

**Yet Another Massacre: For a National Strike  
Against the Criminal Government**

## **Mexican Teachers Strike Braves Murderous Repression**



Quadratin

**The Battle of Oaxaca Airport, May 26. After hundreds of teachers blockaded the entrance, Federal Police issued an ultimatum. Teachers refused to move. As cops were preparing to strike, hundreds more teachers came up from behind, encircling them. After a tense stand-off, police were forced to retreat.**

*The following article is translated from a supplement to Revolución Permanente, newspaper of the Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International.*

JUNE 20 – Mexico has just had its Bloody Sunday. In Russia, the police attack on a march of workers who only wanted to present a petition to the Tsar sparked the 1905 Revolution. In Mexico of 2016, the massacre of Sunday, June 19 in Nochixtlán, Oaxaca against teachers, students, social

activists and parents could be the detonator for an explosion of class struggle around the country. The protesters are fighting against the disastrous “educational reform” which seeks to destroy independent teacher unionism. For five days they defended a barricade on the superhighway to Mexico City, managing to stop a caravan of the Federal Police. Yesterday, the *federales* took their revenge. But instead of frightening people, it had the opposite effect.

By the current count, according to spokesmen for the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers (CNTE), the toll of that fateful Sunday the 19th in Nochixtlán is eight dead, 22 disappeared and 94 injured, 45 of them by bullets. The Federal Police, who at first denied using firearms, finally had to admit, in the face of photos and videos showing cops firing with abandon, that it was the uniformed police who shot the activists. Even so, the hail of bullets and gas did not intimidate the

strikers and their supporters. After passing through the barricades at Nochixtlán, the police came across ferocious resistance from barricades in Huitzo, and then at the intersection of Hacienda Blanca. And once the convoy of buses and pick-up trucks of the Federal Police passed, the barricades were rebuilt. The effect of the repression has been to further exacerbate the anger of the population.

Today tens of thousands filled the

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**On June 12, police evicted protest encampment in front of Oaxaca state education institute, then pursued striking teachers who set up flaming barricades as they retreated to the Zócalo (main square).**



**Following the massacre at Nochixtlán on June 19, teachers continued to resist advance of Federal Police in Huitzo and Hacienda Blanca (above). After cop convoy passed, barricades were rebuilt.**



# Imperialist Offensive Threatens Slaughter Defend Raqqa – Drive U.S./NATO Imperialists Out of Syria and Iraq!

MAY 31 – A new stage has opened in the fighting in Syria and Iraq with the launching of offensives against the Islamic State (I.S.) by U.S. imperialism and its allies. On May 24 the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a military front dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), announced the beginning of a drive on the de facto capital of the I.S. in Raqqa. The YPG has had a semi-alliance with the U.S. military, relying on U.S. air strikes since the I.S. siege of the Kurdish city of Kobanê on the Turkish border in late 2014, even as Turkey (a member of the NATO military alliance) has continued to attack the Syrian Kurdish region. But now the Kurdish militias are directly participating in a military operation under U.S. command and together with U.S. special forces at the front.

The League for the Fourth International declared from the outset of U.S. intervention in September 2014 that the imperialist invaders are by far the greatest threat to the working people and oppressed, calling to drive them out of the region and to defeat them with workers action. Today, in the face of the U.S.-led assault, we call to defend Raqqa against the imperialists and the Kurdish and Arab forces serving as their ground troops.

As the LFI has pointed out in previous articles, there are several intertwined and overlapping wars going on simultaneously in Syria: the U.S./NATO bombing, where we call to drive the imperialists out; an inter-communal/sectarian civil war between pro-imperialist Islamist militias, Al Qaeda Islamists, the Syrian government, the Islamic State and now Kurdish militias operating outside the Kurdish enclaves, in which we



**U.S. special forces commandos sighted May 26 in village of Fatisah, Syria, barely 2 kilometers from the front of fighting with the Islamic State. They are part of U.S.-led offensive against the I.S. “capital” of Raqqa. Drive the imperialists out of Syria and Iraq!**

oppose all sides; additionally there is the right of communal self-defense of all ethnic/religious communities threatened with massacres; and the Kurdish struggle for self-determination. In this complex situation, we noted from the outset that the character of the fighting in Syria could change, depending on U.S. intervention. And we stressed that only the working class throughout the region, fighting on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, can cut through the hatreds and oppression fostered by the feuding bourgeois forces.

The current offensive was prepared by a significant increase of U.S. forces in Syria from the reported 50 support personnel last December, deployed at a remote airfield in the rear, to the dispatch of an additional 250 special forces combat troops, ordered by President Obama on April 24. Now these forces have been sighted carrying out operational activities at the front. On May 26, two days after the launching of the drive against Raqqa, a photographer for Agence France-Presse spotted U.S. commandos in full combat gear on vehicles with heavy

machine guns and grenade launchers in the village of Fatisah near the town of Ayn Issa north of the I.S. capital. The U.S. forces were in a contested area where offensive operations were underway “less than two kilometers from the area under the control of the jihadists” (“A chance encounter on the Syrian front,” AFP dispatch, 27 May). Several commandos sported shoulder patches of the YPG including, curiously, of the Kurdish women’s militia, the YPJ.

Videos also show other U.S. personnel in a vehicle loaded with communications gear, evidently running the show (“US Commandos Are Fighting the Islamic State on the Frontlines in Syria,” Vice News, 27 May). A U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad sought to downplay the importance of this, saying that the U.S. had been conducting “advise-and-assist operations” with “elements” of the SDF for a number of weeks. However, the liberal Daily Beast (26 May) web site noted: “The U.S. has said that its forces would not be on the front lines but ... the photos suggest otherwise as U.S. troops appear to be side-by-side with their local counterparts.” The AFP photographer said there were at least 20 American personnel present, who refused to talk to him. A Syrian commander said that American “advisers” were “present at all positions along the front” (*New York Times*, 26 May).

These forces are no more “advisers” than were the initial combat troops U.S. president John F. Kennedy sent into Vietnam in the early 1960s. Not only are U.S. commandos playing a lead role in the military operations against Raqqa, the whole offensive was prepared by the Pentagon and the White House. On May 21, “The head of U.S. Central Command, Gen. Joseph Votel, met SDF fighters and U.S. special operations forces in northern Syria ... in a rare, unannounced visit to discuss the Raqqa offensive” (*Wall Street Journal On-Line*, 25 May). Back in January, Brett McGurk, President Obama’s personal envoy met with leaders of the YPG’s political parent, the PYD (Democratic Union Party), in Kobanê. But here was Centcom commander Votel inspecting forward positions just days before

the offensive began: “Splitting off from the reporters who flew in with him, Votel then visited several other undisclosed locations” (AP dispatch, 22 May).

As part of the operation, warplanes of the U.S.-led “Coalition” dropped leaflets on Raqqa saying “This is the time you have been waiting for. It is time to leave Raqqa” with a cartoon showing fleeing civilians. While a direct attack on the I.S. “capital” may or may not be imminent, that is clearly the ultimate aim of the current offensive, spearheaded by the Kurdish YPG-led Syrian Democratic Forces, under the command of U.S. imperialism. According to the *modus operandi* of the Yankee imperialists, this will likely be accompanied by horrendous terror bombing (“shock and awe”), and the resulting casualties dismissed as “collateral damage.” With the Pentagon running down its stocks of “smart bombs,” they will likely start using the 500-lb. “dumb bombs,” “bunker busters,” and other weapons of mass destruction in the U.S. arsenal.

The current fighting is distant from Kurdish ethnic regions, and the population of both Raqqa and Ain Issa (currently occupied by the YPG/SDF) is almost entirely Arab. Moreover, according to the web site Raqqa Is Being Silently Slaughtered (29 May), which is hostile to the I.S. and whose activists have been murdered by the *jihadis*, the hundreds of thousands of residents of Raqqa see the YPG as a force of would-be conquerors, particularly following the atrocities it committed burning down Arab homes and expelling Arabs in its conquest of Tel Abyad last year.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, it was engaging in the same kind of “ethnic cleansing” as the other forces in the communalist civil war wracking Syria. We denounced this at the time:

“The League for the Fourth International has stated that: ‘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.’ We have also reiterated our call for a socialist republic of united Kurdistan. At the same time, the LFI has consistently stood for revolutionary defeatism on all sides in the communal civil wars wracking Iraq and Syria, while supporting the right of self-defense of threatened communities. As long as the YPG was defending Kobanê and Rojava (Western Kurdistan) it was exercising this right, but as it expands its sway it has joined the all-sided communal/sectarian bloodbath.”

–“Flashpoint Syria: Russian Intervention and Imperialist Aggression” (October 2015), *The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016

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<sup>1</sup> As we noted then: “reports are now surfacing about Kurdish atrocities against Arabs and Turkomans in recently conquered areas. Residents of ten villages and towns under the Kurdish Autonomous Administration were driven from their homes, their property destroyed or confiscated and in some cases their houses were burned and bulldozed (Amnesty International, *We Had Nowhere Else to Go*, October 2015).”

**The Internationalist**



**CENTCOM commander General Joseph Votel flew secretly to area near Raqqa, Syria to inspect forces on eve of offensive.**

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<http://www.internationalist.org>**

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## Mass Protests to Shut Down Trump Hate-Fest

# No to the Democratic and Republican Parties of Deportations, Imperialism and War

The following is an Internationalist Group leaflet distributed at the April 14 protest against a fundraising gala for Donald Trump in Manhattan.

APRIL 14 – Tonight multimillionaire and front-running Republican candidate for president Donald Trump will speak at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City. (This was the first building he built in Manhattan, thanks to a 40-year tax abatement). Earlier today he was to speak in a Republican Party rally in Patchogue, Long Island, the village where Marcelo Lucero was killed by a racist mob in 2008. In fact, the site of Trump's speech is a dance hall only steps away from where Marcelo was stabbed to death.

Meanwhile, the Democratic administration of Barack Obama has formally deported more than 2.5 million people since coming to office in 2009. The actual number deported is over 4.5 million when you include those thrown out of the U.S. without formal removal orders. Among them are over half a million parents of children who were born here and are U.S. citizens. Five million children live in families of undocumented immigrants that face constant danger of losing their parents and caretakers should the ICE immigration police strike.

Both the partner parties of American capitalism sow racist terror and immigrant-bashing. Whether it's done by lynch mobs or black-uniformed *migra* cops, millions live in constant fear and without rights. The record number of deportations by liberal Democrat Obama has earned him the title of "Deporter-in-Chief." And while Donald Trump, the bigot with billions who wants to wall off Mexico, paid no taxes on his hotel, low-paid undocumented immigrants have poured \$100 billion into Social Security over the last decade, from which they will never see a dime.

Across the country, Trump's election rallies have become an orgy of racism. Black protesters and others are beaten by thugs, instigated by the candidate himself.



CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Internationalist Group at April 14 "Shut Down Trump" protest.

He calls Mexicans rapists, a vile smear, while he was accused of rape by his ex-wife and has stolen millions. He accuses Muslims of promoting terrorism, when he supports torture, saying "we have to beat the savages." His bigoted diatribes, vile attacks on women and gays, and threats and incitement to violence have spurred thousands to come out with utter justification to protest his race-hate rallies.

Yet many of those protesting Trump are backing Democratic presidential candidates Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton. In Chicago, where anti-racist protesters spiked his March 11 rally (which was an outrageous provocation against the mostly non-white students at the University of Illinois campus), many chanted "Bernie, Bernie." But the Democrats are the governing party of U.S. imperialism, the deadliest terrorist force in the world.

Obama has personally authorized the murder of thousands of innocent civilians by drone strikes, which Clinton and Sanders support.

Trump is endorsed by the fascist David Duke and Ku Klux Klans. Trump's father, it turns out, was a wealthy KKKer. The International Action Center (led by the Workers World Party), which has called a protest today to "Shut Down Trump in NYC," proclaims, "No Fascist Movement." The Donald is

certainly a raving psychopath, a grotesque misogynist, an odious anti-Muslim Latino-hating racist and dangerous jingoist. He's all that and a billionaire exploiter to boot. Young people are quite right to protest Trump, and the Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs will come out today as well.

Trump seems to consciously mimic Mussolini, encouraging beating up protesters and talking of possible riots if he's not nominated. But fascism is not a swear word or a synonym for awful or horrific. Fascism is a mass extra-parliamentary movement of terror that seeks to destroy and atomize the labor movement and do away with parliamentary institutions and existing parties. U.S. rulers today don't need a fascist movement per se, because they are not facing a combative workers movement threatening their class rule.

While millions are rightly repelled by "Trumpism," and there are some outright fascists among his supporters, its vile characteristics alone don't make it fascism. Donald Trump is in the tradition of many right-wing demagogues down through history. Doctrinal right-wing Republicans, many of them frothing reactionaries themselves, don't trust Trump because they see him as a semi-closet liberal, like taking five different positions on abortion in one week. The Republican establishment and corporate chiefs are having conniptions because he talks of scaling back NATO (it's only talk), and doesn't embrace "free trade."

They call him a populist because they worry that by erratically pandering to some of those ground down by economic crisis he might embrace policies that threaten their own profits. But supposing for a moment that Trump and his "movement" were

fascist, what would that imply? First of all, you don't stop fascist movements by supporting bourgeois politicians. How did Adolf Hitler come to power? German Social Democrats voted for General von Hindenburg in 1932 as president, as a supposed "lesser evil" to stop the Nazis. Then von Hindenburg turned around and appointed Hitler imperial chancellor.

To stop an actual fascist movement one must bring out the *power of the workers movement* in the streets to smash the fascist squads, and to take on the bastions of capitalist power that finance the fascists. Stalinists label everything from militarists like former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet to racists like Trump "fascist" because they have a very different program. They want to build a "popular front," that would unite "the people" by chaining the poor, the unemployed and workers to their class enemy, the supposed "anti-fascist" sections of the bourgeoisie, and thus be a *roadblock to revolution*.

While opposing Trump, the various Stalinists as well as social-democratic reformists deliberately evade the call for struggle against the Democratic Party. Why? Because they want to use the term "fascism" to frighten people into voting for "lesser evil" Democrats against the "greater evil" Republicans. Trotskyists, in contrast, call for a *class mobilization*, and fight for revolutionary *working-class politics* independent from and against all sections of the exploiter class. As Marx and Engels wrote in 1871: "The workers party must never be the tag-tail of any bourgeois party."

If you look at politics through the bourgeois prism as if it's a continuum, *continued on page 6*



Internationalist demonstrators chanted, "Not Democrats, Not Republicans, Build a workers party."



## Stop the Persecution of Black Lives Matter Organizer Jasmine Abdullah!

# California “Lynching” Conviction Is a Threat to All

*We reprint below an Internationalist Group leaflet distributed at the June 7 sentencing hearing for Black Lives Matter organizer Jasmine Abdullah. At the hearing, where over 300 people came out to support her, Jasmine was sentenced to 90 days jail time and three years probation. On June 18 she was freed on bail, but the persecution continues: she must return to court next month for hearings on two other cases.*

LOS ANGELES – On June 1, 28-year-old Black Lives Matter organizer Jasmine Abdullah (Richards) was grotesquely convicted in near-by Pasadena under a California law that until recently was known as “felony lynching.” This is a blatant case of political persecution in which she faces up to four years in prison. At her trial, an entirely non-black jury accepted the prosecution’s outrageous claim that Jasmine’s non-violent effort to protect a young black woman from police brutality was a crime legally equivalent to participating in a KKK lynch mob for the purposes of murdering that woman. As Jasmine’s attorney Nana Gyamfi put it on the Democracy Now (2 June) TV/radio program:

“[T]o take this law, that was used allegedly to protect black people from being lynched, and to turn around and use this law against a black person who is actually speaking about the lynchings, the serial lynchings, that are going on at the hands of police, not just in Pasadena, but all over this country, is more than ironic, it’s disgusting.”

Jasmine was targeted by the capitalist state for being an outspoken activist capable of mobilizing outraged black youth in active struggle against racist police terror. After participating in a “freedom ride” to Ferguson, Missouri to protest the 2014 police murder of Michael Brown, she founded a chapter of Black Lives Matter in her hometown of Pasadena. There she worked to expose the heinous murder of unarmed 19-year-old Kendrec McDade by the local police, among other victims of racist cop terror. In an on-line video last year, Jasmine explained:

“[T]here’s been a lot of youth that have been killed by the Pasadena police.... Since I was a child, these police have scared me.... I know their first and last names. I felt like we needed a group out here that stood up to that injustice.”

In August 2015, Jasmine was leading a protest in Pintosco Park in Pasadena when police moved to arrest a young black woman, unrelated to the protest, who had allegedly not paid for her meal at a restaurant across the street. The protesters stood up for the woman in a failed attempt to protect her from the brutality they have seen so many of their brothers and sisters face at the hands of the murderous capitalist state.

No arrests were made of protesters during what was later falsely dubbed a “riot.” It was only three days later that the



Jasmine Abdullah (Richards)

cops began to cite this incident as justification for pursuing their political vendetta against Abdullah. While a host of other ridiculous charges (including “child endangerment”) were dropped, the prosecution falsely branded Jasmine as a “felon” on the bogus charge of attempting to take a person from police officers in a supposed “riot” (a charge formerly called “attempted lynching”) which could mean years in prison, depending on the results of the upcoming sentencing, scheduled for June 7 at the Pasadena Courthouse.

Black Lives Matter Los Angeles chapter organizer and California State University professor Melina Abdullah noted on the BLM web site:

“Obviously, the police, District Attorney, and entire system are trying to make an example out of Jasmine, using this outrageous conviction to intimidate other organizers from fighting for an end to police terror and other forms of state violence against Black people.... It won’t work.”

While political persecution, particularly of radical black activists, is nothing new in racist capitalist America, Jasmine’s conviction sets a new precedent for the criminalization of protest activity, and is a threat to all those who would speak out against injustice. The state is asserting its “right” to imprison protesters on felony (not just misdemeanor) charges for opposing police attempts to arrest them or others as they exercise their right of free speech. Earlier last year, other protesters had been charged with, but not convicted of, “felony lynching”, such as Sacramento Black Lives Matter organizer Maile Hamilton, who was arrested after trying to pull a fellow protester away from police. Tiffany Tran was charged with *lynching herself* by yelling “help” as the police arrested her at an Occupy protest in Oakland.

These cases set off controversy over the absurdity of dubbing such actions “lynching,” and the charges were dropped. There ensued a move to change the law to remove the word “lynching.” State Senator Holly Mitchell (Democrat, Los Angeles), who authored the measure, presented it as a progressive cor-

rection to an archaic law. But as Jasmine’s case shows, removing the word “lynching” while retaining the substance of the law has enabled the capitalist state to more easily obtain a felony conviction of any protester who “participates” in any way “in the taking by means of a riot of another person from the lawful custody of a peace officer” – including if they were trying to protect that person from lynching by the police.

For us as revolutionary Marxists, as well as for any class-conscious worker or defender of democratic rights and fighter against racist repression, removing a victim of police repression from the clutches of the capitalist state is no crime. Only those who would keep black people forcibly segregated at the bottom of society, those who claim that undocumented immigrants have no rights and who deny workers the right to use their power to fight against exploitation, can claim it is criminal to assist a potential victim to be wrested free of the armed enforcers of capitalist rule.

As Jasmine was hauled off to jail following the “lynching” verdict, she led her supporters, who had packed the court-

house, in repeating the words from Assata Shakur which have become a well-known chant at Black Lives Matter protests:

“It is our duty to fight for freedom.

It is our duty to win.

We must love and protect one another.

We have nothing to lose but our chains.”

Assata was a class-war prisoner targeted in the U.S.’s war on black radicals in the 1970s who escaped and fled to Cuba where she was granted asylum. Shakur must be defended, and the attempts by the Obama government to get the Cuban government to extradite her must be vigorously opposed.

As we have seen time and time again across the country, this latest drive in California to further repress black activists on behalf of the capitalist rulers is spearheaded by a black Democrat: Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacy. It’s no accident either that the mayors of Pasadena and Los Angeles are Democrats, as are the mayors of most large cities in the U.S. as well as the Obama administration in Washington. But from the outset of the 2014 mass protests against racist police murder, various leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement have sought to “play ball” with the Democrats. DeRay McKesson, a prominent BLM spokesman on social media in the St. Louis area during protests of the cop killing of Michael Brown, ran for mayor of Baltimore in the Democratic primary this spring.

Across the country there has been a push to draw Black Lives Matter activists into the electoral circus of American capitalism, and the Democratic Party in particular. Both Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders hired BLM activists to coordinate “outreach” to anti-racist youth. They (along with some reformist leftists) peddle the absurd notion that the police

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Workers power vs. cop terror: ILWU Local 10 shut down Bay Area ports on May Day 2015, marching to Oakland city hall demanding an end to murder by police.

**Mobilize Labor/Black/Immigrant Power – Only Revolution Can Bring Justice!**



# Unionize Verizon Wireless, Aid Philippines Call Center Workers! Verizon Strike Beats Back Company Assault, But With Big Healthcare Givebacks

JUNE 12 – From April 13 to May 27, close to 40,000 members of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) waged a determined strike against Verizon Communications Inc. This was the largest and most important strike by workers in the U.S. in recent years. The multiracial Verizon workforce showed courage and perseverance, and an enthusiasm for the strike that was palpable at pickets and mass rallies. Workers expressed a lot of pride for waging the fight and for the solidarity they maintained and built through 45 days on the picket line, which was no easy feat. In New York, we also saw how the strike inspired other workers, as trucks and innumerable delivery vans and cars blew their horns while drivers showed clenched fists.

As the strike ground on, the company was about to be faced with paying unemployment charges. At the same time, Obama had sent in a federal mediator, and Labor Secretary Perez was applying pressure. While some had illusions that this was aiding the workers, the National Labor Relations Board hit the strikers with injunctions limiting pickets, and then tried to stop the boisterous picketing of hotels housing scabs. The strikers were sent back to work without seeing any contract, while scabs were still working. After 45 days on the line, many felt some relief, while others were rightly suspicious – especially in light of past sellouts and being sent back suddenly with worse than nothing in 2011.

The strike came on the heels of the company stonewalling contract negotiations for eight months (while raking in a cool \$1.3 billion in monthly profits). Among the company's chief demands for givebacks were big increases to health care costs, forcible months-long relocations to

For the IG leaflet distributed during the strike, see "Verizon Strike: A Fight for All Workers" (25 April 2016) at [www.internationalist.org](http://www.internationalist.org).



Huge rally of 14,000 striking CWA and IBEW Verizon workers floods the streets of Manhattan, April 18.

service distant parts of the company's wireline network, and significantly slashing the number of call-center union jobs (in order to savagely exploit workers in the Philippines, India and Mexico). The 7% raise the company was offering would have been a pay cut once health care costs and inflation were taken into account.

CWA and IBEW union tops are crowing that the outcome of the strike was a victory. Workers are now voting on a "tentative agreement" on the basis of a ten-page summary. They are slated to get a 10.9% wage increase (compounded) over four years, and a number of the most egregious company demands were beaten back, including the forcible relocations. Company plans to shut down call centers were scaled back, while 1,300 new unionized call-center jobs would be created. But Verizon and business analysts are underscoring a big win for the company, that the "unions agreed to shoulder hundreds of millions of dollars more in health-care costs" and "union

members will be paying higher monthly premiums and out-of-pocket [medical] expenses" (*Wall Street Journal*, 31 May). In fact, CWA/IBEW negotiators had already agreed to huge health-care givebacks even before the strike. While the summary says "overall" wage increases will "more than pay for the new costs under the health plan," when inflation is factored in workers may be treading water at best.

A real union victory, in which substantial gains were made, would have required a very different strategy and a union leadership committed to class struggle. An April 25 *Internationalist* leaflet called to "stop the scabs, build mass picket lines no one dares cross" and to unite with the call-center workers in Philippines and elsewhere being paid starvation wages by this profit-gorged company. Moreover, the 15,000 AT&T West workers represented by CWA were kept on the job even though their contracts had expired. Instead, they should have been brought out on strike for a joint struggle of phone workers across the country.

The strike offered a glimpse at the possibility of mobilizing working-class power. Workers picketing outside Verizon Wireless stores chanted "What's disgusting!? Union-busting!" and eagerly adopted our slogan of "Picket lines mean don't cross!" As a result of the pickets, Wireless stores saw a sharp drop in foot traffic. The few customers who entered faced a barrage of whoops and hollers, lambasting them for crossing a picket line of people who were on strike to maintain a decent life for themselves and their families. Numerous passers-by expressed support for the striking workers, with some businesses even donating free food and water – daily. As for the scabs, they were greeted by picket line "wake-up" calls every morning outside the hotels housing them ... until the NLRB injunction banned strikers from doing this in mid-May, for being a "secondary boycott." But the union leadership generally did not try to stop scabs at the garages and central offices.

The Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York, Class Struggle Education Workers (CSEW), and the Internationalist Group (IG) were a presence on these picket lines in the New York City area starting on Day One. It was an important learning experience for young revolutionaries from CUNY, and their sustained presence on the picket line was much commented on by many strikers. One Internationalist Club member was told by a cop that she would have to move from in front of a Verizon Wireless store. She refused. The officer cited the injunction. She replied that it did not apply to her. When he insisted, she demanded "show me." After going into the store to consult, he came back out after a few minutes conceding her point. The strikers appreciated how she stood her ground. "That was a big push for us all," said the picket captain.

## Verizon Beaten Back, But Far From Beaten

The sharpest edges of the company's union-busting assault have been blunted, for now, but the settlement is nowhere near what could or should have been won, and includes plenty of bad news. It reportedly stipulates that retirees are to be switched over from premium insurance plans to Medicare Advantage plans in order to save the company "significant money," which these former Verizon workers will have to cover. Active service workers, particularly those with dependents, may be hit with thousands of extra dollars per year in payments for medical care, between increased premiums, co-pays, deductibles and "out-of-pocket maximum" charges.

As for the new call-center jobs, those would be in the second tier (with no defined-benefit pensions, which the unions gave up in the 2011 sellout contract). Moreover, Verizon has *gained* the right to reduce the volume of calls to certain call centers, which would then be used to "justify" their closure on the basis of low call volume. In addition, the company can now offer buyout incentives for workers without union permission – another way of slowly but surely eliminating the number of union workers with defined-benefit pensions.

The Quality Assurance Review (QAR) program, used by management to target and dole out suspensions on the basis of "productivity," has been one of the most hated weapons in Verizon's anti-worker arsenal. Union tops would have workers believe that the QAR is gone, but it is replaced with ... a *joint operation* between management and the union. This gives the company carte blanche to engage in the same blatant targeting of workers as under the former QAR, except that since the unions are now involved, management can shift the blame. (Plus it would be much harder than it already is to file grievances against these disciplinary measures.)

Verizon backed off on some of its demands, in part because the picketing of Verizon Wireless was more effective than it expected, and because its management



CUNY Internationalist Club students and Class Struggle Education Workers at April 26 Verizon strike rally outside hotel housing scabs. May-June 2016



(and other) scabs couldn't tackle installation, repair and maintenance. But analysts agreed that another important factor was the company's intent to get rid of the unionized wireline business altogether and focus on its *non-unionized* wireless operations. A *New York Times* (30 May) article quoted one of these analysts:

"‘They needed to end the strike and they bit the bullet,’ said Roger Entner of Recon Analytics. He said he thinks the deal ‘reinforced their commitment to basically exiting’ wireline, which he called ‘the least profitable, most problematic part of the business.’ The new contract ‘gives Verizon four years basically to get rid of the unit. Let it be somebody else’s problem.’ Entner said."

The next day, in a piece for *Fierce Telecom*, a leading telecommunications industry publication, Entner went on:

"With the strike now over, Verizon management must wonder if the remaining wireline activities are worth the distraction it creates on a regular basis. Their answer will almost inevitably be ‘no,’ especially because Verizon seems to have a significantly more acrimonious relationship with its unions than AT&T. A sale of the remaining wireline assets beyond what it needs to operate its wireless backbone is the way to go."

Verizon workers faced repeated acts of strike-breaking violence – a company lawyer hit a striker with his Porsche, a drunk scab struck a striker with his truck, a scab pulled out a machete on a striker, and a cop ran a scab-filled van into a striker's car while he was in it. The memory of Gerry Hogan, who was killed when a scab hit him with her van during the 1989 strike, was rightly invoked by union members. Scab and police violence is no coincidence. *The cops are not neutral*, they are the armed enforcers of capitalist "law and order." "Just doing their job" means protecting the bosses' property, and the whole system of exploitation and oppression. During a strike this means mak-

ing sure scabs can scab and workers do not get "out of line" – like shutting down production.

Another example of how the cops are capital's enforcers was the CWA's encounter with a SWAT team in the Philippines. In an act of international workers solidarity, the BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) invited the CWA to the Philippines to witness the horrid working conditions Verizon subjects its Filipino call-center workers to – getting paid a meager \$1.78 per hour, forced overtime and a mandatory six-day week. Together with employees from Teletech Nova (a call-center contractor hired by Verizon), BIEN activists, members of the May First Labor Movement (Kilusang Mayo Uno, or KMU), and members of the UNI Global Union, representatives from the CWA were confronted by masked police brandishing automatic weapons. The unionists' crime? Trying to get a statement from Verizon about its Filipino operations.

During the strike, CWA bureaucrats staged events to showcase Democratic presidential contenders Hillary Clinton and especially Bernie Sanders, whom they endorsed. But Sanders, like Clinton, is a bourgeois politician, a supporter of capitalism. Various left groups are also pushing this Democratic Party "socialist," including the International Socialist Organization, which had this to say about Sanders' "left-wing campaign": "Having encouraged members to be active in the Sanders campaign and support his anti-corporate themes, the CWA leadership prepared the ground politically for taking on the bosses" (*Socialist Worker*, 3 June). Really? Like hell. As we noted in our April 25 leaflet, Sanders "cites *the police* (!) as an example of what he considers a 'socialist institution'." Chaining workers to the Democratic Party as the union bureaucracy does is a roadblock to taking on the bosses with real *class* struggle. In fact, subjugation to the bosses' parties and politicians is the No. 1 problem facing U.S. labor, and the key to its many defeats over the past decades.

The World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) published articles on the strike and distributed leaflets at Verizon pickets. But what they were pushing was *anti-union propaganda*. In a piece titled "Lessons of the Verizon strike" (June 2), these fake-left union-bashers claim that unions "are not working class organizations, but arms of corporate management and the state." They deliberately equate *the sellout labor bureaucracy* with the unions themselves. Class-struggle unionists fight to drive out the pro-capitalist bureaucracy so that the unions actually act as powerful defensive organizations of the working class against capital.

What the workers

of the CWA need now more than ever is a class-struggle leadership that will not be afraid to use the power of the working class. It means building mass pickets that actually shut down operations. It means forming elected mass strike committees that are recallable at any time, to stop back-room deals and put control of the struggle in the hands of the membership. It means waging an all-out fight to unionize Verizon Wireless, and providing real and substantial aid to Verizon call-center workers to unionize from the U.S. to Philippines, Mexico and India, instead of flag-waving appeals about "saving American jobs" from the union tops and Democratic Party politicians like Sanders. Above all, it means building a workers party in sharp struggle against all the capitalist parties and politicians, to lead the fight for a workers government, here and around the world. ■

## No to Dems...

*continued from page 3*

there's always a "greater evil," thus inducing workers to vote for the "lesser evil" so they never fight in their own interests, and the political spectrum moves ever further to the right. Revolutionary Marxists judge politics by the class line. You are either on the side of the exploiters, the capitalists, or on the side of the exploited, the working people and oppressed. If you're sitting on the fence, or making a pitch for the "progressive" capitalist politician, you're only trying to hoodwink people.

So now the "anyone but Trump" caucus in mainstream bourgeois politics has discovered a "lesser evil" even among the Republicans, namely Ted Cruz. Actually, he is a raving religious fundamentalist and ultra-reactionary flat-earthier whose earlier claim to fame was to author the shutdown of the federal government in 2013.

Hillary Clinton is being billed as the voice of experience and "realism." If Obama ran on the phony program of "hope" and "change" with the slogan "yes, we can," Clinton is running against Sanders essentially on the slogan, "no, we can't." (As in: Nice idea, Bernie, but it won't work.) Her surrogates like the war criminal Madeleine Albright (waged war against Yugoslavia, imposed Iraq sanctions that killed half a million children) and former CIA asset Gloria Steinem are berating young women who are supporting Bernie Sanders as betraying feminism. Actually this shows how the feminist idea of all women as being sisters is opposed to the real struggle for women's liberation from capitalist oppression.

Hillary Clinton is no friend of working women, and she's certainly no "sister" to the women workers toiling at less than \$5 a day in the Haitian sweatshop she set up with money stolen from earthquake relief funds. Hillary Clinton is no friend of women in Libya who saw their country reduced to rubble by U.S./NATO bombers in a war she instigated. Hillary Clinton is no friend of the millions of African American and Latina women she and husband Bill knocked off welfare, or of the millions languishing in jail as a result of their 1996 omnibus crime bill.

Bill Clinton's sneering put-down of Black Lives Matter demonstrators protesting over those deadly policies was a clear expression of the sinister racism lurking behind their photo ops with black Democratic politicians, whose job is to keep the

urban poor chained to the system that impoverishes them.

Bernie Sanders, meanwhile, is running as the "enemy of corporate greed" and "friend of labor." Yesterday, Sanders put on the colors of the CWA and IBEW workers striking against Verizon. This posture used to be standard fare for any and all Democratic candidates, but it's been so long since they have even made the empty gesture that many on the left see this as somehow a step forward. Despite his "socialist" pretense, Sanders is a standard-issue liberal whose job is to refurbish the Democratic Party, to attract young people and working people to vote for their bosses. He's literally channeling speeches by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who put together the political mechanism for subordinating the unions, African Americans, Latinos and the left to U.S. imperialism's Democratic Party for generations.

As an economic populist, Sanders' tradition has been to turn a "color-blind eye" to issues of racial oppression. So after stumbling over this issue initially, he has added a BLM coordinator and a toothless racial justice program. But this will change nothing, since, as we have stressed, all across the country, from City Hall to the White House, "Democrats Are the Bosses of the Racist Killer Cops" (*The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016).

Bernie Sanders says he's for immigration reform with a path to citizenship, and if Congress won't cooperate, as president he would use his executive powers to the hilt. So said Barack Obama, and look where it got us. Sanders says he will "stop deportations." What such campaign promises are worth is shown by Obama's 2008 pledge to shut down Guantánamo or his hints about stopping the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Is Sanders a socialist? No way. The most basic starting point of socialist politics is the need for the political independence of the working class against all capitalist parties and politicians.

Revolutionary Marxists stand for *workers action* against racist attacks, as when last May Day dock workers shut down ports in the San Francisco Bay Area to demand, "Stop Police Terror," and class-struggle unionists in Portland led a "Labor Against Racist Police Murder" contingent the same day. We fight for *workers strikes against imperialist war*, as when ILWU longshore workers shut down every port on the West Coast on May Day 2008 demanding an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and to defend immigrants' rights.

A guiding rule of Trotsky's Fourth International is: tell the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter. The truth is that the Trumps, and Cruzes, and Clintons and Sanders all keep the capitalist electoral shell game running. We fight instead for a workers party on a program of intransigent class struggle to put an end to the system of endless poverty, racism and war through socialist revolution here and everywhere. As Marx and Engels wrote in the 1848 Communist Manifesto:

"Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."

Help us win it. ■

Photos: Reuters



**Democratic presidential candidates Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton go to Verizon strike picket lines, April 13. The Democratic Party defends the interests of Wall Street and capital. We need a class-struggle workers party to fight for a workers government.**



# Democrats and Republicans Against Women's Rights Portland: Class Struggle Picket Slams Right Wing Anti-Abortion Rally

By Class Struggle Workers –  
Portland

The following article is reprinted from the Bridge City Militant No. 2, Winter 2016, published by Class Struggle Workers – Portland. The CSWP, an opposition tendency in the Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington labor movement, is politically supported by the Internationalist Group.

On Sunday, January 17, a group of 50 union activists picketed a “youth rally” held by Oregon Right to Life, an anti-abortion group that held a day of action nationally to “mourn” the anniversary of Roe v. Wade and attack women’s right to abortion. With a banner calling on labor to defend abortion rights, Class Struggle Workers – Portland led a determined picket with members of the Painters, Stagehands, Carpenters, Teachers, Teamsters, IWW, and Laborers unions participating, as well as members of Black Rose Anarchist Federation, Portland Solidarity Network and many others. The crowd picketed the entrances to the event, causing delays and confusion for attendees.

Event organizers and attendees were shaken by the unexpected militant opposition, as pro-abortion chants drowned out their Jesus rock and soured their misogynist pizza party. They threatened to call the police, then tried shoving matches, and when that failed, resorted to juvenile taunts as they tried in vain to hide from the noisy protesters that surrounded the swank Pearl District catering facility.

Protesters chanted “Pro-life, your name’s a lie, you don’t care if women die” and “Not the church, not the state, women must decide their fate” as anti-abortion fanatics arriving from a rally held earlier in Pioneer Courthouse Square dodged the picket lines covering both entrances to the building.

Demonstrators chanted, “Racist, sexist, anti-gay, Christian fascists go away!” Organizers of the anti-abortion rally included Oregon Right to Life executive director Gayle Atteberry, prominent in the far right of the local Republican Party, and ORL president Harmony Dawes, well-

known for her virulent anti-Semitism and support of her Holocaust denier uncle Ted Pike’s National Prayer Network. Dawes (formerly Grant) has several anti-Jewish articles published on fascist David Duke’s website.

As the presentation inside got underway, pickets moved to cover large windows through which participants could hear their chants and see their signs. Speakers at our counter-rally highlighted the danger women face from anti-abortion bigots, and pointed out the need for a workers revolution to overturn capitalism and liberate women.

An IWW member addressed the crowd: “For them, you are a baby factory, an incubator for the worker of tomorrow, who can be exploited by a boss, another body to keep replicating the system of profit, a system that keeps your boss living large and you from getting the services you need...We need a revolutionary organization.”

A member of Class Struggle Workers Portland addressed the crowd, saying, “What does that mean for women when abortion is illegal? When there are no clinics? When you can’t get access? Women die every year from trying to self-terminate pregnancies because they can’t obtain a safe, legal abortion. We need a society that can collectivize all aspects of housework, of child rearing, in order to truly liberate women. But in order to do that we need a working class revolution, an international revolution.”

An Internationalist Group spokesman explained, “We’re calling on labor to defend the right to abortion, to defend the clinics, which are under attack by terrorist elements supported by some of the people in there.”

Union militants intend for the January 17 picket to be a beginning for organizing more solid and numerous labor-centered defense of abortion clinics. Speakers at the rally recalled the recent terrorist attacks on a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs and the firebombing of a Pullman, Washington Planned Parenthood last September. CSWP picket signs called for “Free Abortion on Demand,” while speakers warned that the Democratic Party was no friend of working women. This party of



Union militants confront anti-abortion bigots, Portland, OR January 17.

bloody imperialist war supports restrictions on abortion access that make a mockery of the “right” to abortion for poor and working class women. We need a class

struggle workers party to lead the fight for the emancipation of women, an essential part of the struggle for the emancipation of the working class. ■

## Why CSWP Says “Labor: Defend the Clinics!”

Point six of the Class Struggle Workers – Portland program states: “Fight sexism, defend the rights of women. For free, high quality 24-hour child care. For full reproductive rights, including free abortion on demand as part of a socialized universal health care system. For labor defense of abortion clinics against reactionary terrorists....” And for us, program is not just some nice words, but a set of principles for action.

We are an opposition tendency in the trade unions, a tendency seeking to change the policy of the unions and to replace the current union leadership with one committed to the policy of class struggle. CSWP is not the only left opposition in the labor movement. But there is no other group in the Portland-area unions that is trying to get the unions to take a stand on the abortion question.

Most union lefts don’t draw the line in the unions on the right to abortion because it’s “divisive,” so in practice these not-so-radicals limit themselves to issues of “bread and butter” and “democracy.” Sure, so long as nothing serious is at stake, they will carry on about all sorts of “social justice.” But in pursuit of opportunist alliances and temporary popularity, they won’t fight the capitalist system and all the oppression it creates — oppression of women, blacks, immigrants, gays and lesbians, etc. In our epoch of decaying capitalism, however, if you can’t fight the capitalist system politically you can’t win any serious labor struggle.

At the January 17 picket, we chanted “Pro-life, your name’s a lie, you don’t care if women die.” It is often noted that the anti-abortion movement’s professed concern for the “life” of the fetus is simply

a hypocritical ploy in their agenda to put the woman in her “place.” And while the religious bigots truly believe that they are marching under the banner of heaven, the oppression of women is not just a relic of biblical times. The drive to put women in their place, as incubators and house-slaves, comes from the capitalist system.

It is immensely beneficial to the bosses to keep half of the working class in that special place, tasked with doing most or all of the unpaid work that keeps the labor supply coming back to work from day to day and from generation to generation. So long as a woman, by reason of a pregnancy that she is not allowed to abort, can be condemned against her will to 20 or so years of this second shift, then you can forget about “equal rights.” And the bosses have even got some of the workers believing that this is the way things ought to be, that this arrangement is some kind of “human nature.”

It doesn’t have to be this way: oppression is not “human nature” but the product of a specific social order, the rule of capital. The fight against capitalism — the class struggle — is not just about wages and benefits. The class struggle includes the fight for the liberation of women: for the right of women to control their own bodies, for the socialization of “women’s work,” free child care, cooking, cleaning and laundry services. Likewise, the struggle for black liberation, including of doubly oppressed black women, is part of the class struggle.

With working-class women standing at the forefront of the class struggle, leading together with their male comrades, our class will become an unstoppable force. ■



It will take nothing short of workers revolution to free women from domestic slavery.

May-June 2016



# Italy: Back to Trotskyism

By Giulia and Carlo

11 May 2016

*The authors of this document have since formed the Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia, Italian section of the League for the Fourth International.*

We declare our political solidarity with the League for the Fourth International (LFI), which is the continuation of Spartacism before it degenerated, and want to struggle to help reforge the world party of socialist revolution, the Fourth International. With 21 and 27 years in the Spartacist tendency respectively, we were the recognized leaders of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia (LTd'I), Italian section of the International Communist League (ICL), from 1993-1999. This period included the Prodi/Rifondazione Comunista (RC) popular-front government, which fell with RC's departure in October 1998 (due to the massive desertion of its angry base), as well as the imperialist massacre in Serbia which provoked large-scale protest and resistance in Italy. With the policy of proletarian political opposition to all popular fronts, based on the program of revolutionary Trotskyism the LTd'I doubled its size in two and a half years, set up a local in Naples, had contacts from Puglia to Switzerland, put the pseudo-Trotskyists on the defensive, and was successfully doing the concrete work to significantly enlarge the organization.

Then came the stab in the back from the ICL international leadership in 1999 which launched a two-year-long witch hunt against us, sent us to New York, liquidated the Naples local and completely sabotaged the work. The tremendous opportunity of significant growth was completely thrown away. The ICL reprimanded us for not bringing the understanding of the "new period" after the capitalist counter-revolutions in the Soviet Union and East European deformed workers states along with the new "qualitative historic regression in the political consciousness of the working class and left internationally" into the section. This was the ICL leadership's version of the bourgeois myth of the "death of communism" that swept most of the left, and which we failed to understand. Since we were forced out, over the following 17 years the LTd'I has been a moribund organization, an empty shell of its former self, lately publishing an issue of *Spartaco* once a year or so consisting overwhelmingly of translations and making no intervention in the class struggle.

In 1999-2001 we were subjected to a political witch hunt culminating in an International Control Commission "investigation" involving grotesque accusations of faking illness (cancer), making false "charges" against the ICL leadership and hiding political differences. It was a hideous frame-up from start to finish. It is not just us saying this. A subsequent 2004 ICL "ICC Investigation Reopening October 2001 ICC Investigation" declared that "the

findings of the October 2001 ICC were based on manipulated evidence and therefore cannot be considered valid." It went further, concluding:

"In simplest terms, the question is whether Carlo and Giulia were subjected to a bureaucratic witchhunt. The answer is yes, with the consequences that these comrades were treated with contempt and hostility, marked by pulling them from their assignments in Italy.... The record demonstrates that Carlo and Giulia's 'crime' was their refusal to agree to political conclusions and characterizations insisted on primarily by [the] then I.S. [International Secretariat] secretary, and backed up by other members of the I.S. and IEC [International Executive Committee], about their political views and the work of the LTd'I, which in key particulars were in fact gross exaggerations or outright falsifications."

Yet while the evidence was laid out in painful detail, the report concluded that "the damage done to the ICL by the bureaucratic abuse documented in this ICC is irrevocable." This might appear to be an honest coming to terms, but in fact it served to continue to cover up the abuse. Although this document was published in an internal bulletin over 11 years ago, we were never informed that the charges against us had been found to be false. It was only after we entered into contact with the LFI that we learned from them of the "reinvestigation of the investigation" and were able to read the incriminating bulletin. A striking fact is that the techniques used against us were so close to those used in the 1996-97 purge of ICL cadres who went on to found the Internationalist Group and LFI. But the most important thing to understand about the bureaucratic abuse and political cowardice is that it was the product of the latter-day ICL's abandonment of the authentic Trotskyist revolutionary program that for decades we fought for, and for which we are again taking up the struggle today.

## ICL Suffers a Qualitative Historic Regression of Consciousness

After three decades of upholding the revolutionary continuity of Trotskyism, the ICL drew defeatist conclusions from the world historic defeat that was the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. While that certainly had an impact on workers' consciousness, although unevenly, it is the ICL, as well as other opportunist leftists, that has experienced the qualitative historic regression of revolutionary consciousness it ascribes to the working class. Is it the working class that has decreed that its struggles are no longer related to the final goal of socialism? No, it is the International Communist League. For those willing to take the trouble, go back and read the International Executive Committee thesis of January 1996.

We were not the first ones to experience the consequences of this political degeneration of the ICL. We certainly knew



Italian trade unionists block train carrying materiel for invasion of Iraq, February 2003. After falsely accusing Italian leadership of boycotting 1999 strikes against Balkans war, a few years later the ICL dropped the call for "hot cargoing" military goods in wartime.

that the organization had become bureaucratized, but for a time we had a hard time grappling with this. With time, the accumulation of programmatic revisions – with the ICL's 2010 support for the U.S. imperialist invasion of Haiti being a big one – began to pull the pieces together. Meanwhile, the long-time cadres expelled by the ICL in 1996-97 went on to form the League for the Fourth International and have fought to build a vanguard in action of the proletariat. We are now joining with them, on the program all of us fought for. Over the years, although small, the LFI has grown with the class struggle, while the ICL has withdrawn from the class struggle and begun betraying ever more programmatic points of Trotskyism (not only in action or more often non-action, but also formally codified). The main line of the degeneration of the ICL has been capitulation to its own bourgeoisie and imperialist rulers:

- abandoning and betraying the fight to oust the police from the trade unions in Brazil (1996),
- dropping the fight against and even denying the existence of the popular front in Mexico (1997),
- the social colonialist position of dropping the call for independence for Puerto Rico (1998) and the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique (2009),
- dropping the call to defeat one's own imperialism (post 9/11, 2001),
- dropping the call for hot-cargoing military goods in wartime (2002),
- dropping the call for workers strikes against the war because "it has no resonance in the working class" (culminating in 2008), and
- the ICL's three-month-long support, which it vociferously defended, for the brutal U.S. imperialist invasion of Haiti (2010).

More recently, in Greece (2015), the ICL raised the call for an amorphous "government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to

them." This is the typical type of weaselly formulation used by a myriad of centrist and reformist groups to call for support of a bourgeois government, which led to bloody defeats in Chile 1973 and during the Spanish Civil War and was the position of the Mensheviks in 1917. The ICL's de facto call for Grexit (Greek exit from the euro and the European Union) under bourgeois rule – even though Greece may be forced to undertake such a step – is hardly a revolutionary program, and could undercut the fight to unite European workers against capitalist austerity, to replace the Europe of bankers and militarists with a red Europe of workers councils, through socialist revolution continent-wide and beyond. Behind the ICL's fixation on this is its belief that such revolution is impossible today. The LFI fights for workers revolution inside or outside the E.U.

In another key conflict of recent years, the LFI has correctly insisted that the main enemy in Syria and the region is imperialism, which must be defeated and driven out, while warning that any alliance with the U.S./NATO imperialists is suicidal. Any real blow struck against the imperialists, including by the utter reactionaries of the Islamic State, is in the interests of working people around the world. But the fundamental character of the fighting in Syria and Iraq continues to be a sectarian civil war in which Trotskyists oppose all sides. The victory of one side or another in that civil war means a bloodbath of the conquered people. While the ICL gives military support to the I.S. against imperialism "and its allies," the immediate targets of the I.S.' holy war are the Shiite, Yazidi, Christian and Kurdish populations of Syria and Iraq. To claim that a victory of the I.S. against the Kurds, with its inevitable bloodbath and return to 8th century oppressive social norms, would be a blow against U.S. imperialism is not only false

*continued on page 20*

The Internationalist



Communism Lives ... Just Not in the SL/ICL

# SL/ICL: Haunted by Revolutionary Trotskyism

Joint Statement of the expelled Better-Late-Than-Never Faction  
and the Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International

Zigzagging on fundamental programmatic questions, tripping over the class line and abandoning key principles of Leninism – in short, the centrist degeneration of what was once a revolutionary party – doesn't sit well with those who actually want to fight for socialist revolution. But engaging in an open and sharp debate with their own comrades who uphold the principles and program of authentic Trotskyism which that party once stood for is not in the repertoire of a leadership that has lost its moorings and confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat.

Over the last two decades, in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the East European bureaucratically deformed workers states, the Spartacist League and its International Communist League have sought refuge from the class struggle in an increasingly inward-directed, self-referential world of their own. At the same time the SL/ICL has revised, and re-revised, one plank after another of the Trotskyist revolutionary program it once championed. And incapable of defending its revisionism in the service of "pulling their hands out of the boiling water" of the class struggle, the latter-day SL/ICL has had to resort to ever cruder means to defend the indefensible.

In contrast, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International, founded by cadres expelled by the SL/ICL in 1996-98, have sought to carry the Trotskyist program into the struggles of the working class and oppressed. Despite its limited forces, the IG/LFI has made modest but significant advances in struggles ranging from workers strikes against imperialist war and workers defense guards in the strike at the National University of Mexico (UNAM), to winning youth and immigrant worker cadres to Trotskyism in struggles for unionization and against deportations and racist police terror.

On April 16, the Better-Late-Than-Never (BLTN) Faction of the International Communist League (ICL) put forward its Declaration of Faction calling to "Return to the Road of Genuine Spartacism" and to "Regroup with the IG/LFI on the Basis of *Their* Revolutionary Continuity!" The very next day they received a response from the Spartacist League's Los Angeles local claiming that the document was "self-evidently composed in close collaboration with the Internationalist Group," which was utterly false, and cynically saying "we consider your document a statement of resignation and hereby accept it."

Comrades Ines and Wright fired off a "Letter to All Members of the ICL" refuting the lie of collaboration with the IG, noting that in order to wage a principled faction fight against the political degenera-

tion of the ICL they had continued to abide by party discipline and did *not* make contact with the IG/LFI. "We are proud autodidacts who took on the task of researching and writing this factional document entirely by ourselves," they wrote. "For the SL leadership to assert that this is impossible ... is to denigrate the intellectual and political capacity of the ICL membership."

The ICL leaders' response has a certain perverse logic to it: since they have been spinning around endlessly, swinging from one position to its opposite on key programmatic questions and capitulating before virtually every major test in the last two decades, why should they believe that any among their members are capable of incisive Marxist thought? But perhaps concluding that the pretext for "resignating" the BLTN Faction was all too transparent, the SL then sent a second letter to the Faction explicitly expelling it for "organizational and political loyalty" to the IG. The parallel to the 1963 expulsion of the leaders of the Revolutionary Tendency (who went on to found the Spartacist League) by the degenerating Socialist Workers Party for having a "hostile and disloyal attitude" was hard to miss.

Only on April 22 did the Internationalist Group learn of the existence of the Faction when it first established contact with the IG five days after its expulsion from the ICL.

The platform of the BLTN Faction took the ICL leadership to task for their anti-Trotskyist revisionism in four key areas: "The Russian Question," "The Class Line," "The State" and the struggle to "Reforge a Fourth International That Trotsky Would Call His Own." It exposed how the party that had uniquely waged a principled and heroic struggle to defend the DDR (East Germany) and Soviet Union responded to defeat by dumping Trotsky's analysis of the dual nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy and whitewashing the role of the bourgeoisie and its social-democratic agents in the capitalist counterrevolution. The new line, that "the Stalinists led the counterrevolution," was concocted in the course of the 1995-96 fight leading to the expulsion of the cadres who subsequently founded the Internationalist Group, and codified in the ICL's 1998 "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program."

As the BLTN Faction pointed out, the ICL cannot even claim originality. It picked up this line after hearing it again and again in polemics against the ICL's work in the DDR by wretched Stalinophobes like the misnamed International Bolshevik Tendency and David North & Co. (d/b/a the World Socialist Web Site). The Shachtmanite and Cliffite renegades from Trotskyism used this line to mislabel

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**Read the Declaration of the expelled Better-Late-Than-Never Faction that the SL and ICL wouldn't let their membership discuss. Send US\$2 to Mundial Publications, Box 3321, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10008, USA.**

the Stalinist bureaucracy a new exploiting class, in order not to have to defend the USSR against imperialism. The ICL waged the hard fight to defend the gains of the October revolution to the end, only to start whipping itself for doing so just 6 years later. While the ICL leadership acts as if this is an unending game of words, it is spreading a conception that politically disarms those who would actually fight for proletarian political revolution in the remaining deformed workers states, which is crucial to their defense against imperialism and counterrevolution.

ICL members should ask why this issue keeps coming back to haunt their tendency. First and foremost because, as the founder of American Trotskyism, James P. Cannon said in his 1939 Speech on the Russian Question, "Who touches the Russian question, touches a revolution." Therefore, he counseled, "Be serious about it. Don't play with it." The ICL also continues to stumble over this cornerstone of Trotskyism because what came to be known as the "Norden fight" was really a fight over its own history. To embrace the new line meant to renounce the ICL's fight against counterrevolution in the DDR and

USSR, one of its proudest moments.

After all, on 3 January 1990, the ICL initiated a united-front demonstration together with the Stalinist ruling party, bringing out a quarter million people protesting against Nazi defacing of a Soviet war memorial and against capitalist reunification of Germany. As the Faction Declaration asked:

"So if you accept the idea that the Stalinist bureaucracy 'led' or was 'centrally responsible' for counterrevolution, what does that say about the nature of the Treptow demonstration?"

The question has been asked before, but never answered by the ICL.

We encourage readers to study the Declaration of the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction which is available on the IG/LFI web site ([www.internationalist.org](http://www.internationalist.org)). It wades through (with hip boots and a shovel, as Cannon said of polemics with Shachtman) the muck of lies, distortions and obfuscations the ICL leadership has thrown out to cover its own betrayals, starting with abandoning and stabbing in the back the comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil in their unprecedented struggle to remove police from the unions (which the ICL always called





**Treptow, January 1990: the ICL initiated a united-front demonstration with the ruling Stalinist party that mobilized 250,000 against capitalist reunification of Germany. The ICL's later claim that the Stalinists "led" the counterrevolution means politically disavowing one of the proudest moments in its history.**

for but never tried to carry out). The ICL then falsely accused the LQB of suing the union when its comrades were the union leaders who were sued and removed by the courts. To this day, the ICL repeats the lies of pro-police elements who used the power of the bourgeois state against the Brazilian Trotskyists.

What was particularly impressive to the IG about the Declaration was how the comrades independently investigated key political differences between the ICL and the LFI. This included the question of corporatist "unions" in Mexico which are actually an agency of state control to prevent the rise of genuine workers unions. This heritage of the one-party regime that governed Mexico for seven decades can be difficult to grasp for those who have never experienced a system where virtually all social institutions were state-controlled. But for Mexican workers, and anyone claiming to provide revolutionary leadership, understanding this issue is literally a life-or-death question as the corporatist pseudo-unions have murdered hundreds of their own members in line with their social function of integrating "labor" organizations directly into the capitalist state apparatus. The Faction established that the current ICL line, treating these labor cops as genuine unions, flatly contradicts its own published line for a decade prior to the 1996 expulsions, when *Workers Vanguard* rightly described Mexican corporatist unions as "company unions on a grand scale."

Similarly, while fighting the popular front had been the cornerstone of its Mexican section's work from its inception in 1988 until the section's leaders and youth militants were expelled in the 1996 purges, the latter-day SL/ICL imagines that claiming that there is not, never has been and cannot be a popular front in Mexico will help them discredit the LFI. Quite the opposite – by denying reality and their own past, in the end they can only discredit themselves.

Those in the ICL and others reading the Faction's Declaration will be struck also by the fact that the BLTN comrades began fighting on other issues, notably over crude distortions regarding the so-called "theory" of "white skin privilege," with a leader of the L.A. Spartacist League incredibly claiming that, because white workers are the majority in the U.S., "in the aggregate" white workers are

even "more exploited and miserable" than black workers.

The BLTN Faction also took up the issue of walking bosses (foremen who directly represent the shipping bosses) in the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). The Faction took up the issue as the SL backtracked on its earlier position that walking bosses are management and therefore should not be in the union. After reading the materials from the Faction, investigating labor and SL archives on the ILWU and speaking with former activists in the caucus the SL had politically supported in the union, the IG, which had not studied the question before, concluded that the BLTN comrades' position was correct. They upheld the class line against attempts by the SL to obscure it and promote class collaboration on the docks. This is no small matter in one of the most powerful and key unions in the United States.

It was only after hitting a brick wall in these earlier fights that the comrades who subsequently formed the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction began to dig deeper and investigate the possibility that the IG/LFI might be right in its analysis of the degeneration of the ICL. It is well-known among members of the ICL that the IG/LFI has repeatedly been right against their party, with the SL/ICL's shameful support for the 2010 U.S. invasion of Haiti in the guise of earthquake relief being only the most egregious example.

After so many changes of line, often going back and forth on the same question, and admitted betrayals, it is impossible for a thinking SL/ICLer not to harbor nagging doubts. But many hesitate to study the LFI's program and record – as the BLTN Faction boldly and frankly did – because they fear (rightly, as was just demonstrated) that their membership would be quickly terminated. In an organization which has gone to great lengths to be an alternative world for its members in their isolation from intervention in the class struggle, this is a daunting prospect.

The Better-Late-Than-Never Faction Declaration is a challenge to those in the SL/ICL who truly want to make a revolution. What the BLTN comrades discovered as they dug into one question after another, is that the program of the IG/LFI was already familiar to them in its fundamentals – it was the program of revolutionary

Trotskyism they had embraced and thought they were fighting for. As the report on the latest conference of the Spartacist League/U.S. (published in the 22 April issue of *Workers Vanguard*) makes clear, the SL is a dying party. Youth Commission "disbanded," Labor Black Leagues "moribund," WV to be cut back to 8 pages "in cases of emergency" due to a "paucity of resources," etc. The references to up-and-coming youth leaders ring hollow when internally the leadership talks of having a Council of Elders to ensure against political wobbles (not much luck so far).

And how can young militants get a solid grounding in Marxism in an organization wracked by cliquism in the leadership, unable to orient itself, which will run against the rocks in any stormy class struggles? Lamenting that "even those who want to fight see little hope for change and lack any understanding of the central role of the working class in putting an end to capitalism" and "even less understand the need for a proletarian vanguard party," the SL conference concluded that the organization's central task "is to maintain the continuity of revolutionary Marxism today, i.e., Trotskyism." That's a tall order for a tendency that flips back and forth on the role of Stalinism, that can't tell the difference between death squads and workers unions, can't see an imperialist "humanitarian" invasion for what it is, and that has self-consciously exited the class struggle.

It is crucial to understand that the decline of the SL/ICL is a direct result of its political/programmatic degeneration. The proclamation of the supposed qualitative degeneration of workers' consciousness is the SL/ICL's embrace of the bourgeois false consciousness of the supposed "death of communism," as a speech by SL spokesman Joseph Seymour makes clear ("Critical Notes on the 'Death of Communism' and the Ideological Conditions of the Post-Soviet World," in *Workers Vanguard*, 1 January 2010). The IG/LFI has opposed this "theoretical" justification for desertion from the class struggle from the start, understanding that the period following the victory of counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and East European workers states has been a contradictory one, in which workers around the globe, and in the heartland of U.S. imperialism, continue to face class battles where revolutionaries must actively intervene. Only in the course of struggle can revolutionary cadre be forged, and only by fighting alongside the workers in struggle can the revolutionary vanguard demonstrate its capacity to lead its class to victory.

As for the Russian Question, which is at the heart of the Declaration of the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction, its defense of the Trotskyist position against the ICL's wobbling neo-Shachtmanite revisionism is vital to fight the threat of counterrevolution in China, Cuba and the other remaining deformed workers states. Consider the response by SLers to the expelled Faction as it distributed its Declaration at May Day in New York City, where it marched with the IG/LFI. When confronted by the Faction with the question "Who led the counterrevolution in the DDR?" young SL members gave contradictory answers. One said it's "obvious" from empirical facts that "the Stalinists led the counterrevolution" while another argued that the wrong line

that the Stalinists led the counterrevolution was "corrected" a long time ago. A more cynical ICL leader from Germany flatly refused to give an answer to the question "Who led the counterrevolution?" changing the subject after each of the three times the question was asked of her.

The Faction pointed out that this coexistence of counterposed positions within the ICL on the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy was the result of a pseudo-correction in 2003 and the accompanying diversionary campaign labeling all discussion on this question as part of a "false fight," which the BLTN factional declaration exposed as a conscious fraud to prevent a reevaluation of the 1995-96 fight and expulsions, that represented a turning point for the post-Soviet ICL. With this level of confusion, the Spartacist tendency could never carry out today the crucial intervention, with all its shortcomings, that the ICL mounted in 1989-92. That alone is a guarantee that this badly degenerated party cannot lead victorious struggles in the future.

The SL/ICL is dead for revolution, and the sooner those who want to fight for revolution come to grips with that, the sooner they will be able to make their own contribution to the struggle for humanity's future. Many have put up with years of pulling their punches in hopes of strategically waging single-issue fights to gradually add up to reforming the ICL back to Trotskyism. Some have become demoralized after realizing that even the greatest mental gymnastics exerted toward that goal amounted to running full speed in a hamster wheel. The recent expulsion of the BLTN Faction demonstrates yet again the resolve of the leadership to keep internal oppositionists in their place – i.e. keep quiet or get out. Those who are fed up with the idea that they can only "succeed" through internal self-censorship and endless cliquist cannibalism, and want to exert their energy on actually building a revolutionary party to intervene in the real world, don't belong in the ICL, they belong in the LFI.

Carrying out our common perspective of revolutionary regroupment on the basis of authentic Trotskyism, on May 4 the BLTN Faction and the Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International adopted an Agreement for Common Work, which states in part:

"Following several days of discussion, and jointly participating in the May Day march in NYC, the IG/LFI and the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction hereby agree to carry out common work aiming at an early fusion of our forces on the basis of:

"–the Document of the First National Conference of the Internationalist Group, 'The Trotskyist Struggle for International Socialist Revolution' (April 2015);

"–the 'International Perspectives of the League for the Fourth International' (April 2015), notably including the sections outlining the policy of proletarian internationalism on Syria, and polemicalizing against the ICL on this issue;

"–the 'Declaration of the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction' (April 2016) which powerfully reaffirms the struggle of the IG/LFI to uphold and put into practice Bolshevik politics from Germany to Mexico, Brazil and elsewhere in the period since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, homeland of the October Revolution, which we defended to the end, despite and against

*continued on page 19*

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# Mexico Teachers...

*continued from page 1*

streets from sidewalk to sidewalk in the city of Oaxaca to express their solidarity with the teachers, chanting slogans condemning the “murderers” and the “repressive government.” “Not with bullets, not with machine guns will the people be silenced,” they shouted. The mobilization recalled the atmosphere of the third megamarch of 16 June 2006 when the teachers swept away the police of hated Oaxaca governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz after his failed attempt to evict the teachers’ encampment. But the popular rage will go nowhere without a revolutionary leadership that takes on the fundamental enemy, capitalism, and extends the strike to key sectors of the Mexican proletariat. It is essential that the mobilization have an internationalist class character, not nationalist such as bourgeois sectors are trying to foist on the movement, in particular those around the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, popularly known by his initials, AMLO, who was formerly a leading politician of the long-governing PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and then the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution).

The strike by the independent teachers unions is in a critical phase after the brutal attack by the bourgeois state. The murderous federal government of Enrique Peña Nieto (of the PRI), at the request of the state government of Gabino Cué, attacked barricades on the state’s highways from the air and on the ground. Teachers, parents and residents fought back with sticks and stones against the ferocious attack by the federal police on the night of June 17 in the oil port of Salina Cruz in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and then subsequently in the Mixteca region and in the Central Valleys. For the bourgeoisie, smashing the teachers’ struggle is fundamental to advancing the privatization of public education and the destruction of independent unions in the country. For the workers movement, stopping the blood bath is a question of elementary survival. Mobilizations denouncing this attack are urgently needed throughout the country, on the road to a genuine national strike.

In recent years, the teacher’s struggle has become a matter of life or death. Long gone are the ritual teachers demonstrations in the game of give and take between the government and the union leadership, in which the pattern of “mobilization-negotiation-mobilization” gave the appearance of producing some results. From the time of the uprising of 2006 on, the teachers’ struggles have confronted a voracious bourgeoisie avid to turn education into a source of profit, and thus to eliminate the right of working people for their children to get a free, high quality public education. Today the PRI federal government of Peña Nieto wants to do to the CNTE what the PAN (the clerical-rightist National Action Party) president Felipe Calderón did to the SME (Mexican Electrical Workers Union) in order to impose the so-called “labor reform,” and later the energy “reform” in the midst of his deadly “war against drugs” which cost the lives of over 200,000 people.

The struggle is not only national. The “structural reforms” which Mexican governments are attempting to implement have been dictated by world imperialism and designed by its financial agencies. The

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“education reform” that consists of penalizing teachers for all the ills of this decaying capitalist system is being carried out from Chile to Brazil and inside the United States. The bourgeoisie is trying to counteract its declining profit rate by having the entire weight of the world economic crisis fall on the shoulders of the working people and the urban and rural poor. However, in his eagerness to smash the teachers unions that are independent of the state control exercised by the SNTE, Peña Nieto’s government has made a big mistake. By declaring that any teacher who is absent for three days in a month would lose his or her job, it has created a force of tens of thousands of battle-tested fighters who literally have nothing to lose, and thus are prepared to go to the limit.

The level of state violence today is comparable to that imposed on 25 November 2006, at the end of the Oaxaca rebellion, with one major difference. Instead of drowning the uprising in rivers of blood, today they have led to its intensification. Even bourgeois sectors – leaders of the restaurant and hotel trade, the manager of the Guelaguetza folklore festival, large farmers, church hierarchs – have been frightened by the scope of the resistance, and notably by the massive participation by parents. They say that this is “worse than 2006,” and timidly suggest that a “conversation” with the teachers be undertaken in order to restore calm. But however much the leaders of the CNTE call for “dialogue,” as in the teachers mobilization of 2013, this is a trap: the murderers in power are deaf to the strikers’ demands. They will not give up at the bargaining table what has not been imposed on them by the force of the workers movement. What’s needed is to forge a leadership with the revolutionary program and determination to mobilize that force in an all-out battle.

## In the Face of Repression: Deepen, Broaden and Radicalize the Strike

The Grupo Internacionalista has actively intervened in the teachers strike from the start, participating in marches and blockades. We have sold more than 1,000 copies of *Revolución Permanente* in Oaxaca alone. We have organized Marxist study groups outside the headquarters of the CNTE’s Section 22 in Oaxaca and in the moving encampment in Mexico City. We have shown political films in the same places. We have spoken on Radio Plantón, the teachers’ radio station, in our program, the “Internationalist Workers Frequency.” We have distributed thousands of leaflets warning against voting for any bourgeois party, including AMLO’s Morena. In all this, we have called since the beginning to extend the strike to the entire education sector nationwide, and to mobilize key sectors of the industrial proletariat in a powerful national strike. Only in this way can we stand up to the state that not only is attacking the teachers but the entire workers movement.

Thus our comrades organized brigades of striking teachers to agitate among students, workers and faculty of the National University of Mexico (UNAM). We were able to get the Philosophy and Literature School of the UNAM to strike on May 17, helping out with CNTE teachers, mainly from Oaxaca, in speaking with striking students about the need to extend the strike to the entire education sector, which is today

under attack. Also in meetings of the STUNAM union, members of the Grupo Internacionalista and CNTE teachers called on the workers to go on strike. In doing so, we were able to observe the games played by the bureaucracy of STUNAM leader Agustín Rodríguez who publicly talks of his solidarity with the teachers strike but inside the union argues that going on strike together with the teachers is impossible.

It is clear that the will to struggle and combativeness of the teachers not only has not diminished but has grown with every attempt by the government to stop the mobilization. However, the political strategy of the CNTE leadership has been to press for dialogue with the bourgeoisie, going to Gobernación (the interior ministry) and Los Pinos (Mexico’s White House) to beg for someone in authority to grant them an interview. At the same time, it is seeking an alliance with the parliamentary deputies of the bourgeois parties and to divert the struggle onto the sterile path of bourgeois electoral politics, calling to vote for Morena. To believe in the empty rhetoric of supposed support for the teachers from AMLO, whose job for the big capitalists and their imperialist godfathers is to channel struggles into pressuring the institutions, is a guarantee of defeat. We already warned in our supplement calling not to vote for Morena or any other bourgeois party.

“It is expected that the repression – so far administered in doses, in order not to inflame the ire of a population that still is on the brink of a social explosion – will intensify in the wake of the June 5 elections. Then the rulers who are seeking to impose an education “reform” in the service of capital will go all out.”

–“Mexican Teachers Strike at a Crossroads,” *The Internationalist*, June 2016

And that is exactly what happened.

What’s needed rather than the popular-front policy of class collaboration is intransigent class struggle. It’s necessary to fight with complete political independence from all the bourgeois parties and politicians, including the PRI, PAN, PRD, MC (Citizens Movement), PT (Labor Party, a satellite of the PRD), Morena, AMLO, etc. The illusions in the pathetic mask of bourgeois democracy donned by the present semi-bonapartist regime of Mexican capitalism must be shattered. For its part, the ruling class has made it utterly clear that anyone who fights against the plans of capital will experience the sadistic response of the state. The long list of massacres, from 1968 and 1971 to the fateful night of Iguala of 2014, when the 43 teachers college students of Ayotzinapa were disappeared, and now that of Nochistlán, register the fact that the Mexican capitalist state is fed by a tribute of human blood. No political reform or constituent assembly within the framework of capitalism can stop the capitalist onslaught which is destroying past gains and democratic concessions worldwide.



**Grupo Internacionalista literature table in striking teachers’ encampment in Oaxaca, May 2016**

## Drawing the Lessons of 2006

The 2006 struggle in Oaxaca marked one of the cruelest class battles in a country convulsed by miners and metal workers strikes and large-scale peasant struggles. We are experiencing today a resurgence of the teachers insurgency that was begun 37 years ago against the phony trade-unionism of the corporatist SNTE (National Union of Education Workers). Today the SNTE is the spearhead of the government attack on the CNTE. Following in the wake of the Federal Police, it promises to “clean out” Section 22 and impose its Section 59 of scabs and hired assassins. Nevertheless, illusions persist in some sectors of the CNTE of an impossible “democratization” of this state apparatus dedicated to preventing genuine independent workers unions. The strikebreaking by the SNTE in the current conflict should make clear the need to break the straitjacket of labor corporatism.

It is also necessary to draw the lessons of the experience of 2006, which has entered the pantheon of heroic defeated struggles of Mexican history, such as Zapata’s at the time of the Mexican Revolution, which weigh so heavily on the consciousness of those fighting against this deadly system that they seem destined to repeat them, always with the same result. When on 14 January 2006 the state police attempted to evict the encampment of Section 22 of the CNTE in the Zócalo (main square) of the city of Oaxaca, the residents of the state capital came out in support of the teachers and defeated the cops. As the conflict escalated, there was talk of a “Oaxaca Commune” and even dreaming about a communist society in that one state. However, for all the popular combativeness, which was able to push the police and the state apparatus out of the city of Oaxaca for over five months, the Oaxaca State Trade-Union Front and the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO) which led the struggle followed a popular-front policy.

With their narrow reformist outlook, they were unable to extend the teachers strike not only beyond the borders of Oaxaca, but even to other areas inside the state. By focusing all the will to struggle shown on hundreds of barricades into bourgeois parliamentarism, the leadership of the teachers and the APPO called for a “punishment vote” against the PRI and PAN, thus channeling the struggle into supporting the then candidate of the PRD, López Obrador. Thus instead of fighting to break with the





Hearing reports of a caravan of 4,000 gendarmes (riot troops) of the Federal Police being dispatched to Oaxaca to repress the teachers, strikers, parents and residents of Nochixtlán, Oaxaca as well as social activists from throughout the Mixteca set up a blockade of over 1,000 people on the superhighway, holding off the police convoy for five days (above), until it was dissolved in the massacre of Sunday, June 19.

bourgeoisie, they pave the way to defeat. Following the elections, fraudulent as always, and with the movement politically disarmed, lacking a policy of class struggle, came the dark night of November 25 when the Federal Preventive Police swept through the historic center of Oaxaca city and arrested hundreds of activists, putting a full stop to the audacious teachers struggle, at a cost of 26 compañeros murdered.

Now the situation is more acute. Following the implementation of the education reform, which the CNTE mobilization in 2013 was not able to beat down, the bourgeoisie figured that by taking away from Section 22 the control of some parts of the state education institute it could undercut the teachers' capacity to fight. Another mistake. Even without the incentive of earning points by participating in protests, and defying the threats to fire them without severance pay, thousands of education workers are once again joining encampments, blockades and barricades. The teachers' example can also be a catalyst for social discontent produced by the firing of 30% or more of public sector workers, the process of de facto privatization of the health sector, of the massive firing of Pemex (state oil company) workers and an exchange rate that has fallen to 20 pesos to the dollar, drastically cutting into the purchasing power of working people.

In 2016, in contrast to ten years ago, the teachers struggle is not limited to the Oaxaca capital and the Valles Centrales region but has extended to the Tehuantepec Isthmus

and the Mixteca region. The former includes strategic facilities for the bourgeoisie, like the refinery at Salina Cruz, which supplies fuel to practically all the Pacific Coast states. The blockade of the refinery checkmated the government, and also won sympathy for the teachers' struggle from some oil workers who saw how "their" union (the corporatist STPRM) hasn't put up the least opposition to the energy "reform" which is threatening to cost them their jobs. Also in the Isthmus, health workers have given decisive support to the teachers' struggle. In the Mixteca, the educators' strike has been joined by activists from all over the region, as was seen in the memorial service today in the city of Tlaxiaco for two of those who were cut down in the massacre at Nochixtlán.

In 2016, in contrast to 2006, the onslaught against the teachers takes place in a fertile field for extending the strike to other key sectors of working people. In the last year there have been the explosive struggles of the agricultural workers of San Quintín and the maquiladora (free trade zone) workers in Ciudad Juárez. Today the health workers, who have shown their support by attending the wounded on the barricades and calling strikes in solidarity with the teachers, are fighting against a phony "universalization" of health insurance will mean slashing the right of workers to medical services. The steel workers of section 271 of the semicorporatist Union of Mine and Metal Workers in the port of Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán have been subject to harassment by the government, which after a strike in the

steel plant in March of this year arrested five leaders for protests in 2007.

In 2016, as in 2006 and 2013, the combative teacher unionists organized in the CNTE have played a leading role in heroically confronting the state, defending public education and nearly 40 years of independent trade unionism against labor corporatism. But to avoid repeating the story of those defeats, it is necessary to draw the lessons and apply them to the current struggle. The movement of 2006 was defeated because it didn't go beyond the limits of the state of Oaxaca to become a national strike, nor did it extend to the industrial proletariat even though at the time there were workers strikes in various parts of the country. In 2013, the CNTE left the teachers of Guerrero hanging when they went out on strike against the education "reform," only undertaking national action some months later. And it ended up accepting the false promises of a "dialogue" with the federal and state governments which are now brutally attacking them.

The teachers insurgency lacks a revolutionary class leadership. The risk of repeating history lies precisely in that. However, there is a modest but important change: the presence in Oaxaca of a local of the Grupo Internacionalista, the result of our intervention in 2006 and later years, and which has shown in practice the way forward. Drawing the lessons of the struggle of 2006 we wrote at that time:

"In order to win this battle, a proletarian leadership is required which breaks

with all the bourgeois parties on a genuine class program and mobilizes the tremendous power of the working class nationally against the capitalist state....

"The 'democratic' program has led to a dead-end, because the struggles of the working people cannot be resolved on the basis of bourgeois democracy – which, moreover, is impossible in semi-colonial countries like Mexico. As Trotsky indicated in his perspective (both a theory and a program) of *permanent revolution*, today no wing of the capitalist class is capable of carrying out the tasks which the great bourgeois revolutions accomplished in centuries past. The *agrarian revolution* necessary to free poor peasants and Indians from their centuries-old poverty; *national liberation* from the imperialist yoke; and *democracy* for the exploited and oppressed, the wage slaves of capital, can only be won through workers revolution, expropriating the profit-hungry bourgeoisie and extending to the very heart of the empire, where today more than ten million Mexican workers toil.... We do not look backwards, to the heritage of Zapata's peasant nationalism; instead, we seek to be the proletarian Bolsheviks of the 21st century.

–"State of Siege in Oaxaca, Preparations in Mexico City." *The Internationalist* No. 25, January-February 2007

Armed with this program, put forward by the Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, we can open the way to victory. ■



On Sunday morning, June 19, the Federal Police took their revenge, brutally attacking the barricades at Nochixtlán. In response, strikers and their supporters set fire to trucks and other vehicles. Cops seeking to "teach a lesson" to the protesters opened fire with live ammunition, killing eight and wounding 94, 45 of them with bullet wounds. Nevertheless, as we go to press the blockade has been reestablished.



# “Operation Car Wash”: An Attack by the Police and Judiciary Threatening Democratic and Labor Rights

## Brazil:

### No to Impeachment!

#### For Workers Mobilization Against the Rightist Bourgeois Offensive

#### No Political Support to the Bourgeois Popular Front Government

Since the beginning of March, Brazil has been engulfed in a deep-going political crisis. A million people marched in right-wing protests around the country on March 13 demanding impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers Party (PT). Meanwhile, a runaway “corruption investigation” threatens basic democratic rights. In response, a half million protested in the streets on March 18 against impeachment, followed by tens of thousands on March 24 and 31. But the popular-front government continues to push anti-working-class policies in its attempt to conciliate the aggressive right wing, and the left is divided between pro- and anti-government blocs.

Subsequently, on May 12 the PT president Rousseff was suspended by a vote of the Chamber of Deputies (lower house of Brazil’s Congress). The popular-front bourgeois government was replaced by a hardline capitalist interim regime headed by former vice president Michel Temer while impeachment proceedings are underway in the Senate.

The following article, translated from a special supplement of *Vanguarda Operária* (April 2016) published by our comrades of the *Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil*, underscores why revolutionary Marxists call for workers mobilization against impeachment and the bonapartist threat, and at the same time to use that power against the attacks on working people by both the feuding bourgeois forces.

MARCH 30 – The train is underway, the clock is ticking. The countdown to the showdown over the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff has begun. The big business press is howling for the jailing of former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. In the name of fighting corruption, “Operação Lava Jato” (Operation Car Wash)<sup>1</sup> has given the green light to the repressive apparatus. The judicial power and

<sup>1</sup> The judicial “investigation” of kickbacks on contracts of the semi-privatized Petrobras oil company – now mainly owned by Wall Street investors but with the Brazilian state still controlling management – in which politicians of all major parties received payoffs, mainly to finance election campaigns. The earliest cases involved transfers of money at a car wash, “Lava Jato” (jet wash).



Workers at Ford auto assembly plant in Brazil’s ABC industrial region vote massively to “fight against the coup and in defense of labor rights,” March 22. But that requires powerful class actions, including factory occupations and a general strike. The real coup that has to be resisted is the anti-worker offensive of capital – the budget cuts, privatizations and pension and labor “reforms” being pushed both by the bourgeois right and by the capitalist popular-front government led by the Workers Party of Lula and Dilma.

the police have slipped the leash of civilian control, ignoring laws, placing themselves above any body elected by popular vote. Today they are attacking Dilma and Lula, tomorrow their targets will be the pensions, wages and jobs of working people – and the organizations of the workers movement. Make no mistake, democratic and labor rights are under attack. To defeat this sinister bonapartist offensive, we need a powerful revolutionary mobilization of the working class.

For the last 13 years, the Workers Party (PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores) has governed together with the PCdoB<sup>2</sup> and with bourgeois parties in a *popular front*, a class-collaborationist coalition that chains the workers to capitalist sectors, their class enemies. The biggest of the bosses’ parties is the PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement), the eternal party of government for which the be all and end all is burrowing into the

<sup>2</sup> PCdoB – Communist Party of Brazil, formerly Maoist, now thoroughly social-democratized.

state apparatus in order to secure its sinécures. Now these rats are jumping ship as they see it going under. If this leads to a domino effect, other parties supporting the government may follow suit. The bourgeois “allies” are abandoning the PT. What will the PT do? Is it putting forward a more radical program in order to mobilize its working-class ranks? Not a chance. Lula, now acting as an informal advisor of Dilma, is doing everything possible to keep some PMDBers on board, and offering hundreds of positions given up by the deserters to the more than 20 smaller rent-a-parties in Congress. Those who play by the rules of phony bourgeois “democracy” will die by the rules of this fixed game, and the PT has made its choice.

For the popular-front government, the departure of the PMDB will probably prove fatal. The PT dug its own grave, and chose the gravedigger. But if Dilma goes down, it will be difficult for the leaders of the “picaretas” (crooks) in Congress – Vice President Michel Temer, Cham-

ber of Deputies president Eduardo Cunha and Senate president Renan Calheiros (all of them PMDB) – to take office. On the other hand, the barons of the PSDB<sup>3</sup> like Senator José Serra, São Paulo state governor Geraldo Alckmin, former presidential candidate Aécio Neves and even ex-president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, are facing legal charges on scandals like the “Banestado” scandal<sup>4</sup> and the “trensão” scandal.<sup>5</sup> This gang has already been kicked out of demonstrations accused of being opportunists.

If the federal Supreme Court supports an interim government and the Superior Electoral Court calls new elections, Rede Globo (the right-wing press and TV behemoth) will try to get Marina Silva elected. Legislators of the PT and PSOL<sup>6</sup> are already fleeing to her. Since Silva was formerly in the PT, they will try to calm the labor federations and set up another form of class collaboration. At the same time, she was the candidate of the evangelical right wing, maintaining good relations with agribusiness and the São Paulo bankers. In short, the perfect anti-PT candidate. And after a transition under Marina, with Judge Sérgio Moro of Operation Car Wash in the forefront, you can see the outlines of a bonapartist strong state dominated by courts and cops.

Be that as it may, the coup against working people – the deadly “fiscal adjustment” (budget cuts), the pension and labor “reforms” – is plowing ahead with the wind in its sails, whether under the command of the PT or the right, or of a “technical” government. Therefore, at the same time that it’s necessary to mobilize the power of the workers movement to block the road of the bonapartist offensive, we must use this power against the anti-worker policies which unite the bourgeois forces in conflict, both the right-wing opposition and the popular front which is still in office. We need class ac-

<sup>3</sup> PSDB – Party of Brazilian Social Democracy, a “center-right” bourgeois party and main opposition in Congress.

<sup>4</sup> Over billions of dollars of tax evasion funneled through the Bank of the State of Paraná.

<sup>5</sup> Over bid-rigging on contracts for the expansion of the São Paulo subway.

<sup>6</sup> PSOL – Party of Socialism and Liberty, a social-democratic split-off from the PT.





### Rightist mobilization with the FIESP duck calls for exterminating Workers Party.

tions – not vague “movements,” but concrete measures – such as real, not symbolic, strikes and plant occupations to sink the budget cuts, the privatizations and the “reforms” ordered by big capital and imperialism, which is applying in Brazil the same program as in Greece. And to come out victorious, all this must be guided by a program of transitional slogans and measures which prepare the way to socialist revolution.

For that reason, our response to the ominous judiciary/police offensive amid the current deep political crisis in Brazil must be against the bourgeoisie and the labor lieutenants of capital within the workers movement. We inscribe on our battle standards:

**No to impeachment!**

**For workers mobilization against the bourgeois rightist offensive, no political support to the bourgeois popular-front government!**

**Forge a revolutionary workers party! Fight for a workers and peasants government, the beginning of the socialist revolution!**

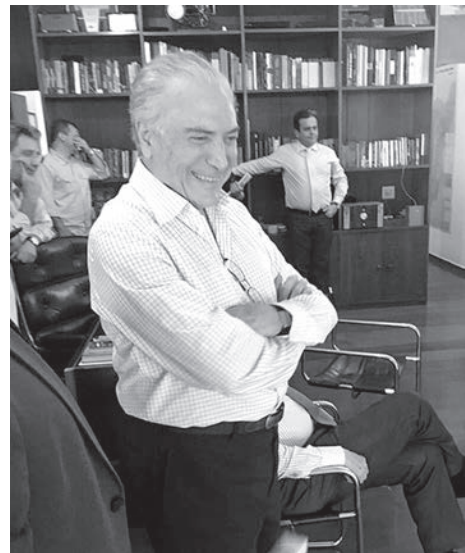
### Rightist Bonapartist Offensive Against the Popular Front

At this moment, the workers, the impoverished black residents of the *favelas* (slums) and outskirts of the big cities, the students and women, the landless in the countryside and homeless in the cities cannot remain indifferent in the face of an offensive by the most reactionary forces of the country who want to throw the exploited and oppressed into absolute poverty. It is impossible not to see the hand of big business behind the large demonstrations. The Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (FIESP) has for some time been pushing for impeachment, with its gigantic inflated duck as a complaint against the taxes that would result from reintroducing the CMPF (a tax on financial movements by investors and speculators). Now there is an outpouring of statements by business entities, such as the “Communiqué to the Nation” by the National Confederation of Industry denouncing “chaos” and demanding “reestablishment of governability.” The anti-Dilma hard core meets in front of the FIESP headquarters on the Avenida Paulista in São Paulo where the leaders receive coffee, free Internet and lunch with filet mignon, while the pawns in the street get beef stroganoff.

It is also impossible to ignore the ostentatious participation by the militarized police in the rightist actions. Whether they are Military Police with guns, horses and *caveirões* (vans for transporting prisoners) or Federal Police delegates proclaiming, “I am from the Republic of Curitiba,” the city that is the

base from which super-judge Sérgio Moro directs his Operation Car Wash, the threat is unmistakable. Out there in “Moroland” a teacher who dares criticize on social media that students dressed in black are calling for a coup d’état is persecuted as a “leftist” and “communist” and driven from her school. And at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, when a sizeable crowd protested a noisy pro-impeachment rally, the Military Police attacked with pepper gas and fired rubber bullets at those opposing the rightist provocation. If in the dying Roman Republic the rulers sought to silence the plebs by offering them “bread and circuses,” the decaying Brazilian bourgeoisie wants to impose its dictates by offering filet mignon and stroganoff to its people, and bullets for their adversaries. For now made of rubber. And if the country goes up in flames over impeachment?

Concerning that fraud, we are about to witness the spectacle of a trial of the president, who has not been accused of personal corruption, by a congress in which 60% of the deputies and senators – 351 out of 594 of the members of those august chambers – are under investigation for criminal activity, ranging from Car Wash and dubious campaign expenses to homicide. The big business right wing is seeking to grab what it was unable to win at the polls: as soon as Pter Dilma began her second term, the *tucano* (PSDB) losers began the marches trying to overthrow her. In the Congressional den of thieves, horse-trading and vote-buying among the 25 parties is so flagrant that they have a “party window,” a period of a couple weeks in which legislators can change their party without penalty if they get a better offer. In this year’s parliamentary auction, some 90 legislators switched parties. But there remains a minor problem by the name of Eduardo Cunha, the president of



**Vice president (now interim president) Michel Temer is all smiles watching impeachment vote, May 12.**

the Chamber of Deputies who will be leading the impeachment process, and who is being investigated for his millions stashed away in secret accounts in Switzerland.

But this chief of the parliamentary bandits is taking advantage of the party swapping to push a bill to alter the composition of the Ethics Commission in order to get a majority in favor of burying the procedure that would expel him from the Chamber. And since the basis for the original articles of impeachment is quite weak, if not to say non-existent, the Order of Attorneys of Brazil (OAB) has just submitted another bill with different charges. Forget about the alleged “crimes” (of “responsibility,” i.e., the president is not accused of personally doing anything), at bottom this is on the one hand an act of political revenge, a clash between two factions of the bourgeoisie, the traditional right wing and the popular front. On the other hand, it offers the chance to shatter the PT, a reformist workers party – or as Lenin described the British Labour Party, a “bourgeois workers” party – and thereby weaken worker resistance to the economic reforms seeking to jack up the profit rate. As a banner in front of the FIESP duck said during the right-wing occupation of the Avenida Paulista, “Exterminating the PT: Priceless.”

As for the Car Wash “investigation,” Judge Moro assumes messianic airs in raising the Public Prosecutor’s Office on high, placing the judiciary above the Three Powers of the Republic, far beyond anything imagined by one of those who thought up the separation of powers, Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu. Intimately aware of the visceral crisis consuming the other two powers of the Republic, the would-be master judge has shown partiality and obstinate ideological intent: the effort to destroy the PT while causing the least possible damage to the PSDB jumps out before your eyes. This new Batman with his black cape has judged with equal emphasis the PT leadership and leaders of all the top concerns with whom it collaborated. The judge of Curitiba is able to pull this off this because he has the backing of powerful national and imperialist forces, and the support of these companies’ competitors who want to return to the feeding trough so that they can savor the tasty main dishes which the top contractors were able to enjoy instead of having to content themselves with leftovers.

The charges against Dilma and Lula, suffice it to say, are based on absurd pretexts. The president is accused of transferring money from one state financial agency in order to temporarily cover expenses of another agency, and thereby avoid an interruption of service: these are the famous “*pedaladas*” (financial finagling). Governments around the world do this all the time. The ex-president, on the other hand, is accused of being the “true” owner of an apartment of 215 square meters in Guarujá, and of a seaside property in Altibaia which has pedal boats and which he visits from time to time. In both cases he denies being the owner, with documents in hand, and even if the claims were true, they are hardly crimes. The other charge, that he was paid hefty sums by the Odebrecht construction firm, also is not a crime according to bourgeois law. But his justification gives stunning proof of how the mentality of the “simple worker” of the past has evolved. “People get upset that I charged US\$200,000, but it doesn’t bother them that Clinton charges a

million dollars to come here to speak to the National Council of Industry,” he remarked. Lula is speaking like a true Paulo Maluf.<sup>7</sup> But Bill Clinton is not the leader of a party which claims to represent the workers.

If today Judge Sérgio Moro considers himself to be above the other powers, with strong elements of bonapartism, the PT is all to blame and now is itself experiencing the poisonous effects of its class collaboration. The constituent assemblies which produced the Magna Carta of 1988, where Lula played a leading role as the candidate who received the highest number of votes, designed within the limits of bourgeois democracy a strong public prosecutor’s office supposedly to protect citizens against excesses by the state. Now the Car Wash judge is using the practically untouchable status of the federal prosecutor’s office to project himself as the supreme arbiter of the nation. Moreover, almost the entire judiciary of the country was appointed by the popular-front government. The PT didn’t reform the judiciary precisely because it sought to collaborate with the bourgeoisie, principally over labor cases or those that could bring a modicum of justice to those down below, yet take decades before a verdict is rendered.

In order to secure its position in government, the PT made a bloc with the top companies including Odebrecht, OAS, Camargo Correa, Andrade Gutierrez and other construction contractors which were founded or gorged themselves during the military dictatorship. We have here one more proof that the popular-front governments not only allied themselves with imperialism, but also with big capital nationally, causing resentment to fester everywhere among the medium-sized and small capitalists and their party representatives in Congress.

In truth, the leaders of the PSDB are the true fathers and mothers of the “*mensalão*,”<sup>8</sup> “*trensão*” and “*petrolão*,”<sup>9</sup> where the evidence and proof against that party are as strong as that which Moro has used to condemn the PT leadership. The scales of Judge Moro intentionally tilt to one side. However, accusations of corruption are more problematical for the PT, which arrived in the Palácio do Planalto (Brazil’s White House) with middle-class votes promising “ethics in politics.” And the reality is more instrumental for the PT governments because it is not simply a matter of personal enrichment but served as a key means of maintaining the popular-front coalition with bourgeois elements that is the base of its government. As we wrote at the time of the “*mensalão*” scandal:

“The innovation of Lula’s government was to convert the ‘presents’ into a monthly subsidy, in order to ‘rent the allied parties’ that the government relied on in Congress, as [former PT treasurer] Jefferson put it. This was the direct result

<sup>7</sup> A notoriously corrupt politician who during the military dictatorship was named governor of São Paulo and later ran for president with the junta’s backing, and who in recent years has supported Dilma’s popular-front government.

<sup>8</sup> The scandal over monthly payoffs to bourgeois parties and politicians in Congress, principally to buy their support for the PT-led popular-front government. See “Brazil: Lula Against the Workers – Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!” The Internationalist, May 2006, and “Brazil: The Election Racket of the Bourgeoisie,” The Internationalist No. 38, October-November 2014.

<sup>9</sup> An earlier name for Operation Car Wash





**Military Police saluting in front of new armored cars in a gesture of support for the pro-impeachment march on Avenida Paulista, São Paulo, March 13.**

of the government's lack of a parliamentary majority, and was part of an effort to extend the popular front to include notorious rightist elements such as Antônio Carlos Magalhães [leader of the Northeastern landowners], Orestes Quércia and Paulo Maluf, dinosaurs left over from the military dictatorship, all of them accused of corruption and under investigation by parliamentary commissions (which were then dismissed, when they reached agreement with the PT leadership). The *mensalão* (fat monthly payoff) was the counterpart of the '*frentão popular*' (the expanded popular front).

"Corruption is a constant in bourgeois politics. It is the axle grease that makes the gears of the capitalist state machinery function, so that the government of the day can serve as the executive committee of the ruling class, meshing the interests of its different factions. It particularly annoys the 'proper' petty bourgeoisie and social-democratic reformists because it reveals the dirty reality behind the mythology of the 'neutrality' of the state, providing concrete proof of how this state defends the interests of capital, not of 'everyone'."

—"Brazil: Lula Against the Workers – Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!" *The Internationalist*, May 2006

Our indictment of Lula, Dilma and the PT is diametrically opposed to that of the bourgeois right: they charge corruption in order to get rid of a government which was hesitant in imposing anti-worker policies. The accusation of class-conscious proletarians is that with its "tips" (bribes), the PT bought bourgeois support so that its popular front could attack the workers.

### **The Betrayals of Lula and Dilma's PT Against the Workers and In Favor of the Bourgeoisie**

From its beginnings, the PT saw itself as a parliamentarist party, its feet firmly planted on the capitalist terrain. Even the original PT, so beloved of pseudo-Trotskyists today, never declared itself socialist. Its slogan was "perfecting democracy." The lesson that Lula and his advisors drew from his two previous (unsuccessful) presidential campaigns was to shift his program even further to the right in order to reassure the bourgeoisie of his reliability. They carried out purge after purge – the most notable being of Causa Operária (Workers Cause), today the PCO, and Convergência Socialista,

May-June 2016

today the PSTU (United Socialist Workers Party) – in order to cleanse the party in preparation for becoming the bourgeois government with a minimum of ideological constraints. Lula wrote his famous "Letter to the Brazilian People" (June 2002) – which was really addressed to the International Monetary Fund and Wall Street bankers, and their junior partners in the Bovespa (São Paulo stock market) – promising to continue the policies of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (of the PSDB), with a primary budgetary surplus (i.e., before debt payments).

At the same time as they kicked out leftist elements from the PT, the architects of the popular front, Stalinist ex-guerrilleros José Dirceu and José Genoino, along with the clerical left (Frei Betto), sought to attract elements of the capitalist parties to the PT. In the energy sector, for example, they recruited Dilma Rousseff, who today is mainly known for being an ex-guerrillera but who for 20 years was a cadre of the PDT,<sup>10</sup> a populist bourgeois party in the "*trabalhista*" (labor) tradition led by Leonel Brizola; and Delcídio Amaral, who was a political operator for the PSDB in Petrobras and then assumed the same role for the PT, and who recently submitted a bought confession (*delação premiada*) in return for lenient treatment by Judge Moro. Dirceu, who was president of the PT from 1995 until he was succeeded by Genoino, dreamt up the "*mensalão*" scheme, and after his fall as Lula's chief of state founded JD Consultancy in order to continue the lucrative work. He probably dreamed of converting the PT into a bourgeois party.

Immediately upon assuming office, the popular front under Lula's presidency pushed through a "reform" of the pension system, attacking the benefits of public sector workers, and expelled another slice of the PT left around the Democracia Socialista current. It was leaders of this tendency who in 1990 purged the leadership of the PT in Volta Redonda who opposed the first Frente Brasil Popular (and who

<sup>10</sup> PDT: Democratic Labor Party, a split from the PTB (Brazilian Labor Party) founded by Getúlio Vargas, the nationalist strong man who after coming to power in a 1930 coup d'état ruled the country until 1945 and was later elected president in the 1950s. Since Vargas' time, populist politics in Brazil have traditionally adopted a labourite rhetoric even though the parties are solidly bourgeois.

went on to form the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil in 1996). But after flinching over the subsequent (late 1990s) expulsions, a large part of the DS later found itself outside the PT for disagreeing with that reform. In the same period, Lula figured out how to gain favor with Washington. Following the kidnapping of the elected president of Haiti, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in a coup carried out by troops of the U.S., France and Canada, the PT president sent Brazilian troops to serve as mercenary forces in imposing an imperialist occupation on the only country in the world where a revolution of former slaves was successful. It was in Haiti that Lula sealed his alliance with imperialism.

From then on, the attacks have not ceased. The "Bolsa Família" (Family Stipend) is frequently cited as the great achievement of the PT government, even though it was a continuation of the "Bolsa Escolar" (School Stipend) of Cardoso and was a recommendation of Milton Friedman, the economic advisor of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile and father of neo-liberalism. Such programs fit right in with the free-market ideology which approves of welfare programs "in order to ameliorate the life of the neediest" in exchange for eliminating the rights of working people, such as public health, pensions and public education. That is why the United Nations has recommended Bolsa Familia for poor countries. The same could be said of the ProUni ("University for All") program, which has only enriched the sharks of private education while public schools were left to decay, from the criminal abandonment of the CIEPs (Centers of Integrated Education) to the universities. Education workers fighting against wage slashing and poverty have led some of the most mili-

tant demonstrations and strikes, such as the strikes of the Rio de Janeiro teachers in 2013 and 2014, and in São Paulo and Paraná in 2015.

The peasants and indigenous peoples were already and are still being brutally attacked by the big landowners, who ever since Lula won the support of orange juice exporters in his 2002 election campaign have enjoyed privileged access in Brasília. From 2010 on, Dilma gave the PMDB control of the Agriculture Ministry, currently being run by the direct representative of agribusiness, Kátia ("Chainsaw") Abreu. As a result, the numbers of expropriations for agrarian reform settlements under the popular-front governments have been well below those of Cardoso, and in the last year there have been none. The union and labor reform is being carried out piece by piece, and the government has already sent to Congress a series of bills which will undo decades of gains by the Brazilian working class. Even amid the tumult of recent days, on March 17 Dilma signed the anti-terrorism law to inhibit social protests, above all by the working class, which will be used to prohibit demonstrations against the August Olympics, to suppress mobilizations against fare hikes for public transportation, and – why not? – may even be used in the case of demonstrations against impeachment.

In the *favelas* and poor districts, the killing of poor people and black people is increasing. With the National Security Force (FNS) formed by Lula, the popular front has attacked social protests. The privatizations, tax breaks and preferences for big business continue, as shown by the cases of CSN (the privatized National Steel Company), Petrobras and Samarco.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The giant mining conglomerate was responsible for the 2015 dam break that dumped mil-



**The National Security Force, created by Lula, represses oil workers and other demonstrators protesting in Rio de Janeiro against the auctioning of the Campo de Libra oil fields, October 2013.**



The internal and foreign debt are paid on time and to the letter, sucking resources out of the country. These facts could be multiplied at length, but this is already more than enough proof that ever since taking office the PT adopted the most far-reaching bourgeois plans, including some that even the military dictatorship did not dare undertake. This proves that the function of the popular front is not to carry out reforms, but rather to wear down the workers movement and demoralize working people to the point that the traditional bourgeois parties no longer need the help of a workers party, even with a pro-capitalist leadership, and can return to the feeding trough in order to directly control the “public” tax receipts. Evidently, the Brazilian bourgeoisie thinks it has reached that point.

### What Is To Be Done?

What, then, should be the policy of revolutionary Marxists in this context of sharp class struggle?

At bottom what we are experiencing in Brazil is a variant of the right-wing offensive that is taking place pretty much everywhere in South America and elsewhere around the globe in the wake of the defeat of uprisings and defensive workers struggles within traditional frameworks (street demonstrations, one- or two-day “general strikes,” the rise of bourgeois populist politicians and parties) set off by the capitalist crisis which exploded in 2007-2008. Today and over the past year, part of the Brazilian left sought salvation in the arms of the dying popular front while another part has lined up with the antediluvian right, and a smaller section wants to sit atop the fence in the dispute. Despite their differences, all of these groupings place themselves on the terrain of “democratic” struggles within the bourgeois regime.

Most likely there will be no coup, since with impeachment the right wing will have obtained its primary goal. But meanwhile we are faced with a dangerous offensive by the judicial and police powers, and the offensive by the entire bourgeoisie against the working people is proceeding at top speed. Its is fundamental to understand that there is no solution under capitalism to the deep economic crisis which gave rise to the Brazilian political crisis. Only by fighting for workers mobilization leading to socialist revolution can we defeat the attempts to shield capital against the resistance of the workers who are bearing on their backs the entire weight of a system that is degenerating into barbarism, where democratic rights and the rights of workers and the oppressed are giving way to the reactionary offensive. We urgently need a revolutionary proletarian response.

Today in Brazil Lula and Dilma have heavily attacked the interests of the working people in defense of the bourgeoisie, which their popular-front government represents. There is utterly justified rejection of the PT among important layers of the youth and proletarian sectors. Thousands feel that Lula betrayed those who voted for him. One must acknowledge that at least part of this sense of betrayal comes from the belief that

lions of cubic meters of iron waste and poisoned water supplies over much of the state of Minas Gerais in the worst environmental disaster in Brazilian history..

Lula, Dilma and their pals discredited the workers movement: that is, it reflects the pressure of the cynical bourgeois media campaign. But this should not keep us from seeing the capitalist offensive behind the mask of the struggle “against corruption,” which is preparing an attack against the workers, the poor, the youth and all the oppressed.

Currently there are at least 55 bills and constitutional amendments in Congress which threaten the interests of the working class: unlimited contracting out of jobs, allowing individual contracts, preventing fired workers from appealing to the labor courts, giving negotiated contracts priority over law, regulating rather than prohibiting slave labor, etc. If the popular-front government headed by Dilma and Lula remains in office, they will be pressuring and attacking our rights on a daily basis as they seek to conciliate the right wing and its political partners of the PMDB, the PP,<sup>12</sup> and to defend capital. But if the bonapartist right wins, they will proceed with the entire weight of the judicial police apparatus behind them. For that very reason we must use our own class strength to block these executioners.

There are contradictions which revolutionaries can make use of between the working-class base of the union federations and bourgeois workers parties on the one hand, and the tops in the popular-front government. Even though they are “*chapa branca*” (subservient to the regime), the national leadership of the CUT (United Workers Confederation) is formally opposed to the new pension reform, even though in reality it stands in the way of a genuine mobilization against it. The leadership of the Metal Workers Union of the ABC Region had the workers in the Ford, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and other assembly plants vote a motion pledging to “fight against the coup and in defense of labor rights.” At the same time, it nixes struggle, saying “For now, our framework is resistance. Later it will be to advance.” All these bureaucrats are sellouts, labor lieutenants of capital, an obstacle to workers struggle. Workers should reject the call for a truce with the bosses and the bourgeois government, and instead:

–Prepare *escalating work stoppages, factory occupations, blocking of highways and intersections, and taking over public buildings* (city halls, etc.) beginning immediately at the local, regional and national levels, by all unions and labor federations to quickly arrive at an

–*Unlimited general strike to smash the judiciary/police right-wing threat, block impeachment by the nest of corrupt politicians in Congress, prevent the budget cuts and sink the privatizations and labor and pension “reforms”;*

–*Form elected strike and occupation committees, recallable at any time at the factory and industrial area level, in the schools and universities, the hospitals, banks and stores, followed by unifying these committees into workers councils at the municipal regional and national levels; formation of workers defense guards to defend against repression;*

–Work out in these committees and

<sup>12</sup> Progressive Party, a right-wing party until recently headed by Maluf, which includes ultra-rightist and militarist elements.

## Lesson of History: Trotsky and Lenin on Kornilov and Kerensky

Simply rejecting the policies of the right-wing opposition and of the popular-front government while doing nothing about the threatening advance of the judicial and police power – which is the main characteristic of the Brazilian conjuncture at this moment – would be to abdicate the responsibility of defending the proletariat and the oppressed. We are confronting a situation in which the lessons of the Kerensky-Kornilov clash in Russia in 1917 are relevant, but without soviets and without a revolutionary Marxist party recognized by the masses such as the Bolsheviks.

Even though the situation is quite different in many respects, the question of how to respond to a deadly threat to the workers is the same. Trotsky explained the situation in his pamphlet *What Next: Vital Questions for the German Proletariat* (1932) in the face of the fascist escalation of the Nazis.

“During July and August 1917, Kerensky, then head of the government, was in fact fulfilling the program of Kornilov, the commander-in-chief of the army. He reinstated at the front military court-martials and the death penalty. He deprived the duly elected soviets of all influence upon government matters; he repressed the peasants; he doubled the price of bread (under the state trade monopoly of the foodstuffs); he prepared for the evacuation of revolutionary Petrograd; with Kornilov’s consent, he moved up counter-revolutionary troops towards the capital; he promised the Allies to initiate a new attack at the front, etc.”

But at the end of August, Kornilov broke with Kerensky, “because of the latter’s vacillation.”

“What course did the Bolshevik Party take? Not for an instant did it hesitate to conclude a practical alliance to fight against Kornilov with its jailers – Kerensky, Tseretelli, Dan, etc. Everywhere committees for revolutionary defense were organized, into which the Bolsheviks entered as a minority. This did not hinder the Bolsheviks from assuming the leading role: in agreements



Trotsky, Lenin and Kamenev in 1919.

projected for revolutionary mass action, the most thoroughgoing and the boldest revolutionary party stands to gain always. The Bolsheviks were in the front ranks; they smashed down the barriers blocking them from the Menshevik workers and especially from the Social Revolutionary soldiers, and carried them along in their wake.”

Russia at that moment was at war, there was a revolutionary situation, the risks were even greater than in Brazil today. But the fundamental lesson, that in the face of a mortal threat, one can make a military bloc, in action, without giving any political support to the bloc partner, is relevant. However, many pseudo-Trotskyists have deliberately misinterpreted the policy of Lenin and Trotsky at that moment, claiming that the Bolsheviks politically “defended” the Kerensky government. Quite false. As the League for the Fourth International quoted in 2009 in calling for a military bloc with supporters of Honduran President Zelaya, a conservative large landowner, against a coup d’état being mounted by Hillary Clinton, Lenin was quite explicit in the case of Kornilov vs. Kerensky:

“Our workers and soldiers will fight the counter-revolutionary troops ... not to defend this government ... but to independently defend the revolution as they pursue their own aim, the aim of securing victory for the workers, for the poor, for the cause of peace, and not for the imperialists, for Kerensky.... A Bolshevik would tell the Mensheviks: ‘We shall fight, of course, but we refuse to enter into any political alliance whatever with you’.”

–“Rumors of a Conspiracy” (August 1917) ■

councils a platform of demands to be achieved by workers action to *put an end to contracting out jobs, raise the minimum wage to above the cost of the basket of basic necessities as calculated by the DIEESE, ban layoffs and implement a workweek of 30 hours without any cut in pay* (the sliding scale of wages and hours) in order to eliminate unemployment; –Against Operation Car Wash and the phony investigation of corruption which in reality seeks the destruction and privatization of the former state-owned company, now in the grip of Wall Street, undertake a *strike and occupation of all facilities of Petrobras and all private oil companies* in order to impose *workers control*, expelling

the top managers and *opening the books to workers inspection*, to reveal who is profiting from the product of the workers toil; and, above all,

–*For proletarian opposition against the bourgeois right wing and the bourgeois popular front in power*, no vote for any party participating in such a political alliance of class collaboration; *break with the PT, the PCdoB and all the bourgeois workers parties* whose bought-off leaders have sacrificed the workers’ gains; and *forge the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party* on the basis of the program of permanent revolution, to fight for a *workers and peasants government, the start of the international socialist revolution!* ■

The Internationalist



# World Economic Crisis Behind the Rightist Offensive For Class Struggle Against the Bonapartist Threat in Brazil

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In the present acute political crisis which is shaking the country, a string of explosive revelations, shifting parliamentary alliances, arbitrary actions by the repressive apparatus and huge street mobilizations are presented in the bourgeois media as a struggle over “corruption.” Yet the latter has been a constant in Brazilian capitalist politics for the last century, especially during the “democratic” periods. The idea that there is a moral “cleansing” underway among the rulers is an illusion and a pretext. In reality, there are three main elements of the crisis: first, a political struggle marking the end of the popular-front government that has been in office for the last 13 years; secondly, a blatant attempt by the judicial and police organs to free themselves of all civilian control on the road to an authoritarian regime; and third, underlying it all, the consequences of the world capitalist economic crisis.

The economic crisis of the capitalist system which exploded in 2007-2008 is the deepest since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The falling rate of profit on productive investments led to a series of speculative “bubbles” which exploded, one after another. In the imperialist centers, a new depression (not a cyclical recession) broke out which will take years – probably more than a decade – to be overcome by the destruction of capital (either through bankruptcies or war) and heavy blows against the working class which in combination would restore the profitability

of capital. As a result of the crisis, not only industrial workers but sectors of educated youth were suddenly thrown into unemployment. These were the ones who initiated the 2011 protests in North African countries (Tunisia, Egypt), which a few months later crossed the Mediterranean and appeared in the “movements of the squares” (the so-called Indignados, or “Outraged”) in Portugal, Spain, Greece and later in Turkey, and subsequently in the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States.

In the case of Brazil, after a year of an abrupt decline in economic activity followed by an equally rapid recovery, that depression wasn’t immediately felt due to the enormous expansion of raw materials exports to China, which as a deformed workers state with an economy still subject to (bureaucratic) planning was able to defend itself against the capitalist economic crisis. But little by little, with the declining economic growth in China, the effects of the crisis finally affected Brazil. This was seen in the explosive street protests in 2013, initiated by students in São Paulo

and the South which later extended to broad layers of the workers and poor throughout the country. Now the addition of the steep fall in the price of oil has led to the biggest economic crisis in decades. The traditional bourgeoisie wants to throw the blame on the government of Dilma Rousseff. The Workers Party (PT), for its part, enlisted Lula to supposedly return to the golden years. But no politician and no policy can substantially alter the capitalist crisis. Only workers revolution offers a way out for the working people.

Throughout the world, the revolts of 2010-11 by the youth and other sectors hit by the crisis have achieved nothing. The bankers, who unleashed the collapse of the financial markets, came out ahead thanks to the trillions of dollars which were given to them for free by the imperialist governments and central

banks. Meanwhile, the rest of the population (including important sectors of the previously well-off petty bourgeoisie) is suffering unemployment, many have already lost their homes, their retirement savings have gone up in smoke, etc. Due to the submission of the trade-union leaderships to the demands of capital, the workers movement either has not put up major resistance (in the case of the U.S.), or ended up capitulating after first initiating defensive protests without a perspective of defeating the capitalist offensive (workers struggles in Europe, or in Wisconsin in the U.S.). As a result of these defeats there arose a series of bourgeois populist electoral movements, like SYRIZA in Greece or the current candidacy of Bernie Sanders in the U.S. But populism cannot combat the capitalist system, and thus it leads again to defeat, forcing the masses to swallow the poison of “austerity,” as we saw with the spectacular about-turn by the Tsipras government in Athens last year.

## Movements Evolving to the Far Right

The result of this panorama of defeats is the rise of a new wave of reactionary protests, expressed in support for fascist forces (the National Front in France) or violent racists (the Trump candidacy in the U.S.). In Brazil, the street protests over the last year have the same rightist character, resulting from the defeat of the struggles of the “hot winter” of 2013 and of the struggles against the World Cup (against repression, cutbacks in education, public health, etc.). But the current mobilizations have the specific character of being directed against the dying popular-front government, and its main force, the reformist PT of Lula and Dilma. The big rightist mobilization of March 13, although its main slogan was “against corruption” and while it came off peacefully, was marked by

clear hatred against anything leftist.

Begun by the traditional conservative parties calling for the impeachment of Dilma, the marches have evolved in an authoritarian direction, with calls on the judges, the police and military to clean out the dens of corruption. In turn, this is the “popular” reflection of a *sinister bonapartist revolt brewing in the repressive organs of power against civilian authority*. The PT left (PT, PCdoB, PCO and smaller groups) has identified the offensive against President Dilma Rousseff as a “coup.” In itself, impeachment does not signify a break in the bourgeois democratic “order.” The impeachment of Fernando Collor (in 1992) was not a coup. However, in the last month things have changed: what was latent in the past is now dominating political developments. The order for the search, detention and “coercive transfer” of the ex-president to the Congonhas Airport to be interrogated by the Federal Police on March 4 was a notification on the part of the judicial and police apparatus that they were placing themselves above the representative and executive powers of the state.

If the repressive organs gain autonomy in order to effectively dominate a government, whether by a coup d’état or behind the façade of a “technical” or “transition” government, this would be de facto a bonapartist regime, a “state of exception” which is anti-democratic, even within the bourgeois framework. Not every popular front ends in a Pinochet-type coup d’état (Chile) or civil war (Spain). The twilight of Léon Blum’s popular front in the 1930s was marked by a succession of governments, first of the bourgeois sector of the front, the Radical Party, and later by increasingly rightist and authoritarian governments ending up with the French State of Marshal Pétain. As the Popular Front was decaying, despite its attacks on the workers,



Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators in rightist protest against the popular-front government of Dilma Rousseff at the starting point of the rally in front of the headquarters of the São Paulo State Federation of Industry (FIESP) on the Avenida Paulista, São Paulo, March 13.



Demonstrators in March 13 rally hail the “Super-Judge” and “national hero” Sérgio Moro as the savior of the nation.





**Kim Kataguiri of the Movimento Brasil Livre (Free Brazil Movement), an ultra-rightist and racist outfit founded and funded by imperialist right-wingers.**



**Federal Police delegate inciting demonstrators to demand police “autonomy” from all civilian control.**

the Trotskyists called for workers resistance at every step of this downward spiral without giving support to any of the parties of this bourgeois alliance, including the SFIO (Socialist Party) and PCF.

Beginning in March 2015, the PSDB (Party of Brazilian Social Democracy) of Geraldo Alckmin, Aécio Neves and José Serra began a series of large-scale mobilizations around the country in an offensive to bring down the government of Dilma and the popular front by parliamentary means. From the beginning, the marches have had a presence of fascist elements, who were also present in the 2013 protests without determining the character of those mobilizations. However, the March 13 march showed a notable evolution. In addition to the Nazi and monarchist elements, among the ordinary demonstrators the mobilization was one of praise for the “hero” judge Sérgio Moro, the theatrical director of *Operação Lava Jato* (Operation Car Wash), as the savior of the nation. There were cries of “Super-Moro,” t-shirts with the image of Moro, placards proclaiming “Moro: Pride of the Nation,” “Pride of Brazil,” etc. In Brasília there was an enormous banner saying “We Are Sérgio Moro.” In

São Paulo and Goiânia and elsewhere there were identical printed banners with a photo of the judge saying, “We Are All Sérgio Moro,” followed by “Put Lula in Jail.”

Judge Moro, for his part, issued a declaration thanking people for the praise, highlighting the close collaboration of the Federal Police and the Public Prosecutor’s Office, and saying that the politicians should listen to and obey this supposed “voice of the people.” The March 13 mobilizations calling for the impeachment of Dilma and the jailing of Lula brought over a million people into the streets, quite a bit less than the 4 million claimed by the organizers, but still a very large number. According to all reports and videos, the demonstrators were overwhelmingly white, with very few workers. Datafolha reported, based on a survey in São Paulo,

that almost two thirds (63%) had incomes of more than five times the minimum wage: a well-to-do petty bourgeois and bourgeois crowd. Above all, its political purpose had little to do with a struggle against “corruption” but was rather aimed at throwing the PT out of the Palácio do Planalto (Brazil’s White House) before the next regular elections in 2018.

This is an inter-bourgeois dispute between the right-wing opposition and the governing popular front. We politically oppose both of the squabbling camps because there are capitalist forces carrying out anti-worker policies. The question of political corruption has always been a battle cry of ultra-rightist and fascist forces, as in the famous *affaire Stavisky* in France in the 1930s. At that level, revolutionaries are mainly interested in revealing the details of how capital gets the government to defend its interests, both individually and as a class. Whether it buys influence wholesale, as in the United States with its huge political action committees financed by big business, or at a retail level, as in Brazil, or even if the capitalist state finances electoral campaign costs, these are all methods to guarantee that capital controls elections.

We are against the impeachment of Dilma not because the president and her coalition are supposedly more progressive, but instead because it is above all a settling of accounts and political vengeance being pushed by reactionary forces whose victory would aggravate the attacks on democratic and trade-union rights of workers and the oppressed.

Interestingly, when the PSDB politicians Alckmin and Neves arrived at the demonstration

where they expected to receive an enthusiastic greeting they were booed as “opportunists” and “assholes.” When the pair approached the tent of the Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL – Free Brazil Movement), people shouted out “you’re thieves, too.” And when instead of climbing atop the sound truck of the MBL they decided to leave, even then they were accompanied by shouts of “*fora*” (get out). The same happened with Serra of the PSDB and Marta Suplicy (currently of the PMDB, the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement, the main bourgeois component of the popular-front coalition government under Rousseff) during their lightning visits. On the other hand, the ultra-rightist DEM (“Democrats,” continuation of Arena, the political vehicle of the military junta that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985) is now formally participating in the leadership of the protests. Another confirmation that the “anti-corruption” commotion is evolving toward the far right were the many favorable references in interviews with demonstrators about Jair Messias Bolsonaro, the former parachutist congressman of the “*bancada da bala*” (the “bullet fraction” of parliament), notorious for his praise of the military dictatorship and torture, and for supporting the rape of congresswomen. A typical commentary by a businessman was, “There’s only Bolsonaro, but the Army would be better” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 14 March).

The MBL, the main organizer of the São Paulo protests, is part of the racist far right. It was founded by a group, Students for Freedom, financed by the Charles Koch Fund in the United States, which is also active in Venezuela and Ukraine. In the National Congress, on March 22, the spokesman for the “Democrats” asked that MBL coordinator Fernando Holiday speak on behalf of the DEM against the celebration of the International Day of Struggle for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which commemorates the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa on 21 March 1960. The MBL representative ripped up a piece of paper with the Hymn of Negritude, saying that it “belonged in the trash.” Last year, on 15 March 2015, the calls for military intervention were so insistent and frequent that the MBL had to pretend to distance itself from them, and in fact they were less frequent this year. Which doesn’t mean that these scum changed their views, only that they know how to disguise them and that they have a new savior, Judge Moro (and his armed wing, the Federal Police). Even so, on March 13 in Rio there were banners like “Only a new military intervention can reestablish order, morality and dignity to the Brazilian people.” Earlier, on March 4, the day of the temporary detention of Lula by the Federal Police, in the anti-PT march in São Paulo there was a banner “Federal Police, Pride of the Nation.”

Beyond that there is the noteworthy presence of the Military Police (PM) in support of the protests (to “monitor”

them for their “protection”), its acts of solidarity with the demonstrators and vice-versa. On March 13 there was a photo of PMs ostentatiously saluting on the Avenida Paulista (São Paulo’s main business thoroughfare) while showing off their brand-new armored trucks imported from Israel. There was also a video of São Paulo military police saluting in support of the protests and being applauded by the demonstrators. It’s not only the Military Police. Another video of the same march shows representatives of the Federal Police (PF) speaking from a platform full of cops on Avenida Paulista, calling for “autonomy” for the PF vis-à-vis the government, a slogan which the crowd massively took up. On the same occasion, a policewoman explained in detail for more than five minutes the content of PEC (Draft Constitutional Amendment) 412 which calls for “autonomy [of the police] to investigate, without limitations, the corruption in the country.”

But they not only salute and whip up the public in support of the anti-Dilma protests, they also act against those who oppose impeachment. Two days before the megamarch in São Paulo, on March 11 according to a report on Telesur, Military Police armed with a machine gun and revolvers invaded an event supporting Lula in the hall of the Union of Metal Workers of Diadema in the ABC industrial area. And once again, on the night of March 21 at the Pontifical Catholic University in São Paulo, when several hundred students made a counter-demonstration against a pro-impeachment protest, the PM intervened to protect the rightists. And when the leftist counter-demonstrators began to chant, “I want to end the Military Police,” the cops unleashed tear gas grenades, pepper gas and rubber bullets against the left-wing students (article in *Folha de S. Paulo*, 22 March).

### Judicial/Police Action: A Bonapartist Offensive

Operation Car Wash is an investigation by the Federal Police which was later handed over to the Federal Prosecutor’s Office specializing in money laundering, dating back to 2009 and whose public phase began in March 2014. From the outset it has been a media production, with leaks to media eager for a scoop and dra-

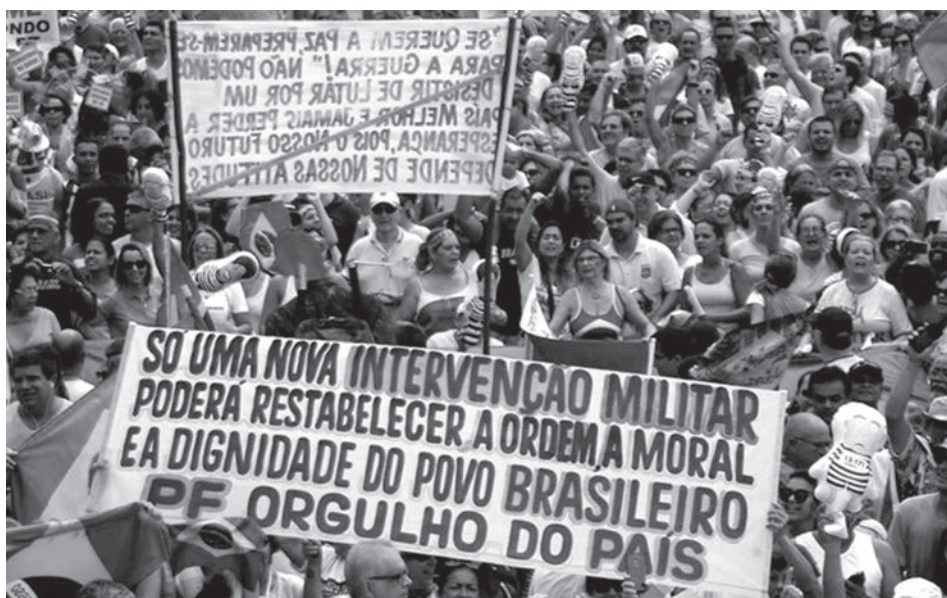


**The Military Police violently attacked PT supporters who arrived at Lula’s residence in São Bernardo do Campo on the morning of March 4 to protest against the “coercive transfer” of the ex-president.**



**A Brazilian Air Force plane waiting outside the Federal Police post at the Congonhas airport during the “deposition” (interrogation) of Lula. At the same time, rightist supporters of Judge Moro blocked entrance to the PF post.**





**Banner in the March 13 pro-impeachment rally in Rio de Janeiro says “Only a New Military Intervention Can Reestablish Order, Morality and Dignity to the Brazilian People – Federal Police, the Pride of the Nation.”**

matic made-for-TV police actions. In fact it resembles a *telenovela* (television soap opera), already in its 27th installment, each one baptized with a dramatic name. Its 24th installment, called Aletheia, began on March 4 at 5:50 a.m. when a caravan of Federal Police vehicles, armed with a “search and detention” order authorized by federal judge Sérgio Moro, entered the garage of the building where Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva lives in São Bernardo do Campo while others secured the perimeter. The ex-president was taken in “coercive transfer” to the Federal Police post at the Congonhas Airport to “make a deposition” (i.e., to be interrogated by the police).

The target was Lula. At the same time 43 other “search and detention” orders were executed against family members of officials of the Lula Institute. The accusations, as we have already indicated, were absurd, which he countered with documented proof and in any case are of little import, even according to bourgeois laws. The real crimes of Lula against the working people are different, and there are many, notably of chaining the workers to their capitalist class enemies through the popular front, to serve as a sheriff for Yankee imperialism in the Caribbean, providing mercenary troops for the occupation of Haiti, and then after ending his presidential period, turning into a kind of ambassador of the giant construction contractor Odebrecht, notorious for safety violations on its construction sites and “labor in conditions analogous to slavery” in one of its projects in Angola. But whether or not the ex-president and PT leader was guilty of any crime was not what the judicial and police authorities were interested in. Even though Judge Moro said later that he “didn’t anticipate guilt” (then why so much theater?), the clear objective was to produce the image of “prisoner Lula,” like the giant puppet-balloons of him in a prison uniform that floated above the March 13 demonstrations.

However, there are indications that in reality the intention went beyond that, to possibly arresting him and taking him as a prisoner to Curitiba (Moro’s set of operations), and that the rapid arrival of furious PTers around his house and the presence of hundreds protesting noisily in the airport convinced them not to try this. A video of the G1 chain (part of the Globo Network) shows a Brazilian air force plane ready to receive passengers parked just opposite the Federal Police post at the airport, which according to the journalist was totally cut off, with supporters of

Judge Moro blocking the entrance. The next day, March 5, Judge Moro attacked the PT protests as “acts of violence.” On March 9, São Paulo state prosecutors denounced Lula on the same grounds cited by the Car Wash judge, and the next day they called for the ex-president to be placed under preventive arrest on the basis of their indictment. It’s notable that all this occurred after Lula declared that he would again be a candidate for the presidency in 2018. “Operation Aletheia” was a political show and a demonstration of repressive force.

If the temporary detention of Lula on March 4 was the prior notification, authorizing wiretaps by the Federal Police of conversations between the ex-president and the current president of the republic, and then publicizing the March 17 conversation these on the grounds of “public interest,” was the announcement by Judge Moro of the independence and supremacy of the judicial/police apparatus under his command. In just about every capitalist state, the actions of the super-judge, his prosecutorial task-force and the police would have led to loud calls to begin a process of removal of the judge and for the immediate firing of the head of the Federal Police and all those involved in the wire-tapping. But Dilma did nothing, because she couldn’t, she has already lost a large part of her control over the machinery of state. Meanwhile, when the government announced it was looking for a new director of the Federal Police, and the new minister of justice who theoretically controls the PF announced that he would replace the entire team if there was an information leak (as there was in this case), a judge of the Superior Court of Justice gave him 72 hours to produce an explanation. And when Lula was indicated as chief of staff of the presidency, the Federal Supreme Court justice Gilmar Mendes, a political operator of the PSDB, suspended the action and sent the case to Car Wash judge Moro.

Evidently, the overbearing actions of the “Republic of Curitiba” have led to certain worries in the higher levels of power in Brasília. Marco Aurélio Mello of the Federal Supreme Court declared that wire-tapping the Palácio do Planalto “harms the Constitution and constitutes an assault on national sovereignty.” The justice who is managing the Car Wash case in the high court instructed Judge Moro to send all relevant material about investigations involving Lula to the Supreme Court. Two weeks later, a plenary session of the Supreme

Court upheld the decision and declared the recording and publication of conversations to be illegal, recalling the excesses of police and judges who carried out illegal bugging of telephones on the pretext that it was accidental. But while the justices in their black robes want to prettify the image of justice, the bonapartist impulse continues. The wheels of Operation Car Wash are spinning at top speed, as is the maneuvering in Congress. The indications of preparations for an anti-democratic “strong state” are in full view of all, and it will not be prevented by any kind of “democratic” struggle which is limited to the bounds of bourgeois domination.

In the face of the impeachment procedure already underway, the popular-front government is seeking to give evidence to the bourgeoisie of its reliability. Treasury Minister Nelson Barbosa announced new budgetary amendments, with more drastic cutbacks and a wage freeze for public workers, including a freeze of the minimum wage. Dilma announced in her “breakfast chat” at the beginning of the year in January that she would once again try to legislate pension “reform.” In February, the PT, PMDB and PSDB together voted in the Senate to approve the bill of José Serra which would eliminate the requirement for participation by Petrobras in the oil exploration in the pre-salt layer in the Atlantic, which will mean opening the huge oil reserve to the imperialist monopolies. And in March, Dilma signed the new “anti-terrorism” law. Even if the government is paralyzed in the face of the judiciary and the police, we can be sure that they are already preparing to use this draconian measure to smash any protest against cutbacks, reforms and privatizations.

We repeat: the struggle against corruption is only a pretext. In Brazil as in Europe and other parts of the world, the rightist and bonapartist offensive is a product of the economic crisis. Its main targets are the exploited and oppressed, and there is no solution to this crisis in the interest of the workers under capitalism. The rulers in Brazil are imposing the same policies as the European central bankers imposed on the Greek people, and that the International Monetary

Fund demands of all the countries under its domination. They want unrestricted powers in order to smash any working-class resistance to the “emergency” measures they are preparing to impose, “to clean up the state and resolve the economic crisis” in the interests of capital. To fight this scourge, what’s needed is a powerful class struggle, led by a revolutionary workers party capable of mobilizing the power of the proletariat against the anti-working-class attacks coming from all wings of the bourgeoisie. ■

## ICL Haunted...

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the Stalinist bureaucratic betrayers.

“The Faction’s defense of the Trotskyist understanding of Stalinism against the ICL’s zigzagging revisionism upholds the program that is key to proletarian political revolution which is integral to the defense of China, Cuba and the other remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution.”

Among other tasks we agreed to “Work together exploring further opportunities to win people from the ICL milieu to authentic Trotskyism.”

James P. Cannon explained factional struggle as “a part of the process of building the revolutionary party,” as a necessary “test of leadership.” The revisionist ICL leadership rightly feared that they might fail that test, and thus bureaucratically maneuvered to avoid it altogether by expelling the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction forthwith. The leadership’s momentary reprieve was secured, however, at the cost of blatantly exposing themselves as just as much of a strangled party as the degenerated American SWP. The Revolutionary Tendency (forerunner of the Spartacist League) was right to fight that degeneration, even though it led to their expulsion and meant they needed to start all over and build a new party from scratch. All those still in and around the ICL who are not too cynical to open their eyes and see should heed the battle cry of the BLTN Faction and join the fight for genuine Trotskyism. Better late than never!

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## The Internationalist



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# Italy...

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but shows a callous indifference to the fate of neo-colonial peoples and women.

Internationalist communists fight for crushing all the Islamist armed gangs through workers action, looking centrally to the millions-strong Turkish, Kurdish and Egyptian proletariats. Militant sectors of the Italian working class engaging in sharp struggle against imperialist war can play a leading role in this respect by defending full citizenship rights for all immigrants and asylum for all refugees, to be won through workers action and the struggle for socialist revolution on both sides of the Mediterranean.

The ICL's abandonment of the revolutionary program has had a direct effect on the Italian national terrain as well. The LTd'I now has the position that "after the collapse of the USSR, the working class did not conceive of any alternative to capitalist society," and since a real general strike, not a four- or eight- or 24-hour stoppage plus a parade, would pose the question of which class rules, and since fake-leftists often call for general strikes as the antechamber to a popular front with sections of the bourgeoisie, it is wrong to call for general strikes. To call this scholasticism would be a polite understatement. But when the working masses want to struggle against attacks by capital and pressure is building from the ranks, and when that pressure is being resisted by the bureaucrats terrified of the consequences, revolutionaries should put forward a program for full-scale mobilization of the working class leading to socialist revolution while fighting against attempts to divert the anger into a popular front. Not to do so in these circumstances means aiding the reformist misleaders.

A general strike (which the revolutionary syndicalists idealized) and even factory occupations are not a panacea, as the tragic experience of Italy's *biennio rosso* of 1919-20 showed. But they can be key steps to revolution. To prepare the working class to fight to win the battles already under way in these cases, it is necessary to put forward a transitional program of workers action leading to the formation of a workers government based on workers councils, the beginning of the socialist revolution. Revolutionaries call for workers defense guards, defense of immigrants, elected strike committees that could become workers councils, and an all-out general strike, along with other transitional demands. But the key to victory is building the indispensable revolutionary workers party, acting as a tribune of the oppressed, to lead the struggle forward.

Acting as a rearguard to the proletariat as workers are pushing forward to fight is not new to the ICL, but is typical of its overall retreat from the class struggle. One example really caught our attention. In December 2005 there was a crucial labor showdown in New York City, when the strategic and powerful TWU subway and transport union went on strike. The Spartacist League (U.S. section of the ICL) did not call for the strike before it happened and did not criticize the head union bureaucrat Toussaint during the strike in its leaflet directed to the union members. Later, when a critical reader questioned this policy in a letter published in *Workers Vanguard* No.

872 (June 2006) WV replied, "The leaflet did not directly attack Toussaint. Since we could not point to an alternative leadership of the strike, to do so would only have weakened the strike."

So according to the ICL, to criticize the trade-union bureaucrats during a strike weakens the strike! This is the logic of opportunists everywhere. Yet that leadership *sold out* the strike which had paralyzed the center of world finance capital, leading to a defeat in which the ICL with its pro-bureaucratic abstentionism was in fact complicit. Furthermore, the TWU is one of the very few unions where the SL has supporters, yet it says it "could not point to an alternative leadership." This is an admission that the ICL has renounced the fight for revolutionary leadership in the trade unions, a conscious policy. In contrast, every day of the strike the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the LFI, distributed on the picket lines thousands of its daily strike bulletins agitating for class-struggle action (see *The Internationalist* articles at <http://www.internationalist.org/nycstricketoc.html>).

While the ICL betrayed the fight to remove the police from the unions in Brazil in 1996, stabbing the comrades in the back and siding with the forces of the popular front to slander the struggle, the LFI helped continue the fight and fused with the comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brazil. While the ICL section in Mexico remained willfully passive during the historic UNAM university strike in 1999-2000, the tiny LFI group sparked the formation of workers defense guards to protect the occupation against police attack and grew significantly. After intervening in the revolt in southern Mexico (Oaxaca) in 2006 and other battles, the LFI's Grupo Internacionalista/Mexico now has four locals in different cities while the ICL section remains stagnant.

While the LFI in the U.S. agitated and worked for five years to bring about the historic May Day 2008 West Coast port strike against the war, the ICL did nothing to build it, confining its efforts to sneering at it after the fact. The LFI later fused with a group of working-class militants in Portland in 2012 who had played a key role in a port shutdown there during the brief upsurge of the populist Occupy movement. While the office-bound SL in New York has negligible public presence (perhaps it's too "busy" churning out internal bulletins about how youth cannot even imagine a socialist society today), the IG/LFI has been winning revolutionary cadres among immigrant workers organizing the unorganized, winning youth during mass protests against racist police murders, putting out a youth paper, and carrying out highly visible dynamic activity. The SL, in contrast, recently announced it was dissolving its youth commission and its Labor Black Leagues. But again, this all goes back to program.



**Immigrant workers led by SI Cobas union at Granarolo milk plant in Bologna struck for nine months against pay cut and firings. Immigrant workers are a key force for revolution.**

## A Program for Revolutionary Class Struggle

The ICL, which claims that Trotsky's emphasis on the crisis of revolutionary leadership has become outdated, is incapable of providing such leadership today. Yet as sharp struggles break out in one country after another, from North Africa to Southern Europe, in Latin America, Asia and even the United States, yet go down to defeat one after another, it is clear that the raw material for revolutionary struggle is there. As capitalism spirals downward into barbarism, the centrality of reorganizing an authentic Trotskyist Fourth International is as crucial as ever. We want to contribute to that effort.

There is a profound crisis of capitalism mired in world-wide depression, which is bitterly felt and in front of the eyes of all. In the case of Italy most youth have little present and less future under capitalism. With two-month and three-month contracts and the exploding use of "vouchers" where you are literally paid by the hour, a "permanent contract" is now for three years. Many work for free "to have something to put on their CVs" at an endless succession of degrading job interviews, where the few jobs are reserved for those with "friends in high places." While a large and ever-increasing sector of pensioners now live in poverty, youth will have no pensions at all. While 10% of the population lives in absolute poverty, the South is abandoned to sink into ever greater immiseration, desperation and the deindustrialization of what little is left.

If life is hell for men, it's doubly hell for women who are the real backbone of "welfare" in this country of the Vatican. Significantly lower pay and pensions, massive unemployment, absence of availability of abortion services due to the "conscientious objector" clause (permitting doctors to refuse to perform the procedure), practically forced to say in job interviews that they will never have children, together with daily degradation, are routine parts of life for the female majority. Unpayable childcare costs and having to take care of the old and infirm due to the progressive dismantling of the medical system weigh down heavily. And then the bourgeois rulers blame women for declining birth rates!

Thousands of desperate refugees drown in the Mediterranean, or are left to silently die of cold and disease, incarcerated and deported back to face likely death. Meanwhile, Italy and its imperialist allies

gear up for another imperialist war in Libya and elsewhere, like the imperialist massacre in Libya in 2011. While seeking to accelerate deportation procedures with the fast-track "Dublin III" regulation, the European Union seeks to push out newly arriving immigrants (who threaten to throw themselves into the sea). Meanwhile, the E.U. is beefing up its Frontex paramilitary immigration police and expanding the *lager*, concentration camps for undocumented immigrants, not only the CIE (Centri di Identificazione ed Espulsione, the deportation camps) but also the CDAs and CARAs that supposedly are reception centers, but are beset by profiteers and racists.

Trotskyists fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Amid the anti-immigrant frenzy whipped up by racist rightists, some opportunist "far left" groups, like the Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori (PCL – Communist Workers Party) of Marco Ferrando and Grisolia, limit their program to calling for *permesso di soggiorno* (temporary work permits) for immigrants (to be granted by the *questura* – the police – for limited periods of time) and an "end to racist laws," although some local sections do raise the call for citizenship rights for all. The Partito di Alternativa Comunista (PDAC – Party of the Communist Alternative) of Francesco Ricci does raise this call in a list of reforms, but does not link this directly to revolutionary action by the working class. For the social democrats of the International Workers League (LIT, followers of the late Argentine pseudo-Trotsky Nahuel Moreno), to which the PDAC belongs, "bringing down capitalism and constructing a socialist economy" means nationalizations and other measures leaving the capitalist state intact. Yet the democratic demand for full citizenship rights for immigrants has only been realized by revolutionary means, in the French Revolution of 1789-92, in the Paris Commune of 1871 and in the Russian October Revolution of 1917.

At every turn, defensive workers struggles and struggles for democratic rights cannot be won under decaying capitalism. There are great reservoirs of hatred and bitterness towards this capitalist system, on both the European and African shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and many who hate it desire a revolution. The ultra-rightist racist Matteo Salvini is constantly hotly contested in all of Italy. The SI COBAS (the Rank and File Committees Inter-

**The Internationalist**



sectorial Union) has carried out numerous strikes of brutally exploited immigrant workers (who are also a human bridge for the fight for proletarian revolution in their countries of origin) and Italian workers and has won some partial victories in spite of victimizations, threats of deportations and all-sided repression. It organized a national general strike against imperialist war including war on working people and immigrants here on March 18. But still the working class groans under the straitjacket of a sellout trade-union bureaucracy, which tries to eliminate all internal dissent, from the CGIL led by pro-PD (Democratic Party) bureaucrats to the FIOM (metal workers) union of Maurizio Landini.

Public workers have had their wages frozen for over six years and are carrying out a series of strikes and protests. Education workers and students are fighting against the cuts in public education and the “reform” which gives the school directors dictatorial powers and attacks trade-union gains. There is anger among the ranks of health workers over successive cuts, privatizations and increasingly impossible working conditions. ILVA steel workers in Taranto are waging a key fight for their jobs and safety. Students and youth repeatedly demonstrate for affordable quality secular education. To unite these struggles, it is necessary to fight for communist leadership in the trade unions and workers movement.

To overcome the sabotage of the trade-union bureaucracy and the division of the working class in different unions it is necessary to fight for the formation of elected and recallable mass strike committees or similar organisms that unite different sectors of the working class in struggle. In 1984 the workers councils formed in the course of an enormous struggle had the potential to become soviets, the basis of workers power. But instead of waging hard-hitting working-class actions, the pro-capitalist PCI (Italian Communist Party), Democrazia Proletaria and others sold out the powerful movement for a meaningless popular referendum on the *scala mobile* (“sliding-scale” cost-of-living adjustment).

The historically politically advanced and militant proletariat in Italy has gone through two revolutionary situations and numerous powerful upheavals and revolts. But it has been constantly betrayed by its leadership. Following Italy’s defeat in World War I, in September 1920 at the culmination of a two-year virtual civil war, the proletariat occupied the factories, had control of much of the countryside and there were massive revolts in the army. The failure of any wing of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) to even try to take state power was paid for with over two decades of fascism.

Again at the end of World War II, proletarian revolt, centered in Turin, was decisive in bringing down the fascists. The PCI, with its Stalinist class-collaborationist theory of “socialism in one country” and popular-front program, sold out the revolutionary situation of 1943-48. With the *svolta di Salerno* (Salerno turn) executed by Palmiro Togliatti under direct orders of Stalin, the PCI disarmed the partisans and worked to prop up the Christian Democrats and Vatican.

Since then the PCI, Democrazia Proletaria, later Rifondazione Comunista, and their utterly fake “Trotskyist” tails (sometimes inside and sometimes outside

of DP and RC), have constantly supported popular frontism, which subordinates the workers movement to the bourgeoisie. The present day PCL as well as the PDAC have pushed popular-frontist class collaborationist politics for decades. They only broke with RC in 2006 when it entered the Prodi government and Prodi demanded that Ferrando and Ricci not be candidates for the senate. These misleaders all supported anti-Soviet Polish Solidarność of the pope Wojtyla, Reagan and Thatcher; they deny that China is a deformed workers state that must be unconditionally defended against imperialism and the forces of counterrevolution, and they sided with the counter-revolutionary CIA-financed student occupation movement in Hong Kong in 2014.

While the PCL committed blatant class treason by supporting the bourgeois politicians Pisapia in Milan in 2011 and De Magistris in Naples, the PDAC calls China “the most barbaric capitalist country in the history of the world” and says “long live the revolution in East Europe, which overturned the Stalinist dictatorship” (and drove the population into desperate poverty and drastically shortened their lifespans). The PDAC supports the pro-imperialist Islamist “rebels” of the Free Syrian Army. These pseudo-Trotskyists are in fact apologists for counterrevolution, imperialism and Italian capitalism. For all those many who justifiably feel betrayed by this lot of fake proletarian leaders – not least of which is the ex-PCI, which has been totally transformed into a bourgeois party headed by the tax collector for the rapacious EU bankers, Renzi – it is necessary to draw the lessons. It is necessary to forge a Leninist party by engaging in and mobilizing for the class struggle. We fight for:

–Strikes against imperialist war. Bring down the imperialist E.U. and NATO through Europe-wide class struggle leading to socialist revolution!

–Hot-cargoing military goods, like Italian train workers and antiwar activists did outside of Vicenza in February 2003 when they stopped a NATO war train.

–Integrated workers defense guards to teach the racist lynch mobs a well-deserved lesson. Down with racist Fortress Europe! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees!

–Organize the unorganized and fight for full trade-union wages for all, equal pay for equal work!

–Down with the “conscientious objector” clause! Free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all!

–Drastically reduce the work week at full pay to provide employment for all. Solidarity strikes across national borders are urgently needed.

–For a socialist united states of Europe! For the rebirth of the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution!

Proletarian power will not come from bourgeois parliamentarism. The key question is revolutionary leadership. There is no “more human” capitalism. Either a Bolshevik party leads the proletariat to victory or we face complete barbarism that is already descending upon us. As Trotsky wrote at the founding of the Fourth International in 1938, “the crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.” This thesis, now declared outdated by the ICL although its validity

is constantly confirmed, is the very reason the Fourth International was founded in a period of deep defeats for the working class, and why it must be forged anew as the world party of socialist revolution.

The present ICL is no place for a communist. For those in the ICL who may still want to be communists, we urge you to read and study the literature of the League for the Fourth International, as we did and in doing so recognized the genuinely Trotskyist program we were won to years ago. Politically, this is a life or death question for those who would be communist revolutionaries. Lenin once said that only idiots do not study both sides of a controversy. Don’t be an idiot. It is time to go forward with the LFI. ■

## “Lynching” ...

*continued from page 4*

can cease being racist. “But by creating illusions that the police could somehow ‘serve the people’ the result is to divert struggle into a dead end of attempts to reform the unreformable” (“Bad Apples, Broken Windows, and Other Myths About the Police,” *The Internationalist*, February 2016).

The cops – white, black, Latino and Asian – are the enforcers of racist repression that is and has been at the core of American capitalism since the days of slavery. And as we have emphasized, from City Hall to the White House, “Democrats Are the Bosses of the Racist Killer Cops” (*The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016). Illusions in the Democratic Party have long been a roadblock standing in the way of a powerful *class* struggle against racist oppression. There is massive outrage around the U.S. at seeing over a thousand people, overwhelmingly African American and Latino, cut down every year by the police. What’s needed is to break the ties binding labor, African Americans, Latinos, immigrants and young anti-racist activists to this capitalist party responsible for enforcing ruling-class “law and order.”

Southern California has always been rife with racist police and state terror, from the racist attacks known as the “Zoot Suit riots” in 1943 in which sailors and Marines assaulted Latinos, to the 1970 murder of Reuben Salazar by Los Angeles County sheriffs, to the 1991 racist attack by LAPD on Rodney King, to the 2015 police murder of a homeless man known as Africa on L.A.’s Skid Row. At the same time, from the ports of Los Angeles-Long Beach to the L.A. garment district, the Southern California workers movement with its heavily immigrant labor force has the power to shut down production in response to racist police terror. But it must become aware of its power to wage a successful struggle against this system. We seek to

demonstrate this power in action through labor-black-immigrant mobilizations.

As an example, on May Day 2015 International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 shut down San Francisco Bay Area docks and marched on Oakland City Hall at the head of thousands demanding “Stop Police Terror” (see “May Day Oakland Port Shutdown Against Racist Cop Terror,” in *The Internationalist* No. 39, April-May 2015). That same day, Class Struggle Workers – Portland organized a multi-union contingent in the May Day protests there, marching under the banner, “Labor Against Racist Police Murder.” (The CSWP is a tendency in Portland, Oregon-area unions that is politically supported by the Internationalist Group.) As we wrote in *The Internationalist* No. 42:

“These are small examples of what needs to be done, but they point in the right direction. The idea that justice could be obtained by pressuring the courts and capitalist politicians to investigate, ‘reform’ or prosecute the racist police on which capital depends is a dangerous illusion. We must look to using our own class power to put an end to the bloody lynch law system that has taken so many of our brothers and sisters from us.”

Most fundamentally, it is vital that those who would wage an effective fight against cop terror understand that this is part of a system – capitalism – and so long as society is ruled by the capitalists, racist repression and oppression will persist. What’s key is to build a revolutionary workers party that acts as the tribune of the oppressed to rally the population behind the social power of the working class to smash the capitalist state through international socialist revolution. Looking to the example of the Russian Revolution of October 1917 that ripped power out of the hands of the exploiters and established workers rule, we can open the road to a classless, egalitarian society that can put an end to the nightmare of racist police terror once and for all. ■

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# Defend Raqqa...

*continued from page 2*

The current military campaign represents a further shift. While the YPG operations last year were aimed at linking up the Kurdish cantons to form its autonomous area of Rojava, including committing atrocities against the Arab population, the SDF offensive this year is an integral part of an imperialist military operation. The League for the Fourth International has from the start called for the defeat of the imperialists and to drive them from the region, as well as declaring any blows against imperialist intervention and domination, even by ultra-reactionary forces such as the I.S., to be in the interests of the working class and oppressed peoples of the world. But it is now necessary to go beyond that and call for defense of Raqqa against the attack by imperialism and allied forces including the Kurdish-led YPG/SDF.

This includes defense against bombing by Russian forces in Syria reportedly seeking to join the U.S.-led “anti-terrorist coalition” in the assault on Raqqa, as Kremlin strong man Putin has wanted to do all along (though with little success), and against Syrian government forces as they “join the race to Raqqa” (Al Masdar News, 31 May). If this assault is successful, the result would be to solidify domination of the region and of the Near East by U.S. imperialism (along with its Turkish Islamist and Arab monarchist allies). Hillary Clinton will applaud, liberal populist Bernie Sanders (who supports the air war on the I.S., and Obama’s murderous drone strikes) will approve, while the reformists tailing him will be complicit. And it will be very bad for the Kurds.

At the outset of U.S. intervention in Syria in 2014, we called to “Defend the Kurds, Defeat U.S./NATO Imperialism!” We warned against the YPG’s attempts to ally with imperialism, saying: “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 Erdoğan and the Turkish nationalism of the [Turkish] army. And NATO Turkey is a linchpin for Western imperialist domination of the Middle East.”<sup>2</sup> Again in early 2015, we stated that, “While defending the Syrian Kurds, Assyrians and other minorities under attack by the Islamic State, we have warned against any alliance with imperialism, which would use them as pawns, to be discarded when convenient.”<sup>3</sup> If there is any doubt on this, the U.S. State Department spokesman made it clear in a May 23 press briefing:

“We obviously are in close dialogue with Turkey. We understand their concerns regarding Kurdish forces in northern Syria. And we’ve also made it clear to these Kurdish forces as well that they should not seek to create autonomous, semi-autonomous zones, that they should not seek to retain the territory that they liberate....”

Spelling it out, he said the CENTCOM commander’s visit to the region two days earlier was “not to imply any kind of recognition of their sovereignty or whatever.”

Today, again, we denounce any alliance with the imperialists, the biggest mass murderers of all, while continuing to defend the Kurdish areas against attacks by Turkey, the Syrian government, the so-called Free Syrian Army and other Islamist militias and against the Islamic State, whose response to any military setback is invariably to launch indiscriminate terror attacks against the population. In fact, the YPG recently staged pre-dawn raids to round up young men who are seeking to avoid being cannon fodder for the assault on Raqqa, who feared the blowback of an offensive against the Islamic State. As one commented, “I.S. will take revenge on the SDF and the YPG by bombing Kurdish areas and killing Kurds wherever they see them.... The Kurds have no need for this battle. If our young men are thrown into this fight, the results will be disastrous” (Syria:Direct dispatch, 24 May).

Contrary to the latter-day Spartacist tendency (the International Communist League), the Islamic State, which claims Marxists have a fantastical “military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and their proxies” (*Workers Vanguard*, 31 October 2014), we repeat, as we have said before, that even under U.S./NATO attack, the Islamic State “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 jihadis seek to impose the oppressive social norms of an 8th-century nomadic tribal society on modern urban secularized populations” (“For Workers Action to Defeat Barack Obama’s Iraq/Syria War,” October 2014). Internationalist communists stand for defense of the Arab cities controlled by the I.S., whose population is threatened with massacre by the “human rights” imperialists and allied forces, even as we call for bringing down the jihadist caliphate which along with all the Islamist gangs is a mortal threat not only workers revolution but to the democratic rights of all, particularly religious and ethnic minorities.

In the fighting that continues throughout most of Syria between competing communalist and sectarian forces, proletarian revolutionaries have no side, including where the I.S. clashes with Syrian government forces or the competing Islamist militias, whether of the al Nusra Front (Al Qaeda), Ahrar al-Sham or those that call themselves the Free Syrian Army, who are supported by much of the left even as they sell their services to the imperialists.

The situation in Iraq, meanwhile, is not the same as in Syria. The *International New York Times* (30 May) reported:

“American commandos are on the front lines in Syria in a new push toward the Islamic State’s de facto capital in Raqqa, but in Iraq it is an entirely different story....

“The United States has thousands of military personnel in Iraq and has trained Iraqi security forces for nearly two years, yet is largely on the sidelines in the battle to retake Falluja.... [I]t worries that an assault on the city could backfire – inflaming the same sectarian sentiments that have allowed the Islamic State to flourish there.

“Already, as the army and militiamen battled last week in outlying areas, taking some villages and the center of the city of Karma, to the northeast, the

fight has taken on sectarian overtones.” Of course, U.S. claims to oppose inflaming religious sentiments are utterly hypocritical, as the Yankee imperialists installed the Shiite Islamists in power when they invaded Iraq in 2003 and have propped up that virulently sectarian regime ever since. Meanwhile, in northern Iraq, under the control of the Kurdish regional government, U.S. forces are preparing for an eventual attack on Mosul, an overwhelmingly Arab city. While attacks by the I.S. on American forces there, like the one on a U.S. base in Makhmour last March, are a blow against imperialism, a full-scale U.S.-led assault on this largest population center controlled by the Islamic State, may be a ways off. But when it does, it will be just as bloody and sectarian as the one on Falluja.

The battle of Falluja is already seeing sectarian slaughter of many of the 50,000 or more Sunni Arab residents. The *Times* article quoted Aws al-Khafaji, the head of the Abu Fadhil al-Abbas militia, from a widely viewed video: “There are no patriots, no real religious people in Falluja. It’s our chance to clear Iraq by eradicating the cancer of Falluja.” Another source quoted from the same video: “There are no civilians in Fallujah, there is a tumor [that] should be removed from Iraq, those are infidels and must be exterminated.” But what is the response of the Islamic State? According to an article in the London *Guardian* (31 May):

“Isis [another acronym for the I.S.] responded to the offensive by dispatching suicide bombers in and around Baghdad. Three attacks targeted the populous Sadr City suburb and the Shaab neighbourhood, as well as the area of Tarmiya north of the capital, killing more than 20 people in the largely Shia districts. Isis claimed responsibility for the attacks in statements circulated online.”

Against this all-sided sectarian slaughter, Trotskyists call for defeat of the attackers and defend Falluja’s right to communal self-defense while not diminishing one bit our opposition to the I.S.

More than anywhere else on the planet, in the Middle East today it is only by fighting for internationalist workers revolution, to drive out and defeat imperialism as well as to uphold democratic rights and smash all the bourgeois regimes and feuding Islamists, militarists and Zionists, that it will be possible to unite the exploited and oppressed of the myriad ethnic/religious communities, peoples and nations. That means fighting for a socialist federation that can make this crossroads of civilizations flourish in all its diversity. As everywhere, the key is forging a revolutionary leadership, and that is the task the League for the Fourth International seeks to resolve. ■

## Huelga nacional...

*sigue de la página 24*

La lucha magisterial ha cobrado en los últimos años un carácter de vida o muerte. Lejos quedaron las manifestaciones rituales del magisterio en el juego de estira y afloja entre el gobierno y la dirigencia sindical en donde el esquema de “movilización-negociación-movilización” daba la apariencia de proporcionar episódicos resultados. Desde el levantamiento de 2006 en adelante, las luchas magisteriales han enfrentado la rapacidad de una burguesía unida, ávida de convertir la enseñanza en una fuente de lucro, determinada a eliminar el derecho de los trabajadores a que sus hijos reciban una educación de calidad, pública y gratuita. Hoy el gobierno federal

priista de Peña Nieto quiere repetir con la CNTE lo que hizo el presidente panista Felipe Calderón al SME para imponer la llamada “reforma laboral”, y luego la energética, en medio de su nefasta “guerra contra las drogas”, que ha cobrado la vida de más de 200 mil personas.

La lucha no es meramente nacional. Las “reformas estructurales” que buscan implementar los gobiernos mexicanos han sido dictadas por el imperialismo mundial y diseñadas por sus institutos financieros. La “reforma educativa” que consiste en culpar al magisterio de todos los males de este capitalismo decadente está siendo implementada desde Chile y Brasil hasta las entrañas de los Estados Unidos. La burguesía busca amortiguar la caída en sus tasas de ganancia, haciendo que todo el peso de la crisis económica mundial recaiga sobre los hombros de los trabajadores y los pobres del campo y la ciudad. Sin embargo, en su afán de aplastar al magisterio independiente del control estatal ejercido a través del corporativista SNTE, el gobierno peñanetista ha cometido un error garrafal: al declarar que todo maestro que falte tres días en un mes pierde su puesto, ha creado una fuerza de decenas de miles de agueridos luchadores que literalmente no tienen nada que perder y que, por lo tanto, están dispuestos a ir por todo.

El nivel de violencia estatal hoy es comparable al que se impuso el 25 de noviembre de 2006, pero con una diferencia significativa. En vez de ahogar el levantamiento en un río de sangre, ahora han provocado su intensificación. Incluso sectores burgueses – directivos del sector restaurantero y hotelero, el gerente de la Guelagueta, barzonistas, jerarcas eclesiásticos – se han asustado por la amplitud de la resistencia, notablemente por la participación masiva de los padres de familia. Dicen que esto es “peor que en 2006” y sugieren tímidamente entablar “pláticas” con los docentes para restablecer la calma. Pero por mucho que los dirigentes de la CNTE reclaman el “diálogo”, como en el 2013, éste es una trampa: los asesinos en el poder están sordos ante sus reclamos. No cederán en la mesa de negociación lo que no se les haya impuesto con la fuerza del movimiento obrero. Lo que se necesita es forjar una dirección con el programa revolucionario y la determinación requerida para movilizar esta fuerza en una lucha frontal.

### Ante la represión urge profundizar, extender y radicalizar la huelga

El Grupo Internacionalista ha intervenido activamente en la huelga magisterial desde el inicio, participando activamente en marchas y bloqueos. Desde el inicio de la huelga hemos vendido, tan sólo en Oaxaca, más de mil ejemplares de *Revolución Permanente*. Hemos organizado círculos de estudio marxistas frente a la sede de la Sección XXII y en el plantón movedido en la Ciudad de México. Hemos proyectado películas políticas en los mismos lugares. Hablamos por Radio Plantón en nuestro programa “Frecuencia Obrera Internacionalista”. Hemos repartido miles de volantes en los que llamamos a no votar por ningún partido burgués, incluyendo el Morena de AMLO. Desde el principio hemos llamado por la extensión de la huelga a todo el sector educativo del país y por movilizar a sectores clave del proletariado industrial en una poderosa huelga nacional. Sólo así

**The Internationalist**

<sup>2</sup> “For Workers Action to Defeat Barack Obama’s Iraq/Syria War” (October 2014), in *The Internationalist* No. 38, November-December 2014.

<sup>3</sup> “International Perspectives of the League for the Fourth International” (April 2015), in *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015.





**Círculo de estudios marxista del Grupo Internacionalista en Oaxaca, el 31 de mayo.**

podremos hacerle frente al estado que ataca no sólo al magisterio sino a todo el movimiento obrero.

Es con esta perspectiva que nuestros camaradas han organizado brigadas con los maestros en huelga para ir a agitar entre estudiantes, trabajadores y académicos de la Universidad Nacional. Fue así como logramos que la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la UNAM parara labores el día 17 de mayo, con la asistencia de maestros de la CNTE, principalmente del estado de Oaxaca, que hablaron con los estudiantes en paro sobre la extensión de la huelga a todo el sector educativo que hoy está bajo ataque. También en las asambleas sindicales del STUNAM, militantes del Grupo Internacionalista y maestros de la CNTE llamaron a que los trabajadores de la Universidad Nacional se fueran a huelga. Ahí se pudo observar los juegos de la burocracia frentepopulista de Agustín Rodríguez, quien públicamente habla de su solidaridad con la huelga del magisterio, pero al interior del gremio argumenta sobre la imposibilidad de irse a una huelga conjunta con los maestros.

Es evidente que el ánimo de lucha y combatividad de maestras y maestros no sólo no ha disminuido, sino que se ha acrecentado ante cada intento del gobierno por detener la movilización. Sin embargo, la estrategia política de la dirección de la CNTE ha sido la de presionar para conseguir un “diálogo” con la burguesía, acudiendo a Gobernación y a Los Pinos para rogar que alguna autoridad les conceda una entrevista. Asimismo, esta dirección busca una alianza con los diputados de los partidos burgueses y desviar la lucha hacia el camino estéril del juego electoral burgués, llamando a votar por Morena. Confiar en la verborrea vacía de supuesto apoyo al magisterio de AMLO, cuya tarea al servicio de los grandes empresarios y sus amos imperialistas consiste en canalizar las luchas para presionar hacia los marcos institucionales burgueses, es una garantía para la derrota. Como decíamos en nuestro suplemento que llamaba a no votar por Morena ni por cualquier otro partido de la burguesía:

“Se anticipa que la represión –dosificada hasta ahora para no desatar la ira de la población que se encuentra todavía al borde del estallido social– se intensificará luego de las elecciones del 5 de junio. Entonces los gobernantes que buscan imponer una ‘reforma’ educativa en beneficio del capital van a ir por todo.”

—“La huelga magisterial en la encrucijada”, suplemento de *El Internacionalista*, 2 de junio de 2016

Y así fue.

Lo que hace falta en lugar de la política frentepopulista de colaboración de clases es la intransigente lucha de clases. Hay que luchar con plena independencia política con respecto de todos los partidos

y políticos burgueses: PRI, PAN, PRD, MC, PT, Morena, AMLO, etc. Se debe hacer añicos las ilusiones en la pobre máscara de democracia burguesa con que se presenta el régimen semibonapartista actual del capitalismo mexicano. Por su parte, la clase dominante ha dejado bien claro que todo aquel que luche en contra de los designios del capital enfrentará la respuesta

sádica del estado. La larga lista de masacres, de 1968 y 1971 a la fatídica noche de Iguala de 2014, en la que fueron desaparecidos los 43 estudiantes normalistas de Ayotzinapa, y ahora la de Nochixtlán, da constancia de que el estado capitalista mexicano se alimenta con un constante tributo de sangre humana. Hace falta una revolución socialista internacional para liberarse de la mano muerta de esta burguesía agonizante. Ninguna reforma política, ninguna asamblea constituyente dentro del marco burgués, podrán detener la embestida del capitalismo, que a nivel mundial está aniquilando las viejas conquistas y concesiones democráticas.

### Sacar las lecciones de 2006

La lucha de 2006 en Oaxaca marcó una de las más cruentas batallas de clase en medio de un país convulsionado por huelgas mineras, metalúrgicas y luchas campesinas de gran envergadura. Estamos viviendo el resurgimiento de la insurgencia magisterial iniciada hace 37 años contra el falso sindicalismo del corporativista Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación. Hoy en día el SNTE es la punta de lanza del ataque gubernamental en contra de la CNTE. En la estela de la Policía Federal, promete “sanear” la Sección XXII e imponer su Sección 59 de esquiroles y sicarios. No obstante, todavía persisten ilusiones en sectores de la CNTE en una imposible “democratización” de este aparato estatal dedicado a impedir un auténtico sindicalismo obrero independiente. El esquirolaje del SNTE en el actual conflicto debería hacer patente la necesidad de hacer jirones la camisa de fuerza del corporativismo laboral.

También hay que sacar las lecciones de la experiencia de 2006, que ha entrado en el panteón de heroicas luchas derrotadas de la historia mexicana que, como el zapatismo en la época de la Revolución Mexicana, tanto pesan sobre la conciencia de los que luchan contra este sistema mortífero que parece que estarían condenados a repetirlas, siempre con el mismo resultado. Cuando el 14 de junio de 2006 la policía estatal intentó desalojar el plantón de la Sección XXII de la CNTE en el Zócalo de la ciudad de Oaxaca, los residentes de la capital oaxaqueña salieron a apoyar al magisterio y derrotaron a la policía. A medida que el conflicto se fue intensificando, se comenzó a hablar sobre una “Comuna Oaxaca” e incluso a soñar sobre una sociedad comunista en este solo estado. Sin embargo, con toda la combatividad popular, que logró expulsar a la policía y el aparato estatal de la ciudad de Oaxaca durante más de cinco meses, el Frente de Sindicatos del Estado de Oaxaca y la Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO), que dirigían la lucha,

seguían una política frentepopulista.

Con su estrecha visión reformista, fueron incapaces de extender la huelga magisterial no sólo más allá de los límites de Oaxaca, sino incluso a otros sectores al interior del estado. Al dirigir todo el ímpetu de lucha demostrado en cientos de barricadas hacia el parlamentarismo burgués, las direcciones del magisterio y la APPO llamaron a dar un voto de castigo al PRI y PAN encauzando la lucha al apoyo al entonces candidato del PRD, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Así, en vez de luchar por romper con la burguesía, allanaron el camino para la derrota. Luego de las elecciones, como siempre fraudulentas, y desarmado políticamente el movimiento por carecer de una política de lucha de clases, vino la negra noche del 25 de noviembre, cuando la Policía Federal Preventiva barrió el centro histórico de Oaxaca y detuvo a cientos de activistas, poniendo un punto final a la atrevida lucha magisterial a un costo de 26 compañeros asesinados.

Ahora, la situación se presenta con mayor agudeza aún. Tras la implementación de la reforma educativa, que no logró derribar la movilización de la CNTE en 2013, la burguesía pensó que al quitarle a la Sección XXII el control de algunas instancias del IEEPO, podría menguar la capacidad del magisterio. Otro error. Sin la premisa de obtener puntos por movilización a la que se asiste, y desafiando las amenazas de ser despedidos sin cesantía, miles de trabajadores de la educación, de nueva cuenta, hacen plantones, bloqueos y barricadas. El ejemplo del magisterio puede ser también el catalizador de un descontento social producto del despido del 30 por ciento o más de los empleados públicos, del proceso de privatización *de facto* de la salud, del despido masivo de los trabajadores de Pemex y del dólar a 20 pesos que reduce vertiginosamente el poder adquisitivo de los trabajadores.

En 2016, a diferencia de hace diez años, el conflicto magisterial no se circunscribe a la capital oaxaqueña y la región de Valles Centrales, sino que se ha extendido a las regiones del Istmo de Tehuantepec y la Mixteca. En la primera se encuentran instalaciones estratégicas para la burguesía, como la refinería de Salina Cruz, que prácticamente abastece de combustible a todos los estados del litoral del Pacífico. El bloqueo de la refinería puso en jaque al gobierno, y también ha ganado la simpatía a la resistencia magisterial de parte de petroleros que han visto cómo su “sindicato” (el corporativista STPRM) no ha puesto la menor oposición a la “reforma” energética que amenaza con costarles sus trabajos. En el Istmo también, los trabajadores de la salud han dado un respaldo decidido a la huelga de los educadores ha contado con la participación de activistas de toda la región, como se vio en el homenaje de hoy en Tlaxiaco a dos de los caídos de la masacre de Nochixtlán.

En 2016, a diferencia del 2006, la embestida contra el magisterio encuentra un campo fértil para poder extender la huelga hacia otros sectores clave de los trabajadores. En el último año se han dado las explosivas luchas de los jornaleros de San Quintín y las de los trabajadores y trabajadoras de la maquila de Ciudad Juárez. Hoy los trabajadores de salud, que han mostrado su apoyo auxiliando a los heridos en las barricadas y estallando paros en solidaridad con

el magisterio, luchan contra una falsa “universalización” del seguro, que implicaría recortar los derechos de los trabajadores a servicios médicos. Los acereros de la Sección 271 del semicorporativista Sindicato de Trabajadores Mineros y Metalúrgicos en el puerto de Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán han estado bajo acoso del gobierno, que luego de un paro en la siderúrgica en marzo de este año detuvo a cinco dirigentes por protestas realizadas en 2007.

En 2016, al igual que 2006 y 2013, el combativo magisterio organizado en la CNTE ha tomado el papel protagónico al enfrentar heroicamente al estado para defender la educación pública y cerca de 40 años de sindicalismo independiente en contra del corporativismo sindical. Pero para evitar repetir la historia de aquellas derrotas, es necesario sacar las lecciones y aplicarlas a la lucha actual. El movimiento de 2006 fue derrotado porque no salió del marco del estado de Oaxaca en una huelga nacional, ni logró extenderse hacia el proletariado industrial, a pesar de que en aquel entonces había huelgas obreras en varias partes del país. En 2013, la CNTE dejó aislados a los maestros de Guerrero cuando estallaron su lucha contra la “reforma” educativa, sólo activándose a nivel nacional meses después. Además, terminó aceptando las falsas promesas de un “diálogo” con el gobierno federal y con los gobiernos estatales, que ahora los atacan brutalmente.

A la insurgencia magisterial le hace falta una dirección clasista y revolucionaria. El riesgo de que la historia se repita radica justamente en la ausencia de una dirección tal. Con todo, hay un cambio modesto pero importante: la presencia en Oaxaca de un comité local del Grupo Internacionalista, formado gracias a nuestra intervención en 2006 y años posteriores, y que ha mostrado en los hechos el camino a seguir. Sacando las lecciones de la lucha de 2006, escribimos hace diez años lo siguiente:

“Para ganar esta batalla, es necesaria una dirección proletaria que, sobre la base de un programa genuinamente clasista, rompa con todos los partidos burgueses y movilice a nivel nacional la enorme fuerza de la clase obrera contra el estado capitalista....

“[E]l programa ‘democrático’ ha conducido a un callejón sin salida, porque las luchas de los trabajadores no pueden resolverse con la democracia burguesa – imposible por lo demás en la época imperialista en países semicoloniales como México. Como señaló Trotsky con su perspectiva – teoría y programa a la vez – de la *revolución permanente*, hoy ningún ala de la clase capitalista es capaz de realizar las tareas de las grandes revoluciones burguesas de siglos pasados. La *revolución agraria*, necesaria para liberar a los campesinos y los indígenas pobres de su miseria secular; la *liberación nacional* del yugo del imperialismo; y la *democracia* para los explotados y oprimidos, los esclavos asalariados, sólo pueden conquistarse mediante la revolución obrera.... No miramos hacia atrás, a la herencia del nacionalismo campesino zapatista; fijamos como nuestra meta ser los bolcheviques proletarios del siglo XXI.”

—*El Internacionalista* N° 7, diciembre de 2006

Armados con este programa, el que defiende el Grupo Internacionalista, sección mexicana de la Liga por la IV Internacional, sí podemos abrir el camino a la victoria. ■



**Tras la masacre: ¿qué camino para la insurgencia magisterial?**

# Ampliar la resistencia en las barricadas a una verdadera **México: ¡Huelga nacional contra el gobierno criminal!**



Quadratin

**La Batalla del Aeropuerto de Oaxaca, el 26 de mayo. Luego de que cientos de maestros bloquearon la entrada, la Policía Federal les dio un ultimatum. Los docentes rehusaron moverse. Cuando los federales se alistaron para golpear llegaron otros cientos de profesores en resfuerzo, encapsulando a la policía. Después de varias horas de enfrentamiento los federales se vieron obligados a dar la retirada.**

20 de JUNIO – México acaba de vivir su Domingo Sangriento. En Rusia en 1905, el ataque policiaco contra un desfile de trabajadores que sólo querían presentar un pliego de peticiones al zar fue la chispa que encendió la Revolución de 1905. En México en 2016, la matanza del domingo 19 de junio en Nochixtlán, Oaxaca contra maestros, estudiantes, activistas sociales y padres de familia podría detonar una explosión de lucha de clases en todo el país. Están luchando

contra la nefasta “reforma educativa” que busca destruir el sindicalismo magisterial independiente. Durante cinco días mantuvieron una barricada en la supercarretera a México que logró detener a una caravana de la Policía Federal. Ayer la PF cobró su venganza. Pero en lugar de atemorizar a la gente, consiguió el efecto contrario.

Por lo pronto el saldo de la fatídica mañana del domingo 19 en Nochixtlán, según voceros de la Coordinadora Nacional de

Trabajadores de la Educación, es de ocho muertos, 22 desaparecidos y 94 heridos, 45 de ellos de bala. La PF, que al principio negó haber usado armas de fuego, ante las fotos y los videos que mostraban a los federales disparando a mansalva con pistolas y rifles automáticos, finalmente tuvo que admitir que los uniformados fueron los que balearon a los activistas. Aún así, la lluvia de balas y gases no intimidó a los huelguistas ni a sus partidarios. Después de pasar las barricadas de Nochixtlán, los federales se toparon con una resistencia feroz en las barricadas de Huitzo, y luego en el cruce-ro de Hacienda Blanca. Y una vez que el convoy de autobuses y camionetas de la PF pasó, las barricadas fueron nuevamente montadas. El efecto de la represión ha sido el de crispar aún más a la población.

Hoy, decenas de miles llenaron las calles de Oaxaca de Juárez de lado a lado para expresar su solidaridad con los mentores, coreando consignas sentenciando a los “asesinos” y al “gobierno represor”. “Ni con balas, ni metralla, al pueblo se le calla”, gritaban. La movilización recordaba el ambiente de la tercera megamarcha del 16 de junio de 2006, cuando el magisterio arrasó con la policía del odiado Ulises Ruiz Ortiz después de su fallido intento de desalojar al plantón magisterial. Pero la rabia popular no llevará a nada sin una dirección revolucionaria que la conduzca a librar la batalla en contra del enemigo fundamental, el capitalismo, y que extienda la huelga a

sectores clave del proletariado mexicano. Es imprescindible que la movilización revista un carácter proletario e internacionalista, y no nacionalista, como el que están intentando imprimirle al movimiento sectores burgueses, en particular los que se encuentran alrededor del Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (Morena) del ex priísta y ex perredista Andrés Manuel López Obrador, lo mismo que la propia dirección de la CNTE.

La huelga del magisterio independiente mexicano se encuentra en una fase crítica luego del ataque brutal del estado burgués. El asesino gobierno federal de Enrique Peña Nieto, a petición del gobierno estatal de Gabino Cué, ha atacado por aire y tierra las decenas de barricadas instaladas en las carreteras del estado. Maestros, padres de familia y colonos combatieron con palos y piedras el feroz ataque de los federales durante toda la noche del 17 de junio en el puerto petrolero de Salina Cruz en el Istmo y luego en la Mixteca y Valles Centrales. Para la burguesía, aplastar la lucha del magisterio es una cuestión primordial para poder avanzar en la privatización de la educación pública y en la aniquilación del sindicalismo independiente en el país. Para el movimiento obrero, detener el baño de sangre es una cuestión de elemental supervivencia. Urgen movilizaciones de repudio en todo el país en rumbo a una verdadera huelga nacional.

*sigue en la página 22*



**¡Asesinos! Y no sólo los que apretaron el gatillo, sino también sus mandos y sus jefes políticos Peña Nieto, Cué y Nuño.**