

All Out in Solidarity with the Palestinian People!

May Day 2024:

For International Workers Action Against the Genocidal U.S./Israel War on Gaza

MARCH 26 – With the barbaric war on Gaza now in its sixth month, it is utterly clear that this is an actual genocide, targeting the entire Palestinian Arab population of what has been termed the world’s largest open-air prison. After over 40,000 killed,¹ the destruction of more than half of all homes in the densely populated enclave, the bombing of schools and universities and attacks on hospitals, now more than one million people face the spectre of imminent starvation.² It is also clear that this is a joint U.S./Israeli war, as *all* the heavy bombs and *all* the warplanes from which they are dropped are supplied by the Pentagon, while Washington funnels billions in U.S. aid to Israel annually. Millions

have marched worldwide to denounce the slaughter and calling for a ceasefire, to no avail. Every appeal to the Zionist/imperialist warmongers has come to naught.

What’s desperately needed is the mobilization of *power* that can bring the slaughter to a halt, the power of the working class, in the United States and around the world. This coming *May 1*, the workers day, should become *a day of militant international workers action – including strikes and labor-led mass mobilization – to stop the genocidal U.S./Israel war on Gaza*. It should be followed up with *labor action worldwide to shut down all flights and shipping to and from Israel so long as the Zionist war on Gaza continues*. Workers should demand: *stop the bombing, stop the massacres, Israeli military and settlers get the hell out of Gaza and all the Occupied Territories NOW!*

Last October, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in

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S.I. Cobas

Labor activists of S.I. Cobas, the CALP (Autonomous Collective of Port Workers) and other “rank-and-file” unions blockade the port of Genova, Italy, on February 23-24, preventing the loading/unloading of an Israeli ZIM line ship.

¹ Includes 7,000+ missing under rubble of collapsed buildings. Euro-Med Monitor, Info-graphic, *The Israeli Genocide in the Gaza Strip*, 7 October 2023 – 14 March 2024.

² Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, *Famine Review Committee: Gaza Strip*, March 2024.

Defend the Palestinians! Defeat the McCarthyite Witch Hunts!

Gaza Solidarity Encampments and Cop Repression Spread Across U.S.

**Democrat Biden, Republicans
Smear Protests as “Antisemitic”
Cops/Security Guards Off Campus!**

APRIL 30 – As the U.S./Israel war on the Palestinian population of Gaza reached its 200th day (April 23), almost 43,000 Palestinians have been killed in the genocidal slaughter. The horror continues to mount relentlessly: over half of all homes in the strip destroyed by bombing, “flour massacres” as Israeli troops shoot hundreds of people desperately seeking food from aid trucks, the targeted murder of humanitarian aid workers, the spectre of imminent mass starvation. Now mass graves are being uncovered at Gaza hospital sites following raids by the Zionist military. While the Democratic administration of U.S.

president Joe Biden continues to supply Israel with arms to carry out the butchery, on the home front Democrats and Republicans lyingly label anti-Zionist protests “anti-Semitic.” This filthy libel reached a crescendo at an April 17 hearing in Congress interrogating Columbia University president Nemat Shafik, who thanked the inquisitors and vowed to crack down on pro-Palestinian students and faculty.

In her groveling performance before the Congressional witch-hunters, Shafik condemned chants and slogans that have drawn the Zionists’ ire, promising lawmakers that “there will be consequences” for pro-Palestinian protesters. This set off a firestorm back at Columbia. That afternoon, as she was testifying in Washington, student protesters set up a Gaza solidarity encampment occupying the

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USA Today

State troopers repress pro-Palestinian demo at University of Texas, April 24.

Germany: For Workers Mobilization Against the War Drive and Police-State Measures!

Against Social Democracy (SPD, Die Linke and Satellites) and All Brands of Reformism – Build a Revolutionary Multi-Ethnic Workers Party!

MAY 1 – In the midst of the vicious genocide committed by the United States and Israel against the Palestinian population in Gaza – for which Germany, as Israel’s second largest arms supplier, is co-responsible – obligatory support for Zionism has officially been declared “*Staatsräson*” (in diplomatic jargon *raison d’état*, or a matter of state overriding any other considerations). The severity of the repressive measures against any and all defense of the Palestinians stands in stark contrast to the dwindling support of the population for this monstrous war crime.

Heading up those banned under this precept was Samidoun, the Palestinian nationalist defense organization. The list of demonstrations and assemblies that have been banned or attacked in Germany since October 7 is long. The most recent are the brutal dispersal of the April 20 Berlin demonstration against arms deliveries to Israel and, a week earlier, the protest against the storming of the Palestine Congress.

On April 12, the Palestine Congress in Berlin was busted up by 900 cops. This highly anti-democratic attack was directed

against organizers, invitees and participants alike – solely on the basis of “thought crimes.” It was a brutal warning to all those who might oppose the German bourgeoisie’s war drive and the impoverishment that has accompanied it.

After a massive smear campaign, supported by an alliance ranging from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) to the Left Party (e.g. former Berlin state minister for culture Klaus Lederer), the Congress was harassed, surrounded by cops, assaulted and then dispersed. The Palestinian surgeon (and rector of Glasgow University) Ghassan Abu-Sittah was denied entry at the airport and his video message to the congress was cut off and banned by the police. Former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis was also banned from speaking.

Udi Raz, a leading member of Jewish Voice, was arrested at the Congress. The group’s bank account was frozen – like Jewish bank accounts in the Third Reich. Prayers in Arabic and singing in Hebrew were also prohibited. What’s next? A ban on the words *salaam* and *shalom*, the cognates (closely related words) for peace in these two Semitic languages? Then came the April 26 dispersal of the protest camp in front of the Reichstag against the genocide in Gaza.

The repression by the German imperialist state, along with its recent campaign against Muslims and the systematic scape-

goating of refugees for the suffering caused by the crisis of German capitalism, is all putting wind in the sails of the fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD), who are the real antisemites. The AfD is at the forefront pushing many of these repressive measures, from the banning of Samidoun to the planned expulsion of dissident students from Berlin universities, which must be fought with strikes by faculty, staff and students.

The AfD and open fascists swimming in its wake are protected, financed, supported, held in readiness and used by sections of the capitalist class to ultimately secure capitalist rule and smash the organizations of the working class. The fascist danger and the racist terror associated with it will not be defeated by large rallies together with bourgeois forces or at the ballot box, and even less so by blacklists [of prohibited pro-Palestinian speakers]. On top of which, the police throughout Germany are notoriously infiltrated by fascist elements. Calling on the bourgeois state to ban the fascists is not only futile, it is downright suicidal.

The organizers of the “anti-fascist” mass mobilizations that were held across the country in January and February, touched off by the exposure of a secret fascist/reactionary meeting in Potsdam last November to plan future mass deportations of “foreigners,” were in no way opposed to the accelerated deportations that the ruling coalition had just decided on at that time. At these rallies Palestinian flags were generally banned, while Israeli and German flags were of course not. In some cases (e.g., Munich and Berlin), pro-Palestinian demonstrators were excluded.

These demos were based on the popular-front principle “All together against fascism,” which blurs the class line against the



Internationalistische Gruppe at January 14 Lenin-Luxemburg-Liebkecht demonstration in Berlin. Sign (right) reads: For Workers Action Against Racist Repression of Gaza Solidarity!

bourgeoisie. Calls to base the demonstrations on the DGB labor federation or to “organize from below,” as Klasse gegen Klasse (Class Against Class, German affiliate of the Trotskyist Fraction) advocated in a January 23 declaration, do not call this class collaboration into question, but rather give it a “left” cover. Fascism must be defeated on the streets and in the factories through hard class struggle and the organization of workers self-defense.

An Attack on One Is an Attack on All

German federal chancellor Olaf Scholz has announced the deportation of immigrants “on a grand scale.” The working class, with its large immigrant component, must not allow itself to be divided. It must oppose the all-party campaign

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On April 12, an army of 900 police stormed the Palestine Congress in Berlin, turning off the electricity, kicking out the participants and banning speakers.

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Berlin cops attack protesters in attempt to break up a Gaza solidarity march, 16 October 2023.

A Weaponized Smear for Witch-Hunting, Police Repression and Thug Attacks

Genocide Defenders Slander Anti-Zionists as “Antisemitic”

MAY 14 – Speaking at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Remembrance Ceremony on May 7 in the U.S. Capitol, President Joe Biden let loose a diatribe of vituperation against the Gaza solidarity encampments that sprang up on campuses across the country this spring. Denouncing a “ferocious surge of antisemitism in America and around the world,” he painted a fictitious portrayal: “On college campuses, Jewish students blocked, harassed, attacked while walking to class. Antisemitism – antisemitic posters, slogans calling for the annihilation of Israel, the world’s only Jewish state.” At the same time, the commander in chief of U.S. imperialism declared that his commitment to “the security of Israel” is “ironclad.” So much for the charade of cutting off bomb supplies over the impending Israeli invasion of Rafah . . . after already delivering thousands of “bunker busters” without which the genocidal slaughter of tens of thousands of Palestinians would not have been possible.

Biden was followed at the podium by Mike Johnson, the hard-right Republican speaker of the House of Representatives who went to Columbia University a couple of weeks earlier to call for sending in the National Guard against the pro-Palestinian protesters camped out on the lawn. Johnson said that “we are witnessing American universities quickly become hostile places for Jewish students and faculty,” accusing student protesters of “repeating the Nazi propaganda” of a “final solution.” Johnson and the Democrats are now in a tactical alliance against a challenge to his speakership by even farther right, fascistic Republicans, after he delivered the quid pro quo, permitting Congressional approval of \$95 billion in military and other aid to U.S. imperialism’s flunkies and allies in Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. *What we are witnessing here is a cynical, orchestrated, bipartisan hysteria to justify U.S./Israeli genocide by smearing opposition to it as “antisemitic.”*

The purpose of this vile slander is to bring down the hammer of capitalist state repression to silence critics of the mass murder being carried out by the Zionists and the U.S./NATO imperialists. The very next day, a Republican-led House committee summoned the heads of public schools in the liberal bastions of New York City, suburban Washington, D.C. and Berkeley, California to accuse them of being soft on anti-Zionism. The inquisitors asked menacingly if they agreed that the slogan “Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea” is antisemitic, as it was labeled in HR 894, passed by the House last November.¹ (They agreed.) Why wasn’t a New York teacher fired for showing a map of the Middle East identifying the country between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea as Palestine, they demanded. (The NYC schools chancellor at least said employees have the right of due process.) Of course, when Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu held up a map at the United Nations labeling the entire area “from the river to the sea” Israel, no one blinked. And now, thanks to Biden, he is carrying out that program with U.S. arms.

The filthy smear that the protests against the Zionist slaughter are “antisemitic” and a threat to the safety of Jewish students is repeated by Democratic and Republican politicians from Biden and Johnson on down, and regurgitated in the media, from the high-brow imperialist Zionism of the *New York Times* to the tabloid gutter press and Fox News. The claim that the encampments and/or antiwar protests around them are hotbeds of “Jew hatred,” as the *New York Post* (25 April) blared on its front page, is a flat-out lie – as numerous Jewish participants and others have pointed out. Not only are many of the pro-Palestinian protesters themselves Jewish, report after report

¹ By a vote of 311 to 14, with 95 Democrats (a plurality) voting in favor.



Doug Mills / New York Times

Democratic president Biden and Republican House speaker Johnson whip up bipartisan hysteria labeling pro-Palestinian protests “antisemitic” as they justify genocidal U.S./Israel war on Gaza.

claiming that Jewish students are threatened has turned out to be false.

- The claim that students encamped at Northeastern University in Boston chanted “Kill the Jews” was used as a pretext for triggering mass arrests of over 100, but a reporter for WGBH (27 April) revealed that it was uttered by a pro-Israel counterdemonstrator mocking the pro-Palestinian protesters.

- The story of a Jewish Yale student supposedly getting stabbed in the eye with a Palestinian flag, played up by Fox News and repeated by Speaker Johnson at the Holocaust ceremony, was “misleadingly portrayed by the victim” (*New York Times*, 28 April).

- A man shouting “The Jews control the world! The Jews are murderers!” across the street from a Gaza war protest at Columbia was not part of the demonstration and was told by a demonstrator to take his antisemitic filth and “go away” (*Ibid.*).

- The scene of pro-Palestinian demonstrators banging on a glass wall at Cooper Union last October was a set-up by pro-Israeli demonstrators who earlier taunted them outside and spotted the opportunity for a good visual.

The claim that Jewish students are forced to “hide their kippahs under baseball hats, tuck their Jewish stars into their shirts” on campus as Biden claimed is pure bunk. The purpose of this slander is to outlaw slogans and ban protests defending the Palestinians. That defenders of the Israeli genocide in Gaza feel uncomfortable about protests against the barbaric slaughter they are supporting – as well they might – is another matter.

Moreover, as Republicans are avidly preparing more “antisemitism” hearings modeled on the anti-communist witch hunts of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) of the 1950s and

’60s, the stage is now being set for federal government “investigations” based on such inventions. The same day as Biden and Johnson were denouncing Gaza solidarity encampments in unison at the Capitol, the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education issued a guidance for sending in the feds based on “purely hypothetical” scenarios that are the exact opposite of actual events. Its Example 3, for instance, posits the following:

“At a public university, a school organization announces that it has invited an Israeli filmmaker to screen a video about his observations from Israel. In response, several dozen students and faculty members gather in the main entryway of the building and refuse to allow anyone to get through, including the event organizers who had arrived for setup, explaining that they do not want to give a ‘Jewish filmmaker an opportunity to spread their propaganda.’”

In real life, at Hunter College in New York City, the Film and Media Department and Arabic program scheduled a showing last November of the film *Israelism* by two Jewish American filmmakers recounting their experiences visiting Israel and coming to realize how it oppresses the Palestinians. This was banned by the administration at the last minute (literally on the day of the showing), and faculty and students, including both Palestinians and Jews, mobilized to demand that the film be shown. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs played a central role in the protest campaign, which resulted in rolling back the ban.²

Example 4 in the witch-hunters’ fake scenario list hypothesizes that “During anti-war demonstrations, protest signs list specific Jewish students by name and use

² See “McCarthyite Film Ban at Hunter College Struck Down By Student/Faculty Protest,” on our blog Revolutionaries in the Class Struggle (<https://igclassstruggle.blogspot.com/>).

Internationalist photo



Marxist anti-Zionists combat the real antisemites, including Christian Zionist defenders of Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza.

epithets that stereotype all Jewish people as racist murderers.” Nothing like this has been reported anywhere. On the contrary, what has happened is that, in response to antiwar demonstrations, “doxxing trucks” have prowled around or parked near schools from Harvard to Columbia, Yale, campuses of the City University of New York and elsewhere, displaying names and faces of academics lyngly branded as “Leading Antisemites.” These scenarios eerily recall George Orwell’s dystopian novel *1984* in which “war is peace,” “freedom is slavery,” and “ignorance is strength.” The Orwellian fantasies of the official “antisemite” hunters portray those protesting genocide in Gaza as persecutors of Jews in the U.S. But in 2024, the repression of anti-Zionists is not hypothetical but very real, with thousands arrested in the last month alone.

The equation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism is a longstanding trope of Israel’s state-sponsored propaganda, or *hasbara*, which it uses to whitewash its crimes. Seeking to give this official imprimatur, an “International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance” in 2003 cooked up a definition of antisemitism that included characterizing Israel as racist or opposing the existence of the self-proclaimed “Jewish state.” In 2018, the Trump administration adopted this definition in judging civil rights complaints, and it has been used by university administrations to ban pro-Palestinian speakers, as well as by supporters of Israel to defame and blacklist academics like Norman Finkelstein, author of *The Holocaust Industry* (2000), whose parents were survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto and the Auschwitz and Majdanek concentration camps. Now the IHRA definition is being written into law in the ominous “Antisemitism Awareness Act” (HR 6090) overwhelmingly adopted on May 1, with 133 Democrats joining 187 Republicans to outlaw opposition to the Zionist state built on land stolen from the Palestinian people.

Antisemitic “Friends of Israel”

Marxists oppose a religious or ethnic designation of a state, as this is inherently anti-democratic. We are against a self-proclaimed “Jewish state” of Israel as well as the “Islamic republics” of Iran and Pakistan or the Islamic monarchies of the Arabian peninsula, and would-be Christian states such as the fascist military dictator-



Internationalist contingent banners in New York City May Day 2024 march.

ships of Marshal Pétain in France and Generalissimo Franco in Spain. The League for the Fourth International calls instead for a binational Arab/Hebrew Palestinian workers state, in a socialist federation of the Middle East. As for liberal supporters of Israel, they should be aware of who some of their allies are. “Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson has proclaimed that America is and was founded as a Christian nation,” as the Associated Press (17 February) noted in a feature article on the spread of Christian nationalism on the U.S. right wing. Johnson denies that there is a constitutional separation of church and state, and is closely associated with an outfit called the Wallbuilders, which talks of the “Godly foundation of our country.”

Standing together with Johnson at his April 22 Columbia appearance inciting violent repression against student protesters was North Carolina representative Virginia Foxx. This far-right Republican chairs the inquisitorial House committee that forced the resignations of the presidents of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania. Now, having wrung an *auto da fé* confession from Columbia’s president Nemat Shafik, they seek to crucify her as well, even after Shafik called in the NYPD to disperse the encampment and arrest the participants. Foxx, like Johnson, is an evangelical Christian Zionist, who holds that Jews are “God’s chosen people.” But chosen for what? In the milieu of the religious right, the answer is often grotesquely antisemitic. As for Foxx, she is

also a promotor of “Christian academies,” the name preferred by the whites-only private schools set up in the South following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling outlawing segregation in public schools.

The most prominent Christian Zionist is Protestant fundamentalist televangelist pastor and head of Christians United for Israel John Hagee, who spoke at the 14 November 2023 “March for Israel” on the National Mall. Hagee is a raving antisemite, claiming that the Rothschild family runs the world’s banks, blaming the Holocaust on “half-breed Jews,” etc. Hagee delivered the benediction at the opening of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem along with another Christian Zionist antisemite, Pastor Robert Jeffries. Hagee and Jeffries, like many of this variety of evangelical bigots, believe that an apocalyptic end-times war in the Middle East will result in the Second Coming of Christ and the Rapture, in which true Christians will rise to heaven while Jews and Muslims will either convert, or burn in hell for eternity.

As Johnson and Foxx get ready for a second coming of Donald Trump, another of this set of “friends of Israel” is Steve Bannon, the former Trump White House advisor bounced after praising the August 2017 Charlottesville, Virginia “Unite the Right” fascist rally where marchers with torches chanted “Jews will not replace us” and anti-racist demonstrator Heather Heyer was run over and killed by a Nazi. So while slandering the pro-Palestinian protests and

encampments as “antisemitic,” *the Zionists are in fact making common cause with antisemitic white supremacists, fascist elements and outright fascists.* But why would this be surprising, as Israeli prime minister Netanyahu’s cabinet has two fascist ministers, Itamar Ben-Gvir of Jewish Power and Bezalel Smotrich of the Religious Zionism party, both followers of the Jewish supremacist anti-Arab fascist Meir Kahane.

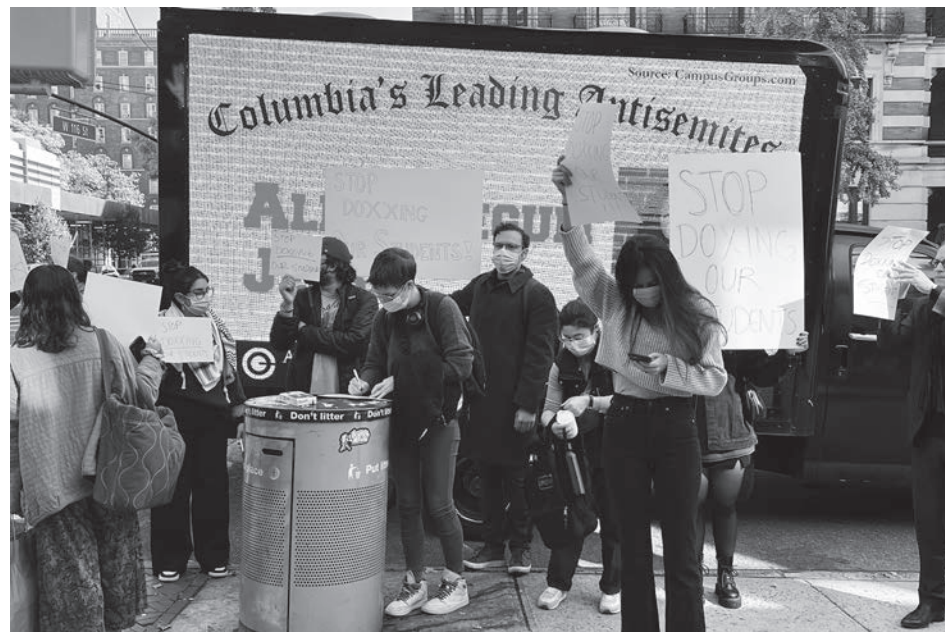
And then there is the star of the congressional star chamber inquisition against the presidents of Columbia, Harvard and MIT, Representative Elise Stefanik from upstate New York, who, seeking to become Trump’s running mate, styles herself an “ultra-MAGA” Republican. (Stefanik’s performance was hailed by New York’s Democratic governor, Kathy Hochul, who has launched witch hunts against CUNY and the State University of New York system.) While smearing protests against the Gaza genocide as antisemitic as a pretext for escalating censorship and police-state measures, this cynical operator is notorious for echoing the antisemitic, anti-immigrant “great replacement” conspiracy theory in her campaign ads (“The Invention of Elise Stefanik,” *New York Times*, 31 December 2022).

Meanwhile, *real* antisemitism is indeed growing, or at least being more openly expressed. The witch hunters and other backers of the U.S./Israel war on Gaza are helping fuel it, by equating Zionism with Jewish people, and Jews with the crimes of the Israeli state – the official ideology

Bing Guan for The New York Times



Far-right Christian nationalists Mike Johnson (speaking) and Virginia Foxx (behind him to left) at Columbia University, April 22. Johnson called to bring in the National Guard to repress Gaza solidarity encampment while Foxx is leading witch-hunt committee in Congress.



False claims about Jewish students being harassed on campus are used to vilify and repress pro-Palestinian protesters (many of whom are Jewish). Above: “Doxxing truck” prowled near Columbia University campus during April 2024 pro-Palestinian protests, with names and photos of their targets.

Internationalist photo

Judy Goldstein / Columbia Spectator



Residents return to devastated Khan Younis in southern Gaza after Israeli troops pull out, April 8. Every heavy bomb used in this genocide, and every warplane from which they were dropped, was supplied by the United States.

of which is Zionism, based on oppression of the Palestinian people. The Internet is awash with conspiracy theories about Khazarian Jews, (falsely) portrayed as ancestors of the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe, along with the usual themes of “cabals” of Jewish bankers, etc. But this is not coming from the Gaza solidarity encampments, which have been vigilant to squelch such filth. In the U.S., actual antisemites are to be found largely among Trumpian ultra-rightists, and are often explicit supporters of Zionism. They would like to get rid of Jews and have them all go to Israel. This seemingly odd alliance is, again, nothing new. The “Revisionist” wing of Zionism founded by Ze’ev Jabotinsky was inspired by Italian fascism and with Mussolini’s support founded a military school for his Betar youth movement, closely allied with the genocidal Irgun terrorists. And both Revisionists and “Labor” Zionists led by David Ben Gurion made deals with the Nazis to spirit some Jewish notables to Palestine.³

³ A documented account of this sordid history, as well as of the common struggles of Jewish and Arab workers in Palestine prior to the founding of Israel, can be found in the dossier headlined “Defend the Palestinian People!” of articles in *The Internationalist* No. 9, January-February 2001.



“Labor” Zionist David Ben Gurion and “revisionist” Zionist Ze’ev Jabotinsky collaborated with Hitler and Mussolini to bring prominent Jews to Palestine.

The slogan “Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea” is in itself not antisemitic, but rather an expression of desire for a Palestinian state in historic Palestine, whose land has been stolen by the Zionists to erect what they claim to be a “Jewish state.” The only basis for claiming that a state of Palestine would be necessarily oppressive to Jews is if one assumes, as the Zionists do, that Palestinians would treat Jews in the brutal, oppressive and murderous way that Israel has treated Palestinians. And by denying the Palestinians’ right to national self-determination, pushing them off their lands and now killing over 42,000 of Gaza’s residents the Zionists are fueling a desire for revenge for three-quarters of a century of brutal Zionist repression that Islamist groups like Hamas feed off. That the present genocidal war on Gaza will increase antisemitism among some of the victims is yet another crime of the Israeli state and its imperialist backers.

Interpenetrated Peoples: Common Struggle for Socialist Revolution

There is no right of national self-determination for a “Jewish state.” Jews are not a nation but a religious and, to a degree, ethnic category, of several different ethnicities. Historically they were a people that had a distinct economic function as a merchant class under the pre-capitalist Ottoman and Russian empires – what Jewish Trotskyist Abram Leon termed a “people-class.” (The author of the classic *The Jewish Question: a Marxist Interpretation*, Leon died in Auschwitz at the age of 25.) That specificity dissipated under capitalism and Jewish people became integrated, sometimes as an oppressed minority,

or expelled from the various nations where they reside. Israel is not the state of Jewish Americans. A nation is not a nebulous “imagined community,” as some liberal academics assert, which would mean that just about any group could imagine itself to be a nation and claim the right to national self-determination. For Leninists, and in reality, nations are historically constituted peoples having a common predominant language, common territory, a common economy and common culture.

At the same time, due to a confluence of historic crimes (the Nazi Holocaust that slaughtered six million Jews, followed by the Zionist Nakba, that drove hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and their homeland), a specifically Hebrew-speaking nation has been consolidated in Israel. That nation, like all nations, does have the democratic right of self-determination, even though it like many other countries is an oppressor nation. It is the oppressor of *the Palestinian nation, which also has the right of national self-determination* while dispersed in Israel, the Occupied Territories, Gaza and the refugee camps in neighboring countries, which includes the Palestinians’ right to return to their historic homeland and homes. So you have two nations, one oppressor, the other oppressed, living on the same narrow strip of land in the eastern littoral of the Mediterranean, both with the right to exist, that is, of national self-determination. This situation of *interpenetrated peoples* thus presents a conundrum.⁴ Seeking to ignore or deny this basic fact can only help the Zionist rulers further cement “national unity” of the Hebrew-speaking workers with the nuclear-armed Israeli state.

Under capitalism, there will always be competition for scarce resources (like water in this parched desert region), in which the stronger state power will prevail. Just look at how Israel has since its birth stolen water from the Jordan River. Thus calls for a “two-state” solution are in fact a recipe for continued subjugation and oppression of the Palestinian Arab population whose pseudo-state would necessarily be at the mercy of the vastly more powerful Israeli state. A “democratic secular Palestine” under capitalism is a liberal fantasy that will not come to pass. The only way those competing national rights can be realized in a just and equitable manner is through a revolution, under

⁴ For a discussion of the situation of the interpenetrated Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples in Israel-Palestine, see the articles in *Workers Vanguard* when it was the voice of revolutionary Trotskyism, particularly “The Birth of the Zionist State, Part 1” (WV No. 33, 23 November 1973), and “Part 2” (WV No. 45, 24 May 1974), as well as “Israeli Trotskyists Call for Hebrew/Arab Workers Revolution,” WV No. 47, 21 June 1974.

workers rule, establishing a collectivized economy, replacing the inherently anti-democratic, Jewish-supremacist Zionist state of Israel with an *Arab/Hebrew Palestinian workers state*. And that state can only be the product of a common Arab/Hebrew workers revolution, in conjunction with revolutionary struggles in the neighboring Arab, Turkish, Iranian and Kurdish lands leading to a *socialist federation of the Middle East*.

The creation of Israel was due to the crimes of the imperialists, who (with the connivance of the Zionists) refused entry to Jewish refugees during and after the Holocaust and pushed large numbers of them into Palestine. There, the supposed “Jewish state” relegated the Palestinian Arabs to a second-class citizenship in Israel proper, and then subjugated them militarily and deprived them of any democratic rights at all in the Occupied Territories. While conditions in the occupied West Bank bear some resemblance to the “bantustans” of apartheid South Africa, *to depict Israel itself as an apartheid state is altogether too generous, and misleading*. Those who take this description seriously argue that Zionist rule could be overcome just as apartheid rule was in South Africa, by a political overturn. That ignores the fact that the denial of political rights to the African peoples under the apartheid system in South Africa was designed to perpetuate the superexploitation of black labor. That superexploitation continues today under black capitalist rule in neo-apartheid South Africa.

The goal of Zionism is fundamentally different. While the Israeli state is dependent on Arab labor in several sectors, the Zionists’ founding and present-day goal is not to superexploit Palestinians – their aim has always been to expel the indigenous population (euphemistically termed “transfer”) or destroy them. As Jabotinsky wrote, “There can be no voluntary agreement between ourselves and the Palestine Arabs. Not now, nor in the prospective future” (*The Iron Wall* [1923]). And Ben Gurion concurred: “We must expel Arabs and take their place” (letter to his son Amos [1937]). *The logic of Zionism is not apartheid but “ethnic cleansing” by forced population transfer leading to what we are now seeing before our eyes: genocide*. And as revolutionary Trotskyists proclaim our “ironclad” defense of the oppressed Palestinian people, we declare that Zionist oppression cannot be overcome by Palestinian nationalism, whether of secular or Islamist variants, but only through the joint revolutionary struggle of the working people of the entire Middle East and North Africa.

Above all, as the present horrendous war underlines, the road to a just and equitable solution for all the myriad peoples of this region, a fabled “crossroads of civilizations,” requires the overthrow of the rapacious imperialist exploiters and militarists who have laid waste to Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and have now supplied the weaponry to turn all of Gaza to rubble. This perspective of international socialist revolution underlines the centrality of the struggle to mobilize workers’ power, in the U.S., Europe and throughout the world, to defend the besieged and imprisoned Palestinian people and defeat this obscene and barbaric, genocidal U.S./Israel war. ■

Appeal from the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions – Gaza Strip



الإتحاد العام لنقابات عمال فلسطين - قطاع غزة
Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions - Gaza Strip

On International Workers Day

*Urgent Appeal from the
Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions*

Brothers and Sisters of unions and other labor organizations in the United States of America:

In the midst of pain and blood, in the displacement camps, amidst the rubble, and the ruins of our homes, workshops, factories, stores, and institutions destroyed by the "Israeli" occupation, using U.S.-made weapons, in the name of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), we call on you for solidarity.

Instead of celebrating with you on May 1st, International Workers Day, we are busy shrouding dozens of people who are being killed around the clock in the middle of a genocidal war against our people - in every sense of that word. This has led to the destruction of everything in the Gaza Strip (hospitals, health centers, schools, universities, streets, water purification, sewage, and other infrastructure, factories, shops, cultural centers, mosques, churches, and even unborn children), none of which were spared by the occupation's bombs, missiles and shells (including internationally banned weapons, like white phosphorus).

We are living through wholesale slaughter and forced dislocation - ethnic cleansing - committed against us. This devastating war and its catastrophes have forced upon us in the PGFTU in Gaza significant responsibilities to collect the broken bodies and even pieces of our people, healing the wounded, and trying to ease their pain (without anesthetics, antibiotics, or other medicine), dealing with the psychological trauma (especially of the children), while trying to convey the truth of this suffering and the humanitarian and environmental catastrophe to the world.

Since the beginning of the aggression, we in the PGFTU have considered ourselves an integral part of our people - not separated from their reality. We have lost thousands of members, union offices, facilities, and other institutions.

Despite our efforts to provide relief to our people with the limited support we have received and to raise the voice of our people loudly in international forums, we have encountered shocking silence and neglect by the international labor movement. However, we recognize there have been some exceptional examples of unions, clearly demonstrated in leading protests denouncing the Zionist war of genocide being waged on the Gaza Strip.

Dear comrades in the American unions,

Several actions have come to light during the aggression, which must be closely observed and exposed, most notably:

First, U.S. unions need to expose the extent of the war crimes and genocide committed against our people and the biased American position and complicity in enabling the aggression. This must be confronted and continue to be protested to exert pressure against the export of U.S.-made weapons to the occupation. Pressure must be increased on the U.S. administration to abandon these hostile actions against the Palestinian people.

Secondly, There is the Israeli decision to suspend or terminate the contracts of thousands of workers in the Gaza Strip by local, Arab, and international institutions in connection with the war of extermination, depriving employees of their rights and compensation. It would have been better for these institutions to strengthen the workers' economic security by implementing support packages instead of firing them from work. This issue must be at the core of your concerns and struggle.

Third: The international labor movement, including the International Federation of Trade Unions, retreated to verbal positions without taking measures on the ground or pressuring the decision-makers to stop this war of extermination, limiting union activities to conferences and statements and not delving deeply into the need to guarantee humanitarian aid, or influencing international public opinion to expose the truth about Zionist crimes and the practices of the allied countries that continue to support Israel.

Among these steps is the struggle to ban the occupation's trade unions internationally, as they are partners in the war of genocide. In particular, we call on American unions to boycott these unions to protest their complicity in this genocidal war.

Fourth, Unions can play an influential role in the United States to provide relief for hundreds of thousands of workers' families whose homes and workplaces have been destroyed, leaving them to shelter in tents without any work or income. You can contribute to financial projects and relief funds for workers and temporary social security through coordination with the International Trade Union Confederation to alleviate the suffering of thousands of our people.

Dear comrades...

We call on you to be our voice and advocate inside and outside America. What our people are experiencing and what workers and unions, in particular, are exposed to is the most horrific catastrophe known to humanity in recent decades. We ask that you convey our message and give voice to the suffering of hungry, starving workers and their families—not just to the American people, not just to your unions, but to the entire world.

We are a people enduring bombardment, hunger, disease, and all forms of suffering, but we are determined to live, to stand firm, and to rebuild from this destruction with our blood and many sacrifices.

Thank you for your efforts, and happy new year on International Workers Day. We will certainly carry the banner of victory despite the killing and destruction.

From your comrades/trade and professional unions in Gaza

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

Signatory: Basheer Al-Sisi, Member of the General Secretariat of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions - City of Gaza



May Day 2024...

continued from page 1

Gaza and more than two dozen Palestinian unions and professional associations issued an urgent appeal to labor internationally to refuse to build or transport arms for and to Israel. In the U.S., over 200 union bodies have since passed resolutions calling for a ceasefire - but with no action beyond joining "peace" marches. In some cases, notably the AFL-CIO, these appeals are actually support for Israel, denouncing Palestinians for starting the war, not demanding that Israel *get out of Gaza*, calling for release of all Israeli hostages but nothing about the over 9,000 Palestinians being held hostage in Israeli jails (and another 4,000 workers from Gaza who were in Israel when the war began and are now being held in military camps).³

The League for the Fourth International and its U.S. section, the Internationalist Group, have called from the outset to "Defend the Palestinians Against U.S./Israel Genocidal War on Gaza!" (*The Internationalist*, 10 October 2023), "For Workers Action Against Zionist Terror" and "against the shipment of arms to Israel and Ukraine," where the U.S. and its NATO allies are waging an imperialist proxy war against Russia. We have underlined that, so far, calls for labor solidarity have been mainly on paper, and what port shutdowns there have been were mostly called by community groups rather than the unions, as long-time maritime labor activist Jack

³ "9,077 'Security' Inmates Are Held In Prisons Inside Israel," HaMoked, March 2024.



This is what genocide looks like. Residents of Gaza City gather at site of destroyed building, March 2024.

Heyman pointed out in his recent article reiterating the call "Dock Workers: Block Military Cargo to Israel" (*The Internationalist*, 15 February).

Heyman and others last week put for-

ward a resolution (see below) for International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 in the San Francisco Bay Area to stop work on May Day, the international workers day, "calling for interna-

Local 10 will celebrate May Day with a shutdown and rally in the port of Oakland, stopping work calling for international workers action in solidarity with the besieged Palestinian people, in opposition to the genocidal Israel/U.S. war on Gaza and to stop the flow of arms to that war.

We also call on all the ILWU locals in the Longshore Division to adhere to the Caucus resolution that passed, directing all locals to use their membership meeting in May to celebrate May Day, International Workers Day. To show unity on the Coast, Local 10 appeals to all ILWU locals, in the Warehouse Division, Marine Division (IBU), Hawaii and Alaska, to uphold the ILWU position passed in conventions in 1988 and 1991 by participating this May Day solidarity action.

Finally, we urge dock workers internationally to join together in this May Day solidarity action, and urge the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and the International Dockworkers Council (IDC) to participate.

Agence France-Presse

the union and dock workers internationally to join in taking May Day Palestinian solidarity actions.

Now the Palestinian General Federation of Labor – Gaza Strip has issued a May Day appeal to unions in the United States calling to do just that. The PGFTU statement says frankly that "we have encountered shocking silence and neglect by the international labor movement." It spells this out:

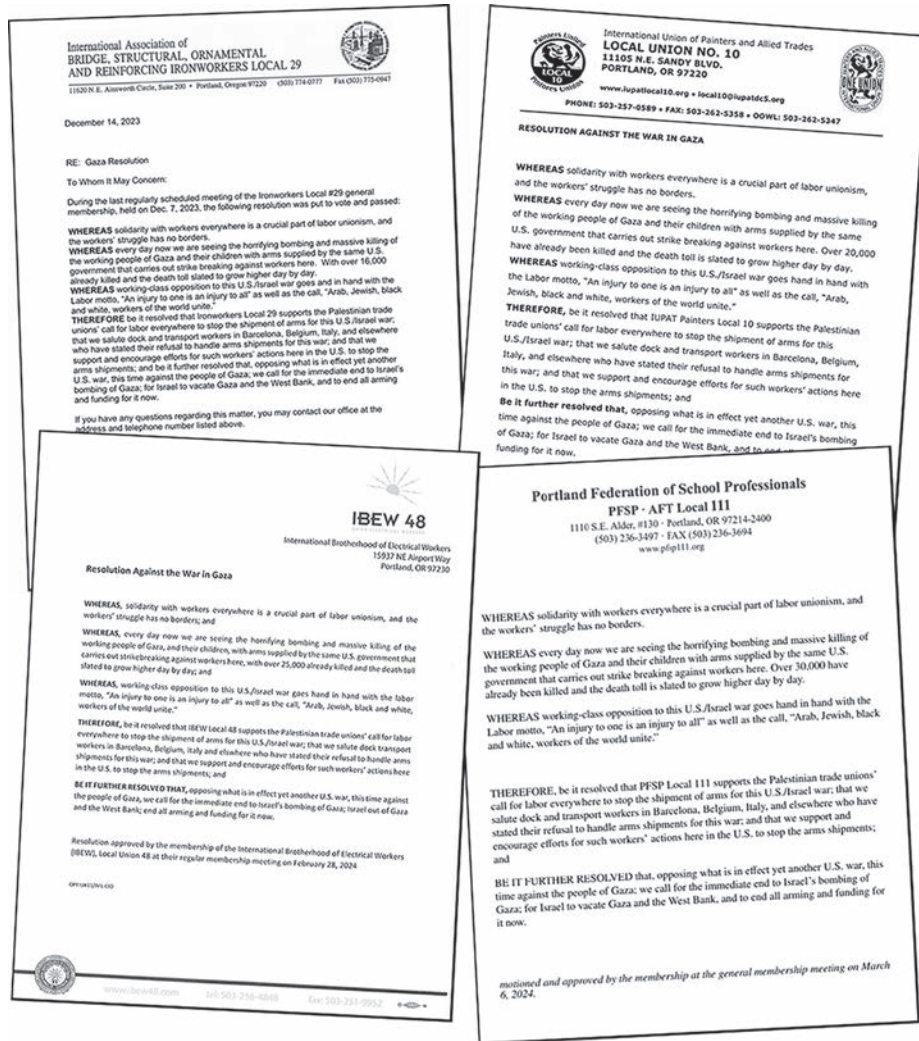
"The international labor movement ... retreated to verbal positions without taking measures on the ground or pressuring the decision-makers to stop this war of extermination, limiting union activities to conferences and statements and not delving deeply into the need to guarantee humanitarian aid, or influencing international public opinion to expose the truth about Zionist crimes and the practices of the allied countries that continue to support Israel."

(See full text of the PGFTU – Gaza Strip appeal above.)

In response to the PGFTU's urgent appeal to unions and trade-unionists in the U.S. and internationally "to be our voice and advocate inside and outside America," the League for the Fourth International urges labor militants around the world to **mobilize workers' power in hard-hitting labor-led actions on May 1 in solidarity with the besieged Palestinian people against the genocidal U.S./Israel war.** Such actions can and should include not only focusing May Day marches on Palestine solidarity and organizing workers aid to Gaza, but blocking arms shipments and carrying out labor boycotts of flights and

tional workers action in solidarity with the besieged Palestinian people, in opposition to the genocidal Israel/U.S. war on Gaza and to stop the flow of arms to that war." The motion also urged the rest of

Portland Unions Call for Solidarity Action with Gaza



shipping to and from Israel, and wherever possible, **strike action and shutting down production**. Such actions should demand **an immediate stop to the bombing, forced population transfers and any restrictions on emergency aid to Gaza; an end to all aid to Israel, and for Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza and all the Occupied Territories.**

In the U.S., it is crucial to fight for the workers and oppressed to **break with the Democrats**, who are financing, advising, arming and jointly waging war on the Palestinians in Gaza together with the Israeli government of hardline Zionists and outright fascists; and to **oust the class-collaborationist labor bureaucracy**, which for decades has chained the unions to the bosses' parties. A prime example of this is the leadership of the United Auto Workers (UAW), which in response to clamor from the ranks, particularly in the Detroit area with its large Arab American population, called for a ceasefire in Gaza, and then turned around and endorsed "**Genocide Joe**" Biden for president! For their part, the Teamster tops are currently flirting with Donald Trump, who said of the war in Gaza that he would tell Israeli prime minister Netanyahu to "finish it up and do it quickly" (*Haaretz*, 17 March).

The contours of effective solidarity action with the Palestinian people vary from country to country. In Germany, labor action against the genocidal war must necessarily oppose not only the ferociously pro-Zionist Social Democrat/Free Democrat/Green government (which has banned many pro-Palestinian protests) and the equally rabidly pro-Israel right-wing "opposition" but also the Left Party, as all the parliamentary parties explicitly support "Israel's right to self-defense," the formula justifying the mass murder in Gaza. In Italy, where fascists lead a far-right-wing government, organizing effective labor solidarity will require united action by the

normally fractious "rank-and-file" unions and bringing out key industrial sectors in a direct challenge to the "mainstream" confederations, which despite talk of a ceasefire are solidly pro-Israel.

Everywhere, the opportunist left seeks to build a "broad antiwar movement," typically centered on calls for a ceasefire, in order to include dissident liberal or "progressive" elements from the bourgeois and reformist parties, who don't necessarily oppose the war on Gaza but only its "excesses." Rather than such "popular-front" coalitions pushing impotent pressure politics, **what's urgently needed is independent, militant class struggle against all the capitalist and governing social-democratic parties**, which are all cogs in the imperialist system, and therefore, one way or another, complicit in the genocide being carried out in Gaza. Classless appeals for "peace" are a diversion in the face of implacable U.S. and Israeli mass murderers, who can only be stopped by international socialist revolution.

Highlighting the urgency of this independent class-struggle policy are resolutions that have been passed by four unions – Iron Workers Local 29, IUPAT (Painters) Local 10, IBEW (electrical workers) Local 48 and AFT (education) Local 111 – in the Portland, Oregon area of the U.S. Pacific Northwest. Rather than calling for a ceasefire, which would leave the Israeli in control of Gaza and which plays into the hands of the Biden administration that is now toying with the word, the resolutions, introduced by supporters of Class Struggle Workers – Portland, call for labor action to stop the shipment of arms to Israel, for "the immediate end to Israel's bombing of Gaza, for Israel to vacate Gaza and the West Bank, and to end all arming or funding to it now" (see reproductions above).

Above all the fight to halt the genocidal U.S./Israel war against the Palestinian

Port of Oakland Shut Down! All Out to Defend the Palestinian People!



Thousands of protesters gathered on January 13 to picket a military ship in the Port of Oakland, California, demanding an end to U.S. support for Israeli actions in Gaza and an immediate ceasefire.

The following leaflet and solidarity message was distributed to protesters in Oakland on January 13.

This morning, January 13, the Port of Oakland, California has been shut down by 3,000 pickets in protest against the war on Gaza being waged by Israel and the United States, which is supplying the weaponry that is making the genocide possible. No cargo is moving, no workers are being dispatched to the port from the hiring hall of International Longshore and Warehouse (ILWU) Local 10. Demonstrators are rightly calling President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken and Pentagon chief Austin war criminals. A showdown may come this evening if the employers try to work the port. Working people and opponents of imperialist mass murder in the Bay Area should go to the docks to stop any attempt to shut down the protest. This action should be a clarion call to workers internationally to use their power to defeat the genocidalists.

The following Internationalist solidarity message has been sent to the Oakland demonstrators:

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International salute the pickets shutting down the Port of Oakland in solidarity with the Palestin-

ian Arab people and against the genocidal war being waged against them by the Israeli militarists and U.S. imperialists. Workers everywhere should follow their example and that of dock workers in Italy, Barcelona and transport workers in Belgium, to act now to stop the flow of arms from the United States and other imperialists to Israel. We must mobilize our class power to defeat the Zionist/imperialist war on Gaza and now against Yemen as well.

Make no mistake: this is "Genocide Joe" Biden's war. Every one of the 2,000-pound bombs being used to wipe out whole blocks and to make the Gaza Strip uninhabitable comes from the Pentagon arsenal. Take concrete action now to stop the mass murder! U.S. unions and supporters should surround the Dover, DE Air Force base from where munitions are being airlifted to Israel. The action of militant Italian unions that carried out a national strike in solidarity with the Palestinians and against the war on Gaza should be an example for all.

Break with Biden's Democrats, the Republicans and all the bosses' parties! Build a class-struggle workers party to fight for a workers government, here and internationally! ■

people requires a political fight against the capitalist parties. This was addressed by the Portland Painters, who in a 2016 resolution called to break with all the bosses' parties and build a class-struggle workers party. The call in that resolution for the national union to repudiate its endorsement of the Democratic presidential candidate should be a beacon to worker militants today as unions in the U.S. join calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, and then endorse war criminal Democrat Biden who is responsible for arming, financing and directing the genocidal war.

The embattled Palestinian Arabs have been subjected to "ethnic cleansing" for more than three-quarters of a century, following subjugation by the British imperialists and the Ottoman Empire – and now to outright genocide by the Zionist state of Israel and its U.S. patrons. It will take a

revolution to put an end to this oppression, a revolution that can only be successful by splitting and exploding Israeli society from within. This requires intransigent, internationalist class struggle, throughout the entire region. As the League for the Fourth International has emphasized since the beginning of that war, and long before that, the bottom line is that defenders of the oppressed and opponents of imperialism must **stand foursquare with the Palestinian people against the Zionist oppressors and their state**, and that the only solution that promises a just and equitable future to the two peoples inhabiting this tiny land is for an **Arab-Hebrew Palestinian workers state, in a socialist federation of the Middle East.**

All out for militant international workers action on May Day in solidarity with the Palestinian people against the genocidal U.S./Israel war! ■

Mobilize Workers' Power to Halt the Genocidal War!

Bay Area ILWU Local 10 Calls for Labor Boycott of Arms to Israel

Meeting on May 1, International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 in the San Francisco Bay Area unanimously passed an important resolution denouncing “the genocidal war on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip,” and stressing that “all the heavy bombs being dropped on Gaza are supplied by the United States, as are all the warplanes from which they dropped.” Recalling that the “ILWU has a long history of defending the rights of the Palestinian people,” the resolution for the union’s convention declares “the ILWU will refuse to handle military cargo to Israel” and “will honor picket lines protesting the war on Gaza.” Also due to the union’s stop-work meeting, the port of Oakland was shut down all day on May Day, the international workers day.

Palestinian unions in Gaza, under the bombing and murderous attacks by vengeful Israeli occupation troops, had appealed to labor internationally, and to unions in the United States in particular, to “be our voice” and undertake action against the slaughter. The call went out from workers in Gaza, and ILWU Local 10 answered, loud and clear. This strongly worded resolution (reprinted on page 9), by a key local of a powerful union with a track record of fighting on behalf of the oppressed and against imperialist war, could help spur workers around the world to concrete action against the Zionist and imperialist war. A first step should be for labor activists and supporters to widely circulate the motion and call for similar action by their unions.

From the very outset of the Israeli war on Gaza last October 7, it has been clear that this is a joint war of the Zionist military machine with its United States patrons, and that it is a genocidal slaughter aiming to destroy the Palestinian people of the Gaza Strip. This is not an “Israel-Hamas war,” as the U.S. media call it, but indiscriminate mass murder of tens of thousands. The large majority of the dead are not soldiers but children and women killed as their homes are bombed into oblivion. The survivors have been pushed into the desert, deprived of food, water and electricity. Medical facilities, schools and essential services are deliberately targeted for destruction as the Zionists, using heavy weaponry supplied by the U.S. imperialists, seek to make Gaza unlivable for Palestinians.

From the beginning, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International called “For International Workers Action Against the Attack on Gaza,” in our article “Defend the Palestinians Against U.S./Israel Genocidal War on Gaza!” (10 October 2023).¹ Concretely, we said, this “could include workers action against the shipment of arms to Israel and Ukraine” (where the U.S. and NATO imperialists are waging a proxy war against Russia through the Kiev puppet government of fascists and nationalists that took power in a 2014 coup d’état). On 16 October 2023, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in Gaza issued an urgent ap-



Thousands of protesters effectively shut down the Port of Oakland, California, on January 13 to demand an end to the genocidal war on Gaza. On May 1, the Bay Area longshore local unanimously passed a motion declaring “the ILWU will refuse to handle military cargo to Israel” and “will honor picket lines protesting the war on Gaza.”

peal to labor internationally, “calling on trade unions in relevant industries:

- “1) To refuse to build weapons for Israel.
- “2) To refuse to transport weapons to Israel.
- “3) To pass motions in their trade union to this effect.
- 4) To take action against complicit companies,” etc.

A number of unions internationally issued statements that they would refuse to transport war cargo to Israel, including transport workers in Belgium and dock workers in Barcelona, Spain. In Italy, combative “rank-and-file” unions actually shut down ports, brought tens of thousands of workers into the streets, and have now twice carried out one-day national strikes in solidarity with the Palestinians. In the U.S., several unions took up the PGFTU appeal, notably four in the Portland, Oregon area – IUPAT Local 10 (painters), Ironworkers Local 29 (bridge construction), IBEW Local 48 (electrical workers) and AFT Local 111 (educational workers) – due to efforts by Class Struggle Workers – Portland.

But for the most part, unions in the U.S. have focused on pressuring the government to call for a ceasefire (which the hardline pro-Israel administration of Democratic president eventually did – to no effect) instead of calling for independent labor action, and mostly they just issued paper resolutions, as veteran longshore union activist Jack Heyman stressed in an article (“Dock Workers: Block Military Cargo to Israel Against the Genocidal War on Palestinians in Gaza!”²) that has been widely circulated in left and labor circles. Then in mid-March, the PGFTU issued a second appeal, specifically addressed to trade-unionists in the United States, making many of the same points and calling on them “to be our voice and advocate inside and outside America.”

Meanwhile, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) has

taken up the call for labor action to stop arms transport to Israel. At NUMSA’s initiative, the African regional conference of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) passed a resolution on March 7 that “calls on all ITF affiliates to support workers refusing to handle goods linked to Israel’s occupation,” and for other concrete actions in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The South African powerhouse union also issued a May 1 statement, “NUMSA dedicates Workers Day to the struggle of the people of Palestine,” highlighting past actions of the Bay Area ILWU against Israeli ships in previous Zionist wars, as well as against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

It is in this context that ILWU Local 10 unanimously adopted its resolution, “on this May Day 2024,” to “refuse to handle military cargo to Israel, as requested by the PGFTU and seconded by NUMSA, and as our union already did in 1978, refusing to load bomb parts for the Chilean military junta, and as it also did in 1980, refusing to load arms to the military junta of El Salvador; and will honor picket lines protesting the war on Gaza, as we have done repeatedly in the past.” The reso-

lution will go to the union’s convention and Longshore Caucus in mid-June in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.³ Already last December, the ILWU’s Canadian area called for an end to the war. *But there is an obstacle: the role and position of the union leadership.*

The Local 10 resolution is an about-face from the shameful silence on the Gaza war of the ILWU’s tops led by International president Willie Adams, who has backed Israel since going on a 2006 junket sponsored by a Zionist outfit. But if the upcoming convention approves the motion, it wouldn’t be the first time that the powerful West Coast dock union bucked its own bureaucrats. The resolution cites Local 10’s historic 1984 boycott of the South African ship *Nedlloyd Kimberly* to protest apartheid rule, an action that the union tops repeatedly tried to squelch. And the ILWU’s May Day 2008 shutdown of all 29 U.S. and Canadian Pacific ports against the war on Afghanistan and Iraq also overcame opposition from the union leaders and the maritime bosses.⁴

Underlining the potential and importance of the ILWU Local 10 resolution, we print below excerpts from an interview by the Labor Video Project with Jack Heyman, who authored the May Day 2024 motion, as well as motions for previous ILWU actions, including the 2008 May Day strike against the war and the 1999 West Coast port shutdown demanding freedom for class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Jack Heyman: In 2008, the union leadership was opposed to that resolution. Nevertheless, the ILWU is still a democratic union, and the opposition to the president in favor of shutting down the coast prevailed. I think this is a similar scenario. Some of the ILWU locals on the West Coast are opposed to the war. That is, Local 10 here in San Francisco/Oakland, Local 8 in Portland, the Marine Division

³ Note: the Local 10 motion was defeated at the ILWU convention, as the union bureaucracy mobilized against it.

⁴ See “May Day Strike Against the War Shuts Down West Coast Ports” and other articles in *The Internationalist* No. 27, May-June 2008, for more information on this historic event.



Irvin Jim, general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, presenting motion calling on unions to boycott arms to Israel at meeting of the International Transport Workers’ Federation.

¹ See *The Internationalist* No. 71, June-October 2023.

² Originally published on www.internationalist.org, 15 February.



Jack Heyman, longtime longshore union activist and author of Local 10 motion, at 16 December 2023 “Labor for Palestine” march in San Francisco.

of the ILWU, which is the Inlandboatmen’s Union, and ILWU Warehouse Local 6. Local 5 in Portland, the Powell’s Bookstore workers, had a resolution that’s coming up again at the convention because it was voted down at our International Executive Board meeting chaired by the president of the ILWU, who is an unabashed supporter of the Zionist government.

So there’s going to be an interesting struggle at the convention, and the [longshore] caucus which follows. From where I’m sitting, I think that Netanyahu is insistent on raiding Rafah and it’s going to be a massacre on steroids. We’ve already seen 42,000 dead, mostly children and women. Going into Rafah, which is more or less the last refuge left in the Gaza Strip, it’s going to be a catastrophe, another *nakba*.

The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions issued an appeal calling on all transport unions to refuse to load Israeli cargo in general, and especially not to handle war materiel. We want to “hot cargo” that war materiel. NUMSA, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, the largest union in that country, has come out with the same position call-

ing for workers around the world to refuse to handle Israeli cargo based on those two appeals to trade unions.

Labor Video Project: Local 10 at its May Day meeting voted unanimously to refuse to handle military cargo and any cargo going to Israel.

Heyman: We have the power, the working class has the power to shut down this war, but we need to do it in a coordinated way. It can’t be one union here and another union there, because the Zionists will always find a way, if we’re split up like that, to get what they need. The only way this could really be effective is if it is coordinated internationally and that means we’re going to have to have some sort of support from the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and hopefully from the International Dockworkers Council (IDC). These are important trade unions that organize the transport sector, particularly in maritime.

So I think our convention is going to be important politically for the working class. If they [the Israeli military] go into Rafah in a continuation of this blood lust, it’s going to exponentially raise the level of struggle. More and more people are going to get involved in this. It’s already happening on the campuses, it’s going to spread more to the trade unions that have the power to actually stop the war materiel from going to Israel.

Labor Video Project: What do you think about the recent attacks of the Zionists and fascists at UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles], mobilizing to shut down these encampments? And what should labor do about them?

Heyman: You know, I’ve seen this film before. This didn’t just start in 2024. You had attacks like this by Zionists back in the ’70s. You may remember the Jewish Defense League, the JDL. They were a fascist group, a Zionist group that went around attacking anybody who dared to criticize Israel.

I think it’s incumbent upon the labor movement to stand up for free speech, for the right of students to organize, for the right of students to have an encampment. The trade-union movement has picket lines, and to the extent that they’re effective is whether they’re able to show people, to demonstrate that picket lines mean don’t cross. I think the students have the same right to encamp on the university property. It’s their property. The attack down in UCLA was horrendous, and to see politicians of both parties – the Republican and the Democratic party – supporting these

Local 10 Caucus Resolution on Gaza and the West Bank

Whereas, the genocidal war on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip has now gone on for more than 200 days, with more than 42,000 dead and almost 80,000 seriously wounded; and

Whereas, on March 7 the headquarters of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in Gaza was demolished by Israeli bombs; and

Whereas, all the heavy bombs being dropped on Gaza are supplied by the United States, as are all the warplanes from which they dropped; and

Whereas, ILWU has a long history of defending the rights of the Palestinian people and calling on Israeli soldiers and settlers to stop the beating and killings of Palestinians and the occupation of their land in resolutions passed in 1988 and 1991 Conventions, the highest bodies of our union; and

Whereas, in 2002, when the Israeli military bombed the headquarters of the PGFTU in the West Bank, ILWU Local 10 officers sent an Open Letter to the Israel Consulate in San Francisco condemning that unprovoked attack; and

Whereas, on April 5, 2003, Harry Belafonte, civil rights leader and famous singer, joined ILWU in leading an anti-Iraq War protest in Oakland. Two days later anti-war protesters in the port of Oakland were attacked by OPD injuring ten longshoremen in what the U.N. rapporteur called the worst police violence against anti-war protesters. Local 10’s historic lawsuit argued that police posed a danger to health and safety to longshoremen in a labor struggle, as in the 1934 Big Strike. Local 10 and its injured members were compensated; and

Whereas, in 2010 Israel attacked the Turkish *Mavi Marmara* Freedom

Flotilla carrying humanitarian aid of food and medical supplies [to Gaza], massacring ten unarmed volunteers. When the ZIM *Shenzhen* docked in the port of Oakland and was picketed by pro-Palestinian protesters, longshore workers honored the picket line. This enraged the Israeli Consulate, which demanded a meeting with Local 10 officials. When their delegation arrived at the union, the Executive Board refused to meet with them; and

Whereas, in 2021 the ZIM-chartered *Volans* was boycotted in Oakland, and at the same time the ZIM *San Diego* was successfully picketed until federal and city police broke up the pickets; and

Whereas, the PGFTU in Gaza last October 16 issued an appeal to transport workers around the world not to handle war cargo to Israel; and

Whereas, on March 22 the PGFTU issued an appeal to American unions to be the voice of the beleaguered Palestinian population of Gaza and to tell the truth about what is happening in Gaza and take concrete action to put a stop to the horrific war; and

Whereas, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) called on unions to refuse to work Israeli cargo, especially military cargo, and use their power to stop the war on Gaza;

Therefore, on this May Day 2024, Be it resolved, that the ILWU will refuse to handle military cargo to Israel, as requested by the PGFTU and seconded by NUMSA, and as our union already did in 1978, refusing to load bomb parts for the Chilean military junta, and as it also did in 1980, refusing to load arms to the military junta of El Salvador; and will honor picket lines protesting the war on Gaza, as we have done repeatedly in the past.

attacks is just an indicator of where this country is headed. I think the labor movement should and could come to the defense of the students.

Labor Video Project: How could they do that?

Heyman: Well it’s kind of like what happened here on a small scale [in 1980-81 in Contra Costa County]. There was a black family, a member of the ILWU, that moved into a previously white neighborhood and their windows were broken, [the racists] tried to firebomb the house. So that question was brought before the membership of Local 10 and [we fought] to organize defense squads to go to the house, 24/7, around the clock.

The longshore union has a long history of fighting oppression. Our union came out of the 1934 [West Coast dock workers] struggle, when police killed two strikers, shot them in the back. To this day we don’t allow police to be members of our union. They’re not part of the work-

ing class. Whether it’s oppression from the state or oppression from right-wing or fascist groups, it’s in the interest of the trade-union movement to defend these expressions of protest against the Israeli genocide. That’s what the students are doing, and it’s in the interest of the working class to defend those students, whether it’s at UCLA, at Columbia, wherever.

You know it was workers and students in 1968 that almost toppled the bourgeois government in France. If the workers here organized with the students, we could have a similar dual power situation in this country. But it’s really incumbent on unions to at least defend the free speech rights of students.

Labor Video Project: How are you going to try to get support for that resolution, going to the ILWU convention in Vancouver?

Heyman: The interesting thing about the convention is that the largest body in the ILWU that has publicly come out against the war is the Canadian sector. That’s really



ILWU Local 10’s 1984 anti-apartheid action, picketing South African ship *Nedlloyd Kimberley* for eleven days. Speaking is Larry Wright.

important and is a basis for organizing other locals of the ILWU – that the host is opposed to the war. The problem is we have an International president and officers that have not spoken out against the war. That’s a big problem, because that’s a 180-degree turn from previous administrations of the ILWU.

The ILWU has always opposed U.S. imperialist war, going back to the Korean War [of 1950-53]. In the midst of the McCarthy period, we opposed U.S. imperialism and we defended the Koreans and the Chinese. So for [the ILWU top leaders] to now support the U.S./NATO war in the Ukraine, that is, the International officers of the longshore union defending this Zelinsky/fascist government – fascistic, anyway, with the Azov Battalion and so forth – is unconscionable. There’s a real sea change in the ILWU, to the right unfortunately.

Where we’re strongest in terms of going up against the bureaucracy is there still is a modicum of workers democracy in the union, number one, and number two, the convention is going to be held on the turf of the ILWU Canada. And I think we have a chance to organize other unions, because day by day there are more people becoming opponents of this war, and others who are defending the rights of students to have encampments to protest the war. Thanks to Netanyahu and his fascist government, a movement is growing and I think there’s a good chance next month that the ILWU will take the position, which it has done historically, of opposing this war.

In 1984 it was in the longshore union here in San Francisco that the union members voted to strike against the first ship that came in from South Africa, to oppose that government which was in ’84 shooting down miners for striking, arresting the leaders and so forth. We did that for eleven days protesting the apartheid government. That’s what our union has always done, defend the oppressed, not the oppressor.

Another point here is that this convention is taking place on the week of June-teenth [marking the day when slavery was finally formally abolished in the United States]. I know that particularly resonates in Local 10, which is a majority black union identifying with the Palestinian people.

Labor Video Project: What about the [Israeli] Histadrut? The AFL-CIO [U.S. labor federation] is directly connected with the Histadrut, which calls itself a trade union, [but] which was involved in supporting apartheid South Africa with military equipment. They worked to overthrow governments in Latin America, armed death squads. What is the relationship of U.S. labor to the Histadrut, and should they have a relationship with it?

Heyman: The officials of the AFL-CIO have a very close relationship with the Histadrut and with the Israeli government. I don’t know if I’d even categorize the Histadrut as a union because they have a massive ownership in land and factories and things like that. When the PGFTU was bombed in Nablus on the West Bank [in 2002], they said nothing. We on the other hand, in ILWU Local 10, sent an open letter to the Israeli consulate here in San Francisco protesting that attack on the trade-union headquarters.

So many unions in this country give a blank check to the aggressive militaristic foreign policies of the U.S. and the Israeli Histadrut has a close relations with the same bureaucrats that support every imperialist war of the U.S. To me, this harkens back to the 1960s when, just before Martin Luther

King was assassinated, he made that famous speech in Riverside Church calling the United States government the greatest purveyor of violence in the world. That hasn’t changed since the Vietnam War for sure. We need to fight here in this country to change the leadership. We need a class-struggle leadership, which doesn’t exist now. Certainly in Israel they need to get rid of the Histadrut, which is not really a trade union, and form their own union independent of the government.

In this country, the key thing is for the unions to be independent of the government. I just reread a pamphlet the other day that Trotsky wrote, “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay.” He points out that the main task is to demand independence of the trade-union movement from the government because there’s a tendency under imperialism for unions to come together with and be inextricably linked to the government, and that’s got to be broken.

Labor Video Project: What effect do you think this resolution will have on the rest of the labor movement if the ILWU does that? Because the government, the Biden administration, may come in and try to stop it, or use the Taft-Hartley law⁵ to threaten you with all kinds of legislation and laws.

Heyman: You know, one of the shortcomings of the 2008 action, where we shut down all the ports on the West Coast, was that it was only ILWU that took that kind of action. We had some local unions marching with us on the Embarcadero to the tune of *The Internationale*. But it’s really important for trade unions to build a class-struggle leadership, not these class-collaborationist leaderships that go along with whatever the employers want, or the government. That’s not going to be an easy fight. The best way for the ILWU to defend itself will be to reach out to other unions, and there is motion now in different European unions.

Certainly in South Africa, NUMSA has taken some tremendous actions in coordination with the ILWU. For instance, just last year, in 2023, they had a big demonstration for [imprisoned former Black Panther] Mumia Abu-Jamal in Pretoria, the capital, in front of the U.S. embassy there. So we need to coordinate trade unions backing each other up. It’s really simple. It’s called solidarity and it’s something that too many unions have jettisoned. The basis for the trade-union movement to survive and flourish is solidarity, and that solidarity sometimes will be interpreted by the government as being unpatriotic or too radical, or that they’re terrorists or they’re Communists or whatever. So really the key thing here is going to be solidarity. Coming out of the convention, if we pass the resolution, you’re right, we can expect to have tremendous repression of all sorts from the government. The only way to beat that is with solidarity, and it’s going to have to be international, it can’t just be in this country. ■

⁵ The 1948 Taft-Hartley Act was passed at the height of the post-World War II “red purges” in U.S. unions and included clauses against Communists in union leadership roles, as well as prohibiting militant labor struggles. While the leaders of both the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations denounced the act as a “Slave Labor Law,” the labor bureaucracy that was consolidated in these early years of the anti-Soviet Cold War was based on anti-communism, support for U.S. imperialism, and acceptance of bans on tactics like sit-down strikes (plant occupations), flying pickets and solidarity (“secondary”) strikes. The ILWU was one of the few unions that successfully defied this anti-labor strikebreaking law.

Break with the “Labor” Operatives of Imperialism and Zionism



Maritime Union of Australia, Sydney Branch

Gaza solidarity protest in Port Botany, Australia, November 2023. To bring to bear the power of the workers movement, it is crucial that unions lead protests to shut down shipping to and from Israel.

One of the calls in the PGFTU appeal is to “ban the occupation’s trade unions internationally, as they are partners in the war of genocide,” and in particular for “American unions to boycott these unions.” The reference is to the Israeli Histadrut, which is not a genuine workers union but an institution integral to the operation of the Zionist state since its inception, that perpetuates the superexploitation of Palestinian and immigrant workers, notably those in the West Bank under Israeli occupation. Unions should certainly boycott the Histadrut, but the “AFL-CIA,” as the U.S. labor federation’s international operations are widely known, is even more sinister. (The AFL-CIO “Solidarity Center” is financed by the U.S. government, and has been key to many U.S.-instigated attacks on leftist unions and coups.)

In many European countries as well, the main unions have longstanding ties to the Zionist “labor” body. In Germany, the DGB labor federation immediately supported the Zionist war and even today (in its appeal for the traditional Easter “peace marches”) does not even mention Gaza or the mass slaughter by the Israeli military, instead lambasting Hamas (and attacking Russia over the U.S./NATO imperialist proxy war in Ukraine). In France the CGT union confederation has called for a ceasefire and an “end to the massacre in Gaza,” but raises this only in the form of appeals to President Emanuel Macron rather than action by the unions themselves (for example, stopping arms shipments). In Italy, the once leftist CGIL raises calls for a ceasefire and to end the genocide, usually in conjunction with Catholic “peace” groups like Pax Cristi, but again, such pacifist invocations mean nothing.

The PGFTU appeal notes that “there have been some exceptional examples of unions, clearly demonstrated in leading protests denouncing the Zionist war of genocide being waged on the Gaza Strip.” This is particularly the case in Italy where the “rank-and-file unions” (*comitati di base*), in opposition to the bureaucracies of the CGIL/UIL/CISL labor federations, have held workers solidarity actions. Last November 17, S.I. Cobas held a nationwide

strike shutting many transport hubs in solidarity with the Palestinians, followed by a demonstration in Bologna against the war on Gaza. On February 23, a general strike was called by several of these smaller militant unions, blocking the port of Genova with Israeli Zim Line ships in the harbor, followed by a labor-led pro-Palestine demonstration of several tens of thousands in Milan the next day.

On the U.S. West Coast, in Australia and elsewhere, “block the boat” actions have been called by “community pickets” (often including numerous trade-unionists), which dock unions then respect on “health and safety” grounds, or not. But to mobilize the power of the workers movement, it is vital that *the unions* declare Israel cargo “too hot to handle” and themselves lead such “hot cargo” actions. In Australia, the Labor Party government is seeking to chain waterfront workers ever tighter to the state, with a “Military Strategic Fleet” of commercial vessels that can be requisitioned by the government “in times of need,” as these social democrats gear up for war on China via the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) imperialist alliance.

The subordination of labor officialdom to the capitalist state reflects, as Lenin emphasized during World War I, that with the advent of imperialism a “labor aristocracy and bureaucracy” has arisen for which “morsels of the loot” from the oppression of the rest of the world served as “a justification of their alliance with their ‘own’ national bourgeoisie, against the oppressed masses of *all* nations.” This privileged layer is the social basis of opportunism, and in “the stage of revolutionary action ... the time has come for a complete break with opportunism” and to oust these agents of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement (V.I. Lenin, “The Collapse of the Second International” [June 1915]).

Today, real solidarity action with the embattled Palestinian people requires a class-struggle fight against the labor bureaucracy that marches in lockstep with the imperialists and Zionists. That, in turn, is only possible on the basis of a program connecting today’s burning issues with the struggle for socialist revolution. ■



German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, April 17. Hobnobbing with fascists in Ukraine, supporting genocide in Gaza, the Greens are once again, as in 1998 against Yugoslavia, a top war party.

Germany...

continued from page 2

(Thuringia prime minister Bodo Ramelow from the Left Party is already on board) against refugees and the accelerated deportations, and fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, along with class-struggle measures to prevent deportations.

“Defense” minister Pistorius declares that Germany must “become fit for war.” Economics minister Robert Habeck, who just declared himself “armaments minister,” believes that “there are too many strikes for less and less work.” Transport minister Volker Wissing emphasized even more clearly that “there is war in Europe. This wage conflict [rail workers strikes] must not become a security risk.” The working class must mobilize against the double war of German imperialism and NATO in Ukraine and the Middle East, the accompanying criminalization of opposition and threats against trade-union struggles.

The ruling class has thrown down the gauntlet: it’s “pensions or rearmament.” The workers have the power to smash this all-sided offensive of the bourgeoisie. We not only have the power, it is in our most fundamental class interest to **stop the transport of war material to Ukraine and Israel.**

But the trade-union bureaucracy is fanatically loyal to the aims of German imperialism. So Scholz easily persuaded the misleaders of *ver.di* (service workers) and IG Metall (metal workers), the largest sections of the DGB labor federation, to support more arms shipments to Israel, to the Zionist genocidal warmongers in Gaza, and for the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. This is pure class betrayal. These unions should instead use their power to stop such shipments!

Repeated strikes in local transport, on the railroads, in the port of Hamburg and at the airports have shown the strength of the working class. There is an urgent need to fight, and that means sweeping away the bureaucratic parasites. This requires a revolutionary, Trotskyist program and leadership.

The attempt to build up the Left Party as a “left” social-democratic partner in order to pressure the SPD has been a miser-

Defend Michael Pröbsting (RCIT) and Der Funke (IMT)

Stop Austria’s Repression of Pro-Palestinian Protest

The trial of pro-Palestine activist Michael Pröbsting in Austria for a video statement expressing solidarity with the Palestinian resistance and opposition to the Israeli Zionist state ended with a “guilty” verdict and a conditional prison sentence of six months. We print below a statement by the League for the Fourth International at an April 26 protest in New York City against the frame-up trial.

On May 2, a trial is slated to begin in Vienna, Austria against Michael Pröbsting, the international secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) on the lying charges of “suspicion of incitement to commit terrorism” and “approval of terrorist criminal actions.” These charges could bring up to 2 years in jail. The criminal complaint cites a RCIT leaflet from last October opposing the Zionist state of Israel. Also under attack are two Austrian socialist youth leaders, Sonja and Alex, affiliated with the International Marxist Tendency, who were hauled in for interrogation by the state prosecutor in February. The League for the Fourth International calls to defend Pröbsting, Sonja and Alex and all those subject to repression against opponents of the U.S./Israel genocidal war on Gaza, in Austria and elsewhere. We say: **Drop the charges, lift the bans, stop the inquisition against pro-Palestinian protesters.**

These cases are a small part of wave of repression unleashed as part of the Zionist/imperialist war on the Palestinian people that has already *murdered* well over 40,000 residents of the Gaza Strip. That is over 2 percent of the entire population packed into this tiny enclave – smaller than the borough of Queens – that is known as “the largest open-air prison in the world.” This mass murder is financed and armed by U.S. imperialism. The Pentagon has supplied *every heavy bomb and every warplane* used to carry out this slaughter, mainly killing children and women in their homes. This mass murder is being carried out by the Democratic administration of “Genocide Joe” Biden, backed by Congressional representatives of the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America, even as they call for empty “restrictions” on the U.S.-supplied weapons. All DSA members thereby bear personal responsibility for this “genocide made in U.S.A.”

In Austria, a pro-Palestinian protest was banned last October 11 and criminal complaints filed against more than 300 demonstrators for violating the ban. The grounds for the prohibition was the claim that the protest slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine

able, demoralizing flop. The Left Party is a political corpse that cannot be revived. The Alliance for Sähra Wagenknecht (BSW), for its part, is a bourgeois populist party that, despite some rhetoric about reviving the welfare state, is openly pro-capitalist and anti-socialist. While the BSW warns the German bourgeoisie against provoking Russia, it is nevertheless a proponent of “European” imperialist militarization. Wagenknecht and (her husband) Oskar Lafon-



Internationalist Group at April 26 New York protest to defend Austrian leftist Michael Pröbsting and supporters of the International Marxist Tendency.

will be free” was a “call for the violent annihilation of Israel.” The magazine *Profil* accused organizers of “Anti-Semitism in Vienna.” This is grotesque coming from a state and pro-Israel forces that support genocide in Gaza. The Austrian demo ban followed similar action by police and local and state governments Germany. Cops there have outlawed and violently attacked countless demos in defense of the Palestinians, while the federal government banned Samidoun, the Palestinian nationalist defense organization. On April 12 in Berlin, an army of 900 cops smashed a Palestine Congress, on the grounds that various of the speakers were banned from political activity.

Here in the U.S., just in the last week in New York, hundreds of students and other defenders of the besieged Palestinian people have been arrested for participating in protest encampments in defense of Gaza. Now this repression is spreading across the U.S., with mass arrests at Yale University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Texas and yesterday a vicious cop attack on protesters at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. These bans are increasingly ludicrous. Two days ago, some 200+ protesters were arrested as they held a pro-peace seder on the street in Brooklyn during Passover, calling for peace in Gaza. **Talk about antisemitism!** And in dissolving the Berlin Palestine Congress, police banned praying in Arabic, or singing in Hebrew at a protest camp outside the Reichstag, Germany’s parliament. What’s next? Banning the

words “salaam” and “shalom,” the Arabic and Hebrew cognates for “peace”?

Against this across-the-board offensive by the bourgeoisie, a revolutionary leadership must be built that is not afraid to swim against the tide. Karl Liebknecht’s battle cry during the First World War, “The main enemy is at home,” still applies today. Class-conscious workers must defend both the Palestinians and Russia against the Zionist and imperialist

words “salaam” and “shalom,” the Arabic and Hebrew cognates for “peace”?

The forces prohibiting actions in defense of the Palestinian people – and spreading the filthy libel that anti-Zionism equals antisemitism – are the same ones waging a war of extermination on Gaza. They are also waging an imperialist proxy war against Russia over Ukraine, in a drive for counter-revolutionary war on China pointing to World War III. And they are fueling genuine anti-Semitism, from the fascist Austrian Freedom Party to the fascistic Alternative for Germany to Christian Zionists like U.S. House of Representatives speaker Mike Johnson, who came to Columbia yesterday to call to bring in the National Guard to suppress student revolt. Against the orchestrated McCarthyite repression, we call on the workers movement to defend the protesters, to undertake international labor action to halt arms shipments to Israel, and stop the annihilation of the Palestinian people. **Israel out of Gaza, the West Bank and all the Occupied Territories!**

Drop the charges against Michael Pröbsting! Put a stop to pro-war repression in Austria!

Mobilize the power of working class against police attacks and witch-hunt inquisitions!

For international workers action to stop transport of war materiel to Israel and Ukraine!

All out to defend the Palestinians against the genocidal U.S./Israel war on Gaza!

wars, which ultimately aim at a counter-revolutionary war against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed worker state. To prevent the looming World War III, and to dispel seductive dreams of an impossible “peaceful coexistence” with world capitalism, the Internationalistische Gruppe, German section of the League for the Fourth International, is fighting to build a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party dedicated to world socialist revolution. ■

Against the Genocidal War on Palestinians in Gaza!

Dock Workers: Block

Military Cargo to Israel

By Jack Heyman

(retired member of ILWU Local 10)

The following is the text of a leaflet that was distributed at the February membership meeting of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 in San Francisco, California.

The massacre of Palestinians in Gaza is escalating as the misnamed Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continue their carnage, flattening whole neighborhoods and committing mass murder of civilians. Yemen and Southern Lebanon have now been drawn into the war. More than 35,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed and 67,000 seriously injured according to the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor (4 February).¹ The United States is co-responsible for this genocide under way, as *all* the heavy (500-2,000-lb.) bombs causing the mass slaughter and *all* the warplanes from which they are dropped are *made in U.S.A.* Without U.S. weaponry, the Zionist militarists would be stymied. “Genocide Joe” Biden’s pretense of concern about civilian casualties is nothing but cynical crocodile tears. *This is a U.S./Israel war.*

Hospitals, universities and residential buildings are being deliberately targeted. Ambulances have been destroyed and medical workers killed, recently including those seeking to rescue a 6-year-old girl trapped in a car where her parents were killed by Israeli fire. Israel has cut off food, water, medical supplies, electricity and fuel, allowing only a trickle of humanitarian aid to enter. United Nations authorities report that 90% of Gaza’s 2.2 million people have been driven from their homes, and nine out of ten have less than one meal a day. Now, based on an Israeli claim, the U.S. along with Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland have stopped funding the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), making them complicit in the Zionist campaign to obliterate the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

¹ While Gaza Health authorities report 27,700 killed at this time (February 10), the figures cited above include those who have been reported missing for 14 days, mostly buried under the rubble.



For workers action to stop arms to Israel! Jack Heyman, center, at 16 December 2023 Bay Area labor solidarity with Palestine march.

How can this monstrous slaughter be stopped? In December, the South African government brought charges of genocide against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a toothless body that in a January 24 ruling called for Israel to change its war policy to protect civilians. This predictably had zero effect. In the U.S., the Center for Constitutional Rights and Defense for Children International – Palestine brought a case last November against war criminals Biden, U.S. secretary of state Blinken and Pentagon chief Austin, calling to enjoin the defendants from “providing, facilitating or coordinating military assistance or financing to Israel.” (One of the Palestinian American plaintiffs, Monadel Herzallah, will be speaking at a labor forum against the genocidal war on Gaza at ILWU Local 10 on February 24.) On January 31, a federal judge in Oakland ruled that he didn’t have jurisdiction, but echoed the

ICJ ruling that “it is plausible that Israel’s conduct amounts to genocide.” So much for the courts.

Now Israeli forces are poised to escalate the slaughter by attacking Rafah, where over a million Gazans are concentrated. On the Israeli-occupied West Bank, from October 7 to date at least 390 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli soldiers and fascist settlers, and thousands arrested. Backing the Israelis up, there are some 50,000 U.S. troops in the region and 19 warships in the eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea, from which U.S. warplanes and missiles are bombing targets in Yemen, Syria and Iraq and threatening Iran. *Working people the world over should be demanding that Israel get out of Gaza and the West Bank entirely and that the U.S. and its allies get the hell out of the Middle East. As a first step, unions should use their muscle to stop all Western arms shipments to Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and anywhere else in the region.*

Labor on Gaza: Paper Resolutions But Not a Lot of Action

Last October 18, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) issued an urgent appeal notably “calling on trade unions in relevant industries: 1) To refuse to build weapons destined for Israel. 2) To refuse to transport weapons to Israel. 3) To pass motions in their trade union to this effect,” as well as to take action against companies complicit with the Israeli siege, to pressure governments to stop military trade with Israel “and, in the case of the U.S., stop funding it.” In response, on October 30, five Belgian transport unions issued a joint statement saying they were refusing to load or unload arms shipments

heading to the war zone. And on November 6, the Barcelona dock workers union announced it would “not permit activity in our port of ships containing war materiel,” while calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

In Britain, Canada and elsewhere unions have passed motions and there have been protests outside Israeli companies, notably the “defense” contractor Elbit. In Italy, rank-and-file dock unions in Genoa and other ports actually stopped operations with Israeli ships and held a national one-day strike against the war on Gaza on November 17 that shut down hundreds of warehouses in logistics hubs. In Sydney, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) joined protests against Israeli ZIM Lines ships and has called for an immediate ceasefire. In January, the 20-million-member International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) issued a statement, “Global Unions Call for Unified Action Following IJC Ruling on Gaza Genocide Case.” Sounds good, but there is no call for labor action, just an appeal to the U.N. and “world leaders.”

In the United States, beginning in October the United Electrical Workers (UE) circulated a petition to other unions with demands for a ceasefire and restoration of food, fuel, water and electricity to Gaza, demands that were taken up by the United Auto Workers (UAW), American Postal Workers Union (APWU), National Nurses Union (NNU), Service Employees (SEIU), Painters (IUPAT), Flight Attendants (AFA) and even the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and National Education Association (NEA). But these appeals were *not* opposed to Israel’s war on Gaza as such, and in the case of the UAW specifically were rendered moot by its endorsement of warmonger Democrat Biden, who has emphatically backed and enabled the Israeli slaughter, for president. The rest of the liberal union leaders will certainly follow suit.

As for the national AFL-CIO, after first quashing a ceasefire call by a local labor council in Washington State last October, on February 8 it issued a statement that begins by “condemn[ing] the attacks by Hamas,” does not oppose the Israeli assault on Gaza, and calls for the release of Israeli hostages held in Gaza but not for freeing the more than 8,000 Palestinians held hostage in Israeli prisons. In short, *this is a pro-war statement* – but what else can you expect from the outfit whose international “labor” operations in conjunction with U.S. intelligence agencies earned it the nickname “AFL-CIA” in much of the world?

What About the ILWU?

While hundreds of Palestinian civilians are wantonly slaughtered by the mass-murdering IDF occupation forces every day, while the specter and reality of this genocidal war horrifies millions around the world, what has come from the titled officers of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) has been



Transportation workers block entrance to the Port of Salerno, Italy, during 11 November 2023 national strike called by rank-and-file union SI Cobas in solidarity with Palestine against Israeli war on Gaza.



Bay Area December 16 labor solidarity with Palestine march. The ILWU leadership put the kibosh on taking any stand against Israel's slaughter in Gaza.

a thundering silence. This is no accident. It goes hand-in-hand with the action (and inaction) on union matters by the ILWU International leadership under Bob McEllrath (2006 to 2016) and currently Willie Adams. The common denominator is *class collaboration*. Where McEllrath focused on cooperation with the shippers' Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), Adams has set his sights higher, seeking a seat at the White House table, literally, and dock jobs threatened by automation or Palestinians facing genocide be damned.

At the beginning of November, as outrage was building over the Israeli forces' massive slaughter in Gaza, several ILWU locals were working on resolutions of solidarity with the besieged Palestinians. On November 3, a ship of the U.S. Military Sealift Command, the *Cape Orlando*, rumored to be headed to Israel, docked in Oakland where it was met by hundreds of protesters responding to a call of the Arab Resource and Organizing Committee (AROC). I and others headed to the docks to express solidarity with the protest, which lasted for 12 hours before police forced demonstrators away from the

bollards so the crew could let the lines go. As the ship arrived in Tacoma the next day, 1,000 pro-Palestinian demonstrators blocked the dock. Longshore workers did not cross their picket line. Soldiers were brought in to work the ship.

Then on November 6, the ILWU International Executive Board (IEB) met in San Francisco, chaired by President Adams. ILWU Local 5 in Portland put forward a resolution citing ILWU's proud history of convention resolutions and longshore actions protesting Israeli attacks on Palestinians. It called for a ceasefire and "upholding and amplifying our Union's long history of solidarity with the people of Palestine." But some Locals objected and a motion was introduced to table the resolution, which was accepted by the chair and passed. Even so, on November 18 Local 10 in the Bay Area unanimously passed a resolution recalling the local's repeated refusal – in 2010, 2014 and 2021 – to work Israeli Zim Line ships when there were protests in defense of Palestinians, and expressing "our determination to take action in their defense."

It is also reported that ILWU Locals

et Cold War. In 1949, an ILWU strike shut down Hawaiian ports for six months. In 1953, the union undertook a general strike that paralyzed the islands to protest the conviction of regional director Jack Hall and six others as Communists under the Smith Act, on charges (later overturned) of conspiracy to overthrow the territorial government.

Every ILWU president since Bridges has confronted either the bosses' courts, the cops or the feds. But government hostility didn't stop union members from opposing and undertaking militant action against U.S.-backed oppressor regimes. In 1984, Local 10 undertook a historic boycott of the *Nedlloyd Kimberley*, a ship from apartheid South Africa, which after the Local leadership bowed before a court injunction was taken up by community protesters who continued to block the ship for several more days, an action that was hailed by South African anti-apartheid fighters in South Africa.

In 2002, in the build-up to the Iraq war President George Bush II threatened to send troops to occupy West Coast ports if the ILWU walked out during contract bar-

gaining. Democratic senator Diane Feinstein called on Bush to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act, which he did. In April 2003, ILWU longshore workers respected the lines of anti-Iraq war protesters in the Port of Oakland, who were viciously attacked by the police using concussion grenades, rubber bullets, wooden dowels and tear gas. A number of protesters were hospitalized and scores arrested, including myself as the Local 10 business agent on the scene. Then on May Day 2008, acting on a Local 10 resolution, the ILWU shut down every port on the Pacific Coast demanding an end to the U.S. war on Afghanistan and Iraq – the first strike by U.S. workers against a U.S. war since 1919.

ILWU Tops Swing Hard to Starboard on Israel-Palestine

But today it's different. ILWU president Willie Adams clearly disagrees with the union's longstanding defense of Palestinian rights. This is not new. In 2006, when he was secretary-treasurer of the ILWU International, Adams travelled to Israel on a trip sponsored by an evangelical Christian pro-Zionist group. He wrote an article for the ILWU newspaper, *The Dispatcher*, fulsomely praising Israel with no mention of the oppression of Palestinians in the giant open-air prison that is the Gaza Strip, or of the attacks by fascist Zionist settlers against the Palestinian people in the West Bank. When Adams asked *Dispatcher* editor Steve Stallone for his opinion of his article. Stallone told him: "It's problematic. It conflicts with the ILWU's official position established by its highest decision-making body, the convention."

Stallone showed Adams union resolutions of the 1988 and 1991 ILWU conventions defending Palestinian rights and criticizing Israeli attacks. Shortly after, Stallone was fired, in good part for his critique of Adams' pro-Zionist article, which was challenged in the *Dispatcher* by a letter to the editor from 38 angry members in Canada and the U.S. The firing, engineered by newly elected International president Bob McEllrath and Adams, both from the conservative leaderships of the Pacific Northwest locals of the ILWU, was an early marker of the union's rightward trajectory. It revealed a top-down bureaucratic tendency to undo democratically decided political positions. This was reflected in

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In December Bay Area march, the Internationalist Group solidarized with ILWU Local 10 members opposing Israeli genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.



ILWU leaders have openly embraced class collaboration. While Bob McEllrath focused on cooperation with the maritime bosses' PMA, his successor Willie Adams (above, second from left) has had his sights on a "seat at the (White House) table." Above: what ILWU billed as an "historic" October 2021 meeting with President Biden in the Roosevelt Room on supply chain issues.



Banner at the Gaza solidarity encampment at Columbia University in New York City, April 22.

Encampments...

continued from page 1

New York City campus' South Lawn, leading to split-screen TV coverage. Faculty members complained that the university president threw academic freedom under the bus, while 20 Jewish professors slammed the witch-hunters' weaponization of anti-Semitism. That night, Shafik called on the New York City Police Department to clear out the encampment, which they did the next morning, arresting 108 participants. The students were suspended from school and barred from campus; those living in dormitories were evicted on the spot, given 15 minutes to clear out their stuff.

Rather than squelching protest, this vindictive repression had the opposite effect, spurring Gaza solidarity actions across the country. Within hours of the police action, a new encampment sprouted at Columbia. On Friday, April 19, tents appeared in a plaza outside the New York University business school; that night, some 150 were arrested as hundreds yelled "Let them go." The police complained that faculty protesters were the most vocal against the cops. The following Monday, April 22, an encampment sprung up at Yale University, in New Haven, Connecticut, where at least 60 were arrested. In the next days, Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. suspended the undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee and closed off Harvard Yard, but students set up an encampment there anyway. Occupations spread to other area schools, including Emerson College in downtown Boston, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Tufts University, and a little later, at Northeastern University.

The encampments began at elite Ivy League universities and private colleges in the Northeast, but soon spread to state universities across the country, including the University of Minnesota, Ohio State, Indiana University, the University of South Carolina, University of Texas, University of Colorado and Arizona State. In all of those cases, police were called in to clear the tents and carry out mass arrests, often brutally. At UT Austin, Republican Texas governor Gregg Abbott sent baton-wielding state police, some on horseback, to break up a pro-Palestinian demonstration – not even an encampment – saying "these protesters belong in jail" and that students in "hate-filled, anti-Semitic protests at any public college or university in Texas should be expelled." On April 24, the Republican House of Representatives speaker Mike Johnson staged a provocation at Columbia, telling protesters to "stop the nonsense," and saying that if it didn't stop, university president Shafik should be fired and the National Guard called in.

It's not just right-wing Republicans who are smearing and repressing the Gaza solidarity camps and pro-Palestinian demonstrations. On April 21, the White House issued a statement in reference to the Columbia protests, saying "This blatant anti-Semitism [*sic*] is reprehensible and dangerous – and it has absolutely no place on college campuses." After speaking at the University of Virginia the next day, Democratic president Biden told the press "I condemn the antisemitic protests" – putting the presidential seal of approval on this disgusting slander of young people rightly indignant at the genocidal war armed and financed by his administration. The same day, New

York's Democratic governor Kathy Hochul beat Johnson to the punch, rushing to Columbia to denounce "anti-Semitism," seconded by New York City's Democratic mayor Eric Adams. In Boston, liberal Democratic mayor Michelle Wu sent city police to assault the Emerson encampment (118 arrests) and liberal Democratic governor Maura Healey deployed Massachusetts state police to bust up the Gaza solidarity camp at Northeastern (102 arrests).

The brutality of the cop attack in several places horrified many. At Emory University in Atlanta, a CNN video shows a woman professor with a handbag admonishing university, city and state police to stop beating a protester when a beefy officer viciously manhandles and throws her to the ground, another piles on and a third stands watch with a semi-automatic pepper-ball gun. This wanton violence against peaceful protesters and even a faculty member passing by is hardly surprising coming from Atlanta police who each got a \$500 bonus for harshly repressing the 2020 protests over the racist police murder of George Floyd; who at the height of those protests shot and killed Rayshard Brooks for falling asleep in a Wendy's drive-thru lane; and who in December 2022 executed Manuel Esteban Paez Terán (Tortuguita) in their war against demonstrators protesting the "Cop City" police training center.¹ What shocked liberals was this kind of repression being meted out at Emory, a top-flight university with a \$60,000 tuition.

Against the Gaza Genocide, Bring Out the Power of the Working Class

For hundreds of thousands of people across the United States – and millions worldwide – who have taken to the streets to protest the horrific slaughter in Gaza, the solidarity encampments on U.S. campuses have spurred hopes that they would mushroom into a mass movement. In New York City alone, the mayor reported more than 1,900 pro-Palestinian protests in the five months from October 7 to mid-March. Yet so far these have had no visible effect on U.S. policy, much less on the ground in Gaza. As of the end of April, some 80 encampments have been reported and over 800 arrests, climbing toward 1,000 as cam-

¹ See "Under Biden and the Democrats, Racist Police Terror Rages On," *The Internationalist* No. 69-70, January-May 2023; and "Atlanta's 'Cop City': Sinister Center for Racist Police Repression," *Revolution* No. 20, September 2023.

pus administrators look to police power to discipline academia. This is very significant, but nowhere near the scope of the 2020 mass marches that rocked U.S. cities for months protesting racist police murder, and it is politically still far from the radicalization of the student/youth revolt against the Vietnam War symbolized by the 1968 Columbia University occupation.

The reality is that the present protests have yet not gone beyond the dead-end of liberal pressure politics, seeking to turn capitalism's universities into morally liberated zones. But the hardline Zionists in Jerusalem, together with the imperialist mass murderers in Washington who finance, arm and jointly carry out the U.S./Israel genocide in Gaza, will not be pressured into "changing their priorities." They can only be stopped by a potentially stronger force, that of the working class here and internationally. It is to that force that the most serious student activists must turn. This requires a program of sharp class struggle.

Of course, new developments may change the course of events, such as a bloody eviction of an encampment. As the old saying has it, the brutality of a cop's riot stick can quickly raise consciousness and dispel "ivory tower" illusions. Meanwhile, the Israeli military is readying what could be mass murder on an even greater scale with an offensive in Rafah in the southern end of Gaza. There, a million Palestinians are bottled up, many in makeshift shelter after fleeing their now-destroyed homes, stuck on a waterless desert amid the searing summer heat. As people watch an actual genocide taking place before their eyes, and are desperately seeking some way to take action against it, various intractable forces are interacting. You have kill-crazed Zionist militarists; U.S. imperialist rulers seeking to stave off the unraveling of their dominance and pushing the world closer to WWII; McCarthyite witch-hunters in Washington and university authorities desperate to "restore order" to save their jobs. The result could be an explosive situation that goes beyond the campuses.

As the school year draws to an end, continued spread of protests, and of repression, could lay the basis for student strikes and walk-outs across the country. This would certainly be an important development, but rather than illusions in "student power," looking to and linking up with the power of the working class that can bring everything in society to a halt is key. These things don't fall from the sky; revolutionaries work to bring the program of class struggle into the fight. Our comrades in Port-



NYPD attacks New School (New York) faculty Gaza solidarity encampment, May 10. Over 3,000 pro-Palestinian protesters have been arrested across the U.S.



Revolutionary Internationalist Youth at University of California, Berkeley Gaza solidarity encampment, April 22.



CUNY Internationalists at CCNY encampment early on May 1 as mass arrests loomed. Four Club members were arrested.

land, Oregon have won construction workers unions to call for workers action to stop arms shipments to Israel, as Palestinian unions in Gaza urged. Building on that and putting such calls into practice, is a concrete way to strike a blow against Israeli and U.S. warmakers. In the face of repression against the student Gaza solidarity encampments, bringing out labor to defend the protesters could significantly change the balance of forces.

The key is a revolutionary program and revolutionary leadership. In the campus protests, this starts with a clear understanding that universities are part of the capitalist system, and those that administer them are servants of the capitalist ruling class. They can't be made into "friends of the people" or allies of the oppressed. The war on Gaza is not a case of "mistaken priorities" but an expression of the barbarism of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalist, in a state of accelerating decay. Thus, it is vital to connect today's struggles to the fight to overthrow this system through international socialist revolution.

The Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth (RIY) have been present daily at solidarity protests outside Columbia University, as well as at the New School and NYU. Members of RIY and the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York (CUNY) are participating in the Gaza solidarity encampment at City College. As early as last October and repeatedly since then, the Internationalist Clubs have taken the lead in protesting McCarthyite repression against defenders of the Palestinian people at Hunter College and elsewhere in CUNY.² In the face of the snowballing repression, we call to **drop all charges against pro-Palestinian demonstrators** and demand **police and security guards**

2 See "Defend the Palestinians! Defy the Witch-Hunters!" (24 October), "Hunter College Speak-Out Defies Intimidation Campaign" (12 November) and "McCarthyite Film Ban at Hunter College Struck Down By Student/Faculty Protest" (17 March) on our Revolutionaries in the Class Struggle site.

off campus. And we appeal to the unions – beginning with the Professional Staff Congress representing 30,000 faculty and staff at CUNY – saying **Labor: defend the students protesting genocide in Gaza!**

Across the country, the IG and RIY have been to multiple encampments in the Boston area (Emerson, MIT, Northeastern, Tufts); at Portland State University in Oregon where a building takeover is underway, to the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and participated daily in the encampment at the University of California in Berkeley. Everywhere we have combined the call to link up with the power of the working class, to the program for a binational Arab/Hebrew Palestinian workers state in a socialist federation of the Middle East.

Above all this struggle is a political fight against the combined forces of the capitalist state, and its leading parties, Democrats and Republicans, which are responsible for financing, arming and jointly waging genocidal war against the Palestinians. It is not about "bearing moral witness," "speaking truth to power" or other liberal platitudes. Against the bipartisan war party in Washington, which just voted \$95 billion to wage U.S. imperialist wars, we call to build a revolutionary workers party that can lead the struggles of all the oppressed. The stakes couldn't be higher. ■

Hunter College Speak-Out Defies Intimidation Campaign

Defend Gaza – We Will Not Be Silenced!



Speak-out protests McCarthyite witch hunts against defenders of the Palestinian people, at Hunter College in New York City, 7 November 2023.

7 NOVEMBER 2023 – "Defend Gaza Against Israeli Terror!" "Stop the Witch Hunts – We Will Not Be Silenced!" "Joe Biden Is a War Criminal!" "Arab, Jewish, Black and White – Workers of the World Unite!" Militant chants rang out as student protesters marched around the Midtown Manhattan campus of the City University of New York's Hunter College today, capping a "speak-out" by over 100 students and faculty. The rally was initiated by the CUNY Internationalists to help build opposition and defiance against the escalating campaign of intimidation – including at CUNY, the largest urban public university in the United States – against campus protests in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The McCarthyite drive to regiment universities and colleges for the U.S./Israel war on Gaza is coming straight from the federal, state and local governments, the media and Wall Street investors, in tandem with professional pro-Israel witch hunters. But amidst growing outrage at the genocidal war, large numbers of young people are awakening to the crimes of U.S. imperialism and its Democratic Party.

We reprint below the text of the flier for today's speak-out, thousands of copies of which were distributed at Hunter and other campuses, including City College, the Graduate Center and other CUNY campuses, together with efforts to draw in students from a number of private universities. At CUNY's Baruch College, a right-wing professor ripped stacks of fliers out of young leafleters' hands. At CCNY, campus security tore fliers down, while during the Hunter speak-out a small group of Zionist counter-demonstrators hurled epithets while waving U.S. and Israeli flags.

None of this deterred the crowd of speak-out participants. Strikingly young in their majority, they ardently chanted in defense of the besieged Palestinian people and closely followed speeches by fellow students as well as a sprinkling of faculty members. (One speaker noted that efforts at intimidation are having a noticeable effect so far on faculty and staff, and that student protest can help break through this.) Several first- and second-year students attending their first protest were inspired to come forward and give their own impromptu comments. As the rally ended, the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth comrade MCing the event said: "This doesn't stop here. We have to take this CUNY-wide" and to other universities. "Get involved and help us organize!"

Stop McCarthyite Witch Hunts at CUNY and Other Campuses!

At City University of New York campuses, and at universities throughout the New York area and across the U.S., witch hunts are underway against anyone showing solidarity with the Palestinian people, who are being killed by the thousands in an onslaught backed, financed and armed by the U.S. government. This sinister campaign to silence dissent is reminiscent of the "McCarthyite" purges, censorship and repression of the Cold War era.

The current reactionary crusade goes hand in hand with doxing of students at Columbia, NYU and elsewhere, threats to fire faculty and staff and ban campus groups, and new attacks on CUNY and campus free speech by the New York Post and other rightist media. Yet again, administrators and the Board of Trustees join the hue and cry, virtually putting a target on the backs of students, faculty and staff.

Seeking to smear, intimidate and silence all who speak out against the onslaught on Gaza, this witch hunting campaign poses a direct threat to the rights of us all. Make no mistake: if they succeed today, the witch hunters will expand and intensify their attacks. The time to stand up against this is now.

On November 1, Democratic governor Kathy Hochul seized on this climate of intimidation to launch a probe of CUNY that brings to mind the infamous "Rapp-Coudert Hearings" of 1940-42, which targeted hundreds of faculty members, students and staff at Brooklyn, Hunter, Queens and City colleges, and the campus "loyalty oaths" and mass firings of the 1950s red scare.

In the McCarthy era, they branded leftist teachers, students and union activists as dangerous "subversives." Today, they go all-out to stigmatize those who speak out in defense of the Palestinian people, outrageously conflating this with anti-Semitism. In reality, this smear is a gift to genuine anti-Semites, Islamophobic racists and white-supremacists.

The CUNY Internationalists call on students, faculty, staff, and all defenders of democratic rights to come to the speak-out on Tuesday, November 7 and raise our voices together, calling to Stop McCarthyite Witch Hunts at CUNY and Other Campuses – Now! ■



Statistical snapshot of the U.S./Israel genocide of the Palestinian population in Gaza, on Day 200 of the war.



NYC May Day 2024



May Day, the international workers holiday, took place this year amid a raging genocidal U.S./Israel Zionist war against the Palestinian people of Gaza, and the continuing U.S./NATO war against Russia over Ukraine. Both wars are way stations on the road to a third world war, a looming threat centrally aimed at counterrevolution in China, the largest remaining bureaucratically deformed workers state.

In the upcoming U.S. elections, despite their heated campaign rhetoric, both the Democratic and Republican parties of “Genocide Joe” Biden and now Kamala Harris, his partner in innumerable crimes of U.S. imperialism, and the all-round reactionary bigot Donald Trump are united in their China-bashing. This underscores Karl Liebknecht’s declaration in the first imperialist world war, “The main enemy is at home.” To combat the menace to the working and oppressed people of the world requires above all an internationalist proletarian revolutionary struggle.

The League for the Fourth International, virtually alone on the left, defends Russia and China against the imperialist war drive and calls for a binational Arab/Hebrew Palestinian workers state in a socialist federation of the Middle East. At the present time, the national sections of

the LFI are seeking to intervene wherever possible to mobilize workers action to stop war cargo to Israel and Ukraine.

In the United States, May Day came at the height of protest encampments of solidarity with Gaza at over 100 universities. More than 3,000 protesters were arrested nationwide in the last two weeks of April. The Internationalist Group actively intervened in these protests from New York City and Boston to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, where Class Struggle Workers was able to win a number of unions to pass resolutions calling for workers action against the slaughter in Gaza.

On the night of April 30-May 1, mass arrests were carried out to clear out encampments at Columbia University and the City University of New York. Four members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs were among those arrested. By noon on May 1, the Internationalists organized an emergency speak-out at Hunter College (photo above left) of some 200 demonstrators protesting the arrests. Many of these then joined with the May Day contingent of the IG and the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, numbering over 75 people, making it by far the largest organized left presence in the march. ■



**League for the
Fourth International**

www.internationalist.org



From the ICL-LFI Debate

In Defense of the Trotskyist Program

On January 13, a debate titled “The Fight for the Fourth International Today” was held in New York City between the League for the Fourth International and the International Communist League. (The LFI’s U.S. section is the Internationalist Group; the ICL’s is the Spartacist League.) The background to the debate was the ICL’s publication, in *Spartacist* No. 68 (September 2023), of “A Program for the Fourth International” based on a sweeping renunciation of the historic program and revolutionary continuity of the Spartacist tendency, which the “new” SL/ICL now dismisses as “Deformed at Birth.”

While explicitly admitting the unprincipled nature of the 1996 purge of longtime ICL cadres that led to the formation of the LFI, *Spartacist* 68 further deepened and widened the programmatic differences between the two organizations.

The burning importance today of the programmatic issues involved was highlighted in correspondence with the ICL reproduced in our previous issue,¹ and by our speakers at the January 13 debate.

As for the born-again ICL, it seeks to “theorize” an increasingly explicit break from Trotskyism by rewriting the history of the Russian Revolution in order to gut its programmatic lessons, as we addressed during a section of the January 13 debate titled “Permanent Revolution.” In fighting in defense of the revolutionary program of Trotskyism that was upheld by the Spartacist tendency for three decades beginning



Partial view of audience and speakers at the debate between the International Communist League and the League for the Fourth International held in New York City on 13 January 2024.

with its inception in the early 1960s,² the LFI fights for new October revolutions to open a socialist future for the workers and oppressed throughout the world.

Chaired by radical labor historian Bryan Palmer, widely acclaimed for his ongoing series of books on the life of U.S. Trotskyism’s founder James P. Cannon, the debate began (after a coin toss) with a presentation by ICL international secretary Perrault, followed by Abram Negrete for the LFI.

This was followed by brief rebuttals by the two presenters; a discussion period alternating supporters of the ICL, of the

² See “In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective” (1962), founding document of the Revolutionary Tendency of the Socialist Workers Party, republished in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 1 (1965) by the Spartacist group, established by RT members after their expulsion from the SWP.

LFI, and of other organizations; and then summary remarks. A similar format was then followed in the “Permanent Revolution” section, in which Ana Milei, a member of the International Executive Committee of the ICL, spoke first, followed by Jan Norden for the LFI.

Below we print the remarks by comrades Negrete and Norden, slightly condensed for publication, with subheads and notes added by *The Internationalist*. A full video of the debate will be available at internationalist.org, and a pamphlet including these and other materials will be published soon.

Presentation by Abram Negrete

I wanted to thank Bryan for chairing today’s debate and also all of the people from both organizations who worked really hard on the technical and other arrangements.

I also wanted to thank comrade Perrault for helping to make my job up here somewhat easier – actually, a lot easier.

So the title of today’s debate, as you’re aware, is “The Fight for the Fourth International Today,” in other words, the World Party of Socialist Revolution, which was founded by Leon Trotsky and his co-thinkers in 1938 and was destroyed in 1951-53 by the revisionist current within the Fourth International that came to be known as “Pabloism,” after the then-International Secretary of the Fourth International, Michel Pablo.

The central thesis of the founding program of the Fourth International, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, known as the Transitional Program, is that the crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolu-

tionary leadership. Interestingly, that thesis, and defending it or attacking it – or dismissing it, saying it was obsolete – was one of the early political disputes between us and the old ICL. Well, let’s call it the “middle-old” ICL or something like that, before the current “born-again” ICL. After our expulsion in 1996, early on, we had to defend, against a revisionist attack by the ICL, that concept at the heart of the Transitional Program. You can read about it in *The Internationalist* No. 5, in an article called “In Defense of the Transitional Program.”³

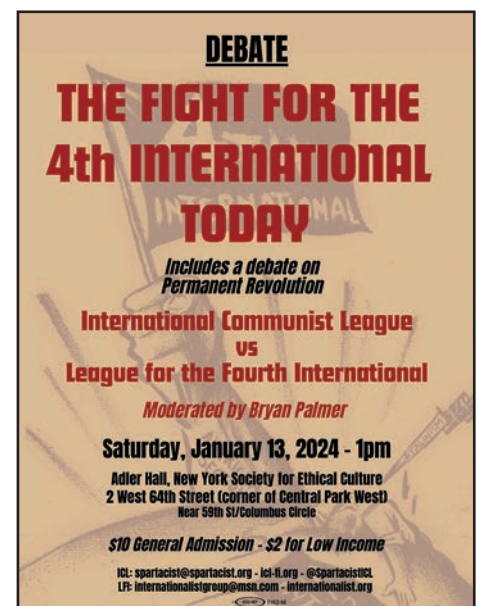
I think that if we look at the world today, we can certainly see that this thesis is as urgent as ever, and I would argue even more urgent. We have the war on Gaza, a genocidal war against the Palestinian people. And this is a U.S. war, a U.S./Israel genocidal war on Gaza, and it is proceeding every day. The fact that it is a U.S. war is of enormous importance and it’s something that the LFI emphasizes. The ICL? I’m not sure if they’ve ever even said that.

But in any case: our line is to defend Gaza and to defeat the U.S./Israel genocidal war and to bring out the power of the international working class. From here to Portland to Italy to Sydney and Melbourne and elsewhere, LFI comrades are part of the fight to defend the Palestinian people, to defeat the witch hunts against defenders of the Palestinian people and to stop the flow of arms to this genocidal war. We have been part of those mobilizations and out in the hallway, you can see a poster about the motions that our comrades in Portland, Oregon have initiated and that were passed for the stopping of arms shipments by construction workers

³ See *The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998.



Well over 200 people attended, while many others saw it on Youtube.



Flier for ICL-LFI debate.

Internationalist photo

Internationalist photo



unions on the basis of comrades' struggle in the Painters union and elsewhere; for a break with the Democratic Party and the forging of a class-struggle workers party, a motion that was passed in the Painters union some years ago and has been the basis for much of their work.⁴

On the Ukraine war, as explained in *The Internationalist*, this went from the original nationalist war between two non-imperialist, capitalist states to a full-on U.S./NATO proxy war against Russia, which is a way station – as the imperialist military and political chiefs say – towards war against China. That war is aimed in large part against China, something that we also rarely, if ever, hear from the ICL. And this is part of a drive by U.S. imperialism, heading towards World War III. Only socialist revolution can stop that world war.⁵

Now, our position with regard to the Ukraine war: revolutionaries stand for the defeat of the imperialists and for the military defense of those targeted by them, Russia and the Chinese deformed workers state. You will have noticed that comrade Perrault said that the war in Ukraine is a proxy war between NATO and Russia. The ICL states correctly that Russia is not an imperialist country. It states correctly, obviously, that NATO is a military alliance of imperialist countries headed by the U.S. Not only that, it's headed by a liberal party, the Democratic Party.

Despite this, the ICL refuses to defend the *targets* of that imperialist war. It takes a neutralist position, saying it's a war between two "gangs of thugs." A lot of liberals say that, in fact I think I hear that from liberals pretty much every day: just a gang of thugs on one side and just a gang of thugs on the other side. So apparently the defeat of Russia by the imperialists would be a matter of indifference.

Now we hear about this "unipolar world." Well, in fact, after the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union there was considerable *disunity* amongst the imperialists. Perhaps not as much as foreseen in the prognosis of a memoran-

⁴ See "Portland-Area Unions Call for Workers Action Against U.S./Israel War on Gaza" (December 2023) and "Portland, Oregon Painters Union Says: To Hell with the Bosses' Parties – For a Class-Struggle Workers Party" (August 2016), *internationalist.org*.

⁵ See "U.S. Imperialism Hurling Toward World War III," *The Internationalist* No. 69-70, January-May 2023, and "Only Socialist Revolution Can Defeat U.S. Imperialism's Drive to WWII," in *Revolution* No. 20, September 2023

dum from 1994 or a document from 1992,⁶ but there was something called the Yugoslavia War, you may have heard of it. There was the Iraq War – where there was not unity amongst the imperialists – and a whole bunch of other stuff.

But where you *do* get something approximating that picture is right now with the U.S./NATO imperialist war against Russia, in which the ICL refuses to defend the targets of the imperialist onslaught – and uses liberal verbiage to promote that position. All right, let's move on, there's a lot to say and not much time. We give no political support, obviously, to the bourgeois government of Putin, but we call for bringing out the power of the working class to stop the arms shipments to the imperialists' proxies, the Ukraine government.

Now, on the basis of what program, based on historical experience, can the Fourth International be reformed? Comrade Perrault said, and I think correctly, that the question of which program is of great importance. So let me just say, and I said this at an SL forum: when I was recruited to the SL youth group in 1972-73, at that time the Socialist Workers Party claimed to be Trotskyist, and they called us – guess what? Three guesses, starts with an "s." "Sectarians." But they tooth and nail denied that they were abandoning Trotskyism. They had some very intelligent people, with writers – [SWP theorist] Joseph Hansen was very competent, and a bunch of others – who would contest it every time that we said, "You're abandoning the Trotskyist program."

Until in the early '80s, after a study of the "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" and after polemics on this by Doug Jenness and polemics on this by other leaders of the

⁶ This refers to *Spartacist* No. 68's claims regarding "exceptional stability of the post-Soviet period" under "ultra-imperialism [sic], made in the USA"; that perspectives documents from 1992, 1994 and 1996 were the source of "every opportunist mistake or sectarian stupidity of the ICL in the last 30 years"; and that while we were "correct in denouncing some of the ICL's most egregious betrayals," the Internationalist Group/LFI was essentially the same as the ICL since supposedly "neither the IG nor the ICL had an answer to liberalism, the dominant ideology internationally and the main political obstacle they confronted in the workers movement."

SWP, they came out in 1982 with a speech by Jack Barnes called "Their Trotsky and Ours," where they said: You know what? We're *not* Trotskyists. Trotskyism is ultra-left sectarianism. And that permanent revolution thing? No good. And guess what? We've discovered the importance of supporting the Freedom Charter in South Africa and the ANC.⁷ That was an important thing.

Now, with the Spartacist League and the ICL: we were expelled in 1996 on frame-up charges, right? [Turning to Perrault:] They were frame-up charges, right? Comrade Perrault says "Right, they were." Thank you. Listen to that. In other words, what's been said about us for 28 years was a lie. You understand that? But let's move on from that. We said – year after year – and we documented the abandonment of one key position after another by the ICL. But they denied that they were abandoning the historic program of Spartacism.

Born-Again ICL vs. Historic Spartacist Program

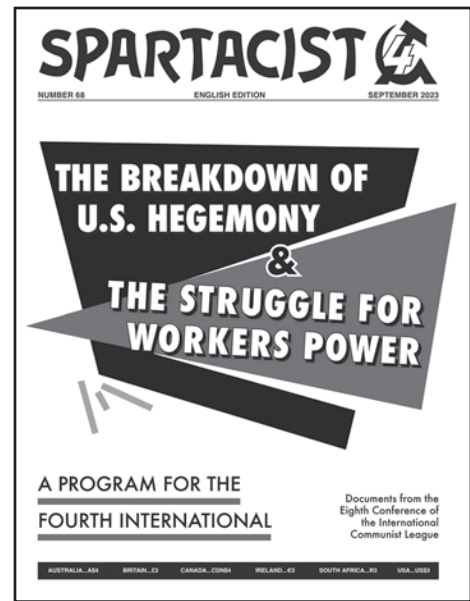
But now we have a new revelation. Does everybody have their *Spartacist* 68? [Holds it up.] I very much agree with comrade Perrault that it should be studied carefully – actually, very carefully. And here, what it says is: You know what? The Spartacist tendency was deformed from birth; we were wrong on just about everything, they say. As for your paper, the paper of one section or another [of the ICL], we renounce that paper back to the beginning, they say. They have junked and they're in the process of junking, in a kaleidoscopic, dizzying way, one part of that program after another.

It's far from over. I said at one of one

⁷ The Freedom Charter has been the bourgeois-democratic keystone for South Africa's African National Congress since its adoption in 1955. After rightly refusing to spread illusions in the ANC's program since the inception of Spartacist work in South Africa and years before, the ICL now states that "revolutionaries" must "fight for the working class to lead a struggle for the Freedom Charter's implementation." This was the program of pseudo-Trotskyist groupings orbiting around or embedded in the ANC, and it is the stated program of Stalinist reformists today. Tailing the governing party of South Africa's neo-apartheid regime is part of the "new ICL's" ever-extending embrace of bourgeois nationalism, publicly launched in 2017 with a bizarre self-denunciation titled "The Struggle Against the Chauvinist Hydra," *Spartacist*, Summer 2017.



The League for the Fourth International defends Russia and China against the imperialist war drive. The born-again ICL refuses to defend the targets of the united imperialist onslaught.



of the ICL's forums, in May: the members of the Spartacist League and the ICL do not know what their politics will be next week or next month or next year, because they're changing so rapidly.

But in any event, *that* debate is over. The historic program of Spartacism is *ours*. They have renounced it, they say that it was a betrayal, they say it was a betrayal on one thing after another, they throw it into the garbage. But we maintain that the historic program of Spartacism is crucial and vital to reforging the Fourth International.

So *that's* what the debate is about. Is the historic program of Spartacism – which was not the invention of some person in a fever dream, it was the distillation of decades of bloody struggles of the oppressed and the lessons of the past history of the Fourth International and the communist movement. Is the historic program of Spartacism fundamental to reforging the Fourth International? We say *yes* – and they say *no*. They say *no*.

Well, at least that's out of the way.

So, what was the foundation of the Spartacist tendency? It came out of the Socialist Workers Party and something called the Revolutionary Tendency (RT), as most of the people here know. It was a group of young revolutionaries; some had been Shachtmanites,⁸ but the experience of the Hungarian Revolution [of 1956] taught them a thing or two. For example, on the "Russian Question." And they came over to the Socialist Workers Party. So when the challenge of the Cuban Revolution arose, they were pretty well armed to have a revolutionary Marxist position, of militant defense of Cuba, but understanding that it was in the process of consolidating as a deformed workers state. And that a political revolution by the proletariat was necessary to open the road to socialism, to establish workers democracy based on workers soviets and a policy of revolutionary internationalism to expand the revolution. They rejected the suicidal strategy of guerrilla warfare.

⁸ Max Shachtman (1904-72) was a leading member of the U.S. Trotskyist movement from 1928 until 1940, when he split from it in opposition to the Fourth International's position on the "Russian Question" (unconditional military defense of the USSR against imperialism and counterrevolution; proletarian political revolution against the conservative Stalinist bureaucracy). Moving further rightwards over subsequent years, Shachtman's decision to merge the remaining "Shachtmanites" into the Cold War Socialist Party of Norman Thomas was the last straw for activists such as James Robertson, Tim Wohlforth and Shane Mage, who were won over by the SWP, founding the *Young Socialist* newspaper in 1957 and then the SWP's youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance.

And the Russian Question became key for the Spartacist tendency throughout its history. The Russian Question in the Soviet Union, the Russian Question in Vietnam, the Russian Question in Cuba, the Russian Question in Poland – which the ICL is now renouncing, what the Spartacist tendency had to say about Poland at the crucial moment of 1981 [when the U.S.-backed clerical-nationalist Solidarność movement was making a bid for power]. Openly.

Two: the black question in the United States, key to proletarian revolution – the specific nature of U.S. society, a society in which black oppression lies at the root of the origins of this society and at the heart of almost every political question in this society, every social question. The program of revolutionary integrationism, in opposition to false roads like black nationalism or following the liberal leadership, of the liberal pro-Democratic Party leaders of the official civil rights movement. The RT fought inside the Socialist Workers Party, to get the activists from the SWP down there [i.e., into the South] into the movement, to get them on the buses, get them into the streets with the program that we now synthesize as “black liberation through socialist revolution.”

This was enormously important for arming the Spartacist tendency in the future, not only on the black question and in the extremely important and historic mobilizations to stop the Ku Klux Klan, for example, in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere. But also on other questions of special oppression, like the woman question, the fight for women’s liberation through socialist revolution. And this led to one of the most important Marxist journals, in my opinion, of the postwar period, *Women and Revolution*.⁹ What’s your position on that journal? I’d like to hear. Do you renounce that as well? Somebody answer that question today, please. Because we consider *W&R*, until pretty close to the end of it, ours in the sense of part of our political legacy. What’s your line on that? It also was key to other questions of understanding the Leninist party as the “tribune of the people,” the tribune of the oppressed. This was key, for example, to the historic fusion with the former Lavender and Red Union, which changed its name to Red Flag Union, a gay revolutionary Marxist group.¹⁰

⁹ Initiated by the Spartacist League in 1971, *Women and Revolution* was published until 1996. An archive of its 44 issues is available online at marxists.org/history/etol/newspaper/w&r.

¹⁰ See *Red Flag* “Special Fusion Supplement” in *Workers Vanguard* No. 172, 8 September 1977.



Bringing the revolutionary program of Trotskyism into the living class struggle. Labor militants in Class Struggle Workers – Portland (CSWP), politically supported by the Internationalist Group, brought hundreds of trade-unionists and their supporters into the streets on 4 June 2017 (above) against a fascist mobilization protected by local, state and federal police. They also fight in the unions to break with the Democratic Party and for a class-struggle workers party. Since October 2023, they have won five Portland-area unions to pass motions calling for workers action against the U.S./Israel genocidal war on Gaza.

And then the struggle against Pabloism was the third, if you like, “whale” of the RT;¹¹ the struggle against Pabloism, the struggle against the liquidation of the independent revolutionary Marxist party as the essential instrument for leading the proletariat and the oppressed to victory, and [against] the tailism of the existing leaderships by the liquidationist leaders of the [post-WWII] Fourth International.

Can people get their reading for today out, please? *Spartacist* 68 and “The LFI Chooses Sectarianism” (*Spartacist* supplement, 3 November 2023). [*Shows cover of Spartacist* No. 68.] So we read here,¹¹ The reference is to the Bolsheviks’ formulation, from 1905 to early 1917, of central programmatic demands in the form of “three militant slogans: Democratic Republic, Confiscation of the Landed Estates, Eight-Hour Working Day – colloquially called the three whales of Bolshevism, by analogy with those whales upon which according to an old popular fable the earth reposes” (Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution* [1930], “Rearming the Party”).

“A Program for the Fourth International,” and I’m like, wow! I kind of thought there was one already, the Transitional Program, but this ought to be interesting. I’d like to see what it has to say about the black question in the United States, for example, the citadel of world imperialism; about the struggle in the United States for black liberation, which was one of the pillars of the RT. Guess how much it has to say about that? *Nothing*. Please explain why. Why does the “Program for the Fourth International,” according to you, not mention the struggle for black liberation in the United States one time? Not once. Please explain.

Second question: the struggle against Pabloism. If you have to reforge the Fourth International, why is that? It took us a while to settle on that word, didn’t it, comrades who remember, and who want to remember. We had “rebirth of the Fourth International,” “reconstruct the Fourth International,” that didn’t work – I don’t have time to explain why – we came up with the somewhat exotic term “reforge.” But in any case, why? Not a word about it.

What about the Cuban Revolution and its lessons? Cuba is mentioned in a few lists of countries. The Cuban Revolution is mentioned in a photo caption, on page 42. Please open to page 42. You can do it too, you know, it’s yours. We’ve studied it. This is the only place that the Cuban Revolution is mentioned, in a photo caption, to make fun of the Spartacist tendency, [the photo and caption are placed next to the subhead] “Deformed at Birth.” Get it? You know, like a deformed workers state – isn’t that funny? That is the only time the Cuban Revolution is mentioned.

The Cuban Revolution is under threat right now. What’s your line? What is your line on the riots in Cuba in July 2021, in which counterrevolutionary instigators took advantage of economic crisis.¹² Do you consider the question of defense of the Cuban

¹² See “The Truth About Cuba Protests – Defend the Revolution Against U.S. Imperialism and Its Frontmen” and related articles, *The Internationalist* No. 64, July-September 2021.

Revolution in the here and now – not in “doctrinal abstractions” of orthodox “sectarians,” but now – do you consider it worthy of inclusion in what you call the “Program for the Fourth International”? If so, why is it not here? If not, please explain.

Bringing the Revolutionary Program into the Class Struggle

So I was having some trouble, quite a bit of trouble, actually, preparing for this debate for one reason, in one aspect. It was fun in a lot of ways. But how would one explain this to young people who want to figure out what is this all about?

When I was being recruited away from Guevarism, from Stalinism, in high school, me and my best friend, we used to get all the leftist papers and try to figure out what they were talking about – like, what the hell is this, I don’t understand this stuff. We had to read [Lenin’s] *Two Tactics* at an SL study group. The person who gave it might be here. There was a group in *Two Tactics* called *Osvobozhdeniye* – “what the hell is that?” What is the “revolutionary dictatorship,” etc. We read a little red [Spartacist] pamphlet called “Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution” by Leon Trotsky, which contrasts the “revolutionary democratic dictatorship [of the proletariat and peasantry]” formula of Lenin to the permanent revolution and to the Mensheviks. That was our main reading for one of the study groups of the SL/RCY study groups. [*The Revolutionary Communist Youth was the Spartacist League’s youth section at that time.*] But why, we wondered, were people arguing about such things? What did it mean in politics today? A lot of people probably wonder about that today.

So I was trying to think of some kind of analogy and I wasn’t doing so well. First I thought: this *Spartacist* 68, the new revelation and the new evangel, I guess, has a bunch of things to say, but they’re mainly about the ICL and how it screwed up in a whole lot of ways. And I was wondering, how would one explain this?

And a funny thing happened on the way



Internationalists at Cuba solidarity demonstration, 15 July 2021, denouncing counterrevolutionary riots instigated by gusanos and U.S. imperialism.

Bring Out Workers Power to Free

Mumia, Fight Imperialist War



The League for the Fourth International sparked the first workers strike action calling for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, by education workers union (SEPE) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (upper left), on 23 April 1999, in coordination with ILWU shutdown of all U.S. West Coast ports the next day (upper right). Dock workers chanted, “An injury to one is an injury to all, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal.” The Internationalist Group/U.S. also played a key role in bringing about May Day 2008 West Coast port shutdown (lower right) against U.S. imperialist war on Afghanistan and Iraq. (Enlarged images of the display boards are available online at <https://www.internationalist.org/icl-ifi-debate-in-defense-of-the-trotskyist-program-2401.html>)

to the forum – I mean, the debate. A guy came up to me, kind of a little guy, and he said, “Are you going to the debate?” I said, “I am.” And he said, “I don’t understand what is happening between your group and their group. Could you please explain?” And I thought I should try to boil it down somehow, so I came up with an analogy of a company that builds bridges and when asked, “Well, what’s your experience building bridges? Like, what’s your record, say for the past 30 years?” “Oh, all our bridges fell down, but now we’re very good at building bridges – we hope.” And I thought, no, that’s not such a good one, maybe you should use one with doctors, no, that’s not so good. So I thought: why not make it real?

Comrade Perrault is right and Bryan is right, they both said it or implied it: that this is going to be – it is already, but it will increasingly be – a turbulent period. There’s going to be a lot of struggles. So I thought: why not imagine that this audience consists of workers involved in a really hot

struggle, who are getting fed up with their reformist leaders and looking for something like revolutionary leadership, and they are comparing the two organizations. And they say: Listen, we want some kind of radical leadership, but we want to know who is who and what is your experience, in the sense of not how old you are and how many years you’ve lived, but what is your record?

We would say: The LFI has fought seriously, consistently and systematically; we have written and we have fought in the class struggle to bring the revolutionary program of Trotskyism into the living class struggle.

They might say to us: Someone told us you lead some workers out in Portland. Is anybody from Portland here? Could you stand up? [*A comrade from Portland stands up.*] Thank you. You can talk to her and ask – we would say to these workers – she can tell you about the struggle to stop the fascists, Portland Labor Against the Fascists, and the role of class-struggle militants. [*These workers might ask:*] How was that connect-

Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas



Workers’ power in action. The Grupo Internacionalista called on the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) to form union guards when the army threatened to intervene to smash student strike to keep free education at the National University (UNAM) in July 1999. The union did, with around-the-clock defense guard (above) and threat to “throw the switch” and black out Mexico City if military came in. This held off suppression of the strike for months.

IG/TIC: Revolutionary Struggle for

Immigrant Rights



The Internationalist Group and Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (TIC – Class Struggle International Workers) have fought to defend immigrants, mobilizing against anti-immigrant “war purge” (upper left) at the City University of New York (2001), in organizing union at Hot and Crusty bakery-restaurant (upper right) in 2012, over the 2014 kidnapping of 43 teacher college students in Ayotzinapa, Mexico (lower left), and forging immigrant worker communist cadres, like our comrade Fernando López (center top), who died in 1999. Lower right: TIC pamphlets on taxi workers and immigrants in the epicenter of the coronavirus epidemic (2020).

ed to fighting against the union bureaucracy tying the Painters union and other unions to the bosses’ Democratic Party? What about the motions that were just passed in the Ironworkers and the Painters, not just saying that they stand for stopping the arms shipments, but calling on the labor movement to stop the arms shipments – how did that happen? What about the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, are there some lessons out there? Weren’t you guys (in the Painter’s union it’s mainly guys) in a pre-strike situation recently – what did you do about that? How is it connected to the struggle against the Democratic Party mayor? And what about when Portland was occupied by the feds, pretty much, and by “Teargas Ted” Wheeler, the Democratic Party mayor, during the mass upheaval against racist police terror after the racist murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many others?

There’s a poster display out there [in the hall], I invite you to see it.

How about in Mexico, like in the Oaxaca struggles, the struggles over Ayotzinapa, and there’s a strike right now in Mexico City. How about that huge UNAM [National Autonomous University of Mexico] strike in 1999 to 2000? Bringing the Trotskyist program, the Transitional Program, into the class struggle – did you from the LFI have anything like that, in that huge strike at the largest university in Latin America, when the World Bank, a pillar of the liberal order indeed, ordered the Mexican government to impose tuition?

Is anybody here from Mexico? Can you stand up, please? [*ICL member in audience laughs.*] It’s real funny – because bringing the Transitional Program into that struggle meant sparking workers defense guards. Look it up in your Transitional Program, that’s the old program for the Fourth International, not this one. They [our comrades in Mexico] sparked, they caused to be organized workers defense guards, which defended the strike 24 hours a day when the army, in July of 1999, threatened to invade the largest university in Latin America. And as a result of that, UNAM is still free... You know, a very “sectarian” action.

Speaking of university strikes, how about the one here in New York, there was a big university strike about two years ago. Was anybody here in that strike? Stand up if you were. I’m serious, let’s see the “sectarians.” [*More than a dozen supporters of the IG and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth stand up.*] What did you fight for? Picket lines mean don’t cross. Is that part of the program? It’s very “abstract,” it’s an “abstract orthodox dogma.”¹³ Fighting for that against the DSA, your [the ICL’s] new friends, or hoped-for friends. “Revolutionaries in the DSA” – give me a break.¹⁴ It’s a faction of the imperialist government party, the war criminal party. Don’t tell me about revolutionaries in the party of *genocide*, the party of the Vietnam War and napalm and Hiroshima. If they had an ounce of revolutionary in them, they would not be in that organization. Opportunism – yes, we call it that.

But fighting against the DSA and the Democratic Party in that strike, which led to “Shut It Down” on December 8 [2021], where the picket line – the SL was there, the only thing they were doing, even when people were crashing through the picket line, literally, was trying to get people to take their nutty (that’s a polite word for it) lockdown leaflet. That was the only thing they did there. But as a result of [the “Shut It Down” picket line] that strike won. This is connected to the program.

¹³ Adhering to supposed abstract sectarian dogmas has been one of the present-day ICL’s central accusations against the LFI, including at the debate. The strike referred to here, in which CUNY Internationalist Clubs activists played an important role, is discussed in “Columbia Strike Wins, More Struggles Ahead” (*Revolution* No. 19, September 2022) and an Internationalist video at youtube.com/watch?v=E-DVQ5HISwU.

¹⁴ The SL’s *Workers Vanguard* (22 December 2023) launched an appeal to “revolutionaries inside the DSA” (Democratic Socialists of America). Referring to this in his presentation at the debate, ICL speaker Perrault remarked, “You don’t need to be a genius to know what [the LFI] will say: they’ll no doubt denounce us as opportunists....”

What about the McCarthyite witch hunts right now against defenders of the Palestinian people? Anybody here been involved in the struggle against that? I'm going to ask you to stand up again. [Again, more than a dozen supporters of the IG and RIY stand up.] What about organizing immigrant workers, one of the most exploited and oppressed sectors of the proletariat in this city? What about Hot and Crusty, is the former vice president of the union here? Would you stand up? [Comrade stands up.] He was fired and he's been fired many times for organizing unions, and he was part of the struggle at the Hot and Crusty [bakery/restaurant] to put into effect the slogan "Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants," and to fight against the union bureaucracy which turns its back on them. Hot and Crusty, Bröd Kitchen, B&H, Cabricanecos, Liberato restaurant: in each of these, the youth organization and the IG have brought the comrades into it, to fight for the revolutionary program.¹⁵

ICL: Again and Again, We Betrayed – Now Follow Us!

By the way, when our comrades were arrested in Mexico [in February 2000] in the UNAM strike, there was only one organization that had no one arrested. Three guesses. Yes, the ICL. Why? Three guesses. When the cops arrived on the campus to arrest 1,000 students, the ICL wasn't there. What a surprise. Isn't that a big surprise?

So these workers then want to know: What about the mass upsurge against the racist police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor? Well, we collapsed, says the ICL. You mean you weren't there at all? Did you publish something? No. Did you post something? No. Did you put out a leaflet? No. Why? Well, we'll get to that in a second. One could go on. What about 9/11? We'll talk about that later.

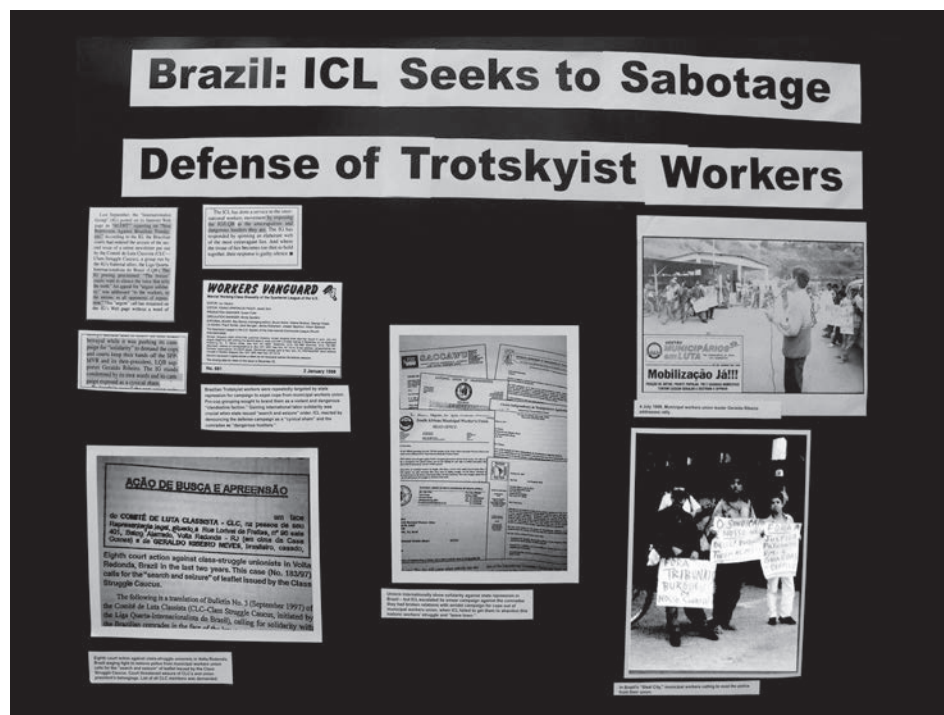
Then they say, well, what were you doing for the past 30 years? Well, it's all in Spartacist: we were betraying. Wait a minute, you betrayed for 30 years? Yes, according to you. Seriously? What were you doing in your organization? Well, we were having a whole lot of turmoil and a lot of fights, lots and lots of fights, for 30 years, OK? What did those fights consist of? Oh, it doesn't matter, it's not very interesting. (I could go through them all, said comrade Perrault in a report which is published here, but they're not very interesting.)¹⁶ They're all basically meaningless. So what you're talking about, you devoured yourselves for 30 years. Yes – now we're back, OK? – they say. They were very busy.

After two years, they came out with *Workers Vanguard*. This is the first issue that came out, No. 1177 [17 March 2023].¹⁷ And in that issue, what did they do? They

¹⁵ See, for example, "NYC: Immigrant Workers Rebel," *Revolution* No. 12, March 2016; and "Cabricanecos: Indigenous Immigrant Workers Fight Deadly Conditions in NYC," *The Internationalist* No. 67-68, May-October 2022.

¹⁶ "I could spend a lot of time going over all the different fights and party regimes between 1992 and 2017. But not only would this take forever, it would not be interesting or useful" ("Why the ICL Collapsed & How We Reforged It," *Spartacist* No. 68, September 2023).

¹⁷ The previous issue, WV No. 1176, was dated 29 May 2020 (four days after the murder of George Floyd); thus it was actually almost three years until issue 1177 appeared. See "As U.S. Convulsed Over Racist Police Murder: SL Silence = Capitulation to the Democrats," *The Internationalist* No. 61, September-October 2020.



Display board shows how, after a Brazilian court issued a "search and seizure" order for leaflets amidst struggle to remove cops from municipal workers union in Volta Redonda, threatening use of "police force," SL criminally tried to stop international defense campaign, calling it a "cynical sham" and labeling black Trotskyist steel workers "dangerous hustlers."

were very productive. They listed their betrayals: eight betrayals. Eight. On what? According to them, on the black question; according to them, on the trade-union question; according to them, on six other questions. And then they came out with another issue, which listed more betrayals. On what questions? On the woman question, for example, and other questions.

So if these workers then asked: You're saying that you betrayed over and over and over again. How about on Haiti, when you supported the U.S. imperialist occupation? Why did that happen? Oh, we don't really want to talk about that very much. We were wrong, the IG was right.¹⁸ But why did it happen? Hmm, maybe because of a memorandum that people voted for 25 years before that, the memorandum made us do it. And the reason why you betrayed on these other questions? Well, we were really like the IG, you know; both of us supported the same memorandum and the same tasks and perspectives document.

Now sometimes, tasks and perspectives documents and memorandums can have some good aspects of their prognoses and some not so accurate aspects. But the argument that this is the essential question and if you get your prognoses wrong, everything is garbage and your program is garbage, this is the argument that was used after World War II when Trotsky's prognoses of the post-World War II period were largely not confirmed. In reality it was used by whom? It was used by the Goldman-Morrow faction in the Socialist Workers Party. And what was their program? "Democracy." They said: "The Trotskyists must be the best fighters for democracy" – democracy – oh! – in general. In Spanish, the expression is that democracy "tiene nombre y apellido," it has a first and last name: there's bourgeois democracy, there's proletarian democracy. But the Goldman-Morrow faction said democracy in general. The Cochran-Clarke [faction in 1952-53], during the Pablo fight, they also said that the prognoses of the SWP and Trotsky did not come true in some considerable part and therefore the program was off. Where was the program, the fundamental pro-

¹⁸ See "Haiti Earthquake: Capitalism, Occupation and Revolution," *The Internationalist* No. 31, Summer 2019.

grammatic questions, determined by this?

The Truth About the ICL's Brazil Betrayal

But back to the workers asking these questions: Your organization, they would say [to the ICL], gave rise to another organization. How did that happen? Well, we expelled them back in 1996. Why did you do that? You also organized some trials and stuff? Yeah, we did that; we're investigating that. Well, what do you think about it? Well, it was unprincipled. The fight against them was unprincipled. Really? Why? Oh, because both they and us voted for the same memorandum. The memorandum made you do it? Why did it happen? I don't know – maybe you could ask some of the people in this room who did it. Because they're here.

What about the stuff in Brazil: is it true that what you did in Brazil was unprincipled? Yeah, it's true. It's true, isn't it? [Turning to Perrault:] Is it true? Comrade Perrault is saying "yes," and he's written it. Well, why did it happen? Why did that happen? We're not sure yet, but it was unprincipled. Why? Because both sides voted for the same document. Oh, did the comrades in Brazil vote for that document? No, they weren't around at that time. They were busy organizing illegal strikes – well, they weren't illegal anymore, but against the military and [in the early '90s] they were in a centrist organization called Causa Operária.

What was going on when that struggle [in 1996] happened? Oh, that's the past. We don't want to talk about the past. We're all about the "now." What did you do when those comrades were attacked by the bourgeois state, which put out an order for the "search and seizure" of their documents, of their bulletin, of their union leaflet? What did you do? Did you defend them, or did you side with the other side? There is an answer to that.

One of the people involved in the ICL's actions, that the ICL now says that we are correct to still be "outraged" about their actions in 1996 – Let me repeat that: that we are correct to still be outraged by

¹⁹ The reference is to the struggle to expel police from the municipal workers union in Volta Redonda, Brazil's "Steel City." See *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil*, Internationalist pamphlet, 1997.

their actions in Brazil.²⁰ In other words, what they were saying for 28 years was a lie, what we were saying was true. "Oh, but that's old history and besides, you're a bunch of hidebound doctrinaires." Oh really? Were there no consequences?

I'm going to do this now. Can you please bring me that poster? [Holds up poster with headline "Brazil: ICL Seeks to Sabotage Defense of Trotskyist Workers," with photos and documents on the campaign to remove police from the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union and quotations from *Workers Vanguard* (2 January 1998) denouncing the Brazilian comrades' defense campaign – see photo.]

The bourgeois state, you've heard of it? It sent one of its agents to the offices of the comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, and they had a "search and seizure" order for every copy of their leaflet. This came from a suit which was demanding the names of all of the members of the trade-union committee, or caucus, and the order threatened, was associated with the threat to seize all of the belongings of the caucus and of the union president. And we organized an international defense campaign to try to get unions to support them. We're talking about real people, we're not talking about words on paper. Real people with names like Jorge Oliveira, the target of this suit, a black worker who worked 25 years as a railway man at the largest steel company in Latin America, which is not a doctrinal invention written on paper. It's not about words on paper.

And what did the ICL say?

[This was an] "ação de busca e apreensão," an "action for search and seizure," right? Unions around the world were signing up to defend them [the Brazilian comrades], in South Africa, in El Salvador and elsewhere, on the basis of our work. The ICL tried to stop people from defending them. Is that statement true? Yes, it is true. They called the defense campaign a "cynical sham." And they called the comrades – taking words virtually verbatim from the pro-cop grouping in Volta Redonda headed by Artur Fernandes – they called them "dangerous hustlers." You want to defend a "dangerous hustler" in a campaign which is a "cynical sham"?²¹ What's your line on this? [Turning to Perrault.] What's your line on this? Please respond.

Now these workers in this room [in the scenario of a group of workers posing questions], when confronted by the ICL, might very well say: Well, what do you have to say about that? And the ICL would probably say: That was a long time ago, we're all about the "now." You ready to follow us now? We betrayed, we betrayed this way, and this way, and this way, and this way, and this way, and this way – now follow us!

²⁰ "Comrade Norden is justified in still being outraged by the actions of the ICL in Brazil in 1996," the ICL states in "The LFI Chooses Sectarianism," 3 November 2023.

²¹ See "ICL Seeks to Sabotage Defense of Brazilian Trotskyist Workers" (30 January 1998), reproduced in *Responses to ICL Smear Campaign Against Brazilian Trotskyists*, Internationalist pamphlet, 2010. When asked, during an intermission in the debate, to explain the ICL's actions in Brazil, Perrault publicly stated that "your bulletin does a pretty good job of explaining" this. In his summary during the debate, he said: "Brazil: You know what? What we did was despicable, I'm ashamed of it," while making the ludicrously false claim that on Brazil the LFI evades the questions of black liberation, the popular front and the role of imperialism.

Because since the first of September 2023, when this [Spartacist No. 68] was published, now it's all OK. You ready to follow us? I don't think so. Well, we're investigating it. One certainly hopes so; one looks forward to seeing the results of those investigations.

They're going to say, "But what about the program?" We've been talking about program. Program is real – when you fight for it.

Pushing the "Anti-Imperialist United Front"

But what about the revelations in here [Spartacist No. 68]? Why, according to them, was the Spartacist tendency "deformed" since birth? Jim Robertson, they say, did not understand the permanent revolution or the national question, and the "revisionist" and reactionary positions, etcetera, meant that the Spartacist tendency was deformed from birth. So, a kind suggestion: why don't you change the name of your journal? Change it.

How is that? We're going to hear about some of this in the second part of the debate. What is this all about? What does it come down to, as a pompous SLer used to like to say to me, "when the rubber hits the road"? It comes down to the "anti-imperialist united front."

They have resuscitated something which even most Trotskyists are not particularly aware of, or would-be Trotskyists: the "anti-imperialist united front" from the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. And they're determined to "defend" the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. We always used to say that we stand on the first four Congresses of the Communist International, with reservations on the fourth. The discussion on the workers government [slogan] was very confused, Zinoviev was all over the map.

And what about the "Theses on the Eastern Question" [from the Comintern's Fourth Congress]? I used to hear about that a lot, from Guillermo Lora, head of the Bolivian POR. Why? Because he's got a pamphlet (I can give it to you as a present) called "The Anti-Imperialist Front": because he dug those theses up to justify his class-collaborationist Frente Revolucionario Antimperialista with the president – former president – of Bolivia.²²

Because in the Trotskyist movement, the "Theses on the Orient" or "Eastern Question" (originally it was called by that term, "Theses on the Orient") had not been mentioned at the First Congress [1938] of the Fourth International nor in its documents nor at the Second Congress [1946] nor in the documents of the SWP. But they were mentioned at the Third Congress, by a man called Michel Pablo. Why? In order to justify a political bloc with the nationalist party [in Bolivia].²³

²² After the bloody August 1971 military coup led by right-wing general Hugo Banzer, Lora's centrist Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers Party) put together the FRA, an "anti-imperialist" political bloc with the Bolivian Stalinists and a range of nationalist forces, including the deposed president, General Juan José Torres, whose regime had paved the way for the Banzer coup.

²³ At the Fourth International's Third Congress (1951), which was key in the emergence of the revisionist current that came to be known as Pabloism, the resolution on Latin America stated, regarding Bolivia's Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), which the following year became the country's ruling bourgeois party: "in the event of the mobilization of the masses under the preponderant impulsion or influence of the MNR, our section should support the movement with all its strength, should not abstain but on the contrary intervene energetically in it with the aim of pushing it as far as possible up to the seizure of power by the MNR on the basis of a progressive program of anti-imperialist united front" (*Fourth International* [New York], November-December 1951).

Well, we would never do something like that, might say the ICL, mightn't they? Well, they might – but they don't. To the contrary, they want an anti-imperialist front – and they say this, we asked it as a rhetorical question: Would the "anti-imperialist united front" include the president of Mexico? And they said: Why, yes, using a hypothetical – if in the future Mexico were attacked by the U.S., wouldn't you be for a military bloc with AMLO [Mexico's president Andrés Manuel López Obrador]?²⁴

We would defend Mexico militarily against U.S. imperialism – of course we would. But what's happening right now is that he [AMLO] is serving as the border guard for Yankee imperialism. And they rush to his *political* defense. And one of their main arguments, I found it quite comical. They said, well, he had half a million people at this rally. When I moved to Mexico in the spring of 1988, the president of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid from the government party, the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party], had 1.3 million people at his May Day rally. He must have been an "anti-imperialist" – let's make an "anti-imperialist united front" with him, now.

How about, is there anywhere in the world where the ICL calls for an anti-imperialist united front now? It would be nice if comrade Perrault would answer that, but I can give you at least part of an answer. They say that it was necessary to form an anti-imperialist united front with the government of Greece in 2015. They say that voting for the maneuver by SYRIZA, the bourgeois populist-nationalist government party of Greece, was necessary. We said no, this is a maneuver, we're not going to participate in tricking the workers.²⁵ They [SYRIZA] are going to capitulate immediately to the bankers and this is preparation for that. They [the ICL] said no, you've got to vote for it. Now retroactively they say, yeah and guess what: that was an anti-imperialist united front. And it was necessary to make "a common front" – with the government. *With the government*. So, more will be coming on that.

But what if they say, "Wait a minute," some not yet up-to-speed SLer or ICLer might get up and say, "No, we're talking about the *original* discussion at the Fourth Congress [of the Comintern, 1922]. We're not talking about *now*." Really? Trotsky said the real historical process invests terms with meaning, historically.

But let's look back at it. This was the Fourth Congress, comrade Perrault. Safarov, leader of Comintern work among the peoples of the East, said in the discussion on the Theses on the Eastern Question (you can find it in John Riddell's very valuable collection):²⁶ he said, since "the colonial and national revolution is a bourgeois-democratic revolution," a "bourgeois-democratic government in the backward countries provides support and great reassurance for our proletarian movement." Now is that Stalin? Is that Stalinism? No, the whole struggle in real life in the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27,

²⁴ See "The LFI Chooses Sectarianism."

²⁵ This refers to the SYRIZA government's July 2015 referendum ploy, calling to vote "no" to the European bankers' blackmail in order to use this as a bargaining chip to slightly improve the terms of surrender and then capitulate to the Eurobankers' austerity *diktat* a few days later. See articles in *The Internationalist* No. 41, September-October 2015.

²⁶ John Riddell (ed.), *Toward the United Front: Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922* (2012).



"Anti-imperialist united front" of Chinese Communist Party with nationalist Guomindang (GMD) led to April 1927 Shanghai Massacre, which devastated CP and decapitated militant workers movement. Above: Workers militias mobilized before entry of GMD troops into Shanghai, 27 March 1927. Below: communist beheaded in white terror ordered by GMD leader, Chiang Kai-shek, April 1927.

in which the Stalinists used the formula of the anti-imperialist united front, yielded a bloody result through which, indeed, despite your [the present-day ICL's] denials, Leon Trotsky extended the theory of permanent revolution internationally.

This is why they [the ICL today] are doing all this stuff about the "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry." All the theoretical revisionism and rewriting of the history of the Russian Revolution that they're doing: it's got a political purpose. Program does generate theory, you know. What you want guides what you do.

So how about the representative for Iran at the Fourth Congress discussion of those theses? He said – his name was Nikbin: "The Party," in Iran, "is trying to create a general anti-imperialist alliance.... It has made an extensive proposal for a democratic" – that beloved word, *democratic*, the ICL is very much in love with that word *democracy*, *democratic*. And yes, we fight for democratic rights and in the countries of belated capitalist development, the bourgeois-democratic tasks can only be carried through by the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by and resting on the peasants. But he [Nikbin] says the party has a "proposal for a democratic bloc that is to include representatives of all the national and democratic groups.... [T]he bourgeois parties themselves are seeking a bloc with us," said the representative for Iran.

But what about China? The representative of the Chinese CP – this is at the Fourth Congress, and I'll finish up with this. "Starting from the principle that an anti-imperialist front should be established to drive imperialism out of China," said the representative of the Chinese Communist Party at the Fourth Comintern Congress discussion on the Theses that they [the ICL] uphold, "our party decided to achieve a united front with the national-revolutionary Guomindang party. This united front took the form that we joined this party." And we know, don't we, where that led.²⁷

²⁷ The Chinese Communist Party's entry into the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang led to the April 1927 Shanghai Massacre that devastated the party and crushed China's militant workers movement. See *What Is Trotskyism? The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited*, Internationalist pamphlet, 2012.



Communists be executed at June 1927

So let's follow them! I don't think so. Thank you.

Rebuttal by Negrete

After comrade Negrete's presentation, ICL speaker Perrault had a rebuttal, which was followed by Negrete's:

On liberalism, I would like to ask comrade Perrault to please define what the ICL means by the word. Please, because it's used many, many times in their analysis. They use the term *liberalism* 51 times in *Spartacist* [No. 68]. They use *liberal* 87 times. A very large part of their program consists, apparently, of saying "liberal," of saying the word "liberalism" many times, and telling people to break from it. Liberalism has a very strong power, almost mystical magical power to make people do stuff, according to them. It's liberal idealism.

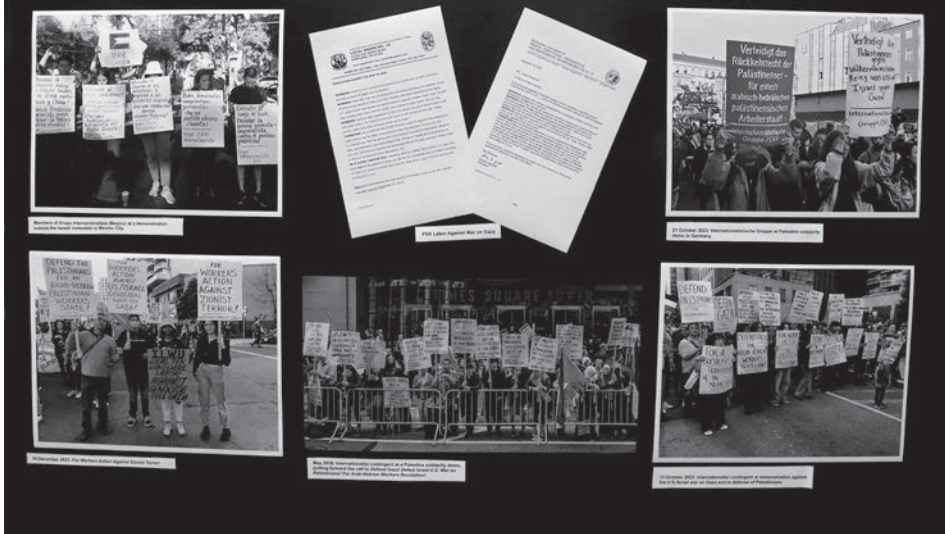
The picture that they present of the world in the post-Soviet period is remarkably similar to that of the "death of communism" triumphalists. Supposedly, apparently, after the destruction of the Soviet Union there was considerable peace, prosperity and the growth of productive forces. Hmm, OK.

Now there's a bunch of stuff to say about this, but I would like to talk a bit about what they're doing now – because they say "we're tired of talking about the past and the self-referential stuff," which is pretty interesting for an organization whose Program for the Fourth International, quote unquote, consists overwhelmingly of denouncing itself. *Vote for us, we were deformed since birth!* Jim Robertson, revisionist shmuck, according to them; it actually pisses me off.

But what about what they're doing now? What about Palestine? Compare their leaflet to ours – compare "Only

Fighting For Workers Action

Against U.S./Israel War on Gaza



The League for the Fourth International has fought since the very first days of the U.S./Israel genocidal war on Gaza in October 2023 for workers action against the slaughter and to “hot cargo” arms to Israel. Clockwise from upper left: Mexico City, Portland, Berlin, New York City, Los Angeles.

Death and Defeat with Hamas: A Revolutionary Road” – quote unquote – “for Palestine Liberation”: that’s the headline. It genuflects to the bourgeoisie and what it demands. Right at the beginning and repeatedly, just like after 9/11. And what ours has to say: “Defend the Palestinians Against U.S./Israel Genocidal War on Gaza! Drive the Zionists Out of the West Bank and Gaza! For International Workers Action Against the Attack on Gaza!” So please tell me how, here in the United States or in Europe or in most places, the key task is to dispel illusions in – Hamas?

Now what about Palestine, where, as the pompous SLer (who’s in the room here) used to say all the time, “the rubber hits the road.” They’ve got a very interesting statement from [the ICL’s] British paper, *Workers Hammer*. It says: “Trade unions must take concrete action to stop arms shipments to Israel” – yeah. That was on October 20, 2023. The next day, *Workers Vanguard* has a supplement on the strike of the auto workers. I remember – some of you do too, I’m sure – that in 1973, 2,000 Arab American auto workers walked out in a protest against Zionism. Dearborn, Michigan is a largely Arab American city – auto. What [does the *WV* supplement] say?

It says: “Lots of workers are watching the horrors in Gaza and wondering what they can do. The main thing that workers can do to fight for Palestinian liberation is to *win this strike!*”

[–“UAW: Let’s Win This for Real!” (21 October 2023), emphasis in original]

Nothing about stopping arms shipments, nothing about fighting to stop arms shipments, nothing about convincing others to fight to stop arms shipments, nothing about calling for it – but win your strike, don’t be distracted by the genocide in Gaza, pursue your strike. Yes, they should win their strike, but to separate this in this way, and to tell the workers to do nothing, nothing, *nothing* – this is worse than economism.

And lastly, what they’re doing now. A “revolutionary” program for black liberation, unlike BLM, which had *liberal* demands. True, and we exposed those demands systematically in our press, in our leaflets, in our speeches, in our signs, on the streets, in the meetings, in the unions. We did not collapse ignominiously, which is a capitulation to your own bourgeoisie. I don’t give a damn about how messed up you were in your organization, you couldn’t bring yourselves to put out one leaflet? *Nobody* should follow you. Your



In 1973, Arab American auto workers staged a wildcat strike protesting UAW purchase of Israel bonds. Above: demonstration of nearly 2,000 outside Zionist dinner honoring union president Leonard Woodcock, 28 November 1973. Today UAW Arab Caucus calls on union leadership to stop manufacturing of weapons to send to Israel. In recent strike (October 2023), SL supplement says nothing about stopping arms, only calling to win the strike.

Who Brought

Revolutionary Program Into

Mass Upheaval Against

Racist Police Terror ?



The Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth mobilized in the streets, combating illusions in the Democratic Party during mass protests against racist police terror in the summer of 2020. Top line of banner reads: “Democrats Are The Bosses of the Racist Killer Cops.” The SL did nothing.

credit is zero.

But what do they call for in their campaign? “What’s necessary is a fight that will unite the broadest possible forces” – popular-front language. Take motions for opening the police archives, bring them “to your political officials who claim to represent you. We need to mobilize to bring pressure down on all the liberal and progressive politicians who claim to stand for workers and for black rights.... Opening the police archives is doable” – it’s a “*doable*” demand – “and, in fact, can be done by any politician in office that is really on the side of black people.”²⁸

Want some liberalism? It’s right here. And what would happen if those archives were opened? Who’s going to choose the “hundred most heinous cases”? The cops? And you believe what’s in the cops’ archives? Don’t you know anything about what cops put in archives?

That’s what you’re doing today. You’re trying to spread liberal illusions. And you say that it’s “exposing them.” I heard that from the SWP, pretty much every day of the year. And all the other opportunists.

Summary

First of all, I wanted to just mention that among the things that the ICL says that it’s going to investigate, and that we are waiting to hear the results of, are the [1996] trials; the trial of comrade Socorro. and the trial that was going to be held of comrades Jan and Marjorie.²⁹

I want to send greetings to comrade Socorro of the Internationalist Group, a founder of our organization, and to protest here yet again against the filthy trial which you staged against her. Some of you are here in this room. We want to know *what* was unprincipled about that trial. And if you say “everything,” that’s true, but you don’t get away with just that. And if it’s maybe ancient history to you, and not so important, perhaps that’s because you were on the dishing out end and not the receiving end.

Similarly, when comrade Vincent [an ICL leader who spoke during the discussion “Open All Police Archives! A Proposal to Rebuild the Movement,” SL statement, 28 August 2023.

²⁹ See *From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle*, July 1996.

sion period] says that the ICL at least admits its mistakes. I call this the Boy Scout defense: *Hey, everybody makes mistakes, but we admit it.* You get merit badges for it. No. What I will say about that is, you’ve had a lot of practice, haven’t you? In terms of your so-called “mistakes.” But there’s one little problem. According to us, and according to you, they were not mistakes, they were betrayals. They were betrayals. Have you ever been on the receiving end of a betrayal – I mean, a political, social one in the class struggle. The comrade from Brazil just talked about what that was about. That was a real struggle. It was a struggle to bring the program of Trotskyism into practice.

Now, unbelievably, we heard here today that the so-called “real crime” was not that sort of thing, but failing to understand the documents – the power of the documents from 1992 and so on and so forth. This is the memorandum theory of history yet again. Well, the very powerful documents magically made *you* do one thing – and *us* do the other. You say, well they both voted for the documents and they’re both the same, the [ICL] and the IG/LFI are both the same. The IG fought and the LQB fought to *throw the police out of the union – and you fought to stop it.* You told them to stop. Why? “The memo made us do it.” Funny that this powerful memo made us do the opposite.

How about 9/11? [“How about it?” yells an ICL member from the audience.] We called to defeat U.S. imperialism.³⁰ We marched in the streets with that slogan. We called for workers strikes against the war. Was that an abstract slogan? According to you it had no “resonance.” We took it onto the docks. We took it onto the docks as the Iraq War was ramping up. This is not an abstract, hidebound, theoretical orthodoxy. This is called the class struggle – and you said that our call for hot-cargoing was wrong.³¹ Yes, you did, look it up. And

³⁰ In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks, as the U.S. ramped up for war, the IG/LFI called to “Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Afghanistan and Iraq!” while the SL/ICL ditched this elementary Leninist call and denounced us for upholding it. See *The Internationalist* No. 12, Fall 2001.

³¹ On the Internationalist Group’s fight for longshore workers to refuse to handle war matériel, and the SL’s line echoing the union bureaucracy’s opposition to this, see *Why We Call*



On May Day 2008, the ILWU shut down all U.S. and Canadian West Coast ports to demand an end to the U.S. war on Afghanistan and Iraq.

we've documented it. You want to talk about the bureaucracy? That was the line of Jim Spinosa, [who was] the head of the ILWU: Don't stop the war matériel, it might cause problems for the union.

And we called for workers strikes against the war, and you and the rest of the opportunist left said that would never happen. But guess what? It did. On May Day 2008, all 29 ports were shut down on the West Coast. And you sneered at it, and, talk about "deformed," you deformed and you fabricated, same damn thing that you did about the Mumia shutdown [of the ports] in 1999 – then you had to apologize and retract it, kind of, sort of.

But what about the one in Brazil that started it?³² The first workers action for Mumia's freedom, the first labor shutdown for Mumia's freedom. It's not a page of paper, it's a real action in the class struggle and it's part of the program of revolutionary Marxism. That happened in Brazil. You have not written a single word about it since that time. Not one time, why do you think that is? Oh, because the "sectarians" carried it out. And the "anti-sectarians," anti-sectarianly, don't mention it. Because those are unmentionable, disposable people – disposable people on the receiving end, not of your "mistakes." Everyone makes mistakes – trivial Boy Scout talking, I don't mean the person, I mean the phrase. It was not a "mistake," it was a betrayal.

And yes, when we called to defeat U.S. imperialism and we criticized you for dropping it, what did you say? A comrade referred to this. [Shows poster with quotations from Workers Vanguard, 26 October 2001.] No, we're not going to let you forget it. You want to talk about "now"? Now is a product of history. You are a product of that history. You said that we were "playing the counterfeit card of anti-Americanism." You said this in the weeks after 9/11, when "anti-Americanism" could land [someone] in prison. And there were roundups of immigrants all over the place and we went to the demonstrations to free them, which you did not, of course. (Well, you did go there, to denounce us, one time.)

³² See "May Day Strike Against the War Shuts Down All U.S. West Coast Ports," *The Internationalist* No. 27, May-June 2008, "Brazil Education Workers Stop Work Demanding: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" (May 1999) and "Brazilian Workers Mobilize for Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal," *The Internationalist* No. 8, June 2000.

And you said something else: "But the IG's purpose is otherwise; it is playing to a different audience, one of 'Third World' nationalists for whom the 'only good American is a dead American'." That's what you wrote about us. So you can say, well, we all make mistakes. This was not a "mistake," and you're doing the same kind of obeisance and genuflection to your own ruling class today, including over your leaflet on Palestine.

Why did this powerful memo make the two sides do opposite things? Because you ceased to be revolutionaries, through a process of degeneration, which has now culminated in you openly saying that the founding program of the tendency you still pretend to have some continuity with, somehow, was what? The old-timers are supposed to chew this up and swallow it. "The historic position of Spartacism turned the world upside down."³³ Interesting. Look at your *Spartacist* 68. The hammer's upside down and backwards – they get a lot of things upside down and backwards – in their new logo. "Shaped by the delusion that the historic leader of our tendency, Jim Robertson, had a correct approach," blah blah, "therefore it upheld many positions counterposed to permanent revolution." It's a "perversion of permanent revolution," they say.

The old-timers are supposed to eat it, swallow it and regurgitate it. *You have sold your birthright for a mess of pottage*. The revisions are far from finished. The reason for this stuff about the "anti-imperialist united front" and supporting the language laws in Quebec and Catalonia and embracing the Freedom Charter and the rest of it is to take what remains of this organization very, very far, qualitatively far – who knows how far? – but it will be enormously far from what it set out to do.

And I'm very glad, let me just say, that the [SL's] grotesque Neely leaflet³⁴ was attacked, and quite horrified by the [SL supporter's] response.

Forward to a real Fourth International – not a collection of rotten opportunist gimmicks.

³³ See *Spartacist* No. 68, passages under sub-head "For the Anti-Imperialist United Front!" claiming that from its inception "the Spartacist tendency turned permanent revolution into its opposite."

³⁴ WV supplement (8 June 2023): "New York City Subway Killing: Neely No Angel, Penny No Hero." The reference is to the denunciation of this leaflet by a speaker during the discussion period and an SL supporter's reply heatedly defending it.

Hands Off Trotsky's Permanent Revolution!

Presentation by Jan Norden

So what we are discussing here today is how what we have called the born-again International Communist League and the Spartacist League in the United States have abandoned, renounced, *denounced* and vilified one key plank after another in the revolutionary Trotskyist program that the Spartacist tendency upheld against all manner of opportunists for three decades. We have explained before how the degeneration of the ICL reflected the wave of demoralization of the left set off by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, undermined by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, and of the bureaucratically deformed workers states of the East European Soviet bloc. With its new leadership, the ICL has now reached terminal degeneration, so that it renounces the very program on which it was founded.

As the ICL sank into passive propaganda, abstentionism and ultimately betrayal in the class struggle, capitulating to the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" lie, those long-time cadres who it expelled in 1996 went on to found the Internationalist Group and two years later joined with comrades in Brazil, France and Mexico to form the League for the Fourth International. While the IG and LFI continue to fight for the revolutionary program the Spartacist tendency stood for, the latter-day ICL, for its part, went into a prolonged crisis, which continues to this day, repeatedly changing leaderships and programmatically gyrating like a top.

Beginning almost immediately after our expulsions, this latter-day ICL began revising and gutting its former program. We've already talked about the string of betrayals: abandoning Brazilian Trotskyist workers' historic 1996 struggle to oust the police from the unions, abandoning the call for Puerto Rican independence, "anti-American" baiting the LFI for calling for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan, supporting the U.S. invasion of Haiti, and that's only a small part of them. There is a common thread to all these betrayals, and it's not disorientation because of the 1992 [ICL] conference document. It's capitulation to U.S. imperialism, which continues today as they refuse to defend Russia in the face of the united imperialist proxy war over Ukraine. You claim that there has always been a unipolar imperialist world. Well, there has been at the present time, and what do you do? You refuse to defend the countries that are being attacked by that united imperialist offensive.

I want to reiterate that, because in discussing the question of *permanent revolution*, which is the topic of this debate, we are not having an academic discussion. What we have here are counterposed class programs, proletarian internationalist in the case of the LFI vs. bourgeois nationalist for the ICL. So *Spartacist* No. 68 came out at the beginning of September [2023], where the leaders of the ICL declare that the political organization they have taken over was "deformed at birth" on the central question of permanent revolution, supposedly because of "denial of revolutionary leadership of the national liberation struggle." According to the new ICL, the Spartacist tendency was some kind of thalidomide baby, a caricature of Trotskyism that betrayed at every turn.

So what is Trotsky's perspective of permanent revolution? This is not just a phrase about the revolution continuing indefinitely, but a theory based on his evaluation of the class forces in the first Russian Revolution of 1905, which then became the program of the Russian October Revolution of 1917, and which Trotsky later generalized to colonial, semicolonial and other countries of belated capitalist development under imperialist domination. In a nutshell, and I'm quoting here, "The theory of the Permanent Revolution, which is basic to our movement, declares that in the modern world the bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot be completed except through the victory and extension of the proletarian revolution." I quote this summary because it comes from the 1963 document "Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International," the founding document of the Spartacist tendency,³⁵ which we in the LFI uphold and the reborn ICL will surely renounce, sooner or later, as it is incompatible with their present distortion and negation of permanent revolution.

The Spartacist tendency was founded on the authentic program of permanent revolution and upheld it against all the pseudo-Trotskyists like Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel starting in the early 1950s, and a decade later joined by the leaders of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party who abandoned the fight for workers revolution led by a Bolshevik-Leninist vanguard, and instead tailed after non-proletarian forces. Today the ICL under new management – which pulled off what in the business world would be called a hostile takeover with the acquiescence of a demoralized Spartacist old guard – draws its arguments from the various pseudo-Trotskyists, but with an important difference: whereas the Pabloites, Mandelites and so on capitulated to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists and populists, this new crop of revisionists actually are "nation-building" nationalists masquerading in Trotskyist garb.

To carry out their cynical operation they have to resort to blatantly falsifying history. We saw this already in their 2017 "Hydra" document where in the name of defending oppressed nations they tried to present their advocacy of discriminatory, anti-democratic language laws as Leninism on the national question, when Lenin emphatically said the opposite, opposing official privileging of any language, including of the oppressed.

On permanent revolution *Spartacist* 68

SPARTACIST
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**THE ICL'S REVISION OF
PERMANENT REVOLUTION**

Deformed at Birth

Since its inception, the Spartacist tendency's approach to the problem of revolution in neocolonial countries was based on a revision of

claims that "From 1905 to 1917, there was an essential identity between Trotsky's permanent revolution and Lenin's strategic line expressed in the formula of the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry'." It claims that the different formulas were only "prognoses" and a "nuance," and that by 1917 Lenin's "algebraic" slogan was "outlived" and had to be substituted by the more "arithmetic" program of "all power to the workers and peasants."³⁵ Published in *Spartacist* No. 1, February-March 1964.



Lenin delivering his “April Theses” in the Tauride Palace, 17 April 1917. If the “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry” had prevailed, there would have been no socialist October Revolution.

the Soviets.” In other words, no big deal.

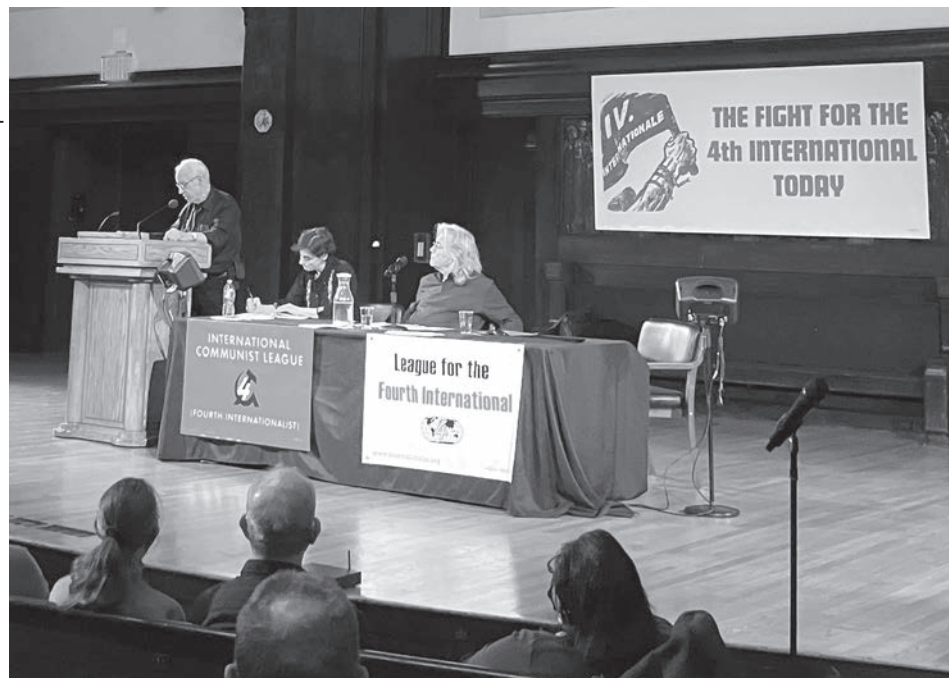
The attempt to pass this off as authentic Trotskyism is rank cynicism. Those of us who were won to Trotskyism away from the “revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the peasantry and the proletariat,” which we called in shorthand the “RDDPP,” anyone who went through that experience instantly spotted this ploy. In the correspondence leading up to this debate the LFI pointed out that in his 1905 pamphlet *Two Tactics of the Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* Lenin stated that his call was explicitly for a “democratic, not a socialist” regime, and how Trotsky in his 1939 essay on “Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution” contrasted his call for permanent revolution both to Lenin’s formula and that of the Mensheviks. So I suggest you can consult those sources.

As for the reborn ICL’s claim that Lenin’s coming over to the programmatic conclusion of Trotsky’s permanent revolution – namely to fight for workers revolution, for the dictatorship of the proletariat – was just a matter of replacing an outdated prognosis, Trotsky wrote at length in his 1930 *History of the Russian Revolution*, in Chapter 16 on “Rearming the Party” about the tremendous struggle that took place after Lenin issued his 1917 “April Theses” calling for “all power to the soviets.” This

was ferociously resisted by Kamenev, Stalin and the other “Old Bolsheviks” who clung to the old formula, which called for completing “the first stage of a bourgeois revolution.” The point is, *had the program of a “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry” not been defeated, there would have been no October Revolution!* And that’s what you claim was essentially the same.

So the ICL under new management is lying about differences between Lenin’s program and Trotsky’s leading up to the 1917 Russian Revolution, and when people lie about big issues, it’s for a purpose. The purpose in this case is quite clear, underlined by their embrace of the call for an “anti-imperialist united front” – namely that they want to make political blocs with bourgeois nationalists, from the populist government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico – which they pretend is somehow anti-imperialist, when in fact AMLO is acting as a border guard for the U.S., both under Trump and now Biden – to the African National Congress which presides over the neo-apartheid regime on behalf of international capital. And they also want to make a political bloc, in the name of such a so-called “united front,” with [Greek prime minister Alexis] Tsipras and SYRIZA in Greece.³⁶

³⁶ See note 25 above.



Trotsky speaking in Copenhagen, November 1932, “In Defense of October.” The Bolshevik leader summed up the program of permanent revolution: “The victory of the Revolution is therefore possible only as a victory of the proletariat. But the victorious proletariat will not stop at the program of bourgeois democracy: it will go on to the program of socialism.” It was not, as the born-again ICL now pretends, a stagist program of first national liberation, then socialism.

The new crew at the helm of the ICL try to pretend that they are presenting the real deal even when they are transparently negating Trotsky’s program. *Spartacist* [68] talks, repeatedly, of “the core of permanent revolution: placing the struggle for national liberation at the center of revolutionary strategy for the neocolonial world.” In another place it says that “the experience of 1917, speaks to the *fundamental core of permanent revolution*, which is nothing other than the need for *communist leadership of the democratic struggle*, first and foremost national liberation.” So the essence of the 1917 Russian October Revolution was a democratic struggle for national liberation? What garbage! For what nation? The Russian nation, the Polish nation, the Finnish nation? And the experience of 1917 was essentially a “democratic struggle”? Whatever happened to the proletariat taking power?

The most striking case of a tendency that “revised” permanent revolution was that of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. In late 1981, Doug Jenness, the editor of the SWP’s newspaper *The Militant*, published an article, “How Lenin Saw the Russian Revolution” essentially equating permanent revolution with Lenin’s RDDPP, the same sleight-of-hand the ICL is carrying out today. Ernest Mandel replied with a long article stressing the difference between Lenin’s formula from 1905, which foresaw the workers and peasants leading a bourgeois revolution, and Trotsky’s program pointing to workers revolution. Jenness responded with an even longer article in mid-1982 claiming that the October 1917 revolution was actually the RDDPP, not a workers revolution but a democratic revolution. And a few months later SWP leader Jack Barnes came out against permanent revolution altogether in his speech on “Their Trotsky and Ours.”

What was driving the SWP’s evolution was the desire to join with Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress in South Africa as the anti-apartheid movement was heating up. And we see the same with the ICL today. Like the SWP, the new ICL wants to push to implement the ANC’s Freedom Charter, which was a program for a bourgeois-democratic revolution, although with some fairly radical

social measures.³⁷ Incidentally, the Charter was written by supporters of the Stalinist South African Communist Party (SACP) whose watchword of a “national democratic revolution,” like Lenin’s RDDPP, did not go beyond the bounds of capitalism. And when the reborn ICL calls to implement the Freedom Charter, as their new South African paper does, that is in fact the position of the SACP and the ANC, whose maintenance of superexploitation of black labor was symbolized in the 2012 Marikana massacre [of mine workers]. But where Lenin, with his formula, was fighting for revolution against the bourgeoisie, the South African CP, which you are tailing, is essentially fighting to administer that neo-apartheid capitalist exploitation.

There is much more to be said about the ICL’s new “anti-imperialist” clothes in Mexico. Its call for a “united front” with the government of AMLO [Andrés Manuel López Obrador] and his MORENA party would stand in the way of the necessary struggle to break workers away from this nationalist, but in no way anti-imperialist, government, which is now trying to force the so-called “independent” unions back into the straitjacket of corporatist state control of labor. Once again, as in equating the RDDPP with permanent revolution, the ICL leaders justify this with a subterfuge, conflating Trotsky’s call for independent proletarian support for the expropriation of imperialist-owned oil companies with making a political bloc with the government of Lázaro Cárdenas [president of Mexico from 1934 to 1940], which Trotsky never called for. With its vague talk of national liberation and nation-building, the newborn ICL’s program would be a roadblock to revolution if it had any impact, which luckily it doesn’t. If anyone agreed with the line of *El [Antiimperialista]*, the bourgeois name of their new paper, they would join AMLO’s MORENA party and push from within.

So here, there and just about everywhere, the line of the new ICL – which now repudiates just about everything the Spartacist tendency represented when it fought for the revolutionary program of Trotsky-

³⁷ In a statement on the May 29 South African elections, the ICL has now come out for voting for an outright bourgeois formation, the populist-nationalist Economic Freedom Fighters.



The then-revolutionary international Spartacist tendency warned in 1979 against leftists' support to the theocratic regime of Ayatollah Khomeini that took power in Iran after the overthrow of the bloody imperialist puppet Shah Pahlavi. Shown here: leftist students being attacked by Khomeinist thugs in Tehran, April 1980. Tens of thousands were arrested, and thousands executed by the victorious mullahs. Today the born-again ICL, junking its past in the service of its new nationalist line, seeks to resuscitate illusions like those of the Iranian leftists and their backers who bowed before their executioners.

ism – would have terrible consequences if carried out in the class struggle. Nowhere is this clearer than over Iran where they denounce the Spartacist tendency's warnings against leftist support for the 1979 so-called "Islamic revolution." They take a quotation out of context to pretend that we equated Khomeini with Hitler when its point was that there can be reactionary mass movements. There were some problems with the initial formulations on Iran before we settled on the call for "Down with the shah, no to the mullahs." But we told the truth about the mullah regime, whereas *Spartacist* 68 pretends they were leading an anti-imperialist struggle.³⁸

That was in fact the line of almost the entire opportunist left, from "Islamic Marxists" to Stalinists to pseudo-Trotskyists. And many acted on this as leftists streamed back to Tehran after spending years in exile to escape the dreaded SAVAK, the secret police of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Shah Pahlavi. But almost immediately there were extensive arrests of leftists, following by a wave of tens of thousands jailed in 1981, of whom hundreds, perhaps several thousand, were executed in 1988.

³⁸ See "Iran and the Left: Why They Supported Islamic Reaction," *Workers Vanguard* No. 229, 13 April 1979; and "Iran and Permanent Revolution," *Spartacist* No. 33, Spring 1981 for further information on the deadly illusions in the mullah regime pushed by various pseudo-Trotskyists and other opportunist leftists.

The Stalinist Tudeh party, which had led striking oil workers into the arms of Khomeini, was rewarded by having its offices closed and its paper banned in 1979, with mass arrests of over 1,000 Tudeh members in 1982-83, with 45 of them executed as supposed Soviet spies.

Because the then-revolutionary Spartacist tendency was not taken in by the fool's gold of bourgeois "anti-imperialism" and fought for workers revolution, we were able to warn against the impending slaughter, while the opportunists, as we wrote at the time, "bowed before their executioners." And from the beginning, while politically opposing the "Islamic republic" we defended Iran against imperialist and Zionist attacks, threats and sanctions, including calling, as we do today, for Iran's right to have nuclear weapons to deter and defend against the nuclear-armed U.S. and Israeli warmongers.

A couple of final comments: First, the new ICL leaders never knew the Spartacist tendency when it stood for genuine revolutionary Trotskyism – not that this would make a difference, as they are deeply wedded to their nationalist politics. The latter-day ICL they came to know had plenty of imperialist chauvinist aspects to their line – like declaring in Mexico, a U.S. semi-colony, that "the main enemy is at home." This was never the position of the revolutionary ICL, and in fact that line was cooked up to go after the Internationalist



Spartacist banner at April 1970 protest against the Vietnam War in Washington, D.C. How long until the "new ICL" renounces this call as well?

Group in the U.S. and Grupo Internacionalista in Mexico.

Secondly, the Spartacist tendency and ICL, when they stood for revolutionary Trotskyism, told the truth to the masses and fought for proletarian revolution, while the born-again ICL tries to hoodwink them with vague talk of national liberation, copied from the Stalinists who were past masters in pushing this line in order to disguise their refusal to fight for socialist revolution. This was true from Latin America to South [Africa] and Vietnam, where almost the entire left called for national liberation while the SL called for "All Indochina Must Go Communist." Perhaps you will want to reject that slogan as well, as being "sectarian."³⁹

Leninists and Trotskyists have always been sticklers for programmatic clarity. Seemingly small differences in political formulas can have enormous consequences in the class struggle. As we said earlier, the reborn ICL has done us, and the workers movement, a favor by making clear that they are not, in fact, the heirs of the Spartacist tendency that fought for revolutionary Trotskyism. They are its antithesis. The League for the Fourth International and its national sections today represent the revolutionary political continuity of authentic Trotskyism and Leninism. We have consistently put forward programs for revolutionary internationalist struggle, from picket lines mean don't cross, to workers strikes against imperialist wars, to calling for defense of Gaza and the Palestinian Arab people coupled with the fight for an Arab-Hebrew Palestinian workers state in a socialist federation of the Middle East.

The new ICL, in contrast, is putting forward one gimmick after another, many a transparent call for class collaboration while others are just nonsensical. So when you see *Spartacist* on their publications, we counsel *caveat emptor* – buyer beware.

And in conclusion, let me say: *Hands off Trotsky's permanent revolution!*

Summary

There's a lot to say and I don't have enough time. I do want to answer on the question of Greece. The struggle in Greece is not for national liberation, it's for international socialist revolution together with all the countries in Europe. The Greek Civil War was fought on the program of national liberation by the Stalinists – when it should have been a struggle for international communist revolution – and that program, together with the Stalinists, prevented the struggle for a Balkan socialist federation at the time. There is no separate national bourgeoisie or comprador bourgeoisie in Greece. Greece is a sub-imperialist power. It controls much of the world's shipping, it is a banking presence in Eastern Europe, and Alex Tsipras proved that there is no separation between the national bourgeoisie and the other bourgeoisies of the imperialist European Union.

On the referendum, this was known beforehand, it was perfectly obvious that this was a maneuver by Tsipras to get a "no" vote to bargain with the bankers,

³⁹ Presenting the social revolution in Vietnam as if it were simply a bourgeois-democratic struggle for national liberation was characteristic of reformist groups like the SWP, to facilitate its alliances with Democratic liberals in the antiwar movement (while for groups like the Shachtmanite International Socialists it reflected virulent anticommunism).

after which he would capitulate to them. We called for abstention because this was a ploy, this was a fraud, and you participated in that fraud. We did not just call for abstention, we called for workers action, for occupying the ports, for occupying the hospitals, for shutting down the railroads. That is workers action against the imperialist oppression of the Greek working people and all Greek people through their austerity program. What you did, is you tailed after the bourgeois nationalists.

Secondly, someone asked about communist leadership in the national liberation movement. We call for socialist revolution to resolve national oppression and the imperialist stranglehold. To pretend that you can have national liberation without socialist revolution is a fraud and a lie that you are hoodwinking people with. The speaker from the British section of the ICL said how can you expose the bourgeois nationalists if you don't engage in united fronts. We intervene in the struggles against imperialist domination to expose the nationalists.

On the IBT's [referring to the "International Bolshevik Tendency"] proposal for some kind of a conference, I would say simply, there is no family of Spartacism any more than there is a family of Trotskyism or a family of the left, and you're not going to build a revolutionary party by a Spartacist family reunion but only by the intransigent struggle for the program that the Spartacist tendency was founded on, which the ICL has now renounced and which the two branches of the BT and IBT fled from at the start of the anti-Soviet Cold War. In terms of the comparison of the trial of Socorro with the trial of Bill Logan: Bill Logan was guilty as charged, Socorro was persecuted.

And on Malvinas, the support of the Argentine nationalist left to the military adventure of the generals is what sank the possibility of workers revolution in Argentina.⁴⁰ There was a burgeoning workers movement at that time. The generals called their adventure in order to head it off. The left bought it. And then when it was defeated, a wave of defeatism seized Argentina. And it was because the left supported that war it was the bourgeoisie that profited from the fall of the junta. ■

⁴⁰ In April 1982, the Argentine military dictatorship under General Leopoldo Galtieri, hoping to divert radicalizing workers' struggles, launched a military adventure invading the Falkland/Malvinas islands in the South Atlantic. The sparsely populated islands, whose English inhabitants (there was virtually no Argentine population there) mainly lived off sheepherding, had been under British rule since 1833, while "recovering the Malvinas" has been a mainstay of Argentine nationalism for decades. Amid jingoistic hysteria in London and nationalist fervor in Buenos Aires, the two militaries fought a naval war in which the British overpowered the Argentine forces. In the conflict between imperialist Britain and Argentina, an intermediate capitalist power, did not affect the latter's right to self-determination, the international Spartacist tendency called for a policy of revolutionary defeatism on both sides. See "Sink Thatcher! Sink the Junta!" *Workers Vanguard* No. 306, 28 May 1982. The support by the nationalist Argentine left for the junta's ill-fated invasion meant that instead of the generals being overthrown by a workers uprising, popular outrage over the senseless slaughter and military corruption was capitalized on by the conservative bourgeois opposition led by the Radical Civic Union of Raúl Alfonsín, which came to office in the 1983 elections.

Revolution



Revolutionary Internationalist Youth at SL forum “Just asking...”

On 4 November 2023, the Spartacist League/U.S. held a forum in New York City based on documents of a recent conference of the International Communist League published in the ICL's journal *Spartacist* No. 68 (September 2023). Among supporters of the League for the Fourth International who attended were activists from the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth (youth section of the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the LFI), whose comments in the discussion period are printed below.

Hello, my name is Grace. I am a member of the Internationalist Clubs at CUNY [the City University of New York] and the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth.

I started getting involved in revolutionary politics in 2020, during the mass protests against the racist police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and I have been reading your material since that time.

Having read the most recent literature your group has come out with, I have a few questions. According to the new *Spartacist*, your organization got everything wrong for the past three decades. But now your organization claims to be holding the mantle of Trotskyism. In *Spartacist* 68 you say that the fights against the people who were expelled [in 1996] and formed the Internationalist Group were unprincipled. You say this and I want to know exactly why they were unprincipled. You also say that your break with Luta Metalúrgica in Brazil was unprincipled. I would like to know why both things were unprincipled.

Exactly what unprincipled actions were taken? Who carried out these actions? Why did this happen? What was going on in the real world, in the real class struggle, and what was going on in your organization? When you state in your journal that the fights were unprincipled, you offer no explanation as to why.

Having grown up Catholic, I recall having to go to confession. I would state my sins and then say five Hail Mary's and be forgiven. I can't help thinking that this “confession” about the unprincipled fights is similar.

It also reminds me of what you did regarding Haiti in 2010. When your organization supported the U.S./UN intervention in Haiti, you repeatedly criticized the IG for denouncing that.¹ Then when you said you were wrong, you didn't explain *how* or *why* that happened. The ICL admitted that this was a betrayal, but to this day provides no real explanation as to how such a betrayal occurred.

Yet, you continued to claim that you

¹ See, for example, “Haiti: IG Conjures Up Revolution Amid the Rubble,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 952, 9 February 2010.

were a genuinely revolutionary party that would lead the working class. In the IG's open letter to the ICL (May 2010),² they asked how and why that betrayal came about, and what this support for U.S. imperialism in Haiti meant for the ICL's claims to be the embodiment of revolutionary continuity. They stated that in any genuinely revolutionary party, a betrayal of this magnitude would result in a faction fight or a split.

Now, by your own account, your organization was wrong on many fundamental questions up until five weeks ago. You denounce yourselves repeatedly, and state that the expulsions of 1996 were unprincipled. In correspondence, the LFI asked you for specifics about this and received none. As a young person who is serious about revolutionary politics, I would like an answer to these questions. I think that anyone – inside or outside your organization – who is serious about revolutionary politics and wants to learn from these events deserves answers and an explanation.

I'll close with one final question: Do you think that you are the first genuine Trotskyists since Trotsky?

* * *

My name is Amalia, I'm a member of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth. I first got involved with the CUNY Internationalist Clubs in the Fall of 2021.

I want to talk about the Spartacist League's August 28 “Open All Police Archives” leaflet.³ To begin with, everyone knows that the Spartacist League by all measures completely disappeared in 2020, during the largest protest movement this country has ever seen. You started publishing *Workers Vanguard* again in March 2023. We read it carefully and try to figure out what you're trying to say.

Everyone here will also recall that when your organization finally showed its face after this complete desertion, it relentlessly accused the Internationalist Group of “marching under the banner of liberalism” for even participating in these protests – for seeking to be the revolutionary pole putting forward a real program for black liberation. You criticized both your own organization and ours for supposedly seeking to be a left counsel for Black Lives Matter. What is your police archives leaflet actually calling for? First, it is subtitled “A Proposal to Rebuild the Movement.” Exactly what

² After months of railing against the IG/LFI for opposing the U.S. occupation of Haiti, the SL/ICL issued a statement admitting that the IG/LFI had been correct to characterize its position as “social-imperialist” ... then resumed its standard litany of rants and distortions. (See “Open Letter from the Internationalist Group to the Spartacist League and ICL,” *The Internationalist* No. 31, Summer 2010.)

³ SL/U.S., “Open All Police Archives!” (28 August 2022), online at icl-fi.org.

movement are you talking about?

This leaflet is a blatant call for class collaboration. It calls to “unite the broadest possible forces” to “bring pressure down on all the liberal and progressive politicians who claim to stand for workers and for black rights.” This is the type of language that popular-frontist groups use over and over. I'm not sure if it sounds more like the DSA or the PSL [Party for Socialism and Liberation] or Socialist Alternative.

So, what is the actual content of the campaign you're calling for? “Opening the police archives is doable and in fact can be done by any politician in office who is really on the side of black people.” So, after criticizing the liberalism of Black Lives Matter leaders and delusions in the Democrats, you then call to revive the movement on the basis of a sub-reformist demand and spread illusions about any politicians in office who are on the side of black people. Let me just also mention that last December a huge fire here in Brooklyn destroyed decades of NYPD archives. Where in New York would you find the archives that you're referring to?

Just asking.

There's also a pattern here, that we keep seeing in one leaflet after another. This leaflet doesn't call for socialism, for revolution, for socialist revolution, for black liberation through socialist revolution, for a workers party, for a revolutionary party, or anything of the kind. What it calls for is a class-collaborationist campaign to achieve a so-called “doable” demand.

It's reformist and it's class-collaborationist. And I think that's the direction you're going in.

* * *

Below we print excerpted comments by Revolutionary Internationalist Youth comrade Leticia during the discussion period at a 6 May 2023 New York SL forum.

This event is purported to be a return to Trotskyism for the Spartacist League. The chair today encouraged people to study the contents of *Workers Vanguard*, and I have to say one should really do that – because when you do, it becomes clear that the politics of the Spartacist League now are a promotion and embrace of bourgeois nationalism. Now with your new orientation towards AMLO [Mexico's president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador], we're supposed to believe that you're anti-imperialist?

Yet you justified the U.S. invasion and occupation of Haiti in 2010, as “humanitarian aid,” and criticized the Internationalist Group for upholding Trotskyism by calling for U.S. and UN forces out of Haiti. What was it that you said? Oh yes, that we were engaged in “Third World cheerleading” and “con-juring up fantasies of proletarian revolution in Haiti.”⁴ But now you've pretty much disappeared that betrayal. You also abandoned the call for the independence of Puerto Rico, a colony of the United

⁴ See footnote 1.

States, one of the most basic principles of any communist organization, The SL even went so far as to say you would support annexation – if that were “the will of the population.”⁵

In 2001, in one of the most powerful imperialist countries in the world, you abandoned the call to defeat U.S. imperialism, after you cracked under the pressure of your own national ruling class following 9/11. It's actually not enough to say that you abandoned this call: you attacked it and attacked those who were determined to maintain and uphold that position after 9/11 and during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. In a particularly vile smear, *Workers Vanguard* accused the Internationalist Group of “Playing the Counterfeit Card of Anti-Americanism” for upholding this basic Leninist position. It went further, grotesquely claiming that we were playing to an audience of “‘Third World’ nationalists for whom the ‘only good American is a dead American’”⁶ This monstrous lie was printed by you in the hysterical atmosphere following the 9/11 attacks....

And now, with the war between Ukraine and Russia, which has long since become a proxy war of the U.S. and NATO against Russia, you still use pitiful excuses to refuse to call for the military defense of Russia and the defeat of U.S. imperialism. Meanwhile, someone brought up the defense of workers states? You even alibi the Wuhan lab theory,⁷ which is imperialist propaganda. All of this is unsurprising because it's just yet another capitulation to your own national bourgeoisie.

Talk about bowing to the bourgeoisie. Despite correction after correction after correction after correction; after trashing time and again the programmatic record that the once-revolutionary Spartacist tendency built up from its inception in the early 1960s, and denouncing the Internationalist Group for upholding that revolutionary program – after all this, we're supposed to believe, that now, today, the Spartacist League is officially anti-imperialist? Let alone a revolutionary Trotskyist organization?

I don't think so. ■

⁵ On Puerto Rico, the SL had since its inception called for the colony's independence, but in 1998 declared, “We do not currently advocate independence for Puerto Rico” (see “ICL Renounces Fight for Puerto Rican Independence,” *The Internationalist* No. 6, November-December 1998). Then in 2017, while again switching gears and claiming to espouse independence, it went so far as to declare that it would support statehood, i.e., the colonial *annexation* of Puerto Rico, if that reflected “the will of the population” (see, “SL/ICL on Puerto Rico: Annexationist ‘Socialists’,” *The Internationalist* No. 50, Winter 2017). Now *Spartacist* No. 68 (September 2023) includes a brief piece titled “Puerto Rico: For Independence and Socialism!” that evades the question of statehood entirely.

⁶ See “The Internationalist Group: Centrist Pathology,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 767, 26 October 2001.

⁷ See “Pandemic in China: Trotskyism vs. Stalinism,” *Spartacist* No. 67, August 2022.



In November 2023, ILWU president Adams was back at the White House for another photo op with Biden, this time to support the Democratic president's "Global Labor Directive."

Dock Workers...

continued from page 13

deepening capitulation to the shipping bosses "at home," as successive longshore contracts failed to defend longshore and clerks' jobs from the threat of automation.

Another stark example was McEllrath's sabotage of the struggle in 2012 to unionize a scab export grain terminal (EGT) being constructed in Longview, Washington. He ordered Local 21 to drop plans to occupy the site and then saddled it with a contract leaving the control tower fully in the hands of management. Meanwhile, the union accepted a \$20 million dollar fine over its job actions in the Port of Portland, Oregon, stemming from an ill-advised dispute with the IBEW over a couple of reefer jobs. It even went into bankruptcy proceedings rather than shutting down the coast in response to this attack. But more on that later.

The ILWU's sharp right turn was reflected in the bargaining over the 2022 Pacific Coast Longshore Contract Document (PCLCD), especially over relations with the federal government. Adams sat in a

photo op for President Biden on the deck of the USS *Iowa* in June 2022, before the expiration of the previous contract. He dutifully vowed not to strike, abandoning the ILWU's historic program of "no contract, no work" and surrendering labor's leverage in the bargaining. Then, in an unprecedented move, he invited U.S. acting secretary of labor Julie Su into the contract negotiations with the employers' PMA. Adams kept members working without a contract for a year, when the ILWU was not facing a no-strike clause and could have walked out at any time. Instead, the union leadership kept the "wheels of commerce rolling."

Adams brags that he's the first ILWU president to meet at the White House with a U.S. president. After the *six-year* 2022-28 PCLCD was finally ratified last August, Adams was rewarded with a visit to Washington to be photographed with Biden, in which the Democratic president praised the contract as "a good deal for the United States of America." Adams was back at the White House for another photo op in November, when he applauded Biden's "Global Labor Directive," which

the ILWU president said will "reverse decades of labor-hostile trade deals" like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). What a fraud! Biden voted for NAFTA and helped Democratic president Bill Clinton fast-track that job-killing deal through Congress in 1993.

ILWU on the ILA Warpath

For decades, the West Coast ILWU traded on its reputation as the "progressive" U.S. dock workers union. The ILWU courageously opposed the Korean War at its height, and refused to send arms to the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile in 1978 and to the military junta in El Salvador in 1980. At the same time, the union leadership was careful not to cross vital "red lines" of the imperialist rulers. Thus, the ILWU marched in demonstrations against the Vietnam War, but even as it struck against the PMA in 1971 it continued to move war cargo. And as Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet war drive went into high gear in 1980-81, social-democratic ILWU president Jimmy Herman denounced the Soviet Union over the CIA-funded, Polish nationalist Solidarność, Ronald Reagan's favorite "union."

The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) on the East and Gulf Coasts, on the other hand, has backed every U.S. imperialist war. Yet in 2022 the ILWU joined the ILA in support of the U.S./NATO-provoked imperialist war in Ukraine, refusing to work Russian ships. And now both unions are mum about the genocidal war by Israel and the U.S. against the Palestinians in Gaza. They are not alone. The International Dockworkers Council (IDC), which in 2014 and 2021 issued sharp denunciations of Israeli massacres in Gaza, has said nothing about the genocide currently under way. The only recent "action" by the IDC, now headed by Dennis Daggett (son of ILA president Harold Daggett), was a statement in November against "any kind of war or confrontation" that didn't even mention Gaza, and a January visit to Pope Francis in the Vatican, where likewise no mention of Gaza was reported.

In contrast to the complicit silence of the ILA and ILWU leaders in the U.S., the Canadian section of the ILWU on December 20 issued a brief statement calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and expressing "solidarity with the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions." It did not, however, call for any specific action, such as boycotting war materiel. Not coincidentally, the week before, the Canadian government voted for a ceasefire resolution in the United Nations. In January, Canadian ILA Locals 273 (St. John, New Brunswick) and 1953 (St. John's, Newfoundland) took a stand for a ceasefire in Gaza. The reality is that almost all trade-union leaderships

are part of a privileged *labor bureaucracy* that is ultimately beholden to the capitalist-imperialist rulers. Occasionally some may break ranks, particularly when they as well as the workers organizations they lead are under attack. But mostly that will reflect divisions in the ruling class, as with "anti-war" Democrats over Vietnam.

Many liberals are calling for a ceasefire in a desperate effort to put an end to the horrifying slaughter of the people of Gaza, even though they don't oppose the U.S./Israeli war as such. But precisely because of the latter, they are condemned to impotence in the face of the kill-crazed Zionist warmongers who will not stop, nor will Biden stop them. Plus any "negotiated ceasefire" would leave the Israeli occupiers in place, which is intolerable to the people of Gaza. And the besieged Palestinians have a right to defend themselves against the murderous Israeli onslaught. Rather than seeking in vain to pressure Biden and the Democrats in Congress, what's needed is to use labor's power to *block* the imperialist war machine. Dock workers are at the choke point for transporting military cargo. We can stop it. The bureaucrats will say that violates the contract. But ILWU Local 10 has done it before, and it can do so today against the genocide in Gaza.

What's needed is a leadership that is prepared to wage sharp class struggle against the bosses, on the docks and beyond. With that, we can impose workers control over automation, help win organizing drives for Amazon workers, fight racist police repression and strike a powerful blow against imperialist and Zionist wars. In this global economy, port workers hold an awesome power if they are organized and armed with a program and leaders willing and able to use it. The supply chain problems during and after the pandemic made the importance of the ports clear to the imperialist rulers, which is one big reason why ILWU leaders are suddenly getting invites to the White House to chitchat in front of the cameras. Class-conscious union leaders would say instead: government hands off! To unchain workers power, we need to break with the Democrats and all capitalist politicians and build a workers party on a class-struggle program.

Genuine solidarity with the besieged and massacred Palestinian people must demand, as did motions last December by Painters Local 10 and Ironworkers Local 29 in Portland, Oregon, "the immediate end to Israel's bombing of Gaza; for Israel to vacate Gaza and the West Bank, and to end all arming and funding for it now." In Oakland on January 13, AROC called for a "Port Shutdown for Palestine," to "Stop Military Aid to Israel!" and for "Ceasefire Now!" A couple thousand protesters were mustered, starting at 5 a.m. and going till 4 p.m. The PMA evidently realized that if they ordered up longshore workers while all the terminal gates were picketed, the workers would not cross. So employers didn't even order longshore workers from the union hiring hall. *The next time, it should be the ILWU itself that initiates the action, as it did in the apartheid ship boycott in 1984.*

The Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions has called on transportation unions to refuse to touch arms to Israel. We must honor their request, *now! War cargo to Israel – too hot to handle! Defend the Palestinians, defeat the war on Gaza!* ■



Activists of Class Struggle Workers Portland (above at 11 November 2023 Palestine labor solidarity rally) initiated motions in IUPAT (Painters) Local 10 and Ironworkers Local 29 calling for immediate end to Israeli bombing of Gaza, for Israel out of West Bank and Gaza and to stop U.S. arming and funding.

Against the Anti-Picketing “Protocol” and Milei’s Anti-Worker Mega-Decree

Argentina: Smash the “Chainsaw” Assault on Labor and the Unemployed

Fight for a Workers Government!

We publish below an abbreviated English translation of an *El Internacionista* leaflet that was distributed in Buenos Aires during the January 24 strike by unions, the left and community organizations that mobilized against the avalanche of anti-worker legislation by far-right president Javier Milei who took office in early December. It was the first national strike since 2019. While police estimated some 80,000 demonstrators in Buenos Aires, it was certainly much more – up to 200,000 by some counts. In addition, tens of thousands more – perhaps another 150,000 in total – marched in every major city around the country. It could have been far greater except for the decision of the public transit unions to keep trains, subway and buses running until 7 p.m. – limiting the impact on non-unionized workers – and the limited participation of the industrial unions, which mostly stayed in their own areas.

The Peronist¹ union leaders who spoke from the stage mainly sought to pressure Peronist legislators to vote against the government’s “Omnibus Law” which would eliminate a panoply of social programs and labor laws, gutting the right to strike and leading to the destruction of whole sectors of the economy. The law did not come to a vote on the 24th, due to disputes among the bourgeoisie, so various left groups are calling for a repeat strike when Congress reconvenes on January 30. But parliamentary tinkering will not stop the onslaught. While a court decision on the 24th stayed the application of some of the anti-labor “reforms,” the vast scope of the government’s plans to destroy any and all protections against the ravages of the capitalist market make clear that the only answer is to mobilize the power of the working class and the oppressed to drive out Milei and establish a revolutionary workers government.

The Spanish-language leaflet was also distributed at solidarity demonstrations in Mexico City, New York City and Berlin, Germany. The full English text of the leaflet is available on the internet at: <https://www.internationalist.org/argentina-smash-%27chainsaw%27-assault-on-labor-and-unemployed-2401.html>.

¹ Since the time of the governments of General Juan Domingo Perón (from 1946 until his overthrow in 1955, and again from October 1973 until his death on 1 July 1974) the Argentine political scene has been dominated by *la grieta* (“the rift”) between the bourgeois populist movement of Peronism, with strong roots among the workers, and the anti-Peronism of the traditional right-wing bourgeois elite.



The January 24 national strike, called by the CGT and the other main labor federations in Argentina, against the avalanche of anti-worker decrees and laws by the government of ultra-rightist Javier Milei. The Peronist union tops only sought to pressure legislators to vote “no.” The goal should have been to shut down the capital and Greater Buenos Aires on the road to a real general strike and factory occupations.

BUENOS AIRES – After an election campaign² in which the ultra-rightist Javier Milei succeeded, even among sectors of the working class, in capitalizing on the anger and frustration generated by the inflationary policies of the Peronist government which left almost half of the population in poverty, the new “libertarian” president took office on December 10. In his inauguration speech, Milei announced a “shock” program³ which, if implemented, will plunge millions of workers and poor people into destitution: tenants evicted from their homes, workers fired from their jobs, unions destroyed, companies bankrupted, education and public health devastated. It was a real declaration of war against the labor movement.

Now comes the first major response from the unions and the left. The General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which includes the large majority of the industrial and strategic unions of the country, has called a national strike for January 24, with

² In the campaign, the “libertarian” Milei often posed brandishing a chainsaw, vowing to gut workers’ right to strike, privatize all state-owned enterprises, eliminate social programs for the unemployed and do away with the “privileges” of unionized workers. See “Argentina Elections: Mr. Chainsaw vs. Washington’s Favorite Peronist,” *The Internationalist* (16 November 2023).

³ In announcing a “new era” the newly minted president proclaimed that “There is no alternative to adjustment and shock,” *La Nación*, 11 December 2023.

a rally in front of the National Congress. That step was then ratified by the other important union federations, including the Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina Autónoma (CTA-A) and the Workers’ CTA (CTA-T) which include the education (CTERA) and public employee unions (ATE). Likewise, almost all the left, including the United Left and Workers Front (FIT-U) electoral cartel, supports the strike.

In the face of the mortal threat represented by the Milei government, it is essential to mobilize for this test of strength, while warning against illusions in the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats that called the strike, who seek to avoid a head-on clash with the union-busting government. Lasting only 12 hours starting at noon, and intended to put pressure on the members of Congress, the strike is far from a class-struggle fight against the regime. Class-conscious militants should break the limits imposed by the Peronist union leadership and shut down the city of Buenos Aires, while seeking to form inter-union committees to prepare for a real general strike leading to a revolutionary workers government.

December 20: a Down-Sized Leftist Protest, and an Ultra-Rightist Mega-Decree

After his inauguration, the new president fired off a burst of anti-worker measures. First (December 12) came a mega-

devaluation by the minister of economy Luis Caputo: in a single blow, the official exchange rate of the U.S. dollar went from 366 to 800 Argentine pesos. Then (December 14), security minister Patricia Bullrich announced her police “protocol” outlawing street blockades and roadblocks by *piqueteros*,⁴ even for marching in the street. By the weekend (December 17) it was leaked from the Casa Rosada (Argentina’s White House) that a mega “decree of necessity and urgency” (DNU) would soon be issued containing an avalanche of deregulations, privatizations, “freeing” of prices and “reforms” (especially regarding labor) which would target the working people as a whole and large sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

It was a frontal challenge to the unions and the left. The piquetero organizations together with the parties of the FIT-U had already announced a protest for the 20th. “50,000 people will be mobilized” proclaimed Eduardo Belliboni, the main media figure of the leftist piquetero groups and leader of the Polo Obrero (Workers Pole), the piquetero organization of the Partido Obrero (PO – Workers Party). Newly elected federal deputy of the Partido de Trabajadores Socialistas (PTS – Socialist Workers Party) Christian Castillo tweeted that there would be “tens of thousands” in the streets.

From early in the morning it was announced on loudspeakers and posters in the city’s train stations that “*el que corta no cobra*” (anyone who blocks will not get paid). This was the threat made by Milei in his inaugural speech, that anyone stopping traffic on the streets would have their social plan cancelled. Both Bullrich and Milei went to the central department of the Federal Police to observe the development of the leftist demonstration from the “situation room.”

As it turned out, only about 10,000 demonstrators attended: more than the 3,000 announced by the Ministry of Security, but far from the 50,000 or the tens of thousands expected by the organizers. Seeing the reduced attendance, President

⁴ Beginning in the late 1990s as many factories in Argentina closed due to the policies of the Peronist government of Carlos Menem – who pegged the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar, making many Argentine industries uncompetitive internationally – movements of unemployed workers arose that blocked highways with pickets (*piquetes*). This intensified with the economic crisis of 2001-02, and since then *piquetero* movements of thousands of jobless workers have persisted, some controlled by the Peronist bureaucracy and others led by leftists, all competing for government financing.

Milei left the federal police headquarters and went to the Casa Rosada, where a few hours later he announced his mega DNU which consists of 83 pages and repeals or modifies some 300 laws on social matters.

The anti-popular measures of the mega-decree “Bases for the Reconstruction of the Argentine Economy” constitute an unprecedented attack on Argentine workers. They represent a dramatic economic transformation of Argentina toward total opening of the market and complete subordination to the interests of international capital. They attack head-on the right of the working class to organize and defend itself, assailing – or eliminating outright – gains that were the fruit of decades of hard class struggle.

Unlike what happened in the afternoon with the scant participation in the left-led protest, this juggernaut of anti-popular measures provoked a wave of semi-spontaneous “*cacerolazos*” (pots-and-pans protests) with hundreds and thousands expressing their horror at Milei’s decrees. Every neighborhood in the capital had at least one, and many converged towards the Congress. Of course, banging pots and pans in protest will not stop a hard-line government like Milei’s, but it indicates the discontent that is there to be mobilized.

What is not true is the claim by the PTS that the “demonstration called by the left filled Plaza de Mayo and broke the new repressive protocol,”⁵ nor that thereby “We opened the way so that that same night thousands would also make the pots and pans ring out.”⁶ The truth is that on the 20th the members of the FIT-U and its piquetero organizations and related union currents occupied only half the Plaza and the street in front and they yielded to the “protocol,” avoiding challenging it frontally and ostentatiously.

December 20 was the 22nd anniversary of the Plaza de Mayo massacre amid the heroic street battles of 2001 in which 39 people were killed by the police, triggering a general strike and the resignation of President Fernando de la Rúa who fled in a helicopter. What was at stake in this 20 December 2023 was, as expressed by the head of the government of the capital city, Jorge Macri, “the logic of who controls the street.” His assertion that “Order is here to stay,” is far from conclusive, but Milei and Bullrich had the upper hand in this first skirmish. If the left had openly challenged the anti-picketing measures, if it had offered resistance and forced the repressive apparatus to show its hand, the *cacerolazos* would indeed have played out in support of the left, which would have been at the forefront of the resistance. Instead, it finds itself once again tailing along after the Peronists.

January 24 Strike: Form Inter-Factory Coordinating Committees

The anti-picketing protocol is an effort to readjust the historical balance of class forces in Argentina, completely erasing the influence of the piquetero organizations. Milei’s ambition is to root out Peronism, gut the unions and eliminate the electoral left outright, branding everyone, wrongly in each case, as “communists.” His presidency will not be just another episode of a reactionary government, to be followed by a supposedly “progressive” one.

Make no mistake: Milei is playing for keeps, and he has the backing of large sectors of the national bourgeoisie, as well as of the imperialist agencies. The working class needs an even more determined revolutionary Marxist vanguard, to mobilize the superior force of the Argentine and international working class in an all-out class struggle.

Milei has shown no interest in negotiating with the CGT, and his decree pursues two of the most important economic sources of the Peronist union bureaucracy. The first is the dues checkoff, quite common among pro-capitalist labor unions around the world. The second is a vast financial empire built around health care plans managed by the semi-corporatist unions.⁷ This system of subcontracting social works was granted by the military dictatorship of Juan Carlos Onganía at the end of the 1960s, essentially as a way of buying off the union leaders of the Peronist opposition. It turned union bureaucrats into de facto executive directors of health insurance companies, through which they maintain a black box of dubious financial transactions.

On December 27, the CGT organized a huge protest in front of the Supreme Court, to bolster its lawsuit seeking an injunction against Milei’s mega-decree for alleged “unconstitutionality.” This time tens of thousands of trade unionists, piqueteros and leftists came out, overflowing into the streets in open violation of the Bullrich protocol.

Although the CGT leadership held out hope of negotiation with the government and judicial intervention, the publication of the Omnibus Law convinced it that a show of force would be necessary. So the CGT leadership announced an active national strike with a rally in front of Congress for January 24. It is part of an overall policy of pressure. It will coincide with the convening of the emergency sessions of Congress, and the CGT leadership is letting it be known that “what they expect is that the measure of force will enable a dialogue with the Casa Rosada” (*Clarín*, January 22).

The left has largely limited itself to calling on the Peronist trade-union bureaucracy to undertake action. Most of the FIT-U parties took part in the protest on December 27 under slogans calling on the CGT leadership to call for a national strike with a “plan of struggle.” So the CGT proceeded to call for an active national strike, with a concentration at the Congress. What now? The first reaction of the PTS was to call for building the strike with assemblies in the workplaces to discuss how to make the day’s protest as big as possible. The second reaction was to take credit for the push for the strike. This self-congratulation overlooks the fact that the union leadership, wedded to the bourgeois Peronist

⁷ Unlike the corporatist “unionism” system in Mexico, where the state party took over the trade unions, purging their combative leaderships and integrating them into the state apparatus, the Peronist trade unions in Argentina were born as subsidiaries of the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security under Eva Perón. But after the overthrow of General Perón in 1955, the Peronist unions were orphaned until Juan Carlos Onganía granted them the “outsourced” administration of social works, thus giving them a semi-corporatist character. We Trotskyists fight for the full independence of the unions from the capitalist state, including replacing the collection of union dues by the state and the bosses, with self-financing of the unions by their membership directly.

movement, has its own motives for calling for a strike, and that it is the policy of these “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class” which has the upper hand, at least so far.

To reverse the situation, it will be necessary for the revolutionary Marxists – i.e., the Trotskyist-Leninists – to politically combat the pro-capitalist bureaucracy on the basis of a transitional program leading in the direction of the struggle for socialist revolution. This is precisely what the various pseudo-Trotskyist groups do not do. For example, in the declaration of the Plenary Meeting of Combative Unionism, the main slogan is: “Let’s rally at Congress and throughout the country, independent of the bureaucracy, to demand a Plan of Struggle to defeat Milei’s chainsaw plan.” In other words, “independently” tail after the bureaucracy. The same idea is repeated by all the components of the Left and Workers Front. Calling on the CGT for a plan of struggle is absurd: it already has one, consisting of pressuring the Peronist opposition.

In the Joint Plenary Meeting held on January 17 by the teachers union ADEMYS and the Plenary of Combative Unionism, representatives of the MST repeated that the national strike was “wrested” from the union bureaucracy. Almost nobody disagreed with this statement. Only Marcelo Ramal, of Política Obrera, warned of the clear intention of the CGT to use the national strike as a mere tool of parliamentary pressure politics and to contain the working class within these channels. He also raised the slogan of promoting inter-factory coordinating committees on the road to the general strike. His intervention was the only one that did not receive applause in the plenary, which shows the depth of the illusions of the others in the policy of pressuring the Peronists. But even raising the slogan of a general strike is insufficient: it is necessary to prepare the struggle for socialist revolution.

It is striking that almost nobody on the left presents a program of transitional demands in their propaganda around the strike of the 24th (and in the prior protests). At most they demand trigger clauses in labor contracts to compensate for wage losses due to galloping inflation. They approach the struggle against Milei’s “Chainsaw Plan” as if it were one more wage ne-

gotiation. But with Milei there will be no bargaining. There is no mention of the formation of workers defense groups, which will be indispensable in the face of repression of “unauthorized” strikes and of jailing piqueteros. Nor is there a word about imposing workers control, particularly in the transportation sector, where struggles around fare hikes are foreseeable, or in companies, such as YPF [state oil company] or Aerolíneas [state airline], scheduled for privatization.

When they speak of factory occupations, they are referring to bankrupt companies. That would only be a measure to demand government subsidies, whereas to defeat the government’s union-busting plans it would be necessary to mobilize the strength of the workers movement to occupy profitable enterprises. And suppose the CGT were to launch a general strike against the Milei government, as it did partially in the 1980s with a series of powerful general strikes against the government of Raúl Alfonsín, of the Radical Civic Union (UCR, the traditional party of the right-wing capitalist elite). The result was the victory of the Peronist Menem, who came in with the support of the unions on a platform that promised non-payment of the debt, only to turn around to launch the 1990s orgy of privatization, deregulation and financial speculation for which Argentina is still paying today.

The terminal decline of Argentina is inseparable from the decline of the capitalist class that governs it and the rotting of the imperialist system on a world scale. This implies fighting against the imperialist yoke exemplified by the endless austerity plans of the International Monetary Fund, and Milei’s plan of full dollarization, which will lead to the ruin of large sectors of the Argentine economy. But what is the alternative? The Peronist economic regime of protectionism and subsidies is exhausted. As we wrote about last November’s elections, even if the Peronist candidate Sergio Massa had won, he too would have imposed brutal austerity. The only real alternative to Argentina’s economic collapse is to fight for a workers government and international socialist revolution.

Today, in the face of Milei’s enthusi-

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⁵ *Izquierda Diario*, 21 December 2023.

⁶ *Izquierda Diario* special supplement, January 2024

asm for Israel in the midst of its genocidal war, together with the U.S., against the Palestinian Arab population of Gaza, some on the left criticize his government as Zionist. Yet they ignore his alliance with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a puppet of U.S. imperialism and NATO, who was guest of honor at Milei's inauguration. They refuse to defend Russia against the imperialist proxy war over Ukraine that points to a Third World War whose ultimate aim is to foment counterrevolution and overthrow the Chinese deformed workers state. In fact, far from defending China and Russia against the united onslaught of all the imperialist powers, most of the Trotskyist left in Argentina, and particularly the heirs of the pseudo-Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno, find themselves in the same trench as U.S. imperialism . . . and Javier Milei.

The League for the Fourth International stresses that to lead a class struggle against the starvation policies and union-busting plans of the present bonapartist-tinged capitalist government, just as against its Peronist predecessors, the main task is to forge an authentic Trotskyist party that fights against capitalism across the board, as part of a reformed Fourth International on the basis of the proletarian internationalist program of Lenin's Bolsheviks. ■

Primero de Mayo...

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EE.UU. contra Gaza y a poner alto al flujo de armas para dicha guerra". La moción urge también al resto de los sindicatos y trabajadores portuarios a escala internacional a realizar acciones de solidaridad con Palestina el Primero de Mayo.

Ahora la Confederación Sindical General de Palestina de Gaza ha lanzado un llamado para el Primero de Mayo a los sindicatos en Estados Unidos a hacer precisamente eso. La declaración de la PGFTU dice francamente que "nos hemos encontrado con un impactante silencio y negligencia en el movimiento obrero internacional". Y procede a explicarlo:

"El movimiento obrero internacional . . . se ha retirado a posiciones verbales sin emprender medidas concretas para presionar a los responsables de parar esta guerra de exterminio, limitando las actividades sindicales a conferencias y declaraciones, sin ahondar en la necesidad de garantizar ayuda humanitaria, o en influir a la opinión pública internacional para sacar a la luz la verdad acerca de los crímenes sionistas y las prácticas de los países aliados que siguen apoyando a Israel".

En respuesta al llamado urgente de la PGFTU a los sindicatos y sindicalistas en EE.UU. y a escala internacional "a ser nuestra voz y abogar a nuestro favor dentro y fuera de Estados Unidos", la Liga por la IV Internacional insta a los militantes proletarios en todo el mundo a **movilizar el poder obrero en acciones contundentes este 1° de mayo en solidaridad con el asediado pueblo palestino en contra de la guerra genocida de EE.UU. e Israel**. Estas acciones pueden y deben no sólo enfocarse en las manifestaciones del Primero de Mayo en solidaridad con Palestina y en la organización de ayuda obrera a Gaza, sino en el bloqueo de cargamentos de armas y en la realización de boicots obreros a los vuelos y envíos por barco hacia y desde Israel, y donde quiera que sea posible, **realizar huelgas y parar la producción**. Tales acciones deben exigir **un alto inmediato a los bombardeos, a las transferencias forzosas**



Así es como se ve el genocidio. Residentes de la ciudad de Gaza se reúnen en el lugar de un edificio destruido, 24 de marzo.

de la población y a cualesquiera restricciones a la ayuda de emergencia a Gaza; asimismo, poner fin a toda ayuda a Israel y la retirada completa de Israel de Gaza y de todos los Territorios Ocupados.

En Estados Unidos es crucial luchar para que los trabajadores y los oprimidos rompan con los demócratas, quienes están financiando, asesorando, pertrechando y librando la guerra contra los palestinos en Gaza junto con el gobierno israelí de sionistas de línea dura y abiertos fascistas. Es fundamental también **echar a la burocracia sindical pro patronal**, que durante décadas ha encadenado a los sindicatos a los partidos capitalistas. Un excelente ejemplo de esto es el de la dirección de los United Auto Workers (UAW), que en respuesta al clamor de las bases, particularmente en el área de Detroit con su población árabe de envergadura, llamó por un cese al fuego en Gaza, *¡para luego darse la vuelta y respaldar a "Joe Genocida" Biden para la presidencia!* Por su parte, la cúpula de los Teamsters (camioneros) está flirteando con Donald Trump, quien abundó respecto a la guerra de Gaza que le diría al primer ministro israelí Netanyahu que "la lleve al fin, y que lo haga rápidamente" (*Haaretz*, 17 de marzo).

Los perfiles de acciones de solidaridad efectivas con el pueblo palestino varían de país en país. En Alemania, la acción obrera en contra de la guerra genocida debe necesariamente oponerse no sólo al gobierno de los partidos Socialdemócrata, Demócrata Libre y Verde, que es ferozmente pro sionista (y que ha prohibido muchas protestas pro palestinas) y a la igual de rabiosamente pro Israel "oposición" derechista, sino también al Partido de Izquierda, pues todos los partidos parlamentarios explícitamente apoyan "el derecho de Israel a la autodefensa", la fórmula para justificar el asesinato en masa en Gaza. En Italia, donde los fascistas dirigen un gobierno de extrema derecha, organizar acciones obreras efectivas requerirá movilizaciones unidas de parte de los sindicatos de "base" normalmente enemistados entre sí, y poniendo en acción a sectores industriales clave en un desafío directo a las confederaciones "mainstream" que, a pesar de sus declaraciones a favor de un cese al fuego, están sólidamente a favor de Israel.

Por doquier, la izquierda oportunista busca construir un "movimiento amplio contra la guerra", centrado típicamente en llamados a favor de un cese al fuego, con el fin de incluir a elementos liberales disidentes o "progresistas" de la burguesía y a los partidos reformistas,

que no necesariamente se oponen a la guerra contra Gaza, sino sólo a sus "excesos". En lugar de coaliciones de "frente popular" como éstas que promueven una impotente política de presión, **lo que urgentemente hace falta es una lucha clasista combativa e independiente contra todos los partidos capitalistas y socialdemócratas en el gobierno**, que son engranes en el sistema imperialista y, por lo tanto, de un modo u otro, cómplices del genocidio que se está realizando en Gaza. Llamados a favor de la "paz" sin referencia sin contenido de clase son una desviación frente a los implacables asesinos en masa norteamericanos e israelíes, que sólo pueden ser detenidos mediante una revolución socialista internacional.

Las resoluciones que han aprobado cuatro sindicatos —el local 29 de los Ironworkers (constructores de puentes), el local 10 del IUPAT (pintores), el local 48 del IBEW (electricistas) y el local 111 de la AFT (educación)— en el área de Portland, Oregon, en la costa norte del Pacífico en Estados Unidos, subrayan la urgencia de esta política clasista independiente. En lugar de llamar por un cese al fuego, que dejaría a los israelíes con el control de Gaza y que le hace el juego al gobierno de Biden que ahora está jugueteando con la fórmula, las resoluciones, presentadas por partidarios de los Class Struggle Workers —Portland (trabajadores clasistas de Portland) llaman a favor de acciones obreras para poner alto al envío de armas a Israel, por el "fin inmediato del bombardeo de Israel contra Gaza, por la salida de Israel de Gaza y Cisjordania y por poner fin al pertrechamiento y financiamiento de Israel ahora".

Sobre todo, la lucha para poner alto a la guerra genocida de EE.UU. e Israel contra el pueblo palestino exige una lucha política en contra de los partidos capitalistas. Esto fue abordado por los pin-

tores de Portland, quienes en una resolución en 2016 llamaron a romper con todos los partidos de los patrones y a construir un partido obrero de lucha clasista. El llamado que hacía esa resolución al sindicato nacional a repudiar su respaldo al candidato presidencial demócrata debe ser un ejemplo para los obreros combativos hoy, toda vez que los sindicatos en EE.UU., tras pronunciarse a favor del cese al fuego en Gaza, *respaldan al criminal de guerra Biden del Partido Demócrata, quien es responsable de armar, financiar y dirigir la guerra genocida*.

Los asediados árabes palestinos que han estado sometidos a una "limpieza étnica" durante más de tres cuartos de siglo, tras haber sido sojuzgados por los imperialistas británicos y por el Imperio Otomano, enfrentan ahora un abierto genocidio a manos del estado sionista de Israel y sus patrones norteamericanos. Para poner fin a esta opresión hace falta una revolución, una revolución que sólo podrá tener éxito si divide y hace estallar a la sociedad israelí desde adentro. Esto exige una intransigente lucha clasista internacionalista en toda la región. Como ha enfatizado la Liga por la IV Internacional desde el principio de la guerra, y durante mucho antes, la conclusión es que los defensores de los oprimidos y luchadores contra el imperialismo deben **mantenerse firmemente del lado del pueblo palestino en contra de los opresores sionistas y su estado**, y que la única solución que puede garantizar un futuro justo y equitativo para los dos pueblos que habitan este pequeño territorio es un **estado obrero palestino árabe-hebreo, parte de una federación socialista del Medio Oriente**.

¡Con todo por combativas acciones obreras internacionales el Primero de Mayo en solidaridad con el pueblo palestino en contra de la guerra genocida de EE.UU. e Israel! ■

League for the Fourth International

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

Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

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

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

Internationalistische Gruppe/Deutschland

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

Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia

Italy: write to Anna Chiaraluce, C.P. N. 78, Ufficio Postale San Sisto, 06132 Perugia (PG), Italy
E-mail: it_internazionalista@yahoo.com

Grupo Internacionalista/México

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

Internationalist Group/U.S.

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

¡Todos a la calle en solidaridad con el pueblo palestino!

Primero de Mayo de 2024:

¡Acciones obreras internacionales contra la guerra genocida de EE.UU. e Israel contra Gaza!

26 de MARZO – Con la bárbara guerra contra Gaza ya en su sexto mes, resulta totalmente obvio que se trata de un verdadero genocidio dirigido en contra de la totalidad de la población árabe palestina de la que ha sido denominada la prisión al aire libre más grande del mundo. Tras más de 40 mil muertos,¹ la destrucción de más de la mitad de todas las viviendas en este enclave densamente poblado, el bombardeo de escuelas y universidades y los ataques contra hospitales, ahora más de un millón de personas enfrenta el espectro de la inminente hambruna.² Queda claro también que ésta es una guerra conjunta de Estados Unidos e Israel, pues *todas* las bombas pesadas y *todos* los aviones de guerra desde los cuales son arrojadas han sido suministrados por el Pentágono, además de que el gobierno norteamericano cada año transfiere miles de millones de dólares en ayuda a Israel. Millones se han manifestado en todo el mundo para condenar la matanza y para pedir un cese al fuego, sin resultado alguno. Cada solicitud a los guerrilleros sionistas e imperialistas ha fracasado.

Lo que se necesita desesperadamente es la movilización del *poder* que puede poner alto a la matanza, el poder de la clase obrera, en Estados Unidos y en todo el mundo. Este próximo **Primero de Mayo**, el día internacional de los trabajadores, debe convertirse en *una jornada de acción obrera internacional combativa –que incluya huelgas y movilizaciones de masas dirigidas por la clase obrera– para poner alto a la guerra genocida de EE.UU. e Israel contra Gaza*. El siguiente paso debe ser la *acción obrera en todo el mundo para cancelar todos los vuelos y envíos por barco hacia o desde Israel mientras la guerra sionista en Gaza continúe*. Los trabajadores deben exigir: **¡Alto a los bombardeos! ¡Alto a la masacre! Ejército y colonos israelíes ¡lárguense de Gaza y de todos los territorios ocupados AHORA!**

¹ Esta cifra incluye a más de 7 mil personas desaparecidas entre las ruinas de los edificios destruidos. Euro-Med Monitor, Infographic, *The Israeli Genocide in the Gaza Strip*, 7 October 2023 – 14 March 2024.

² Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, *Famine Review Committee: Gaza Strip*, marzo de 2024.



El Grupo Internacionalista marcha el Primero de Mayo en Puebla, México.

En octubre pasado, la Confederación Sindical General de Palestina (PGFTU) en Gaza y más de dos decenas de sindicatos y asociaciones profesionales palestinos lanzaron un llamado urgente a la clase obrera internacional para que se rehúse a construir o transportar armas para Israel. Desde ese momento, más de 200 organismos sindicales en EE.UU. han aprobado resoluciones que piden un cese al fuego, pero sin llevar a cabo ninguna acción más allá de participar en las marchas “por la paz”. En algunos casos, notablemente en el de la AFL-CIO, estos llamados son, en realidad, de apoyo a Israel, pues condenan a los palestinos por comenzar la guerra, no exigen que Israel *salga de Gaza* y demandan la liberación de todos los rehenes israelíes sin decir absolutamente nada sobre los más de 9 mil palestinos secuestrados en cárceles israelíes (además de otros 4 mil trabajadores de Gaza que estaban en Israel cuando comenzó la guerra y que ahora están retenidos en campos militares).³

La Liga por la IV Internacional y su sección norteamericana, el Internationalist Group, han llamado desde el principio a “¡Defender a los palestinos contra la guerra

³ “9,077 ‘Security’ Inmates Are Held In Prisons inside Israel”, HaMoked, marzo de 2024.

genocida de EE.UU. e Israel contra Gaza!” (*El Internacionalista*, octubre de 2023), por “¡Acciones obreras contra el terrorismo sionista!” y “para impedir el envío de armas a



Bloqueo del puerto de Génova, Italia, realizado por activistas sindicales de S.I. Cobas, el CALP (Colectivo Autónomo de Trabajadores Portuarios) y otros sindicatos de “base”, 23-24 de febrero, impide la carga y descarga de un barco de la naviera israelí Zim.

Israel y Ucrania”, en donde EE.UU. y sus aliados de la OTAN están librando una guerra subsidiaria imperialista en contra de Rusia. Hemos subrayado que, hasta ahora, los llamados a favor de solidaridad obrera se han quedado sobre todo en el papel y que los cierres de puertos han sido convocados en su mayoría por grupos comunitarios, y no por sindicatos, como señaló el veterano activista sindical marítimo Jack Heyman en su reciente artículo en el que reitera el llamado “Trabajadores portuarios: ¡bloqueen todos los cargamentos militares a Israel!” (*The Internationalist*, 15 de febrero).

La semana pasada, Heyman y otros presentaron una resolución ante el local 10 del International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU – sindicato de estibadores y almacenistas de los puertos de la costa del Pacífico de EE.UU.) en el Área de la Bahía de San Francisco para parar labores el Primero de Mayo, el día internacional de los trabajadores, “llamando a favor de acciones obreras internacionales en solidaridad con el asediado pueblo palestino, en oposición a la guerra genocida de Israel y *sigue en la página 31*”

Revolución Permanente

Si Cobas