

Drop Charges Against Rakem Balogun!

FBI Targets Black Activists

Capping more than two years of surveillance, heavily armed FBI agents invaded the Dallas, Texas, apartment of Rakem Balogun in the early morning hours of December 12. Separated from his 15-year-old son, Balogun was then forced to stand outside in his underwear while the Feds ransacked his home. An activ-

ist against rampant cop terror and a co-founder of the Huey P. Newton Gun Club and other groups devoted to black armed self-defense, Balogun (previously known as Christopher Daniels) was charged with unlawful possession of a firearm after a pistol and assault rifle were seized. With prosecutors invoking Micah Johnson's

shooting of five Dallas cops in 2016, the judge denied Balogun bail for being a "threat to the community," although he had no connection to Johnson, and the FBI conceded at the bail hearing that he had made no threats against the cops.

A statement by the Rakem Balogun Defense Committee described him as

"a Marine Corps veteran guided by the spirit of freedom, justice and equality to defend those that have none of those things." Balogun's trial is set to begin on March 26, and he faces up to *ten years in prison*. It is of vital importance for opponents of racist cop terror, advocates *continued on page 5*

South Africa: Zuma Out, Ramaphosa In ANC Factions: No Side for Workers



Gallo

Cyril Ramaphosa (above left) and Jacob Zuma celebrate their election to ANC leadership in December 2012, four months after ANC-led government's cops massacred 34 striking miners at Marikana (right).



Foto24

We print below excerpts from an article written in January by our comrades of Spartacist South Africa for their newspaper. That month, the African National Congress (ANC) removed Jacob Zuma as head of the party. On February 14, after more than a week of tense behind-the-scenes talks, the ANC leadership succeeded in pressuring him to resign as president of South Africa, making way for the new ANC head, Cyril Ramaphosa, to take over. That same day, police raided a residence of the Guptas—a capitalist family originally from India with ties to Zuma—carrying out multiple arrests.

* * *

The African National Congress's 54th national conference, held in December,

was one of the most bitterly divided in its 106-year history. And while the official party rhetoric since the conference has shifted to emphasising "unity," the results of the conference show clearly that the ruling party remains evenly split between the two main factions. On the one hand, the faction behind Cyril Ramaphosa won the prize of getting him elected to succeed Jacob Zuma as president of the ANC. At the same time, the main rival faction—supporters of Zuma, who remains president of South Africa—is well represented in the ANC's leading bodies.

The (mainly white) big bourgeoisie and its media mouthpieces were, for the most part, firmly in Ramaphosa's corner. They breathed a sigh of relief over his victory, with the rand gaining significantly against

the U.S. dollar. This relief, however, has been tempered by concern that Ramaphosa could be constrained, by a divided ANC leadership, in acting swiftly on the capitalists' most pressing issues. In particular, the latter are hoping that Ramaphosa can broker a deal to quickly remove Zuma and his close allies from their positions in the government. There are worries that Zuma and Co. could increasingly resort to populist manoeuvring in order to hold on to power.

A case in point was Zuma's surprise announcement of free higher education for families earning up to R350,000 [\$30,000] per annum, made at the start of the ANC conference in an unsuccessful attempt to garner support for Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, his preferred candidate to succeed

him as ANC president. This policy pronouncement was met with consternation by the capitalists, who are keenly looking to Ramaphosa to cut government spending and for whom it makes very little financial sense to invest in the education of the black masses. While clearly done by Zuma for his own hypocritical purposes, this is a significant concession to the working class and poor which comes after years of on-and-off mass protests against fees....

Notwithstanding their bitter quarrels with one another, all factions of the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance are committed to maintaining the system of capitalist exploitation. This was amply demonstrated by the massacre of 34 striking black mineworkers in Marikana five years *continued on page 6*



For a Black-Centered Workers Republic!

Black History and the Class Struggle

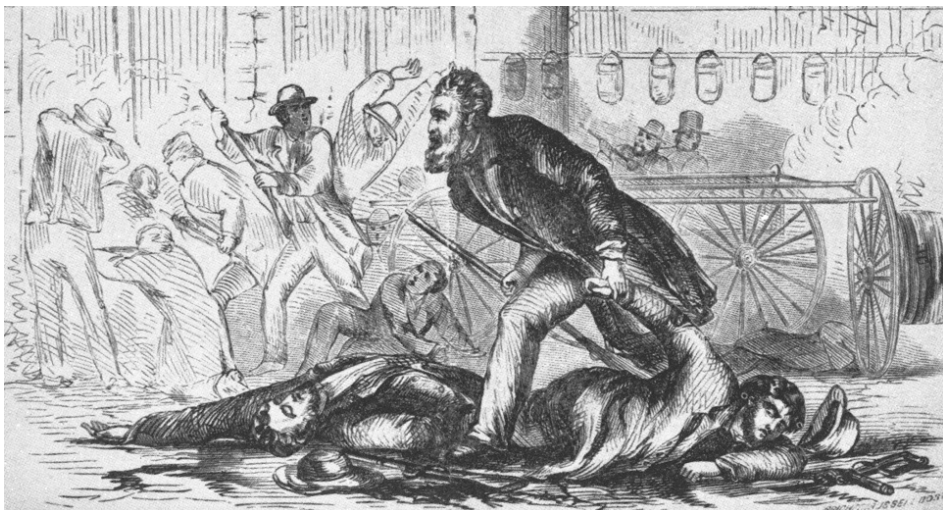
In Honor of John Brown

On 16 October 1859, revolutionary abolitionist John Brown led an armed and racially integrated group in a daring raid on the Harpers Ferry federal arsenal in what was then Virginia. His aim was to procure arms, free slaves in the area and lead his army into the mountains where they could establish a liberated zone and, as needed, wage war against the slave masters. Brown's forces fought heroically but were overwhelmed and defeated by U.S. marines led by Robert E. Lee, who would soon become the commander of Confederate forces during the Civil War. Brown and his surviving comrades were captured. On December 2, he was hanged.

Throughout his life, John Brown burned with hatred for slavery. Several years before the Harpers Ferry raid, in what became known as "Bleeding Kansas," John Brown and several of his sons led a struggle to crush pro-slavery forces and ensure that Kansas entered the Union as a free state. On the day of his execution, he scrawled a small note to a friend that prophetically stated: "I John Brown am now quite *certain* that the crimes of this *guilty land*: will never be purged *away*; but with blood." The raid on Harpers Ferry was the real opening shot of the Civil War, which broke out in 1861. It took the blood and iron of that war, including the 200,000 black soldiers and sailors who helped ensure Union victory, to finally destroy the American slave order.

We print below extracts of a 30 May 1881 address by Frederick Douglass paying tribute to the courage of John Brown. The speech was delivered at Storer College, a historically black college in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Douglass, who had escaped slavery in 1838, was an electrifying agitator and one of the most powerful champions of black freedom in America's history.

As Trotskyists, we stand in the revolutionary tradition of John Brown and Frederick Douglass. We fight to complete the unfinished tasks of the Civil War, which require sweeping away the American cap-



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly

Engraving depicts John Brown with his dying sons as Robert E. Lee's troops break into his stronghold at Harpers Ferry, 1859.

italist order. As we wrote in the first issue of *Black History and the Class Struggle* (1983), "The whole system stands squarely counterposed to black freedom. Forward to the third American Revolution, a proletarian revolution led by a Trotskyist vanguard party with a strong black leadership component. Finish the Civil War—For black liberation in a workers' America!"

John Brown

An Address by Frederick Douglass

The bloody harvest of Harper's Ferry was ripened by the heat and moisture of merciless bondage of more than two hundred years. That startling cry of alarm on the banks of the Potomac was but the answering back of the avenging angel to the midnight invasions of Christian slave-traders on the sleeping hamlets of Africa. The history of the African slave-trade furnishes many illustrations far more cruel and bloody...

Your interests, like mine, are in the all-commanding figure of the story, and to him I consecrate the hour. His zeal in the cause of my race was far greater than

mine—it was as the burning sun to my taper light—mine was bounded by time, his stretched away to the boundless shores of eternity. I could live for the slave, but he could die for him. The crown of martyrdom is high, far beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, and yet happily no special greatness or superior moral excellence is necessary to discern and in some measure appreciate a truly great soul. Cold, calculating and unspiritual as most of us are, we are not wholly insensible to real greatness; and when we are brought in contact with a man of commanding mold, towering high and alone above the millions, free from all conventional fetters, true to his own moral convictions, a "law unto himself," ready to suffer misconstruction, ignoring torture and death

for what he believes to be right, we are compelled to do him homage....

Slavery is indeed gone; but its long, black shadow yet falls broad and large over the face of the whole country. It is the old truth oft repeated, and never more fitly than now, "a prophet is without honor in his own country and among his own people." Though more than twenty years have rolled between us and the Harper's Ferry raid, though since then the armies of the nation have found it necessary to do on a large scale what John Brown attempted to do on a small one, and the great captain who fought his way through slavery has filled with honor the Presidential chair [Abraham Lincoln], we yet stand too near the days of slavery, and the life and times of John Brown, to see clearly the true martyr and hero that he was and rightly to estimate the value of the man and his works. Like the great and good of all ages—the men born in advance of their times, the men whose bleeding footprints attest the immense cost of reform, and show us the long and dreary spaces, between the luminous points in the progress of mankind,—this our noblest American hero must wait the polishing wheels of after-coming centuries to make his glory more manifest, and his worth more generally acknowledged....

To the outward eye of men, John Brown was a criminal, but to their inward eye he was a just man and true. His deeds might be disowned, but the spirit which made those deeds possible was worthy [of] highest honor. It has been often asked, why did not Virginia spare the life of this man?

continued on page 4

Spartacist



Black History Month Forums

John Brown Revolutionary Abolitionist Fighter for Black Freedom

Finish the Civil War!

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

LOS ANGELES

**Saturday, February 24
4 p.m.**

Immanuel Presbyterian Church,* 3300 Wilshire Blvd.
(At Berendo St., 2 blocks west of Wilshire/Vermont stop
on Red/Purple Line. Entrance on Berendo.)

For info: (213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

*The views expressed by the participants are not necessarily those of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church.

NEW YORK CITY

**Saturday, February 24
3 p.m.**

322 West 48th Street, First Floor, Manhattan
(Between 8th and 9th Avenues—
Take A, C or E to 42nd Street)

For info: (212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Spartacist League / Spartacus Youth Club Day School

BAY AREA

**Saturday, March 3
12:30 p.m.**

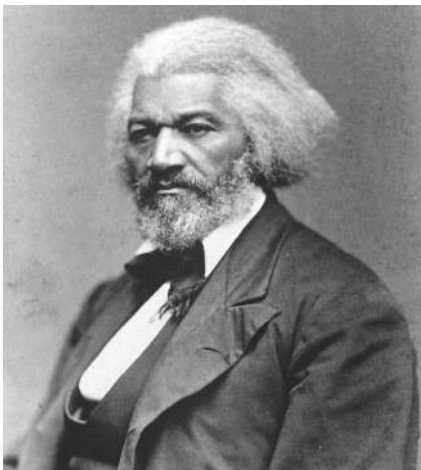
Rockridge Library, 2nd Floor
5366 College Ave., Oakland
(5 blocks from Rockridge BART, near Broadway)
For info: (510) 839-0851 • slbayarea@fastmail.net

**John Brown
Revolutionary Abolitionist Fighter for Black Freedom
12:30 p.m.**

**Communism and the Family
The Russian Revolution and
the Emancipation of Women
2:30 p.m.**



Library of Congress



National Archives

Militant abolitionists John Brown and Frederick Douglass.

WORKERS VANGUARD



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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Alan Wilde

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

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

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

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. Email address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

The closing date for news in this issue is February 20.

No. 1128

23 February 2018

Citizenship Circus

Australasian
SPARTACIST 

There already exists a permanent subclass of well over two million Australians who do not have citizenship. They cannot vote, cannot freely go in and out of the country, and can be deported. The whole citizenship frenzy deepens a climate of fear and racism where those without citizenship can be targeted as suspected fifth colum-

Keystone

When Japan's army took Singapore during the Second World War, the shocked Australian bourgeoisie realised they could no longer rely on the Motherland to defend their White European outpost in Asia. As the sun began to set on Britain's massive colonial empire at the end of World War II, the ruling class was keen to

The Constitution that politicians today are lining up to swear undying allegiance to is the birth certificate for a nation-state founded on genocidal wars and total dispossession of the original inhabitants, along with exclusion and expulsion of other “non-whites.” One of the first laws passed by the Australian parliament was the White Australia policy. Even while the 1948 Act established some sort of

continued on page 4

[illegible]

John Brown...

(continued from page 2)

why did she not avail herself of this grand opportunity to add to her other glory that of a lofty magnanimity?...

Slavery was the idol of Virginia, and pardon and life to Brown meant condemnation and death to slavery. He had practically illustrated a truth stranger than fiction,—a truth higher than Virginia had ever known,—a truth more noble and beautiful than Jefferson ever wrote. He had evinced a conception of the sacredness and value of liberty which transcended in sublimity that of her own Patrick Henry and made even his fire-flashing sentiment of “Liberty or Death” seem dark and tame and selfish. Henry loved liberty for himself, but this man loved liberty for all men, and for those most despised and scorned, as well as for those most esteemed and honored. Just here was the true glory of John Brown’s mission. It was not for his own freedom that he was thus ready to lay down his life, for with Paul he could say, “I was born free.” No chain had bound his ankle, no yoke had galled his neck. History has no better illustration of pure, disinterested benevolence. It was not Caucasian for Caucasian—white man for white man; not rich man for rich man, but Caucasian for Ethiopian—white man for black man—rich man for poor man—the man admitted and respected, for the man despised and rejected. “I want you to understand, gentlemen,” he said to his persecutors, “that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of the colored people, oppressed by the slave system, as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful.” In this we have the key to the whole life and career of the man....

It must be admitted that Brown assumed tremendous responsibility in making war upon the peaceful people of Harper’s Ferry, but it must be remembered also that in his eye a slave-holding community could not be peaceable, but was, in the nature of the case, in one incessant state of war. To him such a community was not more sacred than a band of robbers: it was the right of any one to assault it by day or night. He saw no hope that slavery would ever be abolished by moral or political means: “he knew,” he said, “the proud and hard hearts of the slave-holders, and that they never would consent to give up their slaves, till they felt a big stick about their heads.” It was five years before this event at Harper’s Ferry, while the conflict between freedom and slavery was waxing hotter and hotter with every hour, that the blundering statesmanship of the National Government repealed the Missouri compromise [of 1820, which banned slavery in most of the northern part of the Louisiana territory], and thus launched the territory of Kansas as a prize to be battled for between the North and the South. The remarkable part taken in this contest by Brown has been already referred to, and it doubtless helped to prepare him for the final tragedy, and though it did not by any means originate the plan, it confirmed

him in it and hastened its execution....

Such was the man whose name I heard uttered in whispers—such was the house in which he lived—such were his family and household management—and such was Captain John Brown. He said to me at this meeting, that he had invited me to his house for the especial purpose of laying before me his plan for the speedy emancipation of my race. He seemed to apprehend opposition on my part as he opened the subject and touched my vanity by saying, that he had observed my course at home and abroad, and wanted my co-operation. He said he had been for the last thirty years looking for colored men to whom he could safely reveal his secret, and had almost despaired, at times, of finding such, but that now he



Black Union Army recruits in Philadelphia during Civil War. Black troops helped turn tide for North’s victory over slavocracy.

was encouraged for he saw heads rising up in all directions, to whom he thought he could with safety impart his plan. As this plan then lay in his mind it was very simple, and had much to commend it. It did not, as was supposed by many, contemplate a general rising among the slaves, and a general slaughter of the slave masters (an insurrection he thought would only defeat the object), but it did contemplate the creating of an armed force which should act in the very heart of the South. He was not averse to the shedding of blood, and thought the practice of carrying arms would be a good one for the colored people to adopt, as it would give them a sense of manhood. No people he said could have self-respect or be respected who would not fight for their freedom....

Slavery was a state of war, he said, to which the slaves were unwilling parties and consequently they had a right to anything necessary to their peace and freedom. He would shed no blood and would avoid a fight except in self-defense, when he would of course do his best. He believed this movement would weaken slavery in two ways—first by making slave property insecure, it would become undesirable; and secondly it would keep the anti-slavery agitation alive and public attention fixed upon it, and thus lead to the adoption of measures to abolish the evil altogether. He held that there was need of something startling to prevent the agitation of the question from dying out; that slavery had come near being abolished in Virginia by the Nat. Turner insurrection, and he thought his method would speedily put an end to it, both in Maryland and Virginia. The trouble was to get the right men to start with and money enough to equip them. He had adopted the simple and economical mode of living to which I have referred with a view to save money for this purpose. This was said in no boastful tone, for he felt that he had delayed already too long and had no room to boast either his zeal or his self-denial.

From 8 o’clock in the evening till 3 in the morning, Capt. Brown and I sat face to face, he arguing in favor of his plan, and I finding all the objections I could against it. Now mark! this meeting of ours was full twelve years before the strike at Harper’s Ferry. He had been watching and waiting all that time for suitable heads to rise or “pop up” as he said among the sable millions in whom he could confide; hence forty years had passed between his thought and his act.

Forty years, though not a long time in the life of a nation, is a long time in the life of a man; and here forty long years, this man was struggling with this one idea; like Moses he was forty years in the wilderness. Youth, manhood, middle age had come and gone; two marriages had been consummated, twenty children had called him father; and through all the storms and vicissitudes of busy life, this one thought, like the angel in the burning bush, had confronted him with its blazing light, bidding him on to his work....

Two weeks prior to the meditated attack, Capt. Brown summoned me to meet him in an old stone quarry on the Conocochequi river, near the town of Chambersburgh, Penn. His arms and ammunition were stored in that town and

could see Harper’s Ferry only as a trap of steel, and ourselves in the wrong side of it. He regretted my decision and we parted....

But the question is, Did John Brown fail? He certainly did fail to get out of Harper’s Ferry before being beaten down by United States soldiers; he did fail to save his own life, and to lead a liberating army into the mountains of Virginia [now West Virginia]. But he did not go to Harper’s Ferry to save his life. The true question is, Did John Brown draw his sword against slavery and thereby lose his life in vain? and to this I answer ten thousand times. No! No man fails, or can fail who so grandly gives himself and all he has to a righteous cause. No man, who in his hour of extremest need, when on his way to meet an ignominious death, could so forget himself as to stop and kiss a little child, one of the hated race for whom he was about to die, could by any possibility fail. Did John Brown fail? Ask Henry A. Wise in whose house less than two years after, a school for the emancipated slaves was taught. Did John Brown fail? Ask James M. Mason, the author of the inhuman fugitive slave bill, who was cooped up in Fort Warren, as a traitor less than two years from the time that he stood over the prostrate body of John Brown. Did John Brown fail? Ask Clement C. Vallandigham, one other of the inquisitorial party; for he too went down in the tremendous whirlpool created by the powerful hand of this bold invader.

If John Brown did not end the war that ended slavery, he did at least begin the war that ended slavery. If we look over the dates, places and men, for which this honor is claimed, we shall find that not [South] Carolina, but Virginia—not Fort Sumpter, but Harper’s Ferry and the arsenal—not Col. Anderson, but John Brown, began the war that ended American slavery and made this a free Republic. Until this blow was struck, the prospect for freedom was dim, shadowy and uncertain. The irrepressible conflict was one of words, votes and compromises. When John Brown stretched forth his arm the sky was cleared. The time for compromises was gone—the armed hosts of freedom stood face to face over the chasm of a broken Union—and the clash of arms was at hand. The South staked all upon getting possession of the Federal Government, and failing to do that, drew the sword of rebellion and thus made her own, and not Brown’s, the lost cause of the century.

—Reprinted from John Brown/Boyd B. Stutler Collection, a Feature of West Virginia Archives and History■

Australia...

(continued from page 3)

Australian citizenship, the country’s original inhabitants were still long denied the rights of citizens. In many cases treated as wards of the state, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ families were broken up and the most intimate personal decisions (including who they could marry and where they could live) rested in the hands of government “protectors.”

The celebrated 1967 referendum removed the two negative and only references to Aborigines in the Constitution. Supported by a massive “Yes” vote, the referendum amended the Constitution to allow the long-overdue counting of Aboriginal people in the Commonwealth census and remove the exclusion of Aboriginal people from its “Race Powers” clause. The latter change gave the federal government power to make laws in relation to Aborigines and was widely seen as a way to undercut harsh, discriminatory state laws. In reality, however, by amending this clause of the Constitution, the referendum *reaffirmed* the power of the federal government to make special laws based on race. Such laws in the past had been used to expel dark-skinned people from the country. Fifty years on from the landmark referendum, life remains brutal and grim for the majority of Indigenous people. (See “NT Intervention: Ten Years of Heightened Racist State Terror,” *ASP* No. 232, Spring 2017.)

The overtly racist clauses of the Con-

stitution have been a source of mild international embarrassment for recent Australian rulers. Thus, in 2012, the Gillard Labor government set in train a campaign for “Constitutional Recognition” of Indigenous people. This was to build support for a referendum to expunge the racist clauses and simultaneously give paper recognition to the existence of the original inhabitants. This campaign culminated in a July report by a Referendum Council hand-picked by Prime Minister Turnbull and Opposition leader, Bill Shorten. After understandable anger from many Aboriginal people at having to seek “recognition” from their racist oppressors, the Council recommended the creation of a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous body to advise parliament on Aboriginal matters.

Even this tokenism was too much for Turnbull’s government. They unceremoniously killed the proposal, its Council and the whole five-year multi-million dollar exercise. One could rarely find clearer confirmation that today’s capitalist rulers and their parliamentary representatives march in the footsteps of the colonial conquerors who carved White Australia out of the living body of Aboriginal peoples. To hell with the bosses’ parliamentary circus! For a government of workers councils, forged in revolutionary struggle by the multiracial proletariat. The Spartacist League fights for proletarian rule, where all working men and women will be accepted regardless of race, creed or colour, as part of a socialist brotherhood of Asia on the road to a world communist society.■

A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1.50

Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 25

Racist Police Terror U.S.A.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

No. 25, July 2016

\$1.50 (64 pages)

Black History is sent to WV subscribers.

Make checks payable/mail to:

Spartacist Pub. Co., Box 1377 GPO

New York, NY 10116

UC Berkeley Cops Attack Black Unionist

OAKLAND—At a February 1 rally on the University of California (UC) Berkeley campus called by Local 3299 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), campus cops brutally assaulted black union member David Cole, a 51-year-old dining hall worker. A video of the attack shows multiple cops grabbing Cole from behind, slamming him to the ground and grinding his face into the pavement, inflicting injuries that required hospital treatment. Cole was arrested and slapped with bogus charges of vandalism and resisting arrest. Unions representing UC technical workers, faculty, librarians, teaching assistants and student employees have joined with Local 3299 in protesting this racist, anti-labor attack.

The police assault took place minutes after the crowd of over 100 union members and supporters had moved into a Berkeley intersection at the entrance to the campus. As described by Local 3299 organizer Libertad Ayala, one driver tried to drive his car through the crowd, hitting a number of protesters. Another rally participant, a member of the Undergraduate Workers Union, told *Socialist Worker* (8 February) that the driver then got out of his car to demand the cops arrest Cole, who had been yelling, “Stop, don’t run people over, stop hurting us!” The cops then jumped Cole, later manufacturing the lie, echoed by the UC administration, that he had thrown his

Defend David Cole!

placard at the car and threatened the driver.

The 24,000-strong Local 3299 called the rally at Cal in support of its heavily minority service employees, patient care workers and others throughout the UC system. Union members have been working without a contract after being stonewalled by the administration in negotiations last year. While UC bosses grant themselves lavish raises and plan to jack up tuition again, they demand that these workers continue a five-year wage freeze as well as take cuts to their health and pension benefits. At the same time, the administration continues the union-busting practice of contracting out work at low, non-union wages.

The union timed its February 1 statewide rallies to mark the day 50 years ago when two black sanitation workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were crushed to death on the job in Memphis, Tennessee. Their hideous deaths sparked a victorious nine-week, union-organizing strike by the sanitation workers. Martin Luther King Jr., who was in Memphis to support the strike, was assassinated there on 4 April 1968. In its statement protesting the police assault on David Cole, Local 3299

wrote: “At a peaceful protest honoring the generations long struggle of black workers who risked everything to win dignity and fair treatment on the job, the University of California decided to engage in police tactics more befitting of the Jim Crow South.” In fact, such police tactics have always been the norm throughout the country and throughout its history.

UC’s own statewide police force has a long record of brutal repression against radical students, unions and minorities. Today, their boss is UC president Janet Napolitano, who as Obama’s Homeland Security chief prosecuted the racist “war on terror.” If AFSCME or other unions strike, the campus cops together with their fellow thugs in blue will be mobilized to attack their picket lines. Yet the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy actively organizes such lethal enemies of labor and black people into the ranks of the unions. Nationally, AFSCME misleaders have organized tens of thousands of cops and prison guards, who are a central part of the capitalist state. ***Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions!***

Some who have rallied to the defense



Paul Darwin Picklesimer

UC Berkeley cops brutalize campus worker David Cole, February 1.

of Cole have raised calls to reform the UC police or to hold them “accountable.” Such illusions are dangerous. Racist repression and union-busting *is the job* of the cops as the enforcers of capitalist class rule against the working class, black people and all the oppressed. As the assault on David Cole once again drives home, the fight against black oppression and the struggle of all workers against exploitation are inseparably linked. ***Defend David Cole! Drop the charges now!*** ■

Activists...

(continued from page 1)

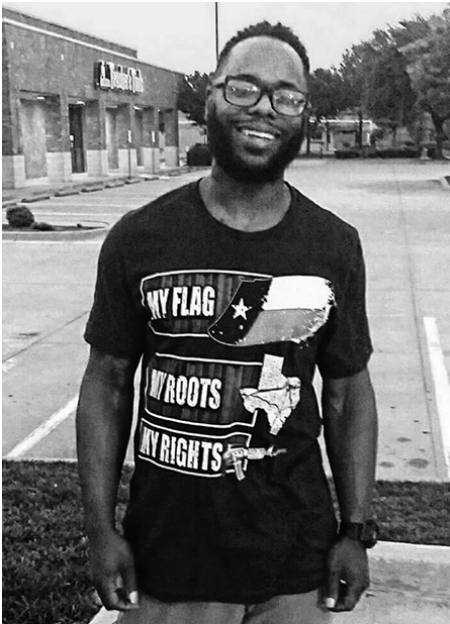
of black gun rights and defenders of the right to assemble and protest to defend Balogun. His arrest is the first of a black activist known to be branded a “Black Identity Extremist” (BIE) by the FBI.

Concocted as part of a racist blowback against Black Lives Matter, this designation is a “domestic terrorist” smear that draws a bright neon target on anyone with dark skin who questions the authority of the cops to stop, frisk, taser, choke and shoot black people and Latinos. Activist/attorney Kamau Franklin pointed to the gravity of Balogun’s prosecution: “This is obviously the first of what will be several attempts to begin to criminalize black organizing, militant black organizing in particular, and work their way down to other types of organizing.” ***Free Rakem Balogun! Drop the charges!***

Shortly before his arrest, Balogun posted a video on YouTube warning of the BIE label, “The next time you try to go to a protest or raise awareness, don’t be surprised when Homeland Security pulls up.” His friends have been tracked down by the FBI and questioned about his activities and their own political beliefs. According to the FBI’s definition, a Black Identity Extremist is someone who looks to “unlawful acts of force or violence, in response to perceived racism and injustice in American society.” The FBI has long had black political organizations in its sights. The very fiction of a black conspiracy to kill cops is a page right out of the playbook of the FBI’s Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) that targeted “black extremists” in the 1960s-70s.

Initially intended as a weapon against the Communist Party, COINTELPRO’s deadliest fire was directed at the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, founded in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. The FBI used COINTELPRO to disrupt and destroy the Panthers, the best of a generation of black radicals. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover declared the Panthers to be the “greatest threat to the internal security of the country” and vowed in 1968 that “the Negro youth and moderates must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries.” His agents followed through on that threat. Thirty-eight Panthers were killed and hundreds more imprisoned.

COINTELPRO is commonly identified with the Republican Nixon administration.



Rakem Defense Committee

Rakem Balogun, activist against cop terror, targeted by FBI as “extremist.”

But it was Robert F. Kennedy who authorized wiretaps on Martin Luther King Jr. and another Democratic attorney general, Ramsey Clark, who initiated the ghetto informant program and issued orders to expand COINTELPRO operations against “Black Nationalist Organizations.”

Likewise, today’s BIE designation is attributed to the brazenly racist Trump White House. But the initial push to designate black protesters a threat to law enforcement came from FBI director James Comey under the Obama administration. The Southern Poverty Law Center, which is known for tracking the KKK, Nazis and other fascist organizations, provided liberal cred to the racist witchhunters last August with its report “Return of the Violent Black Nationalist.”

When the FBI’s BIE report was leaked late last year, Democratic Representative Karen Bass, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, questioned why there was no “White Identity Extremist” designation. The American capitalist order is built on the bedrock of racial oppression—and that order is defended by Democrats and Republicans alike, no matter their skin color or gender. The FBI launched its investigation of Balogun after the right-wing, conspiracy-themed InfoWars website posted a video of him at a March 2015 Texas protest against police brutality. That video featured prominently in his bail hearing. Similarly, California cops collaborated with outright fascists in going after well-known activist Yvette

Felarca. Now, she and two others face criminal charges for defending themselves and other protesters against fascist attacks in Sacramento on 26 June 2016 (see “Drop All Charges Against Anti-Fascist Protesters!” WV No. 1116, 25 August 2017).

Citizenship and the Right to Bear Arms

That Balogun faces ten years behind bars for gun possession in Texas of all places is down to one reason: He is a black man. In 2007, after being traumatized in jail, Balogun was coerced by his court-appointed lawyer into pleading guilty to domestic abuse charges, rendering it illegal for him to possess a firearm under Texas law. The many thousands of black men and women thrown behind bars nationwide find themselves deprived of this basic citizenship right, along with the right to vote, upon their release. The reality is that 150 years after the slavocracy was defeated in the Civil War, basic citizenship rights are still withheld from much of the black population. When Philando Castile told a Minnesota cop who pulled him over on 6 July 2016 that he was legally armed, it didn’t stop the cop from blowing him away in front of his girlfriend and her four-year-old daughter.

Notably, the G-men who raided Balogun’s apartment carried away a copy of *Negroes with Guns*, the 1962 book by Robert F. Williams, who had been president of the heavily working-class NAACP chapter in Monroe, North Carolina. The book recounts courageous episodes of armed defense against the KKK and their killer cop allies. Driven out of the NAACP with the assistance of Martin Luther King Jr. and abandoned by the liberal, pro-Democratic Party civil rights leaders to face arrest at the hands of the Feds, Williams fled the country and found refuge in Cuba and later China.

For America’s rulers, there is little more frightening than the specter of black people with guns. In the infamous 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that black people “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.” The author of that decision, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, noted with horror that if black people were recognized as citizens, they would be entitled to certain rights, including the right “to keep and carry arms wherever they went.” Any serious reading of the history and social reality of this country makes clear the necessity of black self-defense. As race-terror swept the Jim Crow South

in the late 19th century, anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells wrote:

“The only times an Afro-American who was assaulted got away has been when he had a gun and used it in self-defense. “The lesson this teaches and which every Afro American should ponder well, is that a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give.”

As Marxists, we vigorously uphold the Second Amendment right to bear arms. In the struggle to build and defend unions, from the West Virginia and Kentucky coalfields to the docks and trucking hubs, workers armed themselves against scabs and other strikerbreakers. Following World War II and the Korean War, armed black vets formed the foot soldiers for the early struggles against Jim Crow in the South. Both the white reactionaries who oppose gun control and the liberals who promote it share a common program: keep guns out of the hands of black people.

In 1965, the New York City Council passed a bill specifically to prevent Malcolm X from carrying a carbine for his protection; he was assassinated shortly afterward. In 1967, the California legislature banned the carrying of a loaded gun after a demonstration by Black Panthers at the State Capitol in Sacramento. The state ban was followed by gun control laws nationwide, especially after the ghetto upheavals that broke out following MLK’s assassination in 1968. As we have always underlined, ***gun control kills blacks!***

For black people, armed self-defense and other basic rights were won, guns in hand, with the Civil War that smashed slavery. Although that war, the Second American Revolution, smashed slavery, the promise of black equality and integration remains unfulfilled. Its unfinished tasks demand the sweeping away of the capitalist order through proletarian socialist revolution, a third American revolution in which black workers are slated to play a leading role.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—has donated to Rakem Balogun’s legal defense and commissary funds, and urges others to do the same. To donate go to: freerakembalogun.org/home. To write to Rakem Balogun, address letters to: Christopher Daniels, ID 56601-177, FCI Seagoville, Federal Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 9000, Seagoville, TX 75159. ■

South Africa...

(continued from page 1)

ago, the blood of which stains the hands of the leaders of both the Ramaphosa and the Zuma factions. At the moment, both factions are pushing for amendments to the Labour Relations Act that would severely restrict the right to strike and impose government arbitration—a blatant attack on the power of the trade unions which must be fought with hard class struggle.

Reflecting the seething anger that many mineworkers in the platinum belt still feel towards the ANC and Ramaphosa, the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) responded to Ramaphosa’s election in a 19 December press statement with denunciations of his so-called “New Deal.” Correctly warning that this economic programme is aimed at attacking the right to strike and implementing brutal austerity, the AMCU statement noted: “The reaction of the markets demonstrates how big capital, domestic and foreign, perceive the new leader of the ANC as the gatekeeper to their interests.” At the same time, the AMCU statement promotes dangerous illusions in the bourgeois ANC, including by urging the new leadership to “discard their pro-market, pro-big business programme that has left a trail of social and economic destruction.”

For the working class, it is suicidal to entertain illusions in, or give the slightest political support to, any of the ANC factions. As the wave of wildcat strikes following the Marikana massacre powerfully demonstrated, the working class does not lack for militancy and bravery. This country’s industrial proletariat—centred on the mines, large manufacturing and transport—has the social power and historic interest to bring the racist capitalist exploiters to their knees and begin the reconstruction of society on an egalitarian, socialist basis, under a black-centred workers government. This alone shows the way to achieving the genuine liberation so yearned for by the masses that fought to end apartheid.

This perspective is based on the theory of permanent revolution developed and generalised by Leon Trotsky, co-leader along with V.I. Lenin of the Russian Revolution. Recognising that in the countries of belated capitalist development the national bourgeoisie is too weak and dependant on imperialism to complete the historic tasks of social and economic modernisation, Trotsky posited that in these countries, “the complete and genuine solution to their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation” (*The Permanent Revolution*, 1930). This places the tasks of socialist construction on the agenda, which ultimately require international extension of the revolution to succeed. Trotsky’s permanent revolution was powerfully confirmed by the 1917 October Revolution.

For the proletariat to lead such a struggle, standing at the head of the non-white toilers and all the oppressed, it must be guided by its own class interests and the strictest political independence from *all* bourgeois parties—whether the ANC or the bourgeois parties of the opposition. In contrast, for more than two decades the Tripartite Alliance of the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and

the trade union federation COSATU has treacherously subordinated the mainly black working class to the racist capitalist exploiters. The SACP and COSATU tops were four square behind Zuma when he became ANC president in 2007, and loyally backed him as his government gunned down the workers in Marikana. Currently, they have shifted their support to Ramaphosa. In the days leading up to the Marikana massacre, Ramaphosa acted as a board member of Lonmin [the company the workers were striking against] to demand that the ANC government take “concomitant action” against the striking mineworkers.

The Tripartite Alliance is a nationalist popular front—a class-collaborationist alliance between the capitalist ANC and workers organisations that serves to enforce bourgeois rule. The ideological

plaints that control over the state has been usurped, under Zuma’s presidency, by the corrupt and nefarious capitalist upstarts of the Gupta family, to whom South Africa is allegedly being “sold.” In response, Zuma, the Guptas and the would-be black capitalist exploiters in their camp call out the hypocrisy of the Randlords and their mouthpieces in order to cynically present their own looting as a valiant struggle on behalf of the oppressed black majority.

Enough of this nonsense! What both sides in this bogus “debate” seek to obscure is the true nature of the *neo-apartheid capitalist system*, because both are 100 percent committed to its maintenance. Under neo-apartheid, the same white bourgeoisie that ruled under apartheid remains firmly in the saddle, now joined by a small handful of non-white capitalists who’ve “made it,” while the black masses continue to suffer

class that its rule would be maintained. The pass laws, influx control and other measures that made up apartheid’s rigid, legally enforced system of racial segregation and white minority rule were done away with. But the underlying socio-economic structure of the society, based on the superexploitation of black labour and ensuring the privileges of the white minority, remained untouched.

Contrary to the pious, deceitful phrases about the state being a benevolent instrument for “democracy and development,” the state, as Lenin explained, “is an organ of class *rule*, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of ‘order,’ which legalises and perpetuates this oppression” (*The State and Revolution*, 1917). Zuma and Co. have not “betrayed” the system that was put in place in 1994, but have—like Zuma’s predecessors—faithfully administered the state on behalf of the Randlords.

Nothing demonstrated this truth clearer than the Marikana massacre of 16 August 2012, when the cops of the Tripartite Alliance government gunned down 34 black mineworkers in cold blood, injuring 78 others, in an attempt to crush a bitter strike against London-based platinum magnate Lonmin. In the aftermath of the massacre, as the strike wave spread to mines across the platinum belt and elsewhere, a virtual state of emergency was imposed and the army was called in as standby to assist the police. As Lenin pointed out, *proletarian* rights are always thrown to the wind by capitalist states when the workers begin to rebel against wage slavery:

“There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a ‘violation of public order,’ and actually in case the exploited class ‘violates’ its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner.”

—*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, 1918

While Marikana is the starkest example to date, it was no aberration but a concentrated expression of what it means for the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance to administer neo-apartheid capitalism. Since 1994, the Alliance government has regularly sent in the cops to brutalise striking workers and protesting township dwellers, round up and deport immigrants, evict landless people, etc.

We have consistently politically opposed all wings of the bourgeois ANC. At the time when Nelson Mandela took office and declared the blood-drenched country “free at last,” virtually the entire left here and internationally called for a vote to the ANC and was ecstatic over the “new” South Africa. In contrast, we told the bitter truth and counterposed a revolutionary programme for black liberation based on the application of permanent revolution to the specific social reality in South Africa. For example, in the 1995 article, “ANC Fronts for Racist Exploiters,” we explained:

“In South Africa the struggle of labor against capital is integrally bound up with the struggle of the oppressed black African people against white domination. The proletarian revolution is at once the supreme act of national liberation....

“We have sought to encapsulate the Trotskyist program for South Africa in the slogan of a ‘black-centered workers government.’ Today, the social power and combativity of the black African proletariat is manifest for all to see. However, for the black working class to lead the struggle for national liberation it is necessary to break with the nationalist misleaders of the African National Congress, who now openly act as the junior partners of the Randlords.”

—“South Africa Powder Keg,” Part One, reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12, February 1995

From the standpoint of the working class and oppressed, it is the betrayal of the non-white majority’s just struggle for national liberation, made possible through the heinous political crime of subordinating the proletariat to the capitalist exploiters through the Tripartite Alliance, that represents by far the biggest swindle perpetrated under the “new” South Africa. ■



Reuters

Johannesburg: Wits University students demand free education, October 2016.

glue binding this treacherous alliance is the myth of the “national democratic revolution” (NDR), which asserts the need for a capitalist “stage” during which leadership of the national liberation struggle falls to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. In reality, the “NDR” has meant writing off the struggle for socialism. It has also served as a justification for the reformist misleaders of the SACP and COSATU to administer neo-apartheid capitalism, which entails the brutal suppression of the workers and popular protests. The Marikana massacre demonstrates what we Trotskyists have always said about “two-stage revolution,” and what has been shown by a long list of Stalinist betrayals stretching back to the beheading of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution: in the first stage the “progressive” bourgeoisie comes to power; in the second stage workers are massacred.

Neo-Apartheid and the “State Capture” Sham

It is a damning indictment of the current misleaders of the working class and their left coat-tails that, just five short years after Marikana, political life in South Africa is dominated not by the impact of that watershed event but by the farce that is the “state capture debate.” This “debate” is in reality the ideological cover for a struggle over money and influence between competing (though vastly unequal) capitalist factions. On the one hand, the big bourgeoisie—the Randlords, etc.—com-

brutal exploitation and grinding national oppression. Whether led by Ramaphosa, Zuma or their predecessors, the Tripartite Alliance rules loyally on behalf of the racist exploiters. It is this system of neo-apartheid that must be reckoned with by the proletariat, which has no interest supporting either side of the farcical conflict around “state capture.”

The hue and cry over so-called “state capture” has many aims, but at bottom seeks to channel popular discontent into defence of the capitalist state and the bourgeois constitution. Exploiting widespread anger at the venal corruption of Zuma and other ANC leaders, this propaganda serves to divert attention from the capitalist rulers they serve and thus is an attempt to shore up the neo-apartheid system and its founding mythology of the “rainbow nation” at a time when they are increasingly discredited. A good example is the report published in May 2017 by the State Capacity Research Project. Appealing for the defence of the state against “capture” by Zuma and Co., the authors plead:

“The nation needs to realise that the time has come to defend the founding promise of democracy and development by doing all that is necessary to stop the systemic and institutionalised process of betrayal that is now in its final stage of execution. It is not too late. The 1994 democratic promise remains an achievable goal.”

—*Betrayal of the Promise: How South Africa is Being Stolen*

So the “Beloved Country” is being “stolen”?! And this, several centuries after the white European colonisers began their dispossession of the native peoples and over a century after this dispossession was codified and legalised in the Natives Land Act! Not only are the black, coloured and Indian toilers who bear the brunt of poverty, massive unemployment, crumbling to non-existent health care and education, police violence, and countless other social ills in this wretched, oppressive society expected to believe that Zuma and the Guptas are the source of it all! No, they are also lectured by these sanctimonious bourgeois professors that “the time has come” to rally round the status quo, anointed in 1994, that Zuma and his cronies are allegedly “betraying.”

The “1994 democratic promise” was above all a promise to the rapacious, colonial- and apartheid-derived capitalist

Spartacist South Africa

Newspaper of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Issue No. 14 (32 pages) **US\$1 R2**

Subscription (4 issues) **US\$4 R10**

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

In South Africa:
Spartacist, P.O. Box 61574
Marshalltown, Johannesburg 2107
South Africa

SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

No. 14 October 2017

Blade, VCs Unleash Apartheid-Style Repression on Student Protests



For Free, Quality Education for All! Working-Class Power Must be Mobilised!

Other left press's Free Must Fall protests were not with violent state repression, the university administration managed to avoid any loss by heavily controlling the protests and the police. The police used the opportunity to arrest and detain students and to use the police to suppress the protests. This was highlighted when the police of higher education, Black Students, set up the committee on...

Issue 17 is, among other things, also close to certain the student protests. No National Day is the new area that already has ready are they, how ready are we to government? This comes on the heels of many other protests. This was highlighted when the police of higher education, Black Students, set up the committee on...

Down with State Repression Against Student Protesters.....4
Black's Black Consciousness: A Liberal Nationalist Programme.....6
On Coloured Marginalisation and the Fight for a Black-Centred Workers Government.....11
Fidel Castro 1926-2016: Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!.....21
"Communism and the Family" by Alexandra Kollontai.....32

Printed by trade union labour at the print factory of Lithwick Corporate

6

WORKERS VANGUARD

Nina Droz...

(continued from page 8)

medication. She has endured the torture of solitary confinement on two occasions now: for 28 days in a federal facility in Puerto Rico and, again, for 13 days in Tallahassee. In the latter case, she was explicitly punished for translating (from Spanish to English) a letter to the prison warden demanding medical treatment for prisoners with Hepatitis C, HIV, diabetes and cancer.

On February 9, Droz was transferred back to Puerto Rico, where the Comité de Amigos y Familiares de Nina Droz Franco (Committee of Family and Friends of Nina Droz Franco) held a solidarity rally. As the committee wrote in a February 8 press release: “The unequivocal goal of this prosecution has been of a political and repressive character to teach a lesson to people who seek to exercise their con-

stitutional rights to freedom of expression and others in the face of a panorama of increased austerity.”

The treatment of Nina Droz is a stark example of the countless ways the U.S. tramples on its colonial subjects. The real criminals are the imperialists who have bloodily repressed independence fighters, including by bombing Jayuya to crush the 1950 uprising. The looters of the island’s wealth are the U.S. capitalists, together with their Puerto Rican lackeys. The latest round of plundering is taking place under the control of a management board imposed by Obama in 2016. Known as the “junta,” this U.S. body has enforced savage austerity to make the Puerto Rican working people pay the banks and hedge fund vultures for the debts racked up by the capitalists. The junta is chaired by José B. Carrión III, a member of the family dynasty whose fortune comes from Banco Popular. *Cancel Puerto Rico’s debt!*

It was in opposition to the junta’s attacks

on jobs, education and health care that thousands of workers and students shut down the island on May 1, rallying outside the financial institutions lining San Juan’s “Golden Mile.” Cops attacked and arrested protesters, including trade-union leaders mobilizing in support of students, who were continuing a months-long strike at the University of Puerto Rico. Within an hour of the rally, owners of the Banco Popular filed a lawsuit against 42 organizations, including unions, student and leftist groups, demanding that these be banned from holding future protests. The imperialist bloodsuckers and their Puerto Rican cronies had clearly prepared a smear campaign in advance to clamp down on protests and intimidate activists, including by making an example of Droz. The fear tactics have continued—two of Droz’s supporters were arrested at a rally demanding her freedom last June.

The persecution of Nina Droz and many Puerto Rican activists before her

is emblematic of the racist, colonial subjugation of the Puerto Rican nation. As opponents of national oppression and U.S. imperialism, we favor independence for Puerto Rico. The sentiment of many Puerto Ricans toward the status of their country is contradictory. There is intense hatred toward the vicious U.S. overlords; at the same time, many Puerto Ricans fear that independence would mean increased poverty on the island and loss of the ability to live and work in the U.S. We therefore stress the right of independence for Puerto Rico and seek to win the multiracial American working class to this demand. *Free Nina Droz now!*

* * *

The Committee of Family and Friends of Nina Droz Franco asks that letters of solidarity be sent to: Nina Alejandra Droz-Franco, 50427069 3C, Metropolitan Detention Center, P.O. Box 2005, Cataño, P.R. 00963-2005. ■

L.A. Times...

(continued from page 8)

the country to the other. In Los Angeles, 20,000 demonstrated.

In the midst of this struggle, SP candidate Job Harriman (one of the McNamaras’ defense attorneys) was poised to win the upcoming mayoral election. To avert an SP victory and put an end to the labor struggle, the city rulers needed convictions in the McNamara case. Help came from the brothers’ lead attorney, Clarence Darrow, who engineered a plea deal that was signed off by L.A. business leaders, including Otis and Chandler. Under the final deal, James was made to confess to planting the dynamite. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, while his brother received 15 years. In an interview decades later, John made clear that “neither Jim nor I wanted to plead guilty. We wanted the case to go to trial.” He denounced Darrow for concealing from the brothers the massive working-class support they had. John said that had he and James known the truth, they would have never gone along with the plea deal.

Darrow’s double cross had a demoralizing effect on the L.A. working class. The street protests came to an abrupt end; Harriman lost the election; and the militant organizing campaign of 1910-11 was derailed. In a treasonous move the AFL leadership denounced the McNamaras as criminals and demanded that they be punished. The convictions set back the L.A. labor movement for decades.

Organize the Unorganized!

While journalists and editors are petty-bourgeois professionals, the unionization of the *L.A. Times* newsroom represents a victory against the labor-hating bosses. Widely viewed today as a liberal newspaper, the *L.A. Times*, like every capitalist news outlet, is in the business of molding public opinion in defense of capitalist rule—from justifying imperialist war to witchhunting communists and other leftists and demonizing black people, Latinos and the poor. Thus, the *Times* still regularly publishes anti-union diatribes. In 2004, the paper, acting on behalf of the

city’s rulers, launched a propaganda blitz against King/Drew Medical Center, which was the main trauma center for the impoverished, predominantly black and Latino Watts/South-Central/Compton triangle. Especially targeting the heavily black and unionized nurses—as well as black doctors—the *Times* offensive, which earned it a Pulitzer, succeeded in shutting down the hospital in 2007.

During the Otis/Chandler dynasty, L.A.’s rulers first sought to keep out and then brutally exploited the hundreds of

sterism” and claimed that the servicemen were simply out “to defend themselves from zoot suit attacks.” A decade later, the *Times* helped kill public housing plans on the grounds that they were “socialistic.”

The open shop in Los Angeles undermined conditions for all working people and served to intensify and further entrench the brutal oppression of black people, immigrants and other minorities. Enforcing the rule of the city fathers against the majority of the city’s population, the LAPD has long been among the



Pickets stop truck at Vons distribution center in El Monte, California, during UFCW grocery workers strike, December 2003.

thousands of whites who tried to move West to escape starvation-level poverty in the Dust Bowl during the Great Depression. At the same time, L.A. increasingly came to resemble a Southern city, with the small but growing black population subjected to Jim Crow-style oppression: housing covenants, job discrimination, segregated swimming pools and beaches. For its part, the *Times* fomented white hostility against Mexicans and black people. Amid the “Zoot Suit” riots of June 1943, when white sailors and soldiers went on a racist rampage against young Mexicans (and blacks) in downtown L.A., the *Times* (11 June 1943) denounced “zoot suit gang-

most notorious police forces in this country for its racist terror. This cop violence ignited social explosions such as the Watts ghetto uprising in 1965 and the multiracial rebellion in 1992, sparked by the acquittal of the racist cops who brutally beat Rodney King. As we wrote in “L.A. Flashpoint U.S.A.” (reprinted in *Black History and*

the Class Struggle No. 9, August 1992): “That the LAPD rivals the military in some Third World military dictatorship is because they have never felt the mobilized power of an organized labor movement.”

In the last few decades, Southern California has experienced successful unionization drives among hotel workers, dry-wall installers, janitors and home health care workers. This organizing in large part reflects the significant growth of the Latino workforce in the region, including immigrants who bring traditions of labor militancy from their countries of birth. Today, Latinos make up nearly half of the population of Los Angeles County; at the time of the Watts rebellion, the population of greater L.A. was 85 percent white.

Los Angeles is one of the most unequal cities in the U.S., where legions of poor and homeless people live side by side with a small minority flaunting their money, mansions and Maseratis. The growth in unionization that has taken place in L.A. has occurred against the backdrop of a steep decline in union membership nationwide over the last several decades. This wretched state of affairs can be laid at the doorstep of the trade-union bureaucracy, which identifies the interests of the workers with those of the capitalist ruling class and its political parties. An integral component of the Democratic Party, the trade-union bureaucracy has served to launch the careers of many politicians, such as former L.A. mayor (2005-13) Antonio Villaraigosa, who was previously a teachers union organizer.

As we wrote in “L.A. Flashpoint U.S.A.”: “What is desperately needed is common *class struggle* to unite organized labor with all strata of the oppressed *against* their common capitalist oppressors who have impoverished and brutalized the working people who built the wealth of this country. This requires the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party to act as a ‘tribune of the people.’” ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail

☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

☐ I would like to contribute \$_____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

1128

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

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.

Local Directory and Public Offices

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

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

ChicagoBox 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (312) 563-0441

Los AngelesBox 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (213) 380-8239

New YorkBox 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (212) 267-1025

OaklandBox 29497, Oakland, CA 94604
slbayarea@fastmail.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (510) 839-0851

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE IN QUEBEC AND CANADA

MontréalCP 83 Succ. Place-d’Armes, Montréal, QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578
trotskyste.montreal@gmail.com

TorontoBox 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

VancouverBox 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
tl.vancouver.bc@gmail.com

23 FEBRUARY 2018

7

WORKERS VANGUARD

Puerto Rican Protester Framed Up by Feds Free Nina Droz!

Last May 1, Nina Droz Franco, who was participating in a mass rally in San Juan during a Puerto Rican general strike, was arrested for lying down on a road. She has been in prison ever since. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) snatched her from the custody of the Puerto Rican police that night. On May 3, she was indicted by federal prosecutors based on outrageous claims that she had tried to burn down a bank.

Asserting jurisdiction because the Banco Popular building in San Juan is used for “interstate commerce,” the Feds charged Droz with “malicious use of fire” and “conspiracy,” which carry a sentence of up to 30 years in prison. The main piece of “evidence” was video footage of a small piece of paper burning on a marble walkway outside the building. The Feds themselves even admitted that the building was never on fire! Nina Droz is the

victim of a transparent frame-up by the U.S. colonial overlords, who have bloodily repressed and starved the Puerto Rican people for more than a century.

Droz initially pleaded not guilty. But facing decades in prison, she took a plea deal last July on the lesser charge of conspiracy, with a maximum sentence of just over three years. More than six months later, she still awaits sentencing, which is currently scheduled for March 8. There is no guarantee that the judge in her case, who has already denied her bail, will follow the prosecution’s recommendation.

An art teacher, former model and student at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), Droz has been vilified as a violent criminal by prosecutors and the bourgeois media. As Droz’s mother stated at a February 9 press conference: “Nina went there as a protester, as a student, as one of those who were at the march defending the right

**Nina Droz (left)
being seized by
federal agents in
Puerto Rico,
May 2017.**



El Nuevo Día

to study at the public university.” Presenting fiction as fact, the chief prosecutor claimed that Droz boasted of being “the fire breathing girl,” conveniently concealing that this was a role Droz played in the 2013 Hollywood movie *Runner Runner*.

After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico last September, Droz was transferred to the Federal Detention Center in Tallahassee, Florida. This was clearly intended to send a chilling message to Puerto Rican activists. This is the same prison in which

Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña member Ángel Rodríguez Cristóbal was found dead in his cell in 1979, with his head gashed and his body covered in bruises. Like Droz, he had been arrested at a demonstration, sentenced to six months for protesting U.S. military exercises on Puerto Rico’s island of Vieques.

From the moment the Feds seized Droz, they have singled her out for cruel treatment, including by denying her necessary

continued on page 7

— Over the Dead Body of General Otis — *L.A. Times* Newsroom Unionizes

In January, journalists and editors of the *Los Angeles Times* voted 248-44 to join the NewsGuild-Communications Workers of America, a welcome blow against this labor-hating publication. Through much of the 20th century, the newspaper was the leader and organizer of the bosses’ war to bust L.A.’s union movement and maintain Southern California as a bastion of the racist open shop. The journalists’ recent success, combined with the fact that the pressmen are already organized, should be seen as an opportunity to spur the rest of the paper’s workforce to organize.

Tronc, the company that owned the paper during the organizing drive, sought to intimidate the journalists with threats of pay cuts and layoffs and created a shadow newsroom made up of staff that could potentially be used as scabs. This is typical of the union-busting *Times*. Over the past ten years alone, anti-union forces at the paper unsuccessfully tried to decertify the pressmen’s union five times. Despite the organizing victory in the newsroom, contract negotiations have yet to begin and the union’s position remains tenuous. Less than three weeks after the journalists voted to unionize, the *Times* is now being sold to L.A. billionaire Patrick Soon-Shiong, who was a substantial shareholder in Tronc while it was trying to crush the newsroom’s unionization bid.

From its appearance in the early 1880s as a right-wing rag under Harrison Gray Otis, the *Times* would earn the reputation “as the most powerful and persistent enemy of organized labor in America, a role of which Otis was intensely proud”

(Robert Gottlieb and Irene Wolt, *Thinking Big: The Story of the Los Angeles Times, Its Publishers and Their Influence on Southern California* [1977]). A robber baron who liked to be addressed as “General,” Otis, together with his son-in-law Harry Chandler, led a cabal of railway tycoons, developers and bankers that molded L.A. into a strikebreaking and scabherding haven for the capitalist bosses. The Otis/Chandler dynasty ruled and looted the city and much of Southern California for several generations.

“Los Angeles Daily Liar”

Otis fought tooth and nail to rid his newspaper of any hint of union organization. While the printers won a union shop

in 1883-84, Otis used lockouts and scabs some years later to drive the union out. He would eventually open a school to train linotype operators as reserve strikebreakers. Meanwhile, the pages of the paper were filled with venomous anti-labor tirades, prompting Socialist Party (SP) leader Eugene V. Debs to brand it the “Los Angeles Daily Liar.”

By the first decade of the 20th century, low-wage L.A. was “a city of slave owners, slave drivers, and chattel slaves,” as one unionist put it. To ensure “economic freedom,” Otis set up the anti-union Merchants and Manufacturers’ Association (M&M), which came to represent 80 percent of the city’s companies and ran the police force as its own private army.

In June 1910, 1,500 metal trades workers struck 25 L.A. firms—the largest strike in the city’s history until that time. An anti-picketing ordinance was passed, and cops arrested hundreds. Then on October 1, two explosions ripped through the *L.A. Times* building, killing 21 people. Before the blood could dry, the *Times* screamed on its front page, “Unionist Bomb Wrecks the Times.” Labor leaders denied the accusation, pointing to a leaky gas jet and the strong odor of gas fumes on the evening of the disaster. Some even accused Otis himself of ordering an attack on the building. The capitalist rulers pinned the blame on the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers Union (IBSIW), framing up two unionists for murder: John J. McNamara, the secretary-treasurer of the IBSIW, and his brother James.

The McNamara case roiled L.A. labor and was followed closely by workers throughout the country. The Socialist Party, the Industrial Workers of the World, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and a host of individual unions came out for the McNamaras. Even conservative AFL leader Samuel Gompers denounced the case as a frame-up, while the AFL Executive Council organized to raise funds for legal defense, declaring that the brothers were the “innocent victims of capitalist greed.” In June 1911, 80,000 workers gathered in Chicago against the drive “to hang J.J. McNamara and wreck union labor.” And on Labor Day—renamed “McNamara Day”—protests occurred from one end of

continued on page 7

**Brothers James and John
McNamara, framed up
for murder following
1910 explosion at building
of viciously anti-union
Los Angeles Times.**



Herald-Examiner

