

Drive U.S. / NATO Imperialists Out of the Middle East!

For Workers Action to Defeat

Barack Obama's Iraq/Syria War

OCTOBER 25 – On the eve of the anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, Barack Obama declared a new U.S. war, this time in Iraq (again) and Syria. The recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize announced his intention to bomb the Middle Eastern countries at will in order to “degrade and ultimately destroy” the Sunni Islamist “holy warriors” calling themselves the Islamic State (I.S.). After 13 years of war and occupation, the imperialist superpower is still bogged down in Afghanistan. And having formally exited Iraq in 2011, eight years after invading, the Pentagon has now sent U.S. troops back while declaring Syria a free-fire zone. So much for the hopes of the millions who voted for Obama as an “antiwar” candidate. “Back to Iraq with Barack” isn’t exactly what they had in mind.

The new U.S. war actually began a month earlier, when Washington launched air strikes against I.S. forces in northern Iraq as they bore down on Erbil, capital of the autonomous Kurdish region, described in the press as “home to a United States Consulate and thousands of Americans” (*New York Times*, 9 August). “Thousands”? Those would be the huge numbers of “contractors” (mercenaries), “advisers,” “support personnel” and oil company employees who stayed on after U.S. troops departed. By the time

Obama let loose a torrent of cruise missiles in Syria on September 23, the U.S. military said that it had carried out at least 194 air strikes in Iraq. But this didn’t put a dent in Sunni Islamist control of more than a quarter of the country.

Obama says the bombing (now dubbed “Operation Inherent Resolve”) is being carried out to stop massacres and ethnic cleansing, the same claim made by Bill Clinton for his two wars on Yugoslavia in 1995 and 1998-99. This is standard procedure when Democrats launch wars. As air strikes began in August, Washington billed them as a rescue mission against the threat of imminent genocide by the I.S. of the Yazidi religious minority of Kurds trapped on Sinjar Mountain in Iraq. But when U.S. special forces arrived on the mountain, they declared no rescue mission was needed and that was the end of that. More recently, after a long siege, I.S. attackers had already entered the largely Kurdish city of Kobanê on the Syria-Turkey border threatening a slaughter before the U.S. started dropping bombs. A “humanitarian” war? No way.

Last year, the U.S. and British population didn’t go for bombing Syria over the supposed use of chemical weapons on its own people by the regime of Bashar Assad (a lie the warmongers keep repeating despite *continued on page 17*)



Internationalist photo

Barbarism? Beheadings? U.S. imperialists do it with drones. Below: Internationalist Group at August 9 demonstration protesting Israeli war on Gaza.

Huge Protests Sweep Mexico Over Massacre of Students

For a National Strike Against the Government of Murder!



Revolución Permanente

“For a National Strike Against the Government of Murder!” The Grupo Internacionalista in October 22 Mexico City march denouncing the massacre of students from Ayotzinapa teachers college in state of Guerrero.

OCTOBER 12 – Over the last week there has been a deluge of outrage throughout Mexico and worldwide at the police murder of six people, including three students of the Ayotzinapa rural teachers college, and the disappearance (and possible execution) of another 43 in Iguala, Guerrero. The grisly news of the discovery on October 4 of human remains of 28 bodies in mass graves near Iguala set off an explosion of fury against the “*gobierno asesino*” (murderous government). Parents of the abducted students called for a national mobilization for Wednesday, October 8 to demand that their children “were taken from us alive, and we want them back alive!” The response was massive.

According to media reports, there were protests in at least 63 cities in 27

states of Mexico, from Tijuana in the north to Cancún in the south, where there are seldom demonstrations. In the Guerrero state capital of Chilpancingo, up to 50,000 marched in a giant procession that extended for five kilometers, headed up by relatives, neighbors and students from Ayotzinapa. Signs and banners demanded the ouster of the state governor and the jailing of the fugitive mayor of Iguala, both of the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution). Workers of the Autonomous University of Guerrero carried the names of a dozen student activists who were “disappeared” in 1976.

Throughout the state of Guerrero, schools were shut down by a strike of the *continued on page 2*



Outrage sweeps Mexico over massacre in Iguala. Militant teachers of the CETEG charge police lines (above left) outside offices of Guerrero state government in Chilpancingo, which were later torched (above right), October 13. In Mexico City, 25,000 protesters marched to the Zócalo on October 8 (below).

Mexico Protests...

continued from page 1

combative teachers unionists of the CETEG, part of the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers (CNTE). Hundreds of students, teachers and supporters marched in the port of Acapulco, and 3,000 in Tlapa in the Montaña region. In the Costa Chica area where there had been earlier protests, parents of the kidnapped students reported receiving phone threats not to march. In the Federal District, some 25,000 marched, converging on the Zócalo, the huge Constitution Plaza opposite the Presidential Palace in the center of Mexico City.

It was in Oaxaca that the mobilization was strongest. *Noticias* (9 October) reported that Section 22 of the CNTE teachers “paralyzed the state.” This was no exaggeration. In addition to shutting down schools and classes for 1.3 million students statewide, the teachers blocked access to the Oaxaca airport, blocked shopping centers, blocked the Oaxaca-Mexico superhighway, blocked the bridge to Veracruz, shut down a bottling plant in Tuxtpec, blocked the state attorney general’s offices and a fuel depot of the state oil company Petroleos Mexicanos, and blockaded the Pemex refinery in the Salina Cruz.

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The Internationalist

A Journal of Revolutionary Marxism
for the Reforging of the Fourth International

Publication of the Internationalist Group,
section of the League for the Fourth International

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jan Norden (editor), Abram Negrete, Mark Lazarus, Marjorie Salzburg

The Internationalist (ISSN 1091-2843) is published bimonthly, skipping July-August, by Mundial Publications, P.O. Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.
Telephone: (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711 E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com
Subscriptions: US\$10 for five issues.

No. 38



INTERNATIONALIST GROUP 1162-M

October-November 2014



staying to the end two hours later. Dozens of Mexican immigrants came out, including some from Guerrero who had been in touch with relatives of the Ayotzinapa students. NY Zapatistas and YoSoy132 New York had a puppet of death with a skull shrouded in black and a sign identifying it as the “narcogovernment.” A number of left groups participated including the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee, Freedom Socialist Party (with a sign calling for freedom for Nestora Salgado), International Socialist Organization, Spartacist League and Batay Ouvriye Support Network, all of which addressed the crowd.

Demonstrators chanted angrily at the consulate, “¡México, gobierno

asesino!” (Mexico, government of murder). Another chant that was enthusiastically picked up was “PRI, PAN, PRD, bloody parties of the bourgeoisie.” Today the government is trying to pin the blame for the slaughter in Iguala on drug traffickers. Yet while the PRD is overseeing a government of death in Guerrero, President Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and his predecessor Felipe Calderón of the rightist National Action Party (PAN) have carried out a “war against drugs” and a “war against terror” that has turned Mexico into a giant killing field and mass grave, killing some 100,000 people since 2006.

The rally at the end had 16 speakers including members of New York educa-



October 8 demonstration outside Mexican Consulate in New York City. Over 100 participated. At the end, the names of the murdered and disappeared students were read off and after each one the crowd responded, “¡presente!”

The Internationalist

Once Again: Bloodbath, “Disappeared” Victims ... and Impunity

Mexico: Guerrero Massacre

Calls for Mobilization and Workers Revolution

**PRI, PAN, PRD:
Murderous Parties
of the Bourgeoisie
Forge a Workers Party
That Fights For
Socialist Revolution!**

In the early afternoon of Saturday, October 4, news dispatches from Guerrero began reporting the discovery of several mass graves on the outskirts of Iguala. As the hours passed, they reported finding first 9, then 20 and finally 28 charred and dismembered bodies in six pits. Many signs indicate that they may be some of the 43 students arrested by municipal police a week earlier. If it is confirmed that the missing Ayotzinapa normalistas were executed, it would be the worst slaughter of students in Mexico since the fateful 2 October 1968 [when hundreds were killed by army and police in the Tlatelolco Massacre].

The mass murder in Iguala is already news around the world. Calls for a “fair investigation” come from human rights organizations, the United Nations and even the United States government (which kills dozens daily in its occupation of Afghani-

tion unions, Professional Staff Congress (CUNY) and United Federation of Teachers, as well as opposition groups (Movement of Rank and File Educators and Class Struggle Education Workers), who emphasized that behind the killings in Iguala is an international offensive against public education that students, educators and parents are fighting in the U.S. as well. An immigrant worker supporter of the IG recalled how a few days ago, we saw police in Brooklyn throw a pregnant woman on the ground in order to intimidate people:

“Back in the time of the kings, they used to make an example of those who fought back against the state by tearing them limb from limb. In Mexico we are seeing the same thing today. They skinned one student alive to be an example so that we don’t rise up in struggle. And that struggle is against the same attacks as we have here on women, on black people.

“We are the ones who produce all the profits of those parasites, everything you see here was built by us, the workers. We make the city move, and we can make it stop. We saw that a few years ago in the strike in the MTA [public transit]. We need to move these armies of proletarians to defeat this murderous and corrupt bourgeoisie. Long live the socialist revolution. ¡Luchar, vencer, obreros al poder!

A spokesman for the Internationalist Group stressed that it was not enough to call for the ouster of a mayor, a governor or even Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto, as many in the protests have demanded:

“It is not a question of one ruler. It is not



Students from the teachers college of Ayotzinapa blocked a caravan of troops on highway to Acapulco on October 5, finally forcing it to leave.

stan and the war in Iraq and Syria). Against this official hypocrisy, relatives of the dead and missing Ayotzinapa students along with militant teachers of the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers (CNTE) have marches and nationwide

a question of one party, even though we have insisted that the PRI, PAN and PRD are all capitalist parties with their hands dripping in blood. All this is the product of a system, not of ‘neo-liberalism’ but of capitalism; and not of ‘globalization’ but of imperialism. This militarization, whose fruits we are seeing in Iguala, is ‘made in U.S.A.’ it’s made in Wall Street, it’s made in Washington.

“Because here the Republican and Democratic parties consider Mexico and the rest of Latin America to be their backyard. Secretary of State John Kerry said it explicitly. But we are all in the same house. There are 15 million undocumented workers in this country, and we demand full citizenship rights for everyone here.”

The IG speaker ended by saying “we are fighting today, here, in Mexico and everywhere to form revolutionary parties on the program of workers revolution around the world.” Citing Leon Trotsky’s program of permanent revolution, that “in this imperialist epoch it is impossible to achieve even democratic rights without the working class taking power,” he concluded:

“Mexico has had three ‘democratic’ revolutions yet the peasants, the indigenous peoples, the black people in Guerrero continued to be oppressed as are all the working people. The next revolution in Mexico will not be a peasant revolution, it will not be a new edition of zapatismo, it will be a workers revolution, or it will not be.”

The rally ended with a chant of “Asian, Latin, Black and white, workers of the world unite!” ■

strikes called for today, October 8. There will also be picketing internationally at Mexican consulates, one of them in New York where our comrades of the Internationalist Group/U.S. initiated an emergency protest on Sunday.

In these mobilizations it is critical to hold the Mexican government and its imperialist masters responsible for the crime of Iguala. The smokescreen about drug traffickers is only an attempt to wash the blood-soaked hands of the government, whereas it is the capitalist state that should be on trial. There have been up to 100,000 killed and many others missing in the “war on drugs” under the government of Felipe Calderón (PAN – the rightist National Action Party) and now Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI – the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party), on orders from the U.S. So long as capitalism persists, there will be bloodbaths, “disappearances” and impunity. Thus a class mobilization of working people against the bloodthirsty state

of the bosses is urgently necessary, crippling key sectors of the economy and pointing toward socialist revolution.

Why?

The murder of six people in the night and early morning hours of September 26-27 was only the prelude to the carnage. There are pictures of the missing students being transported in vehicles of the municipal police to the outskirts of the city. The official government version of Guerrero governor Ángel Aguirre Rivero (PRD – the supposedly “progressive” bourgeois Party of the Democratic Revolution), is that a kingpin of the drug cartel Guerreros Unidos (United Warriors), a certain “Chucky,” ordered the chief of police to apprehend Iguala students to deliver them to his henchmen, who then executed them. But whatever the role of the drug traffickers in the kidnapping and disappearance of the teachers college students, it should be underlined that *the bourgeois state apparatus is directly responsible for what happened.*

Why did this heinous crime occur? Initial versions accused the students of having “stolen” some buses to take them home, although it had been negotiated with the drivers. Then it was claimed that the mayor of Iguala, José Luis Abarca Velázquez (also of the PRD), who has been “untraceable” since last week, considered it an unpardonable offense that the students had been collecting contributions in Iguala on the day his wife offered a “gala” event after reading her report as head of the local DIF (the government system for Integral Development of the Family). With his connections to drug trafficking and as a financier for Governor Aguirre, the fugitive mayor thought himself untouchable: last year he reportedly killed with his own hands three leaders of the peasant organization Emiliano Zapata People’s Union, with total impunity. Even today, there are still no charges against the mayor for the massacre of September 26-27, according to the federal attorney general’s office (the PGR).



Mexican president Peña Nieto sent in National Gendarmerie (rear), a new unit of the National Police, to patrol Iguala together with army troops (foreground).

However, the responsibility does not lie solely with the murderous PRD mayor. The PRD governor began his term with the murder by the state (and federal) police of two students from the Ayotzinapa teachers college on the the Autopista del Sol (the superhighway to Acapulco). He only had to apologize some time later. The same Aguirre Rivero was head of the state PRI organization in Guerrero in 1995 when the PRI government of Ruben Figueroa Jr. massacred 17 peasants in Aguas Blancas. There were never any judicial consequences. Today many demonstrators demand the resignation of Aguirre, but the head of the national PRD, Carlos Navarrete, is opposed, because in that case one would have to oust several state governors. (The mayor of Iguala belonged to same tendency of the PRD – Los Chuchos– as Navarrete.)

Now the PRI president Enrique Peña Nieto has sent in the newly established National Gendarmerie (the body of the Federal Police which he announced with great fanfare at the beginning of his term) to patrol Iguala, along with the army. This is the same army whose members are responsible for the slaughter in Tlatlaya (in Mexico state) in late May, where it executed over a dozen “perps.” But the people of Guerrero have not welcomed the troops, which only promise more repression. Last Sunday (October 5), hundreds of supporters of the Federation of Socialist Peasant Students of Mexico (FECSM), which includes Ayotzinapa and all the rural teacher training institutes in the country, blocked a military convoy on the superhighway and forced it to turn back.

Whatever the immediate cause that triggered the bloodbath of Iguala, the rationale for the slaughter is the *demonization of militant students* and the commitment of the governments of all the parties to *close the rural teacher training institutes*. This is part of the *privatization offensive against public education* ordered by Washington and the global financial institutions. Today, this calamitous policy is being carried out in Mexico by Peña Nieto and his education secretary, Emilio Chuayffet, who was interior minister at the time of the massacre at Acteal in 1997. It should be noted that a lawsuit in the United States against former President Ernesto Zedillo for Acteal was recently rejected because the former president enjoyed “immunity.”

Rural teacher training institutes have been favorite targets of education “reformers,” who label them “nests of communists” or “Bolshevik kindergartens,” as was pointed out by the researcher Tanalis Padilla (*La*



Students strike at National University of Mexico 15 in protest against massacre of students from Ayotzinapa teachers college. Poster of Grupo Internacionalista (on wall to left of speakers platform) calls for “National Strike Against the Government of Murder!”

Jornada, 4 October). Their students have been persecuted and brutally suppressed for opposing the constant attempts to economically strangle or close their schools. Elba Esther Gordillo herself, the former “Secretary General for life” of the corporatist National Union of Education Workers (SNTE), an agency for police control of teachers, called for eliminating rural teacher training schools. At a seminar on “new education” this government-imposed “labor leader” who is responsible for hundreds of killings of teachers, said:

“We have raised many times that if the authorities close some of the rural teacher training institutes, there will be a lot of rioting by the youth. Don’t forget that these schools were seedbeds for guerrillas. But if we don’t do this, the same thing will keep on happening.”

—quoted by Luis Hernández Navarro, “Assault on the Rural Teacher Training Institutes”, *La Jornada*, 10 August 2010

From Rebellious Guerrero to Workers Revolution

Guerrero has long been the scene of militant mobilizations of “those at the bottom”¹, and a vicious cycle of massacres, dirty war and repression by the “those at the top” – the capitalist ruling class. In the

¹ *Los de abajo*, a reference to the novel of that name by Mariano Azuela, written in 1915 at the time of the Mexican Revolution and translated into English as *The Underdogs*.

rugged Sierra Madre del Sur, isolated villages live as in previous generations from seasonal crops, which are often insufficient for subsistence. Indigenous communities of Nahuatl, Amuzgo, Mixtec and Tlapanec Indians scattered around in the Montaña region, along with major concentrations of Afro-Mexicans in the Costa Chica, have experienced centuries-old ethnic and linguistic oppression that continues to exist today. In recent years they have also been stalked by illegal loggers and murderous drug gangs.

“Guerrero ready to fight!” goes a popular chant in demonstrations in Mexico City. Indeed it is, and has been since the time of the guerrillas led by Genaro Vázquez Rojas (in the 1960s) and Lucio Cabañas (early ’70s), both graduates of Ayotzinapa. (Cabañas was also president of the FECSM.) Then came the insurgent peasants among the copra (coconut) and coffee growing regions, and the militant mobilizations CETEG teachers (the local affiliate of the CNTE) and their allies in the teacher colleges. Last year, the CETEG started off the largest and longest teacher struggle in decades, although it was not backed up in time by other sections of the CNTE. However, each of these struggles has remained isolated from the power that actually has the ability to defeat the bloodthirsty capitalists: that of the urban working class.

The state has a remarkable revolutionary history, beginning with Vicente Guerrero, military commander in the war of independence from Mexico,

born in Tixtla where the Ayotzinapa teacher institute is located, who became the first and only black president of Mexico (his mother was African slave) and carried out the abolition of slavery. Unfortunately, Vicente Guerrero also supported the Plan de Iguala which trumpeted the “union” of social classes and subordinated his insurgent army to the royal army of the future “emperor” Agustín de Iturbide. From then up to the installation of

governments of the PRD made up of former PRI pols, class collaboration has undermined the rebelliousness of Guerrero. As in Salvador Allende’s Chile, “the people united” is a slogan for defeat. Our call is to *Fight, Win, Workers to Power!*

Today, it is evident that calling for “clean” investigations and demanding the resignation of a mayor, a governor or even the President of the Republic will not solve anything. The lament and anger of relatives and compañeros of the missing students, who angrily demand on their banners that “they were taken alive, we want them back alive,” will keep on being repeated. The weak Mexican bourgeoisie, subject to imperialism and confronting a powerful proletariat and poor peasantry, can not do without bloody repression to maintain its rule. As noted by the great Russian revolutionary

Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army and the Fourth International, in the imperialist epoch, in semi-colonial countries like Mexico a workers and peasants government is required to resolve the democratic tasks by *initiating the international socialist revolution*.

There are those who dream of take to the mountains and starting up the armed struggle as in the past. But as in the past, heroic gestures will not achieve victory, because peasants do not have the economic and social power and consistent class interest to overthrow capitalism. We have pointed out that the current “self-defense groups” of the Tierra Caliente of Michoacán are run by the employers, and the indigenous community police of Guerrero are controlled by Aguirre’s government. At the same time, we continue to demand freedom for Nestora Salgado and the community patrol members arrested for carrying arms. From the Zapatista uprising in 1994 to the teachers and popular uprising of Oaxaca in 2006, the lesson of recent years – and of three failed bourgeois-democratic revolutions – is that the next Mexican revolution will be a workers revolution, or it will not be.

It is necessary to break with the PRI, PAN and PRD, capitalist parties whose hands are stained with blood, and also with Morena, the movement of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, one of whose agents in Guerrero, the current state secretary of public health, Lázaro Mazon, is the main political godfather of José Luis Abarca, the murderous mayor of Iguala. We need to build a revolutionary leadership armed with the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, to build the core of a Leninist workers party like the Bolsheviks in Russia, serving as tribune of the people by leading all the exploited and oppressed to the taking of power.

We send our message of proletarian solidarity from Mexico City (and Berlin and New York) to the battle-hardened teachers college students of Guerrero, to their comrades and parents: “We are with you, now and forever!” And let the governments of the day of the bourgeoisie know, both in Mexico and the United States and around the world, that their crimes will not escape the vigilance of the world working class. For the 2014 slaughter of Iguala like that of Mexico City on 2 October 1968, there will be no forgetting, no pardon ... *Fight, win workers to power!* ■

Defeat Israel / U.S. War – For Workers Action Against Zionist Slaughter Defend Gaza and the Palestinian People – For Arab-Hebrew Workers Revolution!

**All Settlers Out of the West Bank!
From Egypt to Turkey,
Fight for Workers Revolution!**

JULY 29 – Every two years like clockwork since Israel’s rulers “disengaged” from Gaza in late 2005, the Israeli military has launched a murderous attack on the 1.8 million Palestinians confined in this narrow 25-mile long strip along the Mediterranean. In 2008, “Operation Cast Lead” killed some 1,400 Palestinians over 22 days; in 2010 there was “Operation Sea Breeze,” the deadly high-seas assault on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla; in 2012 it was “Operation Pillar of Defense” (100+ dead), and currently we have “Operation Protective Edge.” The Zionist militarists cynically refer to this periodic mass murder as “mowing the lawn.” Over the last three weeks the blood-drenched Israeli “lawnmower” has mowed down over 1,200 Palestinians.

Beyond the repulsive language of the Zionists is the hideous reality of the slaughter of the Palestinian Arab population. What is most striking is the huge number of non-combatant dead (three-quarters of the total, according to the United Nations) and the dramatic number of children killed (at least 250). Under the guise of “stopping rockets fired into Israel and destroying tunnels used by Hamas fighters, the Israeli military has been targeting residential apartment buildings, destroying thousands of homes, as well as hitting 133 schools, 22 health clinics, a hospital and now Gaza’s power plant, knocking out electricity, water supplies and sewage treatment. Very quickly the situation will become catastrophic for those who survive the daily bombing.

The Palestinian fighters on the ground have been resisting the Zionist assault bravely. The Gaza population has not buckled under the rain of bombs and pounding artillery. There have been solidarity demonstrations of thousands from New York to Tokyo; in France, tens of thousands defied a protest ban by the “socialist” government; 100,000 marched in London against Israel’s



On July 29, Israel bombed Gaza’s only power plant, leaving the 1.8 million inhabitants without electricity, water or sewage treatment.

criminal attack. Some 20,000 Palestinians demonstrated on the West Bank while 6,000 Israelis braved fascist attacks to call for an end to the war. But this has had zero impact on the bloodbath. The Zionist militarists will not be deterred by impotent appeals for “peace.” *It is necessary to mobilize the power of the world working class to stop these genocidal butchers.*

In reality, this is a war to terrorize the Arab population. Israel’s claim that the occupation has ended is pure fiction. On top of strangling Gaza for the last seven years with an economic blockade and fencing in the population in what amounts to a concentration camp, the Israeli military periodically turns “the Strip” into a killing field. The Zionists deal with Gaza like the Nazis dealt with the Warsaw Ghetto. And now Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appears to be escalating the assault, announcing a “prolonged campaign” and killing 129 in the bloodiest day of the war. Meanwhile, ultra-Zionist cabinet members and sections of the Israeli public are “panting for the operation to be expanded” to exterminate Hamas (*Haaretz*, 29 July).

Revolutionary Marxists give no political support Hamas, an Islamist current associated with the virulently anti-communist Muslim Brotherhood. Islamist rule in whatever guise is inimical to the rights

of women and the democratic rights of everyone and every community not part of the dominant sect. Moreover, while Zionists vituperate against Hamas they neglect to mention that Israel helped set up the reactionary Islamic group, in order to compete with the Palestinian nationalist Fatah. Hamas has actually clamped down on rocket launches from Gaza during its administration. But it was elected based on its posture of opposing the Israeli occupation, and we defend the resistance of Hamas-ruled Gaza against the Zionists and their Fatah quislings.

A main reason given by Israeli “experts” for prolonging the slaughter is the quantity and sophistication of military tunnels discovered so far. More to the point is the toll of more than 50 Israeli soldiers killed so far by Hamas’ fighters, both those emerging from the tunnels and in firefights inside Gaza. While the rockets fired at Israel have merely sent people scurrying to bomb shelters, the significant number of army casualties makes it hard for Netanyahu to proclaim victory and declare a ceasefire. Meanwhile, Israelis have no stomach for a long war (this is already one of the longest) and are already heading back to the malls and the beaches. Income from American tourism has taken a big hit.

The lack of even phony support for Gaza from most Arab regimes this time around is striking. The Palestinian Authority of Mahmoud Abbas is, as usual, acting as stooges for Israel. And even with nightly protests across the West Bank, a third *intifada* (popular uprising against the Israeli occupation) has not yet materialized. But the people of Gaza, facing horrendous death and destruction, are *not* calling on Hamas to capitulate. All reports indicate that, whatever the cost, they are determined not to return to the *status quo ante*, to the slow death of life under the economic blockade. In short, the traditional Zionist tactic of terrorizing the population into pressuring the leaders to sue for peace is not working. So what’s next?

The resistance in Gaza is vital, but not enough to stop the Israeli military juggernaut. International solidarity against the Zionist onslaught begins with exposing the

pretensions of the United States and United Nations of acting as “peacemakers.” Despite the vituperation from Zionist hawks, the tag team of U.S. secretary of state John Kerry and U.N. secretary general Ban Ki Moon with their calls for a ceasefire with no concessions are actually working on behalf of Israel. American president Barack Obama denounces Ukrainian rebels for using “Russian-made weapons” (as does the Ukrainian army), yet every day Israel is laying waste to Gaza with U.S.-supplied F-15 and F-16 war planes. *This is an imperialist / Zionist war on the Palestinians.*

For their part, the Western bourgeois media are playing their role to the hilt. They harp on rockets from Gaza as a justification for “Israel’s right to self-defense.” What a crock of horse manure! So far only 2 Israelis have been killed by rockets while well over 2,000 residents of Gaza have been slaughtered, supposedly in retaliation. In fact, the very few rockets fired in the previous year and a half total less than an active day in the current war. Another favorite theme is alleged attacks on Jewish targets during anti-war protests, buttressing the claim that “anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism.” Yet demonstration organizers have been vigilant to prevent any occurrence of anti-Jewish actions.

The protests have been dominated by Palestinian nationalism and Islamic appeals, which is to be expected in the face of Israel’s theft of Palestinian lands and more than six decades of violent suppression of the subjugated Arab population’s national and other democratic rights. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have repeatedly demonstrated to “*Defend Gaza*” and “*Defend the Palestinian people*” on a program of proletarian internationalism, calling for an *Arab-Hebrew Palestinian workers state in a socialist federation of the Near East*. We have pushed for *workers action against the Israel’s war on the Palestinians*, and called to “*smash imperialism and Zionism through workers revolution.*”

Israel: An Imperialist Client State

According to the Israeli war propaganda (dutifully echoed in the Western press), the current slaughter of the Gaza population was in response to the mid-June kidnapping and murder of three Jewish youths as they were hitchhiking in the Etzion Bloc of West Bank settlements. Prime Minister Netanyahu immediately blamed this on Hamas, while presenting no evidence of a connection. More than 500 Palestinians were rounded up in the West Bank, including nearly all Hamas leaders in the area and re-arresting scores who had been released from prison only a few months earlier. Meanwhile, a Palestinian teenager, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, was kidnapped and burned alive by ultra-rightist Zionists.

In reality, the reference to the kidnapping/murder of the Jewish teenagers (and to the relatively few rocket attacks) was only a pretext for carrying out a military operation against the Gaza military tunnels that had



Internationalist Group at July 9 protest in NYC against Israeli war on Gaza.

long been in the works.¹ The war is a follow-up to the breakdown of the phony “peace process” – widely ridiculed by Palestinians as all process and no peace – in May due to Israel’s escalation of West Bank settlement construction and cancelation of the scheduled release of Palestinian prisoners. The assault on Gaza was also retaliation against the declaration of a Palestinian unity government bringing together the Islamist Hamas with its nationalist Fatah rivals who have become West Bank ghetto police for the Israeli occupation.

The origins of the current war go to the heart of the nature of the Israeli state and its occupation of Palestinian lands. From its origins, the Zionist nationalist movement founded by Theodor Herzl at the turn of the 20th century presumed the mass expulsion of Palestinians. The establishment of Israel was as a result of the genocide of six million Jews by the German Nazi fascists under Hitler, and of the refusal by U.S. imperialism to accept Jewish refugees from Europe during and after World War II. Israel’s 1948 “war of independence” involved the deliberate driving out of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs. Many ended up in refugee camps in the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza where they and their descendants remain today.

Thus the birth of Israel was the result of a heinous crime, and itself a crime. This is no novelty in world history. The United States, after all, was formed on the basis of genocide against the Native American population and chattel slavery of black Africans, dragged in chains from their homelands by the capitalist slavers. Moreover, Marxists are opposed on principle to any and all religious-based states, which are inherently anti-democratic. We oppose the existence of Israel as a Jewish state just as we oppose the Islamic republic of Khomeini’s Iran and the officially Christian states of Petain’s France and Franco’s Spain.

Many on the left have described Israel as a “colonial settler state.” This would make it the equivalent of white-ruled Rhodesia in southern Africa and the Hebrew-speaking population of Israel would be analogous to the French *colons* in Algeria. This is a false analogy. Israeli Jews are not the representatives of foreign colonial power who can return to the *metropole* if the native population rises up. If things get hot in

¹ “Army prepared for Gaza campaign, defense minister says,” headlined the *Times of Israel* (31 December 2013), saying that the military objective would be to “deal a harsh blow to Gaza and the organizations operating there....”

Palestine, a large percentage of the Israeli non-Arab population would likely fight to the end, even opposed to the U.S., as it did in the Suez invasion in 1956. The fact is that a Hebrew-speaking nation has been forged through the dispossession of Palestinian Arabs, who have also become a nation through their bitter experience of oppression.

A second common description of Israel by opponents of Zionism is as an “apartheid state,” on the lines of white-supremacist South Africa. Again, while Israeli oppression of Palestinian Arabs is no less criminal than the oppression of non-whites in South Africa, the oppressive regimes are far from identical. Certainly there is segregation and vicious denial of democratic rights of Palestinians in Israel, and far more so in the Occupied Territories. But South African apartheid was also an economic regime based on the *superexploitation of black labor*, which has continued under a “neo-apartheid” black capitalist government, which kills miners just like its predecessor. Israeli rulers, however, would expel and ultimately slaughter the Palestinian people.

The Zionist outposts on the West Bank, many filled with transplants from the U.S., actually are a colonial settler phenomenon. All of them, even the residential suburbs of Jerusalem, are strategic bases to control and push out the Arab population. This has been true since the Allon Plan, drafted after the Israel’s 1967 occupation of the area, which led to a string of fortified settlements along the Jordan Valley. That is also why so many of the 120+ official settlements are located on hilltops, and connected by military highways that divide up the Palestinian population into small “cantons” that can be easily surrounded and cut off by the army. Thus they are all legitimate military targets. The IG and LFI demand *all settlers out of the West Bank*.

In rejecting the characterization of Israel proper as a “colonial-settler state” or “apartheid state,” we in no way diminish the monstrous nature of the Zionist crimes. On the contrary, what Israeli rulers are prepared to do to the Palestinians is potentially *much worse* than the Rhodesian or South African racists. The murderous assault on Gaza currently underway could be the lead-up to “ethnic cleansing” on a massive scale – literally emptying Gaza of its population, whether by military means as in 1948 or by turning off the water, electricity and food supply. And if they get frustrated enough, or feel threatened enough, the Zionists (“hawks” and “doves” alike) are fully capable of carrying out a genocidal “final



Cranes idle, booms up: Picket called by Transport Workers Solidarity Committee and others of Zim Lines ship in port of Oakland, California, September 27, to protest Israeli war and blockade of Gaza. ILWU longshoremen refused to work the ship in act of international labor solidarity.

solution” of the Palestinian “problem.”

Never forget that the Zionist madmen are sitting on a huge arsenal of nuclear warheads, *hundreds of them*, and with their “Masada complex”² they are crazy enough to unleash what could be a suicidal catastrophe. Israeli rulers calculate that the only way they can secure their position in the Middle East is by maintaining absolute military superiority. That is why they are so intent on preventing Iran from getting “the bomb,” because that would limit Israel’s ability to intimidate its neighbors with nuclear blackmail. Revolutionary Marxists, on the other hand, while giving no political support to the mullahs’ regime in Tehran, defend Iran’s right to nuclear weapons to defend itself against imperialist and Zionist war threats.

Israel is today, and has been since its birth, a client state and ally of Western imperialism. In historical Palestine there are two nations – the oppressor Hebrew-speaking nation and the oppressed Palestinian Arab nation – with interpenetrated populations inhabiting and laying claim to the same land. In this situation, where both nations have the democratic right to self-determination, there can be no equitable solution to competing national rights short of a socialist revolution that establishes a collectivized economy throughout the Near East. Talk of a “two-state” solution is a fraud, for under capitalism, where nations compete for scarce resources such as water and fuel, the stronger (i.e., Israel) will always prevail.

And the Israeli ruling class will never agree to a single democratic (capitalist) state, first because it would be the doom of the Zionist project of a Jewish state, and because they know well how criminally they have treated the Palestinians and expect the same in return if they should be in a minority. That is why the League for the Fourth International calls for *Arab-Hebrew workers revolution* that alone offers a future not only to the impoverished Palestinians but also to Hebrew-speaking workers and the large secular Israeli middle class that may tire of living with a siege mentality in a garrison state where every few years they must send their sons and daughters off to kill and be killed for the greater glory of Zionism.

² In biblical times, the fortification of Masada overlooking the Dead Sea was besieged by troops of the Roman Empire, ending with the mass suicide of the Jewish warriors and their families. Today recruits of the Israeli army armored units swear an oath of allegiance on the heights saying “Masada shall not fall again.”

For International Workers Solidarity Action Against Zionist Terror

Amid the hysteria, the Zionist warmongers’ hammerlock on the Jewish population of Israel would seem absolute, although that can change quickly as the Israeli soldiers’ death toll mounts. For now, polls report 90% to 95% of Jews support the assault on Gaza. “Liberal” Zionist media join with right-wingers in bashing the “hypocritical” and unpatriotic left. Leftist-led protests are attacked by fascist-led mobs of up to 800 in Tel Aviv on July 12 and several hundred in Haifa on July 19. Thugs chanting “death to Arabs” and wearing neo-Nazi t-shirts and emblems of the Kahane Chai movement brutally beat antiwar demonstrators while the police stood by. For some 6,000 protesters to come out on July 26, although belatedly, took a good deal of courage.

Many on the left have pinned their hopes on a “third intifada” by Palestinians on the West Bank. While the first (1987-93) and second (2000-05) uprisings against the Israeli occupation were heroic, they could not overcome or even dent the Zionist military’s might. Amira Hass wrote earlier of “Why the West Bank isn’t erupting against Israel” (*Haaretz*, 18 July). In fact, there have been almost nightly protests of thousands, with up to 20,000 marching July 24 on the Qalandia checkpoint near Ramallah, but they have been blocked by Israeli soldiers firing on unarmed demonstrators in East Jerusalem and Qalandia (*Palestine Monitor*, 25 July), and suppressed by the police of Abbas’ Palestinian Authority in Hebron (*Alternative Information Center*, 22 July).

So what is the goal? In Israel, the Communist Party (CPI-Maki) and its electoral front Hadash, as well as a smaller reformist outfit, the Socialist Struggle Movement (SSM-Maavak Sotzyalisti, part of the Committee for a Workers International), call for a Palestinian mini-state. They may try to prettify this with talk of “a truly independent, equal, democratic and socialist Palestinian state, next to a socialist and democratic Israel” (“Gaza in Crisis,” *socialistworld.net* [CWI], 29 July). But in calling for “an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel,” they are parroting the imperialists’ failed bourgeois “two-state solution” laid out in the moribund 1993 Oslo Accords. This comes down to acceptance of Zionist rule and continuation of Palestinian oppression.

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Women settlers practice firing in Jewish settlement of Pnei Kedem, near Bethlehem, in September 2012. All settlements are strategic bases to control and expel Palestinian Arabs. All settlers out of the West Bank!

After 5-Month Platinum Strike, 200,000+ NUMSA Members Walk Out Worker Revolt Continues to Shake South African Capitalism

For the the last two years, ever since the massacre of striking mine workers at Marikana, South Africa has been roiled by workers' struggles. This discontent was reflected politically in the decision of the metal workers union NUMSA last December to break with the ruling African National Congress (ANC).

Following on the heels of the bitter January-June platinum miners strike, NUMSA engineering and metal workers walked out at the beginning of July. That strike (see article below) ended after one month on the picket lines with a 10% raise for the lowest-paid workers and 8% for others. While this is more than the current 6% inflation rate, it is considerably less than originally demanded and far from constituting a "living wage," with most auto assembly line workers earning less than US\$600 a month.

Since then the class battle has not let up for a minute. On the eve of a NUMSA International Symposium on Building a Socialist South Africa that began August 7, three shop stewards in KwaZulu-Natal province were shot to death after returning from a union meeting. And at the end of October, the leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions began preparing to expel NUMSA, which may take place at a COSATU meeting on November 7.

While the metal workers leadership has been taking a more militant stance than the cravenly pro-government union tops, it has not fundamentally broken with capitalism. So while COSATU called on ANC vice president Cyril Ramaphosa, the former mine union leader who is now a leading mining capitalist, to "mediate" the conflict with NUMSA, the latter appealed to the capitalist courts to stop the expulsion move.

The struggle for international socialist revolution in South Africa and elsewhere must be based on intransigent struggle for workers political independence from all bourgeois parties, politicians and their state.

JULY 5 – South African bosses are worried. *Business Day* (3 July) headlines, "Worker revolt' Aggravating Most Difficult Economic Time Since 2009." The online news site Daily Maverick frets, "South Africa may well be the strike capital of the world." The five-month platinum miners strike, the longest in the country's history, was settled on June 23. Although failing to achieve the demand of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) for a monthly wage of 12,500 rand (a little under US\$1,200), the base pay of the lowest-paid miners was raised from around 5,000 to 8,000 rand – a 60% increase over three years.

Then on July 1, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) launched an indefinite strike involving more than 220,000 workers in the engineering and metals sector, ushered in by massive marches by its membership across the country. The strike hit producers of iron, steel, durable consumer goods and plastics. By July 4, General Motors had to shut down its Port Elizabeth auto assembly plant due to parts



Members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) in Durban on July 1, first day of the national strike, point to non-striking construction workers demanding they join the walkout.

shortages. The head of the employers' Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa estimated the NUMSA strike was costing the industry US\$30 million a day.

Following reelection of African National Congress (ANC) leader Jacob Zuma as president, the back-to-back AMCU and NUMSA strikes, which could spread to the gold mining sector, set the stage for another confrontation between workers and South Africa's black capitalist regime. The shock waves of the August 2012 Marikana massacre continue to reverberate in the economic powerhouse of Africa. But a decisive victory will require a break with the ruling Tripartite Alliance of the ANC, the sellout Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the anti-communist South African Communist Party (SACP) and rejection of the Stalinist/social-democratic program of "two-stage" revolution in order to fight for socialist revolution.

The platinum strike had already shaken the neo-apartheid regime (see "Elections and Miners Strike: South African Popular Front in Crisis," *The Internationalist* No. 37, May-June 2014). The miners walked out for 12,500 rand, the demand of the 2012 strike, for which 36 strikers were shot down in cold blood by the police at Marikana. The final settlement was a limited but real victory for the miners. The bosses' media try to minimize it by calculating how much strikers lost during five months without pay. But for the miners what was key was that the companies were not able to starve them into submission, they resisted police repression and won a big raise.

Yet mine workers will still be mired in abject poverty, living in tin shacks while managers wheel around in their BMWs. The claims that replacing the formal structures of white supremacy known as apartheid would bring freedom for the downtrodden South African non-white masses have been shown to be hollow. Now some liberals are talking about a switch from a "low-wage, high-employment" mining industry to a "high-wage, low-employment" model (*Business Day*, 18 June).

Nonsense. They may automate the mines, but South African capitalism was built on the bedrock of superexploitation of black labor and that will not change under neo-apartheid.

The platinum strike went up against the ANC government, and had to contend with scabbing by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Even so, the historic 12,500-rand wage demand against the hugely profitable Lonmin, Amplats and Implats mining companies could have been won – but the miners couldn't do it alone. As we wrote last April, "There should have been, and should be today, a mobilization of all of South African labor to defend the miners with *solidarity strike action* to bring South Africa to a standstill in support of the platinum strike." NUMSA workers in the platinum refineries could have continued their strike until the miners won.

The point was noted by a Witwatersrand University researcher, Gavin Capps, quoted by the liberal *Mail & Guardian* (20 June) saying that the union's initial demand "could have been won with co-ordinated action from another sector. If there had been co-ordination with refinery workers, for example, and with transport workers who would have simply refused to transport the stockpiles, there would have been a tighter squeeze on production." But this was blocked by mutual suspicion between the NUMSA and AMCU tops while "the National Council of Trade Unions, to which Amcu is affiliated, folded its arms as Amcu slugged it out in Rustenburg."

Even as the COSATU/NUM labor fakery and SACP fake communists back the Zuma government to the hilt as the price for their reserved seats on the neo-apartheid "grave train," and despite bureaucratic tensions among the more militant unions, with metal workers walking out on the heels of the miners strike, the capitalists are reacting like they were hit by a one-two punch. "There will be no settlement whatsoever unless a double-digit increase is achieved," said NUMSA president Andrew Chirwa on

June 26. Although the leadership scaled back its demands, from 20% to 15% to 12%, union marchers in Johannesburg are insisting on at least 15%.

NUMSA also decided to launch a series of pickets and marches on July 2 over its deadlocked wage negotiations with the power utility Eskom, where it is likewise demanding 12%. Strikes against this state-owned electricity firm are banned under South Africa's anti-labor "essential services" law. NUMSA represents only a quarter of the 40,000 Eskom workers, but a few pickets at the Medupi power station under construction in Limpopo province resulted in many contract workers not showing up (*The Citizen*, 4 July). Cops drove off the pickets at the entrance with potentially lethal rubber bullets. The next act in this drama could be bloody.

The ANC government has of course denounced the metalworkers, but despite backstabbing by COSATU bureaucrats, the strike has received verbal support from a number of federations. Meanwhile, the bourgeois press screeches that Moody's, the credit rating firm, may downgrade South African government bonds to "junk" status. At a July 1 rally in Port Elizabeth, NUMSA treasurer Mphumzi Maqungo replied to "economic analysts arguing that this strike is politically motivated and will hit the economy hardest. We want to tell them that they must go to hell" (*The Herald*, 2 July).

While the NUMSA strike is fully justified, it is nonetheless very political. In addition to the wage demand, NUMSA is calling for a ban on labor brokers (the parasites who supply temporary contract workers who receive a pittance far below the poverty wages regular workers receive) and a ban on hiring under the Employment Tax Incentive Act (a scheme to subsidize capitalists if they hire youth, also with poor wages and no rights). COSATU has begged its "allies" in the bourgeois government to ban labor brokering, to no avail. (Not coincidentally the profiteers from this modern-day slave trade include the son of President Zuma.)

In December 2013, NUMSA broke with the Tripartite Alliance, and refused to back the ANC in the May elections. It talks of socialism and calls for building some kind of "workers party." But the NUMSA memorandum announcing the strike, while citing the crises of capitalism, deplores the "shameful" poverty wages "in our democracy" and demands "that government stops pursuing neo-liberal policies." It also asserts that "we have a struggle to engage both business and capital" to "defend the current capability of our manufacturing sector." Thus in practice, its policy amounts to a hopeless quest to pressure capital into behaving in a "comradely" way.

Curiously, the South African business weekly *Financial Mail* (20 June) recently published a series of articles on "participative capitalism" including an editorial, featuring a photo of NUMSA general secretary Irvin Jim, titled "Can Comrade Capitalism

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No Party or Candidate Presents a Class Challenge

Brazil: The Election Racket of the Bourgeoisie

The following is an abridged translation of an article published by our comrades of the *Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil* (Fourth-Internationalist League of Brazil). Since it appeared, Dilma Rousseff, the incumbent president and candidate of the Workers Party (PT) came in first in the initial round of balloting but well short of a majority. In a second-round runoff election on October 26, Rousseff narrowly won with 51.5% against 48.5% for the right-wing candidate Aécio Neves of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB).

OCTOBER 2 – We’re now at that time in the political cycle when the TV screens are filled with talking heads, theatrically pontificating and making empty campaign promises; when the electoral marketing firms are raking in profits hand over fist, when messengers hand over suitcases stuffed with cash to parliamentary deputies-for-hire, and union bureaucrats of all stripes clamp down on the workers’ struggles and instead dedicate themselves to rounding up votes. The Brazilian elections of 2014 are no exception to this rule. We Marxists do not reject on principle using the bourgeois electoral circus as a platform to present the revolutionary program, even as we recognize that this is enemy territory. But in this election there is no party or slate which could represent a working-class vote against capitalism.

The three main candidates – Dilma Rousseff, of the Workers Party (PT), Marina Silva of the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) and Aécio Neves of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) – all defend capitalist rule. Even though the PT is partly based on the workers movement, its program is strictly limited to the framework of capitalism. Beyond that, even before it undertook governing the country in 2003 under the presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, this “bourgeois workers party” (as Lenin defined the British Labour Party) organized a popular front with bourgeois forces in order to subordinate the workers

Cast a Blank Ballot and Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!



Militarized “democracy.” Special operation of the Shock Battalion (Batalhão de Choque) of the Military Police of Rio de Janeiro took the streets to oversee elections (and intimidate voters).

to the dictates of the bourgeoisie.

The popular-front government of Dilma Rousseff and her vice president, Michel Temer of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), the main bourgeois component of the PT’s stable of allies, has been deteriorating after 12 years in office. Last year there was an explosion of street protests of up to a million people in Rio de Janeiro against the social policies of the governments.

In 2014, after four years of a boom due to the export of raw materials to China, the Brazilian economy went into recession. There were big mobilizations denouncing extravagant expenditures for the World Cup of soccer while education and public health are starved of funds. Then the Brazilian team suffered a “humiliating” 7-1 defeat at the hands of Germany. A new corruption scandal exploded in the semi-state oil com-

pany Petrobras. Yet the São Paulo bankers have been making money like never before under the governments of Lula and Dilma. Above all, in the opinion surveys the PT has kept the support of low-income voters and a good chunk of the famous “middle class.”

The PT apparatus, pro-government and right-wing union bureaucracies and assorted spokesmen of the “center-left” media are calling for a vote for Dilma with various arguments, which boil down to two main appeals: the PT government has implemented an economic policy of “growth together with redistributing income” to the poor that is an alternative to “neo-liberalism”; and (since they no longer talk of imperialism) that it “pursued an independent foreign policy. Both explanations are a gross distortion of reality.

It is true that the several welfare programs, above all *Bolsa Família* (the Family Fund), have reduced income inequality, the unemployment rate, the poverty rate (-55%) and the rate of extreme poverty (-65%) as well as raising the minimum wage, from 2003 to 2014. Yet Brazil continues to be one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a monthly average wage of less than \$R 3,000 (roughly US\$1,200), and the paychecks of industrial workers took a pay cut of 3.4% last year and up to 7.8% for metal workers. Moreover, from the very outset the Lula-Dilma government has attacked workers’ union gains with its “reform” of health and welfare benefits; it has smashed several strikes, and is preparing a new assault with the labor “reform” taking aim at union contracts.

As for its “independent” foreign policy, Brazil under the popular front, along with Bolivia and Ecuador, has a certain room to maneuver due to trade with China, but basically knuckles under to the demands of Yankee imperialism. One only has to look at the role that these countries (along with

Chile and Argentina) play as a mercenary occupation force for imperialism in Haiti, with U.N. blue helmets, of course.

Concerning Marina Silva, despite her international fame as an environmentalist, ever since leaving the PT in 2008, in her presidential campaign for the Green Party in 2010 and today as a standard-bearer for the PSB, she has offered her services to the minor capitalist parties as the perfect “anti-PT candidate.” In reality, her program and candidacy have been crafted to pick up votes from the right should there be a second-round runoff election.

Marina’s right-wing program linked to high finance is summed up in the demand for “independence for the Central Bank.” Independence from the government, that is, and instead dependence on the São Paulo bankers, and on the imperialist financial institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, etc. She also appeals to the most retrograde social layers with her opposition to gay marriage, to the rights of women (opposition to abortion) and her support for the homophobic pastor Marco Feliciano, as head of the Human Rights Commission of the federal Chamber of Deputies.

For her part, Dilma only supports abortion for those cases permitted under the 2013 law (rape, risk to the life of the woman and an encephalitic fetus) rather than defending the unlimited right of women to free abortion on demand in safe medical conditions, as we Trotskyists demand. But Marina is linked to fascist, coup-plotting sectors and is opposed to revising the Amnesty Law to punish torturers from the military dictatorship (1968-1985), after having taken the opposite position in 2008. Her environmentalism is nothing but a green fig leaf to cover her program for an ultra-neo-liberal government of the religious right.

And Aécio Neves? Workers might have illusions in Dilma Rousseff or Marina Silva, but the candidate of the PSDB is a declared enemy of the workers movement and of the rights of all oppressed sectors in capitalist society, so there’s no point in spending any more time on him.

Campaigns of a “Socialist” Left Bought Off by the Capitalist Government

In the face of the onslaught by all the parliamentary parties against the rights and interests of working people, women, blacks and other oppressed sectors, one might ask if among the parties of the “socialist” left running in the presidential elections there is a slate that would merit critical support from revolutionaries. We are referring here to the candidates of the Partido Socialismo e Liberdade (PSOL, Party of Socialism and Freedom), of the Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificado (PSTU, United Socialist Workers Party) and Partido Causa Operária (PCO, Workers Cause Party)¹. All

¹ In the first round voting, the PSOL received 1.6 million votes, or about 1.5% of the total, while the PSTU got 91,000 votes and the PCO 12,000.



Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff with her imperialist overlord, Barack Obama in the White House, April 2012. Meanwhile, NSA was listening to phones of Rousseff and her top aides.

three claim to be Trotskyist, or include internal tendencies which consider themselves Trotskyist, although their concrete politics are opportunist and quite distant from the Bolshevik-Leninism of Trotsky's Fourth International.

To consider the question, we first have to establish the principles. From the time of the First International, the International Workingmen's Association (IWA), the basic political orientation has been, as Friedrich Engels noted: "Our politics must be working-class politics. The workers party must never be the tagtail of any bourgeois party; it must be independent and have its goal and its own policy" (speech at the September 1871 London Conference of the First International). The next year, Marx and Engels wrote a resolution that was included as Article 7 of the statutes of the IWA, which stated:

"Against the collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes. "This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate end – the abolition of classes."

In this same period, Marx drew the lessons of the experience of the Paris Commune, writing:

"[T]he working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes."

–*The Civil War in France* (June 1871)

It was necessary to "smash" the bureaucratic-military machine of capital in order to carry out a revolution, beginning with the taking of power by the proletariat at the head of all the oppressed layers.

Basing ourselves on these principles, whose validity has been confirmed by all subsequent history, we in the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil), section of the League for the Fourth International, fight for total political independence from the bourgeoisie, its parties and its state. We reject voting for any party which is part of a popular front, a class-collaborationist coalition with bourgeois sectors, as is the case with the current Brazilian government led by the PT in alliance with the (social-democratic) PCdoB (Communist Party of Brazil), the PMDB, the PDT and bourgeois rightist forces (PSD, PP, PR, PRB). Yet the parties of the reformist "socialist" left, the PSOL and PSTU, even as they criticize the PT government, are merely seeking to form an alternative popular front.

So, for example, in 2012 the PSOL managed to elect the mayor of Macapá (in the northern state of Amapá) on the basis of a popular front with minor bourgeois parties, which then in the runoff was supported by the rightist DEM, the successor to the political vehicle of the military dictatorship. Currently, the star candidate of the PSOL, Heloísa Helena, is again running for senator from the state of Alagoas, with the support of the PSDB in a formal pact.

In August, it came out that in Rio Grande do Sul, the PSOL received R\$50,000 (about US\$20,000) from the Zaffari Group, owners of the main supermarket chain in the state and the fifth largest in Brazil. Of this money, R\$15,000 went to the campaign of Luciana Genro (whose father is the current PT state governor) and R\$30,000 for the PSOL candidate for governor. Yet a month

earlier, PSOL presidential candidate Genro criticized "that the same contractors who build the overpriced public works for the World Cup are the financiers of the PT, PMDB, PSDB and PSB" (Brasil 247, 2 July). Any contradiction there? Supermarkets, yes – contractors, no? Or is it PSOL, yes – the rest of the parties, no?

The PSTU, which published an article (9 August) breaking the scandal about the PSOL, commented:

"When the capitalists do this with the traditional parties, they do so in the certainty that, once elected, they will be paid back with bids, policies, construction projects, among other things. In short, they do this in order to ensure that once elected the parties will govern in the interests of those who financed them. But when the capitalists do this with a party of the socialist left, which has in and around it a significant share of the activists of the militant social movements in our country, they do so – in addition to the above motives – in order to undermine the ranks of this organization. They do it in order to buy them off and destroy them. "The leadership of the PSOL knows this, since they broke with the PT denouncing that. Why, then, do they ask for and receive financing from the bosses? Without political and financial independence, they will build another PT."

One inconvenient detail: the PSTU had made an electoral pact with the PSOL, for an "independent candidate," a "left opposition" to the government of Genro father. What to do? The PSTU's answer: nothing, for they kept on supporting the PSOL-Zaffari candidate.

Despite all this twisting and turning, the PSTU insists that "we don't accept funds from companies because we wish to maintain our commitment to the working people and our independence with regard to the bosses." And how about with regard to the capitalist state? Why then, did the government's Party Fund dole out R\$772,000 (a little over half a million U.S. dollars) to the PSTU in 2013, and in the first nine months of this year another R\$604 thousand? The PSOL got quite a bit more, R\$3.7 million [US\$1.5 million] in 2013 and R\$3 million so far in 2014.

"He who pays the piper calls the tune," writes the PSTU, adding: "In elections it's no different. Whoever finances the candidacies is who, after the campaign is over, will define the policies." Correct, and this not only applies to banks, contractors or supermarkets, but also to the capitalist state. The right-wing press complains about the money paid by the state to the "midget parties," in the same way it complains about television time accorded to left-wing parties. We are opposed to all prohibitions or restraints on access to the communications media. But a party that receives money from the capitalist state is a hostage of the bourgeoisie: its political campaign, and its very existence, depend on the good will of the apparatus which manages the affairs of the bosses.

But in the end, one can hardly expect principled political consistency from the followers of the late fake Trotskyist caudillo Nahuel Moreno, who embodied the opportunism of unprincipled alliances with variable denominators. Moreno was a quick-change artist who went from posing as a "left" Peronist, to Castroite, to Guevarist, to Maoist, to Sandinista and finally ending up (as the PSTU is today), a plain old social democrat. Faced with pseudo-socialists like these reformist

opportunists, revolutionary Marxists and class-conscious workers cannot vote for the candidate of the PSOL, nor for Zé Maria Almeida, the perennial candidate of the PSTU, as they do not represent, even minimally, a class opposition to the capitalist regime. Quite the contrary, in the recent struggles of the São Paulo metro (subway) workers and Rio de Janeiro teachers, the role of fireman to put out the flames of the class struggle has passed from the PT to the PSOL and PSTU.

The centrist Partido Causa Operária uses rhetoric ever so slightly to the left of the PSOL and PSTU, but at bottom its politics don't differ from those of the reformists. Currently the PCO is obsessed by the supposed danger of a coup d'état, another 1964 in Brazil or Germany 1933. In the militant struggles of the June Days of 2013 the PCO saw a fascist danger, which is craziness and serves as an excuse for backhanded support to the PT government.

The PCO polemicizes against "The Political Nullity of the Petty-Bourgeois Left" that calls for a *voto nulo* (blank ballot) "on principle," and argues that "it is necessary for working people to go through the experience of elections and parliament." (In Brazil, voting is compulsory.) We of the LQB do not reject fighting on the electoral terrain "on principle," but we do reject supporting a parliamentary left which considers it "necessary" for workers to participate in the bourgeois electoral circus. And above all, we don't accept such lessons in pseudo-Marxism from parties on the payroll of the capitalist state, like the PCO which received R\$472,000 from the Brazilian government's Party Fund in 2013 and R\$386,000 in the first nine months of 2014.

A proletarian revolutionary party would not take one cent of financing from the capitalist state, or from other capitalist institutions (foundations, companies, etc.). A Leninist and Trotskyist party finances itself with the contributions of its members and those who support its program and political activities. The principle is straightforward for any Marxist: it is the expression of political independence from the class enemy. This isn't obvious to parties like the PSOL, PSTU and PCO because for these opportunists, the state is not their enemy but instead booty that they hope to conquer, that they seek to govern. Their election programs are proposals for another social policy, for lower interest rates by the state banks, for reform of the capitalist state rather than its revolutionary overthrow.

We in the LQB have called from the 2002 elections on for "proletarian opposition to the popular front" of the PT when the PSTU called to vote for Lula on the second round, and the PCO called to "defend the vote" against a non-existent

coup threat. After the PT won, we said that Lula's government together with the Liberal Party would be the "fireman for the IMF," the guarantor of payment of the debt to the imperialists and to domestic bankers. When the "companheiro presidente" substituted for the U.S. troops as the occupation force in Haiti, we called him the "sheriff of Yankee imperialism" in Latin America.

Then, with the election of Dilma Rousseff as the "continuity of Lula" in 2010, we explained that "The Candidates of the Left (PSOL, PSTU, PCB, PCO) Accept Rather Than Fighting the Bosses' Parliamentary 'Games'" (see "Brazilian Elections: The Bourgeoisie Goes for More Lula," *The Internationalist* No. 32, January-February 2011). As against centrists like the Liga Estratégia Revolucionária (LER – affiliated internationally with the Trotskyist Faction) which called for a "critical vote for Zé Maria" [Almeida of the PSTU] in these elections, the LQB fights for a workers and peasants government based on workers and peasants councils which initiates socialist revolution.

What the working people and oppressed of Brazil need today is a program of permanent revolution, of demands that lead directly from today's struggles to international socialist revolution. As Lenin said in his letter of "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists" (October 1919):

"Only scoundrels or simpletons can think that the proletariat must first win a majority in elections carried out under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, under the yoke of wage-slavery, and must then win power. This is the height of stupidity or hypocrisy; it is substituting elections, under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and revolution."

Our motto in this Brazilian electoral year of 2014 is the same as that put forward by the Bolshevik leader one hundred years ago: "For revolution!" ■



(Top) Defense squad of Rio de Janeiro teachers union SEPE during strike last year. (Bottom) Teachers clash with police when they were refused entry to Rio city council debate on teachers salary and seniority bill, 8 October 2013. Union leaders affiliated with PSTU and PSOL acted as firemen for the bosses, calling off the strike despite massive popular support.

Comité de Lula Classista

The Great "People's Climate March" Scam

On Sunday, September 21 an event will be held in New York City called the People's Climate March in conjunction with the 2014 United Nations Climate Summit, which will begin two days later. The Sunday event is being billed as "the biggest climate march in history," with 100,000-plus participants predicted. The organizers boast of an "ever-growing coalition" of more than 1,500 organizations, including in addition to various Green organizations, seemingly every union in NYC, religious groups, and socialist and anarchist outfits. Similar events are being held in a number of cities around the world. **But the whole thing is a gigantic scam, a public relations stunt masquerading as social activism.**

To begin with there is the question of its demands: there are none. There will be "themed contingents," and depending on where you enter the march route you can be with environmental, indigenous, labor, interfaith, anti-corporate, peace and justice, scientific, LGBTQ and community groups. This will allow for varied photo and video images to "thread our many messages together." The march itself will not be calling on anyone to do anything in specific. There will be no speeches or rally at beginning or end. Just a petition appealing to "all world leaders" for "urgent action to safeguard our planet, our future and all that we love." Meaning nothing.

This lack of concrete demands is not an accident, the organizers (more about them below) purposely decided not to raise any in order to make it more "mainstream," "family friendly," nothing "divisive," nothing

that would turn anyone off. Instead this will be a celebration of liberal social concern. Posters urge people to get up in the morning, walk your dog, have brunch, join the march. A subway ad asks, "What puts hipsters and bankers in the same boat?" with the word "boat" crossed out and replaced by "march." A photo of this ad appeared on the Facebook page of Occupy Wall Street, which hailed it. That tells you something about OWS, but *for working people an appeal for unity with bankers means hold on to your wallet.*

Certainly the huge numbers of people who will join the march will be motivated by concern over global warming. But while various measures to combat this threat are proposed, one thing is certain: there is no way this can be seriously controlled so long as capitalism rules the planet. What this march is about is not saving the planet, it's about saving capitalism. The "green" in its "message" is the color of money. The "people" behind the "people's march" are the corporations recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court as "persons" for purposes of buying elections.

In good part, this event is part of the run-up to the November U.S. elections. Ask yourself: why do labor bureaucrats ever do anything in the fall of even numbered years? They may talk "jobs," but it's really to elect Democrats: expect to see plenty of pols parading on Sunday. This march is also to preempt peace marches. Barack Obama just declared a new war in Iraq and Syria, the Pentagon has dispatched 1,600 troops, Congress voted to authorize the slaughter. So where are the peace marchers? Answer:

they'll all be at the feel-good climate march on Sunday. When Republican George W. Bush launched his Iraq war there were half a million protesters in the streets of Manhattan. When Democrat Obama launches his, there is the sound of silence.

To be sure, from Vietnam on, the endless impotent peace marches mainly serve to defuse anger over imperialist war and channel it into support for the Democratic Party, with leftists doing the donkey work. The "biggest climate march" ever won't do a bit to stop climate change. But in this case, there is nothing remotely leftist about it: this event is purely bourgeois. To organize an "anti-capitalist" contingent (International Socialist Organization) or one against "war, racism

and imperialism" (Workers World/International Action Center) is like calling for an internationalist contingent in a Fourth of July parade.

So who is behind this lollapalooza of a media event? There are two main groups organizing it. First is an outfit called "350.org," headed by environmentalist Bill McKibben, which serves as a propaganda medium highlighting former Democratic vice president Al Gore. While its board includes Naomi Klein to give at a hint of fake "anti-capitalism," 350.org was started by seed money (\$480,000) from the Sustainable Markets Foundation of ... the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, derived from the Standard Oil Company fortune. More recently 350 has been funded mainly by the Tides Foundation, whose largest donor by far is Warren Buffett's Novo Foundation.

A main focus of 350.org is its campaign to stop the Keystone XL pipeline bringing oil south from the oil fields of North Dakota and tar sands of Alberta. In particular, the campaign calls for universities, churches and other concerned investors to divest stocks in fossil fuel companies. This has allowed the oil majors to buy back shares at discount prices, and has been a windfall for railroads (which are the main alternative to shipping by pipeline), in particular Burlington Northern, owned by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway corporation. So "non-governmental organizations" (NGOs) campaigning around climate change are funded by and benefit the same mega corporations that profit from fossil fuels. A rather inconvenient truth for "green" NGOs.

The second major organizer is Avaaz, which boasts that it is the world's biggest activist network, with 9 million "members." Avaaz was set up by George Soros, the billionaire hedge fund mogul (and convicted inside-trader) whose MoveOn.org is a major NGO "advocacy group" advocating for the Democratic Party and fundraising for its candidates. Avaaz has been a major force lobbying for aggressive U.S. imperialist intervention around the world, notably in Libya and now in Syria. The founders and leaders of Avaaz are also the founders and leaders of an NYC-headquartered conglomerate consisting of Purpose, Inc. and its non-profit arms, Purpose Foundation, Purpose Action and Purpose Campaign.

Avaaz/Purpose credits itself with having played a major role in getting the U.N.-authorized U.S.-NATO "no fly zone" over Libya in 2011 that gave the green light for the bloody imperialist attack that toppled the government of Muammar Qaddafi and destroyed the country. U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice thanked Avaaz for its e-mail blitz of one million messages. Last year, Avaaz mounted a major campaign to push for U.S. bombing of Syria, using the lie of massive use of chemical weapons against civilians by the Assad regime. After last year's failure, Avaaz/Purpose lead-



Subway ad for People's Climate March.

ers recently mobilized liberal war hawks to demand that Obama present a plan for bombing Syria, this time with the Islamic State jihadis as the excuse.

So here we have the same people pushing an empty climate change march and insistently demanding war on Syria, while "anti-war" liberals and reformist leftists are herded along like sheep. The herders are no novices. Avaaz co-founder, former Virginia Democratic congressman Tom Perriello, was earlier a mover behind the drive for U.S./U.N. intervention in Darfur, Sudan, co-founding DarfurGenocide.org, now called Darfurian Voices, whose sponsors include the National Endowment for Democracy (NED [read: CIA]). Perriello has appeared on panels with ex-general David Petraeus (at the U.S. Institute of Peace!), is a fervent backer of Israel and now head of the Democratic Party-aligned Center for American Progress think tank.

But beyond war, what are the 350/Avaaz/Purpose organizers after? Profit, of course. Why spend millions of dollars – including subway ads, ads on the *New York Times* web site and other media – to organize a march with no demands? Arun Gupta, who edited the *Occupied Wall Street Journal* and *The Independent*, commented: "Having worked on Madison Avenue for nearly a decade, I can smell a P.R. and marketing campaign a mile away. That's what the People's Climate March looks to be" (CounterPunch, 19 September). He's not the first to smell a rat. It's all about marketing, and in particular "branding." The leaders are seeking to mobilize millions of consumers for their political, and commercial, projects.

Avaaz/Purpose co-founder Jeremy Heimans calls himself a "movement entrepreneur." *The Economist* (26 January 2013) ran an article about "the business of campaigning" headlined "Profit with Purpose." It noted that Purpose Inc. "sells consulting services to big companies such as Google and Audi, and to charities such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation...." It helped Audi's "social innovation fund" start a company to dispense clean water in India, to sell water as a privately owned commodity. "Purpose also hopes to develop a business promoting 'new economy' products such as solar energy. It will recommend to its members that they buy solar power from such-and-such a provider. In return, it will charge a referral fee."

Meanwhile, the non-profit arm of Purpose raised \$3 million from investors in 2012, among them the Ford Foundation. In 2011, Heimans received the Ford Foun-



Climate March organizers Avaaz are major lobbyists for imperialist aggression. Above: Avaaz claims its e-mail blast played key role in getting U.N. approval for "no-fly zone" which led to destruction of Libya. Below: Avaaz/Purpose co-founder Tom Perriello (right) with ex-general David Petraeus (left) at U.S. Institute of Peace.

dation's Visionaries Award of \$100,000, saying he would use it to promote "consumer activism, of organizing people not as citizens but as consumers." Other past and present leaders of Avaaz/Purpose include Marilia Bezerra, who earlier was Commitment Development Senior Manager at the Clinton Global Initiative; and brand strategist Douglas Atkin, author of *The Culting of Brands: Turn Your Customers into True Believers*, who helped relaunch brands like Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Lipitor through the "secrets of fierce customer identification" and "unbreakable loyalty."

Heimans' particular shtick is that it's necessary to junk the term "green," even the talk of a "green economy," that "we need to kill the language and imagery and green in order to have any real shot at scaling sustainable consumption." Instead "we can create a new economy that takes these models that can very quickly acquire market share and we can give people a sense they're part of something much bigger, we'll build the green economy, we just won't talk about it and we won't say that we're doing it."¹ Having "found a lucrative revenue stream by warning about climate catastrophe that can be solved with the click of a donate button," Gupta writes, these specialists in "behavioral economics" are launching a marketing campaign to test it out.

Meanwhile, along with Sunday's "People's Climate March" a whole week of profitable activities are planned. There is a book launch for Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*.² A recruiting movie presented in conjunction with the New School: *Disruption. Climate. Change.* A Flood Wall Street action on Monday by Occupy. And a host of activities by the Climate Group, a corporate action group founded by the Swiss Re insurance giant, with the military contractor Lockheed Martin as a "platinum sponsor," Hewlett-Packard and BMW as gold sponsors, Bloomberg LP and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund as supporters, and Ikea and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation as Clean Revolution Partners. Talk about a royal corporate flim-flam job!

As for the U.N. summit, it will be an opportunity for 120+ heads of state to utter pious platitudes about international cooperation combating climate change. The U.N. is the outfit that brought cholera along with imperialist occupation to Haiti. Our demand to the U.N., from Haiti to Libya to Syria, is "hands off." Calling on the U.N. to act as ecological guardian is like ... calling on BP, the criminals of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, to preserve the Everglades. At least BP are not partners and sponsors of Climate Week. That would violate one of the cardinal rules of marketing, avoid "branding dissonance" at all cost. Nevertheless, BP is an official Supporting Partner of International Women's Day 2014.

The People's Climate March is the official rolling out of the campaign for a "sustainable" capitalist economy in the Brave New World of untrammelled corporate dominance. With heart-warming visuals of

¹ This and much of the information about Avaaz/Purpose comes from well-researched articles by the Canadian environmental journalist Cory Morningstar on her web site The Wrong Kind of Green, including "This Changes Nothing. Why the People's Climate March Guarantees Climate Catastrophe" (15 September) and "Syria: Avaaz, Purpose & the Art of Selling Hate for Empire" (17 September).

² Klein, a liberal anti-communist who writes inane books beloved by reformists and "anarchists," is about as "anti-capitalist" as the pope.

a diverse crowd in the streets, with balloons and floats for "the planet" and "all that we love," they will be market-testing appeals to scale up "eco-friendly" business in the digital world, to substitute "clicktivism" for mass struggle. It certainly will do nothing to counter the threat posed by global warming. To deal with that, it is necessary to put an end to what Karl Marx called the anarchy of production for profit – capitalism – through an international socialist revolution. To begin, we need to break the stranglehold of the Democratic Party by building a revolutionary workers party. ■

Defend Gaza...

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The International Socialist League (ISL) of Yossi Schwartz, who has migrated from one international tendency to another over the past several decades, blithely changing his positions on every key issue, calls for a "workers state from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea." The ISL's current bloc partner, after dumping the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) last year, is the "Revolutionary Communist International Tendency," which exists mainly on the Internet. A July 8 joint RCIT-ISL statement calls to "conquer [the] apartheid regime and replace it with a state of equal civil rights for all – from the river to the sea." Nothing about a "workers state" there. In contrast to the pro-Zionist CPI and SSM, the ISL capitulates to bourgeois Arab nationalism.

Internationally, there have been large demonstrations against the war on Gaza around the globe. Most of the anti-Zionist forces (including the International Socialist Organization in the U.S. and many liberals) call for a policy of "boycott, divestment and sanctions" (BDS) against all things Israeli, harking back to the divestment movement against South African apartheid. We have explained before that impotent consumer boycotts of Israeli products and academics, calls on businesses not to invest in Israel and appeals for imperialist sanctions will not stop the Zionist mass murderers, nor did they stop the white supremacist regime in South Africa.³ The apartheid butchers were brought down by a combination of militant struggle by black workers in South Africa and the imperialists' calculation that after the destruction of the Soviet Union they had nothing to fear from the house-broken South African Communist Party.

Recently there have been splits among liberal anti-Zionists, with some prominent voices (notably Noam Chomsky and Norman Finkelstein) opposing the "BDS" call for Palestinians' right of return. This a capitulation to the Zionists. Our objection to the bankrupt BDS "strategy" is quite different, although in some cases it may be necessary to give critical support to such initiatives against rabid Zionist reaction. For one thing, since the crimes of U.S. imperialism far outweigh those of its Israeli junior partners, why not call on American universities to refuse to hire American professors, or for Europeans to boycott U.S. products, etc.?

But most fundamentally, the BDS campaigns of moral outrage are at bottom an appeal to the imperialists to rein in or abandon their Israeli allies. As we have noted, "This is an illusion, particularly in the case of the United States, whose alliance with Israel is

³ See "Israel's Gaza Flotilla Massacre: Bloody War Provocation," *The Internationalist* No. 31, Summer 2010.

strategic. Israel is a key element in Western domination of the Middle East, including vital oil supplies and trade routes, which also benefit the European imperialists. No amount of popular pressure will change that" (*The Internationalist* No. 31). When we challenged Israeli leftist historian Ilan Pappé on this at a forum in New York City, he stated emphatically that he and others in the BDS movement had long since concluded it was a mistake to call for a fight against imperialism.

Yet the hard reality is that Zionist power in Palestine will not be broken without defeating its imperialist patrons. It can be done. U.S. imperialism was handed a stinging defeat by the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants in the 1960s and '70s, which had wide-ranging beneficial effects for the world's peoples. But the imperialists counterattacked from Afghanistan and Central America to Eastern Europe, culminating in the counterrevolution that destroyed the USSR and Soviet bloc bureaucratically deformed workers states in 1989-92, and by unrelenting class war on workers "at home." As we have insisted, success in the fight against Zionism can only be won through struggle to bring down capitalism and imperialism.

Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky warned in the 1930s that the Zionist project in Palestine was a death trap for Jews as well as a calamity for all the peoples of the region. As Trotskyists, the International Group and League for the Fourth International continue his struggle for world socialist revolution. Along that road, rather than appealing to imperialism and calling for bankrupt consumer boycotts (BDS), we seek to spur international workers action against Zionist terror, such as a labor blockade of transportation (refusal to handle ships, planes and cargo) to and from Israel so long as Israeli bombs are falling on Gaza. But even that would be just a token of the mobilization of workers power that is needed.

The liberation of the Palestinian masses and breaking Israeli workers from Zionism will require a convulsive revolutionary wave sweeping the Middle East and North Africa. A tall order, to be sure, but one only has to recall the tremendous impact of the overthrow of the U.S.-allied dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011 to see the potential. Though that was not a revolution, as the imperialists and opportunist leftists claimed and we denied, it did raise revolutionary aspirations and spurred class struggle, even in Israel. It's significant that Habima Square in Tel Aviv, where antiwar protests are now held, became the focal point for "social justice" protests and was nicknamed "the Israeli Tahrir," after Cairo's Liberation Square.

As we wrote in 2010: "we seek to build an Arab/Hebrew Trotskyist party in all of Palestine to lead the fight for a binational Arab/Hebrew workers state in the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East. However distant that prospect may seem today, it is the only basis on which Muslims, Jews, Christians, Druzes – not to mention Kurds, Zoroastrians and numerous other national and religious minorities throughout the region – can overcome sectarian divisions and live and develop in harmony. Achieving this is a vital task not only of Hebrew-speaking and Arab workers in Palestine, but of the world proletariat as we struggle to smash imperialism through international socialist revolution." ■



Aron Skyy/The Times of Johannesburg

Miners shot down at Marikana. Are police workers? No, they are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie.

South Africa...

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Work?" As any Marxist could tell you, the answer is a flat "no." Even in the neo-apartheid never-never land, where the South African Communist Party staffs the bourgeois state and runs the police/intelligence apparatus, all the talk of "stakeholder," "responsible" and "conscious" capitalism won't amount to a hill of beans because the very essence of capitalism is exploitation.

As Lenin remarked about the "economist" social democrats of his day who talked of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character," such simple trade unionism cannot take the workers' struggle forward to revolution. Yet the excruciating situation of the South African proletariat cries out for revolutionary, class-struggle politics. To win support from the oppressed masses of township residents, contract workers and unemployed youth that the government appeals to with its demagogic anti-labor laws, NUMSA should fight for massive hiring for full-time jobs through a drastic reduction of the workweek with no loss in pay, with pay adjusted for inflation (a sliding scale of wages and hours).

Particularly after Marikana, it should be clear to class-conscious workers that organizing "unions" of police – the armed fist of capital – such as POPCRU is a ticket for disaster. A class-struggle leadership of labor would organize workers defense guards to block scabs and cop attacks. And in the face of threats of retrenchments (layoffs) and closures of plants and mines, rather than simply asking to see the capitalists' "financials," as does the NUMSA strike memorandum, it would fight to impose workers control of their enterprises. Such demands from Leon Trotsky's Transitional Program would be a bridge from today's struggles to the fight for socialist revolution.

Unlike the social democrats of the Democratic Socialist Movement and its Workers and Socialist Party, who envisage the NUMSA obliging COSATU to call a nice, peaceful general (protest) strike for a wage hike and a living minimum wage – with nationalization of the metal industry tacked on at the end as left cover – authentic Trotskyists emphasize that a revolutionary struggle for power would be posed by a real general strike. What's urgently needed in South Africa today to free the workers and urban and rural poor from neo-apartheid slavery is above all building a revolutionary workers party on the program of Lenin and Trotsky, to fight for a black-centered workers government in a socialist federation of Africa. ■

Mobilize Workers Action Against Police Terror!

Racist NYPD Murder of Eric Garner

JULY 26 – The racists in blue uniforms of the New York Police Department are at it again. Eric Garner, 43, a black asthmatic father of six and grandfather, was standing on a corner on Bay Street in the Tompkinsville section of Staten Island on July 17. He was set upon by cops who surrounded him, put him in a chokehold and dragged him to the ground. Soon he stopped moving. EMS medics did nothing to help him. Why don't they apply CPR to get him breathing, a bystander asked. Instead, cops and medics stood by and watched him die.

The chokehold has been banned in New York for 20 years, but they have never stopped. There have been over 1,000 chokehold complaints since 2009 alone, and you can be sure this is only a fraction of the number of times the deadly tactic was used. No cop was ever seriously disciplined for this. What was different this time was there are videos showing the encounter from start to finish. They went viral on social media, as outrage spread over another cop killing of a black man in NYC.

On the video you can hear Mr. Garner saying "I can't breathe, I can't breathe" over and over, but this didn't stop the killer cops as they choked the air out of his windpipe and lungs. Did he die of a heart attack, from his asthma? Makes no difference: Eric Garner was choked to death. It was racist murder by the NYPD, and it was intentional.

The cops' story is he was resisting arrest. Like hell. In fact, they had been called to the scene about a fight. But Mr. Garner, known on the street as a peace-maker, had already broken it up. He was a big man, 350 pounds, but he was called "the gentle giant." The police knew him well, having arrested him more than 30 times, mostly for the same bogus "crime" of selling "loosies" – loose cigarettes people buy because they can't afford the astronomical taxes on a pack.

Mr. Garner was not "resisting arrest" – another phony crime. He was protesting the constant police harassment: "I didn't do shit! I was just minding my own business," Garner can be heard telling the cops in one of the videos. "Every time you see me, you want to mess with me," he added. "I'm tired of it.. It ends today. Please just leave me alone!" But they wouldn't let him alone. Eric Garner was targeted by murderous cops, he dared to talk back, and so he was killed.

"It Ends Today": Eric Garner's Parting Words Become a Rallying Cry

At vigils and protests in the ensuing days, Eric Garner's desperate cry, "I can't breathe," and his parting words, "It ends today," have become rallying cries. The cops belong behind bars. And not just Daniel Pantaleo, who applied the chokehold and who has provoked numerous complaints of brutality. All the police involved are accomplices. Moreover, the EMS medics who did nothing are also guilty, of dereliction of duty if not much worse.

On July 25, Rev. Al Sharpton and Mr. Garner's family formally asked for a federal civil rights probe of the police

chokehold murder and EMS non-action. At the funeral service at Bethel Baptist Church in Brooklyn, Sharpton said a federal civil rights violation resulted in jail for racist cop Volpe who brutally tortured Abner Louima. But what about the cops who murdered Amadou Diallo, Patrick Dorismond, Sean Bell and so many others? They all walked, because the "justice" system stands by the police, the guard dogs of capital.

A sign held by Internationalist Group supporters who attended Eric Garner's funeral recalled the 1994 racist cop chokehold murder of Anthony Baez who was playing football on a Bronx street. A second IG sign read: "Workers Revolution Will Avenge Trayvon Martin, Ramarley Graham, Amadou Diallo, Sean Bell, Troy Davis, Marcelo Lucero, Patrick Dorismond, Rekia Boyd" – the list goes on and on of black lives snuffed out by killer cops, racist vigilantes and black-robed judges. As a third sign declared, "The Capitalist System Is Racist to the Core."

What Is To Be Done?

The Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin asked that question over a century ago and it's still the right one to ask. There has been a lot of justified outrage expressed over the killing of Eric Garner, and some calls for cosmetic reforms, but nothing that gets to the root. New Yorkers Against Bratton are calling to fire the police commissioner. William Bratton was named top cop by Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani in the mid-1990s when police swooped down on black neighborhoods, arresting thousands of people on so-called "quality of life crimes." Now Bratton's back, and pursuing his same "broken window" strategy.

Bratton arrogantly announced that nothing would change in NYPD policies as a result of the killing of Eric Garner. Sure, they may do some "retraining" about use of force, but that won't stop kill-crazed cops who keep on choking their victim as he complains he can't breathe. It also won't put a dent in the astronomical arrest numbers – almost 400,000 a year in a city of 8 million. Even after massive protests against NYPD victimizing young men for the crime of "walking while black," Brooklyn teachers say their 13- and 14-year-old students are regularly "stopped-and-frisked" on the way home from school.

But what about Bratton's boss, Bill de Blasio? Vacationing in Italy, he declares

his full faith in Bratton. The liberal mayor has gotten a free ride from protesters, who hated the snarling racist Giuliani, plutocrat mayor Michael Bloomberg and his top cop Ray Kelly but many of whom love "progressive" Democrat de Blasio, even though he appointed the police commissioner and approved Bratton's tactics. Not us. As an Internationalist sign declared: "Bloomberg/Kelly, De Blasio/Bratton, 'Stop and Frisk,' Chokeholds: It Doesn't Stop – For Workers Revolution!"

At the time of his election last fall, we said "De Blasio Will Be 'Bloomberg Lite'." He has to be: as a leader of the capitalist Democratic Party, he takes his orders from Wall Street and Washington. Even though our headline angered many liberals, de Blasio's first six months in office proved us right: a green light for charter schools; closing of Long Island College Hospital despite repeated community protests (including some grandstanding by de Blasio himself); calls for raising the minimum wage forgotten; and now backing up the killers-in-uniform, the NYPD.

De Blasio never pretended he was going to do away with "stop and frisk," just "reform" it. Now there are calls to reduce the number of "quality of life" misdemeanor arrests. Many if not most of these are no crime at all, like putting your feet on a subway seat. Selling untaxed "loosies"? Abolish the punitive tobacco tax! Turnstile jumping? Rip out the turnstiles and have free mass transit! "Broken windows" lead to major crimes? Like what? We don't see Wall Street executives who looted the U.S. Treasury for trillions of dollars getting stopped and frisked!

The New York Times (25 July) reports: "All told, since 1994, the police in New York City have arrested more than 1.3 million people for misdemeanors who had never been previously arrested for a



From cellphone video showing Eric Garner being choked to death by NYC cops, July 17.

penal-law crime...." The reason for this arrest mania is not some "compstat" computer system or a particular strategy or tactic, not is it limited to the NYPD. The purpose of this racist mass incarceration, of the "school-to-prison pipeline," is to put millions of African American, Latino, Asian and poor youth in the chokehold of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state: subject to the revolving door of jail, parole, constant harassment, monitoring, surveillance and joblessness.

Get another police chief? Like Kelly who arrested 700 Occupy Wall Street protesters on the Brooklyn Bridge, had his cops pepper spray and slam them to the ground and sent Cecily McMillan to jail for the crime of "resisting" when cops grabbed her breasts? (Before heading the NYPD, Kelly led a U.S. imperialist police force in Haiti under Democrat Bill Clinton.) Replace the chokehold with tasers? Are they kidding? Tasers kill too. The issue is not just policy or personnel but power, and the answer to endemic, systemic racist cop terror is to mobilize a greater power
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Internationalists at funeral of Eric Garner (left), July 23. Whether Bloomberg/Kelly or de Blasio/Bratton (above), racist cop terror doesn't stop.

The Internationalist

Outrage Over Cop Murder of Michael Brown Throws Capitalist Rulers Into National Crisis

Mobilize Across U.S. Against Racist Police Terror in Missouri!

**Stand with Protests
Against Military / Police
Occupation**

**Drop Charges Against
All Arrested Protesters**

**All Cops and Troops
Out of Ferguson, MO!**

AUGUST 19 – When a police officer in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Missouri shot down an unarmed black teenager, Michael Brown, and cops left his body lying in the street for hours, it set off an explosion of mass anger that hasn't stopped. Young and old, the population of this more than two-thirds black town had had it with the almost entirely white cops and their racist bosses who lord it over the place like it was a plantation. No matter what the rulers tried, they couldn't squelch the protests. Right from the start, St. Louis County police deployed the military arsenal they had been building up to put down black unrest: armored cars, snipers with high-powered rifles, tear gas, stun grenades, rubber bullets, the works. Didn't work.

In fact, it backfired. There was nationwide shock as the images resembled upheavals against bloody dictators in the Middle East, Palestinians rising up against Israeli occupation or mass protests in the black Soweto township in apartheid South Africa. The snarling dogs recalled Birmingham, Alabama in the most violent phase of repression against the civil rights struggle.



Michael Brown (top) had just graduated high school and was about to start vocational college. Bottom: police left Michael's body lying in the street for five hours as a threat while they went after residents who complained about the wanton murder.



Scott Olson/Getty Images

Police in Ferguson advance on hundreds of demonstrators protesting on August 17 the cop murder of Michael Brown.

For Labor/Black/Immigrant Mobilization Now!

Militarized policing drew particular attention, with liberal Democrats and even right-wing Republicans lamenting it (after lavishly funding it). All the firepower didn't stop nightly protests by angry youth fed up with police harassment, and now murder of a young black man as he held up his hands saying, "Don't shoot!" So under pressure from Washington, Democratic governor Jay Nixon brought in a black state highway patrol official to take command.

Captain Ronald Johnson did the Officer Friendly routine, walking with protesters, promising to pull heavy armor off the streets, speaking to church congregations about his own teenage black son ("who wears his pants saggy"). Simultaneously, black Democrats Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson came to town to cool things out. Thinking that those in power were finally listening, the mood shifted, people celebrated. The euphoria lasted barely a day. When local police finally released the name of the killer cop, Darren Wilson, after days of stonewalling, they also tried to smear Michael Brown as a "suspect" of shoplifting. First they murder him, then they assassinate the victim's character. Furious protests broke out again, and the armored cars were back.

Next came the curfew. While Democratic president Barack Obama made hypocritical speeches about protecting the right to protest, Democratic governor Nixon ordered protesters off the streets at midnight Saturday, supposedly to stop looting. The protesters defiantly stood their ground for an hour in the rain until the barrages of gas and gunfire finally drove them away. Then on Sunday the results of the independent autopsy by Dr. Michael Baden came out: Michael Brown was shot six times, all from the front, twice in the head. Militant protests broke out again. This time the cops didn't wait and attacked demonstrators hours before the curfew went into effect. On Monday morning the governor ordered in the National Guard.

Now mass arrests have begun, with 78 protesters booked in the last two days. In line with local politicians' denunciation of "outside agitators," a number of people from New York and California have been yanked out of crowds by the cops. Among them was Carl Dix, a leader of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), who said, rightly, "There are no 'outsiders' in the struggle for justice and liberation." Meanwhile, Presi-

dent Obama piously appealed for "justice," "healing" and "coming together going forward" – along with calls to maintain "public safety." The first thing to be done for the safety of the public in Ferguson is to get the cops and military out of town, and drop all charges against everyone arrested since August 9.

The Internationalist Group stands with the embattled people of Ferguson, Mo. We hail the courageous youth who have refused to be intimidated by everything the racist rulers have thrown at them. The fact that they have fought back against the police has thrown the ruling class into crisis nationally. The police murder of Michael Brown reverberated around the country because this is no local issue. It came only a few weeks after Eric Garner was choked to death on Staten Island by New York City police. Across the U.S., cops kill well over 400 people a year, and they won't be stopped by calls to limit their hardware.

The military/police occupation in Missouri must be fought by mobilizing labor/black/immigrant power and youth opposed to racist repression nationwide.

Because racist police brutality and cop

**Capitalism Is Racist to the Core
Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

terror is endemic in American capitalism, it can't be stopped by a few modest reforms. Killer cop Darren Wilson definitely belongs behind bars for a long time. Many are calling for him to be arrested, indicted and tried, and vow to keep up the pressure, chanting "No justice, no peace." But as Marxists we know that there is no justice for the oppressed in the capitalist courts. The ruling class stands by its guard dogs – the police "serve and protect" the interests of capital. The cops' job is to keep the poor and working people down, which is exactly what they are doing in Ferguson.

In this fight to rip racist oppression out by its roots – in this country born from chattel slavery – the struggle for black liberation is and has always been central. To put a stop to racist police brutality and murder, we must fight for revolution, a socialist revolution to overthrow capitalism.

Nationwide Militarization of the Police

What has happened in this white-ruled black Missouri suburb is not just the result of local racism (see box), it is a direct reflection of the rampant militarization of police forces throughout the U.S. Those Bearcat and MRAP (mine-resistant ambush-protected) armored vehicles, the LRAD (long-range acoustic device) sound cannons and heavy-duty weaponry that suddenly showed up on West Florissant Avenue in Ferguson, along with the police helicopters circling overhead, are part of a national program in which the U.S. Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security are pumping billions of dollars of equipment into beefing up local police forces in the name of fighting "terrorism."

Some of this is disposing of surplus war materiel: the Pentagon's "1033" program has provided over \$4 billion in left-over armor, ammo and weapons from Iraq and Afghanistan to domestic police agencies. The Homeland Security Department supplied \$34 billion in "terrorism grants." So now police in Fargo, North Dakota (average homicide rate, 2 per year) have assault rifles in every squad car, Kevlar helmets to withstand battlefield-grade ammunition, and a \$250,000 armored truck (with rotating turret) "just in case." St. Louis County got a \$360,000 Bearcat, night vision goggles, body armor and three helicopters (*New York*

Ferguson, MO: A History of Entrenched Racism

It's no secret that the police and military assault on Ferguson, Missouri is shot through with racism. Police chief Jackson and his police force act, as does the nearly all-white city council, like they're in a Southern town back in the days of Jim Crow segregation. It's no accident. Under the "Missouri compromise," Missouri entered the union as a slave state. Missouri slave owners formed militias to stage bloody incursions into free Kansas, such as Quantrell's Raiders who burned Lawrence to the ground and provoked guerrilla war with abolitionist John Brown. Dred Scott, then living in St. Louis, sued to win his freedom, but was told by U.S. supreme court chief justice Roger Taney that black men "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect," a decision which set the stage for the Civil War that finally abolished slavery.

St. Louis County broke off from the city in the late 1800s as a refuge from the "urban ills" of the growing railroad, river shipping and manufacturing hub. As blacks moved north during World War I, St. Louis County towns kept them out by enacting restrictive covenants which banned home sales to non-whites and were only outlawed by a 1948 Supreme Court decision. These were then replaced by

zoning laws designed to achieve the same purpose by requiring large lots and prohibiting apartment buildings. As the black population of St. Louis grew and the civil rights movement led to the end of formal segregation, the 1950s and '60s saw a massive exodus of whites from the city to the suburbs in St. Louis County.

By the 1970s and '80s, between "white flight" and the collapse of industry, St. Louis suffered massive depopulation, and is now down by almost two-thirds since 1950. The city gained notoriety then as the "used brick capital" of the world. As poverty spread in the inner city, many black middle- and working-class families migrated to North County towns. More recently, whites have been moving back to the city, which as a result of gentrification went from 28% white in 2000 to almost 50% white a decade later. Since 1990 Ferguson has gone from being 74% white to 70% black. But political power remained in the hands of white politicians who held all but one seat in the city council and school board, while a 96% white police force held blacks in check.

Although over one-fifth of the population in Ferguson lives below the official poverty line, what's notable about Ferguson is that this is not a ghetto rebellion of the jobless but

a revolt of a working-class and middle-class African American community against an entrenched white capitalist power structure. There are major profitable companies in the area: the corporate HQ of Emerson Electric (\$24 billion a year in sales) is in Ferguson; another major area employer is Express Scripts (\$105 billion a year), the mail-order prescription supplier. But very little of this revenue finds its way into municipal coffers. Instead, the second largest source of the town's revenue (\$2.6 million last year) is from ... traffic tickets, fines and court fees.

Moreover, five out of six tickets issued in Ferguson are to blacks, who are twice as likely as white drivers to be pulled over. As one resident put it, "Everybody in this city has been a victim of DWB [driving while black]" (*Washington Post*, 13 August). Or as another said, quoted in a recent report by the Arch City Defenders, "in North County, if you're black, they're going to stop you" (*Newsweek*, 14 August). According to the public defenders' report, last year the Ferguson municipal court issued 24,532 arrest warrants, more than one for every man, woman and child in this town of 21,000 people. So the racist police are not only brutal repressors, they are parasites feeding off the black population. ■

Times, 15 August). And of course, if they have it, they're going to use it, as they are now doing in Ferguson.

Residents of Ferguson are well aware that their city has been turned into a war zone. A *Los Angeles Times* reporter recorded a protester shouting at a line of police in fatigues, "You gonna shoot us? Is this the Gaza Strip?" In fact, high-level police officials from the area have traveled to Israel to receive how-to lessons on occupation. This included St. Louis County police chief Timothy Fitch, who attended an Anti-Defamation League-sponsored "National Counter-Terrorism Seminar" in 2011 to "study first hand Israel's tactics and strategies" (Rania Khalek, "Israel-trained police 'occupy' Missouri after killing of black youth," *Electronic Intifada*, 15 August). The NYPD is so tight with Israel that it has an office in Tel Aviv.

The result of these programs is that run-of-the-mill police actions across the country increasingly resemble military operations, with the general population as the "enemy." While this has been intensified by the "war on terror" since 2001, it dates back to the "war on drugs" starting in the 1980s, and to the original creation of SWAT teams in the late 1960s. And from the beginning, it has been a bipartisan effort.

A recent study by the American Civil Liberties Union ("War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing" [June 2014]) reports that 90% of all large U.S. cities have SWAT (special weapons and tactics) assault teams, as do 80% of small towns. Moreover, 80% of the hundreds of SWAT raids it investigated in 2011-12 were in order to serve search warrants: terrorizing people on the basis of mere suspicion. A *New York Times* (9 June)

critics were mainly concerned that the heavy-handed paramilitary tactics weren't working. Note that the ACLU study only objects to "excessive" militarization, i.e., "overkill." If protesters had been shocked-and-awed into submission, there wouldn't have been a peep from Washington. As soon as the National Guard was brought in, the complaints stopped.

However, the greatest threat is not that this is a boondoggle but that the authorities are gearing up for internal war. They publish studies on it, formed a military North American Command to prepare for it, and used the 2013 Boston Marathon attack as a practice run for locking down an entire metropolitan area. Internal war against whom? Forget about Al Qaeda, the target is us, the poor, black, Latino, immigrant and working people who dare to resist.

The military equipment was always intended to be used to quell "domestic disturbances" (by which they don't mean family quarrels) and "racial unrest" (what they used to call "race riots," meaning when black people fight back against racial oppression and racist attacks). And in fact the police recipients of the Pentagon largesse are contractually required to use all that stuff within a year of receiving it. So what's happening in Ferguson, Mo. is no one-shot deal, we'll see those images again, most likely soon.

Build a Multi-Racial, Revolutionary Workers Party

With the election of Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States there was a lot of happy talk about a "post-racial America." The reality is very different. In fact, in recent years there has been a rise in racist reaction. This is the core of the rabid rightist opposition to Obama, despite his capitulation to right-wing pressure at every step. And it is accompanied by mounting racist attacks by police, security guards and vigilantes against blacks and

article by Matt Apuzzo reported:

"Police SWAT teams are now deployed tens of thousands of times each year, increasingly for routine jobs. Masked, heavily armed police officers in Louisiana raided a nightclub in 2006 as part of a liquor inspection. In Florida in 2010, officers in SWAT gear and with guns drawn carried out raids on barbershops that mostly led only to charges of 'barbering without a license'."

In the shock wave set off by events in Ferguson, liberals have criticized militarized policing focusing on the absurdity of supplying armored cars to townships in rural Maine. Ruling-class



Scott Olson/Getty Images

August 13: Youth defy police in Ferguson to protest murder of Michael Brown.

immigrants. Last year there was the NYPD murder of Kimani Gray in East Flatbush, Brooklyn and the racist verdict freeing the killer of black teenager Trayvon Martin in Florida. This year it is the NYPD murder of Eric Garner, the Missouri cop killing of black teenager Michael Brown, and an ever-growing list across the country.

What we're facing is not some cracker cops run amok, "a few bad apples," an out-of-step police chief – it's a whole apparatus of racist repression in the service of imperialist capitalism. The increasing virulence of the attacks is a reflects entrenched local racism, certainly, but also the worldwide economic depression since the 2007-08 financial crash, and endless U.S. wars of terror in the Middle East and around the world. Today, as clouds of tear gas and volleys of flash-bang grenades engulf Ferguson, many young people have marched in protest, as they did in 2013 for Trayvon. Whole sectors of the population may be beginning to see, as the Internationalist Group has declared on our placards, that "Imperialist War Abroad Means Racist Repression in the U.S."

The key question is how to fight this escalating racist-capitalist assault. What's needed above all is revolutionary leadership. Black Democrats like Jesse Jackson Sr. and Al Sharpton are only trying to divert and defuse struggle in order to aid the government. In New York, Sharpton called a mass march over the Verrazano Bridge to protest the police killing of Eric Garner, but then backed down under pressure from fellow Democrat, mayor liberal Bill de Blasio, and his police commissioner Bill Bratton. Instead he is now holding an August 23 march on Staten Island calling on Democratic president Obama and his corporate lawyer attorney general Eric Holder to launch a federal civil rights investigation – in order to keep protest under control.

Nevertheless, the August 23 march has become a referendum on racism, as reactionaries attack the United Federation of Teachers for participating in what they call an "anti-police" march. Thus class-conscious teachers, students, immigrants and workers will join in marching while fighting for a program of militant class struggle against cop terror.

On the social-democratic left, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) has mainly done reporting, denouncing racism but raising no demands at all. Its main competitor, Socialist Alternative (SAIt), demands that "the whole Ferguson police system be put under scrutiny" – meaning nothing – and calls for "community controlled policing," supposedly overseen by union and community representatives. This is a sinister call for collaboration with the cops. SAIt would have you believe that cops are workers, a deadly illusion as cops are the armed fist of capital. It is ABC for Marxists that the police are the core of the state, and no matter who supposedly "controls" them, they will uphold racist capitalist "law and order."

A smaller social-democratic outfit with a local in St. Louis is the Workers International League (WIL), affiliated with Alan Woods' International Marxist Tendency. Unlike SAIt, WIL warns against illusions in "community control of the police," but a statement on the murder of Michael Brown echoes the capitalist media in denouncing "riots," "looting" and "vandalism":

"while we can sympathize with the reasons for the riots ... riots can never bring
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CLASS STRUGGLE EDUCATION WORKERS

MORE Takes a Stand ... With the Police Denounces UFT for Backing Anti-Racist March

When New York City's United Federation of Teachers, along with other NYC unions, endorsed an August 23 march in Staten Island called by black Democrat Al Sharpton to protest the police killing of Eric Garner (see page 12), there was a barrage of racist criticism, from the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA), from the bourgeois press and from many teachers.

Grotesquely, the Movement of Rank-and-File Educators (MORE), an opposition caucus in the UFT which includes supporters of various left groups (including the International Socialist Organization, Socialist Alternative, Progressive Labor Party and others), joined this outpouring of pro-cop sentiment, calling for "unity" with the PBA and refusing to support the march in any way.

The comment printed below was posted to the MORE web site by Marjorie Stamberg of Class Struggle Education Workers, an opposition tendency in New York educator unions. The CSEW along with the Internationalist Group and the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York had a contingent in the August 23 march.

Subsequently controversy continued on the MORE web site. Some responded to posts from supporters of CSEW with red-baiting, while others were uncomfortable about MORE'S stance. On September 13 a MORE membership meeting voted, after the fact, to support participation in the August 23 march (but not to repudiate the call for "unity" with the police).

Whereupon some on MORE's right wing promptly split to form a "Solidarity Caucus" devoted exclusively to "teacher justice" as opposed to "social justice." But even that did not end the turmoil in MORE, as some who stayed began pushing for by-laws to subject discussion of non-teacher issues to time limits...

Try as it might, MORE can't sidestep the burning issues of the class struggle. It's which side are you on, and "reform" caucuses like MORE which don't break with capitalist politics inevitably end up on the wrong side of the class line.

AUGUST 25 – MORE's unspeakable statement refusing to support the August 23 Staten Island march against police brutality, particularly over the NYPD chokehold murder of Eric Garner last month (see <http://morecaucusnyc.org/2014/08/21/the-march-for-justice-and-unity/>) speaks volumes. Not only did you not stand with the thousands who came out to denounce this racist cop killing, you called instead for "unity" with the PBA, the voice of the killer cops

You wrote that many of your members would be there. How nice. But MORE as a caucus in the UFT would not. Claiming you are in solidarity with the Garner family is cynical hypocrisy when you wouldn't march with them. How dare MORE call itself or pretend to be a "social justice caucus"? If you cannot even take a stand against racist police murder you have indelibly stamped yourselves as a social injustice caucus.

What's more, you have shown that on the key issue of racism MORE stands to the right of Mike Mulgrew's sellout UFT bureaucracy.

You have criticisms of Al Sharpton. I have repeatedly publicly criticized Al Sharpton since 1983 when he wore a wire for the feds. But your objections come from the opposite direction, from people who think he is "anti-police." Nonsense, Al Sharpton has worked with the police for decades to "cool things out," keep protests "under control" and divert struggle against racist injustice in alliance with the capitalist Democratic Party.

But this march was not about Al Sharpton. It was a referendum on racism. Even the UFT knew that. The NAACP knew that, and sent a big contingent. Countless other New Yorkers knew that. They came out, including unionists from SEIU 32 B-J, the New York Nurses Association, CUNY's Professional Staff Congress, and numerous anti-racist and left groups across the city. Class Struggle Education Workers was there with a contingent.

The August 23 march was a time to stand up and be counted. If MORE was so blind to racial oppression that it couldn't see that, all you had to do was look at the barrage of racist criticisms of the UFT for its stand. But, of course, you were well aware of those criticisms, and conciliated and even embraced them. What was needed on Saturday was a massive turnout of labor, blacks, immigrants and all defenders of working people and the oppressed against police terror. Thousands did turn out, but not MORE.



Internationalist photo

CSEW and IG supporters at August 23 Staten Island march against racist police attacks.

MORE claims to "stand against racism," not to mention being for justice, unity and all good things, but when the moment came to show it, you were first tied up in knots, and then came down on the wrong side. Instead of linking arms with the family of Eric Garner, murdered by the racist NYPD, you put out a despicable call for "unity" with ... his killers ("we encourage the leaderships of the UFT and PBA, to find ways to work together and unite" ... "with our brother and sister officers"). Outrageous.

Far from being our "brothers and sisters," the police are professional strikebreakers and enforcers of racist "law and order." That's their job for the ruling class. The victims of NYPD killer cops include Eleanor Bumpurs, Anthony Baez, Amadou Diallo, Patrick Dorismond, Sean Bell, Ramarley Graham, Kimani Gray and so many others. The list goes on and on of black lives snuffed out by the NYPD. But MORE wants to work together and unite with the murderers.

I might have said MORE's statement was shocking, that it was incredible coming from a group claiming to be a "progressive" alternative to the sellout UFT bureaucracy of Mike Mulgrew and Randi Weingarten. In fact, it is not only credible but even predicable. It flows directly from MORE's basic premise of "uniting" all and sundry against the Unity misleaders. It flows directly from its avoidance of all issues of race and class, the fundamental questions in this country.

If MORE cannot fight against our union endorsing the capitalist Democratic Party politicians that keep labor tamed and enchained, and who are leading the offensive against public education and teachers in particular; if it cannot take a firm stand against Common Core; if it cannot point out the racist nature of the school closings; if it was "missing in action" during the NYC school bus drivers strike last year; if it couldn't march last summer against the NYPD's "stop and frisk" of hundreds of thousands of African American and Latino youth; if today it can't bring itself to mention the racist cop killing of Michael Brown in Missouri, MORE has demonstrated that it is in no advance over Mulgrew's bureaucratic Unity Caucus.

While the MORE Caucus of the UFT has been lionized by many on the left, we in Class Struggle Education Workers have characterized it as a case study in opportunism. Opposing racist police repression is a litmus test. Today people throughout the U.S. are confronted with the basic, urgent need to take a stand with African American targets of murderous racist repression and military occupation. This is ABC for any decent unionist or opponent of oppression.

Trying to dodge this with a gazillion words about "teacher priorities" is obscene. What are we as educators if not advocates for our students who are stopped and frisked in the streets every day, and sometimes shot?

After MORE's vile statement, how can any self-respecting leftist, anyone with a shred of anti-racist consciousness (or conscience), not to mention class consciousness, remain in MORE? This is not a mistake, it is a betrayal of the first order.

–Marjorie Stamberg
UFT member, delegate D79
Class Struggle Education Workers



August 13: St. Louis County police confront demonstrators in Ferguson, Missouri with armored vehicle, body armor, assault rifles and a sniper aiming at the crowd. Equipment supplied by federal government under the guise of fighting “terrorism.” The terrorists are the police.

Missouri...

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about fundamental change.... Furthermore, the looting and vandalism will only damage our own neighborhoods and give the powers that be a convenient excuse to dismiss the legitimate issues facing the youth. Riots provide a convenient distraction for the media.”

—Socialist Appeal, August 12

Revolutionary Trotskyists urge protesters to direct their anger effectively at the capitalist state, but in contrast to these reformists we defend the youths who raged against the racist cop murder and demand that charges be dropped against all those arrested. The real looters are the giant corporations (including QuikTrip, whose gas station was torched and whose \$11 billion a year in revenue comes from soaking communities like Ferguson).

The most prominent left group that has been active in Ferguson is the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party, which mainly promotes the thought of its cult leader Bob Avakian. The RCP also works with liberals like Cornel West in the Stop Mass Incarceration Network, and with the National Lawyers Guild on the Stolen Lives Project, whose banner listing hundreds of names of the more than 2,000 killed by police since 1990 has been prominent in the Ferguson protests. Despite its name, the RCP these days is putting forward a program that doesn’t go beyond liberal/reformist demands – such as calling to “fire the police chief” and for “a full accounting of what happened” – with a little rhetoric about revolution tacked on to spice it up.

The RCP chants “The Whole Damn System Is Guilty as Hell!” but doesn’t say that system is capitalism. Nothing about communism either. Strikingly, in several articles on Ferguson the RCP never once mentions racism, which isn’t easy given the blatantly racist repression. Yet the key point for genuine revolutionary commu-

nists to stress is that the struggle against racism and for black liberation requires a program for workers revolution against capitalism. We defend the RCP against the red-baiting authorities, and demand charges be dropped against Dix and all those arrested. But in Ferguson as elsewhere what these Maoists put forward is the politics of reformism, as they pitch their message to liberals rather than pointing a road to revolution.

The hard truth that revolutionary Marxists must state plainly to the masses is that all these supposed “reforms” will do nothing to change an unreformable capitalist system that was founded on slavery, and which in one form or another has continued black oppression ever since. A new police chief will do nothing more than placing state highway patrol official Johnson “in charge” did: put a black face on racist repression. Limiting the flood of heavy weaponry from the Pentagon and Homeland Security won’t stop the killer cops. In New York City under liberal mayor de Blasio, who campaigned to “reform” the racist stop-and-frisk tactics, cops murdered Eric Garner with their bare hands.

The fight to put a stop to racist cop terror must mobilize the force that has the power to bring the capitalist system to a grinding halt: the millions-strong multiracial working class. St. Louis labor has a special responsibility to oppose the police/military occupation of Ferguson, but as elsewhere the political program of union officialdom is to elect Democrats. And while the mayor of Ferguson is a Republican, the St. Louis County executive and Missouri governor who control the cops carrying out the repression are Democrats. The key to mobilizing workers power is to oust the bureaucrats and break with the Democrats.

What’s urgently needed is to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Not some insipid “mass party of labor” (WIL) or “independent left-wing, anticorporate

candidates and coalitions” (SAlt), but a party that can lead all the oppressed in sharp class struggle to bring down capitalism and install a workers government. It would call on workers, blacks and all defenders of democratic rights to mobilize massively in the streets against cop terror, demanding that all police and military get out of Ferguson, now, and initiate integrated labor/black defense guards against racist attacks. It would also call for a massive program of public works under union control, and for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay to provide jobs for all.

The militarized police and National Guard invasion and occupation of black Ferguson, Mo. is the face of racist repression in the U.S. today, as endless imperialist wars abroad “come home.” An effective fight against cop terror here is inseparably connected to the struggle to mobilize workers’ power to drive the U.S. out of Afghanistan and Iraq and to defend those fighting against imperialism. It is necessary as well to join with immigrants who face arbitrary seizure by the police and hundreds of thousands of deportations a year. As an Internationalist Group sign noted at an August 18 protest in New York, “Immigrant Workers in NYC Say: Stand With Besieged African Americans in Ferguson.” We demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

The way to put an end to the terror of the ruling class against the exploited and oppressed was shown almost a century ago in the revolu-

tionary program of Lenin and Trotsky, who together led the 1917 Russian October Revolution. This means combating all illusions in capitalist “justice,” or appeals to Obama and his top cop Eric Holder, who terrorize the world, from drones in Yemen to prisons in Guantánamo. We emphasize that racist repression is a bedrock of American capitalism, as it has been since slave patrols in South Carolina in the 1830s became the first professional police force in the U.S. To put an end to it, we must replace the dictatorship of capital with the rule of the working class.

From New York to Ferguson: Mobilize workers’ power to smash racist terror! Black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

Eric Garner...

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than the police, greater even than the capitalists they serve and protect.

That power is in the hands of the working class, and the many millions who suffer at the hands of the NYPD and their Wall Street bosses. The response to heinous crimes like the murder of Eric Garner should be to massively mobilize NYC workers and the oppressed in class-struggle action. Notably, Eric Garner’s mother Gwen Carr is a train operator for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and his sister Elisha Flagg is an MTA bus driver. Several TWU Local 100 members came out the funeral Wednesday, some there to show their solidarity even without knowing that this terrible crime had hit their union sisters. The TWU should strike to shut the city down in protest against this cold-blooded killing of their members’ brother and son.

But that can only be a first step. We need to break labor and the black, immigrant, poor and working people free from the stranglehold of the Democratic Party, to build a multiracial, class-struggle workers party. Capitalism survives by making its wage slaves’ lives hell. It will take nothing less than workers revolution to put an end to this system of racist police repression and make Eric Garner’s last wish a reality. ■

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Iraq/Syria War....

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all evidence to the contrary). This time public opinion has been whipped into a pro-war frenzy by grisly videos of beheadings of American and British captives by the fanatical Islamists of the I.S. Yet a key U.S. ally is Saudi Arabia, the reactionary Islamist monarchy that beheads people all the time (79 in 2013, 22 this past August alone), particularly foreigners. Recall as well that Barack Obama personally signs off on every drone strike, including the one that killed the 16-year-old son of American imam Anwar al-Malaki, himself killed by a drone in Yemen. The Islamists use swords and knives, the U.S. uses drones.

A “war against terrorism”? The U.S. military machine is the biggest terrorist force in the world. It bombed Baghdad in 2003 in order to terrorize the Iraqi population into submission. The Islamists slaughter hundreds, the Pentagon murders millions (4 million in Korea, 3 million in Vietnam, 1 million plus in Iraq). Strip away the pretexts and Barack Obama’s Iraq/Syria attack is one more imperialist war for world hegemony. It is intended to demoralize Palestinian resistance to Zionist occupation, to reassert U.S. domination of the Middle East, to “send a message” to Russian strong man Vladimir Putin over Ukraine, to intimidate the leaders of the Chinese deformed workers state in Asia and opponents of Yankee imperialism in Latin America.

And U.S. terror war abroad is linked to racist repression and the war on working people “at home.” Many of the same tactics and weapons of urban counterinsurgency used by the Israelis on the West Bank are deployed against the black population of Ferguson, Missouri. Immigrants are treated as the “enemy within” as right-wing politicians fantasize about terrorists surging across the Mexican border and unleashing ebola in Manhattan. Education “reformers” label teachers unions “terrorists” and rip up job security as bosses seek to “degrade and destroy” the labor movement. *From Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria to the U.S., we must fight to defeat the capitalist/imperialist war that targets the poor, oppressed and workers of the world.*

We wage this struggle with our own methods, of militant class struggle. As at the time of the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and



Victims of December 2013 U.S. drone strike in Bayda province, Yemen that killed 15 members of wedding party. U.S. has slaughtered thousands of civilians in “targeted killings” (assassinations) by drones.

Iraq and since then, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International call for workers action against the war. Examples include the 2003 actions by Scottish and Italian railway workers to block weapons trains, the 2008 strike by the U.S. West Coast longshore union (ILWU) against the war

on Afghanistan and Iraq, and the refusal by ILWU Local 10 to handle Zim Lines ships after Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2010 and this year. As supporters of the revolutionary program of Lenin and Trotsky, the leaders of the 1917 Russian October Revolution, we stand for *class war against imperialist war.*

I. A War for Imperialist Domination

Despite widespread illusions among liberals, when Obama campaigned for president in 2008 the Democratic candidate said he wasn’t opposed to all U.S. military intervention, just to “dumb wars” like the 2003 invasion of Iraq by Republican president George W. Bush. Obama meant wars that end up weakening U.S. imperialism and strengthening its foes, which the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and occupations have certainly done. But after three years of resisting calls by Republicans (and top officials in his own administration, including ex-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and ex-CIA chief David Petraeus) to arm Syrian rebels, wary of getting drawn into the quagmire of that civil war, now Obama has done just that, with dire consequences. Why?

First of all for domestic political reasons. After months of being pummeled by Republicans and even liberal pundits as a “feckless” president, Obama worried that if he failed to attack, he would be labeled “soft on terrorism” and Democrats would take even bigger losses in the upcoming midterm elections, guaranteeing a solid Republican Congress and legislative paralysis for the rest of his administration. But bombs didn’t stop the “who lost Iraq and Syria” blame game. If Obama launched his reelection bid by “taking out” (assassinating) Osama bin Laden, now the administration is being faulted for being too focused on Al Qaeda and failing to anticipate the explosive

growth of the Islamic State.

The grisly videos of executions of two American journalists and a British aid worker, played over and over on the Internet, are cited as justification for the “new” U.S. war. At the United Nations Obama proclaimed that there can be “no negotiation” with “this brand of evil” (the Islamic State) and declared his intent to “dismantle this network of death.” (Recall George W. Bush inveighing against an “axis of evil” including Iran, Iraq and North Korea in order to escalate his invasion of Afghanistan into a “Global War on Terror,” or GWOT in Pentagonese.) Yet beginning on August 19, the beheadings came a week after and were explicitly in retaliation for the American air strikes in Iraq.

U.S. rulers and media always try to reduce any conflict to a dichotomy of good vs. evil. Partly they think Americans are too stupid to understand anything more, so they paint the current enemy, whether Saddam Hussein or Bashar Assad, as Satan incarnate. They also want to hide the fact that the “good guys” often are “our sons of bitches” (as Franklin D. Roosevelt described Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza). A commentator on CNN claimed to provide “moral clarity” about the Syrian civil war, saying, “Simply put: Syrian government, bad. Syrian people, good.” Today the Islamic State “barbarians” are contrasted to the “moderate” rebels of the “Free Syrian Army.” Yet *all* the Sunni rebel groups seek to impose an Islamic state, and an FSA leader was videotaped cutting out the heart of a Syrian soldier and eating it. Some “good guys”!

At bottom, the new Iraq/Syria war reflects *the need of U.S. imperialism to assert its world domination.* As the London *Economist* (17 September) wrote:

“The sense that America is locked in relative decline has been growing in recent years, as it has languished under

the shadow of the financial crisis and two long, difficult wars. Why should a newly rich country like China take lectures about how to run its affairs from a president who struggles even to get his own budget through? America, meanwhile, seems swamped by the forces of disorder, either unable or unwilling to steady a world that is spinning out of control. IS embodies this frightening trend.”

The war makers in Washington figure that with U.S. economic strength in decline, how can they intimidate rivals and opponents anywhere if they don’t use their firepower in Iraq and Syria?

Obama has labored mightily to distinguish *his* Iraq war from his predecessor’s. Announcing it, he said he was assembling a “broad coalition to roll back this terrorist threat.” Although the U.S. claims that 40 countries have enlisted, it doesn’t look all that different from Bush’s 2003 “coalition of the willing”: the U.S. military for the heavy-duty action, plus assorted imperialists and Arab countries as window dressing. Sunni Arab emirates and monarchies were included so the U.S. wouldn’t look like the air force of Shia-ruled Iraq. But NATO ally Turkey under reputed “moderate Islamist” president Tayyip Erdogan was conspicuously absent, having for years aided the Islamists *jihadis* pouring into Syria and being determined to keep the Kurdish minority down.

The White House has insisted that the operation “will not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil,” as Obama said on September 10. But testifying in Congress six days later, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, said he might well call for “the use of U.S. military ground forces.” The next day Obama vowed again to troops at U.S. Central Command HQ in Tampa, Florida: “I will not commit you and the rest of our armed forces to fighting another ground war in Iraq.” That same day, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno told journalists, “you’ve got to have ground forces.” And on September 25, Gen. Dempsey repeated to the press that he “might, at some point, recommend that we need a large ground force.”

Such a public contradiction by top officers of their commander-in-chief’s policy borders on insubordination. The fact that Dempsey provocatively repeated his statement instead of tendering a resignation (as Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the Afghanistan commander, did in 2011 after a *Rolling Stone* article quoted him bellyaching that Obama hadn’t sent more troops) suggests that the Pentagon brass are solidly opposed to Obama’s “no U.S. ground troops” line. In reality, U.S. “advisors” are in the field “embedded” with Iraqi units, and now a division HQ from the First Infantry has been deployed to organize U.S. and Iraqi forces at Joint Operations Centers in Baghdad and Erbil. In short, the boots are already on the ground.

Meanwhile, in Syria U.S. air strikes have not only hit I.S. targets in the east but also affiliates of the al-Nusra Front, the official Al Qaeda franchisee, from which the group now calling itself the Islamic State split earlier this year. A few days earlier, U.S. spy chiefs began talking about a hitherto unknown “Khorasan Group” linked to al-Nusra which was supposedly just as dangerous as the I.S. (While the U.S. considers al-Nusra a terrorist organization, the so-called “moderate” Syrian rebels work closely with it.) So when air strikes targeting the “Khorasan Group” led to civilian casu-



U.S. president Obama vows not to send ground troops to Iraq speaking at U.S. Central Command headquarters, McGill AFB, Tampa, FL, September 17. But Pentagon brass repeatedly contradict him.

October-November 2014

alties, there were protests in northern Syria by the rebels the U.S. says it is supporting together with al-Nusra and I.S. accusing Obama of aiding the Assad regime.

Dumb and dumber: if for liberals who want a less militaristic U.S. foreign policy, the new attack on Iraq and Syria is “Barack Obama’s dumb war,” the policy of Washington hard-liners is sure to blow up. Leading the war hawks is none other than Hillary Clinton. As early as mid-2012, a “plan that Mr. Petraeus developed and Mrs. Clinton supported called for vetting rebels and establishing and arming a group of fighters” in Syria (*New York Times*, 3 February 2013). Last month, burnishing her “tough guy” image as the virtual Democratic nominee for president in 2016, Clinton openly attacked Obama’s Syria policy (which she characterized as “don’t do stupid stuff”). Now Clinton’s supporters are pushing to send in thousands of U.S. ground troops.

We have noted the role of Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland, appointed by Hillary and a close associate since Bill Clinton’s administration, in pushing for confrontation with Putin’s Russia in Ukraine, including working with Ukrainian fascists. Nuland’s husband, Robert Kagan, also a former Clinton adviser, was co-founder of the “neo-conservative” Project for a New American Century which beat the war drums to attack Iraq. He has now co-authored *A Strategy to Defeat the Islamic State* (September 2014) with sister-in-law Kimberly Kagan, a former aide to Gen. McChrystal in Afghanistan, who is married to Frederick Kagan, author of the 2007 troop “surge” plan in Iraq, starring one David Petraeus.

It is obvious to one and all that the “moderate” Islamist Syrian rebels (no one even bothers to pretend now that they are secular) will never be a militarily credible force. Equally clear is the danger of Syria falling apart with feuding Islamist bands, as in Libya. So when Obama called, in his

September 10 speech, to “strengthen the opposition” while “pursuing the political solution necessary to solve Syria’s crisis,” hardliners worry that he is aiming at a “solution” that would integrate some “moderate” rebels into the present Syrian regime. To counter this, the Kagan “strategy” calls for “as many as 25,000 ground troops in Iraq and Syria” plus another 10,000+ “quick reaction” and combat aviation troops, and a whole lot of support personnel. If Obama hesitates to implement it, a president Hillary Clinton surely would.

In the same vein, Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a neocon think tank, has issued a report titled “The Air War Against the Islamic State: The Need for an ‘Adequacy of Resources’” (17 October), arguing that the present air war is little more than a pinprick (“too little, too slowly”), totaling in two months less than one-fifth the number of air strikes on an average day of the 1990-91 Gulf War. He asks pointedly, “How does this war escalate?” And against lily-livered liberals wringing their hands over civilian casualties, Cordesman replies in Pentagon-speak: “Humanitarian reality requires looking at the total butcher’s bill from war, not focusing on one aspect of the fighting.”

So the armchair butchers, the same neocon gang that couldn’t shoot straight which a decade ago brought you the Afghanistan and Iraq invasion/occupations, now proposes to set the region aflame by pumping tens of thousands of ground troops into Iraq and Syria. And if they aren’t U.S. forces, where would they come from? Saudi troops in Iraq? The Shia militias would be up in arms. Turkish troops in Syria? Arabs would see the spectre of a new Ottoman Empire. Like those *caveat emptor* (buyer beware) lists of risk factors that mutual funds are required by the Securities and Exchange Commission to put on their prospectuses, the Kagans admit that “this strategy contains a high risk of failure” and go on to cite more than a dozen different and very plausible ways in which the whole thing could go up in smoke.

But this won’t stop the imperial strategists, who see their empire at risk. There is talk of the return of a “war party” in Washington, referring to the hawkish Cold Warriors back in vogue since the blow-up with Russia over Ukraine. But while there are sometimes important tactical differences, just as there is a bipartisan “property party,” all wings of both capitalist parties are part of the imperialist “war party.” In this epoch of decaying capitalism, there is no “peace-loving” sector of the U.S. ruling class, which is still desperate to climb out of economic depression since the 2008 financial crisis and stock market crash. Ultimately, the hardliners in the bourgeoisie will prevail unless they are checked on the battlefield or in the class struggle.

Meanwhile, the military-industrial complex is salivating at the thought of feasting at the Pentagon feeding trough. “The open-ended air war against the



Tim Sloan/AFP

A “perfect war” for military contractors. With occupation of Afghanistan winding down, there is shrinking market for equipment like mine resistant ambush protected (MRAP) armored vehicles, such as the M-ATV model shown here on display outside the Pentagon. Surplus is being donated to police departments in U.S. for use against “civil disturbances,” like in Ferguson, Missouri. New, profitable product lines are being developed.

Islamic State group will mean billions in sales for bombs and missiles,” not to mention spare parts, fighter jets, spy planes, etc., reported AFP Pentagon correspondent Dan de Luce in *Space Daily* (9 October), an industry publication. De Luce quoted a top military consultant: “It’s the perfect war from a defense contracting standpoint and a defense spending standpoint.” Already shares for Lockheed Martin (which manufactures the Hellfire missile for the Reaper drones) are up 9.3% and Raytheon landed a \$251 million contract for more Tomahawk cruise missiles. At \$1.4 million apiece, with 47 Tomahawks fired on the first day of the air strikes in Syria, that makes...

All this is reported under a *Space Daily* rubric titled “Milplex” whose slogan is “big bucks, big bangs.” Daddy Warbucks, the caricature of a military profiteer, is rubbing his hands in glee. The merchants of death are out to make a killing. *The Frankfurter*

Allgemeine Zeitung (18 October) headlined its article: “Hopes for a Long, Profitable War.” Military contractors like Oshkosh Defense, which announced layoffs because of a shrinking market for their M-ATV mine resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicles, now being donated as surplus to police forces (like Ferguson, Mo.) around the U.S., are already developing new product lines for their “customers.” Marxists will recall Rosa Luxemburg’s famous aphorism about the slaughter of World War I: “Dividends rising, proletarians falling.”

Now Turkey is calling on the U.S. to decree a “buffer zone” in Syria while the generals and civilian war planners in D.C. are discussing imposing a “no-fly zone” in northern Syria, which as in Libya would involve massive attacks on the Syrian air force and air defense system and huge numbers of casualties. Whereupon all hell would break loose.

II. A Third U.S. War As Iraq Rips Apart

This past June as Mosul fell to the forces of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS, now the I.S.) which then headed south toward Baghdad, we underscored that “*this latest war in Iraq is “made in the U.S.A.”* Imperialist intervention from the Balkans to the Middle East has led to:

“a massive escalation of inter-communal and sectarian slaughter, as minority populations are driven out everywhere. The multi-ethnic states resulting from artificial boundaries are being homogenized with a vengeance, with the U.S. pushing the process in the name of ‘democracy.’

“The bloody U.S. policy of ‘democracy through ethnic cleansing’ has taken such a heavy toll on southeastern Europe and the Middle East because of the existence of all kinds of ethnic and religious enclaves and mixed populations, which was the heritage of the Ottoman Empire....

“So in the Balkans, Christian Serbs and Croats and Bosnian Muslims lived side-by-side speaking essentially the same language (although with different alphabets) while in the Levant along with a Sunni Arab Muslim majority there were enclaves of Druzes, Shiites, Alawites, Kurds, Greek Catholics, Maronite Christians, Assyrians, and dozens of other minorities....

“While recognizing the right of national

self-determination, Trotskyists insist that the only equitable solution to the myriad national, ethnic, religious and linguistic conflicts of the region is through a struggle for socialist revolution.”

–“From Ukraine to Middle East: U.S. Imperialism Strikes Out,” *The Internationalist* No. 37, May-June 2014

Instead, ethnic hostilities in Mesopotamia (the “land between the rivers”) have reached the point of civil war, as the country rips apart at the seams. Now it has escalated into the third U.S. war in Iraq in as many decades. However deadly the conflicts between Shia, Sunni and Kurd in the past, imperialist intervention has only exacerbated them. It is necessary to overcome the division and unite the working people to throw off all the exploiters and their imperial overlords.

Iraq today is ruled by a sectarian regime, installed under the U.S. occupation, dedicated to enforcing the supremacy of the Shia branch of Islam over the Sunni Arab Muslims, who were dominant under Saddam Hussein and prior Iraqi governments going back to the (Sunni) Ottoman Empire, as well as against (majority Sunni) Kurds. The several Shiite Islamist parties are united in insisting that this formerly persecuted majority of the Iraqi population monopolize power. Following the collapse of the Iraqi

The Internationalist



Internationalist photo

Ex-general, ex-CIA chief David Petraeus led 2007 military “surge” in Iraq, ran drone assassination program in Afghanistan and Pakistan, is architect of U.S. war plans against Syria. Students and faculty have protested of this certified war criminal at the City University of New York. Above, IG and CUNY Internationalist Clubs at protest against war threats to Syria, September 2013.



Mahdi Army rallies in its stronghold of Sadr City, Baghdad, on June 20. Shia militias have been terrorizing Sunni neighborhoods in the Iraqi capital.

army in June, the U.S. and its imperialist allies blamed then prime minister Nuri al-Maliki and his Shiite chauvinist government for excluding and persecuting Sunnis, which he did throughout his eight years in office, as Washington looked on.

Maliki imprisoned thousands of Sunni men on trumped-up charges, holding them in jail for years where most still languish. Shiite militias controlled by Maliki act as veritable death squads, assassinating several thousand Sunnis and stepping up their slaughter in recent months. Now a new prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, has been installed due to U.S. pressure, who is described as more “open” and “pragmatic” (because he is filthy rich) and less sectarian than his predecessor. But the same was said of Maliki when he succeeded Ibrahim al-Jaafari. All three are core leaders of the Shiite Islamist Dawa Party. In fact, Abadi’s new cabinet has *more* Dawa party members, and Maliki is hardly out of power, having been named vice president of the country.

What has happened in Iraq over the last year and a half is that the extreme salafist jihadi¹ Islamic State has managed to place itself at the head of a *Sunni insurrection* against the Shiite regime. The proclamation of a caliphate in June by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, with himself as caliph or supreme religious and political authority, irked other conservative Islamist regimes, notably the Saudi monarchy and Gulf emirates, as well as Islamic scholars. But all Islamists are committed to establishing a theocratic religious state based on Islamic law (the sharia), and the I.S.’ successes against the Shia regime in Iraq and both the Assad government and other Islamist rebels in Syria, as well as its defiance of the West, have won support among disaffected Sunnis.

The Iraqi government is shot through with corruption. An army of 350,000 sol-

¹ Salafism is a component of the Sunni branch of Islam which considers the practices of the first three generations after Muhammad to be the model of an Islamic society. This includes many reactionary aspects of 7th-8th century Arab society, particularly strictures on women, that are not found in the Koran itself. While some Salafists are merely extreme conservative pietists, others are prominent in Sunni Islamist political currents promoting *jihad*, in this case meaning holy war, against *kafirs* (infidels) and apostates, supposed ex-Muslims including Shiites. The Wahabi sect which dominates Saudi Arabia and from which Osama bin Laden stemmed is Salafist, as is the Islamic State, whose ideology is largely taken over from Wahabism. Many of the so-called “moderate” Syrian rebels are also Wahabist.

diers, on which almost \$42 billion was spent over the last three years, melted away before an attacking force of only 1,300. The fact is that the I.S. never would have been able to conquer Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city with 1.5 million inhabitants where government troops outnumbered the attackers by at least 15 to 1, and certainly not in the space of a few hours, if it were not for the tacit and active support of the large percentage of the Sunni Muslim population. The I.S. has acted as “the shock troops of a general Sunni revolt,” as veteran British Middle East correspondent Patrick Cockburn wrote in his recent book, *The Jihadis Return* (OR Books, 2014).

Now Shiite militias are terrorizing Sunnis in Baghdad and at checkpoints leading to I.S.-held regions. Even the imperialist “human rights” agencies are noting the slaughter, in order to back U.S. calls for a more “inclusive” regime. Human Rights Watch’s bulletin “Iraq: Pro-Government Militias’ Trail of Death” (31 July) reports scores of murders of Sunnis around the country. An Amnesty International report, *Absolute Impunity: Militia Rule in Iraq* (October 2014), documents how Shiite militias, particularly the Badr Brigades and Asaib Ahl al-Haq, both linked to former prime minister Maliki, work directly with government military and security forces to kidnap, ransom, torture and execute Sunnis, as well as Christians and other minorities.

“Sectarian attacks have spiraled to a level not seen since 2006-2007, the worst period of civil strife in the country’s recent history,” reports AI. That was when under U.S. commander David Petraeus, masked Shiite commandos, advised by U.S. “contractor” ex-Col. James Steele who supervised death squads in El Salvador, unleashed a reign of terror in the Sunni population.² Cockburn sums up: “The inability of the Baghdad government to field a national army and its reliance on militias means that Iraq is in the last stages of disintegration. The few mixed Sunni-Shia areas are disappearing.... The final break-up of Iraq has become a fact” (*Independent* [London], 14 October).

Meanwhile, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) led by Massoud Barzani’s Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani’s Patriotic Union of

² See “The Bloody Trail of Col. James Steele and David ‘Death Squad’ Petraeus,” *Revolution* No. 10 (October 2013), published by the Internationalist Clubs of the City University of New York; and the documentary produced by the London *Guardian* (6 March).

Kurdistan (PUK) has been seizing areas it has long coveted, notably the oil capital of northern Iraq, Kirkuk. In the process, the KRG has been persecuting Sunni Arabs and Turkmen residents, using the Iran-backed Shia militias to do the dirty work. AI reports that “Shi’a militias are operating openly, and in cooperation with or at least with the tacit consent of Kurdish Peshmerga [militia] forces,” and the KRG has made it clear “that it does not intend to give up control of the city.” The conservative, tribalist Barzani clan have been tools of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency since the 1970s.

After the 1991 Gulf War, when Shiites rose up in southern Iraq and Kurds in the north, the U.S. and Britain established a “no-fly zone” turning Iraqi Kurdistan into a de facto American protectorate. Since the 2003 U.S. invasion, which they supported, the Kurdish parties have been part of the Baghdad government while maintaining a semi-autonomous region. Territory and spoils have been divided, Talabani getting southern Kurdistan and national posts (first president, then vice president) and Barzani getting the north and control of the KRG. The lifeblood of the Kurdish region is production of oil, which the KRG has sought to export independently of the Iraqi government. Without oil, no Iraqi Kurdistan – hence the importance of seizing Kirkuk.

In the fighting with the Islamic State forces following the fall of Mosul, the fabled Kurdish *peshmerga* (guerrilla army) had no more success than the Iraqi army, although they didn’t just run away. Because of that, as well as historical ties and the huge number of Western “contractors” already in the area, the Kurdish forces have received considerable aid from the imperialists. The CIA has sent arms since August, the Germans have sent arms and “instructors” since late September, and now British Special Forces are on the scene. In addition, Israel has longstanding ties to the Iraqi Kurds, having armed the *peshmerga* since the 1970s. It now supports independence for Iraqi Kurdistan.

As for the Islamic State, maps published in the press of areas under its control look like worms stretching along the Tigris

and Euphrates rivers. This understates the extent of I.S. domination, since those are the only inhabited areas of the vast desert region. At present some 5 to 6 million people are ruled by these Sunni *jihadis* who took over Raqqa, Syria in March 2013, Falluja, Iraq in January 2014, Mosul in June, Tikrit in July and by late summer had almost all of the Sunni areas north and west of Baghdad in their hands. This territory is hundreds of times larger than anything bin Laden ever controlled. And they have continued to advance in Iraq despite the air strikes, taking the city of Hit and now being on the verge of seizing Ramadi.

The I.S. success on the battlefield is due to several factors: support (tacit or overt) of the Sunni population of Iraq fed up with the Shiite regime; a core of experienced former Baathist military commanders from Saddam Hussein’s army; and an estimated 1,000 battle-hardened Chechen Islamists, veterans of years of fighting Putin’s Russia. Very few Sunni tribal militias are siding with the Iraqi government, in contrast to 2007 when the U.S. was able to put them on the payroll. Some of the former Baathists and other Sunni leaders may figure they are using the I.S. as a battering ram against the Shia regime, but they will find it hard to throw off the would-be caliphate that will stop at nothing to destroy anyone deemed an obstacle to its rule.

In the areas they control, the I.S. jihadis have massacred huge numbers of supposed apostates and infidels. They set off car bombs in Shia areas. Their videos show them mowing down hundreds of captured Iraqi soldiers lined up at the edge of a mass grave. They have enslaved thousands of Yazidis, mostly women and girls. The I.S. brags about distributing Yazidi women as concubines. The latest issue of its English-language magazine *Dabiq* has an article on “The Revival of Slavery Before the Hour,” referring to the Yazidis as pagans and “devil-worshippers” and saying “their women could be enslaved unlike female apostates” such as Shia Muslims, who are given the option of “repent or face the sword.”** Male “apostates” are simply executed.

III. Syria: Defend the Kurds, Defeat U.S./NATO Imperialism!

We have written previously about how “Syria has been engulfed by an upheaval that began as protest demonstrations, quickly morphed into a sectarian insurgency and became a communal civil war that is now spilling over to neighboring Lebanon and Iraq.” While opposing all sides in this war pitting Islamist reactionaries against the authoritarian Assad regime, we noted that if Washington and its allies unleashed their military power as they did in Libya:

“That would change the character of the conflict from inter-communal fighting to a battle against U.S./NATO intervention.... And any genuinely revolutionary Marxist, while giving no political support to the Assad regime, would stand foursquare for the military *defense of Syria against imperialist aggression.*”

–“U.S./NATO Imperialists Get Your Bloody Claws Off Syria!” *The Internationalist* No. 35, Summer 2013

So now the U.S. is bombing in Syria, and while Washington claims that its target is the “Islamic State,” that could change in a flash. Liberal “doves” might tut-tut about “mission creep” while liberal “hawks”

would cheer if Obama bombs Syrian forces. But the entire region would go up in flames, and it could become a “proxy war” against Russia and Iran, with untold consequences.

Inside Syria, faced with the total domination of the armed opposition by Islamists, and particularly the growth of the Islamic State, the hard-fisted Assad government has consolidated support (grudging or active) not only among various religious and ethnic minorities (Alawites, Druzes, Imami and Ismaili Shiites, Christians) but also among secular Syrians who fear a Sunni Islamic dictatorship. The liberal-minded, secular, educated Internet generation of elite youth who started the protests against government repression in the “Arab Spring” of March 2011 were quickly sidelined by the religious fundamentalists who dominate the Sunni Arab majority, particularly in the rural areas and impoverished outskirts of the major cities.

* Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Hafez al-Assad in Syria were leaders of the Arab nationalist Baath Party who took power in military coups.

** See Matthew Barber, “Islamic State Officially Admits to Enslaving Yazidi Women,” Syria Comment, 12 October.

This has now become a bitter “Arab Autumn,” as Islamist rebels shoot Roman Catholic priests dead (François Murad, by Jabhat al-Nusra in Gassanieh); Syriac and Greek Orthodox Catholic bishops are abducted (Gregorius Yohanna Ibrahim and Boulos Yazigi, in Aleppo); women activists are forced by Islamist rebels to wear the veil (Marcell Shehwaro, by the Jaish al-Mujahedin in Aleppo), to flee the country (Souad Nawfal, by ISIS in Raqqa) or are disappeared (Razan Zaitounh and Samira Khalil along with male colleagues, by the Army of Islam in Douma); and a 15-year-old boy selling coffee is executed on orders of a sharia court for blasphemy for allegedly insulting the prophet (Mohammed Qatta, in Aleppo).

In this dismal panorama, the forlorn liberal/reformist “progressive” milieu which had become increasingly despondent, hailing a mythical “Syrian Revolution” as the supposedly “moderate” rebels were eclipsed by the hardline *ihadists*, suddenly discovered the Kurds. Now blogs, e-mail lists and social media are abuzz about a supposed revolutionary commune in Syrian Kurdistan (Rojava), on the border with Turkey. David Graeber, the anarchist sociologist of Occupy Wall Street fame, authored an article, “Why is the world ignoring the revolutionary Kurds in Syria?” in the London *Guardian* (8 October), declaring what’s happening in Rojava to be today’s equivalent of the Spanish Republic, with popular councils, militias and worker-managed co-ops.

According to Graeber, a veritable “social revolution” is underway, led by the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and its Syrian affiliate, the PYD. The PKK, whose leader Abdullah Öcalan languishes in a Turkish jail, is still labeled terrorist by Turkey and U.S., the European Union and NATO imperialists for fighting for Kurdish independence. But “the PKK itself is no longer anything remotely like the old top-down Leninist party it once was” and doesn’t even call for a Kurdish state, says Graeber. Instead, it is now inspired by the Mexican Zapatistas and the anarchist Murray Bookchin, adopting the vision of “libertarian municipalism” to create “self-governing communities” based on “direct democracy” which could become a “model



Women fighters of the YPJ training. Thousands of Kurdish women in militias will have significant impact, while liberation from traditional oppression will require a social revolution.

for a worldwide movement towards genuine democracy.” Hallelujah!

Actually, the PKK was never Leninist but a Stalinist-inspired nationalist party that braved murderous repression by the Turkish government. It is true that the PKK, the PYD (Democratic Union Party) and the militia linked to it, the YPG (People’s Protection Units), are not Islamists. Women in Rojava (as well as Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish Kurdish regions) are not obliged to wear the veil. There is a women’s militia unit, the YPJ, and the media are full of photos of Kurdish women guerrillas in Syria. And unlike the U.S. which wrote off Yazidi refugees (even as Obama used their plight as a “humanitarian” justification for his war), the YPG intervened to save 10,000 Yazidis, and has tenaciously fought off militarily superior I.S. *ihadis* in Kobanê.

Unlike the so-called moderate Sunni militias in Syria, with which it has periodically clashed, the PYD had not been allied with salafist *ihadis*. It has largely stayed out of the fratricidal communal civil war and the YPG includes Syriac units as well as Kurds. Nor, in contrast with activist groups like the Local Coordination Committees, are they part of the imperialist-approved, Turkish-controlled Syrian National Coalition (SNC), which contemptuously dismissed calls for

Kurdish regional autonomy. Proletarian revolutionaries would defend the Kurdish areas against attacks by the Assad regime or the Free Syrian Army and certainly against the Islamic State whose victory would mean wholesale slaughter of Kurds.

Various reports attest to some important social gains in the region. Women in Syrian Kurdistan are surely much freer than in FSA- or I.S.-controlled areas. In itself, the fact of a women’s militia does not equal “radical empowerment of women” (Graeber), much less equality. Women have been active in many guerrilla movements, and there are also women’s units of the imperialist-backed Iraqi Kurdish *peshmerga*. But in Rojava the YPJ has enrolled as many as 10,000 female fighters, and this will certainly have an impact: a woman who knows how to handle an AK or heavy machine gun is less likely to be physically abused. Nevertheless, historically, after victory (or defeat) of the armed struggle, unless there is a social revolution women are usually relegated to traditional roles dictated by capitalism and its central conservatizing institution, the family.

There is nothing “anti-capitalist” about the autonomous areas of northern Syria. The popular councils, co-ops and “workers control” are largely hypothetical under war-time conditions in a besieged region whose

economy has been devastated. In fact, the “social contract” which serves as the region’s charter guarantees the right of private property, and the PYD has assiduously sought unity with various bourgeois parties, including the corrupt capitalist rulers of Iraqi Kurdistan rather than posing a revolutionary opposition to Barzani and Talabani, who have become billionaires by siphoning off U.S. aid and oil profits.

Rojava is not some democratic/libertarian utopia, an imaginary Occupy on the Syrian-Turkish border. Such fantasies can only disorient, and in this case they’re being used to build support for imperialist intervention. In the glowing reports about “revolutionary Rojava,” the fact that the PYD/YPG has lately been doing all it can to become acceptable to the imperialists is given short shrift. Since the U.S. demanded that it join with

the Free Syrian Army, in September the YPG set up a joint command together with several FSA-linked factions, including the “Jihad in the Path of God Brigade” and some Islamists pushed out of Raqqa by the I.S.³ So far, such elements appear marginal, but that could change.

Today even hard-line Zionists are singing the praises of the PKK/PYD.⁴ And since it has shown it is willing to play ball, the U.S. has stepped up bombing of I.S. targets and air-dropped supplies to the Kurds in Kobanê, while Ankara says it will let Iraqi *peshmerga* (but not the PKK) into the besieged city. If Barzani’s militia shows up, it will only be in order to fight the YPG. In any case,

the U.S. and European imperialists will never accept Kurdish independence, or even real autonomy in northern Syria. That would threaten the Ottoman ambitions of the Islamist Erdogan and the Turkish nationalism of the army. And NATO Turkey is a linchpin for Western imperialist domination of the Middle East.

We call for revolutionary defeatism on all sides in the communal civil wars wracking Iraq and Syria. A victory for any of the warring sectarian forces or the respective governments would lead to atrocities against the opposing side, including bloodbaths and/or mass expulsion of entire populations. Proletarian revolutionaries support the right of self-defense against the threat of communal-sectarian slaughter. At the same time we are mortal enemies of Islamism of any stripe, as well as of Zionism and Christian fundamentalism. And far from calling on the U.S. and NATO to aid “moderate” anti-Assad rebels like they did in Libya, we call to expel U.S. imperialism from Syria, Iraq and the entire region.

As Leninists and Trotskyists, we stand with the oppressed fighting to free their lands from colonial and imperial domination. This includes siding with the struggles even of reactionary-led forces fighting against imperialism such as Marx and Engels did in the 1857 Sepoy Revolt against British rule in India (see our article “Marx on the Sepoy Revolt,” *The Internationalist* No. 21, Summer 2005); as Marx’s follower William Morris did with the 1880s Mahdi revolt against the British in Sudan; and Lenin did with the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China (see “Lenin on the ‘Boxer Rebellion’,” *The Internationalist* No. 21). We have written about Afghanistan:

“Following the example of Lenin and Trotsky, we stand on the side of the semi-colonial peoples against imperialism, and with those resisting the occupiers – who are by no means limited to Taliban, Al Qaeda or other Islamists.”

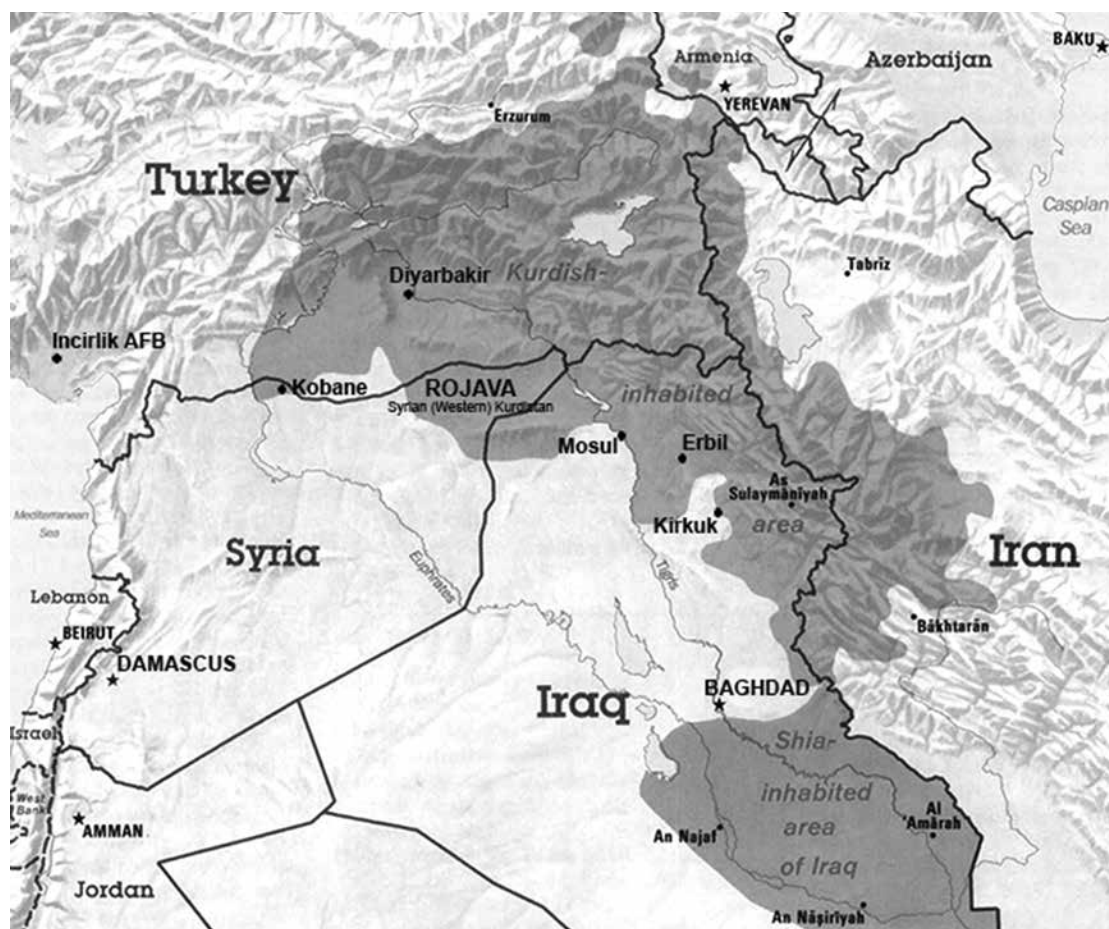
–“Defeat U.S. War on Afghanistan and Iraq,” *The Internationalist* No. 30, November-December 2009

And concerning the current situation in Iraq and Syria, we wrote in our last issue:

“But while giving no political support to any of the feuding bourgeois bands, communists defend those fighting against the U.S. imperialists, who unleashed a horrific bloodbath in conquering and

³ Check it out at <http://rojavarreport.wordpress.com/2014/09/10/ypg-and-fsa-form-joint-operations-command/>

⁴ See “Has Obama Realized the PKK Can Be Allies?” *Commentary*, 20 October.



occupying Iraq that far exceeds the crimes of a small-time bourgeois strongman like Saddam Hussein (or the Assads)."

–“From the Ukraine to Middle East: U.S. Imperialism Strikes Out,” *The Internationalist* No. 37, May-June 2014

Any actual blow against imperialist intervention and domination is in the interest of the working class and oppressed peoples of the world in the fight to drive the U.S./NATO imperialists out of the Middle East. Yet the Islamic State, while posing as defenders of Islam against Western “crusaders,” is not seeking to unite the oppressed masses of Iraq and Syria to throw off the imperialist yoke. The immediate targets of the I.S. “holy war” are the Kurdish, Shiite, Yazidi, Syrian and Iraqi Christian populations, as these Sunni *ihadis* seek to impose the oppressive social norms of an 8th-century nomadic tribal society on modern urban secularized populations. They have no compunction about allying with U.S. imperialism, as the forerunners of al Qaeda did against the Soviet Army and a reform regime in Afghanistan in the 1980s. And they have been financed and armed by the imperialist surrogates of the Arabian oil monarchies, as well as by NATO member Turkey.

In calling for working-class struggle to

defeat imperialism, authentic Trotskyists have long defended the PKK, as well as defending Iranian and Iraqi Kurds against repression by the shah, Khomeini and Saddam Hussein. We call for a socialist republic of united Kurdistan, to overcome the national oppression of the 30+ million Kurds, the largest nation in the world without a state due to the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty and 1923 Lausanne treaty that carved up the Ottoman Empire. While opposing nationalism, this is a program for internationalist *class* struggle against the rulers of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, all with oppressed Kurdish minorities; against the imperialists, and against the Kurdish bourgeois ruling clans.



Demonstrators march in the Gayrettepe district of Istanbul during one-day general strike called by left-wing unions over mine disaster in Soma, 15 May 2014. Protesters chanted, “This was not an accident, this was murder” and called for Erdogan government to resign. Turkish labor should come to the aid of besieged Kurds in Kobanê by using their class power to bring down the labor-hating, warmongering Erdogan regime, fighting for workers revolution.

IV. Turkish Proletariat Is Key

Meanwhile, the Islamist Erdogan government in Ankara is playing hardball with Obama in its drive to project Turkey as a regional power, crush the Kurds and overthrow Assad in order to establish a (Sunni Muslim) Syrian client state. Despite its vague talk of support for the U.S.-led “coalition,” Turkey has been and still is an ally of the Islamic State, continuing to allow supply columns and recruits for the I.S. to cross the border (while blocking Kurds). Erdogan wants to regain the glory of the last caliphate, abolished by Kemal Atatürk in 1924. The crowds subjected to bloody police attack at Istanbul’s Gezi Park in June 2013 were protesting Erdogan’s plan to rebuild the Ottoman-era Taksim military barracks as a museum (and shopping mall) on the spot.

The symbolism is part of Erdogan’s broader program to provoke U.S. intervention against Assad. Thus a recording of a secret meeting between the Turkish

spy chief, the foreign minister and a top military official that was leaked on YouTube revealed a plan to stage a “false flag” attack on the tomb of Suleyman Shah, the grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman Empire, in northern Syria as an excuse for Turkish troops to move in (*New York Times*, 28 March). And journalist Seymour Hersh has published an extensive article detailing evidence of Turkish aid to Islamists preparing chemical attacks in Syria, and quoting former U.S. intelligence officials saying that the August 2013 gas attack in the eastern suburbs of Damascus was a Turkish plot:

“We now know it was a covert action planned by Erdogan’s people to push Obama over the red line,” the former intelligence official said. “They had to escalate to a gas attack in or near Damascus when the UN inspectors’ – who arrived in Damascus on 18 August to investigate the earlier use of gas – ‘were there. The deal was to

do something spectacular. Our senior military officers have been told by the DIA and other intelligence assets that the sarin was supplied through Turkey – that it could only have gotten there with Turkish support. The Turks also provided the training in producing the sarin and handling it.”

–“The Red Line and the Rat Line,” *London Review of Books*, 14 April

Presently there are Turkish tanks and troops lined up just across the border from Kobanê, waiting. Turkey has over 10,000 battle-ready tanks and an army of 510,000 soldiers, plus another 100,000 in the paramilitary gendarmerie to keep internal order (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 October). On October 2, the Turkish parliament approved a motion authorizing use of Turkish forces to invade Syria and Iraq. On October 10, more than 30 died as Turkish police and military attacked Kurdish demonstrators. On October 13, Turkish warplanes bombed PKK positions in southeastern Turkey. Thus a crucial factor of a proletarian program to defeat imperialism in the region is the mobilization of the Turkish working class against its warmongering rulers.

Most left groups long ago gave up any pretense of fighting for proletarian revolution in the Middle East, instead tailing after assorted nationalist and even Islamist groups, from the Palestinian PFLP and DFLP to Hezbollah in Lebanon. For the few that make any reference at all to workers revolution it is mostly lip service, an abstract invocation of a purely theoretical goal. But how could an actual working-class socialist revolution overthrowing capitalism and all the Zionist, Islamist, monarchist and militarist regimes, as well as defeating imperialism, come about? The Syrian working class, after all, has been largely atomized and destroyed. Key to the answer are the two big concentrations of proletarian power in the region, Egypt and Turkey.

Turkey has a working class of over 10 million, with strong contingents in heavy industry including steel, shipbuilding and mining, transportation and con-

sumer goods manufacturing. A little over 1 million are members of trade unions, which like labor around the capitalist world have taken a beating from the capitalist offensive over the last three decades. In Turkey both military and Islamist regimes have gone after unions with a vengeance, but they are hardly in “death throes,” as an article on the web site Al-Monitor (5 May) claimed. There are left-oriented union federations DISK (Confederation of Revolutionary Unions) and the allied public sector KESK, and yearly pitched battles with the police on May Day.

The potential for militant workers struggle is palpable, as shown by the huge protests that swept Turkey over the hundreds of deaths in the Soma mine disaster this past May. Erdogan had to take refuge in a supermarket to escape an angry crowd. During the mass mobilizations over Gezi Park in June 2013 the DISK and KESK twice staged one-day “general strikes.” But faced with implacable repression by the police and military, such actions had little effect. Despite the reference to “revolutionary unions,” the actual policies of the Turkish labor left are social-democratic reformism. To bring workers’ power to bear, what’s needed is a revolutionary-internationalist workers party.

Such a party would not limit itself to economic struggles but act as a tribune of all the oppressed. It would defend women’s rights. It would intransigently defend the Kurdish right to self-determination (independence) and stand with the millions of Alevis who like the Kurds have been subject to murderous attacks. It would seek to build mass, labor-based workers self-defense against official repression, fascist squads and Islamist mobs. And it would mobilize working-class action, including strikes, against Turkish intervention in Syria, as well in defense of the Palestinian people under the Zionist boot. All this, and resisting the inevitable anti-communist attacks, requires a solid footing on the Bolshevik program of Lenin and Trotsky.

AP



Turkish soldiers and tanks at Syrian border keep out refugees fleeing Islamic State attack on Kobanê in September. Turkey’s Islamist government has aided Islamic State jihadis as it seeks to restore “glory” of Ottoman empire.

V. Leninist-Trotskyist Workers Party Vital to Middle East Revolution

Such revolutionary leadership is decidedly *not* what one will get from the would-be socialist and even “communist” left in the West today. It is striking that in the face of a new U.S. war in Iraq and Syria there have been *no* significant antiwar protests in the U.S., not even when Obama came to the United Nations to sell his campaign to bomb “evil” into oblivion. When Republican Bush launched the 2003 Iraq war there were half a million protesters in the streets of New York. Now, with a Democrat in the White House, some 300,000 joined a “climate march” organized by *pro-war* lobbyists to complement Obama’s pitch at the UN Climate Summit.⁵ Since their usual liberal allies are in favor of this war, the reformist leftist antiwar coalitions did nothing.

Meanwhile, after being all atwitter in 2011 over the Arab Spring “revolutions” which weren’t (see the collection of articles in *The Internationalist* No. 33, Summer 2011), the opportunist left ever since has sought to explain away the disastrous outcome in Egypt, Libya and elsewhere, with military regimes and feuding Islamic bands, as part of a “long revolutionary process.” First prize in this category for absurdity is a recent article in the paper of the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) titled “Unstoppable revolt in the Middle East.” Unstoppable? Want to bet? After citing a history of “ignoble U.S. deeds,” under the subhead “Uneven course of revolution” we read:

“The Middle East today is not the hopeless shambles portrayed by corporate media. But the fight for radical change is inevitably arduous....

“As in any revolutionary course, agonizing lessons are being learned; organizers seasoned; class consciousness heightened.... Socialist understanding deepens. No matter the obstacles and set backs, such political advances cannot be underestimated in the long view of revolution-building. They justify hope and solidarity for a secular, socialist, egalitarian Middle East.”

—*Freedom Socialist*, October-November 2014

This is, hands down, the most ridiculous thing we have read in the left press in many moons. Class consciousness heightened, socialist understanding deepening? What world are these pollyannas living in? With murderous salafist *jihadis* slaughtering ethnic minorities, Shiite Muslims, even other Sunni Islamists; with U.S. imperialism on a bombing spree; with secular leftists increasingly isolated everywhere in the region, we’re supposed to believe things are hopeful, the secular socialist revolution is unstoppable! Why would anyone write such drivel? In order to alibi their disastrous policy of allying with reactionary religious fundamentalists and calling this unholy alliance “revolutionary.”

While the FSP has gone off the deep end, almost the entire spectrum of what passes for a socialist left is facing the same dilemma: how to justify the unjustifiable opportunism of allying with the pro-imperialist Islamist armed opposition to Assad, just as they did earlier against Qaddafi in the name of a non-existent “Libyan Revolution.” And this is not new: it goes back to 1979 when the whole lot of these pseudo-socialists hailed Ayatollah

⁵ See the IG leaflet, distributed at the march, “The Great ‘People’s Climate March’ Scam” on page 10 if this issue.

Khomeini’s “Islamic Revolution” in Iran, which then turned around and *murdered tens of thousands of leftists* who had capitulated to the mullahs’ hijacking of the struggle against the murderous, CIA-installed shah. At the time our policy, the policy of authentic Leninism and Trotskyism, was “Down with the Shah, No to Khomeini!”

So why do they do it, why do such “socialists” end up backing such retrograde elements? One explanation is inveterate tailism: they’re so used to chasing after any popular movement that they can’t tell the difference between bourgeois liberal “progressives” and arch-reactionaries. But there is another key reason: as social-democratic reformists who only want to tinker with the capitalist system, to make it more “people-friendly,” they show a particular predilection for *supporting the very same Islamist forces that “their own” imperialist rulers do*. In Afghanistan, they all vituperated against Soviet intervention, and some hailed the CIA-backed *mujahedin*. In contrast, the genuine Trotskyists proclaimed, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!”

So things have been going from bad to worse over the last three years for the Western leftist cheerleaders for the phantasmagorical “Syrian Revolution.” But after months of claiming, all evidence to the contrary, that the armed gangs roaming the countryside are really moderate and secular, or at least sort of, suddenly there appears in northern Syria a force that more or less matches what the liberal imagination thinks “freedom fighters” should be like: the Kurds of Rojava. So in the space of a few weeks, the leftists who didn’t lift a finger to protest Obama’s air war in Iraq and Syria are holding big demonstrations, particularly in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, to “Save Kobanê.”

One little problem: this campaign is using sympathy for the determination of the Kurdish fighters to line up the Western left with the imperialist warmongers, who are the deadliest mass murderers of them all.

The leftists promoting this campaign are quite devious about it. *L’Humanité*, the newspaper associated with the French Communist Party (PCF), had a special issue on Kobanê (22 October) which criticizes Obama for setting Iraq aflame, slams French president François Hollande for supporting Turkey’s demand for a “buffer zone,” calls for an end to the criminalization of the PKK, and then has PCF national secretary Pierre Laurent calling on France to prioritize “the defense of universal values, the rights of peoples and peace.... for which it is loved by the peoples of the world,” and therefore to “respond favorably to the request of the Kurds of Kobanê to have the indispensable arms to resist and avoid a massacre....”

Translated: French imperialism – the invaders of Mali, the occupiers of Afghanistan, the bombers of Libya, the protagonists of dirty colonial wars against Algeria and Indochina, *and the former colonial masters of Syria* – with 900 troops now on the ground in Iraq, should see to it that Kobanê gets arms. From where? From the NATO imperialists, where else?

Oriented to a somewhat more leftist milieu than the reformist PCF, with its nationalist praise of France as “the land of human rights,” the no less reformist New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) resorts to double-talk. Thus in



Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, 1920.

its newspaper, *L’Anticapitaliste* (16 October), it feigns a certain “critical” distance from the imperialists, saying “it doesn’t seem to us that one should expect great results from these appeals” to the West to arm the Kurds. But in a call (9 October) for a mass demonstration together with Kurdish groups, the NPA urges “the U.S. as well as the European Union to respond to their call [of the PKK and YPG] for material aid, in particular arms....”

The NPA grew out of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), the French affiliate of the International (formerly United) Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel, in the course of abandoning all pretense of Trotskyism. The Danish Mandelites are part of the Red-Green Alliance (RGA), whose members of parliament voted for sending a Danish military plane to “transport weapons and ammunition to the Kurdish militias fighting Islamic State” (*International Viewpoint*, 15 September). While praising the PKK and YPG, in fact it is sending arms to the pro-imperialist Iraqi *peshmerga*. And while pretending that “this decision does not allow any other Danish military activity in the region,” only a week earlier Denmark sent a squadron of jets and 250 military personnel in Iraq under the aegis of NATO, then headed by former Danish premier Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

The NPA, RGA and their cohorts around West Europe are nothing but vulgar NATO social democrats, who have enlisted in the imperialist war drive in the Middle East. So how do they square this dirty reality with their tattered leftist pretensions? They use three main arguments: First, that the Islamic State represents a “new fascism.” This is the line of Mandelite leaders François Sabado (*Imprecor*, 27 September) and Pierre Rousset (*International Viewpoint*, 19 October). We’ve seen that before. It’s the punch line of “Islamofascism” used by ex-leftists like Christopher Hitchens to support the U.S. invasion/occupation of Iraq in 2003. But the I.S. is not a bunch of enraged petty bourgeois mobilized by big capital to smash the workers movement.

The salafist-jihadists of the “Islamic State” are Sunni religious fanatics preaching a theocratic political doctrine. USec “theoreticians” talk of Islamic fascism to hide the fact that the I.S. is an extreme form of Islamism, which these pseudo-leftists have supported for decades (Iran 1979, Afghanistan in the 1980s). Not only is this counterposed to Trotskyism, the political argument behind it is that of the Stalinist Georgi Dimitrov, codified in 1935, to justify chaining the working class to bourgeois forces in the name of a “popular front against

fascism.” Trotsky thundered against this class-collaborationist policy (embraced also by the anarchists) that blocked proletarian revolution and enabled the victory of Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

The second argument of the leftist supporters of imperialist war is that the I.S. represents “barbarism.” Sabado refers to the “barbaric monster,” to peoples who are “victims of barbarism,” and so on. Thus calling for imperialist intervention to “save Kobanê” is supposedly defending humanity. The same with the third argument: the need to stave off impending massacre. We do not criticize besieged Kurds

for getting arms where they can. But for would-be socialists to call on the U.S. and NATO to supply them ignores the fact that *the imperialists are the most barbaric mass murderers of all*. If Washington furnishes a dribble of munitions, it will be in order to use that bait to control and ultimately crush any trace of Kurdish independence or autonomy.

The more “sophisticated” (and cynical) apologists of calling on U.S. imperialism to arm the Kurds in Kobanê cite Trotsky’s May 1938 article “Learn to Think: A Friendly Suggestion to Certain Ultra-Leftists.” We’ve seen this ploy before, too: it was the knock-’em-dead argument of the Spartacist League (SL/U.S.) and its International Communist League to justify its shameful support of the American invasion of Haiti in January 2010 under the guise of providing earthquake relief. After months of vociferously defending this *social-imperialist betrayal* in the face of our denunciation, the SL/ICL finally “repudiated” its position, among other things admitting that it “misused the authority” of Trotsky.⁶ (Doubtless there are still some SL/ICL members and supporters who would like real answers as to how their organization degenerated so far as to make such an “error.” But as ever new zigzags keep coming, one thing is clear: they won’t get those from the leadership of this demoralized centrist outfit.)

This was also the supposedly clinching argument of the Brazilian PSTU (Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificado), reformist followers of the late Nahuel Moreno, in justifying their call on the imperialists to arm the pro-imperialist Islamist bands fighting the Assad regime in Syria.⁷

What position would proletarian revolutionists take, Trotsky had asked, if fascist Italy, for its own imperialist interests, had decided to ship arms to Algerians fighting for independence from France. “Should the Italian workers prevent the shipping of arms to the Algerians?” He answered that every revolutionist, class-conscious worker or Algerian rebel would indignantly spurn such a policy. In another article, “Answers to Questions on the Spanish Situation” (September 1938), Trotsky asked what Spanish dock workers would do if faced with two ships bearing arms, one for Franco and one for the Republic. Obviously, he answered, the workers should block the ship with

⁶ See our “Open Letter from the Internationalist Group to the Spartacist League and ICL,” *The Internationalist* No. 31, May-June 2010.

⁷ See “Brazil: Leftists in the Camp of Pro-Imperialist Syrian Islamists,” *The Internationalist* No. 36, January-February 2014.

weapons for Franco and let the one for the Republic pass.

There are two key reasons why the opportunists' reference to Trotsky is false. First, Trotsky was asking whether workers should block arms shipments, not urging workers to call on fascist Italy or the imperialist "democracies" to arm Algerian rebels or insurgent Spanish workers. It was the Stalinists and anarchists who called to pressure France to send arms to Spain, while Trotsky warned that "democratic" France was an enemy of Spanish workers. And second, the pro-imperialist Islamist armed bands in Syria are not at all equivalent to Algerian fighters for independence or workers militias in Spain. They are reactionary sectarian-communist forces that should be defeated by workers action, along with the authoritarian Assad regime.

The pseudo-socialists call for a "popular revolution" in Syria, which are code words for collaboration with bourgeois forces. The program of revolutionary Marxists is to fight for mobilization of the working class and for international socialist revolution. The League for the Fourth International does not call on U.S. and NATO imperialists to arm the Kurds (much less the pro-imperialist Syrian Islamists), which in any case would be a poisoned chalice. Instead we call on Turkish workers rise up against the Erdogan government. Strikes shutting down transportation in Istanbul and Ankara and mass mobilization surrounding Turkish air bases in Incirlik and Diyarbakir would be the most effective aid to embattled defenders of Kobanê.

Likewise, revolutionaries in the imperialist countries should be fighting to mobilize workers action against the imperialist war. Above all, it is urgently necessary to begin building the nucleus of genuinely Bolshevik, Leninist-Trotskyist parties throughout the region, fighting for workers revolution from Istanbul to Cairo, Baghdad and Tel Aviv, in a socialist federation of the Middle East. That proletarian-internationalist program of *permanent revolution* is the road to defeating *all* the Islamist and Zionist forces and breaking the stranglehold of imperialist barbarism, in order to provide a true "age of happiness" of freedom and prosperity for the toilers in this cradle of civilization. ■

México massacre...

sigue de la página 24

Las normales rurales han sido blanco predilecto de los "reformadores" educativos, al ser tenidas como "nidos comunistas" o "kinderes bolcheviques", como anota la investigadora Tanalís Padilla ("La criminalización de los normalistas rurales", *La Jornada*, 4 de octubre). Sus estudiantes han sido perseguidos y brutalmente reprimidos por oponerse a los constantes intentos de asfixiar económicamente o cerrar sus escuelas. La propia Elba Esther Gordillo, otrora "secretaria general vitalicia" del corporativista Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE), organismo de control policial de los mentores, llamó a eliminar las normales rurales. En un seminario sobre "una nueva educación" la charra responsable de cientos de asesinatos de maestros dijo:

"Hemos planteado muchas veces a las autoridades que si se cierran algunas de las normales rurales va a haber mucho alboroto de los jóvenes. No se olviden que las normales rurales han sido semilleros de guerrilleros, pero si no hacemos esto, van a seguir con lo mismo".



El Grupo Internacionalista en la marcha del 22 de octubre en la Cd. de México denunciando la matanza de estudiantes normalistas de Ayotzinapa.

—citado por Luis Hernández Navarro, "Asalto contra las normales rurales", *La Jornada*, 10 de agosto de 2010

De Guerrero rebelde a la revolución obrera

Guerrero ha sido el escenario de combativas movilizaciones de "los de abajo", y también de un ciclo infernal de masacres, guerra sucia y represión por parte de "los de arriba" — la clase dominante capitalista. En la accidentada Sierra Madre del Sur, las aisladas poblaciones viven como en generaciones pasadas de la siembra de temporal, con frecuencia insuficiente para la autosubsistencia. Comunidades indígenas nahuas, amuzgas, tlapanecas y mixtecas dispersas en la región de la Montaña, junto con importantes concentraciones afromexicanas en la Costa Chica, han padecido una opresión étnica y lingüística secular que subsiste hoy en día. En años recientes son acechadas también por los talamontes y bandas asesinas del narcotráfico.

"¡Guerrero en pie de lucha!" reza un popular coro en las manifestaciones del D.F. Así es, desde las guerrillas de Genaro Vázquez Rojas (en los años 1960) y Lucio Cabañas (a principios de los 70), ambos egresados de la normal rural de Ayotzinapa. (Cabañas también fue presidente de la FECSM.) Siguieron los campesinos insurgentes entre los copreros y cafetaleros, hasta las combativas movilizaciones de los maestros de la CETEG (filial estatal de la CNTE) y sus aliados los normalistas. El año pasado, la CETEG inició la más grande y larga movilización magisterial en México en décadas, aunque no fue secundada a tiempo por otras secciones de la CNTE. Sin embargo, cada una de estas luchas se ha mantenido aislada del poder que sí tiene la capacidad de derrotar a los sanguinarios capitalistas: el de la clase obrera urbana.

El estado tiene una historia revolucionaria notable, comenzando con Vicente Guerrero, comandante militar en la guerra de independencia de México, originario de Tixtla donde se encuentra la normal de Ayotzinapa, quien llegó a ser el primer y único presidente negro de México (su madre era esclava africana) y que realizó la abolición de la esclavitud. Lamentablemente, Vicente Guerrero también apoyó el Plan de Iguala que pregonó la "unión" de las clases sociales y sometió su ejército insurgente al ejército realista del futuro "emperador" Agustín de Iturbide. De ahí

hasta la instalación de gobiernos perredistas en la entidad compuestos por politiqueros ex priistas, la colaboración de clases ha socavado la rebeldía guerrerense. Como en Chile con Salvador Allende, "el pueblo unido" es un lema para la derrota. El nuestro es *¡Luchar, vencer, obreros al poder!*

Hoy, resulta evidente que pedir investigaciones "limpias", exigir la renuncia de un alcalde, un gobernador o incluso del presidente de la república no solucionará nada. El llanto y la ira de los parientes y compañeros de los normalistas desaparecidos, que reclaman airadamente en sus mantas "vivos se los llevaron, vivos los queremos", se repetirán. La débil burguesía mexicana, sometida al imperialismo y enfrentada por un poderoso proletariado y un campesinado pobre, no puede prescindir de la represión sangrienta para mantener su dominio. Como señaló el gran revolucionario ruso León Trotsky, fundador del Ejército Rojo y de la IV Internacional, en la época imperialista, en países semicoloniales como México se requiere un *gobierno obrero y campesino* para resolver las tareas democráticas al *iniciar la revolución socialista internacional*.

Habrán quienes sueñen con echarse al monte e iniciar la lucha armada como en

el pasado. Pero igual que en el pasado los gestos heroicos no lograrán la victoria, pues los campesinos no tienen el poder económico y social ni un interés de clase coherente para revertir el capitalismo. Hemos señalado que las actuales "autodefensas" de la Tierra Caliente de Michoacán son de hecho patronales, y las policías comunitarias indígenas de Guerrero son controladas por el mismo gobierno de Aguirre. A la vez, seguimos exigiendo la libertad de Nestora Salgado y los comunitarios presos por portar armas. Desde el levantamiento de los zapatistas en 1994 hasta la sublevación magisterial y popular de Oaxaca en 2006, la lección de los años recientes — y de tres revoluciones democrático-burguesas fallidas — es que la próxima revolución mexicana será obrera, o no será.

Es preciso romper con el PRI, el PAN y el PRD, partidos capitalistas cuyas manos están manchadas de sangre, y también con el Morena de Andrés Manuel López Obrador, uno de cuyos operadores en Guerrero, el actual secretario de salud estatal, Lázaro Mazón, es el principal padrino político de José Luis Abarca, el asesino alcalde de Iguala. Hace falta construir una dirección revolucionaria, armada con el programa trotskista de la *revolución permanente*, para forjar el núcleo de un partido obrero leninista como los bolcheviques en Rusia, que sirva como tribuno del pueblo al dirigir a todos los explotados y oprimidos a la toma del poder.

Enviamos nuestro mensaje de solidaridad proletaria desde la Ciudad de México (y Berlín y Nueva York) a los aguerridos estudiantes normalistas de Guerrero, sus compañeros y padres: "¡estamos con ustedes, ahora y siempre!" Que sepan los gobiernos de turno de la burguesía, tanto en México como en Estados Unidos y todo el mundo, que sus crímenes no escaparán a la vista de la clase obrera mundial. Sobre la masacre de Iguala de 2014 igual que la de México del 2 de octubre de 1968, no habría *ni olvido, ni perdón...* *¡Luchar, vencer obreros al poder!* ■

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The Internationalist



A Journal of Revolutionary Marxism for the Reforging of the Fourth International

Publication of the Internationalist Group, section of the League for the Fourth International

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Otra vez: matanza, desaparecidos e impunidad

México: Masacre en Guerrero exige movilización y revolución obrera

**PRI, PAN, PRD: asesinos
partidos burgueses**
**¡Forjar un partido
obrero que luche por la
revolución socialista!**

En las primeras horas de la tarde del sábado 4 de octubre, los despachos noticiosos comenzaron a informar desde Guerrero sobre el descubrimiento de una serie de fosas en las afueras de Iguala. Conforme pasaron las horas, se reportó el hallazgo de 9, luego 20 y finalmente 28 cuerpos calcinados y desmembrados en seis fosas. Muchos indicios apuntan a que serían algunos de los 43 estudiantes arrestados por la policía municipal una semana antes. De confirmarse que los normalistas de Ayotzinapa desaparecidos fueron ejecutados, se trataría de la peor masacre de estudiantes en México desde la del aciago 2 de octubre de 1968.

La matanza de Iguala ya es noticia mundial. Exigen una “investigación limpia” organismos de derechos humanos, Naciones Unidas y hasta el gobierno norteamericano (que asesina a decenas diariamente en su ocupación de Afganistán y su guerra en Irak y Siria). Contra esta hipocresía oficial, los parientes de los estudiantes muertos y desaparecidos de Ayotzinapa junto con los combativos maestros de la Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE) han llamado para hoy, 8 de octubre, a marchas y paros a escala nacional. También habrá piquetes frente a consulados mexicanos a escala internacional, uno de ellos en Nueva York donde nuestros camaradas del Grupo Internacionalista iniciaron una protesta de emergencia el domingo pasado.

En estas movilizaciones es fundamental responsabilizar al gobierno mexicano y a

sus amos imperialistas por el crimen de Iguala. La cortina de humo sobre el narcotráfico sólo busca lavar las manos ensangrentadas del gobierno, siendo el estado capitalista el que hay que enjuiciar. Ha habido hasta 100 mil asesinados y otros tantos desaparecidos en la “guerra contra las drogas” bajo los gobiernos de Felipe Calderón (PAN) y ahora Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI), a órdenes de EE.UU. Mientras persista el capitalismo, seguirán las matanzas, las desapariciones y la impunidad. Por eso urge una movilización *de clase* de los trabajadores contra el sanguinario estado de los patrones, paralizando sectores claves de la economía y apuntando hacia *la revolución socialista*.

¿Por qué?

El asesinato de seis personas en Iguala en la madrugada del viernes 27 de septiembre, fue apenas el preludeo de la carnicería. Hay imágenes de los estudiantes desaparecidos que son transportados en vehículos de la policía municipal hacia las afueras de la ciudad. La versión oficial del gobierno de Guerrero, del gobernador Ángel Aguirre Rivero (PRD), es que un capo del cartel Guerreros Unidos, un tal Chucky, ordenó al jefe de la policía de Iguala que aprehendiera a los estudiantes para entregarlos a sus sicarios, que los habrían ejecutado. Pero cualquiera que haya sido la participación



Mitin en Ciudad Universitaria durante el paro de la UNAM y otras universidades el 15 de octubre denunciando el asesinato y desaparición de normalistas de Ayotzinapa, Guerrero.

del narco en el secuestro y desaparición de los normalistas, es preciso subrayar que *es el aparato estatal burgués el responsable directo de lo ocurrido*.

¿Por qué este crimen abominable? Las primeras versiones acusaban a los estudiantes de haber “robado” unos camiones para transportarlos a casa, aunque eso fue acordado con los choferes. Luego se alegó que el alcalde de Iguala, José Luis Abarca Velázquez (PRD), “ilocalizable” desde la semana pasada, consideró como un agravio imperdonable el que los normalistas botearan en Iguala el día en que su esposa ofrecía una “gala” tras leer su informe como jefa del DIF local. Involucrado con el tráfico de drogas, este financiero del gobernador Aguirre y narcoalcalde prófugo se sentía intocable: el año pasado habría asesinado con sus propias manos a tres dirigentes de la organización campesina Unión Popular Emiliano Zapata, con total impunidad. Pero incluso hoy, sigue sin haber acusación alguna contra el alcalde por la matanza del 27 de septiembre, afirma la PGR.

No obstante, la responsabilidad no recae exclusivamente en el asesino alcalde perredista. El gobernador perredista inició su sexenio con el asesinato a manos de la policía estatal (y federal) de dos estudiantes normalistas de Ayotzinapa en la Autopista del Sol. Sólo tuvo que pedir disculpas tiempo después. El mismo Aguirre Rivero era jefe del PRI de Guerrero en 1995 cuando el gobierno priísta de Rubén Figueroa Jr. masacró a 17 campesinos en Aguas Blancas. Jamás hubo consecuencias penales. Hoy muchos manifestantes exigen la renuncia de Aguirre, pero el jefe del PRD nacional, Carlos Navarrete, se opone, porque en ese caso habría que defenestrar a varios gober-

nadores. (El alcalde igualteco pertenecía a la misma corriente perredista, Los Chuchos, que Navarrete.)

Ahora, el presidente priísta Enrique Peña Nieto envía a la flamante Gendarmería Nacional (el nuevo cuerpo de la Policía Federal anunciado con bombo y platillo al principio de su mandato) para vigilar Iguala, junto con el ejército. Se trata del mismo ejército cuyos integrantes son responsables de la masacre de Tlatlaya en Edomex a finales de junio, donde se ejecutó a más de una veintena de “individuos”. Pero el pueblo de Guerrero no ha dado la bienvenida a la tropa, que sólo promete más represión. El domingo pasado, cientos de integrantes de la Federación de Estudiantes Campesinos Socialistas de México (FECSM), que engloba a los de Ayotzinapa y todas las normales rurales del país, bloquearon en la autopista a un convoy castrense y lo obligaron a dar vuelta atrás.

Cualquiera que sea el motivo inmediato que desencadenó el baño de sangre de Iguala, la razón fundamental de la masacre es la *satanización de los combativos estudiantes* y el empeño de los gobiernos de todas las siglas de *cerrar las escuelas normales rurales*. Esto forma parte de la *ofensiva privatizadora de la educación pública* ordenada por Washington y las instituciones financieras mundiales. Hoy, esta política nefasta es implementada en México por Peña Nieto y su secretario de educación, Emilio Chuayffét, quien fue secretario de gobernación cuando la masacre de Acteal en 1997. Cabe señalar que una demanda judicial en EE.UU. contra el ex presidente Ernesto Zedillo por Acteal recién fue desestimada por gozar el ex mandatario de inmunidad.

sigue en la página 23



Protesta de emergencia por la matanza de Guerrero, iniciada por el Grupo Internacionalista frente al consulado mexicano en NY, el 5 de octubre.