

## Elections 2012: Wall Street Democrat vs. Wall Street Republican



White House

The following is a presentation, edited for publication, by Spartacist League spokesman Paul Cone at an October 13 forum in Los Angeles.

As revolutionary Marxists, our approach to the elections is the same as our approach to all our work and especially our interventions into class and social struggle. We seek to break the workers from illusions that the Democrats, Republicans or *any* capitalist party can be relied on to promote their interests, or that any lasting improvement of their lot can be achieved under capitalism. At bottom, the belief that any fundamental change for workers and the oppressed can be achieved through the ballot represents a utopian belief in the reformability of the bourgeois state.

We seek to instill in the working class, as well as radicalized youth, the recog-

### PART ONE

nition of the unique social power the proletariat possesses as the collective producers of most of the wealth of this society. Such social power needs to be realized through a party of their own, a workers party. What we mean by that is not an electoral vehicle but a party that leads the working class and oppressed in a fight for workers rule: the expropriation of the capitalist class through workers revolution and the formation of a workers government. In a society under workers rule, the productive capacity and resources are owned in common and production is based on human need—not the mad chase after profits.

I want to also point out that we communists would run for elective office and



Getty

Line outside San Francisco soup kitchen, September 2010. Barack Obama and Mitt Romney vie for chief executive of U.S. capitalism.

## For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!

serve in the Congress and other legislative bodies as revolutionary tribunes of the working class—i.e., *as oppositionists* to the capitalist order. But we would not run for executive offices such as president, governor, mayor. Holding executive office means taking responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state. Running for such offices can only reinforce illusions that the capitalist state, under the right leadership, can be made to serve the interests of the exploited and oppressed.

Although the working class here has historically waged some of the fiercest battles against the bosses and their state, the U.S. stands out as the only advanced capitalist country where the working class has not attained even a minimal level of political class consciousness. In its mass, the American working class has never supported a party whose declared ultimate goal is the replacement of the capitalist system with a socialist society, or which even claims to stand simply for workers' interests in their day-to-day struggles against the employers. The two primary, and interrelated, obstacles have been illusions in the Democrats and the racial and ethnic divisions promoted by the capitalists, both of which are purveyed by the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy.

### Capitalist Crisis: Workers Pay

This year's elections come in the context of four years of the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression

of the 1930s. We've seen the continued hemorrhaging of jobs, home foreclosures and massive indebtedness along with a massive bolstering of the forces of state repression under the pretext of the wars against terrorism and drugs.

To the tune of trillions of dollars, first Bush and then, even more so, Obama bailed out the con men on Wall Street whose financial swindles were central to this collapse. The working class, black people, Latinos, the poor, the sick and the aged have been made to foot the bill. Alongside large-scale and long-term unemployment, corporate profits have, on the average, risen at an annual rate of 4.8 percent over the past three years. Over the past year, the net worth of the 400 richest Americans grew by \$200 billion—an average of \$50 million each. In that same period, median household income fell by 4 percent. In New York City, the center of American finance capital, nearly 1.7 million people are officially classified as poor, the highest figure in more than a decade. Officially, the homeless population of the city is 46,000.

The national jobs report issued on September 7 disclosed that only 69.8 percent of men over the age of 16 were either working or looking for work—an all-time low. With one-quarter of jobs paying below the poverty line for a family of four, 58 percent of all job growth since what they like to call the "recovery" is in low-wage occupations, earning less than \$14

an hour. Six million people have no income other than food stamps. Some 2.8 million children live in households with incomes of less than \$2 per person a day—a benchmark generally associated with the impoverished Third World.

In racist America, it's all the worse for black people and Latinos, who were among the main victims of the banks' subprime mortgage scams. One-third of black and Latino households have no net worth, with many underwater in

debt. Over 25 percent of blacks and Latinos are officially recorded as living in poverty.

Periodic economic crises, such as the one we are in now, are inherent in the capitalist system of production for profit. In the 1930s, the one country that not only wasn't ravaged by the Great Depression but experienced great economic development was the Soviet Union, where the working class in 1917 had taken state power, which was maintained despite the subsequent bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin. Today in the Chinese deformed workers state, where capitalism was overthrown by the peasant army led by Mao in 1949, state control of the economy has greatly offset the effects of the worldwide economic crisis.

Short of the working class taking power, there is no crisis that cannot be surmounted by the bourgeoisie. In "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," better known as the Transitional Program, which was written in 1938 during the Great Depression, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky put forward a series of demands that are applicable today. These demands address the economic catastrophe facing the working class, "unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

In the face of mass unemployment, Trotsky called for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to spread the available  
*continued on page 2*



Elections...

(continued from page 1)

work, for a massive program of public works and for wages to rise with prices to guard against the ravages of inflation. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, he argued that the workers should demand that the capitalists open their books. He also raised the call for the expropriation of branches of industry vital for national existence and of the most parasitic of the capitalist owners. He underlined that such a demand must be linked to the fight for the seizure of power by the working class, as against the Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders for whom the call for nationalization was merely a prescription for bailing out capitalist enterprises.

Trotsky bluntly put it: “If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish.” In opposition to the capitalists and their reformist agents, Trotsky argued that “‘realizability’ or ‘unrealizability’” would be “‘decided only by the struggle,” by means of which, “no matter what its immediate practical

successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.”

**Obama at Helm of U.S. Imperialism**

Our opposition to Obama and the Democrats, no less than our opposition to the Republicans, is a *class* opposition. It’s not a protest against the Democrats’ failure to live up to expectations—they did exactly what we expected. It is not a search for some alternative within the capitalist electoral framework—a formation like the Greens or the Peace and Freedom Party that would supposedly break the two-party monopoly with a bourgeois third party. Nor is it an exercise of political coquetry: “Oh, if you know we always vote for you Democrats, what would compel you to carry out our political wishes?” All of these are how the radical liberals and reformist socialists approach the question of the Democratic Party. No less than open support to the Democrats, these do nothing to advance class consciousness but rather keep the working class enthralled to the capitalist order. They are all obstacles to building the revolutionary workers party necessary to end this nightmare of capitalism once and for all.



TROTSKY

The Class Struggle and the Fight Against Reformism

*The explosion of strikes in South Africa points to both the combativity of the proletariat and the role of the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy in subordinating the workers to the bourgeois state. In the 1938 founding document of the Fourth International, commonly known as the Transitional Program, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky stressed the need for communist intervention into the wide range of class struggles in order to forge revolutionary workers parties worldwide.*

The Bolshevik-Leninist stands in the front-line trenches of all kinds of struggles, even when they involve only the most modest material interests or democratic rights of the working class. He takes active part in mass trade unions for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy. He fights uncompromisingly against any attempt to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state and bind the proletariat to “compulsory arbitration” and every other form of police guardianship—not only fascist but also “democratic.” Only on the basis of such work within the trade unions is successful struggle possible against the reformists, including those of the Stalinist bureaucracy....

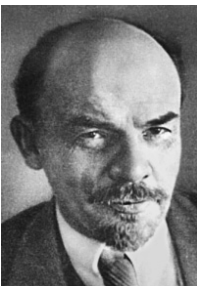
At the same time, the Fourth International resolutely rejects and condemns trade union fetishism, equally characteristic of trade unionists and syndicalists.

(a) Trade unions do not offer, and, in line with their task, composition, and manner of recruiting membership, cannot offer, a finished revolutionary program; in consequence, they cannot replace the *party*. The building of national revolutionary parties as sections of the Fourth International is the central task of the transitional epoch.

(b) Trade unions, even the most powerful, embrace no more than 20 to 25 percent of the working class, and, at that, predominantly the more skilled and better-paid layers. The more oppressed majority of the working class is drawn only episodically into the struggle, during a period of exceptional upsurges in the labor movement. During such moments it is necessary to create organizations ad hoc, embracing the whole fighting mass: strike committees, factory committees, and, finally, soviets.

(c) As organizations expressive of the top layers of the proletariat, trade unions, as witnessed by all past historical experience, including the fresh experience of the anarcho-syndicalist unions in Spain, developed powerful tendencies toward compromise with the bourgeois-democratic regime. In periods of acute class struggle, the leading bodies of the trade unions aim to become masters of the mass movement in order to render it harmless. This is already occurring during the period of simple strikes, especially in the case of the mass sit-down strikes which shake the principle of bourgeois property. In time of war or revolution, when the bourgeoisie is plunged into exceptional difficulties, trade union leaders usually become bourgeois ministers.

—Leon Trotsky, “The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International” (1938)



LENIN



U.S. Air Force (inset), Reuters

**Pakistani families grieve for victims of U.S. drone attack, June 2011.**  
**Left: Reaper drone deployed in U.S.-NATO occupation of Afghanistan, 2007.**

As we wrote four years ago (“Obama: Commander-in-Chief of Racist U.S. Imperialism,” WV No. 925, 21 November 2008): “The election of Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States has aroused great expectations among working people and the oppressed around the world. Black people and others celebrated on streets throughout the country the election of the next Commander-in-Chief of bloody U.S. imperialism.... Amid fears of a new Great Depression... hopes for ‘change’ center on the incoming Democratic Obama administration. These hopes will be brutally dashed.”

We also pointed out: “As America’s next top cop, Obama will preside over the racist capitalist system, which is based on the exploitation of working people at home and abroad.”

That prognosis was verified—and then some. But we didn’t need a crystal ball. V.I. Lenin, who founded the Bolshevik Party and together with Trotsky led the October 1917 Russian Revolution—the only successful workers revolution in history—aptly described the choice in elections under capitalism as a process “to decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people.”

This time around, the reality show to become America’s next top war criminal pits the two rich white guys, Romney and Ryan—who look like a walking ad for khakis, hair gel and Pearl Drops tooth polish and who promise to eliminate just about all of the remaining government social services that are a lifeline to a large bulk of the population, while promising greater riches to the capitalists—against the hoops-playing, change-promising Obama, who stuffed his administration with a Wall Street all-star team, such as Timothy Geithner, Lawrence Summers and Jacob Lew. The Obama administration has handed out lucre to just about every industrialist and

banker that came, hat in hand, knocking on the White House door—and not even spare change for the rest.

A lot has happened in the last four years. Mass unemployment has provided a more fertile climate for the decades-long attacks on the basic organizations of defense of the working class—unions. The current attacks were kicked off by the 2009 auto contracts forced upon workers at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler by the United Auto Workers’ Ron Gettelfinger and the newly elected Obama—part of the bailout of the auto bosses. This opened the floodgates for extending two-tier agreements to other union contracts throughout the country, and threw thousands of auto workers on the scrap heap.

We’ve seen the emergence of the Tea Party crazies, launched and funded by some of the fattest of fat cats in the conservative Republican establishment. They seem to have consolidated a great deal of control of the Republican Party, peddling religious obscurantism, anti-women bigotry, nativist hatred of anyone who wasn’t born in the U.S.—that is, born with white skin and speaking English. Their not so thinly veiled racism is expressed, among other ways, in the hallucinogenic belief that Obama is forcing socialism on the U.S., the only basis for which is his black skin. To defend the purity of elections, they have been on a drive to purge blacks and Latinos from voting, imbibing so much of the “voter fraud” Kool-Aid they have begun to visualize magic buses full of “illegal” voters pouring into polling places across the country.

After decades of massive redistribution of wealth to the richest sliver of the population under both Democratic and Republican administrations, even the bourgeois press has noted the gaping inequality between the haves and have-nots. The

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

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# France: Cop Crackdown on Muslim Demonstrators

*The following is a translation of a September 18 leaflet issued by the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

The recent broadcast on YouTube of *Innocence of Muslims*, a repugnant, inflammatory attack on the prophet Muhammad, was a racist provocation consciously calculated to arouse the anger of Muslims around the world. Protests erupted everywhere, especially in the Arab world but also in Paris. On September 15, about 200 demonstrators, mostly unorganized youth from the minority neighborhoods supervised by a few Salafists, tried to stage a protest near the U.S. Embassy not far from Place de la Concorde and the Elysée [presidential palace], where all demonstrations are generally prohibited.

The cops, claiming that the demonstration was unauthorized, engaged in a real manhunt in Paris, detaining about 150 people, some 75 percent of the demonstrators. The new social-democratic minister of cops, Manuel Valls, said he would go further and also prosecute the alleged organizers of the event, who could get up to six months in jail and a fine of 7,500 euros [\$9,764]. The police attack is a direct threat to the right to protest and a threat to the labor movement in particular.

By sending the cops against protesters on September 15, the new capitalist popular-front government of François Hollande and Manuel Valls is in line with its Sarkozyite predecessors. In his fury, Valls is perhaps even more grotesque than his predecessors, Brice Hortefeux and Claude Guéant. Valls went so far as to tell Agence France-Presse: “I will not allow...slogans hostile to allied countries, hostile to our values, to be heard in our streets.” Will this fanatic use this opportunity to prohibit not only demonstrations but even slogans against crimes committed by U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan, or by the Zionist state against the Palestinians, or by Athens and Brussels against the Greek workers?

President Hollande began his five-year term by exhibiting his “values” in a tribute to Jules Ferry, who during his lifetime was called “Ferry-Tonkin” because of his glorification of colonialism. Will Valls’ values lead him to outlaw demonstrations against crimes committed by French troops in Libya or the Ivory Coast, or against the detention camps in Mayotte [a French possession in the Indian Ocean], where babies are dying? His outrageous statements are a threat to the entire labor movement and beyond. ***Socialist Party/ Green government, hands off the right to protest! Drop the charges*** against alleged



**Paris, September 15: Cops surround demonstrators near U.S. embassy during protest against racist anti-Muslim video.**

# Defend Minority Youth! Defend the Right to Protest!

participants and organizers of the September 15 pro-Muslim demonstration!

Valls even took the opportunity to enact a “terrorism” bill drawn up mainly under Sarkozy. This legislation would extend for three years the extraordinary right of the political police to spy on phone calls and the Internet and to sue “jihadists” for opinions expressed on the Web. In the Merah case [see “French Elections: No Choice for Workers,” WV No. 999, 3 March], Claude Guéant said, “We do not criminalize intent.” But Valls wants to criminalize travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan. We warned that Hollande’s program was Sarkozyism without the bling, and, unlike the French Communist Party, the New Anticapitalist Party and even Lutte Ouvrière, *we called for no vote* for Hollande’s popular front. *Down with the government’s racist “anti-terrorism” measures!* Their only purpose is to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the state against the working class. The police are the watchdogs of capital. As Bolshevik leader Lenin wrote [*The State and Revolution*, 1917]:

"Civilised society is split into antagonistic, and, moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic, classes, whose 'self-acting' arming would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, shows us the naked class struggle, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve *it*, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new

organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters."

This is why the capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of workers, ban layoffs or implement other reformist fantasies. It will have to be smashed by a workers revolution that will establish the power of workers councils, as was done in the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The capitalist government's offensive against the minority youth they arbitrarily label "Salafists" is in line with this summer's attacks against youth in the working-class neighborhoods of Amiens and against the Roma (Gypsies). It specifically targets isolated and marginalized layers, who suffer from rampant unemployment, in order to pit workers against each other along religious or ethnic lines. Its aim is to both weaken the working class and strengthen the police arsenal against labor as a whole, as only labor has the social power and historic interest to put an end to the capitalist system.

Salafists are obscurantist, anti-women reactionaries. Our international organization has a long history of struggle against Islamic fundamentalism. For example, we hailed the Soviet Red Army in 1979 when it intervened, at the request of the Afghan government, to stop an uprising of reactionary mullahs who wanted to impose the *burqa* [head-to-toe veil] with weapons and money from the CIA and the Wahabi regime in Saudi Arabia. In all religions, the veil symbolizes women's oppression,

which itself is rooted in the private ownership of the means of production and in the family. But we have always opposed the bourgeois state's ban on wearing the veil. In France, this is a racist measure against Muslim women and youth. Two years ago we warned that the law against the *burqa* would also be used against minority youth wearing a ski mask. We also oppose legal measures against blasphemy, which the Catholic church periodically demands in France. This kind of law represents a danger because the state would use it primarily to pursue and punish anyone who opposes religious reaction.

Religious backwardness in minority communities is the result of oppression, unemployment and racist terror, as well as the fact that the labor movement does not defend these youth against ubiquitous racist segregation. Religion provides an illusion of heavenly consolation for real misery on earth. This is why the fight against religious backwardness cannot be separated from the struggle to eradicate its cause, capitalist oppression. The bourgeoisie understands very well that religion is

an asset in diverting the struggle of the oppressed for their social emancipation. The French imperialists, along with the United States and NATO, played a crucial role last year, under Sarkozy, in putting Muslim reactionaries in power in Libya, with the direct or veiled support of the French left. *French troops out of Africa, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Abu Dhabi!*

Not to defend these youth under the pretext that they were led by reactionary Salafists would give a blank check to the bourgeois state and its transparent divisive maneuvers: the working class must defend *all* the oppressed against repression. This raises the need for a multiethnic, multi-racial Bolshevik proletarian vanguard party. Our model is a revolutionary

“who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”

—Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*  
(1902)

*Defend the right to protest! Down with the racist cop witchhunt against Muslim fundamentalists! The labor movement must defend minority youth! ■*

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# Young Spartacus

## SYC Presentation at Bard College

# Students Must Ally with the Working Class

*We print below an edited presentation given by comrade Irene Gardner to students and campus workers at a May 9 Student Labor Dialogue meeting at Bard College in New York State. Although the liberal Occupy movement has dissipated during the 2012 drive to re-elect Obama, the central illusions propagated during these protests are still commonly shared among young activists.*

Thanks for inviting us to speak with your group. Since you are interested in supporting workers, we are here to address the question: how to bring about the end of the exploitation of workers, of wage slavery, and bring about the liberation of all humanity? Well, you can't do it by trying to fundamentally reform the capitalist system, by putting Band-Aids on it, by trying to pressure capitalist parties like the Democrats or by carrying out civil disobedience. The only way to ensure jobs and decent living standards, including free, quality medical care and education for all, is by seizing the wealth from the hands of the capitalist class through proletarian socialist revolution.

In 1848, Marx and Engels indicted the bourgeoisie as “unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society.” If the bourgeoisie of that time was unfit to rule, the imperialist rulers today have long passed their “sell by” date. It is high time that working people, who create the wealth in this society, run this society! We need an all new ruling class—the workers! Labor must rule!

A question that comes up a lot these days is what is the definition of class. A Marxist analysis is that social class is defined by your relationship to the means of production, not from a state of mind, nor how rich or poor you are. For example, a unionized worker in the building trades may make as much or more income than a yuppie supervisor in an office. Nevertheless, the worker still has an economic interest in overthrowing his capitalist exploiter, while the supervisor is an accessory to capitalist production and thus bound to its ongoing material success. The real, fundamental division in capitalist society is between the working class, which sells its labor power to survive, and the capitalist class, which is actually a very small fraction of the “1 percent.” In order to survive, workers have no choice but to sell their labor power as a commodity to the capitalists, who own the banks and the means of production, such as factories and mines.

Consciously or not, labor seeks to resist capitalist exploitation. It seeks to maintain and even raise its standard of living. It comes into *constant conflict* with the uncontrollable drive of capitalist production, which is the drive for the accumulation of more and more capital, and the production of more and more profit. This is the basis for class struggle: the irreconcilable class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These class interests are counterposed and cannot be harmonized.

Uniquely, the international working class possesses the social power—its ability to shut off the flow of profit by withholding its labor—and the collective interest to expropriate the bourgeoisie and reorganize society globally on a socialist basis. The intermediate social layers are part of the petty bourgeoisie—a heterogeneous class encompassing professionals, shopkeepers,

students and others—who have no direct relationship to the means of production. Lacking social power, the petty bourgeoisie cannot provide an alternative to capitalism and, depending on which way the wind is blowing, will align either with the workers or against them. If the working-class leadership shows that it has the resolve and program to lead society out of its crisis,

Afghanistan. The only way out of the endless cycle of capitalist economic crises and imperialist wars was shown by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, when workers took power in their own hands, expropriating the bourgeoisie and establishing the Soviet workers state.

Today the bourgeoisie uses every opportunity to proclaim that the destruction of

thrown out by workers political revolution to institute workers democracy under the banner of revolutionary internationalism.

### The Myth of “Pure Democracy”

Many of you may be involved with the Occupy movement, which raises calls for classless “democracy” and liberal reform, especially of the financial sector. But what is democracy in a class-divided society? Under capitalism, it is democracy for the ruling class, the owners of the means of production who construct and carry out laws to defend their private property. There are no laws that will establish equality between the capitalists and the working class. We fight against any attacks on democratic rights for the oppressed under capitalism, but it is futile to call for classless “democracy.” Real democracy for the working class, black people, immigrants and the poor can only be accomplished by the proletariat smashing the rule of the bourgeoisie and establishing its own class rule.

The Occupy protests have tapped into the widespread anger against the increasing destitution brought on by the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. But the populist notion that the struggle is about “reclaiming our democracy” from greedy bankers and corporate magnates is erroneous. This country was founded on the enslavement of black people and the genocide of Native Americans. Its history is riddled with the bodies of working-class fighters killed at the hands of the police or the courts. The banks and corporations didn't “hijack” the government in the last couple of decades or with the onset of the Wall Street crash. The purpose of this government has always been to defend the property and profits of the ruling class.

The wealth of this country is actually overwhelmingly concentrated in the handful of families—far less than 1 percent of the population—that own the corporations and the banks and whose profits are derived through the exploitation of labor. This capitalist class runs both the Democratic and Republican parties, whose main difference is not *what* they do but *how* they do it. The Republicans make no bones about being the party of “big business” in viciously going after the labor movement and minorities. The Democrats lie and do the same thing. The “choice” at election time is simply which capitalist party will oversee the brutal repression of the working class and oppressed at home and prosecute U.S. imperialism's bloody wars and occupations abroad.

The ubiquitous slogan of the Occupy movement—“We are the 99 percent”—is based on a populist notion of the “people,” which falsely lumps together everyone except for a small, rich elite, the so-called “1 percent.” According to this outlook, workers and the oppressed supposedly share common interests with the managers who fire their employees, cops who gun down black people and religious leaders who preach obedience to authority. This “99 percent” populism dissolves any understanding of the fundamental class line between workers and their capitalist exploiters.

Especially in the beginning of the Occupy protests, there were lots of illusions in the cops, with slogans like “NYPD is a layoff away from joining us.” Cops are



Viktor Bulla

**Putilov factory workers meeting for re-election of Petrograd Soviet, 1920. Russian Revolution overthrew capitalism, put political power in hands of proletariat.**

it can pull much of the petty bourgeoisie behind the workers in struggle.

### For International Workers Revolution!

V.I. Lenin, who along with Leon Trotsky led the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, described how modern capitalism in the late 19th century reached its highest stage—imperialism. He described how the means of production came to be monopolized by fewer and bigger conglomerates with ever-growing needs for investment funds and other financing, leading to the dominance of finance capital, centrally the giant banks. As the capitalists in the advanced industrial countries strove for newer markets to exploit, they carried out wars to redivide the world and secure spheres of exploitation in less-developed countries. In their competition for world domination, the imperialist powers engulfed people around the world in the barbarism of World Wars I and II and waged countless bloody wars in colonial and semicolonial countries.

Reformist left groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party raise the demand, “Money for jobs & education, not for war.” These slogans simply build illusions that mass protest can somehow pressure capitalism to stop being imperialist by somehow redirecting the budget. This is a total fallacy. As long as capitalism survives, there will be imperialist wars of depredation like Iraq and

the Soviet Union in the early '90s proved Marxism to be a “failed experiment.” But the collectivized economy in the Soviet Union worked! Despite its isolation in a world dominated by imperialism, the Soviet Union, arising from deep backwardness and the destruction of world war, civil war and imperialist intervention, became an industrial and military powerhouse, even under Stalinist bureaucratic misrule.

When the capitalist world was in the midst of the Great Depression, the Soviet Union actually increased its industrial output. Now, two decades after counter-revolution destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state, many in Russia long for the days when they were guaranteed a job, education, housing, health care and vacations, regretting that they were taken in by the myth of capitalist “democracy.” What undermined the collectivized economy, and ultimately laid the basis for the destruction of the Soviet Union itself, was the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, which beginning in 1923-24 robbed the workers of their political power and vainly sought to appease the imperialists by selling out workers struggles in other countries.

As Trotskyists, we continue to defend the existing bureaucratically deformed workers states—China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea and Laos—against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. These are countries where capitalism was overthrown and the economies collectivized. But they are run by nationalist, Stalinist bureaucracies that need to be

# Britain: Down With Anti-Immigrant Crackdown on Campuses!

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 220 (Autumn 2012), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League. On September 21, a British High Court judge ruled that London Metropolitan University students from outside the European Union who are currently enrolled or have an offer of a place for this year will be allowed to begin classes. Meanwhile, the university is challenging the UK Border Agency's suspension of its license to sponsor overseas students.

## WORKERS HAMMER

On 29 August, the UK Border Agency (UKBA) stripped London Met of the right to sponsor students from outside the European Union, effectively revoking the visas of more than 2,500 students. The students, many of them in the middle of their courses, having already paid punishing overseas tuition fees, have been given until December to gain sponsorship at another university or face deportation. The Home Office is seeking to honour the Tories' election pledge to reduce annual



Huffington Post UK

**August 30: London Metropolitan University students facing deportation protest outside 10 Downing Street.**

immigration “to the tens of thousands”—from the current figure of more than 200,000—by 2015. Students account for about 40 per cent of the total figure and the state is pushing university administrations to be more aggressive in policing them to determine who has a “legitimate” right to remain in the country and who

does not. Two other universities, Glasgow Caledonian [in Scotland] and Teesside in northern England, had earlier been threatened with losing their right to sponsor student visas. Students, immigrants and all working people must demand: **No deportations! Hands off overseas students!**

All universities, including the elite

campuses, rely on recruitment of overseas students as a lucrative source of income. Thus the UKBA's move at London Met has led to concern, including within the Conservative [Tory] Party, over the potential damage to the £2.5 billion per year English universities make from international students' fees. London Met students are largely drawn from working-class and minority populations. Indeed it has been noted that this university has more black Caribbean students than all of the elite universities put together. Loss of the income generated through overseas students' fees is projected to push the already debt-ridden London Met into insolvency. This will likely pave the way for the university to become a test case in the government's privatisation plans.

According to a *Times Higher Education* article on potential privatisation at London Met, universities and science minister David Willetts “is said to be willing to explore the idea of allowing a ‘failing’ university to be taken over by a private buyer” (6 September). Privatisation plans would bring the force of the capitalist market directly to bear against unionised workers and lecturers, and open

*continued on page 7*

not workers. The police are an essential part of the repressive state apparatus that exists (along with the prisons, courts and military) to defend the interests and rule of the capitalist class against workers and the oppressed. They break strikes, terrorize black and Latino youth and carry out vicious police repression of political movements. Contrary to illusions built by the reformist left and others, no amount of civilian review boards, “community control” or federal oversight is going to change that. We call for cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

### No Substitute for Labor's Power

It's good that many Occupy activists want to solidarize with labor, but for the most part workers are seen as simply another victimized sector of the “99 percent.” Protesters have been led to believe that solidarity with workers means setting up community pickets to shut down port operations (like on the West Coast), or calling for a “General Strike” (like on May Day with the call for no school, no work, no shopping). To be clear, these Occupy protests were not genuine strikes, and they did nothing to advance the workers'

consciousness of their power as a class. In a real general strike, workers actually shut down production and run various aspects of society themselves, thus posing the question of which class shall rule.

Some anarchists, like the Black Orchid anarchist collective in Seattle, openly try to pit Occupy against the unions, saying that Occupy represents a “new movement of the working class.” The unions, which were built in this country through hard class battles, must be defended, and there is no substitute for waging a political fight within the unions to build a new class-struggle leadership. During the Great Depression, when there was a brief upturn in the economy, workers began to engage in hard-fought battles to organize industrial unions. The sit-down strikes, mass pickets and other actions that built the CIO and the mass movement for integrated industrial unions were ignited by the 1934 San Francisco general strike and mass strikes in Toledo and Minneapolis the same year. All of those strikes were led by reds. New Deal social programs such as Social Security were implemented to head off the threat that continuing class battles would challenge capitalist rule. Following World War

II, Cold War red purges in the unions drove out socialists and communists, including the Stalinist Communist Party which had channeled workers' discontent into support for Roosevelt's Democratic Party.

It will take a leadership committed to the *political independence* of the working class to pull the struggle forward. At times, the union tops can be pressured by labor's ranks or by provocations of the bosses into carrying out strikes and other work actions. But within the labor movement, the proletariat is saddled with a pro-capitalist, protectionist union bureaucracy that promotes the lie that the interests of labor and capital are compatible. Instead of mobilizing in struggle, they tie working people and the oppressed to the capitalist system, especially through support to the Democratic Party. The trade-union tops poured a whopping \$450 million into the 2008 elections, backing capitalist politicians like Obama as a “friend of labor.” Even though the Obama Democrats have stomped on unions, the trade-union officialdom will do the same thing this time around.

Reformist groups like the ISO argue that “many labor leaders have correctly seen Occupy as a key to a revival of the union movement” [“The Unions Weigh In for Occupy,” socialistworker.org, 10 November 2011]. To the contrary, the labor tops embrace the Occupy movement not to revive workers' struggle but to divert workers' discontent once again into the Democratic Party. This was put clearly in a [seiu.org, 16 November 2011] statement by SEIU president Mary Kay Henry: “We agree, all across SEIU, that we need to stand for a 99 percent agenda and re-elect our president, Barack Obama, and that those two steps are on the same path...so that we can make the 2012 election about the agenda for the 99 percent.”

It is absolutely necessary to forge a workers party to mobilize labor in struggle for its class interests; to fight against all forms of discrimination and for full citizenship rights for immigrants (and we're not talking about a party like France's Socialist Party or the British Labour Party, parties that administer the capitalist system). A revolutionary workers party is the *critical instrument* for leading the

battle to sweep away capitalist class rule through proletarian socialist revolution.

Students can play an important role by allying with the working class and helping to build a revolutionary party. Student struggle can also provide a spark for broader social struggles. But there is no such thing as genuine “student power”—during the '60s and early '70s there were massive student strikes across this country against the Vietnam War, but in fact the bourgeoisie escalated the war. What ended the Vietnam War was the military defeat of U.S. imperialism by the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

Student power illusions are usually tied to the idea that the universities can become morally pure “ivory tower” communities isolated from the exploitation of bourgeois society if students apply enough pressure. But as university administration union-busting campaigns across the country show, capitalism doesn't stop at the campus gates—immigrants and all workers are still exploited at institutions of higher education.

Under capitalism, colleges and universities serve an irreplaceable function: training the future administrative, technical and ideological personnel of bourgeois society. For the most part, children of the working class and minorities are excluded from quality higher education. We are for nationalizing private institutions and making them open to all, free of charge, with a state-paid living stipend so that all working-class youth have access to higher education. We also call for abolishing the administration, including the Board of Trustees—colleges and universities should be run by those who work and study there.

To conclude: the crisis of capitalism will not in and of itself catapult the proletariat to power. It is crucial that we build a revolutionary vanguard party that will bring the critical element of consciousness to the working class, to transform it from a class *in itself* to a class *for itself*, to do away with this entire system of wage slavery. The Spartacist League and its youth section, the Spartacus Youth Clubs, part of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), are committed to this task. Check us out, and join us in the fight for a socialist future! ■



Minnesota Historical Society

**Strikebreaking cops confronted by workers in 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike.**

# Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs!

*The Spartacus Youth Clubs intervene into social struggles armed with the revolutionary internationalist program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We work to mobilize youth in struggle as partisans of the working class, championing the liberation of black people, women and all the oppressed. The SYCs fight to win youth to the perspective of building the Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in socialist revolution, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter.*

## What We Fight For

**1** Mobilize students behind the social power of the multiracial working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Unionize the South! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the bosses' government and courts out of the unions!

**2** Black oppression is the bedrock of racist American capitalism. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! For mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the fascists and race-terrorists! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense! No reliance on the capitalist courts or politicians! Fascist terror is not a question of "free speech." Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

**3** For free, quality, integrated public education for all! Nationalize the private universities! Down with the racist purge of higher education—defend affirmative action, no to tuition hikes! No to budget cuts! For an end to tracking! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Down with police occupation of public schools! Cops off campus!

**4** For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For mass, labor-backed mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free abortion on demand! For free, quality 24-hour child-care! For free, quality health care for all! Equal pay for equal work! Down with anti-gay laws! Down with reactionary age of consent laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against consensual activities, called "crimes without victims," like pornography, gambling, drug use, prostitution and "statutory rape"!

**5** Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Organize foreign-born workers into the unions! No deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Arab, anti-Asian, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry!

**6** Down with the "war on terror," which is a war aimed at immigrants, labor, the left and minorities! Free all the detainees! Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! For labor mobilizations against racist cop terror! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against black and Hispanic youth! The capitalist state—at its core

consisting of the cops, courts, prisons—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the workers and the oppressed. It must be smashed through workers revolution!

**7** Defend separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! Keep religion out of the schools! No prayer in the schools! Down with the teaching of creationism! For the teaching of evolution! No government funding for religious, private or "charter" schools!

**8** Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! U.S. and allied forces out of Iraq, Afghanistan now! Down with the neocolonial occupations! For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers at home! No illusions in the UN—a den

of imperialist thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans, Haiti! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean! U.S. imperialist butchers: hands off the world! No to the draft! Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military! Drive ROTC, CIA and police recruiters off the campuses!

**9** For international working-class solidarity! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! Workers of the world, unite! For unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states of Cuba, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attack! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of

workers democracy, based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism!

**10** Break with the racist, warmongering Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism! No support to any capitalist parties, including Greens! For a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

15 May 2011

*The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the revolutionary Marxist Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

## SYC Protests NATO at CCNY

On September 27, City College of New York (CCNY) president Lisa Coico and her administration rolled out the red carpet for war criminal Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The New York Spartacus Youth Club protested outside Shepard Hall where Rasmussen, who presided over the 2011 NATO war on Libya, gave his talk "Why NATO Matters for You." The slogans for the SYC speaker were: Protest Anders Rasmussen at CCNY—Secretary General of Blood-Soaked NATO War Alliance! U.S./NATO Forces Out of Iraq, Afghanistan and North Africa! Imperialist Hands Off Syria! Down With Imperialist Sanctions Against Iran!

An SYC speaker addressed the protest: "The U.S.-dominated NATO alliance was forged after World War II—after the Soviet Red Army's victory over Hitler's Third Reich—as part of the imperialists' drive to 'roll back communism.'" She emphasized that in the post-Soviet world, NATO has served as an all-purpose tool for the imperialist subjugation of dependent capitalist countries, from Serbia in 1999 to Afghanistan and Libya today. Another SYC speaker called for all cops and military recruiters off campus and for abolishing the university administration.

A leading activist for Freedom Road Socialist Organization conspicuously stood



Young Spartacus

**September 27: NYC Spartacus Youth Club protest demands "NATO War Criminal Off Campus!"**

apart from our protest and refused to join it. A supporter of the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) did join and take up some of our chants against imperialism. But the fact is, the LRP was in the same camp as NATO *against the*

*Soviet Union* when it counted. By contrast, we communists gave unconditional military defense to the Soviet Union and fought for political revolution to oust the corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy. *U.S./NATO hands off the world!* ■

## Spartacus Youth Club Events

### BAY AREA

**Thursday, October 25, 7:30 p.m.  
Capitalist Electoral Circus**

Down With the Democrats and Republicans,  
Enemies of Workers and Oppressed!  
For a Multiracial Workers Party  
That Fights for Socialist Revolution!

San Francisco State University  
Meet at Malcolm X Plaza

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851  
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

### CHICAGO

**Monday, October 29, 4 p.m.  
The Capitalist State:  
An Instrument of  
Organized Terror**

University of Illinois at Chicago  
African American Cultural Center  
Library, Addams Hall, Room 200

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441  
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

### LOS ANGELES

**Saturday, October 27, 3 p.m.  
Introduction to  
Revolutionary Marxism**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

Information: (213) 380-8239  
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

### NEW YORK CITY

**Tuesday, November 13, 7 p.m.  
Imperialism: The Highest  
Stage of Capitalism**

CCNY, NAC Room 1/211  
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025  
nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL Web Site:  
**www.icl-fi.org**

### TORONTO

**Wednesday, November 7, 6:30 p.m.**

**The October Revolution:  
How the Working Class  
Took Power**

University of Toronto  
venue to be announced

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138  
spartacan@on.aibn.com

### VANCOUVER

**Thursday, November 1, 6 p.m.  
Economic Crisis Rips Europe:  
Down With the EU!  
For a Socialist  
United States of Europe!**

UBC, Irving Barber Learning Centre  
Room 157

Information and readings:  
(604) 687-0353  
trotskyist\_vancouver@shawcable.com



# Elections...

(continued from page 2)

populist Occupy phenomenon burst across the scene with an impact reminiscent of the 1973 comet Kouhoutek.

Earlier this year Charles Murray, author of the racist screed *The Bell Curve* (1994), turned his attention to poor white people in a new book, *Coming Apart*. According to Murray, poor people are poor because they make poor choices—usually citing what he considers “moral” ones, like smoking, drinking, a little pot, having sex at a young age. As if the well-heeled don’t do exactly the same—and probably to a greater extent since they have the money to burn. (This is the same drivel that Bill Cosby, Obama and others have been handing down to poor black people to blame them for their oppression.) Obviously the poor “choices” begin with choosing to be born into a poor family. Although the book overwhelmingly represents the view of the capitalist class, it didn’t get that much play thanks to its inopportune timing—both political parties are fighting over precisely that demographic in the key swing states.

The right to abortion has been further eroded. Obama promised to ease the Republicans’ war on immigrants only to have his administration shatter prior records for deportations by such a wide margin it is a wonder they weren’t called before a Congressional committee investigating steroid use. Obama also promised to reverse much of the decimation of civil liberties under the “war on terror” only to expand government spying to a level that would make George Orwell’s Big Brother envious. Meanwhile we have seen authorized assassinations of U.S. citizens, indefinite detention and persecution of leftist opponents of government policies.

## Two-Party Electoral Circus

In his September 25 lecture to the United Nations, Obama told this gathering of imperialist thieves and their victims that Americans “have fought and died around the globe to protect the right of all people to express their view.” No. Since its emergence as an imperialist power with the Spanish-American War of 1898, the U.S., like its imperialist rivals, has sent its young men, and now some women, to fight and kill in its quest for world domination, to secure markets and resources and geopolitical military advantage. For over a century, Washington has placed in power and/or propped up just about every military dictatorship around the world.

This Nobel Peace Prize recipient initiated a surge of troops for the occupation of Afghanistan and supplied the firepower for NATO’s devastation of Libya. He has bolstered U.S. military

# California Prop 32 and Labor’s Ties to the Democrats

## No on Prop 32!

*We print below, excerpted and edited for publication, the remarks of a Spartacist League supporter in the discussion at the L.A. forum on the elections. Proposition 32, cynically dubbed the “Pay-check Protection” act, is an anti-union initiative on the ballot in the November California state election.*

The union bureaucracy has been pushing really hard for a no vote on Prop. 32. This proposition would make it illegal for any corporation or labor union to “make a contribution to any candidate” or to give money for a candidate’s use. As well, it would make illegal any payroll deductions for political purposes.

We say: vote no on Prop. 32! Government hands off the unions! We oppose this proposition because we oppose any and all intervention by the capitalist state—which is a machinery of repression defending the tiny class of exploiters against the working class—into the labor movement. The capitalist state

has no business telling the unions what they should or should not do with their money. State intervention only works to subordinate the unions to the bosses’ government and to weaken their ability to wage class struggle.

For the misleaders of the unions, Prop. 32 is the devil because it undermines their entire strategy: support to the Democrats as illusory “friends of labor.” As one union paper stated, “If we are unable to support our political friends and fight our political foes, then the hard-core anti-union, anti-working people conspiracy will work to destroy the prevailing (union) wage, our benefits, and our pensions.” Of course, whom they see as their political “friends” are the Democrats and “foes” the Republicans.

The union bureaucracy’s strategy is actually a direct route to the grave-

yard. In fact, the Democrats today are in the forefront of the attacks against the unions. In California, it’s been [Governor]

Jerry Brown and [L.A. mayor Antonio] Villaraigosa who have led the charge against teachers as well as public workers generally. Villaraigosa recently celebrated a success for his agenda: the city council increased the retirement age and decreased pensions for new city workers.

What is necessary is a fight for the complete independence of the unions from the state agencies and political parties of the class enemy. The question of where a union sends its money is a fight that must be waged *within* the union, as part of a political struggle to oust the labor misleaders and replace them with a revolutionary leadership committed to the fight to build an independent party of the working class. Such a party would not be an electoral vehicle but an instrument for leading a socialist revolution.

forces in Asia directed against the Chinese deformed workers state, declaring the Pacific to be the Pentagon’s number one priority, and the U.S. also maintains the embargo against the Cuban deformed workers state. Obama has also implemented starvation sanctions against Iran as punishment for their purported program of developing nuclear arms. U.S. drones regularly rain death and destruction from Pakistan to Somalia. DEA narcs help terrorize Latin American farmers and workers in the name of the “war on drugs,” and when the U.S.’s puppet rulers meekly suggest decriminalizing some controlled substances they get slapped down from Washington. U.S. imperialism, hands off the world!

Obama promised nothing to black people. He kept that promise. In the supposedly “post-racial” utopia ushered in by his election, we have the continued mass

incarceration of black people and the escalating terrorization by cops of black and Latino youth in ghettos and barrios, which in turn fuels vigilante terror like the racist killing of Trayvon Martin.

Yes, Obama has done just about everything the capitalist masters asked and so much more. Yet from the day he took office, a core component of the Republican Party took to the streets demanding “Take our country back!” Back from whom? No secret there. Even as the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Obama is marked by his black skin and African heritage. Newt Gingrich called him the “Food Stamp President.” Romney, not unexpectedly, has even charged, falsely, that Obama is undoing Clinton’s signature law eviscerating welfare by removing the work requirements, resurrecting Reagan’s “welfare queen” chimera that impoverished black women

are sucking up the government dollars of hard-working, tax-paying white people.

Add to these the likes of abortion opponent Todd Akin, the Republican candidate for Senator from Missouri, who said that a woman who gets pregnant following a rape wasn’t really raped; the spectacle at the Republican Convention, where a black woman working for CNN was pelted with peanuts while one of the Republican faithful screamed at her, “This is how we feed the animals”; the efforts across the country to destroy unions; draconian immigration laws enacted in Arizona, Georgia, Alabama and elsewhere. You get a sense of why workers, blacks, immigrants, women, gays, who have nothing to show for their past support, are going to again vote Democrat as a lesser evil.

How to account for a significant portion of the American bourgeoisie being so

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Reuters photos

Left: Obama with AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka, August 2010. Right: Then-UAW head Ron Gettelfinger (second from left) with GM, Ford, Chrysler CEOs at Congressional auto bailout hearing, December 2008.



# Britain...

(continued from page 5)

the way to further austerity. Vice chancellor Malcolm Gillies’ “cost saving” measures have already meant redundancies [layoffs] and reduced services. Further plans for London Met include outsourcing of IT, libraries, student services and careers advice. In order to beat back this attack, unions and students must oppose the discriminatory system of massive fees for overseas students and demand *universal access to free, quality education with a state-paid living grant for all!*

Anti-immigrant hysteria plays a role in maintaining the vicious exploitation of labour that makes Britain one of the most unequal societies in Europe. The existence of a pool of the population with no legal rights allows the bourgeoisie to drive down wages and living conditions for the population as a whole. Insistence from student union officials at London Met that students should not be treated like “illegal immigrants” only plays into the racist divide-and-rule schemes of the capitalist class. It is a question of elemen-

tary self-defence for the workers movement to take up the fight for *full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it to this country*, legally or otherwise.

Protests called by London Met UCU [University and College Union] and UNISON [public-sector union] branches have mobilised hundreds outside the Home Office and on campus. It is vital that the social power of the unions be used to defend the targeted foreign students. But this type of mobilisation is undermined by the perspective pushed by union bureaucrats, who corral students and workers into a campaign to vote out the Tories, i.e., support the Labour Party. The current Tory government’s privatisation schemes are a continuation of the onslaught against public services including the NHS [National Health Service] and education led by the Blair/Brown Labour governments. It was the Blair Labour government that introduced tuition fees for university students and replaced student grants with student loans in England in 1998. Moreover, in the name of the racist “war on terror,” Labour introduced draconian rules compelling universities and lecturers to act as auxiliaries of the immigration police by

monitoring foreign students and reporting “suspicious” behaviour. Despite the outrage of many lecturers and the statement by their union, the UCU, that it is “absolutely opposed to this legislation,” the union leadership disgracefully urged its members to co-operate, stating “these duties are part of a legal obligation on universities” (“Points-based Immigration,” UCU briefing paper, February 2009).

Policing the campuses in the interests of the bourgeoisie is not confined to the union leadership. When the university administration at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) implemented a chauvinist compulsory English policy under Labour’s 2006 “extremism” guidelines targeting primarily Muslims, they found able and willing enforcers among the student union bureaucracy and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Then-spokesperson of the SWP Clare Solomon spearheaded the drive to impose a rule at the 2006 Freshers Fair that “All publicity must be in English.” The Spartacus Youth Group waged a principled campaign demanding: *Down with the chauvinist compulsory English policy for student societies at SOAS!* [See “Down With Chauvinist

Language Policy at London Campus!” WV No. 924, 7 November 2008.]

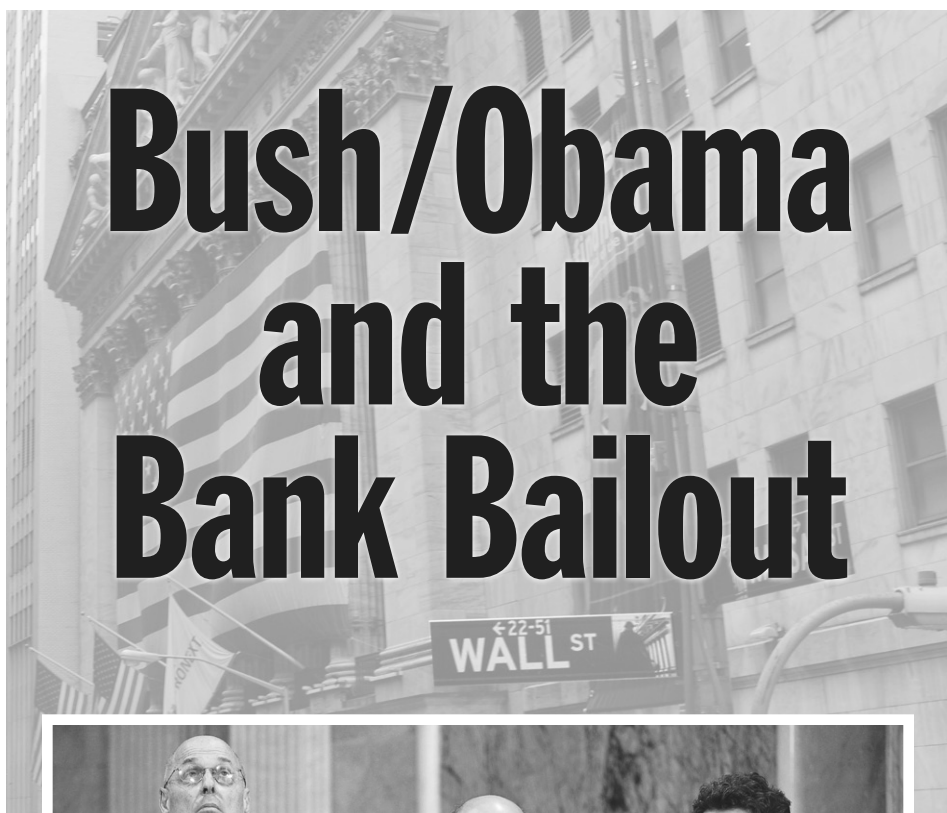
The British education system—from its “public” schools to the appalling, overcrowded comprehensives of the inner cities, where poor, black, Asian and immigrant children are crammed—has always embodied the virulent snobbery, prejudice and arrogance of the ruling class. Today, with manufacturing in Britain devastated, the ruling class has precious little need for educated workers. As was starkly illustrated in the 2011 riots, for decaying British imperialism, vast numbers of the population, especially poor and minority youth, are expendable, not even worthy of a basic education. The fight for free, quality education for all is inseparable from the fight to overthrow the system of capitalist exploitation, inequality and racism. The essential pre-requisite for this is the leadership of a revolutionary party, forged in opposition to the defeatist, sell-out policies of the pro-Labour trade union bureaucracy and all varieties of Labourism. We seek to win students and youth not simply to a pro-working-class perspective but to the fight to build such a party. ■

**D**uring the 2008 election campaign, we called Barack Obama a “Wall Street Democrat” when the bulk of the left was openly or backhandedly pushing his candidacy. During the intervening four years, Obama has amply confirmed our characterization. Nevertheless, right-wing demagogues like Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck castigate Obama as a “socialist,” and Mitt Romney and other Republican politicians denounce him as “anti-business.” On the other side, some leading Democrats are using pseudo-populist rhetoric in attacking the Republicans for favoring the rich. At the Democratic National Convention, Vice President Joseph Biden lambasted the GOP for opposing “even one dollar—one cent—in new taxes for millionaires.” Elizabeth Warren, the Democratic Senatorial candidate in Massachusetts and a hero in liberal circles, declaimed: “Republicans say they don’t believe in government. Sure they do. They believe in government to help themselves and their powerful friends.”

In reality, the Obama administration has been just as subservient to Wall Street bankers as its Republican predecessor. That reality is described in a factually detailed, firsthand account: Neil Barofsky’s *Bailout: An Inside Account of How Washington Abandoned Main Street While Rescuing Wall Street* (Free Press, 2012). Barofsky is the former Special Inspector General for the bank bailout program, initially called TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program). His efforts to impose somewhat more stringent conditions on the banks receiving hundreds of billions in government money—greater transparency, limits on executive pay—were continually opposed and obstructed by Obama’s treasury secretary, Timothy Geithner, and his cohorts. With the fervor of the newly enlightened, Barofsky exclaims:

“I had no idea that the U.S. government had been captured by the banks and that those running the bailout program I’d be charged with overseeing would come from the very same institutions that both helped cause the crisis and became the beneficiaries of the generous terms of the bailout.”

As a liberal, Barofsky believes that the U.S. government can and should serve the interests of the American people even at the expense of Wall Street. His assertion that the government “had been captured by the banks” implies that this was a relatively recent development, a notion currently widespread among liberals and reinforced by many reformist “socialists” who have cheered on the populist Occupy movement. However, as Karl Marx and



Top: WV Photo, EPA

**October 2008: (from left to right) Bush’s treasury secretary Henry Paulson, Fed chairman Ben Bernanke and NY Fed president Timothy Geithner, now head of Treasury, after announcement of bank bailout plan. Obama administration has obstructed investigations into Wall Street bailout.**

Friedrich Engels stated in the *Communist Manifesto* over 150 years ago: “The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” In capitalism’s imperialist epoch, which emerged in the late 19th century, the bourgeoisie as a whole is dominated by the lords of finance.

The financial abuses that concern Barofsky are but a small aspect of the system of exploitation, immiseration and oppression that is capitalism. Even if all of the policies advocated by him had been implemented and strictly enforced,

they would have had little effect on the worsening conditions of the working class and poor amid the deepest and most prolonged global economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Here one can clearly see the destructive irrationality of the capitalist system. To overthrow that system and with it the political rule of the bourgeoisie, under both the Democrats and Republicans, requires a social revolution carried out by the working class allied with the impoverished black and Latino masses, establishing a workers government. Such a government

would expropriate the productive wealth now in the hands of the capitalist class and establish a planned socialist economy, one based on meeting social needs, not maximizing private profit.

#### The Bipartisan Financial Elite

When the financial crisis hit Wall Street in the fall of 2008, Barofsky was a senior federal prosecutor, specializing in mortgage fraud, at the office of the U.S. Attorney in New York City. He was then offered the job of “SIGTARP,” special inspector general of the newly established TARP, by the outgoing Bush administration. Barofsky was surprised that as a known Obama supporter he was selected by this right-wing Republican administration for a supposedly important financial post.

In its own way, Barofsky’s appointment illustrates how the two capitalist parties, despite their sometimes heated rhetorical exchanges, collaborate when the vital interests of the capitalist ruling class are at stake. Bush’s treasury secretary, Hank Paulson, a former CEO of Goldman Sachs (the country’s premier investment bank), needed support for the bailout from the then Democratic majority of the House of Representatives and Senate. He was willing to pay a small political price by making one of their own the program’s “watchdog.” As it happened, this particular “watchdog” was rendered toothless by the subsequent Obama administration.

The top government financial officials, under both Republican and Democratic presidents, are mainly drawn from the same small pool of the Wall Street elite. A good example was Barofsky’s immediate boss, Herb Allison, head of TARP under Obama. A former CEO of Merrill Lynch, he was brought to Washington by Paulson during the financial crisis in late 2008 and made head of Fannie Mae. A giant government-sponsored corporation involved in mortgage finance, Fannie Mae was effectively nationalized to prevent it from going bankrupt. When the Obama team took over, they retained Allison, shifting him to another component of the government’s bailout of finance capital.

In his own naive way, Barofsky reveals the cynical manipulation of public opinion by the Democrats as well as Republicans. After Obama was elected but before he took office in January 2009, his main economic point man, Lawrence Summers, urged Congress to release the second \$350 billion cache of the TARP funds. In doing so he said that the new administration would impose tougher conditions on the recipient

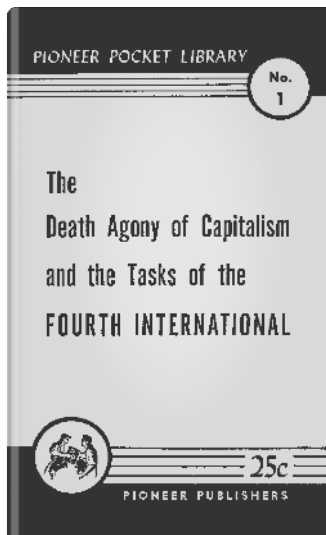
## Elections...

(continued from page 7)

mentally unhinged? Did a Klingon warship pass over the U.S. 30 years ago firing some form of brain-destroying phaser? Maybe the answer is buried in the UFO museum in Roswell, New Mexico. But I don’t think so. After the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, it appeared that the U.S. imperialists had finally become masters of the world. But even as the U.S. achieved unrivalled military supremacy, its industrial base continued to decline. To some in the ruling class, this decline of the country’s economic might defies explanation—besides being contrary to “God’s will.” In consequence, a wing of the bourgeoisie has seemingly gone totally insane.

The massive redistribution of wealth to the top, the increasing segregation of black people, shredding of the social “safety net,” embrace of “Christian family values,” rollback of democratic rights, imperialist wars and occupations: all have been bipartisan policies. The Republicans may explicitly announce that it is open season on workers and oppressed minorities; the Democrats instead offer a pat on the back, maybe a little consolation that we “share your pain,” while enforcing capitalist misery and social reaction, often more effectively.

Yet at the same time that the differ-



ences between these two capitalist parties have increasingly narrowed, the vitriol between them has grown. This is not a unique development. Writing about the 1912 presidential election won by the Democrat Woodrow Wilson, in an article titled “The Results and Significance of the U.S. Presidential Elections,” Lenin observed:

“Since the Civil War over slavery in 1860-65—two bourgeois parties have been distinguished there by remarkable solidity and strength. The party of the former slave-owners is the so-called Democratic Party. The capitalist party, which favoured the emancipation of the Negroes, has developed into the Republican Party.



Wide World

**Transitional Program, written by Leon Trotsky, was adopted as founding document of Fourth International in 1938.**

“Since the emancipation of the Negroes, the distinction between the two parties has been diminishing. The fight between these two parties has been mainly over the height of customs duties. Their fight *has not had* any *serious* importance for the mass of the people. The people have been deceived and diverted from their vital interests by means of spectacular and meaningless *duels* between the two bourgeois parties.”

#### Centrality of Black Oppression

Shortly after the Republican Ronald Reagan’s 1980 election victory, Richard Viguerie, a key conservative fund-raiser and organizer, said, “It was the social issues that got us this far, and that’s what

will take us into the future. We never really won until we began stressing issues like busing, abortion, school prayer and gun control.” Reagan aide Lee Atwater made clear what that meant. For obvious reasons I’m going to paraphrase here: “You start out in 1954 by saying the ‘N’ word. By 1968 you can’t say the ‘N’ word—that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states’ rights. You’re getting so abstract now you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you’re talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is blacks get hurt worse than whites.”

In fanning the flames of racist reaction, the Republicans are implementing the “Southern Strategy” that has served them well for the past 40 years. The shape of bourgeois politics in America was fundamentally altered by the civil rights movement. The New Deal alliance between labor, Northern liberals and Southern segregationists cemented by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1930s was blown apart. The 1964 Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, who voted against the Civil Rights Act, was the one who authored the “Southern Strategy,” persuading racist Southern Democrats—the Dixiecrats—to defect.

The bourgeoisie, which was willing to permit the gradual abolition of *legal* segregation and provide avenues for the upward social mobility of a small layer of black people, at the same time unleashed



banks. Barofsky recounts a conversation at the time with Neel Kashkari (also a Goldman alumnus), who was head of TARP in the lame-duck Bush administration:

“Kashkari dismissed the point, saying ‘Those new conditions are purely political. And I strongly suspect, even if they’re adopted, the new administration may not want you looking too closely at them.’ I was somewhat surprised that Kashkari was essentially accusing his incoming bosses of making false promises to Congress just to get their hands on the second cache of TARP funds. But he was ultimately correct; those ‘commitments’ never saw the light of day.”

Barofsky implicitly assumes that unlike the cynical Republican financial operative Kashkari many members of Congress, presumably mainly Democrats, were taken in by Summers’ “false promises.” They really weren’t that gullible. The main thing driving Obama’s men was to dampen popular opposition to and even outrage over the bailout of the bankers amid increasing immiseration for working people.

Barofsky looked forward to the new administration only to be bitterly disappointed by the replacement of the Republican Paulson by Democrat Timothy Geithner: “Whereas Paulson appeared to view SIGTARP as a potential ally that could help protect TARP and enhance its credibility, Geithner was utterly dismissive.” Geithner is another example of the bipartisan character of the financial elite. A career government functionary, Geithner started out at a think tank established by Henry Kissinger, a major Republican power broker. He then became a protégé of Summers, who served as an economic consigliere in the Clinton administration in the 1990s. Under Bush II, Geithner was president of the New York branch of the Federal Reserve (U.S. central bank). Along with Paulson and Fed chairman Ben Bernanke, he initiated and organized the massive bank bailout.

An early instance of Barofsky’s disillusionment with Geithner’s Treasury Department concerned executive pay for the bailed-out firms. An especially egregious case was that of AIG (American International Group). A global insurance giant, AIG was a major provider of so-called credit default swaps (CDSs), a kind of insurance against the default of various types of bonds. When the financial crisis hit, AIG could not pay off the hundreds of billions it contractually owed to Goldman, JPMorgan, Deutsche Bank and other banks that had purchased its CDSs. The Treasury Department and Federal Reserve duly “rescued” the fallen insurance giant to the tune of \$170 billion, money that

**Oakland woman prepares for eviction after foreclosure on her home, July 2008.**



Chinn/SF Chronicle

went to pay off the holders of its CDSs. In March 2009, Treasury officials approved \$168 million in annual “retention bonuses” for executives in AIG’s Financial Products division, in Barofsky’s words, “the very unit whose reckless bets had brought down the company.” Pointing to the AIG bonus scandal, Barofsky comments:

“The Wall Street fiction that certain financial executives were preternaturally gifted supermen who deserved every penny of their staggering paychecks and bonuses was firmly ingrained in Treasury’s psyche. No matter that the financial crisis had demonstrated just how unremarkable the work of those executives had turned out to be, that belief system endured at Treasury across administrations.”

The Treasury officials’ dogged defense of the “staggering paychecks and bonuses” of Wall Street executives is not, however, motivated by the ideological biases that Barofsky ascribes to them. Rather, the false ideology—“these executives are worth every cent they make”—acts as a rationale for their *material self-interest*. The top officials of the Treasury Department, Federal Reserve and other government financial agencies typically come from and return to the boardrooms and executive suites of the big Wall Street firms. For example, when Neel Kashkari resigned as head of TARP, he moved on to a senior position in PIMCO, the world’s largest investment fund specializing in corporate and government bonds.

**The Bank Bailout and Other Financial Scams**

The official justification for the bailout was that it would enable and encourage banks to start lending again, especially to businesses, and thereby pull the economy

out of the sharply deepening downturn. At the time, we predicted that was *not* going to happen. Right after Obama was inaugurated we wrote:

“Bank executives are fearful that additional loans will become additional losses. Through the massive sell-off of financial stocks...capitalist investors are forcing bank executives to rebuild their capital base however they can, including by reducing their outstanding loan volume. So any government bailout money is going to be hoarded, used to pay down the bank’s own debt or to take over weaker, failing competitors.”  
—“Obama: CEO of Bankrupt American Capitalism,”  
WV No. 930 (13 February 2009)

Barofsky, who closely monitored how banks were using the bailout money, substantiates this prediction:

“Banks were beginning to talk to the press, and they were saying that they were using their taxpayer-supplied funds for just about everything other than increased lending that had been Treasury’s justification for CPP [Capital Purchase Program]. Buying securities, great; buying other banks, no problem; saving it for a rainy day, sure; but lending? It wasn’t happening.”

One of the few financial programs instituted by the Obama administration that was supposed to directly help working people hurt by the economic downturn was HAMP (Home Affordable Modification Program). Announcing the program immediately after taking office, Obama claimed that it would enable up to four million homeowners to modify their mortgages to avoid foreclosure. To begin with, excluded from this program were people who were faced with losing their homes because they had lost their jobs and couldn’t find another one. To qualify for HAMP required a certain level

of income from *current* employment. Barofsky explains how this program mainly benefited the banks and their underlings, an especially sleazy type of financial operator called mortgage servicers. The latter collected the mortgage payments and, after taking their cut, transferred the money to the banks. Under HAMP there were two levels of mortgage modification (reduction): trial and permanent. A trial modification was much more lucrative for the banks and servicers than a permanent one. Under a trial modification all mortgage payments, even if made on time, were legally considered “late” because the amount was less than the originally scheduled amount. Participants were therefore charged a late fee that was waived only if the trial status was made permanent.

Servicers naturally used every means available to them, including outright fraud, to prevent trial modifications from becoming permanent. Many families were subjected to a lengthy trial period only to be denied permanent status. The banks then demanded they pay a huge “deficiency” bill—the accumulated difference between the reduced and original mortgage amount—plus late charges. Many families lost their homes *because they participated in HAMP!* Barofsky writes: “Borrowers who might otherwise never have missed a payment found themselves hit with whopping bills that they couldn’t pay and now faced foreclosure. It was a disaster.”

The HAMP scam demonstrated on a small scale the different ways by which the Democrats and Republicans serve the interests of Wall Street. The Republicans openly express hostility to and contempt for the working class, poor and oppressed minorities. Witness Romney’s recent rant against almost half the U.S. population because they “believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing.” The Democrats claim to stand for the interests of working people, sometimes even at the expense of financial capitalists. But that claim is fraudulent.

In opposition to both parties of capital, we stand for a revolutionary workers party, part of a Leninist-Trotskyist international dedicated to fighting for socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order worldwide. This will lay the basis for a rationally planned international economy. Only then will productive forces be developed and utilized such that poverty, scarcity and want are eliminated, creating the conditions for an egalitarian and harmonious society. ■

a campaign of white backlash which eventually took the form of opposition to “big government”—identified as forcing white children to go to school with blacks, giving tax money to black welfare mothers and poverty bureaucrats, and giving jobs to blacks and women under affirmative action. While most black people were no better off, the government created a layer

of black middle-class professionals. Racist politicians began deliberately stoking white resentment. All this underscores that the oppression of black people, a race-color caste overwhelmingly segregated at the bottom of society, remains at the core of American capitalism. The forcible segregation, stigmatization and vilification of those

whose ancestors were dragged here in chains as slaves serves to maximize profits, regulate labor and divide the working class. As historic American Trotskyist Richard Fraser noted of segregation some 60 years ago:

“Prejudice is the product of this complex social relation. But although it is directed immediately against the Negro, its object is the working class as a whole. Through discrimination and segregation, Negro labor is degraded and its wage falls to the bare subsistence level. But this sets the pattern and controls the conditions of labor as a whole.”  
—“The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution” (1953), reprinted in “In Memoriam—Richard S. Fraser: An Appreciation and Selection of His Work,”  
*Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, August 1990

Fraser added: “Without racial separation in the United States, there would be no possibility of maintaining the discriminatory social and economic practices which are fundamental to the economic and social well-being of American capitalism, and its role in the world today.”

The fight for black equality remains the strategic question of the American revolution. We fight for black freedom on the program of revolutionary integrationism. In fighting for the working class to oppose all instances of racist discrimination, we have supported scatter-site public housing in opposition to residential segregation; defended school busing as part of our

fight for free, quality integrated education; initiated mobilizations centered on the multiracial labor movement against KKK and Nazi terror. At the same time, we stress that genuine equality for black people in the U.S. will only come about through the smashing of capitalism, preparing the road to an egalitarian socialist order. This perspective is counterposed to liberal integration, which is premised on the utopian notion that equality for black people can be attained within this capitalist society founded on black oppression. Our perspective is counterposed as well to go-it-alone black nationalism—a petty-bourgeois ideology of despair which at bottom accepts the racist status quo.

There will be no effective resistance to the immiseration of American working people without the unity in struggle between the trade unions and the black and Latino poor. Despite the destruction of industrial jobs and erosion of union strength, black workers, who have a significantly higher rate of trade-union membership than white workers, continue to be integrated into strategic sectors of the proletariat, which alone has the power to shatter this racist capitalist system. Won to a revolutionary program, black workers will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed ghetto masses with the social power of the multiracial proletariat under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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**For Workers Revolution!**

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**For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!**

**For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!**

SEE PAGE 2

**Organizational Rules and Guidelines of the Spartacist League/U.S.**

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**Opponents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Movement**

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# South Africa...

(continued from page 12)

can actually get away with depends on the course of the class struggle; the Lonmin strikers successfully won their jobs back. Virtual martial law exists in the mine fields, with the army called in as a standby to assist the police. The cops regularly use tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse pickets and workers' meetings. Such tactics are also employed regularly by local councils, generally controlled by the ANC, to prevent community organizations in the impoverished townships from holding protests demanding basic services such as electricity and water.

## The State: Machine of Class Oppression

Mass murder and abrogation of the rights of the workers and poor—this is the face of South Africa under bourgeois rule, today under the Tripartite Alliance as it was yesterday under the white-supremacist apartheid regime. On paper, the constitution of South Africa is one of the most democratic in the world, guaranteeing freedom of speech and assembly and so on. But as V.I. Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik Party that led the workers to victory in the Russian October Revolution of 1917, pointed out, *proletarian* rights are always thrown to the wind by capitalist states when the workers begin to rebel against wage slavery:

“There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a ‘violation of public order,’ and actually in case the exploited class ‘violates’ its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner.”

—*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, 1918

The struggle to bring down the hated apartheid regime mobilized literally millions of workers and youth, and the ANC's 1994 electoral victory was greeted with huge expectations of liberation for the oppressed masses. But after 18 years of the Tripartite Alliance in power, the anger at the base of society is increasingly being expressed in class and other social struggle. Many members of the SACP and COSATU are fed up with their leadership's repeated betrayals of working-class struggles such as the Marikana strike. But it is necessary to understand that the SACP's treachery flows logically from its Stalinist-derived reformist program of “revolution in stages.”

According to this false ideology, South Africa is undergoing a “national democratic revolution” that will “grow over” into socialism. The SACP's line is that the South African state is not bourgeois but “class-contested terrain” and thus can be pressured to act in the interests of the working class. This schema flies in the face of the elementary Marxist understanding that there are two fundamental classes in society, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and that a state must be ruled by one or another of these classes. The Marikana massacre is about as pure a demonstration that there is a capitalist state in South Africa as you can ask for! It also demonstrates what we have always noted about “two-stage revolution”: in the first stage the “progressive” bourgeoisie comes to power; in the second stage workers are massacred. Meanwhile in South Africa, some leading “Communists” and union officials become millionaires.

By its nature, the capitalist state defends capitalist profit and necessarily seeks to suppress workers struggle. While virtually the entirety of the South African and international left pandered to the widespread illusions in the ANC, claiming that it would achieve “national liberation” for the oppressed masses, the Spartacists told the truth. When the ANC was elected in 1994, we headlined “ANC/De Klerk Deal Is Betrayal of Black Freedom” (WV No. 599, 29 April 1994) and “Mandela/ANC Front for Racist Capitalist Rule” (WV No. 600, 13 May 1994). The latter article stressed: “Black Freedom Requires Socialist Revolution.”

We pointed out that while the legal superstructure of apartheid was abolished, social and racial inequality remained essentially unchanged. Hence we termed this society one of neo-apartheid oppression. Today many South Africans see the similarity between the cop butchery of miners at Marikana and the apartheid rulers' murder of black people at Sharpeville

marched on the NUM's Rustenburg office to cancel their membership. In general, revolutionaries favor organizing workers in one union in a given industry as a means of maximizing the strength of the working class against the capitalists. However, we do not condemn all splits within the trade-union movement; these need to be judged on a case-by-case basis, and certainly if the majority of platinum and other miners want to join AMCU they have that right. It is the NUM tops' class treachery that is fundamentally responsible for undermining workers' unity in the mining industry. But in any case, new unions are not in and of themselves an answer to the bosses' attacks. What is necessary is the forging of a class-struggle leadership in the unions, based on complete independence from the bourgeoisie and its state, as a crucial part of building a revolutionary workers party that champions all the exploited and oppressed.

It is appropriate today to call for a joint strike committee based on elected local mine committees, many of which



**Nelson Mandela meets with former Anglo American chairman Gavin Relly in 1990 as ANC reassures capitalists that post-apartheid government would defend their interests. WV told the truth.**



in 1960 and Soweto in 1976. But what must be driven home is that the ANC-led regime is simply the changed face of bourgeois class rule, which, like its predecessor government, slaughters black workers to defend the rule of the (mainly white) capitalist masters.

Over the years, we have documented in our press viciously anti-working-class acts carried out by the ANC along with the misleaders of the unions and SACP. We noted how NUMSA metal workers' leader Moses Mayekiso and SACP top Joe Slovo were sent to break a week-long plant occupation by Mercedes-Benz workers in East London in 1990; how the newly installed ANC-led government under Nelson Mandela brutally repressed striking Pick 'n Pay grocery store workers in 1994; how in 2000 the NUMSA bureaucracy openly sided with the Volkswagen bosses who fired 1,300 workers in Uitenhage in response to a wildcat strike they carried out in defense of their shop stewards. And we have consistently politically opposed all wings of the bourgeois ANC, whether Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Zuma (who a few years ago was passed off as “pro-worker” by the SACP and COSATU tops) or Julius Malema.

## For a Joint Strike Committee

Miners at Lonmin and Implats have resigned from the NUM *en masse* and signed up with AMCU, while thousands of Anglo American Platinum strikers recently

have already been constituted during the strikes. Such a committee would organize and unify the miners' struggles, bringing together workers irrespective of union affiliation. It would fight to ensure equal pay for the same work, striving to drive out the parasitic labor brokers, whose employees at Lonmin were not covered by the pay hike. It would coordinate workers defense guards to stop scabs and organize defense against the cop thugs. It would promote demands in the interests of the surrounding black communities and would seek to draw in those, like the miners' wives, who have actively supported the strikes.

Trade unions generally organize a minority of the working class and tend to express the particular interests of the more skilled and conservative layers of the proletariat. Thus, the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky emphasized the importance not only of fighting within the unions for class-struggle politics but of forming organizations in periods of intense class struggle that embrace broader sections of the working masses, such as factory committees. He wrote in the Transitional Program (1938):

“Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions.”

Elected strike committees would more democratically reflect the will of the workers than existing union bodies. Moreover, should an effective joint strike committee be established, it would take responsibility for food provisioning, organization of security, public transport, etc. Thus, the workers would in fact be taking over many of the functions of running society in the mining areas. This would be an invaluable experience, instilling consciousness in these miners of the capacity of workers to organize society on the basis of proletarian state power.

According to the *Daily Maverick* (15 October), a meeting of wildcat strike leaders took place in Marikana, representing miners from several provinces. The article noted in particular the presence of the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), which has been active in the Rustenburg area. The DSM says that a national strike coordinating committee was launched on October 13 and that the committee is calling for a general strike on November 3. On October 19, Vavi and NUM officials were pelted with rocks by striking workers at AngloGold Ashanti's mine in Orkney, North West Province. Earlier, several DSM members were detained by mine security and grilled by police after addressing the strikers. The workers movement must defend the DSM and all others victimized for their role in the miners struggle!

However, mineworkers and others need to be aware of the thoroughly opportunist history of the DSM, which is affiliated to the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) headed by Peter Taaffe. The Taaffe group formed the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, remaining inside this *bourgeois* party until 1996. In a speech in New York given shortly after the 1994 elections, Taaffe, then the leader of the British Militant Labour Tendency, *opposed* the call for a workers party, saying: “The working class in South Africa has to go through the experience of an ANC government. The slogan of a workers party was an incorrect slogan in the period prior to the elections in South Africa. We wanted the biggest possible ANC majority” (WV No. 602, 10 June 1994).

The DSM emerged from its entrisms inside the ANC when the latter's “national liberation” credentials were starting to wear thin as a result of economic policies aimed at reassuring investors. Indeed, few if any left groups persist in uncritically cheerleading for the regime and its leaders, who are unashamedly riding the “grave train.” But the DSM, like the other reformists who hitched their wagon to the Tripartite Alliance, maintains its class-collaborationist politics, which are at bottom the same as those of the SACP and COSATU tops. This can be unmistakably seen in the DSM's attitude toward the state (see the 1994 Spartacist pamphlet, *Militant Labour's Touching Faith in the Capitalist State*). Just like their reformist big brothers, the CWI/DSM believes that the police are part of the workers movement.

In the 1994 speech cited above, Taaffe supported the cop union POPCRU (Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union), enthusing that “these very same black police who were tools of the apartheid regime, were *radicalized* by the situation.” His conclusion was: “We can neutralize the forces of the state and win them over.”

One can cite any amount of evidence disproving this suicidal illusion, the cop massacre of miners at Marikana being an obvious example. In the wake of that event, the DSM, in a 17 August statement titled “For a General Strike to End the Marikana Massacre,” violence-baited the Lonmin strikers, rebuking them for “killing first two security guards, on Saturday, and then two police officers on Monday” (quoted in a 23 August SSA statement published in WV No. 1007, 31 August). Now, in a 16 October statement, the DSM refers to a wave of workers militancy sweeping through the country, which supposedly includes “the police as well as the municipal workers”! Of the Taaffeites, it can truly be said that they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The police, black and white, are enforcers for capitalist rule. We say: Cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

The DSM calls for “nationalisation of the mines under workers' control and management.” A black-centered workers government would expropriate the mines, banks, industry and land without compensation, while struggling to extend the revolution internationally. Such a government could only be put in place through the expropriation of the South African bourgeoisie as a class, i.e., through *proletarian revolution*. The DSM statement does not mention socialist revolution, and

## Spartacist League/SYC Forum

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Left: Police brutally evict squatters in Alexandra township near Johannesburg, May 1996. Right: Strikers at Volks-wagen plant near Port Elizabeth in January 2000 faced lockout, cop attacks, mass firing and betrayal by NUMSA bureaucrats.

this is not an accident. They don’t believe that the workers must smash the capitalist state and replace it with a workers state. In Britain, Taaffe’s organization claims that industry will be nationalized through the mechanism of an “enabling bill” passed by the bourgeois Parliament. This is just a version of what the British Labour Party did after World War II: it’s social democracy, not communism.

### Malema, Corruption and COSATU

Expelled ANC youth leader Julius Malema was arrested last month and charged with money laundering, accused of using his former position to enrich himself and his business partners. The bourgeois press has carried prominent exposés of the slush funds he uses to collect kickbacks from wealthy “tenderpreneurs”—beneficiaries of government contracts—and the alleged profits he’s made from his business deals are big enough to owe some R10 million [\$1.15 million] in unpaid taxes. Much of Malema’s fortune is apparently derived from acting as a parasitic middleman, plundering the state coffers in Limpopo, one of the most impoverished provinces.

Whatever the “legality” involved here, Malema is getting rich through exploiting his connections to the ANC-led government, which makes him no different from an entire layer of the new black elite. Cyril Ramaphosa, a former NUM leader, is a rand billionaire and stockholder in Lonmin. The timing of Malema’s arrest indicates that the motive was not concern over corruption—Malema “crossed the line” when he claimed to support the strikers. In fact, the elite Hawks police unit is also reportedly going after Malema for “incitement to violence” stemming from his visits to striking miners in Marikana and elsewhere. The legal vendetta aims to gag critics of the government’s attacks on miners. For this reason, the state prosecution of Malema is against the interest of the proletariat.

Julius Malema is a bourgeois populist demagogue who skillfully exploits the anger and discontent among the country’s impoverished black majority in order to advance his own political career. His calls for nationalizing the mines and white-owned land angered not only foreign capital and the racist reactionaries but also the leaders of the Tripartite Alliance. But

Malema’s call for “economic freedom” is a fraud. He fully supports capitalism. His call for nationalization of the mines, for example, envisions transferring wealth from the white Randlords to the bourgeois state and the politically connected elite who benefit from the “black economic empowerment” program, which like all capitalist enterprise in South Africa is based on exploiting mainly black labor. His use of the “race card” inflames racial and ethnic divisions among layers of the oppressed and is empty when it comes to taking on the mainly white rulers. But Malema has won support among black youth and some workers including many miners. He must be *defeated politically* and exposed as a class enemy of workers’ emancipation.

The SACP and COSATU tops have cheered on the prosecution of Malema. But the corruption in the workers movement results from the class collaboration of the reformists and their integration into the bourgeois state. There are numerous instances of unions running business enterprises; for example, leaders of the NUM and SACP help run a mining venture, Kameni, in Limpopo, and the NUM and the bosses’ Chamber of Mines jointly own Unibank. An article in *Business Day* (19 September) noted that Patrice Motsepe, the owner of African Rainbow Minerals, had contributed R1.75 million to COSATU over the past three years, not including his donation to this year’s congress. He also gave R1.75 million to a trust that supports the dependents of deceased national union office holders. Other large corporate donors included Investec, which funded last year’s central committee meeting with a R1 million donation, and Standard Bank, which contributed R850,000 to the 2009 congress. These capitalists understand whose interests are served by the Tripartite Alliance and its labor-bureaucratic component; the working class needs to learn this lesson.

### Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

Some miners have expressed the view that unions should stay out of politics and concern themselves solely with the economic betterment of their members. This undoubtedly reflects their bitterness at the Tripartite Alliance. However, struggles at the point of production, important as they are, cannot by themselves do away with or even fundamentally alleviate the brutality

of capitalist exploitation. The system will simply breed another layer of bourgeois politicians like Malema who exploit the discontent of the masses.

Wage and other economic gains are inherently reversible, subject to the vicissitudes of the capitalist market. With sagging demand on the world market for platinum, the bosses are already threatening layoffs. Moreover, only a small fraction of South Africa’s working masses and plebeian poor is represented by trade unions. Many people are jobless or unorganized. The unemployment rate for youth exceeds 50 percent. Farm laborers are at the mercy of wealthy white farmers. The government’s land redistribution program is a farce. A revolutionary party would fight to organize these workers and demand the expropriation of the land without compensation. A workers government would establish cooperative and state farms, which alone can provide a decent life not only for the farm laborers but for the millions more living in desolate rural backwaters.

The lot of the township poor is equally harsh, subject to cutoffs in electricity and water, if they had ever gotten these essentials in the first place. Despite the government’s phony promises to provide housing for all South Africans, millions continue to live in shantytowns. Capitalist misery hits black women the hardest—from significantly higher rates of poverty and HIV infection to the widespread practices of polygamy, *lobola* (bride price) and even *ukuthwala* (“marriage by capture”) in some rural areas. Studies show that up to 50 percent of women are assaulted by their partners.

What is necessary is a Leninist vanguard party—not a party of working-class betrayal like the SACP or a reformist labor party as advocated by the DSM but a party modeled on the Bolsheviks who led the workers to power in Russia in 1917. Such a vanguard party, consisting of the most class-conscious section of the workers as well as revolutionary intellectuals, will be forged by winning over the best elements of the SACP from their pro-capitalist tops, as well as other militants. The discontents of society, unless they are expressed in

struggles on a *class* axis, can easily take on reactionary form in polarizations along racial, national, ethnic and tribal lines. As we wrote in 1995, what is needed is a revolutionary workers party which:

“does not simply defend the particular interests of the working class, especially its unionized sector, but is fighting to eradicate *all forms* of national and social oppression.... To unite all of the oppressed, a workers party must staunchly champion the democratic rights of those who have cause to feel threatened by the ANC’s brand of nationalism—e.g., coloureds, Indians, Zulu villagers, immigrants from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other neighboring African states.”  
—“Two Letters to the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action,” printed in the 1997 International Communist League pamphlet *The Fight for a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left*

The overlap of race and class in South Africa has given credence to the nationalist ideology pushed by the ANC, the false belief that the black African people have a common interest that stands higher than class divisions. But the investor-friendly policies of the ANC have caused widespread disillusion among the working masses. Large protests over service cuts began years ago in the townships, and now important sections of the proletariat have begun to move. The government has responded with savagely repressive measures. This points to the brittleness and instability of bourgeois democracy in South Africa. The gulf between the impoverished masses and the privileged white caste, along with their black “grave trainers,” is simply too vast to be easily subsumed in parliamentary horse-trading and the seemingly endless succession crises at the top of the Alliance.

The masses’ expectations for national and social equality require the proletariat taking power. This is the heart of Trotsky’s concept of permanent revolution, which recognizes that in countries of belated capitalist development, the achievement of the burning democratic tasks requires the destruction of capitalism. A black-centered workers government would expropriate the bourgeoisie, establishing a planned collectivized economy that would undertake the much-needed improvement in the living standards of the black toilers while upholding the democratic rights of the coloureds and Indians and of those whites who accept a government centrally based on the black working masses.

A workers government must be linked to the toilers throughout the region in a socialist federation of Southern Africa, and it would have to fight like hell to extend workers power to the advanced industrial countries. A socialist revolution in South Africa would confront powerful enemies; at the same time it would find important proletarian allies in the imperialist centers devastated by the long economic downturn, as well as other countries where the masses have strongly identified with the struggle against white supremacy. On the basis of international socialist planning, we can build a truly humane society in which the exploitation associated with the rule of the mining magnates and imperialist blood-suckers is a relic of the past. ■

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### SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

No. 8 Winter 2012

#### Smash Neo-Apartheid Capitalist Misery Through Socialist Revolution!

#### We Need a Leninist-Trotskyist Vanguard Party!

Tripartite Alliance tops administer racist capitalist rule. Ndlovu, Zuma and Venter at SACP gathering in 2007 (top left); Malema campaign for ANC in 2009 (bottom left), before falling out with Zuma. Right: Impact of the 1917 October Revolution. Main photo: Mineworkers at NUM tops.

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No. 12

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FOR BLACK PROLETARIAN POWER

Pseudo-Science in the Service of Racism  
The "Bell Curve" and Genocide U.S.A. SEE PAGE 34

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## Miners Struggle Shakes Neo-Apartheid Capitalist Order

### South Africa



Rustenburg: Anglo American platinum miners march on October 6, one day after company fired 12,000 strikers.

AP

## Break with the Tripartite Alliance! Fight for a Black-Centered Workers Government!

In the face of the horrific August 16 massacre of 34 striking workers at Lonmin's Marikana mine, South Africa's miners have persevered in their struggle. The Lonmin strikers won a substantial pay increase and the strike acted as a spur to numerous other workers in platinum, gold, chrome and iron ore mines. Seeking to catch up with the workers' militancy, the bureaucrats in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and other labor officials authorized a truck drivers strike that lasted for three weeks.

The striking miners at Lonmin and at Impala Platinum (Implats, where there was a strike earlier this year) successfully defied their leadership in the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and proved that hard class struggle can win. One observer noted that this represented "an industrial relations meltdown" in South Africa that included "total collapse of collective bargaining structures and agreements; destruction of the majority union and emergence of often uncoordinated strike and interim committees to represent workers; emergence of a new minority union," etc. (*Mail & Guardian*, 12 October).

COSATU is a component part of the Tripartite Alliance government led by the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) and also including the South African Communist Party (SACP). In this role, the COSATU bureaucrats have imposed on the mainly black working class a stifling code of labor laws that limit strikes, require advance notification for strikes and solidarity actions, and substitute arbitration procedures for industrial action. But the mineworkers ignored these straitjackets, engaging in wildcat strikes and bringing into the sharpest relief the union tops' loyalty to the capitalist government at the expense of the working masses.

The Tripartite Alliance is a nationalist popular front, a class-collaborationist alliance in which the leaders of COSATU and the SACP subordinate the working masses

to the capitalist exploiters. Such popular fronts are a classic mechanism through which the Stalinist Communist parties in such countries as France and Italy repeatedly sold out revolutionary opportunities, as well as in Spain in the 1930s when the Stalinists helped to violently suppress insurgent workers. In this regard, the Stalinists are no different from the Social Democrats, who have staunchly upheld the capitalist order since World War I.

The leaders of COSATU and the SACP have been in the forefront of the government's witchhunting of militant miners. The NUM leadership solidarized with the cops, even after the massacre. An article in the *Daily Maverick* (13 October) by Jared Sacks cites eyewitness accounts that the first killings in Marikana, prior to even the big massacre by the cops, were carried out on August 11 by NUM shop stewards and

other officials who fired on striking miners protesting the NUM's complicity with the Lonmin bosses. After an emergency meeting called by South African president Jacob Zuma, COSATU head Zwelinzima Vavi praised Zuma for "showing leadership" and expressed relief that the meeting "condemned the violent strikes and urged law enforcement agencies to curb the illegal action" (*City Press*, 14 October).

At last month's COSATU congress, the pro-government bureaucrats organized an attack on a literature table of our comrades of Spartacist South Africa. A 25 September SSA statement sharply pointed out that the purpose of this attack was to threaten any expression of solidarity with the mineworkers' strike wave and noted that "the COSATU bureaucrats fear that other sections of the working class, inspired by this, will take the road of class struggle"

(see WV No. 1009, 28 September).

In fact this projection has come to pass. Not only did workers at the South Africa Toyota plant in Durban go out on strike, but there was a trucking strike in which scab vehicles were burned. The deeply oppressed, mainly coloured (mixed race, partly of Malay origin) clothing workers in the Western Cape went on strike in September for a modest wage increase, while more recently farm workers in the province also launched a strike. Earlier, the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union had negotiated a **30 percent pay cut** for new hires, thus acting to cut salaries that are already the lowest in the manufacturing sector. This speaks volumes about the COSATU tops' "living wage campaign," which they ballyhooed at their recent congress while knifing the miners who were trying to win just that.

A central purpose of the emergency meeting of union and company bigwigs convened by Zuma, which was also attended by the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) and the FEDUSA trade-union federation, was to reassure foreign investors in the face of the downgrading of South Africa's credit rating by Moody's and Standard & Poor's. S&P expressed concern that the continuing mining strikes and "social tension" would "increase spending pressure and reduce the country's fiscal flexibility" (*City Press*, 14 October). The genuflection to overseas businessmen underscores the dependence of the South African bourgeoisie and its ANC-led government on foreign capital.

The bosses are now stepping up strike-breaking efforts. With the Chamber of Mines hardlining it in talks with striking gold miners, tens of thousands of these workers are being threatened with dismissal. Anglo American Platinum, the world's biggest platinum mining company, has fired 12,000 workers for engaging in an "illegal" strike. But what the bosses

*continued on page 10*



Reuters

September 16: Strikers from Lonmin's Marikana platinum mine demand pay hike, protest union misleaders and ruling ANC. Strikers stayed firm after massacre by cops and won pay increase, setting off strike wave.