Storm over the Middle East
U.S./NATO Imperialists Hands Off Syria!

A year and a half after a wave of protest and revolt swept through the Arab East, where are we at? In the wake of the popular upheaval touched off by secular youth joined by workers, in Tunisia and Egypt, military-based authoritarian regimes have been replaced by military-based pseudo-democratic regimes with weak Islamist governments subordinate to imperialism. U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton and war secretary Leon Panetta jet around the region “advising” presidents, generals and “rebels.” Women protesters are brutalized. Thousands of demonstrators are jailed by military tribunals.

In Libya, the U.S./NATO imperialists bombed the government of national strongman Muammar Qaddafi to smithereens, so that a hodgepodge of competing Islamist and tribal militias now hold sway. In Syria, the U.S. and its European allies, together with Arabian peninsula monarchs are arming a Sunni Muslim military insurgency against the regime of Bashar Assad, dominated by the Alawi minority and allied with Shiite Iran. In Bahrain, a revolt by the Shiite majority against a Sunni puppet monarchy backed by the U.S. Fifth Fleet was ruthlessly put down with Saudi aid.

U.S. imperialism would seem to be sitting pretty, considering that last year its satraps were falling one by one. Back then, everyone from Barack Obama’s White House to the bourgeois media and the vast majority of the left were all hailing the “revolutions” that overthrew Hosni Mubarak in Cairo and Mohammed Ben Ali in Tunis. The Internationalist Group was among the very few voices warning that there had only been a popular revolt, and so long as the army ruled, calling it a revolution was a fraud. Today the military still holds the whip hand. Yet the civil war in Syria and U.S./Israeli threats to “bomb, bomb Iran” could set off a conflagration engulfing the region. And still holds the whip hand. Yet the civil war in Syria and U.S./Israeli threats to “bomb, bomb Iran” could set off a conflagration engulfing the region. And the working class is beginning to move, notably in Egypt.

continued on page 19

We Don’t Beg, We Demand: Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

The June 15 announcement by President Barack Obama that he would stop the deportations of certain undocumented immigrant youth set off a tremendous stir nationally. “Light At the End of the Tunnel” proclaimed New York’s El Diario/La Prensa. “Close to the Dream” cheered the headline of Prensa Latina. “Supreme Disappointment for Immigrants” headlined El Diario. Although the ruling rejected three of the disputed sections of the racist law, it did not disallow the key provision, which instructs police to ask people about their immigration status when questioning them about a misdemeanor or criminal offense, if the cops have a “reasonable suspicion” that they are undocumented. Obviously, this invites “racial profiling” of brown-skinned people or those who “look Mexican,” both immigrants (undocumented or “legal”) and citizens. Thirty percent of Arizona’s population is of Hispanic origin.

As we pointed out in our article, “Deportation Elections 2012: For a Revolutionary Workers Party!” (The Internationalist supplement, May 2012), immigration is a hot issue between Democrats and Republicans in the current presidential campaign. Hispanic and immigrants’ rights groups are assiduously using the Obama administration’s administrative action and the Supreme Court’s green light to the Republican-sponsored SB1070 to round up votes for the Democrats. But while Republicans are appealing for support from the most reactionary sectors of the white population with barely disguised xenophobic rhetoric, this doesn’t make the Democrats friends of immigrants.

In fact, the two partner parties of American capitalism are enemies of the workers, both those who have arrived from abroad and those born here. In his 2008 presidential campaign, Obama promised to enact “comprehensive immigration reform” in his first year in office. He did nothing of the sort, not even presenting a bill. Blaming the Republicans for their opposition, he is now making the same promise for the first year of a second term in the White House. In his June 22 speech before the National Association of Latin American Elected Officials, the Democratic president excused himself, saying “we did what we could do.” A bald-faced lie. And by deporting more than a million immigrants, double the figure of his Republican predecessor George W. Bush, Barack Obama is in no way a “lesser evil.”

The Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International, warns against the fraud of a mythical “immigration reform” which won’t happen, certainly nothing favorable to immigrant workers, who constitute a huge and potentially militant section of the working class. We call for no votes to the Democrats, Republicans or any capitalist candidate or party. Only a workers party can lead a victorious struggle to defend immigrants. As we chant in demonstrations, “Ni ilegales, ni criminales, ¡somos obreros internacionales!” (Neither...
illegal nor criminals, we are international workers). The IGI fights for full citizenship rights for all immigrants as part of a struggle for international socialist revolution.

The Dream Is Still a Nightmare for Undocumented Youth

So let’s briefly analyze the two latest measures: the deferred action on deportation of certain youth, and the implementation of the Arizona law.

For the roughly 65,000 immigrant students who graduate from high school every year, more than half of whom do not live in their countries of origin, the proposal to suspend deportations was reason to celebrate. Those who are approved get a temporary suspension of deportation which will enable them to get a work permit. In principle this could benefit some 700,000 youths between the ages of 18 and 30, who arrived in this country when they were under 16 years old, who have lived here for at least five consecutive years, who are studying or have graduated high school, or who have been in the military, and who have no criminal record. It would also eventually benefit another 700,000 minors under the age of 18. But in the words of the president himself, “This is not amnesty, it doesn’t provide immunity, this is not a path to citizenship.”

Obama’s 2008 campaign was based on weasel words like “hope,” “change” and “yes we can.” Today he is again selling false hopes and empty election promises. During the last two years, a movement has arisen of undocumented youth in support of the Dream Act. The campaign is led by a network of liberal “non-governmental organizations” (NGOs) in order to serve as a safety valve to vent the frustrations of a generation of youth who live in the shadows. Upon leaving high school, lacking the proper papers it is difficult for them to study in the universities or get a legal job. For their part, the Democrats want to give the impression that they are doing something about immigration in order to rev up the Latino vote in key “swing states” like Florida, Colorado, Nevada, North Carolina and Virginia.

We have refused to support the national Dream Act because of a key provision which offers legal residence for serving in the military. This is an attempt by the Pentagon to recruit young immigrants in order to fill a gap in cannon fodder for their imperialist wars. But despite the generals’ testimony, anti-immigrant hysteria buried in the Dream Act in Congress and almost all the state legislatures. In the face of this failure, the Obama administration is seeking to profit from the sympathies by and for this sector, who erroneously considered “innocent” even by many reactionaries. And with the young dreamers, who courageously came out of the shadows to affirm their identity, the maneuver worked. Many received the news of the action with tears in their eyes. But let’s look more closely at what was approved.

Not only is it not an amnesty, nor permanent residence, nor a path to citizenship, it isn’t even an executive order. It was only an internal administrative memo from the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), a sinister agency which is at the heart of the drive to intensify repression in the United States. Indeed, under both Bush and Obama, thanks to the DHS and its Immigration Control and Enforcement (ICE) police, undocumented immigrants in the U.S. are already living in a police state. And even if young people manage to qualify for deferred action, this measure could be withdrawn tomorrow if the DHS chief changes her mind, or if the Republicans win the elections. Immigration law specialists are recommending not to make use of the measure until after seeing the outcome of the November elections.

Keep in mind that the government generally doesn’t know whether a young person is an immigrant or not. When they request deferred action, they enter the immigration control system. As a Phoenix-based immigration lawyer remarked, once in the system “they may not be able to get back into anonymity.” Moreover, they will have to hand over a stack of documents, informing the authorities of the whereabouts and immigration status of their parents; they will probably have to pay a stiff processing fee; and they will have to undergo a background check by the FBI. In practice, it is likely to be a small layer of middle class youth who are seeking to get a university degree will benefit from this action. For the bulk of the youth in immigrant neighborhoods it offers little or nothing.

What those who are approved will receive will not be an exemption from deportation but only a deferment. In contrast to the “temporary protected status” granted to Central Americans, the action announced by Obama does not change the immigration status of the youth concerned. It is only an “exercise of prosecutorial discretion,” deciding to temporarily not proceed with deportation. A year ago, the ICE director made a similar announcement, that on the basis of prosecutorial discretion in the future they would not deport “low priority” persons. He promised to review 340,000 cases in which deportation proceedings had already begun. But of the 200,000 cases examined so far, only 2% have been closed (Arizona Republic, 16 June). In other words, the result has been negligible.

SB1070 Goes Into Effect: “Show Your Papers!”

If the action announced by President Obama doesn’t turn out to be as beneficial for undocumented youth as many thought, the Supreme Court decision permitting the implementation of the key provision of Arizona’s SB1070 law promises an increase in police harassment against immigrants and Latinos, and an avalanche of legal battles over this and similar racist laws. It already has people reeling in Arizona: after hearing the verdict, parents flocked to lawyers’ offices to draw up letters of parental rights, transferring custody of their children if they are picked up on the street or highway under the new law. (There are already several thousand cases of undocumented immigrants who were detained and their children then kidnapped by the authorities, and in some cases given up in adoption.)

Strictly legal terms, the Court ruling has contradictory elements. It turned down Section 3 of the SB1070 law which would have made it a crime not to carry alien registration papers. So if a police officer in Arizona asks another state demand somebody’s papers, the person being questioned is under no obligation to produce documents. It also annulled Section 5, which would have made it illegal for an undocumented immigrant to ask for a job. The Court prohibited states from implementing laws on this issue, underlining that Congress, by making the employer responsible, “made a deliberate choice not to impose criminal penalties on aliens who seek, or engage in, unauthorized employment.” So it spelled out that day laborers who are harassed by the police, and not only in Arizona, are not violating the law in looking for work.

The Court also struck down Section 6 of the law, which would have authorized the arrest without a warrant of individuals simply for being undocumented. In doing so, the highest court in the country reaffirmed in writing that, “As a general rule, it is not a crime for a removable alien to remain present in the United States.” This has been the case for many years, but it must enrage the xenophobes to see it reaffirmed in so many words, and this ultra-reactionary Supreme Court. Nevertheless, while immigration law experts applaud these sections of the ruling, the supporters of SB1070 correctly emphasize that the Court let the key piece of law go into effect, Section 2B, which requires police officers to ask about the immigration status of anyone being questioned if they suspect that the person is undocumented.

Even in this case there are limitations. It is not permitted to stop people simply to inquire about their immigration status. All this means is that the police will have to look for a pretext, but officers are already well-trained in doing that. It further stipulates that the stop cannot last longer than normal in order to verify the person’s status. But these are only questions of form. The most important thing is that the Court did not issue a decision on whether SB1070 violates the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which prohibits “unreasonable searches and seizures” which would be the case if individuals were stopped according to a racial profile. The Court didn’t rule on this key aspect because the U.S. Attorney General, who sought the injunction to stop the law from going into effect, didn’t ask for it.

The Obama administration only objected to the Arizona law on the grounds that U.S. law preempts state legislation on immigration matters. There are several additional continued on page 8
Portland Trotskyist Study Group

Fuses with Internationalist Group

After intensive discussions, visits and several months of joint work, the members of the Portland, Oregon Trotskyist Study Group and the Internationalist Group have decided to unite their forces in a single organization, the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International. The comrades of the PTSG see this as a big step forward in embracing authentic Trotskyism against those who have known various currents which falsely claim the legacy of Leon Trotsky, co-leader together with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 October Revolution. Together we see this as an opportunity and challenge to build a class-struggle opposition in the workers movement on the program of revolutionary Marxism.

The members of Portland Trotskyist Study Group have a number of years of experience on the left, both as unionists and members of socialist organizations. One member of the PTSG was a longtime member of the International Socialist Organization, playing a leading role in founding a branch of the ISO in Southeast Portland. After nearly a decade of membership, disagreements on positions on a variety of issues, from the ISO’s shifting position on labor to the question of Leninism and the ISO’s campaign against supposed “ultra-leftism,” led to a split earlier this year. Two members of the PTSG (one of whom was also a member of the ISO for several years) are experienced labor activists, who have struggled to put forward a class-conscious perspective inside their unions and in the labor movement at large. They helped to form and build a group for construction workers from all trades to work together to defend picket lines and act in solidarity.

They also fought against bureaucratic sabotage to build support for the courageous longshore workers of Longview, Washington, in their battle against an union-busting attack by a giant grain-shipping consortium. It was their experience of running up against the dead-end of reformist politics and a labor bureaucracy that continually sells out the rank and file that led the Portland comrades to seek out an organization whose revolutionary words were matched by deeds. Having grown frustrated with the malleable positions which pass on the left take on crucial questions in labor and class struggle, and having read The Internationalist over some time, they recognized the IG as a politically resolute and steadfast group. The first contact was a phone call that began, “There’s a group of us here in Portland who are fed up with the ISO and we want the real Trotskyism.” Obviously, we had to talk.

Although the initial contact predated the outbreak of the Occupy Wall Street movement, in which the Portland comrades played an active role, the contradictions of that amorphous populist movement – and of the politics put forward by various left groups in it – brought the need for a revolutionary leadership to the fore. This was highlighted following a January 6 labor solidarity forum in Seattle called by OccupY to support ILWU Local 21 in Longview. When ILWU bureaucrats physically disrupted the forum, after attempting to do the same in Portland, the ISO was caught between two groups it was tailing after, Occupy and the labor bureaucracy. The ISO chose the latter, justifying it with some convoluted and distorted accounts of events, and launched an internal campaign on the need to fight “ultra-leftism.” This led to a fairly alienating conference. The Portland comrades, explaining that amorphous populist movement – and its contradictions, and build a class-struggle opposition in the workers movement on the program of revolutionary Marxism by presenting a genuine class line.

The current crisis facing the revolutionary movement is not one of rampant ultra-leftism, as the ISO leadership pretended, but of rampant liberal reformism that Lenin also identified in Left-Wing Communism. The lesson of that polemic was on the need for revolutionaries to organize within the existing mass organizations of the working class in order to go beyond their limitations, put an end to these contradictions, and build a revolutionary party.

A series of key questions were taken up in discussions between the Internationalist Group and the Portland comrades who are now fusing with the ISO. First and foremost is what is known in the Marxist movement as the “Russian Question.” A text outlining initial ideas on political action began with agreement with James P. Cannon’s 1940 “Speech on the Russian Question” and more generally in agreement with Cannon’s Trotskyism, in response to Stalinism. An initial report recounted the actions of the Portland comrades in the December 12 port shutdown called by the Occupy movement in solidarity with Longview longshore workers, explaining how a potentially explosive confrontation between the port activists and port truckers was averted.

The discussion over the six-hour day demand underlined Lenin and Trotsky’s policy of united-front actions on clear demands, as opposed to the general practice of the opportunist left of forming popular-front type “coalitions” in which liberal and social-democratic groups dominate in formulating a lowest-common-denominator reformist program. Putting forward transitional demands, which link the fight for reforms to the struggle to raise workers’ revolutionary consciousness, is recognized by the IG and the PTSG as a fundamental aspect of party building. Transitional demands provide a bridge between the immediate demands of the working class for jobs, wages, housing, rights, against acts of racism, violence, in defense of basic democratic rights, etc. and the revolutionary struggle for workers rule. Raising demands for independent action by the working class, the workers’ independence from the state is as crucial today as it was when the Transitional Program was written in 1938. The collaboration between the IG and PTSG also included trade-union work, in which it was agreed from the outset to oppose any government intervention in the unions, demanding cops, courts and Department of Labor out of the unions. This was outlined in the article by the Portland comrades, “Labor Must Clean Its Own House: For a Class-Struggle Opposition in the Union Movement.” Many left groups talk of trade-union independence from the bosses, but when it comes to drawing a hard line against any and all government intervention in the labor movement it is another matter. In fighting for working-class control, a number of left groups have gone to the capitalist courts or DOL, with disastrous results for the union membership. We defend the unions despite, and against, the sellout bureaucrats.

A split from the Workers International League, affiliated with the International Marxist Tendency led by Alan Woods.
beginning was on opposition to any support for capitalist politicians, such as Ralph Nader, who was twice supported by the ISO for president, and on the need to build a Leninist workers party. Such a party must be the revolution of all the oppressed; in the U.S., this requires an understanding of the crucial strategic question of the fight against black oppression. In this period in which the bourgeoisie proclaimed the “death of communism,” many leftist groups have turned sharply to the right, retreating to pre-Leninist conceptions, re-engaging arguments long since settled and seeking to unite politically with liberal and social-democratic groups. Instead it is necessary to undertake the struggle to cohere the nucleus of a revolutionary party politically independent from such formations, and point the way forward toward workers revolution. Rather than go backwards and restart history, it is important to go forward by reforging the Fourth International.

Having had more than their fill of working in and alongside groups like the International Socialist Organization that are constantly building reform movements and continually putting forward a program of class struggle with principled united-front actions, comrades were reminded of the phrase of Eduard Bernstein, the granddaddy of all reformists, that “the movement is everything, the final goal nothing.” For the leaders of the International Marxist Group, the immediate goals of reform struggles they undertake are nothing: “The goal seems to be to recruit, regardless of whether there’s any agreement on any political basis,” as one comrade characterized it.

In international politics, a whole host of opportunist groups are endlessly hailing the “Egyptian Revolution,” the “Libyan Revolution” and now the “Syrian Revolution.” Yet in Egypt a military-based regime was replaced by an even more nakedly military government now combined with Islamists who want to introduce Sharia law. Regarding Libya and Syria, various social-democratic groups claim to oppose U.S.-NATO imperialist intervention, even as they hail “new orientations” rather than the level of class struggle with principled united-front actions, comrades were reminded of the phrase of Eduard Bernstein, the granddaddy of all reformists, that “the movement is everything, the final goal nothing.” For the leaders of the International Marxist Group, the immediate goals of reform struggles they undertake are nothing: “The goal seems to be to recruit, regardless of whether there’s any agreement on any political basis,” as one comrade characterized it.

forward a program that can act as a bridge between the consciousness of the working class now and the tasks we must undertake to make socialist revolution possible. The current crisis facing humanity remains a crisis of revolutionary leadership. Across the world, from Egypt to Greece to Wisconsin and Washington, there has been no lack of revolts and mobilizations of the working class. What has been absent is the leadership to take this forward to a struggle for international workers revolution. Maintaining political independence from liberal and reformist organizations is crucial to winning the working class to the revolutionary program. The members of the Portland Trotskyist Study Group see in this fusion the chance to join with comrades internationally to make Trotsky’s Transitional Program a living reality and not just words on paper. A comrade of the Internationalist Group expressed in meeting one of the Portland comrades, “for us as immigrant workers it gives us great pleasure and tremendous hope to join with North American workers, for revolution here in the United States is key internationally.” The fusion of the PTSG with the IG is an expression of a revolutionary regroupment which will be vital in seeking to reconstitute an authentically Trotskyist world party of socialist revolution.

29 July 2012

Labor Must Clean Its Own House: For a Class Struggle Opposition in the Union Movement

By the Portland Trotskyist Study Group

In a recent article entitled “Fighting for the Soul of the Carpenters Union,” Workers Action writes about the Reform Slate of United Brotherhood of Carpenters Union Local 156. The members of the slate had organized a campaign aimed at resisting labor-employer partnership bargaining and giving more power and control to the union membership. While its program does not go beyond militant trade-unionism, the members of the Reform Slate have been brought up on charges by the incumbent union leaders. They claim to represent themselves and fellow union members by ousting an entrenched leadership that ignores the rights of the membership and sells out to the bosses. But in defending them the Workers Action article especially favorably references the Landrum-Griffin Act, also known as the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) of 1959.

The LMRDA was the result of an offensive by the ruling class, spearheaded by Democrat Bobby Kennedy—-together with right-wing Republican Barry Goldwater—to seek to smash the growing power of the Teamsters union in particular. Holding the Landrum-Griffin Act up as an alternative for labor dissidents perpetuates the lie that the government is a neutral body that can make unbiased decisions on our behalf. The way that rights under the LMRDA are accessed is by filing suit in court. The government already has a team they pay for, and it’s the bosses they tune every time. Asking them to solve internal labor disputes is issuing an open invitation for our bosses to destroy our unions, and that is unacceptable.

The support for the Reform Slate of Local 156 reflected widespread opposition in the local to a leadership that had sold out members by agreeing to reopen a five-year contract that had been voted on by the membership each year that it was in place, and agreeing to less money than the initial agreement. In addition, several locals in Oregon were combined into one, making it difficult for many members to attend meetings or have a voice in decision making. The reform opposition flew the worksites, organized fundraisers and set up a network of communication for their campaign, all perfectly within their rights as union members.

Members of the Reform Slate were able to do important outreach and solidarity work with other unions, voting to raise the demand on May Day for a 6-hour workday with no cut in pay, as is written in the Carpenters union constitution. They also got Local 156 to come out in open support for Longview ILWU Local 21 in their struggle with employer EG&G, criticizing Operating Engineers Local 701 and even members of the UBC for working behind Local 21 picket lines.

The Reform Slate won 15 out of 17 district council delegate seats and 5 executive board positions. Twelve of the reformers that were elected last February as the leadership of Carpenters Local 156 were convicted in a rigged trial. They were accused of phone-banking to get out the vote from the union hall, which isn’t against the rules. However, they were charged by the incumbent regional council leadership with causing dissent in the ranks, failing to uphold the union oath and defrauding the union. The charges are baseless, and an obvious attempt at preventing the opposition from taking office.

Even after the opposition won a second election, ordered by the international leadership, the onslaught from the incumbent leaders continued. In order to silence the Reform Slate, the leadership reappointed a trial committee twice, excluding any members from Oregon. In spite of a letter from the Reform Slate stating objection to the process the Pacific Northwest Regional Council used, citing that there was no proof that the trial committee was selected by a lottery as is mandated by the District Council Bylaws, the trial proceeded. Once continued on page 6

The Internationalist
Explosion of Outrage in Orange County, California

Anaheim Cops on Murderous Rampage Against Latino Youth

AUGUST 3 – A wave of outrage has swept through southern California in response to a rampage of racist shootings of Latino youth by the Anaheim police. When cops gunned down two young men, Manuel Angel Diaz and Joel Acevedo, on July 21 and 22, residents in the Anna Drive neighborhood immediately took to the streets. Their protests were met with even more vicious cop terror. These were the seventh and eighth police killings in Anaheim in the last year. And as graphic videos of the events are played over and over on the Internet, the wealthy, white rulers who lord it over the poor and Latino population worry at the prospect of “Rodney King riots,” the 1992 upheaval over the acquittal of the racist cops caught beating him on videotape.

On Saturday the 21st, police piled out of an unmarked car to go after three men in an alley. Manuel Diaz, 25, was shot in the leg and then again in the head as he fell to the ground. A bystander’s video shows him still alive for three minutes as the police leave him lying and push back the gathering crowd. The cops then brought in a riot squad, which fired rubber bullets, beanbags and pepper-sprayed a crowd of 100. A second video shows police firing into a group of women and children, then unleashing a vicious dog which went after the strollers, biting parents as they tried to protect their babies. Dozens were injured and five arrested. News reports labeled the protesters an “unruly crowd,” to justify shooting and setting of what? Four are from Anaheim Hills. They run the city in the interests of the corporations and the profitable representations of the Latino communities. A change the voting process to allow district representation of the Latino communities. A whole lot of good such penny-ante cosmetic reforms are calling for a variety of measures. Some want a return to “community policing” – i.e., the cops spy on you, carry out “stop and frisks” and talk with “community leaders” before they shoot you down. Others are calling for federal civil rights investigations (the Justice Department and FBI say they are on the case) while the American Civil Liberties Union has a suit to change the voting process to allow district representation of the Latino communities. A whole lot of good such penny-ante cosmetic changes would do: demonstrators are right that racist police brutality is built into the system. That system has a name: capitalism. Just look around California: in South San Francisco, 15-year-old Derrick Gaines, shot down by police in June for “behaving suspiciously” at a gas station; in San Francisco, Kenneth Harding Jr., shot and left...
to die on the pavement in July 2011 for not having a MUNI ticket, in Stockton. James Rivera, a black teenager executed by at least 30 police bullets in 2010 (a recent report of Manuel Diaz, Joel Acevedo and more than 2000 police bullets in 2010 (a recent report of police brutality.

Some what can be done about the racist killer cops? Various left groups routinely touched off huge protests of angry black youth and opponents of police brutality. The cops responded with massive arrests, turning downtown Oakland into an armed camp.

So what can be done about the racist killer cops? Various left groups routinely claim the need to build a workers party fighting for socialist revolution to put an end to capitalist horror once and for all. Labor Clean... continued from page 4

The planned cleanups were mandated by law and the members of the opposition were fined as much as $5,000 and stripped of their union privileges pending the right to office for up to 6 years. The worst of the fines were aimed at the reformers who were elected to important e-board positions, but several others were charged as well.

After two elections, and an unnecessary trial proceeding, members of the Cartoon, the Slate and the members who voted for them had their rights trampled thoroughly. Opposing the rigged trial is a fight not just for members of Local 156, but for all Carpenters.

The last thing the ranks need in their union now is the government, who will always represent the interests of the employers.

In claiming that the opposition slate “has federal labor law on their side,” the author of the Workers Action article, Shamus Cooke, provides the membership with the Department of Labor (DOL) has union members’ interests at heart. While Workers Action correctly defends the Carpenters opposition against employer-union partnership, their solution is a partnership with an even bigger enemy, the DOL, and the U.S. government. Seeing the DOL as a neutral interpreter of justice ignores the fact that the government is far from neutral. Rather, the DOL and other government bodies from the courts to the cops are capitalist institutions designed to protect the bosses’ interests, what Karl Marx called the “executive committee of the bourgeoisie.”

Any intervention on the part of the government into the union should be resisted, even in cases where the bureaucracy is corrupt or unfair. Inviting the biggest organized criminals the world has to offer, the U.S. government, to run a union’s internal elections and union members’ rights at their whim. Far from being a law that “was created to give basic democratic rights within all labor unions,” as Cooke claims, the Landrum-Griffin was intended to strengthen the union bureaucracy and union members’ rights at their whim. A strong mobilization of labor’s power in conjunction with the Latino, African American and Asian poor and working people to stop racist police brutality should also demand full citizenship rights for immigrants. And it must be built independent of Democrats and Republicans, the partner parties of capital. We need to build a workers party fighting for socialist revolution to put an end to capitalist horror once and for all.

Two recent reports show the need for the Landrum-Griffin Act. “In the Minneapolis Teamster strike, wrote of the new Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin law” that “among its many provisions hostile to labor this law clears the way for open FBI intervention in the unions. The future will see these imperialist political police attempting to give all of labor the same treatment they have been dealing out to radical workers all through the witch hunt.”

Other aspects of the law allow for the Secretary of Labor to ask for a review when the union is breaking or on the point of breaking the law, as well as give courts and the DOL free rein to “supervise” the internal financial affairs of unions and intervene in cases of dispute to run elections. In other words, the Landrum-Griffin Act means a trust fund is the capital state, its laws and courts against our unions, no matter how rotten the leadership. That crosses the class line. While the article published by Workers Action and reproduced by various liberal web sites lays the blame for the situation of class-conscious unions in the building trades have from the beginning insisted instead that labor must clean its own house. What is key is to build a fighting opposition in the unions based on a program of militant workers control. The first step is to throw off the bosses’ government and their government, and for the workers to take power.
Part of a Whole System to Criminalize Black and Latino Men

Thousands Protest Racist NYPD “Stop and Frisk”

A constant, antagonistic police presence is a defining feature of life for black men in New York City, as it is in cities, towns and rural areas across the United States. To be black in this country is to have no effective rights against arbitrary detention and arrest. It is the sense of being the target of a police apparatus that makes its presence felt everywhere, from the streets to the hallways of schools and apartment buildings, from the workplace to social and religious institutions.

In New York City, this oppressive cloud of control over the black community is official policy. It is summed up in the police practice of “Stop and Frisk.” The New York Police Department carries out thousands of brief detentions (stops) and searches (frisks) every day, overwhelmingly targeting poor black and Latino youth. On Father’s Day, June 17, some 15,000 people came out to march down Fifth Avenue against “stop and frisk.” Prior to the “official” start, there was a noisy march through Harlem. But the “mainstream” event was led by a coalition of bourgeois politicians and labor bureaucrats who insisted on a silent march, lest the pent-up anger of the masses find expression outside the organizers’ program for cosmetic “reforms” to the police.

The scope of “stop and frisk” is staggering. Last year, 685,724 people were stopped by the NYPD, according to the department’s own reports. This is “racial profiling” with a vengeance: over half were black and a third were Latino, in a city where blacks and Latinos each make up a quarter of the population. Nine percent were white. “Stop and frisk” operations are concentrated in the poorest, most racially segregated neighborhoods — yet when they are conducted in wealthier, whiter precincts in Manhattan, blacks are stopped even more disproportionately than they are in the ghettos of Brooklyn and the Bronx. Of all demographic categories, young black and Latino men bear the brunt of the policy: the NYPD stopped 168,126 black and Latino men aged 14 to 24 in 2011, ten thousand more than live in the city!

Even if “stop and frisk” had never been invented, the NYPD, a police force larger than most standing armies, would be infamous for racist repression. The middle-class Occupy Wall Street protesters last year who were shocked by the cops’ wanton violence and callous contempt for their democratic rights got a brief taste of what the NYPD brings to bear daily on the ghettos and barrios. Here police menace the population from mobile watchtowers, public schools for black and Latino children are infested with cops who treat students like prisoners, and every few months another young man is executed by a hail of police bullets.

“Stop and frisk” is allegedly intended to crackdown on “illegal” weapons, although the vast majority of those stopped are absolutely innocent. King Bloomberg rolls with a phalanx of private bodyguards, emperor Obama assassinates U.S. citizens via remote-control drones with impunity, but the “crime” of mere possession of a gun, supposedly a right guaranteed by the Second Amendment to the Constitution, can get a black man or woman thrown in prison for years, effectively unable to gain employment and barred from public housing upon release. That is, if they aren’t executed on the spot by trigger-happy cops.

The Internationalist Group calls to mobilize black, white, Asian and Latino workers, women and men, in militant class struggle to demand an immediate end to “stop and frisk,” arbitrary police stops and entrapment. But even such a simple prohibition, which doesn’t go beyond the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution against “unreasonable searches and seizures,” won’t happen in capitalist America. Racist repression is part and parcel of this system of exploitation and social oppression, and if it doesn’t take one form it will take another. Nothing short of socialist revolution that overthrows capitalist America will end police repression.

Meanwhile, Democratic Party politicians exploit the righteous anger to mask their support to the racist social order that all capitalist parties and politicians defend. The Fathers Day march in NYC was adored by Democratic politicians: every major Democratic mayoral candidate was on hand, including City Council speaker Christine Quinn, Manhattan borough president Scott Stringer, former comptroller Bill Thompson and his incumbent successor, John Liu. None of them want to end “stop and frisk!” They, along with the “Communities United for Police Reform” coalition that headlined the march, want to enact a few cosmetic “reforms” that would only sanitize the image of the police while doing nothing to stop the massive dragnet operations against the black and Latino communities.

While toasting off the slogan “Stop and Frisk” to attract a crowd, their actual program is the “Community Safety Act,” a package of bills before the City Council that would “ban profiling,” require proof of consent to a search without probable cause, require police to identify themselves to anyone they stop (except in “extenuating circumstances”) and establish an “Inspector General” of the NYPD. These measures will not change anything about the racist, oppressive nature of the police. Make profiling illegal? The NYPD already has an anti-racial-profiling policy, which the department agreed to in settling a previous lawsuit against “stop and frisk” (Daniels, et al. v. The City of New York, et al.) Fat lot of good that did. Cops will simply ignore the consent requirement, claiming they have “probable cause” to search, which the Supreme Court has defined so broadly as to include nearly any conceivable pretext.

As for Officer Friendly identifying himself as he throws you up against a wall and goes through your pockets, don’t bet on it. When plainclothes cops stopped black deputy mayor (now NYC schools chancellor) Dennis Walcott in his chauffeur-driven car last year, they refused to give his badge numbers. The fact that even this flunky for billionaire mayor Bloomberg (and defender of “stop and frisk”) has been repeatedly stopped by the police is one more proof that the policy is racist. If young black men on the street in impoverished Brownsville are presumed to be gang-bangers, black men in expensive cars in middle-class St. Albans’ are presumed to be drug kingpins until proven innocent.

Even these proposed non-reforms are likely to be preempted by the outcome of pending court cases. The Center for Constitutional Rights is litigation a class-action suit against the NYPD (Floyd, et al. v. City of New York, et al.) which demands an end to “suspicious” stop-and-frisks. Various establishment voices have been hinting at a resolution similar to the settlement between the American Civil Liberties Union and Philadelphia over that city’s “stop and frisk” policy. As part of settlement, according to the ACLU, “the city and the plaintiffs recognize that stop and frisks are a legitimate police enforcement practice.” As for the toothless “safeguards” and “monitoring” of police conduct, these have changed little.

As a recent New York Times (12 July) article made clear, the numbers of stops may be down, yet black Philadelphians are still harassed and threatened by the cops for no reason but the color of their skin.

“Stop and frisk” is neither the first nor the most horrendous aspect of racist police-state repression of blacks, immigrants, and other oppressed groups. Cops don’t just stop, they murder too: the family and friends of Ramarley Graham, the 18-year-old black man shot to death by a plainclothes narcotics squad in his apartment on February 2 of this year, have been prominent in many anti-Stop and Frisk demonstrations. The NYPD is spying on Muslim student organizations all over the Northeast. And under the Obama administration’s “Secure Communities” program, information even on those charged with minor violations and misdemeanors as a result of police stops is sent to Homeland Security to feed the deportation of 400,000 immigrants every year.

These are all parts of a whole system of racist repression, dubbed the “New Jim

Internationalist contingent at June 17 Harlem march against NYPD’s “stop and frisk.”

Police Are The Armed Fist of Capital – It Will Take Socialist Revolution to Get Rid of Racist Cop Terror
Crow" by some commentators. We have noted before that racial oppression is part of the DNA of American capitalism. Following the Civil War that abolished chattel slavery, new laws were devised to keep the black population down and deprive them of democratic rights. This eventually took the form of “Jim Crow” segregation even more rigid than before. After a long and bloody struggle by the civil rights movement, the last of these Jim Crow laws were abolished in the mid-1960s. But no democratic gains are secure under decaying capitalism, and those rights have since been gradually rolled back. Today schools in the U.S. are more racially segregated than before, and the death rate of black men is only partly non-racial. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- dent, the subjugation of the oppressed black population continues under the guise of only non-racial terms. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- dent, the subjugation of the oppressed black population continues under the guise of only non-racial terms. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- dent, the subjugation of the oppressed black population continues under the guise of only non-racial terms. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- dent, the subjugation of the oppressed black population continues under the guise of only non-racial terms. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- dent, the subjugation of the oppressed black population continues under the guise of only non-racial terms. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- president, the subjugation of the oppressed black population continues under the guise of only non-racial terms. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- dent, the subjugation of the oppressed black population continues under the guise of only non-racial terms. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- dent, the subjugation of the oppressed black population continues under the guise of only non-racial terms. In this monstrous system of police control, “stop and frisk” programs are key to a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Today over 40% of prison inmates are black, and 30% of black men are in prison, on probation, or on parole. There are more black people under the control of the “justice” system than there were slaves in 1860. And once labeled a “criminal,” “color-blind” discrimination in employment, housing, and education is today legally acceptable, but in many cases mandated by law.

Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party ran uncritical articles about the June 17 march (WW called the creepy silence a “cover-up of theaar American) following the 2008 election of a black man as presi- den
Beyond the June 17 Elections

Greece: Battle Over Anti-Worker Austerity Comes to a Head

In the second Greek elections in two months, the right-wing New Democracy party and bourgeois nationalist PASOK together received 39% of the vote, while the social-democratic SYRIZA coalition received 27%. However, because of undemocratic election laws, the ND-PASOK coalition got a majority of the seats. The Communist Party (KKE) saw its vote cut in half as many of its supporters went over to SYRIZA. The new “center-right” government is made up of the same parties that have alternated in power for the last three and a half decades and which presided over the collapse of the Greek economy. It has now accepted the eurobankers’ demands for more draconian cuts and privatizations, while the opposition has limited itself to parliamentary maneuvers and ritual demonstrations. The following article was published shortly before the June elections.

On the eve of the June 17 Greek elections, the most momentous in recent European history, imperialist bankers and political leaders are on pins and needles. The financial press is acting like Armageddon is near. Major investment houses in Wall Street and the City of London have crisis teams set to go Sunday in case the voting returns from Athens portend a collapse of the euro and a run on the banks when markets open. On Monday, the Group of 20 heads of state, including U.S. president Barack Obama and German chancellor Angela Merkel, will be meeting in Los Cabos, Mexico to gauge the fallout. They fear a worldwide “contagion” like that which set off the 2008 financial crisis following the collapse of the Lehman Brothers investment house. They’re worried about the trillions in the capitalists’ coffers. But Greek working people face a threat to their very existence, and it won’t be solved at the ballot box.

Over the past two and a half years, workers in Greece— who already worked far longer hours than in any other country of the European Union (EU) — have seen their livelihoods devastated. Public sector employees’ salaries have been slashed on average by over 30%, and in many cases much more. Teachers who earned €20,000 (US$25,000) a year have had their income fall to €12,000 ($15,000). Sales taxes have been raised to 23%. The economy has shrunk by more than a quarter since 2008, as much as in the depths of the U.S. Great Depression (1929-1933). Official unemployment is 22%, and 53% among the youth. An estimated 70% of recent college graduates are trying to emigrate. And the “troika” (a dozen in 2010 alone) didn’t stop, or even slow, the international bankers and their flunkies in Athens. Neither did street battles between cops and anarchists. The middle-class “agakaktismeni” (out-raged) who camped out in Syntagma (Constitution) Square fared no better. Counting on demoralization, the conservative New Democracy (ND) party forced an election, figuring it would pick up the votes of those angered by the austerity imposed by the previous government of the Panhellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) on behalf of the eurobankers.

The conservatives miscalculated, badly. To be sure, in the May 6 election, more than 2 million voters deserted the PASOK, which got barely 13% of the vote. Yet the ND also lost big, over 1 million votes, leaving it with 19%, and the far-right LAOS party didn’t make it past the 3% threshold for representation in parliament. Greek rulers and the international markets were stunned by the dramatic increase in the vote for SYRIZA, the Coalition of theRadical Left, which won over a million votes (17% of the total). The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) picked up another half million (8.5%), as did several smaller left groups between them. But while leftists advanced, so did the outright Nazi thugs of Golden Dawn (Chrysi Avgi), which got 7% of the votes, encouraging them to step up their attacks on immigrants and the left. In sum, the vote reflected a sharp political polarization as usually occurs in situations of social crisis, with a marked split to the left, for now.

Ever since the fall of the dictatorship of the “colonels” regime in 1974, Greece has been governed by a duopoly of New Democracy and the PASOK, which alternated in office and stocked the administration with patronage jobs. The collapse of the established parties sent shock waves through stock markets from Athens to New York. Politicians, bankers and media decried the “red menace” in Athens, portraying SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras as a telegeric latter-day Lenin. This bourgeois hysteria is utterly misplaced. PASOK was not a workers party at all but a bourgeois nationalist party run by the scions of the Papandreou dynasty which has governed the country off and on from 1944 to 2011. “Socialist” in its name reflected a preference for a strong state sector, typical of countries with a weak bourgeoisie. PASOK is now replaced by SYRIZA, which is a social-democratic party that is no threat to Greek or international capitalism.

Despite its name, the Coalition of the Radical Left is utterly reformist. With 13 members in the present parliament, in the last half year of bankers’ rule SYRIZA hasn’t waged a fight against the troika-imposed prime minister Papademos or the package of vicious anti-working-class cutbacks ordered by the international bankers. It hasn’t mobilized in support of the workers of the Hellenic Steel Company, on strike for the last eight months over mass firings and wage cuts. SYRIZA leader Tsipras has vowed to rip up the so-called Memorandum of Understanding with the banks that has brought untold suffering to the Greek masses, saying it is unworkable, which many bourgeois economists agree with. But all he is saying is that he is a better bargainer who can negotiate the terms of submission to the eurocrazts and eurobankers and make them more palatable by allowing for a little economic growth instead of unrelied cutbacks.

Many reformist socialists in Europe and the United States have hailed SYRIZA’s electoral breakthrough and are calling for its victory in the June 17 vote. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S., whose Greek comrades of the Internationalist Workers Left (DEA) are part of SYRIZA, argues that “an election victory for SYRIZA” would give “firm political shape to workers’ demands that the cost of paying for the crisis be shifted from them to the capitalist class” (Socialist Worker website, 13 June). Socialist Alternative (SAI) is part of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI), whose Greek supporters in Xekinima (Socialist International Organization) are calling to “Vote for SYRIZA” and for a “left government on a socialist program.” The ISO and SAI/CWI admit that SYRIZA is not revolutionary, but these social democrats yearn for just such a reformist left and elite.

The opportunists make much of SYRIZA’s five-point platform to “cancel the bailout” of the banks, “tear up” the EU austerity agenda and “tax the rich.” Contrary to leftists’ fantasy that it would nationalize the banks, SYRIZA’s economic program calls for “bank recapitalization” continued on page 18.
The following article is translated from a May 2012 supplement to Vanguarda Operária, the newspaper of our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil).

The year 2011 around the world was one of explosive popular uprisings, of workers’ struggles, of rebellions by students and youth in general. Contrary to the propaganda of the bourgeois press and the opportunist left, however, the hard reality is that it was not a year of revolution. Protests and revolts can succeed at a spontaneous and unplanned way, generating a great deal of enthusiasm. But in order to win, what’s needed above all is the preparation and intervention of a proletarian vanguard, forged in the class struggle, with a revolutionary program.

The windstorm of revolt which shook the Near East and North Africa, also gusted on the southern coast of Europe (the movement of the “Indignados,” or Outraged), in Latin America (“Lula-Dilma” in Brazil) and North America (the Occupy movement). The winds of class struggle extended from Egypt to Spain (a general strike in March) and even the United States (struggles against union-busting attacks in Wisconsin and Washington). But in the final analysis, the capitalist classes have preserved their rule and are preparing to intensify their assault on the exploited and oppressed.

The bourgeois media present Brazil as an exceptional case. The government of Lula has been regarded as a “model.” This government has made use of the raw materials boom to dish out a few crumbs to the poor, using its welfare programs to reduce extreme poverty. They are silent about the fact that 16 million people, the largest majority of them blacks, still live with a monthly income of less than R$70 (US$35); that they have only managed to raise the poorest to the level of a brutal “normal” poverty; and that the programs Fome Zero (Zero Hunger), Bolsa Família (Family Stipend) and Bolsa Escolar (School Stipend) are financed by slashing health care and pension programs.

On this May Day, amidst the worst world economic crisis in three-quarters of a century, the struggle for a new world against wage-gouging and intensified attacks on their rights continues worldwide. In a situation of great social volatility, with the ebb and flow of the class struggle, more than ever a leadership is required that can go beyond the merely “democratic” bourgeois program, to intervene in events with a program aiming at international socialist revolution.

**Capitalist Carnival: The Imperialists and Their Vassals Seek to Escape the Crisis Putting On New Masks**

Since 2008 the capitalist world has been jolted by a financial crisis that led to great turmoil in the leading powers. It shook the economic foundations from Wall Street to the European Union, spilling over into North Africa and other areas around the globe. It is the biggest crisis since the counterrevolutionary wave that destroyed the former USSR at the beginning of the 1990s, which the imperialists celebrated as the “end of history,” while inaugurating their “Neo World Order” with a bloodbath massacring the population of Iraq in 1991. In 2003 U.S. imperialism invaded that Mesopotamian country again, while naming Lula’s Brazil sheriff for Latin America. The so-called “Washington consensus” was nothing more than a pact among the imperialist powers led by the U.S. in the post-Soviet period to do away with or slash the rights and gains of the working class around the world. Particularly in Latin America, a sharply limited critique of “neo-liberalism” was expressed in bourgeois populist governments, with a social-democratic pink hue and various types of populist fronts. But they barely masked the deep poverty of the working class with cosmetic reforms while seeking to coopt their leaderships. The government of the Workers Party (PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores) in Brazil was the archetype.

From 2000 on, in Latin America south of the Equator this “left” policy was used to gain favor with “popular” sectors using nationalist and ethnic appeals. Thus in Brazil, the “worker” Lula (who Obama calls “my man”) launched his career as a “fireman for the IMF” (“International Monetary Fund”), as we in the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB) dubbed him. Next came Evo Morales in Bolivia, boasting of his indigenous roots in order to divert the discontent of the indigenous working people in the “gas war” which took the country to the brink of revolution. Once installed in office, “Evo” made a few nationalist gestures while repressing the workers and peasants who elected him.

In the U.S., the election of Barack Obama and the arrival of the first black president in the White House caused even more sensation. With his famous “yes we can,” he appealed to the discontent of an American population tired of years of war in the Middle East and alarmed by the fall of the stock market that heralded a new economic depression. He put a new face on the imperialist monster. Then came the election victories of the ex-guerrilla Dilma Rousseff in Brazil and the populist Peronist Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina. Despite their populist appeals, they all applied the same bitter medicine as their predecessors, foisting the dictates of the IMF on their misers electorate.

Inheriting the mantle of Lula and the popular front of the PT, PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement) and others, Dilma currently enjoys around 70% approval ratings according to the bourgeois polling institute IBOPE. The secret of her success is her continuation of the program guided by the IMF. This program, first implemented by Fernando Henrique Cardoso (The Democracia Socialista current in the PT. 1) the ill-fated Left Front went all-out to support the preparation for the 2014 soccer World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, offering very little bread and lots of circuses.

The reformist left with its (bourgeois) democratic policies has been left speechless by the economic policies of Lula-Dilma. With their horizons limited to the capitalist framework, all they can think of is to ask for “more.” And concerning the militarization offensive, they only seek to “democratize” the repression. After supporting the “strike” of the military firemen of Rio de Janeiro in June 2011, earlier this year the PSTU (United Socialist Workers Party, Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificado) and its ill-fated Left Front went all-out to support the mutinies by firemen and military police. The LQB and the Comité de Luta Clasista have resolutely opposed the movement of the armed firemen, many of them linked to the militias that terrorize the Rio favelas (see “Brazil: Reformists Fail After ‘Strike’ By Militarized Firemen In Rio De Janeiro,” The Internationalist No. 33, Summer 2011). Continued on page 17

*The Internationalist*
Quality Education Is Not a Commodity But Everyone’s Right

Teachers in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil Stop Work to Stop High Stakes Test

The following article is translated from a June 2012 supplement to Vanguarda Operária, the newspaper of our comrades of the Liga Quarta Internacional de Brasilia (Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil). The title of the original was, “Teachers, Students, Shred the SAERJ: A Fraud Against Students and Parents, A Weapon of Capital Against Teachers, A Noose to Strangle Public Education.”

On June 27 and 28, teachers in Rio de Janeiro are stopping work for an unusual purpose: to boycott the SAERJ exam. This “Education Evaluation System of the State of Rio de Janeiro” has nothing whatsoever to do with a scientific diagnosis of the pedagogical development of the students. Like the national Prova Brasil exam, this test doesn’t even measure the level of factual knowledge, much less the capacity for analysis, critical thought and ability to express oneself. By reducing education to a number based on answers to a standardized multiple-choice test designed to be corrected by machine, the SAERJ is a swindle perpetrated against students and parents and a weapon of capital against teachers. It is an arm of the enemy in the capitalist offensive to privatize public education. Teachers together with students, parents and working people must mobilize our strength to rip up this fraudulent test and prevent it from being administered.

The work stoppage called by the Teachers Union of the State of Rio de Janeiro, SEPE, is not an isolated local event. The SAERJ imposed by [Rio state governor] Sérgio Cabral is a key component of his Goals Plan, and only the most recent of a series of failed education “reforms” promoted by successive governors and the federal government of Henrique Cardoso and Lula. Like the New Schools program of Anthony de Melo (Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil), the SEPE-RJ is taking a step against teachers. It called for educators’ salaries to be “open to private enterprise,” permitted state financing of “non-profit” private schools, and provided vouchers and scholarships for private schools. Lula’s PDE is also the result of a campaign, “Everyone for Education,” sponsored by high finance (the Santander, Itaú, Unibanco and Bradesco banks) and big companies (Gerdau [steel], Suzano [wood products]), to monitor the “proper management of public resources invested in education.” And above all, it is in response to the directives of the imperialist financial institutions, notably the World Bank and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which promote a business model of educational management in order to increase the “productivity” of teachers. This is where the SAERJ exam and other high-stakes tests come from.

In calling a work stoppage of the state school network, the SEPE correctly underscores that these tests blame teachers for the results of “decades of neglect and dismantling of public education.” The lack of investment, the overcrowded classrooms, the inadequate or non-existent computers, laboratories and libraries, teachers’ starvation wages and students’ difficult living conditions are all factors which impinge on the quality of education but are ignored by the SAERJ exam. “Rewarding” or “punishing” teachers and staff on the basis of test scores is not only unjust, not only does it promote cheating, it introduces competition into an undertaking (education) which isn’t a discussion about reforms to improve learning. Nor is it a matter of a policy which could be replaced by another. It is a war of the capitalists to gut public education and privatize it, to demolish teachers unions and

Members of the Teachers Union of the State of Rio de Janeiro (SEPE) during recent strike in the city of São Gonçalo.

intensify the exploitation of teachers. That is why the Class-Struggle Committee (CLC) insists that we have to respond with the weapons of class war. The work stoppage called by the SEPE after previous efforts to boycott the SAERJ is a beginning. The combative Mexican teachers have taken resistance to another level in calling strikes to stop these phony “evaluations.” And because it is an offensive of imperialism, of capitalism in its phase of decay, of systematic destruction of past gains, the reformist trade-unionism of the past no longer works – what’s required is a revolutionary international response.

Commodification of Education: the U.S. Experience

The United States is one of the countries where corporate “reforms” of public education have deepened the most in recent years. Since 1983, at the beginning of the administration of the conservative Ronald Reagan, a study was published under the title, A Nation at Risk: the Imperative of Educational Reform. This report was supported by the two partner parties of American capitalism, Democrats and Republicans, which with regard to education are truly twins. Posing the issue in terms of national security during that period of anti-Soviet Cold War, it placed the blame for the failings of public education in the hands of teachers. It called for educators’ salaries to be “professionally competitive, market-sensitive and performance-based.” Ever since, the onslaught against teachers, and their unions in particular, hasn’t let up for a minute.

Nevertheless, the professional teacher-bashers are frustrated in the face of the strength of teacher unionism, one of the few solid sectors of a badly weakened union movement. 2 Recently there has been an increase of resistance by education activists against the attacks of the government, particularly over the closing of “failed” schools. This racist policy has brought teachers closer together with the black and Latino neighborhoods affected by this operation of tearing down public education. At the same time there is growing opposition to the system of educational evaluation by

1 The average salary of teachers in Rio de Janeiro is approximately US$600 a month.
2 Even today, 38 percent of U.S. teachers are union members, compared to less than 12 percent of the workforce as a whole and under 7 percent of private sector workers.

One of the most prominent figures in this opposition is historian Diane Ravitch, former assistant secretary of education in the administration of George Bush I. Her critique of the effects of this policy of standardized tests, holding teachers responsible for students’ scores and closing schools is all the more influential because until a few years ago she was one of the most prominent defenders and proponents of this same program of corporate educational reform. The SEPE is circulating an interview with Ravitch with the newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo (2 August 2010) where she criticized: “The administration of President Obama continues to accept the punitive approach which began with the Bush government. Privatizing schools negatively affects the public education system... and making the teachers responsible is being used in order to destroy them.”

For Ravitch and many educators, it is enough to detail these counterproductive results. But for the architects of these “reforms,” for the capitalist governments that implement them and for the imperialist financial agencies that promote them, the educational outcome is utterly beside the point. The intention is not to improve “education for everyone”—that’s only the sales pitch. The advocates of the commodification of education—the executives of the Business Roundtable, or “philanthropists” like Bill Gates of Microsoft, or the Walton family of WalMart—want to kick the present teachers out of the profession, get rid of teachers unions, slash the cost of education to the treasury and turn public schools into profit platforms (by means of contracts, public-private partnerships) and centers of labor force training for employers. Quality education would be restricted to the sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie and upper middle class.

Beyond the critiques, anyone who really wants to defend public schools and fight for quality education for all must ask themselves what must be done to defeat this assault. If in Rio de Janeiro, the SEPE is taking a step forward in resisting by calling the work stoppage of June 27-28, the teachers unions in the United States, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and National Education Association (NEA), shamefully capitulate continued on page 17
The Internationalist

Mission Impossible: #YoSoy132 Proposes to Clean Up the Electoral Farce

Mexico: Defeat the Bourgeois Repression of the PRI, PAN and PRD! Workers to Power!

UPDATE: In the July 1 Mexican elections, the presidential candidate of the PRI, Enrique Peña Nieto, was declared the victor amid widespread vote-buying. As we noted in an article on the 2006 elections, “Fraud in Mexico is not an aberration but an integral part of the electoral process. And not just in Mexico…. In fact, the whole system of bourgeois elections is a swindle. Behind the veneer of ‘democracy’ it is money that decides who wins and loses, the money of the various capitalist forces whose interests are affected. The state, as Marxists have insisted, is a machine for imposing the interests of the ruling class, and the government is its executive committee. Whether it is by ‘dirty tricks,’ handing out bags of cement in Mexico or buying up TV time in the U.S., this is how the contending bourgeois forces ensure that the ‘popular vote’ reflects their interests” (see “Mexico: Bourgeois Elections and Workers Blood,” available online at www.internationalist.org).

Trotskyists give no political support to any bourgeois candidate, either at the polls or in the post-election maneuvering which is an integral part of the process. While supporting demands for recounts, we warn that calls on the courts and election commissions to investigate sox illusions in these administrators of the electoral farce. Moreover, the present demonstrations are essentially political support to the candidacy of the popular-front opposition, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. If, however, the struggle leaves the terrain of the electoral circus and the capitalist state apparatus imposes a candidate by a repressive crackdown pointing toward a police-military dictatorship, proletarian revolutionaries would call for politically independent working-class mobilization against the bonapartist threat.

The following article is a translation of a leaflet put out by the Grupo Internacionalista prior to the election on the anniversary of a 1971 massacre of students.

JUNE 10 – The sudden appearance on the political scene of the movement #YoSoy132 (I am 132) a month ago has shaken up the previously listless campaign for the July 1 elections. By questioning the media coverage of the Televisa-TV Azteca duopoly and opposing the “imposition” of Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) as president, the students have thrown a wrench into the works. His main opponent, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (universally known by his initials, AMLO), candidate of the Progressive Movement, began climbing in the opinion polls while Peña Nieto’s numbers began plummeting. Alarmed, ex-president Vicente Fox of the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) came out in favor of the PRI candidate, turning his back on PAN candidate Josefina Vázquez Mota. And while the entire bourgeois media treat the #YoSoy132 movement with kid gloves, even the most “progressive” ones are vituperating against the struggle of the teachers in the CNTE.

It all began with a routine visit by the leading presidential candidate to a private university, along with partial and lying media coverage. On May 11, the PRI standard-bearer Peña Nieto was loudly booed at the Universidad Iberoamericana. The students recalled his responsibility for the repression unleashed by the ruling class against the townspeople of San Salvador Atenco in May 2006, which resulted in the murder of two youths and the rape of 26 women being held by his state police. Amid shouts of “Murderer, murderer!” the candidate had to hurriedly leave the campus. When Televisa and journalists who act as flacks for the regime repeated the accusations that the students were “porros (“thugs”) and acarreados (bussed in) for AMLO, 131 of those who joined in the protest put up a video on the Internet where they denounced the media lies. The video went viral, and #YoSoy132 was born.

Naturally, various groups of the opportunists left who habitually tail after every new “movement” are trying to clamber aboard the latest one. Those who support López Obrador and his Progressive Movement (Militante and Izquierda Socialista’s) groups are clamoring for #YoSoy132 to issue a call for an “informed vote” (i.e., for a “useful vote” for AMLO). Those who previously called for boycotting the electoral farce or for casting a “no vote” (the LTS, POS and LUS) are repeating their earlier proclamations, or at most they mention them in a whisper, while calling for 132 to emphasize its “non-party” character. The various denominations join together to try to push the left a move that arose in the private universities and which from the outset has had an elitist bias. Yet all the references to the “Arab Spring,” the European Indignados (Outraged) or the Occupy Wall Street movement cannot hide the fact that #YoSoy132 is an attempt to prettify the rigged bourgeois electoral process.

As we said on signs we held outside the general assembly of the 132 movement at the National University on May 30, “We are communists and we fight for workers revolution.” The Grupo Internacionalista emphasizes that all the capitalist parties and alliances are responsible for the deadly repression unleashed by the ruling class against the working people of town and country.

Continent of the Grupo Internacionalista in the June 10 march commemorating the 1971 “halconazo,” the massacre carried out by a paramilitary hit squad of the PRI (the Hawks) which attacked a student march, murdering dozens.

#YoSoy132 outside the Federal Election Institute (IFE), above, imitates with its white gloves the reactionary student mobilization in 2007 in favor of the coup-planning TV channel RCTV in Caracas, Venezuela.

The video went viral, and #YoSoy132 was born. Naturally, various groups of the opportunists left who habitually tail after every new “movement” are trying to clamber aboard the latest one. Those who support López Obrador and his Progressive Movement (Militante and Izquierda Socialista’s) groups are clamoring for #YoSoy132 to issue a call for an “informed vote” (i.e., for a “useful vote” for AMLO). Those who previously called for boycotting the electoral farce or for casting a “no vote” (the LTS, POS and LUS) are repeating their earlier proclamations, or at most they mention them in a whisper, while calling for 132 to emphasize its “non-party” character. The various denominations join together to try to push the left a move that arose in the private universities and which from the outset has had an elitist bias. Yet all the references to the “Arab Spring,” the European Indignados (Outraged) or the Occupy Wall Street movement cannot hide the fact that #YoSoy132 is an attempt to prettify the rigged bourgeois electoral process.

As we said on signs we held outside the general assembly of the 132 movement at the National University on May 30, “We are communists and we fight for workers revolution.” The Grupo Internacionalista emphasizes that all the capitalist parties and alliances are responsible for the deadly repression unleashed by the ruling class against the working people of town and country.

continued on page page 15

1 The Militante group, which considers itself the “Marxist” current of the bourgeois Party of the Democratic Revolution, split in 2010 with one wing keeping the original name (and ties to the International Marxist Tendency led by Alan Woods) while the other eventually adopted the name Izquierda Socialista (Socialist Left) and is associated with the Revolutionary Marxist Current led by the former Spanish section of the IMT.

2 As opposed to a throwaway vote for the rightist Vázquez Mota, who has no chance of winning, or abstaining or casting invalid ballots (a “no vote”).

3 The Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo, Partido Obrero Socialista and Liga de Unidad Socialista had previously been part of a Socialist Front calling for a boycott of the elections.
In the Face of the War Measures of the Liberal Government, Mobilize the Heavy Battalions of the Working Class!

Quebec Student Strike: Defeat the Capitalist Attack

The following is a translation of a supplement to L’Internationaliste distributed in Montreal on May 22.

MAY 20 – For more than three months, Quebec students have been on strike against the plan of the provincial government of Liberal Party (PLQ) premier Jean Charest to impose a massive tuition increase. Mobilizing up to 300,000 strikers, the students have rocked the Quebec nation. This is the largest student mobilization in the history of Quebec and one of the fiercest social struggles in Canada in recent decades. It is of prime international importance, together with the eight-month-long Chilean student strike last year. These are among the main current struggles against the capitalist war on public education, and on working people in general. The strike deserves the active support of all defenders of the democratic right to education, and of the world working class. And now is the time to show this support with concrete actions.

The Quebec student movement has arisen in the context of mass struggles around the globe. The description of the struggle as the “Maple Spring” of 2012 makes the link to the “Arab Spring” of 2011. Shortly after, the movement of the Outraged in Portugal, Spain and Greece occupied squares in the city centers of Europe. In Quebec, the starting point of the struggle, the big mobilization of 10 November 2011, when 200,000 students struck and 30,000 took to the streets of Montreal, came on the heels of the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States, and as the Chilean student strike was still going strong. But while the unrest is global, with the exception of the United States, and as the Chilean student movement has arisen in the context of mass struggles around the globe.

The Quebec student movement has arisen in the context of mass struggles around the globe. The description of the struggle as the “Maple Spring” of 2012 makes the link to the “Arab Spring” of 2011. Shortly after, the movement of the Outraged in Portugal, Spain and Greece occupied squares in the city centers of Europe. In Quebec, the starting point of the struggle, the big mobilization of 10 November 2011, when 200,000 students struck and 30,000 took to the streets of Montreal, came on the heels of the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States, and as the Chilean student strike was still going strong. But while the unrest is global, with the exception of the United States, and as the Chilean student movement has arisen in the context of mass struggles around the globe.

In Tunisia and Egypt, the dictators have been overthrown but the military-based dictatorships remain. In Europe, even though several governments that have presided over the effects of the international capitalist economic crisis have fallen (Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy and most recently France), the new governments continue to impose austerity policies. In the U.S., the hundreds of Occupy camps were almost all removed by police action. In Quebec, the scope of the movement has enabled it to show this support with concrete actions.

In this epoch of decaying capitalism, when all past gains are under attack, one cannot win or even defend such gains except through revolutionary struggle leading to a workers government.

From Duplessis’ “Padlock Law” to Charest’s “Riot Club Law”

At this point, after 14 weeks of resisting the slanders of the bosses’ press, the threats of the government and the ferocious repression of its police, having taken more than 1,600 arrests, there are still more than 150,000 students from 1,964 student associations on strike. From the start, the PLQ government has categorically refused any negotiation or even discussion of the tuition hike. The only “modification” it would make was to spread it over seven years instead of five, while indexing it for inflation so that the total increase rose from $1,625 to $1,778 a year, an increase of a whopping 82%. And when the student assemblies of all the universities and colleges on strike flatly rejected his latest poisoned “offer,” the prime minister who would be Emperor John James of Quebec decreed a “hardening” of the government’s position.

Several cabinet ministers known as the mafia-linked PLQ government of Quebec is hard-lining it because it is backed up by the power of imperialist capital, whose affairs it manages. And the forces that have risen up against Charest & Co. on a strictly democratic basis are weakened due to their failure to attack the economic and social bases of the regime. To be sure, maintaining the tuition freeze or even abolishing tuition is simply an expression of the democratic right to education. But in this epoch of decaying capitalism, when all past gains are under attack, one cannot win or even defend such gains except through revolutionary struggle leading to a workers government.

Against Privatization and Commodification of Public Education, Fight for Socialist Revolution!
Quebec provincial police (Sûreté du Québec) assault striking students and protesters against the policies of privatization and repression. To defeat the attack, it is necessary to call on a more powerful force, that of the working class. “hawks” had been urging for some time for the government to play the “authority card,” and now Charest has done so, with Law 78. The bill was introduced to the National Assembly (Quebec’s provincial parliament) at 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 17, and was voted into law less than 24 hours later in a fast-track procedure worthy of any authoritarian regime. Budget minister Raymond Bachand inveighed: “Enough! Enough already! There are radical groups which want to destabilize the economy of Montreal. Anti-capitalist and Marxist groups” (La Presse, 16 May). “The Boss” Charest is assiduously imitating the habits of Maurice Duplessis, the last Quebec prime minister to win three consecutive terms. Pervasive influence trafficking, a docile parliament, brutal repression against the unions, demonizing protesters as dangerous “reds,” and tough legislation to stifle all opposition.

Winter in August? Duplessis decreed his loi cadenas (“padlock law,” titled “Law Protecting the Province Against Communist Propaganda”). His epigone issued a “Law for Quebec,” counseled the students to make a “Non-Cordial Non-Entente.” We saw that it was impossible to discuss in such an atmosphere.

Now it’s Quebec’s turn. Charest wants to put an end to the debate over university tuition. Hence he has adopted a position which allows no compromise, which excludes any negotiation. With more than 75% of respondents in public opinion polls saying they are dissatisfied with his administration, he wants to project an image of toughness. A revealing fact: on the eve of the announcement of the special law, the leader of the most “moderate” group, Léo Bureau-Blouin of FECQ (Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec, the Quebec College Student Federation), proposed a “new scenario,” also backed by the FEUQ (Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, Quebec University Student Federation) and even by the minority of students who favor a tuition hike. This formula would have meant betraying the goal of the strike, but the government refused. The new education minister, Michelle Courchene, declared that “there isn’t room for compromise anymore.” In short, the federal government is looking to the right.

A Non-Cordial Non-Entente. We saw the same thing following the talks which the previous education minister, Lucien Bouchard, and the new minister Chourchesne held with the student leaders on May 4-5. In a marathon session they were down the resistance of the strike negotiators. Trade-union leaders, who had been brought in to do a “service for Quebec,” counseled the students to make concessions. At the same time, the Sûreté du Québec, the provincial police, were bloody suppressing thousands of demonstrators outside a PLQ congress in Victoriaville. The ministers called on the student leaders to make a statement “against violence,” which they did. The media then broadcast this as a denunciation of the “violence” of the demonstrators who sought to defend themselves against the clouds of tear gas and hail of dozens of plastic bullets fired by the police.

At that point, what was called for was to denounce the police fusillade and to declare that it was impossible to discuss in such conditions of intimidation. But the student leaders stayed. Finally, after 22 hours locked up with their enemies and false friends (the union bureaucrats), they accepted a document submitted by the government. Unfortunately, the students hadn’t checked to make sure the compromises they thought they had reached were included. Moreover, the government presented as an “entente,” or agreement, what for the students was only a government offer. In any case, this document amounted to a capitulation to the regime. It didn’t touch the tuition hike at all, it proposed to reduce accompanying student fees by questionable savings, and proposed a “provisional committee” with a clear majority appointed by the government and businesses.

This was a disaster. There was a hul-labaloo among the CLASSE leaders when they saw the text. Even the leaders of the FEUQ and FEICQ couldn’t defend it. So what did the government do? It added fuel to the fire. Beauparlant wrote to Liberal deputies crying that the tuition hike was intact and there wouldn’t be sufficient savings to appreciably lower the accompanying fees. Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois of CLASSE complained, “compared to France, we are being about as one on us” (La Presse, 8 May). Subsequently, student associations throughout the province voted by overwhelming majorities against the phony “agreement.” Yet what’s striking is that even this capitulation to the pressure of the facts didn’t satisfy it. Charest is above all out to demoralize the students, to ensure that there won’t be another student strike for many years.

Why not? With its début, Charest wants to put an end to the debate over university tuition. But why did the student leaders sign this abomination, or even agree to discuss it? In the case of the FEIQ, it had already proposed, last November, to form such a commission to look for savings in university operations. Marxists call for a tri-partite government of the universities by councils of students, teachers and workers. But the government refused. The new education minister, Michelle Courchene, declared that “there isn’t room for compromise anymore.” In short, the federal government is looking to the right.

The Internationalist
higher education a new profit center. There is no justification for raising tuition costs from the standpoint of financing the universities. The cost of totally eliminating tuition, some hundreds of millions of dollars, is trivial. The bourgeoisie wants to raise tuition in order to produce surpluses for the banks from student loans (which are risk-free since the government guarantees them), and to subject students to the discipline of debt servitude.

Thus the Charest government’s attack is not a case of the desperate, mafia-infested PLQ running amok looking for a campaign theme for the next elections. It is perfectly in accord with the actions of governments and banks in the U.S., where the incidence of student debt has risen from around 45% of graduates in 1984 to 94% today, and where hundreds of thousands of students have taken on more than $50,000 in debt (and today cannot find a job). This offensive has been coordinated and theoretically justified over the last two decades by the international financial agencies including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and particularly the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Thus in order to resist this offensive by international capital, it is entirely insufficient to fight on the basis of a bourgeois democratic program. For the bourgeoisie there are fundamental class interests at stake, and they will not be deterred by some thousands of students and faculty who produce no profit and who, even if they can “disrupt” the economy cannot bring it to a halt. It is therefore absolutely necessary to mobilize a proletarian counteroffensive, a workers response, to the assault not only by the Charest government but rather by the employers and the bourgeoisie as a whole. Expressions of solidarity are nice, but above all now that the government has thrown down its challenge with Law 78, it is high time to undertake workers action to shut down the economy and government.

To win the strike, it is indispensable to extend it to the workers movement. We have suggested the formation of a common front of students and faculty with the locked-out metal workers of RTA at Alma, with the locked-out Aveo airline mechanics and construction workers under government attack as a first step toward a strike of at least the key sectors of the Quebec economy in support of the students and all working people targeted by the offensive of capital. Given the furious reaction of large sections of the working people and even the middle classes against Charest’s farcical “solution,” which many compare to the stage of siege on the national scale, one can even pose the need for an unlimited general strike to sweep away this corrupt government which endangers the well-being of all working people.

We are presently witnessing a stream of student struggles (Puerto Rico, Chile, England, Quebec) being waged on a national and democratic program in the face of an iron front of capital. Last week there was there was a demonstration of upwards of 100,000 Chilean students and their supporters, and there will in all probability be many thousands of Quebec students and their defenders in the streets of Montreal on May 22. But they remain isolated from each other, and they are not supported by workers action.

It is instructive to consider the experience of the ten-month strike of the National University of Mexico (UNAM) in 1999-2000 against a government attack which, in order to satisfy a contract with the World Bank, sought to introduce tuition. The students suffered more than 1,000 arrests, but in the end they won. How were they able to do it? To be sure, they occupied University City with tens of thousands of strikers. They fought off attacks by strikebreakers. Quebec students have also shown great combativeness in this respect, driving the Liberal government crazy. The big difference is the intervention of the power of the working class.

We in the League for the Fourth International fought in the UNAM strike for the formation of worker-student guards to defend the strike against threats of invasion by the army. At first, many students thought we were crazy, dreaming of long-gone and more heroic times. But as the threat of a military attack drew closer, the strike committees approved our proposal. At the key moment, hundreds of electrical workers arrived on campus to participate in joint defense guards which made it possible for the strike to go on. The Mexican bourgeoisie was well aware that while students can cause lots of “trouble,” the workers in the electrical system could throw the switch and plunge Mexico City into darkness. And today, there is still no tuition at the UNAM.

The demilitarization of the assaignment of the Quebec student strike is an important gain, which has made it possible to continue for almost 100 days. Popular support is tremendous. The determination of the students in the face of merciless repression and demonization in the bourgeois press has even surprised the strike leaders. To wage a victorious strike, a class struggle going beyond the limits of phony bourgeois democracy which is now being revealed as a police state, it is necessary to forge a leadership based on a revolutionary program. This leadership, the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party, will not appear from one day to the next. It must be built through intervening in struggle, proposing measures to mobilize the forces necessary to win and which also raise class consciousness.

The League for the Fourth International fights for the independence of Quebec in the framework of a federation of workers states of North America. We fight on the basis of an internationalist program based on the chauvinism of the Anglo bourgeoisie and also against the bourgeois Quebec nationalist of the PQ and its offshoots as well as the petty-bourgeois reformism of much of the PQ and its offshoots as well as the petty-bourgeois reformism of much of the left. We offer our observations on the course of the movement in the spirit of combative solidarity, as participants in a common struggle.

Mobilize the power of the working class to win the student strike! Send Charest packing, this wannabe emperor who rules with the riot club, gas and bullets! Fight his financiers and his backers in the forces of big capital, from Toronto’s Bay Street to Wall Street in New York. The power of a mobilized working class based on a revolutionary leadership can defeat these relics who represent more than the passing stage of siege in this country.

Contingents of secondary school students march for education in Santiago de Chile, 30 June 2011. The struggle against privatization and commodification of education is international.
was militarized are shocked. As the PAN candidacy implodes, it is likely that today the “useful vote” would be in favor of López Obrador, who has softened his image, assuming a “loving” posture towards capital. Some leaders of the PRD (presumably not Peña Nieto), I understand to the extent that they don’t back AMLO directly, and despite their supposed political independence, will act as defenders of his vote. And, as in 2006, the opportunistic socialists will once again be the “left” flank of a bourgeois movement.

Repression is the Work of All the Bourgeoisie Parties

After the May 11 incident which gave rise to the #YoSoy132 movement, it rapidly spread through other sectors of the working class across the country. On May 18, hundreds of students from the Iberoamerican and the Monterrey Technological Institute demonstrated outside Televisa offices in the Mexico City neighborhood of Santa Fe; at the same time, students of the Autonomous and Technological Institute of Mexico did the same outside the Televisa installations in San Ángel. That Televisa lies is hardly news. Students from the National University (UNAM), SME electrical workers and CNT telecommunication employees were invited to the TV station and are routinely ignored. But this time, instead of repeating the usual insults, the media suddenly changed their tone: they praised the initiative and civic sense of the students. Their class origin was decisive. The Iberoamerican and Monterrey Technological Institute of Mexico are hardly hotbeds of leftist activism, they are preparatory schools for the bourgeoisie. The protests indicate that there is discontent in the well-off sectors of the country. This rebellion was not coincidental. The increase in the price of tortillas has soared from 4.5 pesos a kilo in 2000 to more than 12 pesos today. Communiqué has soared from 4.5 pesos a kilo in 2000 to 6 pesos in 2009, and insubstantial that the main news was the 20 seconds during which an edecán (escort) of the Federal Election Institute appeared on the screen.

The Iberoamerican students discover that the bourgeoisie means “no revolution!” in fact, that is their basic function: to cultivate a “public opinion” consistent with the interests of the capitalist class. Subsequently, #YoSoy132 raised the banner of “democratization” of the communica-
tions media, and thus that the bourgeois media will have to encourage competition by authorizing new television networks. But whether there are many more channels, or even 1,000 TV cable channels as in the United States, the mass information media will continue to serve the exploited and oppressed.

Some left groups have tried to give an “anti-capitalist” interpretation to the demand for democratization to infor-
mation Michoacán,” at the request of Cárdenas clide of students, faculty and workers, for the elimin-
ation of all tuition and fees at all educational levels, and for a living stipend for students. The #YoSoy132 movement seeks “real democracy,” but the “Outraged” in Euro-

Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

A program of the entire youth? The implicit promise of the Contraencore position is that you are above the divi-
sion of society into classes. They couldn’t be more wrong.

In Mexico, access to higher education is highly restrictive: barely 25% of youth between the ages of 19 and 25 attend an institution of higher education. Consequently, many university students are part of the upper petty bourgeoisie or bourgeois. The same could be said of a student movement arising in the private universities must be for the expropria-
tion of these institutions, for opening the universities to all who wish to study, for control by the students, for the participation of students, faculty and workers, for the elimination of all tuition and fees at all educational levels, and for a living stipend for students.

The #YoSoy132 movement seeks “real democracy,” but the “Outraged” in Europe, to which they trace their origins. To be sure, the right to free, quality public education is no more a democratic demand, and as such it is not in itself incompatible with capitalism. However, in the recent perspec-
tional cases, in this epoch of capitalist decay, this right can only be achieved through revolu-
tionary mobilization of the working class. The fact that even students of the well-off petty bourgeoisie are mobilizing, both in Mexico and southern Europe, indicates the depth of the world economic crisis. But in order to really fight against oppression and poverty, they will have to break with the ruling classes and take their place alongside the proletariat and the oppressed in the class struggle.

Despite the tremendous hopes raised by the sudden mobilization of thousands of youth, the #YoSoy132 movement is essen-
tially electoral, with a bourgeois program. As communists, we fundamentally oppose this perspective. We call for no votes for any of the bourgeois candidates. It is ur-

necesary to build a Leninist party of the proletarian vanguard, armed with the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. Emphasized the fact that #YoSoy132, in achieving the most pressing democratic rights (land to the peasants, democratic rights in reality and not just on paper) goes beyond the framework of the capitalist system, this party will fight for workers and peasants governments. This party would be the vanguard, expropriating the capitalists and spreading internationally.

The Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth Interna-
tional, seeks to form a fighting national group to prepare the cadre for a future revo-
lutionary workers party. In this struggle it is vital to attract working-class youth, but also the most conscious radicalized youth, to the camp of workers revolution. We invite you to join us in this effort.
Brazil Teachers... continued from page 11

before the corporate onslaught. They accept tests that be used as the basis for teacher evaluations, only trying to limit them to 40% of the points. Union oppositionists are calling teachers against the tests or “opt out.” The union bureaucracy doesn’t want to fight, it wants to fight for control of the Union. They want to control the teachers, and in the struggle for control of the Union, they want to control the teachers’ knowledge. Not only did they impose the national high-stakes test of students (the ENLACE) and the “Universal Evaluation” by assemblies of teachers, students, staff and parents. It is such select bodies that should evaluate the efforts of the students and teachers, and not some capitalist authorities who are out to destroy the unions and subordinate public education to the orders of capital. We argue: fight the CSEW, fight the SNTE, fight for the Union of the working class.

Union Combat Struggle in Mexico

The policy of the CSEW might seem advanced in the context of the United States, but in Mexico it has actually been carried out recently in combative strikes. In the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero and Michoacán, tens of thousands of teachers mobilized to prevent the administration of a national high-stakes test of students (the ENLACE) and the “Universal Evaluation” of teachers’ knowledge. Not only did they stop educational activity, shutting down the schools, unionists occupied state education departments and, as a precaution, placed the warehouses where the exams were being stored under guard. In three of the states they forced the governors to sign agreements to not administer the tests, and in Oaxaca, where tens of thousands of teachers occupied the center of the capital for two weeks, teams of 50,000 unionists sent out patrols to places where exams might be held to ensure that they did not take place.

In Mexico, the National Education Workers Union (SNTE) is not a workers union but an organ of the state to control teachers. It is one of the main “corporatist” pseudo-unions left over from the regime of the state party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), similar in their integration into the capitalist state, the “pepoleo” (state-controlled unions) in Brazil under the bonapartist Estado Novo of Getúlio Vargas (1931-45, 1951-54) or the military dictatorship (1964-85). The current “leader” for “life” of the SNTE, Elba Esther Gordillo, was installed as president of the organization in 1989 (and her predecessor, Carlos Jonguitud, was removed) by the president of the republic, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, in a private meeting. Under Jonguitud and Gordillo, “union” gunmen murdered well over 100 members of the organizing teachers. Currently, the SNTE is supporting an “Agreement for Quality Education” (ACE), which includes the ENLACE test and the “Universal Evaluation” of the teachers.

Fighting against the charro (state-imposed) bureaucrats of the SNTE, an opposition current arose in the 1980s, the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers (CNTE), which today and for many years has controlled the state federations of the SNTE in Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán and Oaxaca, along with a considerable presence in the federal district (Mexico City) and other states. The CNTE acts as an independent organization, calling for extended strikes of up to a half million teachers. Section 22 of the SNTE-CNTE in Oaxaca was the main force behind the turbulent revolt which kicked the governor, the police and other repressive bodies out of the state capital for more than five months in 2006. In 2012, Section 22, after a march of 50,000 teachers on May 15, went out on an unlimited strike on May 21. Tens of thousands of teachers occupied 20 blocks in downtown Oaxaca. A week later, the CNTE called a national strike to oppose implementation of the ACE “and all of its programs.”

In Oaxaca, the strike lasted two and a half weeks, resulting in the state government agreeing to all the teachers’ demands. The ACE was cancelled, as was the ENLACE and the teacher evaluation, financing was agreed upon on alternative programs negotiated with the government. Now they are circulating a petition calling for the Union of the working class— strikers to withdraw its troops from Haiti, the LQB and the police and other issues, come back to the same “strategy,” trying to push the PSTU and PSOL to the left. In both cases, their efforts have uniformly resulted in failure. A similar tendency is evident in the popular front and the PT social-democratic managers of capitalism must intervene in the class struggle, seeking to mobilize the working people to defeat the “frenemies of imperialism.” We continue to support neither Lula in the Palácio do Planalto. Ever since, the various components of the opportunist left have been unable to put forward a genuine struggle and fight for popular forces to win the ruling class supported his election, after the candidate gave his guarantees to capital in his “Letter to the Brazilians.”

Even if the Chavista governments, Brazil Teachers...

In Oaxaca, the strike lasted two and a half weeks, resulting in the state government agreeing to all the teachers’ demands. The ACE was cancelled, as was the ENLACE and the teacher evaluation, financing was agreed upon on alternative programs negotiated with

Union Combat Struggle in Mexico

The policy of the CSEW might seem advanced in the context of the United States, but in Mexico it has actually been carried out recently in combative strikes. In the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero and Michoacán, tens of thousands of teachers mobilized to prevent the administration of a national high-stakes test of students (the ENLACE) and the “Universal Evaluation” of teachers’ knowledge. Not only did they stop educational activity, shutting down the schools, unionists occupied state education departments and, as a precaution, placed the warehouses where the exams were being stored under guard. In three of the states they forced the governors to sign agreements to not administer the tests, and in Oaxaca, where tens of thousands of teachers occupied the center of the capital for two weeks, teams of some 500 unionists sent out patrols to places where exams might be held to ensure that they did not take place.

In Mexico, the National Education Workers Union (SNTE) is not a workers union but an organ of the state to control teachers. It is one of the main “corporatist” pseudo-unions left over from the regime of the state party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), similar in their integration into the capitalist state, the “pepoleo” (state-controlled unions) in Brazil under the bonapartist Estado Novo of Getúlio Vargas (1931-45, 1951-54) or the military dictatorship (1964-85). The current “leader” for “life” of the SNTE, Elba Esther Gordillo, was installed as president of the organization in 1989 (and her predecessor, Carlos Jonguitud, was removed) by the president of the republic, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, in a private meeting. Under Jonguitud and Gordillo, “union” gunmen murdered well over 100 members of the organizing teachers. Currently, the SNTE is supporting an “Agreement for Quality Education” (ACE), which includes the ENLACE test and the “Universal Evaluation” of the teachers.

Fighting against the charro (state-imposed) bureaucrats of the SNTE, an opposition current arose in the 1980s, the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers (CNTE), which today and for many years has controlled the state federations of the SNTE in Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán and Oaxaca, along with a considerable presence in the federal district (Mexico City) and other states. The CNTE acts as an independent organization, calling for extended strikes of up to a half million teachers. Section 22 of the SNTE-CNTE in Oaxaca was the main force behind the turbulent revolt which kicked the governor, the police and other repressive bodies out of the state capital for more than five months in 2006. In 2012, Section 22, after a march of 50,000 teachers on May 15, went out on an unlimited strike on May 21. Tens of thousands of teachers occupied 20 blocks in downtown Oaxaca. A week later, the CNTE called a national strike to oppose implementation of the ACE “and all of its programs.”

In Oaxaca, the strike lasted two and a half weeks, resulting in the state government agreeing to all the teachers’ demands. The ACE was cancelled, as was the ENLACE and the teacher evaluation, financing was agreed upon on alternative programs negotiated with
Greece Austerity... continued from page 9

by the government, and for “dialogue with stakeholders for the shaping of an effective system of public control” (Greek Left Review, 12 June). And contrary to the claims of the bourgeois press that SYRIZA is aiming for a Greek exit from the euro (dubbed “Grexit”), its leader Tsipras has assured capitalist moneymen that “Syriza is committed to keeping Greece in the eurozone” (Financial Times, 13 June). In the same article, Tsipras identified his program for economic growth and deficit reduction with that of U.S. president Obama, and says SYRIZA only intends to raise taxes to “average European levels.”

In recent days, the press has reported private opinion polls giving New Democracy a slight edge in the June 17 vote. Under Greece’s undemocratic election laws, the leading party gets an additional 50 seats in the interests of government “stability.”

But even if SYRIZA comes out ahead, the “left government” it talks of would in fact be a coalition with a section of the Greek bourgeoisie, as it could not win a majority in parliament without the participation of, or support from, at least a big chunk of PASOK. A vote for SYRIZA would not draw a clear line against the bourgeoisie, and should be rejected by class-conscious workers. Other Greek leftists organizations, including the OKDE-Spartakos, are part of a second coalition, ANTARSYA (Anticapitalist Left Cooperation for the Overthrow), which criticizes SYRIZA for not attacking capitalism. Yet in a response to its “comrades” of the misnamed United Secretariat of the Fourth Internation (Ussec), which favors SYRIZA, the OKDE-Spartakos says it would take a “critical stance, supporting progressive measures” of a class-collaborationist left government (International Viewpoint, May 2012).

While the reformist left is all flocking to support SYRIZA, either enthusiastically or “critically,” the International Communist League (ICL) led by the Spartanist League: U.S. has published a June 5 statement on the Internet by its supporters of the Trotskyist Group of Greece calling to “Vote KKE! No Vote to Syriza!” The ICL argues that “A massive vote to the KKE ... would deliver a slap in the face to the imperialists and their Greek lackeys and could give a boost to the defensive battles of workers across Europe.”

In these elections, the KKE has adopted a more leftist language than often in the past, and has rejected calls on it by SYRIZA to join a bourgeois “left” government, which has reportedly led to a sharp drop in its electoral support while some Communist youth say they will vote for SYRIZA. But would the KKE refuse to vote for such a government of the capitalist state if its votes were needed to keep it in office?

Since the KKE is running independently of and against the bourgeois parties, against the EU and NATO, critical support to its candidates is a concave tactic, but in the concrete, given the KKE’s ingrained passive parliamentarism it is hard to see how this could be a lever to move Greek workers toward the needed revolutionary class struggle posed by the desperate economic conditions they face today. A KKE statement, “Between two tough battles” (23 May), talks of “the overthrow of capitalism” and the “construction of the new socialist-communist society” in the sweet by-and-bye, but all it calls to do today is to be a parliamentary opposition. An 8 May Central Committee statement says that in the next period “the difference between a government and real people’s power will become even clearer” and that the “political electoral activity of the KKE ... constitutes an important legacy for the years to come. Or as a 10 May statement put it, “The KKE is ‘a thorn in the side’ of the bourgeoisie and opportunists.”

An article on a June 5 press conference of KKE general secretary Aleka Papariga headlined, “The strengthening of the KKE will determine the people’s position the day after the elections.” Papariga argues that Greek working people will face either renegotiation of the loan agreements with a new harsh “memorandum,” or a push for “departure from the Eurozone with the possibility of an uncontrolled state bankruptcy.” So what then? Her answer: organize in the workplace and promote a popular alliance with other hard-hit sectors. To do what? She rightly criticizes SYRIZA for ducking the issue of NATO and the potential use of Greek military bases for an imperialist attack on Syria or Iran. But what would the KKE do, would it mobilize the workers to march on the bases to prevent this? The general secretary denounces the fascist Golden Dawn, one of whose candidates assaulted KKE and SYRIZA women candidates on national TV, but the KKE has opposed mobilizations against the Nazi thugs.

In its election propaganda, the KKE is largely silent about immigrants who are being physically attacked by fascist lynchers, although given its leadership of the PAME union federation it could bring out powerful worker-immigrant defense mobilizations. While Trotskyists oppose the capitalist-imperialist European Union on a proletarian internationalist program, fighting for Europe-wide workers revolution, the KKE rejects the EU in the name of defending Greek sovereignty. While SYRIZA calls for a bourgeois “left” government within the EU, the KKE in calling for Greek “disengagement from the EU with people’s power” at most is talking of bourgeois populist-front government such as Salvador Allende’s Unidad Popular in Chile. And while SYRIZA awaken illusions that it can do away with harsh austerity by renegotiations, which the eurobankers will not agree to, the KKE doesn’t warn about the imperialist onslaught that an Allende-style “people’s government” would face.

Greece today is seething with discontent on the cusp of a pre-revolutionary situation. June 17 is not one more parliamentary election, and defensive struggles by the workers are wholly inadequate to counter the capitalist assault. Imperialist spokesmen talk of “Fears of Social and Political Unrest if Greece Leaves Euro” (New York Times, 16 June). Neither SYRIZA, nor the KKE or ANTARSYA present a program for revolutionary class struggle. The ISO writes that “SYRIZA’s program recalls what the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky described as ‘transitional politics’ – when, in a period of prolonged economic crisis, serious demands of the working class can lead to a major confrontation with the capitalist class.” Please! What Trotsky called for was not some nebulous “transitional politics,” but a series of transitional demands which challenge the rule of capital, “unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat” (as he put it in the 1938 Transitional Program).

Facing mass layoffs and drastic wage cuts, Greek workers should be warning industrial struggle leading to a real general strike (not the endless one-day or 48-hour work stoppages) and workers control of production. A starting point could be the eight-month-old strike at Hellenic Steel in Halyvourgia against firings under labor laws imposed by the troika. PAME, which has a notable presence in the strike, has basically limited the strike, calling only for token regional solidarity strikes for a few hours. Since an Athens court recently ruled the strike illegal, an appropriate response by the workers would be a strike/occupation extending to the company’s plants in Volos and surrounding installations. Likewise, at the state-owned Larco ferronickel mine threatened with privatization, an occupation imposing workers control would be appropriate. But SYRIZA didn’t even denounce the court ruling against the Hellenic Steel strike, and in meeting with Larco unionists, the KKE’s Papariga only said she would take the matter up with the Treasury secretary in charge of privatization.

Criticizing SYRIZA’s talk of “public control” of the banks subsidized by the government, ANTARSYA speaks of nationalization of the banks and big companies under workers control. In reality, that amounts to a program for a slightly more left “left government” of the capitalist state, whereas what is needed is for workers to seize the banks, impose workers control and open the books to reveal the actual figures and dirty dealings of financial vultures while fighting
Part I: Egypt – Military and Islamists in Power

In Egypt, it was the massive strike wave that triggered the downfall of Mubarak after three decades in power. Joyous crowds chanted, “the army and the people are one.” The elder statistician, “The people want the regime to fall,” became “The people have brought down the regime.” But who actually ousted the despotic Pharaonic (leader) was not “the people” but the Egyptian military, after getting the green light from Obama and the Pentagon. And while the despised dictator was gone, the military-based dictatorship remained. As Anwar Sadat said, “In short, the revolution that so many Egyptians yearn for may have begun, but it is far too early to proclaim victory. In the name of democracy, the Egyptian army (with Washington’s backing) just staged a coup.”

Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood meeting with generals of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces on August 9.

Socialist Worker, 11 February 2011

A month later, speaking to an ISO-sponsored event at the Left Forum in New York, Omar noted: “Sections of activists that were quiet before are now publically criticizing the timidity of the Council in meeting the revolution’s demands for democracy and social justice – something you could not do in the first few weeks after February.”

Some are drawing the conclusion that the army is complicit in counter-revolutionary actions (Socialist Worker, 30 March 2011). Certainly the ISO and its cothenskers in the Egyptian RS did not do that on February 11 and immediately thereafter, much less call for struggle to bring down the SCAF.

Beyond tailing after the masses, the ISO and RS social democrats did not even seek workers power, speaking instead of a “democratic revolution.” This is the hoary program of “two-stage revolution” – first (bourgeois) democracy, then sometime later socialism. The supposed democratic “allies” turn on the socialists and begin persecuting and even murdering them. In Egypt, when the mass pressure on the military eventually came, the SCAF went after striking workers and the secular and leftist youth who sparked the uprising, murderously attacking demonstrators in Tahrir Square in early April with armored cars and live ammunition.

Islamist-Imperialist-Militarist Alliance

In this and subsequent attacks on demonstrators, leftists and workers, the ruling military junta was backed by the Muslim Brotherhood. Founded in 1928 by Egyptian imam Hassan al-Banna, the Brotherhood is a mass Islamist organization dedicated to ordering society on the basis of Islamic law (sharia) according to the Sunni tradition. Over the decades it has built up a clientele of millions of impoverished Egyptians through social work while organizing conservative businessmen and professionals. Its main leader, Khairat al-Shater, the presidential candidate of the Brotherhood-sponsored Freedom and Justice Party until he was disqualified by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, was subsequently killed by Islamist forces. Clinton and Panetta flew in to talk with the Brotherhood and made it clear that the MB was the main force fighting the left. In the early ‘90s, the Brotherhood was deeply involved in the Free Officers coup which ousted King Farouk, but later turned against national colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, tried to assassinate him and was banned. Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat, a former Brother, released MB prisoners but was subsequently killed by Islamist officials.

Under Mubarak’s rule, the Muslim Brotherhood was tolerated, its leaders sometimes jailed to keep them in line. The MB only joined the demonstrations at the end. In the immediate aftermath it mobilized to approve the military’s constitutional decrees, since it believed in the state religion and the principles of sharia the basis for law. Over the next few months, the MB denounced protests against the SCAF as “counterrevolutionary.” They were joined in this by the more extreme Salafi and jihadi Islamists, who together with the MB held a giant rally in Cairo at the end of July calling for the imposition of sharia, for “national unity” with the army and denouncing secular liberals and the left. In September and October, as a new wave of strikes broke out, the Islamists and the military both opposed them. Islamists and the military competed in attacking religious minorities.

On the eve of parliamentary elections in November 2011, when the SCAF spelled out that it intended to act as arbiter over a new constitution, posing as a defender of individual rights, the Islamists for the first time mobilized massively calling to end military rule. But as battles raged, the MB made a deal to leave the military in power until June 2012, when a new parliamentary aliance took half the parliamentary vote and a Salafist bloc headed by the Al Nayour party won another 28%, the skirsmishing continued through the presidential elections. In the June run-off, the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidency via Reuters

Under Mubarak’s rule, the Muslim Brotherhood was tolerated, its leaders sometimes jailed to keep them in line. The MB only joined the demonstrations at the end. In the immediate aftermath it mobilized to approve the military’s constitutional decrees, since it believed in the state religion and the principles of sharia the basis for law. Over the next few months, the MB denounced protests against the SCAF as “counterrevolutionary.” They were joined in this by the more extreme Salafi and jihadi Islamists, who together with the MB held a giant rally in Cairo at the end of July calling for the imposition of sharia, for “national unity” with the army and denouncing secular liberals and the left. In September and October, as a new wave of strikes broke out, the Islamists and the military both opposed them. Islamists and the military competed in attacking religious minorities.

On the eve of parliamentary elections in November 2011, when the SCAF spelled out that it intended to act as arbiter over a new constitution, posing as a defender of individual rights, the Islamists for the first time mobilized massively calling to end military rule. But as battles raged, the MB made a deal to leave the military in power until June 2012, when a new parliamentary aliance took half the parliamentary vote and a Salafist bloc headed by the Al Nayour party won another 28%, the skirsmishing continued through the presidential elections. In the June run-off, the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidency.

After the last minute, the MB won the parliamentary vote plummeted from over three-quarters to one-quarter while the Nasserite candidate, Hamdeen Sabahi, did far better than the MB’s Mohammed Mors. The Brotherhood is a bulwark of capitalism and an archenemy of communism, socialism, trade unions, strikes, secularism, democratic rights for women or anything else that goes against the interests of capital or Islamic law. It is not against alliances with the military and imperialism, quite the contrary. In the late 1940s when the Egyptian Communist Party was making big gains in the working class, the Brotherhood worked closely with the British military occupiers and his MB was the main force fighting the left. In the early ‘90s, the Brotherhood was deeply involved in the Free Officers coup which ousted King Farouk, but later turned against national colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, tried to assassinate him and was banned. Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat, a former Brother, released MB prisoners but was subsequently killed by Islamist officials.

On the eve of parliamentary elections in November 2011, when the SCAF spelled out that it intended to act as arbiter over a new constitution, posing as a defender of individual rights, the Islamists for the first time mobilized massively calling to end military rule. But as battles raged, the MB made a deal to leave the military in power until June 2012, when a new parliamentary aliance took half the parliamentary vote and a Salafist bloc headed by the Al Nayour party won another 28%, the skirsmishing continued through the presidential elections. In the June run-off, the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidency. The Brotherhood is a bulwark of capitalism and an archenemy of communism, socialism, trade unions, strikes, secularism, democratic rights for women or anything else that goes against the interests of capital or Islamic law. It is not against alliances with the military and imperialism, quite the contrary. In the late 1940s when the Egyptian Communist Party was making big gains in the working class, the Brotherhood worked closely with the British military occupiers and his MB was the main force fighting the left. In the early ‘90s, the Brotherhood was deeply involved in the Free Officers coup which ousted King Farouk, but later turned against national colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, tried to assassinate him and was banned. Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat, a former Brother, released MB prisoners but was subsequently killed by Islamist officials.

On the eve of parliamentary elections in November 2011, when the SCAF spelled out that it intended to act as arbiter over a new constitution, posing as a defender of individual rights, the Islamists for the first time mobilized massively calling to end military rule. But as battles raged, the MB made a deal to leave the military in power until June 2012, when a new parliamentary aliance took half the parliamentary vote and a Salafist bloc headed by the Al Nayour party won another 28%, the skirsmishing continued through the presidential elections. In the June run-off, the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidency.
with both sides. In reality both the SCAF and the MB are willing to do business with each other: this was maneuvering over the terms of the deal. The real contradiction, as it has been throughout, is between the working class and a militarist-Islamist-imperialist alliance.

**Reformist Socialists Call for Vote for Muslim Brotherhood**

As the second round election approached, many on the left lamented that voters were being given the “choice” between “jail or the veil.” Yet at this point, the Revolutionary Socialists suddenly sprung a call on “all the reformist and revolutionary forces” to “form a national front that stands against the candidate of the counterrevolution,” Shakif (Socialist Worker [UK], 2 June). In other words, it was an appeal to vote for Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood. This was linked to “demands” on Morsi and the MB to form a coalition government with the Nasserite Sabahi and liberal Islamist al-Fotouh and select a prime minister outside the FJP, to approve a “civil” (code word for secular) constitution, guarantee the right to strike, include representatives of Copts, workers and youth in a constituent assembly, etc.

The RS’s shamefaced call to vote for a bourgeois candidate was a betrayal of the most basic Marxist political principle of working-class independence. Moreover, this was not your usual popular-front coalition tying the workers organizations to some bourgeois “progressives,” it was calling to elect an outright reactionaries. The demands tacked on were just window dressing, since there is no way the Brotherhood would agree to them. Even if they did, this would be a trap for the left and would not benefit Egyptian workers. Morsi has made it clear he will agree to a $3.2 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund, which will include onerous conditions. The job of any “left” representatives in an MB government would be to impose the cutbacks and keep a lid on workers’ protests. After the dirty work was done, they would be tossed aside.

The call to vote for the MB/FJP leader caused a commotion inside the RS, and on June 4 the leadership produced a letter “To the comrades” regretting the “muddling of their position.” They declared, “The call to vote for the MB/FJP leader being in cahoots with the military against strikes, leftists, etc., while Ali replied by citing the ISO’s longstanding position of supporting the MB’s right-wing program and the return of “a regime ready to slaughter the revolution.” In fact, the MB is quite prepared to slaughter any real revolution through its still-tenacious alliance with the military and imperialism, or with Islamist squads who have repeatedly attacked leftists. Conserva-

The reality is that the SWP, ISO and RS are all reformist organizations deeply committed to pursuing opportunist policies—their only differences are over who to tail after and how far to go. At the same time, the Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists without a doubt have among their ranks many committed militants who have braved repression. Yet in the continuing turmoil, such betrayals (this was far worse than a mistake) can have disastrous consequences. Today, many in the Cairo streets are saying that a “second revolution” is needed. But as the Muslim Brotherhood was losing support, particularly among workers, the RS told people to vote for the MB. While it is false to say that the overthrow of Mubarak amounted to a revolution, the stark choice facing Egyptian working people today is indeed revolution or counterrevolution. And the stark fact is that both Morsi and Shafik were candidates of counterrevolution.

Reformist Support for Islamism, Product of Cliffite Anti-Sovietism

In justifying their precipitous call in a moment of “shock” and “panic for some” to vote for the candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood, the RS leaders argued that this was just carrying out a policy of blocking with “moderate Islamism” which had been decided long ago. That at least is true. For years, the RS and their SWP mentors held anti-Soviet social democrats in Cuba together with top MB leaders. They all hark back to the anti-Marxist tract by the late Chris Harman, *The Prophet and the Proletariat* (1994). Flitting from Egypt to Algeria to the Sudan to Afghanistan and Iran, SWP honcho Harman presents a catalogue of erudite and treacherous arguments for why socialists should ally with Islamic reaction... “some-times.” The Islamists recruit among the downtrodden masses and the impoverished petty bourgeoisie; they are a response to the bankruptcy of Stalinism and nationalism; they sometimes adopt “anti-imperialist” postures, etc.

In more recent years, the SWP/ISO/RS buttress their arguments by lambasting Islamophobia and bourgeois ideologues who equate Islamism with fascism. (One of the main purveyors of the “Islamofascism” excuse for supporting imperialism was ex-International Socialists/SWP member Christopher Hitchens.) Yet the policy of politically aligning with anti-communist, reactionary Islamists has been literally suicidal, in the case of Khomeini’s Iran, where tens of thousands of leftists were executed by the “Islamic Revolution.” (Harman faults the “mistaken positions” of the Iranian left for this.) While Trotskyists called for “Down with Shah, No to Khomeini!” the ISO in the U.S. published gushing headlines on Khomeini’s Iran like “The Form – Religious, the Spirit – Revolution!” (Socialist Worker, January 1979).

More fundamentally for this social-democratic current, this policy was a post-facto justification for supporting Islamic reaction in alliance with imperialism against the Soviet Union. Over Afghanistan, where the Soviet Army intervened to prop up a weak reform government against the onslaught of U.S.-financed Islamic mujahedin, the British SWP demanded “Troops Out of Afghanistan!” (Socialist Worker, 12 January 1980). An article in the SWP’s journal *International Socialism* (Spring 1981) praised the mujahedin as “brave freedom fighters giving their lives in a struggle against imperialism,” referring to the Soviet intervention. While these anti-Soviet social democrats lined up with imperialism in Cold War II, genuine Trotskyists instead proclaimed, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the Gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan Peoples!”

**Left: Afghan mujahedin executes communist school teacher during imperialist-sponsored proxy war against Soviet Union. Right: Afghan women’s militia in 1988. Trotskyists hailed Soviet intervention, Cliffites praised CIA’s “holy warriors” as “freedom fighters.” Now they’re back together again in alliance with Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.**
women who refused to wear the Islamic veil and whose teachers were murdered by the CIA’s “holy warriors” for the “crime” of teaching girls to read. Haman, in contrast, criticized the Afghan land reform for supposedly provoking “spontaneous risings from all sections of the rural population.” Those “spontaneous” uprisings were led by the landowners, khans and muftis, they were also sparked by the reform government’s decrees favoring women’s rights, and (it was confirmed years later) were financed and encouraged by the CIA even before the Soviet intervention.

So there is a pre-history to the SWP/ISO/RS policy of political support to Islamism, and it all goes back to the anti-Sovietism of their godfather Tony Cliff, the founder of the International Socialist Tendency. Cliff broke with Trotskyism at the onset of the first Cold War, declaring the USSR under Stalin to be “state capitalist.” He formalized the break with the Fourth International during the Korean War when he refused to support Soviet-backed North Korea against the U.S.U.N. imperialist attack. From that time on, although claiming to represent a “third camp” (“neither Moscow nor Washington”), in fact, the Clffites have acted as “socialist” hangers-on of the “first camp” – U.S. NATO imperialism. Today, by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, in increasingly open alliance with Washington, and the U.S.-backed Islamist insurgency in Syria, the latter-day Clffites are once again backing the same horse as the imperialists.

Egypt under the Muslim Brotherhood and the military may not be identical to Iran under Khomeini and the military. But in Iran, Afghanistan, Egypt or elsewhere, Islamism is antithetical to communism. The Islamists understand this, so do the imperialists. Hard-line Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles, Republican president Dwight Eisenhower’s future Secretary of State, wrote in his tract War or Peace (1950): “The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communism. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it.” That is exactly what U.S. imperialism did by allying with Islamist mujahedin against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s, pouring in over $1 billion a year in the biggest CIA operation in history. And then as now, it gets some cover on their left flank from the fake-left.

Egyptian Working Class Needs an Internationalist Communist Vanguard

Marxists have always insisted on independence from all wings of the bourgeoisie as the bottom line of working-class politics. Karl Marx put it succinctly in a speech to the International Workingmen’s Association (the First International) in September 1871, summing up the lessons of the failed 1848 revolutions and the Paris Commune: “Our politics must be working-class politics. The workers’ party must never be the tailgate of any bourgeois party; it must be independent and have its own policy.” This principled opposition to class collaboration was carried forward in Trotsky’s political opposition to the “popular fronts” of the 1930s, when the workers organizations tied their ranks to capitalists, often no more than “the shadow of the bourgeoisie,” but which acted as barriers to proletarian revolution (see the Internationalist Group bulletin on The Popular Front: Roadblock to Revolution [May 2007]).

Thus in Egypt the League for the Fourth International has opposed political blocs not only with “moderate” Islamists like the Muslim Brotherhood but also with bourgeois secular liberals like Mohammed El Baradei. The RS (backed by the ISO and SWP), on the other hand, has blocked both, and their main complaint against the liberals (and against the former Muslim Brotherhood youth, now called the Egyptian Current) is that they want to have a “third way,” supporting neither the SCAF nor the MB! Instead of navigating among the various bourgeois forces, genuine Marxists fighting for socialist revolution look to the working class. And in recent weeks workers on the Nile have once again been fighting hard.

It has been well-documented and is widely known that since 2006, the Egyptian working class has been engaged in the largest strike wave in its history. Moreover, while the protests that led to the downfall of Mubarak were started by petty-bourgeois youth, it was the strike action by hundreds of thousands of workers on 9-11 February 2011 that forced the military to finally oust the hated autocrat. Ever since then, there have been numerous strikes. Many have been led by the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU), which was founded just days after the revolt broke out. Historian Joel Beinin reported that at least 150,000 workers participated in 489 strikes in February 2011. The EFITU issued a list of “Demands of the Workers in the Revolution” which proclaimed:

“If this revolution does not lead to the fair distribution of wealth it is not worth anything. Freedoms are not complete without social freedoms. The right to vote is naturally dependent on the right to a loaf of bread.”

– Joel Beinin, The Rise of Egypt’s Workers (Carnegie Papers, June 2012)

Those demands and calls for do not basically go beyond the call for democracy and do not challenge capitalism. Beinin notes: “Many public and private sector managers treat workers, especially women, no less contemptuously than they did in the Mubarak era.” When women workers of a textile company that went bankrupt held a sit-in to demand back wages they were owed, at the invitation of a police officer (who said that the blood money for their deaths would only be $8 each), a truck driver plowed into them, badly injuring one and killing another. The driver was released. A year after the overthrow of Mubarak, many new unions have been formed and the EFITU now claims over 2 million members. But the military still continues to uphold the corporatist Egyptian Trade Union Federation, which is an organ of state control of labor.

This July, following the election, workers have again launched a new wave of strikes, notably in the center of labor militancy in the past, Mahalla al-Kabra, a textile city in the middle of the Nile Delta. Some 23,000 workers of the state-owned Misir Spinning and Weaving factory walked out on February 17 and were joined by another 12,000 workers from other state textile mills. They returned a week later after receiving some concessions, but threatened to go out again in September. Other strikes include the Pirelli Tire workers. The English-language Egypt Independent (22 July) reported that “Strikes sweep Minya, Fayoum and Ismailia.” This shows that the Egyptian working class is ready to fight. But to stand up to and defeat the military and the MB government (which the reformist socialists voted for!), workers must fight politically.

This includes centrally building a workers party, and not just some reformist parliamentary “labor party” such as the Democratic Workers Party (DWP) that the RS and others launched in April 2011. The program of the DWP is limited to reforms under capitalism such as land reform, rent control and the like. Its founders make clear that this is not to be a revolutionary party. RS leader and DWP founder Kamal Khaled declared, “If there is a vanguard party we would’ve named it the Socialist Labor Party, or the Communist Workers’ Party, and its agenda would have been geared toward revolutionary socialism rather than reform” (Egypt Independent, 15 April 2011). This in the midst of convulsive struggles which the RS claims is already a revolution!

Again, this reformist policy is diametrically counterposed to that of Leon Trotsky, who in made clear in discussions on the Transitional Program that calling for a workers party in the United States Marxists advocate a party that fights for a series of transitional demands including workers control of industry, the formation of factory committees and “workers and farmers’ government.” In Egypt today, the focus on this issue is on the terrain of bourgeois elections but in building such a workers party on a program of revolutionary class struggle, and on founding workers committees and councils that would challenge the bourgeois state. Such bodies are directly posed by struggles in industrial centers with a militant tradition such as Mahalla. But who on the Egyptian left is fighting for such a program? The impoverished masses of the Near East certainly yearn for revolution. For decades they have lived under the heel of dictatorships either installed and financed by the Western imperialists (Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, the Arabian peninsula monarchies, etc.) or periodically in league with them (Libya, Iraq, Sudan, Chad), living in misery, lives soared as subsidies were abolished, and a tiny elite grew obscenely wealthy while working people saw their standard of living plummet. This extreme disparity between fabulous riches and deadening poverty drove the first Arab revolts.
Los proyectos de ley estatales generalmente carecen de esa cláusula, y por lo tanto hemos tomado una posición diferente respecto a ellos (ver nota en The Internationalist/El Internaciona- lista, suplemento de mayo de 2012, p. 11).
Otra batalla importantísima será librada en el próximo noviembre cuando se decidirá si el presidente Obama mantendrá su puesto o será remplazado por un líder republicano.

La lucha por defender a los inmigrantes no puede ganarse —ni siquiera librarse— en el terreno electoral burgués. La contienda es fundamentalmente de clase. Los dos partidos del capital representan un sistema que busca con la sobreexplotación de millones de trabajadores que carecen de los derechos más fundamentales. Si hay divisiones entre la clase dominante sobre la mítica “reforma migratoria” es porque los capitalistas tienen intereses contradictorios con respecto a los trabajadores venidos del exterior. Por un lado desean explotar en gran escala esta mano de obra barata; por otro lado, no quieren que los explotados puedan resistir. Su solución preferida sería un sistema que con eufemismo espeluznante llamen “trabajadores huéspedes”, o sea contratados, como el del programa de braceros, pero ya no más.

La acción de sindicalistas y sindicatos en Nueva York. Times (17 de mayo de 2005) llegó a la conclusión de que “el deportar a la totalidad de los 12 millones de inmigrantes ilegales en los Estados Unidos no sería factible”. Cita la falta de personal policial y el costo de nuevos centros de detención (ya rondan a un millar). Pero el problema mayor para la burguesía es que la economía norteamericana ya no puede prescindir de esos millones de trabajadores. Más allá del fraude institucionalizado que es todo sistema electoral burgués, controlado por las enormes sumas de dinero invertido en el por los capitalistas, los migrantes —“legales” o indocumentados por igual— no votan. Pero si producen los valores y crean la riqueza que se apropian los capitalistas debido a su control de los medios de producción. La potencia de los inmigrantes como trabajadores se vio en el “paro general” del 1° de mayo de 2006 contra el nefasto proyecto de ley Sensenbrenner (HR4437), que ante este despliegue de fuerza obrera fue rápidamente archivado en el Senado. Hasta la iglesia católica se sumó a la convocatoria de aquella inusitada movilización, pero ya no más.

Para hacer valer los derechos de los trabajadores inmigrantes hay que organizar su fuerza y ponerla en marcha. Los sindicatos pueden jugar un papel importante en eso. Si en el pasado los sindicatos controlados por burócratas que representan una aristocracia laboral promovieron una política xenófoba, acusando a trabajadores inmigrantes de “robarles los empleos de los norteamericanos”, hoy en día los migrantes constituyen más del 12 por ciento de la matrícula sindical. La acción de sindicalistas y sindicatos en Portland, Oregon que adoptaron para la marcha del 1° de mayo de 2012 la consigna oficial de “plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos” es un paso importante en esa dirección. Pero no es suficiente. La lucha por defender a los inmigrantes no puede limitarse a pedir esta u otra reforma. Los migrantes son hostigados no sólo por elementos reaccionarios, sino porque los capitalistas necesitan un “enemigo al interior” para afrontar a la población en favor de sus guerras imperialistas. Durante y después de la I Guerra Mundial hubo una caza de brujas contra los “rojos”, comunistas, anarquistas y trabajadores inmigrantes, sobre todo italianos. En el II Guerra Mundial se confinó a los ciudadanos de origen italiano en campos de concentración. En la actual “guerra contra el terrorismo” que dura ya más de una década, los inmigrantes en general son el blanco preferido. Para derrotar la “guerra contra los inmigrantes es indispensable forjar un partido obrero capaz de liberal la lucha contra los representantes del capital y su estado.

Contra demócratas y republicanos y todos los partidos y políticos capitalistas, el Grupo Internacionalista busca cohesionar el núcleo de este partido obrero, revolucionario e internacionalista, necesario para dirigir la revolución socialista internacional. Insistimos, como lo hace el Manifiesto Comunista de Karl Marx y Friedrich Engels, en que “los obreros no tienen patria”. Enarbolamos su lema, “proletarios del mundo, uníos”, en las marchas gritamos “La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras”. Para los millones de trabajadores inmigrantes, la frase del Manifiesto según la cual “los proletarios no tienen nada que perder excepto sus cadenas”, expresa la realidad de su vida diaria. Únete a nosotros en una poderosa lucha de clase para romper estas cadenas.

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

E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

Write the Internationalist Group at the above address, or contact:
New York, NY 10008 U.S.A.
City___________________________State/Province___________________
Address______________________________________________________
Name_____________________________________________________

Annual subscription US$10 for five issues.

Name_______________________________________________________
Address_____________________________________________________ 
City___________________________State/Province___________________
Postal Code/Zip
Tel.___________________________Apt. #________________________
Country_____________________

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

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

Tel (212) 460-0983 Fax (212) 614-8711
E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

23
Las huecas promesas electorales de “Mr. Deportaciones” Obama

El Internacionalista

No rogamos, exigimos: ¡Plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes!

¡Forjamos un partido obrero, revolucionario e internacionalista!

Cuando el presidente Barack Obama anunció el 15 de junio que suspenderá las deportaciones de ciertos jóvenes indocumentados, se generó un inmenso revuelo a nivel nacional. “Luz al final del túnel!” proclamaba en primera plana El Diario/El Prensa de Nueva York. “Cerca del sueño” rezaba con júbilo el encabezado de La Opinión de Los Angeles. En una nota informaba: “Como un “sueño cumplido” describieron los jóvenes conocidos como dreamers (soñadores) la medida que puede diferir por dos años (renovables) los procedimientos de deportación de quienes reúnan los requisitos. Grupos conservadores antiinmigrantes, en cambio, criticaron el anuncio de Obama al calificarlo como una “amnistía por la puerta trasera”.

Diez días más tarde, la Suprema Corte de Estados Unidos emitió su fallo sobre la siniestra Ley SB1070 de Arizona. En este caso no se dio el optimismo delante con que se acogió la medida previa de la administración Obama. “Suprema decepción para inmigrantes” tituló su artículo El Diario. Aunque el fallo del tribunal desechó tres de las secciones disputadas de dicha ley racista, no rechazó el artículo principal, que instruye a la policía indagar sobre el estado migratorio de personas durante la investigación de una infracción o delito si tiene la “ sospecha razonable” de que se trate de indocumentados. Evidentemente, esto invita al uso de “perfiles raciales” contra los de piel morena o los que “parezcan mexicanos”, tanto de inmigrantes (indocumentados o “legales”) como de ciudadanos. El 30% de la población de Arizona es de origen hispano.

Como señalamos en nuestro artículo, “Deportaciones y elecciones 2012: ¡por un partido obrero revolucionario!” (El Internacionalista, suplemento de mayo de 2012), el tema de la inmigración es uno de los puntos neurálgicos de la actual contienda electoral para los partidos Demócrata y Republicano. Grupos hispanos y de defensa de los derechos de los inmigrantes están aprovechándose asiduamente de la decisión administrativa del gobierno Obama y de la luz verde que dio la Suprema Corte a la Ley SB1070, de autoría republicana, para cazar votos a favor de los demócratas. Pero aunque los republicanos soliciten el apoyo de los sectores más retrógrados de la población blanca con un lenguaje xenófobo apenas velado, los demócratas ciertamente no son amigos de los inmigrantes.

De hecho, los dos partidos gemelos del capitalismo norteamericano son enemigos de los trabajadores, tanto los llegados del exterior como los nacidos en el país. En su campaña por la presidencia en 2008, Obama prometió legislar una “reforma migratoria comprensiva” en su primer año en funciones. No hizo nada: ni siquiera presentó un proyecto de ley. Culpando a los republicanos por su oposición, ahora promete lo mismo para el primer año de un segundo periodo en la Casa Blanca. En su discurso del 22 de junio ante la Asociación Nacional de Funcionarios Latinos Electos, el presidente demócrata se excusó: “hemos hecho lo que hemos podido hacer”. Esto es una burda mentira. Y al deportar a más de un millón de

immigrantes, el doble de los que deportó su antecesor, el republicano George W. Bush, Barack Obama no es para nada un “mal menor”.

El Grupo Internacionalista, sección norteamericana de la Liga por la IV Internacional, advierte contra el fraude de la mítica “reforma migratoria” que no se va a dar, mucho menos una que favorezca a los trabajadores inmigrantes que constituyen un sector enorme y potencialmente combativo de la clase obrera. Llamamos a no votar por demócratas, republicanos ni por cualquier candidato o partido capitalistas. Sólo un partido obrero puede dirigir la lucha por el futuro de los trabajadores inmigrantes. El “cambio” solo beneficia a los trabajadores en los países de origen. Como gritamos en las manifestaciones, “Ni ilegales, ni criminales, ¡somos obreros internacionales!” El GI lucha por los plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes como parte de la lucha por la revolución socialista internacional.

El sueño sigue siendo una pesadilla para jóvenes indocumentados

Analizamos brevemente las dos medidas más recientes: la acción diferida sobre la deportación de ciertos jóvenes y la puesta en marcha de la ley de Arizona. Para los aproximadamente 65 mil jóvenes estudiantes indocumentados que se gradúan de la secundaria cada año, muchos de quienes ni siquiera conocen sus países de origen, la propuesta de suspensión de las deportaciones fue motivo de celebración. Para los que sean autorizados, la suspensión temporal de sus deportaciones facilitaría obtener un permiso de trabajo. En principio podría beneficiar a alrededor de 700 mil jóvenes de entre 18 y 30 años, que llegaron al país con menos de 16 años cumplidos, que han vivido aquí al menos cinco años consecutivos, que están estudiando, se han graduado de la secundaria o han salido del ejército, y que no tengan antecedentes penales. Beneficiará eventualmente a otros 700 mil menores de 18 años. Pero en palabras del propio presidente, “Esto no es amnistía, no da inmunidad, ni abre la vía a la ciudadanía”.

La campaña de Obama de 2008 se basó en referencias trampomas a la “esperanza”, el “cambio” y el “sí se puede”. Hoy está nuevamente vendiendo sueños falsos y promesas electorales huecas. Durante los últimos dos años, ha surgido un movimiento de jóvenes indocumentados a favor del Dream Act. La campaña la dirige una red de “organizaciones no gubernamentales” (ONG) financiadas por fundaciones liberales para que sirvan como una válvula de escape para la frustración de una generación de jóvenes que viven en las sombras. Al salir de la escuela secundaria, sin los papeles requeridos, les resulta muy difícil cursar estudios universitarios o conseguir un empleo legal. Los demócratas quieren dar la impresión de que hacen algo en materia migratoria para revivir la votación latino en estados clave como Florida, Carolina del Norte, Colorado, Nevada y Virginia.

Nos hemos rehusado a apoyar el proyecto nacional de Ley del Sueño por una provisión central que ofrece la residencia legal en cambio de servicio militar. No es más que un intento del Pentágono de reclutar jóvenes inmigrantes, dado el déficit de carne de cañón para sus guerras. Sigue en la página 22.