

Squabble over Khashoggi Murder Down With U.S./Saudi War on Yemen!

More than three and a half years of unrelenting war by Saudi Arabia aided by the U.S., British and French imperialists have turned Yemen into a slaughterhouse and the world's most horrific scene of mass starvation and disease. Along with a bombing campaign, a naval blockade enforced with the help of U.S. warships has largely sealed off aid to Yemen, worsening the human toll in a country heavily reliant on food, fuel and other imports. An estimated 56,000 people have been killed while some 14 million—half the country's population—teeter on the brink of starvation. With the collapse of health care and basic sanitation, including clean water, one of the largest cholera outbreaks in history has raged uncontrollably. At least one million people have contracted the disease; more than 2,500 have died from it. According to UNICEF, a child dies in Yemen every ten minutes due to malnutrition and disease.

In March 2015, the Saudi-led coalition launched the bombing campaign against Houthi rebels in Yemen with key support provided by the Obama administration, including precision weaponry, in-flight fueling of warplanes and satellite intel. The assault began after the Houthi movement, which is based on the Zaidi Shia minority, seized control of the capital, Sana'a, and other parts of the country. As expectations in Riyadh and Washington of early victory proved hollow, the coalition increasingly massacred civilians and sought to destroy the economy.

To starve the Houthis into submission, airstrikes have been aimed at food production and transportation facilities. Roads, bridges, electric grids, seaports, airports and water supply facilities have been destroyed. Helicopters and warships have blasted hundreds of fishing boats in the Red Sea, killing more than 150 fishermen. Thousands have died in precision airstrikes against civilian targets: homes, weddings, funerals, marketplaces, hospitals and schools, including one for the blind. Scores of cars and buses have been bombed. Forty-four children and ten adults died in one attack on a school bus.

Prior to 2015, Marxists took no side in the conflict between the Houthis and their tribal and religious rivals. However, from the start of the U.S.-backed Saudi war, workers in the U.S. and internationally have had a side: with the Houthis and their allies against the Saudi-led coalition and its proxies. This position does not lessen our Marxist political opposition to all forms of religious reaction and bourgeois nationalism. But we stress that it is U.S. imperialism that is the enemy of working



Reuters

Above: Funeral held for victims of U.S.-supplied bomb dropped in Saudi airstrike on a school bus in northern Yemen, which killed 44 children and ten adults on August 9. Below: U.S. Navy troops on board intercepted boat in the Gulf of Aden in August, as part of enforcing blockade that largely seals off aid to Yemen.



U.S. Navy

people throughout the world. A setback for the Saudi-led coalition would rebound not only against this deeply reactionary, theocratic state but also against U.S. imperialist designs in the region.

The Khashoggi Affair

With world attention focused on the barbaric Saudi monarchy, Donald Trump has steadfastly refused to follow the example of Obama, who, when Riyadh's torture and killing of dissidents became too conspicuous, would gently admonish the Saudis about the importance of "human rights" while continuing to arm them to the teeth. Since the October 2 murder of Jamal Khashoggi, Trump has maintained his unabashed support of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto Saudi ruler, citing among other things his recent help in lowering oil prices. As evidence leaked by Turkish president Recep

Tayyip Erdogan made clear, Khashoggi, a journalist critical of bin Salman, was murdered by Saudi security forces in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. While Trump trotted out a litany of excuses to deflect blame from the royal family, the CIA slapped at the White House by categorically declaring the obvious: bin Salman was guilty of ordering the murder. Trump slapped back: Maybe he did, maybe he didn't.

Khashoggi was a longtime member of the Saudi elite and supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood and other reactionary Islamist forces. As a young man in the 1980s, he made a pilgrimage of sorts, at Osama bin Laden's invitation, to Afghanistan. There he was photographed brandishing an assault rifle as he cheered the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats fighting the liberating forces of the Soviet Red Army. Khashoggi later forged close ties with members of the Saudi royalty,

notably the former head of the blood-soaked intelligence services, for whom he served as "media adviser."

In more recent years, he butted heads with bin Salman, including by coming out for a negotiated end to the quagmire in Yemen. Khashoggi was also making pals with Erdogan at a time of intensifying regional tensions between Saudi Arabia and Turkey. To bin Salman, Khashoggi's tepid opposition was a betrayal as well as a threat to his campaign to cultivate an image as a reformer. Khashoggi, fearing arrest, had for the past year lived outside Washington, D.C., writing columns for the *Washington Post*.

Democrats in Washington have had a field day criticizing Trump for his rapport with the Saudi royal family. This is pure cynicism. The partnership between Washington and Riyadh has been reaffirmed by every president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt negotiated the 1945 U.S.-Saudi accord with King Ibn Saud. That agreement guaranteed U.S. protection of the Saudi monarchy in return for access to the country's oil fields. The largest in the long history of U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia—over \$115 billion—was concluded under Obama. For well over a year after the outbreak of the Yemen war, the Obama administration supplied Riyadh with anti-personnel cluster bombs, and after a brief hiatus resumed sales.

Last March, when bin Salman visited the U.S. after announcing an easing of restrictions on women driving, the supposed "reformer" was embraced by a full gamut of politicians and celebrities, from Donald Trump and Bill Clinton to Oprah Winfrey. Following that visit, the arrest of Saudi women's rights activists provoked little more in Washington than a collective yawn. A number of the 18 activists arrested this year have reportedly been tortured with electric shocks and whippings.

Now Congressional Democrats, and several Republicans, are calling for a halt to U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia as they press for an end to the Yemen war. This position reflects concerns in sections of the U.S. ruling class that by further pursuing an unwinnable war in Yemen, the Saudis are undercutting their ability to act as a linchpin, along with Israel, for U.S. interests in the Near East. As he did during his presidential bid, imperialist running dog Bernie Sanders has called for ending the war; his campaign indicated that the rationale was to free up warplanes and troops from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states to join U.S. forces fighting ISIS in Syria.

Military depredations are part of the normal workings of imperialism. As we wrote in "Down With Saudi-led War in Yemen!" (WV No. 1070, 12 June 2015), "Every time one of its tentacles is weakened or cut off, every time a blow is struck against the American imperialist

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Poland: Capitalist Rulers Glorify Anti-Jewish Pogromists

The triumph of Solidarność counterrevolution in Poland nearly 30 years ago ushered in imperialist-dictated “shock therapy” that razed the collectivized foundations of the former bureaucratically deformed workers state and reduced much of the population to penury, forcing many Polish workers to seek a livelihood abroad. Accompanying this devastation was the steady drumbeat of a reactionary crusade reasserting the dominance of the Catholic church over Polish society and glorifying the interwar Poland of Marshal Jozef Pilsudski and the ultraright National Democrats (Endeks).

A new edition of the Inquisition, the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), was established to root out and punish those who deny or minimize “crimes against the Polish nation.” The law heinously equates the World War II Nazi occupation with the Soviet “invasion” of 1944-45 that smashed the Nazis. Earlier this year, the IPN Act was amended by the latter-day Endeks of

the Law and Justice (PiS) government to also criminalize, with penalties ranging up to three years’ imprisonment, any assertion of Polish complicity in the Holocaust. Jewish survivors protesting outside the Polish Embassy in Tel Aviv proclaimed, “No law will erase history!”

Some six million European Jews, half of them Polish, were murdered by Hitler’s Nazis, along with millions more, particularly Roma, Soviet war prisoners and homosexuals. Yet in the eyes of the contemporary heirs of Pilsudski and the Endeks, the Soviet liberation of Poland from the Nazi scourge was indeed the greatest “crime” against capitalist Poland. The main activity of the Polish bourgeois-nationalist “resistance”—the Home Army (AK) of the London government in exile and the openly anti-Jewish terror gangs of the Endek National Armed Forces (NSZ)—was to shoot down Communist and Jewish partisans who were fighting the

Polish nationalists march by portrait of Marshal Jozef Pilsudski on November 11 “Independence Day” in Warsaw, 2016.



Nazis throughout the German occupation. However, the AK engaged in battle with the Germans after the Red Army began its offensive toward the eastern bank of the Vistula River. (See “The Warsaw Uprising of 1944” [WV No. 294, 4 December 1981; *Platforma Spartakusowców* No. 9, Spring-Summer 1999] for an exposé of the anti-Soviet myths surrounding that event.)

As the Nazis began liquidating the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942, the AK’s Antyk (Anti-Communist) department declared: “The extermination of the Jews in Europe by the Germans...represents from our point of view an undoubtedly favorable development, for it will weaken the explosive power of Communism” (quoted in Reuben Ainsztein, *The Warsaw Ghetto Revolt* [1979]). After Soviet forces defeated the Nazi occupiers, the NSZ and remnants of the AK—today dubbed “cursed soldiers”—waged a war of terror, assassinations and pogroms against Soviet soldiers, Communists, Ukrainians and Jewish survivors. As the Spartacist Group of Poland has noted previously: “Hitler’s war against ‘Jew-Bolshevism’ fit in neatly with the Polish nationalist myth of a ‘Jewish-Communist’ conspiracy against Poland” (*Platforma Spartakusowców* No. 20, April 2016; reprinted in WV No. 1090, 20 May 2016).

The International Communist League is committed to the forging of a revolutionary internationalist party of the Polish proletariat. As a necessary task in this struggle, the SGP seeks to sear into the consciousness of the working class the record of the Polish bourgeoisie’s complicity in the Nazi extermination of the Jews.

Trotskyists Said: Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!

The enactment of the Holocaust law was met with hypocritical protest from Polish Civic Platform (PO), the parliamentary opposition party, whose embrace of the European Union makes it more sensitive to imperialist “public opinion.” As well, many liberals warned that the law would suppress historical research and debate. We oppose all state censor-

ship. However, the criminal role of the interwar Polish bourgeoisie and its World War II anti-Communist cutthroats is not a matter of debate but of historical fact.

The record of Polish nationalism, suitably prettified for Western consumption, is embraced by all parties of the Polish bourgeoisie, including the PO as well as the PiS. In 2011, the PO-led coalition government commemorated the postwar terrorists by declaring March 1 a “National Day of Cursed Soldiers.” In 2017, the PiS-dominated Sejm (lower house of parliament) further honored these anti-Jewish and anti-Communist killers, by acclamation, for making “a valuable contribution to the Homeland” because “NSZ troops never accepted the Soviet Union’s conquest of Poland and the imposition of Communist rule.” Meanwhile, at November 11 “Independence Day” celebrations, government leaders stand side by side with outright fascists howling, “Communists will hang on trees” and “Save Europe from emigration.” We Trotskyists say: *All honor to the millions of Red Army soldiers and officers who died liberating East and Central Europe from the Nazis!*

Interwar Poland was a capitalist dictatorship enforcing intense exploitation and marked by virulent chauvinism, anti-Communism and anti-Jewish bigotry. It was also deeply oppressive of the Ukrainian and Belorussian national minorities. The Red Army’s entry in 1944-45 was welcomed by wide swaths of the populace. The Polish People’s Republic that was later erected as a result of the Soviet presence marked an end to the capitalists and landlords and their pogromist gangs; provided jobs, health care and education for all; and freed women from the draconian dictates of the church.

However, decades of Stalinist bureaucratic mismanagement under the dogma of “socialism in one country”—which included conciliation of the Catholic hierarchy and peasant smallholders and the mortgaging of the economy to the Western bankers—ultimately drove much of the working class into the arms of Solidarność

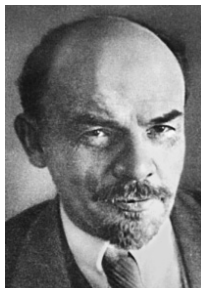
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TROTSKY

Honor Warsaw Ghetto Fighters!

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 was the last heroic chapter of Poland’s combative Jewish proletariat during World War II. Some 40,000 men, women and children held off elite Nazi troops for 42 days before they were nearly all dragged off to the gas chambers. We reprint below an excerpt from Czerwony Sztandar (Red Flag), the newspaper of the Jewish Trotskyists in the Warsaw Ghetto, hailing the Red Army shortly after the German invasion of the Soviet Union. This selection



LENIN

originally appeared in WV No. 573 (9 April 1993). In the intervening period, we have misplaced the source material.

The first workers state is fighting for its existence. The fate of the Russian Revolution and—to a considerable degree—the fate of the international revolution weigh in the balance. The workers of the whole world follow with bated breath the course of the greatest class war in the world, and their hearts and souls are with the Red Army.... Under which slogans will the Soviet bureaucracy lead the war? Under patriotic or revolutionary ones, “democratic” or class?

The history of the last 17 years, beginning from the foundation of the theory of “socialism in one country,” and especially the “gains” of the last six years—the “people’s front,” betrayal of the Spanish revolution, the Moscow trials, the pogrom against the Bolshevik elite, the restoration of the officer caste in the Red Army, triumphant reaction in all spheres of Soviet life, the propagation of the cult of [tsarist generals] Suvorov, Kutuzov and similar “heroes,” the assassination of Trotsky and the friendship with Hitler, all Stalin’s crimes—the whole Soviet Thermidor would have had no sense if the Soviet bureaucracy were to show itself suddenly willing and capable to conduct revolutionary war....

We defend the workers state regardless of the Stalinist regime, as we defend every workers organization from the blows of the class enemy regardless of the reformist regime ruling it.... The war of the USSR against Hitler—is the war of the international proletariat, it is our war!

“We accept the workers’ state as it is and we assert, ‘This is our state.’ Despite its heritage of backwardness, despite starvation and sluggishness, despite the bureaucratic mistakes and even abominations, the workers of the entire world must defend tooth and nail their future socialist fatherland which this state represents” (Trotsky, 1932).

Long Live the Red Army!

Long Live the Russian Revolution!

Long Live the International Revolution!

—“Our War,” *Czerwony Sztandar* (July 1941)

WORKERS VANGUARD



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30 November 2018



Nazis round up Jewish survivors of heroic 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising for deportation to Treblinka death camp.



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

The Frame-Up of the Omaha Two Free Ed Poindexter!

For 48 years, Ed Poindexter has been locked behind bars for the “crime” of being an unbending fighter for black freedom. Along with his codefendant Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, then known as David Rice, Poindexter was framed up on bogus charges of killing Omaha, Nebraska, police officer Larry Minard in an August 1970 bomb explosion. Without a shred of physical evidence and based on the perjured testimony of teenager Duane Peak at their 1971 trial, Poindexter and Mondo, leaders of the National Committee to Combat Fascism (NCCF), a Black Panther Party (BPP) affiliate, were sentenced to life. Mondo died in prison in 2016. The racist capitalist rulers have made it clear that is the only way they will let Poindexter leave his prison hell.

A July 2018 book by Michael Richardson, *Framed: J. Edgar Hoover, COINTELPRO & the Omaha Two Story*, lays bare the racist conspiracy by the FBI and

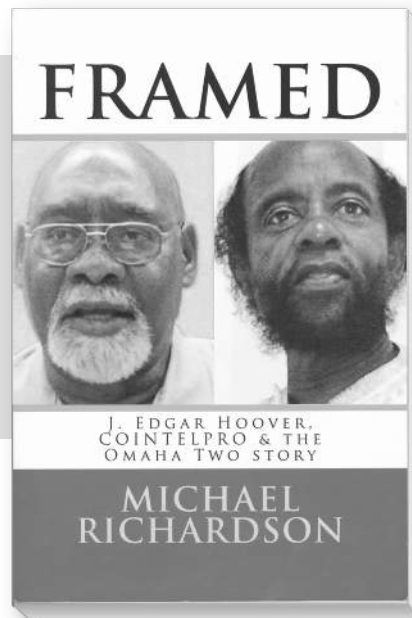
Omaha police to frame up Poindexter and Mondo as part of the murderous FBI COINTELPRO vendetta against the Panthers. Based on a decade of meticulous research, the book exposes the lies of cops, prosecutors and FBI agents. It details collusion at the highest levels of the FBI with the Omaha police to suppress evidence, as well as prosecutorial intimidation and coaching of Duane Peak to concoct a scenario that tied Poindexter and Mondo to Minard’s killing.

Like the Panthers, the NCCF rejected the turn-the-other-cheek pacifism of Martin Luther King Jr., advocating armed self-defense in the face of racist cop terror. The avowedly revolutionary and anti-capitalist BPP crystallized the best of a generation of black militants. But the program of the Panthers was disdainful of the multiracial working class, which has real social power based on its role in production. This isolation from the proletar-

iat left the Panthers especially vulnerable to government repression.

FBI head J. Edgar Hoover declared the Panthers to be the “greatest threat to the internal security of the U.S.” He said of an expanded COINTELPRO: “The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalists.” Hoover spelled out what he meant in 1968, when he stated: “The Negro youth and moderates must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries.”

This was no idle threat. Thirty-eight Panthers were killed and hundreds more arrested on bogus charges. Richardson describes the 4 December 1969 FBI-orchestrated raid by Chicago cops on the apartment of 20-year-old Panther leader Fred Hampton, who was assassinated together with Mark Clark as they slept



in their beds. Four days later, a SWAT team laid siege to the Panther office in Los Angeles, firing thousands of rounds of ammunition. The primary target was L.A. BPP leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), a Vietnam War vet whose military knowledge was crucial that day to saving his own life and those of his comrades. Geronimo was subsequently framed up for a 1968 murder and spent 27 years in prison (eight of them in solitary) before his conviction was overturned and he was freed in 1997; he died in 2011. Those the authorities couldn’t kill were railroaded to prison hell. Among them is class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was falsely

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Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Freedom Now for Kevin Cooper!

California

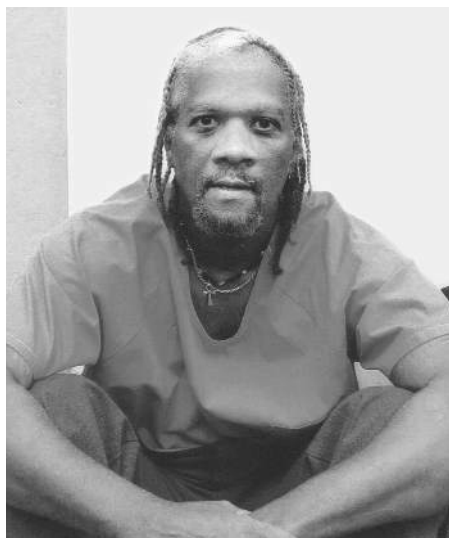
Kevin Cooper, a black man framed up for the 1983 murder of a white family, has spent 33 years on death row in San Quentin prison. In 2004, Cooper was less than four hours away from being murdered by the State of California when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a stay of execution issued by the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. That stay was granted after questions were raised over the pros-

ecution’s evidence against Cooper in his 1985 trial. As one of the appeals court judges, William Fletcher, later wrote: “Kevin Cooper, the man now sitting on death row, may well be—and in my view probably is—innocent. And he is on death row because the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department framed him.”

Cooper’s case returned to the public spotlight earlier this year after the *New York Times* published a May 17 op-ed column by Nicholas Kristof that compellingly detailed the police frame-up. It began almost immediately after the brutally mutilated bodies of Douglas and Peggy Ryen, their 10-year-old daughter and an 11-year-old neighbor were found in the Ryens’ house in Chino Hills, California, on 5 June 1983. Incredibly, the Ryens’ 8-year-old son Joshua, whose throat was slit and skull fractured, survived.

At the hospital, Joshua communicated to a social worker that the killers were three or four white men. This matched the coroner’s initial conclusion that there had been several killers who had used a hatchet, an ice pick and knives. But this and other evidence was thrown out by the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department as soon as they realized they could pin the murders on Cooper. A 25-year-old black man with a criminal record, he more than fit the police profile of a wanted suspect in racist, capitalist America.

Three days before the murders, Cooper had escaped from a nearby minimum-security prison, where he was serving a four-year sentence for burglary. He had then hidden out in a house next door to the Ryens before fleeing to Mexico. Evidence shows that Cooper checked into a Tijuana



Norman Hille

Kevin Cooper in San Quentin, 2013.

hotel on June 5. The next day, cops looked through the house where Cooper had hidden and found nothing. But as soon as Cooper became their prime suspect, “evidence” suddenly turned up, including a blood-stained button from a green prison uniform. Cooper’s was brown. A hatchet sheath was all of a sudden found in the house. Cigarette butts that the cops claimed were Cooper’s were likewise suddenly discovered in the ashtray of the Ryens’ station wagon, which had been stolen the night of the murders.

Buried was the testimony of local residents who reported seeing three white men driving the station wagon, as well as the accounts of witnesses who had seen three white men in bloody clothing in a nearby bar. Two bloody shirts were later found down the street from the bar. On June 9, a call was made to the San Ber-

nardino Sheriff’s Department by a woman saying that her boyfriend, a convicted murderer, had come home on the night of the Ryen murders in an unfamiliar station wagon, wearing bloody coveralls but not the T-shirt he had on earlier in the day. She turned the coveralls over to the police, who threw them away!

Cooper, who has maintained his innocence from the beginning, fought to have a DNA test done on a bloody T-shirt that had been found near the Ryens’ house. When the test, which was conducted in 2002, showed his blood on the shirt, Cooper insisted that it had been planted by the police. Further testing after the 2004 stay of execution revealed that the blood on the shirt included a chemical that the police use to preserve blood samples. When a vial of the blood taken from Cooper was tested, it was found to contain the DNA of Cooper and another person. In short, it’s likely that the police planted blood from the vial on the shirt and then topped it off with someone else’s blood to make it look like the vial hadn’t been tampered with. Nonetheless, the court upheld Cooper’s conviction and death sentence.

In his op-ed, Kristof noted that the defense attorney’s repeated requests for advanced DNA testing had been refused by California’s Democratic Party governor Jerry Brown, as well as by Kamala Harris, who was the state’s attorney general from 2011-17. Now a U.S. Senator and hopeful contender for the top slot on the Democrats’ presidential ticket in 2020, Harris immediately responded to Kristof’s column, declaring: “As a firm believer in DNA testing, I hope the

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Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Number 40 50c Fall 2017

For Labor/Black Action to Stop the Fascists!



Spartacist League/PDC contingent at anti-fascist protest in Berkeley, August 27.

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Ed Poindexter...

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convicted of the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

The sinister motivation for the frame-up of Poindexter and Mondo was made clear two decades later by Jack Swanson, the Omaha Police Intelligence Division liaison with the FBI. In a 1991 documentary by George Case, *Black Panthers*, Swanson boasted: “I think we did the right thing at the time, because the Black Panther Party...completely disappeared from the city of Omaha.” For his role in the frame-up, Swanson was promoted to lieutenant and later became Omaha’s chief of police.

By the time he joined the BPP, Mondo was known as a performance artist and anti-poverty worker. Like many military veterans, Poindexter was radicalized by the Vietnam War and sought in the BPP the vehicle to place his military experience in the service of the black freedom struggle. The two joined with the BPP in response to relentless racist police brutality—which brought Omaha to a boil with the killing of black 14-year-old Vivian Strong, who was shot in the back of the head by a cop in the summer of 1969. Strong’s killer was acquitted by an all-white jury. A year earlier, a black high school student had been shot dead by the cops during protests against arch-segregationist George Wallace, who held a rally in the city during his presidential election campaign.

In the early morning hours of 17 August 1970, Omaha police received a 911 call from a man speaking with a deep gravelly voice, reporting that a woman was screaming from a vacant house. When the cops arrived, the house was empty except for a suitcase inside the doorway. That suitcase exploded, killing Minard. Afterward, Omaha police rounded up dozens of black people in a racist dragnet. Richardson points out that within hours, the FBI knew from its informants that Mondo and Poindexter were not involved in Minard’s death—but it is the two of them that the cops and FBI targeted.

Among those picked up was 15-year-old Duane Peak, who confessed to placing the bomb. Peak told the cops at least six versions of what happened. Initially, he stated that he acted alone, and that Poindexter and Mondo were not involved. Threatened with the death penalty and promised a deal, Peak agreed to implicate them.

At a preliminary hearing, he effectively recanted his accusations against Poindexter and Mondo. The prosecution asked for a break. Two hours later, Peak returned to court wearing sunglasses, which when removed revealed swollen eyes. He then

Ed Poindexter (left), Duane Peak and Dorothy Stubblefield in front of the National Committee to Combat Fascism headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska.



Savage/Omaha World-Herald

repeated his earlier fabrication that Poindexter had built the bomb using dynamite that was stored in Mondo’s basement. The next day, Peak confided in a letter from jail to a family friend, Olivia Norris: “From now on I refuse to call myself a man, or anything close to a man, because I did what I did.” He added, “I not only turned against those two bloods, but I turned against myself and my own people.” That letter, which prosecutors knew about, was suppressed along with other evidence.

Peak testified that he carried the suitcase bomb around North Omaha from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m., taking it into three different cars and two residences. Four witnesses, including two cousins of Peak, testified that Peak was never together with Poindexter and Mondo at the times and places that Peak claimed. Peak also testified that it was he who made the 911 call. A recording of the 911 call was never played for the jury. Omaha police had sent a copy of the tape to FBI headquarters for analysis but later asked that no written report be issued, putting a stop to the search for the identity of the caller. An FBI memo pointed to a warning by the Omaha assistant chief of police that use of the tapes “might be prejudicial to the police murder trial.” Hoover himself signed off on this suppression of evidence. Testifying at a 2007 hearing on Poindexter’s petition for a new trial, vocal analyst Tom Owen confirmed that Peak could not have made that phone call.

Peak testified that he never entered into a deal with the prosecution, and the prosecutor denied that any bargain was struck. After testifying against Mondo and Poindexter, Peak pleaded guilty to juvenile delinquency in juvenile court.

The cops’ claim that they had recovered dynamite from the basement of Mondo’s house was transparently false. Of the more than two dozen police photos of the basement, not one shows any dynamite—which only appears in photos of the trunk of a police cruiser. Jack Swanson testified at the 1971 trial that he found the dynamite in a coal bin but changed his story in a 1974 federal appeal hearing, saying he saw it by the furnace. In the 2007 hearing, another cop who at trial had backed up Swanson’s story claimed that he, not Swanson, discovered the dynamite. The court ruled these contradictions “immaterial.” Neither Mondo’s nor Poindexter’s fingerprints were found on the dynamite. In the George Case documentary, Marvin McClarty, a former Omaha policeman present at the search, said he knew that the cops “were out to get those two,” adding: “To this day I still believe that it [the dynamite] was planted in that house.”

The cops also claimed that residue recovered from Mondo’s pants and Poindexter’s pockets tested positive for dynamite. A photo of Mondo taken moments before he surrendered his pants showed him with his hands deeply thrust in his pockets, yet swabs from their hands tested negative. In 1999, a retired top FBI explosives expert, Fred Whitehurst, submitted an analysis. “I still find that suspicious. The dynamite is in cartridges that don’t

need to be opened ever except to punch a hole in them and stick a blasting cap in them. But there are dynamite particles in many places. This is not right.” He concluded: “Something doesn’t add up here unless that evidence was salted.” Many of those initially rounded up tested positive for dynamite, only to be released with charges dropped immediately after Poindexter and Mondo were convicted.

Mondo remained an unbroken fighter against racial oppression until his last breath. Poindexter, who just turned 74, remains unbowed despite numerous health conditions, including recent triple-bypass heart surgery, no doubt exacerbated by nearly five decades of vindictive and inhumane treatment. He has earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees and is recognized as a caring mentor for fellow prisoners.

COINTELPRO was formally terminated two weeks after the conviction of the Omaha Two in the early 1970s. But it lives today not only in the ongoing imprisonment of a generation of Panthers and other fighters for black freedom but also in the surveillance, harassment and state terror directed against those who oppose depredations of racist American capitalism.

In 1974, a federal district court overturned Mondo’s conviction based on the illegal search of his house, a decision affirmed by a federal appellate court a year later. But in 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the case returned to Nebraska state court. The Nebraska Supreme Court then ruled that Mondo’s time to appeal had lapsed. Since 1993, Nebraska’s Parole Board has voted for the release of Poindexter and Mondo. However, the Nebraska Board of Pardons, made up of the governor, the attorney general and secretary of state, has refused to commute the life sentences to a term of years—a prerequisite to a grant of parole.

The FBI, cops and courts are core components of the capitalist state, whose purpose is to safeguard the bosses’ profit system through breaking strikes, terrorizing ghetto and barrio youth and repressing social protest. There will be no end to cop terror and racist frame-ups without getting rid of the capitalist system and its state through workers revolution. *Ed Poindexter is an innocent man—Free him now!*

* * *

Ed Poindexter is among the 11 class-war prisoners receiving stipends from the Partisan Defense Committee, which is preparing to hold its 33rd annual Holiday Appeal fundraiser in support of this program. We first started providing stipends to Poindexter and Mondo in 1986. For more information about the PDC and its class-war prisoners fund, see www.partisandefense.org. You can write to Poindexter at: Ed Poindexter, 27767, 1-A-09, Nebraska State Penitentiary, P.O. Box 22500, Lincoln, NE 68542-2500. ■

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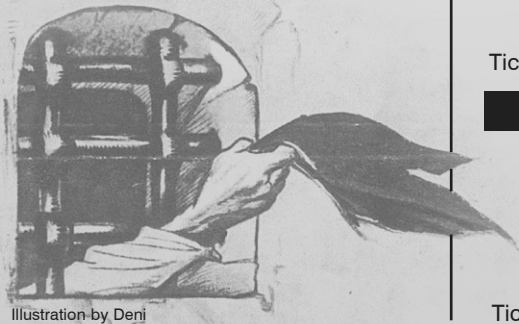


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Kevin Cooper...

(continued from page 3)

governor and the state will allow for such testing.” The cynicism is breathtaking.

For his part, Governor Brown, who leaves office in January, has refused to grant Cooper’s request for DNA testing. When Kristof suggested that every day matters “for an innocent man on death row,” Brown simply shrugged that “California has 130,000 prisoners.” He should know. For years, Brown openly defied a Supreme Court ruling that conditions in California’s overcrowded prisons were so atrocious that they violated the Eighth Amendment’s ban on “cruel and unusual punishment.” In his previous stint as attorney general of California, which has the most death row inmates in the U.S., Brown similarly shrugged off the notion that anyone on death row could be innocent.

Kristof presents the case of Kevin Cooper as “the story of a broken justice system.” Far from it. The police frame-up of Cooper is an object lesson in how the

racist injustice system of American capitalism actually works. As Cooper himself observed: “I’m frameable, because I’m an uneducated black man in America. Sometimes it’s race, and sometimes it’s class.” The cops, courts, prisons and military are at the core of a state apparatus whose purpose is the defense of the profits, property and rule of the bourgeoisie against the working class and oppressed.

The death penalty stands at the pinnacle of the state’s machinery of violence. In the U.S., legal lynching is rooted in the very foundation of American capitalism, which was built on black chattel slavery and continues to be maintained through the forcible segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of this society. Those condemned to death row have always been disproportionately black.

The fight for Cooper’s freedom is a cause that is in the interest of the multi-racial working class and all opponents of the brutal racism, exploitation and oppression enforced by the capitalist state. Free Kevin Cooper now! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Yemen...

(continued from page 1)

monster and its local agents and allies, working people and oppressed around the world benefit, not least in the U.S. itself.” That also applies when ISIS lands blows against the U.S. and its proxies in Syria. We demand: All U.S. forces and bases out of the Near East and Afghanistan now!

The same imperialists who slaughter and wreak havoc across the globe are in an extended war against the workers and the oppressed at home in the search for ever-greater profits. Workers have seen their wages slashed and benefits gutted. Black people, forcibly segregated at the bottom of society, continue to be gunned down by the killer cops. The disillusionment and anger of working people in the U.S. must be turned into class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. Our aim is to build the workers party that will intervene into such struggle to win the multiracial proletariat to the program of socialist revolution to destroy the imperialist beast from within.

Imperialist Merchants of Death

While the war in Yemen is led by the Saudis, the country’s devastation is very much an American product. Years before the Saudis started their air assault, Yemen had been transformed by the Obama administration into a killing field for U.S. Special Forces and a firing range for drone attacks. In the name of combating the local Al Qaeda franchise, scores of Yemeni civilians were targeted for assassination, as were several U.S. citizens, such as Anwar al-Awlaki.

What makes Yemen so important for the imperialists and the Gulf monarchies is its strategic position on the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen sits on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which connects the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. If blocked, this choke point, through which some 3.8 million barrels of oil pass each day, would cut off all shipping between the Suez and points east.

Since early in the current war, U.S. and British military officials have worked in the command and control center in Riyadh that directs Saudi airstrikes. Britain, like the U.S., has supplied Saudi Arabia with billions’ worth of fighter jets and other military hardware. British Royal Air Force personnel are helping to train Saudi crews. France, in addition to supplying weapons to the Saudis and other Gulf states, has sent special forces to fight alongside troops from the United Arab Emirates in Yemen. And U.S. Green Berets are at the Saudi-Yemen border. (The U.S. announced the suspension of aerial refueling of Saudi warplanes following Khashoggi’s murder.)

The background to the war is the arch rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran over influence in the region. Washington fully backs the Saudis, who play a critical

role in financially sustaining U.S. client states in the area, such as Egypt and Jordan, and propping up other oil-rich Gulf kingdoms and emirates. Although U.S. reliance on Saudi oil has declined considerably in recent years with the increased fracking on American soil, Washington wants to retain control over the flow of Gulf oil to the rest of the world.

The Saudis and their allies present the war as a fight against Iran. Iran’s clerical bourgeois regime is based on Shia Islam, while the Saudi monarchy is rooted in the extreme, Wahhabi variant of Sunni Mus-



President Barack Obama meets with Saudi royal family members, including Mohammed bin Salman (on right), at the White House, May 2015.

lim fundamentalism, whose social strictures are similar to those of the reactionaries of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan and ISIS in Iraq and Syria. At the outset of the war, there was no evidence to justify the accusation that Iran was arming and financing the Houthis. But one result of the Saudi onslaught has been to drive them into the arms of Tehran.

Saudi Arabia took on special importance for the U.S. rulers after the 1979 “Islamic revolution” that brought Iran’s reactionary clerical regime to power amid a social upheaval against the despised, U.S.-backed Shah. Iran’s proletariat had the potential to seize power in struggle against both the monarchists and the reactionary Islamist forces. But it was betrayed by its leftist leaders who threw their support to the Ayatollah Khomeini. We were unique on the left internationally in calling for “Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs! Workers to power!” The new regime of the mullahs moved rapidly to enslave women in the veil and unleash murderous repression of workers, leftists, national minorities and others.

The sectarian divide across the region was greatly enflamed by the U.S. overthrow of the Sunni-dominated Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein in 2003. With the establishment in Baghdad of a Shia-dominated regime, the Saudi theocracy appointed itself guardian of the Sunni Arab peoples against the Shia theocracy

in Iran. Not least among the Saudi rulers’ concerns is that their country’s major oil fields are in its majority-Shia Eastern Province. There and elsewhere in the country thousands of foreign workers live in virtual indentured servitude.

In 2011, the Saudis suppressed Shia protests in neighboring Bahrain, where domination of the Shia majority by a Sunni royal family is a vestige of British colonialism. That same year saw the first of a series of large protests in Eastern Province. One of the protest leaders, Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr, was executed

in 2016, an act that Khashoggi hailed. Half a dozen other activists were recently convicted of participating in the protests and are threatened with beheading.

Regional Rivalries and Imperialist Machinations

Regional rivalries explain how Turkey is playing the Khashoggi killing. Exposing the murder of the journalist certainly has nothing to do with defending the press on the part of Erdogan, whose normal response to media and political critics at home is mass incarceration. In slowly leaking the evidence and keeping the story on the front pages, the Turkish government is trying to pressure Washington and Riyadh into granting political concessions.

What Erdogan wants from Washington is no secret. First, he has demanded since 2016 that the U.S. extradite his former ally, Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom he accuses of fomenting a coup attempt that year (see “Turkey’s Failed Coup: Both Sides Bad for Workers—Down With the State of Emergency!” WV No. 1093, 29 July 2016). Secondly, Erdogan has long insisted that Washington distance itself from the Kurdish forces in Syria, who have served as ground troops in the U.S. war against ISIS. With regard to the Saudis, Erdogan is angling to knock bin Salman down a notch or two, and maybe get the U.S. to push for his removal from power. According to the *Guardian* (12 November), the royal court in Riyadh was furious when Turkey rejected a Saudi offer of “significant” financial compensation if it dropped the Khashoggi affair.

Following the murder, Erdogan declared that only Turkey “can lead the Muslim world.” Turkey and Saudi Arabia have long jockeyed for dominant influence in

the Near East. Tensions between the two have heightened enormously since June 2017, when bin Salman was named heir to the throne. Erdogan had supported the Saudi war in Yemen, denouncing “Iran and the terrorist groups” there. However, when several countries led by Saudi Arabia imposed an embargo on Qatar last year because of its ties with Iran, Turkey reinforced its military base in Qatar and joined Iran in breaking the economic blockade. The new crown prince in turn denounced Turkey as part of a “triangle of evil,” along with Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. Bin Salman’s embargo backfired, as Qatar strengthened its ties with Tehran.

The regional interests of Turkey’s capitalist rulers require them to tread a fine line between Iran and the coalition of the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia directed against Tehran. The Trump administration recently made good on its pledge to restore punishing sanctions on Iran, having withdrawn earlier this year from the nuclear deal struck by the Obama White House. In contrast, Turkey has repeatedly supported Iran’s “right to enrich,” i.e., to further develop its nuclear capacity. Heavily dependent on gas and oil imports from Iran, Ankara has pledged to defy the sanctions, as it did the earlier round. While Tehran claims that its nuclear program is purely for energy purposes, U.S. bellicosity underlines that Iran needs nukes as a means to defend its sovereignty. Down with all imperialist sanctions against Iran!

Toward a Socialist Future

From Yemen to Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, imperialist intervention and machinations have brought ever more misery and devastation, strengthening retrograde tribal and religious forces and fueling sectarian conflicts and pogroms. The region’s bourgeois rulers are dependent on one or more of the U.S., European and Japanese imperialist powers, whether or not the imperialists currently consider them enemies or allies/flunkies. All of these regimes brutally repress the toiling masses.

Overcoming backwardness and casting off the imperialist yoke requires the working class, leading the oppressed masses, to overturn the capitalist order through socialist revolution. There are powerful proletarian concentrations in the region, from the Turkish auto plants to the Iranian oil fields and Egyptian textile mills. An end to capitalist rule will open the door to liberating all—women, Kurds and other oppressed nations and minorities, the urban and rural poor. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East will there be a full and equal place for all the myriad peoples of the region. To open the way to a socialist future, proletarian revolutions in these countries must necessarily be combined with the fight for workers rule in the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries.

What must be done is to build revolutionary workers parties that can intervene into class and social struggles and lead the working class and its allies to victory, as the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky did in 1917 in Russia. This is the understanding that guides the International Communist League as we fight to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ■

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Socialist Future...

(continued from page 8)

its ongoing material success. All workers, regardless of race, religion or gender, are exploited by the capitalists and dependent on them for their livelihoods. The interests of the two classes are inherently counterposed, and the class and social conflicts that fester within capitalism cannot be resolved.

There is an important point to make clear here. The working class is not just one sector in the population or some victim of the 1 percent (actually, the bourgeoisie is more like the 0.001 percent). The workers, who have an objective interest in ending a system based on their own exploitation, are the only revolutionary class in capitalist society. The power of the working class comes from the strategic place it has in the production process. As Marx pointed out, capitalism creates its own gravediggers. What's needed is a vanguard party to make the working class conscious of its historic task to smash capitalist rule and establish workers power.

Our Marxist program speaks to the burning needs of the working class, black people, Latinos, women, immigrants and all of the oppressed. The solutions put forward by our forebears over the last century and a half, from Marx and Engels to Lenin and Trotsky to American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon, are not only still relevant but all the more urgent today. We seek to build a multiracial, revolutionary workers party that is committed to fighting for proletarian revolution internationally.

Our model for such a party is based on the Bolsheviks, who led the working class to power in Russia in October 1917. The workers state that issued out of the October Revolution gave the Marxist program flesh and blood and put socialism on the order of the day throughout the world. It confirmed the crucial role of the revolutionary party and illustrated the superiority of a planned and collectivized economy.

Despite a political counterrevolution by a repressive Stalinist bureaucratic caste in 1923-24, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying historic gains, with jobs, health care, education and housing provided to all. Until its final undoing in 1991-92, we unconditionally defended the Soviet degenerated workers state against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attack. We also fought for a proletarian political revolution to restore workers democracy and open the road to the international extension of October. The fall of the Soviet Union was a devastating defeat for working people and the oppressed around the world. The DSA, and much of the rest of the left, rallied for counterrevolution and continue to this day to be enemies of the bureaucratically deformed workers states, where capitalist rule has been overthrown: Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea and China.

Black Oppression: Bedrock of American Capitalism

The United States was founded on three principles. Not life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; more like genocide, puritanism and slavery. The legacy of all these remains deeply rooted in U.S. capitalist society. The legacy of chattel slavery—the buying, selling, owning and killing at will of black people—has branded an entire section of the population based on the color of their skin. Black people today make up a specially oppressed race-color caste, in their majority forced to the bottom of society. The conditions of the black masses continue to be marked by desperate poverty, police violence, unemployment and mass incarceration. At the same time, blacks make up an important component of the working class, integrated into key sectors of the industrial proletariat, such as transit, longshore, auto and steel. In the case of black working-class women, they face triple oppression—by race, class and sex.

The black question is the central defining feature of American capitalism, and

the fight against black oppression is of strategic importance for workers revolution. Centuries-old poisonous racism against black people obscures the fundamental class division between the capitalists and the workers. White supremacy serves to bind white workers to their exploiters through the illusion of a commonality of interest based on skin color. Anti-black racism, as well as anti-immigrant bigotry, pits sectors of the working class against one another, weakening the capacity of the class to struggle collectively and defend its own interests. The bosses push such divide-and-rule tactics with the aid of the pro-capitalist misleadership of the trade unions.

As Karl Marx said at the time of the American Civil War, “Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.” The fight against black oppression benefits the whole of the working class. Rights for the oppressed either go forward together or fall back separately. We fight every manifestation of racial oppression, but we understand that the liberation of black people from these conditions cannot be achieved under capitalism because they are inherent to it. It took a Civil War to smash the institution of slavery, and it will take a proletarian revolution to free black people from their remaining chains. A collectivized economy providing jobs, quality housing, health care and education for all will integrate black people into society on an equal footing. All of this together is the program of revolutionary integrationism.

The country is very polarized right now, not by class but by race and by which party of exploitation and oppression to vote for. It is the job of Marxists to help imbue the multiracial proletariat with some class consciousness, that is, an understanding of the common enemy, the entire ruling class, not just one wing of it. There is a lot of social tinder out there—despair, anger, discontent, fear. The city of Chicago exemplified much of that recently in the lead-up to the verdict in the trial of the racist cop who shot black teenager Laquan McDonald in 2014. It was an execution: 16 shots were fired within six seconds of



Self-declared socialists Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders, featured speakers at July 20 “Unite for America” rally, seek to refurbish image of “red, white and blue” Democratic Party.

Instead, the Democrats have their scapegoat and they can try to sell the lie that the system works for everyone. We already hear the refrain that the cops supposedly will think twice before shooting or that they have been put on notice. But this is racist capitalist America, and cops walk all the time regardless of whether or not the killing is recorded: Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Harith Augustus. In Chicago, four out of five people murdered by cops are black men, and those cops will continue to shoot and get off. In 2017, there were only 14 days when the cops did not kill someone. Nationally, over 99 percent of the police killers get off scot-free because they are actually doing what they are hired to do. The job of the cops is to defend capitalist rule and profits by terrorizing the poor and oppressed and violently suppressing workers struggle.

Racist police atrocities are regularly followed by investigations, reports, police review boards and the occasional firing to keep a lid on things. Appeals for police “reform” are not only futile but also dangerous because they deflect outrage over the cops into false confidence that these armed thugs can be made to be accountable to the “community.” The



DiNuzzo/Chicago Tribune

Chicago police confront demonstrators protesting cop killing of Harith Augustus, July 14.

the cop arriving on the scene. The dashcam footage of the murder was buried for a year. But when it was finally released, Chicago exploded.

On the day of the verdict, the city was poised for a similar explosion. School kids stayed home, downtown was emptied out and dozens of city buses were commandeered for the scores of riot cops ready to attack protesters. Everyone expected an acquittal for the cop, no matter what side they were on. But something different happened: the verdict was second-degree murder. For the first time in 50 years, a Chicago cop was convicted of killing someone while on duty. He was also found guilty of 16 counts of aggravated battery with a firearm (one for each bullet), but not of official misconduct. On the heels of the verdict, a woman poignantly commented, “I hate that as Black people we have to be so excited.... Laquan McDonald shouldn’t be dead.” That’s an important point. This cop should rot in prison, but nothing has fundamentally changed.

police, alongside the other institutions of the capitalist state like the courts and military, are integral to upholding the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and will never “protect and serve” working people and the oppressed.

Democrats: The Other Face of Capitalist Imperialism

As I map out some of our program today, keep something in mind. One major labor upsurge or social explosion, something that you or I can’t predict, could shift the climate in this country overnight. We live in a very stable but also unstable country. In a 30-day period, everything could change. The U.S. has a history of long periods of quiescence interrupted by convulsive social and class struggle.

The situation for working people and youth in this country is bad and getting worse. Politicians and the media may talk about an uptick in jobs, but these jobs pay such a low wage that you need three of them just to get by. There is the 24-

24-24 generation: 24 years old, working 24/7, earning \$24,000 a year. But not just the millennials are screwed; one-third of working people earn less than \$25,000 and about 42 percent earn less than \$31,000. Black people face twice the unemployment rate of whites. Working women, many of whom are sole breadwinners for a family, continue to earn on average 20 percent less money than men. One study concluded that it will take 41 years for white women to reach pay parity, while black women will have to wait 101 years, and Hispanic women 206 years!

Immigrants still are mostly forced into the lowest-paying jobs. Those fleeing the ravages of U.S. imperialism, in the face of great peril and hardship, are met with repression and merciless treatment once they get here. We all saw the scenes of children being ripped away from their parents and workers being rounded up, to then languish in overcrowded detention centers while awaiting deportation. And there are those who are killed as they set foot across the border, like Claudia Patricia Gómez González, a 19-year-old indigenous Guatemalan shot in the head by a Border Patrol agent when she entered Laredo, Texas. We demand full citizenship rights for all those who make it here!

Without question, Trump’s openly racist rhetoric dehumanizing and criminalizing immigrants is revolting. While Trump himself is not a fascist, he has given the fascists a green light to crawl out from their holes and carry out deadly race-terror. But violence against black people and repression against immigrants is fully bipartisan. The Obama administration deported qualitatively more immigrants than George W. Bush. The Democrats push for more border security, that is, more agents and more militarization.

True enough, things under Trump seem deranged. Here’s an erratic megalomaniac who tweets his foreign policy and treats his cabinet like it was an episode of “The Apprentice.” Bob Woodward’s book *Fear* lays out a picture of a president who is called a “moron,” an “idiot” and a “professional liar” by his own White House cronies. His chief of staff, John Kelly, called it “crazytown.” That may be, but the Democrats paved the way for “crazytown.”

Obama rode into office claiming to be “change we can believe in.” What did his promised change bring? The bailout of the auto bosses meant that workers got screwed, forced to accept less pay and benefits in order to restore the profits of the giant manufacturers. The bailout of the banks and Wall Street meant that the workers faced more attacks on living standards, including through massive home foreclosures and personal bankruptcies. Sadly, bankruptcies for those age 65 and older have soared in the last period. Union-busting and attacks on public education, including a rise in non-union charter schools, were a hallmark of the Obama years. For the black population, the election of the first black president meant more of the same.

Abortion rights is another question where the Democrats have helped set the stage for the anti-woman onslaught we see today. In 1977, Jimmy Carter signed the Hyde Amendment that eliminated abortion coverage from the Medicaid health plans of 23 million poor women. In the 1990s, Bill Clinton, who axed welfare for mothers, presided over a barrage of additional abortion restrictions. In 2010, Obama ensured that federal funds from the Affordable Care Act would not be used for abortions.

The Democrats are supported by the feminists, who rely on the capitalist state and politicians to protect women’s rights. Feminism does not challenge the source of women’s oppression—the institution of the family within the capitalist system itself—but instead tries to make bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women “equal” to their male counterparts under capitalism. We call for free abortion on demand, an elementary democratic right. But we know that the material basis for sexual oppression cannot be rooted out short of socialist revolution.

WORKERS VANGUARD

A lot of people are fearful that the addition of the ultra-reactionary Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court sounds the death knell of the 1973 ruling *Roe v. Wade*. After the Kavanaugh hearings, *Saturday Night Live* had a skit where a black female commentator mocked the proceedings, telling the audience, “Two of the oldest white people I have ever seen are about to run a circus.” The Senate hearings were a grotesque spectacle of both Republican bigotry and Democratic hypocrisy. Kavanaugh generated justifiable outrage. He is a poster boy for racist arrogance, entitlement and white elitism, which in fact makes him a perfect candidate for the Supreme Court.

We are not indifferent to the damage that the Supreme Court can do if able to get away with it. However, the burning issues at hand for working people will not be decided by nine judges in black robes. The high court is a major part of the capitalist rulers' machinery of class repression. A changing of the guard of the individual components no more changes the Court's purpose than does purging a few so-called "bad apples" from the police force. Our point is that what the working class and oppressed have won has come through hard class and social battles. From the eight-hour day and union protections to civil rights and abortion—none of these gains would have been conceded without struggle. When the labor movement is quiet as it is today, the bourgeoisie can take away with one hand what it granted yesterday with the other.

Just look at the Supreme Court's recent *Janus* ruling, which has made "right to work" the law of the land for public



WV Photo

Charleston, West Virginia: Teachers and school staff protest inside State Capitol during statewide strike for higher wages, against assault on health care, March 2018.

employees by striking down mandatory union fees. Previously, employees who refused to join the union at their workplace had to pay “agency fees” to the union because they were still covered under the contract. The ruling is aimed squarely at destroying public-sector unions, in which black people and minorities are heavily represented, and poses a direct threat to all labor. It is of a piece with decades of anti-union attacks and the relentless ravaging of social programs. This outcome is a reflection not of the composition of the Supreme Court but of the prostration of the unions under a pro-capitalist bureaucracy that is committed to maintaining “class peace.” Pushing the false consciousness that the bosses and the workers are “in

this together," the labor tops make major concessions rather than strike.

The class-collaborationist union leadership is integrated into the Democratic Party. Consider Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers. In the lead-up to the 2016 elections, WikiLeaks revealed how Weingarten was concocting strategies to punish unions that refused to back Hillary Clinton. Around the same time, she flew to Chicago to personally prevent a joint strike between public and charter school teachers, a strike that would have been unprecedented. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Weingarten received critical assistance from the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) leadership, especially then

president Karen Lewis, supported by the DSA, and then vice president Jesse Sharkey, supported by the International Socialist Organization. The labor lieutenants of capital do the dirty work for the bosses.

Weingarten, Lewis and Sharkey are the norm, not the exception. Let's go back to Chicago shortly after the dash-cam footage of the cop execution of Laquan McDonald was finally released. Democratic Party mayor Rahm Emanuel was on the ropes, and the two major unions in the city—the CTU teachers and the ATU transit workers—were working without contracts. These two unions, backed by the rest of city labor, could have shut down Chicago and opened the door to further class struggle. But instead, their leaderships helped the Democratic administration weather the storm.

Nonetheless, these labor fakers can't always keep the lid on. Union leaders, under pressure from their base, sometimes initiate struggle. In the last few years, there have been some important and inspiring strikes, particularly in the public sector, like those by teachers. It is in the context of heightened class conflict that a new workers leadership in the unions can be forged. There must be a political fight to break all union ties with the Democrats and to oust the sell-outs. A new, class-struggle leadership of the labor movement will not only seek to win battles on the picket lines but will be dedicated to the liberation of humanity from the profit system. Striving to forge such a leadership is part of the fight for a revolutionary workers party whose aim is to overturn capitalist wage slavery.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Poland...

(continued from page 2)

and its CIA and Vatican sponsors. Standing on the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the bureaucratically deformed workers states, we called for the smashing of Solidarność from the moment it consolidated around an open program of capitalist restoration in 1981. At the same time, we fought for a proletarian political revolution to oust the bankrupt Stalinist bureaucracy. As we warned it would be, Solidarność was the spearhead for capitalist counterrevolution throughout East Europe and in the Soviet Union itself.

The purpose of the Holocaust law was clear from the choice of its first target in March: a press article about a 1941 massacre of Jews illustrated with a photo of “cursed soldiers” executed by the postwar Soviet-backed government. The article, published in the Argentine newspaper *Página/12* last December, was based on the book *Neighbors* (2001) by historian Jan T. Gross, an account of the July 1941 Jedwabne pogrom. As further documented by liberal journalist Anna Bikont in *The Crime and the Silence* (English edition, 2015), Jedwabne was one of many towns where Endeks and local priests organized anti-Jewish pogroms in the days after Soviet troops pulled out from eastern Poland following Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Bikont also described the chauvinist anti-Jewish rage directed at those who exposed or condemned the pogroms.

Facing international pressure, especially from Israel and the U.S., the Polish government quickly stopped the prosecution of *Página/12* and finally agreed in June to remove the threat of criminal penalties from the new law. PiS prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki declared: “Those who say that Poland may be responsible for the crimes of World War Two deserve jail terms. But we operate in an international context and we take that into account.” This is a cynical nod to fascists and other nationalist vigilantes who operate “outside the international context” to go after perceived “enemies of the Polish nation,” as they have already in terrorizing guides at the Auschwitz memorial.

For its part, the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu, butchers of the Palestinian people, signed off on a statement



TASS

1945: Polish people in Krakow greet Soviet Red Army troops following liberation of Poland from Nazi tyranny.

asserting that “the Polish underground state supervised by the Polish government-in-exile created a mechanism of systematic help and support to Jewish people” (reuters.com, 5 July). This is such a blatant lie that the government-funded Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Israel was compelled to protest that the London government and its underground forces “did not act resolutely on behalf of Poland’s Jewish citizens at any point during the war. Much of the Polish resistance in its various movements not only failed to help Jews, but was also not infrequently actively involved in persecuting them” (haaretz.com, 5 July). The Zionist rulers spit on the memory of Samuel Zygelboim, representative of the reformist socialist Jewish Bund in the government in exile who, in the wake of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, committed suicide in an anguished protest over the lack of assistance to the Jews.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

Unlike nationalists and liberals, Marxists do not subscribe to the notion of "collective guilt," which blames an entire people (be they Germans, Poles or Israeli Jews) for the crimes perpetrated by the capitalist rulers and their murderous underlings, from other classes. Among the latter in Poland were particularly backward elements of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry (as well as some workers), who were incited by bourgeois nationalists and clergy to target the Jews as scapegoats for their own miserable conditions.

Some two million ethnic Poles lost their lives under the Nazi occupation, including

many hundreds who were executed for hiding Jews. Before the Holocaust, Jewish workers were a vibrant component of the historically pro-socialist proletariat in Poland, which also included Ukrainians and Belorussians. While the bourgeois nationalists in Poland either ignored the suffering of the Jewish people or acted as henchmen for the Nazis, this was not true of the working class. Notably, the main source of support for the beleaguered Jews, including the Warsaw Ghetto fighters, was the Communist-led People's Guard. As our German comrades noted in a statement of internationalist greetings to Polish workers in the DDR (East German) deformed workers state in 1989: "The revolutionary workers of Poland can proudly remember the instances of heroic resistance against Nazi terror, not least the valiant uprising of the Jewish masses of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943" (*Arprekorr*, 22 December 1989).

We called on Polish workers in the DDR, saddled with the fresh memory of Solidarność counterrevolution, to join in the fight against capitalist restoration in the DDR and for a proletarian political revolution against the abdicating Stalinist bureaucracy, in order to open the door to the creation of a united red Germany of workers councils. We fought to revive the slogan of the Communist International of Lenin's time: *For the revolutionary unity of the German, Polish and Russian workers!* It was this internationalist perspective that won to the ICL the Polish Trotskyist militants who went on to form the Spartacist Group of Poland.

Intent on suppressing any future chal-

lence to the capitalist order, the bourgeoisie has buried the revolutionary traditions of the Polish workers movement under a dung heap of nationalist and clericalist lies. The founding document of the SGP states:

“The drive to restore capitalism revives and intensifies all the ‘old crap’ of the prewar social order, from reactionary clericalism to Pilsudskiite nationalism and anti-Semitism....

“Polish Trotskyists must seek to reclaim the best traditions of the Polish workers movement, forged in the struggle against national chauvinism. This is exemplified by Rosa Luxemburg, a Polish Jewish communist and leader of the revolutionary German proletariat.”

—*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 45-46, Winter 1990-91

Today there are few Jews left in Poland, but the pogromists are back in force, targeting Roma and Muslims and other immigrants. Yet anti-Jewish bigotry still serves as a battle cry for all-sided bourgeois reaction and clerical nationalism. A Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, section of a reborn Fourth International, will be a tribune of the people—capable of mobilizing the proletariat in the fight for free abortion on demand, for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and for all causes in the interests of the exploited and oppressed. Such was the Bolshevik Party that led the first and to date only victorious proletarian socialist revolution, the October Revolution of 1917. The ICL is dedicated to the task of forging new Bolshevik parties to fight for new October Revolutions. ■

SPARTAKUSOWÓW

NR 20 WYJEWIEN 2016 1,00 zł

**Zwalczajcie ataki na imigrantów, Romów, kobiety!
PiS: klerykalni spadkobiercy
kontrowersji „Solidarność”**

Od zwycięstwa w wyborach parlamentarnych w październiku zeszłego roku, kiedyśca socjalistyczna partia Prawa i Sprawiedliwości (PiS) kierowana przez Jarosława Kaczyńskiego zmieniła strategię polityczną, dającą znaczące miejsce w swoim programie politycznym i w programie medialnym prawicy. W tym celu wycofała się z dotychczasowej polityki, w której opierała się na wartościach chrześcijańskich, na których opierała się dotychczasowa polityka. W tym celu wycofała się z dotychczasowej polityki, w której opierała się na wartościach chrześcijańskich, na których opierała się dotychczasowa polityka.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

DSA Pledges Allegiance to Racist U.S. Capitalism

A Socialist Future Requires Workers Revolution

The following article is based on a forum given by Paula Daniels in Chicago on October 27.

PART ONE

On National Voter Registration Day in late September, a record number of people—more than 800,000—registered to vote in time for the midterm elections. This number surpassed the record of newly registered voters on that day in 2016, the year when Hillary Clinton faced off against Donald Trump for the presidency. Headlines announce that more young Americans are voting this year. But enthusiasm over these midterms is not a good thing.

Rather, it is an indication of the massive illusions among youth and workers that some candidate of the bourgeoisie will offer up relief from the horrors that exist in this capitalist society. Faith in the ballot box is connected to the deep-seated myth in this country that there is a fundamental difference between the Democrats and the Republicans. In fact, the difference is purely tactical; there is no difference in terms of the class interests that these capitalist parties represent and defend. As the late writer Gore Vidal said, “There is only one party in the United States, the Property Party...and it has two right wings, Republican and Democrat.”

The two bourgeois parties represent factions within a single ruling class. The Democrats posture as the “friends” of working people, blacks and the oppressed, selling imperialist war and economic misery in different packaging. The strategy of voting for the “lesser evil” party is really like saying: I believe one faction’s particular method of running the American empire of exploitation and oppression is preferable to the other’s. The option to “choose” between the Democrats and the Republicans is upheld as a great model of democracy.

Here’s a quote about democracy from the First Congress of the Third (Communist) International, which was founded in early 1919 by revolutionaries V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky and other leaders of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia:

“So-called democracy, that is, bourgeois democracy, is nothing but a veiled dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The highly touted general ‘will of the people’ is no more real than national unity. In reality, classes confront each other with antagonistic, irreconcilable wills. But since the bourgeoisie is a small minority, it needs this fiction, this illusion of a national ‘will of the people,’ these high-sounding words, to consolidate its rule over the working class and impose its own class will on the proletariat.”

—“The Platform of the Communist International” (1919)

Today, one of the groups selling this fiction and propping up the facade of American democracy is the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Aiming to provide a makeover from within the Democratic Party, the DSA has revived enthusiasm for the party that greased the skids for Trump.

Contrary to the word “socialists” in their name, the program of the DSA is about



WV Photo

August 2017: Spartacist League/Partisan Defense Committee contingent at anti-fascist protest in Berkeley, California.

fighting for bourgeois reforms. The notion is that you can gradually reduce capitalist exploitation through better legislation and somehow rid capitalist society of what makes it capitalist, i.e., its profit-driven nature. Besides being a complete fantasy, this strategy is diametrically opposed to

classes, not to improve the existing society but to found a new one.”

When we speak of socialism, it is not a desire for some benevolent version of what already exists. Socialism, an egalitarian society based on material abundance, requires the overthrow of the bourgeoisie

socialist society through voting or adoption of more democratic laws. No ruling class on earth has ever relinquished its power without a fight or been convinced to hand over the reins.

The DSA makes a false dichotomy between socialism and communism. For them, socialism is a nice gloss to supposedly make capitalist America “more democratic and just,” as they assert on their website. Communism, in contrast, is presented as bad and oppressive, or in their words, “authoritarian.” This is pure anti-communist garbage. Socialism is in fact the lower stage of communism, a classless society on a world scale in which scarcity has been eliminated. We have here Marxism 101, which brings us to the question of what exactly is a class.

Marxists define class as a group of people who share a common relationship in the process of production. The main division in society is between the capitalist class, which owns the means of production and exchange like the factories, mines and banks, and the working class, which sells its labor power to the capitalists for wages in order to survive. Individuals who do not fall into the two decisive classes make up the petty bourgeoisie, an intermediate stratum of small-business owners, professionals, students and others. In periods of social explosion, the petty bourgeoisie can go either way. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie can be won to the side of the working class, provided there is revolutionary leadership capable of leading the workers to power. Alternately, petty-bourgeois elements can serve as the basis for social reaction or even for fascism, as witnessed at times over the last century.

Class is not a state of mind nor about how rich or poor you are. For example, a unionized worker in a steel plant may make as much as, or more than, some yuppie supervisor in an office. Nevertheless, the worker still has an economic interest in overthrowing the capitalist exploiters, while the supervisor is an accessory to capitalist production and thus bound to

continued on page 6

Democrats: Other Party of Exploitation, War

the fight for socialism. The perspective of the International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, is workers revolution. The task of socialists was explained by Marx in 1850: “Our concern cannot simply be to modify private property, but to abolish it, not to hush up class antagonisms but to abolish

internationally. Countries like Sweden are not socialist, but capitalist—that is, the ownership of the factories and the other means of production is concentrated in the hands of a small class of capitalists. There was never any revolution overthrowing private property. It is a hoax to imply that a country can gradually inch toward a



Reuters

Auto workers on assembly line at Fiat Chrysler plant in Sterling Heights, Michigan, last month.