

All U.S. Forces Out of the Near East Now!

Imperialists Devastate Mosul



AFP



DigitalGlobe



DigitalGlobe

Top: Civilians flee Old City of Mosul, July 5. Above: West Mosul neighborhood before and after U.S.-led bombardment.

With thousands of airstrikes, rocket and artillery salvos, mortar attacks and helicopter gunship sorties, the U.S.-led coalition of imperialist powers, Iraqi army troops and federal police have turned the overwhelmingly Sunni western side of the city of Mosul into rubble. So complete is the destruction that it is being compared to the U.S./British bombing of Dresden and American firebombing of Tokyo during World War II.

In the name of “liberating” Mosul from the Islamic State (ISIS), the months-long bombardment has left city streets littered with corpses, and over everything hangs the stench of decomposing bodies. Citing Kurdish reports, Patrick Cockburn estimates that at least 40,000 civilians have been killed (London *Independent*, 19 July). More than one million people have been displaced to camps that are no more than open-air prisons.

Almost a decade and a half after the 2003 U.S. invasion and occupation, Iraq is mired in chaos, a seething cauldron of sectarian tensions pitting Shia against Sunni, Muslim against non-Muslim, Arab against Kurd. Some 6,000 American troops remain in the country, while hundreds more are in Syria as part of Washington’s drive to wipe out ISIS and reinforce U.S.

imperialism’s domination of the Near East.

The U.S. rulers’ utter disdain for the lives of their neocolonial subjects is exemplified by Secretary of Defense James “Mad Dog” Mattis, who stated baldly on *Face the Nation* (28 May): “We have already shifted from attrition tactics where we shove them from one position to another in Iraq and Syria, to annihilation tactics where we surround them.... Civilian casualties are a fact of life.” Mattis knows something about “annihilation tactics.” A Marine Corps general in 2004, he led the assault on Falluja that slaughtered at least 600 Iraqi civilians and demolished much of the city. U.S. forces shot down people waving white flags, targeted ambulances and used white phosphorus, a chemical weapon that burns deep into muscle and bone.

Some liberal critics of U.S. policy point to the Trump administration’s changes to the “rules of engagement” as responsible for the recent carnage in Mosul and elsewhere. But it was Barack Obama who began the murderous escalation in the waning months of his administration. The overwhelming majority of the 19,000 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria since August 2014 were carried out under the Democratic president’s command. This is on top of drone strikes that have killed and continue to kill civilians and combatants alike in Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and elsewhere.

The death and destruction wreaked by the U.S. ruling class is not a matter of the

particular policies of either of its leading parties. They are necessarily a product of the capitalist system in its imperialist epoch, in which the rulers of the imperialist powers in North America, West Europe and Japan have thrown the planet into continual wars and occupations in order to extend their domination of the globe. Such slaughter is but the concentrated expression of a profit system that in its “normal” workings condemns many millions to death by malnutrition, lack of medical care and industrial murder. The same U.S. ruling class that rampages abroad makes life hell for working people at home, squeezing ever more profits from their labor, slashing their health and pension benefits, and unleashing the cops to kill black youth on the streets.

We fight to win the U.S. working class to the understanding that its enemy is its “own” ruling class and that it needs to oppose imperialist aggression abroad. What is desperately needed is class struggle against the capitalist rulers, both to defend the interests of workers at home and to hinder the global ambitions of U.S. imperialism. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, aims to win the most conscious layers of the working class to the understanding that what is necessary to put an end to exploitation, racial oppression and endless imperialist slaughter is the overturn of the capitalist order through

socialist revolution. We fight to forge a revolutionary internationalist, multiracial workers party. Built in opposition to the Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties, such a party would lead the struggle for working-class rule in the belly of the imperialist beast.

Imperialists Stoke Ethnic, Religious Fires

Mosul, known to Iraqis historically as the Pearl of the North, traces its history to the 25th century B.C. under the Assyrians. Then known as Nineveh, it was a key city in the Mesopotamian civilization that is often credited with such profound developments as the invention of the wheel, the first planting of cereal crops and the first use of cursive script. The origins of mathematics and early medical practice can also be traced to the city. Meaning “linking point,” Mosul is located astride a route that linked northern Mesopotamia with Anatolia and became a magnet for Arabs, Kurds and Turkic tribes. As a result of U.S. imperialist barbarism, this cradle of human culture now lies in ruins.

The continuous cycle of sectarian violence wracking Iraq, Syria and other Near Eastern countries is rooted in the schemes of British and French imperialism at the time of World War I (1914-18). Treaties drawn up during and after the war carved up the region into spheres of influence,

continued on page 7



Yes, the Civil War Was About Slavery

15 May 2017

Comrades

While we give credit for the emancipation proclamation, it must be noted that the American civil war was not fought over slavery.

Marx’s conclusion was that capitalist wars are fought over markets and sources of raw material. Cotton was needed for the budding textile industry in New England. It is doubtful that the capitalists would have financed a war just over slavery.

It would be interesting to see how Marx’s conclusion fits into the 21st century.

Best wishes
E.T.

WV replies: It takes either willful ignorance or malice to obscure the fact that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were unequivocal supporters of the North against the South in the U.S. Civil War of 1861-65, precisely because the war was fought over slavery! Wittingly or not, E.T. echoes the racists and bourgeois scholars who have long sought to rewrite the history of the war by denying that the Confederacy was fighting in defense of

the barbaric institution of black chattel slavery. This lie stems from the post-war myth of the “Lost Cause,” which was concocted in order to disappear the horrors of slavery and facilitate “reconciliation” between the North and South.

Marx wrote extensively about the Civil War, actively rallying workers internationally to the side of the Union Army. He underscored early on that “events themselves drive to the promulgation of the decisive slogan—*emancipation of the slaves*” (“The Civil War in the United States” [1861]). From its origins, the U.S. was increasingly rent by two distinct socioeconomic systems—slavery in the South and capitalist wage labor in the North. As Marx explained in the same article:

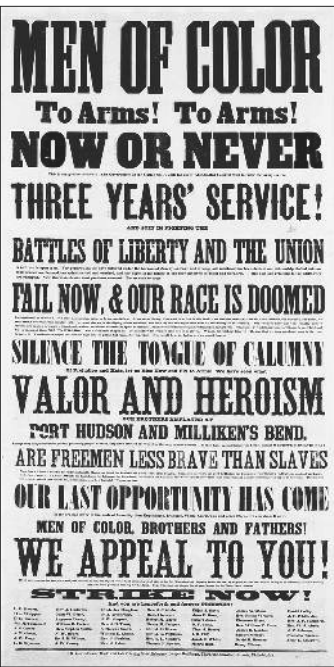
“The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other.”

Marx understood that the defeat of the South and abolition of slavery represented



Progress

Karl Marx (above) supported war against Confederacy. Poster from 1863 calls on black men to enlist in Union Army.



a victory for the workers as well as the slaves. Writing after the war in the first volume of *Capital* (1867), he noted: “In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.”

At the time of the Civil War, *everyone* knew that the war was about slavery. That’s why abolitionists fought to have the Northern Army open its ranks to black soldiers. That’s why 200,000 black men joined the Union Army and Navy, helping to turn the tide of the war. It’s also why multitudes of slaves fled the plantations to U.S. Army lines throughout the South, with many of them later becoming soldiers themselves. They all recognized that what was at stake was black freedom. For its part, the Confederacy never denied the nature of the war. The 1861 declaration of secession by Mississippi baldly stated, “Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery.”

It also quickly became clear to President Abraham Lincoln and Union general Ulysses S. Grant that slavery had to be smashed. Asked in 1878 by German chancellor Otto von Bismarck whether saving the Union had been more important than

eliminating slavery, Grant replied: “In the beginning, yes, but as soon as slavery fired upon the flag it was felt, we all felt, even those who did not object to slaves, that slavery must be destroyed. We felt that it was a stain on the Union that men should be bought and sold like cattle.” Grant went on to explain: “We were fighting an enemy with whom we could not make a peace. We had to destroy him. No convention, no treaty was possible—only destruction” (quoted in Joan Waugh, *U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth* [2009]).

The Civil War was the Second American Revolution, a bourgeois revolution. It was the last progressive act of the U.S. capitalists, who subsequently betrayed the promise of black freedom and reconciled with the former slaveowners in order to prop up the capitalist profit system. As we wrote in “The Civil War Smashed Slavery!” (WV No. 1111, 5 May), the article to which E.T. objects, the fight for black equality and integration demands “the sweeping away of the capitalist order through proletarian revolution, a third American revolution in which black workers are slated to play a leading role.” *Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■*



TROTSKY

In Memory of Frank Little, Labor Martyr

In the middle of the night of 1 August 1917, Frank Little was dragged from his bed, beaten, tied to the back of a car and dragged through the streets of Butte, Montana. His mangled body was found the next morning, hanging from a railroad trestle. He was killed by henchmen on orders from the Anaconda Copper Mining Company. Little was a leading member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a revolutionary syndi-

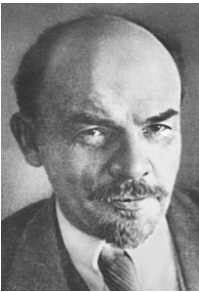
calist organization whose best members, inspired by the October 1917 Russian Revolution, were won to communism. Little had gone to Butte to help organize the thousands of miners and electricians who were striking against the largest copper mining camp in the world. In the wake of his murder, the strikers extended their labor action and stood solid for six months in what was the only mass strike in a basic industry in the U.S. during the first interimperialist world war. We print below excerpts from a 1926 appreciation of Little by James P. Cannon, who was won to communism from the IWW and went on to become the founder of American Trotskyism.

Frank belonged to the “old guard” of the I.W.W. He was one of its founders. Before that he was one of the militants of the Western Federation of Miners. With a singleness of purpose possessed by few, he moulded his whole life’s activities around one central idea, the idea of the revolutionary struggle of the workers for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the workers’ society. Year after year, through storm and conflict, through strikes and struggles, through jails and prisons, he held resolutely to his chosen course to the end....

His hatred of exploitation and oppression and of all those who profited by it in one way or another was irreconcilable. He was always for the revolt, for the struggle, for the fight. Wherever he went he “stirred up trouble” and organized the workers to rebel. Bosses, policemen, stoolpigeons, jailers, priests and preachers—these were the constant targets of his bitter tongue. He was a blood brother to all insurgents, “to every rebel and revolutionist the world over.”...

Frank Little’s last speech, for which he paid with his life, was directed against the capitalist war. In that speech he set up his own doctrines against those of the warmongers. His philosophy, compressed into a single sentence, was picked up and carried all over the country on the telegraph wires with the news of his assassination. “I stand for the solidarity of labor.” This was the final message from that tongue of fire.

—James P. Cannon, “Frank Little, the Rebel” (*Labor Defender*, August 1926), reprinted in *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)



LENIN

De Blasio Screws NYC Carpenters

11 July 2017

To *Workers Vanguard*:

Should anyone believe that NYC’s Democratic Party mayor Bill de Blasio is a friend to the City unions, look no further than the recent treatment of the civil service Carpenters organized in the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

Beginning in January the City unilaterally cut yearly benefits to the tune of \$25-30,000. Under this diktat the Carpenters no longer receive any sick day accruals (it had been 12), the annual leave days were reduced to one per year from 27 and the number of paid holidays was reduced from 12 to 10. In addition, retirement annuity payments that had been \$7.21 per hour were reduced to 22¢! All paid jury duty days were eliminated as were bereavement days for deaths in the family.

This massive cut in benefits was, according to de Blasio’s Office of Labor Relations under Robert Linn, intended to cover the increased cost of NYC’s pension plan. The City said the Carpenters owed the City tens of millions of dollars in retroactive payments. Previously the

City used a formula that set the percent of wages that cover pension funding at 8%. The City now calculates that about 25% of wages are required. The City has offered no explanation of how they arrived at their new formula. It was just asserted.

Unfortunately, the strategy of the union officials to fight against these cuts has proved toothless, and has shown a touchiness of faith in the same state agencies that side with the bosses. Union officials are reportedly “fighting” against this attack on five fronts: the State Courts, Mediation, through the Comptroller’s office, the Mayor’s office and the state legislature.

There is no inkling that what is necessary is a unified show of strength by New York unions whose interest is to support the Carpenters. If de Blasio can do this to the Carpenters, it is just a matter of time before similar tactics are used more broadly. But when Carpenters said there should be picket lines at locations where de Blasio was speaking or a strike, union officials dismissed this quickly and instead called for a press conference.

One of the main strategies by the union is to make use of an amendment to the

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28 July 2017

Bay Area Unionists Detained by I.C.E.

Free Mejía and Nuñez! Stop the Deportations!

We print below a June 19 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee to the San Francisco field office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.). The letter defends Hugo Mejía and Rodrigo Nuñez, two Bay Area union construction workers jailed by I.C.E. and threatened with deportation. They are currently awaiting decisions on their asylum cases from the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mejía's union, the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), has actively organized protests in the workers' defense. On June 20, about 70 people joined a rally outside San Francisco I.C.E. offices. Among the protesters were IUPAT officials and members, representatives of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters (UBC—Nuñez's union), immigrant rights groups and others, including the PDC. In a July 10 statement, IUPAT general president Kenneth Rigmaiden wrote: "We will continue to stand by our union brothers Hugo and Rodrigo, the same way we have stood by other union members before them; be it when they have been exploited by an employer on the job or while experiencing extreme hardship of any kind." It is vital that unions mobilize labor actions in defense of immigrant rights. In so doing, they will be fighting for the unity and integrity of the working class and in defense of the rights of black people and all the oppressed.

Responding to the outpouring of support for Mejía and Nuñez, eleven Cal-

ifornia members of Congress wrote to I.C.E. on June 22 asking the agency to "seriously consider any available alternatives to deportation." Union officials have pushed appeals to such Democratic Party "friends." However, the capitalist Democratic Party, like the Republican Party, is the class enemy of workers and the oppressed. As the emcee at the June 20 rally pointed out, Trump's deportations are the continuation of "the Obama deportation policy." It is by mobilizing labor's power independently of all agencies of the ruling class that real blows can be struck on behalf of Mejía, Nuñez and all immigrants.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee condemns the detention and threatened fast-track deportation of painters union member Hugo Mejía (IUPAT Local 83) and drywall construction union member Rodrigo Nuñez (UBC Local 68) who both were detained on their way to work in northern California on May 3. The two union members showed up to work on a construction job at a hospital on Travis Air Force base. After presenting their California driver's license and individual taxpayer number (ITIN) they were apprehended and transferred to two separate ICE facilities, Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center and Yuba County, CA. Mejía and Nuñez are both long-time union work-



WV Photo

San Francisco: Rally outside I.C.E. offices in support of construction workers threatened with deportation, June 20.

ers and family men with young children and have now been held for more than a month. Mejía has had a pending asylum case for the past decade.

The persecution of these union brothers comes amid an anti-immigrant blitzkrieg ordered by the Trump administration, which has arrested hundreds from coast to coast in highly publicized, armed ICE raids. The intent of these anti-immigrant

raids is to inculcate fear and poison the working class with the lie that foreign-born workers are stealing jobs. We of the PDC understand that mobilizing the unions in defense of immigrants is of vital importance to all working people.

We join many others in demanding, free Hugo Mejía and Rodrigo Nuñez immediately! No Deportations! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! ■

Berkeley: Defend Anti-Fascist Protester Eric Clanton

The Partisan Defense Committee sent the following letter to the Alameda County district attorney's office on July 10 demanding that charges be dropped against anti-fascist protester Eric Clanton, a former professor of philosophy at Diablo Valley College in the Bay Area. Since Clanton's arrest, "alt-right" fascists have continued their threatening provocations, appearing at his arraignment hearing on May 26 carrying the Nazi-inspired "Kekistan" flag.

The Partisan Defense Committee strongly protests the arrest and multiple felony charges against Eric Clanton stemming from a rally in Berkeley on April 15th.

At this pro-Trump rally the fascists of Identity Evropa, the Proud Boys and assorted other white-supremacist thugs used clubs, flagpoles and knives in violent attacks on anti-Trump protesters. One internet video clearly showed the leader of the fascist group Identity

Evropa punching a woman in the face.

These race-terrorists were met by justifiably angry multiracial demonstrators who sought to defend anti-Trump protesters from physical attack and made clear that fascists are not welcome in Berkeley.

Eric Clanton faces prosecution on four felony charges and a misdemeanor charge that stem from this demonstration. The pursuit of these charges is an attempt to intimidate and silence any protest against a growing fascist movement in the U.S.

It is additionally ominous that there was apparent collusion between the police department and the alt-right—the charges against Clanton stem from the fascists' doxxing of Clanton on the internet. Clanton and his lawyer, Dan Siegel, have been subjected to harassment, surveillance and death threats.

The Partisan Defense Committee demands: Hands off Eric Clanton! Drop the charges! Hands off anti-fascist protesters! ■

union-busting Taylor Law known as the Triborough agreement. While the Taylor Law makes striking by government workers in NY state illegal, the Triborough agreement stipulates that if a new contract has not been negotiated the terms of the old one should stand. The current City administration is now shredding the 2005-08 Carpenters contract, which has yet to be renegotiated.

But the Taylor Law in its entirety should be rejected by all New York labor. The unions were not built in this country by relying on the good graces of labor laws, courts or other state agencies but through withholding their labor through militant strike actions as necessary.

Other unions have some understanding that the cuts to the Carpenters are a broader attack on labor. The MLC (the Municipal Labor Committee, representing about 150 unions in the city) has filed a "friend of the court" brief in support of the Carpenters' legal fight. But the court filing is a drop in the bucket compared to what is possible or needed.

In fact, judges have issued temporary restraining orders (TROs) which ordered

a stop to the cutbacks. But the City has simply ignored those orders and maintained the cuts. The union then attempted to get a contempt of court ruling against the City but that failed when the judge decided to shuffle the case off to another court. A new TRO will supposedly restore half of the removed sick and vacation days (of course, "temporarily"). But to date this has not happened. And the courts never ruled that the City should restore any of the slashed annuity.

It couldn't be clearer that the union officials' faith in supposedly "labor friendly" Democrats is a losing strategy. All NYC unions waited until the previous mayor, Michael Bloomberg, was replaced to negotiate expired contracts. It was obvious that Bloomberg wanted to slash union wages and benefits. As for the craft unions, such as the Carpenters, his plan was to break them from prevailing rate negotiations and reclassify these titles at a lower scale.

When de Blasio came to office negotiations finally began. Unions had been without contracts for many years. In 2015, the Carpenters signed a partial agree-

ment for wages, which included retroactive increases from 2008. But there was no contract signed that included benefits such as days off, annuity, etc. The Carpenters union officials were in no hurry to sign a contract as they know that they would have to fight against the City's plan to cut benefits.

Under de Blasio most unions, such as the Teachers and DC37, settled contracts under the "citywide pattern" agreement, with raises below NYC's cost of living increases. For example, DC37, which represents about 125,000 workers, signed a new seven-year contract in 2014, which only provided a 10% raise over that period while substantially cutting back health care benefits. A measly \$1,000 signing bonus was thrown in.

Under State Law 220 trades have an option to bargain using either the pattern agreement or the prevailing rate method. The Carpenters chose to push for the prevailing rate instead of the citywide pattern. The prevailing rate law purports to set wages and benefits to the level of comparable workers in the private sector in the region. Since de Blasio took office, his

administration has pushed almost every trade to pattern bargaining. Reportedly there are only a few trades left that are under prevailing rate bargaining and the fact that the Carpenters fought for the prevailing rate was the basis for the vindictive cuts by the City according to officials.

Of course, the City has more workers in their sights than the 700 civil service Carpenters. Unions should not be relying on state laws (like 220) to protect them against the ever-increasing attempts to cut their wages and benefits. Only by union solidarity and independence from all forces outside the working class can we go forward.

—A Reader

NOTICE
Workers Vanguard skips
alternate issues in
June, July and August.
Our next issue
will be dated August 25.

Greek Trotskyists Say: Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

The following article is translated and reprinted from *O Bolsevikos* [The Bolshevik] (No. 2, April 2017), publication of the Trotskyist Group of Greece (TOE), section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).



The grim situation for thousands of refugees and immigrants in Greece worsened considerably during the winter. As temperatures across the country plummeted to as low as −14C [7°F] in January, images of desperate, traumatized people sheltered in nothing but flimsy, snow-covered tents, were broadcast around the world. Inevitably, there were deaths. In one week alone in January, three people died at the overcrowded Moria camp on the island of Lesbos. Two of those who perished—a 22-year-old Egyptian and a 45-year-old Syrian—were reported to have died after inhaling poisonous fumes. Two months earlier, a 66-year-old Iraqi woman and her six-year-old grandson were killed at the same camp by a gas cylinder explosion.

Responsibility for these deaths lies squarely with the Syriza-ANEL government [Greece’s ruling regime led by the bourgeois Syriza party in coalition with the right-wing nationalist Independent Greeks], as well as with the imperialist rulers of the European Union (EU). While [Prime Minister Alexis] Tsipras hypocritically spouts off about “solidarity” and “democracy,” his government has locked up more than 15,000 immigrants on the islands, in squalid camps run by the army and guarded by the police, at the behest of [German chancellor Angela] Merkel, [France’s president at the time, François] Hollande, [British prime minister Theresa] May & Co. This is the same Syriza that in July 2015 overturned the massive “No” vote in the referendum on more EU austerity and today further bleeds working people to pay the European and American bankers.

The refugee crisis wracking Europe in recent years is a direct result of the wars and occupations carried out by the U.S. and European imperialists in Afghanistan, the Near East and Africa. The majority of those currently detained in Greek concentration camps have fled the war zones of Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. Thousands more immigrants have died in the attempt to reach the gates of “Fortress Europe,” fleeing wars or the desperate poverty that is the lot of most in the neocolonial world. They were murdered by the imperialist governments that have militarily devastated their countries, ravaged their economies, robbed them of their livelihoods and then callously left them to die. Over the past decade, the U.S., France and Britain in particular have been involved in wars and/or occupations from Afghanistan and Iraq to Syria and Libya.

A key factor enabling the imperialists to rampage even more freely throughout the world was the collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92. Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union was a catastrophe for the working people across the globe. For the imperialist powers, especially the dominant U.S., it meant they no longer felt constrained by the threat of Soviet military might and were therefore emboldened to carry out more wars of plunder against semicolonial countries. The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), of which the TOE is the Greek section, fought to the end to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevo-



Migrants on Greek island of Lesbos after perilous night journey across Aegean Sea, March 2016.

Syriza: Border Guard for “Fortress Europe”

lution. At the same time, we fought for a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose criminal policy of conciliating imperialism fatally undermined the workers state.

Syriza: Lackey of the EU

The capitalist Tsipras government has been the willing accomplice of the imperialists in their crimes. During a visit to Greece in November 2016, former U.S. president Barack Obama noted, “Despite facing extraordinary economic hardships, Greece is one of five NATO Allies that spend 2 percent of GDP on defense,” and thanked “our Greek allies for our close cooperation at Souda Bay” (ekathimerini.com, 12 November 2016). Indeed, the Souda Bay base in Crete is a strategic facility for the imperialists, put at the disposal of NATO for attacks on targets in Syria, as well as for policing the Aegean Sea against boats with immigrants. We say: *All imperialist military forces out of the Near East and Africa! Close down the Souda base and all other NATO bases in Greece now!*

To counter the mass influx of refugees into Europe—which is only a tiny percentage of the world’s 60 million refugees—the EU has ramped up repres-

sive measures to block entry and hasten deportations. In 2015, EU member states, including Germany, Britain, France and Italy, dispatched warships to the coast of Libya and elsewhere, ostensibly to deter “people smugglers.” The real purpose was to prevent refugees from reaching the shores of the EU. With the door closing on the Mediterranean routes, refugees fleeing Syria and other war-torn countries had little choice but to make the journey through the Balkans. In March 2016, a number of Balkan states closed their borders to refugees, cutting off the route from Greece into Northern Europe. A week later, the EU announced an agreement with Turkey, under which immigrants in Greece would be deported to Turkey in a one-for-one exchange for Syrian asylum-seekers currently in camps in Turkey.

The EU-Turkey agreement is a blatant bribe by Merkel to get the refugees off her hands. Turkey was promised aid of up to six billion euros, visa liberalization for Turkish citizens visiting the EU and the reopening of Turkey’s frozen EU membership application. Since then, the failed military coup in Turkey in July 2016 and Erdogan’s countercoup have caused the EU-Turkey agreement to stall, with

Greece refusing to recognize Turkey as a “safe country” of origin. Meanwhile, Berlin has announced plans to begin returning asylum-seekers to Greece under the EU’s Dublin Regulation [which stipulates that EU member states can deport refugees to the first EU country that they entered]. The German workers movement should oppose such removals.

Following a European Court of Human Rights ruling seven years ago against Greece for “inhuman and degrading treatment” of refugees, transfers were suspended. There are currently around 62,000 refugees stranded in Greece, living in hellish conditions and facing an uncertain future. The Greek workers movement must demand that the detainees be released immediately and given full citizenship rights in Greece—not only papers and the right to vote and to stand in elections, but also equal access to work, housing and education. *No deportations! Close the detention camps!*

EU: Enemy of Workers and Immigrants

There is no clearer evidence of the reactionary nature of the imperialist EU than the devastation wrought against the Greek working people and the callous treatment of desperate immigrants seeking refuge from war and starvation. The EU has its origins in the 1950s, as the West European imperialists sought to consolidate their alliance against the Soviet Union through improved economic cohesion. In that sense, the EU was the economic corollary of NATO. Today, the EU is an unstable trade bloc, dominated by German imperialism, through which the European capitalists seek to maximize their profits at the expense of the working class, from Germany to Greece, and to improve their competitiveness vis-à-vis their imperialist rivals in the U.S. and Japan. The euro is the instrument for domination by German imperialism of the weaker states of Europe. The ICL has opposed the EU and its predecessor organizations on principle from the beginning. We are for breaking up this imperialist cartel. This is why we welcome the vote for Brexit as a defeat for the British and other European bankers and bosses, and call for canceling the Greek debt and for Greece to get out of the EU and the euro.

Following Syriza’s treacherous reversal of the “No” vote in the July 2015 referendum, the TOE put forward a call for Greek workers and their allies to build workers action committees to repudiate Syriza’s betrayal and to fight to leave the EU and the euro, with demands addressing the immediate needs of the workers and oppressed, including immigrants. These demands necessarily go beyond what capitalism deems “possible” and express the need for a government that acts in the interest of the workers and is subordinated to them. We called for common class struggle between Greek, German and other European workers, united against all the EU imperialists (see “Enough!” *O Bolsevikos* No. 1, March 2016 [WV No. 1072, 7 August 2015]). Our program is for proletarian revolution to expropriate the capitalist exploiters and establish a Socialist United States of Europe.

For United-Front Workers Action to Stop the Fascists!

The destruction of the Greek economy by the EU and its accomplices in the Greek bourgeoisie has led to the increased pauperization of the working class and also of a significant section of the petty bourgeoisie. While working people have



KEERFA banner at March 18 protest in Athens raises utopian call to “Open Borders for the Refugees” and promotes illusion that capitalist state will “Imprison the Neo-Nazi Murderers.”

shown considerable willingness to struggle over a number of years, what has been sorely lacking is a revolutionary, internationalist leadership of the working class armed with a program—not for the dead end of pressuring the bosses’ parliament to act on behalf of the workers and oppressed, but rather for preparing the working class, at the head of all the down-trodden, to take power by revolutionary means and to begin the socialist reconstruction of society in its own interest. In the absence of such a leadership offering a revolutionary way out of the impasse, the despair engendered by the capitalist economic crisis is providing fertile breeding ground for fascists like Golden Dawn.

The refugee crisis has led to a rise in racist incidents and in attacks by the fascists. The official racism of the Syriza-ANEL government has given a green light to such attacks. In early February, immigrants protesting the appalling conditions at the Elliniko refugee camp near Athens gathered to prevent Minister of Immigration Giannis Mouzalas from entering the site. Mouzalas responded by saying: “They have rights, and we respect them. But they too ought to respect the laws of the state. Anyone who feels oppressed inside this facility can leave and be subject to the provisions of the law” (ekathimerini.com, 6 February). In Thessaloniki, Athens and other cities, racist parents have been mobilizing to prevent refugee children from going to school with their own children. In Perama, fascist thugs from Golden Dawn beat up teachers and parents at a primary school in order to prevent refugee children from attending the school.

Perama was once a stronghold of the KKE [Communist Party of Greece]. Today, ravaged by unemployment, it has witnessed numerous attacks by Golden Dawn. In September 2013, nine KKE members who were postering in the area were hospitalized after a brutal assault by some 50 fascists. On that occasion, the KKE called a protest demonstration, which was attended by thousands. But more often than not, the response of the KKE to the deadly danger posed by Golden Dawn has been criminal passivity and reliance on the capitalist state.

Historically, fascist movements are extra-parliamentary mobilizations of the enraged petty bourgeoisie, lumpenproletariat and even a section of backward workers, who have been ruined by capitalist economic crisis and who embrace murderous, right-wing nationalism; their purpose is to physically destroy the workers movement and carry out racist pogroms and mass murder. The capitalist rulers hold the fascist shock troops in reserve so that they can be unleashed at times of social crisis against any prospect of revolutionary struggle by the working class. What's necessary to stop the fascists in their tracks is to build united-front mobilizations centered on the social power of the trade unions and encompassing all of the fascists' intended victims—immigrants

and refugees, Roma, gay people, national and ethnic minorities and others. A massive show of force by the workers and oppressed every time the fascist vermin raise their heads would soon send them running back to their holes and would also imbue the workers with a sense of their own power. It is necessary to build integrated workers defense guards based on the unions to defend working-class and immigrant neighborhoods against the fascist gangs.

Instead, the KKE has been calling simply to “condemn and isolate Golden Dawn” (*Rizospastis*, 28 January) as if it were a question of taking an individual stand rather than mobilizing the working class and the oppressed in *mass action*. At bottom, the KKE’s poisonous Greek nationalism and populism, with which it seeks to compete with Golden Dawn for votes among the most backward elements in society, are an obstacle to waging an effective fight against fascism.

Greek Left's Backhanded Support to the EU

The KKE formally opposes the EU, but this position is contradicted by its criminal refusal to call for a “No” vote in the July 2015 referendum. The KKE’s opposition to the EU flows not from championing what is in the interest of the international (including the Greek) working class, but from what it deems to be in the national interest of Greece, i.e., the Greek capitalists. Thus, in a series of theses on the immigration/refugee question, published in *Rizospastis* on 6 March 2016, the KKE’s main concern is “aggressiveness and provocativeness on the part of Turkey, as was apparent from its actions in recent days, which dispute Greece’s sovereign rights in the Aegean Sea.” The real issue for the Greek nationalists of the KKE is the defense of Greece’s borders against Turkey. The KKE lyingly claims that this could be done “from the point of view of the interests of the working class and popular layers” (*Kommounistiki Epitheorisi* [Communist Review] No. 3, 2016 [TOE translation]), when in fact it pits Greek workers, united with their own bourgeoisie, against their Turkish class brothers.

In the same theses in *Rizospastis*, the KKE calls on the Syriza government to “withdraw its support for the EU decisions, which together with the Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Regulations, condemn thousands of refugees to being trapped in Greece against their will.” The KKE demands: “Immediate, safe transfer of refugees—immigrants from the first reception countries like Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, as well as from the Greek islands, to their final destination countries, under the responsibility of the UN and EU.” This touching faith in the willingness and ability of the imperialist EU and UN to provide asylum to millions of refugees, *bypassing Greece* or with safe passage *out of Greece*, echoes the Syriza



Reuters; AP (inset)

government's complaint that the country is becoming a "warehouse of souls," burdened by too many refugees—and echoes Antarsya's calls to "open the borders" (except, for the KKE, the Greek borders).

Antarsya is a coalition of diverse organizations, ranging from the New Left Current (NAR), which originated in the 1989 split from the KKE/KNE [KKE youth group], to the social-democratic Socialist Workers Party (SEK), the fake-Trotskyist OKDE-Spartakos, Maoists and ecologists. It has acted as a “left” pressure group on the bourgeois-populist Syriza, including by participating in the “national unity” demonstrations called by Tsipras at the time of the negotiations with the EU over the Third Memorandum [which imposed further austerity on Greece]. Following Syriza’s capitulation to the EU, Antarsya switched to tailing mainly after Popular Unity—[Panagiotis] Lafazanis’s bourgeois-populist splinter from Syriza. What all of the groups within Antarsya share is a maximum program of reforms within a capitalist framework and anti-communism expressed in virulent hostility to the former Soviet Union. The SEK’s international *hailed* capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, with the British SWP [Socialist Workers Party] declaring in August 1991: “Communism has collapsed...a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991). The SEK and its cothinkers, who fought for counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, must take their share of responsibility for the post-Soviet world, in which the imperialists have been hugely fortified in their ability to wreak havoc around the globe. It is the imperialists’ destruction of entire societies which underpins the current refugee crisis.

Today Antarsya postures as “left” defenders of immigrants and refugees. In fact, their liberal call to “open the borders of European countries” to refugees (“Solidarity with the Struggles of Refugees,” *Antarsya*, 11 May 2016) serves to promote fatuous illusions in the good offices of Greek capitalism under the “left” Syriza government and in the “humanitarian” facade of the EU. The idea that the same European capitalists who have caused the drowning of thousands of immigrants in the Mediterranean and imprisoned or deported those who have made it to the shores of Fortress Europe can be forced to act out of humanitarian concern is beyond delusional.

There can be no progressive immigration policy under capitalism, and it is not the business of communists to propose policy alternatives. Our aim is to organize the social power of the proletariat to smash this capitalist system and establish workers rule. To foster the unity, solidarity and fighting capacity of our class, we seek to mobilize the workers movement in defense of immigrants, including by championing *full citizenship rights* for all who make it to the country. We oppose all deportations, roundups and racist immigration quotas and call to close the detention center hellholes. We call to organize the unorganized: immigrant workers must be brought into the unions with full rights and protections. This is key to the unity of the working class in Greece, a crucial

component of which is made up of hundreds of thousands of Albanian and other immigrants, many of whom arrived over 20 years ago and whose children have been growing up here.

In contrast, the liberals' and reformists' calls for "open borders" under capitalism are both utopian and reactionary. Calling on the capitalists to open their borders is tantamount to calling on them to eliminate the capitalist state and thus the capitalist system itself. No capitalist ruling class will ever voluntarily relinquish control over its territory. The modern nation-state arose as the vehicle for the development of capitalism and will remain the foundation of capitalism until the whole system is brought down by a series of workers revolutions.

Applied to small or neocolonial countries, the consequences of “open borders” can be reactionary, for example in facilitating imperialist economic penetration. On a sufficiently large scale, mass immigration is incompatible with the right of national self-determination. An example is that of Israel/Palestine. The imperialist states closed their borders first to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany and then to survivors of the death camps. Hundreds of thousands of European Jews were forced to go to Palestine. This mass influx resulted in the Palestinian Arab population being displaced and expelled from their homeland.

Moreover, behind Antarsya's rhetoric of "open borders" in Europe is a glorification of the Schengen Agreement allowing for passport-free travel within the EU in order to nurture illusions in European integration and to conceal the true nature of the EU. Thus, groups like the United Secretariat (USec—to which OKDE-Spartakos in Antarsya is affiliated) and others for years promoted the myth that the EU could become some kind of superstate, standing above nation-states, imbued with the power to erase national borders. As Lenin wrote in August 1915, a united Europe under capitalism is "either impossible or reactionary," and the EU is now coming apart at the seams.

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Σελίδα 2

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Fascists...

(continued from page 8)

the Right” rally, including by competing with the Klan over who best represents the “heritage” of the slavocracy. The aim of these fascists is to reverse the verdict of the Civil War.

The speakers list for the August 12 rally is a veritable who’s who of the contemporary American fascist movement. First among them is would-be *führer* Richard Spencer of the National Policy Institute. In May, Spencer led dozens of fascists carrying torches and chanting Nazi slogans in Charlottesville in defense of Lee’s statue. Other speakers include Matthew Heimbach, head of the Traditionalist Worker Party, and Michael Hill, president of the League of the South. “Former” Klansman David Duke, a keynote speaker at the League of the South’s recent conference, is backing the August 12 rally.

Every time the fascists successfully rally, they gain confidence and win new recruits to their program of race-terror. In June 2016, when white-supremacists of the Traditionalist Worker Party and the Golden Gate Skinheads descended on Sacramento, they stabbed and slashed at least seven anti-fascists. This April, hundreds of fascists rioted in downtown Berkeley, where they chanted, “Hitler did nothing wrong” and attacked anti-fascists and leftists with clubs, flagpoles and knives. A week after Spencer’s torchlight rally in Charlottesville, Richard Collins III, a 23-year-old black student and Army lieutenant, was killed at the University of Maryland by a fascist. In early June, fascists rallied in Portland in what was essentially a celebration of the murder of two men who had intervened to stop the racist abuse of two women—one black, one Muslim—by a white-supremacist who had attended “alt-right” rallies.

Like the Klan, these neo-Nazis are the genuine face of American fascism. And they have powerful defenders, from the off-duty and retired cops and military personnel in the Oath Keepers who have provided security at their rallies to



Wrabel/Daily Progress

Charlottesville: Torchlight rally organized by fascist leader Richard Spencer against proposed removal of Confederate general Robert E. Lee statue, May 13.

the regular police thugs of the capitalist state. On July 8 in Charlottesville, police arrested 23 of the more than 1,000 demonstrators who came out to protest the Klan’s provocation. Four of those arrested face felony charges, including for wearing a mask in public. With the local chief of police arguing that his main concern was “not the KKK,” cops intimidated and harassed anti-racist activists at their homes and workplaces in the weeks before the KKK rally. A spokesman for Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) told *Al Jazeera* (8 July) that the cops singled out non-whites for harassment at their homes. ***Drop all charges against the anti-Klan protesters!***

Now, SURJ is appealing to the Charlottesville city government to revoke the permit for the “Unite the Right” rally. To rely on the forces that administer capitalist “law and order” to ban the fascists is a deadly delusion. It is those very forces that repress anti-fascist fighters. The protesters who had signs declaring “Cops and Klan Go Hand in Hand” had it right. While the cops were hurling tear gas against the anti-Klan militants, their bosses in the local government organized prayer meetings and “community discussion” together

with assorted preachers, invoking the fascists’ “right to free speech.”

Fascism is not about free speech; it is about racist terror. Black people know only too well that when the fascists speak, it is with the lynch rope. Their “words” are fired out of the barrel of a gun. Their intent is to organize for an America in which black people do not exist. As the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party wrote in *Socialist Appeal* (3 March 1939), “The workers who spend all their time and energy in the abstract discussion of the Nazis’ ‘democratic rights’...will end their discussion under a Fascist club in a concentration camp.”

In contrast to the fascists, who see their road to power through extraparliamentary violence, right-wingers like Milo Yiannopoulos and Ann Coulter are racist provocateurs and ideologues. When antifa groups shut down their speaking tours, they fall right into these bigots’ trap, handing them the flag of “freedom of speech” to wave like a bloody shirt. The likes of Yiannopoulos and Coulter should be protested, exposed and refuted. But to equate them with fascists only serves to disarm people in the face of the Nazis and other race-terrorists, who must be crushed in the egg.

The thousand-strong anti-Klan turnout on July 8 shows that there are plenty of people who want to stop the fascists in their tracks. Among such activists are antifa groups across the country. But while they have often shown real courage, the confrontations waged by small groups of antifas will not stop the fascist gangs. The fascists must be met by an overpowering counterforce, based on disciplined mobilizations of the multiracial working class. As Leon Trotsky, who together with V.I. Lenin was a central leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote in the Transitional Program (1938) on the fight against Hitler’s Nazis: “Only armed workers’ detachments, who feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them, can successfully prevail against the fascist bands. The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory—and ends in the street.”

The new fascist organizations are small, but they are growing, armed and dangerous. They feed off economic devastation and are emboldened by official racist reaction. But the bitter economic and social discontent of the working class and oppressed can also fuel the rise of a fighting workers movement. In the U.S. during the 1930s Depression, militant workers who had waged pitched battles against the bosses and their state in order to organize unions struck some real “fear of god” into the fascist gangs.

In Minneapolis, where truckers strikes led by Trotskyist militants in 1934 laid the basis for the growth of the Teamsters into a powerful nationwide union, strike leaders and other battle-tested militants organized a union defense guard to take on a fascist gang called the Silver Shirts. The defense guard was led by Ray Rainbolt—one of the key fighters in 1934, a military veteran and American Indian—and included hundreds of union members. In *Teamster Politics* (Monad Press, 1975), Farrell Dobbs, a young Trotskyist leader of the truckers strikes, recalled that the defense guard aimed to build a labor-centered fighting force that would “include the unemployed, minority peoples, youth—all potential victims of the fascists, vigilantes, or other reactionaries.” When the Silver Shirts tried to hold a rally in Minneapolis, members of the defense guard were called out to the site. The audience turned tail and ran, and, having gotten wind of the union action, the Silver Shirts leader didn’t even show up.

Today, the idea that organized labor would mobilize its power in its own interests, as well as in opposition to the fascists, might seem fantastical, particularly to youth who have seen little to no union struggle. Responsibility for this situation lies with the trade-union misleaders, who have shackled the social power of the working class to the interests of their capitalist exploiters, particularly through the Democratic Party. But labor has real power, which lies in its numbers, collective organization and, above all, its ability to choke off profits through strikes and other actions. Whether it is the factory floor, the transit barns or the docks, the workplace remains the main site of integration in racist capitalist America.

Labor can and must be organized to smash the fascists. The potential for such action was shown in a small but real way by the labor/black mobilizations initiated by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee to stop Klan and Nazi provocations in several cities in the 1970s, ’80s and ’90s. Through flexing their muscle in massive, multi-racial mobilizations against the fascists, the workers will come to recognize their power as a class. What must be done is to build a revolutionary workers party that will wield that power to finally fulfill the promise of black freedom and emancipate all the exploited and oppressed. It will take nothing less than a third, socialist American Revolution to break the chains of racist capitalist rule and bury the fascist gangs for good. ***For labor/black action to stop the fascists! ■***

Greece...

(continued from page 5)

The fundamental concern of European capitalists is the free movement of *capital* among EU member states. In that context, the movement of labor is manipulated to suit the needs of competing capitalists in the EU countries. The much-vaunted passport-free internal borders of the EU were never an obstacle to the capitalist rulers tightening up border controls at will (e.g., in the name of the racist “war on terror”) and carrying out mass deportations of those considered “undesirable,” such as the thousands of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma deported from France.

Only with the advent of a global, classless communist society and the withering away of the state will there be no borders. To argue otherwise is to deny the very necessity of socialist revolution for the further advance of humanity and serves only to fuel illusions in the reformability of a potentially “humane” capitalist system.

But such reformist illusions are exactly what animate Antarsya and the likes of SEK. Of a piece with the call for “open borders” is the demand by SEK and its United Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat (KEERFA) to “Jail the neo-Nazi killers of Golden Dawn.” Such calls sow deadly illusions that the capitalist state will act to restrain the fascists. In early February, following a murderous attack against Pakistani immigrant worker Zisan Elahi, KEERFA issued a statement declaring: “The police have not bothered to arrest the gang that has been carrying out beatings for months in the same area. What are they waiting for?” (KEERFA, 3 February [TOE translation]). It may come as a surprise to SEK/KEERFA, but the capitalist state exists to protect the interests of the exploiters. When the normal workings of the capitalist state are not

sufficient to keep the working class subjugated, the bourgeoisie will resort to its fascist attack dogs.

It is well known that the Greek police force is infested with Golden Dawn supporters and that the fascists enjoy support also among the officer corps [in the military]. The trial against Golden Dawn members for “running a criminal organization,” which began a year and a half after the murder of leftist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013, has dragged on for another two years. Golden Dawn leader Michaloliakos is free, as is Giorgos Roupakias, who is accused of Fyssas’s murder. On January 28, thousands of these Nazi-loving scum were able to hold a race-hate rally in Athens to commemorate Imia [a 1996 military stand-off between Greece and Turkey over the disputed Imia islets in the Aegean]. We are opposed to calls to ban the fascists: not only do they sow illusions that the capitalist state can “take care of” the fascist thugs of the capitalist class, but such bans are invariably used against the left and the workers movement. The working class can rely only on its own strength and organization.

There is an enormous disparity in the country right now between the tasks facing the working class and the wretched opportunism of the leadership on offer. What is needed is the construction of a revolutionary vanguard party like Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks to fight for workers power. Such a party will act as a Leninist *tribune of the people*, reacting against any manifestation of exploitation and oppression. It will be forged through the struggle against capitalist ruin and fascist reaction. Such a party cannot be a “national” party, but must form part of an international revolutionary party, with sections in each country. It is the perspective of the TOE to fight for such a party as part of a reformed Fourth International. ■

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6

WORKERS VANGUARD

Mosul...

(continued from page 1)

amalgamating or splitting peoples according to the imperialists’ interests—including by denying statehood to the Kurdish nation. The secret treaties that created this tinderbox were exposed by the Bolshevik-led Soviet government only weeks after the October 1917 proletarian revolution in Russia, helping touch off mass anti-imperialist struggle in the Near East and elsewhere.

As a result of imperialist divide-and-rule, in a fundamental way there is no Iraqi nation. What exists is the Kurdish North, the Sunni Muslim center, the majority-Shia South and various other regions, overlaid with clan and tribal rivalries. Under Saddam Hussein’s brutal Ba’athist regime, Kurds, Yazidis, Assyrians, Shabaks, Armenians, Turkmen and Mandeans were forcibly displaced from Mosul and its outlying areas. In his government’s effort to encourage the influx of Arab Sunni settlers, an estimated 200,000 Kurds were driven out in 1978 and 1979.

At the time of the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, we called for the military defense of this neocolonial country against imperialist attack, while maintaining our political opposition to the bourgeois Hussein regime. We warned that the carnage the imperialists were about to visit upon Iraq would reverberate throughout the region. Indeed, in their occupation, the U.S. imperialists have systematically played off one sector of the population against another. In 2004, they mobilized Shia militias and the Kurdish *pesh merga* to crush Sunni insurgents in Falluja. Their installation of Shia leader Nuri al-Maliki in 2006 as prime minister helped fuel bloody clashes between Shia and Sunni forces in which tens of thousands died.

More recently, the U.S. enlisted the Iraqi government, Shia militias and the *pesh merga* in its war against the Sunni-fundamentalist ISIS. The ISIS reactionaries are a direct product of U.S. imperialist machinations. ISIS is a split off from Al Qaeda, which itself grew out of Washington’s funding of the *mujahedin* who fought a reactionary war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s. In Iraq, ISIS also drew in support from Ba’athist intelligence and military officers purged by the U.S. after Hussein’s overthrow. After occupying Mosul in June 2014, ISIS slaughtered or forcibly expelled Shias and other “infidels.” With the leveling of Mosul and the flight of hundreds of thousands of Sunni Arabs, the stage is now set for further acts of “ethnic cleansing” by Shia death squads.

The international proletariat has no side in the intercommunal conflict in Iraq and in Syria’s squalid civil war. But the workers do have a side against the U.S. imperialists—the main enemy not only of the peoples of the Near East but of the workers

Goodwin...

(continued from page 8)

turn out to the courthouse, but only the day before the hearing. Flexing the muscle of this 41,000-strong union, whose members transport millions throughout the city every day, runs counter to the pro-capitalist politics of the labor bureaucracy.

The strategy of the union misleaders is to preach reliance on Democratic Party politicians in City Hall and Albany, while fostering suicidal illusions that the cops themselves are “union brothers.” In concert with the MTA, they have also pushed the idea that transit workers are fellow “first responders,” obligated to act as police auxiliaries. This is pure poison and undermines the ability of transit workers to struggle against their racist capitalist exploiters.

A union vice president has reduced the victimization of Goodwin to “an overzealous Police Lieutenant who got up on the wrong side of the bed.” In other words, supposedly the problem is a “bad apple” cop supervisor. Transit and other workers who routinely face cop harassment on



AP



DPA

Brutal Saudi war in Yemen supported by Obama and Trump administrations. Left: Obama with Saudi King Salman, April 2016. Right: Yemeni child treated for cholera, June 28.

and oppressed at home. While we despise everything that ISIS stands for and in no way imbue them with anti-imperialist credentials, we understand that the blows they strike against U.S. military forces and their proxies—the Iraqi army, Shia militias and Kurdish fighters in Iraq and Syria—are objectively in the interests of the international working class, including in the U.S.

U.S./Saudi Arabia Strangle Yemen

The depredations of U.S. imperialism set the stage for a bloody unraveling of the region, in particular by sharply intensifying the conflict between Shia Iran and the Sunni-ruled Persian Gulf states (especially Saudi Arabia). The overthrow of Saddam

U.S. has provided intelligence, munitions and midair refueling of fighter jets for Saudi Arabia, which, since March 2015, has been waging war against the Zaidi Shia Houthis in Yemen (who the Saudis claim receive Iranian aid). In so doing, the U.S. is backing what is arguably the most reactionary regime in the world, Saudi Arabia. This key U.S. ally is a theocracy rooted in the extreme, Wahabi variant of Sunni fundamentalism, the social strictures of which are similar to those of ISIS. When a Saudi-led airstrike killed over 130 people at a funeral in Yemen last October, the Obama administration doubled the amount of fuel it was delivering to the war effort. Following in Obama’s footsteps, Trump, in one of his first acts

been killed and some three million have been displaced. Airstrikes have destroyed schools, hospitals, infrastructure and the country’s agricultural sector. Almost two-thirds of Yemen’s 26 million people suffer from food shortages, with more than seven million acutely malnourished. Without giving the Houthi rebels any political support, we stand for their military defense against the Saudi-led, U.S.-backed war.

In “Down With Saudi-Led War in Yemen!” (WV No. 1070, 12 June 2015), we noted that “more than a century of imperialist depredation has served to retard, and indeed reverse, social progress.” Pointing to proletarian concentrations, especially in Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Israel, the article continued:

“The only way to overcome the backwardness of the semicolonial world and cast off the yoke of imperialism is the program of permanent revolution. The working class, leading the peasantry and all the oppressed masses, must seize power through socialist revolution—sweeping away all the capitalist regimes of the region: the sheiks, emirs, military strongmen and Zionist rulers.

“The proletariat in power would reorganize society on the basis of collectivized property and fight to extend the revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist centers. In breaking the chains of exploitation that enslave it, the proletariat will simultaneously open the door to the liberation of all—peasants, women, youth, national and ethnic minorities—who are oppressed under capitalism. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East will there be a full and equal place for all the myriad peoples of the region—Sunnis, Shi’ites and Christians as well as the Kurdish, Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish nations.”

This perspective may seem very distant given the regression of proletarian consciousness since the destruction of the Soviet Union and the seeming invincibility of the imperialists. But the irrationality of the imperialists’ rule is itself a reflection of the decay and contradictions of their profit system, out of which the class struggle will continue to erupt. Propagating the Marxist worldview is part of our effort to reforge the Fourth International through building Leninist-Trotskyist parties, from the semicolonial world to the imperialist heartlands. Such parties will bring to the fore the principle of international working-class unity across national, religious and communal boundaries, in opposition to imperialism and all forms of bourgeois ideology and religious reaction. ■



WV Map



Hussein led to a pro-Iran Shia regime in Iraq, where the U.S. is now in a military alliance not only with the Baghdad government but also Iranian-backed Shia militias. In Syria, Washington is backing Sunni fundamentalist rebels, mainly against the Alawite regime of Bashar al-Assad, an ally of Iran. At the same time, Washington continues to impose sanctions against Tehran. Workers in the U.S. and elsewhere must oppose these sanctions.

Under both Obama and Trump, the

as U.S. Commander-in-Chief, launched a Navy SEAL raid on a Yemeni village, killing some 30 civilians.

Now, as a result of the Saudi war, Yemen faces a massive cholera epidemic: at least 300,000 people have been infected and more than 1,700 have died. The epidemic has raged uncontrollably due to the lack of clean water supplies and sanitation systems. The disease has spread so widely that the World Health Organization has canceled plans to deliver an oral vaccine, also citing the danger posed for its personnel by Saudi bombing.

With U.S. and British backing, the Saudis have imposed a naval and aerial blockade of Yemen, worsening conditions for an impoverished population that relies heavily on imported food, fuel and other necessities. At least 10,000 people have

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Waving the Flag of Slavery in Charlottesville

“Alt-Right” Fascists: Shock Troops for Racist Genocide

In Virginia, the state where Confederate general Robert E. Lee was defeated and surrendered, the small city of Charlottesville has become ground zero for fascist defenders of the Southern slavocracy. On July 8, 50 Klansmen, many in the hoods and robes of lynch rope terror, rallied in defense of a statue of Lee that the city council had voted to remove. On top of this, a new breed of fascist organizations in the “alt-right” is calling for a “Unite the Right” rally on August 12 in front of Lee’s statue. The poster for the rally features armed troops marching under the battle flag of slavery, surrounded by monuments to military and other Confederate leaders and with Nazi-style eagles flying overhead. This is a direct attack against black people.

Emboldened by the “Make America Great Again” racism of the Trump administration, fascist organizations like Identity Evropa and the Traditionalist Worker Party have been staging provocations across the country. The fascists are paramilitary shock troops that are held in reserve

by the capitalist rulers and unleashed at times of social crisis against any prospect of revolutionary struggle by the working class. Their purpose is nothing less than the destruction of the workers movement, including unions and the left, and racial genocide. In the U.S., that means they especially have black people in their sights.

The roots of American fascism go back to the defeat of the Confederacy by the Union Army in the Civil War. The KKK and other race-terrorists came into being after that victory to bloodily suppress the newly freed slaves. No less than the Klan, the fascist vermin in the “alt-right” today represent a threat to the very right of black people to exist.

To date, this new crop of fascists has mainly aimed its fire at Muslims, immigrants, Jews and the antifas (anti-fascist activists) who have mobilized against them. Feeling the wind in their sails, they are now openly building for race-terror against black people through their “Unite

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Cops (above) in Charlottesville protected KKK rally from thousand-strong anti-fascist counterprotest, July 8.

Polaris

Reuters



Drop All Charges Against Darryl Goodwin!

NYPD Targets Transit Worker

On May 16 New York City subway station agent Darryl Goodwin, a member of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, was arrested at work and held overnight. His supposed “crime” was not opening a platform gate fast enough for a gang of cops chasing a suspected shop-lifter. Goodwin was helping a customer at the noisy and crowded Columbus Circle station when he heard a call of “Gate! Gate!” but could not tell who was shouting. Instead of using their duty MetroCards or keys to open the gate, the thugs in blue stormed to his booth. Furious that Goodwin hadn’t immediately buzzed them in, they screamed at him and banged on his enclosure. Following company procedure, Goodwin opened the gate as soon as he verified who wanted access.

The cops went to the platform, but quickly returned to confront Goodwin. When Goodwin produced his work ID on demand, the cops concocted a story that he had attacked a police lieutenant with his ID badge. Goodwin, who has had a



TWU Local 100 members stand in solidarity with victimized co-worker Darryl Goodwin (above) at June 29 court hearing.



Burke/NY Daily News (inset); WV Photo

spotless job record for nearly three decades, now faces charges of obstructing government administration, resisting arrest and causing injury to a police officer. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) suspended him without pay, not

reinstating him until late June. As a July 22 protest letter by the Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—noted, “Pursuing these bogus charges is clearly a vendetta against

a black transit worker who was not sufficiently servile as far as the police were concerned.” **Drop all charges against Darryl Goodwin! Restore his lost wages!**

This racist frame-up is an attack on the whole union. His defense has struck a chord among many TWU members, who are all too familiar with the NYPD’s arrogance and brutality. Importantly, nearly 50 transit workers, many of them station agents, came out to Goodwin’s court hearing on June 29. Sending a message to the court that they had Goodwin’s back, the workers stood in unison when his name was called. In response, a court officer barked: “Sit down! Sit down!” The transit workers turned to stare at the cop and paused before taking their seats, having made their point.

The power of TWU Local 100 must be mobilized in Goodwin’s defense. The leadership of Local 100 has supported Goodwin and helped with his legal defense. The union tops issued a call for members to

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