



Bloody Sunday

The defining story of the British Army in Northern Ireland

The relatives and supporters of the 14 civil rights marchers who were gunned down by the British Army on 30 January 1972 cheered when British prime minister David Cameron officially admitted on 15 June that the killings were “unjustified and unjustifiable”. Cameron’s speech revealed to the public the results of the twelve-year-long inquiry into Bloody Sunday by Lord Saville, which has been a bone of contention since it was established in 1998. For the oppressed Catholics of Northern Ireland, the Saville Inquiry represented the hope that

the hated Widgery Report of 1972, which cast suspicion that some of the dead “had been firing weapons or handling bombs”, would be removed from history. For the military top brass, the inquiry represented a potential threat that army personnel might actually face charges for killing with impunity.

When Saville’s findings were revealed, the relatives felt vindicated, not least when they heard a British prime minister say that those who were slain on Bloody Sunday were innocent. At the same time,

contrary to the orchestrated complaints about Saville by the military, the report did not recommend that a single soldier should be prosecuted and it carefully avoided describing the killings as “unlawful”. Saville fell far short of the truth about Bloody Sunday, which was stated clearly by Derry coroner Hubert O’Neill at the time of the 1973 inquest: “It was sheer, bloody unadulterated murder.”

“My brother was running away from the soldiers
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Defend the Palestinians!

Zionist massacre at sea



AFP

The Israeli army’s massacre of nine activists aboard the *Mavi Marmara* ship carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza on 31 May has been greeted by outpourings of rage from activists around the world. From Istanbul to the US, Paris and London, thousands came out to protest, with some 20,000 marching in London on 5 June. Significantly, several protests have also taken place in Israel, including on 5 June when 6000 people marched in Tel Aviv. Undeterred by international condemnation, the Israeli military boarded another ship carrying humanitarian aid destined for Gaza, the MV *Rachel Corrie*, and detained its crew that same day.

New York-based documentary maker Lara Lee, who was on the *Mavi Marmara*, captured the sentiment of those onboard when she said “[The Israelis] came to kill” (*Guardian*, 11 June). Indeed, several eyewitnesses reported seeing the Israeli army firing live ammunition from a helicopter before any troops even boarded the boat. Autopsies carried out on the victims revealed that most were shot multiple times, some in the back of the head at close range. Another 48 activists suffered gunshot wounds during the attack. At a London meeting organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign on 9 June, eyewitnesses



Reuters

Left: Injured victim of 31 May Israeli commando attack on Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara*, pictured above leaving Istanbul on 22 May. Right: Attack in international waters killed at least nine people.

vividly described how the ships came under attack from Israeli commandos using tear gas, rubber bullets and tasers as well as live ammunition. The wounded were refused medical help and activists were denied food, water and access to a toilet before being hauled off to prison

ing “the actions taken by the organisers of the flotilla and its participants, as well as their identity”. This is a continuation of the Zionists’ policy of smearing anyone seeking to defend or assist the desperate Palestinian masses as “terrorists”. The Israeli government claims that

All Israeli troops, settlers out of the Occupied Territories!

in Israel and then deported.

Predictably, the Israeli government has rejected growing calls for an international investigation. Backed by the Obama administration, the Zionist rulers have instead brazenly declared they will conduct an “internal inquiry” of their own, without even the fig-leaf of international involvement. Grotesquely, according to the Israeli government, the scope of this inquiry will include exam-

its blockade of Gaza is being significantly eased. However the ban on crucial goods for industry and on exports remains in place as does the naval blockade. We demand: **End the blockade of Gaza!** Both Tony Blair in his capacity as Middle East representative for the Quartet—the UN, US, EU and Russia—and Tory foreign secretary William Hague have made clear their continued support for Israel’s “security” concerns. Britain is a



AFP

long-time ally of Zionist Israel and shoot-to-kill of innocent civilians is nothing new for the British rulers: from the Bloody Sunday killings by the British Army in Northern Ireland in 1972 to the police killing of Jean Charles de Menezes in London in 2005 to the numerous massacres of civilians by imperialist forces as part of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

We reprint below in abridged form a 1 June statement which first appeared in *Workers Vanguard* no 960 (4 June), newspaper of the Spartacist League/US.

* * *

“This was murder.” These three words, spoken by Greta Berlin of the Free Gaza Movement, captured the horror perpetrated by elite naval units of the Israeli Zionist state when they descended from Black Hawk helicopters onto a civilian ship in international waters and began blasting away at its 700 passengers, mainly Turkish citizens, in a pre-dawn raid yesterday. At least nine people aboard the Turkish *Mavi Marmara*—the lead ship in a six-ship “Freedom Flotilla” carrying medicine, construction supplies and other goods to Gaza—were killed and dozens injured. Survivors of
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Bloody Sunday...

(Continued from page 1)

when he was shot," said Joe Duddy, speaking about Jackie Duddy who was shot from behind as he tried to escape from the paratroopers. The Widgery Report "destroyed our loved ones' good names", he added. "Today we clear them." Tony Doherty, whose father Patrick was shot as he tried to crawl to safety, addressed the thousands-strong crowd in Derry saying: "It can now be proclaimed to the world that the dead and the wounded of Bloody Sunday, civil rights marchers, one and all, were innocent, one and all, gunned down on their own streets by soldiers who had been given to believe that they could kill with perfect impunity" (*Guardian*, 16 June).

Heaping praise on the British Army for its "courage and professionalism in upholding democracy and the rule of law in Northern Ireland", Cameron sanctimoniously declared that "Bloody Sunday is not the defining story of the

service the British Army gave in Northern Ireland from 1969-2007". This is a blatant attempt to bury the memory of British Army brutality in

Fulvio Grimaldi



Derry, 30 January 1972: Body of Jackie Duddy, shot by Paratroopers, is carried by men as Father Edward Daly waves bloodstained handkerchief.

Northern Ireland once and for all. The theme about the need to "move on", to erase the memory of Bloody Sunday from history, is echoed *ad nauseam* in the British capitalist press. By portraying Bloody Sunday as an exceptional incident within an otherwise impeccable record, the Saville Report is being used to refurbish the credentials of the imperialist forces who today shoot-to-kill with impunity in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Announced by Tony Blair's Labour government as a prelude to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, the Saville Inquiry was designed in part to give the Dublin government some credibility with the Northern Ireland Catholics whom it has long treated with disdain, including over Bloody Sunday. Bertie Ahern, who was Irish Taoiseach at the time, spoke recently of the Bloody Sunday inquiry's centrality to the "peace" process. "I had to put a lot of pressure on Tony Blair. All the advice he was getting from securicrats was to not go into a full judicial inquiry", said Ahern, who added that the Dublin government had "a lot at stake in building up nationalist confidence that we would be able to work with the British government and work with Tony Blair" (*Guardian*, 15 June). Talking in Blair's other ear, David Trimble, then Unionist leader, warned in 1998 that if the inquiry moved "one millimetre" from the Widgery Report, there was a risk of soldiers facing charges "of manslaughter, if not murder". "I pointed out to Blair that we would see soldiers in the dock", said Trimble (*Guardian*, 10 June). Indeed the Saville Report, at 5000 pages and a cost of £192 million, did not recommend putting any of the killers in the dock. Some soldiers may be charged...with perjury, for having made "knowingly untrue" statements to the inquiry (*Guardian*, 16 June). Seemingly a "crime" against the process itself is more serious in the eyes of the good Lord Saville than gunning down Catholic protesters.

Saville cleared Major General Ford, the commander of land forces in Northern Ireland in 1972, of responsibility for the deaths, saying he "neither knew nor should have known at any stage that his decision [to deploy 1 Para] would or was likely to result in soldiers firing unjustifiably on Bloody Sunday" (*Saville Report*, Volume III). Never mind that three weeks before Bloody Sunday Ford had advocated shooting "rioters" in Derry, or that on Bloody Sunday he was heard to say: "Go and get them and good luck" as the Paras entered the Catholic Bogside where the massacre took place. Saville concluded that Martin McGuinness, an adjutant in the IRA in Derry at the time, was "probably armed with a Thompson sub-

machine gun" on the day, a claim which McGuinness says "has no foundation or substance". A glaring illustration of the "impartiality" of British justice is the case of Gerald Donaghy, who served a six-month sentence for throwing stones at the police in 1971. On Bloody Sunday, five weeks after his release, he was shot dead by the British Army, but no one is likely to spend a day behind bars for his killing. The Saville Report upheld the army's claim that Donaghy was carrying a nail bomb when he was killed. This is contrary to reports by witnesses, including "soldier 138", a medical officer who pronounced Donaghy dead and conducted an examination of his body, that they saw nothing in his pockets. The armed forces are widely suspected of having planted the nail bomb which was visible in police photographs taken after Donaghy's death.

The Saville Inquiry has bolstered illusions in public inquiries, based on the myth that the armed forces of the capitalist state can be made accountable to the oppressed peoples and classes they maraud over. The capitalist state is an executive arm of the ruling class and cannot be made accountable to the working class and oppressed. It must be shattered in the course of workers revolution, led by a revolutionary workers party, and replaced with a new state power of the working class. Marxists understand that imperialist "democracy" is the velvet glove to disguise the mailed fist of capitalist class rule. Events such as Bloody Sunday are not some aberration, but part and parcel of the normal workings of the armed forces of the capitalist state.

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, one of the leaders of the civil rights movement who was at the Bloody Sunday demonstration, noted that Saville let the British government off the hook, saying: "It is the British government, not their anonymous and brutalised soldiers of their alphabet army who should be in the dock, at the international court of justice at The Hague. If Saville has closed that route to truth and justice, the British government will consider it worth every penny" (*guardian.co.uk*, 15 June). The idea that the capitalist rulers can be held to account is bogus, but not inconsistent for Devlin McAliskey who supported the British Army being sent to Northern Ireland in 1969. In a 1970 interview she gave to *Workers Press*, paper of the Socialist Labour League, she is quoted as saying:

"The saving of lives, the necessity of saving lives in that circumstance, was brought around by the whole system and therefore you cannot simply say take the troops out of Ulster. Because the people will say you cannot take the troops out because if you do the people will die."

— *Workers Press*, 18 June 1970

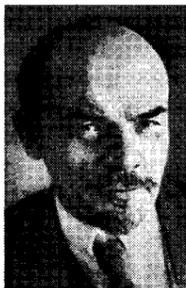
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Zionism and capitalist reaction

Amid the Nazi genocidal rampages against European Jewry, the young Trotskyist Abram Leon, who died in Auschwitz in 1944, warned against Zionism as a solution to the oppression of the Jewish people. The Israeli capitalist state was founded in 1948 through the machinations of British imperialism and under the impact of the Holocaust. Today possessing nuclear arms, Israel is premised on the expulsion and brutal oppression of the Palestinian people and is also a death trap



TROTSKY



LENIN

for the Hebrew-speaking people themselves. There can and will be no just resolution to the conflicting national rights of the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples short of the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East, requiring the overthrow of all the bourgeois regimes of the region through proletarian revolution.

Zionist theoreticians like to compare Zionism with all other national movements. But in reality, the foundations of the national movements and that of Zionism are altogether different. The national movement of the European bourgeoisie is the consequence of capitalist development; it reflects the will of the bourgeoisie to create the national bases for production, to abolish feudal remnants. The national movement of the European bourgeoisie is closely linked with the ascending phase of capitalism. But in the Nineteenth Century, in the period of the flowering of nationalisms, far from being "Zionist," the Jewish bourgeoisie was profoundly assimilationist. The economic process from which the modern nations issued laid the foundations for integration of the Jewish bourgeoisie into the bourgeois nation.

It is only when the process of the formation of nations approaches its end, when the productive forces have for a long time found themselves constricted within national boundaries, that the process of expulsion of Jews from capitalist society begins to manifest itself, that modern anti-Semitism begins to develop. The elimination of Judaism accompanies the decline of capitalism. Far from being a product of the development of the productive forces, Zionism is precisely the consequence of the complete halt of this development, the result of the petrification of capitalism. Whereas the national movement is the product of the ascending period of capitalism, Zionism is the product of the imperialist era. The Jewish tragedy of the Twentieth Century is a direct consequence of the decline of capitalism....

It was capitalism, by virtue of the fact that it provided an economic basis for the national problem, which also created insoluble national contradictions.... With the disappearance of capitalism, the national problem will lose all its acuteness. If it is premature to speak of a worldwide assimilation of peoples, it is nonetheless clear that a planned economy on a global scale will bring all the peoples of the world much closer to each other.

— Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* (published posthumously in 1946)

WORKERS HAMMER

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For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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Statement of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

A capitulation to US imperialism

Repudiating our position on Haiti earthquake

The following statement was issued on 27 April.

In its articles on the Haitian earthquake, *Workers Vanguard*, the newspaper of the Spartacist League/US, committed a betrayal of the fundamental principle of opposition to one's "own" imperialist rulers. In addition to justifying the US imperialist troops as essential to the aid effort, these articles polemicised against the principled and correct position of demanding the immediate withdrawal of the troops. This line was carried in a number of presses in other ICL sections, becoming the de facto line of the International Communist League. Without a public accounting and correction, we would be far down the road to our destruction as a revolutionary party. **From the beginning the only revolutionary internationalist position was to demand that all US/UN troops get out of Haiti!**

In our article in *Workers Vanguard* no 951 (29 January), repeated in subsequent issues of the newspaper, we baldly stated:

"The U.S. military is the only force on the ground with the capacity—e.g., trucks, planes, ships—to organize the transport of what food, water, medical and other supplies are getting to Haiti's population. And they're doing it in the typical piggish U.S. imperialist manner. We have always opposed U.S. and UN occupations in Haiti and everywhere—and it may become necessary to call for U.S./UN out of Haiti in the near future—but we are not going to call for an end to such aid as the desperate Haitian masses can get their hands on."

The International Executive Committee of the ICL repudiates this betrayal of our revolutionary programme. As stated in the SL/US Programmatic Statement: "We unconditionally oppose all U.S. military intervention—and U.S. military bases—abroad, and defend the colonial, semicolonial and other smaller, less developed countries in the face of U.S./UN attack and embargo."

Even in very belatedly raising the call for "All U.S./UN Troops Out of Haiti Now!" in *Workers Vanguard* no 955 (26 March) [reprinted in *Workers Hammer* no 210, Spring 2010], we continued to evade and reject the principle of opposition to the US imperialist occupation of neocolonial Haiti. More-

over this article stated: "As we made clear in our article, 'Haiti Earthquake Horror: Imperialism, Racism and Starvation' (*WV* No. 951, 29 January), while we were not for the U.S. military going into Haiti, neither were we going to demand, in the immediate aftermath of that horrific natural disaster, the immediate withdrawal of any forces that were supplying such aid as was reaching the Haitian masses." In fact, our earlier article had not clearly stated that we were not for the US troops going in nor did it even call the US military takeover what it was.

The US military invasion was designed to provide a "humanitarian" face-lift to bloody US imperialism and was aimed at securing US military control in Haiti and reasserting American imperialist domination over the Caribbean, including against imperialist rivals like France. In failing to oppose the invasion, we also ignored the particular danger this posed to the Cuban deformed workers state (as well as to the bourgeois nationalist-populist regime of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela). We accepted Washington's line that the provision of aid was inextricably linked to the US military takeover and thus helped to sell the myth peddled by the Democratic Party Obama administration that this was a "humanitarian" mission. Our statement that "it *may* become necessary to call for U.S./UN out of Haiti in the *near* future" (emphasis added) amounted to giving conditional support to US military intervention. As one leading party comrade argued, the only difference between the position we took and August 4, 1914, when the German Social Democrats voted war credits to the German imperialist rulers at the outset of the First World War, is that this was not a war.

Thus we gutted the revolutionary internationalist essence of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution linking the fight for social and national liberation to the struggle for proletarian state power both in neocolonial and in more advanced countries. This means educating the proletariat in North America, and internationally, that its class interests lie in actively championing the fight against the imperialist domination of Haiti. Instead our articles did the opposite, promoting illusions in US imperialist "democracy" as the saviour of the Haitian people. We all but echoed Barack Obama as he dispatched imperialist combat troops, including elements of the 82nd Airborne Division and a Marine expeditionary unit. One doubts that we could so easily have taken such a position if the Republican Bush administration were still in the White House.

In its latest article, "SL Twists and Turns on Haiti" (*Internationalist*, 9 April), the centrist Internationalist Group (IG) writes: "While support to imperialist occupation is a small step for reformists, who only seek to modify imperialist *policies* rather than to bring down the imperialist system, in the case of the SL/ICL it should be harder to digest." Indeed it is. For its part, the IG

treated the earthquake as an opening for revolution in Haiti, asserting: "This small but militant proletariat can place itself at the head of the impoverished urban and rural masses seeking to organize their own power, particularly at present where the machinery of the capitalist state is largely reduced to rubble and a few marauding bands of police" ("Haiti: Workers Solidarity, Yes! Imperialist Occupation, No!" *Internationalist*, 20 January).

Instead of simply exposing the IG's Third Worldist fantasies, we concentrated in our polemics on zealous apologies for the US imperialist military intervention, a position to the right of the IG. These centrist apologists for Third

oppose on principle.

However, neither do revolutionaries foster illusions in such non-military aid as capitalist governments may provide. In responding to the US imperialist invasion of Haiti following the earthquake, we would have done well to look to the position of our Australian section in 2005 responding to the imperialist "aid" intervention in Indonesia, specifically the secessionist province of Aceh, following the tsunami. Demanding "Australian/all imperialist military/cops get out of Aceh now!" an article in *Australasian Spartacist* titled "Australian Imperialists Seize on Tsunami Catastrophe" (no 190, Autumn 2005) indicted imperialist aid programmes. The article pointed out that "whatever short-term benefit a part of them may provide to a small number of oppressed people", such aid is "always aimed at reinforcing neocolonial subjugation of the Third World masses".

The "politics of the possible"

From the time of our tendency's inception as a left opposition within the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the early 1960s, we have recognised that national isolation must in short order destroy any subjectively revolutionary formation, not least one subjected to the pressures of operating in the heartland of world imperialism, the United States. Genuine proletarian internationalism means disciplined international collaboration, without which we cannot successfully counter the powerful pull of nationalist opportunism.

The handmaiden to our embellishment of US imperialist intervention was the abrogation of international democratic centralism. The role of propaganda as the scaffolding of a revolutionary party is to publish **the line of the party as decided through discussion and motions by the party leadership**. Prior to going into print opposing the call for "troops out of Haiti" in *Workers Vanguard* no 951, the SL/US Political Bureau and the International Secretariat (the resident administrative body of the IEC) abdicated responsibility by not holding an organised discussion and vote, instead setting our line through informal consultation. However, once the line was published in *Workers Vanguard* it was picked up by many of the ICL's other sectional presses, indicating that there was little initial disagreement.

A meeting of the IS on 18 March did at last vote to call for the immediate withdrawal of US and United Nations troops. However, the motions adopted at that meeting, which became the basis for the article in *Workers Vanguard* no 955, reaffirmed that "we were correct in not calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake". In stating that "the particular exceptional circumstances that obtained two months ago no longer exist", the motions also continued to insist that conditional defence of the US military invasion was correct in the

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Port-au-Prince, Haiti: US soldiers seize man during distribution of food coupons, 1 February.

World nationalism quite correctly characterised our position as "social imperialist"—socialist in words, support for imperialism in deeds. This is a bitter pill to swallow. Only through a savage indictment of our line can we avoid the alternative of going down the road that led the founders of the IG to defect from our organisation in the pursuit of forces other than the proletariat. In their case, this has ranged from remnants of the Stalinist bureaucracy that sold out to imperialist counterrevolution in the DDR to Latin American nationalists and left-talking trade union bureaucrats.

In the context of polemics with the IG, *Workers Vanguard* misused the authority of the revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in order to alibi support to an imperialist occupation. In his 1938 article "Learn to Think", Trotsky argued that one should not always put a minus where the bourgeoisie puts a plus. He was referring not to a military occupation force but to instances where an imperialist government might send military *aid* to anti-colonialist fighters. Moreover, Trotsky's reference in this article to workers fraternising with an army called in to fight a fire manifestly did not refer to a situation like Haiti where US imperialist troops were invading a neocolonial country, an act which **Leninists unconditionally**

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**Australian Military Get Out of Aceh Now!
Indonesian Troops Out!**

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Bloody Sunday...

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Eamonn McCann, another leading figure in the civil rights movement in Derry, and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supported the Labour government of the day sending in British troops. Shamelessly peddling illusions in British imperialism as a force for “peace”, the SWP declared: “The breathing space provided by the presence of British troops is short but vital. Those who call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom which will hit first and hardest at socialists” (*Socialist Worker*, 11 September 1969).

Bloody Sunday is the defining story of the British Army in Northern Ireland, but it is hardly a unique atrocity. According to the Pat Finucane Centre, more than 150 killings by the army between 1970 and 1973 were not even investigated by the police. During the period 9-11 August 1971, when the British introduced internment without trial, paratroopers shot dead eleven civilians in Belfast’s Ballymurphy area in a remarkably similar operation to Bloody Sunday. Relatives of those killed are now calling for an “independent international inquiry” into the shootings. But no one should be fooled into having illusions in public inquiries. Tony Blair introduced the 2005 Public Inquiries Act specifically to curtail what can be made public in any “public” inquiry. This legislation was a kick in the teeth to the family of Pat Finucane, a Belfast Catholic lawyer who defended Bobby Sands and other Irish hunger strikers, who was gunned down in front of his family by the Loyalist UDA in 1989. Finucane was targeted by Brian Nelson, an agent of the British Army and intelligence chief of the UDA, which means that his case would be a devastating exposure of British imperialist collusion with the Loyalist paramilitary killers.

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement gave a facelift to the sectarian Orange state of Northern Ireland, allowing for the entry of Sinn Fein into Stormont and making some cosmetic changes to policing. But the *fundamental* nature of the Orange state as it was created by the British at the time of partition, based on the subjugation of the oppressed Catholics, remains unchanged. The “peace process” brought no peace to those who try to expose to the outside world the British state’s murderous role. In 1999, Rosemary Nelson, a prominent Catholic lawyer who reported to the UN that she received death threats from the RUC, was murdered by a Loyalist bomb. In June 2007 Northern Ireland’s Public Prosecution Service announced that no police officer or soldier will face prosecution for the murder of Pat Finucane.

British “democracy” was never much in evidence in Ireland, which was a testing ground for state repression to be used elsewhere. The treatment routinely dished out to Irish Catholics, who were once indiscriminately targeted as “terrorist suspects”, is now being applied to Britain’s Muslims and to any perceived opponent of British imperialism. Internment without trial and the shoot-to-kill policy, practised for years on the streets of Northern Ireland, have been brought to the streets of London as seen in the brutal execution of Brazilian immigrant Jean Charles de Menezes who was labelled a “terrorism suspect” in July 2005.

An internal report entitled “Operation Banner—An Analysis of Military



Peter Morrison/AP

Mural in Bogsides, Derry commemorating “Free Derry”, first painted on a wall in 1969 to mark self-defence of Catholic areas against British Army and police.

Operations in Northern Ireland” issued by the British Army in August 2007, when its military campaign in Northern Ireland officially ended, boasts that this was “one of the very few ever brought to a successful conclusion by the armed forces of a developed nation against an irregular force”. The report’s foreword is written by none other than General

Sir Michael Jackson, former head of the British Army during the Iraq invasion and former Chief of the General Staff. Jackson was in Derry on Bloody Sunday and as adjutant to the Parachute Regiment he has responsibility for false reporting of what happened—his handwritten “shot list” indicated that those killed included “nail bombers, gunmen

or snipers” (*Guardian*, 16 June).

Despite the much-trumpeted end of military operations there, the British Army maintains troops and bases in Northern Ireland, as back up to the 9000-strong heavily armed Police Service of Northern Ireland/Royal Ulster Constabulary (PSNI/RUC). We have uniquely warned that, within the framework of capitalism, there is no democratic solution to the oppression of the Catholic minority, in a situation where they are geographically interpenetrated with the Protestants, who are a distinct community.

We demand all British troops and bases out of Northern Ireland, Afghanistan and Iraq! Together with the US military, the British Army is one of the most powerful forces for terrorism in the world. There is no way to end the oppression, brutality and subjugation perpetrated by the British Army short of a workers revolution to overthrow this brutal ruling class which has committed atrocities against its colonial subjects for centuries. We seek to build revolutionary parties dedicated to mobilising the proletariat on both sides of the Irish border, and both sides of the Irish Sea, in a struggle for a workers republic in Ireland, part of a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles. ■

Gaza...

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the attack were hauled off to prison in Israel or deported. We demand that the prisoners be freed, now!

The passengers aboard the aid flotilla were carrying out a courageous act of defiance of the Israeli embargo of the Gaza Strip, imposed in 2007 in order to collectively punish the Palestinian population for voting the Islamist Hamas into power. Gaza was already little more than a huge concentration camp, surrounded on all sides by an electrified fence, the sea or a fortified border with Egypt. But the embargo vastly deepened the misery of the 1.5 million people of Gaza, who now overwhelmingly rely on paltry food packages from United Nations relief agencies for survival. Israel slaughtered upwards of 1300 Gaza residents—many of them women and children—beginning in late 2008, as round-the-clock air assaults followed by a ground invasion of over 10,000 troops reduced much of the Gaza ghetto to ash and rubble. And just today, an Israeli airstrike killed three people in Gaza.

The Israeli government has denounced the flotilla participants as “violent extremists” and “terrorists”. The chauvinist capitalist rulers of the Zionist garrison state deem any defence of the subjugated Palestinian people as “terrorism”. In this, they also take a cue from their American imperialist patrons, whose “war on terror” has been used—by the US and other capitalist governments—to justify massacres and state terror against the oppressed around the world. In fact, the so-called “terrorists” in the flotilla included European parliamentarians and a retired US diplomat as well as prominent authors and filmmakers. Israeli claims that the commandos opened fire only after being attacked by passengers are countered by numerous eyewitness accounts and belied by video taken at the time of the assault. In any case, as Greta Berlin put it, “People had the right to defend themselves against soldiers armed with machine guns.”

From San Francisco and New York to Europe and the Near East, people took to the streets in outrage over the massacre.



EPA

May 31 protests against murderous attack on Gaza aid ship: Istanbul (above), New York City (below).



Workers Vanguard

The Spartacist League is joining in the protests, as are sections of the International Communist League in Europe. In Istanbul, Turkey, demonstrators tried to storm the Israeli consulate. We say: Down with the starvation blockade of Gaza! Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem!

Unrestrained terror against the Palestinians by the Israeli ruling class and its fascistic “settler” auxiliaries has always been a given. But in recent years, Israel’s rulers have also made a point of targeting Western supporters of the Palestinians. In 2003, two activists of the pro-Palestinian International Solidarity Movement (ISM) were killed at the hands of Israeli forces:

23-year-old American Rachel Corrie was crushed by a bulldozer as she tried to stop the demolition of a Palestinian home, and 21-year-old British photojournalist Tom Hurndall was shot in the head by Israeli troops as he tried to protect children in Gaza’s Rafah refugee camp. Yesterday in the West Bank, Emily Henochoicz, a 21-year-old American, had her left eye blown out by troops as she protested against the *Mavi Marmara* massacre.

Not surprisingly, the Israeli massacre has provoked condemnation from numerous governments, not least the Erdogan regime in Turkey, an unofficial sponsor of the flotilla. These same capitalist regimes have shown themselves equally as capable as the Israeli bourgeois rulers in

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Defend the Palestinians against Zionist state terror!

For proletarian internationalism, not appeals to imperialism!

Particularly since the Zionist rulers' massacre on the Gaza aid flotilla, many defenders of the oppressed Palestinians have renewed their calls for "boycotts, disinvestment and sanctions" (BDS) against Israel. As revolutionary internationalists, we support time-limited trade union actions against the Israeli state. An example is the Swedish dock workers' action boycotting Israeli ships and goods coming from or destined for Israel from 22 to 29 June in protest against Israel's attack on the "Freedom Flotilla". In general, we are in favour of the trade unions refusing to handle *military* goods being shipped to Israel, which would be a blow not only against the Zionist rulers but also against the British, US and other imperialist ruling classes.

But while we support the proposed action of the Swedish dockers, we oppose the political strategy of the reformist union bureaucracies that initiated it. While raising the supportable demand for lifting the blockade of Gaza, the call for the Swedish workers action also demands that "Israel pays respect to international law" and calls for "a general blockade of Israeli goods until the rights of the Palestinian people are guaranteed and the blockade of Gaza is lifted". In a similar vein, a recent statement signed by British union leaders Tony Woodley, Dave Prentis, Billy Hayes, Bob Crow and Mark Serwotka says: "We call on the British government and the European Union to suspend the EU-Israel association agreement and to end their support for the blockade and collective punishment of the men, women and children of Gaza. We call for support for a policy of boycott of Israeli products, disinvestment from Israeli companies and sanctions against Israel until justice for the Palestinian people has been achieved" (*Guardian*, 5 June).

We are politically opposed to standing boycotts and to campaigns for disinvestment and sanctions against Israel, which are counterposed to the international working-class struggle on which the liberation of the Palestinians is premised. BDS campaigns serve to promote illusions in the benign nature of other capitalist powers — not least British imperialism — relative to Israel. If successful, boycott campaigns would hurt the working class of Israel, both Hebrew-speaking and Arab, causing mass layoffs and weakening its social power, which can and must be mobilised to smash the Zionist state from within through socialist revolution.

The reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supports the strategy of BDS and explains its broad aims in an article titled "The fight against Israeli apartheid" in *Socialist Worker* (19 June) which says:

"The BDS strategy is to seek international support and solidarity until Israel complies with international law: that means Israel must end the occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza and apply its own laws equitably and universally to Jew and to Arab alike.

"BDS is about building an international movement to isolate Israel economically, culturally and academically. It is about persuading artists, writers, and performers not to work in Israel — following the examples of Gil Scott-Heron, Elvis Costello and others. It is about identifying Israeli products

On boycotts, disinvestment and sanctions

that are imported into Britain — not just those produced by settlements on illegally confiscated Palestinian resources — and pressing importers and outlets not to stock them. It is about gathering from supermarket shelves all products illegally produced in the West Bank and presenting them to the managers to help them avoid prosecution for selling stolen goods."

The article notes that "BDS is NOT about boycotting individual Israeli scholars or academics", but is an "institutional boycott". In the face of a vicious Zionist outcry against British unions which had

bloody mess in the Near East is itself the legacy of the "divide-and-rule" machinations of British imperialism when it was the dominant world power.

Appealing to the blood-soaked British imperialists, *Socialist Worker* (5 June) put forward a call that "We must force Britain to break all links with Israel, including shutting down its embassy." The notion that the British government, corporations or campus administrations (or for that matter, the EU or the UN) can be "persuaded" to promote economic and



London, 5 June: Thousands protest Zionist massacre on Mavi Marmara, demand end to blockade of Gaza.

called for academic boycotts of Israel in 2006 we wrote: "The Spartacist League and the Spartacus Youth Group call for the defence of the UCU [University and College Union] and other unions and organisations against the Zionist backlash and recognise that the boycott campaign is motivated out of solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians" (*Workers Hammer* no 196, Autumn 2006). At the same time, we noted that:

"The university unions' boycott, which is part of the wider divestment campaign against Israel, represents an appeal to the supposed morality of British and European academic institutions and funding bodies to sever any links with the brutally oppressive and murderous Israeli regime. The problem with this is that the universities in Britain are no less attached to the British state than they are to the Israeli state in Israel. And the British imperialist state is no less bloody than the Israeli state."

From India to Kenya, Iraq, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland, British imperialism has left a trail of carnage around the globe throughout its history. The present

social justice is ludicrous. But the programme of the SWP rests on the myth that British imperialism can be pressured into acting on behalf of the oppressed and perpetuates the very illusions in imperialist "democracy" that Marxists seek to destroy. As we said in "Zionist backlash over 'boycott Israel'" (*Workers Hammer* no 196, Autumn 2006):

"Why not call for a boycott of all British consumer goods, protesting the British rulers' brutality against the oppressed Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, not to mention British imperialism's role in the subjugation of Iraq and Afghanistan? Not only does this promote illusions in the 'democratic' and 'civilised' nature of other capitalist powers and corporations which the campaign seeks to dissuade from doing business with Israel, such a campaign is actually anti-working class."

Boycotts and apartheid South Africa

The "boycott, disinvestment and sanctions" campaign is consciously modelled on the campaign for disinvestment from

and sanctions against apartheid South Africa in the 1980s. Writing in the *Guardian* (10 January 2009), Naomi Klein argued that "The best strategy to end the increasingly bloody occupation is for Israel to become the target of the kind of global movement that put an end to apartheid in South Africa." The disinvestment campaign against South Africa in Europe and North America was centrally promoted by the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC). It was based on a claim that South African capitalism could be fundamentally reformed through pressure from "democratic" imperialist powers such as the US and Britain. In fact, it was not disinvestment, but the mass social struggles of the black and other non-white toilers, centred on the working class, which brought an end to direct white-supremacist rule in South Africa. The significant wage gains won by black class struggle and the instability caused by a growing strike movement deterred investment in South Africa.

At the time, our organisation uniquely told the truth: that disinvestment was *at best* an empty moral gesture; that if foreign companies did withdraw substantial productive assets this would hurt black workers and weaken the powerful black union movement; and, most crucially, that it was obscene to look to US imperialism and its British junior partner as a force for "democracy" anywhere in the world. The disinvestment that did occur largely took the form of overseas corporations signing over their interests to local subsidiaries, which often treated their workers even more brutally. Indeed, 1989 saw strikes by black oil and rubber workers in South Africa against such disinvestment schemes. As we wrote in "Black Workers Strike Against 'Divestment' UnionBusting" (*Workers Vanguard* no 486, 29 September 1989), "The only kind of 'divestment' that will benefit the exploited and oppressed will be proletarian revolution, and the expropriation of these riches by a black-centered workers government as part of a socialist federation of southern Africa." That remains no less true today, as ANC leaders like Jacob Zuma continue to serve as black front men for a *neo-apartheid* capitalist system whose fundamental character, including enormous disparities between racial groups, has remained intact.

For a socialist federation of the Near East!

The Spartacist League and other sections of the International Communist League intervened into the recent protests against the Zionist attacks on the flotilla to express our solidarity with the Palestinian masses and to put forward the only perspective — international socialist revolution — that can put an end to Palestinian national oppression. The myriad peoples of the Near East will not know peace, justice or prosperity until bourgeois rule in the region is overthrown through a series of socialist revolutions. As revolutionaries in Britain, solidarity with the oppressed in neocolonial

continued on page 8

Down with anti-communist law in Poland!



Workers Hammer photos

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On 8 June, the day the Polish government's anti-communist law took effect, protests against this draconian ban on the dissemination of "communist symbolism", took place in Warsaw and London. The Warsaw protest was called by the Communist Party of Poland (KPP); the London demonstration was called by members of the Young Communist League (YCL) who were joined by members of the British branch of the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE) and members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union executive. The Spartacist League/Britain formed a contingent in the London protest, carrying signs in English and in Polish saying "Down with the anti-communist ban".

We also carried signs in Polish indicating our opposition to the Polish state's all-sided reaction, including: "Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Down with anti-Semitism! For free abortion on demand! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!" Other signs in Polish included: "For unconditional military defence of China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam against imperialist attack!" as well as a slogan "1981: we called to smash Solidarność counterrevolution!" In addition to a sign in Polish calling for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, we made clear our revolutionary internationalist opposition to racism directed against Polish immigrants in this country in a sign that opposed the chauvinist "British jobs for British workers" crusade on Britain's construction sites. The sign in English read: "Unions must defend immigrant workers! Down with reactionary strikes against foreign workers!"

As our comrades joined the protest, the YCL contingent abruptly abandoned the very demonstration they had initiated rather than join in a united protest with Trotskyists. Political debate is alien to these Stalinists, who are incapable of answering our polemics. What we say in the article below regarding the KPP in Poland also holds true for the British YCL and the Greek Stalinists—what they mean by "communism" is "not the proletarian internationalism of Marx and Engels and the Bolsheviks but its nationalist antithesis, codified in the Stalinist dogma of 'socialism in one country'". We refer our readers to the article "Work-

ers protests rock Greece", (page 12) for an exposé of the real programme of the Greek Communist Party, which combines militant class-against-class rhetoric with blatant adaptation to Greek nationalism, echoing the Greek bourgeoisie's hysteria against Turkey.

We reprint below a translation of an article that originally appeared in *Spartakist* no 183 (May 2010), newspaper of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

SPARTAKIST 4

On 8 June, Poland's right-wing government is set to implement an amendment to the penal code criminalising the dissemination of "communist symbolism". Signed into law by the late president Lech Kaczyński last autumn after a virtually unanimous vote in the Parliament, the new measure mandates up to two years in prison for anyone who "produces, perpetuates, or imports, stores, possesses, presents, carries or sends a printout, a recording or other object" carrying "fascist, communist or other totalitarian symbolism" for other than "artistic" or "research" purposes. As against the grotesque circus of "national unity" orchestrated in the wake of the arch-reactionary president's death, the ban underlines that the interests of the proletariat are counterposed



Fidrych/Agencia Gazeta

Walbrzych, Poland: Unemployed men risk their lives to scrounge for coal.

London, 8 June: Young Communist League contingent (right) protests at Polish embassy, but packed up when Spartacist League contingent (left) joined the protest.

to those of all wings of the Polish bourgeoisie. Having presided over the devastation of the lives and livelihoods of millions of working people

in the past two decades, Poland's capitalist rulers now seek to criminalise anything pointing to the only solution to the plight of the working masses, the oppression of women, the imperialist exploitation and war and the anti-Semitism, chauvinism and bigotry that are endemic to capitalism: international proletarian revolution and the creation of a global socialist, egalitarian society.

The Polish ban is one of a spate of such measures threatened or implemented by capitalist governments in Eastern Europe since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the bureaucratically deformed workers states. Hungary imposed a ban on communist symbols in 1993, as did Lithuania in 2009. There are moves afoot for similar bans in Estonia, Latvia and elsewhere. In 2007, the Czech government outlawed the Communist Youth Union because it called for social ownership of the means of production. More recently, Czech reactionaries have demanded that the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, the third-largest parliamentary party, be outlawed as well.

Such blatant censorship is an embarrassment to the "democratic ideals" hypocritically espoused by bourgeois liber-

als. In 2008, the European Court of Human Rights overturned a prison sentence meted out in 2004 to Attila Vajnai, one of the leaders of the ex-Stalinist Hungarian Workers Party, for wearing a red star. And in January, a Czech court ordered the legalisation of the Communist Youth Union.

It is an indictment of the ex-Stalinist social democrats of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) that its deputies in the Sejm, the lower house, having initially opposed the anti-communist amendment, then joined in voting for the legislative package that included the ban. Such opposition to the ban as SLD MPs have expressed is confined to the legalistic framework of the Constitutional Tribunal.

Whether ultimately deemed "unconstitutional" or not, the purpose of such measures is to regiment the population and to intimidate all those who seek to fight against the injustices and ravages of capitalism. As George Toussas of the Communist Party of Greece aptly put it in a 3 December statement in the European Parliament, the Polish ban is "an act of provocation aimed at prosecuting anyone who offers resistance and fights for a better future". Poland's rulers will certainly not hesitate to attack as "communists" supporters of the SLD and other leftist groups or workers who engage in militant strikes and demonstrations. It is in the direct interest of every socialist, every trade unionist, every organisation representing workers, women, gays, Jews, Romas [Gypsies], immigrants or other minorities—in Poland and internationally—to oppose this reactionary legislation.

The Nazi Holocaust: we will not forget!

The drawing of an equal sign between fascism and communism by the reactionary ruling cabals of Eastern Europe is grotesque. Communism, as exemplified by the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky and the Polish-Jewish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, expresses the historic and *internationalist* interests of the proletariat, based on the understanding that in liberating itself from capitalist



Der Spiegel

Above: Poles greet Soviet Red Army troops in 1945 following liberation of Poland from Nazi scourge. Below: Nazis round up Jewish survivors of heroic 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising for deportation to Treblinka death camp.



Eastfoto

exploitation and oppression, the working class must sweep away class society as a whole and construct a global order in which the nation-state and all forms of social oppression have been eliminated once and for all. Fascism, defined by ultranationalism, is a form of *capitalist* rule in extremis: when it feels its power and profits sufficiently threatened by an insurgent proletariat, the bourgeoisie finances the mobilisation of enraged petty-bourgeois and lumpen mobs to crush the workers movement under the iron heel of genocidal social reaction. Fear and hatred of Communism has always been a central pillar of fascist ideology. For example, Hitlerite Germany's 1936 agreement with the Japanese militarists was called the "Anti-Comintern Pact".

The truth of the matter is that the anti-communists who today denounce "totalitarianism" by and large stood *with the Nazis* against "Jew-Bolshevism". Baltic nationalists openly declare themselves to be the heirs of the likes of the Estonian Forest Brothers, who abetted the Nazi Holocaust of millions of Jews, Roma and Soviet citizens. And the architects of Polish Solidarność, which spearheaded the drive for capitalist restoration throughout the Soviet bloc, drew inspiration from nationalist, anti-Communist antecedents such as interwar dictator Jozef Pilsudski, who presided over a panoply of discriminatory measures against Jews, and the virulently chauvinist, overtly anti-Semitic National Democrats (Endeks).

While many Polish workers courageously opposed anti-Semitism as a tool of bourgeois reaction, the vast majority of Polish nationalists not only did nothing to fight against the Nazi "final solution" but, as with the Endeks, actually welcomed it, joining in pogroms of Jews both before and after Poland's liberation by the Soviet Army. In 1991, Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, a former Solidarność activist, declaimed that "45 years of communism had caused more damage to Poland than the Nazi occupation". (This beneficiary of "reborn" Polish capitalism is also known for saying: "The first million has

to be stolen.") To Bielecki and his ilk, the slaughter of three million Polish Jews (as well as Roma and nearly three million other Poles), whose numbers included a large and vibrant component of the multiethnic revolutionary workers movement, was not at all "damaging".

In conjuring up allegations of tens of millions of victims of Communism, Polish reactionaries take a page from *The Black Book of Communism* published in France in 1997, which in turn borrowed not a little from the demented

ravings of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Stéphane Courtois, the editor of the *Black Book*, railed in his introduction that "a single-minded focus on the Jewish genocide in an attempt to characterize the Holocaust as a unique atrocity has also prevented an assessment of other episodes of comparable magnitude in the Communist world".

Echoing this disgusting filth, the European Parliament last year proclaimed 23 August, the anniversary of the 1939 pact between Hitler and Stalin that preceded the Nazi invasion of Poland and led to its division into German- and Soviet-dominated areas, as a "Europe-wide Remembrance Day for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes". In fact, the roles played by Germany and the Soviet Union in Poland in 1939-41 only underlined the profoundly different class foundations of the two countries. While the Soviet forces in eastern Poland encouraged the expropriation of the capitalists and large landowners, the Nazis in western Poland erected concentration camps for leftist workers and intellectuals and corralled the Jews into ghettos. As Leon Trotsky succinctly noted in a January 1940 article directed against a "Third Camp" opposition led by Max Shachtman that had reneged on defence of the Soviet Union, "Why was it chiefly revolutionists, 'democrats,' and Jews who fled from there [Nazi-occupied Poland], while in eastern Poland—it was chiefly the landlords and capitalists who fled?" (Trotsky, "From a Scratch to the Danger of Gangrene", *In Defense of Marxism*).

From the standpoint of proletarian internationalism, a diplomatic agreement with German imperialism was no different in principle from Stalin's earlier, and later, agreements with the "democratic" imperialists of France, Britain and the US. The real crime of the Stalin regime was its *conciliation* of imperialism in the name of building "socialism in one country", which meant betraying proletarian revolution, as in Spain and France

in the mid 1930s. Stalin's beheading of the Red Army in the bloody purges of the late 1930s served to critically undermine the military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state when Hitler's armies invaded in June 1941. But, despite Stalin, the Red Army went on to smash Nazi Germany. Genuine Bolsheviks, including the Polish Trotskyists who went to their deaths in the Warsaw Ghetto, fought for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union while opposing all the imperialist combatants, including the "democratic" Allied powers, for whom World War II was a struggle for redivision of colonies and spheres of exploitation. And we honour the 600,000 Soviet soldiers who died liberating Poland from the Nazi scourge.

From Walesa to Kaczyński, Solidarność and its heirs have always made an anti-Soviet cause célèbre of the 1940 Katyn massacre of Polish military officers near Smolensk, Russia. As we wrote in a 1981 article in *Workers Vanguard*: "Revolutionary Marxists do not support the indiscriminate killing of the bourgeois officer caste any more than that of factory owners or bourgeois politicians. (Those personally responsible for crimes and atrocities against the working masses are another matter; they will certainly be subject to revolutionary justice.) *Nevertheless, Katyn is not a crime against the Polish working people*. These were the military officers of a fascistic, anti-Semitic dictatorship which regularly butchered workers and even bourgeois dissidents" ("Pilsudski and Counterrevolution in Poland", *Workers Vanguard* no 293, 20 November 1981).

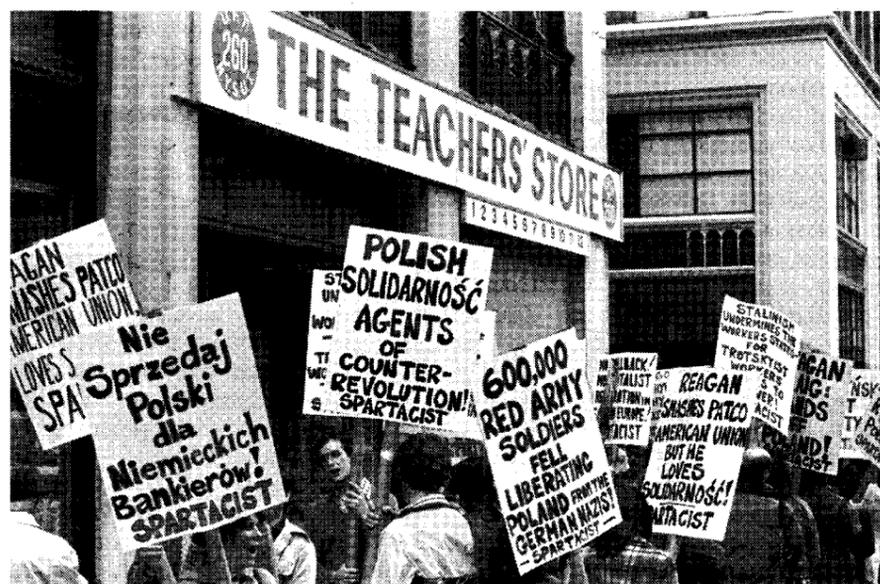
Anti-Communism and anti-Semitism were part and parcel of Polish nationalism from well before the Hitler-Stalin pact. Almost from the moment of its birth in December 1918, the Polish Communist Party was banned in "independent" capitalist Poland (which was in fact utterly dependent on French and British imperialism). Throughout the party's existence, until its dissolution by Stalin in 1938, the heroic Polish Communists who fought underground for the cause of the proletariat were subjected to imprisonment, torture and murder. Against nationalists of all stripes, we proclaim the historic slogan of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky: *For the revolutionary unity of the Polish, Russian and German proletariat!*

Anti-communism: spearhead of social reaction

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Polish deformed workers state and the restoration of capitalist class rule in 1989-90 ushered in widespread unemployment and immiseration and the intrusion of anti-Semitic and anti-woman Catholic reaction into every sphere of society. Millions of women were driven out of social production and forced back into the stifling confines of the kitchen. The unconditional right to abortion was overturned; day-care facilities for children were eliminated; secular education and the separation of church and state were demolished as crucifixes and religious instruction were imposed on schools. For large numbers of working people, the "magic of the market" meant emigrating abroad in an attempt to secure some sort of livelihood.

Anti-communism goes hand in hand with broader social reaction. This is exemplified by the fact that the current anti-communist ban is linked to measures aimed against pornography, sexual activity involving youth under the age of 15 and other such "crimes without

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Workers Vanguard

New York, September 1981: Spartacists demonstrate in front of Solidarność office at teachers union headquarters, exposing Solidarność as company union for CIA, Vatican and Wall Street.

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Boycotts...

(Continued from page 5)

countries means first and foremost opposing our own ruling class and fighting to bring down British imperialism through socialist revolution at home.

The hideous oppression of the Palestinians today, including the siege of Gaza, is an expression of the barbaric rule of capitalist imperialism and Zionist nationalism. For more than 60 years, Palestinians have suffered under the jackboot of Zionist Israel—an oppression that has intensified since the 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the USSR, which acted as a counterweight to US imperialism internationally, deprived the late Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) of crucial diplomatic and financial support, paving the way for the ignominious 1993 US imperialism-sponsored Oslo "peace" accords, establishing the Palestinian Authority as the Zionists' police auxiliaries in the Occupied Territories. In an article headlined "Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto" we wrote that this deal "does not offer even the most deformed expression of self-determination" and "would place the PLO's seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses" (*Workers Hammer* no 137, September/October 1993). It was this betrayal by the secular-nationalist PLO that paved the way for the rise of reactionary Islamic groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad among the Palestinians.

Since Oslo, one "peace" accord after another has been heralded as opening the door to Palestinian national emancipation. In reality, Zionist oppression of the Palestinians has only intensified, leading to ever deadlier cycles of terror against the Palestinian population. Israel's rulers have increasingly driven the Palestinians into bantustan-like enclaves demarcated by a heavily-guarded wall and sliced up by Zionist settlements, checkpoints and bypass highways. Gaza is little more than a concentration camp: an impoverished, devastated strip where 1.5 million Palestinians are trapped, surrounded by the sea, an electrified fence and a wall sealing its border with Egypt. **All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!**

Both the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking nations have the right to self-determination, but because the two nations are geographically interpenetrated, self-determination for one can only be achieved by denying it to the other. Under capitalism, every "solution" to the Palestinian national question either perpetuates the oppression of the Palestinian Arab people or envisions a reversal of the terms of oppression, denying the legitimate national rights of the Hebrew-speaking people. In situations of interpenetrated peoples, a democratic solution to the national question can be achieved only through socialist revolution, because only the proletariat in power has an interest in resolving national antagonisms and can begin to meet the material needs

of all working people.

We make a distinction between the Hebrew-speaking nation living in Israel and the Zionist state. This is counterposed to the view of the Zionists, and indeed of the Islamic fundamentalists, who equate the Zionist state with the Hebrew-speaking people. The Zionist state is not only a catastrophe for Palestinians—it is **also a deathtrap for Jews**. Some 25 per cent of citizens live in poverty and income disparities are higher than in Egypt and Jordan. Sephardic Jews, though overwhelmingly under the sway of right-wing and religious parties, suffer widespread discrimination and poverty. The Palestinian Arabs, nominally "citizens" who constitute 20 per cent of Israel's population, are consigned to segregated, impoverished areas and low-paid, unskilled jobs.

Israeli society is not a seamless reactionary mass. Despite widespread support in Israel for the Gaza blockade, there have been demonstrations against the brutal killings on the flotilla, including a 6000-strong rally in Tel Aviv on 5 June. It is the false consciousness of religion and Zionist nationalism and racism—in the face of pervasive anti-Semitism—that is the glue binding the Hebrew-speaking proletariat to its Israeli ruling-class enemy. As long as Zionist oppression of Palestinians continues, Israeli Jews will continue to be a target of hatred and outrage by the more than 100 million Arabs who surround them. It is only the working class of Israel—Hebrew and Arab—that has the capacity to destroy the Zionist citadel from within.

As Marxists, we fight to bring the class question to the fore. The only road to social and national liberation for the Palestinians—including the right of all refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland—and all the other peoples of the Near East lies through common class struggle by the Arab, Hebrew-speaking and other working classes of the region. For the Palestinians, this means recognising the right of the Hebrew-speaking people to national self-determination. In turn, breaking the Hebrew-speaking workers from their Zionist rulers requires that they champion the national rights of the Palestinians. We have no illusions that winning the Hebrew-speaking proletariat to this perspective will be an easy task. Indeed, it will likely require the victory of socialist revolution in one of the other Near Eastern states to break the Hebrew-speaking proletariat from Zionist chauvinism. This task is not made easier by the criminal indiscriminate terror bombings carried out by Islamic forces against Israeli civilians, which drive the Hebrew-

speaking population further into the arms of the Zionist rulers.

At the same time, the solidarity of the Arab masses with the oppressed Palestinian people must be directed towards proletarian revolution against their own Arab rulers, who, whether bourgeois nationalists or Islamic traditionalists, are fundamentally the political agents of



Workers Hammer
Banner on 5 June London demo supports boycott of Israel. Such calls promote illusions in "democratic" imperialists.

Western imperialism. If this does not happen, the intense and justifiable hostility against Israel and its American protector will serve to further strengthen the forces of Islamic fundamentalism, which posture as the "radical" opposition to the mainly pro-Western Arab regimes. We look to the proletariat of the region more widely, such as in Egypt, which has been a centre of working-class strikes and protests over the past several years. With some 50 per cent of the Palestinian population living outside the Occupied Territories—in Jordan, Lebanon, Israel—the national liberation of the Palestinians demands a perspective of socialist revolution throughout the Near East, including within Israel, the most powerful and economically advanced country in the region. It is vital to forge revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East to unite the proletariat—Arab, Persian, Kurdish and Hebrew, Sunni and Shi'ite, Muslim and Christian—in struggle against imperialism and to smash the Zionist garrison state from within and sweep away the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Syrian Ba'athist bonapartists and the capitalist rulers of Lebanon through socialist revolution. **For a socialist federation of the Near East!**

Our proletarian internationalist perspective is counterposed to those reformists who tail Islamic fundamentalism, such as the SWP. *Socialist Worker* (10 January 2009) ran an article titled "Hamas's history of resistance", enthusing over Hamas as the "bearer of a tradition of Palestinian resistance". Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas and Islamic Jihad are vile anti-Jewish and anti-Christian religious bigots who seek to enslave women and extirpate any manifestations of social progress. Hamas is descended from the clerical-fascist Muslim Brotherhood, which became particularly prominent in Egypt in the late 1940s. Under the slogan "commu-

nism = atheism = liberation of women", the Muslim Brotherhood mobilised a terror campaign against Communists and other secular forces. Hamas preaches the social segregation of women, the wearing of the *hijab* (Islamic headscarf) and anti-woman *sharia* law. Far from embodying a "history of resistance", Hamas was initially supported by Israel as a counterweight to the secular nationalist PLO. Carrying out attacks on secularists and Communists, the Islamists engaged in neither political nor military struggle against Israel.

With the beginning of the first *Intifada* in 1987, the Islamists feared that if they stood aside they would lose their following. Hamas was founded in the spring of 1988 as an Islamist political movement with an armed wing. Hamas sought to fuse the national struggle, previously a secular movement containing a leftist component, with reactionary Islamic fundamentalism. It was only in the autumn of 1989, after discovering that Hamas had killed two Israeli soldiers, that Israel broke relations with the group.

The Arab bourgeois regimes have always been enemies of Palestinian national liberation. When the Arab armies went to war with Israel in 1948, it was not to "liberate" Palestine but to carve it up among themselves. Between 1948 and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the West Bank and Gaza were occupied by Jordan and Egypt respectively. And the Palestinians there remained politically dispossessed and subject to brutal repression. In the decade following the 1967 war, nearly 50,000 Palestinians were slaughtered by Arab governments, including some 10,000 militants killed by the Jordanian monarchy in the 1970 Black September massacre.

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which laid the basis for the liberation of the tsarist empire's many subjugated peoples, was a beacon of liberation for the oppressed throughout the world, inspiring anti-colonial revolts throughout the Near East. This legacy continued despite the Stalinist degeneration of the USSR. In 1958, Iraqi workers led by the multinational Iraqi Communist Party—which included Muslims, Jews and Christians, Arabs and Kurds—fought to make a revolution and came to the brink of power. However, this and other revolutionary opportunities were betrayed by the Kremlin and the Stalinist-led Communist parties, subordinating the proletariat to an alliance with "progressive" bourgeois nationalists, who, once in power, launched a blood-bath against the Communist-led workers.

What is necessary is the forging of revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East, built in opposition to all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism, and committed to the struggle for socialist revolution, which, on an international scale, can finally open the door to human equality and liberation. The conquest of power by the proletariat in the Near East does not complete the socialist revolution, but only opens it by changing the direction of social development. But that social development can be consolidated only through the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the advanced, industrialised imperialist countries.

Defence of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in Britain, the US and other imperialist centres, pointing towards a proletarian struggle for power. The Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League, is committed to the fight to forge a multi-ethnic revolutionary workers party to lead the proletariat in the struggle to sweep away British imperialism through socialist revolution. ■

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Greece...

(Continued from page 12)

[right-wing Christian Democratic Union] association for medium-sized industry went so far as to suggest that the Greek government should sell “uninhabited islands” and other state property to cut its deficit. In an expression of German imperialist arrogance, EU members Greece, Spain and Portugal as well as Italy and Ireland—increasingly hard-hit by the economic crisis—have been chauvinistically stigmatised with the acronym “PIGS”.

In a statement of revolutionary internationalism our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) published an article titled “Solidarity with the Greek workers! For class struggle against the German capitalists!” (*Spartakist* no 183, May 2010) which noted:

“The chauvinist campaign against Greece is being set in motion so as to prevent the German working class from hitting on the idea of placing blame for the crisis at the feet of the capitalist system and its own rulers. The workers movement in Germany must mobilise in solidarity with Greek workers and all the other victims of the EU imperialists—after all, they’ll be confronted with similar attacks in the immediate future. The witch hunt against Greece also serves to split and weaken the multiethnic working class in Germany.”

The article also notes that Merkel and finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble “are united in the aim of having Germany emerge a winner from the economic crisis” and quotes columnist Wolfgang Münchau’s response to the loan agreement finally agreed to by Schäuble: “As long as the credits are paid back, with this contract more funds will be flowing from Athens to Berlin than vice versa” (*Financial Times*, 13 April).

In Greece, the government’s threats and the repression have failed to intimidate workers. But a major obstacle to a class-struggle fight against the capitalists and their government is the Greek chauvinism pushed by the official leaders of the trade unions. This includes both the pro-PASOK private sector General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE) and the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY) as well as the All Workers Militant Front (PAME), associated with the Communist Party (KKE), which opposes the IMF and EU imperialist bloodsuckers on the narrow nationalist basis that they threaten Greece’s national sovereignty. It is only on the basis of proletarian internationalism that the workers of Greece can be mobilised in revolutionary struggle in their own class interests at the head of all the oppressed. Today the bank-

ruptcy of the whole capitalist-imperialist system is clear, but what is lacking is revolutionary leadership to finally end exploitation, poverty, racism and war. For a Socialist United States of Europe! For world socialist revolution to establish an international division of labour in a planned socialist economy!

The attempts by the PASOK government to shift the bourgeoisie’s massive debt burden onto the backs of the working people have led to furious resistance by tens of thousands of workers and pensioners. General strikes throughout Greece in February and March, as well as

the government’s attacks but also to open up the possibility of a counteroffensive against the entire capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. A major obstacle to such a fightback, however, is the official leadership of the trade unions—both the pro-PASOK leadership of GSEE and ADEDY and the Stalinist-controlled PAME—which promote class collaboration and Greek nationalism, thus tying the working class to their exploiters.

While seething anger at the base has forced the PASOK union bureaucrats to call strikes, they have repeatedly expressed their support for the government and its calls for sacrifices. ADEDY



Desperate immigrants seek to reach Greek island, May 2009.

two days of strikes in April, repeatedly brought the country to a halt, closing down transportation, schools, banks and government offices. The workers’ response to PASOK’s savage “stability programme”—imposed as a precondition for any bailout from the EU and the IMF—has been: “We won’t pay!” In March, angry workers occupied government buildings, including the National Printing Office, where they sought to prevent the printing of the legislation bringing the austerity plan into effect. Olympic Airways workers closed down the central Athens artery of Panepistimiou for several days in protest against layoffs.

PASOK’s “stability programme” involves thousands of job losses, raising the retirement age and a massive increase in the cost of living resulting from wage cuts, tax increases and price hikes for gasoline and other necessities. The strikes and protests have clearly demonstrated the enormous potential social power of the working class. That power can and must be mobilised in the workers’ own interests, to beat back the gov-

leader Papaspyros said: “The situation is hard for all of us, for the economy, for the government, for the working people, for the trade unions. Continuous analysis and evaluation is needed from all of us” (quoted in [Athens daily] *To Vima*, 14 February), while GSEE refused to take part in the strikes on 21 and 22 April. The trade union bureaucracy seeks to rally working-class support for the government by trading on the lie that PASOK is some kind of “socialist” party. In this they are aided by reformists like the Socialist Workers Party (SEK) [Greek co-thinkers of the British SWP], who claim PASOK is a reformist workers party. It is no such thing. Since its inception, PASOK has been a bourgeois-populist party—an instrument of the class enemy no less than New Democracy.

It is necessary to forge a new, revolutionary leadership of the unions based on the understanding that there are no common interests between the proletariat and the capitalist bloodsuckers. Workers must fight for what we need, not for what the bosses say they can afford. The Greek capitalist class has brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy and is now determined to make the working class pay for the economic crisis. We say no! To hell with the government’s “stability programme”!

The kind of class-struggle leadership that we seek to build would fight for a series of transitional demands which, as Trotsky explained in the Transitional Programme written in 1938, start from the current consciousness of the working class and its daily struggles against the bosses and the government and lead to the goal of proletarian revolution. According to a 21 March article in [national newspaper] *Eleutherotypia*: “The increase in unemployment exceeded 150,000 people at the end of 2009. In fact, it is much higher if you count those that work only a few hours per week.” In the same article, Labour Minister Andreas Loverdos estimated that unemployment will shoot up to twelve per cent in March. In reality, unemployment is higher still. “GSEE

asserts that the [government] statistic of 11.3 per cent is in real terms approaching 17.5 per cent and the number of unemployed is 800,000 people” ([Athens daily] *Kathimerini*, 21 April). Unemployment has hit women and youth hardest. According to the National Statistics Service, unemployment is four times higher for women and around 25.8 per cent among youth.

To combat mass unemployment, it is necessary to demand the sharing of available work, with no loss of pay, and a massive programme of public works. To protect even their current living standards—already among the lowest in Europe—workers must demand that wages be indexed to inflation. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, Trotsky argued that workers should demand that the capitalists open their books “to reveal to all members of society that unconscionable squandering of human labor which is the result of capitalist anarchy and the naked pursuit of profits”. Raising the call for the expropriation of branches of industry vital for national existence, or the most parasitic of the capitalist rulers, Trotsky underlined that such a demand must necessarily be linked to the fight for the seizure of power by the working class, as against the reformist misleaders for whom the call for nationalisation was merely a prescription for bailing out capitalist enterprises.

In opposition to the capitalists and their reformist agents, Trotsky argued:

“If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. ‘Realizability’ or ‘unrealizability’ is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.”

Down with national chauvinism! For workers’ unity against the bosses!

The fight to mobilise the working class in struggle for its class interests must include a struggle against all forms of discrimination. Key to forging the unity of the working class is the struggle against the racist oppression of immigrants. Immigrant workers, from Albania, South Asia, Africa and elsewhere, are a key component of the working class in Greece who must be drawn into common struggle alongside their Greek class brothers and sisters. To prevent the capitalists’ scapegoating of foreign workers for the economic crisis, the workers movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!

The virulent racism of the Greek capitalist state was recently demonstrated at the Independence Day parade in Athens on 25 March, when a Greek special forces unit was filmed chanting racist slogans against Albanians, Macedonians and Turks. The video was later posted on YouTube and led to protests by Albanians in Athens. Chauvinism towards its Balkan neighbours and towards national minorities within its own borders is used by the Greek bourgeoisie, as it is by all the bourgeoisies in the region, to keep the working classes at each others’ throats and to preserve the rule of capital. In our founding declaration the Trotskyist Group of Greece noted: “The defense of the rights of oppressed nationalities and immigrants is the only means by which the proletariat, consisting of workers of different ethnicities, can be united in the struggle for socialist revolution.” Recognising that the Macedonian question is a test of the authenticity of any group

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Greece...

(Continued from page 9)

claiming to be internationalist in Greece, we wrote: "The TGG defends the national rights of the Macedonian minority in Greece, including their right to set up their own state or unite with the existing state of Macedonia. **For full democratic rights for national minorities in Greece! For a Balkan socialist federation!**"

Down with the bosses' EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The PASOK government's austerity programme is a taste of what the bosses across Europe have in store for the working class as they seek to drive up the rate of profit. The condition for an EU/IMF "rescue package" for the Greek capitalists is a massive attack on the Greek workers.

As Marxists we stand in implacable opposition to the EU, an imperialist trade bloc within which the conflicting interests of the major European bourgeois states are expressed. The EU is also a vehicle for the European capitalists to co-operate

with each other against the working class and against immigrants. Our opposition to the EU, based on proletarian internationalism, is counterposed to the attacks by the Greek Communist Party (KKE) on the EU, which are based on gross capitulation to Greek nationalism. In a 17 April article in *Rizospastis*, the KKE blatantly expresses concern that the PASOK government might be undermining Greece's defence and worries about its borders with Turkey in the Aegean Sea, saying that KKE leader Aleka Papariga "repeated the worries of her party that the country's deeper incorporation into the imperialist organisations and their plans has prepared the ground for compromises at the expense of the sovereign rights of the country and its defence capability". She added that "now we worry additionally for the Aegean Sea". And while the KKE-dominated PAME trade union federation raises class-against-class slogans such as "Either with capital or with the workers", it simultaneously appeals for patriotism in banners proclaiming, "Rising up against impoverishment of the people is patriotism." Such nationalism is poisonous to class consciousness and is counterposed to proletarian internationalism. It serves

to pit workers in Greece against workers in other countries and reinforces anti-immigrant racism. Any effective struggle against the bosses' attacks must begin with the understanding that the workers have no country. What is needed is international workers solidarity across the EU against capital.

The EU was originally established as an adjunct of NATO as the US sought to strengthen Western Europe against the Soviet Union. Today it is an unstable adjunct to the economic, military and political priorities of the European capitalists. The International Communist League uniquely fought to the last for military defence of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We fought for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies whose appeasement of imperialism undermined the defence of the workers states. That is today our programme for the remaining deformed workers states—China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea.

The current world economic crisis is further powerful confirmation of the Marxist analysis of capitalist society and the need for socialist revolution to do

away with the boom-bust cycle of capitalism and establish a rational, planned economy where production is for human need, not for profits for a handful of super-rich exploiters. No amount of tinkering with the existing system can wrench it into serving the needs of the proletariat and the oppressed.

As working people face ruin, the most that reformist groups like the SEK can put forward are pathetic appeals to the PASOK government to "tax the rich". Such schemes, advanced by reformists like the SEK, posit the possibility of radically redistributing wealth without getting rid of the capitalist system. The bourgeoisie has at its disposal cops, courts and troops—the armed bodies of men that constitute the core of the capitalist state—to wage war upon the working class in order to drive up profits. What's needed is a socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers state that will lay the basis for building a socialist society. For that you need to build a revolutionary workers party—a party like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks—which will fight for a workers government. The TGG, Greek sympathising section of the ICL, seeks to build such a party. ■

Poland...

(Continued from page 7)

victims". These measures are linked to a vile witch hunt targeting the right of adults and youth to engage in mutually consensual sexual relations, with the Polish bourgeoisie screaming for paedophiles to be imprisoned and "chemically castrated". We are against any government intrusion into consensual sexual relationships. **Down with the criminalisation of paedophilia! Down with the reactionary concept of "age of consent"! Priests, cops and prosecutors out of the bedroom! For the unrestricted right to abortion—Free abortion on demand!**

The proposed ban on communist symbols would generalise and legitimise the reactionary vendetta that has been a hallmark of capitalist restoration in Poland. The right wing continues to pursue a witch hunt against the former Stalinist officials of the People's Republic of Poland. Earlier this year, the government cut pensions for former employees of the old state security apparatus, including even office cleaners and clerks. Wojciech Jaruzelski, who stood at the head of the Stalinist regime that suppressed a counterrevolutionary bid for power by Solidarność in December 1981, is again on trial on criminal charges. Former ZOMO anti-riot police last year received prison sentences of up to six years for the shooting deaths of nine miners in Katowice during the 1981 state of emergency.

Jaruzelski is being tried by the wrong class for the wrong crimes. For proletarian revolutionaries, the suppression of Solidarność counterrevolution was no crime. From the moment Solidarność consolidated around an open programme of capitalist restoration at its first national congress in September 1981, we Trotskyists declared: Stop Solidarność counterrevolution! (see Spartacist pamphlet, *Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers*). In this we were opposed by an alliance ranging from the Vatican and the CIA to the German Social Democracy (SPD), the New York City teachers union of Albert Shanker and Yetta Barshevsky (Max Shachtman's widow) and the bulk of the fake-Trotskyist left. We fought for a proletarian political revolution to

replace Stalinist misrule with the rule of democratically elected workers soviets committed to a perspective of international proletarian revolution. We condemned the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy for its betrayals, for its nationalism and conciliation of imperialism abroad and the church at home, for its lies and bureaucratism, which ultimately drove much of the historically pro-socialist proletariat into the arms of clerical reaction in 1980-81. Then in 1989-90, the Stalinists sold out the deformed workers state to Solidarność and its imperialist backers. We say: **Hands off Jaruzelski and other former Stalinist officials!**

In a creditable protest against the anti-communist ban posted on its web-

site (kompol.org, 26 September 2009), the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) stated: "We strongly oppose efforts to equate fascism—which, based on racism, led to the bloodiest war in history thanks to the implementation of a plan to exterminate millions of people—with communism, which is built on the principles of social justice, and which defeated the genocidal fascists thanks to the utter dedication to struggle and sacrifice of countless millions of men, women and children. Despite even the most brutal repression we will not stop in our struggle for the victory of socialism, nor turn from the road to a victorious communist destiny!"



East Berlin, 14 January 1990: Spartakist contingent at "3Ls" demonstration. Banner reads: "For the Communism of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg."

But what the KPP means by "communism" is not the proletarian internationalism of Marx and Engels and the

Bolsheviks but its nationalist antithesis, codified in the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country". In their own ways, the SLD and the KPP are both decomposition products of the former Stalinist bureaucracy and its sham "people's democracy". Where the SLD exalts (capitalist) "democracy", the KPP glorifies Stalin.

Unlike reformists and liberals, we do not call on the bourgeois state to ban the fascists. Such calls, premised on illusions in the good offices of bourgeois democracy, will inevitably be used against the left and the workers movement, which is the main target of capitalist state repression. For instance, a law criminalising a fascist group in

West Germany in the early 1950s was used a few years later to ban the Communist Party there. And a recent Czech court ruling banning the fascist "Workers Party" is now providing further ammunition to those who want to ban the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. We look to the mobilisation of the proletariat, standing at the head of all the potential victims of fascist terror, to sweep the fascists off the streets.

While the class rule of the bourgeoisie is not threatened right now, the world recession underlines the truth of Marx's analysis that capitalism is a crisis-ridden system. The right-wing parties governing Poland have been in power for a number of years. But Poland is hardly a stable bourgeois

democracy, and though socialist revolution is not imminent, this decadent, third-rate bourgeoisie has good cause to fear a reawakening of the once pro-socialist Polish proletariat. Notwithstanding that sections of the working class had been intoxicated by clerical-nationalist Solidarność, when the first Solidarność government tried to implement its "free market" attacks on the working class in 1990 it was met by a wave of strikes and was soon replaced by a government led by the social-democratic SLD. Even now, despite 20 years of official anti-Communist hysteria in every sphere of public life, half the population continues to support the December 1981 state of emergency imposed by Jaruzelski. "God, Honour and Fatherland", the watchwords of Polish reaction, ring hollow to a generation of youth raised amid the glorification of capitalist greed and fawning capitulation to the NATO imperialists.

Those looking for a way out of the stultifying dead end of this decaying capitalist order will find it in the authentic communism of the Three L's—VI Lenin, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. As the 1990 founding statement of the Spartacist Group of Poland, section of the International Communist League, stated (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] no 45-46, Winter 1990-91):

"A Trotskyist party must be a tribune of the people, championing all victims of oppression. The drive to restore capitalism revives and intensifies all the 'old crap' of the prewar social order, from reactionary clericalism to Pilsudskiite nationalism and anti-Semitism...."

"Polish Trotskyists must seek to reclaim the best traditions of the Polish workers movement, forged in the struggle against national chauvinism. This is exemplified by Rosa Luxemburg, a Polish Jewish communist and leader of the revolutionary German proletariat. Reviling Luxemburg for her internationalism, Stalin never trusted and finally liquidated the Polish CP, which was the first to come to the defense of comrade Trotsky by asserting in 1923 that 'the name of Comrade Trotsky is insolubly connected with the victory of the Soviet Revolution, with the Red Army, with communism'."

**Down with the anti-communist ban!
Forward to a red Poland of workers
councils as part of a Socialist United
States of Europe! Reforge Trotsky's
Fourth International, world party of
socialist revolution!** ■

Haiti...

(Continued from page 3)

immediate conjuncture of a natural disaster. Moreover, while criticising the formulation that the US military was the only force on the ground with the wherewithal to deliver aid, the IS motions did not mandate a public correction of this statement. This kind of dishonesty was condemned by James P Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism. In addressing a situation where the Trotskyist SWP at its 1954 convention needed to acknowledge mistakes, he noted: "You know, the Stalinists make more changes, and more rapid and drastic changes, than any other party in history. But they never say: 'We made a mistake.' They always say: 'The situation has changed.' We should be more precise and more honest."

Menshevism often takes the guise of "realism" and "expediency". Looking to come up with a "concrete solution" in a situation where there was no such solution from a proletarian revolutionary vantage point, we capitulated. What our small revolutionary party had to put forward was a proletarian internationalist perspective for the liberation of Haiti, above all through opposition to our "own" imperialist rulers. In the immediate situation, the only concrete expression of such a programme was negative—to demand that any and all Haitian refugees be allowed into the US with full citizenship rights, to oppose any deportations of Haitians who had made it here and above all to demand all US/UN troops out.

Our articles distorted reality in order

to justify the American military presence. We correctly criticised the reformists for spreading illusions in the imperialist governments by demanding that they provide "aid, not troops" but our own response was worse. Our articles presented US military intervention as the only "realistic" way for the Haitian masses to get "aid" and claimed demagogically that withdrawal of US combat troops "would result in mass death through starvation". This was to treat the question not from the standpoint of Marxist programme, but through the liberal lens of "disaster relief". Michael Harrington—the former leader of the Democratic Socialists of America and adviser to the "war on poverty" programmes of Lyndon B Johnson's Democratic Party administration—captured the core of such a social-democratic worldview with the expression, "the left wing of the possible".

The "politics of the possible" is a palpable pressure in the period of post-Soviet reaction, where revolution—or even, particularly in the US, militant class struggle—appears remote and there is an overwhelming absence of resonance for our political views. There is a yawning abyss between what we stand for and the consciousness of the working class and young radicals, even those who claim to be socialist. As we have noted, it has been very difficult to maintain our revolutionary continuity and very easy to have it destroyed.

The fight to maintain a revolutionary perspective

In fighting against the Cochranite opposition in the then-revolutionary American Socialist Workers Party in the

early 1950s, James P Cannon argued:

"The revolutionary movement, under the best conditions, is a hard fight, and it wears out a lot of human material. Not for nothing has it been said a thousand times in the past: 'The revolution is a devourer of men.' The movement in this, the richest and most conservative country in the world, is perhaps the most voracious of all.

"It is not easy to persist in the struggle, to hold on, to stay tough and fight it out year after year without victory; and even, in times such as the present, without tangible progress. That requires theoretical conviction and historical perspective as well as character. And, in addition to that, it requires association with others in a common party."

—"Trade Unionists and Revolutionists", 11 May 1953

The example of the degeneration of the SWP from a revolutionary party through centrism to abject reformism is instructive. The party endured more than a decade of stagnation and isolation during the anti-Communist witch hunt. Seeing their role reduced essentially to a holding operation in the citadel of US imperialism, aging party cadre like those in the Cochran wing gave up on a revolutionary perspective. The SWP majority under Cannon and Farrell Dobbs fought to preserve the revolutionary continuity of Trotskyism against this liquidationism. But they themselves were not immune from the deforming pressures that led the Cochranites to split.

Four years later, in 1957, the SWP supported the introduction of federal troops into Little Rock, Arkansas—the end result of which was the crushing of local black self-defence efforts against the howling racist mobs fighting school integration. Painting US troops as reli-

able defenders of black people engendered significant opposition within the party in the 1950s, particularly from Richard Fraser whose programme of revolutionary integrationism as the road to black freedom in the US we take as our own. But the wrong line was never corrected and the view of the US imperialist army as the only "realistic" force to defend civil rights protesters in the Jim Crow South against racist terror deepened. By 1964 the SWP had adopted the grotesque campaign slogan, "Withdraw the Troops from Viet Nam and Send Them to Mississippi!" By 1965, the SWP had thrown overboard the last remnant of a revolutionary opposition to imperialism, promoting the reformist lie that a classless peace movement could stop US imperialism's dirty war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

The young SWP cadre in the Revolutionary Tendency who fought the party's degeneration were the founding leaders of our organisation. Recognising where the SWP went, and holding it up as a mirror of where we could go without correcting our mistakes and the outright betrayal of our revolutionary internationalist programme in response to the Haiti earthquake, is part of the fight to preserve this continuity with Cannon's revolutionary party that extends back to Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks.

But the ability to make such a correction is hardly cause for celebration. It merely lays the basis for political rectification. We crossed the class line and the urgent necessity is to reassert and struggle to maintain the proletarian internationalist programme of Leninism. ■

Gaza...

(Continued from page 4)

perpetrating atrocities against ethnic, religious and national minorities. As for the imperialists, Britain and France laid the basis for the continuing misery of the Palestinians and other peoples of the Near East in the period between the two world wars, when they brutally suppressed anti-colonial uprisings and set one people against another.

For its part, the Democratic administration of President Barack Obama refuses even to slap Israel on the wrist. Washington has been the chief arms supplier to the Zionist state for decades, shelling out several billions of dollars a year. On the eve of the Israeli blitzkrieg in Gaza, then-presidential candidate Obama made clear in a visit to Israel that his administration would continue to give the Zionist state a blank cheque for its anti-Palestinian terror.

Israel's attack on the civilian aid flotilla serves to underscore the futility of attempts by various reformist leftists to lobby the "democratic" imperialist powers, including the UN, to pressure Israel to tamp down its murderous repression. Suppression of the Palestinian people has been intrinsic to the Zionist cause from its inception in Europe in the latter half of the 19th century, as it set itself the ersatz messianic mission of conquering "a land without people for a people without a land".

Notwithstanding the intentions of some of the earliest socialist-minded Jewish immigrants in Palestine, what the Zionist project has always meant in practice was the driving out of one people from the land and its replacement by another. Decades of land-grabbing were followed by the mass expulsion of Palestinians in 1947-48 and the ghettoization of those Arabs who remained in the new state of Israel. The conquest of the Occupied Territories in 1967 fuelled dreams of

a "Greater Israel" and the further displacement of Palestinians in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which is now surrounded by a wall and riddled with military checkpoints. The right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu includes such figures as Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who openly advocates "transfer"—the genocidal expulsion of all Palestinian Arabs.

American anti-Zionist academic Norman Finkelstein captured something when he described Israel, in a 31 May interview with Russia Today TV, as "a lunatic state with between two and three hundred nuclear devices that is threatening war daily against Iran and against the Hezbollah in Lebanon". It is notable that the massacre on the Turkish ship came only two weeks after the US and Israel denounced a deal brokered by Turkey and Brazil to provide Iran with fuel for its nuclear reactors. While Washington seeks to beef up the imperialist economic embargo against Iran, Israel continues to talk openly of bombing the country. Such threats underline that Iran needs nuclear weapons to defend itself against the imperialists and their junior partners.

Israel/Palestine is a prime example of the genocidal logic of bourgeois nationalism, particularly as played out in the context of its interpenetrated peoples. The national emancipation of the Palestinian people—including the right of all refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland—necessarily entails workers revolutions to shatter the Zionist state from within and to sweep away the neighbouring capitalist ruling classes of Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, which themselves lord it over sizable Palestinian populations. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East will the national rights of both the Palestinian Arab and the Hebrew-speaking peoples, as well as of the Kurds and myriad others, be ensured.

Notwithstanding the growing entrench-

ment of ultra-chauvinist and religious reaction among sections of the Hebrew-speaking population and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism within the Palestinian and other Arab populations, the countries of the Near East are class-divided societies. Notably, Egypt has witnessed a rising tide of workers protests and strikes in recent years. In the face of massive sympathy among Egyptians for the Palestinians, the regime of Hosni Mubarak, which has ruled under a state of emergency for decades, actively collaborates with the Zionist rulers in enforcing the blockade of Gaza.

The solidarity among the peoples of the Near East with the oppressed Palestinian people must be directed towards proletarian revolution against their own rulers, who, whether bourgeois nationalists or Islamic traditionalists, are fundamentally instruments of Western imperialism. Revolutionary struggle in Iran and the Arab countries would serve in turn to

aid in breaking the Hebrew-speaking working class, which includes a large number of downtrodden and impoverished Sephardic Jews, from the intoxication of Zionist chauvinism. Meanwhile, fully one-fifth of the population of Israel consists of Palestinian Arabs who have been subjected to blatant discrimination since the birth of the Zionist state in 1948.

The class interests of the workers of Israel lie in smashing the Zionist capitalist state and sweeping away their exploiters. But for this to happen, the class principle must prevail. What is necessary is the forging of multinational, multiethnic Marxist workers parties throughout the Near East, built in opposition to all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism. Such parties are the indispensable instruments to lead a successful fight for socialist revolution, which, on an international scale, can finally open the door to human equality and liberation. ■

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Financial crisis rocks imperialist EU
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Workers protests rock Greece



Athens: Tens of thousands protest against government austerity programme during 5 May general strike (left). Cops attack 22 April during civil servant strike (top).

We reprint below a translation of a 28 April leaflet published by our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece (TGG). The TGG article was written in response to the savage austerity measures that the Greek government of George Papandreou's Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) has been attempting to foist on the working people in return for a huge bailout package from the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help stave off a default on the country's massive public debt.

The Greek debt crisis has precipitated a major economic crisis throughout the EU and caused turmoil on the world's financial markets. Behind Greece stand other deeply indebted eurozone countries staring at economic collapse, notably Spain, Portugal, Italy and Ireland. According to a 15 April article on the *Economist* website, Greek government debt amounting to between €62 billion and €121 billion is held in eurozone banks, with the bulk in German and French banks. The banks are even more exposed to Spanish debt and Spain

appears to be the most vulnerable country in the eurozone after Greece. European capitalist rulers are deeply worried that a default by Greece or one of the other threatened countries would stampede investors into a panic that could reverberate throughout the financial system. The current crisis has thrown into question the continued existence of the euro as a single currency.

As capitalist Europe has been buffeted by the financial crisis, bourgeois governments have raced to appease the markets, announcing massive budget cuts, job losses and tax rises. In Italy, despite the Berlusconi government's announcement in April that the country would avoid budget cuts, a savage programme of €26 billion of cuts over two years has subsequently been scheduled. Spain has announced €15 billion worth of cuts over two years. Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel intends to push through cuts of €80 billion over four years, while in France the figure is €5 billion over two years. In Britain the public debt amounts to £903 billion—equivalent to 62.2 per cent of GDP, the highest since records

began in 1993. The coalition government of David Cameron's Tories with the Liberal Democrats has announced devastating cuts of £113 billion over the duration of this parliament.

However, while the capitalist rulers across Europe are determined to make working people pay for the growing economic crisis, the workers have not been taking these attacks lying down. Greece has had a total of five one-day general strikes so far this year, with more stoppages likely. On 27 May, hundreds of thousands demonstrated across France as strikes against a government plan to raise the retirement age delayed flights, closed schools and interrupted train traffic. In Spain thousands took part in a public sector strike on 8 June. This rising line of working-class struggles points to the need to forge revolutionary parties that can lead the proletariat, at the head of all the oppressed, to sweep away the bankrupt capitalist order.

The international economic crisis shaking capitalist Europe has exposed the seething national antagonisms beneath the surface of European capitalist "unity"

as embodied in the EU and the euro. In Europe, as elsewhere, each national ruling class is seeking to ratchet up the exploitation of its own working class, while simultaneously manoeuvring to gain the advantage against its rivals.

Despite the word "socialist" in its name, PASOK is a capitalist party whose policies differ little from those of the right-wing New Democracy, with which it has alternated as the ruling party of Greece. While the PASOK government's attacks on working people are in large part dictated by the IMF and the major European powers, with imperialist Germany in the lead, the Greek ruling class is not just a minion of the EU. It is seizing on the current crisis to roll back hard-won gains of the working people and to further enrich itself at their expense.

Meanwhile, the arrogant German bourgeoisie has unleashed a chauvinist campaign with blanket accusations that Greece has been living "beyond its means" and has engaged in "lies" and "deception" regarding the budget deficit. Josef Schlarmann, chairman of the CDU

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