

Imperialist Butchers Gloat over Qaddafi Lynching

In a surprise visit to Tripoli on October 18, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed her hope that former Libyan ruler Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi “can be captured or killed soon.” Two days later, gruesome video images of the lynching of Qaddafi by NATO’s hirelings were played

around the world. The imperialist rulers, whose forces had been pummeling Libya in unrelenting bombing raids for months, reveled in the murder of Qad-

dafi and one of his sons as a victory for “democracy.” Against a backdrop of pictures of Qaddafi—captured but still alive—after he

was bloodied and beaten by the Libyan rebel forces, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Barack Obama, intoned: “The dark shadow of tyranny has been lifted.” He was echoed by British prime minister David Cameron, who declared that Qaddafi’s murder heralded
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Democrats, Republicans: Parties of Capital

“Occupy Wall Street”: Capitalist Crisis Sparks Populist Protests



Tyska/San Jose Mercury News
Left: Occupy Wall Street protesters marching in New York City, October 15. Above: Cops arrest protester as they tear down Occupy Oakland tent city, October 25.

OCTOBER 25—An amorphous group of protesters, ranging from student youth and jobless workers to veteran liberal activists, has now been camping out in Lower Manhattan’s Zuccotti Park under the banner of “Occupy Wall Street” (OWS) for over a month. With its rallies and marches in New York City drawing from a few hundred to over 10,000 people, OWS has tapped into widespread anger over corporate profit-gouging, mass unemployment and stark economic inequalities.

Similar occupations have spread to Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and many other cities and towns across the country, even as police have repeatedly attacked and arrested large numbers of protesters. On October 15, hundreds of

thousands turned out across Europe and elsewhere for solidarity demonstrations with OWS, which itself has drawn inspiration from the “Indignados” (indignant ones) in Spain and Greece. Today, hundreds of riot-equipped cops wielding flash grenades, tear gas and billy clubs surrounded the “Occupy Oakland” tent city at Frank Ogawa Plaza in the early morning hours. With helicopters hovering overhead shining a spotlight on the scene, the cops moved in, ripping apart the encampment and arresting more than 75 people. *Drop all charges against the*

protesters, from Oakland to NYC!

The OWS protests have touched a real nerve in large sections of the population three years into the deep, ongoing economic crisis. Homeless shelters are filled to capacity. College students and recent graduates are choking under a mountain of debt, facing an increasingly bleak future. Many workers who have managed to hold on to their jobs have been made to swallow lower wages, with their benefits shredded and their pensions looted by the bosses and bankers. With the trade unions taking it on the chin, many work-

ers have greeted the OWS protests as an outlet for their own anger. Meanwhile, the bulk of the capitalist ruling class has made out like bandits, with the Obama White House, following George W. Bush, showering hundreds of billions in bailouts onto the banks and auto companies. Fed up with government lies, foreign wars, the ban on marijuana and worsening unemployment, one protester in Phoenix said, “All the world’s problems run downhill, and I’m at the bottom.”

Many young occupiers are participating in their first political protest, and most enthusiastically embrace its democratic pretensions and “grassroots” origins, seeing the potential to do something, *anything* about what’s happening to themselves and so many others. While the OWS organizers pride themselves on not having a clear political agenda, affiliation
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For Workers Revolution to Expropriate the Bourgeoisie!



New Orleans
October 2, 2011

On “Occupy Wall Street”

Dear Mr. Bishop:

I am a subscriber to your publication *Workers Vanguard*. The front page article titled “We Need An All New Ruling Class—The Workers” [WV No. 985, 2 September] is perhaps more relevant now than ever before. This was an excellent article! Neither of the two primary political parties that dominate American politics adequately represents my interests, nor those of the ordinary working folks of this nation. I would like to propose a non-violent means to address the problem.

I have devoted much thought to how to get the attention of wall street and the 1% of the folks who have 90% of the wealth. There is a way it can be done without any violence whatsoever. The people have an enormous power in numbers. If a large

majority of this nation’s wage earners were to simply choose not to go to work, until they get a bigger piece of the pie, the likes of wall street will be crippled. There will be no law clerks working to foreclose on our houses and evict us from our apartments. Doing so will mean a significant sacrifice on the part of working people. But, this sacrifice must occur to change the balance of power. The people have this capability, and this right, only if they exercise it! Until the people have the guts to make this very short-term sacrifice, nothing will change. The singular objective of the Occupy Wall Street movement should be to bring the big corporations that usurp our voting power to their knees by denying them a labor source.

I challenge you to make this your next

issues lead article along with one on Occupy Wall Street.

Kindest regards,
Russell A.

WV Replies:

We thank Russell for his letter and direct him and other readers to our front-page article on the “Occupy Wall Street” protests in this issue. As we lay out there, the capitalist class has at its disposal a state apparatus of organized violence—the cops, courts and prisons—to repress struggle against its domination. The liberal doctrine of “nonviolence” obscures the fact that the capitalists will stop at nothing to protect their profits.

As we have argued while intervening in these protests, an equitable redistribu-

tion of wealth (so that the workers get a “bigger piece of the pie”) is not possible within the capitalist system. Bringing down Wall Street will not come about through atomized individuals making their own “sacrifice,” but through workers revolution. It is not a question of changing the balance of power between Wall Street and the “people,” but of changing the class in power from the capitalists—the parasitic owners of the banks and industrial enterprises—to the proletariat, the class whose labor is the source of the capitalists’ profits. A workers revolution would expropriate the banks and factories and lay the basis for abolishing the system of wage slavery altogether. To do this requires the building of a revolutionary party that imbues the working class with the consciousness of its historic mission to overthrow capitalist rule and reorganize society on a socialist basis. ■

Oakland, California
15 August 2011

Nuclear Power and Capitalism

To the Editors

Dear Comrades,

While I agree that the working class in power must remake the world, that Green Party reformism is a dead end, and that an exclusive focus on ending nukes is also reformist, I cannot understand your drive to promote a dangerous and dying capitalist industry such as nuclear power (“Greens’ Anti-Nuclear Hysteria Amnesties Capitalism,” WV 983, 08 July 2011).

You say that the struggle must be for the expropriation of energy concerns, and that this must be “part of the fight for a socialist revolution to establish an internationally planned economy under the control of workers councils.” Good. But then you say, “Only then, based on

an international division of labor, will it be possible to consider whether it is really necessary to construct nuclear power plants in thickly settled earthquake zones like Japan.” H-m-m, that sounds like damning with faint praise. Why withhold condemnation of such capitalist crimes?

Trotskyists seek to breathe revolutionary life into the class struggle with the Transitional Program, saying: here’s what the revolutionaries want to do with the world to address the current needs of the masses. But the SL says, essentially, just put us in power, and then everything will be sorted out. Periodically, you mention some general slogans, such as “public works.” But you don’t say what sort of

public works for today, and it sounds like you’re just reading an old quote.

Aside from capitalism itself, climate change is the most devastating threat humanity has ever faced. It represents the ultimate in the rift between man and nature, of which Marx and Engels spoke. The working class needs to know: how will the revolutionaries deal with this? Of course we’re for technology, but we don’t just take over capitalist industry as is: we transform the entire economy into an engine for real human needs, which now must include: saving the planet. Which technologies will serve that end best?

Many scientists now say that an economy based entirely on renewable technology is possible. Is the SL just not paying attention?

Do you support the license extensions the capitalists demand for outdated nuclear plants which are becoming increasingly dangerous, or oppose them on safety grounds? If the latter, where do revolutionaries go next? We know what the capitalists will do: more coal, oil, gas and new nuclear. You don’t promote mountain top removal, fracking, coal gas, tar sands or shale oil (all of which must be stopped immediately under workers’ government, in my opinion). Yet instead of revolutionary, transitional demands to transform the economy, you defend a capitalist-promoted technology that has already compromised humanity’s future with radioactive waste, and could easily irradiate the entire planet. Why?

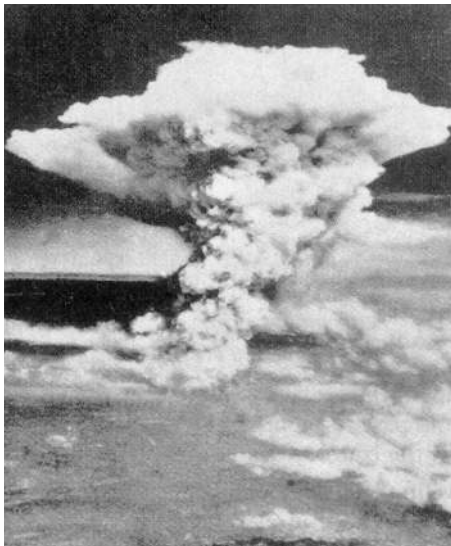
Revolutionaries want to move beyond capitalism’s path of profit-driven destruction! Say clearly: only a revolutionary workers government can, with workers councils and careful planning, save the working class, humanity and the planet; and here’s how.

Comradely greetings,
Chris Kinder

WV Replies:

Peddling an “alternative energy” agenda is entirely consistent with continued capitalist rule and imperialist depredation. When the German parliament (Bundestag) voted this summer to close all of the country’s nuclear power plants by 2022, Chancellor Angela Merkel tapped renewable sources (wind, biomass, solar and hydroelectric) to pick up the slack. Renewables already account for 20 percent of Germany’s electricity generation. In the U.S., advanced biofuels are ready to be rapidly commercialized for military use. Soon drone aircraft will fly with a reduced carbon footprint while raining down death and destruction on neocolonial peoples.

We want nothing to do with advising the bourgeoisie on how best to meet its energy needs, which is tantamount to



Asahi Shimbun

Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima by U.S., 6 August 1945.

helping prop up the decaying and anarchic profit system. Not so Kinder, who also decries “climate change” as a “devastating threat” separate and apart from “capitalism itself.” In fact, shattering the capitalist order and establishing an internationally planned, socialist economy is the key to overcoming major ecological problems. Human-derived climate change is no exception, as we detailed in our two-part article “Capitalism and Global Warming” (WV Nos. 965 and 966, 24 September and 8 October 2010).

Our goal as Marxists is to eliminate material scarcity. In that pursuit, we defend the gains of science and technology, and a socialist society would build on these advances. But when the proletariat first seizes state power, it *will* have to “take over capitalist industry as is” and qualitatively develop the productive forces from there. No amount of wishful thinking regarding what is “possible” can make it otherwise. We are not so presumptuous as to preclude the use of fossil fuels or nuclear power in a workers state, as these energy sources could well prove crucial in modernizing and developing much of the world. At the same time, when workers are in charge of production, energy would be generated in the most rational, efficient and safe manner possible.

Judging by this letter and another in the September/October 2011 issue of the San Francisco-based *Socialist Viewpoint*, Kinder is quite busy proselytizing the petty-bourgeois anti-nuclear gospel. In his zeal, he even resorts to shamelessly attempting to frame us up as backhanded supporters of the nuclear reactor owners at Fukushima and elsewhere. As evidence, he offers up the following sentence from our article: “Only then, based on an international division of labor, will it be possible to consider whether it is really necessary to construct nuclear power plants in thickly settled earthquake zones like Japan.” It is a dim formulation, but not one that backs

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Those Who Labor Must Rule!

Emerging in the first half of the 19th century as a mass independent workers movement, the British Chartists advanced revolutionary republican principles while leading the workers in class struggle. James Bronterre O'Brien, an Irish-born leader of the movement, gave voice to the need for the working class to fight in its own interests instead of begging its oppressors.

TROTSKY

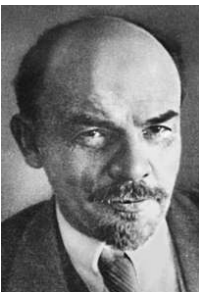
I hate long discussions and disquisitions upon the rights and privileges of the oppressed.

I hate such arguments as go to prove that hawks should not prey upon doves; wolves on lambs; or the idlers of society upon the productive classes; I hate all appeals to the morality of monsters....

We have had enough of moral and learned strictures upon abstract rights and duties, which have left the respective parties *in statu quo*—the one plundering, the other being plundered....

My motto is...“What you *take* you may have.” I will not attempt to deal with the abstract question of right, but will proceed to show that it is POWER, solid, substantial POWER, that the millions must obtain *and retain*, if they would enjoy the produce of their own labour and the privileges of freemen.

—James Bronterre O'Brien (1837), quoted in Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (1984)



LENIN

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Cliffites Back Capitalist Party in Elections

Thailand: Imperialists Demand “Stability”

The following article is reprinted from *Australasian Spartacist No. 214 (Spring 2011)*, newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

**Australasian
SPARTACIST**

In a widely anticipated outcome, the bourgeois party Pheu Thai (PT) won Thailand's 3 July general elections, defeating Abhisit Vejjajiva's ruling Democrat Party (DP), which had been installed in government following a judicial coup in 2008. Yingluck Shinawatra, the newly elected PT prime minister, is the sister of exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, broadly seen as de facto leader of the party. Among those backing PT in the elections was Giles Ji Ungpakorn, exiled founding member of Turn Left Thailand and a member of the Cliffite British Socialist Workers Party. His article trumpeting the PT election victory as “a slap in the face for the dictatorship” was eagerly republished by much of the reformist left in Australia, including Solidarity, Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance. However this was far from a victory for the oppressed Thai masses.

Like Thaksin's earlier Thai Rak Thai party (banned after the 2006 military coup that ousted Thaksin), the bourgeois Pheu Thai presents a nationalist, populist program that postures to ameliorate conditions for the oppressed masses. Election pledges such as raising the minimum daily wage to 300 baht (about \$10), debt restructuring for the poor and a guaranteed price for rice farmers ensured widespread support for PT among the impoverished rural masses in the populous north and north-east of the country. For Pheu Thai, such reforms serve to co-opt and contain plebeian discontent within the framework of the brutal and exploitative capitalist system. With concerns among the imperialists about parts of PT's populist platform, particularly raising the minimum wage, a key purpose of Thaksin's visit to Japan in August was to assure the Japanese imperialists that “wage increases [will] not be that high and corporate taxes [will] also be reduced” (*Nikkei Shimbun*, 24 August).

Economically, Thailand is largely a neo-colony of Japan—some 40 percent of total foreign investment is from Japan—while the anti-communist alliance with the U.S. dominates politically. The imperialists have made it clear that they are running out of patience with the ongoing bitter divisions within the Thai bourgeoisie, centred around PT and its Red Shirt supporters on one side and the DP and Yellow Shirts on the other. The neocolonial masters are demanding their Thai underlings come together to keep the oppressed and poor down and ensure a stable environment for capitalist exploitation. U.S. president Barack Obama phoned Yingluck after the election to congratulate her. Together they affirmed the importance of the U.S.-Thai alliance and pledged to ensure “peace and stability” in the Asia-Pacific region. Earlier, *Nikkei Shimbun*, mouthpiece of Japanese imperialism, wrote in a 5 July post-election editorial: “It is desirable also for stability in the region that an end will be put to the serious domestic strife. More than anything else, it is necessary for the next PM Yingluck to work towards national reconciliation.”



AFP

Above: Anti-government protesters face off against police in Bangkok, April 2010.

Right: Yingluck Shinawatra kneels before portrait of King Bhumibol as she receives royal command appointing her prime minister, August 8.



Reuters

Abolish the Monarchy! For a Workers and Peasants Government!

Indeed, Yingluck Shinawatra campaigned under the banner of “reconciliation” during the elections. With its large victory, and particularly its support from the poorer layers of society, PT is well placed to deliver on the demands of the imperialist masters and Thai bourgeoisie for “stability.” Furthermore, as reported in a 30 June *Asia Times* article, since February, “high-level secret talks” had been held between the royal palace, military and Thaksin camps in which the military agreed to allow Pheu Thai to form a government. In exchange, Thaksin's PT would not pursue reprisals against military leaders over the 2006 coup and the 2010 bloody crackdown against anti-government Red Shirt protesters, and “refrain broadly from intervening in military affairs.”

Thaksin's envoy was also pushed to “rein in the anti-monarchy elements in his camp.” In her first official address to the nation as PM, Yingluck pledged her loyalty to the deeply repressive monarchy, a symbol and purveyor of Thai nationalism,

and historic rallying point for capitalist reaction in Thailand. In mid-September, the new PT coalition government denied bail to labour activist and Red Shirt supporter, Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, in prison for allegedly insulting the king, and has already jailed a further three people under the *lèse majesté* law. We say: Free all those arrested under this draconian law! Drop the charges! Down with the *lèse majesté* law! Abolish the monarchy!

As revolutionary Marxists, the International Communist League (ICL) has defended the Red Shirt activists against bloody state repression. At the same time we stand in political opposition to this bourgeois-populist movement, which is closely allied to Pheu Thai and is defined by its support to, and from, the billionaire telecommunications mogul Thaksin. The Red Shirts' aims and politics are counterposed to the interests of the workers and rural toilers who have rallied behind it (see “Thailand: For a Workers and Peasants Government!” WV No. 972, 21 January).

In contrast to this principled class line, Ungpakorn, and his pseudo-Marxist cheerleaders internationally, enthusiastically promote the Red Shirts. In doing so, they reinforce deadly illusions in the capitalist state by pushing the liberal reformist lie that, with enough pressure from the masses, the state can be forced to reorder its priorities in the interests of the working class and oppressed. Following the elections, Ungpakorn wrote, “It will be up to the Red Shirt movement to push the Government into making more radical reforms rather than doing secret and dirty compromises with the Military and the elites.” Calling on the new PT government to “start to build a welfare state,” he counsels that money for state subsidies such as cheap, government-subsidised rice “should come from taxing the rich and drastically cutting the Military budget” (redthaisocialist.com, 6 September). The blood-drenched Thai military stands at the core of the capitalist state, along with the police, courts and prisons. This state exists to defend the rule of the Thai bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed but must be shattered and replaced by a workers state.

For a Trotskyist Party, Tribune of the People

In semicolonial countries like Thailand, the role of bourgeois-nationalist governments, including that of Yingluck's Pheu Thai, is to ensure the exploitation of the masses and the plunder of resources to strengthen the power and the profits of the local bourgeoisie and their imperialist masters. In doing so they act to ruthlessly enforce the capitalist order. During the election campaign PT pledged to reinforce “drug suppression,” with Thaksin ominously promising to “eliminate the drugs problem within 12 months” (*The Nation on Sunday*, 24 April). The Thaksin government's savage “war on drugs” resulted in some 3,000 extrajudicial killings by the police and military. Such campaigns mean general state repression against anybody deemed “undesirable,” serving to regiment and intimidate the masses and directly threaten the working class. Similarly, Thaksin's bloody campaign against the Malay Muslim minority in the south also meant the slaughter of many. “Emergency rule,” introduced in three southern provinces by the Thaksin government in 2005, was extended by the outgoing Vejjajiva government this July. The Thai working class must defend the Muslim minority against the ongoing state repression, without giving any political support to the Islamists. Fighting for full democratic and national rights, it must demand that the Thai military and security forces get out of the southern provinces.

The antagonisms between the Red Shirt and Yellow Shirt camps that have dominated Thai politics over the past few years reflect the divisions within the ruling class over how to deal with the fundamental contradictions of Thai capitalist society. With its strong, modern industrial sector based on massive imperialist investment resting alongside an impoverished rural and urban petty bourgeoisie, Thailand is a classic case of combined and uneven development. The growth of industry has created a modern industrial proletariat with immense social weight and potential social power. Women, deeply oppressed in the predominantly Buddhist

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Young Spartacus

Economics of a Workers State in Transition to Socialism

We are pleased to publish a class by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour given for our SYC members in Oakland, California, on 6 August 2005. It has been edited for publication and slightly expanded by Young Spartacus in collaboration with comrade Seymour.

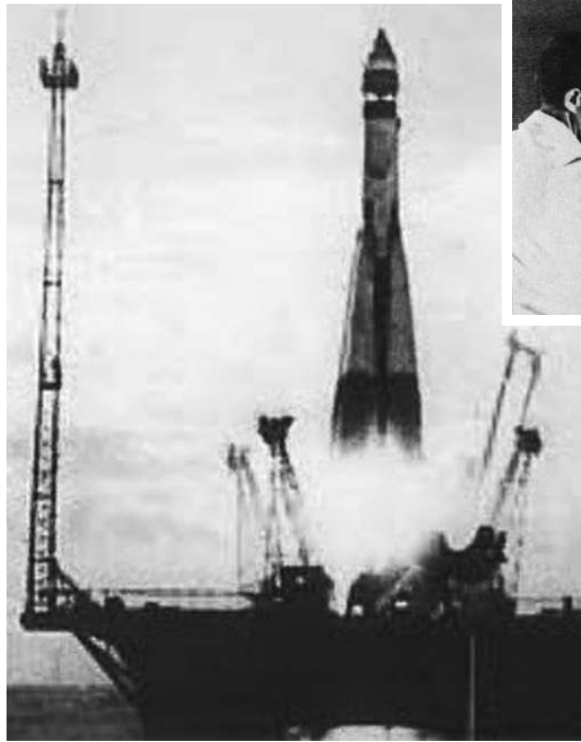
The fundamental goal of the early, pre-Marx socialist movement was economic equality, considered to be both immediately achievable and ultimately desirable. That is, there was no conception of a higher level of economic development made possible by the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. The Conspiracy of Equals was the first revolutionary communist organization, emerging in the latter phase of the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century. Its program was a communism of consumption and distribution. The revolutionary government would provide larger houses and proportionally more food, clothing and other necessities to families with more children.

One of Marx's great theoretical contributions was to shift the axis of the socialist movement from equality in the sphere of consumption to entirely overcoming economic scarcity through progressively raising the level of productive forces. To be sure, in a classless, communist society, everyone will have equal access to consumable resources. But there will undoubtedly be a huge diversity of individual lifestyles corresponding to very different levels of individual utilization of those resources.

I'm beginning this educational with that point because, in some important ways, we have been thrown back into the intellectual universe of the early Marx. If you take a survey of 100 students and you ask them what socialism means, the overwhelming majority will say it's about economic equality. They will tell you it means that everyone has more or less the same living standard. Very few of them would reply that the goal of socialism is to raise the level of production and labor productivity to such an advanced level that the division of consumable resources among individuals will no longer be a source of social conflict or even social concern. But that is our ultimate goal.

Unfortunately, getting there will require a relatively lengthy historical period after the proletarian socialist revolution has expropriated the capitalist class. In that society in transition to socialism, economic scarcity—and therefore certain kinds of economic inequality—will con-

Novosti



Below: Peasant scene in prerevolutionary Russia, 1902. Left: Soviets launch Sputnik (inset), world's first satellite, 1957. Despite Stalinist misrule, USSR's collectivized economy transformed society.



Countess M.G. Kleinmichel

tinue to exist. When you think about it, this is obviously true at the international level. It will take generations of an internationally planned socialist economy to raise the living standards of the populations of China, India, other Asian countries, Latin America and Africa to those of the so-called First World.

But even in a workers state in an advanced area like North America or Europe there would still be certain kinds of economic inequality. Marx spoke about this in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875). People would still have

to expend a lot of time and a lot of energy doing what Marx called alienated labor, that is, working at jobs that they would not do unless they got paid for them. Some jobs are physically harder, dirtier, more boring, more unpleasant or, in some cases, more dangerous than others. So coal miners and construction workers would command higher wages than data processors who work in comfortable offices. Workers who have economically valuable skills acquired through lengthy training, such as airline pilots, would get higher wages than flight attendants and baggage handlers. That's just the overhead cost of what Marx called the initial phase of communism in society.

There is another important source of economic inequality in the initial phase after the proletarian revolution. A fundamental goal and feature of a fully communist society is the replacement of the nuclear family by collective institutions for nurturing and socializing children. But this most fundamental of all social transformations is, again, going to be the work of generations. For a historically significant period the family will still be the basic social unit and therefore the basic economic spending unit.

So take two families, both of whom have the equivalent income of \$70,000 a year. The first has one child, and the second has three children. The first fam-

ily will have a somewhat higher standard of living. The difference will be nowhere near as great as under capitalism. There will be free medical care. There will be affordable housing. There will be free, quality education from day-care centers through university and beyond. But income will not be simply proportional to family size. Again, Marx mentioned this in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

Economic Planning by Workers Democracy

Eliminating economic inequality in all its forms requires overcoming economic scarcity through progressively raising the level of production. This will be achieved by using a portion of society's total output and investing it in the expansion of productive equipment that embodies the most developed technology.

But herein lies a contradiction. The more a workers government spends on building new factories, retooling existing factories, expanding and modernizing infrastructure (e.g., electric power grids, water supply systems, highways and railroads), the less it has available for direct personal and familial consumption. So, it will face the choice between a somewhat higher level of consumption in the short term versus a much higher level of consumption in the long term.

In the absence of international socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, this choice obviously would be especially painful and conflict-ridden in a nationally isolated and economically backward workers state. But even in a future workers state in the U.S. or West Europe with much greater resources at its disposal, the division between consumption and investment would still be a politically divisive issue, in which there are likely to be strongly held differences within the working class. "I want as much as I can have now, man, not in ten or twenty years from now. For all I know, I may be dead by then." You are going to get that argument.

In order for the democratic organs of a workers government to make rational decisions concerning the division of total output between consumption and investment, the trade-off between the two has to be quantified. If we increase investment in productive capacity from 13 to 15 percent of total output, how much greater will the output of consumable resources be in five years, in ten years, in fifteen years?

Fortunately for us, these types of questions were discussed and investigated in depth in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. A rich economic literature, written from a Marxist perspective, was generated in the course of the debate and factional struggle over the establishment of a centrally planned, collectivized economy. One Soviet economist, G.A. Feldman, developed a theoretical model for a long-term economic plan, that is, covering 20 to 40 years. In my opinion, Feldman's work "On the Theory of Growth Rates of National Income" is an extremely important contribution to a Marxist understanding of the economics of the transition period. You can find the English translation in Nicolas Spulber, ed., *Foundations of Soviet Strategy for Economic Growth* (1964). Feldman adapted a model developed much earlier by Marx to a centrally planned, collectivized economy, while

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John Javellana

Manila, Philippines: Scouring garbage dump, 2007.

Students in Capitalist America: Huge Debt, No Jobs, No Future

As Karl Marx said, “Ignorance never helped nor did anybody any good.” Even given the class bias inherent in what is taught in the schools under capitalism, knowledge is an invaluable tool for those who seek to struggle for a better world. But this is the opposite of what the ruling class seeks to get out of the education system. That anyone should pay for the “privilege” of learning about the world makes sense only in the twisted logic of capitalist profit. To the capitalist financiers, mounting tuition and soaring student debt mean easy prey and big money. Every year, millions mortgage their futures, taking on debilitating student loans in order to attain the educational credentials necessary for a shot at the shrinking number of decent jobs left in the “world’s only superpower.” Students who graduate college have an average of \$24,000 in loans. For higher degrees, debt ranged between \$50,000 and \$150,000. By the end of this year there will likely be *over a trillion dollars* in outstanding student loans, twice what they were five years ago.

In capitalist America, the lie has long been that anyone who studies hard and gets a good education will find the door wide open to a better life. While poor and working-class youth with only a high school diploma are simply consigned to a future of minimum-wage service jobs, if they’re lucky, many who claw and borrow their way to a degree don’t have it that much better. As bankers vie for bonuses and bailouts and capitalists enjoy record profits after layoffs and “restructuring,” students and recent graduates are fenced into a bleak future of mounting debt and dwindling job prospects. Recent graduates join unemployed millions scrambling for low-wage, dead-end jobs, often facing the monthly choice between rent and groceries—eviction and starvation. Over 40 per-

Free, Quality Higher Education for All!

with college degrees—an estimated 59 percent of available jobs in the U.S. now require at least some college, according to a Georgetown University study.

Meanwhile, funding for public primary and secondary schools has been slashed, with disastrous consequences for the quality of education. The Obama administration’s education “reforms” have meant the further gutting of public

amount to trading debt slavery for indentured servitude. At best, participants work as teachers in low-income schools (if these haven’t been slated to be shut down). At worst, they join the racist, capitalist state apparatus, enlisting in the U.S. Army to kill the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. Even those programs often only “forgive” a fraction of outstanding debt. Then there are income-based repayment plans,

in the South, with the understanding that an educated workforce was more productive than illiterate slaves. Today in America, however, as manufacturing jobs continue to evaporate and the imperialists ravage the globe in search of quick fixes to jack up their declining rate of profit, a decent education for most youth is no longer on the agenda for the capitalists, or for either of their two parties—the Democrats or the Republicans.

Under capitalism, the rulers maintain elite schools as preserves for their offspring and to train a new generation of managers and technicians. For the education of those they exploit and oppress, they spend only what they can realize back in profit and what they have conceded as a result of hard class battle. The capitalist rulers need skilled workers, but they benefit from a working class chained by debt and beaten down, until it takes whatever scraps are offered and thanks the bosses for the opportunity.

It is a measure of the decay in society that the only way for the majority of working class and poor to get a college education is to take on tens of thousands of dollars in loans, only to find themselves reduced to indentured servitude to pay back their financial usurers. The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students. This is linked to our fight for a socialist future where the resources and wealth of society are dedicated to the advancement of everyone and not to the exclusive benefit of a tiny capitalist class. Liberals constantly demand “money for education, not for war” as an answer to the vast inequality in society. But to get the money for jobs, education and health care, to make life livable for blacks, immigrants, all working people and the poor, we must break the power of the bourgeoisie.

Working people and youth in the U.S. and around the world must throw off illusions in the reformability of this dead-end system and join the revolutionary struggle for socialism across the globe. Under the rule of the working class, there would not only be education for all, but also *jobs for all*. Universal education, to the highest levels, will be a key component in developing a new socialist society where humankind will transcend the daily struggle for existence and rise to undreamed-of heights. Then, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*: “In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” ■



Reuters

NYC: Students and other Occupy Wall Street protesters, October 5.

schools serving poor and minority youth while showcasing select well-funded private charter schools as an “alternative” (see “Obama’s War on Public Education,” WV No. 967, 22 October 2010). Desperate to attain employable skills, students increasingly attend for-profit colleges, such as the University of Phoenix and DeVry. Such schools have far more than doubled their enrollment over the past ten years, even as their graduation rates and their post-graduation employment rates remain a fraction of those of traditional institutions. The government’s answer has been to limit loans to students attending poorer-quality campuses.

Those saddled with an underwater home mortgage (where the balance is more than the value of the property) or drowning in credit-card debt have the last-ditch option of declaring bankruptcy—a “right” enshrined in law since 1841. But for those whose debt stems from an attempt to learn something, even fewer options are available. While federal loans have long been considered “non-dischargeable,” under a 2005 law private student loans are now also not generally allowed to be written off under bankruptcy, joining a select list including child support, back taxes and debts stemming from drunk driving.

By one estimate, 20 percent of all federal student loans that went into repayment in 1995 (during relatively better economic times) had gone into default by 2010. Delinquent payments mean mounting fines and fees as voracious creditors seek to pry every last morsel from the bones of their victims. Student loan debt can be garnished from wages indefinitely, and compounding late fees can amount to many times the value of the original amount loaned. This translates into obscene profits for the capitalists—from 1995 to 2005, the stock of Sallie Mae, the largest U.S. student loan corporation, returned over 1,900 percent.

The Obama administration touts loan “forgiveness” programs, which simply

begun in 2009, which lower payments only at the cost of drastically increasing the term of debt and interest, potentially more than doubling total interest owed. As if things weren’t bad enough, in the midst of the recent phony “debt ceiling crisis,” Democrats and Republicans rammed through a further reduction in federal loans, eliminating subsidized loans for graduate and professional students—meaning that they owe interest the moment they set foot on campus.

As is always the case in the U.S., minorities and black people in particular get hit first and worst. Private lenders charge discriminatory rates based on which school a student attends. Those schools with the highest minority populations have typically been profiled, “red-lined” and hit with the highest rates. An estimated two-thirds of all black college students who drop out do so because they cannot afford to continue.

In 1865, the then-progressive capitalist North defeated the Southern system of slavery in the American Civil War. Following the Northern victory, some of the first public schools were established



Young Spartacus

Spartacus Youth Club contingent at UCLA protest against attacks on affirmative action, May 1998.

cent of 2010 college graduates couldn’t find employment by spring the following year, according to a Rutgers University study.

Tuition has been rising drastically across the country, especially at public universities and colleges decimated by budget cuts. Once almost free, annual tuition and fees for California residents at the University of California have more than tripled over the past ten years—to over \$13,000. Each wave of tuition hikes at public universities and colleges drives out another layer of working-class and particularly black students. At the same time, overall college enrollment has been soaring nationwide, especially as those unable to find work return to school. Able to choose from a glut of job seekers, employers prefer those

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Workers State...

(continued from page 4)

making certain important extensions and modifications of it.

In the second volume of *Capital*, Marx developed a theoretical model of expanded production under capitalism. Marx divided the economy into two basic sectors: consumer goods and producer (or capital) goods. Consumer goods and services are things that directly satisfy personal needs and desires. Producer goods are things that directly or indirectly generate consumer goods. A shirt is a consumer good. A sewing machine that makes the shirt is a producer good, as is a power loom that weaves the cotton cloth from which the shirt is made. A loaf of bread is a consumer good. The oven in which it is baked and the agricultural combine which harvests the wheat or oats from which it is made are producer goods.

Feldman extended Marx's model to a workers state by dividing the producer goods sector into two basic subsectors. There are producer goods that make consumer goods and there are producer goods that make additional producer goods. A sewing machine is an example of the former. Machine tools such as lathes, which make machinery, including sewing machines, fall into the latter category. Many producer goods are not technologically specific, but can be used to expand either the capacity of the consumer goods sector or the capacity of the producer goods sector. A steel mill can make steel for automobiles or for construction equipment. Cement mixers and earthmovers can be used to construct apartment houses or factories. A hydroelectric plant can generate electricity to run household appliances as well as factory assembly lines.

Thus there are two basic factors that determine the growth rates of total output of productive capacity and consumable resources. One is the division of the total output between the consumer goods sector and producer goods sector. The second is the division of the producer goods sector between producer goods geared to the consumer goods sector and producer goods geared to expanding more producer goods.

Take two socialist economies, both of which expend 25 percent of total output in the producer goods sector. In the first economy, 75 percent of this investment in producer goods is geared to expanding the output of the consumer goods sector; in the second, 50 percent. In the first economy, consumption will increase faster in the initial period of the economic plan but more slowly later on. In the second it's just the opposite. By adjusting the proportions it is possible to develop a range of alternative economic plans, ranging from those which maximize short-term consumption to those that maximize productive resources (and therefore consumption) in the long term.

So the planning authority would present to the highest body of a workers govern-

ment, i.e., the central assembly of workers councils, a range of maybe six alternative long-term plans to be debated and decided upon. This is likely to be a contentious issue. Some delegates are going to argue: "Our workers and poor people have just made a revolution. They expect and demand a big, dramatic improvement in their living standards, not just promises of a big improvement 15 or 20 years from now. We want Plan A." Other delegates will say: "Let's not be shortsighted about this. Our goal is to expand productive capacity and labor productivity. Plan C does that the best. Granted, consumption will increase more slowly in the immediate period than it otherwise could, but we think that is the price we want to pay."

Once the long-term growth rates of total output, the means of production and the consumable resources are all determined, it is then possible to work out a comprehensive economic plan for the various intervening periods—one year, two years, five years. Say a plan is adopted by the central assembly of workers councils. According to this plan, in five years the annual per capita income will be the equivalent of \$60,000. On the basis of existing consumption patterns, consumer surveys and consultation with consumer cooperatives, one can more or less accurately project the basic pattern corresponding to that level of income. For example, \$15,000 is estimated for housing, \$10,000 for food, \$10,000 for automotive and other modes of transportation, etc.

Another key element in the economic planning of a workers state, especially in the more advanced countries like the U.S., Germany and Japan, is to invest some of its total output in providing crucial resources, money and technological expertise to the underdeveloped countries to help them to qualitatively raise the level of production on the road to building socialism.

For Market Calculation, Not Market Competition

Once the basic pattern of final goods is projected, it then becomes possible to figure out the inputs of basic raw materials and intermediate products. How much steel, aluminum and other metals do you need? How much plastic, cotton and synthetic cloth, cement, rubber and the like?

The technology and information for this, incidentally, already exists. There are theoretical models and empirical studies which relate the output of raw materials and intermediate goods necessary to produce a given array of final goods. This is called input-output analysis. Significantly, the pioneer theorist and initial investigator of input-output analysis, Wasily Leontief, was a student at the University of Leningrad in the mid 1920s. So clearly his development of input-output analysis was conditioned by the rich discussion and debate among Soviet economists and other intellectuals about how a centrally planned, collectivized economy would work in practice.



Basil Blackwell, Inc.

Above: Trotskyist Left Oppositionists exiled to Siberia by Stalin demonstrate on anniversary of October Revolution, 1928. Trotskyists opposed bureaucratic degeneration of Soviet workers state, upheld program of Leninism. Inset: 1927 Platform of Joint Opposition, signed by Trotsky and 12 other Bolshevik leaders.

In the early 1930s, Trotsky was extremely critical of the Stalin regime's destructive economic adventurism and bureaucratic commandism. In the course of an article attacking this, Trotsky made a sort of statement of general principles: "Only through the inter-reaction of these three elements, state planning, the market, and Soviet democracy, can the correct direction of the economy of the transitional epoch be attained" ("The Soviet Economy in Danger," October 1932). This is true for a future American workers state as well as for the Soviet Union at the time. The Soviet Union in 1932 was a degenerated workers state ruled by a conservative, parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, which a workers state after a proletarian revolution in the U.S. would presumably not be.

Thus far, I have mainly discussed aspects of state planning. I've introduced the question of workers democracy mainly in terms of deciding the basic parameters of economic growth at the highest level. But I have not yet talked about the role of the market. It's a complicated question. One area where the market is important, and in certain respects dominant, is in determining the specific output mix of consumer goods.

There are literally tens of thousands of types, styles and sizes of apparel. I became painfully aware of this a few weeks ago when I helped my daughter move into a new place with her boyfriend. I swear she has at least 80 pairs of shoes, all of them different styles. There are thousands of different kinds of household appliances, utensils and furniture. Even in a collectivized economy there will be dozens of types and models of automobiles. Not everyone is going to want to drive the same kind of car. So it makes no sense to subject the detailed output of consumer goods to even a short-term plan. Output should be constantly adjusted to the changing structure of demand.

However, rapidly and efficiently coordinating the supply and demand in a collectivized economy does *not* require atomized competition between state-owned enterprises. In Stalinist-ruled workers states, such as the former Soviet Union or China today, the terms "market socialism" and "market reforms" mean subjecting enterprises to competition with one another. Managers are given the authority to decide what to produce in what quantities, and they are instructed to sell their products at the highest available price in the market, either to consumers or to other enterprises. The stated goal is to maximize enterprise profitability, and usually the income of the managers and also the workers is tied to profitability (or negatively to losses). We are opposed to this system because it replicates many of the inequities and irrationalities of the capitalist market system.

In honor of my daughter, I will give the example of the shoe industry operated under the conditions of "market

socialism" in a bureaucratically deformed workers state such as China. There are two shoe factories—we'll call them A and B—and they both produce standard men's dress shoes (which probably none of you in this room has ever worn nor intends to wear). Let's say that Factory A is relatively new, so that its equipment is much more technologically advanced than Factory B. Therefore, Factory A can produce the same pair of shoes using 25 percent less labor time than Factory B can.

The market price for a pair of shoes is equal to the average cost of production for the industry as a whole. Factory A is producing below the average cost, so it is making a handsome profit. Its managers are getting a nice salary and bonuses, and its workers are also getting substantial wage increases because it's making money. On the other hand, Factory B, which makes the same thing, is chronically losing money because its costs are above the average of the industry and the going market price. Unless the government then subsidizes this factory, some workers are going to be laid off or all



Line at job fair, New York City, November 2009. Unemployment is endemic to capitalist system.

workers will have to take cuts in wages and benefits just like under capitalism, through no fault of their own.

We are opposed to atomized competition between state enterprises. We are for using market calculation but not market competition. We advocate what can be called a centrally managed market system in the consumer goods sector. How would this operate? Again I will go back to my shoe industry example. There would be a central distribution agency that commands the output of several shoe factories. It supplies shoes to retail outlets and consumer cooperatives. You

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Let's say that as a result of miscalculation or changing demand there is an oversupply of dress shoes and an undersupply of sporting goods shoes (running shoes, hiking boots, basketball shoes, especially those that are endorsed by Michael Jordan). So what happens with this system? The directors of the distributive agency call up some factories and say, "OK, cut back production of dress shoes, increase production of sporting goods shoes. If you need special equipment that you don't have, if your workers need retraining, fine. We'll provide it." End of story. The basic point is that management remains centralized but utilizes market calculation in order to mesh supply and demand in this particular sector.

Syndicalism vs. Workers Government

I want to discuss the differences between our Marxist program and the syndicalist program for the post-revolutionary organization of the economy. Before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, revolutionary syndicalism was the main left-wing alternative to Marxism. A number of leading figures in the early communist movement, who later became supporters of the Trotskyist Left Opposition, started out not as Marxists but as revolutionary syndicalists: James P. Cannon in the U.S., Alfred Rosmer in France, Andrés Nin in Spain.

The crux of the syndicalist program for the post-capitalist reorganization of the economy is that the workers should exercise total managerial authority in autonomous enterprises or at least in some branches of the economy. There would be no higher governmental authority above the industrial syndicates. In a sense syndicalism is a proletarian or industrial version of anarchism. It was described as such by a British anarchist intellectual, George Woodcock, writing in the 1940s:

"The syndicate, on the other hand, is based on the organization of the workers by industry at the place of work. The workers of each factory or depot or farm are an autonomous unit, who govern their own affairs and who make all the decisions as to the work they will do. These units are joined federally in a syndicate which serves to coordinate the actions of the workers in each industry. The federal organization has no authority over the workers in any branch, and cannot impose a veto on action like a trade union executive."

—George Woodcock, *Railways and Society* (1943), excerpted in Woodcock, ed., *The Anarchist Reader* (1977)

In other words, the classic Bakuninite anarchist program of a federation of autonomous communes is here replaced by a federation of autonomous industrial or other economic units.

At the present time, neither in the United States nor anywhere else that I know of do we encounter and compete with significant syndicalist tendencies. So why do I want to talk about syndicalism? I have two reasons. One is that, if there is a significant upsurge of labor struggle in this country, many of the left-radical youth who are currently in and around the anarchist milieu will become workerist. Trust me on this, I've been through it. They will therefore subscribe to some kind of syndicalist program, which is an amalgam of anarchism and workerism.

The other reason is China. When the political situation in China opens up, and it will, I think that syndicalist ideas and even tendencies may gain a sympathetic hearing among Chinese workers. Chinese workers have already experienced a large dose of capitalism, and by all available evidence they don't like it. At the same time, many Chinese workers may well identify Marxism-Leninism and central planning with bureaucratic commandism, not to speak of corruption. So when things open up, some leftist-minded Chinese workers as well as intellectuals may say, "Let's kick out the capitalists and the CCP bureaucrats and the workers will take over and run by themselves the factories, con-



VAAP

October 1917: Putilov factory workers and Pavlovsky Regiment exchange banner reading, "Long Live All-Russian Revolution as Prologue to Social Revolution in Europe. Under This Banner We Pledge to Achieve a Brotherhood of All Nations."

struction sites, coal mines and railroads."

There has never been and will never be an economy organized on syndicalist principles, just as there has never been and will never be a society organized on anarchist principles. But if we encounter a serious-minded leftist who subscribes to a syndicalist program, it is insufficient to say that such a program can never be realized. We also want to convince him that even if it were possible, in practice it would operate in a way contrary to the interests of the workers and of society in general.

The problem with syndicalism is very similar to that of "market socialism." A syndicalist program would necessarily replicate many of the inequities and irrationalities of capitalism. If economic units are genuinely autonomous of one another, they can only interact through market relations governed by changing conditions of supply and demand. Inevitably, this means that some workers will have to be unemployed or have to take cuts in income when the market turns against them.

At the risk of sounding like a shoe fetishist, let's consider the shoe industry again. (You can see that carrying shoe boxes up and down the stairs for a couple of weeks addled my brain!) This time we will examine it under the model of a syndicalist economy. The shoe-producing industry is organized as a single autonomous syndicate. This syndicate gets revenue by selling shoes to individuals and stores. In turn, it purchases leather, rubber, plastic and other inputs from other autonomous syndicates.

Let's say leather happens to be in oversupply. More leather is produced than is demanded by the shoe-producing syndicate for its current output and the consumer demand. The directors of the shoe-producing syndicate tell their counterparts in the leather processing syndicate, "We only need 80 percent of your leather, we're not going to buy any more because we don't need any more than that." So what is going to happen? These are autonomous enterprises. Some of the workers in the leather-producing industry are going to have to be laid off or, alternatively, all or some of them are going to have to take cuts in income and benefits because it is suffering reduced revenue.

For Workers Democracy in the Control of Production

Even though people who advocate syndicalism think they are militantly anti-capitalist, their program would actually reproduce many of the inequities and irrationalities of capitalism, despite their good intentions. We are opposed to the syndicalist program of workers' management of autonomous enterprises. But we are for the maximal democratic participation of the workers in economic decision-making at the level of the factory, the construction site, the warehouse, the supermarket and the airport. The section on the Soviet Union in the 1938 Transitional Program states: "Factory committees should be returned the right to control production." This is our program, not only in the past but also in the future.

What does this mean concretely? How does it differ from the syndicalist program of workers management? What we mean by workers control of production in a socialized economy is that the democratically elected representatives of the workers would have an authoritative, consultative voice in all economic decisions at the enterprise as well as higher levels. Let's say that the industrial ministry in

Workers strike for higher wages at Honda's Foshan auto parts plant in China's Guangdong province, June 2010.



charge of aircraft production proposes to spend a couple of hundred million dollars retooling an older aircraft factory, replacing its antiquated machines with more up-to-date equipment. The managers, engineers, technicians would get together with the elected factory committee and jointly work out a concrete plan for retooling the enterprise. This would then be presented to the industrial ministry. The plan will not just come down from on high, with the workers having no say.

Another important area where elected factory committees would play an important role, even replacing direct managerial intervention, is in maintaining labor discipline. How to deal with a worker who is a

perpetual goof-off or who is so incompetent that he disrupts production and maybe even endangers other workers? How do you deal with a worker who abuses sick leaves, who calls in sick just because he wants a day off to go fishing? It is much better that this kind of problem is handled by direct representatives of fellow workers who are more politically advanced and more socially responsible.

The basic point is that a centrally planned, collectivized economy is in no way incompatible with the very active and full participation of the workers at the most basic levels of the economy, as well as in the election of delegates to the soviets.

But unlike "workers management" schemes, workers control in a socialist economy does not allow individual factory committees to have the final say on the scope and composition of investment, since particular groups of workers cannot have unlimited claims on the state budget, i.e., on the *collective social surplus*. Resources for the replacement and expansion of the means of production, provision for the elderly and disabled, expenditure on schools and hospitals, etc., must be deducted from the total social product before distribution to individual workers. As Marx pointed out, "What the producer is deprived of in

his capacity as a private individual benefits him directly or indirectly in his capacity as a member of society."

As Isaac Deutscher said in his speech "On Socialist Man" (1966):

"We do not maintain that socialism is going to solve all predicaments of the human race. We are struggling in the first instance with the predicaments that are of man's making and that man can resolve. May I remind you that Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies—hunger, sex and death—besetting man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labour movement have taken on.... Yes, socialist man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these." ■

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Wall Street...

(continued from page 1)

or even a fixed set of demands, they do have a program: liberal reform of capitalism’s financial sector. Issuing patriotic appeals to this country’s purported democratic values, they raise slogans like: “We are the 99 percent,” “Tax the rich,” and “Banks got bailed out, we got sold out.” Like the populists of more than a century ago, their program amounts to seeking to elect a government that would defend the interests of the little man against the “robber barons” of Wall Street.

It is false that “99 percent” of the population share common interests. There is a fundamental *class divide* in society between the capitalists—the tiny group of families that own industry and the banks—and the working class, whose labor is the source of the capitalists’ profits. The working class is not just one more victim of capitalist austerity within the “99 percent.” It is the only force with the potential power and historic interest to sweep away the capitalist system and rebuild society based on a centralized, planned economy.

In our interventions in NYC and around the country, the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs are fighting to win militants to the Marxist understanding that the capitalist state cannot be reformed



Justyna Surowiec

Left: Sign captures Occupy Wall Street organizers’ appeals to cops, enforcers of capitalist rule, to join with protesters. Right: Colorado State cops do “their job,” dragging away Occupy Denver protester, October 14.



Amon/Denver Post

Zuccotti Park. At a recent OWS General Assembly meeting, a Spartacist League spokesman drew opposition when he denounced the presence of U.S. imperialism’s banner, saying: “This is the flag that bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki! This is the flag that bombed and attacked Vietnam! This is the flag that represents oppression to the people of the world!”

Whatever the claims of the OWS organizers to the contrary, the dominant

on to the protests will alienate some of their financial backers. Key to mobilizing the workers in class struggle against the decaying capitalist order is the fight for their political independence from *all* bourgeois parties—Democrats, Republicans and Greens.

Protest organizers propound the “belief that the American dream will live again” (as one OWS Web site posting said) and argue that the government, which is the executive committee of the ruling class as a whole, should do something good like regulate banks. This is a dead end for youth looking for revolutionary answers. American democracy is the democracy of the capitalist class, whose rule is based on brutal exploitation of workers, murderous oppression of blacks and other minorities and imperialist marauding around the world. As the 1960s militant Malcolm X remarked, “I’m one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy.... I don’t see any American dream; I see an American nightmare” (“The Ballot or the Bullet,” 3 April 1964).

American Populism and the Democrats

Appealing to the common man against the financiers has a long history in American bourgeois politics. The 1892 platform of the Populist Party strongly indicted the “Gilded Age”: “The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few unprecedented in the history of mankind.” The Populists did not desire to abolish but to moderate the despotism of the “few,” to curtail the powers and reduce the privileges of the magnates of industry and finance. The movement reached the peak of its influence in 1896, when the Democrats ostensibly adopted its aims and Populist leader William Jennings Bryan won the Democratic presidential nomination, losing in November to Republican William McKinley.

The Populists were initially a multi-racial movement, encompassing poor white and black farmers as well as small businessmen. But the heroic efforts of its organizers in the South were defeated when the local ruling class launched a wave of racist demagoguery and violence. Many Populist leaders, such as Tom Watson in Georgia, turned against impoverished blacks and openly embraced racism. Many did this to carve out a niche in the Southern Democratic Party, which ruled over the Jim Crow system of entrenched racial segregation through police-state terror supplemented by the KKK’s extralegal violence. On the other hand, the Populist movement also included people who would become key figures in the labor and socialist movements.

The Populist movement emerged in the period when the U.S. was preparing to enter the world stage as an imperialist power, one of a handful of advanced capitalist countries whose competition for spheres of exploitation around the world would lead to the devastation of two world wars and countless colonial wars. As

Lenin described, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism: the economy is dominated by monopolies, with the capital of the large banks combining with the capital of industrial corporations.

This crucial understanding is completely blurred by populist ideology. As we wrote in our 1997-98 series “Wall Street and the War Against Labor”:

“Central to the liberal populist outlook is a belief that the capitalist class is divided into two classes, so to speak: those directly involved in producing and marketing goods and services, and those whose incomes derive from financial dealings. The former are regarded as at least relatively progressive, while the latter are deemed outright reactionary....

“The common interests of *all* elements of the American capitalist class—whether Wall Street investment bankers, Midwestern manufacturers, Texas oilmen or California agribusinessmen—are qualitatively greater and more important than their differences. All want to maximize the exploitation of labor and to minimize the overhead costs of government social programs.”

—reprinted in the 2009 Spartacist pamphlet, *Karl Marx Was Right: Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*

At the core of populist protest, yesterday and today, is the petty bourgeoisie, which is a heterogeneous and highly stratified social layer comprising, among others, students, professionals and small businessmen. Lacking social power and its own class perspective, the petty bourgeoisie is incapable of offering an alternative to capitalism. As the Trotskyist James Burnham wrote in the 1930s, during an earlier period of economic crisis and mass discontent, “The middle classes are seeking a way out of their impasse. But they have no possible way out of their own. And at last they must, in whole or in a division, face the ultimate choice: to line up behind one of the two basic classes and its program, to swing to the side of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat” (*The People’s Front: The New Betrayal*, 1937).

A case in point is *Adbusters*, the Canadian magazine that issued the original call for a Wall Street occupation. This “anti-corporate” outfit has received funds from the Tides Foundation—a clearinghouse for the Ford and Gates foundations. But *Adbusters* doesn’t just take money from fat cats; it also runs its own “grassroots capitalism”—the production of sneakers, which they hail as “ethical.” Ask the workers in Pakistan getting the pitiful local minimum wage as they produce these “no logo” kicks if it feels more humane to slave over hemp rather than nylon.

The capitalist rulers have unleashed their police thugs on the “occupy” protests, even though this movement does not hinder the functioning of the profit system. It is an altogether different matter when workers cut off the flow of profits through strikes and other labor actions. When auto workers occupied plants in Flint, Michigan, in 1936-37, winning recognition of the United Auto Workers, they were part of a militant wave of labor struggle that gave rise to the CIO industrial unions. Those struggles were pitched



Reuters

President Obama greets JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon at Business Council meeting in the White House, May 2010.

to serve the interests of workers and the poor, but must be shattered through proletarian revolution. Ending poverty, oppression and imperialist war requires workers rule internationally, opening the road to a world socialist society. We Trotskyists are dedicated to the task of building a revolutionary workers party to organize and lead that fight. Our model is the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the workers to power in the October 1917 Russian Revolution.

Our Marxist outlook is diametrically opposed to the OWS program of liberal, bourgeois populism, which comes wrapped up in red, white and blue, as seen in the number of U.S. flags flying in

politics of the protests point straight to support to the Democratic Party, which no less than the Republicans is a party of the capitalist exploiters. One Democratic official recently observed of the protests, “Sure, there’s been some crazy anarchy stuff, but overall, the Democrats like their message about Wall Street and accountability,” adding that “it overlaps with our own message.” In fact, with Obama channeling OWS grievances in his stump speeches, Democratic Party stalwarts like MoveOn.org are involved in organizing OWS actions for the purpose of bringing disenchanted voters back into the fold. Meanwhile, some Democratic Party strategists worry that signing

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For Workers Revolution!
For an International Planned Socialist Economy!

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battles between the workers on one side and the cops, company thugs and capitalist courts and government on the other.

After decades of defeats for labor, most young activists view the working class as irrelevant to struggles for economic justice. Setting the stage for those defeats, the bureaucratic misleaders of the labor movement by and large abandoned the class-struggle methods that built the unions. In their role as the capitalists’ labor lieutenants, they tie workers to their class enemy by promoting the interests of U.S. imperialism and supporting the Democratic Party.

The occupation of the Wisconsin State Capitol earlier this year ended in defeat precisely because the union leadership refused to use labor’s strike weapon, instead diverting protest into a (failed) campaign to recall Republican politicians. The result is that the state’s public sector unions have been decimated. Facing a great deal of disillusion with President Obama, who is a Wall Street Democrat, a good section of the trade-union officialdom has endorsed the OWS protests, seeing in them a means of re-energizing liberal support for Obama in the 2012 elections. The same purpose drives pseudo-socialists like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party, whose hailing of the OWS protests is but the latest chapter in their history of reformist pressure politics.

**The Fraud of
Bourgeois Democracy**

No protest movement will convince the capitalist ruling class and its government



Thundering against “moneyed interests,” William Jennings Bryan won Democratic Party presidential nomination in 1896. Liberal populism ties workers to their class enemy.

Letters...

(continued from page 2)

up Kinder’s spurious charges. An international federation of workers states could make available considerable resources so that there would be no need to operate fission reactors in heavily populated areas prone to earthquakes.

When sounding the catastrophist alarm on global warming, Kinder exhibits a touching faith in the stability of world imperialism, which is currently floundering in a deep and ongoing economic crisis. He argues as if it were entirely inconceivable that this decaying capitalist system could produce another major war or a resurgence of fascism. For all his invective against nuclear power, it is the enormous nuclear weapons arsenals possessed by the imperialists that “could easily irradiate the entire planet.” Even a “modest” regional nuclear exchange could entomb the globe in billowing ash, cooling the earth, destroying agriculture and killing a good portion of humanity. In the case of the U.S., the imperialist rulers, who possess the means to extinguish all human life, already intentionally unleashed nuclear holocaust on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Posturing as a “revolutionary” who is



Left: Lech Walesa with U.S. president George Bush at anti-Communist rally in Gdansk, Poland, July 1989. Right: Spartacists expose Walesa’s Solidarność as company union for CIA, Vatican and Wall Street, NYC, September 1981. Capitalist counterrevolutionary Walesa was invited to address Occupy Wall Street protest.

to change their stripes and begin acting in the interests of the “people.” This country’s “democracy” was founded on the enslavement of black Africans, and to this day black oppression remains a fundamental underpinning of the American capitalist system. The “American way” has meant the genocidal extermination of Native Americans, waves of deportations of immigrants, bloody battles with striking workers and a long list of savage wars the world over, most recently the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and this year’s bombing of Libya.

As opposed to the OWS organizers who endlessly speak about restoring democracy, Marxists understand that there is no “pure” democracy. As Lenin observed: “Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the ‘democracy’ of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*” (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, 1918).

In a speech to the OWS crowd, liberal ideologue Naomi Klein hailed the 1999 anti-globalization protests for condemning corporations that were supposedly “becoming more powerful than governments,” saying that this was “damaging to our democracies.” The fact that capitalist governments the world over have been bailing out failing industries and banks during the current economic crisis exposes the fallacy that corporations have superseded the nation-state.

Klein sows illusions in a mythical golden age of “democratic” accountability. The reality is that for the capitalists, “democracy” serves as a veil to hide their class dictatorship, which they enforce

“for technology,” Kinder is at bottom a technocratic reformist. No less than the reformist groups taken up in the WV No. 983 article, he is all too eager to conflate technology with how the capitalist magnates apply (and promote) it. Never mind that most of the world runs off fossil fuels and nuclear power. To just stop accessing mountaintop coal or other fossil fuels would be catastrophic, triggering massive blackouts and otherwise devastating people’s lives and livelihoods. In enthusing over “renewable technology,” Kinder also gives a free pass to the “green” bosses of the world like Solyndra.

The simple truth is that all capitalist industries are hazardous. With thousands of workers killed annually on the job in the U.S. alone, the bosses’ murderous greed writ large creates conditions ensuring that deadly disasters happen with appalling regularity. For the bourgeoisie, the nuclear business is business as usual. When it comes to radioactive waste, which Kinder luridly claims “has already compromised humanity’s future,” the volume (and the number of lethal doses) is small compared to the total volume of poisons produced by industry as a whole, many of which do not afford the advantage of decay to a benign state.

Instead of swearing off a technology because capitalist profiteering greatly

through their state apparatus—armed forces, cops, courts and prisons. Cop brutality and the arrest of protesters are almost daily occurrences, giving a small taste of the terror daily meted out to ghetto and barrio residents. Yet the OWS organizers have continued to call on the “blue-collar police” to “join our conversation” and “speak of the crimes of your supervisors.”

Neither is the problem simply one of “police misconduct.” *All* cops, whatever their background and rank, are the attack dogs of the capitalist class. An SYC speaker stressed at a recent OWS General Assembly, “Cops are not workers. They beat strikers, kill black people and arrest protesters.”

**Apostles of “Democratic”
Counterrevolution**

Liberal ideologue Naomi Klein and pseudo-Marxist academic Slavoj Zizek—leading lights at the OWS protests—like to rail against China as an affront to “democracy.” In this, they are providing ideological service to Wall Street.

The 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalist rule, liberating the country from imperialist subjugation and leading to massive advances for workers, peasants and deeply oppressed women. However, the peasant-based revolution was deformed from its inception, putting into power a bureaucratic nationalist regime akin to that of the Soviet Union after its degeneration under Stalin. Today, despite major inroads by both foreign and indigenous capitalists, the core elements of China’s economy remain collectivized. State ownership of the banking system has promoted massive economic growth in China, mainly through investment in infrastructure. This stands in stark con-

magnifies its potential dangers, the response should be to marshal union power in a fight for safety. Our article reaffirmed the demand for “union control of working conditions and, where there are specific hazards, action to shut down dangerous facilities.” Kinder’s silence on this very real matter of life and death shows that his professed interest in breathing “revolutionary life into the class struggle” is so much smoke.

Although he fraudulently invokes Trotsky’s Transitional Program, Kinder dumped revolutionary politics decades ago, when this one-time labor editor of *Workers Vanguard* quit our organization. As his letter amply demonstrates, he has since gone green-at-the-gills swimming in the Bay Area radical-liberal swamp. When he calls for “revolutionary, transitional demands to transform the economy,” Kinder merely is looking to overhaul the capitalist energy sector. In fact, the purpose of the Transitional Program is to mobilize the proletariat in struggle around its concrete felt needs and link such struggles to the fight for workers revolution. Singling out an industry for elimination, as Kinder does, vitiates any fundamental critique of the capitalist system. Needless to say, such a program would be greeted less than kindly by the workers who would be out of a job.■



trast to the profit-driven world’s dominant capitalist economies, which have been mired in crisis. As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to replace the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy with a regime of workers and peasants soviets (councils) committed to the fight for world socialist revolution.

The current protests against Wall Street are deeply stamped with the “death of communism” ideology that has been propounded by the bourgeoisie and its ideologues since the restoration of capitalist rule in the former Soviet Union in 1991-92. Zizek, who sometimes spouts “revolutionary” verbiage when it serves his “bad boy” image in academia, lectured OWS protesters about how “Communism failed absolutely.” The core of his politics was seen when he hailed Obama’s 2008 election as “a sign of hope in our otherwise dark times.”

A measure of the bourgeois politics that define the OWS protests is the invitation offered by one organizer to former Polish president Lech Walesa to speak at Zuccotti Park. Walesa was the principal leader of Solidarność, which originated in 1980 out of workers strikes in the Polish deformed workers state but rapidly adopted an openly counterrevolutionary program for the restoration of capitalist rule. This was the only “union” beloved by the likes of right-wing U.S. president Ronald Reagan and his British counterpart, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. With the backing of the U.S. and European imperialists, the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracies and the Catholic church, Solidarność became the principal force for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland. We denounced Solidarność at the time as a company union for the CIA, bankers and the Vatican.

The government led by Walesa that took power in 1989 dismantled Poland’s collectivized economy and implemented an economic “shock treatment” that destroyed the bulk of the social gains Poles had enjoyed under the deformed workers state—from virtually free health care to cheap, subsidized housing to pensions one could live on. In line with Catholic “family values,” the right to a safe and free abortion was abolished. Inviting Walesa to speak at Zuccotti Park was to invite a Wall Street stooge to...“Occupy Wall Street”!

Today the basic premises of authentic Marxism must be motivated against the false and prevalent misidentification of the collapse of Stalinism with the failure of communism. Against those who purvey “death of communism” and illusions in capitalist “reform,” we revolutionary Marxists tell the truth: the only road to eliminating economic scarcity is the fight for new October Revolutions. We have no illusions that this is an easy road. But the destructive anarchy of the capitalist mode of production will, if not overthrown, plunge all humanity into barbarism. The key task is the forging of a Leninist vanguard party, the necessary instrument for bringing revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat.■

Qaddafi...

(continued from page 1)

the beginning of “a strong and democratic future” for Libya. United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon saluted the moment as a “historic transition.”

The NATO war against Libya was a blatant demonstration of the imperialist system, in which a handful of advanced capitalist countries terrorize and subjugate the world’s weaker and more backward societies. The “democracy” trumpeted by the imperialist rulers can be measured in the number of corpses of black African immigrants, many of whom have been rounded up during and in the wake of the rebel victory. Brought into Libya under the Qaddafi regime as a source of cheap labor, they have been targeted as “pro-Qaddafi mercenaries.” Among the rebels’ first acts as they seized areas formerly held by Qaddafi’s forces was to carry out pogroms against these black Africans.

In perpetrating this racist vendetta, the ragtag forces brought to power by the NATO imperialists are true to their own reactionary values, and to those of their “democratic” paymasters. Obama’s America remains a hellhole for the vast majority of black people, while the White House prides itself on having deported nearly 400,000 immigrants in the last year alone. For his part, Cameron launched a police dragnet in August in which more than 2,000 people were rounded up as punishment for the upheaval that swept cities throughout England against racist police terror and grinding austerity.

The UN, having sanctioned the NATO terror bombing of Libya, called for a “thorough investigation” into precisely how Qaddafi wound up dead after being captured alive, displaying the sanctimonious hypocrisy that courses through this den of imperialist thieves, their lackeys and victims. A U.S. State Department spokesman pledged that the new Libyan leaders—a collection of defectors from the Qaddafi regime, monarchists, Islamic fundamentalists, former CIA assets, tribal chiefs and others—would “provide a full accounting of what happened.” This is like directing a psychopathic killer to investigate his victims’ murders!

Even by their own cynical rules of war, which are only applied to the losers, the imperialists are guilty as hell of the assassination of the former Libyan ruler. According to press accounts, a U.S. Predator drone provided the surveillance on a convoy that included Qaddafi leaving Surt in the early morning hours of October 20. The convoy was then reportedly bombed by a French Mirage jet fighter. The Libyan rebels—with who knows what support from the imperialists’ own special forces, which had been carrying out operations on the ground—moved in to finish off those who were still alive, decapitating one of them and then murdering Qaddafi.

The U.S. tried to assassinate Qaddafi, then considered a Soviet ally, as far back as 1986 when a bombing attack killed his infant daughter instead. For the past decade, the Libyan strongman had been an ally of the imperialists’ “war on terror,” providing torture chambers for the interrogation of supposed terror suspects who had undergone “rendition”—i.e., kidnapping—by U.S. forces around the globe. With the onset of the NATO air war in March, Qaddafi again became a target of choice, with NATO carrying out repeated attempts on his life.

Imperialist Killers on the Loose

When France, Britain and the U.S. launched their air strikes, the International Communist League issued a 20 March statement calling for defense of Libya against imperialist attack. We called on “workers around the world to take a stand for military defense of semi-colonial Libya.... Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step toward their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, improv-

erishment and oppression” (see “Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!” WV No. 977, 1 April).

Now that Qaddafi has been assassinated, the imperialists are swooping in like vultures to claim the spoils of their dirty war. The NATO allies, particularly France and Italy, are at each other’s throats over who is going to get the biggest share of Libya’s oil wealth. When it was still the colonial overlord of the country in the decades before the end of World War II, Italy dropped poison gas on Libyan civilians and imprisoned more than 100,000 in concentration camps. As for France, the murder of Qaddafi came on the 50th anniversary of the massacre of Algerians in Paris protesting French imperialism’s subjugation of their country. Hundreds were killed by police, who dumped their bodies into the Seine.

For the U.S., the most heavily armed and dangerous of all the imperialist powers, Qaddafi represents yet another notch in its belt of political assassinations, from the murder of Congolese nationalist Patrice Lumumba in 1961 to the kill-



AP
Anti-Qaddafi rebels with Nigerian captive, September 17. Black Africans face threat of pogroms under imperialist-backed regime.

ing of Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara in Bolivia by soldiers trained, equipped and guided by the U.S. and many more before and since, including under the Obama administration. On May 1, a commando squad of Navy SEALs in Pakistan gunned down Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who himself was a monster nurtured by U.S. imperialism in the 1980s war in Afghanistan between CIA-funded reactionary Islamic cutthroats and the former Soviet workers state. The day before bin Laden’s murder, NATO bombed Qaddafi’s house, killing his son and three grandchildren.

On September 30, a missile fired by a U.S. drone in Yemen killed four men, two of whom were U.S. citizens. This attack, aimed at U.S. Islamic cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, was carefully planned and executed on orders from the Democratic Party White House (see “Al-Awlaki Assassination: U.S. State Terror,” WV No. 988, 14 October). It was an open declaration that a U.S. citizen designated a “terrorist” can be summarily executed with no legal charges and no trial.

Hands Off Iran!

Even the cowboys of the Bush administration, who were no less practiced in killing their perceived enemies abroad, at least thought they had to go through the charade of giving Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, a onetime U.S. ally, the pretense of a trial before his execution. Not so the Obama administration, which, as the *Huffington Post* (19 October) noted, “has made it clear that that pretense is no longer of interest.”

Now the U.S. and its Israeli allies are aiming their sights, again, at Iran, with a crackpot story that defies belief. The story being peddled by Washington is that the Iranian government was behind a plot to kill the Saudi ambassador to the U.S., which they say was orchestrated by an Iranian American used car salesman who had been convinced—by an undercover DEA agent—that he was hiring a

Mexican drug cartel for the job.

With mind-boggling hypocrisy, Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder condemned the very notion of plotting to commit a political assassination in another country as an outrage. Evidently, only the supremely arrogant leaders of the “world’s only superpower” get to play that game, and then go after their semicolonial victims by charging them with the same. In a replay of the “weapons of mass destruction” myth wielded by Bush to invade and occupy Iraq, Obama is demanding that UN inspectors release all intelligence “showing that Iran is designing and experimenting with nuclear weapons technology.” Rattling his nuclear-armed saber, Obama promised the “toughest sanctions” against Iran and declared “we don’t take any options off the table.” All of this underlines, as we have repeatedly stated, that Iran needs nuclear weapons, which in this imperialist-dominated world represent the only potential guarantee of national sovereignty.

There is no doubt that Qaddafi was a brutal dictator who violently suppressed

anyone suspected of opposing his rule. Our military defense of Libya against the NATO bombers had nothing to do with political support to his capitalist regime. Nor do we politically defend Iran’s theocratic bourgeois rulers. But the main enemies of the working people and oppressed masses of the world are the imperialist overlords. In any military conflict between the imperialists and the countries they subjugate, workers everywhere have a side with the latter. Conveying this understanding is part of our struggle for the socialist liberation of mankind from the brutal degradation of the capitalist exploiters.

For International Socialist Revolution!

Defense of Libya against the NATO bombers should have been elementary, not only for proletarian revolutionary opponents of imperialism but for anyone opposed to the stronger capitalist powers imposing their will on weaker countries through overwhelming military might. This, however, was not the stance taken by the bulk of the self-proclaimed “socialist” left. Dancing to the imperialists’ tune, reformists peddled unsubstantiated reports of massacres of civilians by Qaddafi’s forces at the outset of the uprising against his regime and promoted the credentials of the Libyan “resistance.” Others, like Workers World Party and its offshoot, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, opposed the U.S./NATO intervention. But they did so from the vantage point of their history of political support for the Qaddafi dictatorship.

As the ICL statement noted, what had essentially been a civil war between Qaddafi’s Tripoli-based bourgeois regime and an imperialist-backed opposition based in the east of the country—a conflict in which the proletariat had no side—became subordinated to imperialist military intervention with the start of the bombing on March 19. Before the bombing began, the International

Socialist Organization (ISO) was one of the groups championing the Libyan opposition. An article headlined “The West’s Fear of Qaddafi’s Fall” in *Socialist Worker* (24 February) opined that the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, part of the opposition forces, was less likely to “be so pliable” to imperialism. When the imperialists’ attack began, so did the ISO’s cover-up. Admitting that the National Front had long been a CIA asset, the ISO indulged in some fancy footwork to explain how the opposition had morphed from “rebels” into running dogs of the imperialists. In reality, the Libyan rebels appealed to the imperialists from the outset!

An article in the ISO’s *International Socialist Review* (May-June 2011), titled “Libya’s Revolution, U.S. Intervention, and the Left,” attempted to explain, pointing to other cases, “where the representatives of a just struggle *do* transform their relationship with imperialism into one of dependence.” As an example, the article points to the *mujahedin* who were bankrolled by Washington to kill Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan. The ISO claims that what began as “a mass popular uprising against the Soviet occupation became, under the tutelage of the CIA, Saudi Arabia, and the Pakistani security services, a proxy army in the U.S.’s Cold War against the USSR.”

Contrary to this self-serving rewrite of history, the CIA was funneling millions to the *mujahedin* well before the intervention of the Red Army in late 1979. When the modernizing, Soviet-allied People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) government attempted to introduce reforms that prohibited forced marriages and allowed girls to learn to read and write, the mullahs launched a “holy war” with U.S. support. The Soviet intervention, which came after repeated requests by the beleaguered PDPA regime, was on the side of these reforms and opened the possibility of liberation for the benighted peoples of Afghanistan, particularly women. The entry of the Soviet Army also served to defend the USSR’s southern borders. We said: Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!

The ISO, like many other putative leftists, stood on the other side—with the forces of Islamic reaction backed by the CIA as part of the imperialist drive to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state. And the Islamic fundamentalists and their imperialist sponsors (and leftist cheerleaders) were successful. The withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1988-89—a treacherous act by the Kremlin Stalinists who vainly sought to appease the imperialists—foreshadowed the final undoing of the Soviet Union itself. The ISO anti-Communists cheered:

“Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin’s heirs.”

—*Socialist Worker*, May 1988

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR, the world’s first workers state, in 1991-92 removed what had been the main impediment to the depredations of the imperialists, who have since been emboldened in running roughshod over the planet.

The barbarism in Libya should steel the resolve of all fighters for the liberation of humanity from exploitation, racism and war to sweep away the rotting capitalist system worldwide. The imperialist subjugation of neocolonial Libya comes together with the escalating war on the livelihoods and very lives of the working class and poor “at home.” The global economic crisis, the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s, demonstrates yet again that this is indeed the epoch of capitalism’s death agony. When the workers, led by revolutionary vanguard parties, have taken power in the U.S. and elsewhere through victorious socialist revolutions, workers tribunals will put the imperialists and their lackeys on trial for their countless crimes against the working people and oppressed masses of the world. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Thailand...

(continued from page 3)

Thai society, form a large majority of heavily exploited factory workers. Millions of workers in Thailand barely eke out an existence, with immigrant workers from Burma, Laos and Cambodia facing the worst conditions of all.

It is necessary to struggle for the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution. In countries of belated capitalist development, such as Thailand, the democratic aspirations of the masses can only be met through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The conquest of power by the proletariat, with the support of the poor and landless peasant masses, can only be consolidated through extending the revolution internationally, particularly to the advanced capitalist countries. This perspective requires building a Leninist-Trotskyist party to mobilise the proletariat, standing as a tribune of the people, against all wings of the Thai bourgeoisie in the struggle to overthrow the exploitative capitalist system through socialist revolution. For a workers and peasants government in Thailand!

Cliffite Drummer Boys for Imperialism

Ungpakorn broadcast his unprincipled call for a vote to Pheu Thai in a 15 June post on his website:

“Normally, no socialists should ever call for a vote for a capitalist party in any election. To do so would risk making the kind of mistakes that the Stalinists used to make when they adopted the Popular Front strategy, building alliances with the bourgeoisie and making anti-working class concessions. But it is my opinion, that in the coming general election in Thailand, socialists have no choice but to call for a vote for the Peua Thai Party. Peua Thai is a thoroughly capitalist party.”

Ungpakorn talks of socialist principles only to trample on them. It takes some *chutzpah* for him to lecture against the Stalinists’ popular-front strategy...while peddling the same kind of class-collaborationist betrayal. The call for a vote to Pheu Thai, contrary to Ungpakorn’s cynical disclaimer that “We make no concessions to Peua Thai in doing so,” only serves to tie workers and the oppressed to the brutal Thai bourgeoisie. The deadly consequences of such class collaboration were played out in Indonesia in 1965-66 with the military-led massacre of more than a million Communists,

workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese. This catastrophe was a direct product of the support by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to the capitalist government of the “progressive” Sukarno. Politically disarmed by the PKI’s “joint unity” course, the proletariat was unable to defend itself when the generals, backed by imperialism, struck to behead the PKI.

Of course, supporting bourgeois forces in elections is nothing new for the Cliffite International Socialists and its offshoots. It flows from their reformist program of working within the bounds of capitalism. In Australia, the competing Cliffite groups, Solidarity and Socialist Alterna-



Daniel Cuthbert

Women textile workers in Mae Sot, Thailand.

tive, repeatedly call on workers to vote for the small-time capitalist Greens party, especially in order to pressure the Australian Labor Party. Grotesquely, a leader of the Zimbabwean Cliffites was elected to parliament in 2000 as a representative of the right-wing, pro-imperialist bourgeois party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and the group supported the MDC leader in the 2002 presidential elections.

It is also no accident that Ungpakorn should call for political support to a representative of the viciously anti-communist Thai bourgeoisie, whose state has served as a bastion of counterrevolutionary terror within southeast Asia and which today plays an integral role in the U.S.-led imperialist military encirclement of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. In fact Ungpakorn’s support to

PT is in line with his reformist claptrap that capitalist Thailand needs “economic Democracy where the people decide on investment and production. This is the true Democracy of Socialism. It is a million miles from the Stalinist dictatorships of North Korea, China, Laos, Vietnam or Cuba” (“The Red-Yellow Class Struggle for Democracy,” 20 January).

Here, Ungpakorn stands firmly in the anti-Communist traditions of the Cliff tendency, which began in Britain in 1950 with the late Tony Cliff and his followers, renegades from Trotskyism. Ensconced in the British Labour Party, and bowing to the pressures of Cold War I hysteria, Cliff

and his supporters capitulated to British imperialism and refused to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialist attack during the Korean War. The “theoretical” justification for adopting this pro-imperialist program was Cliff’s claim that the Soviet Union, which at the time was a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, had become “state capitalist” some 20 years earlier.

Ever since, the Cliff tendency has been a loyal servant of capitalist democracy and an anti-Marxist opponent of the revolutionary workers movement and all those countries where capitalism has been overthrown. Throughout the anti-Soviet Cold War II 1980s they stood with the imperialists against the Soviet Union. They sided with the woman-hating, CIA-funded Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin*

cutthroats against the liberating forces of the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan and championed the anti-Semitic, anti-abortion reactionary Solidarność—the chosen instrument of the Vatican, Wall Street and Western social democracy for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland. They celebrated the Yeltsin/Bush capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, which ushered in mass unemployment, starvation and nationalist fratricide. Today they back the imperialists’ counterrevolutionary drive against China and the remaining deformed workers states.

The overturn of capitalism in China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos are victories for the world’s working masses. However, in the absence of the working class fighting as a contender for power in its own name under the leadership of a revolutionary, internationalist party, these overturns resulted in bureaucratically deformed workers states. Resting atop the collectivised property forms are parasitic, nationalist regimes similar to the Stalinist bureaucratic caste in the former Soviet Union, which usurped political power from the working class in a political counterrevolution in 1923-24. Just as we defended the Soviet degenerated workers state, the ICL stands for the unconditional military defence of the remaining deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution despite the bureaucratic misleaders who undermine the social overturns and are an obstacle to their international extension. We fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies and establish governments based on genuine workers councils and an international program. This requires forging Leninist-Trotskyist parties.

Workers in Thailand must be won to the defence of the remaining deformed workers states if they are to successfully liberate themselves from the capitalist rulers. Fighting for a socialist federation of southeast Asia, and linked to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist heartlands, the creation of a workers and peasants government in Thailand would reverberate throughout the region and beyond. Our model is the October 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party, which established the world’s first workers state and was a beacon for the oppressed around the world. For new October Revolutions! For world socialist revolution! ■

West Papua...

(continued from page 12)

alliance with the Indonesian regime. This is not just to secure the flow of profits from Indonesia. For the U.S., the Indonesian armed forces serve as part of the military encirclement of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, which the imperialists seek to destroy by one means or another.

Not surprisingly, the Freeport strike has galvanized support from long-suffering West Papuan independence fighters. For decades, the Indonesian bourgeoisie, centered on the island of Java, has ruled over myriad oppressed nationalities through military terror with the backing of their imperialist masters. This is the case not least in West Papua, the western half of the island of New Guinea, where abuses include forced removal of villages and massacres by military and police personnel. Just three days ago, military and police forces dispersed several thousand delegates to the Third Papuan People’s Congress after they declared independence from Jakarta. Up to six people were killed. Activists were savagely beaten and 800 were arrested. While many were subsequently released, those still in detention face charges including treason and rebellion, which can carry sentences of up to 20 years in prison. Indonesian troops out of West Papua now! U.S., Australia: Hands off!

Resistance to Freeport’s exploitation of local workers and plunder of natural

resources has long been intertwined with the struggles of the West Papuan independence movement. In 1962, the Dutch colonizers ceded West Papua to the Indonesian bourgeois-nationalist regime of Sukarno under the so-called New York Agreement, which was overseen by Washington. While the deal supposedly obligated Jakarta to conduct an election on self-determination no later than 1969, the military, once it was in control, acted to repress any political dissent.

In 1965-66, the butcher Suharto and his military henchmen, aided by the U.S. and Australian imperialists, rose to power through the crushing of the powerful Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Over a million Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese were slaughtered—a direct result of the PKI’s treacherous class-collaborationist alliance with Sukarno (see “Lessons of Indonesia 1965,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). Suharto quickly moved to open up the Indonesian economy to greater Western imperialist investment. It was in this context of blood-drenched repression that Freeport’s first contract with the Indonesian government was signed in 1967.

Two years later came the farcical referendum on West Papua’s independence, conducted under the title “Act of Free Choice.” Some 1,000 hand-picked tribal leaders were told by the military to vote for Indonesian rule or have their tongues cut out, guaranteeing the outcome: 100 percent “support” to West Papua’s incorporation into Indonesia. Australia’s rulers,

worried about instability spreading across the border to what was then their Papua New Guinea colony, played a leading role in having the “Act of Free Choice” accepted without debate at the United Nations in November 1969.

As with the mines and plantations in Papua New Guinea, the Freeport mine operations combine savage exploitation with racial subjugation. While Freeport reaps fabulous profits, the West Papuan people remain in dire poverty, with AIDS rapidly spreading and the mortality rate for women and children the highest in Indonesia. Schools are empty much of the time, as teachers are subjected to wretched living conditions and children are too poor to travel long distances or purchase the books they need.

In the Indonesian prison house of peoples, the fight to emancipate the deeply exploited working class is bound up with the struggles of the oppressed minority peoples, from West Papua in the east to Aceh in the far northwest of Sumatra, and of women and the rural poor. In dependent countries such as Indonesia, where the capitalist rulers are thoroughly tied to the imperialists, only a socialist revolution establishing the dictatorship of the workers, leaning on the poor peasantry, can satisfy the basic needs of the masses: freedom from imperialist subjugation, agrarian revolution, liberation for oppressed national minorities, social equality for women, alleviation of poverty. To prevent its strangulation by imperialism, overcome the backwardness of the society and lay the basis for developing toward social-


ism, a proletarian revolution in Indonesia must be extended internationally to the advanced capitalist countries in Europe, Australia, Japan and the United States.

This is the perspective of permanent revolution, as developed by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. To successfully lead the workers in this fight requires the building of a revolutionary workers party, an Indonesian section of a reformed Fourth International. ■

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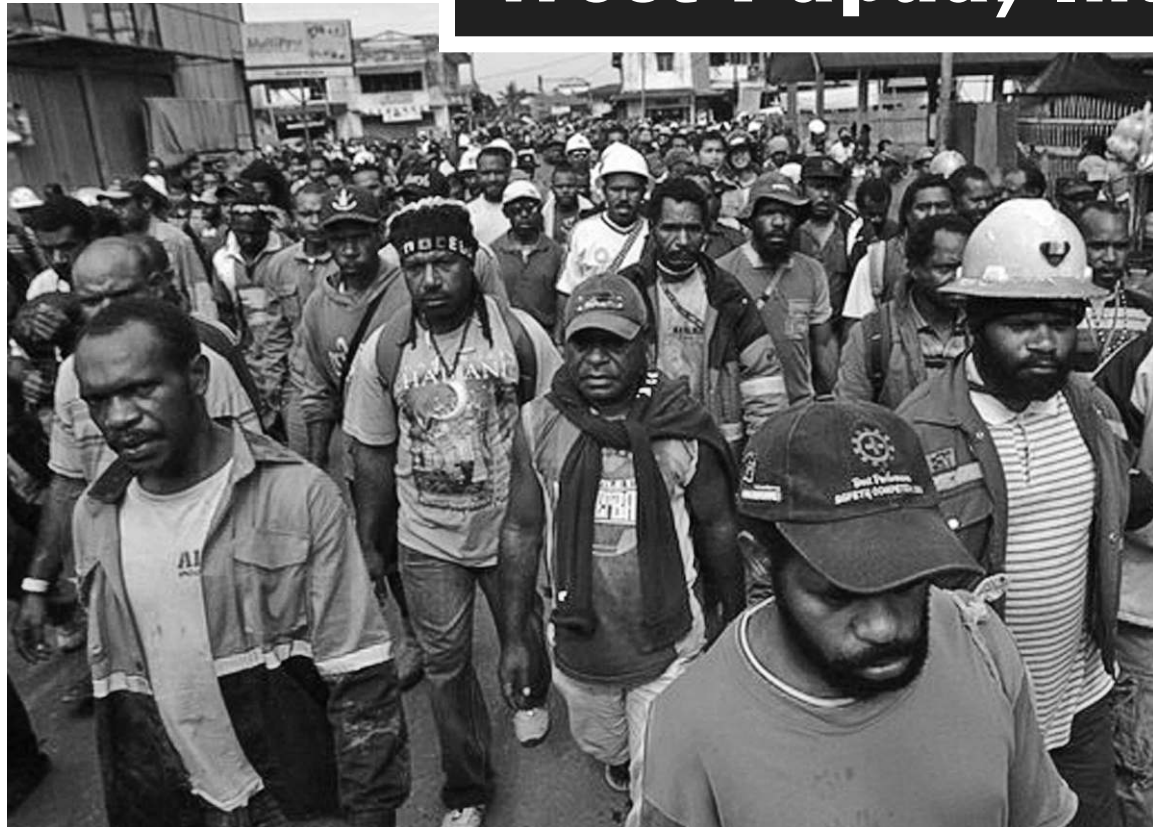
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WORKERS VANGUARD

West Papua, Indonesia



Reuters



AFP

October 10: On day that workers on strike at Freeport-McMoRan's Grasberg mine demonstrated in Timika (left), Indonesian riot cops fired on strikers, killing one and injuring more than a dozen (right).

Strikers in Bloody Clash with U.S. Mining Giant

OCTOBER 22—For more than a month, some 10,000 workers at the giant Freeport-McMoRan Grasberg gold and copper mine in West Papua have been engaged in a hard-fought and increasingly bitter strike for higher wages and better conditions against the company's local subsidiary, PT Freeport Indonesia. On October 10, when more than 1,000 angry workers marched toward buses carrying scab labor, Indonesian police opened fire, killing one worker and injuring others, including one striker who reportedly died five days later. Working in dangerous conditions, with some miners toiling up to two and a half miles underground, the mostly indigenous Melanesian workforce is paid as little as \$1.50 to \$3 an hour, the lowest pay at any Freeport mining facility in the world. Leaders of the Trade Union of Chemical, Energy and Mine Workers have extended the strike until November 15.

West Papua is a literal gold mine for the likes of the U.S.-based Freeport-McMoRan and a living hell for the populace, not least the Grasberg miners. A September 26 statement by the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) calls for "solidarity and support of all miners and all trade unions in mining and other industrial sectors," including messages of support to the PT Freeport Indonesian Workers Union. But it will take more than paper messages of support for the Grasberg miners to win this battle. It is in the interests of workers internationally to come to the defense of the Grasberg strikers, including by refusing to handle scab product.

Freeport-McMoRan is one of the largest mining companies in the world, raking in a profit of \$1.37 billion in the second quarter of 2011. On September 29, more than 1,200 workers at the Freeport-McMoRan Cerro Verde copper and molybdenum

mine in Peru also launched a strike for wage increases. U.S. workers have their own history of battling against this mining conglomerate. Freeport's West Papuan mine is a joint venture with Rio Tinto, which last year locked out International Longshore and Warehouse Union members at its U.S. Borax mine in Boron, California, in a failed attempt to bust the union (see "ILWU: Don't Handle Scab Borax!" WV No. 956, 9 April 2010). In 2007, Freeport merged with Phelps Dodge, which from 1983 to 1986 waged a vicious war at its Morenci, Arizona, copper mine to drive out the United Steelworkers union, whose membership was mainly Latino and Native American.

The Freeport miners are seeking not just a wage increase but also conditions and facilities for local workers equal to those of foreign workers at Grasberg, including housing, health care, education

and pension funds. The Freeport bosses arrogantly dismissed strikers' demands for a wage increase of \$12 to \$37.50 an hour as "unrealistic" and began running the Grasberg mine with scabs. The union has since pared back the pay demand to a five-fold increase. At the same time, Freeport was forced to stop production this week after a pipe carrying gold and copper concentrate from the mine to the company's port facility was severed. With a workers' blockade cutting off access to the mine, the company has been ramping up its intimidation and repression, with 500 to 600 cops mobilized against the strikers.

Over the years, Freeport has paid tens of millions of dollars to the military and police to ensure its continued ability to exploit West Papuan labor. "There is no alternative to our reliance on the Indonesian military and police," the company

told the *New York Times* (27 December 2005). "The need for this security, the support provided for such security, and the procedures governing such support, as well as decisions regarding our relationships with the Indonesian government and its security institutions, are ordinary business activities." The company has also engaged the security firm G4S (formerly Securicor) to help break the strike. This outfit, which operates prisons and detention centers around the world, is known in Australia for its viciously brutal treatment of Aborigines and refugees.

Striking Grasberg miners have been threatened with dismissal, and the company has been "isolating union leaders from workers by posting security guards around them," according to an ICEM report. On September 11, the chief negotiator of the All Indonesia Workers Union Freeport Division was shot at by "persons unknown." In West Papua, this is often code for the Indonesian military (TNI) and its Kopassus special forces, which are notorious for their torture and murder of perceived opponents of Indonesia's capitalist rulers.

With its enormous gold, copper and oil reserves, West Papua is a place of brutal superexploitation, where largely tribal subsistence farmers have been driven off their land without compensation. Freeport Indonesia is the largest single taxpayer to the Indonesian government, contributing billions of dollars a year. While the comprador Indonesian capitalists, corrupt governmental bodies and TNI all take their cut of the profits, mining conglomerates like Freeport take the lion's share, exploiting cheap labor and ripping out resources under the protection of the imperialist-funded military. Along with its Australian junior imperialist partner, the U.S. has been rebuilding its military

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Reuters

Freeport-McMoRan's giant Grasberg gold and copper mine.