

## For Picket Lines Nobody Dares Cross!

# Victory to Chicago Hotel Strike!



WV Photo

September 13: Striking hotel workers rally in downtown Chicago.

**SEPTEMBER 18**—The following leaflet was issued by the Chicago Spartacist League during the first week of the strike and is being distributed at hotel workers picket lines and rallies. As we go to press, the strike continues into the second week.

On September 7, thousands of workers represented by UNITE HERE Local 1 walked off the job at 25 hotels across downtown Chicago, with union mem-

bers at another hotel joining them four days later. The hotel workers, including housekeepers, doormen, cooks and servers, are fighting especially for year-

round health benefits, now outrageously denied to them by the filthy rich hotel owners. Lively and loud pickets are up around the clock. The determination of the strikers is captured by one popular chant: "Who is going to win? Local 1!" A victory by the hotel workers would be a shot in the arm for all city labor.

These glitzy hotels, which cater to the privileged and are rolling in record profits, have nothing but contempt for the overwhelmingly black, Latino, immigrant and female workforce. While on the job, Local 1 members are pushed to the physical limits under hellish conditions.

*continued on page 6*

# U.S., Israel Strangle Palestinians

The U.S. and Israeli rulers are working hand in hand to pound the oppressed Palestinians into utter submission. Last month, the White House announced an end to all funding to UNRWA, the United Nations agency that provides food, education and medical care to more than a million Palestinian refugees, while cutting \$200 million in direct aid to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Next Washington axed \$25 million in assistance to Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem. On September 10, Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, announced the closure of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) diplomatic office in D.C. All of these moves came on the heels of Israel's enactment of a racist "nation-state" law enshrining the country's essence as exclusively Jewish and giving unequivocal legal codification to the subjugation of non-Jewish minorities, centrally the Palestinians.

The aim of this offensive is to compel the Palestinians to crumble under the diktats of the right-wing Israeli regime of Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu and Trump's reactionary fraternity was sealed with the move earlier this year of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem—a big middle finger to the Palestinians, who have long considered East Jerusalem to be their capital and a symbol of their national identity. The policy of the Trump administration is hawkish

and bloodthirsty, with key figures like senior adviser (and son-in-law) Jared Kushner embracing "Bibi" Netanyahu as family. Yet it is merely an acceleration of long-established bipartisan policy, including unwavering Democratic Party

support to Israel. A recent bill authorizing \$38 billion in military aid to the Zionist state was signed into law by Trump, but it was his predecessor Barack Obama who pledged the funds.

Such is the barbarity of U.S. imperialism, irrespective of the party in power: billions for Israel's war machine, starvation for the Palestinian masses. An article (14 September) on the Israeli left-liberal website +972

pointed out, "It is easy to blame Trump or Bolton for the steps they have taken over the past year. But they are not acting alone. It is both houses of Congress that laid the legislative groundwork for each and every one of these measures." Bellicose support to Israel, combined with cynical "peace" talks that extracted endless concessions from the Palestinians, has defined Democratic administrations for decades. Only more

recently has the GOP begun to outdo the Democrats in resolute allegiance to the Zionist butchers, in large part reflecting the influence of Republican Christian evangelicals who believe that Israel is essential to the "second coming" of Jesus. The main difference today between the two capitalist parties with respect to the "Holy Land" is that Democrats still mouth the words "two-state solution," in full knowledge that they are void of meaning.

Twenty-five years after the U.S.-sponsored Oslo accords, a grotesque pact brokered by Democratic president Bill Clinton, the American/Israeli axis of evil is set on stamping out any pretense of Palestinian national rights. The sham Oslo "peace process" gave cover to the Zionist regime to further dispossess, marginalize and ghettoize the Palestinians. Since then, Palestinian laborers from the Occupied Territories have largely been excluded from Israel's economy, Jewish settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem have swelled to over 800,000, and Gaza has been turned into a giant Palestinian concentration camp. The plight of the Palestinian people has become immeasurably worse.

The two and a half million Palestinians in the West Bank are trapped behind an immense concrete wall, surrounded by military checkpoints, divided by Jewish-only highways and brutalized daily by Israeli soldiers.

Many of the ever-growing, militarized Jewish settlements are in fact modern cities, amounting to de facto annexation of Palestinian territory. As in East Jerusalem, which Israel annexed after the 1967 war, Palestinians in the West Bank lack basic services and face the constant threat of home demolition and evictions.

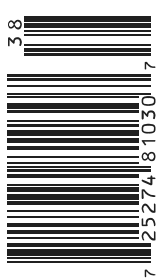
In Gaza, nearly two million Palestinians with little means of subsistence have

*continued on page 2*



Reuters; Xinhua (inset)

**Israeli troops attack Palestinians protesting construction of settlement near Ramallah in the West Bank, August 31. Inset: Trump and Israeli prime minister Netanyahu strengthen U.S./Zionist chokehold on Palestinian people.**



Israel...

(continued from page 1)

been subjected to Israel’s crippling economic blockade and military siege for more than a decade. The Gaza population is encaged in an open-air prison—with little access to jobs, with housing devastated and water regularly cut off—and with no means of escape. In response to ongoing protests in Gaza, Israeli forces have massacred nearly 180 Palestinians and wounded another 18,000 since the start of the year. Egypt, another recipient of massive U.S. military aid, keeps its border with Gaza all but sealed.

Meanwhile, the Palestinians who live inside Israel, making up more than 20 percent of the population, are barely second-class citizens. Along with daily discrimination and segregation, they suffer from severely underfunded schools and receive average salaries 30 percent lower than those for Israeli Jews.

Defense of the Palestinian people against their Zionist oppressors is desperately needed. It is in the vital interests of workers in the U.S. and internationally to oppose U.S. support to Israel and demand an end to the Zionist colonization of the West Bank and East Jerusalem along with the murderous siege against Gaza.

Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs are interpenetrated peoples with rival claims to the same territory. Under capitalism, such situations mean that the exercise of self-determination—i.e., setting up a national state—can only come about at the expense of the other’s national rights. The possibility of a just, democratic solution for the Palestinian masses, including the right to return to their homeland, requires proletarian revolutions to overthrow capitalist rule in Israel and the surrounding Arab states. Only in a socialist federation



Tel Aviv: Protest of tens of thousands against chauvinist “nation-state” law was led by Palestinian citizens of Israel, August 11. Signs in both Hebrew and Arabic demand “Full Equality, Nothing Less.”

of the Near East would the right to self-determination for Palestinians and Israeli Jews be respected, conflicting claims over land and resources equitably resolved, and discrimination on the basis of language, religion and nationality eliminated.

Israel’s Semi-Theocratic, Racist “Democracy”

Israel was created through the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948, and their oppression has been maintained through brute terror ever since. The persecution of the Palestinians is not the product of a particular chauvinist government but is intrinsic to Zionism, which defines Israel as the “state of the Jewish people.”

The new nation-state law was described by Netanyahu as the “essence of the Zionist vision.” Among other things, the law removes the (strictly formal) status of

Arabic as one of the official languages, reaffirms that only Jews—wherever they presently live—have a right of return and acclaims the extension of Jewish settlements as a “national value.” It erases any pretense to legal equality for non-Jewish minorities and is a further attack on the language and national rights of Israel’s Palestinian minority. The law sends a message to Arabs within Israel: this is not your land, drop dead.

The law sparked protests inside the country that were, quite unusually, joined by both Arabs and Jews. On August 11, some 30,000 people, largely Palestinian citizens of Israel, descended on Tel Aviv for a mass demonstration. Signs included, “This Is Our Home, Arabic Is Our Language,” and some demonstrators defiantly carried Palestinian flags against instructions from the organizers. The protest was attended and built by liberal Zionist groups, which are concerned that the law undermines Israel’s threadbare facade as the only “democracy” in the Near East.

An earlier August 4 protest of nearly 100,000 people in the same city was called by leaders of the Druze, an Arabic-speaking minority that originated as a sect persecuted by an Islamic caliphate

in Egypt in the 10th century and retains a unique religion. At the time of the 1948 founding of Israel, many of their leaders pledged loyalty to the new Zionist state. Roughly 150,000 Druze live in villages in the north of Israel and face poverty as well as discrimination in housing, jobs and education. The Druze are the only Arab group conscripted into the Israeli Defense Force, although today a growing number of Druze youth refuse to join the Israeli army.

The protest by Druze leaders, who regard the new law as a betrayal, had support from former top leaders of the military/intelligence establishment. The Israeli paper *Haaretz* (5 August) remarked that their rally featured “enough retired generals to launch three military coups.” One speaker was Yuval Diskin, the past head of Shin Bet, the security agency notorious for torture and murder of Palestinians. Any alliance with Israel’s barbaric state machine spells death to struggles of the oppressed, including the Druze.

Like other capitalist countries, Israel is rent by class, as well as ethnic and religious, divisions. The working class, mainly consisting of Jews along with some Arabs and foreign migrant workers, is exploited by a tiny wealthy minority. Many secular Jews, especially women, chafe under the dominance of ultra-Orthodox religious zealots in the government and society. While the bunker mentality fostered by the Zionist rulers runs deep, Israeli workers can and must be broken from chauvinism and won to the defense of Palestinian national rights. To carry out this difficult but essential task, it is necessary to forge a revolutionary proletarian vanguard party aiming to unite Jewish and Arab workers together with ethnic minorities and migrants.

Imperialism and Arab Regimes: Enemies of Palestinians

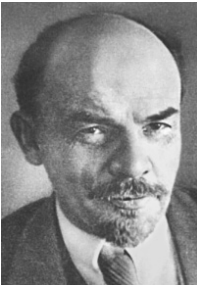
After decades of Palestinian dispossession and dismemberment at the hands of the Zionist regime, the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the PLO are thoroughly discredited among the Palestinian masses. The PLO-led Palestinian Authority (PA), headed by Mahmoud Abbas, is at bottom nothing more than the Zionists’ police auxiliary in the West Bank. The only Palestinian aid that the Trump administration has *not*



TROTSKY

The Working Class vs. the Capitalist Exploiters

We reprint below an excerpt from a 1953 public forum by James P. Cannon, the founding leader of American Trotskyism, exposing the fraud of American bourgeois democracy and the nature of the dual parties of the capitalist exploiters. The chief task in the struggle for proletarian power is to forge a workers party committed to sweeping away the whole capitalist order through socialist revolution.



LENIN

What we have in this country are not two separate class parties, but two factions of the same ruling class—the Republican faction and the Democratic faction. This was a very good and convenient system for rich and stable American capitalism. From one point of view, it flexibly contained the antagonisms within the capitalist ranks. It gave a political expression for the conflicts of interests between different factions and sections of the capitalist class itself. In another respect, the two-party system, expressing the interests of two factions of the ruling class, but pretending to represent all the people, was an excellent safety valve for popular discontent.

When people got fed up with the administration in power, they could always find relief for their dissatisfaction. The traditional American slogan always was, “Turn the rascals out.” The only alternative, however, was to put another set of rascals in. That never did much good, but it gave the people a little satisfaction without disturbing the bourgeois rule....

American capitalism is not in love with democracy. It’s no principle of American capitalism that we must maintain all the democratic forms—free speech, free press, free rights to organize, and all the rest. The only principle the American capitalists have is the exploitation of labor, the extraction of profits, and the enrichment of themselves at the expense of the workers. That’s their principle.

—James P. Cannon, “The Coming Struggle for Power in America,” the *Militant*, 16 February 1953

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Chicago	250	179	72%
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New York	600	386.5	64%
National Total	1,350	866.5	64%

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

DL 1104 1957 7 September 2018

**DSA and Ocasio-Cortez: No Kind of Socialists**

**Democrats, Republicans: Class Enemies of Workers and Oppressed**

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# Partisan Defense Committee

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

## CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

*As an expression of solidarity, for over 30 years the Partisan Defense Committee has provided monthly stipends to dozens of class-war prisoners—those who have been imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression or imperialist depredation and whose freedom is in the interest of the entire working class. For more information about the PDC and how to correspond with the class-war prisoners see [www.partisandefense.org](http://www.partisandefense.org).*

### MOVE's Ramona Africa Gravely Ill

Ramona Africa, the sole adult survivor of the 13 May 1985 cop/FBI bombing of the mostly black MOVE commune's Osage Avenue home, is in a dire medical situation. Ramona spent seven years in prison hell after the government's racist assault in which eleven men, women and children were incinerated to death, and was one of the PDC's first class-war prisoner stipend recipients. In June, Ramona was hospitalized due to complications from post-traumatic stress disorder. A serious stroke left her unable to walk, and she was subsequently diagnosed with lymphoma. To offset the exorbitant medical costs, the MOVE organization has set up a Go Fund Me page. The PDC has contributed funds to Ramona's care

and urges WV readers to do so. For more information and to make a donation see: [gofundme.com/helpsaveramonaafrica](https://gofundme.com/helpsaveramonaafrica).

### Fight for Mumia's Freedom Continues

At an August 30 hearing, attorneys for class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal obtained a continuance to October 29. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, award-winning journalist and MOVE supporter, Mumia was framed up and has been imprisoned for nearly 37 years on charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981, and spent 30 years on death row. Targeted for his political views in a classic frame-up trial, Mumia has seen his rights trampled on by the courts as part of a state vendetta to keep this innocent man behind bars.

Mumia is seeking to overturn the rejection of his appeals due to the judicial bias of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, which repeatedly denied his petitions. Among the justices was Ronald Castille, who served as a senior Assistant D.A. during Mumia's trial in 1982 and as the D.A. during Mumia's direct appeal. Later, as a state Supreme Court judge, Castille went on to rubber-stamp the gross violations of Mumia's rights that he perpetrated as prosecutor (see "Mumia Abu-Jamal Is

Innocent—Free Him Now!" WV No. 1134, 18 May). Mumia's attorneys sought the new hearing due to the continued obstruction by D.A. Larry Krasner, who has resisted releasing documents that may show proof of Castille's involvement. We call on supporters of Castille's involvement. We call on supporters outside the Philadelphia courthouse during his October hearing. Free him now!

### Free Class-War Prisoner Nina Droz!

Puerto Rican activist Nina Droz is the PDC's most recent addition to the class-war prisoner stipend program. On June 12, Droz was sentenced to 37 months in prison in a transparent frame-up stemming from her participation in the 2017 May Day protests and national work stoppage in San Juan. Droz was hit with trumped-up charges based on claims that she tried to burn down a bank. Facing up to 30 years in prison, she accepted a plea deal on the lesser charge of conspiracy (see "Nina Droz Sentenced—Free Her Now!" WV No. 1136, 29 June). Droz was targeted for her political activism against the "junta," or U.S.-imposed management board, which, alongside its Puerto Rican lackeys, has enforced savage austerity on the population. Singled out for cruel treatment by the Feds, Droz's persecution is

intended to send a chilling message to all those engaged in struggle against job and pension cuts, school closures, and starvation measures. The case of Nina Droz and many Puerto Rican activists before her is emblematic of the racist, colonial subjugation of the Puerto Rican nation. For the right of independence for Puerto Rico!

### Chelsea Manning Banned from Australia

Courageous truth-teller and prominent whistle-blower Chelsea Manning was recently denied a visa to enter Australia, where she had a scheduled speaking tour. In a case of obvious political censorship, the Australian government denied her entry for failing "the character test" under the Migration Act. Our fraternal defense organization in Australia, the Partisan Defence Committee, protested her exclusion in a letter to government officials, noting that the denial of Manning's visa is "aimed at silencing all those who would dare speak out about, expose, or oppose U.S. and Australian imperialist mass surveillance and military atrocities." Manning exposed U.S. imperialist war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan and was subjected to seven years of torture in prison under the Obama administration. Down with the vendetta against Chelsea Manning! ■

canceled is tens of millions of dollars for PA "security forces."

For years, the PLO looked for support from the Arab monarchs, sheiks and dictators who have always been enemies of Palestinian liberation—from subjecting Palestinian refugees to squalid camps to carrying out mass murder, as in Jordan's 1970 Black September massacre. Later groveling at the feet of the U.S. and other imperialist powers, the PLO agreed to an array of empty UN resolutions and "peace plans," leading to the 1993 Oslo accords. At the time, we declared that the deal "would place the PLO's seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses" ("Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto," WV No. 583, 10 September 1993). And that is precisely what happened. The PLO's kowtowing to imperialism and the venal Arab capitalist regimes allowed reactionary anti-woman and anti-Jewish Islamists like Hamas, who rule Gaza, to pose as the only fighters against the Israeli occupation.

With the fraudulent "two-state solution" buried, liberals who oppose the Israeli occupation call for some version of "one state" in which all Palestinians and Israelis would have equal democratic rights. But the idea that Israel's rulers would willingly be outnumbered by Palestinians and grant them full rights in a unitary state is a pipe dream.

Many pro-Palestinian activists, including around the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, invoke the UN as an ally against the Zionist rulers. Omar Barghouti, a prominent spokesman for BDS, responded to Netanyahu's nation-state law by calling on "Arab nations and our allies around the world to pressure the UN to activate its anti-apartheid laws and impose serious sanctions on Israel." The UN, which has long been a tool of U.S. imperialist depredation across the globe, sponsored the partition of Palestine and oversaw the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland in 1948.

BDS supporters have been the targets of a ferocious witchhunt based on the poisonous lie equating any criticism of Israel with anti-Jewish bigotry. Half of all U.S. states have passed laws against BDS advocacy, and some university administrations have banned BDS activities. Israel has barred entry to any foreigner who expresses support for BDS. We denounce these campaigns of slander and repression, which aim to silence all opponents of the ghastly crimes of the



**September 10: Palestinian girl treated in one of the East Jerusalem hospitals impacted by Trump's massive funding cut.**

Israeli state. At the same time, we oppose the liberal strategy of BDS, which is based on pressuring the very imperialist forces that are the historic occupiers and oppressors of the peoples of the Near East to divest from and impose sanctions on Israel.

As noted by Nathan Thrall in a *Guardian* (14 August) article, the BDS movement, launched in 2005, "represented something of a last resort" for pro-Palestinian activists coming off the crushing of the second Intifada (uprising) and the political bankruptcy of the PLO/PA. BDS advocates look to the supposed good will of the U.S. rulers and corporations, a scheme that is not just utopian but is actually an obstacle to Palestinian liberation as it bolsters U.S. imperialism's "democratic" cover.

The Zionists' crimes against the Palestinians are abominable, but they pale in comparison to the grisly carnage wreaked by the U.S. around the world. While only a deranged person could appeal to Trump's "good will," the Democrats' record of atrocities is no better than that of the Republicans. The imperial presidency under Obama ravaged the Near East and elsewhere—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Pakistan—taking "regime change" and drone strikes to new heights. The U.S. imperialists support Israel because it has served and continues to serve their interests in the region.

### For Proletarian Internationalism!

Backing Israel is the stock-in-trade of all wings of the Democrats, including the new crop of "progressives," and their adjunct

Bernie Sanders. Sanders defended Israel's 2014 war on Gaza, which massacred more than 2,000 Palestinians. Playing to his young liberal supporters, he occasionally

throws in calls to end the occupation of the West Bank. But he affirms that he is "100 percent pro-Israel." In April 2017, Sanders signed on to a bipartisan letter from the Senate to the UN commending Trump's ambassador Nikki Haley for her denunciation of "the U.N.'s anti-Israel bias" and demanding that UN committees that "inspire" the BDS movement be "eliminated."

As Marxists in the U.S., our starting point is opposition to this country's imperialist rulers, who wreak death and destruction abroad and exploit workers at home. From North America to the Near East, a *class* axis of struggle is desperately needed. In the U.S., we fight to break the working class from illusions in the Democratic Party and win workers to champion the cause of the oppressed—from the Palestinians abroad to immigrants and black people at home. Under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party, part of a reformed Fourth International, the proletariat will become conscious of its power as a class to sweep away the rapacious, war-mad capitalist system through socialist revolution. ■



## Spartacist League Forums

### DSA and Ocasio-Cortez: No Kind of Socialists

## Democrats, Republicans: Class Enemies of Workers and Oppressed

### We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party!

#### BAY AREA

**Saturday, October 13, 2 p.m.**

2619 Broadway, Oakland  
(First Presbyterian Church of Oakland.  
Entrance on 27th St.)

For information: (510) 839-0851  
[slbayarea@fastmail.net](mailto:slbayarea@fastmail.net)

#### NEW YORK CITY

**Saturday, October 6, 3 p.m.**

322 West 48th Street, First Floor  
Manhattan

(Between 8th and 9th Avenues—  
Take A, C or E to 42nd Street)

For information: (212) 267-1025  
[nysl@tiac.net](mailto:nysl@tiac.net)

#### CHICAGO

**Saturday, October 27, 3 p.m.**

Quaker House, 5615 S. Woodlawn Ave.  
For information: (312) 563-0441  
[chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net)

#### LOS ANGELES

**Sunday, October 14, 4 p.m.**

Immanuel Presbyterian Church\*  
3300 Wilshire Blvd.

(At Berendo St. and Wilshire Blvd.,  
2 blocks west of Wilshire/Vermont stop on  
Red/Purple Line. Entrance on Berendo.)

For information: (213) 380-8239  
[slsycla@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slsycla@sbcglobal.net)

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



# In Honor of John Brown

We print below the second part of a presentation, edited for publication, given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander at a February 24 Black History Month forum in New York City. The first part appeared in WV No. 1139 (7 September).

## PART TWO

I'm sure that most of you have heard that what's so terrible about the abolitionist John Brown was that he was a heartless, bloodthirsty killer. These are longstanding bourgeois lies. The real John Brown fought for armed slave rebellion and organized armed struggle against the slave system in "Bleeding Kansas" in the 1850s.

In 1855, John Brown joined his four oldest sons who had migrated to Kansas to fight against it becoming a slave state and win the territory for the "free-soilers." The free-soilers had been associated with the short-lived Free Soil Party, whose platform called both for barring slavery from western territories and for the federal government to provide free homesteads to white settlers. In 1854, many of the Party's former members had gone on to join the newly established Republican Party, which was born on the platform of "free soil" and "free labor."

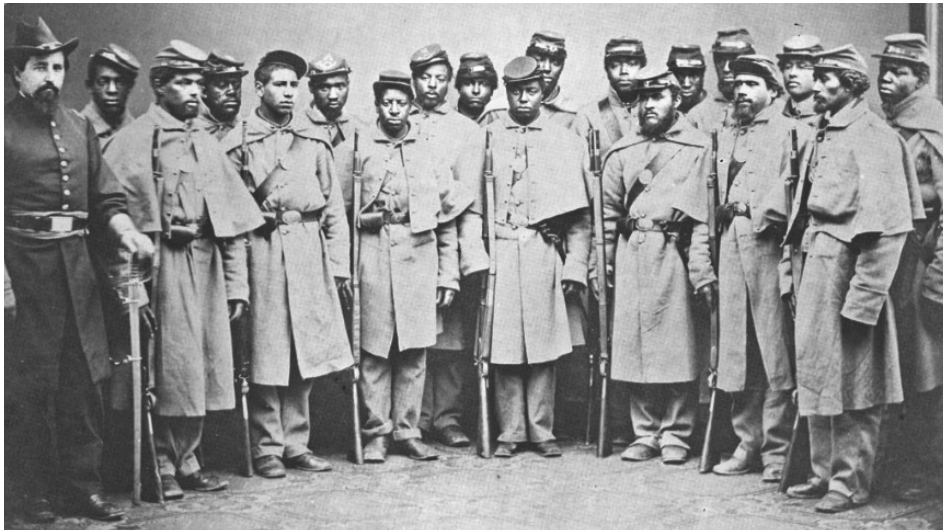
It was a period of turmoil. Congress had just passed a new law called the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which repealed the terms of the 1820 Missouri Compromise that was supposed to limit slavery's expansion. Sponsored by a Northern Democrat, Stephen A. Douglas, the law allowed the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide for themselves whether or not to allow slavery within their borders. According to Karl Marx, the Kansas-Nebraska Act had "placed slavery and freedom on the same footing." As he described it, "For the first time in the history of the United States, every geographical and legal limit to the extension of slavery in the Territories was removed" ("The North American Civil War" [1861]). The Kansas-Nebraska Act was nothing more than a signal for pro-slavery Missourians next door to invade and, through terror and violence, open Kansas to slavery.

At this point it was clear that there wouldn't be, and couldn't be, any lasting "compromises." From the early days of the republic there evolved several sham "compromises" between the North and South. The first of these concessions, coming out of the 1787 Constitutional Convention, made slaves three-fifths of a person for the purposes of apportioning representatives to Congress; this gave the Southern slaveowners control of Washington. Now, the fundamental and irreconcilable class interests between the slavocracy and the Northern industrial bourgeoisie were coming to a



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly

**John Brown with his dying sons as U.S. troops break into the fort at Harpers Ferry, 1859. Brown's assault on Harpers Ferry was opening shot of Civil War. Below: Black Union Army soldiers were key to smashing the slavocracy.**



Civil War Times

head. One or the other would prevail. War was coming and Kansas was the next arena.

After some initial hesitation, Brown sought the approval of his black supporters and garnered the support of several radical abolitionists before joining his sons in Kansas. He decided that it was best to go there because it would be more important ultimately for the cause of freedom. From that point, his determination hardened and grew in the fight against slavery.

John Brown brought weapons and ammunition with him to Kansas to equip an anti-slavery militia where he was captain. He and his sons confronted a well-armed pro-slavery group of Missourians appropriately called the Border Ruffians, who were pouring into the state to terrorize free settlers. The free settlers needed an infusion of fresh blood to beat back a highly organized campaign of intimidation and murder. John Brown, his sons and supporters waged several successful battles in their defense. His militia retaliated for a number of murders of free settlers—in one night raid they killed five pro-slavery sympathizers near Pottawatomie Creek.

Brown's force struck fear into the hearts of the marauding pro-slavery bands.

Both the governor of Missouri and President James Buchanan, a Northern Democrat, offered rewards for Brown's capture. Buchanan and other Northerners with Southern sympathies were called "dough-faces" because they were "half-baked and malleable." Without John Brown's intervention, which strengthened the free settlers' morale and military defenses, a lot worse could have happened. It was not impossible that Kansas could have become a slave state.

Brown fought in Kansas throughout 1856. Toward the end of his stay, a Missouri slave crossed the border into Kansas, seeking help from anyone to keep him and his family from being sold. What do you think John Brown did? He led his militia to where the slaveholder was back in Missouri. His forces freed a number of slaves, eleven in all, including the family that was imperiled. A slaveowner was also killed. Brown's militia seized horses and supplies to facilitate their escape and transport with the final destination being Canada. The local, state and federal authorities were outraged and over \$3,000 was put on Brown's head.

In the end, the slaves made it to Canada because of John Brown. In a frenzy, some of his abolitionist "friends" denounced him—not for seizing the slaves, but for the seizure of the slaveowners' other personal property. And it's not surprising, because some of these abolitionists were capitalists, for whom capitalist private property was sacred. For his part, John Brown had no trust in politicians from either political party. As author Stephen B. Oates noted in *To Purge This Land With Blood* (1970), Brown "hated the Democrats because he believed their party was dominated by the South and despised the Republicans because they were too 'wishy-washy' on the slavery issue."

### Roll Call for Harpers Ferry

The next arena for Brown was Chatham, Ontario. Chatham was a small town just east of Detroit and was a terminus on the

Underground Railroad where thousands of fugitive slaves and free blacks resided. Living nearby in St. Catherine's was Harriet Tubman. I'll get back to her in a minute.

In Chatham in May 1858, John Brown convened a secret convention to debate the way forward and to finalize plans for the coming assault on and seizure of the federal armory and arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The primary aim of the convention was to seek recruits for this action. One of the more important parts of the convention was a programmatic document he submitted—the Provisional Constitution. It was no mere empty exercise, but the basis for a selection of an abolitionist vanguard for revolutionary war. John Brown was making plans for a future provisional egalitarian free-state government in the mountains.

Brown's Provisional Constitution was seriously debated. Some delegates argued that the best time to have a coordinated attack somewhere in the South would be when the U.S. government was at war. But the argument to delay was defeated. There were delegates who rejected any reference to the flag of the United States as a symbol of freedom; they said, this is my oppression, the American flag. Brown argued that the flag was an expression of America's early democratic ideals—a vote was taken and he won. It became the flag against slavery during the Civil War, but today it is the flag of imperialist plunder and mass murder, racial oppression and anti-immigrant bigotry.

When his business was finished in Chatham, he finalized his plans for Harpers Ferry. Brown tirelessly gave speeches to raise money for his war preparations, for the consummation of his life's work to free the slaves. In need of more money for arms and supplies, he contacted a radical abolitionist group that he relied upon: the "Secret Six," which included Franklin Sanborn and Gerrit Smith, who were animated by his Kansas exploits. However, he never revealed to them the specific target of his next strike.

Brown knew that in order to attract significant black support, it was vital to win over Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman. Tubman was key to recruiting followers among the many freedmen and fugitives who had settled in Canada beyond the reach of the Fugitive Slave Law. Through her courageous Underground Railroad work, Tubman had extensive knowledge



National Portrait Gallery

**Heroic abolitionist leader Harriet Tubman, 1885.**

of the planned Appalachian route. Showing deep appreciation of her leadership skills, Brown called her the "General" or "He." Tubman fully embraced Brown's plans. She was organizing people to go with her, but she fell ill and didn't make it. Unceasing toil and hardships, on top of terrible spells of unconsciousness and injuries sustained from beatings by slaveowners, had taken their toll. John Brown was deeply disappointed.

John Brown was about to lead 21 men to what would be in effect the first battle of the Civil War. As the time for action arrived,

**WORKERS VANGUARD**



Library of Congress

**Dangerfield Newby, ex-slave, the first of Brown's men to die at Harpers Ferry.**

Brown met one last time with Frederick Douglass. It didn't go well. He revealed his plans for seizing the armory and arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Douglass sharply disagreed and said that they were falling into a "perfect steel-trap" and would be crushed. They argued for several hours, and Douglass turned down the offer to go. However, at the meeting was a friend, an ex-slave named Shields Green, who was one tough fighter and became highly esteemed by John Brown and his associates. When questioned about going or staying, Green remarked: I think I'll go with the Old Man. Four other black men went—Osborne Anderson, John Copeland, his uncle Lewis Leary and Dangerfield Newby (who in his 40s was the oldest black man to go). Newby was sturdy and immovable and joined to help get his wife and children out of slavery in Virginia.

Putting his plan into effect required meticulous preparation and sheer courage. To hide his forces from the eyes of the prying enemy, Brown required the assistance of trustworthy collaborators. His first pick was his wife Mary, for whom he had tremendous respect. It's clear from his letters and correspondence that they shared and discussed the political news of the day. Brown's 15-year-old daughter Annie and 16-year-old sister-in-law Martha were assigned to hold down the secret farmhouse five miles from Harpers Ferry, keeping watch and feeding soldiers. The men were John Brown men, so they knew how to help and keep the place clean. Though when they didn't, they were set straight. The men were confined in a tiny place and stuffed in an attic. There they studied together, argued about the history of slavery and discussed Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. They were nearly broken by tension and their discipline was weakened, but the courageous young women kept up their morale and cohesion.

The whole thing could have been blown when one of the neighbors, who had a habit of showing up unannounced, caught a glimpse of a black man in the farmhouse. She suspected that Annie was helping run-aways and challenged her to an explanation, but Annie denied it. Annie devised a plan to silence her neighbor by providing her and her children with food and helping them with other tasks as long as necessary.

In a very interesting biography of the women in John Brown's family called *The Tie That Bound Us: The Women of John Brown's Family and the Legacy of Radical Abolitionism* (2013), author Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz describes Annie's "trial-by-fire inauguration into abolitionist activism." Annie herself later described this as the most important period of her life. As Laughlin-Schultz remarked, "Though she did not march to Harpers Ferry in October 1859, Annie's work in the Maryland countryside may have allowed Brown's raiders to do so, and the work of Mary and Ruth [his wife and daughter] at North Elba helped smooth over the Brown men's absences."

The aim of John Brown was this: to procure arms, free slaves in the nearby area, lead his army into the mountains where they could establish a liberated area and, if need be, wage war against the slave masters. From a military point of view, Brown's plan for Harpers Ferry was futile. His son Owen said it was like Napoleon trying to take Moscow. One of the reasons it failed was that Brown didn't fully carry out his plans, which he admitted to afterwards. He also believed he was overly solicitous to his prisoners and relied on some

of them to ward off the enemy's blows. In the end, Brown's forces killed five people but lost ten of their own. They held control for 36 hours, surrounded by gunmen from nearby towns and hamlets and eventually by federal troops. The troops were dispatched by President Buchanan, under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee, the future commander of Confederate forces during the Civil War (you know, the "honorable" man according to White House chief of staff John Kelly). Brown and most of his associates were rounded up and captured, though several managed to escape. Those who were not killed on the spot were railroaded and later hanged by the vindictive courts of Virginia.

### The Aftermath

While they were defeated in the end, John Brown and his men certainly fought. The raid at Harpers Ferry was a bold but unsuccessful action staged by a small, determined, interracial revolutionary band. What soon followed was what abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison termed "the new reign of terror" against black people in the South and against any Northerner who dared raise his head. Southerners were conjuring up fears of more Nat Turner revolts.

Harpers Ferry also caused fright and panic among some of John Brown's so-called radical abolitionist friends in the Secret Six—they burned their correspondence with him. Gerrit Smith claimed insanity and briefly checked into an asylum while others fled for Canada. Some of them had probably been, to put it mildly, surprised when they found out that the plan was an assault on a federal arsenal and armory. It was euphemistically described by Brown, referring to the Underground Railroad, as "Rail Road business on a *somewhat extended* scale." Secret Six member Thomas Wentworth Higginson refused to capitulate. He had told Brown before the raid that he was "always ready to invest in treason," and didn't burn his papers or correspondence. He later led a black regiment in the Civil War.

Frederick Douglass solidarized with the raid in a piece called "Capt. John Brown Not Insane" (*Douglass' Monthly*, November 1859):

"Posterity will owe everlasting thanks to John Brown...[for he] has attacked slavery with the weapons precisely adapted to bring it to the death.... Like Samson, he has laid his hands upon the pillars of this great national temple of cruelty and blood, and when he falls, that temple, will speedily crumble to its final doom, burying its denizens in its ruins."

Douglass had a price placed on his head by the federal government and used a pre-planned trip to England to escape.

John Brown knew that the pro-slavery federal government and its State of Virginia hangmen were close to finishing him off. While imprisoned, Brown was unbowed and wrote and answered many letters to family, friends and supporters (who mostly endorsed his action only some time after the fact). Above all, he pushed very hard for financial help to his family. He said that had he interfered on behalf of the rich, the oppressors would have poured praise upon him. Instead, his whole life had been devoted to fighting for the liberation of the slaves, and now he was willing to pay the ultimate price.

As I said, John Brown despised the ruling-class politicians of his day. For

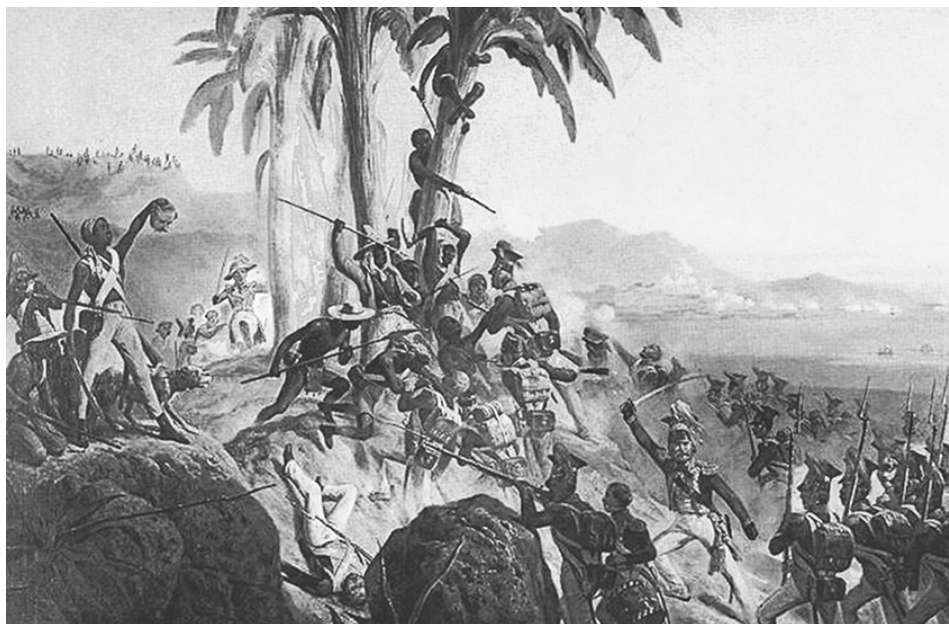


Library of Congress

**T.W. Higginson of Brown's "Secret Six" went on to lead the first black regiment in the Civil War.**

their murderous, cruel and unjust laws, he denounced the government as being filled with "fiends in human shape." Before his death, in a letter to the abolitionist wife of George L. Stearns, Brown stated his wishes to be escorted to the gallows not by some pro-slavery clergyman but by poor blacks, his people: "I have asked to be spared from having any *mock; or hypocritical prayers made over me*, when I am publicly *murdered*: & that my only *religious attendants* be poor *little, dirty, ragged, bare headed, & barefooted Slave Boys; & Girls* led by some old *grey headed Slave Mother*."

Following his execution, there were memorial services of black and white abolitionists in several cities. There was international impact. French writer Victor Hugo had written a rousing appeal to stop his execution and that of his followers. (The British abolitionists sat on their hands.) Brown's death was also keenly felt in Haiti, the country with the first and only successful slave revolution in the Western Hemisphere, which was against the French slaveholders in 1791. Haitians, who saw in John Brown the great revolutionary and liberator of black slaves, Toussaint L'Ouverture, organized gatherings and fundraisers for the Brown family in every corner of the country. In addition, there were German workers—the Red '48ers—



January Suchodolski

**Haitian slave revolution overthrew French slaveholders in Saint-Domingue, 1791.**

European refugees who came to the U.S. following the failure of the 1848 revolution, who ended up playing an important role in building up the Union Army. Alongside black people in Cincinnati, they marched to memorialize John Brown.

John Brown gave his all and championed the struggles of the oppressed worldwide, including the 19th-century Hungarian, Greek and Polish struggles against national oppression. And it was his revolutionary war that opened the road to the annihilation of slavery. As radical abolitionist Wendell Phillips noted: "History will date Virginia Emancipation from Harper's Ferry. True, the slave is still there. So, when the tempest uproots a pine on your hill, it looks green for months—a year or two. Still, it is timber, not a tree. John Brown has loosened the roots of the slave system; it only breathes,—it does not live,—hereafter."

George Novack wrote a tribute to John Brown, published in January 1938 in the *New Internationalist*, journal of the revolutionary Trotskyists at that time, the Socialist Workers Party. He captured the dialectical development of events, noting how a seemingly stable and eternal slaveryocracy contained the seeds of its own destruction: "Through John Brown the coming civil war entered into the nerves of the people in the many months before it was exhibited in their ideas and actions."

### His Body Moldering in the Grave—His Soul Marching On

The Civil War broke out less than two years after the execution of Brown and his comrades. The Civil War was the last great bourgeois revolution, the last progressive war of the U.S. bourgeoisie. Instead of a confederation of states, it consolidated a unified capitalist market under a United States of America.

In the fires of secessionist rebellion and

total war, Douglass called for arming the slaves. For his part, Lincoln was reluctant to wage what he called a "remorseless revolutionary struggle" to crush the slaveholders. Facing ongoing military reverses, Lincoln changed in the course of the war. He was compelled to deploy powerful black arms—ultimately 200,000 black soldiers and sailors—who were critical in tipping the balance of forces against the slaveryocracy. At the war's end more than 600,000 Americans lay dead.

We are told that slavery was a "stain" on this "great" capitalist democracy. This suggests it was an aberration, a deviation from an essential goodness. This is a perfumed lie. Slavery was a barbarous economic system built into the very foundations of U.S. capitalism. Its legacy stamps every aspect of social and economic life. The slaves were liberated through the Civil War. But with the undoing of subsequent Radical Reconstruction, the most democratic period in U.S. history for black people, the promise of black equality was crushed through Klan terror and defeated by political counterrevolution. This led to the consolidation of black people as an oppressed race-color caste toward the end of the 19th century.

John Brown considered himself to be an instrument of "God." He believed that

it was part of God's will for him to liberate the slaves through force, unlike those preachers who pontificated about solace and consolation to the oppressed. We are atheists and dialectical materialists, and we base our revolutionary Marxist outlook firmly upon science. This means explaining the world from the world itself, not from some nonexistent "higher power." In the face of natural occurrences, early human beings devised a system of mystical explanations for what they didn't understand. Earthquakes, famines, sickness and death were not attributed to the workings of a material, physical world—a world that existed prior to and independent of human consciousness. In contrast to a materialist view, an idealist view maintains ideas, opinions and thoughts as primary and material reality as secondary. In his writings, Karl Marx asserts that "man makes religion, religion does not make man," that "religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression of real suffering," and that religion is the "opium of the people."

When the hour of action arrived, John Brown's advice was to be quick, not to trifle. That is good advice. Importantly, he also struggled firmly to win revolutionary abolitionists to the fight for black freedom. He knew his foibles well and wrote about them. But what comes through from those who knew him was not a sense of superiority, but his kindness. Though we should proceed with historical care in analogies, one could say that there was a similarity he shared with Oliver Cromwell—the great 17th-century Puritan revolutionary of England. Brown would, as Trotsky noted of Cromwell, hesitate at nothing to smash oppression.

We of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) seek to build Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties

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# Passports...

(continued from page 8)

a bill to stop Trump’s “passport discrimination.” But make no mistake—while the Democratic Party may seek to attract Latino voters, it is a capitalist party that upholds the same profit-driven system of exploitation and imperialism, including the ongoing economic subjugation of Mexico.

The borderlands north of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo are part of a huge swath of territory stolen from Mexico in the mid 19th century, predating the rise of U.S. imperialism. As white slaveholders sought to expand slavery into Mexican territory, the U.S. conspired to annex Texas in 1845 and then invaded Mexico. By the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, about half of Mexican land was in the hands of the U.S. The Texas borderlands remained hotly disputed for decades afterwards, and Mexican Americans in the area were subjected to bloody terror and racist repression. Today, many residents have family on both sides of the border and regularly cross for work, school or shopping. Until 2009, they were able to do so without passports. Since then, passports are required to cross the border, and immigration checkpoints set up miles inside the U.S. single out Latinos, as well as American Indians, for harassment, interrogation and detention.

The racist White House presents Latinos—the biggest minority group in the U.S., and one that is growing rapidly—as a threat to this country’s Anglo majority.

But this attack is not just against Latinos: the government’s revoking of citizenship calls into question the rights of all citizens. Citizenship is itself the right to *have* rights—the right to due process, to travel, to vote. Who’s next in the crosshairs? As always in racist, capitalist America, a country founded on black chattel slavery, the shredding of legal rights will come at the expense of black people, and ultimately the labor movement.

The rights of citizenship in the U.S. are the cumulative product not only of the War of Independence against Britain, but also of the bloody battles of the Civil War and the explosive class and social struggles of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Southern slaveowners had to be crushed before the Fourteenth Amendment extended the rights of citizenship, which originally applied only to white male property owners, to black people and “all persons born or naturalized in the United States.” (Native Americans were not granted citizenship until 1924.) Following the defeat of Radical Reconstruction, a combination of legal and extralegal terror denied black people their birthright, imposed Jim Crow segregation and relegated them to second-class citizenship. For decades, state governments would challenge birth certificates over the question of race in order to enforce “anti-miscegenation” laws and the anti-black “one drop rule.”

Although many today would take it for granted that American citizenship is a birthright of anyone born here, that modern conception is actually a recent

and reversible victory. A century after the Fourteenth Amendment—in the context of the mass civil rights movement and the tumultuous protests against the Vietnam War—the 1967 *Afroyim v. Rusk* Supreme Court ruling determined that the government cannot deprive anyone of their citizenship involuntarily. Citizenship is an important gain that must be defended. However, like any right in this racist system, it is no bulwark against capitalist injustice; for blacks, oppressed minorities and the poor, rights like equal protection under the law and due process are honored in the breach.

Whipping up racial and ethnic hatred is a way for the capitalist class—represented by Democrats and Republicans alike—to keep the working class divided and weaken its ability to struggle. The American rulers have a long history of racist exclusion laws and mass deportations of both the foreign- and native-born. In the last century, thousands of Americans were stripped of their citizenship due to their race, nationality, political beliefs, or involvement in militant class struggle. During the 1919-20 Palmer raids, launched in fearful reaction to the Russian Revolution, 10,000 suspected Communists, syndicalists and immigrants were rounded up, and more than 1,000 deported. In the 1930s, during a period of upheavals among agricultural and industrial workers, some one million people of Mexican descent were expelled from the country in racist “repatriation” programs, more than half of them U.S. citizens. During World War II, Japanese

Americans were interned in concentration camps and faced losing their citizenship.

Conjuring up an “enemy within” has long served America’s rulers in ratcheting up their machinery of state repression against the working class, black people, immigrants and any perceived opponent of capitalist class rule. Since the 9/11 attacks, the bipartisan “war on terror” has not only gone after Muslims and others but has also trampled on citizenship rights. Take the case of the U.S. citizen Jose Padilla, who initially was to be imprisoned indefinitely as an “enemy combatant” without being charged or having a hearing. Or Anwar al-Awlaki and his son, both U.S. citizens, murdered in Obama’s “targeted killings” crusade in Yemen.

Any attacks by the ruling class against the most vulnerable are a vehicle to roll back rights more broadly and to drive down wages and working conditions across the board. It is only class struggle uniting blacks, whites, Latinos and immigrants that can begin to turn back these attacks and break down the divisions fomented by the ruling class. This struggle must centrally combat black oppression, which is fundamental to American capitalism. The Spartacist League/U.S. is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party that would champion black freedom and immigrant rights, as part of the fight to sweep away racist U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution. Such a party will be in its majority composed of and led by blacks, Latinos and other minorities, who have the least to lose and the most to win in the fight for workers rule. ■

# Chicago...

(continued from page 1)

Then, many workers are laid off and stripped of health care coverage when business slows during the winter. Adding insult to injury, management sabotages their attempts to obtain unemployment insurance. Kept at the beck and call of the hotel bosses, they struggle to put food on the table and to receive vital health care.

As if throwing workers off the job in the dead of winter weren’t enough, the hotels go right back to imposing forced overtime and speedup on them as soon as the tourist-heavy summer months approach. One “guest services” worker told *Workers Vanguard* that she can even be “forced in” to work on her days off, and not showing up to the job is grounds for a write-up. Seeking to intensify the already backbreaking pace of the work, management wants to increase the number of rooms to be cleaned per shift from 16 to 18. This situation cries out for union control of hiring and staffing levels. ***Down with mandatory overtime and speedup!***

Other Chicago trade unionists, from construction workers to teachers, have rightly won year-round health benefits despite not working for long stretches of time. Their labor is what keeps this city going. Hotel workers deserve nothing less. They are now locked in a strike battle with employers out to squeeze them for more profit. Itching to clobber the union, the hotel bosses prepared in advance to break any strike, including by recruiting scabs from out of state and through temp agencies.

Even so, the strike has made an impact, as tens of thousands of visitors pour into Chicago for a huge technology convention. Inside the hotels, towels are piling up, rooms are going uncleaned and lines are

long. But the hotels remain open, with the temps, unorganized workers and management performing the jobs of striking workers. In addition, Local 1 members at four hotels with expired contracts are not out on strike. To win decisively, the strike must be extended and all the hotels shut down tight. The way to do that is to build picket lines that nobody dares try to cross! The union also represents workers at other hotels still under contract. Unity in struggle would be facilitated by having one shared contract expiration for all hotel workers. ***Strike all the hotels! One out, all out!***

It is high time to win one for labor. Importantly, members of other unions who work inside the hotels are honoring the picket lines and staying off the job. These include painters, electricians, engineers and elevator operators. If nothing moved in or out of the hotels, they would quickly become unlivable, as would happen if sanitation workers left the trash to rot. Striking workers told WV that Teamster drivers have refused to make deliveries to struck hotels. This is the kind of labor solidarity that is desperately needed!

Many non-union workers, such as valets and front-desk staff, are reporting to work despite the strike. ***Picket lines mean don’t cross!*** Local 1 should appeal to these workers to join the picket lines and enroll in the union, pledging to defend them against company reprisals. Unless they are brought out of the hotels and into the union, they will continue to be used as scabs and finks for management. A victorious strike could encourage organizing more widely in the hotel industry. ***Front of the house, back of the house—all workers in the union, all workers on the picket lines!***

Local 1 could build such pickets by mobilizing its entire membership as well as by appealing for solidarity from the rest of the unions in the hotel industry

and throughout the city. There is every reason for other workers to fight alongside the striking Local 1 members, who represent a cross section of working-class Chicago with connections to those in the city’s most powerful unions, like transit. On the other side, the profit-gouging hotel bosses are backed to the hilt by the viciously anti-labor city administration.

To be clear, security guards are not workers but hired company thugs. Tasked with protecting the property of the bosses, they are private auxiliaries to the Chicago police, who are watching the pickets for any worker who “gets out of line.” The cops “serve and protect” capitalist profit and terrorize black and Latino neighborhoods. Neither security guards nor cops have any business in the labor movement.

Workers have only ever won gains on the picket lines and through other class-struggle means, so it is a searing indictment of the union officialdom that it has for decades chained labor to the capitalist Democratic Party. This is a dead end! No less than the Republicans, the Democrats are a party of the bosses that will not hesitate to savage workers and their organizations. Even now, the Illinois AFL-CIO tops and other union bureaucrats are endorsing the billionaire Democratic gubernatorial candidate, J.B. Pritzker, whose family owns the Hyatt hotel chain. The Pritzkers have a long history of grossly abusing their workers, from suppressing wages to enforcing debilitating speedup.

J.B.’s sister, Penny, was Secretary of Commerce in the Obama administration, which postured as “friends of labor.” The reality was the exact opposite. Following a massive effort by the union tops to put him into the White House, Barack Obama spearheaded the gutting of the United Auto Workers while bailing out the auto companies as well as the banks. He proceeded to wage a war against teachers unions, impose a two-year wage freeze on federal employees and ban multiple strikes by rail workers.

The Local 1 leadership is no stranger to pushing Democrats, as shown by its “Rahm Love” ad campaign for Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel in 2015. This effusive endorsement was issued after the now outgoing mayor’s repeated efforts to gut the Chicago Teachers Union and as he was actively covering up the cop killing of black youth Laquan McDonald. Early in the strike, Democrat Lori Lightfoot, one of Emanuel’s would-be successors, showed up at a Local 1 picket to garner votes in her bid to become the next enforcer of

class and racial oppression in Segregation City. ***Break with the Democrats!***

Given the large immigrant component of Local 1, it is a good thing that hotel management is prohibited under the contract from inquiring about immigration status. All working people have an interest in defending the rights of immigrant workers. Not only is every deportation a dagger aimed at the heart of the organized labor movement, but the same forces gunning for immigrants also are taking aim at black people and the working class as a whole. A fighting labor movement would organize actions to demand: ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!***

What is needed is a new, class-struggle union leadership to mobilize the social power of the working class independently of and in opposition to the bosses and their political representatives, including the Democrats. Such a union leadership would be committed to building a multiracial revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government. This party would champion black freedom, women’s rights and the cause of all the oppressed with the aim of putting an end to capitalist wage slavery once and for all.

The hotel workers strike has caught the attention of working people across Chicago. After years of defeats at the hands of the bosses, a solid strike could help galvanize trade unionists in the city and beyond. ***Victory to the hotel workers strike!***

12 September 2018



**Trotskyist League Forum**

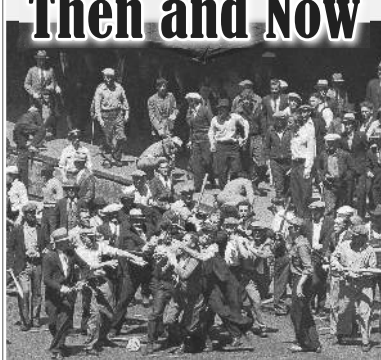
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Pasaportes...

(viene de la página 8)

a inmigrantes naturalizados quienes supuestamente presentaron documentos fraudulentos. Obama usó el cliché de que EE.UU. es una “nación de inmigrantes”, mientras deportaba a un número récord.

Los patanes racistas y simpatizantes del Tea Party, quienes constituyen la base de Trump, le facilitan a los demócratas posar como defensores de minorías, gente negra e inmigrantes. A principios de septiembre, un grupo de diputados introdujo un proyecto de ley para impedir la “discriminación de pasaportes” de Trump. Pero sin duda, aunque el Partido Demócrata trata de atraer a los electores latinos, es un partido capitalista que sostiene el mismo sistema imperialista de ganancias y explotación, que incluye la continua subyugación de México.

La zona fronteriza al norte del Río Grande/Río Bravo es parte de una franja enorme de territorio que se le robó a México a mediados del siglo XIX, previo al ascenso del imperialismo estadounidense. Mientras los esclavistas blancos trataban de extender la esclavitud al territorio mexicano, EE.UU. conspiró para anexar a Texas en 1845 e invadió a México. Hacia el final de la intervención de Estados Unidos en México en 1848, aproximadamente la mitad del territorio mexicano quedó en manos de EE.UU. Las zonas fronterizas de Texas fueron objeto de disputas acaloradas durante décadas, y los mexicanoestadounidenses en el área fueron sometidos al terror sanginario y a la represión racista. Hoy en día, muchos residentes tienen familia en ambos lados de la frontera y cruzan con regularidad para trabajar, ir a la escuela o hacer compras. Hasta 2009 podían hacerlo sin pasaportes. Desde entonces, se requieren pasaportes para cruzar la frontera, y en los puestos de control a millas de la frontera de EE.UU. se tiene como blanco a los latinos, así como a los indígenas estadounidenses, a quienes se les acosa, interroga y detiene.

La Casa Blanca racista presenta a los latinos—el grupo minoritario más grande en EE.UU., y el cual está creciendo rápidamente—como una amenaza a la mayoría angloestadounidense del país. Pero este ataque no es sólo contra los latinos: que el gobierno les quite la ciudadanía pone en duda los derechos de todos los ciudadanos. La ciudadanía es en si el derecho a *tener* derechos—el derecho al debido proceso, a viajar, a votar. ¿Quiénes serán los próximos en la mira? Como siempre en EE.UU. racista y capitalista, un país fundado en la esclavitud de los negros, la destrucción de los derechos legales será en detrimento de la gente negra, y en última instancia, del movimiento obrero.

Los derechos de ciudadanía en EE.UU. son el producto acumulado no sólo de la Guerra de Independencia contra Gran Bretaña, sino también de las sangrientas batallas de la Guerra Civil estadounidense y las explosivas luchas de clase



AP

1931: Deportation of people of Mexican descent in Los Angeles. 1931: Deportación de personas de descendencia mexicana en Los Ángeles.

y sociales de los siglos XIX y XX. Los esclavistas del Sur de EE.UU. tuvieron que ser aplastados antes de que la Decimocuarta Enmienda a la constitución extendiera los derechos de ciudadanía—la cual originalmente aplicaba sólo a hombres blancos dueños de propiedad—a la gente negra y a “toda persona nacida o naturalizada en Estados Unidos”. (A los indígenas estadounidenses no se les otorgó la ciudadanía hasta 1924.) Después de la derrota de la Reconstrucción Radical, una combinación de terror legal y extrajudicial le negó a la gente negra sus derechos de nacimiento, impuso la segregación Jim Crow y los relegó a ciudadanía de segunda clase. Durante décadas los gobiernos estatales disputaron la validez de los certificados de nacimiento con base en la raza para imponer las leyes contra la “mezcla de razas” y la racista regla de “una gota de sangre negra”.

Aunque muchos hoy dan por hecho que la ciudadanía estadounidense es el derecho de nacimiento de cualquiera que nazca aquí, ese concepto moderno es en realidad una victoria reciente y reversible. Un siglo después de la Decimocuarta Enmienda—en el contexto del movimiento masivo por los derechos civiles y las convulsivas protestas contra la Guerra de Vietnam—la decisión de la Suprema Corte *Afroyim vs. Rusk* de 1967 determinó que el gobierno no puede privar a ninguna persona de su ciudadanía involuntariamente. La ciudadanía es un logro importante que se debe defender. Sin embargo, como cualquier derecho en este sistema racista, no es ningún baluarte contra la injusticia capitalista; para los negros, las minorías oprimidas y los pobres, derechos como la igualdad bajo la ley y el debido proceso son la excepción a la regla.

Despertar el odio racial y étnico es una manera en que la clase capitalista—representada igualmente por los demócratas y republicanos—mantiene a la clase obrera dividida y mina su capacidad para luchar. Los gobernantes estadounidenses tienen una larga historia de leyes de exclusión racista y deportaciones masivas de los que han nacido tanto en el extranjero como aquí. En el siglo pasado, miles de estadounidenses fueron despojados de su ciuda-

danía debido a su raza, nacionalidad, convicciones políticas o participación en lucha de clases militante. Durante las redadas Palmer de 1919-20, las cuales se lanzaron como una reacción temerosa a la Revolución Rusa, 10 mil personas fueron objeto de redadas, entre ellas militantes sindicalistas, personas bajo sospecha de ser comunistas e inmigrantes; más de mil fueron deportados. En los años treinta, durante un periodo de revuelta entre trabajadores agrícolas e industriales, alrededor de un millón de personas de descendencia mexicana fueron expulsadas del país en programas racistas de “repatriación”, más de la mitad eran ciudadanos estadounidenses. Durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, los estadounidenses japoneses fueron internados en campos de concentración y enfrentaron la pérdida de la ciudadanía.

Invocar a un “enemigo interior” les ha

John Brown...

(continued from page 5)

that will hesitate at nothing in the fight to put the wealth of the world created by labor into the hands of labor itself through proletarian revolutions across the globe. Guided by a firm, revolutionary vanguard party, the workers will forge the class-struggle leadership of labor by ousting the agents of the bourgeoisie within the workers movement.

In racist capitalist America, we will remember those like John Brown and many others who waged war to throw off the shackles of the oppressed. Capitalism cannot be reformed—no ruling class ever has relinquished its power, its profits and accumulated wealth without a fight and it never will. This understanding is contrary to the illusions spread by the reformist socialists, such as the International Socialist Organization and Socialist Alternative, that you can pressure the Democrats to reform capitalism.

We understand that class struggle is the motor force of history. But this is not all. Even before Marx and Engels, bourgeois historians were writing about class struggle

servido durante mucho tiempo a los gobernantes de EE.UU. para aumentar su maquinaria de represión estatal contra la clase obrera, la gente negra, los inmigrantes y cualquier persona que perciban como opo- nente del dominio de la clase capitalista. Desde los ataques del 11 de septiembre, la bipartidista “guerra contra el terrorismo”, no sólo ha acosado a los musulmanes y a otros, también ha pisoteado los derechos de ciudadanía. Por ejemplo, está el caso del ciudadano estadounidense José Padilla, que inicialmente iba ser encarcelado indefinidamente como “combatiente enemigo” sin cargos o audiencia. O Anwar al-Awlaki y su hijo, ambos ciudadanos estadounidenses asesinados en la cruzada de “asesinatos selectivos” de Obama en Yemen.

Cualquier ataque de la clase dominante contra los más vulnerables es un medio para hacer retroceder los derechos más ampliamente, disminuyendo los salarios y empeorando las condiciones laborales para todos. Sólo la lucha de clases, que una a los negros, blancos, latinos e inmigrantes puede empezar a revertir estos ataques y romper con las divisiones fomentadas por la clase dominante. Esta lucha debe combatir centralmente la opresión negra, la cual es fundamental al capitalismo estadounidense. La Spartacist League/U.S. está dedicada a construir un partido obrero revolucionario el cual sea el defensor de la liberación negra y los derechos de los inmigrantes, como parte de la lucha para barrer con el imperialismo racista estadounidense mediante la revolución socialista. Tal partido estará en su mayoría compuesto y dirigido por negros, latinos y otras minorías, los cuales tienen poco que perder y mucho que ganar en la lucha por el poder obrero. ■

in France and elsewhere. We Marxists seek to extend this to recognizing the necessity for proletarian power, for proletarian dictatorship that will eliminate capitalism. We fight to end the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the capitalists, as part of a transition to a classless society of material abundance.

We stand for the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist order, for revolutionary integrationism. This means integrated class struggle, mobilizing the social power of the proletariat to lead the fight against all manifestations of racial oppression, against racist police terror, against segregated education, against the hated Confederate flag of slavery and finally, to victory over the exploiters.

We fight to win a new generation of conscious workers and militant youth to take up the banner of genuine Marxism: Trotskyism. As a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party acting as a tribune of the people, we have no interests separate from the working class and oppressed. We fight for a communist future. We say: Remember John Brown and all our revolutionary heroes and heroines! We say: Finish the Civil War! For a third American Revolution! For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

Workers Vanguard Suplementos en español

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Número 9  
10 de agosto de 2018  
**El despidado Trump y los demócratas hipócritas**  
**¡No a las detenciones!**  
**¡Plenos derechos de ciudadanía para los inmigrantes!**

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## Borderlands

# U.S. Denies Passports to Citizens

In an ominous racist attack, U.S.-born Latino citizens living near the Mexican border are being denied passports or having their passports taken away. Although the State Department contests the figures, the *Washington Post* estimates that the government is challenging the citizenship of hundreds, possibly thousands, of people. Some have been locked up in detention centers and slated for deportation. Others, who traveled abroad on valid passports, have been stranded in Mexico, unable to return home. The government is rendering native-born citizens stateless, depriving them of basic legal rights in *any* country. We demand: give them their passports now!

The chauvinist pretext for going after Latino citizens, notably in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, is the accusation that they were really born on the Mexican side of the border and their U.S. birth certificates were falsified by midwives. Forced to “prove” the validity of their government-issued birth certificates, those targeted are required to dig for evidence that’s nearly impossible to find—baptismal certificates, prenatal care records and parents’ rent receipts from decades ago. Regardless of which side of the border you were born on, we say: everyone in this country should have full citizenship rights!

Trump rode into office fanning the flames of nativist reaction and has escalated the anti-immigrant drive, from rants about a border wall to attacks on asylum-seekers, to family-separation detentions. He and his administration have brazenly gone after Muslims as well as dark-skinned Spanish speakers, whipping up a witchhunt against anyone who seems “foreign.” Trump’s “white America” chauvinism is an appeal to racist reactionaries and outright fascists, who have become emboldened in their attacks against minorities, black people and leftists.

The State Department dragnet against Latino passport holders dates back to the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Alleging that midwives provided false birth certificates to some babies supposedly born in Mexico between 1950 and 1990, Washington routinely denied passports to people of Mexican descent who were born in their homes or at community health centers near the border. Use of midwives is common in these largely rural and impoverished areas: hospitals are few and far between, and many women cannot afford medical care or fear deportation. Quality medical care, including prenatal and postnatal, should be provided to all free at the point of

service, regardless of their legal status.

In response to a class-action law suit by the American Civil Liberties Union, in 2009 the Obama administration struck a deal, claiming they would develop “new protocols” that would supposedly no longer discriminate against people from border states who were born outside of a hospital. With Trump now reviving the old program, immigration lawyers report that such cases are skyrocketing.

Though carried out with less volt-



**Texas: U.S. Border Patrol demands identification at El Paso bridge between U.S. and Mexico in June.**

**Texas: La migra exige identificación en el puente de El Paso entre EE.UU. y México en junio.**

age and brazen bigotry, the anti-Latino and anti-immigrant campaigns under Trump’s Democratic predecessor were the scaffolding for the policies we see today. Obama devised countless legal means to delay or deny passports to U.S. citizens, like those who have been black-listed as “sex offenders” or tax evaders. Meanwhile, Obama’s Operation Janus program took citizenship away from naturalized immigrants who had allegedly filed fraudulent papers. Obama offered platitudes about the U.S. as a “nation of immigrants,” all the while deporting record numbers of them.

The racist yahoos and Tea Party types who constitute Trump’s base make it easy for the Democrats to posture as defenders of minorities, black people and immigrants. In early September, a group of Democratic Congressmen introduced

*continued on page 6*

## Zona fronteriza

# EE.UU. niega pasaportes a ciudadanos

En un siniestro ataque racista a ciudadanos latinos nacidos en EE.UU. que viven cerca de la frontera mexicana se les están negando pasaportes o se los están quitando. Aunque el Departamento de Estado refuta las cifras, el *Washington Post* estima que el gobierno está cuestionando la ciudadanía de cientos, y posiblemente miles, de personas. Algunos han sido encarcelados en centros de detención y programados para deportación. Otros, quienes han viajado al extranjero

nosotros decimos: ¡todos los que están en este país deberían tener plenos derechos de ciudadanía!

Trump llegó a su mandato echando leña al fuego de la reacción nativista e intensificando la campaña antiinmigrante, desde sus desvaríos sobre un muro fronterizo hasta sus ataques contra solicitantes de asilo, y las detenciones que han separado familias. Él y su administración han perseguido descaradamente a musulmanes y también a hispanoparlantes de piel oscura, despertando una cacería de brujas contra cualquier persona que parezca ser “extranjera”. El chovinismo de un “Estados Unidos blanco” de Trump es un llamado a los reaccionarios racistas y a los abiertamente fascistas, quienes están envalentonados en sus ataques contra minorías, gente negra e izquierdistas.

Los operativos del Departamento de Estado contra los latinos que poseen pasaportes estadounidenses se remontan a las administraciones de George W. Bush y Barack Obama. Alegando que las parteras proporcionaron actas de nacimiento falsas para algunos bebés que supuestamente nacieron en México entre 1950 y 1990, Washington frecuentemente le negó pasaportes a gente de descendencia mexicana que nacieron en sus hogares o en centros de salud comunitarios cerca de la frontera. El uso de parteras es común en estas áreas, en su mayoría rurales y empobrecidas: los hospitales son pocos y están lejos, y las mujeres no pueden pagar los gastos médicos o temen la deportación. La asistencia médica de calidad, incluyendo cuidados prenatales y posnatales, debe ser gratuito para todos, independientemente del estatus legal de la persona.

En respuesta a una demanda colectiva del American Civil Liberties Union, en 2009 la administración de Obama llegó a un acuerdo afirmando que desarrollarían “nuevos protocolos” que supuestamente ya no discriminarían a gente de estados fronterizos que no nacieron en un hospital. Ahora que Trump ha reactivado el viejo programa, según los abogados de inmigración, el número de estos casos está por las nubes.

Aunque se llevaron a cabo de manera menos intensa y fanática, las campañas en contra de los latinos e inmigrantes bajo los predecesores demócratas de Trump fueron el andamio para la política que vemos hoy. Obama ideó innumerables medios legales para aplazar o negar pasaportes a ciudadanos estadounidenses, por ejemplo a aquellos que están en la

lista negra de “delinquentes sexuales” o evasores de impuestos. Mientras tanto, el programa Operación Janus de Obama le quitó la ciudadanía

*sigue en la página 7*

## Mexican Americans Under Attack Mexicanoestadounidenses bajo ataque