

For the Decriminalization of Drugs!

Capitalist Misery and Heroin Addiction

Barely a day goes by without a new report on the growing opioid addiction crisis—a level of heroin use and overdose unseen for three decades. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 2006 and 2013 the number of first-time heroin users nearly doubled, from 90,000 to 169,000. Over half a million Americans

used heroin in 2013—a nearly 150 percent increase since 2007—and opioids played a part in a record 28,648 deaths in the U.S. in 2014. The racist capitalist ruling class, which spent decades locking up people, disproportionately black and Latino, under the “war on drugs,” is now wringing its hands over the heroin “epidemic” because the increased

addiction and death rates are affecting a growing number of whites, including in the suburbs.

The anti-drug hysteria of the 1980s and '90s was based on the fiction that an entire generation of black youth was driven to crazed violence by the use of crack cocaine. These youth were labeled superpredators to justify their mass

incarceration. Sentences for possession of crack were 100 times more severe than for powder cocaine, typically associated with white users. Today, increased heroin use has permeated all levels of society, black and white. It can be found in the enclaves of the wealthy, in the deteriorating towns and small cities where

continued on page 5

PT Popular Front Paved Way for Right-Wing Reaction

Brazil Impeachment: Workers Have No Side



Reuters

Left: São Paulo protest against impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff of the PT (Workers Party), March 18. Above: At October 2010 campaign rally Rousseff embraces her coalition partner, Michel Temer of bourgeois PMDB, who is now a leading force behind impeachment drive.

With a widespread corruption scandal rocking the country, Brazil's lower house of Congress voted last month to initiate impeachment proceedings against President Dilma Rousseff. Since 2002, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT—Workers Party), first under its founder, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and then under Rousseff, has governed Brazil in a series of class-collaborationist coalitions. Now, Rousseff is being accused of accounting gimmicks to cover up state budget deficits. The PT's erstwhile coalition partners—many of whom are under investigation or face criminal charges for corruption—are among those leading the charge against Rousseff. This includes Vice President Michel Temer of the bour-

Break with the PT—For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

geois PMDB, who would take over as president if she is suspended or deposed.

Brazil's governing bloc is an example of a “popular front,” a class-collaborationist coalition in which one or more workers parties join bourgeois forces to govern on behalf of the capitalists. We oppose these bourgeois formations on principle. Reformist workers parties like the PT have a class contradiction between their proletarian base and their leaderships' pro-capitalist program. However, when such parties enter a popular-front alliance, the class contradiction is *suppressed* in the bourgeoisie's favor, a guarantee that while in power they will not exceed the bounds of what is acceptable to the ruling class.

The experience of PT rule has once again confirmed this.

For over five years, Rousseff's government has inflicted a litany of attacks on working people, from implementing austerity measures and cutting social spending to attacking workers on strike and peasants who protest land seizures. These attacks followed nearly a decade of harsh IMF-mandated strictures under former labor leader Lula who, as president, was a credible servant to both the imperialists and the Brazilian bourgeoisie. Lula's PT used its authority over the workers movement to carry out neoliberal policies even its right-wing predecessors were not able to achieve. At the same time, the first era

of PT rule coincided with a global boom in the price of raw materials, of which Brazil is a leading exporter. The PT was able to distribute some crumbs, such as cash payments to the poor (*Bolsa Família*) and increases to the minimum wage.

But the boom is long gone. During the past couple of years, Brazil has been undergoing its biggest economic decline in decades. Alongside the impeachment drive, Rousseff's allies as well as her enemies are caught up in the *Lava Jato* (Car Wash) investigation over graft and money-laundering schemes involving the state oil company, Petrobras. Much of the population views the country's politicians as a nest of thieves. Against the backdrop of political instability and deepening immiseration, the PT is largely discredited within its working-class base. Such discontent was visible in the 2013 protests, initially sparked by transportation fare hikes and later spreading to include the government's extravagant spending on

continued on page 6



Greek Communist Party Pushes Anti-Gay Bigotry

The following is from The Bolshevik (No. 1, March 2016), the newly launched publication of the Trotskyist Group of Greece, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The article was originally published as an introduction to a reprint of “Thermidor in the Family” from Leon Trotsky’s The Revolution Betrayed.



On 22 December 2015, the Greek parliament approved the Civil Partnerships

Bill for same-sex couples. This is a simple legal reform that allows gays some of the same rights—legal, welfare and inheritance rights—given to heterosexual couples. Gays and lesbians welcomed the reform, which in the context of deeply reactionary, Orthodox Greek society represents a step forward. The Civil Partnerships Bill presented by Syriza is, however, a limited reform. Justice minister Nikos Papaskevopoulos made clear that “Civil Partnership is not about adoption by homosexual couples” (“Live, the Debate on Civil Partnerships,” *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 22 December 2015).

As Marxists, we defend any legal advances won by gay people, including civil partnerships. The Trotskyist Group of Greece, section of the International Communist League, calls for full legal equality and full democratic rights for gays, including the right to adopt, marry and divorce. We fight for a society in which nobody needs to be forced into a legal straitjacket in order to get medical benefits or any of the privileges granted to those embedded in the traditional “one man on one woman for life” legal mold. At the same time, we emphasize that gays will continue to face bigotry and discrimination under capitalism, where the institutions of the nuclear family and organized religion are props for the maintenance of bourgeois rule.

Unsurprisingly, this small but important reform provoked the rage of the reactionaries of the Orthodox church, the far right and the fascist Golden Dawn. Chiming in with the anti-gay bigotry were the Stalinists of the KKE [Greek Communist Party]. Disgustingly, the KKE argued and voted against the Civil Partnerships Bill, defending the reactionary institution of the family. The KKE declared:

“The aim of the bill is essentially the institutional recognition of the families of same-sex couples, including—eventually—the adoption of children by them. And that is where our own difference lies. “Rights and obligations arise within marriage, which is the legal expression of the social relations of the family. It includes social protection of children, who are biologically the result of sexual relations between a man and a woman. “With the formation of a socialist-communist society, a new type of partnership will undoubtedly be formed—a relatively stable heterosexual relationship and reproduction.”

—“The Position of the KKE on the Civil Partnerships Bill,” *Rizospastis* (20 December 2015)

The KKE’s model of the family under socialism—“stable heterosexual relationship”—differs not at all from the stultifying oppression by the family under capitalism, with its hypocritical sexual mores. As described by Engels in his classic work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), the patriarchal, monogamous family arose in antiquity as a means of ensuring the inheritance of private property. It was accompanied by the “*world-historic defeat of the female sex*,” when “the man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded

and reduced to servitude, she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children.”

The family under capitalism is the main mechanism for the oppression of women and youth. For the bourgeoisie, it is a means to regiment society, inculcating social conservatism and subservience to authority. Anti-gay bigotry flows from the need to defend this patriarchal structure against any deviation. It has always been a goal of Marxism, beginning with the *Communist Manifesto*, to replace the family as an economic institution by socializing childcare and housework, freeing women to play a full and equal role in social and political life as part of constructing an egalitarian, socialist society.

From its beginning, the socialist movement stood forthrightly in defense of homosexuals’ rights, including such courageous public stands as August Bebel’s 1898 speech in the German Reichstag for repealing the penal code against “unnatural fornication.” The Russian Revolution gave flesh and blood to the Marxist understanding of the woman question and homosexual rights.

Compare what the KKE says with the practice of the Bolsheviks in the first years following the October Revolution:

“Soviet legislation bases itself on the following principle:

“*It declares the absolute noninterference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured, and no one’s interests are encroached upon....*

“Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called ‘natural’ intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters.”

—Quoted in John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)*

The KKE’s position on the “protection of children” and the “upbringing and education of children” in the bourgeois family is completely opposed to everything advocated by the revolutionary Marxism of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky concerning the reactionary institution of the family. As we wrote in “The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006):

“The necessary role of the family—the function that must be replaced and cannot be abolished—is the rearing of the next generation. Under capitalism, the masses of youth are slated for wage slavery and service as cannon fodder in the bourgeois army, and the family plays an important role in training them to obey authority. It is also a major source for inculcating religious backwardness as an ideological brake on social consciousness.”

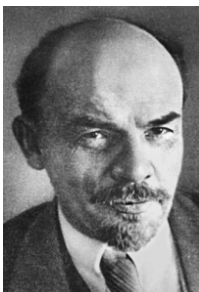
Immediately after the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky began to undermine the old bourgeois prejudices and social institutions that were responsible for the oppression of women and homosexuals. Within the limits of the possibilities in backward

The Popular Front: Class Betrayal

In Brazil today, a class-collaborationist coalition of workers and bourgeois parties governs in the interest of the capitalist rulers. In the 1930s, such formations were dubbed popular or people’s fronts by the Stalinists, who supported them. In 1937, as the Spanish proletariat was locked in a life-and-death struggle for power, James Burnham explained that popular fronts subordinate the proletariat to the bourgeoisie.



TROTSKY



LENIN

At the time, Burnham was a leading propagandist for the U.S. Trotskyists, though he would later desert to the side of the bourgeoisie.

The program of the Peoples’ Front is a program for the defense of bourgeois democracy: that is, for the defense of one form of capitalism.

Whose program is this? It is obviously *not* the program of the proletariat. The program of the proletariat, accepted by revolutionists since the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, can be summed up in two slogans: for workers’ power and for socialism. Naturally the immediate tactic of the proletariat is not on all occasions the struggle for state power: that is possible only in a revolutionary crisis. But at all times and on all occasions the fundamental program remains the same—for the overthrow of capitalism, for workers’ power and for socialism. This program expresses the basic class conflict in modern society; records the Marxist understanding that the problems of society can be solved only by socialism, and that socialism can be achieved only through the conquest of power by the proletariat. The duty of the revolutionary party, the conscious vanguard of the proletariat, is to keep this full and fundamental program always to the fore and always uncompromised. In its program, the revolutionary party thus sums up the independence of the proletariat as a class, and asserts its independent historical destiny.

For the proletariat, through its parties, to give up its own independent program means to give up its independent functioning as a class. And this is precisely the meaning of the Peoples’ Front. In the Peoples’ Front the proletariat renounces its *class* independence, gives up its *class* aims—the *only* aims, as Marxism teaches, which can serve its interests. By accepting the program of the Peoples’ Front, it thereby accepts the aims of another section of society; it accepts the aim of the defense of capitalism when all history demonstrates that the interests of the proletariat can be served only by the overthrow of capitalism. It subordinates itself to a middle-class version of how best and most comfortably to preserve the capitalist order. The Peoples’ Front is thus thoroughly and irrevocably non-proletarian, anti-proletarian....

The Peoples’ Front must *always* be an abandonment of the proletarian program, a subordination of the proletariat to non-proletarian social interests. In the Peoples’ Front, it is the proletariat and the proletariat alone that loses.

—James Burnham, *The Peoples’ Front: The New Betrayal* (1937)

WORKERS VANGUARD



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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: John Blake

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

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

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

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

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

The closing date for news in this issue is May 3.

No. 1089

6 May 2016



Zuma

Gay rights activists outside Greek parliament as Civil Partnerships Bill is debated, December 22. Banner reads: “All Families are Equal.”

Greek Trotskyists Launch Newspaper

We are proud to announce the publication of the first issue of *The Bolshevik*, newspaper of the Trotskyist Group of Greece, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The launching of *The Bolshevik* is a modest but important step in the consolidation of a Greek section of the ICL, whose banner was first planted in Greece in November 2004 with the TGG’s founding. A regular press, even of limited frequency, is essential to our purpose: to cohere the nucleus of a revolutionary vanguard party of the kind that V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks forged to lead the working class to power in the 1917 Russian Revolution.

With Greece mired in a deepgoing economic crisis, the new paper will give the TGG an instrument for intervention in the struggles of the exploited and oppressed. Previously, our Greek comrades had issued multiple pieces under the *Spartacist* masthead. These included Greek translations of articles on the class nature of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state and our fight for women’s liberation through socialist revolution. TGG comrades also wrote key articles on developments in Greece, underlining our opposition to the imperialist European Union (EU) and to the bourgeois Syriza party and pointing to the need for a workers party to fight for working-class rule. Many of these articles have been reprinted in *Workers Vanguard* and other publications of the ICL.

The name *The Bolshevik* was chosen to stress the continuity of consistent Trotskyism, represented in Greece by the TGG, with the political program that animated the October Revolution. This purpose is mirrored by the insignia on the masthead: the worker’s hammer and peasant’s sickle, overlaid by the number “4.” The hammer and sickle was the symbol of the Soviet state that emerged from the Bolshevik Revolution. The four symbolizes our fight to reforge the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938 to continue the fight for world revolution in the face of the Stalinized Communist International’s betrayals.

Unlike elsewhere in Europe, the Stalinist Greek Communist Party (KKE) remains a mass reformist party with major influence and roots in the working class. In contrast to the various Stalinophobic fake Trotskyists, the TGG does not ignore the KKE, but strives to win its base

Russia—ravaged by world war and the outbreak of the civil war that followed the revolution and under the enormous pressure of hostile imperialist encirclement—the Bolsheviks sought to build socialized alternatives to the family. They adopted measures relieving women from the weight of centuries of enslavement, facilitating divorce, establishing public laundries, public restaurants, childcare centers, etc. and guaranteeing the right to free abortion on demand, unheard of in capitalist countries even today.

The KKE’s position on gays has its roots in Stalinism and in the degeneration of the Soviet Union through the political counterrevolution beginning in 1923-1924 and in the defense of the privileges of the bureaucracy that arose out of it.

The Bolsheviks knew that without the extension of the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries, the land of October would not be able to fulfill its tasks. The economic backwardness of the young workers state and its international isolation meant that the Bolsheviks had little access to the social resources necessary to bring about the liberation of women from domestic slavery. In these circumstances, following the failure of revolutions abroad, especially in Germany in 1923, a conservative, nationalist, bureaucratic caste arose, headed by Stalin. In describing the Soviet Thermidor, Trotsky drew a parallel with the overthrow of the radical Jacobins in the years after the bourgeois French Revolution of 1789. With the seizure of political power by the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Bolsheviks’ internationalist program was abandoned and replaced by the anti-Marxist dogma of “socialism in one country.”

In time, the bureaucracy restored reactionary bourgeois ideology, not least the

glorification of the family unit. In 1934, a law was adopted punishing homosexual practices with prison terms, leading to mass arrests of gays. Despite the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union, we Trotskyists always stood for the unconditional military defense of the socialized property forms against capitalist attack and counterrevolution. At the same time, we fought for workers political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy and restore the liberating internationalist program and goals of the party of Lenin and Trotsky.

The task of a genuinely revolutionary vanguard party is not only to lead the



Τεύχος 1 Μάρτιος 2016 0,50 €

Για την Επαναστατική Ηγεσία της Εργατικής Τάξης!

Εξαθλίωση και Ρατσισμός ΑΡΚΕΤΑ!

19 Μαρτίου – Από τη συμφωνία της με την Τρόικα του περασμένου Ιουλίου, η κυβέρνηση που ηγείται ο ΣΥΡΙΖΑ έκανε τα πάντα προκειμένου να εξυμνητήσει τις ιμπεριαλιστικές βδέλλες, λιμοκτονώντας ακόμη περισσότερους εργαζόμενους στην Ελλάδα. Τώρα στον πάγκο κοπής βρίσκονται οι πενυχτές συντάξεις που ήδη έχουν μειωθεί ως το κόκαλο. Έπειτα από αυτό οι ιμπεριαλιστές και η ελληνική αστική τάξη έχουν στο στόχαστρο την καταστροφή των σοματείων και των εργατικών δικαιωμάτων. Όπως έχει φανεί από τις πολυάριθμες απεργίες και τις διαμαρτυρίες αυτού του χειμώνα από εκατοντάδες χιλιάδες εργάτες (όπως και συνταξιούχους, αγρότες και επαγγελματίες), υπάρχει έντονη αποσπαστικότητα για πάλη ενάντια σε αυτή την επίθεση σε ότι απομένει από την κοινωνική ασφάλιση και τα εργατικά δικαιώματα. Αλλά τα μόν αυτά οι αγώνες μπορούν να είναι επιτυχημένοι ώστε να περάσει αυτή η επίθεση της ελληνικής αστικής τάξης των τελευταίων χρόνων ενάντια στους εργαζόμενους, είναι ζήτημα ηγεσίας της εργατικής τάξης και ζήτημα προγράμματος.

Αυτή η μάχη δεν μπορεί να κερδηθεί μέσα στα πλαίσια του κοινοβουλευτισμού, ούτε μέσα από εκλογές ή από την άσκηση πίεσης στο κοινοβούλιο μέσα από μεγάλες διαμαρτυρίες. Αυτή είναι η μάχη στρατηγική που ακολουθούν όλες οι φιλοκαπιταλιστικές ηγεσίες των εργατικών σοματείων, από τις γραφειοκρατίες της ΓΣΕΕ και της ΑΔΕΔΥ, μέχρι την ηγεσία του ΠΑΜΕ (το συνδικαλιστικό μέτωπο του ΚΚΕ). Η εργατική τάξη έχει την κοινωνική δύναμη να βάλει φρένο στο καπιταλιστικό σύστημα κέρδους· αυτή η δύναμη πρέπει να κινητοποιηθεί σε μία ασυμβίβαστη πάλη ενάντια στην ιμπερια-



Αθηνά, 4 Φεβρουαρίου: Γενική απεργία, πορεία του ΠΑΜΕ.

λιστική ΕΕ και την ελληνική αστική τάξη για αιτήματα που υπερβαίνουν τα όρια του τι θεωρείται «βιώσιμο» από τους καπιταλιστές και το σύστημα κέρδους τους.

Το να είναι μία χώρα μέλος στην ευρωζώνη και στην ΕΕ σημαίνει υποδούλωση σε λιγότερα διχως τέλος, επομένως οι εργάτες πρέπει να παλέψουν για να βγουν από το ευρώ και την ΕΕ! Οι άνθρωποι λιμοκτονούν για να αποζημιώσουν τα χρέη τους οι αμειβόμενοι τράπεζες, επομένως πρέπει να παλέψουμε για τη διαγραφή του χρέους! Το καπιταλιστικό σύστημα έχει καταδικάσει εκατομμύρια στην ανεργία ή στο μόχθο χωρίς αμοιβή, επομένως τα σοματεία πρέπει να παλέψουν για δουλειά

Για Εργατικές Επιτροπές Αράσης..... ΣΕΛ. 3
Τρότσκι: Το Θερμίδορ στην Οικογένεια ...ΣΕΛ. 7
Ανατολική Γερμανία 1989-90.....ΣΕΛ. 28

Κάτω η ΕΕ και το Ευρώ! Για Μία Εργατική Ευρώπη!

to genuine communism. With sharp polemics against the class-collaborationist illusions pushed by the KKE and our other opponents, *The Bolshevik* promises to be a vital tool to this end.

The first issue contains three substantial articles. The front page addresses the need for a revolutionary leadership of the working class in Greece and is combined with a reprint of the “Enough!” call initiated by the TGG in July 2015 (printed in English translation in WV No. 1072, 7 August 2015). At the time that statement was issued,

working class in struggle but to unite all sections of the oppressed—to act, in Lenin’s words, as a “tribune of the people” against every form of oppression, whether it comes from racial or national hatred or from oppressive sexual morality imposed by the bourgeois family.

The section titled “Thermidor in the Family” in Trotsky’s *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), his most important analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union, explains how the young Soviet workers state tried to uproot the material basis for women’s oppression and how the Stalinist degeneration—the Soviet Thermidor, which he described as a “triumph

the working masses had just voted down more EU imperialist-dictated austerity in a national referendum. This result showed that workers were eager to fight. The expectation by many working people that the ruling Syriza party would get a better deal from the EU was quickly shattered when Syriza agreed to new starvation terms. Rather than lead workers in militant struggle against the EU at this crucial moment, the KKE leadership echoed the imperialist fear campaign that Greece exiting the euro and EU would be a catastrophe. The *Bolshevik* article notes:

“It was in the context of this opening for the working class to come forward in struggle that the Trotskyist Group of Greece issued the 17 July call.... It was a call on the workers of Greece and their allies to build workers committees of action to repudiate Syriza’s capitulation to the banks and EU by fighting to get out of the euro and EU and for demands that address the burning needs of the workers and the oppressed. These demands necessarily transcend what is ‘possible’ under capitalism, pointing to the need for a government that will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them. We called for common class struggle of Greek, German and other European workers together against all the EU imperialists! We sought to strike a flint to ignite proletarian struggle.”

Rounding out the contents of *The Bolshevik* is the back-page article on our struggle against capitalist counterrevolution in Germany in 1989-90 and a reprint of “Thermidor in the Family” from Trotsky’s book *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936). The former is a reprint of a forum given on the tenth anniversary of the ICL’s fight against capitalist counterrevolution in East Germany, together with an introduction polemicalizing against Greek left groups for their refusal to defend the Soviet Union and other deformed workers states. The latter is packaged with a polemic against the KKE for upholding the reactionary institution of the family, as shown by its opposition to civil partnership and the right to adopt for gays. The polemic is reprinted on page 2.

The TGG press is a new vehicle for introducing radical youth and militant workers, along with immigrants and other oppressed layers, to a Marxist program. We encourage readers with Greek-language capacity to subscribe. A subscription costs \$2 for four issues and can be obtained by writing to the address: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. ■

of the bureaucracy over the masses”—led to retreats also in this area. Despite the degeneration of the Soviet Union, Trotsky fought to the end for defense of the workers state and called for the working class to carry out a political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. Based on the traditions of revolutionary Marxism, Trotsky—the architect together with Lenin of the October uprising in 1917—understood that genuine social liberation and defense of the October Revolution itself are “unrealizable on the basis of ‘generalised want’” but required the extension of the proletarian revolution internationally, leading to a global socialist society. ■

Young Spartacus

Defend Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State!

We reprint below a leaflet issued by the Bay Area Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club on April 13.

For months, students at San Francisco State University (SFSU) have protested against plans to slash funding for the College of Ethnic Studies. The administration's proposed cuts would bring funding down 17 percent since 2008, eliminating about half of the college's class offerings. Work-study programs would be reduced and faculty jobs are on the chopping block since Ethnic Studies would not have enough money to replace retired faculty members or to even pay the salaries of half of its instructors. In response to students' demands to restore funding to pre-2007 levels, expand work-study programs and add faculty positions, university president Leslie Wong has refused to address a *single one* of them. Instead, he tried to sweet-talk the students by proclaiming his "pride" in Ethnic Studies while blaming "consistent underfunding" of the university by the state government.

Targeting programs that have a high rate of black and Latino enrollment, Ethnic Studies cuts are part of the long-running racist purge of the universities—the reversal of affirmative action programs, the drastic rise in tuition and the underfunding of public campuses nationally. The racist rulers see little use in educating the majority of black and Latino youth because as capitalism decays it is no longer profitable to employ them. The lives of the ghetto and barrio poor have already been written off as expendable, leaving them to die on the streets or be thrown behind bars.

The door to higher education is being slammed shut for not just blacks and Latinos, but all poor and working-class youth. At the same time, workers' living standards have been driven down. Funding for the entire California State University (CSU) system, which serves many low-income and minority students, has been slashed across the board. Nearly half of CSU students receive government financial aid and 40 percent come from homes where English is not the first language. Such students who do get in have to work to pay the soaring tuition while often unable to get the classes they need. The vast majority cannot hope to graduate in four years, and are likely to leave saddled with debt.

The same CSU board of trustees and administration that have raised tuition and cut campus budgets have cut faculty wages and hours so drastically that less than half of CSU faculty members earn



Protest in defense of Ethnic Studies at SFSU's Malcolm X Plaza, March 16. Young Spartacus

Down With the Race and Class Purge of the Universities!

For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!

over a paltry \$38,000 annually. When the faculty union, the California Faculty Association (CFA), sought a minimal five percent salary increase, the CSU administration refused to budge until the union set a statewide strike date. Now a tentative settlement grants the teachers 10.5 percent in raises over three years—a grudging concession, but not nearly enough to make up lost ground. It is in the interests of students and other campus workers to support the faculty, just as teachers have an interest in supporting students in their fight against budget cuts. To its credit, the CFA at SFSU has called for full funding for Ethnic Studies and other colleges.

Speaking in defense of Ethnic Studies at a February 23 protest event, a supporter of the Spartacus Youth Club drew cheers when he denounced the U.S. imperialists' bombardment of Syria and Libya and their support to the brutal Zionist rulers of Israel, declaring: "We need to link this [defense of Ethnic Studies] with the fight against imperialist warfare and with the fight to defend the Palestinians." He went on to oppose voting for the Democrats—Wall Street's other party of war, racism and deportations. He pointed out that "Bernie Sanders calls for more cops on the street and he supports the state of Israel. He is no friend of labor, of workers or of the oppressed." Instead, our comrade counterposed the need to build a revolutionary workers party.

At a March 1 meeting to defend Ethnic Studies, the meeting's organizers called on one of our comrades, but then tried

to shout him down as soon as he began to speak against illusions in the administration. They despicably resorted to race-baiting our white comrade for speaking against black oppression. Some student activists also unsuccessfully tried to stop SYC supporters from distributing *Workers Vanguard* at a March 16 rally to defend Ethnic Studies. Such attempts at censorship in the name of liberal "identity" politics obstruct both the broadening of the fight to defend Ethnic Studies and the debate necessary for political clarity on the way forward.

The 1968-69 Student Strike

The College of Ethnic Studies was a hard-fought gain of the 1968-69 SF State student strike, the longest campus strike in American history. At issue was the opening up of the universities to long excluded or marginalized black, Asian and Latino students. The campus administration had blocked the demands of the Black Student Union (BSU) for a black studies department and for more admissions slots for blacks and other minorities. Student protests broke out when the Board of Trustees ordered the campus president to suspend George Mason Murray, an introductory English instructor and the Black Panther Minister of Education, at the end of October 1968. A spokesman for the black students, Murray was targeted for Panther politics, including their correct advocacy of armed self-defense of the black ghetto masses and of victory of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front.

The strike began on 6 November 1968, spearheaded by the BSU and the Third World Liberation Front, a coalition composed of various Asian and Latino student organizations. Six weeks later, the faculty union, then the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), walked out despite threats from the administration to dismiss any faculty member who did not show up to work for five consecutive days. The strike essentially shut down the campus and lasted almost five months, defying massive police repression. Among its gains were the creation of a school of ethnic studies and the admission of some 900 additional black and minority students for the fall 1969 term.

The 1968 strike reflected the mass social struggles of the 1960s. The civil rights movement and opposition to the U.S. imperialist war against Vietnam radicalized a broad layer of student youth. Concessions that the ruling class made in the face of these struggles came under attack as soon as these struggles started to ebb. Student activists at State today invoke the example of the '68-69 strike. But after decades of rollback, in the absence of any significant social struggle, their perspective has been reduced to one of little more than moral suasion directed at the campus administration.

A letter on behalf of the student protest organizers expressed disappointment at Wong's "lack of leadership" and his administration's disregard for "the needs of students." But the administration is not a neutral body nor is it accountable to students and faculty. Such illusions politically disarm those who want to fight.

College campuses are a reflection of the society around them. The capitalist rulers of this country require the universities to transmit ruling-class ideology and to train the administrators, technicians and other professionals they need to keep their system of production for profit running. The job of the administration is to oversee the campuses in line with the American bourgeoisie's interests, including by implementing such budget cuts as their capitalist masters demand while keeping students under control. The SFSU administration has also served the government's racist "war on terror" by funneling information on Near Eastern students to the FBI in 2001 and has repeatedly gone after Palestinian students who protest Israeli state repression.

The Black n' Brown Liberation Coalition, an organization active in the current movement to defend Ethnic Studies, calls for racial sensitivity training for the University Police Department, as if the question of racist police violence were a matter of a few rogue cops with bad ideas. But why does a supposed institution of learning need an armed force with access to assault rifles? They are the arm of capitalist repression on campus, there to put down student revolts like that of 1968. Their off-campus cohorts in blue are paid to harass, jail and kill blacks and break workers' strikes. The police, along with the courts, prisons and the army, are the core of the capitalist state, the armed defenders of the obscenely wealthy capitalist rulers against those they oppress and exploit. It is a liberal pipe dream to believe that the police can be reformed to act in the interests of the oppressed. A wolf in

continued on page 10

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

LOS ANGELES

Thursday, May 26, 6 p.m.

The Degeneration of the Workers State: How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173

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

Visit the ICL website:
www.icl-fi.org

Drugs...

(continued from page 1)

industry once existed, in the ramshackle hovels and trailer parks throughout rural America and in the ghetto slums.

The biggest surge in heroin use today is among whites between the ages of 18 and 25 and with household incomes below \$20,000, who are suffering much of the same economic desperation that has marked black life for generations. These conditions have also spurred a dramatic increase in suicide rates, especially among middle-aged white men. Drug overdoses, suicide and liver disease caused white life expectancy to fall in 2014 (though it is still three years higher than for black people). These social conditions—joblessness, poverty, and hopelessness—are a result of the decimation of unionized industrial jobs over the past few decades. As we noted in “Lockdown U.S.A.” (WV No. 618, 10 March 1995): “Over a million manufacturing jobs were lost in the U.S. in the 1980s, on top of the wholesale destruction of whole swaths of Midwest industry the decade before. *For every place lost on the assembly lines, one has been added in the prisons.*” Since the early 1990s, another five million jobs in manufacturing have been eliminated, while benefits and real wages have declined in the remaining ones. In this context, and with little class or social struggle, many see drugs and alcohol as a means to escape from the hell of everyday life.

In response to the heroin crisis, on March 10, the normally gridlocked Senate was nearly unanimous in passing the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act aimed at reducing opioid “abuse,” expanding treatment programs and pre-



Rainey/Star-Ledger

Drug bust in New Jersey, 2010. Bourgeoisie’s “war on drugs” is a war on black people, flooding prisons with black youth.

the personal use of any drug, regardless of its particular risks or effects.

The only rational way to address the question of drug use is by removing all prohibitions on it. As communists, we demand an end to all laws against “crimes without victims,” such as gambling, prostitution, drug use, pornography and all consensual sex. Those who have an addiction and want treatment should be able to get it—as part of quality health care for all, free at the point of delivery. Decriminalization would reduce the crime and other social pathology associated with the drug trade by taking the superprofits out of it.

The current explosion of heroin use, as well as that of the cheaper, more potent synthetic opioid fentanyl, is also related to the expansion and subsequent crackdown on prescription opioids like OxyContin (oxycodone). Originally (and falsely) marketed as a non-addictive painkiller in 1995, oxy became regularly prescribed for severe pain. A few years later, the

John Ehrlichman, former domestic policy adviser to Nixon, described how Nixon’s anti-drug laws aimed to disrupt both the civil rights movement and opposition to the Vietnam War:

“The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people.... We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.”

The war on drugs was escalated under President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. Along with attacks on consensual sex, abortion and teaching evolution in public schools, it was intended to ideologically regiment the population as Cold War II against the Soviet Union heated up. Key to this crusade was the hysteria whipped up against black people over so-called “crack babies,” which was a lie. Much of crack’s importation into Los Angeles was facilitated by the CIA to fund the right-wing contra guerrillas fighting the leftist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

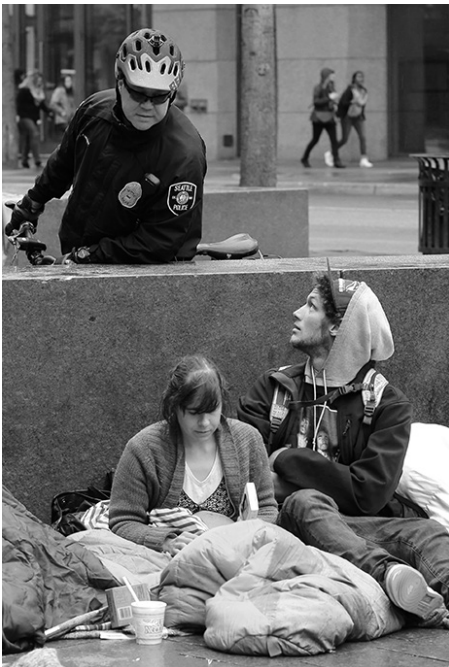
Democrats played a leading role in the “war on drugs.” New York governor Mario Cuomo called for life sentences for pushers while NYC mayor Ed Koch demanded concentration camps for “drug abusers.” Black Democrats led by Jesse Jackson were among the loudest voices. Al Sharpton whipped up a chauvinist frenzy against Arab storekeepers selling rolling papers and pipes, while targeting black “crack houses.” Bill Clinton’s 1994 crime bill expanded the federal death penalty, financed 100,000 cops to hit the streets and allocated nearly \$10 billion for more prison construction.

Largely out of budgetary concerns, there has in recent years been some reconsideration of the disproportionate sentences for possession of crack. In 2010 the sentencing disparity for crack

compared to powder coke was reduced to 18-to-1. Much has been made of Obama’s promise to consider commuting overly harsh sentences of low-level, non-violent drug offenders. He has granted clemency to 248 federal prisoners, but that amounts to less than 2 percent of those who have petitioned the White House for relief. The U.S. still remains the world’s largest jailer, and over 50 percent of the more than two million behind bars are black and Latino.

Puritan Social Regimentation

Drugs, including alcohol and hallucinogens, have been enjoyed by *homo sapiens* since the origin of our species. *Harpers Magazine* contributor Dan Baum noted in a recent article: “Most of what we hate and fear about drugs—the violence, the overdoses, the criminality—derives from prohibition, not drugs” (“Legalize It All: How to Win the War on Drugs,” April 2016). Noting that drug addiction is rare, Baum pointed out, “Lots of Americans drink, but relatively few become alcoholics. It’s hard to imagine people enjoying a little heroin now and then, or a hit of



AP

Downtown Seattle, April 2015. Drug addiction, overdoses and suicides have spiked among whites amid economic downturn.

methamphetamine, without going off the deep end, but they do it all the time.”

Behind the proscription of recreational drugs is the intersection of the Puritan religiosity ingrained in this society and the racist oppression of black people, which is a bulwark of American capitalism. Deeming addiction to be a moral failing, many treatment programs are based on total abstinence. Heroin substitutes like methadone and buprenorphine, many of whose users are able to function quite well, are subject to strict limits. Methadone, which works by “occupying” the brain receptors

continued on page 6



Cronin/NY Daily News

Democratic Party hustler Al Sharpton marking “crack house” in 1986, providing fodder for capitalist rulers’ racist anti-drug crusade.

venting overdose deaths. However, the Republican majority refused to provide funding for the act. On March 29, President Obama stated, “If there’s a market for heroin in an inner city in Baltimore, it’s not going to take that long before those drugs find their way to a wealthy suburb outside Baltimore.”

Expressions of compassion for heroin addicts have come from what would seem to be the most unlikely sources. Hillary Clinton, first lady of mass incarceration, has proposed \$7.5 billion in federal funding for state treatment programs. On the campaign trail, the evangelical nut job Ted Cruz makes a point of tearfully recounting the drug overdose death of his half-sister Miriam. Suddenly treatment is all the rage. White House press secretary Josh Earnest claimed that Obama is shifting the focus from purely law enforcement to medical treatment. But as long as drugs remain criminalized, state repression will be the main response to drug users.

The deterioration exhibited by those who are driven by addiction to devote all their energies and resources to the pursuit of their next high and the anguish this causes to family and friends can be truly excruciating. However, the bulk of the damage to individuals and communities attributed to narcotics is not intrinsic to the drugs themselves but to the fact they are illegal. The government has no business criminalizing

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) began to monitor, harass and threaten doctors who prescribed the drug with loss of their medical licenses and prosecution. The patients who had their prescriptions cut off, along with their teenage children who raided the family medicine cabinet, turned to the streets for heroin as a substitute, which was in any case more easily available and cheaper. The Obama administration’s remedy has been to declare a further crackdown on opioid prescriptions.

As a forensic pathologist wrote to the *New York Times* (26 March), the CDC’s new guidelines “are unrealistic for patients who have done well (sometimes for years) on carefully monitored opioid doses under continuing medical care.” The doctor added that if acetaminophen or ibuprofen “worked for severe pain, no legitimate patient would be taking opioids.” In some cases, patients suffering from chronic pain may benefit from physical therapy. However, this treatment is more expensive and is often not covered by insurance.

Down With the War on Drugs!

Today’s plethora of drug laws is an outgrowth of the state repression under the “war on crime” kicked off by Democratic president Lyndon Johnson’s 1968 “Safe Streets Act” and President Richard Nixon’s 1970 “Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act.” In a 1994 interview,

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.

Local Directory and Public Offices

Website: www.icl-fi.org • Email address: vanguard@tiac.net

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

Chicago.....

Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441

chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

Public Office: 1st Sat. of every month, 2-5 p.m., and by appointment, 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239

slsycla@sbcglobal.net

Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York

Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025

nysl@tiac.net

Public Office: 1st Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318, Manhattan

Oakland

Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851

slbayarea@fastmail.net

Public Office: Sat. 1-4 p.m., 1904 Franklin (Buzzer #407)

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Montréal

CP 83 Succ. Place-d'Armes, Montréal, QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578

trotskyste.montreal@gmail.com

Toronto

Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138

spartcan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver

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

trotskyst_vancouver@shawcable.com

Brazil...

(continued from page 1)

World Cup stadiums, the dismal state of health care and education, and cop violence. The right-wing opposition parties seized on this popular dissatisfaction to lead a major anti-PT campaign.

With elections scheduled for the following year, Rousseff sought to mobilize support among the PT’s base by promising to improve living conditions for workers and the poor. Re-elected in 2014 by a narrow margin, she immediately reneged on her promises and imposed austerity as the country plunged further into recession. This served to demobilize and demoralize working people and the oppressed, further emboldening the right wing, including the PT’s own bloc partners. Today’s millions-strong anti-government protests are spearheaded by reactionary political factions backed by the media oligarchy and by pro-U.S. business groups.

Rousseff and PT loyalists decry the impeachment proceedings as a “violent act” against “democracy” and falsely present it as a coup d’état. Such claims are a potent scare tactic, conjuring up fears in a society where memories of the wounds inflicted by the bloody military regime ushered in by the 1964 coup remain vivid. Many working people, fearful of the right-



Police operation in Rio de Janeiro’s Mare slum on eve of World Cup, March 2014. Popular-front government has unleashed terror on Brazil’s favelas.

wing forces coming to power, have mobilized in demonstrations against Rousseff’s ouster. These protests, replete with red flags and leftist and trade-union contingents—centrally the PT-associated CUT (Central Única dos Trabalhadores)—are being used by the PT to channel the workers’ anger back into support for the popular front. Meanwhile, PT leaders

sought to head off the impeachment by offering ministerial posts to small bourgeois parties in exchange for a “no” vote in Congress.

At this point, Brazil is not facing a military coup to overthrow the government, but rather a series of sordid maneuvers within Congress to remove the president. To oppose Rousseff’s impeachment would

Drugs...

(continued from page 5)

affected by heroin and other opiates, can only be administered through specially licensed clinics, which in much of the country are few and far between. Doctors can prescribe buprenorphine, which helps reduce the physical and psychological craving for opiates, but the number of patients for whom any doctor can prescribe it is limited by federal regulations.

Much touted of late are diversion programs such as the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) initiated in Seattle in 2011 and taken up in some form by 20 other cities. LEAD allows the cops to refer drug users picked up on the street to social workers who, without requiring that their clients stop using, help them find shelter, work, medical care and drug treatment if they so desire. However, who gets diverted and who gets arrested is left entirely to the discretion of the racist cops on the beat. Seattle city council member Kshama Sawant, a member of Socialist Alternative, hails LEAD as “an innovative partnership between police officers, prosecutors, neighborhood leaders, and service providers.” Such illusions in the cops and prosecutors—key elements of the capitalist state which exists to repress workers and the oppressed—are par for the course for the reformists of Socialist Alternative who have long pushed the lie that cops are “workers in uniform.”

Another scheme promoted as an “alternative” to incarceration, and ardently championed by Obama, is the system of drug courts that began in 1989 and now numbers over 3,000. Their purpose was—and is—to clear the dockets of trial courts overwhelmed by drug prosecutions. After giving up the right to a trial, a drug court defendant must complete a program of treatment and drug testing—often including a period of going cold turkey behind bars. Those who fail to “graduate” face lengthy prison sentences.

Recently, the mayor of Ithaca, New York, Svante Myrick, put forward a patently rational proposal for a “super-

vised injection facility” for drug users. Staffed with medical personnel, the center would provide clean needles and prevent overdoses. Starting in Switzerland 30 years ago, injection sites have been adopted in ten countries. Myrick’s plan was met with an immediate backlash. State senator Tom O’Mara called it “asinine” and Cornell law professor William Jacobson condemned it as a “government-run heroin shooting gallery.” Even the best-intentioned proposals highlight the irrationality of drug prohibition. Those stopped by the cops on their way to or from the injection site would still be arrested if carrying drugs.

Bourgeois Hypocrisy and Racism

Opium was first brought to the Americas by European colonists and was long one of the most effective painkillers. Founding fathers Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were frequent users of laudanum (tincture of opium), and trade in opium made possible the fortunes of some of America’s most famous families. Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s grandfather, Warren Delano, was a major player in the opium trade in China, as were many other affluent New Englanders. The Chinese government tried to suppress the opium trade, but Britain (whose Indian colony was the main producer of the drug) waged two wars in the mid 1800s to force open the Chinese market. Delano profited handsomely.

Substantial endowments to Harvard University came from the Cabot family, who in the 1700s hit it big importing opium and rum along with slaves. Yale University’s secretive Skull and Bones society (which counts among its former members both George Bushes) was funded by the Russell family, who grew rich smuggling opium from Turkey to China in the early 19th century. Others who prospered from the opium trade were the Boston Forbeses, whose descendants include current secretary of state John Forbes Kerry.

Every drug scare has been accompanied by racist fearmongering. The smoking of opium was introduced to the U.S. after the Civil War by Chinese laborers who built the railroads in the West under murderous conditions. Toward the end of the century, fears were whipped up over the mixing of white people, particularly women, with Chinese men in opium smoking parties. Laws were passed authorizing imprisonment for operating or patronizing an opium den. In 1909, Congress passed the Smoking Opium Exclusion Act, which banned its importation for non-medicinal purposes. As a result, opium smokers switched to either morphine or heroin, a form of morphine that was first introduced

as a pain reliever and cough suppressant by Bayer in 1898. Criminalization forced these users underground and led to the creation of a thriving black market.

Black people in the South were introduced to cocaine towards the end of the 19th century when New Orleans stevedores began taking the drug (or had it pushed on them by their bosses) to help them endure long spells of loading and unloading steamboats—often laboring up to 70 hours at a stretch. From there it spread to cotton plantations, railroad camps and construction sites throughout the South.

The crusade for the Harrison Act of 1914, which banned non-medicinal use of opium, morphine and cocaine, featured a racist scare campaign that would be echoed 70 years later over crack. The *New York Times* (8 February 1914) ranted, “Negro Cocaine ‘Fiends’ Are a New Southern Menace.” The *Times* claimed



1942 movie poster. Racist, puritanical drug scares (and lurid anti-sex campaigns) are used to regiment population.

that cocaine use turned black men into deadly marksmen and made them immune to wounds that “would drop a sane man in his tracks.”

At the same time, state laws against marijuana were being adopted on the basis of a similar scare campaign directed against Mexican immigrants in the Southwest. By 1931, 29 states had outlawed marijuana and in 1937, Congress passed the Marihuana Tax Act, modeled

mean a vote of confidence in—that is, political support to—the PT-led popular front. To favor impeachment would amount to support to the right-wing political forces mounted against Rousseff. As Marxists who stand for the political independence of the proletariat, we say the working class has no side in this conflict.

What the bourgeoisie can get away with in attacking the workers will be determined by the level of working-class resistance and struggle. The Brazilian proletariat is the only force with the social power to lead the struggle on behalf of all the oppressed, from the urban poor in the favelas, to women, to landless peasants. Such a perspective requires the forging of a revolutionary workers party, which would fight to break the proletarian base of the PT and the trade unions away from their current leadership as part of the struggle for socialist revolution and for workers rule.

Internationalist Group: Left Tail on Popular Front

Among the more militant versions of class collaborationism in Brazil is that put forward by the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB), affiliated with the U.S. Internationalist Group (IG). As with the bulk of the left in Brazil, their line is “No to Impeachment,” which is a vote of political support for Rousseff’s popular-front

on the Harrison Act. The 1937 Act was opposed at the time by the American Medical Association, but it had the support of Henry J. Anslinger, head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, who ranted that reefer made blacks “think they’re as good as white men.” During World War II, Anslinger asserted that the Japanese were conspiring to spread narcotics to sap America’s will to fight. As the Cold War kicked off, he wielded the same assertion against Communists.

Heroin use, largely centered in New York City ghettos, surged after WWII, spreading through jazz clubs, bars, dance halls and hotels. A propaganda barrage portrayed white adolescents as the victims of heroin abuse forced on them by evil pushers. The intended audience was white suburbia, whose children were least likely to take heroin, but who were most likely to be enlisted in a moral panic over narcotics. This led to legislation that established increasingly stiff penalties for drug trafficking.

More than a century of prohibition of marijuana, cocaine, heroin and other opiates, hallucinogens and (for a while) alcohol has done little but lock up millions of people, destroy families and neighborhoods. It has also served to regiment the population and drive a racial wedge deeper into the working class. At the same time, the prohibitions planted the soil for criminal syndicates, from the opium dealers at the end of the 19th century to the bootleggers (including the patriarch of the Kennedy dynasty) during Prohibition. Prominent among the latter were the Mafia, who acquired the experience and organization necessary to take over wholesale narcotics distribution after WWII.

The immiseration that besets the working class and oppressed, pushing some into addiction and alcoholism, must be combated through multiracial working-class struggle. America’s racist imperialist system will continue to chew up its oppressed masses until it is overthrown by a socialist revolution that places the working class in power and expropriates the capitalist class, establishing a collectivized, planned economy. The proletarian social order will abolish all crimes without victims and will move to provide treatment and medical care to all who need it. The prisons, jails and courts that today enforce the predatory rule of the bourgeoisie will be replaced with organs of proletarian justice based on principles of rehabilitation rather than retribution. These measures will be among the many taken to maximize humanity’s control over the conditions that besiege it. Then all will be free to realize their full potential as human beings. ■

Moving?

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

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

government (www.internationalist.org, April 2016). The IG/LQB, while not using the phrase, offers up a version of much of the left’s hype about a “judicial coup” by warning that a “bonapartist strong state dominated by courts and cops”—i.e., a military-police dictatorship—will come to power if Rousseff is removed from office. To obscure their defense of a bourgeois government, the IG/LQB throws around calls for factory occupations and a general strike, even claiming to politically oppose the government.

In reality, their position is no more than thinly disguised fight-the-right opportunism. While the IG/LQB cynically rants and raves about “bonapartism,” they admit that a coup in Brazil is unlikely “since with impeachment the right wing will have obtained its primary goal.” Ritually denouncing the popular front and calling not to vote for it, the centrist IG/LQB simply offers Marxist-sounding rationales to push the same line as much of the reformist left: save the Rousseff government.

The IG/LQB acknowledges that the PT has carried out attacks against the working class, “including some that even the military dictatorship did not dare undertake.” At the same time, they argue that a regime of parliamentary parties to the right of the PT would be qualitatively more dangerous than the popular front. The IG/LQB is, to the extent of its limited forces, helping to prop up the very class-collaborationist alliance that paved the way for right-wing reaction.


The IG/LQB intones that “if the bonapartist right wins, they will proceed with the entire weight of the judicial police apparatus behind them.” As if the PT popular-front government hasn’t mobilized, time and again, “the judicial police apparatus” against workers and the poor! Tell that to the impoverished and predominantly black masses in the *favelas* facing daily police terror. Earlier this year, Rousseff’s government passed a draconian anti-terrorism law that strengthens the repressive powers of the state against social protests.

The bourgeois state—consisting at its core of the army, police, prison system and courts—exists to defend the interests of the bourgeois rulers against working people and the oppressed. For its part, the LQB in 1996 had no compunction about inviting the capitalist state, through a series of lawsuits, to settle union affairs (see “Court Papers Prove They Sued the Union—IG’s Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies,” *WV* No. 671, 11 July 1997).

The whole history of Leninism and Trotskyism has been a struggle against class collaboration and for the political independence of the working class. That is how the Bolshevik Party was able to lead the workers of Russia to power in October 1917. Following the February Revolution that overthrew the tsarist monarchy, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries entered into a coalition government with bourgeois forces. V.I. Lenin’s Bolsheviks denounced this as a betrayal of the proletariat and refused to give any support to the government under Alexander Kerensky.

To provide an orthodox-sounding gloss for its position on the impeachment, the IG/LQB in a short article (currently available only in Portuguese) invokes one aspect of the Russian Revolution: the attempted military coup in August by General Kornilov to overthrow the bourgeois Kerensky government, sweep away the soviets and crush the revolution. The Bolsheviks responded

IG: Militant Supporters of Popular Front




Brazil: No to Impeachment!
For Workers Mobilization Against the Rightist Bourgeois Offensive
No Political Support to the Bourgeois Popular Front Government

Workers at Ford auto assembly plant in Brazil's ABC industrial region vote massively to "No" and in defense of their rights. March 22. But that requires powerful ideas action, including and a general strike. The real coup that has to be resisted is the anti-worker offensive of capital privatizations and service and labor "reform" being pushed today by the bourgeois right at popular-front government led by the Workers Party of Lula and Dilma. (Photo)

Break with the PT and All the Reformist Parties – Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party
Fight for a Workers and Peasants Government, the Start of Socialist Revolution

Crossing the class line: April 2016 supplement by Internationalist Group and its Brazilian affiliate LQB declares, “No to Impeachment,” a call for political support for PT-led popular front. IG/LQB’s bluster about workers mobilizations and claims to oppose popular front are merely cover for their opportunist position.



VANGUARDA OPERÁRIA
Operação Lava Jato: Investida judiciária/policial que ameaça direitos democráticos e trabalhistas
abril de 2016

Não ao Impeachment!
Mobilização operária contra a ofensiva burguesa direitista
Nenhum apoio político ao governo burguês da frente popular

by calling for a united front of all workers organizations to smash the counterrevolutionary offensive, fighting militarily alongside Kerensky’s troops while maintaining their opposition to the government.

The IG/LQB’s article on the Kornilov coup acknowledges the Bolsheviks’ position, but through a sleight of hand blurs the hard line of military defense versus political support in order to justify its own capitulation to the popular-front government in Brazil! Their article lists the ways that the situation in Brazil today is different from Russia in August 1917: Russia was at war, there was a revolutionary situation, there were soviets and a mass revolutionary party. But they deceitfully omit a significant difference: Russian workers were facing an actual military coup, whereas Brazilian workers are facing empty bluster about a coup intended to whip up support for a bourgeois government.

One year after the Stalinized Communist International enshrined the policy of the popular front (or “People’s Front”) at its 1935 Seventh Congress, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky stressed:

“From February to October, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who represent a very good parallel to the ‘Communists’ and Social Democrats, were in the closest alliance and in a permanent coalition with the bourgeois party of the Cadets, together with whom they formed a series of coalition governments. Under the sign of this People’s Front stood the whole mass of the people, including the workers’, peasants’, and soldiers’ councils. To be sure, the Bolsheviks participated in the councils. But they did not make the slightest concession to the People’s Front. Their demand was to *break* this People’s Front, to destroy the alliance with the Cadets, and to create a genuine workers’ and peasants’ government.”

—Leon Trotsky, “The Dutch Section and the International” (July 1936)

For Marxists, the distinction between military defense and political support is

of vital importance. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the popular front collaborated in the suppression of a workers revolution, paving the way for the victory of General Francisco Franco’s forces. At the time, the Trotskyists were giving military support to the Republican side against Franco and the Spanish fascists. In 1937, Max Shachtman, a senior member of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, argued in favor of supporting war credits for the popular-front government under Socialist prime minister Juan Negrín. Shachtman asked: “How can we refuse to devote a million pesetas to the purchase of rifles for the front?”

In a 1937 letter, Trotsky insisted that the only correct position would be a “negative vote” on the military budget. He explained: “A vote in parliament for the financial budget is not a ‘material’ aid, but an act of political solidarity.... “All the Negrín government does is done under the sign of war necessities. If we accept political responsibility for *their* management of the war necessities, we would politically vote for every serious governmental proposition.... How can we, under such conditions, prepare for the overthrow of the Negrín government?” —“Letter to James P. Cannon” (21 September 1937)

In opposing impeachment, the IG buries the class line, buying into the reformists’ framework of “progressive vs. reactionary,” which has time and again been used

to claim that Marxist opposition to left-bourgeois governments aids the right wing. Such an accusation was raised regarding a classic case of opposition to the popular front. In 1964, sometime Trotskyist leader Edmund Samarakkody and one of his comrades cast a parliamentary vote in favor of an amendment put forward by a right-wing politician that brought about the downfall of a popular-front government in Ceylon (today Sri Lanka). That principled and courageous action was debated at the First International Conference of the international Spartacist tendency in 1979. Earlier, Samarakkody had wrongly repudiated his 1964 vote. Our comrades defended his 1964 vote; a better option for Samarakkody would have been to denounce the parliamentary procedure and walk out of parliament. Against Samarakkody’s repudiation, current IG leader Jan Norden, then a leading member of our tendency, rightly stated in 1979:

“Another common objection to our policy of proletarian opposition to the popular front is the charge of aiding the right. But until you’re prepared to overthrow the existing government, *any* kind of opposition to a popular front in office will be open to the attack that it is aiding the right.” —*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 27-28, Winter 1979-80

But that was then. Since leading a small group of followers out of our organization two decades ago, Norden has moved steadily to the right while covering his tracks with pseudo-militant rhetoric.

The working class has no common interests with its capitalist exploiters and oppressors. Throughout the recent period of left-bourgeois governments in Latin America—whether popular-frontist in Brazil or populist in Venezuela and elsewhere—this is the understanding that the ICL has uniquely and consistently fought to bring to the proletariat. Over 13 years of PT rule provides a graphic example of the lesson Marx drew from the experience of the 1871 Paris Commune: The proletariat cannot wield the levers of the capitalist state for its own interests, but must smash it through a socialist revolution that establishes a workers state in its place.

To unchain the revolutionary potential of the Brazilian proletariat requires the forging of a revolutionary internationalist party, one that is based on a perspective of socialist revolution throughout the Americas and internationally, especially in the imperialist heartland of the U.S. Only world socialist revolution, laying the basis for international socialist planning, can ensure qualitative economic development for the countries which are today under the imperialist boot. The ICL fights to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International as the necessary instrument to bring communist consciousness to the proletariat and to lead it to power at the head of all the oppressed. ■

ICL Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

The Declaration of Principles of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist International which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution. This important document, which was adopted at the Third International Conference of the ICL in early 1998, was published in the four language editions of *Spartacist* and additionally in eleven other languages.

English	\$2		
Chinese	\$1	Korean.....	\$1
French.....	\$2	Polish.....	\$1
German.....	\$2	Portuguese...	\$1
Greek.....	\$1	Russian.....	\$1
Indonesian....	\$1	Spanish.....	\$1.50
Italian	\$1	Tagalog	\$1
Japanese	\$2	Turkish	\$1

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

Special ICL Bulletins

No. 38 (1996)
Norden’s “Group”: Shamefaced Defectors From Trotskyism
English edition: **\$6** (152 pages) Spanish edition: **\$6** (92 pages)

No. 41 (1997)
The Fight for a Trotskyist Party in Brazil
Correspondence between the International Communist League and Luta Metalúrgica/Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil
In English, Portuguese and Spanish: **\$7** (184 pages)

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

SPARTACIST

NUMBER 54 ENGLISH EDITION SPRING 1998

For New October Revolutions!
Third International Conference of the ICL
SEE PAGE 2

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program
International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)
SEE PAGE 9

Declaração de Princípios e Alguns Elementos de Programa
Liga Comunista Internacional (Quarta-Internacionalista)

1. A revolução socialista mundial é a Liga Comunista Internacional (Quarta-Internacionalista) 1
2. A luta contra a guerra imperialista 1
3. Somos o partido da Revolução Russa 2
4. A revolução social é a revolução da Liga Comunista Internacional (Quarta-Internacionalista) 2
5. O caráter internacional da revolução socialista 7
6. O papel da vanguarda da classe operária em defesa da luta no operariado 7
7. A base burguesa do revisionismo 9
8. A luta contra a guerra imperialista 9
9. A questão nacional e o direito de autodeterminação do povo em disputa 10
10. A revolução cultural: revolução permanente 10
11. A frente popular: não como tática, mas como estratégia 11
12. O partido revolucionário: seu programa, organização e disciplina 12
13. Nos intervenções para mudar a história 13

1. A revolução socialista mundial é a Liga Comunista Internacional (Quarta-Internacionalista) 1
2. A luta contra a guerra imperialista 1
3. Somos o partido da Revolução Russa 2
4. A revolução social é a revolução da Liga Comunista Internacional (Quarta-Internacionalista) 2
5. O caráter internacional da revolução socialista 7
6. O papel da vanguarda da classe operária em defesa da luta no operariado 7
7. A base burguesa do revisionismo 9
8. A luta contra a guerra imperialista 9
9. A questão nacional e o direito de autodeterminação do povo em disputa 10
10. A revolução cultural: revolução permanente 10
11. A frente popular: não como tática, mas como estratégia 11
12. O partido revolucionário: seu programa, organização e disciplina 12
13. Nos intervenções para mudar a história 13

Palestinians...

(continued from page 12)

defend the Palestinians against the state terror of Israel, a highly militarized, nuclear-armed power.

The recent suicidal “lone wolf” stabbings by Palestinians are, in fact, a reflection of the intensity of that subjugation and the despair it breeds. Some of these attacks have targeted agents of the Israeli 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, as are suicide bombings. We reject the notion that holds the whole of the Israeli population responsible for the crimes of its ruling class, just as we reject the notion that the American population is responsible for the far greater crimes of U.S. imperialism.

On a historical level, what is fundamental is the denial of the national rights of the Palestinians. But what is happening today is also the denial of people to simply live their daily lives.

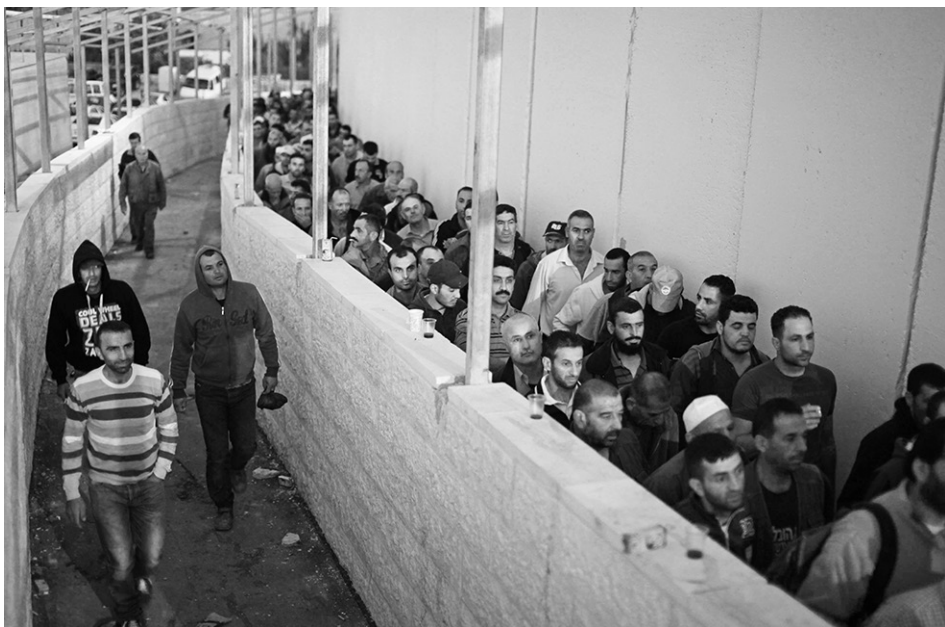
The Gaza Strip is little more than a glorified, open-air prison, a concentration camp with more than 1.8 million people stuffed in a mere 140-square-mile area. Gaza’s borders are sealed off by Israel and Egypt, its Mediterranean coast is patrolled by the Israeli Navy, its airport and port are destroyed. For years, Gaza has been subjected to a blockade that costs its barely functioning economy some \$2 billion per year. Nearly 15 percent of children born in Gaza are stunted from malnutrition; some 60 percent of preschool children in



Gaza are anemic; more than 77 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. As if that were not enough, Gaza’s population is frequently slaughtered and terrorized through bloodthirsty Israeli bombardment and ground invasion. In “Operation Protective Edge,” launched in July 2014, Israel killed over 2,300 Palestinians and wounded over 10,000 more.

Then there is East Jerusalem and the West Bank, 60 percent of which is under direct Israeli military control. There are nearly 800,000 settlers in the area, representing some 12 percent of the Israeli Jewish population and over 17 percent of the total population of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. These heavily armed settlers, backed by the Israeli army, control 40 percent of the West Bank, including access to water, fertile lands and the “Jewish only” roads that lead directly to Israel and bypass the multitude of checkpoints.

The checkpoints are a particular source of humiliation for Palestinians: a trip from one village or town to another, which would normally take no more than 20 or 30 minutes, can now take many hours (or not happen at all) depending on the mood of the soldiers. The checkpoints must be seen in conjunction with the separation wall that runs along much of the West Bank. Together, they have added to the devastation of the economy. They prevent Palestinians from seeking work in Israel, historically one of the primary sources of income flowing into the area. It is also not unusual for the Israeli military to allow fruits, olives and other agri-



Xinhua

Palestinian workers forced to wait at checkpoint in Bethlehem to cross into Jerusalem, May 2014.

cultural perishables, which have come to play an important part in the West Bank economy, to rot, sitting on trucks for days at a time. According to the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem, there are about 100 “fixed” checkpoints in the West Bank and numerous other “flying” checkpoints—here today, gone tomorrow—that are randomly set up by the military.

We demand the immediate withdrawal of all Israeli troops and settlers from all the Occupied Territories. But we all know that the question runs far deeper than that. As noted earlier, what defines the Palestinian question above all is the denial of the national rights of the Palestinian people. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at bottom a conflict of interpenetrated peoples. There are two peoples—Palestinians and Israeli Jews—who lay claim to the same small sliver of land. Under capitalism, the exercise of national self-determination by one side necessarily comes at the expense of the other.

We are opponents of all forms of nationalism. We counterpose to nationalism the program of proletarian internationalism. At the same time, we are for the right of all nations to self-determination, for the complete equality of all nations. As Leninists, our defense of the right to self-determination stems from our internationalism—we seek to get the question of national oppression off the agenda in order to foster the unity of the proletariat of both oppressor and oppressed nations. The problem is that Palestinian national oppression, because it is a question of interpenetrated peoples, cannot be resolved under capitalism. As we explained in “Birth of the Zionist State, Part Two: The 1948 War” (WV No. 45, 24 May 1974):

“When national populations are geographically interpenetrated, as they were in Palestine, an independent nation-state can be created only by their forcible separation (forced population transfers, etc.). Thus the democratic right of self-determination becomes abstract, as it can be exercised only by the stronger national grouping driving out or destroying the weaker one.

“In such cases the only possibility of a democratic solution lies in a social transformation.”

The only program that can win the liberation of the Palestinian masses is one of socialist revolution throughout the Near East. That means a struggle by the working class of the region that combines the fight against imperialism with the struggle against the area’s bourgeois ruling classes, which are beholden to the imperialists. The many peoples of the Near East, including the Palestinians, will never know peace, prosperity or justice until capitalist rule is overthrown. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East will there be a full and equal place for all the peoples of the area—Sunnis, Shias and Christians as well as Kurds, Palestinians and Israeli Jews.

In fact, some 50 percent of the Palestinian population lives outside the Occupied Territories—in Jordan, Lebanon, Israel. That means the national liberation of the Palestinians cannot be achieved without a perspective of proletarian revolution in

these countries as well, including Israel. Israel has a working class, mainly Jewish but also including the Palestinian minority in the country and an increasing number of migrant workers. We fight to win that working class to the understanding that it is in their interests to stand in defense of the Palestinians and to sweep away the Israeli capitalist rulers.

We have no illusion that this will be easy. But that is the only perspective that can lead to the national and social liberation of the Palestinian masses. What is necessary is the forging of revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East to unite the proletariat in struggle against imperialism and against the Zionists, mullahs, sheiks and other capitalist rulers. There is no other way.

The Rise of Zionism

Zionism emerged in the late 19th century as a nationalist political movement in the face of anti-Jewish pogroms and persecutions in Europe. Its clarion call, the establishment of a “Jewish homeland,” represented a secularization of the Jewish faith captured well by the old line: God promised us the land, before he died.

Historically, Zionism had little support among European Jews, many of whom instead looked to the socialist movements of their respective countries for liberation. For example, the number of Jews in Palestine in 1919 was a mere 65,000 (compared to 500,000 Palestinians). The key event bolstering Zionism’s growth was the rise of fascism in Europe and the unparalleled crime of industrial murder, the Holocaust, in which the Nazis exterminated some 12 million people, more than half of them Jews.

Between 1930 and 1948, the number of Jews in Palestine multiplied by nearly four, growing to some 650,000. These were mainly desperate people, escaping the Holocaust and the aftermath of the Second World War. The U.S. and Britain sealed their borders to all but a tiny handful. In this, they had the support of the Zionists, who wanted to keep these borders closed so that the refugees would have no choice but to go to Palestine. This

was captured in a 1938 statement by Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion, who would go on to become Israel’s first prime minister: “If I knew it was possible to save all [Jewish] children of Germany by their transfer to England and only half of them by transferring them to Eretz-Yisrael [i.e., Palestine], I would choose the latter.”

Now, I want to digress here for a moment to mention what I think is an interesting fact. Zionism had even less support among Jews in the Near East. However, after the establishment of the state of Israel, the number of Jews there was vastly expanded by Arab Jews who migrated to the newly established country. In fact, the condition of Jews in the Arab lands was historically markedly better than in Christian Europe. But this changed with the rise of Arab nationalism in the mid 20th century. Coming out of WWII, there was a wave of pogroms and terrorist attacks against synagogues and Jewish public places in almost all Arab countries. It peaked during the 1948-49 Arab-Israeli War. This triggered—with the active help of the Zionists—a mass exodus of Jews from Arab countries, with many of them, especially the poorest ones, going to Israel. Not surprisingly, bitter at having been uprooted from their homes, these Jews and their descendants, known as *Mizrahim*, are typically among the most anti-Arab layers of the Israeli population, even as they suffer discrimination in Israel from the European-derived Ashkenazi elite.

The mass migration of Jews to Palestine served to compact a nation there on the basis of a Jewish ethno-religious identity, regardless of one’s actual religious beliefs, and the revival of a long-dead language, Hebrew, which was key to unifying a population coming from different parts of the world and speaking different languages. The underlying foundation for compacting this nation was the long-established policy that the Zionists called “the conquest of labor” and “the conquest of land.” The latter is clear; it is simply a land grab at the expense of the Palestinians. But I want to spend some time on “conquest of labor” because it is a vital issue that defines the situation to this day.

Zionist settlement policy in Palestine was *not* based on seeking to exploit the labor of the native Palestinian population. Rather, it was based on *displacing* that labor and replacing it with what the Zionists called Hebrew labor. The Zionist leadership understood that to compact a nation it was necessary to forge an industrial and agricultural proletariat drawn from Jews coming into Palestine. This was not easy, as Jewish capitalists in Palestine were often attracted to cheaper Palestinian labor. However, the mainstream of the Zionist movement at the time, the Labor Zionists represented by the likes of Ben-Gurion, understood the centrality of Hebrew labor and fought for it.

For example, the kibbutzim movement was founded in order to, in the words of Ben-Gurion, “guarantee Jewish labor” in the agricultural sector. In 1920, the Histadrut was founded. Today, it is the main labor federation in Israel—and it is thoroughly Zionist and chauvinist. Its initial purpose was not to be a trade union but



Reuters

Jerusalem, 30 March 2015: Border cops detain protester on “Land Day,” which commemorates six Palestinian citizens of Israel killed by security forces in 1976.

to organize, including against Jewish capitalists as necessary, to ensure the predominance of Hebrew labor at the expense of Palestinian farmers and workers. Toward that purpose, it launched many of its own enterprises, such that it became the single biggest employer in pre-Israel Palestine—and, of course, it only hired Jewish workers.

If a key basis of Zionism was the displacement of Palestinian labor, the next obvious step would be the displacement of the Palestinians themselves. Shortly after the First World War, Palestine became a British Mandate, and would continue to be so until May 1948. The Zionist leadership always understood that to establish a state they would need the sponsorship of one imperialist power or another. They thus appealed directly to British imperialism to sponsor a “Jewish homeland.” The British rulers, anti-Jewish to the core, agreed; they saw it as a way to further their divide-and-rule schemes in the Near East at a time when the British Empire was in decline.

In 1947, the newly founded United Nations—an imperialist den of thieves and their victims—took the first step toward actually carving up Palestine and voted to partition the area. Compared to 650,000 Jews, there were over 1.3 million Palestinians, yet the smaller population received 55 percent of the land. Zionist mythology has it that the Zionists were willing to accept this partition and it was the Palestinians who opposed it and the regional Arab regimes that waged war against the newly founded state, which heroically fought off the invaders as it battled for its life. In the process, Palestinians fled of their own accord, or because the Arab armies told them to. It’s a neat and tidy story that has very little resemblance to reality.

Israel Founded on Palestinian Expulsion

The Zionist leadership in Palestine did accept the partition, seeing it as a temporary and necessary compromise. Their policy had long been the forcible expulsion of as many Palestinians as possible. Speaking in December 1947, shortly after the partition plan was announced, Ben-Gurion complained that “there are 40 percent non-Jews in the areas allocated to the Jewish state.” He concluded, “Only a state with at least 80 percent Jews is a viable and stable state.”

The Zionist mythology of a David standing up to the Arab Goliath is just that, mythology. What the Arab bourgeois regimes were interested in was not securing Palestinian rights but slicing up what remained of Palestine among themselves. To that end, King Abdullah I of Transjordan, as Jordan was still called at the time, made a deal with the Ben-Gurion leadership that gave him the West Bank in exchange for his forces staying out of the conflict. This served to take out of the 1948-49 war what was seen as the best organized Arab army at the time. It also served to turn the West Bank into a dumping ground for expelled Palestinians, like southern Lebanon and Gaza.

The Zionist leadership concocted what’s known as Plan D, or Plan Dalet in Hebrew, which systematized the expulsion of Palestinians and the demolition of their villages. By 1949, nearly 800,000 Palestinians, more than half of the native population, had been expelled, 531 villages had been destroyed and eleven urban neighborhoods had been emptied.

Israeli lore has it that the attacks on villages were in response to Palestinian aggression. While there were of course attacks by Palestinians, the majority of the Zionist assaults were not retaliatory but for the purpose of expulsion. As the Zionist leader Ezra Danin would later describe the policy: “Every attack has to end with occupation, destruction and expulsion.” To that end, massacres and other atrocities were carried out. In his book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Israeli writer Ilan Pappé noted that in the May 1948 siege of the old Crusader city of Acre, whose exposed water supply was ten kilometers to the north, “typhoid germs were apparently injected into the water.”



Zionist Haganah militiamen force Palestinians from their homes in Haifa during mass expulsions of 1948.

The process of expulsion began in early December 1947. Between then and May 1948, as British forces either stood by or actively assisted, Zionist forces emptied one Palestinian village after another. By May 15, 1948, when the British withdrew and the actual war began, some 250,000 Palestinians had already been expelled. By the end of the war in March 1949, Ben-Gurion had precisely what he had projected: a state with an 80 percent Jewish majority. Today, if you go to Tel Aviv University, you will see beautiful ancient Roman ruins. But you will barely see any trace of the Palestinian village that sprawling campus was built on.

The Oppression of Palestinian “Citizens” of Israel

Israel boasts that it is the only democracy in the Near East, that it has given citizenship rights to the 20 percent Palestinian minority living in Israel. The very name given to this minority is revealing—“Israeli Arabs,” a name designed to deny their Palestinian identity. These “citizens” were subject to martial law until 1966. Travel permits, curfews, administrative detentions and outright expulsions were a fact of life for them.

At the most basic level, Israel does not define itself as a state of its citizens but rather the “state of the Jewish people.” Hanin Zoabi, a Palestinian member of the Israeli Knesset (parliament), notes that Israel has some 80 laws that either implicitly or explicitly give privileges to Jewish citizens that are unavailable to non-Jewish ones. Most of these laws revolve around access to housing, benefits, welfare, loans, educational curricula, residency rights for non-citizen spouses, denial of the right of Palestinians to live in certain areas, and, perhaps most importantly of all, land ownership, which is all but denied to Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Since the founding of the State of Israel, not a single new Palestinian village or town has been built within Israel to accommodate the Palestinian population, which has grown to more than eleven times its size in 1948. The phenomena of bulldozed homes and surrounded villages exist not only in the West Bank but also in Israel itself. It is routine for whole “illegal” Arab villages to be demolished—and the “unrecognized” ones that have yet to be demolished often do not have access to running water or electricity. Meanwhile, Palestinian villages and towns in Israel are often strategically ringed and squeezed by Jewish towns. Umm al-Fahm in Galilee, for example, is surrounded by several Jewish towns that literally pump their sewage onto its streets.

The Palestinian population in Israel is largely segregated, concentrated in the Galilee and along the northern West Bank border. This is in addition to a few Bedouin villages in the Negev and minorities in cities like Haifa and Tel Aviv. The reason for this segregation should be easy to understand: if Israel wants to expel its Palestinian citizens, it would find most of them concentrated in those areas. When then Prime Minister Ehud Barak made his offer of a “Palestinian state” in 2000 to Yasir Arafat, it included not only Gaza

and disjointed Palestinian bantustans in the West Bank. Barak also mooted giving swaths of the Galilee to Arafat in exchange for land confiscated in the West Bank by settlers. The Palestinian citizens of Israel who live there would’ve lost their citizenship, becoming “citizens” of this new, impoverished “Palestinian state.” A poll released in early March found that 48 percent of Israeli Jews support the “transfer” (i.e., expulsion) of Palestinian citizens from Israel.

The unshakable position of the Israeli ruling class is that an overwhelming Jewish majority must be maintained at any cost. Indeed, any casual perusal of Israeli political literature today would bring up that famous euphemism, “the demographics problem,” which simply means that Palestinians (especially in Israel) are reproducing at a far greater rate than Israeli Jews. One partial exception is the ultra-religious fanatics of the Haredim (who are known for attacking eight-year-old Jewish girls for not dressing modestly). They number around 700,000, or nearly 12 percent of Israel’s Jewish population, and they’re the fastest growing population in Israel outside of Palestinians. Most of the men do not work (their vocation is to study the Torah), but the government fosters the growth of the Haredim because of their high birth rate. Yes, Israeli politicians stay up at night worrying about “demographics.”

Palestinian Nationalism: Dead End

Throughout their long history of oppression, the Palestinians have time and again been betrayed by their petty-bourgeois nationalist misleaders. Rejecting a Marxist working-class axis, Palestinian nationalists, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), have instead sought to appeal to one imperialist force or another to act on behalf of the Palestinians, from the French and British imperialists, who carved up the Near East in the first place, to the U.S., which backs Israel to the hilt, or to the UN, which partitioned Palestine. Likewise, they have sought support from the surrounding bourgeois Arab regimes—venal regional powers that are no less enemies of Palestinian national aspirations than are Israel’s rulers.

The 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state that could act as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism, was a world-historic defeat for the working class internationally that has served to further deepen the oppression of the Palestinian masses. The collapse of the USSR deprived the late Arafat’s PLO of crucial diplomatic and financial support, paving the way for the 1993 U.S.-sponsored Oslo “peace” accords. These accords established the Palestinian Authority (PA) as Israel’s police auxiliaries in the Occupied Territories.

At the time, we wrote that this deal “does not offer even the most deformed expression of self-determination” and warned that it “would place the PLO’s seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses” (“Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto,” WV No.

583, 10 September 1993). If anything, this correct assessment was understated. Oslo and subsequent “peace” agreements have brought nothing but disaster to the Palestinians. It was starting with Oslo that Israel moved to completely cut off Palestinian laborers in the Occupied Territories from the Israeli economy. The settlement population has mushroomed more than three-fold since 1993. Freedom of movement—within the Occupied Territories, between Gaza and the West Bank and to and from Israel—was qualitatively curtailed.

It was in the years after Oslo that Israel pursued its policy of *hafrada*, a Hebrew term that means separation (or, as the Afrikaners called it, apartheid), with the aim being complete segregation of Israelis from Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Thus, in the early 2000s, Israel built its infamous wall, which has effectively annexed nearly 10 percent of the West Bank—this is in addition to East Jerusalem, which Israel officially annexed after seizing it in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Under the guise of “peace,” the Zionist rulers have created a whole generation of Israelis who have never encountered a Palestinian from the Occupied Territories and a whole generation of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who only encounter Israelis as soldiers, border police and fascistic settlers.

Petty-bourgeois Arab nationalism has shown itself to be the bankrupt and impotent dead end that it always was. The secular-nationalist PLO has delivered the Palestinians nothing but defeat and further immiseration, paving the way for reactionary Islamic groups like Hamas to pose as the only fighters against the occupation. These fundamentalist outfits



Bill Clinton with Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin (left) and PLO leader Yasir Arafat at signing of 1993 Oslo “peace” accords establishing Palestinian-controlled ghettos in Gaza and West Bank.

are vile anti-Jewish and anti-Christian religious bigots who seek to enslave women and extirpate any manifestations of social progress. They preach—and, in the case of Hamas-controlled Gaza, enforce—the social segregation of women, the wearing of the *hijab* (Islamic headscarf) and anti-woman *sharia* law.

BDS: No Answer

The last several years have seen the rise and growth of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS). We have many fundamental political differences with BDS, but before getting into them, I want to make clear that we defend BDS activists against the campaigns of smears and slanders that they have faced. Equating criticism of Israel with anti-Jewish bigotry is the leading tactic of a well-oiled Zionist propaganda machine, whose purpose is to suppress any expression of support to the Palestinians. We vigorously oppose all attempts, including those by campus administrators, to limit BDS supporters’ freedom to express their views.

Having made that clear, I want to speak to our criticisms. BDS looks to employ moral suasion to pressure campus administrations and American corporations to ditch Israel and put their money in presumably more ethical investments. Whatever the intentions of its committed young

continued on page 10

SF State...

(continued from page 4)

“sensitivity” clothing is still a wolf. That is why we say: *Cops Off Campus!*

Marxists raise the call: *Abolish the Administration!* The universities should be run by the students, teachers and workers who study and work there. But this democratic demand cannot in itself address the educational system’s glaring inequalities. We fight for open admissions and no tuition with a state-paid living stipend to make college accessible to poor and working-class students. The goal must be free, quality and integrated education for all. These demands inevitably conflict with the interests of the racist ruling class. The fight for such demands must be linked to the one force in this society that uniquely has the social power to win them—the multiracial working class.

Most students today have likely never seen a militant strike, given the decimation of the unions resulting from decades of sustained capitalist onslaught and the pro-capitalist union misleaders’ retreat before it. Nevertheless, the entire edifice of capitalism rests on the exploitation of the collective labor of the workers, who therefore have the power to shut down the flow of profits. As society’s collective producer, the working class alone has the power and the material interest as a class to rebuild the economy based on production for social need, which is absolutely necessary if all forms of inequality are to be done away with. This requires that workers seize the means of production from the bourgeoisie and establish a workers state.

Black Oppression and American Capitalism

Underlying the fight to defend Ethnic Studies is the fight against this country’s pervasive racism. But anti-racist campus protests have been hobbled by the widespread misconception that racist oppression stems from racist ideas. To the contrary, racism is materially rooted in American capitalism, which from its



Underwood

inception has been built upon the brutal racial oppression of black people. While slavery was abolished by the victory of the North in the Civil War, the Northern bourgeoisie eventually made peace with the white Southern propertied classes. Blacks in the South were forced into servitude as sharecroppers and tenant-farmers, subjected to Jim Crow and KKK lynch terror. Blacks who fled to the North were integrated into the workforce at the bottom, last hired, first fired, while forcibly segregated into deteriorating inner-city ghettos. Jim Crow segregation laws were abolished as a result of the civil rights movement. But the liberal program of the movement’s leadership, who looked to the capitalist government for redress, did not and could not address the reality that the racist cop terror, joblessness and poverty endured by blacks nationwide are rooted in the foundation of American capitalism. Just as it took the Civil War to destroy slavery, it will take a third, socialist, American revolution to achieve black liberation. We say: *Finish the Civil War!*

The bourgeoisie wields racial differences to divide and rule the working class. Anti-black racism is the American bourgeoisie’s ideological poison of choice, used to obscure the fundamental class



Stephen Shames

divide between workers and their exploiters. The myth of “white skin privilege” holds that all whites, including workers, benefit from racism. To the contrary—the oppression of black people hurts white workers as well. The proletariat as a whole cannot liberate itself unless it champions black equality and the interests of all the oppressed. In order to do so, workers must organize politically in opposition to all the agencies of their class enemy. They cannot do so while bound by the union misleaders’ alliance with the Democratic Party. This points to the need to fight for a class-struggle leadership of the unions as an essential part of forging a revolutionary workers party.

The Third World nationalists and New Left radicals that led the ’68-69 SF State strike believed that each sector of the oppressed should organize independently, then ally with each other as the occasion demanded. This perspective was based on the dismissal of the working class as the decisive force for revolutionary change. Its end result therefore could never be a revolutionary transformation of society, but rather fragmentary struggles that, lacking the social power of the working class, are inevitably reduced to pressuring a section of the ruling class for reforms within the

framework of capitalism. Sectoralism is a reincarnation, in another form, of the constituency politics of the Democratic Party, which ends up chaining the oppressed to their oppressors. Today this perspective has devolved into the identity politics pervasive among anti-racist campus activists.

The revolutionary alternative was proven in practice by the 1917 Russian October Revolution. Acting as a champion of all those oppressed in the tsarist “prison house of peoples,” the Bolsheviks were able to unite the working class, men and women, across national and ethnic lines in a successful struggle for power.

We communists seek to link the fight for reforms to the struggle for socialist revolution, which alone will clear the way for the abolition of all forms of oppression and exploitation. Freeing the creative power of social labor from the fetters of class society will make it possible to bring about a communist society based on material abundance where no one’s development will be limited by poverty, class, race or sex. To carry out such a revolution requires the forging of a multiracial revolutionary workers party. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), dedicates itself to this task. Join us! ■

Palestinians...

(continued from page 9)

activists, the strategy of BDS is to appeal to the very same imperialist forces that are the historic occupiers, colonialists and oppressors of the peoples of the Near East, including the Palestinians. The www.bdsmovement.net website makes clear that BDS seeks to “encourage companies to use their economic influence to pressure Israel to end its systematic denial of Palestinian rights” and that BDS “aims to pressure governments and international organisations to impose sanctions and a military embargo on Israel.”

The argument is simple: the more that BDS popularizes the Palestinian cause and makes it mainstream, say, among Americans, the more Americans can put pressure on the U.S. government, which would then pressure Israel. This argument buys into the lie of American “democracy,” and has as its base the false notion that U.S. foreign policy is dictated by “the people.” Even admirable Israeli historians like Ilan Pappé, who has devoted himself to exposing Zionist crimes committed against the Palestinian masses, promote this myth.

To seek to pressure the imperialists to make more “socially responsible” or “ethical” investments is to build the dangerous illusion that they are somehow better than Israel’s rulers. It is no accident that advocates of boycotting the goods of “immoral” regimes like Israel do not propose boycotting U.S. goods—they believe that bourgeois democracies like the U.S. can be pressured to be a force for good in the world. But the economic and military force of the U.S. and the other imperialists is what keeps the whole world capitalist system in power.

The U.S. supports Israel because Israel has served and continues to serve U.S. imperialism’s interests in the region.

We would support time-limited trade-union actions against the Israeli state, such as in response to a particular atrocity. But we are opposed to standing economic boycotts, divestment and sanctions. If such campaigns are successful, they would hurt the Jewish, Arab and immigrant working class, weakening its power, which must be mobilized to smash the Zionist state from within through socialist revolution.

As Marxists in the U.S., our starting point is opposition to our “own” ruling class. We demand the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. and other imperialist forces from the Near East. The same ruling class that wreaks death and destruction abroad gorges itself on profits while the workers it exploits have their jobs slashed and their health and pension benefits torn up, unleashes its cops to kill black youth on the streets and incarcerates over two million people in its prison dungeons. Our aim is the forging of a revolutionary workers party to win the multiracial American working class to the struggle for socialist revolution to destroy the U.S. imperialist beast from within.

The South African Analogy

Supporters of the BDS campaign draw parallels between their struggle against “Israeli apartheid” and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Leaving aside (for the moment) that the end of legal apartheid did not end the oppression of South Africa’s black masses, what the BDS campaign promotes is the liberal fiction that divestment ended apartheid in South Africa. They bury the mass social struggles of the black and other non-

white toilers that helped bring an end to direct white-supremacist rule in South Africa. Those struggles were centered on the powerful, mainly black working class. Internationally, the key factor was the collapse of the USSR, which for decades had supported the African National Congress (ANC) materially and diplomatically. As the Moscow Stalinist regime disintegrated, ending the supposed “Communist threat,” South Africa’s capitalist rulers came to terms with Nelson Mandela and the ANC.

Furthermore, in pursuit of their argument, the BDS movement is forced to grossly *prettify* the reality of South Africa today. Nearly 25 years after the end of apartheid, with its legally enforced racial segregation, the economic and social foundation of white supremacy, based on superexploitation of overwhelmingly black labor, remains firmly in place. South Africa is today ruled by the same white capitalist class, with an added sprinkling of a few black faces, and the black masses continue to suffer horrific poverty under neo-apartheid. They have not won liberation and will not win it without working-class revolution.

The analogy is also false at another, in some ways deeper level. The deal that brought the ANC to power as the ruling party in South Africa cannot be replicated in Israel. South African capitalism, both under apartheid and since, is rooted in the brutal *exploitation* of black labor in the mines and factories. The white capitalists *need* the black workers, and thanks to its centrality to social production, the black proletariat has tremendous social power. In contrast, Israel, as already noted, is based on reliance on Jewish labor. It used to be that Palestinians in the Occupied Territories were used for the lowest paid unskilled

work. But beginning in the 1990s, the Israeli ruling class replaced them with migrant workers from Asia, Africa and East Europe, who are themselves deeply exploited and oppressed. This underlines that Palestinian national and social liberation can only come through common class struggle against both the Israeli and regional Arab ruling classes.

The Need for a Socialist Perspective

If you follow the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, you’ll often hear phrases like “two-state” solution or “one-state” solution. The two-state solution, initially formulated by the PLO in 1974, amounts to the creation of a Palestinian “state” along some variant of the 1967 borders, consisting of Gaza and the West Bank. This would be, at best, a very partial and deformed expression of Palestinian self-determination. It would be a ghetto under the stranglehold of Israel and the surrounding Arab regimes, a place where neighboring states could dump their unwanted Palestinian populations.

The one-state solution, originally postulated by the PLO in 1969, calls for the creation of a “secular, democratic” state in Mandatory Palestine, which would supposedly ensure rights to both Palestinians and Jews. Many Palestinian rights activists today are pushing this position, arguing, not without some justice, that increasing Israeli intrusions into the West Bank, especially through growing settlements, have made it virtually impossible to envision even a Palestinian statelet along the lines of the 1967 borders.

But this “secular, democratic” Palestine would, by definition, exclude the millions of Palestinians living in Jordan, which is a majority-Palestinian country.

BDS...

(continued from page 12)

General Union of Palestine Students with supporting the “murder of Jews” after the group marked the sixth anniversary of a campus mural honoring the late Palestinian rights activist and scholar Edward Said.

Democratic Party presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders have joined the witchhunting chorus. In her speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Clinton accused pro-Palestinian students and faculty of “bullying” Jewish students and vowed to make “countering BDS a priority.” Echoing this sentiment, if somewhat less vigorously, Sanders argued that “there is some level of anti-Semitism” involved in the BDS movement.

However much we disagree with the liberal strategy of BDS, the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Clubs vigorously oppose the campaign of slander and repression against BDS and other fighters for Palestinian rights. Equating anti-Zionism with anti-Jewish bigotry is aimed at silencing all opponents of the bloody crimes of the Israeli state, including a growing number of Jewish students and activists who support BDS. It also serves to bury actual instances of anti-Jewish hatred under a mountain of lies. Moreover, in the supercharged climate of the imperialists’ “war on terror,” to be charged as “allies” of terrorism is to be branded as people whom the capitalist state can and should eliminate. Hands off BDS supporters! Defend the Palestinians!

Mobilize for International Labor Solidarity!

Unlike the BDS movement, which looks to capitalist corporations and governments to implement trade boycotts and sanctions to pressure Israel, our starting point is the need for international *working-class solidarity* in defense of the Palestinians. We are for time-delimited labor boycotts to protest particular atrocities—for example, workers refusing to handle Israeli cargo during the 2014 bombardment of Gaza. We are also for a standing labor boycott of all military shipments to Israel, which would be a real blow against the Zionist butchers and, even more crucially, their bloody U.S. imperialist patrons. The purpose of these demands is to strengthen the fighting power and class-consciousness of workers in the U.S. in solidarity with the exploited and oppressed of the world.

A central obstacle in the way is the trade-union bureaucracy, which subordinates the workers’ interests to the prof-

itability of American capitalism and the strategic interests of U.S. imperialism abroad. Last year, the International Executive Board of the United Auto Workers (UAW) joined in denouncing BDS as anti-Jewish. Overturning a pro-BDS resolution passed by UAW Local 2865, representing 14,000 teaching assistants and student workers employed by the University of California, the UAW misleaders grotesquely accused the resolution of “biased targeting of Israeli/Jewish members.” In addition, keeping to their cowardly prostration before the bosses’ laws, the auto union bureaucrats argued that the resolution would interfere with “the flow of commerce” and violate the “no strike” clause in the union’s contract.

In a statement opposing the UAW International’s nullification of the resolution, Local 2865’s BDS caucus pointed out that the bureaucracy’s argument “is clearly based on the interests of the employers rather than those of workers.” True enough. The class-collaborationist policies of the sellouts sitting on top of the unions are based on the lie that the workers have common interests with their exploiters. It is ironic, to say the least, that the UAW International bureaucracy nullified the BDS resolution in the service of the very same corporations and capitalist government that BDS seeks to pressure.

An open letter initiated by Labor for Palestine calling on the UAW officials to “Respect Union Democracy, Solidarity and the BDS Picket Line” argues that the nullification of the BDS motion contradicts the union leadership’s previous support for civil rights movement boycotts and the South Africa divestment campaign. Like the UAW bureaucracy, the pro-Democratic Party civil rights leadership around Martin Luther King was looking to contain more militant struggle in the confines of bourgeois electoralism. The black Democrats who spearheaded the anti-apartheid divestment movement were part of a broader effort by corporations and governments to save South African capitalism when it was increasingly clear that the days of white-supremacist rule were numbered. In both cases, the common denominator behind the UAW’s support was the Democratic Party. It is precisely the union leadership’s ties to the Democratic Party, which historically has been even more pro-Zionist than the Republicans, that makes them opponents of even the tepid BDS campaign.

The Labor for Palestine statement notes that the pro-Zionist policies of the UAW bureaucrats were challenged by wildcat strikes and other protests in the past. Following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Arab auto workers in Detroit mobilized, includ-

ing through strike action, in opposition to the purchase of Israeli war bonds by the UAW Local 600 leadership and against then-UAW president Leonard Woodcock accepting the “Humanitarian of the Year” award from the Zionists of B’nai B’rith. The Spartacist League and our youth organization at the time, the Revolutionary Communist Youth, participated in a protest against the Woodcock award with banners and signs demanding: “End Discrimination Against Arab Workers!” “Oust the Bureaucrats—Build a Workers Party!”



WV Photo

Spartacists at Chicago demonstration against Israeli assault on Gaza, July 2014.

Forward to a Workers Government!” and “No Support to Arab Regimes, Butchers of the Palestinian Resistance!”

In opposition to the prevailing politics of Arab nationalism, our leaflet called for proletarian revolutionary struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East. We argued: “Only the organized and conscious working class, Arab and Hebrew alike, can overcome the endless cycle of war, oppression and revenge, issuing from the domination of competing nationalisms, and provide a truly democratic solution to the national conflict” (“Arab Workers Shut Down Dodge Main,” WV No. 34, 7 December 1973).

ISO Rides BDS Bandwagon

In a 17 March article titled “Building BDS and the Union at NYU” (socialist-worker.org), the International Socialist Organization (ISO) promoted the cam-

paign by UAW-organized graduate student workers at NYU to pass a resolution endorsing BDS. Arguing that this is crucial “to revitalize a union and the labor movement as a whole,” the article enthused, “With their potential social and economic weight, labor unions particularly can make a contribution to the global BDS movement.” Far from having anything to do with mobilizing the social power of labor, the ISO urges the working class to line up behind a leadership that accepts the framework of capitalist rule, whether that be BDS or the trade-union bureaucracy. This serves to offer no alternative for workers and the oppressed other than to eke out an existence under the boot of the bourgeoisie.

In its article, the ISO also called to support an academic boycott of Israeli institutions, which was adopted by the NYU graduate students union by a narrow margin. We oppose such boycotts, which smear the entire Israeli population with the crimes of its ruling class. Moreover, the demand to boycott Israeli universities appeals to the supposed higher morality of academic institutions located in the center of the world imperialist order. Universities in the U.S. are no less tied to the American capitalist state and its far more gruesome crimes than Israeli universities are to the Zionist state. The multiple attempts to shut down pro-Palestinian rights activists on the campuses should serve to underscore that fact.

As revolutionary Marxists, we fight to break the working class from all illusions in the “good will” or “democracy” of U.S. imperialist rule. The American capitalist state—with the cops, courts, prisons and military at its core—represents and defends the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Just as it is the enemy of black people, immigrants and the working class here at home, the U.S. ruling class is the enemy of the Palestinians and all the oppressed abroad.

International labor solidarity is key to defending the struggles of the toiling masses of the world against their brutal subjugation by the imperialists and their local allies. Not only would such solidarity by U.S. trade unionists strengthen the hand of workers internationally against their capitalist exploiters, it would also advance the class struggle in this country. This perspective means fighting for a new leadership of the unions—one rooted in a program of proletarian internationalist struggle, not pandering to the class enemy, as the ISO does in promoting BDS. The Spartacist League and the Spartacus Youth Clubs are committed to defending the Palestinians as part of the fight to build an internationalist, multiracial, revolutionary workers party. Only such a party can lead a struggle for the socialist liberation of humanity. ■

More fundamentally, it is a pipe dream that is premised on appealing to the imperialists and other bourgeois forces to make Israel stop being Israel. Politically, it envisions reversing the terms of oppression by denying that Israeli Jews constitute a nation with the right to self-determination. This was made clear by BDS leader Haidar Eid:

“A binational state by definition is a state made up of two nations. These two nations are historically entitled to the land. But Jews do not constitute a nation. Israeli Jews constitute a settler-colonialist community, not unlike the whites of South Africa or the French in Algeria. Settler colonists are not entitled to self-determination.”

—socialistworker.org,
16 December 2013

We reject the doctrine that an oppressor nation forfeits its right to self-determination. As we explained in “The Birth of the Zionist State”:

“Out of the destruction of European Jewry by Hitler (without whose aid the Zionists would have gone the way of the Shakers and other utopian sects) and at the expense of the Palestinian Arabs, a settler colony was transformed into a nation.

“This Hebrew nation came into existence through force and violence, through the suppression, forced expulsion and genocide of other peoples. Communists must oppose this brutal national oppression. Yet once this historical fact is accomplished, we must certainly recognize that nation’s right to self-determination,

unless we prefer the alternative, namely national genocide.”

If the struggle for Palestinian national justice does not also recognize the right of this Hebrew nation to self-determination, it will only drive the Israeli Jewish proletariat further into the arms of its rulers, ensuring the continued oppression of the Palestinians.

Looked at narrowly through the prism of that tiny piece of land called Israel/Palestine, the situation of the Palestinians is intractable. It is only the working class of Israel that has the capacity to destroy the Zionist citadel from within through socialist revolution. Yet Israeli society has moved sharply to the right in recent decades and the stranglehold of Zionism on the Jewish working class has only tightened. To break the Jewish proletariat from its allegiance to Zionism will likely take a cataclysmic event, such as the conquest of power by the working class in one of the other countries of the region, which would extend a hand of proletarian internationalism to the Israeli working class. The key lies in forging revolutionary, internationalist working-class parties throughout the region.

Israel is not a seamless mass of predatory colonialists. It is a *class-divided* society, with a capitalist ruling class and an exploited proletariat. What is necessary is to wage a difficult struggle to win that working class to the conscious-

ness that the Zionist rulers are its class enemy, that its liberation lies in the fight for socialist revolution. The outcome of such revolutionary upheaval could be a binational workers republic, or it could be two or more states representing the self-determination rights of both the Palestinians and the Israelis.

If the Jewish working class is to fight for its own liberation from capitalist exploitation, it must champion the national rights of the Palestinians. In turn, the Arab work-

ers will not be won to a perspective of proletarian revolution if they are not broken from nationalism, religious fundamentalism and anti-Jewish bigotry. And that will not happen unless the Arab proletariat upholds the right of Israeli Jews—as well as the Kurds and other peoples—to a national existence. In short, every other program, including that of BDS, rejects the only *realistic* program for social and national liberation in the region: a socialist federation of the Near East. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$_____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

1089

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

WORKERS VANGUARD

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

Defend the Palestinian People!

With the backing of its paymaster in Washington, Israel continues to unleash terror against the Palestinian people. Nearly 200 Palestinians have been killed since last October, the majority shot down by Israeli occupation forces in the West Bank. The destruction of Palestinian homes and buildings by Israeli authorities has displaced more Palestinians since the start of this year than in all of 2015. On April 7 alone, 54 structures were demolished in nine Palestinian communities across the West Bank, displacing 124 people, including 60 children. Meanwhile, almost two years after the last bloody offensive against Gaza by the Zionist state, life in Gaza remains a living hell.

Amid the ongoing anti-Palestinian terror, those contending for U.S. commander-in-chief are all staking their claims for who has the strongest bond with Israel. Democratic front-runner and all-purpose hawk Hillary Clinton vows to strengthen the Israeli military and denounces the Palestinian leadership for “celebrating terrorism.” While Bernie Sanders has provoked ire from U.S. and Israeli politicians for the (unremarkable) observation that Israel’s use of force during the 2014 carpet bombing of Gaza was “disproportionate,” he himself supported that war at the time.

Sanders appears to strike a more “balanced” approach on the Israel-Palestine conflict, including with his recent calls to end the occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza. In reality, Sanders is merely playing to his liberal, youthful



Israeli soldiers terrorize Palestinians in West Bank village of Duma, near Nablus, March 2016. Reuters

supporters, many of whom are sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians. But he knows the rules of this game. Just hours before the April 14 New York City Democratic debate, the Sanders campaign suspended its newly hired Jewish Outreach Coordinator, liberal Zionist Simone Zimmerman, because of a year-old Facebook post that aptly condemned Israeli

prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu for having “sanctioned the murder of over 2,000 people.” Indeed, during the debate Sanders stressed that he is “100 percent pro-Israel”—a state whose very existence is premised on the expulsion and dispossession of the Palestinian masses.

We reprint below a forum, edited for publication, by Spartacist League/U.S.

Central Committee member Alan Wilde at City College of New York on March 15.

* * *

To understand the Near East, including the hell that so much of it has become today, requires at least a basic understanding of the long and bloody history of colonialism and imperialism in the region. The imperialist powers, beginning in particular with France and Britain and for decades now the U.S., have bled the region dry. They have played on every religious and ethnic division in the Near East, exacerbating these conflicts. Above all, imperialism has served to arrest and retard the Near East’s economic development and with that its social development, fomenting the growth of nearly every form of reaction throughout the area.

Today, U.S. imperialism, to defend its strategic interests in the oil-rich Near East, each year pumps over \$3 billion in military aid to Israel and shells out another \$1.3 billion for Egypt’s military, while relying as well on the despotic Saudi monarchy. As part of our opposition to U.S. imperialism, we oppose U.S.

aid to Israel and Egypt.

For this talk, I want to focus on Israel, the U.S.’s central ally in the region, and start with our understanding of and programmatic conclusions for the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. To begin with, we have a side, and it’s with the long-suffering and dispossessed Palestinian masses. We

continued on page 8

Down With Zionist Witchhunt Against BDS Activists!

In mid April, University of California campuses at Berkeley, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles were plastered with posters attacking the growing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement as a “ Hamas-inspired genocidal campaign to destroy Israel.” Signed with the hashtag #StopTheJewHatredOnCampus and linked to the website of rabid Zionist David Horowitz, the posters ominously named students and faculty involved in pro-Palestinian activism as “terrorist” allies. This smear job came barely a month after the UC Board of Regents passed a resolution condemning “anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism.” While toned down from the Regents’ original proposal, which explicitly equated any opposition to Zionism with anti-Jewish bigotry, the resolution comes in the context of an onslaught, heavily orchestrated by the Israeli government, against the BDS movement in the U.S. and internationally.

An *Intercept* article (16 February) titled “Greatest Threat to Free Speech in the West: Criminalizing Activism Against Israeli Occupation,” co-



Protest by Students for Justice in Palestine at Columbia University, February 2016. Jared Orellana/Columbia Spectator

authored by Glenn Greenwald, details the backlash. In France, 12 activists were arrested and prosecuted for “wear-

ing shirts emblazoned with the words ‘Long live Palestine, boycott Israel’” and for handing out “fliers that said

“buying Israeli products means legitimizing crimes in Gaza.” In Britain, the government has outlawed participation in the boycott of trade benefiting Israeli settlements. In the U.S., at least 21 state legislatures have taken up resolutions aimed against BDS. Greenwald noted that under already existing laws “American companies have been *fin*ed for actions deemed supportive of boycotts aimed at Israel.”

As detailed in a Palestine Legal report titled “The Palestine Exception to Free Speech,” repression has been particularly intense on American college campuses. From New York University to the University of New Mexico, supporters of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) have been assaulted, suspended, fined and accused of terrorism and anti-Semitism. Thirty-five New York state legislators have called to ban SJP at the City University of New York, while the Columbia University SJP received bomb threats against one of its events. At San Francisco State University, the Zionist group AMCHA Initiative charged the

continued on page 11