

Against Trump *and* the Democrats – Build a Workers Party

Impeachment Crisis: “Deep State” vs. Bigot-in-Chief

OCTOBER 30 – So the Dems finally did it. After months of agitation by liberals and the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America, and months of resistance from the Democratic Party establishment, on September 24 House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi announced that the lower house of Congress would open an official impeachment inquiry against U.S. president Donald Trump. The charges being investigated would be “betrayal of his oath of office, betrayal of our national security and betrayal of the integrity of our elections.” The president, who always relishes being the center of attention, crowed that this will be “a positive for me.” The *New York Times* (25 September) foretold “an epic struggle that will test the limits of the Constitution and the balance of power in the American system.”

Donald Trump is certainly guilty of numerous crimes, of sadistic murderous cruelty against refugees at the border, of vicious per-

secution of immigrants in the U.S., of white-washing anti-Semitic fascist killers, the list goes on and on. But that is not what Trump is being charged with. The Democrats are wrapping themselves in the flag, vituperating about national security, inveighing against Russia and complaining about the Republican “dirty tricks” against them, the other main capitalist party. Both are parties of U.S. imperialism, of the system of war, poverty and racism. If Republican Trump is immigrant-basher-in-chief, Democrat Obama was deporter-in-chief. The president incites racist terror against black people while across the country Democratic mayors preside over the racist killer cops who gun down black people in the streets.

The impeachment investigation has certainly thrown Washington politics into crisis. It goes right to the heart of the state apparatus. But class-conscious workers, de-

continued on page 6



Internationalists at Washington, D.C. protest against Trump inauguration.

Internationalist photo

Defend the Kurds! Drive Out U.S./NATO Imperialists!

For Workers Action Against U.S./Turkey Attack on Kurds!

OCTOBER 14: An agreement has been announced between the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and the government of Bashar al-Assad for the Syrian army to take border positions in the face of the Turkish invasion. This does not presently change the fundamental character of Turkey’s occupation of northern Syria, with the backing of the White House, which is directed at the Kurds. We also defend Syria against the U.S./Turkish attack.

The long-expected Turkish invasion of northeastern Syria began on October 9, two days after U.S. president Donald Trump gave Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan the go-ahead. The immediate target of the attack is the Kurdish YPG (People’s Protection Units) militia, along with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) led by the YPG. In reality, the entire ethnic Kurdish population of northeastern Syria, about 2 million people, is threatened with mass expulsion and massacres. Exactly that occurred when the Turkish army occupied the northwestern Syrian

canton of Afrin in January 2018, forcing tens of thousands of Kurds to flee.

On the first day of the invasion, the Turkish military carried out 181 air strikes against targets in Syria, in addition to pounding the border towns of Tel Abyad and Ras al-Ain with heavy artillery. Some 100,000 people in Kurdish-held territory have fled their homes, according to the United Nations. The YPG/SDF vowed to resist the Turkish attack, and returned fire, sending rockets against the police station in the

continued on page 16



Syrian Kurds in Ras al-Ain demonstrate against imminent Turkish invasion on October 9.

Dellil Souleiman / Agence France-Presse

For Workers Revolution from Turkey and Syria to Iran and Egypt
For a United Socialist Kurdistan in a Socialist Federation of the Middle East

“Workers Struggle Has No Borders!”

Defeat U.S./Mexico War on Immigrants

As Democrats and Republicans gear up for the 2020 elections, both capitalist parties have been attacking immigrants. Xenophobic president Donald Trump did a repeat of his 2015 campaign launch (when he demonized Mexicans as “drug dealers, criminals, rapists”), appealed for racist votes and sent waves of fear through immigrant communities with threats to round up “millions” of undocumented immigrants and immediately deport them. In response, as they did last year, liberal pro-Democratic NGOs (non-governmental organizations) called protests against family separation, but meanwhile Democrats in Congress voted to increase funding for the I.C.E. (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) police.

In the midst of the anti-immigrant hysteria, a white supremacist went into a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas and opened fire on Latinos, killing 22 and injuring two dozen others. As a pretext for this mass murder, the shooter posted a racist manifesto on the Internet vituperating against a supposed “Hispanic invasion” that would “replace” the white population. “Replacement”? In all the coverage of this heinous crime there was hardly a mention of the fact that Texas was part of Mexico until it was invaded by white supremacists from the Southern slave states, who swamped the Hispanic population, staged a rebellion, instituted slavery (banned in Mexico), joined the U.S. as a slave state, and then triggered the 1848 U.S. war on Mexico that stole half its territory.

In this context, with immigrants terrorized by the U.S. government and by mass murderers incited by the white supremacist in the White House, the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth at California State University, Los Angeles, with support from the L.A. local of the Internationalist Group, held a “Speak-Out Against Racist I.C.E. Raids” on August 29. Speakers related RIY’s experience in organizing to defend immigrants and Muslims in New York, IG efforts to mobilize labor in defense of immigrants in Los Angeles and against racist/fascist attacks in Portland. A speaker from Class Struggle Education Workers spoke of the record of the Democrats in building up the deportation machine, as Barack Obama became known as “deporter-in-chief.”

A highlight of the speak-out was the speech of a comrade from the Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, who spoke about how the new president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who campaigned as a populist, has been acting as a border guard for Trump, escalating deportations and harassment of Central American migrants to keep them away from the U.S. border. We print below a lightly edited version of her remarks.

Immigrant workers today face a situation of extreme urgency.

A stark example of the rapaciousness of imperialism can be found in the immigrant-bashing hysteria whipped up by the Trump government. The image of a girl crying for her father who had been arrested by the I.C.E. police and the images of children locked in cages in deplorable conditions, aroused the indignation of thousands of people.

This gave rise to the idea that the openly racist bourgeois Donald Trump was to blame. But it must be said that it is not only his fault: the bourgeoisie is acting as a whole, and the supposedly “lesser evil” parties of Mexico and the U.S., that is, the Democratic Party and MORENA, are defending the interests of the capitalist class against immigrants.

On one side of the border, the U.S. government orchestrates the largest raid in one state, splitting families, launching a racist, sexist and xenophobic campaign that emboldens fascist groups that attack immigrants, and attacks the most oppressed groups in society.

At the same time, on the other side of the border, the Mexican government is perfecting its repressive apparatus on the country’s northern and southern border, and militarizing it with the national guard against migrants.

This makes it clear that the capitalist governments of the U.S. and Mexico



August 29 “Speak-Out Against Racist I.C.E. Raids” at California State University, Los Angeles.

have united the repressive forces on both sides of the border, that is, to join the I.C.E. police with [Mexican president] Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s border police, deploying the full force of the state against its victims.

Both militarism and the catastrophic economic and social conditions in Honduras and all Latin America are the product of U.S. imperialism, and it is these that have led to thousands of poor people, including entire families, to migrate. Those who produced the political framework for the social and economic crisis that has devastated Honduras are to be found directly in Washington and Wall Street.

In Honduras, Trump’s right-wing puppet government is the result of the coup d’état that the Democratic government of Obama staged 10 years ago, which was approved by the State Department headed by Hillary Clinton. As a result, the caravan of migrants headed north, fleeing the desperate misery and violence of their countries of origin.

My point is that the root of the migration crisis is to be found in the functioning of the decaying capitalist system. Migration is a direct and inevitable result of imperialism. Just to give an idea; in the 1980s, Reagan used Honduras as a base for U.S. counterrevolutionary war against Nicaragua, with the Honduran army as its support. Then, in the 1990s, Bill Clinton began deporting hundreds of gang members like the Mara Salvatrucha to Honduras and El Salvador.

And when in 2006 Mexican President Felipe Calderón launched the drug war to comply with the orders of U.S. president George W. Bush, the drug traffickers began to move to San Pedro Sula, Honduras, today the most violent city in the world.

So yes, those who created the current immigration crisis are the imperialists. And their answer to the devastation they created is more police and more effective repression. They are joined by the lackey Mexican bourgeoisie, which has placed itself in the service of imperialism. This is particularly true of immigration policy. The U.S. deported 294,000

immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras from 2015 to 2018, while Mexico deported 436,000 migrants from Central America.

Completely counter to what the reformist left in the U.S. and Mexico think, bourgeois democracy can only be in the service of the bourgeoisie. In reality, capitalism cannot be reformed, it can’t be made into a “lesser evil.” This is not about “developing democracy,” because it is the capitalist state that puts that carries out bourgeois “democracy” with its weapons, its police, its government and its political parties.

We are opposed to anti-immigrant repression and fight for full rights of citizenship, not just in words but in deeds. In Mexico we called to welcome the caravan, in conjunction with the combative Section XXII of the CNTE (National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers) to organize a solidarity mobilization in Oaxaca. We demanded asylum for refugees and full citizenship rights for all immigrants! And we called for workers actions to defend Central American immigrants.

On October 21 of last year, a state teachers assembly in Oaxaca approved a motion supporting the migrant caravan, and mobilized workers to accompany the caravan as it passed through the states where the CNTE is present, and they made a call to the rest of the labor movement to join with them in defending the caravan. The actions included calling on health workers to organize medical brigades to provide medical care for the migrants.

We also called to defeat U.S. imperialist domination of Latin America, which U.S. politicians contemptuously call “our back yard.” The struggle for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, and to stop the raids, must be part of a genuinely revolutionary struggle. For that reason, we have to break with all the capitalist parties and build a workers party on the basis of a revolutionary internationalist program.

For workers actions to stop the racist raids of the I.C.E. police!

*¡La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras!
Workers struggle has no borders!*

Visit the League for the Fourth International/
Internationalist Group on the Internet
<http://www.internationalist.org>

The Internationalist

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

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

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jan Norden (editor), Fred Bergen, Mark Lazarus, Abram Negrete,
Marjorie Salzburg, Jay Wood, Ines Young

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

No. 57



GCC/IBT 1162-M

September-October 2019

Extend the Gains of the 1949 Revolution to Hong Kong – Expropriate the Bourgeoisie, Drive Out the Imperialists

Hong Kong: Defeat Pro-Imperialist Riots With Revolutionary Workers Mobilization

OCTOBER 31 – For almost five months, Hong Kong has been convulsed by increasingly violent imperialist-backed protests and riots. Portrayed in the Western media as “pro-democracy,” their ultimate aim is to instigate capitalist counterrevolution in China. Leading spokesmen of the supposedly “leaderless” movement call for independence from China for the former British colony and appeal to the U.S. president Donald Trump to “liberate Hong Kong.” They have traveled to Washington to appeal to the U.S. government, as well as receiving awards and funds from CIA conduits.

It's not just a few leaders. The protests have been marked by numerous U.S. and UK colonial flags and even the flag of Taiwan, the refuge of the defeated Nationalist army that fled from the Chinese Revolution in 1949. The petty-bourgeois protesters, whether in suits and ties or masked and dressed in black, are virulently anti-communist. They bandy about “Alt-Right” symbols and have embraced fascist provocateurs from the U.S. They were quite literally inspired by the fascist/Ukrainian nationalist uprising of 2014, copied the title of its anthem and adopted its violent tactics.

The current protests are a replay and sharp escalation of the 2014 “Umbrella Movement” in Hong Kong, which was likewise promoted, advised and financed by the imperialists. Yet such counterrevolutionary outbursts and upheavals are the inevitable result of the “one country, two systems” agreement between China and the United Kingdom that led to the 1997 handover of the former imperial outpost that was established by Britain in 1842 as part of the first “Opium War,” when Britain forced the drug trade on the fracturing Qing dynasty that ruled China.

The Hong Kong protests, trumpeted by

the imperialist media marching in lockstep, have brought together an anti-communist unholy alliance extending from outright fascists and right-wing conservatives to bourgeois liberals and most of what remains of an ostensibly socialist left. The League for the Fourth International, in contrast, warns that these protests are a threat to the remaining gains of the Chinese Revolution. They must be countered with a *working-class mobilization on a revolutionary program to drive out the imperialists, expropriate the Hong Kong bourgeoisie and end Hong Kong's “autonomous” status as a capitalist enclave.*

Imperialist-Instigated Protests

Begun as protests against a bill in the Hong Kong legislature (since withdrawn) that would have allowed extradition of suspects among other places to mainland China, the mass marches and the rioting that has accompanied them have been the severest challenge to Beijing's control since the territory was returned to China a little more than two decades ago. In a brazen provocation, on July 1, the anniversary of Britain's handover, protesters stormed the Hong Kong legislative council where they raised the colonial-era flag, yearning for the times when the royal governor appointed almost the entire assembly and executive council.

While some leftist cheerleaders for the Hong Kong protests claimed that such antics were only an aberration, a handful of crazies, the evolution of the protests has dramatically proven them wrong. On August 13, demonstrators stood outside the Hong Kong airport brandishing large American flags and singing the “Star-Spangled Banner.” (Inside the terminal, “pro-democracy” protesters pummeled a reporter for the Chinese Communist Party daily *Global Times*.) Then on September 8, a “pro-democracy”



Protest leaders have openly appealed for imperialist aid, as in this march of thousands to the U.S. Consulate, where they were received by an official.

demonstration of thousands called by the rightist Hong Kong National Party marched to the U.S. consulate in Hong Kong with scores of U.S. flags and a blue banner proclaiming: “President Trump, Please Liberate Hong Kong.”

Two days later, 23-year-old Joshua Wong Chi-fung, one of the leading luminaries of the “anti-extradition” protests as they have exposed themselves as an anti-communist movement, arrived in Germany where he proclaimed that “Hong Kong is like Berlin in [a] ‘new cold war.’” Invited by the right-wing *Bild* newspaper, Wong declared that the former colony is a bulwark against the “dictatorship of China.” A week later he testified before the U.S. Congress urging support for the “Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act,” to sanction Hong Kong officials and cancel its trade privileges if the U.S. decides it was “undermining basic freedoms.”

Five years ago, Western media image-makers made Joshua Wong into the face of the U.S.-funded “Umbrella Revolution.” Although that attempt to destabilize China in the interests of Western imperialism eventually petered out, Wong became an international superstar, travelling to Washington where he was lionized by Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi, named by *Fortune* magazine the tenth most influential person in the world, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Democratic senator Chris Smith and Republican Marco Rubio, and given an award from Freedom House, funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which took over CIA funding of “civil society” groups.

As the 70th anniversary of the Chinese Revolution on October 1 approached this year, reactionary forces in Hong Kong and their backers in Washington intensified their

sinister provocations. This reached a crescendo as official celebrations in Beijing of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China were met by an orgy of virulently anti-communist violence in Hong Kong.

On the weekend before China's National Day, protesters turned central Hong Kong's main commercial areas into a battlefield, hurling bricks and firebombs, burning signs celebrating the PRC's anniversary. Police responded with clouds of tear gas. Crowds carried signs saying “Anti-Chi-Nazi” and chanted, “Expel the Communist Party, free Hong Kong.” Bank of China branches were smashed and set ablaze. The slogan “The Heavens will Destroy the Communist Party” was spray-painted on buildings. The September 29 protest was part of “anti-totalitarian rallies” worldwide, including Taiwan, denouncing “Chinese tyranny.”

On October 1, a large crowd marched through a deserted Causeway Bay shopping district chanting, “Hong Kongers, add oil!” and “Reclaim Hong Kong; revolution of our times,” the slogan coined by ultrarightist “localist” Edward Leung. Flash mobs of black-clad masked thugs roamed the streets, chasing and beating cops, who in several instances drew their revolvers and in one case shot an attacker. In the next days, the squads targeted more than a dozen stations of the MTR subway, smashing glass fronts along with turnstiles and setting entrances ablaze. Many working people expressed outrage over this destruction of their only means of transport.

When Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, ordered a ban on face masks in demonstrations, this set off another round of mass marches and mob riots. A Xiaomi cellphone store was torched, a Fujian restaurant was wrecked

continued on page 20



“Anti-extradition” protesters burn entrance to MTR subway system in Central Hong Kong, September 8.

“One Country, Two Systems” = Stalinist Betrayal For Genuine Communism Through Workers Political Revolution

The Havana Trotsky Conference

By Alberto Fonseca

Notes of a Participant

On May 6-8, an unprecedented and important event was held in Havana, Cuba: the first “International Academic Conference on Leon Trotsky.” The conference was sponsored by Cuba’s Institute of Philosophy and Juan Marinello Institute for Cultural Research, and was held at the Casa México Benito Juárez in Habana Vieja, Havana’s historic “old town.” Those attending included Cuban researchers and students, together with scholars and activists from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Spain, Turkey, the United States and other countries.

As a speaker at the conference, where I gave a talk on “Trotsky in Mexico: Anti-Imperialism and Struggle for the Political Independence of the Working Class,” I was one of the supporters of the League for the Fourth International (LFI) who had the very real honor of participating in this historic event. Panels and presentations addressed many topics – on biographical, cultural, literary and historical themes, among others – from a broad range of viewpoints. This is far more than a brief report can seek to cover. Instead, the purpose of these notes is to give an overview, some background and impressions; and to provide context for the presentations and comments from the floor made by LFI supporters, which are available on the Internet at www.internationalist.org.

Above all, our engagement with the history of Trotsky and Trotskyism is inseparable from today’s struggle for international socialist revolution. We consider the lessons of history to be essential for the fight for humanity’s future. This means political struggle in the here and now for the genuine communist program upheld by Trotsky, the co-leader together with Lenin of the Bolshevik Revolution in tsarist Russia, the organizer of the October 1917 insurrection, founder of the Red Army and of the Fourth International.

Thus at the conference, we considered political debate and polemical discussion to



Poster of the conference.

be essential, though this important aspect has been downplayed or ignored in most accounts of the event. Key issues included the “Russian Question” (the nature of the countries where capitalism was overthrown, and their defense against imperialism and counterrevolution), the fight against class collaboration, and Trotsky’s program of permanent revolution vs. Stalin’s anti-Marxist dogma of “socialism in one country.”

The urgency of proletarian-revolutionary internationalism – not as a ritual phrase but as a guide for powerful *action* by workers internationally against imperialism – was highlighted by the fact that the conference took place just as the White House pushed its attempted coup in Venezuela, and tightened the vicious blockade against Cuba. These aspects too will be discussed in more detail below.

Celia Hart, the Trotsky Museum and the Havana Conference

The conference was organized by Frank García Hernández, a young researcher at the Marinello Institute, as part of a team that included his colleagues Lisbeth Moya González, Yunier Mena, and the director and staff of the Casa Juárez. With contagious enthusiasm, they overcame many obstacles (some anticipated, some unexpected) to ensure that the event would be carried out successfully.

In his inaugural remarks, comrade García paid moving tribute to the memory of Celia Hart (1962-2008), the Cuban

physicist who was the daughter of two renowned leaders of the Cuban Revolution: Armando Hart and Haydée Santamaría. In the early 2000s, she declared her sympathy with Trotsky’s ideas, and she sought to popularize them in Cuba until her tragic death in a traffic accident eleven years ago. García also saluted veterans of the Cuban Trotskyist movement, including León Ferrera, the son of Idalberto Ferrera, whose participation went back to the early 1930s. Inaugural remarks also referred to the important collaboration with the conference from the Trotsky Museum in Mexico City.

These are elements of vital context for the conference, whose intersection was striking for me as a Mexican Trotskyist. The event was my first visit to Cuba since July 2005, when I visited Celia Hart in Havana. I had met her at the Trotsky Museum in Mexico City in the spring of that year. She invited me to attend the event that was going to be held that summer in Cuba to commemorate the attack on the Moncada Barracks, which was carried out on 26 July 1953 and set the stage for the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship by Fidel Castro’s 26 of July Movement.

I took her up on this, and attended the anniversary commemoration she organized in Havana. It was held in the museum dedicated to her uncle Abel Santamaría, who was captured in the attack on Moncada on that day 52 years before, then brutally tortured and murdered. (Celia’s mother Haydée also played a key role in the attack.) In her speech that evening, Celia emphasized the importance of internationalism and her belief that Trotsky’s ideas were crucial for the revolutionary defense of Cuba.

While we differed on important questions (not least the guerrilla warfare strategy that led to many tragic defeats in Latin America), I was proud to join Celia and other Cuban comrades as we sang the “Internationale” that summer night. And it was thanks to her that I met Idalberto Ferrera. Listening to him speaking lucidly in his apartment near Havana’s Capitol building during that 2005 visit, it struck me that this was the first (and perhaps the last) time I had the opportunity to talk with a Trotskyist militant who had joined the Fourth International while Trotsky was still alive.¹ His son León was also present then, proudly showing me a photo of himself as a member of the revolutionary militia in the early 1960s. León also recounted a number of anecdotes about the period when he worked under Che Guevara in the Ministry of Industry.

Celia Hart’s sudden and shocking death seemed, from afar, to threaten to extinguish the growth of interest in Trotsky’s ideas on the besieged island. Yet late last year, we heard the news that plans were underway to hold a gathering in Havana devoted to the study of Trotsky’s legacy, which filled us with enthusiasm. At almost the same time I heard from a Mexican colleague living in Havana that the publication of Cuban author Leonardo Padura’s novel about Trotsky, *The Man Who Loved Dogs*, was awakening considerable interest among the Cuban public regarding the Russian revolutionary leader.

The Havana conference received important support from the Trotsky Museum in Mexico City. Led by Trotsky’s grandson Esteban Volkov, the Museum provided key assistance, including the wonderful display of photos and other materials that it sent, which were installed in the conference hall.

¹ Editor’s note: Idalberto Ferrera died in 2013 at the age of 95. Despite his long record of upholding defense of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution, comrade Idalberto together with his son León and other Cuban Trotskyists were imprisoned for a number of years, first in the 1960s and again in the late ’70s.

Internationalist photo



Conference organizer Frank García Hernández, giving opening remarks to the conference in the Museo Casa México “Benito Juárez,” Havana.



Celia Hart Santamaría



The conference was attended by supporters of a number of tendencies, and saw sharp polemical debates over fundamental issues for Trotskyists. Supporters of the League for the Fourth International insisted on the vital importance of Trotsky's defense of the Soviet Union.

Esteban sent a warm greeting to the conference, and the Museum's acting director, Gabriela Pérez Noriega, gave a presentation at the conference, on the activities carried out there. Due to the efforts of Esteban and the entire staff, Trotsky's house in Coyoacán – now the Casa Museo León Trotsky – has largely been returned to the appearance it had when the exiled Bolshevik leader lived there and waged his last political battles.

Today the Museum is in very good condition, but this has meant overcoming many obstacles over the years. Our tendency's involvement with preserving the Trotsky house as a living part of the revolutionary heritage goes back decades, to the mid-1980s when (at a time when it had very little financial support) we aided the carrying out of vital repairs. After it became an official museum in 1990, comrades gave tours, helped classify and identify historic photos, documents and publications, and in 1995 our comrade Socorro Valero planned and oversaw the restoration of the monument, designed by Mexican artist Juan O'Gorman, that contains the ashes of Trotsky and his companion Natalia Sedova. Thus the connection between the Museum and the Havana Trotsky conference was a highly important point of reference for us, as for others.

Trotsky's Revolutionary Internationalism Essential Today

We arrived in Havana not long after U.S. president Donald Trump activated "Title III" of the notorious Helms-Burton Act. This heightened aggression against Cuba, together with Washington's attempted coup in Venezuela, were a stark backdrop to the event. Passed in 1996 during the presidency of Democrat Bill Clinton, the Helms-Burton Act tightened the U.S. embargo aimed at starving Cuba's people into submission and promoting capitalist counterrevolution – all in the name of imperialist "democracy," of course. The law's Title III, which had previously been kept in reserve ("suspension"), states that non-U.S. companies trading with Cuba can be tried in U.S. courts if they use property "confiscated" (nationalized) after the Cuban Revolution. The use of *extraterritorial* trials is aimed at forcing companies (mainly from Canada and Europe) to stop trading with or carrying out activities in Cuba.

In early May, court suits of just this kind began, kicked off by counterrevolutionary exiles ("gusanos") declaring themselves rightful "owners" of the docks of Havana and Santiago, Cuba. Targets include cruise ships and vessels bringing oil from Venezuela. The brutal exacerbation of scarcity of many consumer products imposed by this vicious measure recalls, for many Cubans, the enormous difficulties they faced during the "special period" brought on by counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which left Cuba without supplies key to its economy. Today, the ramping up of the attempt to strangle the Cuban Revolution was met with widespread indignation in Cuba, where the demand "Down with the Helms-Burton Act!" figured prominently in the May Day rally held a week before the conference, in which hundreds of thousands marched with evident enthusiasm.

As the Havana conference began, this situation highlighted anew the urgency of defending the Cuban Revolution, a vital conquest for the workers and oppressed of the entire world. It underlined the vital importance of discussing the theoretical and programmatic heritage of Leon Trotsky. The event's importance was far greater than any purely academic gathering could have. As Lenin stressed, revolutionary Marxism is a "guide to action" by the international proletariat.

Thus, the struggle between Trotsky's program of "permanent revolution" and Stalin's dogma of "socialism in one country" continues to be crucial for revolutionaries around the world. It was of decisive importance that Trotsky fought relentlessly to uphold the internationalist program of the October Revolution, against Stalin's anti-Marxist, nationalist lie that socialism could be built in the Soviet Union in isolation from the international socialist revolution. Though the USSR made up one sixth of the planet, the constant economic and military pressure of world imperialism led to the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state, and the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR and the East European deformed workers states in 1989-92.

For Trotsky, defense of the enormous conquests for humanity brought by the over-

throw of capitalist rule in the old tsarist empire and the expropriation of the capitalists and landlords demanded the international extension of the socialist revolution, leading to the overthrow of world imperialism. This, together with a proletarian political revolution restoring the proletarian democracy of the soviets (workers councils), was crucial to defend the gains of October and open the way to a classless, socialist society.

Trotsky's last political battle was to uphold the Fourth International's historic position in defense of the Soviet workers state. In that struggle, his close collaborator James P. Cannon – founder of

Trotskyism in the Western hemisphere – led the fight in the U.S. section against the "petty-bourgeois opposition" of Max Shachtman and James Burnham, which renounced this just as World War II began.

At the Havana conference, LFI supporters spoke out in defense of Trotsky's position. Thus we found ourselves answering claims that Trotsky's Left Opposition should have made a political bloc with Nikolai Bukharin's Right Opposition; and opposing the positions of Shachtman and of the late Tony Cliff, which were echoed by a small number of participants. (One presentation was devoted to upholding Cliff's crude "theoretical" justifications for opposing defense of the USSR on the grounds that it was supposedly "state capitalist.")² It was striking that the LFI was the only tendency whose supporters at the conference forthrightly took up this crucial challenge, though our remarks (see www.internationalist.org) were warmly applauded by

² In one exchange during floor discussion, Dan La Botz (formerly of the International Socialists, then Solidarity and now the Democratic Socialists of America) gave a particularly full-throated brief for Shachtman, crying out, "Shachtman was right!"

much of the audience, including many of the Trotskyist "old-timers" present there.

Railing against "Soviet imperialism," "socialist" Cold Warriors such as Shachtman and Cliff represent the *antithesis* of Trotskyism, standing on the opposite side of the barricades all down the line. Upholding the Trotskyist position on the "Russian Question" is essential today in the fight to defeat U.S. imperialism's onslaught against Cuba and its drive for capitalist counterrevolution from China, North Korea and Vietnam to the embattled Caribbean island.

Broad Range of Topics

As Trotsky's and Cannon's struggle against Shachtman is crucial to understanding the history of Trotskyism – and what it is and isn't today – the presentation by Cannon's biographer Bryan Palmer was one of the highlights of the Havana Conference. The Canadian researcher gave a fascinating talk, "On Cannon, Shachtman and Early U.S. Trotskyism," succinctly bringing to light a series of crucial episodes in the period leading up to the crucial showdown over the Russian Question in 1939-40. (Palmer's notes for the talk are available on line here: <http://links.org.au/node/5408>.)

Another widely-known speaker at the conference was U.S. leftist historian Paul Le Blanc, who gave a well-researched talk titled "The Darker the Night, the Brighter the Star: Leon Trotsky's Struggle Against Stalinism." Le Blanc was formerly associated with the "United Secretariat" of the late Ernest Mandel, which claimed to be the Fourth International while systematically adapting to reformist, Stalinist and nationalist leaderships, eventually embracing an essentially social-democratic standpoint.³ Describing the devastation wrought by Stalin's murderous campaign against the Left Opposition, Le Blanc cited Joseph Berger, secretary of the Communist Party of Palestine, who vividly described the

³ He subsequently joined the International Socialist Organization, which dissolved earlier this year. This past summer, following the trajectory of many in both the former ISO and Mandeliste milieu, he came out for supporting the presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders, who is seeking the Democratic nomination. Of course, supporting a capitalist candidate is contrary to the ABC of Marxist politics, which is based on the political independence of the working class (as Cannon underlined in his speeches against support for bourgeois "third parties" in the late '40s).



Alberto Fonseca speaking on "Trotsky in Mexico."



Leon Trotsky, founder and first commander in chief of the Soviet Red Army, described by Winston Churchill as “the most dangerous man in the world.”

struggles of the Trotskyists in the Vorkuta labor camp, who sang the “Internationale” as they were massacred *en masse*.⁴

The annihilation of the Trotskyists in the USSR was one of the elements that led Victor Serge to call the late 1930s “midnight in the century.” They were among the generation of revolutionaries targeted by Stalin because they embodied the memory of October, having survived the Civil War in which they fought the White Guards organized by tsarist generals, armed and backed by the 14 capitalist powers whose intervention, aimed at strangling the workers state, was defeated by Trotsky’s Red Army.⁵

As Trotskyists fighting to bring the program of Bolshevism into the class struggle today, we are often asked to explain: why are the forces laying claim to the heritage of Bolshevism so fragmented? And why, in the vast majority of cases, are groups which claim to be Leninist and Trotskyist so distant from what Lenin and Trotsky meant by communism? Grasping the devastation wrought by Stalinism is a crucial part of understanding why today it is necessary to restore the very meaning of terms and concepts like socialism, communism, working-class politics and so much more.

The bloody repression of revolutionaries carried by Stalin was the corollary to his betrayals of revolutionary struggle, such as stabbing the Spanish Revolution in the back in the vain attempt to win favor from Britain, France and the U.S. in 1936-39. Stalinist terror, as well as that unleashed by the fascists before and during WWII, wiped out the majority of experienced Trotskyist cadres. This is one of the crucial reasons for the weakness and disorientation of the Fourth International in the postwar period, paving the way for its destruction under Michel Pablo in 1951-53. The LFI calls to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution on the basis of a program that Trotsky would recognize as his own.⁶

⁴ See *Shipwreck of a Generation: The Memoirs of Joseph Berger* (Harvill Press, 1971).

⁵ Serge broke with Trotsky in the mid-1930s, among other things, over the Bolshevik leader’s sharp opposition to any capitulation to the “popular front” of class collaboration promoted by Stalin and his followers that produced such disastrous results in Spain (as well as France and elsewhere).

⁶ See “Declaration of the League for the Fourth International” (April 1998, on line at <http://www.internationalist.org/lfideclaration.html>) and “The Struggle to Reforge a Genuinely Trotskyist Fourth International (November 2017, on line at <http://www.internationalist.org/lficonferencedocument1712.html>).

At the Havana conference, many other aspects of revolutionary history and of Trotsky’s work were addressed, in a broad range of presentations. This included talks by Cuban researchers Yunier Mena of the Universidad Central de Las Villas on “Art and Literature in *The Revolution Betrayed*” and Caridad Massón of the Marinello Institute on “The Trial of Sandalio Junco,” a trade-unionist considered one of the founders of Cuban Trotskyism. Other talks reflecting Trotskyism’s impact in Latin America included presentations about Julio Antonio Mella, founder of the Cuban Communist Party; about Trotsky’s writings on Latin America, his analysis of the rise of U.S. imperialism, and the period when he directed the *Bulletin of the Opposition* from Mexico; on some aspects of the Brazilian Trotskyist movement; as well as my presentation on Trotsky in Mexico and Sándor John’s talk on Bolivian Trotskyism, both of which are reproduced at www.internationalist.org.

While it is not possible to go into all the topics and talks at the conference, my interest was also especially drawn by those on the “parallel lives” and aesthetic views of Trotsky and the leftist German philosopher and critic Walter Benjamin; on Sergei Eisenstein’s film *Strike* and “the roots of permanent revolution” in the period of the 1905 revolution; and on comparisons between Trotsky during the four years (1929-33) he spent in Turkey during his final exile, and the pioneering Turkish communist and poet Nazim Hikmet.⁷

Another vital aspect of the conference was the opportunity to meet veterans of the Trotskyist movement, who in some cases we have heard about for decades. It was exciting to meet them in person; and the fact that our views have often diverged widely over the years proved no obstacle to debate and a real exchange of ideas. To choose one example, when I was first learning about the history of the Trotskyist movement, the importance of workers democracy was illustrated to me by

⁷ This made me recall a poem by Hikmet that I first heard on Radio Universidad in Mexico two decades ago:

“We go to the moon
and further still,
where even telescopes reach.
But when will the people of our Earth
no longer go hungry
and no one be afraid of anyone,
or rule over anyone,
or curse anyone,
or steal another’s hope?
This is why I am a communist:
to answer that question.”

the notorious violations of this principle by the British pseudo-Trotskyist leader Gerry Healy. A key case was the 1966 gangster attack on a supporter of Mandel’s United Secretariat named Ernest Tate, whose “crime” was to sell a pamphlet critical of Healy in front of a meeting in London.

It was moving to meet Ernie Tate over a half century later, together with his comrade Jess MacKenzie, who worked closely with the legendary African American revolutionary Robert F. Williams in the early 1960s.⁸ And also to meet other veterans, such as the Austrian scholar Helmut Dahmer, who gave the talk on Trotsky and Walter Benjamin. Dahmer related how he first met Trotskyists as a young teenager in 1956, at a march in solidarity with the Hungarian Revolution. It was remarkable to be meeting and talking together at a conference on Trotsky, in Havana!

“The Most Dangerous Man in the World”

On the second day of the conference, Frank García invited us to visit the Cuban Cinematography Institute for the world premiere of sections of *The Most Dangerous Man in the World*, a documentary-in-progress on Leon Trotsky. (The title is based on Winston Churchill’s description of the exiled Bolshevik.) Film maker David Weiss (1912-2005) started the project in 1972. It is now being produced by Lindy Laub, with historical assistance from Suzy Weissman. Both were present and introduced the film in person.

Watching long portions of the film in the crowded Havana theater was an extraordinary experience. As Laub explains, Weiss, “a lifelong Trotskyist of Communist parents ... looked around and realized that the people who had known and worked with Trotsky were dying.” He traveled to Mexico, Turkey, France and other countries to interview them on film. Combined with extremely rare footage of Trotsky himself, the film includes interviews with more than 40 people, including French militants who knew Lenin and Trotsky in 1917, Nadezhda Yoffe, daughter of his close comrade and friend Adolph Yoffe; *Black Jacobins* author and one-time Trotskyist C.L.R. James; founding U.S. Communist and Trotskyist Arne Swabeck, and many others. (See “How It Began,” on trotskyproject.com.) We see Trotsky’s grandson Esteban Volkov in Coyoacán, speaking in the same voice I have come to know well over the years.

Among the most moving scenes are the interviews with Trotsky’s secretaries Fanny Yanovich and Jean van Heijenoort – who gives a kind of guided tour of the houses in Prinkipo and France where Trotsky lived – and James Cannon. Shortly before traveling to Havana, I was studying Cannon’s *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* (1943). To see and hear Cannon in full color, speaking in his calm yet powerful voice, telling anecdotes about Lenin and Trotsky at congresses of the Communist International – it is hard to describe the impact of these scenes. Like many others, we eagerly await the completion of this crucial film.

On the last night of the conference, a group led by a friend of the conference organizer gave a concert, featuring the debut of a special piece written for the occasion, at a neighborhood café that offered a

⁸ This is described in Tate’s memoir *Revolutionary Activism in the 1950s & 60s* (Resistance Books, 2014).

glimpse of Havana’s vibrant cultural life. As Bryan Palmer humorously commented to me, it was a mixture of Trotsky and Allen Ginsberg. The occasion was poignant as we said goodbye, for now.

Today, 79 years after Trotsky’s murder by a Stalinist assassin, the Trotskyist program of world socialist revolution is more crucial than ever. Sixty years after the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the revolutionary and internationalist defense of its conquests is a vital part of that program. For us as revolutionary Marxists, the Havana conference helped show concretely – in many different ways – what this means. ■

Impeachment...

continued from page 1

fenders of black rights, immigrants’ rights and democratic rights in general, and certainly revolutionary Marxists, have no dog in this fight. Or rather, we are *against* both sides in this dogfight among capitalist politicians over who is betraying and who is upholding the class interests and “national security” of the U.S. bourgeoisie. Trump is being brought up on charges by the wrong class for the wrong crimes. While various opportunist leftists have climbed aboard the impeachment express, we in the Internationalist Group are fighting to build a revolutionary workers party against Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties.

Donald Trump rails against a “Deep State” that he says is waging a conspiracy to oust him. The phrase stems from Turkey, where it referred to the security apparatus that ran the country for decades, whether carrying out coups d’état or operating behind the scenes, independent of which political party was/is in office. It is certainly true that top-level military and intelligence officials – in the Pentagon, Langley (CIA) and in the White House itself – are behind the revelations that sparked the impeachment inquiry. The idea that it was the work of a lone courageous CIA “whistleblower” is ludicrous.

“Deep State”? The force that has turned on Trump is at the core of state power – those “special bodies of armed men,” the military and police, along with their auxiliaries such as courts and prisons, which serve as the key “instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed class,” as Friedrich Engels noted in *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) and V.I. Lenin spelled out in *The State and Revolution* (1917). Under imperialism, this apparatus expands enormously, the Bolshevik leader wrote. Since the dawn of the 20th century:

“military and naval armaments have grown fantastically and the predatory war of 1914-17 for the domination of the world by Britain or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the ‘swallowing’ of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power close to complete catastrophe.”

What left-liberals like Gore Vidal referred to as the “national security state” expanded further as the United States became the top dog among the imperialists after World War II, and reached an apotheosis as the U.S. became the world’s policeman in the post-Soviet “new world order.”

Impeachment Crisis: Calculations and Consequences

So getting the go-ahead from the military/intelligence agencies was the key reason why Democrats in Congress – who include a significant and increasing number

of former intelligence and military personnel – launched the impeachment inquiry, and why they launched it now. After all, the shenanigans by the sinister clown-maniac Rudy Giuliani in Ukraine, looking for dirt on the Bidens, father and son, on behalf of Trump had been known since last May. But getting into a brawl with the president – especially this one, who will stop at nothing – when he is in control the apparatus of repression is a risky business. Let’s not forget that from the outset of Trump’s presidency, the Democrats have looked to the Pentagon and CIA/NSC, hoping that the generals and spy chiefs could rein in the maverick. Those are some of the most sinister, murderous forces on the face of the planet. And they failed.

A second main reason for the impeachment gambit, and the particular charges, is electoral. Desperate to oust Trump at the latest by the 2020 elections, the Democratic Party establishment would like to nail down Joe Biden as the candidate. How can you abandon Biden when he is the object of Trump’s attack? is Pelosi’s pitch. Democratic Party leaders want to counter Trump’s attempt to “marry” the Democrats to Bernie Sanders and “The Squad” of first-term Congresswomen as purported “socialists,” but also to head off the “progressive” Elizabeth Warren, whom the Clinton/Obama “moderates” consider “unelectable.” And by making Trump’s dirt-digging on the Bidens the focus of the impeachment, they can deflect his attack on son Hunter for corrupt connections in Ukraine. Their problem is that Biden Sr. is in several ways a weak candidate, and getting weaker.

What the impeachment process will certainly do is further polarize an already politically and socially polarized country. It would likely trigger the fascist fringe and enrage the right-wing racists at the core of Trump’s support. Many are armed, and not a few are unstable. When Trump tweeted a quote from a notorious Southern Baptist pastor, Robert Jeffress (“If the Democrats are successful in removing the president from office” it would “cause a Civil War-like fracture in this Nation from which our Country will never heal”) this was no idle threat.¹ Another prominent evangelical preacher, Franklin Graham, said the same last May. Hard-core racists are “only” about a quarter of the electorate – maybe not a civil war, but violent attacks against immigrants, Muslims, black people, Jews, leftists, women, gays, trans people, protesters and others are highly likely.

“We the People”? Not

Donald Trump claims Article II of the U.S. Constitution would let him do anything. That is a slight exaggeration, but the foundation document of the government of the United States does provide for a very powerful executive. In civics classes and bourgeois politicians’ speeches, the Constitution is worshipped as a kind of civic religion. It’s as if they are the equivalent of Moses’ tablets, that god spoke unto the hallowed “Founding Fathers” – and sayeth, “Thou shalt write a Constitution that shall be the rock of legitimacy through the ages.” This document, even by the standards of bourgeois democracy, is deeply undemocratic. As Marxists understand, it enshrines one form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie – and it could be replaced

¹ See “Dangerous Racist Provocations in Pre-Election Maneuvering,” *The Internationalist*, July 2019.

by another, such as a military dictatorship, if the capitalist rulers deem it necessary to uphold their class rule.

It’s well-known that “We the People,” as the preamble to the Constitution starts out, excluded black slaves, Native Americans, women and even poor whites and working people generally. The right to vote at the time was largely limited to white men of property. In fact, the entire structure of government established by the Constitution was molded by slavery and the rulers’ fear of the plebeian masses, black and white. After slavery was uprooted in the Civil War, the institution of Jim Crow segregation meant that black people were excluded from voting through poll taxes, literacy tests, and sheer terror. Even today, the “one person, one vote” electoral system supposedly guaranteed by the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution (the result of defeating the Confederate slave masters on the field of battle), as well as Supreme Court decisions, the 24th Amendment and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, has been deeply eroded. Mass incarceration of African Americans combined with state laws banning ex-prisoners from voting have disenfranchised millions of black people.

And, of course, immigrants are excluded – not only those lacking the papers required by the racist ruling class and who are demonized by Trump, but also immigrants with legal residency but not citizenship – even though they represent a very large percentage of the workforce that keeps the country going. They toil in sweatshops and sleep in the fields, are continually persecuted, living in fear with the constant threat of deportation hanging over their heads. Parents are separated from their U.S.-born children, families are put in concentration camps, children locked up in cages and traumatized. The I.C.E. Gestapo terrorizes immigrant communities, both under Democrat Obama and Republican Trump. As liberals call for “gun control,” kill-crazy cops gun down over 1,000 civilians a year, one-third of them black, with near-total impunity. And throughout the history of U.S. imperialist wars, Democrats have as a rule been in the forefront.

These are (some of) the real crimes of the U.S.’ rulers, for which they will never be accountable so long as capitalism reigns and its political representatives and military/police enforcers hold the reins of state power. So are their imperialist wars that killed millions, from Korea and Vietnam to Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. Now the Democrats have lined up Republicans in Congress to slam Trump for ditching the Pentagon’s Kurdish “allies” in the U.S. war on the Islamic State by green-lighting Turkey’s invasion of Syria. We, on the other hand, call to *drive the imperialists out of the Middle East*.

Charged with the Wrong Crimes by the Wrong Class

Would-be strongman Trump loves Article II of the Constitution. Article I (Sections 2 and 5), however, allows for the impeachment of the president, as well as other high federal officials, senators, congressmen and judges. The House of Representatives brings articles of impeachment, but an official is only removed from office upon conviction by the Senate. It should be emphasized that impeachment is not a criminal but a political trial. (The Spanish translation is *juicio político*.) Alexander Hamilton, that proponent of a strong federal government so beloved of liberals today that they flock

to a musical about him, wrote in *Federalist Paper* No. 65 (7 March 1788) that impeachment should deal with “offenses” that stem from “the misconduct of public men,” from “the abuse or violation of some public trust,” and thus are eminently “POLITICAL.”

Since Trump is not being impeached for his real crimes, what are the Democrats accusing him of? The sole charge so far is holding up military aid to Ukraine’s military in order get its president to announce an investigation of the Democrats’ activities there. The Ukrainian Army wants Javelin missiles in order to fight Russian-backed rebels in Eastern Ukraine. Ukraine’s military and police are shot through fascists and ultra-nationalists who have staged pogroms.² The Azov Battalion of the Ukrainian National Guard, which sports a Nazi-like symbol and is led by fascist nationalists, were shock troops for the assault on Donetsk in eastern Ukraine and has reportedly trained white supremacists from the U.S. The House of Representatives has passed resolutions blocking aid to the Azov Battalion, but they were lifted because of Pentagon pressure.

Donald Trump is a grotesque xenophobic, racist, sexist, homophobic pig guilty of countless crimes against working people and the oppressed. He is surrounded by grifters – rip-off artists – like the pair of Ukrainian associates of Rudolph Giuliani, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, who were arrested on campaign fraud charges as they tried to skip the country. (Their company was curiously named Fraud Guarantee.) But Trump is not alone, nor unique. He was in fact earlier closely associated with Democrats. His mentor Roy Cohn, the right-hand man of witch-hunter senator Joe McCarthy, was a registered Democrat. He hobnobbed with Bill and Hillary Clinton, Chuck Schumer and many another pillar of the Democratic Party.³ Donald Trump is a truly bipartisan product of decaying capitalism, which elevates bizarre and sinister fraudsters, like the moribund tsarist empire produced a Rasputin.

But the Democrats are in some respects even more dangerous. In this impeachment they are relying on the Pentagon generals and CIA spymasters whose crimes far exceed anything that even Trump has done. Democrats have deported millions, put child refugees in cages, napalmed Vietnam, imposed murderous sanctions in Iraq and elsewhere. Talk about “election interference”: continuing the long tradition of U.S. imperialism under both parties, Hillary Clinton as secretary of state removed and installed governments in Haiti and Honduras. The Dems have aggressively pushed for war with Russia over Ukraine and Syria, they denounce Trump for negotiating with North Korea, they are war hawks against China. Meanwhile, the Demo-

² For example, burning down trade-union headquarters in Odessa as police stood by, killing almost 50 people trapped inside (see “Fascist Pogrom in Odessa, And the Aftermath,” in *The Internationalist* No. 37, May-June 2014).

³ A vivid account is provided by Frank Rich, “The Original Donald Trump,” *New York magazine*, April 2018



EPA/Roman Pilipey

Fascist Azov Battalion in Ukraine, funded by the U.S.

crats have pushed “free trade” pacts which have devastated peasants’ livelihoods from Haiti (in favor of Arkansas rice) to Mexico (dumping Iowa corn), and destroyed workers’ jobs while lowering wages in all the countries involved.

The workers and oppressed have no class stake in the current impeachment brouhaha, and in fact must *oppose* both sides in this ruling-class squabble. Needless to say, “progressive” Democrats have been pushing impeachment from the get-go. DSA Democrats Rashida Tlaib and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez were among the first in Congress to call for impeaching Trump. And when Republicans and Democrats united to pass a House resolution on October 16 denouncing Trump for withdrawing U.S. troops from Syria, the whole “Squad” voted for it. Assorted reformist leftists have joined the impeachment drive, such as *Socialist Alternative* (30 September) which headlined an editorial “Democrats Begin Impeachment Proceedings: Build a Movement to Drive Trump!”

The Task of Revolutionaries

Will Trump manage to engineer his impeachment? Who can say? But the task of proletarian revolutionaries is to raise the consciousness of the oppressed and exploited about the true source of their oppression, in order to take forward the struggle to overthrow it. As Lenin wrote in his 1913 essay “The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism”:

“Champions of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old order until they realize that every old institution, however barbarous and rotten it may appear to be, is kept going by the forces of certain ruling classes. And there is only one way of smashing the resistance of those classes, and that is to find, in the very society which surrounds us, the forces which can – and, owing to their social position, must – constitute the power capable of sweeping away the old and creating the new, and to enlighten and organize those forces for the struggle.”

The forces that can sweep away the decaying capitalist system and its political representatives are the working class at the head of its allies among the downtrodden and oppressed. The key task is to help free them from the stranglehold of the Democratic Party and its camp followers on the left, to unchain the power of proletarian class struggle.

The focus of our efforts must be to build a workers party in struggle against all wings of the bourgeois rulers, which can break the chains binding the oppressed to the sinking capitalist system and lead the struggle to free the victims of all forms of social oppression through international socialist revolution. ■

This article has been excerpted for publication. For the full text see www.internationalist.org.

You Can't Fight Trump with the Democratic Party

Dangerous Racist Provocations in Pre-Election Maneuvering

JULY 24 – Leading up to the 2020 U.S. elections, the maneuvering between the two main government parties of this imperialist country in deep social crisis has set off a virulent racist hate campaign, whipped up by Republican President Donald Trump, against first-term Democratic Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib. Escalating his racist taunts, Trump ranted that they should “go back” to countries they “originally came from.” His minions piled on, vituperating against the women, two of whom are black, one Latina, one Palestinian American, while Omar is a Muslim immigrant. At a North Carolina election rally, as Trump hurled insults at Omar, who came to the U.S. as a child refugee from Somalia, he whipped crowds into a mob-like frenzy as they chanted “send her back.”

Trump brands the four liberal Democrats as “communists.” White House advisor Kellyanne Conway responded to reporter Andrew Feinberg by demanding, “What’s your ethnicity?” Liberals pointed out that three of the four women were born in the U.S. But Trump isn’t confused about their origin any more than he was in whipping up the “birther” claim that Barack Obama wasn’t born in the U.S. The “go back to where you came from” taunt is a threat of racist (and in this case, misogynistic) violence often hurled against African Americans, immigrants, their children and others branded as “foreigners.” It comes after Trump announced raids by the I.C.E. (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) Gestapo targeting “millions.” Meanwhile, tens of thousands of refugees and immigrants are subjected to sadistic cruelty, with children and adults starved, degraded and terrorized in America’s concentration camps.

Revving up dangerous incitement that could easily turn deadly, the racist and “foreigner”-baiting campaign takes aim at doubly and triply oppressed groups throughout U.S. society, putting black people together with immigrants in the crosshairs. Yet while Trump revels in xenophobia, the actions of the Democrats in office are no less racist, from the Clintons in the 1990s, with their vicious welfare, immigration and death penalty “reforms,” to Obama, who really did deport millions. The only way to mobilize a real and effective response to the *bipartisan racism of the U.S. imperialist rulers* is to bring out the massive potential power of the multiracial working class. To do this requires unchaining that power from all the parties and politicians of this racist capitalist system. This underlines yet again why we insist that “you can’t fight Trump with the Democratic Party,” which is the key mechanism for chaining the ex-



Immigrant-bashing Republican president Donald Trump launches racist hate campaign, Democratic House speaker Nancy Pelosi rounded up votes to increase funds for Border Patrol refugee kidnapers.

ploited and oppressed to the institutions running the decaying capitalist social order in its death agony.

Electoral Purposes, Democratic “Resistance”

Trump suggested that Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi “would be very happy to very quickly work out free travel arrangements” for the four Congresswomen, seeking with sly malice to fan the flames of conflict between Pelosi and “the Squad,” as the four are now widely known. Early this year, their entry to Congress was smoothed by a display of hugs with “establishment” Democrats personified by Pelosi, meant to symbolize amity and party unity. More recently this has given way to increasing rancor between Pelosi and the “progressives.”¹

While the White House bigot-in-chief was clearly enjoying himself with his gibes about conflicts among Democrats, he declared his intention to “marry” the Democratic Party as a whole to “the Squad.” This would enable him to pitch the 2020 presentational race as Trump running against the made-up image that he and Fox News concoct of alien un- and anti-American “socialists.” Right-wing talking heads gleefully embraced the gambit. Soon a Trump supporter in New York was arrested for threatening to “put a bullet in her,” referring to Representative Omar.

In response to Trump’s barrage of racist tweets and declarations, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution denouncing the president for his

¹ See “Midterm Elections: No Win for Working People,” *The Internationalist* No. 54, November-December 2018 and “Nancy Pelosi, Icon of Female Capitalist Power,” *The Internationalist* No. 55, Winter 2019.

overtly and blatantly racist attack on the four Congresswomen. Every single House Democrat voted for the resolution, including a number of “blue dog” Democrats who are otherwise loath to go against Trump. But how they mean to “resist” him was shown as they filled the resolution with quotations from arch-racist Republican Ronald Reagan (together with Democratic Cold Warrior JFK and other icons of bipartisan U.S. imperialism).

“The Squad” held a press conference on July 15, in which they sought to defend themselves with dignity against Trump’s onslaught of woman-hating bigotry. As expected, they joined the Democratic leadership in vows not to be distracted from the party’s “agenda.” And they joined in its appeals to the flag-waving ideology “uniting” exploiter and exploited in fealty to U.S. imperialism. Would-be leftists who sow illusions in Democratic “resistance” can only help disarm real struggle against racist reaction.

Spectre of Civil War?

In significant ways the current situation is unprecedented. The House of Representatives explicitly and formally registering that the head of the executive branch is a racist ranter, while the president tells members of Congress to “go back” where they “came from” – these are vivid indications of the sharp crisis of the decaying political and social system of American capitalism. Trump’s incitement is a harbinger of violence to come, but for all their talk of “Resistance,” the “opposition” has in fact ceded to his bully-boy tactics time after time. The reason is simple: whether it is “cracking down” on undocumented immigrants, threaten-

ing military action against Iran and Venezuela, or escalating trade war against China (a bureaucratically deformed workers state), Democrats and Republicans are partner parties of U.S. imperialism.

Gone are the days when Washington triumphantly proclaimed a “New World Order” and a “second American Century.” Yet even as its economic power and military domination wane, the rival factions of the hegemonic imperialist power have contained their differences. The Watergate crisis of the early 1970s, largely a by-product of the historic U.S. defeat at the hands of the heroic Vietnamese, was “resolved” within the institutional framework. In its wake, presidents from Democrat Jimmy Carter and Republican Reagan on sought to overcome the “Vietnam syndrome” (widespread popular aversion to military adventures involving large-scale U.S. casualties) and refurbish the “imperial presidency.” But after Vietnam and Watergate, the fact that the government lies all the time became an integral part of popular consciousness.

Today, the bourgeoisie – including much of the Democratic Party – worries that another impeachment crisis could even further discredit and erode the institutions of “normal” rule. Of course, there is little normal about the Trump presidency which followed eight years of broken “Hope and Change” promises under Obama. The intensity of political clashes in the ruling class recalls the period leading up to the U.S. Civil War, notably the savage beating of Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts on the Senate floor by South Carolina Congressman Preston Brooks in 1856. Brooks was a member of the Democratic Party, which represented the slave owners, while Sumner was a leader of the Radical, anti-slavery wing of the recently formed Republican Party. Soon the “irrepressible conflict” over slavery turned into armed conflict.

The U.S. Civil War of the 1860s was one of the last examples on a world scale of sectors of the bourgeoisie playing a progressive historical role. The war led to the “Second American Revolution” in which 180,000 slaves, finally armed by the North, played a key role in defeating the bloody slavocracy.² Yet its promise of black freedom was betrayed as Reconstruction was overturned in 1877, sacrificed by the Northern capitalists on the altar of “national reconciliation” for profit. As U.S. capitalism completed its march across the continent, its 1898 conquest of Puerto Rico, Cuba and Philippines marked the advent of the era of imperialism, what Lenin analyzed as the

² See “Lincoln and the Abolition of Slavery” and “The Emancipation Proclamation: Promise and Betrayal,” in *The Internationalist* No. 34, March-April 2013.

**Unchain the Power of Labor and the Oppressed!
For a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

“highest stage of capitalism.” In this epoch of imperialist decay, productive forces have been destroyed in two world capitalist depressions (in the 1930s and since 2007) and two world wars.

Today, the intensity of the political clashes in Washington and the provocations of violent racist and outright fascist groups raise the spectre of civil war. Certainly, sectors of Trump’s most rabid base yearn to avenge the defeat of the vile Confederacy. Yet there are fundamental differences from the U.S. of a century and a half ago. For all the talk of “Resistance” from liberal Democrats and their reformist hangers-on, there is no sector of the U.S. bourgeoisie that will – or can – fight the wave of reaction. With their “Russiagate” obsession, banging the drums against China, embracing the persecution of Julian Assange, etc., national security liberals are the premier war party in Washington. Meanwhile, across the country it is Democratic mayors who are “the bosses of the racist killer cops,” as we have emphasized,³ and who join Trump in protecting racist/fascist terrorists in the name of “free speech.”

The frenzy of bigotry from the highest levels of government underlines again the connection between anti-black racism and anti-immigrant racism. The fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and for asylum for refugees fleeing the deprecation wrought by imperialism, from the Middle East to Central America, is inseparable from the program for black liberation through socialist revolution. Likewise, as women’s access to abortion is systematically cut off, the fight for free abortion on demand must be part of a struggle for women’s liberation through socialist revolution. The destruction of the much of the union movement and driving down of wages, particular for young and older workers, highlights the urgent need for a class-struggle program pointing to the need to bring down the decaying capitalist order.

Unchain Workers Power

While rightist Republicans attacked Ocasio-Cortez and others for accurately using the term “concentration camps” to describe the caging of immigrants, it was the patron saint of Democratic liberalism – Franklin D. Roosevelt, whom “AOC” and Bernie Sanders constantly cite as their political model and inspiration – who put the Japanese Americans in camps during World War II. It was Democrats as well as Republicans who deported hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Mexicans and Mexican Americans during the Depression, on down to “Operation Wetback” in the 1950s – and Barack Obama who massively built up the deportation machine wielded now by Trump.

Today, hard-core racists and outright fascists emboldened by the demagogue Trump – with whom the Republican Party as a whole is now thoroughly identified – would doubtless relish a real-life Confederate “reenactment” to drown their entire enemies’ list in blood. But the self-described Resistance orbits around the Democratic Party, the slave masters’ party that became the leading party of U.S. imperialism, and since the early 20th century has been the central mechanism for subjugating and *burying* even defensive struggles by the exploited and oppressed. As we

³ See “Democrats Are the Bosses of the Racist Killer Cops,” in *The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016.

have emphasized and spelled out in detail, refurbishing and rejuvenating the Democratic Party, bringing in large new layers of youth in particular, is the social and political function of “AOC,” Bernie Sanders, and the rest.⁴

A civil war takes two sides, with a leadership determined to win and (at least for the winning side) capable of doing so. Nothing could be more obvious than the fact that reliance on or any kind of confidence in the Democratic wing of the capitalist class enemy can mean only defeat. For the workers and oppressed to defend themselves, their most vital rights and needs – let alone move to actually win what has up to now been a “one-sided class war” – it is urgently necessary to *break from the Democratic Party*. Thus, while militantly opposing the vicious racist campaign against the four Congresswomen, revolutionary Marxists give no political support to them or any other representative of capitalism’s political machine.

It is precisely subjugation to the Democrats that reduced the labor movement to a shadow of its former strength; chained African Americans, Latinos, defenders of women’s rights and youth to the bosses’ state and institutions; channeled each new struggle into bourgeois electoralism – and paved the way for Trump. Winning the *political independence of the working class* is, in an accumulating range of ways, a matter of life and death. This means ousting the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy and the bourgeois misleaders of struggles of the oppressed and fighting for *revolutionary leadership*, summed up in the urgent need to forge a *revolutionary workers party*, steeled in the fight for socialist revolution.

Class Independence Key to Fight Against Oppression

Revolutionary Marxists militantly oppose all forms of bigotry and oppression, which poisons society, seeking to divide the exploited and oppressed and set them against each other for the benefit of the ruling class. In his crucial *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), V.I. Lenin, who would go on to lead the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 together with Leon Trotsky, took on the question of how building a revolutionary workers party is intimately tied to combatting all forms of oppression going beyond the working class.

In his famous phrase, Lenin emphasized that a revolutionary Marxist party must be “*the tribune of the people* ... able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects.” This meant being able to “generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation”; and to “clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.” Thus genuine Marxists and class-conscious workers must be in the front lines of defense of black rights and immigrants’ rights, of women’s rights and gay and transgender rights, as integral parts of the struggle to overthrow capitalism and institute the revolutionary rule of the working class and its allies.

The proletariat – which makes the

⁴ See, for example, “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to the Rescue of the Democratic Party,” *The Internationalist* No. 53, September-October 2018; and the Internationalist Group pamphlet *DSA: Fronting for the Democrats* (2018).



“The Squad” of liberal Democrats, targeted by Trump’s racist taunts. From left: Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ayanna Pressley.

wheels of the capitalist system turn – has the power to paralyze production, transport and communications in the struggle for liberation. To bring that power into the fight to uproot all forms of oppression, Lenin emphasized the need to educate the workers in their own, independent working-class politics, drawing a clear *class line* demarcating this against bourgeois politics and class collaboration in all its forms.

Thus, in *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin bitingly denounced the French reformist socialist Alexandre Millerand, who joined the capitalist government as a cabinet minister in 1899, arguing that this was justified since “the Republic is in danger” from a reactionary crusade unleashed by royalists, the high clergy and the military general staff. Millerand’s entry into the bourgeois cabinet of René Waldeck-Rousseau was an early example of the class-collaborationist coalitions that would later be known as the “popular front.”⁵

Millerand’s “ministerial socialism” grew out of the response by a wing of the labor movement to the “Dreyfus Affair” that polarized French society at the end of the 19th century. The 1894 frame-up trial of Jewish army officer Albert Dreyfus, on fabricated charges of treason (for supposedly selling military secrets to Germany), whipped up “militarism, chauvinism-nationalism, anti-Semitism, and clericalism,” “mak[ing] evident the disintegration of bourgeois society,” as Rosa Luxemburg explained in her article, “The Dreyfus Affair and the Millerand Case” (1899). While liberal “bourgeois elements ... wanted to cure militarism of its abscess in order to enable it to live,” she stated, Marxists “combat the very militaristic system in its decadence” and “carry on a totally independent struggle, that is to say, a clearly characterized *class struggle* which differentiates” the proletarian movement from all bourgeois politicians.

In contrast, the wing of French Socialism led by Jules Guèdes preached indifference to the Dreyfus Affair, saying it was just a fight among capitalist forces and thus of no importance to the proletariat. (This narrow view of proletarian struggle became known as “workerism.”) Against them, the Socialist leader Jean Jaurès opposed the rightist-nationalist onslaught, siding with the “*dreyfusards*” who opposed the reactionary persecution of Dreyfus and correctly stood for militant working-class defense of democratic rights. Yet “as the crisis came to a head and France headed to the brink of civil war,” as we

noted in “From Millerand to Mitterrand: Popular Front Chains the Workers” (*The Internationalist* No. 2, April-May 1997), “instead of mobilizing the workers in revolutionary struggle, in 1899 Jaurès endorsed the entry of ... Millerand into the bourgeois Radical [Party] government,” betraying the interests of the working class.

In her essay on “The Socialist Crisis in France” (1900), Luxemburg wrote:

“The Republic is in danger! Therefore it was necessary [claimed the reformists] that a socialist become the bourgeois minister of trade. The Republic is in danger! Therefore the socialist had to remain in the ministry even after the massacre of striking workers on the island of Martinique and in Chalon. The Republic is in danger! As a result, the inquiry into the massacre had to be rejected, the parliamentary investigation into the colonial atrocity was quashed, and an amnesty declared.”

When the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet was dismissed in 1902, Luxemburg summed up: “And so the books are closed on ministerial socialism.... Instead of the promised strengthening of the ‘political and economic power’ of the working class, it only brought political weakening and disorganization. And also *moral degeneration* on top of this” (“The Close of the Socialist Crisis in France” 1902). Yet over and over, opportunist socialists and self-proclaimed communists have refused to learn this basic lesson of history, of the need for revolutionary independence from all wings of the bourgeois ruling class.

While today, the reactionary right might like to stage an anti-Muslim, anti-black and anti-Latina 21st-century Dreyfus Case, it is the Democratic Party which time and again takes the lead for U.S. militarism, denouncing Trump for being “soft” on Russia, North Korea, Syria, etc. It was Democratic president Barack Obama who carried out a record number of deportations; the Democratic Party under the Clintons that vastly expanded the racist machinery of mass incarceration. And it is the “bipartisan” governmental apparatus of American imperialism that bred the all-sided social reaction egged on today by Trump.

Militantly opposing the onslaught of bigotry and racist, anti-immigrant reaction, the task of Marxists is to fight for the revolutionary *class* politics required to defeat it. This means winning new layers of workers and youth to the revolutionary program. And it means fighting intransigently for the workers and oppressed to break from the Democrats and all bourgeois parties and politicians, on the path to socialist revolution and a workers government. ■

UAW Tops Let Auto Bosses Off the Hook

After 40-Day Strike, GM to Shut Plants, Keep 3-Tier Wages

On Friday, October 25, the United Auto Workers (UAW) ended its solid 40-day strike against General Motors – the longest walkout in over half a century against the auto giant – announcing that the members had voted to accept the contract settlement. The bosses’ press claim the deal was a “rich contract for workers,” yet 43% of the members voted against it. This reflects widespread anger that the contract did not end the hated three-tier wage system and allowed the closure of three plants, including the historic Lordstown, Ohio, factory.

The supposed pay raise is actually a pay cut, with two 3% hikes in four years – less than the rate of inflation. Plus 4% “bonuses” in the other two years which will not be included in the base wage. The union tops sold the deal with an \$11,000 signing bonus for top-tier workers, and \$60-75,000 bonuses for early retirement (which would help the company lower labor costs by getting rid of higher-paid workers). The raises amount to at most \$1 an hour each, and together with the bonuses would cost GM less than \$1 billion over the four-year life of the contract. This is peanuts for a company with profits of \$11+ billion a year, which is sitting on a cash pile of \$18 billion.

Yes, the company backed off its demand that workers, who typically perform hard repetitive labor on speedy assembly lines, pay more for their health care. There is a lot of hoopla about how second-tier workers (who start at \$17 an hour, barely half the regular rate) can reach top base pay in four years time, instead of the current eight years. That’s still four years at very substandard pay. UAW officials and GM spokesmen also made much of contract clauses that would give “temporary” workers (who make as little as \$15 an hour) a “pathway to permanent employment” after three years of continuous employment. But this is a long way from the demand of thousands of auto workers: for *equal pay for equal work* and to *end tiers now*.

On top of which, this gives the bosses a huge incentive to lay off these “permatemp” workers. A temporary worker at the Spring Hill, Tennessee, GM, who was laid off after a few months and only recalled over a year later, expressed the sentiment of many: “No one is going to make it to three years,” she said. “So it’s useless.” Spring Hill – which produces highly profitable SUVs, has hired hundreds of temporary workers for a third shift, and has a large number of workers who transferred from the closed Lordstown plant – voted against the contract (as did Local 1112 in Lordstown). This is also where police aggressively arrested picketers starting on Day One of the strike.

As for the proviso that future hiring of temp workers is subject to union approval, this will make UAW officials even more complicit in perpetuating the system of low-paid workers which allows GM to rake in billions. The difference between the temporary and regular rate pay scales alone nets the company over \$2 billion a year in pure profit. Meanwhile, the shuttering of three

auto plants was approved, and there are no provisions against closing more auto factories in the future.

Instead of fighting to end the tiered labor system and demanding that there be no plant closures, the UAW misleaders appealed to the GM bosses to move production of some vehicles from Mexico to the U.S. This protectionist demand set U.S. workers against their Mexican brothers and sisters who had expressed solidarity with the GM strike, and echoes the reactionary Mexico-bashing policies of Donald Trump. The bottom line is that, at a time when General Motors is rolling in dough, when workers held fast on picket lines for almost six weeks, the UAW leadership once again aided the bosses, as they did with concessions pushed by the Democratic Obama administration at the height of the 2007-09 economic crisis.

The UAW tops will now use the GM settlement as a “template” for negotiating contracts with the other two Big 3 automakers – Ford and Fiat Chrysler. The latter maintains a huge pool of 10,000 “temporary” workers. An all-out struggle there to end tiered labor and win a big raise would make it possible to successfully organize the mass of workers at plants of non-U.S.-based companies in the South and non-union parts plants. This makes it all the more urgent to build a class-struggle opposition in the UAW against a leadership which knows nothing but class collaboration, repeatedly sacrificing the membership in favor of the bosses’ profits. It is necessary to oust the bureaucrats, break with the Democrats and build a workers party on an internationalist program uniting the workers of the world and all the oppressed against the exploiters and oppressors.

We reprint below our September 25 article issued as a supplement to *The Internationalist*.

For a Big 3 Nationwide Auto Strike!

Spread the Strike – Shut Down GM, Ford, Chrysler – Bring Out Unionized Parts Plants

The strike by some 48,000 General Motors workers at 33 manufacturing plants and 22 distribution warehouses in the U.S., which began at midnight on September 15, is now in its second week and going strong. This is no bureaucratic walk-through. GM workers are pissed, as the company demands more concessions and announces



Auto workers picketing outside Flint, Michigan assembly plant as the General Motors strike began, September 16.

Ryan Garza / Detroit Free Press

plant closures in order to cut costs even as it rakes in billions in profits – \$35 billion since 2015, \$11 billion last year alone. This is the largest industrial strike in the U.S. in over a decade, following a wave of walkouts by teachers, supermarket, hotel and healthcare workers. It is already the longest walkout at GM since the 67-day strike by 460,000 workers in 1970.

A lot is riding on the outcome: a GM settlement will not only affect Ford and Fiat Chrysler (the other “Big 3” U.S. automakers), it could set the tone for a season of sharp labor struggle as strikes loom in West Coast grocery stores, hospitals and other sectors. But the business-as-usual approach of the United Auto Workers (UAW) leadership cannot win this key battle. Even now, the union leaders have not announced their demands on the company, while GM is “offering” a paltry “raise” of 2% a year (which is less than the rate of inflation, making it a *pay cut*).

But the union ranks know perfectly well that what’s needed is to get rid of the whole “divide-and-conquer” tier set-up. GM’s obscene profits are a direct result of the two-tier work force that the UAW tops agreed to in the 2007-09 economic crisis, cutting wages for new hires by more than half, with no pension and inferior health care. Then in 2015, in exchange for a supposed “path” to full status for second-tier workers, the union bureaucrats signed off on the creation of a *third* tier of even lower-paid “temporary” workers. Many of these “permatemps” have been working full-time for years, with only three days of missed work a year, unpaid, and are sometimes even forced to work a seven-day week. Another burning issue is the contracting-out of jobs like those of maintenance workers, who used to be GM employees

General Motors CEO Mary Barra “is aiming to show Wall Street that today’s GM is leaner and more assertive than the one that collapsed into bankruptcy a decade ago,” writes the *Wall Street Journal* (20 September). The *Journal* quoted a

Morgan Stanley analyst saying to Barra at an investor conference in New York that with GM’s cost-cutting, “You guys are kicking butt.” The auto giant with its bloated management is hardly lean, but it is plenty mean, cutting off strikers’ health care and demanding that workers pick up 15% of health care costs. Meanwhile on the eve of the strike, the FBI searched top UAW officials’ homes and arrested high-level union officials on corruption charges. The timing was clearly intended to undercut a looming strike.

General Motors, Wall Street and Washington are out for blood. To defeat this assault on auto workers’ jobs and livelihoods will require an all-out struggle. The union ranks should demand:

- **Turn the GM walkout into a nationwide auto strike!** “Pattern bargaining” has only led to concession contracts for all. **Shut down the Big 3 and bring out UAW-organized parts plants!**
- **End tiered labor:** every worker must have full status, with full pay, full pension rights and full paid health care at no cost to employees.
- **All workers in the plants should be covered by the GM contract.** The UAW’s strength was built on the fact that it was an industrial union representing all employees.
- **Not “profit-sharing” for some but a big raise for all,** with a full *cost-of-living allowance* (COLA) to cover wage loss due to inflation.
- **Create more jobs with a six-hour day with no loss in pay (“30 for 40”), and no forced overtime.**
- **Call on the whole union movement to build mass picket lines that no one crosses!** This is a *class battle*. Unions across the country will be affected by whether GM workers win or lose.
- **Form a national UAW strike committee of elected delegates** from every local, who can be recalled at any time by the ranks meeting in daily strike assemblies.

Unchain labor's power – build a workers party! Above all, this strike must be waged politically. Now Democratic presidential candidates including Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden are grandstanding about “supporting” the strike. Yet it was Democrat Barack Obama who shelled out trillions of dollars to the bankers and Wall Street speculators who set off the economic depression, that gave tens of billions to General Motors and Chrysler, took over management and restructured the bankrupt companies, aided by the pro-Democratic UAW tops’ agreement to a giveback contract.

Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties represent the bosses. The only way to take power, and put the wealth built up from our labor to serve human needs, is to build a class-struggle workers party to lead the fight for a workers government that would expropriate GM and all of the capitalist exploiters. This is key to socialist revolution worldwide and the establishment of an international socialist planned economy that would put an end to war, racism, poverty and make possible the elimination all forms of social oppression.

UAW Tops Play Ball with the Bosses...

Striking UAW auto workers today are seeking to reverse the draconian concessions wrested from the union during the 2007-09 economic crash. In 2007, the UAW bureaucrats headed by Ron Gettelfinger sought to help the Big 3 bosses be “competitive” with non-union and foreign competitors by agreeing to slash pay for workers hired after 2007 to \$14 an hour. Next, the Obama administration oversaw the 2009 bankruptcies and bailouts of GM and Chrysler: the feds gave the GM bosses \$68.2 billion as they implemented plant closures that eliminated tens of thousands of jobs and shifted responsibility for paying for retiree health benefits onto the union. On top of this, the Democrats sweetened the “net operating loss” tax loophole so that GM has paid virtually no federal income tax in this decade, and now won’t for years to come.

As the automakers started turning profits again by 2011, UAW leaders – craven and venal even by the abysmal standards of the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy – refused to mount any effort to fight back. But in 2015, angry workers at Chrysler and GM voted down rotten contracts, forcing renegotiations that set the post-2007 “second tier” workers on an eight-year-long path toward the “traditional pay” of “first tier” workers (who themselves have seen their wages fall 16% against inflation since 2010). At the same time, the 2015 contract expanded GM’s ability to hire “temporary workers” at poverty wages. Temporary workers are now 7% of the company’s hourly workers and GM want that to keep increasing.

In the current round of negotiations, GM announced its insulting “offer” to the union only two hours before the old contract expired. But rather than rejecting out of hand the 2% wage “increase” and the company’s demand that workers foot hundreds of dollars a year in health care costs, “UAW Vice President Terry Dittes told GM that the company’s latest offer might have made it possible to reach an agreement” but it just arrived too late to avert a strike. Meanwhile, the company has refused to budge on workers’ demands to end



Internationalists in strike solidarity visit to Rancho Cucamonga, California General Motors facility, October 6. On a later visit to the picket line together with the Los Angeles Federation of Labor, a GM worker said he was mad that the contract pitted older workers against younger workers, and he was going to vote not just “no” but “Hell No!” An older worker said that if he had a copy of the contract he would burn it then and there.

the system of tiers, which is used not only to maximize profits but to create dissent between older and younger workers and divide the union.

... But Labor’s Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

Now, after the GM bosses announced last November the closure of two assembly and two transmissions plants, workers have walked out. It’s too many sacrifices for way too long. The UAW selected GM for a strike while Ford and Fiat Chrysler workers stay on the job: the UAW for decades has engaged in “pattern” bargaining, selecting one company to reach a deal with and then negotiating similar terms with the others. But Ford and Chrysler workers, just as ground down as those at GM, are itching to go out also. A solid nationwide Big 3 auto strike, backed up by mass picket lines and labor movement solidarity, would sock it to the auto bosses big-time. Winning major gains would also go a long way toward organizing non-union parts plants and assembly plants in the South, and toward busting the union-busting “right to work” offensive. We say: **Spread the strike! Beat back all the auto bosses!**

This is a hard class battle. GM reportedly has held job fairs to hire scabs to reopen assembly plants in Texas and Missouri. At many locations UAW picketers have stopped scab delivery trucks from entering the plants, often facing off against the police. Cops have arrested at least ten picketers at the Spring Hill, Tennessee, assembly plant for stopping would-be strikebreakers. The Teamsters union has announced that its 1,000 drivers who transport GM vehicles will not be hauling them to dealerships—that’s good, but not enough. Mass picket lines should ensure that nothing goes in or out of the plants.

The fundamental working-class principle – that *picket lines mean don’t cross* – has been gutted over the decades by sellout union bureaucrats, who play by the bosses’ rules, which invariably include injunctions against militant picketing. The UAW tops showed their contempt for this principle at the outset of the strike: when 850 UAW-represented Aramark janitorial employees who work in five GM plants in Michigan and Ohio went on strike the day before the assembly plant

walkout, the UAW instructed the autoworkers to *cross the janitors’ picket lines!*

Many workers expressed their disgust at this. Several took personal days rather than cross the picket line. “In my opinion, crossing the picket line makes you a scab,” said Sean Crawford, a Flint Assembly auto worker who joined the janitors and then drove to Detroit to protest outside General Motors headquarters. “The picket line is sacred,” he added. “That’s the meaning of solidarity” (*Detroit Free Press*, 15 September). Janitors in the plant should be under the same contract as the assembly line workers, as they once were. But in any case, no one, and certainly no class-conscious worker, should never, ever cross a picket line, even if ordered to do so by union *mis*-leaders.

For International Labor Solidarity Action

Meanwhile, the UAW strike is affecting GM plants in Canada and Mexico. The Oshawa plant in Ontario has shut down because it ran out of parts due to the strike, while the GM engine plant in St. Catharines, Ontario is also partly shut down for lack of supplies. Militants in the Unifor union, which organizes Canadian auto workers, should fight for solidarity action in support of the UAW strikers, including walkouts at GM and other plants. Such joint struggle is all the more important since General Motors has declared that it will shut down auto production at Oshawa at the end of the year, as it opens another plant in Mexico.

Mexican GM workers, themselves toiling under grueling conditions imposed by the GM bosses, earning barely 2 dollars an hour and working 12-hour days, have in at least one plant taken a stand in solidarity

with the UAW strike. A group of workers at the giant Silao plant, GM’s biggest in Mexico, met on September 15, the first day of the strike, and voted to “reject the company’s use of overtime here to make up for work lost from the strike in the United States.” In a letter to the GM strikers they said they “believe in the internationalization of our conflicts, since the boss is the same and is a multinational.” As a result of their courageous stance, on September 20, five of the workers were fired by GM. The UAW must demand, as part of any strike settlement, that the unjustly fired Mexican workers be reinstated.¹

Over the last 25 years, General Motors, Ford and Fiat Chrysler in the U.S., Mexico and Canada have integrated their production chains in the framework of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which since 2017 has been replaced by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). These pacts have been used by the bosses to drive wages down in all three countries while subjecting Mexico to imperialist looting; they should be opposed by all anti-imperialists and defenders of labor rights. But such opposition must be on the basis of an *internationalist* program of workers solidarity, not poisonous nationalist protectionism.

The UAW has long called to “protect American jobs” and “buy American,” lining up U.S. workers with their bosses and pitting them against their class brothers and sisters in Mexico and elsewhere. This plays into the chauvinist demagoguery of the notorious union-basher and vile immigrant-hater Donald Trump, who accuses Mexico of “taking our manufacturing jobs.” But for all his talk of forcing General Motors to reopen the Lordstown, Ohio plant and pretense of opposing GM auto production in Mexico, the plant is still shut down and

¹ The Silao workers, who call themselves “GM – Generando Movimiento” (Generating Movement), say they are fighting for union democracy and to throw out the fictitious company-imposed “union,” the CTM. This corporatist outfit and others like it have for decades been incorporated into the machinery of the Mexican capitalist state, acting as labor cops for the bosses and their government in order to prevent the rise of genuine workers unions. Now that new populist president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, known by his initials AMLO, has taken office, he has moved to set up a new government-controlled “labor” body, the CATEM (Autonomous Federation of Mexican Workers and Employees), to which some of the Silao workers have been attracted. Insurgent Mexican workers should beware that this is no more independent of the state than the CTM they are rebelling against. The head of CATEM, Pedro Haces Barba, is a former CTM leader, a superexploiting capitalist and politician in AMLO’s bourgeois party, MORENA (National Regeneration Movement), briefly serving as a senator. In an interview with *El Universal* (2 February), Haces declared: “As a union leader, I must not fail AMLO.”

continued on page 20

Don’t Be Fooled by the World Scab Web Site

Then there are the scab “socialists” of David North’s “World Socialist Web Site” who are currently putting out an online Autoworker Newsletter and making supposedly leftist attacks on the UAW leaders. Auto workers should be forewarned: *the WSWS imposters seek to destroy the unions.* North for years was the CEO of a non-union printshop in suburban Detroit,

Michigan. And they literally help the bosses. During a previous round of auto contract negotiations, the WSWS fakers (who also masquerade as the Socialist Equality Party) said they “advise workers, should the UAW come to their plant, to vote to keep it out.” (For more on this sinister outfit, see “SEP/WSWS: Scab ‘Socialists,’” *The Internationalist*, December 2007). ■

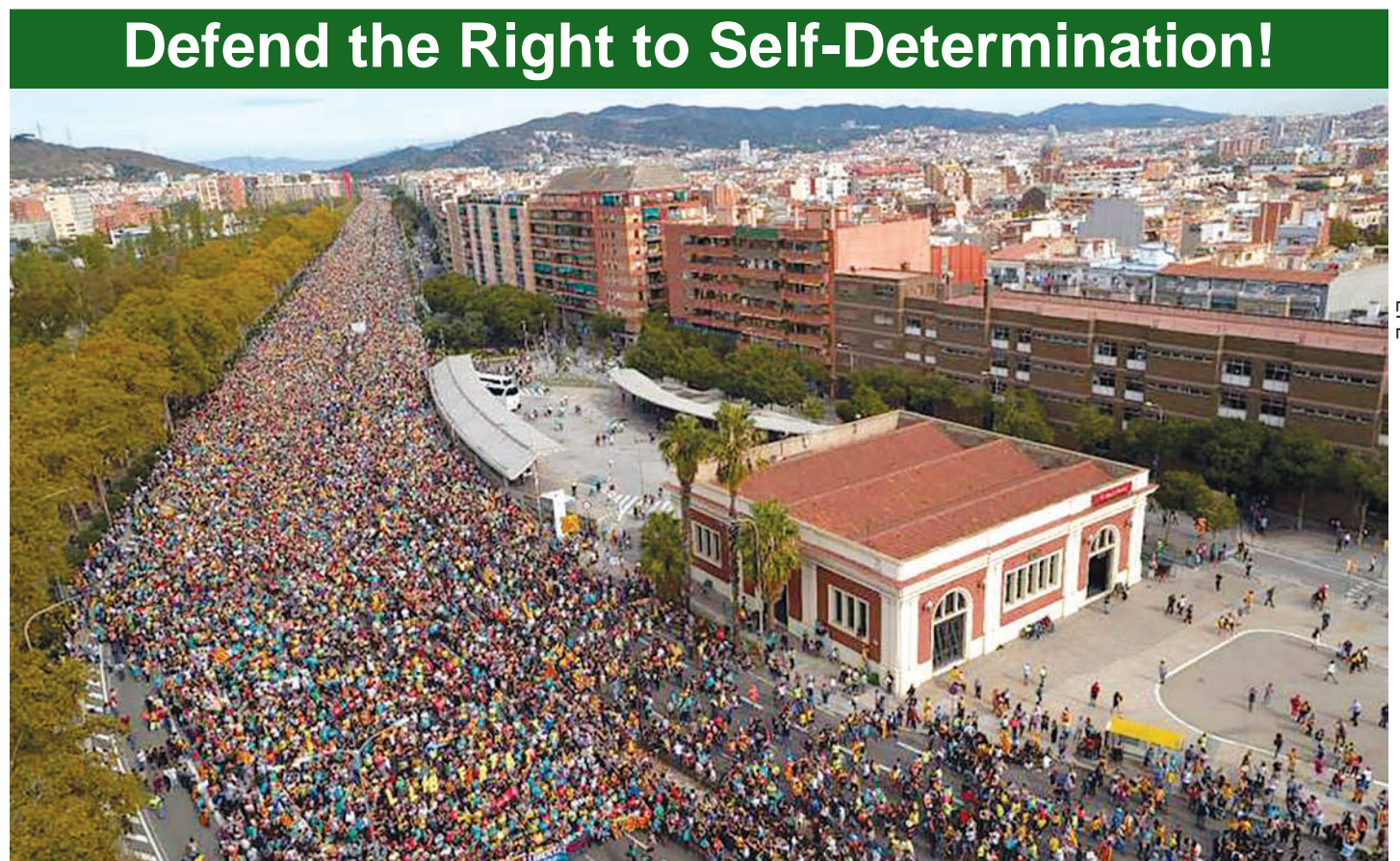
For Workers Mobilization Throughout Spain Against the Bloody Neo-Francoist Attack in Catalonia

Catalonia: Unconditional Freedom for Independentista Prisoners!

On October 14, the Spanish Supreme Court in Madrid pronounced draconian sentences against the nine Catalan independence leaders who were declared guilty in the so-called “trial against the *procés*” (the independence movement). The angry response to this frame-up came that same night in Barcelona as thousands of protesters besieged the airport in order to shut it down. The next day tens of thousands took to the streets to protest against the verdict and the rigged trial. At nightfall as they dispersed, the National Police and the Mossos d’Esquadra (police under the command of the Catalan government) viciously set upon the protesters, leading to a pitched battle with flaming barricades, a scenario that was repeated in the following days.

The horrendous verdict of the Spanish judges was hardest against Oriol Junqueras, former vice president of the Generalitat, the Catalan autonomous self-government, who was sentenced to 13 years in prison for the crimes of “sedition” and embezzlement (paying for the 1 October 2017 independence referendum). Raül Romeva, Jordi Turull and Dolors Bassa, former members of the executive committee of the Generalitat, were sentenced to 12 years in jail. Carme Forcadell, who was president of the Catalan parliament, was given 11 and a half years behind bars; two other former members of the executive, Josep Rull and Joaquim Forn, were sentenced to 10 years, and the leaders of the Catalan National Assembly and Òmnium (pro-independence associations), Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart, to 9 years in jail.

These vengeful sentences are the culmination of the case begun in October 2017 by the Spanish attorney general’s office against Carles Puigdemont, then head of government of the Generalitat, and 13 other Catalan nationalist leaders who promoted and carried out the October 1 referendum. That day, despite the enormous and violent police mobilization to prevent voting, more than two million Catalans flocked to the polls. The League for the Fourth International proclaimed, “Defend the Right to Self-Determination



Defend the Right to Self-Determination!

More than 750,000 people marched on October 18 during a general strike in Barcelona denouncing the draconian sentences handed down to independentista leaders by the Spanish Supreme Court in Madrid.

and Independence for Catalonia,” calling to “Resist Attempts to Prevent the October 1 Referendum!” (*The Internationalist* No. 49, September-October 2017). In response to the repression, the LFI organized an emergency protest in New York.

The Catalan independentistas didn’t commit any crime. Holding the referendum on independence is an expression of the elementary democratic right of nations to decide whether or not they wish to form their own state. Such votes have been carried out in Quebec and Scotland without incident. But in the state derived from the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, with its motto of “Spain, One and Great,” to “proclaim the independence of a part of

the national territory” constitutes a crime against the constitution. Defense of the right to self-determination in Catalonia today requires mobilizing the working class and the defenders of democratic rights throughout Spain, under the watchword, “Free them all, now!”

Since Monday when the fateful Supreme Court verdict was issued, day after day there have been massive protests in Barcelona, Tarragona, Lleida and Girona. And night after night there have been clashes in the streets of the Catalan capital between protesters and the forces of “law enforcement.” So far, the Guardia Civil, the National Police and the Mossos have arrested more than 100 people and injured hundreds. Yet the protests

continue to grow, leading up to Friday, October 18, when more than three-quarters of a million people filled the center of Barcelona with the five columns of the “*marxes per la llibertat*” (freedom marches) amid a general strike called by the pro-independence Intersindical-CSC and the Intersindical Alternativa de Catalunya (IAC).

The bourgeois press tried to minimize the impact of the general strike, claiming that there was only a 7.5% decrease in electricity consumption. However, the number of subway and rail passengers was cut in half, dozens of flights were canceled at the Barcelona airport, schools and universities were emptied, closures of downtown businesses *continued on page 18*



The final session of the frame-up trial of the Catalan pro-independence leaders was broadcast on a giant screen in Barcelona, June 12. Banner at bottom reads: “Democracy on Trial.”



The dock workers union of Barcelona voted to join the general strike, the only industrial union to do so. They marched from the port on October 18 calling for dignity and civil rights.

Lluís Gene/Agence France-Presse

Manu Mitru / El Periódico

Olli Weiss, 1985 – 2019

A Revolutionary Class Fighter for the Oppressed

Translated from the German.

Our comrade Oliver Weiss died on July 22. According to the medical report, the cause of death was repeated heart attacks when he collapsed while jogging. His utterly unexpected death was an incredible shock to his family, his girlfriend, comrades, friends and everyone who knew him; he always seemed so fit and strong. Only a few weeks earlier he had celebrated his 34th birthday. The terrible death of comrade Olli is a severe blow for the Internationalistische Gruppe/Germany, of which he was a founding member and a mainstay, and an incalculable loss for our League for the Fourth International, of which he was part of the international leadership. The working class worldwide has lost an enormously promising communist champion.

Olli was the organizer of the Internationalistische Gruppe and put out the newspaper of the IG, *Permanente Revolution*. He was also instrumental in the production of the newspaper of our Italian section, *L'internazionalista*, and played a leading role in the European work of the LFI. Comrades of the American, Brazilian and Mexican sections got to know him and his many talents when he was responsible for the technical functioning of the First International Conference of the League for the Fourth International in November 2017, as well as reporting on work in Europe. Many others have known him for nearly two decades in numerous struggles against exploitation and oppression and have been inspired by his dedication and straightforwardness.

We all mourn his death. Our tears and fury will only strengthen us in the conviction to fight with increased commitment for a reformed Fourth International, the revolutionary International to which Olli Weiss wholeheartedly devoted his all-too-short

life. This is the greatest honor we can pay to our fallen comrade.

Olli was born to a proletarian family in East Germany when it was a workers state (the German Democratic Republic, or DDR). Experiencing the disaster of “democratic” capitalist counterrevolution as a child gave Olli an appreciation of the enormous gains for workers, women and the oppressed that had been made possible by the overthrow of capitalism and a collectivized planned economy, despite mismanagement and undercutting by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Very early in life he started searching for a political program capable of ending capitalism’s oppression and exploitation around the globe. At the age of 15

Olli had gained enough political experience and knowledge to see through the radical pretensions of the reformist anarchist and anti-globalization milieus that had initially attracted him. It was the ideas of revolutionary Trotskyism that really made sense of the world as he experienced it.

With the intention of fighting for the Bolshevik politics of Leon Trotsky, Olli joined the Spartakist Youth in early 2002 and a year later, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), the affiliate of the International Communist League (ICL). For three decades, the ICL repre-

sented genuine Trotskyism until, after the counterrevolution in the DDR, the USSR and other East European deformed workers states around 1989-1992, it was overcome by the spirit of defeatism and took leave of its former revolutionary program in 1996. Although the ICL was at the point Olli joined only a shell of its former self, its pronouncedly revolutionary past inspired Olli, particularly the then-revolutionary ICL’s intervention for defense of the DDR against capitalist counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy.

As Olli later wrote when he joined the League for the Fourth International in 2017, “After nearly a year and a half of discussion and joint work, I am convinced that the LFI is what I thought the ICL was when I became a member of the Berlin Spartacist Youth in early 2002 and the SpAD in 2003.” Won to Trotsky’s program, despite the revisions, deviations and rejection by the ICL, Olli never changed his revolutionary spirit, but fought to put it consistently into practice.

Within the SpAD, Olli was always very “hands-on” in undertaking tasks and



Olli Weiss in the garden of the Museo Casa León Trotsky in Coyoacán, Mexico, August 2018. Won to Trotsky’s program, Olli never changed his revolutionary spirit, but fought to put it consistently into practice.



Olli Weiss, a revolutionary class fighter for the oppressed.



Olli speaking at a meeting of the TVStud strikers.



Olli actively mobilized to defend Eleonora Roldán Mendivil, slanderously accused of “anti-Semitism” for defending the rights of the Palestinians.

carried them out in a professional manner. At the age of 20 he took over the production of its newspaper, which he continued to do conscientiously for the next 12 years. Olli soon became organizer of the youth group of the Berlin SpAD, and then joined the leadership of the local. In 2006 he was elected to the central committee of the organization. As one of his former comrades remarked, “despite his independence of thought and action being anathema to ICL internal operations, his aptness in whatever he did meant that the SpAD’s leadership preferred to try to coopt him.” Still:

“Olli was unique in that he didn’t bow easily to pressure. He took his time to formulate where he stood on political issues. He was not easily convinced and he stood up for his convictions. We are often tempted to describe such actions as bravery. I don’t think that Olli thought of it this way. I think that he simply said what he thought and did what he said.”

This straightforward way of thinking and acting later attracted Olli to the League for the Fourth International, he remarked, as he was particularly impressed by the Brazilian comrades’ motto of “the unity of deeds and words.”

Olli was always an activist in the best sense of the word, who fought stubbornly against the pseudo-Trotskyists, but was attentive to possible contradictions that would allow the true content of their inconsistencies and betrayals to be demonstrated in struggle. This often distinguished him from the ICL’s predilection to lecture the working class and the left (and when they didn’t listen, to lecture themselves) with abstract pulpit sermons. He strongly defended various leftists who had been attacked for years, often physically, by the so-called “anti-German” proponents of Zionism. Olli was remembered at his funeral by left-wing lecturer Eleonora Roldán

Mendivil at the Free University of Berlin, who was dismissed from her teaching post because of slanderous accusations of “anti-Semitism” (for defending the rights of the Palestinians). One of the first campaigns Olli launched after joining the LFI was in Eleonora’s defense, including writing a powerful solidarity statement and fighting

within his union to take class-struggle action.

Like others in the ICL, Olli often felt restricted, which he reacted to by throwing himself further into the work, among other things. As he wrote in his application for membership in the LFI: “I had been critical of certain tendencies of the SpAD for a long time (passivity; immediate 180° due to criticisms from the IS; office-bound existence; etc.), and I opposed some individual line changes (e.g., on executive office; not trying to explore opportunities in the DDR before the wall came down; etc.) and wrong positions (e.g., non-opposition to privatization, out-sourcing etc.) over the years.” But he had “harbored illusions that through corrections here and there, and a transition of younger, less burned-out cadres into central positions, a kind of self-reform of the ICL could take place, and that I just had to hang in there, fight on selected issues that I might be able to win, and bide my time.”

So, for example, on the ICL’s newly coined principle that it is a betrayal for revolutionaries to run for executive office, even if they use the platform of the election campaign to spread communist principles and refuse to take such executive positions in the capitalist state, in 2007 Olli wrote bluntly:

“I remain unconvinced that the simple act of a revolutionary running for an executive office of the capitalist state always and under all circumstances means crossing the class line and therewith a betrayal of communism.”

He added: “I don’t understand why everyone is suddenly so hot to take a new line so quickly. I find the discussion strange inasmuch as it doesn’t research our own election campaigns, for example New York in 1985. In my opinion, that would be a precondition for an assessment, whichever

way it may go.” Naturally, Olli’s precisely on-target criticism was dismissed out of hand.¹

Olli also rightly feared that the increasingly demoralized and cynical ICL leadership was rewriting its own history on the DDR in order to rid themselves of the obligation to apply the true lessons of this intervention to China, Cuba and the other remaining deformed workers states. While the ICL leadership wanted to retire into producing abstract propaganda from the comfort of their offices, Olli wanted his party to get up and ready itself to again carry out the kind of bold fight that it had waged in the DDR, in all the remaining deformed workers states.

It was in this context that in November 2010, Olli put forward a motion to strike the claim in the main document of the Sixth Conference of the ICL (2010) that the document of the Second Conference (1992) had made an error in declaring that the German section should have tried to “get appropriate propaganda into the hands of political activists in the DDR” even before the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. How could one simply deny such a self-evident statement? he asked. And especially with the (false) statement that all opposition groups were controlled by the church, thereby equating informal pro-socialist circles with conscious counter-revolutionaries? Here he struck a nerve regarding the ICL’s 1989-90 intervention against the capitalist reunification of Germany and for a proletarian political revolution in the DDR.

This first-ever intervention of a Trotskyist International against imperialist-led counterrevolutionary forces in a tottering deformed workers state was one of the ICL’s most outstanding accomplishments – even though, due to the balance of power, the working class ultimately suf-

¹ See his document, “If Left Communism Is an Infantile Disorder, Then What Is ‘Left Trotskyism?’” 19 January 2007.



Olli being interviewed during demonstration in defense of Sea Watch ship’s captain Carola Rackete, 6 July 2019.

fered a world-historic defeat. The ICL was able to undertake this intervention because it still stood on the ground of revolutionary Trotskyism at the time. It was equipped with Trotsky’s analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a contradictory, petty-bourgeois stratum parasitically administering and resting on the foundations of the workers state. Later, seized by the defeatism of the bourgeois thesis of a “death of communism,” the ICL abandoned this foundation of Trotskyism. Instead, it embraced the delusion that the fragile Stalinist caste, rather than the powerful imperialist bourgeoisie, “led the counterrevolution.”

This anti-Marxist assertion served as a “theoretical” rationale for the purge of the ICL cadres who later founded the LFI, and despite much shilly-shallying and rotten compromises to cover it up, it remains the line of the latter-day ICL in its Declaration of Principles. As Olli stressed, on this basis these former Trotskyists could never successfully intervene against a budding counterrevolution, or in an incipient proletarian political revolution, in the remaining deformed workers states (China, Cuba, etc.). But in fact, the abstentionist ICL, which has long since taken its leave from the class struggle, does not want to do such a thing anymore, having sunk so deep

continued on page 19



The Internationalistische Gruppe marching during the TVStud strike of student assistants at Berlin’s Free University, 16 January 2018.



Olli (center, front of banner) mobilized striking hospital workers in solidarity with Dr. Arturo Villalobos in Oaxaca, Mexico over the torture of his son, 15 May 2018.

Mobilize Workers Power to Stop Fascist/Anti-Semitic Terror!

Halle was an Attempted Fascist Massacre

BERLIN, October 13 – On October 9, dozens of people gathered in a synagogue in Halle, in the eastern German federal state of Sachsen-Anhalt, to observe the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur narrowly escaped being massacred by a fascist gunman in an anti-Semitic attack. This individual was unable to break into the synagogue because of its armored doors, and his self-produced weapons proved unreliable. But he was able to shoot and kill a woman passing by, and then proceeded to a kebab takeout store, where he shot down a male customer after trying to bomb the store. After wounding two more people during his flight, he was ultimately arrested.

This was the latest in a series of atrocities which have cut a bloody swathe around the world and followed the same pattern: the indiscriminate terror attack on Latinos in El Paso, Texas in August, the Christchurch mosque shootings in New Zealand in March, the Tree of Life Synagogue murders in Pittsburgh in October 2018 and ultimately going back at least to the slaughter in Norway in July 2011. The Halle attack was live-streamed: each time, the perpetrators have provided manifestos or declarations motivating their heinous acts.

In this case, the would-be mass murderer vowed to “kill as many anti-whites as possible, Jews preferred.” According to his manifesto, he had originally considered targeting a mosque or an “antifa” meeting point, but ultimately decided that striking a synagogue on Yom Kippur would provide a maximum of potential victims. He not only blamed “the Jews” for mass immigration (of Muslims), but also for “feminism” which he vituperated against for reducing the (white) birthrate.

Although police quickly declared that the killer acted alone, the case was swiftly transferred to the chief federal prosecutor on the grounds that the killings were “a threat to the state” (*staatsgefährdend*). The local Sachsen-Anhalt police seemed mainly interested in justifying their absence from the synagogue even though the Jewish community had requested their presence during the High Holidays.

Since the killings, the media have exclusively labeled the attack as “anti-Semitic,” which it certainly was, while ignoring the killer’s extensive enemies list. Neither victim was Jewish; they were people who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The killer announced his attack on the kebab shop with an anti-immigrant slur. Just as the first person killed was a victim of anti-Semitic terror, the second was a victim of anti-immigrant racism, perpetrated by an all-round fascist.

In the guise of opposing anti-Semitism, the prime minister of Sachsen-Anhalt, Haseloff, announced he was consulting the Israeli ambassador, since the Israelis have “experience with radicalized individual perpetrators.” It takes place against the backdrop of the designation of the “BDS” Israel boycott movement as anti-Semitic by the federal parliamentary majority in May – an invitation to yet another witch hunt



Internationalistische Gruppe at #unteilbar (indivisible) demo in Berlin, October 13.

equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism.

These days in Germany any criticism of the criminal repression of Palestinians by the Zionist state is labeled “hatred of Jews,” with rightist Israeli prime minister Netanyahu and his ambassadors as arbiters of who and what is “anti-Semitic.” This reached the point this past June that the director of the Jewish Museum in Berlin was denounced by the Israeli ambassador and forced to resign for tweeting an article about a petition of 240 Jewish and Israeli scholars who signed a petition opposing the parliament’s witch-hunting anti-BDS motion.

Meanwhile, the racist claptrap about a supposed “replacement” of Europeans by non-white immigrants, for which “the Jews” (in particular George Soros) are held responsible, has long since spread into “respectable” conservative circles. And the upsurge in genuinely anti-Semitic incidents on the streets as well as actions by “lone wolves” are being egged on by racist propaganda, including tropes common to fascists and conservatives and propagated by sections of the “mainstream” media.

The electoral successes of the fascistic Alternative for Germany (AfD) provide political cover for full-blown anti-immigrant pogroms like that in Chemnitz last year, which included an attack on a Jewish restaurant. This time, not only did Germany just narrowly avoid a slaughter which could have claimed more victims than the fascist bombing in Munich in 1980, fascist terror had already taken on a new quality with the murder of Walter Lübcke, a Christian Democratic politician.

The murders in Halle were naturally used by federal interior minister Martin Seehofer to demand, yet again, more police and more billions to pay and equip those cops. But in light of the continuing scandals about fascist nests in both the army and police (NSU 2.0), and the endless examples of deliberate blindness to fascist

organizing shown by the state, to call on this same bourgeois state for protection against the fascists is suicidal. Yet the reformist left has no other recourse than to vainly cry out “state, help! intervene!” as the social democrats did up to 1933.

The upsurge in reactionary, anti-immigrant “populist,” violent racist and outright fascist movements and attacks is an international phenomenon. It is a byproduct of the ongoing capitalist economic crisis, the depression that began in 2007-08 and whose effects continue to be felt today, including mass unemployment, stagnant and falling wages, and the destruction of public services and social welfare programs. While its

industrial export drive is failing, the German bourgeoisie is determined to make the working class bear the burden of the crisis. It cynically fans hysteria about “crime” to justify reinforcing its repressive apparatus. Hence the convergence of the bourgeois “center” parties with the program of the AfD.

The massive fortification of every synagogue in Germany – or every mosque, for that matter – is hardly a lasting solution. The fascists must be defeated. This is a political struggle, which begins with the realization that an injury to one is an injury to all – whether Jew or Muslim. The October 13 popular-front #unteilbar demonstration in Berlin against the anti-Semitic attack in Halle calls to “Give no quarter: Kill anti-Semitism and Racism.” Meaning what, exactly? Such “common expressions of sorrow, rage and sympathy” won’t stop the fascists.

Nor will they be stopped by writing off the fascists as merely “right-wing,” a “shift to the right,” as the opportunist left does in seeking to make a popular front with social democrats and bourgeois liberals. Given the need for solidarity between all the targets of racist reaction, there should have been a massive working-class counter-mobilization against the “right-to-life” crowd this past September 22 in Berlin, as there should be to stop the fascist provocations that have been announced for November 9, the anniversary of the 1938 Kristallnacht anti-Jewish pogrom.

The multiethnic working class in Germany is being ground down, yet its power is intact. The key is leadership. What’s needed is a *mass mobilization of workers power to crush the fascists*, their uniformed protectors and their capitalist sponsors, part of a struggle to *build a workers party that fights for international socialist revolution* to bring down the bloody rule of capital and sweep away its enforcers. ■

Permanente Revolution

The Internationalist



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

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

Annual subscription US\$10 for five issues.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____ Tel. (____) _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Postal Code/Zip _____ Country _____

Make checks/money orders payable to Mundial Publications and mail to:

Mundial Publications
Box 3321, Church Street Station
New York, NY 10008 U.S.A.

Write the Internationalist Group at the above address, or contact:

Tel (212) 460-0983 Fax (212) 614-8711

E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

U.S./Turkey...

continued from page 1

Turkish city of Akcakale. By the second day, hospitals were evacuated as Turkish warplanes and artillery pummeled Kurdish areas from Kobanê in the west to Qamishli 400 km. to the east. “The whole border was on fire,” an SDF spokesman said.

Turkey’s president Erdoğan has threatened this occupation for several years, citing “national security.” He labels the Syrian Kurdish PYD (Democratic Union Party) and its YPG militia “terrorist” because of their links to the Turkish PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), which is so designated by the United States and its allies in the imperialist NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) alliance. But the real terrorists are the Turkish governments, which for decades have terrorized the Kurdish population of southeastern Turkey, and the U.S. imperialists, who for the past five years have been terror-bombing Syria (as they did earlier in Afghanistan and Iraq).

The U.S. military has been reluctant to approve the Turkish invasion, having used the YPG/SDF as ground troops of its war against the Islamic State (I.S.) in Syria. Top Pentagon officials and U.S. envoys to the region have warned that without the Kurdish-led militia a resurgence of the I.S. is likely. But Erdoğan would never have proceeded with the occupation without the permission of the U.S., which Trump gave in his October 7 phone call. Besides, the U.S. president already announced last December that he was pulling U.S. forces from Syria and subcontracting the war against the I.S. to U.S. imperialism’s NATO junior partner Turkey.

Western media are portraying the fighting as a “clash between two U.S. allies,” in which the U.S. “stepped aside.” In reality, the U.S. has actively worked with Turkey in carrying out this attack. The *New York Times* (10 October) reported that “for the last few weeks, as Turkish military officials planned the assault, they received American surveillance video and information from reconnaissance aircraft. The information may have helped them track Kurdish positions.” In addition, “Turkish aircraft were given access to a suite of American battlefield intelligence in northeast Syria.” But now, “The United States military ... has cut off all support to the militia.”

The reality is that this latest war on the Kurds is a U.S./Turkey/NATO combined



Mercenary Syrian jihadi militias being used by Turkey to spearhead invasion, most formerly on U.S. payroll, have carried out massacres against Kurds.

operation, which class-conscious workers and opponents of imperialism everywhere must oppose and seek to defeat. The Turkish invasion is aimed at forcibly transferring 2 million Syrian Arab refugees to Kurdish regions and pushing the Kurds into the Syrian desert – “ethnic cleansing” on a vast scale. It is also the predictable outcome of the devil’s bargain of the Kurdish bourgeois leadership in enlisting as mercenary troops for U.S. imperialism in its war against the Islamic State. Now the Kurdish people are paying the price.

The League for the Fourth International has since its inception called to defend the PKK against repression and championed the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination. The LFI calls for a *socialist republic of united Kurdistan*, as part of a proletarian struggle against the imperialists and their Middle Eastern satraps and Zionist allies. As besieged Kurds in Kobanê desperately fought off I.S. jihadis (holy warriors) five years ago, we wrote:

“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.”

At the same time, as PYD/YPG leaders signed on with Democratic U.S. president Obama’s Syrian bombing campaign, we denounced this fateful step, warning:

“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 army. And NATO Turkey is a linchpin for Western imperialist domination of the Middle East.... [W]e call to expel U.S. imperialism from Syria, Iraq and the entire region.”

–“Syria: Defend the Kurds, Defeat U.S./NATO Imperialism!” in “For Workers Action to Defeat Barack Obama’s Iraq/Syria War,” *The Internationalist* No. 38, October-November 2014

The Kurdish People, Victim of Imperialist Carve-Up of the Middle East

The Kurdish people, numbering over 40 million spread over a contiguous, largely mountainous area of the Middle East, is the largest nation in the world without a state. As the victorious Allied imperialist powers dismembered the defeated Ottoman Empire following World War I, they held out the promise of an independent Kurdish state in the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. However, that promise was ripped up in the 1924 Treaty of Lausanne, which carved up the Kurdish nation, leaving them an oppressed minority in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, all of which have bitterly opposed Kurdish independence, or even autonomy.

Turkey prohibited the Kurdish language, or even mentioning the words “Kurdistan” or “Kurdish,” while subjecting Kurdish regions to decades of brutal military occupation. Iraq expelled Kurds from oil-rich areas in the north. Iran crushed a Kurdish republic allied with the Soviet Union in 1946, at the onset of the Cold War, and persecuted Iranian Kurds ever since, both under the shah and the mullahs. Syria under Hafez al-Assad (father of the current president, Bashar al-Assad), also banned the Kurdish language, denied Kurds citizenship and “Arabized” Kurdish regions by resettling tens of thousands of Bedouin Arabs along its northern border.

Facing a leftist Kurdish insurgency of the PKK led by Abdullah Öcalan, since the late 1970s Turkish rulers, both the army with its “secular” Republican allies and the Islamist Erdoğan, have waged a war of extermination in the southeast, killing tens of thousands of Kurds. Now the authoritarian Turkish president, who cited “Hitler’s Germany” as the kind of “unitary state” he seeks to construct with his constitutional reforms, wants to restore the “glory” of the Ottoman Empire. He intends to “resettle” millions of refugees from the Syrian civil

war in a “security zone” occupied by the Turkish army and policed by Turkish-backed Syrian Islamist militias.

To realize his grandiose dreams, the would-be sultan of Ankara vows to clear northern Syria of “terrorists,” i.e., to expel the Kurds *en masse*. This recalls Ottoman Turkey’s annihilation of over a million Armenians in World War I. Objecting to the term “genocide,” last April Erdoğan defended the 1915 mass deportations and massacres as the “relocation of the Armenian gangs and their supporters,” and “the most reasonable action.” Eerily, Ras al-Ain, now under Turkish attack, was the site of a concentration camp to hold Armenian deportees prior to a death march into the Syrian desert around Deir ez-Zor, where Erdoğan wants to push the Kurds today.

Whether he is able to do so is another matter. The Kurds have an army of 60,000 hardened fighters, with some heavy weapons. While they can’t hope to outgun the 350,000-strong Turkish army with its armor (tanks and artillery) and air force, the YPG/SDF could be an effective guerrilla force. It could endlessly harass Turkish positions and pick off Turkey’s Syrian puppet militia, the remnants of the CIA-backed “Free Syrian Army.” The “FSA” was never an effective fighting force, spending most of the war lounging in Turkish hotel lobbies, massacring villagers of the Alawite religious minority¹ and posing for photo ops with U.S. politicians like John McCain.

Meanwhile, seeking to displace 2 million Kurds with 2 million Sunni Arab refugees is a recipe for wholesale communal bloodletting. Many of those refugees were urban dwellers who would be lost in the fields of northern Syria, and relatively few are from that area: they will have to be “re-settled” at gunpoint. The Kurdish population has stood up to repeated attempts to push them out, by the Assads and the I.S.; their youth are armed and battle-tested, and they have nowhere else to go. The stage is set not only for massacres by the Turkish occupiers and their mercenary thugs but for turmoil that could spread to Kurds and Alevis² in southern Turkey.

The YPG’s Strange Bedfellows

Trump’s sudden action has met with cries of “shame” and “betrayal” from Democrats and Republicans in Congress, the Pentagon, the CIA, the State Department and virtually the entire foreign policy establishment. Official Washington is worried that his rhetoric rejecting “endless wars” and talk of handing over policing of “their neighborhood” to Turkey could be a

¹ The Alawites are a religious sect comprising roughly one-sixth (17%) of Syria’s population, concentrated in the mountains along the Mediterranean coast. Nominally Muslim and claiming to be a branch of Shia Islam, the Alawites are considered apostates by many Sunni, the dominant religious group in Syria. Alawite beliefs include a number of Christian elements, and since their theology is largely secret to all but a tiny clergy and they have no places of worship, the Alawite population is in many ways functionally secular. Alawites achieved a prominent position in the military under French colonial rule, and constitute the hard core of the military-based Assad regime, in power since 1970.

² The Alevis are often confused with the Alawites, and like them are a syncretic sect embodying elements of different religions, although more identifiably Islamic. Based in southern Turkey and constituting up to 20% of the Turkish population, Alevis are a persecuted religious minority. Hundreds were killed before, during and after the 1980 coup.



U.S.-Turkey joint military patrol earlier in September outside Tel Abyad on Turkey-Syria border. Pentagon helped Turkish military prepare the invasion, dismantling YPG border defenses and sharing reconnaissance information about Kurdish positions.



Civilians fleeing Turkish bombardment of Ras al-Ain, Syria.

blow to U.S. imperialist hegemony globally. They are concerned that “abandoning our Kurdish allies” will make it much harder to win others to join “coalitions of the willing,” which have been the vehicles for the U.S.’ role as world policeman in the 21st-century “new world order.”

Trump responds that the Kurds “were paid massive amounts of money and equipment” to be U.S. allies. This is hardly the first time the imperialists have left their proxies in the lurch. Recall the CIA’s “secret army” of Hmong guerrillas in Laos, or the “Harkis,” anti-independence mercenaries who fought with the French colonial army in Algeria. But for the Kurds this is one more stab in the back from U.S. patrons, as in 1975 when the CIA cut off funds to the guerrillas who, under long-time leader Mustafa Barzani, were fighting the Iraqi government, resulting in 200,000 Kurdish refugees; or in the 1991 Gulf War, when the U.S. encouraged a Kurdish uprising in the north and then abandoned the rebels to Saddam Hussein’s repression.

A host of Western leftists, particularly anarchist liberals and social democrats, have hailed PYD rule in the area of northern Syria the Kurds call Rojava (or Western Kurdistan), notably for its secularism and promotion of women’s rights. Many talk of a “Rojava Revolution.” They have downplayed the YPG’s role as foot soldiers for U.S. imperialism, and are conspicuously silent about it today. Yet the biggest boosters of the PYD/YPG in Washington are the CIA, the Pentagon, right-wing Republicans and Obama Democrats. Internationally, the Israeli Zionists look to forge (and finance) alliances with Kurdish groups as a counter to Arab nationalism.

So in this situation where everyone from the New York Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Committee to war hawk Republican senator Lindsey Graham, former chief of the U.S. Central Command general Joseph Votel and Israeli prime minister Netanyahu are denouncing the Turkish invasion and calling to support the Kurds, we Trotskyists insist that it is necessary to call to **defeat and drive U.S./NATO imperialism from the Middle East**. Yet despite Trump’s stab in the back, the YPG is calling for the U.S. to enforce a “no-fly” zone over northern Syria to keep the Turkish air force out. Implicitly or explicitly, they want to reestablish the U.S. alliance.

Today we defend the Syrian Kurds against an imperialist attack that threatens their very existence. But the fatal role of the YPG in doing the dirty work for the U.S. imperialist war on the Islamic State should not be forgotten. The monitoring group Airwars

has tabulated some 1,600 civilians killed during the brutal four-month U.S./YPG assault on the I.S. “capital” of Raqqa in 2017 (*The Intercept*, 15 April; Airwars, 7 August). Using what former U.S. defense secretary James Mattis called “annihilation tactics,” the city was leveled, with 11,000 buildings destroyed and 150,000 survivors barely eking out an existence amid the rubble.

The YPG has also acted as jailers for the U.S. imperialists. The YPG/SDF forces that cleared Raqqa rounded up thousands of Sunni Arab residents off the street and shipped them off to concentration camps in the desert. It is reported that almost all the 1,000 I.S.-linked prisoners held in dungeons at the Ayn Issa detention camp have escaped as a result of Turkish bombing, passing over the fact that there were 11,000 others being held there. Conditions at the Al Hawl camp, which confined upwards of 70,000 “displaced persons” in tents exposed to bitter cold and 120° heat, were described by the International Red Cross as “apocalyptic.”

In 2015 we warned, “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” (“International Perspectives of the League for the Fourth International,” *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015). But when the YPG acted as mercenary troops for the Pentagon occupying Arab regions, we wrote that the LFI:

“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



Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and U.S. president Donald Trump meet during United Nations General Assembly in 2017.



Ottoman dreams: Erdoğan’s grandiose presidential palace in Ankara.

beyond that and call for defense of Raqqa against the attack by imperialism and allied forces including the Kurdish-led YPG/SDF.”

– “Defend Raqqa – Drive U.S./NATO Imperialists Out of Syria and Iraq!” *The Internationalist* No. 43, May-June 2016

Middle East in Turmoil, Everyone Against the Kurds

Under siege from his own supporters, the megalomaniacal U.S. president Trump tweeted that “if Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the Economy of Turkey (I’ve done before!).” What those limits are was not specified. This demented and empty bluster was then repeated by U.S. treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin. Meanwhile, facing a possible impeachment trial in the Senate, the unhinged U.S. president managed to unite Republican and Democratic senators into preparing a joint resolution for imposing sanctions on Turkey.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Britain, France and Germany put aside tensions over Brexit to write a joint statement against the Turkish invasion, threatening to cut off future sales to Turkey of arms that could be used in Syria. But that won’t stop the Turkish army from using its 350+ German-made Leopard 2 tanks and its 1,000+ French-made ERYX and Milan missiles to mow down Kurds. Erdoğan responded to the hypocritical European statement by threatening to “open the gates and send 3.6 million refugees your way.” As world leaders trade schoolyard taunts, the only one who might make good on his threats is the megalomaniac in Ankara.

As for Syrian ally Russia, Erdoğan met last month with Russian president Vladimir Putin and Iranian leader Hassan Rouhani at a tripartite summit in Ankara on “regional issues.” They discussed Turkey’s plans for

a “safety zone,” which “could host up to 3 million refugees currently living in Turkey if extended from Turkey’s border to Deir al Zor and Raqqa” far south of the border (Reuters, 16 September). They agreed on the “Astana format” of talks between the Syrian government and opposition (excluding the Kurds)³, and that the U.S. should withdraw its troops from northeastern Syria forthwith.

Meanwhile, mass protests in Baghdad by unemployed young men have plunged the Iraqi capital into turmoil. The government responded with heavy repression (over 100 dead so far). To date there is no recognized leadership, but if one emerges it could shake the regime, which is a client both of Washington and Tehran. And now, while pulling U.S. troops from Syria in order to supposedly “end the endless wars,” Trump has dispatched another 1,000 troops and Patriot anti-missile systems to eastern Saudi Arabia, where they will act as a tripwire to trigger a U.S. attack in case Iranian-backed forces again attack Saudi oil installations, as they did last month.

In this scenario in which the entire region is again thrown into turmoil, the principal regional actors are lined up against the Kurds, actively or passively. The PYD/YPG/SDF will likely be obliged to negotiate with the Assad regime under Russian sponsorship, but the government in Damascus will never agree to regional autonomy for Rojava, particularly with the Kurds having their own army, and much less Kurdish independence. The only way to defend the Kurds’ right to self-determination is through a revolutionary struggle going well beyond the borders of Syria. And in that scenario, as we wrote in our 2014 article, the “Turkish Proletariat Is Key.”

Permanent Revolution from the Middle East to the Imperialist Metropolises

As Leon Trotsky noted in his theory and program of *permanent revolution*, and as was confirmed in the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, in the imperialist epoch of decaying capitalism, even the gains of the classic bourgeois revolutions, including national emancipation, democracy and agrarian revolution, cannot be achieved without the working class taking power and extending socialist revolution internation-

³ Since the end of 2016, there have been indirect talks in the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, under U.N. auspices, with Iran, Russia and Turkey as guarantors of a ceasefire between the Syrian government and some of the Islamist armed opposition. These talks have been discussing a draft constitution of a federal “Republic of Syria” proposed by Russia. The political representatives of the YPG/SDF were explicitly not invited to the talks.

ally. Nowhere is this more true today than in the Middle East, a pivot of imperialist world domination, where the national boundaries arbitrarily drawn at the end of World War I have produced a century of national oppression of the Kurdish people.

There will be no democracy for the oppressed in the Middle East short of socialist revolution, only one or another authoritarian regime, whether Islamist like Erdoğan's or "secular" military-based regimes like Assad's in Syria, Egyptian governments before and after the "Arab Spring," and earlier Turkish governments. The fight for workers revolution – which alone can liberate the myriad oppressed nations, nationalities, peoples and ethnic/religious communities in the Middle East – must be international in scope. The 10-million-strong Turkish working class, along with millions of Egyptian, Iraqi and Iranian workers, is key to the struggle for revolution in Syria.

The Turkish working class has the power to defeat the invasion from the rear. At present, when all reports indicate that the war on the Syrian Kurds is widely popular in Turkey, and as the government is detaining hundreds of people just for making critical comments on social media, calling for workers strikes against the war may not be immediately feasible. But Turkey is experiencing a sharp economic crisis, and class-conscious Turkish workers would fight against any efforts to subordinate their struggles to the war, as well as to mobilize against the war to the extent possible, and to defend democratic rights under wholesale attack by the regime.

Today the focal point for carrying out working-class struggle against the war is in Europe, particularly in Germany where well over a million Turkish workers and several hundred thousand Kurdish workers have for years formed a significant part of the multiethnic proletariat. This is where Turkish-Kurdish working-class unity can be forged. Trade unionists from IG Metall and other unions have demonstrated in the past against Turkish attacks on the Kurds. Now is a key time when work stoppages and industrial action against the Turkish/NATO invasion are urgently called for, but instead the union tops are calling on the European Union imperialists to pressure Erdoğan.

Vital to any struggle to defeat the imperialist assault on the Syrian Kurds is a revolutionary internationalist leadership, cohering the nuclei of Leninist communist parties on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution – socialist revolution extending from the Middle East to the imperialist metropolises. The League for the Fourth International and its national sections, from the Internationalistische Gruppe in Germany and the Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia to Brazil, Mexico and the United States, seek to help forge this vanguard in the heat of the class struggle. ■

Catalonia...

continued from page 12

were widespread and the automaker SEAT shut down its plants in Matorell and the Zona Franca. But the impact of the strike was undermined by the fact that the main union federations, CC.OO. and the UGT, refused to participate. Despite having signed a declaration rejecting the sentence, the union tops clung to "dialogue" with the bosses – that is, to class collaboration – vilely betraying the struggle in defense of democratic rights.

Among the industrial unions, the only

one that had the guts to participate in the October 18 general strike was the dock workers, who marched in a column from the port of Barcelona.

The baton directing the neo-Francoist repression is now in the hands of Pedro Sánchez and his government of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), which is the very incarnation of social-democratic betrayal and "left" *españolismo* (Spanish chauvinism). The acting president fully supported the hideous sentence as "fitting," demanding that it must be "carried out in its entirety." Meanwhile, along with his calls for "proportionality," Sánchez "is not ruling out any scenario" (*El Periódico*, 17 October), including applying the National Security Law, to take control of the Catalan police, or to activate Article 155 of the Spanish constitution that would "suspend" the autonomous government and effectively impose a military occupation, as occurred after the October 2017 referendum.

Meanwhile, Pablo Iglesias, spokesman for the bourgeois-populist coalition Unidas Podemos, pledged allegiance to the Spanish monarchist state by declaring: "Everyone will have to respect the law and take responsibility for the sentence." This is an endorsement of the institutions inherited from Franco's military dictatorship, including a judicial apparatus that is Francoist from head to toe, and a constitution that defines the right to self-determination as "sedition." (German courts rejected Puigdemont's extradition because the crime of "rebellion," which all the accused Catalan *independentistas* were charged with, doesn't even exist in Germany.) Such anti-democratic institutions are essential for Spanish capitalism. Trying to change them through a constituent assembly or some other mechanism within the capitalist framework, as some leftists advocate, is pure illusionism: it will take a socialist revolution.

The Catalan bourgeoisie, meanwhile, is spinning as it tries to maintain control. Feeling pressure from the streets, Quim Torra, the current president, expressed his "empathy" with "peaceful and civic" protest and even with "strong actions like shutting down such an important part of the infrastructure as El Prat Airport." Meanwhile the Mossos, supposedly under the command of the Generalitat, are attacking protesters to "protect them"! Shortly after, Torra announced in the Parliament that he intends to "end the legislature by validating independence," that is, proclaiming it before December 2021. This grandstanding met with derision from the entire opposition – including the right-wing sovereigntists of the ERC and those on the "left" in the CUP (Candidatura d'Unitat Popular) – and bewilderment from his Junts per Catalunya (JxCat).

Currently, there is an orchestrated campaign emanating from La Moncloa (the Spanish prime minister's offices),



Internationalistische Gruppe at protest in Berlin against repression in Catalonia, October 19. "Catalonia: Defend the Right of Self-Determination and Independence! For Workers Revolution to Smash the Spanish Monarchy!"

propagated by the mainstream media and hammered home by all the capitalist parties, from the Spanish right (Vox, PP, Cs) to the bourgeois Catalanists (PDeCAT / JxCat, ERC), demanding that everyone strongly denounce the "violence" of the protesters, especially the youth on the barricades who have opposed the infamous ruling of the Francoist Supreme Court and fought the police violence seeking to impose it. This direct order from capital has been complied with not only by Torra, but also by some groups that call themselves socialist. *Esquerra Revolucionària* (19 October), which leads the Sindicat d'Estudiants (Students Union) and is part of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI), writes that the "demonstration of strength" that's required:

"has nothing to do with the actions of a few hundred hooded youths, who believe that setting containers aflame and facing police repression with stones is the shortest way to win.

"This type of marginal and individual violence is a dead end and does not serve to combat the massive violence of the state apparatus and its police forces. On the contrary, using these means, the hooded protesters, many of them egged on by police infiltrators and provocateurs, play into the criminalization campaign..."

Joining this chorus of denunciation in unison against youths going up against the police, although using less police-like terms ("hooded," "infiltrated," "provocateurs"), *Lucha de Clases* (19 October), of the International Marxist Tendency (IMT), lectures:

"It would be a mistake to wear out in endless confrontations with the police, which isolate the youth vanguard from the rest of the movement and those layers of the class that are still reluctant to fight for the Catalan republic."

Marxists must explain to the most radicalized sectors that street battles are not enough, that in order to defeat the police terror unleashed in Catalonia, the social power of the working class must be mobilized in forceful action, with a revolutionary leadership. But what we have here, from the extreme right to the opportunist left, is a demand to respect the rules of good behavior of a very bourgeois nation-

alist movement.

It should be noted that both the CWI and the IMT claim that the police are "workers in uniform" instead of recognizing their real nature as the armed fist of the bourgeoisie. Rereading Lenin's *State and Revolution* wouldn't hurt, along with the writings of Lenin and Trotsky on the national question. But for these inveterate opportunists, it's not a case of mistaken analysis.

Catalan society is deeply divided over independence. Rejection of the heavy hand of the Madrid government is pervasive. But that by no means necessarily translates into being in favor of independence. Support for independence is particularly weak in the industrial zone of Baix Llobregat and in the capital (Barcelona) itself, due in large part to the fact that many workers are from other regions of Spain, or are immigrants. According to the latest survey of the Center d'Estudis d'Opinió of the Generalitat, only 35 percent of the population would like for Catalonia to be an independent state rather than a region, autonomous community or state in a federal Spain, the lowest level since 2012. And if the only alternative is independence or not, the pro-independence "yes" is still in a minority position (44 percent) compared to 48 percent for "no" (*Baròmetre d'Opinió Política*, July 26).

The League for the Fourth International, which has always defended the right of Catalonia to decide on independence, including holding the October 2017 referendum, has not called for independence, although this could change if massive and brutal repression results in a sharp change of opinion among Catalans. Today, we call for workers mobilization throughout the Spanish State against neo-Francoist repression and in favor of the democratic right to Catalan self-determination. We appeal to the exploited and oppressed throughout the country to mobilize their class force against the government of austerity and repression in Madrid, as well as against the belt-tightening and repressive policies of the Catalan government in Barcelona.

Starting from the internationalist principles of Lenin and Trotsky, we combat national oppression, and all forms of social oppression, on the basis of class independence. In the upcoming November 10 elections, revolutionary Marxists would oppose all bourgeois parties, including Catalan nationalists, and the putrid PSOE of Pedro Sánchez, which has become the spearhead of the brutal onslaught against Catalonia. Ultimately, the only way out is a revolution that establishes a workers government on the ruins of the unspeakable Bourbon monarchy and the Spain inherited from Franco, and that extends socialist revolution to the rest of Europe. This requires a revolutionary, Leninist and Trotskyist, workers party as a tribune of all the oppressed and world party of socialist revolution.

For the unconditional and immediate release of all Catalan independentistas and everyone arrested in the fight against the neo-Francoist repression!

Defend the right of self-determination of the Catalan people!

Drop the charges against the exiled nationalists and all those who are facing accusations over the October 2017 referendum!

For a federation of workers republics of the Iberian Peninsula in a socialist United States of Europe! ■

Olli Weiss...

continued from page 14

in their easy chairs. Olli lost that fight in the ICL, but in the LFI he found the party that shares both his understanding of the Trotskyist program for the deformed workers states and the courage to carry it out.

Olli's last fight in the ICL was on the refugee and immigrant issue, in 2015-16. As he later wrote, "the stubborn insistence [of the ICL] on not opposing the Dublin III fast-track deportation law, and opposing calls for asylum for Syrians as liberal ... was something that I knew I could not possibly uphold in public, even if I opposed it internally. I did not want to be associated with a social-chauvinist position towards refugees." Thus he "arrived at the conclusion that the ICL was lost for revolution."

It was "the sharp and thoughtful declaration of the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction," which resulted in their immediate expulsion, and the powerful statement of the Italian comrades that helped him "connect the dots" and "make sense of what went wrong with the ICL." After studying the founding documents of the League for the Fourth International, Olli wrote in his application for membership in the LFI: "I have realized that the ICL ceased to be a revolutionary organization long before I even joined it, and that the LFI continues today what Spartacism used to stand for."

After the founding of the Internationalistische Gruppe in August 2017, Olli's main work – on top of organizing the entire activity of the German section (!) – was production of the newspaper. He pushed for the name *Permanente Revolution*, appropriating the title of the newspaper of the German Trotskyists in the early 1930s, which printed Trotsky's incisive analyses and calls for a united front of workers organizations to fight the fascists. Olli's meticulous work was highlighted in the very professionally produced issues of the LFI's German and Italian publications. He was firmly convinced that a sloppy-looking, ugly newspaper, leaflet, poster or banner basically reflected contempt for readers. It would also undercut our promise of overturning capitalist society and creating a new, just socialist society.

Olli was key to bringing a class-struggle perspective to striking students and workers at the Free University of Berlin, where he completed his undergraduate and postgraduate studies, for example in the struggles of the student assistants at the Free University who are paid starvation wages for their work to keep libraries and offices running. He always warned in assemblies against placing any trust in the capitalist SPD/Left Party/Green Berlin Senate (city government). "The Social Democrats of the SPD and Left Party (not to mention the bourgeois Greens) are not only no lesser evil than the CDU and FDP – in fact, they are much more effective at ramming through anti-social austerity measures," he wrote in a leaflet (April 2018). He criticized the "stop-and-go" strategy of the trade-union bureaucracy with its endless ineffective warning strikes, and vigorously advocated organizing pickets to shut down the library during the TVStud strike in January 2018.

Olli deeply absorbed Lenin's admonition in *What Is To Be Done?* that the goal of the professional revolutionary is not to

be a trade-union secretary but a tribune of the people denouncing all cases of oppression, capitalist exploitation and police arbitrariness. He wrote articles on the African refugee Oury Jalloh, who was burned to death in a police cell in Dessau in 2005, and on the need to mobilize working-class power for refugee rights and to prevent deportations that appeared in the *Streikurier* strike newspaper. After the brutal attack on the son of our comrade Dr. Arturo Villalobos in Oaxaca, Mexico in May 2018, in a few days Olli won the backing of striking students and hospital staff in Berlin for the international protest campaign. Photos of their solidarity action were immediately sent to Mexico, where they demonstrated that the comrades under attack were not alone.

In evidence of his deep-rooted Leninism, Olli's last public actions in July were participating in demonstrations in defense of two women doctors in Berlin who were punished under the Paragraph 129a law for advertising their abortion services, and a rally in defense of Captain Carole Rackete who was arrested for rescuing refugees in the Mediterranean Sea. In June Olli also organized comrades to mobilize against the closure of the Wombat's Hostel in Berlin and in support of its workers against a union-busting campaign. While opportunist leftists – like the right-centrists of the Revolutionary Internationalist Organization (RIO)² – as usual appealed to the "leftist" Berlin city government, the Internationalistische Gruppe addressed itself to the Berlin working class, calling for occupation of the facility.

Olli Weiss was what Leninists strive to be, a professional revolutionary. This includes the gift of summarizing all essential points in just under three minutes, the usual speaking time we are conceded at rallies and in assemblies (if we aren't simply silenced). When in December 2018 he delivered a brief speech at a RIO-organized demonstration in defense of the Yellow Vests in France, Olli gave a concise call for defense of the movement against police repression; for polarizing it along class lines by the necessary proletarian revolutionary leadership; for defense of immigrants and refugees by the working class, and to demand access to higher education. He then exposed, to the displeasure of the organizers, the "democratic" tinkering with the French constitution raised by RIO's French co-thinkers and other opportunists as a distraction from the proletarian revolution.

As this example shows, Olli's activism, like his attention to detail in the production of propaganda, was closely linked to his dedication to programmatic clarity and readiness for political debate. He was always very well informed about the ostensibly revolutionary organizations. At this year's Lutte Ouvrière Fête in France in early June, he along with young comrades had polemical discussions with members of various currents. He defended Leninist and Trotskyist positions with the called-for severity, but never twisted the political line of the opponents, as the ICL often does to make a cheap shot. He knew from his own experience that good militants can also be found in opportunist and rotten organizations, and that they can only be won with honest polemics.

² Internationally affiliated with the Fracción Trotskista, led by the Argentine PTS.

Everyone who knew Olli in his political activity noted at least three things. First of all, the incredible breadth of his talents. He wrote, gave speeches, produced the newspaper and leaflets, printed and distributed them, organized demos, painted banners, was key to providing the technical infrastructure of international conferences (both for the ICL and the LFI!), and more. A longtime comrade said he was "a great organizer and thinker." A young contact, who learned a lot from him, noticed, in mourning, "for me he was a titan." Later he added, "Olli was phenomenal." So he was.

Secondly, Olli's great enthusiasm was contagious, especially when he was convinced he was fighting for the right cause. All of us in the League for the Fourth International perceived how he threw himself into every task. A former comrade of his, who had disputes with Olli inside the ICL (and who honestly admitted to having sometimes treated him bureaucratically), said: "I believe that Olli must have felt relieved when he turned his back on the ICL and shortly thereafter joined the LFI. It must have felt liberating for him to find a collective of comrades with whom he could align his strong political beliefs and actions." His *compañera* said movingly, "I'm glad that he had found you in his life."

And third, it was recognized by all that he was always decent, straightforward, without cynicism and evasive maneuvers, "brutally honest, with others and with himself." As one comrade remarked, "he always tried to convince, he was always honest, never manipulative."

Olli Weiss was a young cadre and leader who vibrantly embodied our hopes, with revolutionary optimism and determination. He was an internationalist to the core, travelling widely, from China to Latin America. He was an extremely intelligent and talented young person who loved life, had many interests, but knew where he wanted to go and pursued that goal with determination, while always lending a hand when needed by anyone. He was a person who understood that telling the truth and upholding the real principles of revolutionary Marxism was the only way to be true to the great cause he had embraced, and therefore to himself.

Olli's death brings to mind the tragedy of another young comrade, Fernando López in New York, an immigrant worker, union organizer and communist who fell to his death as he was facing deportation.³ In both cases we lost extremely valuable leaders who contributed so much, and had so much more to contribute to ³ See "Fernando López, 1973-1999: Comrade, Internationalist, Revolutionary," *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999.

the revolutionary cause.

At a meeting of a dozen supporters and friends of the Internationalistische Gruppe on July 28 to inform them about the death of Olli and remember him, letters were read from the Nucleo Internazionale d'Italia and Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas in the USA. The well-known words of Bertolt Brecht were quoted:

"The weak do not fight. The strong fight for perhaps an hour. Those who are even stronger fight for many years. But the strongest are those who fight all their lives. They are indispensable."

Olli Weiss was one of those who are indispensable, and irreplaceable. He dedicated his whole life to the struggle for communism. No single one of us can do everything he did, we have to gather our strength to act together. Olli was known for his quick wit, engaging and effective style of argumentation and unwavering perseverance in upholding the truth in small things and big things. The impact of his cutting interventions, patient explanations and demonstrations of revolutionary politics in action will continue far beyond his death, as those inspired by his infectious enthusiasm for revolutionary politics will continue to carry his struggle forward.

In Spanish it is often said at the death of a *compañero* that the deceased is *¡presente!* The hard truth is that Comrade Olli is no longer with us. Yet his ideals, his commitment to the oppressed and exploited, his revolutionary convictions, his Trotskyist and Leninist program, are alive as ever and serve as inspiration to all of us in the struggle for the liberation of humanity.

All honor to Olli Weiss! Long live the Fourth International!

League for the Fourth International

LFI, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A. E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

Brazil: write to Caixa Postal 084027, CEP 27251-740, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil

Rio de Janeiro: write to Caixa Postal 3982, CEP 20001-974, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
E-mail: lqb1996@yahoo.com.br

Internationalistische Gruppe/Deutschland

Germany: write to Postfach 80 97 21, 21007 Hamburg, Germany
E-mail: permanenterevolution@posteo.de

Nucleo Internazionale d'Italia

Italy: write to Anna Chiaraluce, Casella Postale N. 6, 06070 Ellera Umbra (PG), Italy
E-mail: it_internazionalista@yahoo.com

Grupo Internacionalista/México

México: write to Apartado Postal 12-201, Admón. Postal Obrero Mundial, CP 03001, México D.F., México
E-mail: grupointernacionalista@yahoo.com.mx
Tel. Mexico City: 55-3154-7361; Guadalajara: 33-1752-6643; Oaxaca: 951-185-6815

Internationalist Group/U.S.

Internationalist Group, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.
E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com
New York Tel. (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711
Los Angeles Tel. (323) 984-8590
New England Tel. (617) 213-5010
Pacific Northwest Tel. (503) 303-8278

GM Strike...

continued from page 11

manufacturing jobs have not “come back.”

Now Democratic presidential hopefuls like Biden, Warren and Bernie Sanders visit the picket lines to hustle votes and tout their support to the union. But make no mistake, if these phony “friend of labor” capitalist politicians get to the White House, they would continue to serve the ruling class and administer its state against the workers and oppressed, just as their Democratic predecessors Bill (NAFTA) Clinton and Barack (Bailout) Obama did. This shows yet again why labor must break with the Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties.

Labor Must Clean Its Own House!

As workers were preparing to walk the picket lines, the FBI suddenly launched a wave of indictments of UAW officials for embezzlement of union funds for personal luxuries. In August, the feds raided union properties and the home of officials – including past UAW president Dennis Williams and current UAW president Gary Jones – in six states. This followed the 2017-18 indictments of Fiat Chrysler executives and UAW officials involved in a bribery scheme, carried out in order to corrupt contract negotiations in favor of the company. That took the betrayals of the trade-union bureaucrats to a grotesque extreme.

The trade-union bureaucracy with its privileges accepts the framework of capitalism, the essence of which is exploitation of the workers. Therefore, it inevitably opposes sharp class struggle. But the labor bureaucrats are an *obstacle*, sitting atop and undermining the workers organizations, while the cops are the armed fist of the class *enemy*, the guard dogs of capital. The FBI is the main agency of domestic capitalist repression, and the current investigation, arrests and raids have posed the possibility of a takeover of the union by the bosses’ government. When the government has moved to “clean up” the unions, and when union “reformers” have brought in the courts or the feds (Mine workers, Teamsters), it has been a disaster for the workers.

Any government intervention in the UAW, on whatever grounds, would squelch any movement by militant auto workers to forge a class-struggle leadership and must be opposed on principle. We say: ***Government/FBI hands off the UAW! The unions belong to the workers. Labor must clean its own house!***

Today, UAW-represented workers only assemble about half of the vehicles produced in the U.S., down from 85% 20 years ago. Non-union plants have been built by international automakers primarily in the South, the historic bastion of the “open shop” and racist anti-union terror. The defeat this past June of the UAW’s second effort to organize the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, just showed the bankruptcy of the bureaucrats, who have given up so much up to the auto bosses that they have a limited force of attraction to unorganized workers.

A UAW spokesman lamented, “Our labor laws are broken.” But the purpose of the labor laws is not to help workers organize, they are meant to control the labor movement and aid the union-busters. Hard class battles like against GM won’t be won through relying on the bosses’ laws or imaginary government “neutrality,” but

by relying on the power of the labor movement and its allies. The UAW and other industrial unions were built in the 1930s through often bloody class battles, and in opposition to Jim Crow segregation.

Those unions were built by “reds,” by communists and socialists who were later purged after World War II by the Democratic Party and the predecessors of today’s pro-Democratic labor officialdom. Yet what passes for opposition in the U.S. labor movement today would just replace one pro-capitalist bureaucrat with another slightly more “progressive” bureaucrat who won’t do any better because *they all play by the bosses’ rules* – which means the workers are sure to lose.

Thus an article on the GM strike by the social-democratic *Labor Notes* (18 September) – reprinted by *Jacobin*, an unofficial voice of the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America – has various criticisms of the lack of militancy in preparing the strike, the lack of transparency in bargaining, the corruption scandal, etc., and concludes: “if past contracts are an indication, the pact [UAW chief] Jones negotiates is likely to be weak.” So what is to be done about it? “In that case, GM strikers will have just one tool to use between their rock and their hard place: their right to vote no.” That’s it? Just say no?!

To revive the heritage of the sit-down strikes and bring it into the fight today requires ousting the labor bureaucracy as a whole and building a leadership on a program of hard class struggle rather than treacherous class collaboration. A victory to the GM strike is what’s needed to organize the mass of non-union auto workers. ***Reopen Lordstown Assembly – No more plant closures! And key to any real victory is to insist that no one goes back until all go back equal: junk the tier system, make “temporary” workers full-time, equal pay for equal work, now!***

Victory to the GM strike!

Hong Kong...

continued from page 3

and branches of Chinese state-owned banks were trashed. With increasing frequency, attacks were directed at individuals perceived to be from mainland China. A bank employee was punched in the face for speaking Mandarin instead of Cantonese. When he said “we are all Chinese,” attackers yelled “go back to the mainland.” An older shirtless man who argued with demonstrators was beaten bloody.

Defend the Chinese Revolution – End Capitalist Hong Kong’s Special Status

Ever since capitalist rule in the most populous country on the planet was overthrown in 1949 by a peasant army led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Mao Zedong, the imperialists have been consumed by the ambition to overthrow the “Chicom.” The anti-communist hysteria of McCarthyism in the U.S. was set off by a witch hunt over “who lost China.” Although it was not the result of a proletarian uprising like the 1917 October Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky in Russia, and installed a regime modeled on Stalin’s bureaucratically degenerated Soviet Union, the Chinese Revolution represented an enormous historic gain for humankind.

Genuine Trotskyists defended, and continue to defend the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution. The gains of the revolution, notably socialized industry and a (bureau-

cratically) planned economy, have lifted the vast majority of China’s 1.6 billion people out of poverty, a unique achievement. Contrary to the bourgeois economists and most of the left who claim that it had somehow been transformed into a capitalist state, China didn’t suffer the ravages of the worldwide capitalist crisis and economic depression that began in 2007-09.

Key gains, although under attack, remain and must be defended, tooth and nail. They are undermined by the ruling bureaucracy, which includes many pro-capitalist elements, and by the Stalinist dogma of building “socialism in one country.” Every genuine Marxist from Marx on has insisted that socialism can only be achieved on an international scale, and therefore requires a program for international socialist revolution. The variant of this nationalist program pushed by Beijing leaders from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping, “building socialism with Chinese characteristics,” like Stalin’s, is based on the pipedream of achieving “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism.

This was expressed concretely in the case of Hong Kong with the determination of China’s Stalinist leaders to maintain the enclave’s capitalist character. As the Nationalist Kuomintang regime of Chiang Kai-shek collapsed in the late 1940s, Mao ordered the CCP-led People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to stop short of taking Hong Kong. Rather than destroying Chinese capitalism root and branch, he preferred to keep it as an outpost of finance capital, seeking deals with the imperialists. After the victory of the Revolution in 1949, many Chinese capitalists left Shanghai seeking the protection of the British colony.

From the early 1980s under Deng Xiaoping, the negotiations with Britain were premised on the formula “one country, two systems.” By maintaining the capitalist character of the Special Autonomous Regions (SARs) of Hong Kong and the former Portuguese colony of Macau, the Stalinist rulers have sown the seeds for the anti-communist protests that broke out in 2003 and 2014, setting the stage for the situation today. The protests have prominently included lawyers and businessmen whose existence depends on maintaining this status, while investigative journalists have shown that the more militant protest leaders have typically been the offspring of the Hong Kong bourgeoisie, many of them having attended elite private schools.

As we warned 21 years ago:

“The handover of the former British crown colony of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic in July 1997 has incorporated a capitalist enclave whose tentacles have already reached far into China’s interior in the search for cheap labor to exploit.... The annexation of Hong Kong (now a ‘Special Autonomous Region’) will not realize the class-collaborationist fantasy of ‘one country, two systems,’ as China’s former ‘Paramount Leader’ Deng Xiaoping declared. Instead it will give enormous impetus to forces that would restore capitalist rule throughout the country.”

–“Where Is China Going,” *The Internationalist* No. 6, November-December 1998

Today, the Beijing bureaucracy and its representatives in Hong Kong can only appeal to nationalism, rather than class consciousness, and think in terms of stepped-up repression to answer the counterrevolutionary mobilizations. This is particularly the case as Xi, like his predecessors Mao

and Deng, wants to maintain the capitalist character of this banking and shipping hub. The protesters’ tactics, meanwhile, now escalating to use of explosive devices, are clearly intended to provoke intervention by the PLA and Chinese paramilitary police, hoping for a bloody crackdown – a “new Tiananmen” massacre – that could spark imperialist intervention.

What’s needed instead is a mobilization of the working people of Hong Kong, many of whom are openly hostile to the “pro-democracy” protesters, these “privileged millennials” who seem bent on destroying workers’ livelihoods. Residents of several neighborhoods, particularly those populated by poor immigrants from the coastal Fujian province, have pelted demonstrators with objects thrown from their public housing towers. They are also incensed at the virulent ethnic hostility against mainland Chinese, who have been depicted as locusts descending on Hong Kong to buy up goods. But there has been no serious effort to mobilize this working-class opposition, only a few tepid nationalist counterprotests waving PRC flags. Rather than relying on military/police units, organized workers should defeat the counterrevolutionary provocateurs in the streets.

Such mobilizations require revolutionary leadership. Yet groups falsely claiming to be Trotskyist have lined up with the counterrevolutionaries. Thus the Hong Kong group named Socialist Action, part of the wing of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) that split from its founder Peter Taaffe, not only vociferously supports the pro-imperialist demonstrators (claiming that those waving U.S. and UK flags are only “a few misguided Hong Kong youths”), it is calling to extend the counterrevolutionary movement to the rest of China, saying it “can only go forward as a struggle against the real power in Hong Kong, which is the Chinese dictatorship” (Chinaworker.org, 8 September).

Other opportunist leftists such as the misnamed Trotskyist Faction (FT), also support the anti-communist protests, writing: “The socialist left in the U.S. and elsewhere should support the mass struggle in Hong Kong because it is a struggle against repression and state violence” (*Left Voice*, 22 August). And the followers of the late Ernest Mandel claiming to be the Fourth International openly support demands for Hong Kong independence, headlining an article: “Hong Kong: The millennial generation’s struggle for self-determination” (*International Viewpoint*, 26 September). All these fakers have a purely (bourgeois) “democratic” rather than a proletarian class program, and thus they end up echoing the imperialists and siding with counterrevolution – as they also did in East Europe and the Soviet Union 30 years ago.

What is required is the forging of a genuinely communist, Trotskyist vanguard to lead the struggle to expropriate the entire Hong Kong bourgeoisie, including its pro-Beijing components, and to join with class-conscious workers and communists throughout China in defending the revolutionary gains. Authentic Trotskyists have always stood for uprooting the heritage of Britain’s colonial theft of Hong Kong, while calling for workers political revolution throughout China to oust the privileged bureaucracy, smash the encroaching capitalists, establish the proletarian democracy of workers councils (soviets), and unite with the world’s workers to open the road to socialism. ■



Boston Cops Riot Against Protesters At “Straight Pride” Fascist Provocation

On Saturday, August 31, a fascist rally in Boston, MA, billed as a “Straight Pride” parade, was far outnumbered by over a thousand anti-fascist demonstrators who jeered all along the route. The event, organized by a front group for the alt-right “Resist Marxism” outfit with ties to other violent fascist groups like the Proud Boys, was a homophobic hate fest, with self-described provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos as “grand marshal.” Their intent was to ridicule pride events and target gay and trans people, as well as immigrants, black people, and other oppressed groups. Front and center in the parade was a “Trump 2020 – Build the Wall!” float, which was surrounded by scores of U.S. (and Israeli) flags, many with the racist “Blue Lives Matter” blue-stripe design.

Boston has a reputation as a liberal stronghold. Democratic mayor Martin Walsh spoke of “our values of love, inclusion and acceptance,” saying that “Straight Pride” aimed at “sowing division among the people” and “I will not stand for it.” Yet the police force, under the orders of the Democrat-controlled city government, were mobilized in massive numbers – including hundreds of heavily militarized riot police – to serve as a defense guard for the fascists. Before, during and after the gay bashers’ hate parade, the cops went on an hours-long rampage against protesters. They wanted no repeat of September 2017, when in the wake of the fascist murder of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville some 40,000 people chased the fascists from Boston Common.

Well before the official starting time on Saturday, as we and others were assembling at the Arlington T stop, several blocks from the “Straight Pride” meeting point in Copley Square, police began attacking anti-fascist demonstrators. Black-clad antifa protesters were arrested for objecting to police pat-downs; one person was grabbed for testing a bullhorn (which was seized). The Uprise RI blog (2 September) reported:



Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth at August 31 protest against homophobic “Straight Pride” parade.

“The situation escalated as the police continually opened the barricades to rush into the crowd and randomly arrest people as well as indiscriminately use pepper spray against anyone and everyone in the area.”

At one point police charged the crowd and people started running. Demonstrators who tripped and fell were beaten with riot sticks; those who came to their aid got pepper-sprayed. Several journalists got hit, sprayed and tackled.

Then after the fascist event ended at 4 p.m., cops attacked in force. The *Boston Globe* (1 September) reported:

“A phalanx of police riding motorcycles rolled up Congress Street toward State Street, with their sirens and lights on, to disperse the crowd, but the mass of protesters moved into the road and blocked the officers’ path.

“As the sides faced off, protesters could

be heard chanting, ‘Who do you serve?’

“Police moved into the crowd, and officers grappled with protesters, some of whom were knocked to the ground. At least eight people, including a woman limping, could be seen being led away by police.”

Boston is a city wrought with a history of racist violence, including vicious race riots in the early 1970s against busing for school integration – a policy which Democratic front-runner Joe Biden explicitly opposed, along with colleagues in the Senate. The police repression against anti-fascists last Saturday reflects this ongoing reality of racism in a supposedly “progressive” city. While liberal, reformist and anarchist protesters lamely chanted at the cops, “Who do you protect, who do you serve,” the reality was starkly obvious. The police are the armed guards of the racist capitalist order, and they protect the most ardent reactionary forces that form the core of fascist and white supremacist organizations in this country.

The arrest of 34 anti-fascists clearly demonstrates whose side the police are on. In response to the outcry against the wanton cop brutality, the Boston police announced that they will do an internal “review” of the “use of force.” For his part, Mayor Walsh responded to denunciations of the August 31 cop riot at a September 7 protest against police brutality saying, “If we could come up with better ways of doing this, I would absolutely try and do it a different way.” What a farce! In fact, the police have been reviewing videos to find more among the thousands who came out to protest the homophobic provocation to arrest.

Meanwhile, for the last week, local politics have been roiled by the refusal of a municipal court judge to grant the

motion of the Suffolk County district attorney, Rachel Rollins, to dismiss charges against 18 of the arrested demonstrators at the anti-fascist protest. When a defense attorney defending her clients read out the law showing that the judge did not have the authority to force the D.A. to prosecute, he ordered that the lawyer be handcuffed and jailed her. Rollins is one of several “progressives” who have run for the office of prosecutor, including Larry Krasner in Philadelphia (who won) and Tiffany Cabán in Queens, New York (who lost), both backed by the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America.

While Rollins ran on a program to supposedly end mass incarceration, end monetary bail and stop prosecuting a number of low-level charges, the obvious fact is that prosecutors are part of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state, the class enemy of working and oppressed people. Despite his campaign rhetoric, Krasner for months opposed a judge’s order that former Black Panther and class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal be granted a new hearing to appeal his frame-up conviction, for which he has been imprisoned for the last 38 years, most of them on death row. And Rollins is continuing to prosecute eight of the anti-fascist protesters arrested on August 31, several on bogus charges of assaulting police when in fact the police assaulted them.

The Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth demand that all charges be dropped against all the anti-fascist protesters. We call on all defenders of democratic, labor, black and immigrants’ rights to do so as well.

The Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth carried banners on August 31 which called to “Mobilize Workers Power – Stop Fascist Terror” and to “Build a Revolutionary Workers Party.” Another called to “Smash I.C.E. Through Workers Revolution.” Signs called “For Workers Action to Defend Gay and Trans Rights!” and declared, “You Can’t Fight Trump with Democrats” As we have seen time and again, from Boston to New York to Portland, Democrats are the bosses of the racist cops who protect the fascists. Workers must break with the Democrats and mobilize using their class power to put an end to fascist terror!

Following the September 7 rally, the IG contingent along with 40 other protesters joined the picket line of striking workers from the Battery Wharf hotel. A victory for the workers of UNITE-HERE Local 26 could demonstrate the power of the workers in action. But to win such victories, we need to build a revolutionary workers party that fights to do away with all the barbarism of capitalism and build a socialist society. ■



Boston police protect “Trump Build the Wall” float at fascist-organized homophobic parade.

For more information about the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, write: revinternationalistyouth@gmail.com

Ayotzinapa: It Was the Capitalist State

We print below a slightly edited version of a talk by our comrade Lucrecia Roth on September 29 in Berlin at a forum of the *Internationalistische Gruppe*, German section of the League for the Fourth International.

I am a supporter of the League for the Fourth International from Mexico. One of the most important political experiences I've had was to participate in the massive mobilizations that happened in Mexico in the Fall and Winter of 2014 and 2015, that were aimed at finding the 43 students from a pedagogical rural school who were "disappeared" by the local police of the Iguala municipality, under the watchful eye of the Federal Police and the Army, on September 26th of 2014.

In the face of this atrocity, the situation in Mexico exploded. Students from all levels went out to the streets by the thousands. They organized strikes in their schools. They went out to the plazas to hang photographs of their missing fellow students. They got onto the public transport to sing, chant and to rally the people in the name of the young peasants, many of them of indigenous origin, 20 or 21 years old, who the police, armed wing of the capitalist state, kidnapped and disappeared.

This terrible crime became infamous internationally as the symbol of the slaughter of the Mexican population over the last 13 years, where more than 250,000 people have been murdered, more than were killed in Syria and Afghanistan combined. In the United States our comrades of the Internationalist Group called the very first protests about Ayotzinapa, and continued to do so. There was a protest in New York on Thursday and a much larger one in Mexico City of perhaps 20,000 people. We have here some pictures of the New York march.

The Mexican government tried to put the blame on drug traffickers and a few corrupt local politicians and police, carrying out a phony "investigation" to supposedly prove this "*verdad histórica*," or historical truth. But nobody believed it. Due to popular demand, forensic experts were brought in from Argentina who after carefully investigating said that the government's official story was impossible.

During the demonstrations that followed that terrible "night of Iguala," tens and hundreds of thousands of protesters chanted, "*fue el estado*," it was the state. And they were right about that. But what many meant was that the government of Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the PRI, was responsible, which it was, whether drug traffickers were involved or not. But now there is a new government, of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, or AMLO, who is a bourgeois populist, and his party, MORENA, or National Regeneration Movement, and many people have illusions in him.

López Obrador says he is against state violence against the people, that he wants to get to the bottom of what happened to the Ayotzinapa students, and so on. But what AMLO has actually *done* is quite different. The level of state violence against the

On the Fifth Anniversary of the Disappearance of the 43 Students



Class Struggle International Workers (TIC) and the Internationalist Group at New York protest on the 5th anniversary of the massacre, September 26.

population is just as high as ever, AMLO created a new military corps, the National Guard, he is acting as a border guard for Donald Trump to keep refugees from reaching the United States ... and just about everyone arrested over the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students is out of jail.

Why? The answer is: because it wasn't just the government of Peña Nieto that was responsible, or the PRI, it was the state, the *capitalist* state. These kinds of massacres have regularly occurred in Mexico, starting well before Ayotzinapa, and they are going to keep on happening until this murderous semi-colonial state is brought down by a revolution, a socialist revolution. Why that is is what I want to talk about.

So in this struggle, like in many others, the key question is *what is to be done*, which is something that can only be addressed through a Marxist understanding of the Mexican reality. It is necessary to understand the real causes behind this terrible crime in which the capitalist state murdered 4 and disappeared 43 students from the rural teachers college of Iguala, Mexico. For us, to know how to defeat the capitalist's offensive that imprisons, tortures and murders workers, teachers and students in order to assert its control and to privatize public education in a semi colonial country like Mexico is, literally, a question of life and death. Only the Trotskyist program of Permanent Revolution can channel the gigantic desire of the exploited and oppressed to fight and achieve a genuine victory of the working class.

Mexico is a textbook case that shows the validity of the theoretical and programmatic perspective of Permanent Revolution. The "disappearance" and murder of young students that were on the way to becoming teachers in rural and indigenous communities that a century after the Mexi-

can Revolution are sinking ever deeper into poverty, leaves no doubt of what capitalism in a neocolonial country is about. Despite having no fewer than three bourgeois-democratic revolutions in its history, in Mexico, democratic rights for the oppressed and exploited are no more than ink on paper. The peasants, even when formally some own their land, are condemned to starvation or to migrate north, to employ themselves as pawns in the new agroindustrial *haciendas*. The indigenous people, without the control of their own natural resources, without real autonomy, in many cases face the threat of extinction.

The abduction of the 43 from Ayotzinapa is but one episode of government repression directed against the fight for defense of public education, which has been under attack in the country under orders from international financial organizations. So also is the repression of teachers strikes that led to another massacre, at Nochixtlán, in the state of Oaxaca, in June 2016, where our comrades were part of the resistance.

But more generally, a weak bourgeoisie under the boot of imperialism, like in Mexico, requires powerful repressive machinery to keep a massive number of workers in line, who could fight to defeat it, freeing themselves from its yoke once and for all. For 70 years, the PRI accomplished this with a corporatist, and then semi-corporatist state apparatus that exercised control over every aspect of society, punctuated by massacres. But after that fell apart under pressure from imperialism toward the end of the last century, they needed another mechanism, which was massive, bloody repression.

So long as the bourgeoisie rules, there will be no genuine democratic rights for the whole population. From the beginning of the Ayotzinapa mobilizations in Mexi-

co, we have stressed that the true motive of the horrific crime of Iguala goes beyond the corruption of a murderous government. To substitute one bourgeois politician for another does nothing, as the capitalist system is to blame. For us, it is essential to understand that in this epoch, in a country of late capitalist development like Mexico, the resolution of the most basic democratic demands is impossible within the framework of capitalism and this crime against the rural students stands as proof. This is clear evidence that even to achieve the most elementary democratic demands, it's necessary to transcend the framework of capitalism and to fight for a workers and peasants government (and in places like Guerrero and Oaxaca, for a workers, peasants and indigenous peoples government) that could extend the socialist revolution to an international scale. This is no theoretical abstraction; it is the most urgent need of the moment.

On the night of the 26th and the morning of the 27th of September, the local police under the orders of the Mayor José Luis Abarca attacked the school Normal Rural, or Rural Teachers College, of Ayotzinapa, located in the state of Guerrero. They murdered at least 7 people, 4 of which were students, injured two dozen, and kidnapped 43 more students of this school, called *normalistas* in Spanish. Until now, these students are still missing. They were adherents to the Federation of Socialist Peasant Students of Mexico, or FECSM in Spanish, which has a Stalinist program. The municipal authorities claimed that the students had hijacked the buses that were taking them back to Ayotzinapa from nearby town Iguala, and as a result emptied their assault rifles onto the buses, killing one. The next morning, a *normalista* student was found dead with his face flayed on the side of the road.

War on Public Education, War on Drugs = War on Poor and Working People

This episode is no accident. All over the world there is a general campaign for the privatization of education through reforms that has intensified in recent years. It is being pushed by imperialist institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Interamerican Bank and others. And those who have resisted those plans have been targeted.

For years, Mexican governments have tried to shut down the rural teacher training institutes, even sending in the military to occupy them. The bourgeois media was full of accounts saying they were breeding grounds for guerrillas due to the connection of the *normales rurales* to peasant and indigenous struggles. In particular, Guerrero has been the site of combative mobilizations by the peasantry and education workers, against labor and education "reforms." There is also the persecution of indigenous communities by the gigantic miner conglomerates, and of an infernal circle of massacres and the "dirty war," which in the '70s was a technique of extermination of the leftist guerrillas, and which continues today.

The military occupation of the state of Guerrero strengthened the *caciques*, or local strongmen, and their paramilitary groups. In many zones the army allowed the cultivation on a large scale of marijuana and poppy flower (*amapola*), which

Internationalist photo

generated a sort of counterinsurgency “social base” linked to the drug trafficking. The “war on drugs” initiated by Felipe Calderón Hinojosa has deepened the militarization of the country. As I said, more than a quarter million people have been murdered in violent actions in this war. Even though this program of massive militarization has not intimidated drug cartels, (they operate in collusion and collaboration with the repressive agencies of the capitalist state), it has had the desired effect of increasing the involvement of the military in police activities. The so-called “war on drugs” is nothing more than a disguise to hide the war on the poor and the working class. In recent years the indigenous peoples have been persecuted by illegal woodcutters and drug trafficking gunmen, a constant since the 70s. In fact, the mayor of Iguala and his wife, one of the many individual authors of the disappearance of the 43 students, have strong links with the drug trafficking group called “Guerreros Unidos”.

Up to now Mexican governments have tried to pin the blame on the narco for the terrible repression unleashed to the students of Ayotzinapa, as if it was an extraordinary event. We say that the capitalist state is responsible. That the drug trafficking groups served as trigger men would not represent a surprise, given the multiple connections between the narco groups and the state authorities. But it’s not just about any particular government - that can be replaced, and has been replaced by others of the same character. The state, like Lenin explained, consists of “special bodies of armed men (police and permanent army)” that defend the interests of the ruling class and incarnates the dominium of one class above the other.

The continuation of the massacres in Mexico, under the ruling of all bourgeois parties, underscores that it is the very capitalist state, the repressive apparatus of the capitalist system, that has left dead bodies in the whole Mexican territory. Behind it, is the bloody hand of imperialism with its unending wars against the oppressed and exploited. And we revolutionary Marxists, as determined defenders of democratic rights, oppose all laws against the production, trade and consumption of drugs, which are routinely use to set up leftists, workers and poor people for repression. It also reflects the subordination of the bourgeoisie Mexican governments to Yankee imperialism, with its destructive counterinsurgency wars in Latin America since the 1960s.

At the end of demonstrations about the disappeared students of Ayotzinapa, we and thousands of others count one, two, three, and so on up to 43. And then there is a big cry for “*justicia.*” But how is justice to be won? Certainly not from the semi-colonial Mexican state, which manages what the imperialists consider their “back yard.” So when we get to the end of counting 43, we cry out: *¡Revolución!* Or as the comrades of the Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth chant in protests against police killings of black people, “*Only revolution will bring justice!*”

Just a few days ago, the Mexican state released 24 local policemen that were allegedly implicated in the Ayotzinapa case, and one of the leaders of the “Guerreros Unidos” cartel. So what was the response of the AMLO government? Its official in charge

of investigating Ayotzinapa, a former leader of the Mexican Communist Party by the way, said it was a scandal. But AMLO did nothing about it. Because it was the capitalist state, which he administers and upholds.

It has been quite clear in the first months of the AMLO administration that he is in the service of the Mexican bourgeoisie, and in the service of their imperialist senior partners. In relationship with the imperialist government of the United States under the administration of the racist Donald Trump, AMLO and his team have collaborated in the implementation of the North American migration policy. AMLO offers the carrot of “legality” to migrants, but he increasingly applies the “stick” of police persecution. They are looking to keep the dispossessed Central American migrants in the Mexican south, as far away from the US-Mexico border as possible. We in the Internationalist Group say, in Mexico and in Germany, and the United States, and in Italy, and Brazil, say with regard to immigrants and refugees: **Let them in! Asylum for refugees! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! For workers mobilizations to defend immigrants against racist attacks!**

Despite his claims of “governing for everyone”, AMLO represents the most recent attempt of the weak Mexican bourgeoisie to keep social peace in an industrialized country, with a powerful proletariat, that could wake up and mobilize its volcanic strength. Full-scale war on the impoverished population hasn’t worked, so now with López Obrador they’re trying more militarization with a friendly face. Like our comrades in Portland, in the USA, like to say: it’s putting lipstick on a pig.

The struggles of the exploited and oppressed that are flaring up (and will keep on doing so) can only achieve victory on the condition that they are waged with the utmost class independence from the bourgeoisie, their policies, their parties *and their state.* Quite a few leftists are enamored of the new government. Class-collaboration professionals that they are, they pretend that, somehow, the electoral victory of MORENA in the represents some sort of democratic triumph in the country. This characterization is false to the core: the populist bourgeois government of AMLO is the enforcer of the interests of the bourgeoisie.

After the disappearance of the 43 normalistas, the supporters of the League for the Fourth International organized actions in our sections on an international scale. The Grupo Internacionalista in Mexico published a text titled “Massacre in Iguala demands workers mobilization and revolution.” Signs and banners called for a national strike against the murderous government, for workers defense, and declared “The socialist revolution will avenge the students from Ayotzinapa”.

Mexico is a country of late capitalist development, a semicolony of the United States. Despite having in its history at least three bourgeois-democratic revolutions, the democratic tasks have still not been accomplished. The Mexican Revolution that exploded in 1910 was aborted, and its demands like the liberation of the oppressed peasant masses, national independence and the realization of democratic rights were betrayed. Like the great Russian revolutionary Trotsky pointed out in his theoretical-programmatic perspective of Permanent Revolution, and was also pro-

ven in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the only way for a country of late capitalist development in this epoch of imperialist decay to achieve these democratic tasks is that the working class takes power, to establish a workers and peasants government on the basis of the expropriation of private property, and for it to extend the socialist revolution on an international scale.

In the face of such a powerful enemy, there is only one recourse: the revolutionary mobilization of the working class. This is the true “historic truth” of the crime in Iguala. ■

Derrotar...

sigue de la página 24

crata de Obama, mismo que fue aprobado por el Departamento de Estado encabezado por Hilary Clinton.

Consecuencia de esto es la caravana migrante peregrina para huir de la desesperante miseria y la violencia de sus países de origen.

Mi punto es que la raíz de la crisis migratoria se halla en el funcionamiento del decadente sistema capitalista. La migración es un resultado directo e inevitable del imperialismo. Sólo para darnos una idea: en 1980 Reagan usó a Honduras como base de la guerra contrarrevolucionaria de EE.UU. contra Nicaragua, apuntalando al ejército hondureño; después, en 1990 Bill Clinton comenzó a deportar a cientos de pandilleros como los Mara Salvatrucha

Luego, cuando en 2006 el presidente de México, Felipe Calderón inició la guerra contra las drogas para cumplir las órdenes de George W. Bush, los narcotraficantes comenzaron a irse a Tegucigalpa, Honduras, hoy la ciudad más violenta del mundo.

Entonces sí, los creadores de la actual crisis migrante son los imperialistas. Y la respuesta ante la devastación que crearon, es más policía y mejor represión. A ello se une la lacaya burguesía mexicana que se pone al servicio del imperialismo. Esto es particularmente cierto sobre la política migratoria. EE.UU. deportó a 294 mil migrantes de El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras de 2015 a 2018, y México deportó a 436 mil migrantes de Centroamérica.

Enteramente contrapuesto a lo que piensa el grueso de la izquierda reformis-

ta en EE.UU. y en México, la democracia burguesa sólo puede estar al servicio de la burguesía. En realidad el capitalismo no se puede reformar, no se puede hacer “menos malo”. Esto no se trata de “desarrollar” la democracia, porque es el estado capitalista quien pone en funcionamiento esa democracia burguesa a través de sus armas, su policía, su gobierno, y sus partidos políticos.

Nosotros nos oponemos a la represión antiinmigrante y estamos por plenos derechos de ciudadanía, no solo de palabra sino en los hechos. En México hemos hecho el llamado a dar la bienvenida a la caravana, en conjunto con la combativa Sección XXII de la CNTE para organizar una movilización de solidaridad en Oaxaca exigiendo ¡asilo para los refugiados y plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes! Y junto con esto, el llamado a favor de “Acciones obreras para defender a los inmigrantes centroamericanos”.

El 21 de octubre del año pasado, una asamblea magisterial aprobó una moción con la que dieron su respaldo a la caravana migrante y movilizaron a trabajadores para acompañar a dicha caravana en su paso por los estados donde la CNTE tiene presencia, además de que hicieron un llamando al resto del movimiento obrero a sumarse y a defender la caravana.

Las acciones incluyeron el llamado a los trabajadores de la salud para que organizaran brigadas médicas para ofrecer atención a los migrantes.

También llamamos por derrotar el dominio imperialista de EE.UU. en América Latina, que políticos estadounidenses denominan despectivamente como “nuestro patio trasero”.

La lucha por plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes, y por detener las redadas debe ser parte de una lucha verdaderamente revolucionaria. Para ello tenemos que romper con todos los partidos capitalistas y construir un partido obrero sobre la base de un programa revolucionario e internacionalista.

¡Por acciones obreras para detener las racistas redadas de la policía del ICE!

¡LA LUCHA OBRERA NO TIENE FRONTERAS!

The Internationalist



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

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

Annual subscription US\$10 for five issues.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____ Tel. (____) _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Postal Code/Zip _____ Country _____

Make checks/money orders payable to Mundial Publications and mail to:

Mundial Publications
Box 3321, Church Street Station
New York, NY 10008 U.S.A.

Write the Internationalist Group at the above address, or contact:

Tel (212) 460-0983 Fax (212) 614-8711

E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

“¡La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras!”

Derrotar la guerra de EE.UU. y México contra los migrantes

Mientras demócratas y republicanos se preparan para las elecciones de 2020, ambos partidos están atacando a los inmigrantes. El xenófobo presidente Donald Trump ha hecho una repetición de su lanzamiento de campaña de 2015 (cuando satanizó a los mexicanos como “narcotraficantes, criminales, violadores”) para atraerse votos racistas y lanzar olas de pánico entre las comunidades inmigrantes con amenazas de hacer redadas para atrapar a “millones” de inmigrantes indocumentados para inmediatamente deportarlos. En respuesta, tal y como hicieron el año pasado, las ONGs (organizaciones no gubernamentales) liberales pro Partido Demócrata convocaron protestas en contra de la separación de familias, mientras que en el Congreso los demócratas votaron a favor de incrementar el presupuesto de la policía del ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement – la odiada *migra*).

En medio de la histeria antiinmigrante, un supremacista blanco abrió fuego en una tienda de Walmart en El Paso, Texas, y mató a 22 personas e hirió a más de veinte más. Como pretexto para este asesinato en masa, el tirador publicó en Internet un manifiesto racista en el que vituperó en contra de una supuesta “invasión hispana” que terminaría por “reemplazar” la población blanca. ¿“Reemplazo”? En la cobertura de este horrendo crimen prácticamente ni se mencionó el hecho de que Texas era parte de México hasta que fue invadida por los supremacistas blancos de los estados esclavistas del Sur, que inundaron a la población hispana, iniciaron una rebelión, instituyeron la esclavitud (proscrita en México), se unieron a los EE.UU. en calidad de estado esclavista para comenzar la guerra de 1848 de EE.UU. contra México, para robarle la mitad de su territorio.



“Mitin contra las redadas racistas del ICE” en la Universidad Estatal de California, Los Angeles, el 29 de agosto.

En este contexto, con los inmigrantes aterrorizados por la acción del gobierno de EE.UU. y por los asesinatos en masa incitados por el supremacista blanco de la casa Blanca, la Juventud Internacionalista Revolucionaria en la Universidad Estatal de California en Los Angeles, con el apoyo del comité local de Los Angeles del Internationalist Group realizó un “Mitin contra las redadas racistas del ICE” el 29 de agosto. Los oradores describieron la experiencia de la JIR en la organización para defender a inmigrantes y musulmanes en Nueva York, los esfuerzos del IG para movilizar a la clase obrera en defensa de los inmigrantes en Los Angeles y en contra de los

ataques racistas/fascistas en Portland. Un orador del Class Struggle Education Workers habló de todo lo que ha hecho el Partido Demócrata para la construcción de la máquina deportadora, hasta hacer que Barack Obama llegara a ser conocido como el “deportador en jefe”.

Uno de los momentos culminantes del mitin fue el discurso de una camarada militante del Grupo Internacionalista, sección mexicana de la Liga por la IV Internacional, quien habló acerca de la manera en que el nuevo presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador, que hizo campaña sobre la base de un programa populista, ha estado actuando como guardia fronterizo al servicio de Trump, incrementando las deportaciones y el acoso en contra de migrantes centroamericanos para mantenerlos lejos de la frontera con EE.UU. Reproducimos a continuación una versión ligeramente editada de su discurso.

Quiero decirles que los trabajadores migrantes hoy enfrentan una situación de extrema urgencia.

Una cruda muestra de la rapacidad del imperialismo la encontramos en medio de la histeria cazamigrante comandada por el gobierno de Trump. Las imágenes de una niña llorando por su padre detenido por la policía del ICE y las imágenes de niños encerrados en jaulas en condiciones deplorables, despertaron la indignación de miles de personas.

Ello causó la idea de que el culpable de esto era el abiertamente racista burgués Trump. Hay que decir que no sólo es su culpa: la burguesía actúa como un conjunto y los partidos supuestamente “menos malos” de México y de EE.UU., es decir, el

Partido Demócrata y Morena, se han unido como clase, funcionando en contra de los inmigrantes.

Mientras, de un lado de la frontera el gobierno de EE.UU. orquesta la mayor redada de un solo estado, separa familias, lanza una campaña racista, machista y xenófoba misma que envalentona a grupos fascistas que atacan inmigrantes, y lanza ataques en contra de los grupos más oprimidos de la Sociedad.

Al mismo tiempo, del otro lado de la frontera, el gobierno de México se esfuerza en perfeccionar toda su maquinaria represiva en la frontera norte y en el sur del país, y en militarizarlo con la Guardia Nacional en contra de los migrantes.

Esto hace evidente que los gobiernos burgueses de EE.UU. y México tienen los mismos propósitos: unir a las fuerzas represivas de los dos lados de la frontera, es decir, unir a los policías del ICE, y la policía fronteriza de AMLO para desplegar toda la fuerza del estado en contra de sus víctimas.

Hay que decir que tanto el militarismo como las catastróficas condiciones económicas y sociales en Honduras y toda Latinoamérica son producidas por el imperialismo estadounidense y son las que han llevado a miles de pobres, incluyendo a familias enteras, a migrar.

Los culpables de los orígenes políticos de la crisis social y económica que han devastado a Honduras se encuentran directamente en Washington y Wall Street.

En Honduras, el gobierno derechista, títere de Trump, es nada más y nada menos que el resultado del golpe de Estado que hace diez años maquinó el gobierno demócrata *sigue en la página 23*



Contingente del Grupo Internacionalista y de la Juventud Internacionalista Revolucionaria en una marcha en Los Angeles exigiendo el cierre de los campos de detención para migrantes y refugiados, el 12 de octubre.