

Down With Anti-Muslim Ban!



Reuters

January 29:
Demonstrators
at Philadelphia
International Airport
protest Trump's
anti-Muslim ban.

Trump Escalates Obama's War on Immigrants

Tens of thousands of people across the country have rallied at airports and on the streets to protest Donald Trump's anti-Muslim ban of immigrants and refugees. The president's executive order barring citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Somalia and Yemen from entering the U.S. for 90 days, and banning Syrian refugees indefinitely, came on the heels of his order to begin building a wall along the border with Mexico and hiring 15,000 more border guards and immigration cops. There is indeed plenty to fear and to protest as Trump and his advisers, most prominently the poison pen of "white nationalist" reaction, Steve Bannon, roll out their viciously racist agenda. But beware the Democratic Party, which has been the central force organizing the

No Deportations! For Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

protests, as its politicians now shed crocodile tears!

Trump is emboldening the forces of anti-immigrant terror, from the border police to racist vigilantes and outright fascists. But his policies are simply a more grotesque expression—unvarnished by

pious "humanitarian" rhetoric—of those of his Democratic Party predecessors, including Barack Obama. A wall with Mexico? There already are 700 miles of wall, begun under Bill Clinton's administration. In his 2013 State of the Union address, Obama boasted of "putting more

boots on the Southern border than any time in our history" by adding 20,000 more border police. While Obama claims he "fundamentally disagrees" with Trump's ban, his administration deported more people than any other in U.S. history. Others languish in detention center hellholes. Notably, the Democratic "grassroots" organizations that are mobilizing thousands against Trump's ban were not so motivated to protest Obama's war on immigrants.

The countries targeted by Trump's Muslim ban include those named in the Obama administration's 2015 Terrorist Travel Prevention Act, which passed Congress with barely a burp of protest. Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia and Yemen are among the

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Bye-Bye to the Mendacity of Hope

The following contribution, edited for publication, was submitted to Workers Vanguard by Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander.

The charred remains of hopes for equality and freedom—especially among black people—are part of the real legacy of the Barack Obama presidency. Millions put their faith in this Wall Street Democrat. His skin color was supposed to translate into some relief after decade upon decade of assaults on working people and the poorest strata of society by both the Democrats and Republicans. Millions thought they would get some

respite from the increasingly unbearable oppression.

But it is Obama's ruling-class backers, such as the thieving bankers on Wall Street, that could truly say to him as he left office: "Thank you, thank you, thank you. You have been our faithful and able servant. You kept your promise of keeping the pitchforks away from our citadels of power." And no, ex-president Obama wasn't "held hostage by Republicans" when he forked out 16 trillion dollars to the parasitic bankers during the financial crisis. He did it because of his loyalty to capitalism.

Obama was a faithful and dependable servant of U.S. imperialism. He served the interests of his *class*—the bourgeoisie, the moneybags, the exploiters. He also totally screwed workers and the poor.

Obama faded from the picture with

his farewell tour. After he recently spoke in Chicago, the city where he first seriously began climbing the greasy pole of bourgeois politics, some shared their thoughts with the press about what his presidency meant to them. The disappointment in American imperialism's first black president was unmistakable.

For some, it was hard to muster much enthusiasm for his "legacy," as evidenced by the remarks of a couple of black people interviewed. When asked about what Obama meant to them, one said: "I guess I feel sad," and another: "He should be embarrassed that he came in as president and the problems have actually worsened."

You can be sure that isn't half of it.

The mendacity of hope—the sheer effrontery of having declared in 2007 that black people were 90 percent free

(like being partially pregnant) and now boasting about how much progress has been made—is exposed by severe economic, racial and sexual oppression in the country. In his speech Obama cried out: "Yes we did!" But militant workers and youth, men and women, will say: *No you didn't!*

A poignant example of the horrible social misery can be seen in the lack of affordable housing. Consider, for example, the devastation of poor people, largely black and female, in Washington, D.C. A recent *New York Times* article (1 January) noted that in Southeast Washington, "The city and its suburbs accumulate staggering wealth while its poorest residents grow poorer." And, "In December, a devastating survey of 32 big cities prepared by the United States

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Mendacity...

(continued from page 1)

Conference of Mayors showed Washington with the highest rate of homelessness.”

Given the complete absence of militant leadership for workers and oppressed minorities, it’s no wonder that millions today feel a deep sense of hopelessness, powerlessness and invisibility. The “N” word is hurled at black people with increased brazenness. With the possible connivance of the judge and his lawyer, Dylann Roof, the fascist scum who murdered nine black churchgoers in Charleston, used his court appearances as a platform to spew his racist filth while some of the victims’ relatives, friends and supporters looked on, their pain evident.

A class-struggle leadership of labor would have mobilized tens of thousands in Charleston and around the country and fought for labor action on the job to send a strong message to the race haters. Today, these fascists have black people, Jews, immigrants and women in their cross-hairs. We of the Spartacist League have shown the way in the past: these vermin can be checked by powerful labor-centered mobilizations, relying on labor’s power and drawing behind it all the oppressed. It’s imperative that today’s anti-racist fighters study and assimilate this crucial history because it is a life-and-death matter.

Obama has had “amazing” success with the drone warfare program that he inherited from the Bush administration and the surveillance programs that he vastly expanded. Along with increased repression, his leg-



In his first run for president, Barack Obama promised “change” (left). In office he oversaw racist cop terror and poverty at home, imperialist war abroad. Cops attack anti-police brutality protester in New York City, November 2014 (right).



acy is tied to maintaining Guantánamo. Obama started using drone strikes the third day after he got into office. The carnage of his imperialist wars has been extensive. Obama mendaciously downplayed the number of civilians killed by his high-tech assassinations. The journalist John Pilger provided a useful summary (johnpilger.com, 17 January): “According to a Council on Foreign Relations Survey, in 2016 alone Obama dropped 26,171 bombs. That is 72 bombs every day. He bombed the poorest people on earth, in Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan.” He added: “A leading Republican senator, Lindsey Graham,

estimated, approvingly, that Obama’s drones killed 4,700 people.” Several black supporters and critics of Obama’s “legacy”—from Michael Eric Dyson to Ta-Nehisi Coates, Van Jones and other petty-bourgeois, self-appointed Democratic Party spokesmen—will walk to the ends of the earth to hold the coat of their “brother.” The “radical” preacher and professor Cornel West, on the other hand, has attacked Obama with increasing vehemence, while aligning himself with the capitalist politician Bernie Sanders and his so-called “political revolution.”

Racist cop terror and the killing of black men, women and children have defined the Obama era. The heterogeneous Black Lives Matter movement clings to the petty-bourgeois perspective of seeking to pressure the Democrats and the capitalist state on a local level. Intelligent anti-racist liberals have gone off the deep end, with historian Eric Foner going so far as to draw a straight line from Reconstruction to the Obama presidency.

Glen Ford and his Black Agenda Report (B.A.R.) group are more critical of the Democrats and Obama. But they explain the oppressed black masses’ fervent embrace of Obama by claiming that “Black America drank deeply from the intoxicating cup” of “ObamaL’aid” (blackagenda.com, 18 January). This view is fundamentally false and blames black people for the oppression they endured under Obama. This grows out of B.A.R.’s rejection of a Marxist analysis and class-struggle program for black liberation. In not understanding the material basis of black oppression—a legacy of slavery that is rooted in the American capitalist profit system—Glen Ford embraces another bourgeois party, the Greens.

For the oppressed black masses, illusions in Obama’s presidency were bound up with a trans-class racial solidarity growing out of intensifying racial oppression and buttressed by a strong belief in American capitalist “democracy.” This is not the first time that this has happened.

A few decades ago, illusions that a “great” black (male) leader would lead the way out of this racist hell was shown in the support (still going strong) to the liberal, pro-Democratic Party pacifist Martin Luther King Jr. It’s now a well-known and documented fact that King collaborated with the Justice Department during the civil rights era, while the Feds were wiretapping and spreading false rumors about him.

The treachery of the ex-civil rights petty-bourgeois, liberal establishment runs right up to the present. Former civil rights activist John Lewis, an ex-SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) activist and longtime Democrat, was recently in the news calling for a boycott of Donald Trump’s inauguration. Trump basically told him to shut up (“all talk...no action”), and Lewis and his Democratic Party defenders were off and running to show that the now-deflated Democrats are on their game. Lewis’s call for a boycott was an empty stunt, truly a distilled expression of how the capitalist Democrats have nothing to offer the oppressed—never have and never will.

We Marxists remember and seek to

instill in the consciousness of black people and anti-racist fighters the real history of why the civil rights movement was derailed. We tell the truth about the betrayals of such “luminaries” as Lewis. He contributed, in his own way, to politically disarming the masses at a critical time when he acquiesced to the organizers of the 1963 March on Washington and dropped from his speech any denunciation of the Democrats or the Republicans.

The struggle for workers revolution and black liberation requires fighting to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will smash bourgeois rule. Its task is to mobilize the working class independently from all parties and agencies of capital. The power of labor is in its unique role deriving from its relationship to the means of production. Such a party will arm class-conscious workers with a revolutionary program to fight on behalf of all of the oppressed and exploited and for socialist revolution. An internationally planned economy, effected through a series of socialist revolutions around the globe, will lay the material basis for world communism and the abolition of all classes.

A long history of betrayals and sell-outs by the staunchly pro-capitalist union misleadership has led millions of white workers, hit hard by the severe economic depression, to embrace the reactionary demagogue Trump, whose rallies were orgies of racism and anti-immigrant chauvinism. These workers were tired of the lies of the hypocritical Democrats and their constant refrain about an unprecedented “recovery,” while their desperate plight was being ignored. The Democrats believed that their lies would always be swallowed. Their “socialist” helpmates in the reformist International Socialist Organization and Socialist Alternative helped spread illusions in the “people’s president,” Bernie Sanders, as well as the bourgeois Green Party.

Now the workers will be battered by a cabal of billionaire robbers whose government will be a *plunderers’ paradise*, an unconcealed dictatorship of the rich. We can expect even more brutal attacks on labor and oppressed minorities at home and death and destruction rained on dark-skinned peoples abroad, surpassing what even Obama “accomplished.”

The great Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin once remarked that the toiling masses must possess an experience of their own. This has been consciously distorted by the reformists to mean that Marxists must conciliate the illusions of working people and the poor. Far from it!

The irreconcilable interests of the ruling bourgeoisie and capitalism’s wage slaves will necessarily result in struggles against the “masters” of the planet—bloody U.S. imperialism. With the intervention of a Leninist vanguard party, there will come a time when many of these same workers will heed the call for sweeping away all of the exploiters. They will join with their black and Latino class brothers and sisters, with all the poor and oppressed, and see that their interests and future are bound up with fighting in common integrated class struggle for the eradication of the whole capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. Or we will all go down separately. ■



TROTSKY



The Russian Revolution and Black Liberation



LENIN

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 gave a powerful impetus to the struggle for black freedom. Lenin and Trotsky’s Third (Communist) International fought to make American Communists understand the centrality of the fight against black oppression to socialist revolution in the U.S. Jamaican-born poet Claude McKay, who was a fraternal delegate to the Communist International’s 1922 Fourth Congress in Moscow, underlined the significance of the Bolshevik Revolution for American blacks in an essay published by the NAACP’s magazine The Crisis.

When the Russian workers overturned their infamous government in 1917, one of the first acts of the new Premier, Lenin, was a proclamation greeting all the oppressed peoples throughout the world, exhorting them to organize and unite against the common international oppressor—Private Capitalism. Later on in Moscow, Lenin himself grappled with the question of the American Negroes and spoke on the subject before the Second Congress of the Third International. He consulted with John Reed, the American journalist, and dwelt on the urgent necessity of propaganda and organizational work among the Negroes of the South. The subject was not allowed to drop. When Sen Katayama of Japan, the veteran revolutionist, went from the United States to Russia in 1921 he placed the American Negro problem first upon his full agenda. And ever since he has been working unceasingly and unselfishly to promote the cause of the exploited American Negro among the Soviet councils of Russia.

With the mammoth country securely under their control, and despite the great energy and thought that are being poured into the revival of the national industry, the vanguard of the Russian workers and the national minorities, now set free from imperial oppression, are thinking seriously about the fate of the oppressed classes, the suppressed national and racial minorities in the rest of Europe, Asia, Africa and America. They feel themselves kin in spirit to these people. They want to help make them free.

—Claude McKay, “Soviet Russia and the Negro” (The Crisis, Vol. 27, No. 2, December 1923)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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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 1618, 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 February 7.

No. 1105

10 February 2017

Child “Sexual Assault” Frame-Up

San Antonio Four: Latina Lesbians Exonerated

After 22 years of torture at the hands of the American “justice” system, the San Antonio Four have finally been exonerated. In 1994, Elizabeth Ramirez, Anna Vasquez, Cassandra Rivera and Kristie Mayhugh were falsely accused of molesting two young nieces of Ramirez. The four Latina lesbians, close friends who were in their early 20s at the time of the trials, were all wrongfully convicted of aggravated sexual assault without a shred of real evidence. Ramirez, branded the “ringleader,” was tried in 1997 and sentenced to 37 and a half years in prison. The other three were tried together in 1998 and given 15-year terms. The driving force of the frame-up was overt anti-gay bigotry reinforced with heavy doses of lurid “Satanic Panic” in the media and in the courtroom. The case is powerfully depicted in the documentary, *Southwest of Salem*, which premiered last year at New York City’s Tribeca Film Festival.

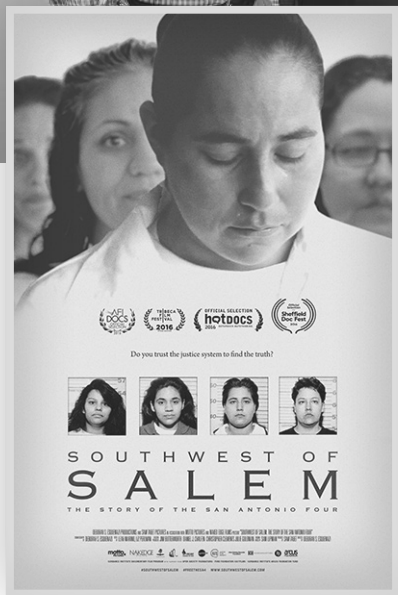
Throughout their ordeal, the San Antonio Four steadfastly maintained their innocence. They refused plea bargains that would have reduced their sentences, and in prison, they declined early release on parole as it would have required them to admit guilt. The women continued their fight after they were released, and finally, last November, all four were vindicated by a Texas Court of Criminal Appeals ruling that cleared their names. That court characterized the original allegations, which caused these courageous women to languish behind bars for an average of 14 years, as “fantastical.”

In the original trials, the prosecution drew an explicit link between homosexuality and child abuse and “Satanic rituals.” Claiming that Ramirez had “sacrificed” her nieces on the “altar of lust,” the prosecution told the jury that being a lesbian was consistent with abusing girls (*Rolling Stone*, 13 October 2016). To further fuel the anti-sex hysteria, the court brought in Dr. Nancy Kellogg as an “expert” witness. Kellogg, who claimed to have “evaluated” more than 10,000 children for abuse, is now known to have presented bogus medical testimony about what the sexual organs of little girls should look like. After examining the genitals of Ramirez’s



Getty

The San Antonio Four (above, left to right): Anna Vasquez, Kristie Mayhugh, Cassandra Rivera and Elizabeth Ramirez, August 2016. Documentary *Southwest of Salem* exposed injustice they suffered.



nieces, Kellogg retailed this junk science to the Texas jury, claiming there was evidence of “painful trauma” and “penetration” by “some object.” As an explanation for the alleged crimes—described in sensationalist detail—Kellogg suggested they were due to devil worship. Tabloid headlines like “Kids in Satanic Sex Horror” flooded the local press.

The San Antonio witchhunt has been referred to as the last chapter of the “Satanic sex ring” panic of the mid 1980s and the early ‘90s. Hundreds of innocent people were imprisoned for supposedly raping, sodomizing and torturing children. During these trials, tales of sexual abuse were bound up with accounts of

naked dancing, ritual animal sacrifice, cannibalism and the drinking of blood. No shred of physical evidence of such activities was ever found, and children as young as two years old were treated as unimpeachable witnesses.

The “abuse” mania—and its associated claims of Satanism, normally the preserve of the far-out religious fringe—became a stock feature at conferences of social workers, doctors and therapists. Part of turning these professionals into adjuncts of a massive apparatus of investigators and “experts” determined to discover abuse was the 1974 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, sponsored by Democrat Walter Mondale. The Act mandated mental health professionals, teachers and social workers to look for abuse of children and report suspicions to the police.

Many of those framed up were employees of day care centers. The crusade was a demented reflection of an ideological campaign that “good” mothers should give up their jobs and stay at home with their kids rather than subjecting them to

the supposed dangers of childcare centers. For their part, the bourgeois feminists recycled the scare campaign, headlining a cover story in *Ms.* magazine in 1993: “Believe It! Cult Ritual Abuse Exists.”

This state-sponsored frenzy, which peaked at the height of right-wing reaction under Ronald Reagan, is chillingly documented in *Satan’s Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt* (1995) written by Michael Snedeker and Debbie Nathan. (We reviewed the book in “Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria,” *Women and Revolution* No. 45, Winter-Spring 1996.) The underlying purpose of such witchhunts, which manipulate fear and bolster racial and sexual prejudices, is to strengthen the powers of the capitalist state to regiment society. Stoking panic also serves to divert attention from the real brutality of life in this twisted, bigoted and racist country. While Democratic and Republican politicians prate on about “protecting our children,” the U.S. imperialists bomb children halfway around the world and cause millions in this country to go hungry.

Exposing the Frame-up

The authors of *Satan’s Silence* helped bring the gross frame-up of the San Antonio Four to light. It was their organization, the National Center for Reason and Justice (NCRJ), that took up the case in 2008 and enlisted the help of the Innocence Project of Texas in 2010. The NCRJ sent trial transcripts to documentary filmmaker Deborah Esquenazi who went on to make *Southwest of Salem*, which in turn galvanized support for the women nationwide.

The compelling film exposes the false evidence and anti-gay rhetoric used to railroad the four women, using clips from interviews going back to the arrests and Esquenazi’s own interviews with them and their family members, as well as home movies, TV news and court footage. The documentary gives a glimpse of the lives of these working-class Latinas who were not long out of high school. Anna Vasquez, who was working at a fast food restaurant, had started college but had to drop out because it cost too much. Two of

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Correction: On Ideology

In the article, “For a Revolutionary Workers Party!” (WV No. 1103, 13 January), we wrote: “Today, our struggle is mainly ideological—to motivate Marxism against the purveyors of false perspectives that bind the labor movement and the oppressed to their exploiters and oppressors through the Democratic Party.” While our struggle today is to motivate Marxism, it is wrong to describe this task as “ideological.” Ideology is itself false consciousness. It is idealism, the presentation of ideas as independent of material reality. Marxism is not ideological; it is conscious. Historical materialism is a science whose theories are based on and tested in material reality.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels formulated the materialist conception of history as the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement. In *The Ger-*

man Ideology—written in 1845-46 but not published until 1932—they asserted: “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.” Against idealism, they argued: “The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men—the language of real life.” Pointing to ideology as false consciousness, they wrote:

“Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious being, and the being of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their relations appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.”

Nearly five decades later Engels reiterated the same point in a July 1893

letter to Franz Mehring. Engels praised Mehring’s essay *On Historical Materialism*, which drew on the works of Marx and Engels and, in Engels’ words, “brilliantly collated the essentials.” At the same time, Engels noted, “Only one point has been omitted, a point which, however, was never given sufficient weight by Marx and myself in our work.” The omission is on ideology. As Engels described:

“Ideology is a process which is, it is true, carried out consciously by what we call a thinker, but with a consciousness that is spurious. The actual motives by which he is impelled remain hidden from him, for otherwise it would not be an ideological process. Hence the motives he supposes himself to have are either spurious or illusory.”

On occasion, Marxists like V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky used the term “ideological struggle” to mean political strug-

gle. But their framework was one of dialectical materialism, which stands in opposition to idealism. In his 1893 letter, Engels pointed to idealists’ inability to grasp historical development: “What has above all deluded the majority of people is this semblance of an independent history of political constitutions, legal systems and ideological conceptions in each individual sphere.” He mocked the idealist view of history as “merely the fruits of a mental process” with the following example: “If Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Philip Augustus had introduced free trade instead of becoming involved in the Crusades, we would have been spared five hundred years of misery and folly.”

It is only with the development of large-scale industry that the material conditions were created for the abolition of private property in the means of production. Our task is to intervene in struggles of the working class and oppressed with the Marxist program for proletarian, communist revolution.

IG Peddles Dems’ Sanctuary Scam

On Thursday, February 2, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs (affiliated with the Internationalist Group [IG]) initiated a speakout at Hunter College, part of the City University of New York (CUNY), calling to “Defend Immigrants, Muslims and the Rights of Us All!” The Spartacist League and New York Spartacus Youth Club participated in the protest, and one of our comrades spoke at the rally. The Internationalist Clubs’ call for the protest included the demands, “Defend sanctuary cities—Make CUNY a ‘sanctuary university,’” while not containing even a word of criticism of New York City mayor Bill de Blasio, the cops or the campus administration. The IG builds illusions that liberal Democratic administrators of the capitalist state can establish “sanctuaries” for immigrants and the oppressed. We print below comrade Max’s speech at the rally.

Trump’s immigration ban is an outrageous attack! We say: **Down with the anti-Muslim ban! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

Thousands of people have taken to the streets to protest the ban, and this is good. However, the main cry has been that the ban is “un-American,” and the Democrats have been heading up these protests to posture as defenders of immigrants. In fact, attacking immigrants is a key part of U.S. imperialism, which

both capitalist parties administer. All of the seven countries Trump has targeted have been bombed, invaded or strangled by sanctions under both the Democrats and Republicans, including “Deporter in Chief” Obama. The list was drawn up by Obama. We say: **U.S. imperialists get your bloody hands off the world!** U.S. immigration policy has always served capitalist interests—from regulating the pool of labor to welcoming counter-revolutionary Cuban *gusanos* and Nazi butchers, to closing the gates on leftists fleeing U.S.-backed death squads in Latin America. To defend immigrants, students must ally with the working class in the fight to break with all capitalist parties and build a revolutionary workers party that fights for socialist revolution.

Capitalists whip up anti-immigrant bigotry to divide and exploit the workers. Organizing immigrant workers and defending their rights are crucial to revitalizing the labor movement. The unions should champion full citizenship rights for everyone living in this country, and defend all of the oppressed, including women and black people. But the current pro-capitalist union leaders are opposed to this perspective, and they keep the workers chained to their oppressors through the poison of nationalist protectionism and support to the Democratic Party. What is needed is a new, class-

struggle leadership of the unions.

The slogans put forward here today by the Internationalist Group reflect the liberal movement politics that must be overcome to build a revolutionary party.

To call for “sanctuary cities” is to promote local governments, the cops and Democrats as defenders of immigrants. De Blasio—“broken-windows de Blasio”—promises his city will be a “sanctuary.” Does anyone here think the NYPD that spies on Muslims and guns down black people and breaks up picket lines will protect immigrants? The state exists to defend the rule of the capitalist class *over* the working class. The sanctuary designation may slightly impede the cops, but it will not stop them from harassing immigrants or colluding with I.C.E.

In that same vein, the IG pushes illusions that the EU and “fortress Europe” have been a haven for refugees. Now this is a lie. These imperialist powers have caused the mass devastation from which these refugees are fleeing.

Look, to call for CUNY—“Fortress CUNY”—to be a “sanctuary university” is to promote the same illusions, just in miniature. CUNY is a capitalist institution, like all universities under capitalism. The administration oversees the exploitation of campus workers and faculty and the indoctrination of students to serve the capitalist economy and the train-



WV Photo

Internationalist Group placard at Hunter College protest, New York City, February 2.

ing of the officers for U.S. imperialism through ROTC. They cannot be looked to to defend immigrants any more than can the campus cops who do their dirty work. We call for: **Cops off campus! ROTC and military recruiters off campus!**

Unlike the IG and the reformists, we don’t look to the rulers and the capitalist state to defend immigrants and the oppressed. Only the working class has the capacity to lead the struggles against all oppression. Our model is the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

We are looking for people disgusted with patriotic slogans—who see through the cynical “sanctuary” slogan pushed by the Democrats. We are looking for the revolutionaries. **Down with the anti-Muslim ban! Defeat U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution!**

Democrats,” who are no less committed than their “corporate” counterparts (or the Republicans) to the exploitative and oppressive capitalist system.

Capitalist America and the War Against Immigrants

In response to Trump’s anti-Muslim edict, Democratic Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer, a rabid Zionist who has voted to approve several of Trump’s government nominees, including Secretary of Defense James “Mad Dog” Mattis, now declaims: “Tears are running down the cheeks of the Statue of Liberty tonight as a grand tradition of America, welcoming immigrants, that has existed since America was founded has been stomped upon.” The whole history of capitalist America, which was founded on the genocide of American Indians and enriched by the brutal toil of black slaves, is a refutation of Schumer’s cynical statement. Immigrants have been brought in at times to provide the cheap labor and raw muscle power for the country’s factories, mines and farms. Whipping up racial and ethnic hatreds to keep its wage slaves divided, America’s rulers have a long history of mass deportations and exclusion of the foreign-born.

Among the first to be targeted were Chinese workers who had been employed as virtual slaves in building the railroads and working in the mines on the West Coast. Playing on “yellow peril” racism to distract from growing unemployment and declining wages, Congress, with the full support of the labor misleaders of the time, passed the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, barring Chinese people from entering the U.S. or acquiring citizenship.

During World War I, Democratic Party president and arch-segregationist Woodrow Wilson signed the 1917 Espionage Act, whose first targets were labor agitators, opponents of U.S. entry into the war, anarchists and leftists, thousands of whom were imprisoned. In the 1919-20 Palmer raids, launched in fearful reaction to the Russian Revolution, 10,000 suspected Communists, syndicalists and other immigrants were rounded up, and more than 1,000 deported.

During the Great Depression, more than 500,000 Mexicans, mostly migrant farm workers, were rounded up and deported. Two decades later, in 1954, a militarized dragnet called “Operation Wetback” imprisoned and expelled over



Bettmann

After being rounded up during Palmer raids, foreign-born anarchists and Communists await deportation at Ellis Island, 1920.

a million Mexican farm workers.

Amid the Second World War, the icon of Democratic Party liberalism, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, issued an executive order to intern U.S. residents of Japanese descent, the majority of them American citizens, in concentration camps. At the same time, desperate Jewish refugees trying to escape the Nazi Holocaust were mostly kept out. In one infamous example, the ship *MS St. Louis*, carrying over 900 Jews, was turned away from U.S. ports. Many of the passengers would later die in Hitler’s concentration camps. After the war, in contrast, Nazi war criminals were welcomed into the U.S. to serve in U.S. imperialism’s Cold War against the Soviet Union.

Conjuring up a “foreign enemy” has long served America’s rulers in ratcheting up their machinery of state repression against the working class, black people, immigrants and any perceived opponent of capitalist class rule. Since the 9/11 attacks, U.S. imperialism has been waging a bipartisan “war on terror,” which was further ramped up by the Obama administration. Today, this arsenal of repression is in the hands of Donald Trump, who has unquestionably upped the voltage of racist reaction. Among his most loyal supporters are the border guards and I.C.E. agents, whose organizations backed his candidacy, as did the Fraternal Order of Police. The guns of the capitalist state are loaded, and they are aimed not only against immigrants, but also against black people, as every black person in this country already knows only too well.

An example of what’s needed to fight back

was the 9 February 2002 labor-centered Oakland demonstration that declared: “Anti-Terrorist Laws Target Immigrants, Blacks, Labor—No to the USA-Patriot Act and the Maritime Security Act!” and “Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!” Initiated by the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, and Partisan Defense Committee, the protest drew some 300 people and had as its core black longshore members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, which endorsed the rally. They were joined by other unionists, Latino day laborers, Asian and Near Eastern immigrants, college and high school students and the revolutionary Marxists of the Spartacist League.

Workers of the World Unite!

Many Democrats, joined by reformists like the ISO and Socialist Alternative, are now promoting “sanctuary cities” (where local cops have discretion to not check immigration status) as an answer to the anti-immigrant drive. It is downright delusional to believe that local agents of the capitalist state will establish oases of refuge for immigrants. The cops who gun down black and minority youth with impunity will not protect immigrants from the Feds. When politicians like Rahm Emanuel, the labor-hating, cop-loving Democratic mayor of Chicago, declare their cities “sanctuaries,” it is to refurbish their own image. Notwithstanding Los Angeles’s “sanctuary” status, more than 22,000 immigrants were deported from that city between 2012 and 2015.

For the fight for immigrant rights to go forward, it must be linked to the struggle against black oppression, which is fundamental to American capitalism. We seek to win native-born and immigrant workers to the struggle for black freedom; at the same time, we aim to win black workers to the fight for immigrant rights. It is only through united class struggle and the intervention of a revolutionary Marxist party that the divisions fomented by the rulers can be overcome.

Against the demagoguery of the capitalist rulers and the politicians of both capitalist parties, we reiterate the closing lines of the *Communist Manifesto*: “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!” As we underlined during the 2006 immigrant rights protests in “How the Fake Left Amnesties the Democrats” (WV No. 873, 7 July 2006):

“We do not seek to tinker with the system, looking for an alternative immigration policy. We will support such reforms as are offered. But, our bottom line is that we will worry about the ebbs and flows of the world economy when the proletariat under revolutionary leadership runs it. We are not responsible for, nor do we seek to advise, the bourgeoisie on its immigration or other policies. We seek to organize the social power of the proletariat to smash this system and establish proletarian rule.” ■

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One of the revisions to the peace deal was a vow to protect the rights of existing landowners against expropriation. This change was intended to address opposition by Uribe and his supporters to the deal's vague promises of government investment in rural development to help small farmers in impoverished areas. These promises are a far cry from the democratic land reform long demanded by the FARC to give "land to the tiller." Just over 1 percent of Colombia's landholders own more than 50 percent of the agricultural

The intractable nature of the land question under capitalism in Colombia is underscored by a recent UN report that at the end of 2015, the country had 6.9 million internally displaced people—the largest number anywhere in the world. Most of these are smallholders driven off their land through the collusion of the state, big landowners and imperialist agribusiness. More often than not, they have fled paramilitary terror. The fraud of bourgeois land reform is further demonstrated by the fact that a 1994 law supposedly intended to provide subsidized land to peasants was used in 2010–12 by the U.S. agribusiness behemoth Cargill to acquire 130,000 acres of public land through shell companies.

The FARC was formed in 1964 out of Communist Party peasant defense leagues established as early as the 1930s to protect peasant land claims against big landowners. Both the FARC and ELN were founded in the wake of the period known as *la Violencia*, during which supporters of the historic rival bourgeois parties, the Conservatives and Liberals, wantonly mas-



Mondomo, Colombia: Indigenous people demanding land reform blockade highway, June 2016.

As peasants were driven off their lands over the decades—and the government waged war on the left—peasants and leftist guerrillas colonized parts of Colombia's vast swaths of remote, uninhabited

AFP

Cops fire tear gas at peasants, trade unionists and indigenous people participating in demonstration organized by Patriotic March movement, Bogotá, October 2012.

The ICL opposes state repression against the FARC and other leftist guerrillas. But our revolutionary program is fundamentally counterposed to that of such nationalist, peasant-based forces. The FARC's

The decline in popularity of the “guerrilla road” of struggle in Latin America reflects the impact of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which was a massive defeat for working people internationally. Despite its degeneration under the nationalist bureaucratic caste that usurped political power from the proletariat beginning in 1923-24 under J.V. Stalin, the Soviet Union remained a workers state until capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. It was the elementary duty of revolutionaries to stand for

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the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, while fighting for political revolution to bring the working class to power.

The same Trotskyist program applies today to the remaining deformed workers states created in the Stalinist image following World War II—China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos. The Soviet Union’s military might and economic aid were powerful counterweights to the Western imperialists, and generations of Latin American radicals looked to the USSR for inspiration. The FARC’s international political isolation and physical decimation are ultimately by-products of the destruction of the homeland of the October Revolution.

For Workers Revolution in the Belly of the Imperialist Beast!

The “dirty war” techniques pioneered by the U.S. in its anti-Communist wars in Korea and Vietnam were directly transplanted to Colombia. Colombian troops who fought alongside the U.S. in the Korean War of 1950-53 were trained in the use of torture camps and napalm, which they used against the peasants back home. In the 1960s, U.S. military advisers who had overseen the killings of Vietnamese workers and peasants instructed the Colombian military in counterinsurgency and set up local death squads. As described by Forrest Hylton in *Evil Hour in Colombia* (2006):

“Perversely, right-wing state and para-state terror helped stimulate armed mobilizations on the Left in the 1960s and 1970s, by creating migration in two directions: first, to the urban frontiers of Colombia’s rapidly growing cities, and second, to the agrarian frontier, especially in the jungles of the south and the plains of the east. In those spaces, state power, even in its repressive aspect, was too weak to govern. Such areas proved to be fertile terrain for the growth of insurgencies until military-paramilitary counterinsurgency operations accelerated after 2000, under US-financed Plan Colombia.”

Notwithstanding the end of the Cold

War in the early 1990s, the U.S. dirty war in Colombia has continued under both Democratic and Republican Party administrations. Since 2000, the U.S. has spent \$10 billion on “Plan Colombia”; the bulk of the funds have gone to the Colombian military and police. Plan Colombia was initially packaged by Democratic president Bill Clinton as a counter-narcotics initiative, part of the “war on drugs.” This “war” has served as a cover for U.S. military intervention in Latin America and

Forces of Colombia oversaw cocaine production. U.S.-supplied aircraft have sprayed large areas with carcinogenic defoliants to supposedly destroy coca crops, recalling the use of Agent Orange against insurgent-controlled areas in the Vietnam War. While the FARC has long been vilified as nothing more than a criminal drug cartel, Plan Colombia has strengthened the real cartels, which have moved in where the FARC has been defeated. Not surprisingly, more than 15



Bogotá, March 2008: Electricity workers carry banner in protest march against state and right-wing paramilitary terror.

for increasing the repressive forces of the state in the U.S. itself, criminalizing whole generations of black people and Latinos. The Spartacist League has always opposed the racist “war on drugs” and stood for the decriminalization of drugs. Aside from the question of personal freedom, decriminalization would take the huge profits and much of the violence out of the drug trade. Military operations under Plan Colombia were aimed overwhelmingly at areas controlled by leftist guerrillas and did not target areas in the north where the notorious paramilitary United Self-Defense

years after the start of Plan Colombia, the country remains the world’s biggest producer of cocaine. Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the war against Colombia’s guerrilla forces became included in the “war on terror.” In 2003, the largest U.S. embassy in the world was in the Colombian capital Bogotá. In 2013, the *Washington Post* revealed the CIA’s covert assassination program in Colombia, which began in the early 2000s and continued under President Obama. The White House claimed that, as with Al Qaeda, killing a

leader of the FARC was not legally tantamount to assassination because the organization posed an ongoing terror threat. The CIA provided the Colombian military with GPS-based technology that enabled 500-pound bombs to target an individual in an exact location in triple-canopy jungle. It also set up an intelligence “bunker” to track down FARC leaders. One of the U.S.-designed “smart bombs” was used to kill FARC leader Raul Reyes and 21 others, including four Mexican university students, in Ecuador in March 2008. The crimes of the U.S. imperialists in Colombia underscore why revolutionaries must have an internationalist perspective. Working people in the United States and in Colombia have a common enemy in the U.S. imperialist rulers, who enforce a system of brutal exploitation and oppression at home as well. It is the American working class that has the social power and objective interest to establish proletarian rule in the U.S. through socialist revolution. This is the perspective of the Spartacist League. Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party understood that the fate of the Russian Revolution depended on the revolution being extended to the advanced capitalist countries. Writing in 1939, Trotsky summarized how, armed with the theory of permanent revolution, he had viewed the approaching Russian Revolution in 1917: “The dictatorship of the proletariat, which will inescapably place on the order of the day not only democratic but also socialist tasks, will at the same time provide a mighty impulse to the international socialist revolution. Only the victory of the proletariat in the West will shield Russia from bourgeois restoration and secure for her the possibility of bringing the socialist construction to its conclusion.” —“Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution” The International Communist League fights to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties throughout the Americas, national sections of a reformed Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

San Antonio... (continued from page 3)

the women had young children at the time they were imprisoned. *Southwest of Salem* also shows the 2012 recantation of one of the alleged abuse victims, Stephanie Limon, now a young adult. Admitting to having been pressured by her father and grandmother to invent the accusations, Limon recounts repeatedly telling government inquisitors, “nothing happened,” but they kept saying: “You know something happened.” When she came forward years later to tell the truth, she had to fight to maintain custody of her own children.

The title of Esquenazi’s documentary aptly invokes the Salem, Massachusetts, witch trials of 1692. Hundreds were prosecuted and dozens executed, victims of Puritan hysteria. More than 250 years later, another American witchhunt was waged, the Cold War McCarthyism of the 1950s. The “Red Scare” aimed to criminalize membership in the Communist Party and break its ties to the labor movement through firings, prosecutions and blacklisting. Communist teachers were special targets, lest they corrupt little children with their fiendish opinions. The anti-Communist purges were accompanied by a “Lavender Scare” that drove thousands of suspected “homosexuals or other sex perverts” from

government jobs and the military with the claim that gays and lesbians had a “corrosive” influence on fellow employees. The civil rights movement broke up the stultifying anti-Communist social climate of the 1950s. The tumultuous struggles of the 1960s, especially the fight for black equality and the Vietnam antiwar movement, achieved some democratic gains for black people and women—including the end of Jim Crow segregation and the 1973 legalization of abortion. But as long as the capitalist system remains in place, even the most minimal rights achieved for working people, women and minorities can be rolled back, as the onslaught against abortion and voting rights demonstrates. The 1980s were marked by a concerted drive to reverse the gains of the civil rights era, including increasing the presence of religion in public life and other efforts to impose social conformity. In our 1996 *Women and Revolution* article on the “Satanic ritual abuse” panic, we wrote how the anti-sex witchhunt “encompassed anti-gay bigotry, censorship of art shows and rock lyrics, ‘kiddie porn’ prosecutions, banning of distribution of condoms and other forms of birth control to teens, the bombing of abortion clinics and the jailing of ‘deviants.’” We also noted that many feminists had scandalously allied with the Christian right and signed on as adjuncts to the government’s “morals” police. The same goes for today. Feminists, who seek to give bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women a chance to compete in the male club of power and privilege, are in bed with the state in crusades against pornography, prostitution and youth sexuality. In recent years anti-sex bigots have focused on an alleged rash of “sexual predators” lurking on the internet supposedly to target children. Untold thousands have been victimized just for viewing porn or communicating with others in the privacy of their own homes, as well as for engaging in consensual sex with minors—none

of which would be crimes in a rational society. Across the U.S., there are now 850,000 people on sex offender registries. Anna Vasquez recounts in *Southwest of Salem* that because she refused to attend classes for sex offenders while in prison, she was punished with solitary confinement. A scene in the film illustrates the intrusive regulations that make normal life impossible for someone on a sex offender registry: prohibited from going past schools or parks, Anna is shown carefully reviewing the one permitted route she could take to the grocery store. The San Antonio Four endured terrible hardship and deserve every penny they can wrest from the state. But nothing can replace the years stolen from these women, framed up because they were

openly gay, working-class Latinas without connections. The American capitalist legal system is designed to provide justice for the rich and powerful, not working people and minorities. Anti-sex bigotry and vicious state repression will persist as long as the system of capitalism, based on private property and production for profit, survives. Sexist stereotyping and attitudes flow from women’s subjugation in the patriarchal family, which, together with religion, serves as a key prop of the capitalist system. The family instills subservience to authority and promotes a puritanical morality against anything that deviates from the monogamous family ideal—from premarital sex to gay sex. The oppression of women can only be ended through socialist revolution. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD



Reuters



EFE

Left: Colombia's president Juan Manuel Santos and FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri (known as Timochenko) after signing "peace" deal, 24 November 2016. Right: Portraits of Patriotic Union supporters killed by government-backed death squads, displayed at exhibition in Bogotá, 2004.

Colombia "Peace" Deal and U.S. Dirty Wars

On November 24, the Colombian government of President Juan Manuel Santos and that country's largest left-wing guerrilla group, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), signed a "peace" deal, which was subsequently approved by Colombia's Congress. Following four years of negotiations, the deal between the government and the guerrillas is largely the outcome of the decimation of the FARC by the Colombian military and right-wing forces acting on the orders of Santos himself. Santos was defense minister under President Álvaro Uribe from 2006 to 2009 and became president himself in 2010. Under both administrations, at least 63 FARC leaders have been killed and one-third of its mid-level ranks have been killed or captured. According to government estimates, since 2002, the FARC's membership declined by almost 60 percent to around 7,000. Santos's decapitation of the guerrilla forces was accomplished with the help of a covert CIA program to assassinate FARC commanders using "smart bombs." This operation was overseen by both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations.

Colombian government forces together with right-wing militias have been trying to wipe out leftist forces in Colombia's countryside and jungle since the 1950s. The crusade began with a war on Communist Party-influenced peasant militias and continued as left-wing guerrilla organizations proliferated in the 1960s and '70s. But until now, the Colombian capitalist rulers have been unable to eliminate either the FARC or the Army of National Liberation (ELN). The latter also remains thousands-strong despite a steep drop in membership since the 1990s.

Billions of dollars in U.S. military aid have been dedicated to the murderous "counterinsurgency" effort, first as part of the Cold War fight against the spread of Communism, and then, following the destruction of the Soviet Union, under the cover of the "war on drugs" and "war on terror." Colombia, the fourth-largest economy in Latin America and located close to the strategic Panama Canal, has long been maintained by Washington as a bulwark of right-wing reaction in the region. It has received more U.S. military aid than any other country in the Western hemisphere. The International Communist League demands: *All U.S. forces out! Down with U.S. aid to Colombia's murderous rulers!*

Six decades of U.S.-sponsored slaughter have been directed not only at guerrilla fighters, but also at peasants and trade unionists, as well as any other perceived opponents of the interests of Colombia's capitalists and their U.S. imperialist patrons. The 1928 massacre of striking banana workers fictionalized in Gabriel



Reuters

U.S. special forces train Colombian soldiers to carry out bloody repression against workers and peasants, February 2003.

García Márquez's acclaimed novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is not too far removed from the realities of life in Colombia to this day. It is the deadliest place in the world to be a member of a trade union; according to a Human Rights Watch report, 138 trade unionists were assassinated between 2011 and August 2015 and thousands receive death threats.

"Peace" for the Capitalist Butchers

The so-called peace deal between the government and the FARC portends continued massacres of Colombia's workers and peasants by right-wing paramilitaries, soldiers and police. The current deal includes a promise that FARC supporters can form a legal political party and participate in electoral politics. As the history of Colombia shows, previous peace talks and attempts by various guerrilla forces to become legal parties have generally ended in bloodbaths. During negotiations between the FARC and the government in 1985, FARC supporters, the Communist Party and others formed the Patriotic Union (UP) electoral party. In the years that followed, government-backed death squads killed over 4,000 of the UP's members, including most of its presidential candidates. The party was then stripped of its legal status for failing to run a candidate for president!

Nor have killings of peasant leaders and left-wing activists abated during the recent round of peace talks. The Patriotic March movement, founded in 2012

by supporters of the Communist Party and peasant organizations, has faced over 7,000 arrests and the assassination of 112 of its members. Over 300 peasant leaders were killed in 2015 alone. The only people likely to get peace from the current deal are the Colombian exploiters and the imperialist investors, for whom the guerrilla struggles are an inconvenience to their pillaging of Colombia's fertile land and lucrative natural resources. The U.S. has been the biggest plunderer of Colombia, most recently through the 2012 U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. As we wrote in "U.S. Hands Off Colombia!" (WV No. 737, 2 June 2000):

"Long one of Washington's showcase Latin American 'democracies,' Colombia is an archetype of 'Third World' countries in which the weak ruling class, beholden to U.S. imperialism, relies on monstrous state repression from the U.S.-trained army and the *paras* [paramilitaries] to protect its privileges from the impoverished and increasingly combative workers and peasants."

Colombia's history is a powerful confirmation in the negative of the theory of permanent revolution advanced by Leon Trotsky, who together with V.I. Lenin led the workers of Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917. During the bourgeois revolutions of England and France in the 17th and 18th centuries, the bourgeoisie played a historically progressive role. It placed itself at the head of the urban and rural populace to sweep away feudal-derived fetters on capitalist development. Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution was based on the understand-

ing that the national bourgeoisies of countries that came to capitalist development belatedly, in the epoch of imperialism, were incapable of playing such a role. Latin American countries, long the victims of colonial and neocolonial plunder, are societies in which modern industries coexist alongside the deepest poverty and rural backwardness. The weak national bourgeoisies of such countries are tied by a thousand strings to their imperialist masters on whom they depend for capital and are also deeply fearful of worker and peasant upsurges. For these reasons, they cannot resolve such key democratic questions as agrarian revolution and complete national liberation.

As Trotsky explained, in such countries, nothing short of a socialist revolution to expropriate the bourgeoisie and establish a workers and peasants government can liberate the oppressed peasantry and end the nation's subjugation to the imperialists. Proletarian socialist revolution would put an end to the system of capitalist exploitation of the workers, who in Colombia produce huge profits for the bourgeoisie by toiling in factories, oil fields, mines and on large plantations, and thereby open the road to socialist reconstruction of society. The U.S. and other imperialist powers would certainly move to crush such a revolutionary regime. Key to the survival of a workers revolution in Colombia and its development toward socialism would be its international extension to the rest of Latin America and to the more advanced capitalist countries that dominate the global economy, above all the U.S.

Bourgeois Divisions and the Land Question

The final 310-page "peace" deal is a revised version of the one rejected by a narrow margin in a nationwide referendum on October 2, in which 63 percent of the electorate did not even vote. Right-wing critics of both versions of the deal say that the transitional judicial process proposed for prosecution of the FARC's "crimes" is too lenient, and they oppose allowing the FARC to become a legal political party with deputies in Congress. A concession to opponents of the first deal was to add the requirement that, in addition to disarming, the FARC turn over all its financial assets and reveal any involvement with drug trafficking. But this has not appeased the critics. Former president Uribe, who led the campaign against any deal with the FARC, argued in an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal*: "The so-called peace agreement will serve as a thick mantle of impunity" ("Narco-Terror Is Being Rewarded in Colombia," 7 July 2016).

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