

Down With U.S. Imperialist Support for Israel!

Zionist Killing Fields in Gaza

MAY 15—On the eve of the 70th anniversary of the founding of Israel, known to the Palestinians as the *Nakba*, or Catastrophe, the Zionist military machine celebrated its supremacy over the besieged Palestinian people in Gaza, killing more than 60 yesterday alone. Since March 30, when the Great March of Return protests began, over 100 Palestinians have been massacred and well over 12,000 wounded, many maimed for life. In a symbolic demonstration to mark their right to return to the land from which they were expelled, masses of protesters gathered near the border in Gaza and were pummeled with high-velocity bullets from Israeli soldiers on the other side. As drones dropped tear gas to suffocate the crowd, snipers shot scores of protesters in their legs for the crime of walking on their own land.

In Gaza, almost two million Palestinians are encaged by Israel and Egypt, surrounded by barbed wire, armed towers and the Mediterranean Sea. The vast majority of the population is made up of refugees and their descendants, driven from their homes during the 1948 war. For over a decade, they have been subjected to a crippling economic blockade and a constant military siege. Israel's 2014 assault, backed by the Obama White House, killed over 2,000 and left the territory in rubble. With Gaza's health care system in a state of collapse

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Trump Scraps Nuclear Deal, Threatens "Regime Change"



Left: During Macron's visit to Washington to appeal for maintaining Iran nuclear deal, Trump gives French president *le grand brush-off*, April 24. Right: Iranian protesters in front of former American embassy in Tehran denounce U.S. withdrawal from accord, May 9.

U.S. Hands Off Iran!

MAY 14—President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and the imposition of draconian sanctions mark a dramatic escalation of U.S. imperialist aggression toward Iran. This move is completely in line with the position of anti-Iran hawks like new national security adviser John Bolton and new secretary of state Mike Pompeo, whose aim is nothing less than "regime change" in that country.

While the decision to withdraw from the deal has increased tensions between the U.S. and European imperialist powers, which have investments in Iran that are now threatened with U.S. sanctions, it has been wholly welcomed by Washington's key Near East allies, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Within a few hours of Trump's announcement on May 8, Israeli forces launched a barrage of missiles against alleged Iranian sites outside the Syrian capital of Damascus. Fifteen people were killed, including eight Iranians.

Adopted in October 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is widely considered the Obama administration's signature diplo-

Down With Sanctions!

matic accomplishment. It was fiercely opposed by most Republicans, including adversaries like Trump and the now much-exalted, terminally ill John McCain, who in 2007 literally crooned "bomb Iran" to the tune of a Beach Boys song. In exchange for relaxing U.S. sanctions, which prevented European and other companies from doing business with Iran, the Iranian regime agreed to dramatically curtail its nuclear program and submit to international inspectors. In addition to the U.S. and Iran, Germany, France, Britain, the European Union, Russia and China signed on to the deal.

Barack Obama called Trump's decision "misguided," while House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi complained, "This rash decision isolates America, not Iran." For the Democrats, the whole point of the nuclear deal was to ensure the disarmament of Iran in the face of unrelenting hostility and threats from both the U.S. imperialists and their Israeli junior partners. In response to the outright lies of Trump and Israeli prime minister Benja-

min Netanyahu that Iran was subverting the agreement, Democratic spokesmen crowed that the deal "worked as intended" by preventing "Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon," as liberal darling Elizabeth Warren recently tweeted.

It takes some chutzpah for the U.S. rulers to rail against Iran possibly acquiring nuclear weapons. The U.S. capitalists possess enough nuclear firepower to destroy humanity many times over. The 1945 atomic bombing of Japan, which was ulti-

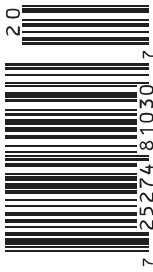
mately meant as a threat to the Soviet Union, epitomized the role of U.S. imperialism as the greatest menace to working people and the oppressed throughout the world.

In Iran itself, many doubtless recall the numerous crimes of the U.S., from the 1953 coup against nationalist leader Mohammad Mossadeq, which was orchestrated by the U.S. and British imperialists and brought back the hated Shah to power, to the shooting down of Iran Air flight 655 by the USS *Vincennes* 30 years ago this July (see "Massacre in the Persian Gulf," WV No. 457, 15 July 1988). Nearly 300 people were killed in that atrocity. The *Vincennes's* commanding officer was later

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Puerto Rico

Primero de Mayo
Policía ataca manifestantes
¡Por el derecho a la independencia!
Ver la página 8



Rakem Balogun Freed

After nearly six months of detention in federal prison on a bogus illegal weapons charge, Rakem Balogun, a 34-year-old black Texas activist targeted for his advocacy of black armed self-defense, is free. Because of his opposition to cop brutality and his support of gun rights, Balogun was designated a “Black Identity Extremist”—a label cooked up by the FBI to criminalize black organizing and to whip up racist fervor against Black Lives Matter and anyone else the government views as a threat. The Feds busted Balogun claiming he couldn’t own firearms due to a 2007 misdemeanor in Tennessee, a pretext the judge noted was baseless when dismissing the indictment on May 1. In an interview with the *Guardian* (11 May) after his release, Balogun called the ordeal the Feds put him through “tyranny at its finest.” He went on: “I have not been doing anything illegal for them to have surveillance on me. I have not hurt anyone or threatened anyone.”

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee join in celebrating the release of this courageous man who, due to the witchhunt prosecution, lost his home, job and car and missed much of the first year of his newborn daughter's life. We welcome the fact that the FBI failed in its first "Black Identity Extremist" prosecution. Balogun immediately resumed his self-defense training activities and public political activism, knowing full well that he will remain under FBI surveillance. "Obviously I have their attention indefinitely," he remarked in a separate interview.

The FBI first started watching Balogun following a right-wing InfoWars video focusing on him at a 2015 Austin protest against police brutality. Trying to make the case for “domestic terrorism,” the FBI cited Facebook posts where they falsely claimed Balogun was promoting violence against the cops because his posts condemned police terror against black people like Alton Sterling and Philando Castile. Agents also provocatively raised the killing of five officers in Dallas by Micah Johnson during a protest against police brutality in 2016.

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 and '70s, a point we noted in our earlier article calling to drop the charges against Balogun (see "FBI Targets Black Activists," *WV* No. 1128, 23 February). COINTELPRO resulted in the deaths of 38 members of the Black Panther Party and the imprisonment of hundreds more. One prominent Panther—killed by San Quentin prison guards in 1971—was George L. Jackson, whose book *Blood in My Eye* was seized from Balogun's apartment along with Robert F. Williams's 1962 *Negroes with Guns* when he was arrested in December.

While today's "Black Identity Extremist" designation is associated with an openly racist administration that has the support of white supremacists, the drive to label black protesters a threat to law

enforcement was revived with FBI director James Comey under Obama. In April 2016, Balogun came into the crosshairs of the Dallas cops, then under a black police chief and a Democratic mayor, after his group, the Huey P. Newton Gun Club, successfully quashed an armed provocation by an anti-Islamic white paramilitary group. Organizing hundreds of residents of historically black South Dallas, Balogun and his comrades defended a local Nation of Islam mosque against the “Bureau of American Islamic Relations” (BAIR), an outfit that prides itself on terrorizing mosques through staging open carry rallies and threatening antifa activists. BAIR boasted about Balogun’s arrest, underscoring how the cops and the white-supremacist terrorists work side by side.

Even in Texas, where firearms are assumed to be present in every home, automobile and handbag, the right of black people, Latinos and other minorities to carry a gun, much less use it, is always under attack. As Balogun noted in an online radio interview (MySkinsMySin.com), “What the government wanted was for me to be legally disarmed.” During his imprisonment, the government tried

Gaza...

(continued from page 1)

and the population banned from leaving for outside medical treatment, Palestinians have few options for survival let alone rehabilitation. Many gunshot victims are being treated by severing limbs, creating a new generation of amputees. One man captured the despair in the face of Israel's all-sided savagery: "We're dying slowly in Gaza anyway. It is better to die on the fence in an attempt to be free" (972mag.com, 14 May).

Some 60 miles away from the Gaza concentration camp, the streets of Jerusalem were lined with American and Israeli flags as a new U.S. embassy was baptized in gold. The moving of the embassy was not only a big middle finger to the Palestinians, who have long considered East Jerusalem their capital and a symbol of their national identity; it epitomizes the reactionary fraternity between President Trump and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has furthered the brutal occupation of the West Bank, expanding Jewish settlements and displacing Palestinians. In a provocation that was both galling and deranged, the prayers drowning out any peep of protest were led by pro-Trump Christian-Zionist pastor Robert Jeffress, notorious for condemning Jews as well as Muslims, Mormons and gay people to hell.

The White House, which supplies billions in annual aid for the Zionist arsenal, blamed the slaughter on Hamas, the Islamic fundamentalist rulers of Gaza. As quickly as the war machine cranked up, so too did the U.S. bourgeois propaganda machine: headlines decried “clashes” in Gaza, equating the victim with the perpetrator. The Israeli garrison state and U.S. imperialism sell the lie that there are no innocent civilians in Gaza and that Palestinians are a threat to Israel by their very existence.

The oppression of the Palestinians, including those who are citizens of Israel, is not simply the result of Netanyahu's right-wing policies, but is inherent to Zionism, which is based on the expulsion and dismemberment of an entire people. The "two-state solution" sham, premised on the

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Guardian

Dallas: Rakem Balogun, activist against cop terror and for black gun rights, after his release from prison.

to pressure Balogun into accepting a plea deal, but he refused, knowing that he would be legally barred from owning firearms. Given that over 90 percent of federal prosecutions end with a conviction, it is a feat that Balogun, a black radical, managed to evade for now the lifelong branding that millions of convicted felons suffer in racist, capitalist America. ***Hands off Rakem Balogun!*** ■

ghettoization of Palestinians, has long been dead. An appeal for a “one-state solution” is, at best, an accommodation to the status quo within Israel today. Only in a mythical dreamland would the Zionists allow themselves to be outnumbered by Palestinians with equal rights in a unitary state.

After decades of betrayals by their leadership and endless imperialist-brokered “peace talks,” the Palestinian people today struggle for any semblance of hope. Isolated, confronting unemployment, starvation and destitution, and with thousands languishing in Israeli prisons, many Palestinians face the prospect of a slow death, a form of “ethnic cleansing” by attrition. As defenders of Palestinian national rights, we stand for the right of return for Palestinian refugees and their descendants. But within the framework of capitalism, there can be no just or egalitarian resolution for the Palestinian people.

The Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab populations are interpenetrated, laying claim to the same land. In such cases under capitalism, the exercise of the right of national self-determination by one people necessarily comes at the expense of the other. The way forward lies in the struggle for socialist revolutions throughout the region, including shattering the Zionist state from within through Israeli working-class revolution. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East can conflicting claims over land and resources be equitably resolved, and all discrimination on the basis of language, religion and nationality be eliminated. *Hands off Gaza—Down with the starvation blockade! Israel out of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and the West Bank!* ■

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English edition Supplement
May 2018 (12 pages) **\$0.25**

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WORKERS VANGUARD

“Progressive” D.A. Shifts Appeal

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent— Free Him Now!

On April 30, lawyers for Mumia Abu-Jamal were once again in a Philadelphia courtroom fighting to overturn his 1982 frame-up conviction on charges of killing Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. Once again they found their path blocked by the same machinations of the cops, prosecutors and judges who condemned this innocent man to death row for 30 years and subsequently to the “living death” of life without parole. This time around the vendetta is being led by Larry Krasner, a “progressive” Democrat, whose election as district attorney last November was hailed by a coterie of liberals and reformist socialists. Krasner wasted little time before stepping into the wingtips of his predecessors in working to squelch any possibility of Mumia’s freedom.

Mumia has been in the crosshairs of the capitalist state since he was a teenage Black Panther Party spokesman in the 1960s. The Philly cops’ venom toward Mumia only grew in the 1970s when, as an award-winning journalist known as the “voice of the voiceless,” he exposed the racist police vendetta against MOVE, the largely black back-to-nature group he came to support. His trial and conviction were a classic frame-up involving close collaboration of cops, lying prosecutors and hanging judges: racist jury-rigging; terrorizing of witnesses; concealment of evidence; phony ballistics and other manufactured prosecution “evidence”; a “confession” concocted by cops and prosecutors. Presiding over the trial was Albert Sabo, who was overheard by a court reporter vowing to help the prosecution “fry the n---r.” At his 1982 trial, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views.

Federal and state courts have repeatedly refused to consider evidence of Mumia’s innocence, especially the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot Faulkner. After a federal court decision rescinded the death penalty and ordered a new sentencing hearing, state authorities in December 2011 dropped their efforts to carry out Mumia’s legal lynching, recognizing the unlikelihood of again procuring a death sentence.

The frenzied campaign to bury Mumia exemplifies the racist rulers’ determination to silence through state terror those fighting against black oppression, which is the bedrock of American capitalism. In this country, the first line of repression is directed at black people, with the aim of keeping workers divided along racial and ethnic lines to hamper joint class struggle against the capitalist exploiters. When Mumia faced execution in 1995, trade unions throughout the world, representing millions of working people, took up his cause. It is crucial that the labor movement defend this eloquent voice of defiant opposition. The fight to free Mumia from the clutches of the capitalist state is in the interest of the multiracial proletariat.

Currently in court is the Post Conviction Relief Act petition Mumia filed in 2016 challenging the judicial bias of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, which has repeatedly denied his appeals. Mumia’s challenge is based on a 2016 decision, *Williams v. Pennsylvania*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged that Pennsylvania’s judicial system was infected with potential bias because of the elevation of Ronald Castille, Philadelphia’s D.A. of the late 1980s, to the state’s Supreme Court in the 1990s. From that perch, Castille ruled on the legality of the very convictions and sentences he and his office secured. One of the cases in which Castille acted as both prosecutor and judge was Mumia’s. Castille served as a senior Assistant D.A. in 1982 during Mumia’s trial, and as *the* D.A. during Mumia’s direct appeal. Then as a state Supreme Court judge, Castille

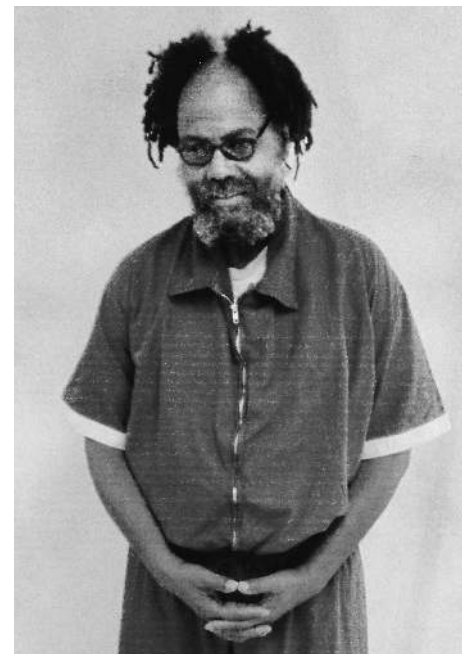
went on to rubber-stamp the gross violations of Mumia’s rights that he perpetrated as prosecutor.

To prevail, Mumia must show that while in the D.A.’s office, Castille had significant personal involvement in Mumia’s case, as he did in Williams’s case. Castille claims that he “didn’t have anything to do” with Mumia’s prosecution and that Mumia’s attorneys never “asked me to recuse myself on appeal when I was a justice. To me it was just another case” (*Legal Intelligencer*, 30 April). In fact, in 1998 Supreme Court Justice Castille wrote a lengthy decision denying a motion for his recusal from Mumia’s appeal.

It is preposterous for Castille to claim that he was just a bystander to Mumia’s case. Capital prosecutions and appeals are not “just another case,” but priorities for prosecutors, subject to strict oversight by D.A.s. In Philadelphia, there was no higher priority than Mumia’s case—for three decades the D.A.’s office worked

mists in the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Socialist Alternative (SALT) and Workers World (WWP) as a victory for the oppressed. The ISO cheered the electoral win of Krasner, and other “progressive” Democrats, last November, writing that it reflected “a desire for a political alternative to the status quo.” They even offered a pre-emptive alibi for him: “Everyone around him in his new position will fight tooth and nail against the least measures for reform he tries to introduce” (*SocialistWorker.org*, 14 November 2017).

After Krasner won the Democratic Party primary last May, SALT’s Philadelphia branch headlined, “Krasner Wins! Keep Building The Resistance!” WWP declared that “Krasner’s election victory was significant,” while also noting that “huge questions remain about Krasner’s ability to fulfill his supporters’ demands” (*Workers World*, 15 November 2017). They went into overdrive fueling illusions in this “new and more progressive DA,” urging activists to



Partisan Defense Committee
Former Black Panther and class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal in January.

politician, to deal with race as he again seeks the Democrats’ presidential nomination in 2020. While Krasner recounted the well-known “past practices” of racist cop brutality and prosecutorial cover-ups, neither Taylor nor the *Jacobin* host could muster even a whimper in protest against Krasner taking up the baton in the imprisonment of Mumia.

For the capitalist class whose interest he was elected to serve, D.A. Krasner did the “right thing” in pursuing Mumia’s continued incarceration. No less than the cops, courts and prisons, the D.A.s and U.S. federal attorneys are at the core of the capitalist state, an apparatus of violence whose purpose is to defend the class rule and property of the capitalist rulers against the working class and oppressed.

The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, has long fought for Mumia’s freedom. Ever since taking up Mumia’s cause in 1987, we have fought for his struggle to be taken up by broader social forces, centrally the multiracial proletariat, while aiming to dispel any illusions in the “justice” of the capitalist courts. We urge our readers to donate to Mumia’s legal defense. Checks payable to the National Lawyers Guild should be sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, Johanna Fernandez, 158-18 Riverside Drive W., Apt. 6C-50, New York, NY 10032, earmarked “For Mumia Abu-Jamal’s Legal Defense.” ■



May 4: Days after “progressive” Philly D.A. Larry Krasner (second from right) came out against Mumia’s appeal, ISO supporter Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (left) joined Daniel Denvir (of *Jacobin*’s *The Dig* podcast), Bernie Sanders and Premal Dharja of Civil Rights Corps at roundtable to “get race right,” while disappearing Mumia’s case.

hand in hand with the Fraternal Order of Police to secure Mumia’s death sentence.

Yet the Common Pleas judge now hearing Mumia’s petition, Leon Tucker, has placed the onus of establishing Castille’s involvement on Mumia’s attorneys. And they are to do this based on documentary evidence, which is in the possession of the D.A.’s office. Predictably, Krasner’s office claims that no such evidence exists.

Tucker has reviewed some of the files in chambers and discovered a March 1990 report to Castille from a Deputy D.A., Gayle McLaughlin, on the status of pending capital cases, including a discussion of Mumia’s appeal. Shortly after receiving McLaughlin’s report, Castille wrote to then Governor Robert Casey, urging him to jump-start Pennsylvania’s death row in order to “send a clear and dramatic message to all police killers that the death penalty actually means something.” McLaughlin’s report was written in response to a memo by Castille. The judge, Tucker, had ordered the D.A.’s office to produce the Castille memo to which McLaughlin was responding. But Krasner’s office claims that Castille’s memo has disappeared!

At the April 30 hearing, a phalanx of cops filled a row in the courtroom in solidarity with Krasner’s prosecutors and to counter protesters, including supporters of the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, who came out to defend Mumia. Tucker continued the case to August 30 to allow Mumia’s attorneys to take McLaughlin’s deposition testimony.

Grotesquely, the ascendance of Krasner to top prosecutor was hailed by the refor-

“keep up the pressure” so Krasner’s prosecutors would “do the right thing.”

On May 4, ISO supporter Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor joined Krasner and Bernie Sanders for a roundtable that appeared on *The Dig* podcast, which is produced by the Democratic Socialists of America-sponsored *Jacobin* magazine. The purpose of this gathering was to convince Democratic Party “socialist” Sanders, a capitalist

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Australia: Racist Outcry over China's “Influence”

We reprint below an article from *Australasian Spartacist No. 234 (Autumn 2018)*, newspaper of the *Spartacist League of Australia*, section of the *International Communist League*.

**Australasian
SPARTACIST**

Following months of U.S.-led sabre rattling and imperialist provocations against North Korea and China, the Australian federal government and sections of the bourgeois media have been whipping up a racist, anti-communist scare campaign against “undue” Chinese influence in Australia and the region. Citing reports of Chinese government interference in Australia’s political affairs, in December the prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, proposed new laws against “foreign interference” that radically expand the definition of treason and espionage. If passed, these sinister laws would ban “foreign entities” and non-citizens from donating to political groups (and unions), and establish a witchhunting “foreign agents” registry with jail terms for those who fail to register. The laws are so broad they have provoked widespread condemnation, from industry groups to media organisations. They can also serve to more easily ensnare and criminalise unionists and leftists. They have fed into the distrust and hostility that has been stirred up against the Australian Chinese population and drawn the ire of the Chinese government.

In January, Australia’s minister of international development, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, lashed out against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state—by far the largest and most powerful of the remaining countries where capitalism has been overthrown—denouncing it for “duchessing” [flattering] the region’s politicians and building “useless buildings” and “roads to nowhere.” The senator’s comments echoed a chorus of right-wing xenophobes who have taken to labelling Chinese investment a “predatory” plan to offer loans, create indebtedness and thereby threaten the sovereignty of countries in the region. According to this fiction, China would gradually displace Australian influence in its own “backyard” and ultimately threaten Australia itself. What particularly irks these reactionary “little Australia” nationalists is that China today is a significant economic and military

power that cannot be easily pushed around.

The current outburst of anti-China chauvinism also takes place in the context of Washington’s campaign to blame China for the economic malaise of U.S. capitalism. In late February, president Donald Trump threatened to impose up to U.S.\$60 billion in tariffs against some 1,300 Chinese-made imports. Trump’s brazen economic and military belligerence, combined with the Australian government’s own shrill campaign against Chinese interference in the region, has been met with horror by significant sections of the Australian capitalist ruling class. They do not want to be caught in a trade war between their great power ally, the U.S., and their major trading partner, China.

the economic instalment plan, continuing to enrich themselves through investment in and lucrative trade with China. At the same time they pursue their own predatory neocolonial interests in the region while ensuring that the Australian military continues to play its role as a counter-revolutionary gendarme under the U.S. umbrella.

Defend the Gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution

In the 19th century, China was carved up and lorded over by competing imperialist powers. This resulted in brutal exploitation for generations of Chinese. The 1949 Revolution changed all this. The peasant-based People’s Liberation Army, led by

foreign trade and instituted far-reaching “market reforms.” Nevertheless, despite these major capitalist inroads, China’s economy as a whole is not organised on the basis of capitalist production for profit. It remains dominated by state-controlled banks, and the core of industry is collectivised, an historic gain for the world’s working class that the imperialists strive to overturn.

Since the 1949 Revolution, China has gone from being a backward peasant country to a majority urban one, lifting some 600 million people out of poverty and creating a powerful industrial proletariat. Testifying to the superiority of a collectivised economy over production for profit, China’s economy surged ahead during the world capitalist economic crisis that erupted in 2007-08. Nonetheless, China remains a country of extreme contradictions, with great backwardness and a widening disparity in wealth. A nascent capitalist class now exists on the mainland. Although they have no cohered political leadership, this bourgeois layer increases the danger of internal capitalist counterrevolution. The social contradictions in China are growing and, when they do blow, either capitalist counterrevolution or workers political revolution will be posed.

As Leninist-Trotskyists who fight for world socialist revolution, we stand for the unconditional military defence of China, and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states of North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution. While we support the Chinese deformed workers state’s right to trade in order to procure what it needs to further its development, we also know that the Stalinists invariably pursue economic advancement in a narrow, nationalistic way.

In contrast, revolutionary Marxists such as Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks recognised that while the workers state might be compelled to strike trade deals and diplomatic agreements with capitalist states, they never confused this with the task of the communist party to lead the struggle for international working-class revolution. The fight to defend and extend the social gains won through the Chinese Revolution requires an additional revolution, a workers political revolution, to sweep away the ruling bureaucracy and establish a genuinely internationalist, communist leadership based on workers and peasants councils. Socialism—a society of material abundance—cannot be built in a single country but requires workers rule internationally, particularly in the most industrially developed countries.

Australian Imperialist Terror in the Region

The campaign against Chinese influence in the region is a racist and anti-communist beat-up—in reality, China’s investment is very small compared with the Japanese and Western imperialist powers. It also takes some chutzpah for an Australian federal minister to denounce the Chinese for building “useless” infrastructure given the role of Australian imperialism in the region. It has been one of unmitigated colonial terror and oppression, from the 19th century kidnapping of Pacific Islanders to work as indentured labour, to colonial terror in PNG [Papua New Guinea], to the more recent military incursions in East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

Acting as top cop of the southwest Pacific and junior imperialist partner to



Bourgeois media and anti-communist scribes stoke racist anti-China hysteria in Australia.

In early March, the Australia China Business Council (ACBC) slammed the federal government’s foreign influence bill, warning that it would damage economic ties between the countries. Mining magnate Andrew Forrest bemoaned that much of the current Australian debate about China “fuels distrust, paranoia and a loss of respect” and demanded it “has to stop.” The refusal by powerful segments of the Australian ruling class to back the outpouring of anti-China bellicosity has somewhat constrained the more open expressions of chauvinism and belligerent militarism, with the foreign affairs minister, Julie Bishop, refusing to endorse Fierravanti-Wells’ comments on China.

Furthermore, some seven weeks after Turnbull’s much-vaunted “100 years of mateship” tour to the U.S., the Australian government is yet to respond to Trump’s very public request that Australia join the U.S. in “freedom of navigation” military provocations against China in the South China Sea. Working in tandem with allies such as Australia and Japan, the ultimate aim behind such “exercises” is to enable a naval blockade of China, closing off shipping lanes and preventing Chinese naval forces from breaking out into the Pacific Ocean. We Trotskyists stand with China in any clashes over the islands and their Chinese installations which constitute a key component of the military defence of China.

While today a wing of the capitalist rulers balks at the creation of any discord with China, in the event of a military conflict between China and the U.S. there can be no doubt who the Australian bourgeoisie would side with. Sharing the U.S.’s strategic aim for capitalist restoration in China, much of the Australian bourgeoisie, however, prefer to do this on

Mao Zedong’s Chinese Communist Party (CCP) overthrew the imperialist-backed bourgeois-nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek’s Guomindang. It smashed the capitalist state, sweeping away the rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords, and lifted the heavy yoke of imperialist subjugation from the Chinese masses. This led to the development of a collectivised economy that laid the basis for enormous social progress for the worker and peasant masses, not least women.

However, in contrast to the 1917 Russian Revolution, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks, the Chinese workers state was deformed from its inception under the rule of the CCP regime. Resting atop the workers state, this nationally narrow, parasitic and bureaucratic caste modelled itself on the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, which had usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in a *political* counterrevolution beginning in 1923-24.

Like their Kremlin counterparts before them, successive Chinese regimes have pushed the Stalinist, nationalist dogma of “socialism in one country” or in the words of current Chinese president Xi Jinping, building “Socialism with Chinese characteristics, for a new era.” The corollary of this is their illusory quest for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. The pursuit of this anti-Marxist fantasy helps prop up the global bourgeois order. It has consistently undermined the defence of the workers states, not least through the betrayal of proletarian, revolutionary opportunities internationally.

Over time the Stalinist misleaders have invited imperialist investment into the country, given up the state monopoly of

**Australasian
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Autumn 2018

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Ugly Racist Outcry Over China's "Influence"

Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Australia

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the U.S., Australia has been in a blood-drenched, anti-communist military alliance with the U.S. since 1951. Under the ANZUS [Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty] pact, which particularly targeted the former Soviet degenerated workers state, the U.S. and Australian military slaughtered millions of workers and peasants from Korea to Vietnam to “contain” pro-Communist insurgencies that broke out across Asia following the military defeat of Japanese imperialism in WWII and the unravelling of British and other colonial rule. In 1965-66 Australia’s security forces collaborated with the CIA to help orchestrate an anti-Communist massacre in Indonesia. This bloodbath crushed the Indonesian Communist Party and served to “stabilise” Southeast Asia under the heel of imperialism at the cost of more than a million lives.

Today, under the U.S. alliance, Australia is engaged in its biggest military build-up since World War II. Most of this is naval and much of it will be heavily integrated with U.S. military systems. The U.S. was scheduled to deploy close to 1,600 Marines in Darwin from April, the largest number since the initial agreement for a base was negotiated by the [Julia] Gillard Labor government in 2011. The highly secretive U.S. Pine Gap spy base, stationed in the Northern Territory, is part of a string of military and intelligence bases that target China extending in an arc from central Asia to South Korea. In late January, Australia backed a new U.S. defence strategy that targets Russia and China as a greater threat to national security than “Islamic terrorism.” As part of our perspective to smash the ANZUS alliance through workers revolution and to defend China we demand: All U.S. bases and Marines out of Australia now! Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military! Australia get out of the South Pacific, Southeast Asia and the Middle East!

Xenophobic Attacks on Chinese Students

Anti-China fearmongering has targeted local Chinese businessmen, accused of being beholden to the CCP and of seeking to influence local politicians through donations. This led to the resignation of right-wing ALP [Australian Labor Party] senator Sam Dastyari last year, long smeared by the government benches and in the media as a stooge of China. The xenophobia being whipped up is having a particularly nasty impact on Chinese students studying in Australia. Last year, the head of ASIO [Australian Security Intelligence Organisation], Duncan Lewis, reportedly warned legislators that “We need to be very conscious of the possibilities of foreign interference in our universities,” adding that this “can go to the behaviour of foreign students... [and] of foreign consular staff.” His comments are part of an ongoing crusade against so-called Chinese influence on campuses. This has seen the Australia China Relations Institute at the University of Technology, Sydney, as well as the Confucius Institutes—Chinese-government-sponsored language and cultural centres on campuses—marked out as “suspect.”

The McCarthyite fiction being peddled is that universities are particularly vulner-

able to infiltration by the Chinese government. Education is Australia’s third largest export (after coal and iron ore) and many universities are financially reliant on full-fee paying international students, almost one-third of whom are Chinese. Numbering some 160,000, Chinese students are increasingly portrayed by reactionary forces as either potential dupes of, or spies for, the Chinese government. Supposedly “brainwashed” Chinese students, under the thumb of Chinese agents or consular staff, are penetrating Australian campus life and using their collective economic clout to pressure university administrations to tamp down on academic “freedoms.” Thus, the story goes, these students are deliberately undermining, if not gutting, Australia’s “democratic values” from within on behalf of the “evil puppet-masters” of the CCP.



Chinese Communist forces enter Beijing in 1949, ousting imperialist-backed regime and sweeping away capitalist rule.

These wild claims appear to rest on the fact that some Chinese students have dared to challenge disparaging and/or false assertions that university lecturers have made about China. One case reported in the *New York Times* (15 November 2017) was that of a Chinese student at Melbourne’s Monash University who condemned a quiz question in a business class where the so-called correct answer was, “Chinese officials are truthful only when careless or drunk.” The student’s complaint was picked up by the Chinese Consulate and pressure was brought to bear on the campus administration. It speaks volumes about the current climate that a professor at an elite university in a major city in Australia would propagate such piggish insults and think that it would go unchallenged.

There are plenty of poison pens ready to stimulate the anti-China frenzy. One of the more wretched and much promoted examples (pushed by key members of the parliamentary committee reviewing Turnbull’s espionage laws) is the book *Silent Invasion: China’s Influence in Australia*. Written by Greens supporter and Charles Sturt University professor, Clive Hamil-

ton, this book drips with “yellow peril” racism and anti-communist prejudice. In the vilest traditions of “White Australia,” Hamilton pushes the lurid fantasy that Australian educational institutions and industry are being penetrated and overtaken by “agencies serving the Chinese Communist Party,” even posing the threat that Australia could become a “tribute state of the resurgent Middle Kingdom”! Of course, at the same time he praises local Chinese anti-communists such as John Hugh from “Australian Values Alliance.” With strong backing from the bourgeois media, this sinister outfit successfully mobilised in 2016 to close down concerts organised in Sydney and Melbourne to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Mao Zedong’s death.

Hamilton’s book is so repugnant that it has been lauded by the fascist Australia

represented by ALP elder statesmen like former prime minister Paul Keating and former foreign affairs minister Bob Carr. The likes of Keating and Carr promulgate the lie that what benefits the large mining magnates and Australian capitalist system as a whole will have a trickle-down effect to the benefit of workers. Meanwhile, under pressure from their proletarian base to defend jobs and conditions, the protectionist union misleaders advance another lie—that unemployment can be solved if workers unite with their bosses to defend Australian industry against competitors and employ “local” labour first.

The union tops’ protectionism is a cover for their prostration before the bosses’ attacks on unions, jobs and conditions. They have scarcely lifted a finger to organise the growing numbers of unorganised workers, many of whom are vulnerable and deeply exploited immigrant, youth and women workers in casual and insecure jobs. When applied to China this protectionism is particularly pernicious in that it serves to line workers directly up behind their own imperialist rulers *against* a deformed workers state. A major campaign by the AMWU today is “The Force Behind Our Forces.” Calling to “Maintain Our [Military] Forces” and complaining about lack of planning and investment in “defence jobs,” the AMWU declares: “Our uniformed Defence Forces rely on a ‘silent army’ of civilian workers to support them.... To safeguard national security, Australia needs a civilian workforce capable of designing and maintaining a variety of military equipment.”

In opposition to such wretched nationalism and militarism, workers should be guided by the understanding that their true allies are not the “local” bosses but workers across the country and internationally. Gains that have already been won by the proletariat must be defended. In defence of the unions and the Chinese deformed workers state, a class-struggle leadership of the unions would organise workers (including those who build military vehicles and vessels) in protest against Turnbull’s vicious new security and espionage laws. Such a leadership would link opposition to state repression with the struggle to maintain the strength and integrity of the working class. Against unemployment, it would demand a shorter work week with no loss in pay to spread the available work around. This would be tied to the demand for a massive program of public works, paid at full union wages, to replace the dilapidated schools, hospitals and public transport systems, and provide decent housing for all. Such demands will not be granted by the capitalist rulers but point to the need for workers revolution to get rid of the whole rotting capitalist system.

We of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) stand in political opposition to the nationalist union misleaders and their reformist left tails such as Socialist Alternative, Socialist Alliance and the Communist Party of Australia who have all backed the union tops’ chauvinist anti-China campaign (see “Defend the Gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!” *ASp* No. 228, Autumn 2016). It is no surprise that these “little Australia” reformists regularly call for a vote to the anti-communist, anti-China Greens who have long championed the demand to bring Australian “troops home” in order to defend Australian imperialist interests in the region.

In contrast to these opponents of revolutionary Marxism, we stand sharply opposed to the current chauvinist anti-China outcry and in defence of the gains of the anti-capitalist revolutions against our own imperialist rulers. Our model is the Russian Revolution of 1917. The young Soviet workers state of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party was based on the principle that workers of the world should unite against their capitalist oppressors. Only the expropriation of the capitalist rulers internationally holds out the possibility of a world free of exploitation, oppression and war. For that to occur we need to build a reformed Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.■

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Iran...

(continued from page 1)

decorated for his “outstanding service.”

The Iranian regime has always denied that it is developing nuclear weapons. However, Iran needs nukes to deter an imperialist attack. While the possession of nuclear weapons is no guarantee of security from an assault by the U.S., it does provide a real measure of sovereignty against the marauding imperialists.

It is the duty of the U.S. proletariat to demand an end to all sanctions against Iran and to stand for the defense of Iran against any military attack by the U.S. Our military defense of Iran against imperialism does not imply the least political support to the bourgeois Islamic regime, which enforces the fierce oppression of women, gays and national minorities and brutally represses labor struggle. But what must be understood is that U.S. imperialism is the greatest danger to the working people and downtrodden of the planet. Nothing short of the overthrow of the capitalist-imperialist system through workers revolution will rid the world of this menace and open the road to a socialist future.

Democrats: Murder by Sanctions

For all their bluster against Trump’s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, it is, in fact, the Democrats who have so far taken the lead in imposing crippling sanctions on the Iranian people. In 1995, the Clinton administration issued an executive order barring U.S. companies from investing in Iranian oil and gas and from trading with Iran, followed a year later by a law imposing penalties on foreign firms with substantial investments in that sector. Sanctions were massively expanded under the Obama White House, which imposed dozens of them. These included his signing into law the 2010 Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act and the tightening of sanctions as part of the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act.

These Obama-era sanctions had a disastrous effect on Iran’s populace. The 2010 sanctions crippled Iranian industry by depriving it of replacement parts. According to a January 4 report on the BBC, the average consumption of basic food staples such as bread, milk and meat has decreased by 30 to 50 percent in the last ten years. In 2013, as sanctions further reduced Iran’s oil revenue, the currency was devalued by more than 450 percent. Meanwhile, unemployment skyrocketed.

Some of the most dramatic impacts of the sanctions were on drugs and medical supplies. In 2012, the inflation rate in the health sector was as high as 45 percent, which resulted in many people not seeking treatment for illnesses because they could not afford it. Between 2012 and 2013, medical drugs were financially inaccessible to much of the population, as their cost had increased by 50 to 75 percent. While medicines were not directly subject to the embargo, Iran was cut off from international banking and often had to pay cash in advance for medicine, which was virtually impossible with the depreciated currency.

The JCPOA eased sanctions imposed by the U.S., United Nations and European Union, while also giving Iran access to \$30 billion of its frozen assets abroad. Under the deal, Iran was able to substantially increase its oil exports, which allowed some growth in the economy—for example, working with the European company Total, Iran developed a major gasfield. Nonetheless, even with the deal, the effects of the embargoes continued to be felt, including by leaving a chilling effect that dissuaded many Western companies, especially in the banking sector, from investing. With Trump’s latest move reimposing U.S. sanctions, the peoples of Iran will be facing even more privation.

It should be recalled that the imposition of U.S.-led United Nations sanctions on Iraq following the 1991 Gulf War led to the deaths of 1.5 million human beings and the hollowing out of the country in the lead-up to the 2003 U.S. invasion and subsequent occupation. In 1996, Bill Clinton’s



Reuters

Carnage in Gaza: Palestinians flee Israeli fire and tear gas during May 14 protests in which Zionist troops killed over 60 people and wounded at least 2,700, more than 1,000 with live ammunition.

secretary of state Madeleine Albright, when told that half a million Iraqi children had died as a result of sanctions, coldly stated: “The price is worth it.” While Iran is more populous and powerful than Iraq, the embargoes placed upon it underline that it is a dependent country subject to imperialist depredation.

Notwithstanding their bickering and conflicting policies, the Republicans and Democrats share a common class interest: maintaining U.S. supremacy in the oil-rich Near East. Indeed, one of the key complaints of Democratic spokesmen critical of Trump’s decision was captured by Susan Rice, who served as Obama’s national security adviser during his second term. In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (8 May), Rice noted, “In light of America’s abrogation of its commitments, Russia and China’s position in the region will be bolstered at our expense.” Both Russia, a regional capitalist power, and China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, have invested billions in the Iranian economy, including by Russia in Iran’s oil fields and by China advancing Iranian banks lines of credit in euros or the Chinese yuan, rather than dollars, in order to bypass U.S. sanctions.

And with a summit scheduled between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, it has not been lost on political commentators that “the United States cannot be trusted,” as Susan Rice put it in her *Times* op-ed. She continued: “Why would Kim Jong-un give up his nuclear and missile capability when the United States has just demonstrated that, once he does so, it might well renege on the bargain?” Indeed. Eight years after Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi ended his nuclear weapons program, he was overthrown and murdered in 2011 by forces backed by a U.S. and European bombing campaign.

From the 1950-53 Korean War to the vicious sanctions the U.S. and other imperialists continue to impose on that country, the imperialists have always been committed to capitalist counterrevolution in North Korea, a country in which capitalist rule was overthrown and a bureaucratically deformed workers state established in the years after World War II. As fighters for international proletarian revolution, we stand for the unconditional military defense of North Korea, China and the other remaining deformed workers states (Cuba, Vietnam and Laos) against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, while maintaining our political opposition to their Stalinist regimes. We demand an end to all sanctions and welcome North Korea’s recent development of nuclear-weapons capability, which has helped stay the hand of U.S. imperialism.

Interimperialist Rivalries

Trump’s decision to pull out of the Iran deal has certainly angered the European imperialists, who have increased their investments in Iran after the nuclear deal. Last month, French president Emmanuel Macron made a widely publicized visit to the U.S., where he tried to butter up Trump in the hopes of saving the JCPOA. This was followed by a more muted visit by German chancellor Angela Merkel

(no hugs or hand-holding) and then British foreign secretary Boris Johnson, who made a point of appearing on Trump’s favorite show, *Fox and Friends*, to try to convince him to stay in the deal.

In March, in an attempt to mollify Trump, European leaders also proposed that the European Union impose additional sanctions on Iran for its support to the Bashar al-Assad regime in the Syrian civil war and for its ballistic missile program, which is not covered by the JCPOA. It was all to no avail. In a haughty display of American imperial arrogance, Trump’s recently installed ambassador to Germany, Richard Grenell, tweeted: “German companies doing business in Iran should wind down operations immediately.” After Trump pulled out of the deal, Macron, Merkel and British prime minister Theresa May issued a joint statement of “concern and regret” and pledged to work with Iranian officials to try to preserve the deal.

We do not know what will happen with what remains of the Iran deal. As one former State Department official told the *New York Times* (9 May), what Europe “might lose in Iran is dwarfed by the American market and the reach of the American banking system.” Additionally, European capitalists are facing the prospect of U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. At the same time, there is growing sentiment to defy the Trump administration. France’s finance minister, Bruno Le Maire, recently stated that Europe should not be a “vassal” to the U.S. while it acts as the world’s “economic policeman.” The rifts between the U.S. and the European imperialists underline the inherent fissures between these powers as they each seek to pursue their spheres of exploitation at the expense of their rivals and the world’s oppressed and working masses.

Down With U.S./Saudi/Israeli Axis of Evil!

Two countries that have welcomed Trump’s decision with open arms are Israel and Saudi Arabia, both of which see Iran as their archenemy. As an unintended consequence of U.S. imperialism’s overthrow of Iraq’s Sunni-dominated Saddam Hussein regime and, more recently, because of the gains made by the Iran-backed Assad regime in the Syrian civil war, the influence of Shia-dominated Iran in the Near East has significantly grown over the past 15 years. This fact has made both Sunni-fundamentalist Saudi Arabia and Zionist Israel apoplectic.

Even before Trump’s announcement, Israel, the only nuclear-armed power in the Near East, had been hitting Iranian targets in Syria, such as an April 29 missile strike that killed 16 people. More recently, after missiles allegedly launched by Iranian forces in Syria hit Israeli military targets in the occupied Golan Heights, Israel announced that its jets had struck “dozens” of military targets in Syria. There is a very real possibility of yet more conflict between Israel and Iranian forces in Syria, as well as in Lebanon, where Iranian-supported Hezbollah made substantial gains in this month’s elections. At the same time, Israel’s bloody rulers, with the full support of the U.S., continue to

wage war against the besieged Palestinian masses (see front-page article).

Meanwhile, the reactionary Saudi monarchs, claiming, with no evidence, that Iran was funding and arming Houthi rebels in Yemen, launched a savage war in that country beginning in March 2015. More than 13,000 people have been killed, tens of thousands have been wounded and over three million displaced. Nearly one-third of the population, eight million people, is on the brink of starvation. Thanks to Saudi destruction of basic sanitation, including clean water, one of the largest and fastest-spreading cholera outbreaks in world history has raged uncontrollably. One million people have contracted the disease; more than 2,000 have died.

While the Saudis have had the support of the U.S. since the war began, it has now been revealed that U.S. Green Berets are at the Saudi-Yemen border directly working with Saudi Arabia against the Houthis. We stand for the military defense of the Houthi forces and their allies against the U.S.-backed Saudi assault, without giving that movement any political support. A setback for Saudi forces would not only give a black eye to this deeply reactionary, theocratic state; it would also hinder the ambitions of the U.S. imperialists, whose interventions into the Near East have wreaked mass death and destruction. ***All U.S. and other imperialists out of the Near East now!***

Saudi Arabia’s importance to U.S. regional interests increased particularly after Iran’s 1979 “Islamic revolution,” which came amid a social upheaval against the despised, U.S.-backed autocrat Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. At that time, the convulsive opposition to the monarchy included powerful strikes in the oil fields and throughout the country, posing the potential for the independent mobilization of the proletariat in the struggle for socialist revolution. However, the then-sizable Iranian left criminally subordinated the working class to the mullah-dominated opposition. Uniquely, our international tendency raised the call: Down with the Shah! No support to Khomeini! For workers revolution in Iran!

The establishment of a Shia theocracy resulted in the savage repression of Kurds and other minorities; the execution of strikers, homosexuals, adulterers and others accused of “crimes against God”; the stoning of unveiled women; the slaughter of leftists and the suppression of all opposition parties. Drawing on the lessons of the past, the task for proletarian militants today is to begin the work of building a Marxist party—an Iranian section of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International. Such a party would seek to mobilize Iran’s multinational working class, standing at the head of all the oppressed, in the struggle to sweep away bourgeois rule. This perspective requires political opposition to all wings of the Iranian bourgeoisie—the mullahs, bourgeois liberals as well as to any monarchists lurking in the shadows—and implacable opposition to the U.S. and other imperialist powers, which will seek to manipulate the grievances of Iran’s masses to serve their own interests.

This perspective also requires the struggle for socialist revolution in the U.S. itself. The multiracial U.S. proletariat has every interest in opposing the depredations of its bourgeoisie. The same ruling class that wages war against the masses of the world brutalizes working people and the oppressed at home. Workers in the U.S. are exploited by American capitalists; black people and Latinos are shot down by American cops; immigrants are deported by American immigration agents; women are denied their right to abortion by American politicians and state governments.

The only class with the objective interest and social power to overthrow the capitalist order is the proletariat. The working class must establish itself as the ruling class, in the U.S. and internationally. To make the proletariat conscious of its historic task requires the construction of internationalist parties modeled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. This is the task to which we of the Spartacist League/U.S. and our comrades in the International Communist League commit ourselves. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

WORKERS VANGUARD

Puerto Rico



Public workers march in San Juan, May 1.
Trabajadores públicos marchan en San Juan, Primero de Mayo.

WV Photo



Riot police attack protesters.
Policías antimotines atacan a los manifestantes.

AFP

May Day Cops Attack Demonstrators

For the second year in a row, a national work stoppage on international workers day shut down much of Puerto Rico, whose impoverished people have long suffered under the yoke of U.S. colonial oppression. Fed up with relentless attacks on basic needs and public services, thousands of trade unionists, students and other activists took to the streets of San Juan and elsewhere to protest against the latest savage austerity measures dictated by Washington's Financial Oversight and Management Board, known as the "junta." This body, established by the Obama administration in 2016, is hell-bent on looting pensions, closing schools and making life post-Hurricane Maria even more miserable for workers and the oppressed, all so U.S. banks and hedge funds can collect on the island's massive debt. Under the directive of the junta, tuition at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) has more than doubled.

Marching from different gathering points, May Day protesters in San Juan converged on the *Milla de Oro* (Gold Mile), where the junta and various financial institutions have their offices. Over 1,000 cops in full riot gear, many with motorcycles, lined the city streets and formed barricades. When one contingent made up mostly of students and leftists tried to proceed to the despised Banco Popular headquarters, riot cops and a SWAT team suddenly unleashed an assault of *macanazos* (nightstick blows), rubber bullets, pepper spray and tear gas. Retirees, union members and their

children cried and gasped for air as gas spread throughout the area and police blocked escape routes.

Cops chased protesters all the way back to Río Piedras, where the main UPR campus is located, releasing tear gas in front of a retirement home and storming a residence without a warrant. Some 20 people were arrested and held at several different police stations, making it difficult for activists to assist them. That night, a protest statement in Spanish and English was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, which we distributed in San Juan. It declared: "We denounce this campaign of terror. The state wants to silence all those who oppose the starvation measures imposed by the U.S. colonial masters and enforced by the capitalist government of Puerto Rico."

A few short hours after the cop rampage, Puerto Rican governor Ricardo Rosselló, a lackey of the U.S. colonialists, demanded that union and other May Day organizers condemn the protesters' "violence." In response, union leaders in the Pueblo Unido coalition, the main organizers of the *Milla de Oro* rally, publicly defended *all* protesters. An emergency demonstration was organized and everyone arrested has been released. In some cases, the state has decided not to press charges. Others arrested have hearings scheduled in upcoming days. *Hands off the May Day protesters!*

continued on page 7

Primero de Mayo Policía ataca manifestantes

Por segundo año consecutivo, un paro nacional en el Día Internacional de los Trabajadores paralizó gran parte de Puerto Rico, cuyo pueblo empobrecido ha sufrido bajo el yugo de la opresión colonial de EE.UU. durante mucho tiempo. Hartos de los ataques incessantes contra las necesidades básicas y los servicios públicos, miles de sindicalistas, estudiantes y otros activistas tomaron las calles de San Juan y otros lugares para protestar contra las más recientes medidas de austeridad salvaje dictadas por Washington y su Junta de Supervisión y Administración Financiera, conocida como la Junta. Este organismo, establecido por la administración de Obama en 2016, está ferozmente resuelto a saquear las pensiones, cerrar escuelas y hacer la vida después del Huracán María aún más miserable para los trabajadores y los oprimidos, todo con el fin de que los bancos y fondos de cobertura de EE.UU. puedan cobrar la enorme deuda de la isla. Bajo órdenes de la Junta, el pago de la matrícula ha aumentado más del doble en la Universidad de Puerto Rico (UPR).

Marchando desde distintos puntos, los manifestantes del Primero de Mayo en San Juan se reunieron en la Milla de Oro, donde la Junta y varias instituciones financieras tienen sus oficinas. Más de mil policías en equipo antidisturbios, muchos en motocicleta, flanquearon las calles y formaron barricadas. Cuando un contingente, formado en su mayoría por estudiantes e izquierdistas, intentó proceder a la oficina central del odiado Banco Popular, la policía antidisturbios y un equipo SWAT

repentinamente los atacó a macanazos, con balas de goma, gas pimienta y gases lacrimógenos. Jubilados, sindicalistas y sus hijos lloraban y luchaban por respirar mientras que el gas se extendía por toda el área y la policía bloqueaba rutas de escape.

La policía persiguió a los manifestantes hasta Río Piedras, donde está el plantel principal de la UPR, soltando gas lacrimógeno frente a una residencia para ancianos y tomando una vivienda por asalto sin orden de allanamiento. Unas 20 personas fueron arrestadas y detenidas en distintas comisarias, dificultando que otros activistas les ayudaran. Esa noche, el Partisan Defense Committee, una organización de defensa legal y social asociada con la Spartacist League, emitió una declaración en protesta en español e inglés, la cual se distribuyó en San Juan. El PDC declaró: "Denunciamos esta campaña de terror. El estado quiere silenciar a todos aquellos que se oponen a las medidas hambreadoras dictadas por los amos coloniales de Estados Unidos e impuestas por el gobierno capitalista de Puerto Rico".

Pocas horas después del arrasamiento por la policía, el gobernador puertorriqueño Ricardo Roselló, un lacayo de los colonialistas estadounidenses, exigió que los organizadores del Primero de Mayo, sindicalistas y otros, denunciaran la "violencia" de los manifestantes. En respuesta, los dirigentes sindicales en la coalición Pueblo Unido, los principales organizadores de la marcha en la Milla de Oro, defendieron públicamente a *sigue en la página 7*

For the Right of Independence! ¡Por el derecho a la independencia!