

## Fifty Years of Occupation



Hebron, March 30: Palestinians protest on National Land Day, marking the violent theft of land by Israel (left). Israeli forces assault Palestinian protester in West Bank, May 26 (right).

# Palestinians Under Israeli Jackboot

Only months after the June 1967 Six-Day War and Israel's seizure of the Palestinian Arab lands in the West Bank and Gaza (as well as the Syrian Golan Heights), the first Zionist settlement was up and running in the occupied West Bank. In the 50 years since, the number of settlers has soared to over 750,000. The so-called Green Line, Israel's pre-1967 border, has been replaced by a concrete "separation barrier" built on confiscated Arab land. Between this monstrous ghetto wall and the Jordan River, more than two and a half million Palestinians struggle for survival. Almost all of them are crammed into 40 percent of the West Bank, where they are surrounded by military checkpoints and fortifications, divided by Jewish-only highways and subjected to unceasing brutality at the hands of soldiers and fascist settlers.

Another two million Palestinians are confined to a living hell in the tiny Gaza Strip. After Israel removed its small settler population there in 2005, Gaza was turned into a free-fire zone for repeated massacres by the Israeli military. These have amounted to collective punishment against the people of Gaza for the 2006 electoral victory of the Islamist Hamas over Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction, which maintains control of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank. A draconian Israeli blockade, enforced with the assistance of Egypt, ensures that the population remains destitute, overwhelmingly reliant on international aid packages and denied any possibility of rebuilding bombed-out housing and infrastructure.

Emboldened by the Trump White House, what was already the most right-wing gov-

ernment in Israeli history is now further strangling the Palestinian populations of Gaza and the West Bank. In early June, the Israeli government sharply curtailed the supply of electricity to Gaza's residents, who will now have only two to four hours of electricity a day. The electricity cut was reportedly requested by Abbas's Palestinian Authority in order to

has fueled decades of national resistance and has won the sympathy and solidarity of thousands upon thousands of activists around the world. What the Palestinians and their supporters lack, however, is a strategy that addresses the root cause of Palestinian oppression.

The Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish nations both lay claim to the same small

smashed. Then the working peoples can with renewed confidence impose their dominance on a new egalitarian society, deeply respecting the different national components."

### Resistance and Betrayal

For many years, the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), whose leading faction is Fatah, looked to the Arab monarchs, sheiks and dictators to "liberate Palestine." This was always a pipe dream. The Arab bourgeois rulers are no less enemies of Palestinian national liberation than the Zionist oppressors. In 1970's "Black September" massacre, some 10,000 Palestinians in Jordan were slaughtered by order of the Hashemite King Hussein—with the acquiescence of Egyptian president and Arab nationalist idol Gamal Abdel Nasser.

In the wars fought between Israel and the Arab states, the emancipation of the Palestinians was never on the agenda. This was the case in 1967 and also in the 1948 and 1973 wars, during which the Arab bourgeois regimes sought to grab as much Palestinian land as they could. In these wars, revolutionary Marxists, Trotskyists, called for the Jewish and Arab workers to turn their fire against their own capitalist exploiters. (In contrast, it was necessary in 1956 to defend Egypt against an attack by imperialist Britain and France, joined by Israel.)

The patent unwillingness of the Arab bourgeoisies to defend the Palestinians pushed the PLO to beg, ever more openly, directly at the feet of the imperialists. Over the years, the imperialists and their Arab bourgeois lackey regimes have sought to solace and silence the Palestinian people through umpteen UN resolutions and a multiplicity of "peace" plans promising a bogus "two-state solution" to their oppression. Two years ago, PA president Abbas presided over the raising of the Palestinian flag for the first time outside the United

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## For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

undermine Hamas. This request is only the latest in a long line of betrayals of the Palestinian people by the PA, which is widely despised and rightly seen as little more than the Zionists' overseers in the West Bank. The political bankruptcy of the PA has driven many Palestinians into the arms of Hamas, a reactionary, anti-woman and anti-Jewish outfit.

On the eve of a visit to Israel by Trump's "peace envoy" (and son-in-law) Jared Kushner, the Netanyahu government brazenly announced that it was beginning construction of a new settlement outside Ramallah, the first one in 25 years. Previously, successive Israeli governments have euphemistically described the massive settlement construction as merely expansion of existing settlements. Now even that flimsy cover has been dropped. **Hands off Gaza—Down with the starvation blockade! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories!**

In the collective memory of the Palestinian masses, the 1967 conquest has come to rival the Nakba, the Catastrophe of 1948, when 80 percent of Palestinian inhabitants were driven out of what became the State of Israel. The ongoing dispossession of the Palestinian people

corner of the Near East. Under the dog-eat-dog capitalist profit system, this necessarily means that one nation will be on top and the other on the bottom. To ensure the rights of both peoples to a national existence, capitalist class rule must be overthrown throughout the region. The road to the emancipation of the Palestinians—for those in Israel and the Occupied Territories as well as for the millions more living in squalid refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan and elsewhere—lies in the fight to forge revolutionary proletarian parties that can lead the workers and all the exploited and oppressed in victorious socialist revolutions. Only through the creation of a collectivized, planned economy in a socialist federation of the Near East can conflicting claims over land and water be equitably resolved and all languages, religions and cultures be placed on an equal footing.

As we wrote in "Palestinian Uprising—A Year of Defiance" (WV No. 466, 2 December 1988):

"There can be a place—a full place—for Jews, Arabs, Druze, Bedouins, Kurds, for all the various peoples who make up the national and religious patchwork of the Near East. But to bring this about, the property-holding classes must be



Labor Must Defend Immigrant Rights!

[Received 15 May 2017]

Comrades,

I was reading your article in WV no. 1109 7 April on page 8 on a Union protesting on behalf of a fellow worker who was facing deportation. Unions coming forward to help their brothers & sisters is definitely the right thing to do. I wanted to mention some points on the subject of undocumented immigrants if I may.

The issue over undocumented immigrants is at the least a red herring by the capitalists to take the working class’s attention away from themselves. The same goes to the union misleaders. There are many lies that they tell which do not stand up to the facts.

For example they say that the undocumented are “stealing our jobs.” This is of course untrue, as the undocumented are often stuck doing the worst of the jobs, such as in horrific sweat shops under unsafe conditions.

Another lie is that the undocumented are “draining our resources and programs.” The truth that old money bags doesn’t want the working class to know is that every year undocumented workers pay

several billion dollars into Social Security alone. Add in Federal and State taxes and the number is more than doubled. Consider also that most use forged papers so they can never benefit from what they pay in. The truth is that the undocumented are a vital part of the working class.

Often in the Workers Vanguard and other material from the ICL(FI) I see written, “Full Citizenship Rights to All Immigrants.” This is much more than a slogan; it’s a major communist principle. In the early days of the Soviet Republic it was the law which was written as:

“In consequence of the solidarity of the workers of all nations, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic grants all political rights of Russian citizens to foreigners who live in the territory of the Russian Republic and are engaged in work and who belong to the working class. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic also recognizes the right of local soviets to grant citizenship to such foreigners without complicated formality.”

—1918 Constitution of the RSFSR

This was in the Soviet constitution under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.

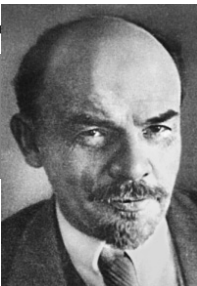
Comradely,  
Alan Nicholoplus



TROTSKY



The Bolsheviks:  
A Party Ready to Take Power



LENIN

*The Provisional Government that emerged after the 1917 February Revolution in Russia, which overthrew tsarist rule, was capitalist and committed to launching a new military offensive in the interimperialist First World War. Speaking at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, V.I. Lenin denounced Menshevik leaders like Irakli Tsereteli, who served in the Provisional Government as the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. In counterposition, Lenin called for a soviet government based on workers and soldiers councils and asserted the willingness of the Bolsheviks to take power. The Bolsheviks were a minority at the Congress, while the Mensheviks and petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries were the majority. By the time of the Second Congress four months later, the Bolsheviks had become the majority. Lenin’s struggle paved the way for the victory of soviet power in the October Revolution.*

According to the previous speaker, the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs...there was no political party in Russia expressing its readiness to assume full power. I reply: “Yes, there is. No party can refuse this, and our Party certainly doesn’t. It is ready to take over full power at any moment.”...

Side by side with a government in which the landowners and capitalists now have a majority, the Soviets arose, a representative institution unparalleled and unprecedented anywhere in the world in strength, an institution which you are killing by taking part in a coalition Ministry of the bourgeoisie. In reality, the Russian revolution has made the revolutionary struggle from below against the capitalist governments welcome everywhere, in all countries, with three times as much sympathy as before. The question is one of advance or retreat. No one can stand still during a revolution. That is why the offensive is a turn in the Russian revolution, in the political and economic rather than the strategic sense. An offensive now means the continuation of the imperialist slaughter and the death of more hundreds of thousands, of millions of people—objectively, irrespective of the will or awareness of this or that Minister, with the aim of strangling Persia and other weak nations. Power transferred to the revolutionary proletariat, supported by the poor peasants, means a transition to revolutionary struggle for peace in the surest and most painless forms ever known to mankind, a transition to a state of affairs under which the power and victory of the revolutionary workers will be ensured in Russia and throughout the world. (Applause from part of the audience.)

—V.I. Lenin, “Speech on the Attitude Towards the Provisional Government” (June 1917)

Remembering Bern Nix  
1947–2017



WV Photo

Bern Nix performing at PDC Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners, New York City, 2004.

4 June 2017

To the Editor:

Sadly, I am writing to inform the readers of WV of the passing of Bern Nix, who died this past week in New York City of a heart attack at the age of 69. Bern was an incredible guitarist, best known for his work with jazz visionary Ornette Coleman, as well as an ardent supporter of the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC). Being a guitarist myself, I always marveled at how Bern simultaneously created a guitar style which was immediately identifiable as his, while at the same time complementing and enriching

Ornette’s music. Bern not only attended numerous PDC Holiday Appeals for Class War Prisoners, his trio was the “house band” for the 19th Holiday Appeal in NYC in December 2004, and featured guest artists Oliver Lake, Roy Campbell, Anthony Coleman and Ursel Schlicht. Because of Bern’s participation and the participation of the guest musicians, this was one of the most successful Holiday Appeals ever in NYC. His death is not only a substantial loss to the world of music, but a loss to the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all class-war prisoners. Jeffrey Schanzer

Correction on Haymarket Martyrs

3 June 2017

Dear Workers Vanguard,

The otherwise accurate and informative article “Arkansas Legal Lynching Machine: Abolish the Racist U.S. Death Penalty!” (WV No. 1112, 19 May) incorrectly states, “While the face of death row is now primarily black and Latino, fighters for labor’s cause have also been targeted for death by the capitalist state: the Haymarket anarchists, labor organizers who fought for the eight-hour day and

were put to death in 1877; IWW organizer Joe Hill, executed in 1915; anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti, who died in the electric chair in 1927.”

Actually, the four Haymarket martyrs—Parsons, Spies, Fischer and Engel—were hanged on November 11th, 1887. Louis Lingg committed suicide the preceding day.

CGs,  
C.A.

**WV replies:** We thank C.A. for correcting our error.

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WORKERS VANGUARD



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The closing date for news in this issue is June 27.

No. 1114

30 June 2017

Fascist terror is a clear and present danger, and Ricky John Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai Meche are among its victims. On May 26 in Portland, white-supremacist Jeremy Christian murdered the two men after they intervened to stop his racist tirades against two young women—one black, the other Muslim. A little over a week later, on June 4, several hundred race-terrorists, feeling the wind in their sails in Trump’s America, mobilized in downtown Portland—essentially in a celebration of the murder of these two courageous men.

The rally included supporters of fascist outfits like Identity Evropa, the Proud Boys and the Traditionalist Worker Party. It was addressed by “alt-right” poster boy Kyle “Based Stickman” Chapman, notorious for his attacks against antifa activists in Berkeley earlier this year. Making clear that they were out for blood, a prominent fascist pointed to the antifa counter-protesters and told the press, “I look over there and I just want to smash.”

The Portland cops, Oregon State Police, FBI and Department of Homeland Security heavily mobilized to protect the fascists. They attacked the anarchist antifa protesters, disarming and dispersing them using stun grenades, pepper balls and tear gas. Fourteen antifa activists were arrested. ***Defend anti-fascist protesters! Drop all charges now!*** The cops made clear that their role is to be the guard dogs of the capitalist order and of its fascist auxiliaries. Indeed, the police are the main source of racist violence against black people and other minorities.

Less than a week after the June 4 fascist mobilization, “anti-sharia” rallies called by American Congress for Truth, the largest anti-Muslim group in the U.S., were held in more than two dozen cities, including NYC, Chicago and other urban centers. The New York rally of some 100 included a significant presence from the Proud Boys, Identity Evropa, Anti-Communist Action and other fascist groups. The fascist-inspired “Kekistan” flag flew prominently, while a placard declared: “No More Muslims.”

The meaning of such declarations was made clear on June 18 in northern Virginia. While walking back to a mosque with friends for an early morning Ramadan prayer session, 17-year-old Nabra Hassanen, who was wearing an Islamic abaya, was assaulted by Darwin Martinez Torres. He attacked her with a baseball bat and dragged her to his car. Her body was found later that evening; she’d been beaten to death. The cops have dismissed Nabra’s

# For Labor/Black Action to Stop the Fascists!



**Fascist Identity Evropa member (left, with bullhorn) at reactionary “New York City March Against Sharia,” June 10. “Anti-Communist Action” flag flies at right.**

murder as an incident of “road rage.” Her father, Mahmoud Hassanen, an immigrant from Egypt, told reporters: “It’s racism. Getting killed because she’s Muslim.”

Now, several prominent fascists have called a “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 12. The slated speakers are a veritable who’s who of the contemporary American fascist movement. First among them is would-be *führer* Richard Spencer of the innocuously named National Policy Institute (last month in Charlottesville, Spencer led a group of dozens of fascists carrying torches and chanting Nazi slogans to protest plans to remove a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee). Other speakers include Matthew Heimbach, head of the Traditionalist Worker Party, and Michael Hill, president of the League of the South. The flyer for the rally includes Nazi-style eagle logos, Confederate monuments and soldiers marching with the Confederate flag.

The fascists are emboldened by the “Make America Great Again” racism of the Trump administration. They feed off the economic misery and devastation inflicted on the population by the capitalist rulers. Every time they successfully rally, they gain confidence and win new recruits to their program of race-terror. The ultimate aim of today’s fascists, including the new breed that dresses in suits and speaks of defending “Western Civilization,” is no different than their Nazi and Klan forebears: racial genocide and the destruction of workers organizations, including unions and the left.

When the race-terrorists reared their heads in NYC on June 10 for the “anti-sharia” rally, our comrades participated with a contingent in the counter-protest. At the same time, we emphasized that what is needed are massive, integrated, disciplined mobilizations based on the social power of the multiracial working class to

stop the fascists and crush them in the egg.

A small taste of that power in action was provided last month by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 in Oakland. On May 25, Local 10 members walked off the job when a hangman’s noose, the symbol of racist terror in America, was found at the SSA terminal in the Port of Oakland. This was the second time in just over two weeks that a noose was found at the terminal, a calculated and deadly threat against the ILWU, particularly its black members, who make up a majority of Local 10. (See “ILWU Work Stoppage Protests Lynch Rope Provocation,” WV No. 1113, 2 June).

The labor movement has been flat on its back for many years under a misleadership that is committed to capitalism and has shackled the unions to the capitalist Democratic Party. With labor struggle at an all-time low, the ruling class currently has no need to let loose its fascist thugs to destroy the workers movement; but they hold their shock troops in reserve.

It is in the interest of the whole of the working class to mobilize the power of labor in defense of black people, immigrants and all the intended victims of fascist terror. As we wrote in “Fascists Fueled by Trump Election” (WV No. 1110, 21 April): “It is the fascists—not black people, immigrants, Muslims, Jews, leftists and others—who must be made to feel the sting of fear.” Standing at the head of the oppressed, and relying on its collective strength, the working class has the power to beat back the fascist threat through united-front action. Above all, it is vital to forge a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that fights to finish the Civil War through an American workers revolution. Proletarian rule will lay the basis for black equality and the liberation of all the exploited and oppressed, putting the last nail in the coffin of the fascist killers. ■

## I.C.E. Takes Aim at L.A. Activist Stop Deportation of Claudia Rueda!

*We print below a leaflet issued by the Los Angeles Spartacist League on June 4. Claudia Rueda has since been released from detention but still faces deportation, as does her mother. Our comrades have distributed this leaflet in Southern California, including at protests outside the detention center near San Diego where Rueda had been held.*

**NOTICE**  
**Workers Vanguard skips**  
**alternate issues in**  
**June, July and August.**  
**Our next issue**  
**will be dated July 28.**

On the morning of May 18, 22-year-old immigrant rights activist Claudia Rueda was kidnapped off the street by a gang of Customs and Border Patrol thugs while she attempted to move her car. In April, her mother was falsely targeted by the Border Patrol and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department for alleged drug smuggling. Picked up a few days after the release of her mother, Rueda was transferred to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) detention center over 100 miles away near San Diego and now faces deportation as an undocumented immigrant. Her attorney stressed that the immigration cops singled out Rueda because of her work in defense of her mother and her activism in support of undocumented youth, while a friend commented, “They wanted pay-

back.” We demand: Free Rueda now! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it to this country!

A student at California State University Los Angeles and an organizer with the Los Angeles Immigrant Youth Coalition (LAIYC), Rueda came to the U.S. as a young child and lives in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles. In the last few years, cops have turned this overwhelmingly working-class, Latino community into a virtual war zone as residents have been subjected to countless drug busts and immigration raids. Meanwhile, the area is undergoing rapid gentrification, as longtime renters are being evicted, rents are ballooning and small businesses are closing. Neighbors of the Ruedas said that they are a poor, working-class Mexican immigrant family, like



**Claudia Rueda speaking at rally protesting threatened deportation of her mother, April 25.**

most of those who live in Boyle Heights.

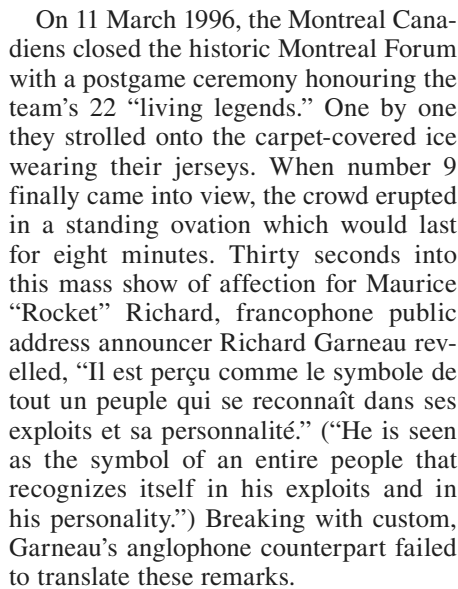
Since becoming Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, President Trump has unleashed a wave of terror against immigrants. Beginning in January, I.C.E. has arrested over 41,000 people, a 38 percent increase over the same period last year. Trump’s “priorities” include going after those who are even suspected of a criminal offense, no matter how minor, and a simple traffic stop can result in felony charges and deportation.

When it comes to anti-immigrant racism and mass deportations, Trump’s Democratic predecessor, Barack Obama, was no slouch either. His administration is notorious for expanding the border wall with Mexico, vastly increasing the size of the border police and deporting

*continued on page 5*



*We reprint the following article from Spartacist Canada No. 191 (Spring/Summer 2017), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste.*



Forty-one years earlier, that recognition famously exploded on the streets of Montreal in the “Richard Riot.” On 17 March 1955, following the Rocket’s suspension by National Hockey League president Clarence Campbell for the season’s three remaining games and the entire playoffs (costing Richard the scoring title and the Canadiens a championship), thousands of protesters gathered outside the Forum during a game against the Detroit Red Wings. Inside, fans pelted Campbell with tomatoes and eggs. One set off a tear gas bomb. Campbell declared the game forfeited and the fire chief ordered the Forum emptied, pouring thousands more into the streets, where young protesters set cars on fire, rocked streetcars and destroyed mailboxes, newspaper stands and windows. Participants held picket signs declaring “Long live Richard” and “We want Richard.” The cops arrested about 100 protesters, mostly young, working-class francophones.

Support extended throughout Quebec, and then some. Over 3,500 in the Saguenay region signed a 160-foot-long telegram of support. In response to a gathering of Richard's supporters at the Soviet embassy in Ottawa, the Soviets expressed "sympathy" with their guests and "blamed the suspension on the English and the Americans." Journalist André Laurendeau observed that the Montreal protest "was not driven only by sporting rivalry or by a sense of the injustice committed against its idol. It was a people frustrated, protesting against its fate."

From its inception in 1909, Le Club de Hockey Canadien was designed as a team for French-speaking hockey fans, if not necessarily French-owned or managed. It was intended to bolster National Hockey Association profits by stoking a national rivalry with the anglophone Montreal Wanderers (later Maroons). Known as the Habs (short for “habitants,” as the early French settlers of Quebec were known), the Canadiens would become a founding member of the NHL in 1917.

This was French Canada's team—and throughout the 1940s and '50s Richard *was* the Canadiens. In his classic children's story *The Hockey Sweater*, Roch Carrier, who also wrote a biography of Richard, recalled his hockey-playing youth in Ste-Justine: "On the ice...we were five Maurice Richards against five other Maurice Richards," all wearing Canadiens uniforms with "the famous number 9 on our backs."

A working-class, devout Catholic francophone from Montreal's east end, Richard rose to become not just the best, but the most electric player of his generation: the first 50-goal scorer (in a 50-game season, not the 82 of today), first to score 500 goals and NHL career leader in goals when forced to retire in 1960. Richard led the Canadiens to eight Stanley Cups and played in 14 all-star games. It wasn't just the goals scored, but how and when: often bloodied; speeding toward the goal, head down and dark eyes glaring; one arm fending off a grabbing defender, controlling the puck with the other and then unleashing a shot on goal from his knees, falling backward, sideways or forward. After being knocked unconscious in a 1952 playoff game against the Boston Bruins, Richard returned to the ice to net the winning goal.

As Richard, his teammates and millions of Québécois were keenly aware, this was all done with a deck ostentatiously stacked against him: the Anglo-chauvinist thugs who hauled Richard down onto the ice or slashed him across the ankle; the taunts of “French pea soup,” “dirty French bastard,” “speak white”; and the referees, linesmen and league officials who turned a blind eye and in turn penalized, fined, censored and suspended Richard for retaliating against one provocation and dirty blow after another.

As an accomplished Golden Gloves boxer, Richard often gave better than he got. On one occasion, after being knocked out by Gordie Howe, the slightly conscious Richard responded to Sid Abel's gloating, "How'd you like that, Frenchie?" by getting to his feet and breaking Abel's nose. Millions saw in the Rocket's victimizations and triumphs their own strug-



## Maurice “Rocket” Richard

gles against chauvinism and inequality, defense of their language, customs and culture. Each goal scored and black eye meted out by the Rocket and every Canadiens victory was greeted as an arrow to the chest of Anglo chauvinism; every loss and retribution by the Anglo-chauvinist lords who ran their league like a colonial fiefdom, an echo of the [1759] French defeat by a British invasion force on the Plains of Abraham.

Richard joined the Canadiens in 1942 amid the stirrings of rising nationalist sentiment beginning to sweep through Quebec along with an Anglo backlash which found its reflection on NHL ice. A 1942 Canada-wide plebiscite on military conscription for World War II won overwhelming support among anglophones, while francophones rejected it with a near unanimous voice. (For his part, Richard tried to enlist on three occasions, only to be turned down due to injuries suffered on the ice.) As for Clarence Campbell, thanks to his service in the Canadian army he was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire. Conn Smythe, the vicious anti-French bigot who owned the Toronto Maple Leafs, recruited for the war effort and reviled the francophone players who rightly refused to kill and die for their English oppressors. During that decade Smythe's all-Anglo team replaced the defunct Maroons as the most bitter rivals of the Canadiens.

The close of the war was marked by a rise in labour struggle. In 1949 this saw its most powerful expression in the courageous asbestos workers strike. In the face of brutal repression by the government of reactionary Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis, the strike was defeated after more than five months. These class struggles catalyzed a reawakening national consciousness among the oppressed Québécois. Although himself apolitical and socially conservative, Richard's pride and combativeness played a role in this revival. As teammate Jean Béliveau noted of Richard in his autobiography, "He was a hero who defined a people who were emerging from an agrarian society in the post-war era and moving to the city to seek their fortunes."

In 1954, Richard used his weekly column “Le tour du chapeau” (“Hat Trick”), published in the Montreal newspaper *Samedi-Dimanche*, to declare NHL president Campbell a “dictator.” He cited the harsh fines and suspensions Campbell regularly meted out to the francophone Canadiens while shielding anglophone players from discipline. The offended autocrat ordered the Canadiens’ front office to compel Richard to apologize, withdraw the remarks and drop the column, which cost him a significant loss of income. Campbell ordered Richard to post a \$1,000 bond with the league as assurance against any future fines. Deeply insulted by this public humiliation of their hero, Québécois fans paid the bond, just as they had been paying his fines for years.

One year later, this simmering anger would erupt in the Richard Riot, which to many was the opening shot of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. Years later, asked about the suspension that led to the riot, Campbell patronizingly responded, “It helped Richard. He had reached the stage where he wanted to challenge authority. Now, he has a better appreciation of the importance of conformity to regulations. He is not rebellious anymore.” As for conformity to regulations, in 1980 Campbell was convicted of conspiring to bribe a legislator, a crime for which he was forced to endure a symbolic day in prison—a couple of hours more than Richard spent in the penalty box during his career.

## A Clash of Nations on Ice

At the team's inception, the francophone Canadiens players were dismissed as not talented enough to compete with their anglophone rivals. Playing a unique style marked by better skating and more speed and finesse in contrast to the thuggish, rugby-derived contact that dominated the sport, over the next 85 years the Canadiens would win the Stanley Cup a record 24 times. Yet for decades, Québécois players have been demeaned as smaller, weak on defense and reluctant to "mix it up," and their accomplishments diminished as well.

4

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Richard’s record-breaking 50-goal season and the Canadiens’ 1944 Stanley Cup victory were both dismissed as the product of a league depleted when its best anglo-phone players were sent overseas to kill Germans. The Rocket put that canard to bed in 1946, leading the Canadiens to his second Stanley Cup. Nine days later, Jackie Robinson made his first appearance for the Montreal Royals minor league baseball team. The next year, Robinson would take the field for the Brooklyn Dodgers, the first black man allowed to play major league baseball in 60 years. Robinson, who recalled being treated very kindly during his brief tenure in Montreal, would overcome a torrent of racist abuse from fans, players and the press during a Hall of Fame career highlighted by the 1955 World Series victory against their hated New York Yankee rivals. For quite some time after Robinson first put on a Dodger uniform, Brooklyn would be black America’s team. Every stolen base, every home run, every diving catch by Robinson was embraced by the black populace as their own victories, no less than Richard’s were for the Québécois.

The struggles against the demonization, racist stereotyping and discrimination of these peoples may be similar, but the historic roots of their oppression—as well as their aspirations—are quite different. Black people in the U.S. constitute a race-colour caste, the vast majority of whom are forcibly segregated at the bottom of society. Their historic struggle has been for direct assimilation—immediate economic, political and social equality. There is no separate black language, and long ago black culture assimilated with the national culture and became the greatest single factor in modifying the basic Anglo-Saxon culture of the United States. Integral to American capitalism, the oppression of black people can only be eradicated by a socialist revolution in which black workers play a leading role.

The Québécois are a separate nation, conquered by the English and forcibly incorporated against their will into a society with a different language, religion and culture. They are the subjects of an English sovereign who sits atop a throne 3,200 miles away. The discrimination and vilification of the Québécois people found its expression in repeated attempts at forced assimilation. The proud Richard had the reminders of this domination rubbed into his nose on a daily basis.

The championship trophy, Lord Stanley’s Cup, is named for the Earl of Derby, appointed Governor General of Canada by Queen Victoria in 1888. The team with the best record was awarded the Prince of Wales Cup. Every NHL game with a Canadian team is opened with the singing of “O Canada” (“God keep our

land glorious and free!”). Richard and his teammates were forced to suffer through the serenading of then-Princess Elizabeth with “God Save the King” when she visited the Forum in October 1951. On orders from the mayor, Richard was benched for most of the game to make sure it would be polite enough for the future monarch. A few years later, downtown Montreal saw the construction of the Queen Elizabeth Hotel blocks away from the Forum—the Habs’ home, which was located in the English-speaking west end. Clarence Campbell’s office was in the Sun Life building, an edifice that, more than any other, represented Anglo



“Richard Riot,” 17 March 1955: Montreal Canadiens fans erupt in anger against Anglo-chauvinist NHL president Clarence Campbell (right) for suspending Maurice Richard.

financial dominance. To this day, the NHL’s award for the most valuable player in the playoffs is named for the Anglo-chauvinist Conn Smythe.

### For Quebec Independence and Socialism!

Today’s Canadiens are a far cry from the pride of the Québécois that last won a Stanley Cup nearly a quarter century ago. The team ownership passed first to Americans and more recently back to the Molsons, who as owners previously forced the end of Richard’s career. (So bitter was Richard that he refused to serve Molson beer at the tavern he briefly owned after retiring.) In recent years the team roster has included very few francophones—a trend throughout most of the league. Anti-Québécois bigotry still pervades the NHL: the same epithets spewed, the same stereotypes peddled, the same pressures to speak English in the locker rooms. In a blatant display of Anglo chauvinism, in 1991 top draft pick Eric Lindros turned down a \$50 million contract to play for the Quebec Nordiques, declaring he wouldn’t

play there “if they offered me \$100 million.” *Hockey Night in Canada* provides Don Cherry a weekly platform for his anti-French, anti-immigrant rants.

In his 2010 book, *Discrimination in the NHL*, Bob Sirois, a Québécois forward for the Philadelphia Flyers and Washington Capitals who retired in 1982, observed, “Many players who used racial slurs against us are now employed by NHL teams. They hold strategic positions as scouts, coaches and assistant coaches in the minor professional leagues and the NHL.” Sirois documented statistically that among players of equal talent, NHL experts will choose an anglophone Cana-

dian ahead of a Québécois (or even an American or European): “The figures show that only the very best athletes from those nations will make it to what is in fact the English Canadian National Hockey League.”

Hall of Famer Guy Lafleur noted this in a 1994 interview with the French-language daily *Le Droit*: “It has been known for a long time that Team Canada, whose offices are in Calgary, is not interested in including third and fourth-line Quebec hockey players. Those positions are reserved for their disciplined and obedient English-speaking players.” Lafleur described the NHL as no different, citing Boston Bruins star defenceman Raymond Bourque, who said had he not been a first-line player, he would never have been able to pursue his career in Boston.

This tracking begins at the lowest levels of organized hockey. Among Québécois players excluded from Junior Team Canada was Mario Lemieux, who in 1991 and 1992 would lead the Pittsburgh Penguins to the Stanley Cup. Sirois noted acidly: “It was said that Mario Lemieux was unable

to adapt to the Canadian hockey style.”

Out of sight of Richard’s on-ice battles against Anglo chauvinism were skirmishes with team owners. Throughout professional sports at the time, athletes were little more than indentured servants, bound to accept the team’s terms or not play at all. Richard, who spent the off-seasons of his first few years in the NHL working as a machinist, was denied raises commensurate with his value to the team—and to the entire league as its biggest draw—with no recourse.

When Red Wings star Ted Lindsay, one of Richard’s greatest tormentors, began agitating in the early 1950s for organizing the players around the issues of pensions and distribution of team revenue, he sought out the Canadiens’ Doug Harvey to enlist Richard’s support. The Rocket so despised Lindsay that he would only give passive, lukewarm support to the proposal for a players association.

The organizing plan went down to defeat. The Red Wings and Canadiens rewarded Lindsay and Harvey, two of their best players, by trading them to other teams. We highly doubt that Lindsay drew the lesson that his Anglo chauvinism poisoned any efforts to enlist Richard, a natural leader for the francophone players, behind him in a struggle that would be to their mutual benefit. Despite the rarefied environment at the top, professional sports reflect the national, ethnic and racial divisions in capitalist society writ large.

While the Québécois nation has taken some measure of control over its destiny over the last 50 years—partially freezing out the dominance of English through language and immigration legislation, for instance—it remains oppressed by English Canada. Following the razor-thin defeat of the 1995 referendum on sovereignty, the federal government passed the Clarity Act, essentially outlawing any unilateral declaration of Quebec independence. And Quebec is still in reality Canada’s only “bilingual” province despite its 80 percent francophone majority, a fact that is only a thin veil for continued English oppression.

The struggle of the Québécois against national oppression has over and over again, throughout history, provided the spark for broader social and class struggle. The workers of English-speaking North America are duty-bound to stand in solidarity with those struggles. Quebec independence must be fiercely defended by every class-conscious worker on the continent and in the world. But it will take socialist revolutions, in Quebec and in Anglo North America, to expropriate the capitalist exploiters, not least the filthy-rich NHL owners who had their empires passed on to them by the tormentors of Maurice Richard. ■

## Rueda...

(continued from page 3)

over 2.5 million people—more than any previous president. Obama also expanded deportations using the racist “war on drugs,” which is continuing as the Trump administration goes after Latino immigrants for alleged drug violations. The “war on drugs” has especially hit black people with brutal vengeance—a war of police repression and imprisonment that has sent millions of blacks to prison. Black people in the majority are forcibly segregated at the bottom of society, and institutionalized racial oppression of black people is central to the maintenance of American capitalism. The fact that the government is increasingly using the “war on drugs” to round up immigrants shows that black rights and immigrant rights will either go forward together or fall back separately.

Since Rueda’s ordeal began, several protests have demanded her release. The day of her arrest, dozens demonstrated at the Border Patrol station in Chula Vista, a few miles north of the Mexican border. The next day, Spartacist League comrades distributed the article “Down With Racist War on Immigrants!”

(*Workers Vanguard* No. 1107, 10 March) at an LAIYC-organized protest of mainly Latino youth in front of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in downtown L.A. We also carried a sign in Spanish demanding, “¡Plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes!” [Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!]

Among the organizations that participated in the L.A. demonstration calling for Rueda’s immediate release from I.C.E. custody was the reformist Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). For decades, the DSA has made a career of rallying behind the capitalist Democratic Party, including its recent backing of Bernie Sanders, a longtime member of the Senate Democratic Caucus and defender of U.S. wars and military interventions abroad. As the Democrats spit on millions of desperate people deprived of decent jobs, affordable housing, education and health care, the DSA works to mobilize leftists and youth around this capitalist party in the name of a “fight the right” campaign to oust the Republicans. As we wrote in “DSA: Democratic Party ‘Socialists’” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 1113, 2 June), the DSA is an obstacle to workers revolution and takes up such causes as anti-immigrant racism to offer up the oppressed

as voting cattle for the Democrats.

The DSA and other leftists are currently pushing the illusion that “sanctuary cities” can protect immigrants from I.C.E. terror. As a result, they burnish the credentials of city councils and Democratic mayors like L.A.’s Eric Garcetti, allowing these enemies of the working class and oppressed to present themselves and their killer cops as “friends of immigrants.” As we have noted, it is downright delusional to believe that local agents of the capitalist state will establish oases of refuge for immigrants. Indeed, the fact that L.A. County sheriffs are not permitted to ask about a person’s immigration status did not stop them from collaborating with the Border Patrol in the drug raid at the home of Rueda’s mother. While the sheriffs released her after admitting that she had nothing to do with the narcotics investigation, she was simply handed over to the Border Patrol’s agents for alleged immigration violations.

Eighty organizations and hundreds of individuals have signed a petition calling for Rueda’s release. Crucially, the California Faculty Association (CFA), an affiliate of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1983, has also issued a statement defending her. However, the union bureaucracy’s strat-

egy is to support the capitalist Democratic Party while focusing solely on pushing legislation in Sacramento to protect undocumented students, faculty and staff in the California State University and community college systems. We welcome any legislative measure that might impede immigration agents, but the power to stop Rueda’s deportation and defend immigrant rights lies with militant mobilizations centered on the multiracial working class and its unions. An example of such struggle was the defense of Juan Vivares, whose threatened deportation was temporarily halted after his wife’s union, 32BJ SEIU in New York City, protested outside an I.C.E. office and called for his freedom (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 1109, 7 April).

To build a revolutionary workers party in the U.S., it is necessary to break labor’s ties to all political parties of the capitalist rulers—Democrats, Republicans, Greens. With a significant black and Latino leadership component, such a party will lead the struggle to end the dictatorship of the capitalist class and establish proletarian state power as part of a series of socialist revolutions internationally. In a workers America, all foreign-born working people in its territory will be welcomed to become citizens. ■

Palestinians...

(continued from page 1)

Nations building in New York. This empty gesture was a consummate expression of the bankruptcy of the strategy of reliance on the imperialists pursued by Abbas’s PLO.

It was the French and British imperialists who carved up the Near East at the end of World War I. It was the UN that partitioned Palestine in 1947. And today, the imperialists, chiefly the U.S., provide billions in financial and military backing to Israel’s rulers while laying waste to countries in the region—from Iraq to Libya and Syria. Since March, hundreds of civilians have been killed each month by the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq and Syria. *U.S. out of the Near East! Down with U.S. aid to Israel!*

Years of futile “peace negotiations” and toadying to the Zionist oppressor have left Abbas and the PA thoroughly discredited. Diana Buttu, who served for several years on the PA team “negotiating” with Israel, noted in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (27 May) that many now view the PA as “simply a tool of control for Israel and the international community.” When Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails, led by Abbas’s rival Marwan Barghouti, himself a prisoner, launched a hunger strike in April, the PA chief barely feigned support for them. In the upshot, after 40 days the prisoners managed to extract a modest concession from their Zionist jailers. More recently, Abbas slashed salaries for former PA employees in the Gaza Strip, thus cutting off a vital source of income to the beleaguered population.

When the U.S.-sponsored Oslo accords establishing the PA were signed in 1993 by then PLO head Yasir Arafat, they were met with acclaim not only by capitalist governments but also by reformist socialist groups around the world. In con-

trast, we Marxists declared that this deal “does not offer even the most deformed expression of self-determination,” but rather “would place the PLO’s seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian masses” (“Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto,” WV No. 583, 10 September 1993). We added, “Its essence is that in exchange for formal Israeli rec-

social and political life in the West Bank and Gaza. Women advanced into the forefront of the struggle. The PLO leadership worked to contain this explosion of popular anger while using it to pressure the Arab rulers and the imperialist overlords to push the Zionist rulers into accepting a Palestinian mini-state in the Occupied Territories. At the same time, the collapse



Reuters

**Impoverished residents of Gaza suffer under Israeli starvation blockade. In early June, the Israeli government further cracked down, drastically reducing electricity supply.**

ognition of its existence, and promises of imperialist/oil money, the PLO will take over the job of policing the Palestinian masses.”

In the most immediate sense, the Israel-PLO deal was a betrayal of the widest and most deepgoing mobilization ever of the Palestinian masses. Beginning in December 1987, the first Intifada galvanized Palestinian society and shook Israel. Popular committees took control of economic,

of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 deprived the PLO and the more radical-sounding Arab capitalist regimes of a key backer. Oslo was the upshot.

The PA’s writ, such as it is, extends to only 18 percent of the West Bank. The rest is either totally or largely under Israeli control. Settlers outnumber Palestinians in fully 60 percent of the land. Growing numbers of Palestinian spokesmen, including Buttu and Ali Abunimah of the

online publication *Electronic Intifada*, now acknowledge that the “two-state solution” is dead in the water.

Such types now advocate a “one-state solution.” When raised by radical nationalists and their left hangers-on in the 1960s and ’70s, the call for a “democratic, secular Palestine” was an expression of hostility to the national rights of the Israeli Jews, who were deemed to be a “colonial-settler population” and an “outpost of imperialism.” This outlook served only to drive the Jewish working masses deeper into the embrace of Zionist chauvinism.

Today the appeal for a “one-state solution” is simply an accommodation to the Zionist status quo. To call on Israel to give equal citizenship rights to the millions of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories is basically to call on Israel to stop being Israel, i.e., a Zionist state.

The latest riposte from the Netanyahu regime to the notion of “equal rights within a single state” is legislation now making its way through the Knesset (parliament) to strip Arabic of its formal status as an official language alongside Hebrew and to enshrine the right to self-determination in Israel as “unique to the Jewish people.” This proposed law is a further attack on the language and national rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel. At the same time, a glance at the conditions of these Palestinians demonstrates that it is in large part a codification of the existing reality.

Israeli society is deeply segregated: Jews and Arabs attend different schools, live in different cities and are even separated in hospital maternity wards. An article in the *Times of Israel* (13 April 2016) notes, “Though Arabs make up nearly 20 percent of Israel’s citizenry, the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, Israel’s largest, is nearly 95 percent Jewish.” It adds, “Eight of Israel’s 10 poorest towns are Arab.” Average salaries are 30 percent lower for Palestinian Arabs than for Jews. Per capita funding for Arab schools is one-fifth

Philando Castile...

(continued from page 8)

is rooted in the brutal exploitation of labor and the forcible segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of society. Like modern-day slave patrols, the cops are paid to terrorize and oppress. NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick posted a picture on Twitter of the virtually identical badges of Southern slave catchers and today’s police, with the apt comment, “Always remember who they are.”

Every black man, woman and child knows that any encounter with a cop is a potential death sentence. After Castile’s shooting, his girlfriend was handcuffed and put in the back of a cop car with her four-year-old daughter, who pleaded, “Mom, please stop saying cuss words and screaming because I don’t want you to get shot.”

With the acquittal of Yanez, one can hear the echo of the infamous 1857 Supreme

Court Dred Scott decision declaring that black people “had no rights which the white man is bound to respect.” And when it comes to the application of the Second Amendment right to bear arms, the forces of “law and order” don’t even pretend that a black man might have the same rights as a white man to carry.

Yanez’s defense was that he “feared for his life.” In a country where to be black is to be branded as a dangerous criminal, this same racist alibi has been played over and over again in acquittals of police. The cop who killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland claimed he feared for his life in the face of Rice’s pellet gun, as did the Oklahoma police officer who shot Terence Crutcher to death as he stood with hands above his head. When on June 18 Seattle cops shot and killed a pregnant black woman, Charleena Lyles, in her apartment in front of her children, they claimed that she was “threatening.”

Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Minneapolis in outrage over Yanez’s acquittal, and protests were held

**June 18: Protesters gather in St. Anthony, Minnesota, two days after cop who killed Philando Castile was acquitted.**



Tsong-Taatarii/Minneapolis Star Tribune

elsewhere in the country. The power of the working class must be mobilized in support of protests against racist cop terror. As we wrote following Castile’s killing in “Black People Under Siege” (WV No. 1093, 29 July 2016):

“A massive show of force based on the mobilization of labor against cop terror would strike some genuine ‘fear of god’ into the police and their capitalist masters. And it would drive home the point that the interests of the working class—white and black, immigrant and native-born—are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and the fight for black freedom. But that means the workers must be mobilized independently of, and in opposition to, all the political parties and agencies of capitalist class rule.”

The power of labor is kept in check by the union misleaders, who support the very capitalist system that the cops “protect and serve” and push the lie that relief can be found in electing Democrats. Under eight years of a Democratic Commander-in-Chief, conditions for black and working people continued to worsen while cops wantonly gunned down black people on the streets. Some 1,100 people were killed by the cops in 2016 alone.

A school cafeteria worker, Castile was himself a member of the Teamsters, one of America’s biggest and potentially most

powerful unions. Yet all his local union leaders could offer in their statement after he was gunned down were “thoughts and prayers.” No wonder—the Teamsters organize cops in Minnesota! It is a measure of the utter treachery of the labor tops that they embrace the murderous, racist, strike-breaking cops as “union brothers.” The key to unlocking the social power of the working class is the fight for a class-struggle leadership of labor forged in opposition to the capitalist state. *Cops out of the unions!*

The bitter truth is that the police cannot be held “accountable” and there will be no end to police terror under capitalism. Only when this brutal system is swept away through proletarian socialist revolution, only when the multiracial working class becomes the new ruling class will there be justice for the exploited and oppressed. The Spartacist League is dedicated to the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party—one that is 70 percent black and minority—committed to the struggle for a workers government. It took a bloody Civil War, the Second American Revolution, to destroy black chattel slavery. And it will take a third American revolution, a workers revolution, to end wage slavery and black oppression. *For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■*

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6

WORKERS VANGUARD



what it is for Jewish schools. One could go on with such statistics.

The oppression of the Palestinians, including those who are citizens of Israel, is not simply the result of policies enacted by a string of overtly chauvinist and right-wing Israeli governments, but of the inexorable logic of Zionism. The rulers of Israel aim not to exploit the Palestinians but to displace them. Until the 1990s, Palestinians from the Occupied Territories had been a component of the working class in Israel, overwhelmingly confined to the poorest paid, dirtiest work. However, after the Oslo agreement Israel’s rulers replaced many of these Palestinian workers with horribly oppressed and exploited migrant laborers from Africa, Asia and East Europe.

The founders of the Zionist movement sought from the outset to dispossess the indigenous Arab population in order to carve out a “national homeland for the Jewish people.” It was Hitler’s Third Reich and the Holocaust that allowed the Zionists to realize their reactionary dream. The U.S. and Britain refused entry to desperate Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi horror both before and after World War II. Instead, they were pushed to Palestine.

**Proletarian Power vs. Liberal Moralism**

Israel, bolstered by billions of dollars annually in American aid, is the pre-eminent military power and the only nuclear-armed state in the Near East. On the eve of the 1967 war Israel had plans to detonate a “demonstration” nuclear bomb on a mountain near an Egyptian base in the Sinai Peninsula should its military offensive falter. The Zionist rulers are not about to be convinced to share power with the Palestinian Arabs on the basis of moral arguments. Diana Buttu observes that when PLO negotiators pointed out to their Israeli counterparts that the settlements were illegal, “Israeli negotiators



**Palestinian refugees forced to leave the West Bank following the Six-Day War.**

laughed in our faces. Power is everything, they would say, and you have none.” This situation will not be changed by the liberal movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) promoted by many Palestinian activists and fake socialists.

A May 15 statement by the BDS National Committee posted on the *Electronic Intifada* website “calls on people of conscience the world over to further intensify BDS campaigns to end academic, cultural, sports, military and economic links of complicity with Israel’s regime of occupation.” Academic and cultural boycotts serve only to further isolate opponents of Zionist occupation within Israel. We would support time-limited, trade-union actions against the Israeli state, but we are politically opposed to standing economic boycotts, divestment and sanctions, which in any case could only be enforced through the exercise of imperialist might. Such boycott cam-

paigns serve to reinforce the view of a monolithic Israeli society, denying the fact that it is a class-divided country.

Israel’s rulers and their imperialist allies have responded to the BDS movement with naked repression. BDS activists in the U.S. and other countries have been subjected to vicious witchhunts and arrests. Last year, Israeli intelligence minister Yisrael Katz called for “targeted civil eliminations” of BDS leaders. In March, the Knesset enacted legislation denying entry into Israel to those who advocate BDS. The wording of the legislation is so broad that the ban can be applied to anyone who opposes Israel’s settlements. However much we disagree with the liberal strategy of BDS, we vigorously defend BDS activists against victimization and repression.

The power to defend the oppressed Palestinian masses resides in the millions of proletarians throughout the Near East—

including in Turkey, Iran, Egypt and, not least, in Israel itself—whose class interests are irreconcilably opposed to those of their capitalist exploiters. So long as capitalist wage slavery remains, the contradiction between exploiter and exploited can ultimately only be resolved, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels noted in the *Communist Manifesto*, “either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.”

Israel is no less governed by the laws of the class struggle than is any other capitalist country. Though the Israeli Jewish workers are deeply intoxicated by Zionist chauvinism, this does not protect them from being attacked by their capitalist exploiters. As Perry Anderson observed in “The House of Zion” (*New Left Review*, November-December 2015), between 1984 and 2008, average wages stagnated while housing prices shot up, spending on health-care declined and a fifth of the population fell below the poverty line. Anderson noted: “At the other pole of this growth model, wealth is fabulously concentrated among a handful of *nouveaux-riche* tycoons.” The Israeli proletariat will not free itself from exploitation by its capitalist rulers unless and until it takes up the fight of the Palestinian people.

Wherever revolutionary struggle breaks out first in the Near East, what will be decisive is the intervention of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party built on the basis of proletarian class independence and uncompromising opposition to any hint of national or religious chauvinism. The perspective of proletarian power in the region must be linked to the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of the U.S., West Europe and Japan. In short, the struggle for national emancipation in the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East is directly and inextricably part of the fight to forge Trotskyist parties as sections of a reformed Fourth International. ■

**London Fire...**

(continued from page 8)

Writing nearly 150 years ago about the “infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers,” Friedrich Engels observed in *The Housing Question* (1872):

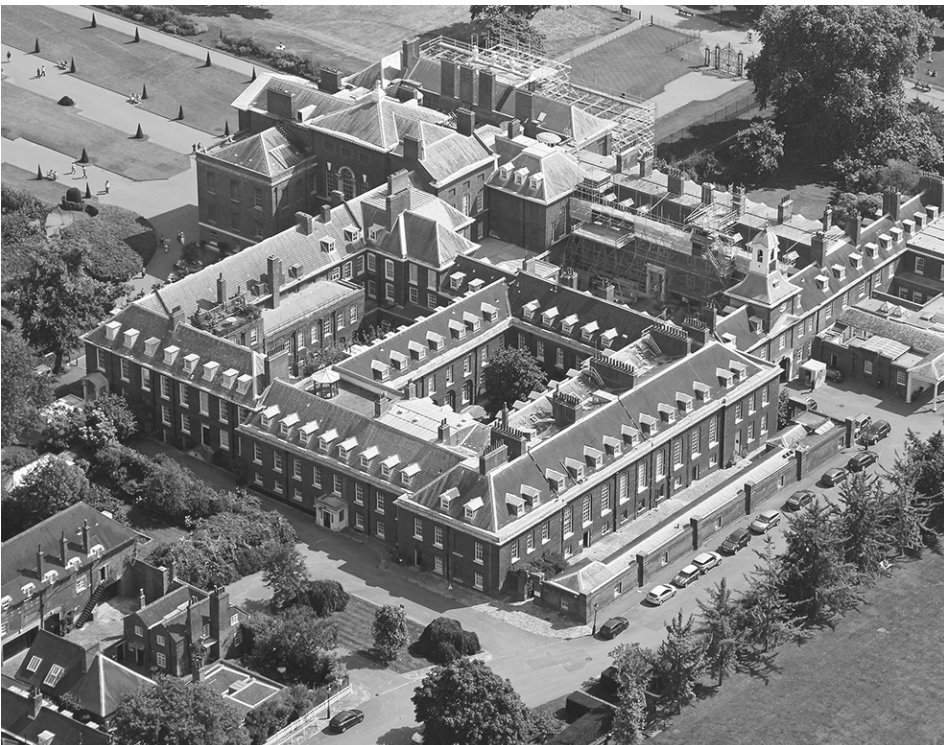
“As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist it is folly to hope for an isolated settlement of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the lot of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of subsistence and instruments of labour by the working class itself.”

A massive programme of public works to rebuild housing and infrastructure across Britain is urgently needed. As are workers committees that would make sure

that shoddy designs and penny-pinching construction will be stopped before they endanger people’s lives, and that lifesaving repairs and maintenance will not fall victim to the axe of austerity. But under capitalism, the basic needs of working people and the oppressed are continually subordinated to what is profitable for the bourgeois exploiters. The situation cries out for the banks, construction industry, factories, transportation and land to be taken away from their profit-driven owners, and rationally developed in the interest of society as a whole.

The likes of radical journalist George Monbiot have been pushing the lie that European Union regulations protect people like the residents of Grenfell Tower. In reality, the EU—with its explicit commitment to privatisation and market competition—has been used by capitalists to loot public infrastructure. Through schemes like forced competitive bidding for government contracts, the EU undermines union protections and safety standards and drives down wages. In Britain, [Labour Party leader] Jeremy Corbyn campaigned against Brexit in last year’s referendum, and today his commitment to tariff-free access to the European single market runs completely counter to his promises to uphold the interests of working people. **Down with the bankers’ and bosses’ EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!**

In contrast to the undisguised contempt with which Theresa May and Kensington and Chelsea council have treated Grenfell Tower survivors, Corbyn has struck a chord with working people by calling to house the survivors in empty luxury properties. In truth, homelessness could be tackled overnight, simply by requisitioning the mansions, luxury hotels and real estate holdings of the ruling class so that everyone has a place to live. To start with, seize Kensington Palace to house the residents of Grenfell Tower, and Buckingham Palace, making use of the £369 million budgeted for renovations! **Abolish the monarchy, that bastion of reaction and inbred privilege! Put its property at**



**Seize Kensington Palace! Royal residence located less than two miles from Grenfell Tower should be used to house those who lost their homes in deadly fire.**

*the service of working people!*

For all of Corbyn’s condemnation of the inequality and injustice rampant in this society, his programme of parliamentary reformism cannot solve the housing problem, or fulfil the other basic needs of the population. The Westminster “Mother of Parliaments” does not represent the “will of the people” but has for centuries presided over capitalist exploitation at home and the brutal and bloody conquest and slaughter of colonial and semicolonial peoples around the world. The capitalist rulers will never willingly give up their vast holdings—and behind them stand the forces of the capitalist state, an apparatus of organised violence for defending the interests of the ruling class against workers and the oppressed.

When workers become the ruling class, the housing crisis, insoluble on the basis of

capitalist private property, will be resolved in a straightforward way. A workers government would undertake a programme to construct residential communities designed to facilitate free and equal social relationships. Free access to quality education and culture will allow the fullest development of all, while facilities and social services will be vastly expanded to free women from the drudgery of housework and the burdens of child-rearing.

Putting the productive wealth of society at the service of working people and the oppressed requires socialist revolution, led by a party modelled on the Bolsheviks, who overthrew capitalist and landlord rule in the tsarist empire 100 years ago. The Spartacist League is working to build a party, a British section of the reformed Fourth International, that will lead the fight for new October Revolutions. ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## We Will Not Forget Philando Castile

# Killer Cops Walk Again

Millions watched as Philando Castile bled to death last July, his body riddled with bullets fired into his car by a suburban Minneapolis cop. Castile's girlfriend Diamond Reynolds, in the car with her daughter, courageously live-streamed the aftermath of the shooting. On June 16, a nearly all-white jury acquitted the killer

cop, Jeronimo Yanez, of all charges. Only then was the long-suppressed dash cam video from the police car finally released. It shows Yanez opening fire on Castile through the driver's window seconds after Castile had politely informed him that he had a gun, which he was licensed to carry. Castile was follow-

ing the cop's order to get his ID when Yanez fired off seven bullets. Castile's last words were, referring to the gun, "I wasn't reaching for it."

As Castile's mother Valerie put it in anguished rage after the verdict: "They murdered my motherfucking son with his seat belt on. So what does that say to you?"

Now they got free rein to keep killing us any kind of way they want to." Within the same week as Yanez's acquittal, another two cops on trial for killing black people also walked. The reason is simple. They are the everyday domestic armed thugs of the American capitalist order, which

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## For a New Ruling Class—The Workers!

# London Fire: Capitalist Murder

*We print below a leaflet that was issued by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain on June 23 and distributed at a London housing protest on June 24.*

The fire that ripped through Grenfell Tower on 14 June was **cold-blooded capitalist murder**. The 24-storey building—home to 400-600 people—lacked elementary safety measures such as a sprinkler system and emergency exits. It was covered in highly flammable cladding that went up like a torch—20 floors were covered in flames in 15 minutes. Survivors watched in horror as those trapped in the building signalled frantically at their windows. Despite the heroic efforts of firefighters and local residents, the official death toll stands at 79. The building burned for nearly 24 hours and is so gutted that it may never be possible to identify all the victims.

Grenfell Tower stood in north Kensington—one of the poorest wards in the country located in the "Royal" Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the richest borough in Britain. Residents of Grenfell Tower included many minorities and immigrants—including 23-year-old Syrian refugee Mohammed Alhajali, the first victim to be officially identified. The burned-out shell of his home resembles nothing so much as the wreckage left by the imperialist bombing in Syria. The racist British bourgeoisie and its servants in the Westminster Parliament have proved once again that they have nothing but murderous contempt for minorities and poor and working people, in Britain as around the world. ***It's high time for the rule of the capitalist exploiters to be swept away and replaced by a workers government!***

The Grenfell Tower atrocity was easily preventable. According to the Fire Brigades Union, there have never been mul-



EPA

**June 16: Marchers in London protest Grenfell Tower blaze. The official death toll stands at 79 people.**

multiple deaths in a fire in Britain in a building fitted with sprinklers. The cost of installing a sprinkler system in Grenfell Tower was estimated in 2012 at £138,000 [\$176,000]. Just last summer, £10 million was spent in a refurbishment that turned a 20th century hovel into a 21st century fire trap, adding the combustible cladding which ensured that the wealthy neighbours didn't have to look at the ugly 1970s concrete block. Fire-resistant alternative cladding was rejected because it was £2 per square metre more expensive—for a saving of £5,000.

For four years, the Grenfell Action Group, a tenants' association, had been warning the property management firm, the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO),

about the inevitable consequences of the "almost criminally lax manner in which the KCTMO treats fire safety issues" (grenfellaactiongroup.wordpress.com, 14 March). A notice posted on the group's website on 20 November 2016 chillingly predicted:

"It is a truly terrifying thought but the Grenfell Action Group firmly believe that only a catastrophic event will expose the ineptitude and incompetence of our landlord, the KCTMO, and bring an end to the dangerous living conditions and neglect of health and safety legislation that they inflict upon their tenants and leaseholders."

Residents who campaigned against the fire dangers at the tower block were reportedly threatened with legal action by the KCTMO. Among those who protested were two women, Mariem Elgawahry and



Press Association

Nadia Choucair, feared to have died in the fire.

Up and down the country, tower blocks have been covered in the same highly flammable cladding used on Grenfell Tower. Successive Labour and Tory governments have ignored calls to require sprinkler systems to be retrofitted in all existing tower blocks. Decades of cuts and privatisations have gutted Britain's council [public] housing while private rents have rocketed up and up. Dangerous wiring, damp, overcrowding and disrepair are rife in low-cost housing—to say nothing of the more than a quarter of a million people in England alone who have been rendered homeless by the high cost of housing, low wages and unemployment.

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