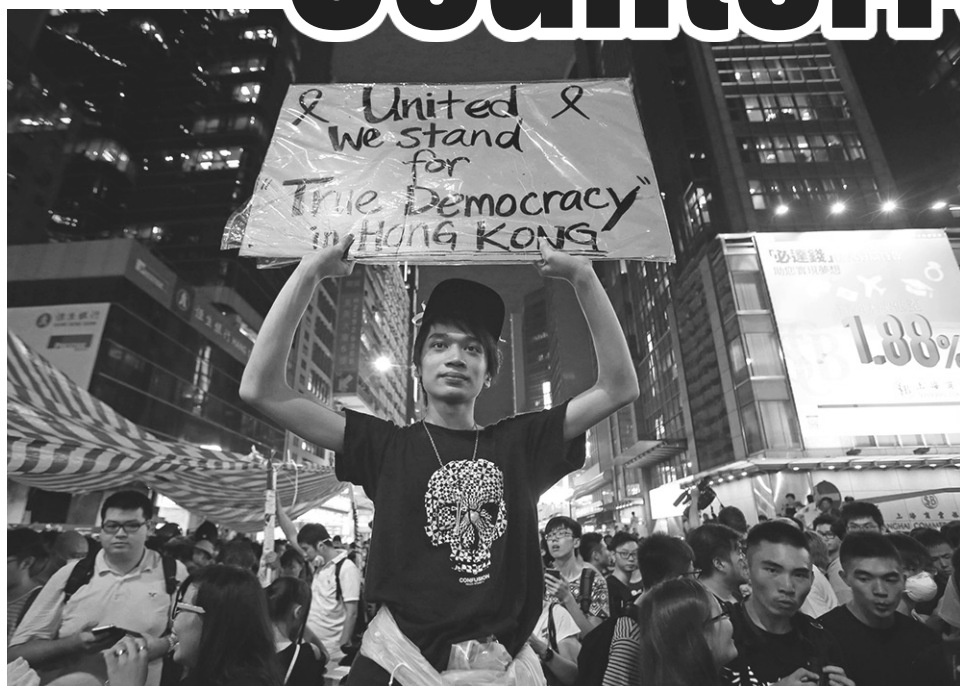


Hong Kong Protests: — Spearhead for Capitalist Counterrevolution



AP



Hongkong2020

Student protesters in Hong Kong, October 3. Above: Martin Lee and Anson Chan, pro-imperialist bourgeois democrats and leaders of Occupy Central, one of the main groups behind the protests, meeting with Joe Biden in White House on April 4.

OCTOBER 13—Imperialist-backed “democracy” activists seeking to end Chinese Communist Party (CCP) control over the capitalist enclave of Hong Kong continue to block streets in parts of the city, as they have since late September. Using the demand for universal suffrage as a wedge, the protesters, known as the Umbrella Movement, are attempting to open the way for Hong Kong’s capitalist parties to exercise direct political power. It is in the interest of working people around the world to oppose these protests. Political power in the hands of the bourgeoisie in Hong Kong would be a spearhead for smashing the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state and opening the mainland to untrammelled capitalist exploitation.

The Umbrella Movement’s demands have been endorsed by a chorus of reactionary forces, from the White House and Fox News to the Vatican. In an October 1 meeting with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi, U.S. secretary of state John Kerry pressed home Washington’s support for “free elections” in Hong Kong. Hong Kong’s former British colonial masters, who lorded it over the territory for a century and a half without the slightest democratic trappings, have also expressed support, with Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg summoning the Chinese ambassador to express “dismay and alarm” at Beijing’s refusal to “give to the people of Hong Kong what they are perfectly entitled to expect.” “Democracy” has long been a favored pretext for imperialist machinations, particularly during the anti-Soviet Cold War. In the case of the Hong Kong protests, however, the imperialists have been somewhat coy in order to avoid disrupting their commercial relations with China.

China is not a capitalist country, although its “market reforms” have opened the door to large-scale investment by for-

Expropriate the Hong Kong Bourgeoisie! For Proletarian Political Revolution in China!

eign corporations and led to the emergence of a layer of capitalists on the mainland. China’s economy is tightly controlled by the CCP regime, with the most important sectors of industry collectivized and owned by the state. The imperialists’ aim is to break the state’s control through capitalist counterrevolution. To this end, they pursue economic inroads into China and promote internal counterrevolutionary forces such as the Umbrella Movement. The other side of their strategy is the military pressure exerted by the U.S. and Japan and other American allies, as marked recently by a series of provocations in the East and South China Seas, not to mention spy flights off China’s eastern seaboard. China has been quite restrained in response. Imagine the frenzy the U.S. government would whip up if the Chinese navy were spotted 50 miles west of California!

Capitalist Hong Kong provides a golden opportunity for the imperialist powers to cultivate “regime change.” They have been doing so with alacrity, with Washington paying hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in State Department grants to develop “democratic institutions” in the enclave and training youth as political activists. They have also set up spy operations in Hong Kong, such as the NSA hacking of Chinese cell-phones revealed by Edward Snowden. The Umbrella Movement is the latest

manifestation of imperialist-backed anti-Communist “democracy” protests going back over a decade. The current demand for “free elections” is directed against a plan by Beijing under which Hong Kong’s chief executive will be elected from a list approved by a committee under the sway of the CCP.

In 1997, when Hong Kong reverted to China from British rule, the CCP pledged to maintain a capitalist economy in Hong Kong under the rubric of “one country, two systems,” which also allowed the local capitalists a voice in the selection of the government. For the Stalinist bureaucrats in Beijing, this arrangement served to promote foreign investment on the mainland by reassuring overseas capitalists that it was safe to do business with China. At the time of the handover, the International Communist League “joined in cheering as the rotted British Empire finally lost its last major colonial holding” but

warned that the continuation of capitalism in Hong Kong “is a dagger aimed at the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution” (WV No. 671, 11 July 1997). Unlike the atomized capitalists on the mainland, the Hong Kong bourgeoisie is politically organized, with parties representing its class interests and a variety of newspapers and other media.

The ICL’s opposition to the Umbrella Movement flows from our unconditional military defense of the Chinese workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We call for the expropriation of the Hong Kong bourgeoisie, including its holdings on the mainland. Likewise, it is necessary to expropriate the new domestic capitalist entrepreneurs in China and renegotiate the terms of foreign investment in the interests of the working people. But to carry out these tasks poses the need for workers political revolution to oust the venal Beijing bureaucracy that acts as a cancer on the workers state and through its policies has emboldened capitalist-restorationist forces in China.

The Beijing Stalinists have long promoted reunification with Taiwan under the “one country, two systems” formula that was applied to Hong Kong. The bourgeoisie in Taiwan, operating under the direct military protection of American imperialism, has ruled over the island since fleeing Mao Zedong’s CCP forces. However unlikely, reunification with a capitalist Taiwan would greatly bolster the forces of capitalist restoration on the mainland, much more so than in the case of Hong Kong. We stand for *revolutionary reunification*: proletarian political revolution in

continued on page 10

Pay College Athletes! For Unionization!
College Sports Plantation
See page 6



Ireland: Anti-Abortion Hell for Women

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 228 (Autumn 2014), newspaper of our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain.

DUBLIN—It’s been nearly two years since the horrific and utterly preventable death of Savita Halappanavar in a Galway hospital due to medical authorities’ refusal to terminate her pregnancy. Protests rocked Ireland when it was revealed that Savita, admitted to hospital suffering a miscarriage, was denied an abortion that would have saved her life because, as her husband was told, “this is a Catholic country.” Last year, in the wake of the protests, the Fine Gael/Labour government brought in new legislation—the “Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act”—to deal with the abortion crisis. Now the barbarity of the Irish clericalist state towards women has been laid bare, again: a young immigrant woman, pregnant as a result of rape, is denied an abortion, rendered suicidal and forced to undergo delivery of a baby by caesarean section.

In an interview with Kitty Holland published in the *Irish Times* (23 August), the young woman told her harrowing story. Shortly after arriving in Ireland last March she found out that she was eight weeks pregnant as a result of the rape she had suffered before fleeing her country. She asked for an abortion at that time, which would necessitate travelling to Britain. For non-EU immigrants, travel to Britain for an abortion involves huge obstacles, including a lengthy visa appli-

cation process and extortionate costs. The woman explained that with weeks passing she became very distraught; however only when she became suicidal, around the 15th week of pregnancy, did she qualify for assessment by the state for a “termination of pregnancy.” This assessment, mandated by the new law, amounts to an inquisition by two psychiatrists and an obstetrician who determine if the woman is “genuinely” suicidal, and then decide the options. In this case, the assessment didn’t take place until around week 25 of the woman’s pregnancy and she was informed that, suicidal or not, she was too far along in the pregnancy to permit an abortion.

Over the course of the next three weeks, the woman twice went on hunger strike. She ended her first hunger strike when told that she could have an abortion, only afterwards to be told that she would be forced to have the baby. Twenty-six weeks into the pregnancy, the baby was delivered by caesarean section.

In the wake of Savita Halappanavar’s death, liberals and leftists demanded that the government finally “Legislate for X,” referring to the Supreme Court ruling of 1992, which overturned the ban on a young suicidal rape victim travelling to Britain to seek an abortion. That ruling, made in response to huge social protests, ordered the government to make limited provisions for abortion where the life of the woman was at risk, including through suicide. For the next 22 years each Irish government refused to touch the question

of abortion legislation, and for 22 years reformist groups like the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party limited their calls to the framework of “Legislate for X.” Now they have their legislation. Not only does it *not* increase the availability of abortion, it introduces up to *14 years* in prison for carrying out an abortion.

In contrast to the wretched social democrats, we Spartacists have consistently called for *free abortion on demand*; i.e., what women living in Ireland *need*. We have no illusions this will be easy to achieve. However the truth is that the only way to win any meaningful abortion rights (and decent health and child-care provision) is through mass struggle against the capitalist state, the church and the reactionary anti-woman forces behind it. Only such struggle, based on the working class, can lead to free access to this safe medical procedure for women from all classes in Ireland.

It is not out of naiveté that the social-democratic Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party limit their calls for abortion rights to what might be “possible,” despite defeat after defeat. In thrall to the capitalist order, reformists seek to corral mass outrage—such as the eruption in the wake of the 2012 abortion atrocity—into “struggle” neatly bound by what is acceptable under the rule of the capitalist state and Catholic hierarchy. Hence their demand to “Legislate for X.” Newly elected Socialist Party TD [member of lower house of Irish parliament] Ruth Coppinger issued an 18 August statement demanding “Abortion must immediately be made available in cases of rape, incest, fatal foetal abnormalities and where there’s a threat to the health of a woman” (socialistparty.ie). But what about the vast majority of unwanted pregnancies which are just that—unwanted?

Coppinger rightly says that the “8th Amendment must go,” that is the 1983 amendment to the Irish constitution that enshrines a ban on abortion. However, she looks not to mass mobilisations but to the Labour Party which she calls on to “ensure there is a referendum to get rid

of the 8th Amendment by the Spring of next year at the latest.” Labour—the very party that just last year, together with Fine Gael, legislated for up to 14 years imprisonment for procuring an abortion—is now expected to aid in the liberation of women?

All the reformist and liberal campaigns for abortion rights refuse to take on the church, fearing the enormous reactionary backlash the bishops can and do unleash. From education to healthcare, in Ireland the Catholic church and the state are utterly intertwined. While much of the population is far less beholden to the church today, especially after the revelations regarding the brutalities of the church-run “industrial schools,” Magdalene laundries and the “homes” for single parents, the church hasn’t relinquished its hold over Irish society. Today, over 90 per cent of schools are owned and run by the church, with the state paying the teachers’ salaries.

Similarly, while hospital staff are often state employees, the “ethos” of many hospitals is still laid down by religious orders. The notorious Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Charity still run two of the largest general hospitals and one of the children’s hospitals in Dublin. These are the same orders that carried out the decades-long physical and mental torture inflicted on the child inmates of the “industrial schools.” The chairman of the Board of Governors of the National Maternity Hospital and the other children’s hospital in Dublin is none other than the Archbishop of Dublin. This is not to mention the number of unidentified lay Catholic organisations, such as the sinister Opus Dei, that ensure their members occupy key positions in health and education.

Birth control and abortion remain restricted throughout the capitalist world by the state, by the institution of the family and by organised religion, which all serve to enforce the oppression of women. The road to emancipation for women will be opened only with the destruction of the capitalist system through workers revolution. ■



TROTSKY

The End of Bourgeois Economics

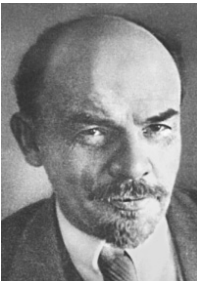
Prior to World War I, Rosa Luxemburg—then prominent in the German Social Democracy’s revolutionary wing—began preparing for publication a popular version of her cadre school lectures on Marxist economics in order to educate workers as to their historic task as gravediggers of the capitalist order. The first chapter of Luxemburg’s unfinished book appeared in English as a pamphlet, issued by the American Trotskyists’ Pioneer

Publishers in 1954 and subsequently reprinted in London and Colombo, in then-Ceylon.

As Marx demonstrated, the inherent tendencies of capitalist development, at a certain point of their maturity, necessitate the transition to a planful mode of production consciously organized by the entire working force of society—in order that all of society and human civilization might not perish in the convulsions of uncontrolled anarchy. And this fateful hour is hastened by capital, at an ever-increasing rate, by mobilizing its future gravediggers, the proletarians, in ever greater numbers, by extending its domination to all countries of the globe, by establishing a chaotic world economy, and by laying the foundation for the solidarity of the proletariat of all countries into one revolutionary world power which shall sweep aside the class rule of capital....

The Marxian doctrine is a child of bourgeois economics, but its birth cost the mother’s life. In Marxist theory, economics found its perfection, but also its end as a science. What will follow—apart from the elaboration of Marxist theory in details—is only the metamorphosis of this theory into action, i.e., the struggle of the international proletariat for the institution of the socialist economic order. The consummation of economics as a science constitutes a world-historic task: its application in organizing a planful world economy. The last chapter of economics will be the social revolution of the world proletariat.

—Rosa Luxemburg, “What is Economics?” reprinted in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (Pathfinder Press, 1970)

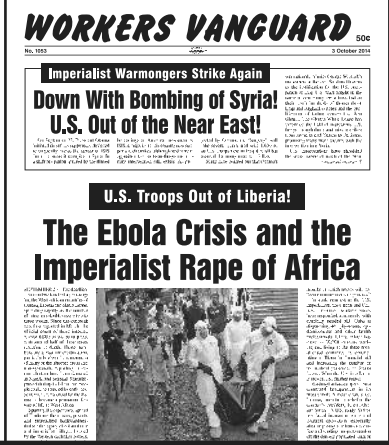


LENIN

Workers Vanguard Subscription Drive

August 21 to October 15

Local	Quota (in points)	Week 7 (Oct. 2-8)	%
Bay Area	450	392	87%
Chicago	375	380	101%
Los Angeles	275	203.5	74%
New York	725	814	112%
National Total	1,825	1,789.5	98%



Subscribe Now!

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*)
International rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$_____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____
Address _____
Apt. # _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (____) _____ E-mail _____

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon
EDITOR: Michael Davisson
EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Conor Kristofersen
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Laura Zamora (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Blandine Hauser (letters editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, John Blake, Bonnie Brodie, Jon Brule, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, George Foster, Walter Jennings, Elizabeth Johnson, Michael Joyce, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alan Wilde

The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is October 14.

No. 1054

17 October 2014

Anti-Woman, Anti-Black, Anti-Labor

Supreme Court Gets That Old-Time Religion

With the U.S. Supreme Court's summer break now over, there is every reason to be afraid, very afraid. In the closing months of its last session, women, black people, workers—just about anyone outside the property-owning white male demographic of the country's founding fathers—saw their already severely depleted rights fed into the judicial woodchipper. In *Harris v. Quinn*, the Court found unconstitutional a public-sector union's authority to collect fees from workers it represents. In *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, the high priests of the American injustice system sanctioned the reading of Christian prayers at the opening of town board meetings over the opposition of offended residents. In *Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action*, a Michigan ballot initiative banning the consideration of race in admissions to public universities was upheld, driving yet another stake into the corpse of affirmative action in education.

The celebrations last week that greeted the Court's refusal to take up the overturn of gay-marriage bans in some states should do nothing to assuage the fear. Even as many same-sex couples were finally able to wed, the growing acceptance of this basic democratic right is largely explained by the conservative nature of the institution of marriage. Despite its temporizing, the Court undoubtedly will revisit the issue in the future. Characteristically, once the justices went to work, they upheld restrictions on voting rights except in one case where the adoption of those restrictions came too close to election day. Chaos at the polls would not do much for the trappings of democracy.

Among the high court's most ominous rulings in its previous term, and the one drawing the most attention, was the June 30 decision in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*. Citing the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the Court held that the religious beliefs of the Christian fundamentalist owners of a "closely held" for-profit corporation were violated by requiring the company to pay for health insurance coverage for certain forms of contraception under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Crafted as having narrow applicability, *Hobby Lobby* is a dangerous stepping stone for wide-ranging judicial incursions on basic democratic rights. *Hobby Lobby* turns the separation of church and state, embodied in the First Amendment, on its head. The company's owners had not been deprived of the right to their religious practices. Rather, they used the sword of their religious beliefs to trample on the rights of others. Where does it stop: exemptions from public health measures, such as vaccinations; tearing up health and safety regulations; dumping minimum-wage and child-labor legislation; banning unions? The Supreme Court ruling is not a "slippery slope" but another mudslide in the 40-year crusade to shoe-horn religion into all spheres of public life, the purpose of which is to enforce social conformity and inculcate respect for established authority.

What rankles the fundamentalists is not that their religious practices are being infringed upon but that obstacles remain in the way of forcing their bigoted practices on others. Even before the Court's edict, in February the Kansas House of Representatives passed a bill that would have allowed people citing their religious beliefs to refuse to do business with same-sex couples. In Idaho, Oregon, South Dakota, Arizona, Ohio and Okla-



AP

June 30 protests in Oklahoma (above) and Washington, D.C., on day of Supreme Court decision allowing employers to exclude contraceptives from health insurance coverage on religious grounds.



Reuters

homa, similar bills have been introduced.

Justice Samuel Alito, who has emerged as the laureate of judicial reaction, promises that laws prohibiting racial discrimination will not be affected by its ruling. Perhaps. But citing religious objections to social measures was part of the legal scaffold upon which racist opposition to the 1960s civil rights laws were based, supplementing the old Confederacy's call for "state's rights" and other constructs. That such complaints are echoed today is not accidental.

The Court under Chief Justice John Roberts has already gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act of any meaning. In further knifing affirmative action, it has repeatedly wielded the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which was adopted to protect the rights of black people who had recently been emancipated from slavery. A CNN report (10 April) asked, "Has the Roberts Court Placed Landmark 1964 Civil Rights Law on a Hit List?" Notably in this regard, the Court has interpreted legislation adopted to facilitate sexual discrimination claims in employment to make it more difficult to prove such claims.

The Homage Vice Pays to Virtue

Hobby Lobby's owners, David Green and family objected to the emergency contraceptive pills Ella and Plan B (so-called "morning after" drugs) as well as intrauterine devices (IUDs), all of which they falsely define as means of abortion. Prior to challenging the implementation of the ACA, though, Hobby Lobby's employee medical insurance covered Plan B and Ella. The company's 401(k) plan *continues* to invest millions in funds that own the companies that make birth control, including Plan B. Yet the Supreme Court declared that the ACA mandate to cover emergency contraceptive pills and IUDs—products that reap financial benefits for Hobby Lobby offi-

cers—imposed a "substantial burden" on the company's religious liberty.

The religious objection to these contraceptives as abortifacients was based on the claim that they destroy fertilized eggs by interfering with implantation in the uterus. This is demonstrably false. These birth-control measures prevent pregnancy by delaying ovulation. Even abortion opponent Dennis Miller, director of the bioethics center at the Christian Cedarville University, conceded that emergency contraceptive drugs do not cause abortion. But this meant nothing to the Supreme Court majority.

In a deception appropriate to the highest body of the legal profession, the Court promised that the *Hobby Lobby* decision would be applied narrowly. Alito assured those concerned that only the four specific contraceptive measures objected to by Hobby Lobby's owners were implicated. But the following day, the Court clarified that the ruling extends to all 20

forms of contraception covered by the ACA. The Court also sought to massage its foreseeable critics by declaring that this covered only "closely held" corporations, i.e., those where a few individuals, often family, own most of the stock. Hobby Lobby is not some mom-and-pop operation, as implied by the Court, but a multibillion-dollar chain of craft stores, with thousands of employees. "Closely held" describes nearly 90 percent of the corporations in the U.S., which are now deemed to embody the religious beliefs of their owners.

Anticipating skepticism and even outrage among the public over ascribing human attributes to corporations, Alito opined, "A corporation is simply a form of organization used by human beings to achieve desired ends.... When rights, whether constitutional or statutory, are extended to corporations, the purpose is to protect the rights of these people." So now fetuses have rights, corporations have rights—how about black people and home health care workers? Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the UC Irvine School of Law, answered Alito in a *Los Angeles Times* op-ed piece (30 June): "A corporation—a fictional entity—is created to protect its owner from liability. So long as the corporation is run as a separate entity, the owner is liable only for what he or she invests in it." He added, "But a fictional entity cannot have a religious conscience or religious beliefs." Except, of course, the worship of profit, capitalism's ecumenical religion.

Anti-Abortionism: Love Child of Religious and Racist Reaction

For over 30 years, the Christian fundamentalist right has spearheaded the backlash against the limited gains won by women and black people in the 1960s and early '70s. At the heart of this crusade has been the war on women's right to abortion, an effort that also includes attacks on access to contraception. The anti-woman bigots view abortion as a threat to the patriarchal family, which along with religion is a key prop of capitalist class rule, helping to regiment the population and instill social conservatism (see "For Free Abortion Available to All!", WV No. 1052, 19 September).

Religion emerged as an organized political force in the late 1970s, with

continued on page 9

Spartacist League/SYC Forums

Near East Cauldron: Imperialism, Zionism, Islamic Fundamentalism

Defend the Palestinians! Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!
Down With Imperialist Air Strikes Against ISIS Reactionaries!

U.S. Out of the Near East!

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, October 18, 4 p.m.

Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Avenue
(2 blocks north of
Vermont/Sunset
Redline Metro Station)

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

BAY AREA

Saturday, October 25, 2 p.m.

303 Hudson Street, Oakland
(Berkeley Korean United Methodist Church,
5 blocks south of Rockridge BART
at College & Manila Ave.
opposite Rockridge Library)

For information: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net

The Poverty of Bourgeois Economics

Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*

By Gerrit Bogle and Joseph Seymour

Part Two

Part One of this article appeared in WV No. 1053 (3 October).

Interviewed by *The New Republic* (5 May), Piketty declared that he had “never managed really to read” Karl Marx’s *Capital*. That has not stopped him from devoting a chunk of his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* to attempting to prove that Marx was wrong. In a subsection titled “Back to Marx and the Falling Rate of Profit,” Piketty purports to criticize a core understanding of Marxist economics. He in fact jousts with a straw man.

One of Marx’s key insights was the inherent tendency for the rate of profit, the driving force of the capitalist system, to decline over time. Capitalists invest in expanding productive capacity on the assumption that they will be able to sell the goods produced at a particular rate of profit. However, as Marx showed, during periods of expansion, capitalists over time find themselves unable to garner the expected profit, so they cut back their investments. The result is an economic downturn and a catastrophic shutdown of factories, with the mass firing of workers.

The explanation of this tendency flowed from Marx’s understanding that surplus value, the unpaid portion of workers’ labor, is the source of profit. Marx focused on the capital (i.e., means of production) invested per worker, which he termed the organic composition of capital. He observed that, especially in periods of economic boom when workers can often demand higher wages, individual capitalists increase the amount of capital per worker in order to cut costs and gain a competitive advantage. As all capitalists follow suit, the total amount of surplus value that is generated per capital invested—that is, the average profit rate—declines.

Piketty seeks to refute Marx’s analysis of this fundamental contradiction of the capitalist mode of production: “The

implicit hypothesis was that growth of production, and especially of manufacturing output, was explained mainly by the accumulation of industrial capital. In other words, output increased solely because every worker was backed by more machinery and equipment and not because productivity as such (for a given



Gamma-Rapho

Paris, March 2007: Thomas Piketty (second from left) with French Socialist Party presidential candidate Ségolène Royal, whom he served as economic adviser.

quantity of labor and capital) increased.”

Piketty is imputing to Marx an absurdity. How is it possible for productivity to increase with a given stock of capital goods (leaving aside speedup)? An increase in labor productivity almost always requires replacing or augmenting existing machinery with new equipment embodying more advanced technology. Such new equipment, because it enables the capitalist to extract a greater amount of surplus value per worker, will necessarily have a higher market value than older equipment. In short, increased labor productivity is necessarily associated with more capital per worker.

Marx, writing in the period of the industrial revolution, knew well that capitalism increased not only the quantity of industrial capital, but also its productivity.

As he wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, “The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society.”

Piketty takes Marx to task for not subjecting his theory on the falling rate of

as basic to his general theory of capitalist development.”

Mage also found that especially in the period of rapid capital accumulation between 1946 and 1960 “technological progress has been extremely capital-intensive.” Over this period, he computed that the organic composition of capital had increased by 45 percent.

Piketty distorts Marxist theory in other ways, including by attributing to the concept of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall a prediction of the inevitable downfall of capitalism. Such historical determinism is utterly foreign to Marxism. As the revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in “Once Again, Whither France?” (March 1935):

“There is no crisis that can be, by itself, fatal to capitalism. The oscillations of the business cycle only create a situation in which it will be easier, or more difficult, for the proletariat to overthrow capitalism. The transition from a bourgeois society to a socialist society presupposes the activity of living people who are the makers of their own history.”

Marx and Engels explained that the only way to end the boom-bust cycles inherent to capitalism is for the working class to take control of the means of production through socialist revolution and institute a planned, collectivized economy.

Crisis-Ridden Production for Profit

Piketty’s bogus conception of Marx has him describing capitalism as a constraint on *profit*. Marx’s actual criticism is that the capitalist profit system is a constraint on *production*, and hence to fulfilling the needs of the mass of the population. The vast majority of the means the capitalists have at their disposal to increase profit (e.g., slashing wages, intensifying speedup, plundering neocolonial countries) have nothing to do with increasing the stock of goods available to the mass of the world’s population. Furthermore, many of the avenues into which the search for profit compels capitalism amount to an enormous destruction of productive capacity.

As Marx explained in Volume III of *Capital*: “The expansion or contraction of production are determined by...profit and the proportion of this profit to the employed capital, thus by a definite rate of profit, rather than the relation of production to social requirements, i.e., to

profit to empirical investigation. Such an investigation was made in 1963 by Shane Mage, a founding leader of the Spartacist tendency, who is today no longer an active political figure. As part of his doctoral dissertation, Mage calculated the average rate of profit for the U.S. economy from 1900 to 1960 (archive.org/details/MagesDissertation). He did so in two different ways: one using units of labor time appropriate to Marxist theory, the other using current dollar values corresponding to the accounting procedures and decision-making criteria of capitalist managers. Mage summarized the results as follows:

“This study has made it clear that the U.S. rate of profit as defined by Marx, whether calculated on a labor-unit or current-dollar basis, has fallen drastically over the past sixty years. The organic composition of capital has simultaneously increased, though not in as pronounced a way. The facts of the modern U.S. economy thus tend to confirm, at least in general outline, the ‘law’ that Marx regarded



Reuters

GM’s long-abandoned Fisher Body plant in Detroit. Former Motor City was left to rot by capitalists after profit rates fell too low.

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

Web site: www.icl-fi.org • E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

Chicago.....Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

Public Office: 1st Sat. of every month, 2-5 p.m., and by appointment, 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los AngelesBox 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New YorkBox 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Public Office: 1st Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318, Manhattan

Oakland.....Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net

Public Office: Sat. 1-4 p.m., 1904 Franklin (Buzzer #407)

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Montréal.....CP 83 Succ. Place-d’Armes, Montréal, QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578
trotksyste.montreal@gmail.com

TorontoBox 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

VancouverBox 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotksyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

the requirements of socially developed human beings. It is for this reason that the capitalist mode of production meets with barriers at a certain expanded stage of production.”

But Piketty needn’t have read *Capital* to know better. Again, the idea is stated with great eloquence in the first chapter of *The Communist Manifesto*, written twenty years earlier:

“Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce.... The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other,

of the world by a handful of ‘advanced’ countries.” Lenin emphasized that the monopolization of production and the dominant role of finance capital impel the imperialist powers to search for markets, raw materials, sources of cheap labor and spheres of exploitation in more backward countries.

The carving up of the world is not accomplished by purely diplomatic and economic means. Military force is the ultimate arbiter. At times, military adventures are launched to further this looting. At other times, competition between imperialist rivals has ignited world war. On top of the tremendous human toll, such wars usher in the destruction of the wealth of mankind on a massive scale. Imperialist aggression and war are thus ingrained within the framework of capitalism—the entire system must be overturned.

Accounting and Ideology

The mathematician Richard Hamming was fond of recounting a parable from physicist Arthur Eddington: “Some men went fishing in the sea with a net, and upon examining what they caught they concluded that there was a minimum size to the fish in the sea.” Piketty’s net is the method of bourgeois accounting, and casting it out into the great sea of social relations, he has concluded only that certain accounting identities make the books balance.

The world that Piketty describes, despite all the charts he produces and injunctions he issues, is curiously static. He calculates his “capital/income” ratio across centuries but cannot integrate his occasional description of changes in that ratio with events in society. And for him, past behavior locks in the future. For



National Archives

U.S. capitalism newly arrived as an imperialist power: American troops pose over slaughtered Moros (Muslims) in Philippines, 1906.

tell us. This chart is a graphic illustration of the flaws in Piketty’s method. From 1700-2010, the data consists of his estimates from Britain and France. For the rest of human history, he simply invented a return of 4.5 percent.

What sense does it make to even speak of a “global rate of return on capital” in a period when most of the globe was not aware of most of the rest of the globe, much less that humans dwelled on an object shaped like a globe? Or, for that matter, when much of the globe not only did not live in market economies, but barely had a notion of a market if at all? Never mind. For Piketty, if something cannot be quantified in an account ledger, then it cannot have been important. If he were not making an argument that the bourgeoisie wanted to hear, such methods would be considered crackpot.

Bourgeois economics is in many respects less a science than a set of beliefs. Models are invented and debated that do not correspond to the real world, but make up “idealized” market systems. Such models generally attempt to show that capitalism can or should generate stable and sustainable growth (“equilibrium”). Piketty’s laudable collection of data represents an improvement on this status quo. All sources of data from his book as well as his calculations are freely available online. Similarly, the work he has done on the *World Top Incomes Database* is freely available and well documented. However, Piketty’s improvements in method cannot compensate for his attachment to the principles of bourgeois economics. Despite his affinity for data drawn from the real world, he still does not see this data in terms of the world beyond the balance sheet.

The past century has seen multiple crises and depressions that left millions to starve and two interimperialist wars in which one hundred million people were slaughtered. Innumerable smaller conflicts born from colonial avarice have also destroyed human lives and devastated entire societies. These crises and conflicts were not external to the capitalist economy, but an integral part of its work-

ings, brought about by economic forces even as the events themselves reshaped productive relations.

Likewise, the decreased income inequality in the West in the 1950s, noted by Piketty, had social origins. In the case of the U.S., the carnage of World War II had catapulted it into a hegemonic economic position. Meanwhile, the non-capitalist world was undergoing vast expansion with the creation of the deformed workers states in East Europe, North Korea and soon after China. In the U.S., a postwar strike wave saw millions of workers out of the factories and on the picket lines. Faced with the “red peril” of Communism and a restless proletariat, the U.S. ruling class initiated an anti-Soviet Cold War drive and imposed new restrictions on unions, while granting significant, albeit temporary, economic concessions to the workers in order to tamp down struggle. The rise in income inequality in recent years cannot be divorced from the capitalist counterrevolutions in the Eastern bloc and the USSR, which emboldened the imperialists to ratchet up exploitation at home.

Decades-long global trends and glib formulaic averages are not going to provide much insight into the functioning of the capitalist system. Capitalist production is a dynamic process consisting of real people—a tiny few who prosper and a large number who toil in misery—and real forces in conflict. It is not a stable set of social relations but is subject to the ebb and flow of the class struggle, which is sometimes out in the open and sometimes less so.

Contrary to Piketty’s view of capitalist relations across millennia, capitalism is a historically delimited mode of production. It emerged under certain circumstances and came to dominance in a particular fashion, not as an inevitability but as the result of the victory of the nascent bourgeoisie over the landed aristocracy. It is not the first mode of production in human history, and if humanity is to survive, it cannot be the last.

The development of capitalist industry, as Marx and Engels observed in *The Communist Manifesto*, “cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers.” The working class, standing at the head of the oppressed, must seize the reins of power and impose its own class rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat—to liberate mankind from the oppression of capital. A workers government would reorganize economic relations on the basis of socialized ownership of the means of production. Only then will production begin to satisfy human need.

The task of socialist revolution is not immediate, and not easy. It requires consciousness, organization and leadership. We in the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, seek to build parties around the world capable of leading the proletariat in the fight for a future in which inequality and want are but distant memories. ■



Sally Ryan

Working people pay for capitalist crisis: Unable to pay rent, evicted Milwaukee woman with her belongings, 2010.

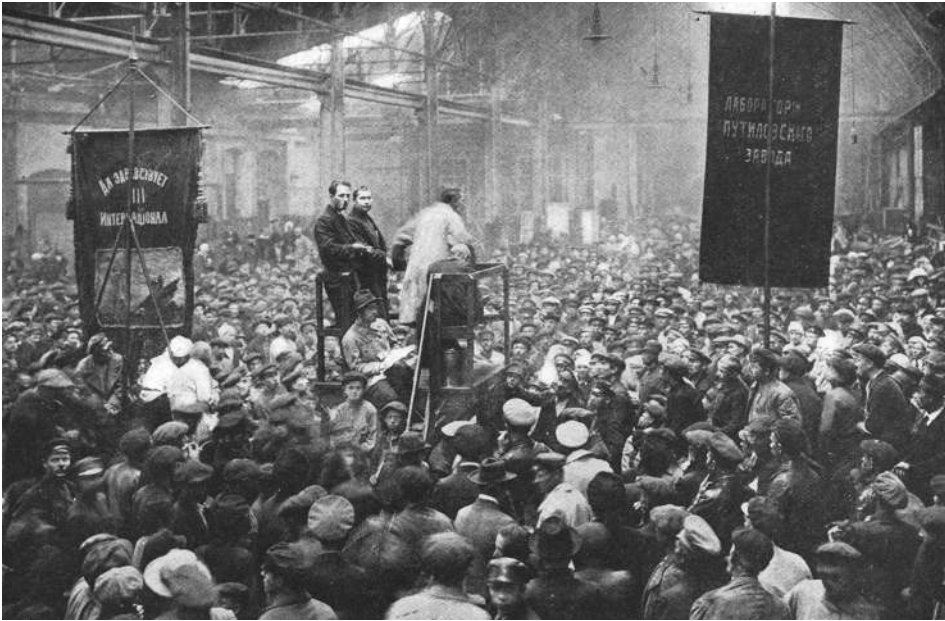
by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.”

The crises that Marx described in his day are in substance no different from the recent “Great Recession.” When the finance bubble popped in 2007, vast quantities of capital that could no longer be invested at a sufficient rate of profit were withdrawn from circulation and directed into savings or commodity speculation (see the 2009 Spartacist pamphlet *Karl Marx Was Right: Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*). In such crises, the least productive firms are shuttered and their workers thrown on the street. Capital is scrapped or re-purposed, and the overall stock of constant capital (the industrial plant, machinery, raw goods, etc.) temporarily contracts. Working people are made to sacrifice to get the economy back off the ground. Recovery means union-busting and deep wage and benefit cuts for workers and renewed profits for the capitalists.

To Marx’s description in the *Manifesto*, we can add another way in which the capitalists offset the falling rate of profit, which has come to the fore in the epoch of imperialism that began in the late 19th century. In his study *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, V.I. Lenin, leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, described how imperialism, i.e., modern, decaying capitalism, is “a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population

example, Piketty argues that no major capitalist country has had a rate of growth in per-capita output higher than 1.5 percent over a long span of time. He then treats this number, derived purely from past averages, as a law of nature as absolute as the speed of light.

Piketty does not even speak of a rate of profit, but rather a misdefined “rate of return on capital”: the net income of a nation relative to its total wealth. He has produced a chart that purports to trace this rate of return on capital for the past 2,000 years and show that it hovers between 4 and 5 percent. Why this rate? He cannot



Boni and Liveright

Soviet power at Petrograd’s Putilov factory. With Bolshevik-led 1917 October Revolution, proletariat overturned capitalism, expropriating the bourgeoisie.

Young Spartacus

Pay College Athletes! For Unionization!

College Sports Plantation



Auburn University football team stretches during practice, March 2014.

Roughly \$12 billion is generated—tax free—each year by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and its associated athletic conferences and member schools. Far more profit is raked in on college sports by major corporations, such as television broadcasters and game manufacturers. Football and basketball coaches are paid, on average, between \$2.5-3.5 million a year. In 40 states, the highest-paid public employee is such a coach. Meanwhile, the typical Division I athlete lives \$3,500 to \$5,000 below the poverty line and is prohibited by contract from receiving a single cent of those billions generated off their sweat, discipline, endurance and talent.

College athletics is a concentrated expression of capitalist greed and exploitation, bolstered by flag-waving religiosity and underpinned by the ludicrous legal concoction that defines players as “student-athletes” and the associated myth of amateurism. The fiction is that wholesome, all-American students play purely for love of the game. But for the black students who make up nearly 60 percent of college players in men’s basketball and football in the six major college conferences and at the same time make up less than 3 percent of full-time undergraduates overall, reality is better captured by what many have dubbed the NCAA system: the “plantation.”

Stories abound of athletes starving and homeless, often having suffered debilitating or life-threatening injuries without medical coverage. Between the racist war on drugs and the gutting of public education, sports are seen as one of the only escape routes from the hellish conditions of ghetto life. As The Notorious B.I.G. famously rapped, “Either you’re slingin’ crack rock or you got a wicked jump

shot.” And a very small, talented few may make it to school on athletic scholarships.

The students aiming at these scholarships are often “in the pipeline” by the time they hit high school, spending countless hours practicing and preparing for their shot at a different life. A large percentage of these athletes will experience some form of serious injury. Even most of the uninjured will be used up and tossed aside in a matter of years. Ultimately less than 2 percent of NCAA football and basketball players ever make it to the pros.

should fight back. Additionally, over a dozen lawsuits have been launched against the NCAA and its partners. On August 8, in an antitrust lawsuit whose lead plaintiff was former All-America basketball star Ed O’Bannon, who led University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to a championship in 1995, the judge issued an injunction against the NCAA, allowing players to receive compensation for the use of their names, images and likenesses. This ruling puts a modest dent in the millions the campuses generate from selling

Calling the NCAA a “dictatorship,” Northwestern quarterback Kain Colter announces formation of first labor union for college athletes, January 28.



In the face of such a rigged game, several players have chosen not to accept the racist status quo. In March, the Chicago office of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled that scholarship football players at Northwestern University are employees and therefore eligible to form a labor union. While this case may be tied up in the courts for some time, it demonstrates a growing consciousness on the part of players that they can and

merchandise emblazoned with players’ names and deals with TV broadcasters and video-game manufacturers. Another antitrust suit, led by Jeffrey Kessler, seeks to do away with compensation caps for college football and basketball players altogether. Kessler is the sports attorney who helped bring free agency into the National Football League (NFL) in 1992.

Up through the mid 1970s, most professional athletes were mercilessly exploited in a somewhat similar fashion to the way college players are today. Major league baseball’s reserve clause made players effectively the property of their teams. In 1969, black All-Star Curt Flood refused to be traded from the St. Louis Cardinals and demanded his right to negotiate as a free agent, writing to the baseball commissioner, “I do not, however, consider myself to be a piece of property to be sold regardless of my desire.” Known as “Baseball’s Bolshevik,” Flood was subsequently driven from the sport, but players won the right to free agency in 1975. In 1976, a lawsuit by black basketball legend Oscar Robertson was settled, paving the way for free agency in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

The college players’ challenges to the NCAA have wrung some concessions thus far. The NCAA has decided to stop forcing players to sign over the rights to their names and likenesses. Indiana University has announced an athletes’ bill of rights that promises free tuition guaranteed until a degree has been earned instead of the typical renewable one-year scholarships (often performance-based). Others are considering covering the full cost of attending college as well as increased health coverage for players. This is key—football especially has been shown to be a lethal game. In 2011, college football player Derek Sheely suffered a head injury during practice. After he had begun to bleed profusely from his head, his coach at Frostburg State told Sheely to “stop your bitching and moaning and quit acting like a pussy and get back out there!” Soon after, Sheely died from his head injury. From 2004 to 2009, there were 30,000 concussions sustained by college athletes. On average, 12 high school and college football players die each year as a result of playing their sport. Three high school players died in a single week this fall.

We in the Spartacus Youth Clubs believe college athletes should be paid and receive compensation for the images used by the media. They should have the right to unionize, strike and collectively bargain. As for the fiction that universities are providing free “education” to these exploited athletes, the following provides a glimpse: in the 1980s, Jan Kemp, an English instructor at the University of Georgia, was fired because she refused to inflate grades for athletes. Defending the university from a lawsuit, a lawyer explained just what they really thought of “student-athletes”: “We may not make a university student out of him, but if we can teach him to read and write, maybe he can work at the post office rather than as a garbage man when he gets through with his athletic career.”

We fight for *everyone* to receive the benefits of a quality education, up to and including the university. We are for open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all who need it. Cancel the student debt! As for the elite private campuses, bastions of race and class privilege, we call for their nationalization. While colleges and universities purport to embody higher ideals, under capitalism higher education is run as a business. The capitalist ruling class maintains elite



UConn basketball player Ryan Boatright watches from sidelines during arbitrary NCAA suspension, January 2012.

SYC at CCNY Rally: Defend the Palestinians!

On September 30, a rally was held at the City College of New York (CCNY) in opposition to the Zionist state's massacre of Palestinians in Gaza. The Spartacus Youth Club attended in solidarity with the besieged Palestinian population as well as to oppose our "own" rulers—the U.S. imperialists who arm Israel to the teeth. Called by the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and the Maoist Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC), the rally platform was festooned with Palestinian flags and the speeches filled with vicarious nationalism, captured in a July 10 joint statement issued by the SJP and RSCC entitled: "From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free!"

As the SYC speaker pointed out, behind this oh-so-militant-sounding nationalism are the liberal politics of appealing to various imperialist powers and their respective institutions to rein Israel in—through boycotts, divestment and sanctions. The SJP-RSCC statement was quite clear, insisting that the imperialists "cannot even turn a blind eye to the blatantly genocidal attacks anymore—various European governments are calling for divestment and even the US government cannot help but warn Israel that it is going too far."

The RSCC & Co. call for Zionist prime minister Netanyahu to be tried for war crimes. But to whom is this directed—the even more bloodsoaked war criminals of the "democratic" imperialist powers? The United Nations—which is covering for U.S. imperialism's bombing of ISIS in Iraq and Syria? In contrast to both this hapless liberalism and cheap enthusing from afar over Palestinian nationalism, our speaker raised the internationalist, proletarian, revolutionary program necessary to smash the Zionist state as well as to emancipate the Palestinian people from the deathtrap of

bourgeois nationalism. His remarks are printed below.

* * *

We are here to denounce the Zionist bloodbath in Gaza, in which over 2,000 Palestinians have been killed, many of them children. Gaza lies in ruin. To Zionist Israel, the attacks on Gaza are just "mowing the grass," i.e., standard procedure. Israel is

these Islamic reactionaries or to Palestinian nationalism.

Behind the Israeli terror stands the far more powerful and deadly terror machine of U.S. imperialism. As we speak, the U.S. rulers and their allies are raining death upon Iraq and Syria. We say: Down with the imperialist onslaught against the ISIS reactionaries under Obama's "humanitarian" and "anti-terror" pretexts. Obama is



Woman addresses 30 September CCNY protest in defense of Palestinians, at which SYC also spoke.

a garrison state founded on the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland. We say: **Defend the Palestinians!**

The SYCs stand for the defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist state terror. We oppose all U.S. aid to Israel and Egypt. We demand the withdrawal of Israeli troops and settlers from the Occupied Territories and call for the right of return for Palestinian refugees and their descendants.

We take a side militarily with Hamas against the Zionist terror campaign, while giving not the least political support to

the Commander-in-Chief of bloody U.S. imperialism.

The Students for Justice in Palestine and the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee promote the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign [BDS] which aims to pressure the *imperialists* and *private corporations* to bring about change in Israel. In contrast, our starting point is the need for *international working-class solidarity with the Palestinians*. This includes time-limited *labor* boycotts, like refusing to handle Israeli cargo. BDS appeals to the UN to enforce

"international law" and reinforces dangerous illusions in this imperialist den of thieves and their victims. While we disagree with the liberal politics of BDS, we oppose all attempts to limit its supporters' freedom to express their views. **We say: Hands off BDS supporters! Reinstatement Professor Salaita!**

We fight to bring the *class* axis to the fore. National emancipation for the Palestinians requires the proletarian overthrow of the Israeli capitalist rulers and also those of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, which are home to millions of Palestinians. The Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab populations are interpenetrated peoples, laying rival claims to the same territory. Under capitalism, the exercise of the national rights of one necessarily comes at the expense of the national rights of the other. Unlike the RSCC, we oppose reversing the terms of oppression by disenfranchising the Israeli Jews. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East can conflicting claims over land and resources be equitably resolved.

Israel is a class-divided society, with workers exploited by the capitalist ruling class. It is only the working class of Israel that has the capacity and historic interest to destroy the Zionist state from within. It is the false consciousness of Zionist nationalism, religion and racism that binds the Israeli proletariat to its class enemy. The fact that Israel is surrounded by anti-Jewish bigotry in the Arab countries allows the Israeli rulers to more easily sell the lie that the Zionist state "protects" Israeli Jews. What must be done is to forge revolutionary Marxist parties in Israel/Palestine and throughout the Near East, in opposition to all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism and committed to the struggle for socialist revolution on a world scale. **Defend the Palestinians! U.S. get your bloody hands off the world! ■**

schools as preserves for their offspring, training a new generation of politicians, judges, academics, scientists, military brass, managers and technicians. But for the education of those they exploit and oppress, they spend only what they can realize back in profit and what they have conceded as a result of social struggle. The rulers add insult to injury by brutally exploiting those few who find an athletic scholarship and escape the projects and prisons.

The Superexploited Athlete

In March, soon before leading the University of Connecticut (UConn) Huskies to a college basketball championship, point guard Shabazz Napier said on national television, "There are hungry nights that I go to bed and I'm starving." His experience is not unique. In the documentary *Schooled: The Price of College Sports*, Arian Foster, who is now a running back with the NFL's Houston Texans, summed up the bitter experience of getting by as a college football player:

"There was a point when we had no food, no money, and so I called my coach. And I said, coach, we don't have no food, man and we don't have no money and I'm hungry. Either you give us some food or like I'm going to go do something stupid. And he came down, he brought like 50 tacos for like four or five of us—which is an NCAA violation! But then the next day I walk up to the facility; I see my coach pull up in a brand new Lexus. Beautiful."

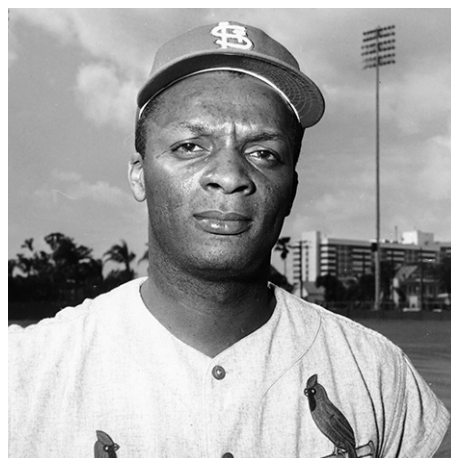
Schooled features a speech by civil rights historian Taylor Branch calling for increased rights for student-athletes. In response, former Navy Athletics Director Jack Lengyel tells him, "The student does not have consent. You can't have the animals running the zoo in a college education." Such grotesque statements reveal

the bigotry and backwardness that mark much of the upper echelons of sports—college and professional—in this country.

Branch's muckraking book *The Cartel* argues that the NCAA's maze of bureaucracy and bylaws is reminiscent of the logic behind the Dred Scott Supreme Court decision of 1857, that black people "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." College athletes indeed give up control of nearly every aspect of their lives. The Northwestern NLRB ruling recounted the regimented and grueling daily routine of these football players. Training begins in August, plunging them into a 60-hour workweek in which entire days are mapped out by the coaching staff, from 6:30 a.m. training room sessions to 10:30 p.m. mandatory "lights out." When the school year starts, this schedule is "merely" 40 to 50 hours per week for the three- to four-month season—on top of classes.

Kain Colter, the ex-Northwestern quarterback who is leading the players' unionization drive, testified to the NLRB that he was encouraged by his advisers and coaches to give up his pre-med major because his football schedule was too demanding. He eventually fell behind and had to switch to psychology.

Players also testified to the Orwellian extent of control that their employers exercise over their personal lives. They are not allowed to swear in public. In order to monitor their every waking minute, players are not allowed to deny a coach's friend request on Facebook and are restricted in what they may post. Players also must submit detailed information to the school on the vehicles they drive, presumably so the university can make sure no boosters are bumping them above the poverty line. Scholarship players must



All-star Curt Flood challenged baseball's reserve clause, which bound players to teams for life. Flood was subsequently driven out of baseball.

live on campus for their first two years at school, and upperclassmen who live off campus must submit their leases to the coach for approval before signing.

No less than the flag-waving extravaganzas that mark major sport events, religion also teaches obedience to authority and conservative social values and has served many coaches well in disciplining players. At Clemson University, where the football team is saturated with religiosity, recruits have been told by Coach Dabo Swinney, "I'm a Christian. If you have a problem with that, you don't have to be here." In 2012, Swinney had player DeAndre Hopkins baptized on the team's 50-yard line.

As greater sums of money have poured into college sports over the years, the NCAA has sought more and more to crack down on "scandals" involving players breaking the NCAA's amateurism rules. Some students sold autographs and mem-

orabilia or traded them for minor favors such as tattoos. Branch describes the case of A.J. Green, a wide receiver at Georgia who confessed to selling his jersey to pay for a spring-break vacation:

"The NCAA sentenced Green to a four-game suspension for violating his amateur status with the illicit profit generated by selling the shirt off his own back. While he served the suspension, the Georgia Bulldogs store continued legally selling replicas of Green's No. 8 jersey for \$39.95 and up."

In 1995, UCLA linebacker Donnie Edwards, who went on to the NFL, said on the radio that he was having trouble paying his bills and did not know where his next meal would come from. An anonymous donor then left some groceries on his doorstep. The NCAA suspended him for a game for accepting a gift from a supposed sports agent! These regulations extend down through the entire high school-to-college pipeline. In 2010, after high school football coach Bill Buldini allowed a homeless athlete to move in with him, he was suspended, the school was fined and the next year, Buldini resigned his post. Similarly, in 2011, UConn basketball player Ryan Boatright was suspended because a family friend paid for his mother to accompany him on a recruiting trip—while he was still in high school.

The Amateur "Ideal"

Sports have always supplied the ruling class with an ideological lightning rod to drain off the energies of radicalized and working-class youth into harmless pursuits. Karl Liebknecht, founding leader of the German Socialist Youth leagues, noted in 1911 that, at the German Kaiser's initiative, "the tomfoolery of sport

continued on page 8

Ferguson...

(continued from page 12)

We distributed hundreds of the August 20 Spartacist League leaflet “Ferguson: The Real Face of Racist Capitalist America” (reprinted in WV No. 1051, 5 September), which notes that in this society, a cop’s badge is a license to kill black people. With government officials seeking to quell the protests convulsing Ferguson at the time, the leaflet warned: “The authorities want to herd the mass outrage back into the ballot box, while Democratic Party politico Al Sharpton chimes in to scold Ferguson residents for low voter turnout. There should be no illusions in the Democrats or the federal government, which oversees this rotten system that the cops ‘serve and protect’.”

We spoke with many black youth who expressed frustration over the inaction of black Democratic Party politicians and with a system they see as corrupt from top to bottom. They view Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson as sellouts only out for the TV cameras and money. Such sentiments were captured by hip-hop artist and Hands Up United organizer Tef Poe, who noted in a *Time* (16 September) article: “This is the moment I asked myself, ‘Why did I vote for Barack Obama twice?’”

Dissatisfaction with the “system” and one or another Democrat is not going to amount to much absent an understanding of the *class* divisions within this society. The Democratic Party, no less than the

Republicans, represents the tiny capitalist class that profits from a system rooted in the exploitation of labor and the subjugation of black people at the bottom. The very job of black Democrats is to co-opt or otherwise hold back the struggles of the black masses. So far as we could tell, no black elected officials were on the platform at the end of the march. But there were plenty of preachers as well as young activists calling for voter registration.

During a mass meeting at St. Louis University the next day, black youth heckled a gaggle of religious leaders and the president of the NAACP, demanding a “plan of action” from the speakers who were offering up love-thy-neighbor and other liberal pabulum. Playing to the crowd, headline speaker and radical academic Cornel West suggested: “The older generation has been too well adjusted to injustice to listen to the younger generation.” West, a onetime Obama supporter, has had his own falling out with the president. His more spirited rhetoric masks a strategy that at bottom is the same as the other preachers at the event: looking to the Democrats to “revive some democratic spirit and democratic possibility.”

A number of reformist groups, such as the Revolutionary Communist Party and Socialist Alternative (SAlt), mobilized heavily from across the Midwest for the weekend protests. These groups have picked up and run with the call to arrest Darren Wilson. Whatever punishment might be meted out to this killer cop will surely be not nearly enough. The fact of

the matter is that the cops are not going to be held “accountable” for their crimes. The simple reason is that their purpose, regardless of who is in office, is to enforce the rule of the capitalist exploiters through the violent suppression of workers, blacks and all the oppressed. Even if Wilson is in some way punished, it will simply be for appearances so that the Ferguson police can better go about their business of repression. But the fake socialists would have you believe that by removing a few bad apples, the class enemy’s guard dogs and the rest of its state apparatus can be made to serve the exploited and oppressed masses.

After the march, we attended a SAlt public forum titled “The Whole System Is Guilty,” which drew 60 people. This outfit holds that police are “workers in uniform,” a position SAlt’s speaker conveniently neglected to mention before we brought it up in the discussion. Our comrade explained that such an embrace of these hired guns “is contrary to the Marxist understanding of the state, which is the armed bodies of men—the courts, the cops, the military—who defend the interests of the bourgeoisie.” The SAlt spokesman disgustingly responded that many people “have to go find jobs like the police department” and that we should “have a dialogue with them.” SAlt’s touching faith in the capitalist state notwithstanding, many black youth realize that if they try to have a “dialogue” with a cop they are more likely than not to end up face down on the sidewalk.

Mobilizing the social power of the multi-racial working class independent from and in opposition to the capitalist state and its political parties is vital to the fight against cop terror and racial oppression. Members of the United Auto Workers, Communications Workers of America, Service Employees International Union and the Chicago Teachers Union were at the march. Our perspective that labor must take the lead in fighting black oppression was well received by many workers. While AFL-CIO officials had decided to sponsor buses for trade unionists and others from out of town, the only labor banner we spotted was from the St. Louis Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU).

One CBTU member complained that although a lot of labor people were there, the unions had not mobilized the ranks, in force, as organizations. As a component part of the Democratic Party, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy was not about to do so. In supporting the march, its primary interest was bolstering the fortunes of the Democrats, especially with the mid-term elections on the horizon. The key to unlocking the social power of labor is the fight for a class-struggle union leadership.

The capitalist state cannot be reformed to act in the interests of workers and the oppressed but must be destroyed and replaced by a different kind of state where those who labor rule. Our purpose is to build the revolutionary workers party that can lead the fight for a socialist America. Only then will there be justice for the mass of the population. ■

Young Spartacus

College Sports Plantation...

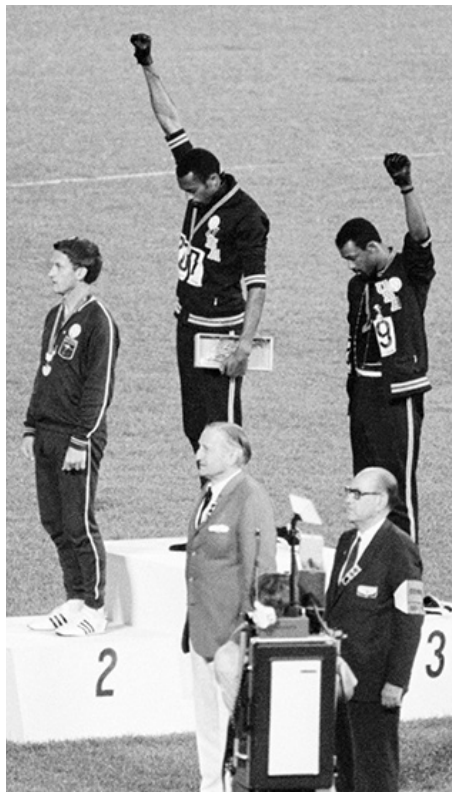
(continued from page 7)

is being used among the young in order to produce a mood which will estrange them from the great proletarian struggle” (*Speeches of Karl Liebknecht*, 1927). In the U.S., the cult and business of spectator sports has become another “opium of the people.”

In late 19th-century America, as universities expanded across the country, sports programs were seen as a vital means to build student enrollment and loyalty to their institutions. While many players were in fact compensated under the table, amateurism appeared in U.S. universities as a guiding moral principle and ideological training mechanism. Walter Camp, the “Father of American Football” and coach of the Yale and Stanford football teams disingenuously claimed, “A gentleman never competes for money, directly or indirectly.” In the 1912 Olympics, Native American Jim Thorpe, considered by many to be one of the greatest athletes in history, won the first ever ten-event decathlon. It was later revealed that he had played minor league baseball in violation of the Olympics’ amateurism rules. He was promptly stripped of his medals and having lost his foothold in the sports world, he died penniless. Long after his death, the rules were changed and Thorpe’s medals were posthumously returned to him.

Black track star Jesse Owens, whose record-setting four gold medals smashed Hitler’s parade of the “Aryan master race” at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, was greeted with a reception at New York’s Waldorf-Astoria...which he was allowed to enter only through a freight elevator. Exhausted after his Olympic performance, Owens was ordered to compete in a number of exhibitions, one of which he refused. He was suspended by the Amateur Athletic Union and blacklisted from amateur sports for life. Famed actor and musician Paul Robeson was stripped of his All-America award as star running back for Rutgers, due to his affiliation with the Communist Party.

So much for the lofty mythology of ama-



Bettmann

Sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos give “black power” salute at 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

teurism. As Branch recounts, the NCAA was formed in the early 20th century, effectively as a shrewd maneuver to offset outrage against the mounting body count of college football, with 25 deaths in the 1905 season alone. He writes: “For nearly 50 years, the NCAA, with no real authority and no staff to speak of, enshrined amateur ideals that it was helpless to enforce.” In fact, not only were college football players often paid, but in 1939, freshman players at the University of Pittsburgh went on strike against the wage gap with upperclassman players.

But in 1951, then-NCAA head Walter Byers seized on a series of scandals involving grade inflation and gambling to suspend the University of Kentucky basketball team for a full season. With the momentum from this, the NCAA took control of licensing for all televised games, thus securing enough money and power to win the NCAA full control over the regulation of all college sports. Branch documents how the “student-athlete” arose not from “the nobility of amateurism and the

precedence of scholarship over athletic endeavor” but as a tool for the NCAA to fight workmen’s compensation claims for injured players.

During the 1950s, the NCAA carved its definition of amateurism out of the death of football player Ray Dennison, who played for the Fort Lewis A&M Aggies. After he died from a head injury received during a game, his widow filed for workmen’s-compensation death benefits; the school refused to pay. In the ensuing legal battle, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that she was not eligible for benefits because the college was “not in the football business,” and that Dennison was therefore not an employee but a student. The designation of “amateur” also serves as a pretext to deny players the right to bargain to receive even a fraction of the massive profits that they generate.

Down With Plantation Rule!

The limited victories won for college athletes thus far reflect an important social fact. While students in general have virtually no social power, if college athletes were to withdraw their labor and go on strike, it could have a significant impact on this multibillion-dollar industry. William Friday, former president of the University of North Carolina, was sworn to secrecy by a colleague who told him that in the lead-up to a championship basketball game one year a team had planned to go on strike if they made the finals. The prospect that such an action could have cost the colleges hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue struck fear into Friday and his colleagues. (To their relief, this team did not make the finals.)

We recognize the athletes’ status as employees who, as such, should have the basic right to workmen’s compensation. Moreover, we support their struggle to unionize and get paid for their labor. The treatment of college athletes reflects the basic appetites and interests of capitalist profiteers—to extract as much labor as possible, as brutally as need be, from those with no better option. Because class exploitation and the special oppression of black people as a race-color caste are inextricably linked to the workings of American capitalism, the struggle to unionize college players must include a fight for black rights and against the rac-

ism that pervades organized sports.

NBA great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar put it succinctly:

“Yes, I was just like the rest of those black athletes you’ve read about, the ones that put all their waking energies into learning the moves. That might be a sad commentary on America in general, but that’s the way it’s going to be until black people can flow without prejudice into any occupation they can master. For now it’s still pretty much music and sports for us.”

In racist America, even as some black athletes are revered by black and white fans alike, others remain hostile to the fact that there are black sports stars who make big money. Hank Aaron, writing of his stature as baseball’s highest-paid player in the early 1970s, recalled, “The Atlanta fans weren’t shy about letting me know what they thought of a \$200,000 n----r striking out with men on base.”

In the context of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War struggles, black athletes like Flood, Muhammed Ali and others challenged the racist owners—at great personal sacrifice. 1968 Olympic gold and bronze medalists Tommie Smith and John Carlos were banished from the U.S. Olympic team and given 48 hours to get out of Mexico after raising the clenched-fist “black power” salute during the awards ceremony. But their silent act of defiance spoke loudly to a generation of angry, politicized youth of all races.

The injustices and deprivations of this society may be temporarily ameliorated through hard class and social struggle. But only when the entire capitalist system is swept away by victorious workers revolution can we begin to speak of genuine equality. What is required is the expropriation of the exploiters, the smashing of their state and the construction of a society in which those who labor rule. Stripped of capitalist profiteering and exploitation in such a society, sports will provide simple human enjoyment. Education will be organized, as will everything else, not on the basis of individual profit and exploitation, but for collective social gain. We seek to win young people to act as partisans of the working class—the only class with the social power to and interest in smashing once and for all this vile system of racism and war, poverty and disease. There is a future—it lies in the fight for socialist revolution. ■

Supreme Court...

(continued from page 3)

the Democratic Party administration of “born again” Jimmy Carter (1977-1981). In the wake of the civil rights and anti-war movements, and particularly after the humiliating defeat of U.S. imperialism in the Vietnam War, the capitalist rulers under Carter launched a major ideological assault aimed at instilling unquestioned acceptance of capitalism, god and family, including the desirability of dying for one’s country. Like every rightward shift in this country, it was tied to a rise in racist reaction against black people. As school busing, a minimal but real step toward school integration, was going down to defeat in city after city, Carter stoked the segregationist backlash by proclaiming the virtue of “ethnic purity.”

Writing in *Christian Ethics Today* (Spring 2014), historian Randall Balmer noted, “Although abortion had emerged as a rallying cry by 1980, the real roots of the religious right lie not in the defense of a fetus but in the defense of racial segregation.” The catalyst for the rise of the Christian right as a political factor was the denial of tax exemptions to segregated schools across the country by the administration of Republican president Richard Nixon in the early 1970s. This came to a head with the 1976 IRS rescission of tax-exempt status for the arch-segregationist Bob Jones University in South Carolina, driving Jerry Falwell and his fellow bible-thumpers into a frenzy over what they saw as government interference into church affairs. Recognizing that openly organizing around the call to defend segregation would not be politic, conservative strategist Paul Weyrich and Jerry Falwell & Co. cast about for another beacon of light and found it in the backlash to the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion.

Not that they always read the “good book” that way. Originally, fundamentalist Christians saw abortion as a “Catholic issue” and were largely indifferent—and in some cases favorable—to the *Roe* decision. In a statement that would mark him as an apostate today, W.A. Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, noted when the ruling came down: “I have always felt that it was only after a child was born and had a life separate from its mother that it became an individual person, and it has always, therefore, seemed to me that what is best for the mother and for the future should be allowed.” In 1974 and 1976, the Southern Baptist Convention reaffirmed its pre-*Roe* resolution citing rape, incest, fetal abnormality and emotional and physical health of the woman as justifications for terminating a pregnancy.

The success of anti-abortion candidates in a few 1978 elections spurred these same forces to grab onto opposition to abortion as a core tool to organize evangelical Christians. When Carter refused to endorse a constitutional amendment banning abortion, they threw



Naythons/Gamma-Liaison

Democrat Jimmy Carter, a “born again” Christian, at pulpit before 1976 presidential election.

their weight behind Ronald Reagan in the 1980 presidential campaign. The Reagan years saw a marked advancement of religion forced into public life. Among other things, there were efforts to restore school prayer, stop the teaching of evolution in favor of biblical “creationism” and ban books from school libraries on religious grounds, including the “heathen” *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

It was under Reagan that the Republican Party solidified its hold among white Southern voters in particular. Writing in “Texas: The Southern Baptists in Power” (*New York Review of Books*, 9 October), Thomas Powers describes Reagan as “joining the Baptists to reject pretty much everything ‘modern’ to emerge in American culture and society over the last two centuries. The three that most disturbed the Bible Belt South were the end of slavery, the ‘theory’ of evolution that cast doubt on the literal truth of the Bible, and the emancipation of women.” This was the atmosphere in which the reactionaries behind the *Hobby Lobby* litigation cut their teeth dressing racist reaction in religious garb. Three decades later, the hymn remains the same.

Bless Me, I’m a Liberal

The growth of religion in political life was the context behind the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), upon which the *Hobby Lobby* decision was based. That law was initiated by Democrat Chuck Schumer—then a New York Congressman and today a leading light in the Senate—and sponsored in the Senate by liberal icon Ted Kennedy and signed into law by Bill Clinton. Only three Senators voted against the bill, one of them North Carolina segregationist Senator Jesse Helms, who feared it would provide some rights to prisoners.

The RFRA was purportedly adopted in response to the 1990 Supreme Court decision *Employment Division v. Smith*, which upheld the denial of unemployment benefits to two Native American counselors at a drug rehab program who had been fired for using peyote as part of their religious practice. But defending the rights of a marginal and controversial religious sect was farthest from the minds of those who pushed and adopted this measure. Seven months before Clinton signed the bill, his Justice Department had launched a raid on the integrated Branch Davidian religious sect in Waco, Texas, killing some 80 devotees, many of them children.

Pandering to religious reaction was integrally linked to the political strategy of Clinton’s Democrats, who expressed contempt for black rights in order to win back racist white male voters who had fled to the Republicans after the adoption of the civil rights laws in the mid 1960s. Upon signing the RFRA, Clinton declared Americans to be a “people of faith” and

complained that the family “has been under assault for 30 years.” The following year, Clinton pushed for a Constitutional amendment sanctifying school prayer.

Testifying in support of the proposed RFRA at a 1992 Senate hearing, American Civil Liberties Union president Nadine Strossen warned that the *Smith* decision “could force religion-sponsored hospitals to provide abortion or contraception services.” While Democrats who voted for the law now whine that the *Hobby Lobby* ruling was not the RFRA’s intent, Republican Senator Orrin Hatch, a cosponsor of the bill, exulted, “That’s why RFRA passed Congress overwhelmingly more than 20 years ago.”

One of Obama’s appointees to the Supreme Court, Justice Elena Kagan, voted against the *Hobby Lobby* ruling, but as a legal counsel to Clinton she sang a different tune. This was evident when she went to bat for a Chico, California, landlord named Evelyn Smith who had violated a state housing anti-discrimination law in 1994 by refusing to rent an apartment to an unmarried heterosexual couple because she thought they were living in sin. After Smith argued unsuccessfully before the California Supreme Court that the RFRA protected her right of refusal, a 1996 Kagan memo urged the Justice Department to support Smith’s appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, denouncing the California court’s reasoning as “outrageous.”

Supreme Court of Injustice

For the Roberts court, the spring 2014 term was little more than business as usual. The Court had already upheld draconian anti-immigrant legislation on the state level, approved strip-searching of those arrested for merely violating fines, granted absolute immunity for government agents who perjure themselves during trial and castigated lower courts for too often

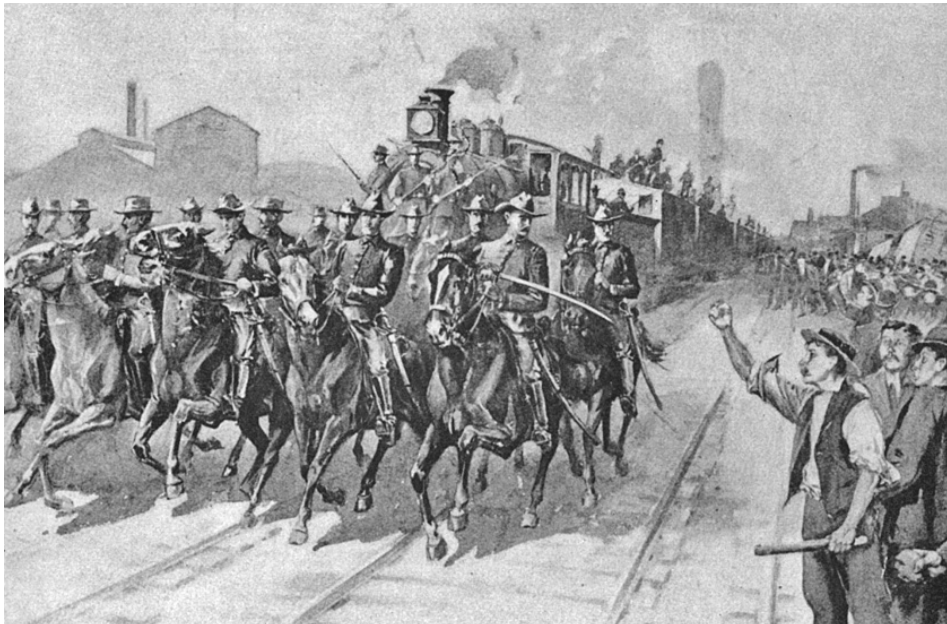
that law in declaring the 1894 national railroad strike an unlawful “restraint of trade” and affirming the conviction of union leader Eugene V. Debs, who was imprisoned for defying a strikebreaking injunction.

In 1895, the same court ruled that the Sherman Act could *not* be applied against the E.C. Knight Co. sugar-refining monopoly. In the 1905 *Lochner* case, it struck down a New York City law limiting the working hours of bakers to no more than ten a day, and 60 a week, declaring this an “unnecessary and arbitrary interference with the right and liberty of the individual to contract.”

The context for the *Plessy* court was the rise of the U.S. as an industrial power, with a nascent union movement that needed to be suppressed, and its emergence on the international field as an imperialist country. Integral to these developments was the compacting of black people as a race-color caste following the defeat of post-Civil War Reconstruction. Today’s Roberts court was formed by the backlash to the social struggles of the 1960s and ’70s, determined to overturn gains from that period.

From its inception, the Supreme Court was designed to be a ruling-class protection against the masses, a bastion of conservatism, “an essential safeguard against the effects of the occasional ill humors in the society,” as Alexander Hamilton put it in the *Federalist Papers*. The founding fathers created “checks and balances” to insulate government from the “ill humors” of the unpredictable masses, with a powerful executive, the president, who nominates the high court with consent from that exclusive club called the Senate, now full of millionaires.

In the recent anti-union *Harris v. Quinn* decision, Roberts & Co. provided a clear example of how the vaunted “checks and balances” of American bourgeois



Library of Congress

U.S. Cavalry troops escort scab train in Chicago during national 1894 railroad strike. The strike was ruled unlawful by Supreme Court, and smashed by the army.

granting *habeas corpus* petitions. This is easily the most reactionary Supreme Court since the body that issued the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision upholding “separate but equal” segregation as the law of the land. But as reactionary as it is, the Roberts court has found itself to the left of the Obama administration on issues involving the Fourth Amendment proscription against unreasonable search and seizure. Thus, it has ruled against the government’s upholding of police reading the cell-phone contents of detained suspects without warrants and using GPS monitors to track moving vehicles.

Like today’s court, the *Plessy* court openly reveled in contempt for workers, blacks and women and proved itself adept at twisting the clear letter and professed purpose of laws they are called on to “interpret.” A case in point was the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act, which was purportedly adopted to break up the monopolies of the Gilded Age. The law’s sponsors swore that union organizing would not be considered the “restraint of trade” that the bill targeted. The Supreme Court would have none of it, upholding

democracy works. When the Supreme Court doesn’t like laws that favor unions or black people, it overturns them. The RFRA shows that when the legislature doesn’t like a Court decision, it passes a law to circumvent it. And the executive branch, led by the president, can just choose not to enforce either. In any case, the core of the state power remains armed bodies of men—the police, prison system and military—dedicated to defending the rule of the tiny class of capitalists against the many they exploit and oppress.

Those on the receiving end of capitalist reaction must understand that we are all in this together, underlining the importance of building a multiracial workers party that acts as a tribune of the people. Such a party would fight every manifestation of oppression as part of the struggle to smash the entire system of capitalist class rule and replace it with a government of the workers, whose labor produces the vast bulk of the wealth of society. This is the only road to sweeping away the ignorance, superstition, bigotry and racism that are synonymous with, and help maintain, bourgeois rule. ■

A Spartacist Pamphlet

IN DEFENSE OF SCIENCE AND MARXISM

THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE
IN THE LIGHT OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD

BY KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS

TRANSLATED BY J. W. DUFFIELD

56 PAGES

\$2 (56 pages)

Order from: Spartacist Pub. Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Hong Kong...

(continued from page 1)

the People’s Republic of China and proletarian socialist revolution in Taiwan, resulting in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

Who Pays the Piper Calls the Tune

In a useful exposé of the Umbrella Movement in *Near Eastern Outlook* (1 October), Tony Cartalucci reported, “Identifying the leaders, following the money, and examining Western coverage of these events reveal with certainty that yet again, Washington and Wall Street are busy at work to make China’s island of Hong Kong as difficult to govern for Beijing as possible.” In particular, Cartalucci detailed the role of the U.S. State Department’s National Endowment for Democracy (NED)—which was up to its eyeballs in the fascist-infested coup in Ukraine earlier this year—and the NED’s subsidiary National Democracy Institute (NDI). Christian churches, which have a long, dirty track record of organizing anti-Communist dissidents in the deformed



July 1997 ceremony marking end of over 150 years of brutal British colonial rule in Hong Kong.

workers states, have also assumed a prominent role in the movement. An inheritance of British colonialism, they constitute a powerful force for social reaction in Hong Kong, where there is a church on practically every street. The Umbrella Movement developed out of a September 22 student strike called by the Hong Kong Federation of Students and

Occupy Central founders (left to right) Baptist minister Chu Yiu-ming, Benny Tai and Chan Kin-man at June 30 press conference.



an organization of middle and high school students called Scholarism. The Federation of Students forms a significant part of the annual July 1 anniversary protests *against* the former British colony having been returned to China. Scholarism is largely the creation of Joshua Wong, an 18-year-old who became a political activist under the influence of his proselytizing parents. (His father, an elder in the Lutheran Church, is an outspoken opponent of gay rights.) Wong cut his political teeth, and won the praises of the NDI, by organizing a campaign against a pro-Beijing school curriculum that he called “brainwashing.”

Another force in the protests for capitalist “democracy” is the Occupy Central leadership, which has close, longstanding ties to the imperialists. The most touted of Occupy’s founders, law professor Benny Tai, is a common speaker at NED-sponsored events. Other leaders include Baptist minister Chu Yiu-ming, who spirited pro-capitalist dissidents to the U.S. after the 1989 protests in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square, and Martin Lee, founding chairman of Hong Kong’s capitalist Democratic Party and recipient of the NED’s 1997 Democracy Award. This April, Lee and fellow Occupy leader Anson Chan took a trip to Washington, where they met with Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi. Occupy Central’s Jimmy Lai, a media mogul, denied conspiring with the U.S. after meeting in May for five hours on his private yacht with his “good friend,” former U.S. deputy defense secretary and neocon Paul Wolfowitz (Hong Kong *Standard*, 20 June).

After police using tear gas and pepper spray attempted to clear students who had shut down the area around the central government offices late last month, the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU) called a one-day general strike. Representing mainly white-collar workers and teachers, the CTU stands in the anti-Communist tradition of “free

trade unions” backed by the imperialists, unlike the pro-Beijing Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions. Among the bosses who weighed in on behalf of the CTU strike was the advertising company McCann Worldgroup Hong Kong, which explained to its staff: “The company will not punish anyone who supports something more important than work” (*South China Morning Post*, 30 September).

There is no mistaking the reactionary nature of the “democracy” protests, which are dominated by students and other petty-bourgeois layers. One protester told the *New York Times* (7 October) that he preferred “to be ruled by a democratic country,” which was spelled out by his T-shirt emblazoned with the Union Jack, the butcher’s apron of Hong Kong’s former colonial overlords. Protesters commonly combine overt anti-Communism with haughty scorn for mainland Chinese who are derided as “locusts.”

Hong Kong: White-Collar Sweatshop

The 1949 Chinese Revolution was of world-historic significance. Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been exploited from time immemorial. The subsequent creation of a centrally planned, collectivized economy laid the basis for enormous social progress. The revolution enabled women to advance by orders of magnitude over their previous miserable status rooted in such Confucian practices as forced marriage. A nation that had been ravaged and divided by foreign powers was unified (with the exception of Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao) and freed from imperialist subjugation.

However, the revolution was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong’s CCP regime, a bureaucratic caste resting atop the workers state. Unlike the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the Bol-

shevik internationalism of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the 1949 Chinese Revolution was the result of peasant guerrilla war led by Mao’s Stalinist-nationalist forces. Patterned after the Stalinist bureaucracy that usurped political power in the Soviet Union beginning in 1923-24, the regimes of Mao and his successors, including Xi Jinping today, have preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country. In opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution, “socialism in one country” has always meant accommodation to world imperialism.

A case in point was the CCP leadership’s attitude toward British rule over Hong Kong. During the civil war that preceded the 1949 Revolution, Mao ordered the CCP’s forces to stop just short of the Shenzhen River that separates the mainland from Hong Kong. In return, Britain was one of the first countries to recognize the People’s Republic of China. In 1959, Mao declared: “It is better to keep Hong Kong the way it is.... Its present status is still useful to us.” In 1967, Hong Kong Communists and trade-union leaders mounted a protest movement against British rule, complete with large-scale strikes, that lasted over eight months. This struggle was betrayed by the Maoist regime, which preferred to remain friendly with the imperialist colonizers.

In maintaining Hong Kong as a hub of finance capital, Beijing accords the population certain political freedoms that it withholds from the population on the mainland. These liberties go hand-in-hand with Hong Kong’s reputation as a white-collar sweatshop, where office employees commonly work 12 hours for eight hours pay. Before 1997, Hong Kong was a center of both trade and light industry, in which workers were brutally exploited, forced to live in horrendous conditions and deprived of the most basic rights. Since the early 1990s, 80 percent of the city’s manufacturing jobs have disappeared as the Hong Kong capitalists shifted their operations to the mainland. In one of the most expensive cities in the world, full of designer shops and luxury hotels, a fifth of the population falls below the official poverty line. For most youth, future prospects are dim. Meanwhile, many corrupt CCP officials continue to enrich themselves through their connections to Hong Kong financiers.

The plight of Hong Kong’s more than 300,000 domestic workers—97 percent of them from Indonesia and the Philippines—shines an especially harsh light on the territory’s class divide. Other immigrants who live in Hong Kong for seven

Mexico...

(continued from page 12)

The recent horrendous attack occurred while many thousands of students at the National Polytechnical Institute in Mexico City are on strike, and as workers at Mexico City high schools organized in the SUTIEMS education union were

ending their strike last weekend. Both the SUTIEMS workers and the striking Polytechnical students have raised their voices against the government’s *anti*-education reform, which is really just an attempt to destroy the SNTE teachers union and a reflection of how little the bourgeoisie cares about educating the masses of the population. And education is something that Mexicans care deeply about, seeing it

as the ticket out of poverty for their children. The massive strike against tuition at UNAM [National Autonomous University of Mexico] in 1999-2000 attracted wide support, especially among workers and the poor who can only dream of ever attending the elite private universities that the bourgeoisie sends its children to. We stand for nationalization of the private universities, for open admissions and an end to entrance exams, for no tuition and for state-paid stipends for all students. This is the only way that higher education can become a reality for most youth.

Protesters in Guerrero are demanding that the mayor of Iguala resign and that the police be investigated. Twenty-two municipal cops have been disarmed and detained by the government, while the federal police, the army and state and ministerial police have taken control of Iguala. Make no mistake! These forces are fundamentally no different than the ones that were removed—they *all serve the same master*. The bourgeois state cannot be reformed to serve the oppressed. To end once and for all the murderous state violence directed against workers, poor peasants and other oppressed sectors, the working class must destroy the bourgeois state and replace it with its own class rule: the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. To this end, the

proletariat must break with *all* bourgeois parties—not only with the PRI and the PAN [right-wing National Action Party] but also with the PRD and Morena [former PRD presidential candidate López Obrador’s Movement for National Regeneration]—and forge a revolutionary workers party that can lead the struggle to put an end to capitalism. ■



Spartacist League at protest initiated by Internationalist Group outside Mexican consulate in New York City, part of October 8 day of action in solidarity with Guerrero students.

ESPARTACO

PUBLICACION DEL GRUPO ESPARTACISTA DE MEXICO

JUNIO 41

JUNIO 2014

PRECIO \$2.00

“Reforma” migratoria e hipocresía liberal

La maquinaria de deportaciones de Obama

El gobierno mexicano, “desafiando al jefe”, en un corteo ante la reclusión en San Francisco, 23 de noviembre. Detrás: integrantes del movimiento estudiantil en el aeropuerto de San José, antes de su deportación, junio de 2011.

El gobierno mexicano, “desafiando al jefe”, en un corteo ante la reclusión en San Francisco, 23 de noviembre. Detrás: integrantes del movimiento estudiantil en el aeropuerto de San José, antes de su deportación, junio de 2011.

El gobierno mexicano, “desafiando al jefe”, en un corteo ante la reclusión en San Francisco, 23 de noviembre. Detrás: integrantes del movimiento estudiantil en el aeropuerto de San José, antes de su deportación, junio de 2011.

El gobierno mexicano, “desafiando al jefe”, en un corteo ante la reclusión en San Francisco, 23 de noviembre. Detrás: integrantes del movimiento estudiantil en el aeropuerto de San José, antes de su deportación, junio de 2011.

Publication of the Grupo Espartquista de México

No. 41, June 2014, \$50 (24 pages)

Subscription: \$2 for 4 issues (includes Spanish-language Spartacist)

Order from/make checks payable to: Spartacist Publishing Co. Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

10

WORKERS VANGUARD

years receive the right to vote. Not so the domestic workers. With no recourse against violent or otherwise abusive employers, domestics who are fired must leave the country within two weeks. As an article in *Al Jazeera* (30 September) pointed out, “Hong Kong’s protesters demand democracy, but not for its domestic workers.” Our demand to expropriate the Hong Kong bourgeoisie draws a sharp class line against the pro-imperialist protesters, concretizing the call to defend and extend the gains of the 1949 Revolution.

For Workers Democracy, Not Capitalist Counterrevolution!

Capitalist democracy is, in reality, a political form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In such a system, the working class is politically reduced to atomized individuals. The bourgeoisie can effectively manipulate the electorate through its control of the media, the education system and other institutions that shape public opinion. In all capitalist democracies, government officials, both elected and unelected, are essentially bought and paid for by the banks and large corporations.

Parliamentary democracy, which is mainly the preserve of the wealthy imperialist countries, gives the mass of the population the right to decide every few years which representative of the ruling class is to repress them. As Lenin explained in his 1918 polemic *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*:

“The working people are *barred* from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they *never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realise perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are institutions *alien* to them, *instruments for the oppression* of workers by the bourgeoisie, institutions of a hostile class, of the exploiting minority.”

Lenin also stressed: “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.”

In their drive to destroy the degenerated Soviet workers state and its Eastern bloc allies, the imperialists promoted all manner of counterrevolutionary forces waving the banner of “democracy” against Stalinist “totalitarianism.” The purpose was to overthrow the Communist regimes by



Peter Turnley

May 1989: Workers’ contingent arriving in Tiananmen Square. Entry of proletariat into mass student protests heralded incipient political revolution.

one means or another, including through free elections in which peasant and other petty-bourgeois layers as well as politically backward workers could be mobilized against the workers state. As the Stalinist regimes reached the point of terminal collapse, an election in Poland in 1989 resulted in a counterrevolutionary government headed by Solidarność, the consolidation of which marked the restoration of capitalist rule. A key event in the capitalist reunification of Germany in the spring of 1990 was an election won by the Christian Democratic Union, the ruling party of German imperialism.

Shattering in the face of the capitalist onslaught, the Stalinist bureaucracies demonstrated that they were not a possessing class but a brittle and contradictory caste resting atop the workers states. A key condition for the victory of counterrevolution in East and Central Europe and in the Soviet Union itself in 1991-92 was that the working class, atomized and demoralized by decades of Stalinist misrule, did not act to stop the forces of capitalist restoration and seize political power in its own name. These counterrevolutions marked a historic defeat for the working people internationally. Millions of workers in the former workers states lost their jobs and guaranteed benefits, women’s rights were thrown back (for example, through the banning of abortion in Poland) and the peoples of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were torn apart by massive nationalist bloodletting. Meanwhile, the U.S. and other imperialist powers felt emboldened

to carry out their rampages around the world and against working people at home.

For China, capitalist counterrevolution would mean a return to imperialist enslavement and the destruction of historic social gains. In answer to the aspirations of the working people both in Hong Kong and on the mainland for democratic rights and a government that represents their interests, Trotskyists look to the model of the early Soviet workers state. As Lenin described in polemicalizing against Kautsky, a bitter opponent of the October Revolution: “The Soviet government is the *first* in the world (or strictly speaking, the second, because the Paris Commune began to do the same thing) to *enlist* the people, specifically the *exploited* people, in the work of administration.”

A workers political revolution in China would place decisions about the direction of the economy and the organization of society in the hands of elected workers and peasants councils, ending bureaucratic mismanagement and corruption. Under the leadership of China’s massive working class, non-proletarian sectors such as the peasants would in fact have far more say through their representation in such councils than they have in any capitalist republic. China has made vast strides in industry and urbanization in recent decades, while also accumulating huge financial reserves. But China’s all-around development, particularly its presently backward agriculture, is crucially dependent on proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, which would open the road to a world planned economy based on the highest level of technology and industry. This Trotskyist perspective, premised on unconditional defense of the Chinese workers state against its imperialist and domestic class enemies, has no common ground with the pro-imperialist camp’s program for “democratic” counterrevolution.

Bootlickers for Capitalist Democrats

One of the most glaring examples of aid to the bourgeois cause in Hong Kong is Socialist Action, which along with Socialist Alternative in the U.S. is affiliated to Peter Taaffe’s Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI). With a counterfeit reputation as Trotskyist, this organization has a long and disreputable history of supporting capitalist counterrevolution in the name of opposing dictatorship. In the Soviet Union in August-September 1991, the CWI’s forebears in the Militant tendency joined the capitalist-restorationists on Boris Yeltsin’s barricades in Moscow. In contrast, our Trotskyist international distributed tens of thousands of leaflets calling on Soviet workers to crush the counterrevolutionary forces led by Yeltsin and backed by the George H.W. Bush White House.

Writing off China as authoritarian and capitalist, the CWI has made itself the most rabid cheerleaders of the Umbrella Movement. An article in the CWI’s *China Worker* (30 September) enthuses over the possibility that “the democracy struggle would spread across China—with the initial spark quite possibly coming from

Hong Kong’s protest movement.” The CWI’s fervent desire that the “democracy” movement be wielded against the “CCP dictatorship” on the mainland is the U.S. State Department’s hope exactly!

The CWI suggests that the Umbrella Movement might constitute a new Tiananmen, referring to the May-June 1989 upheaval that shook mainland China. Hong Kong’s “democracy” proponents hold huge anniversary commemorations every June presenting the Tiananmen uprising as a student protest for capitalist democracy against the evil Communist regime. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The 1989 events centered on Tiananmen Square began with students demanding more political freedoms and protesting the corruption of top bureaucrats. The protests were joined first by individual workers, then by contingents from factories and other workplaces, as workers were driven to act by high inflation and the growing inequality that accompanied the bureaucracy’s program of building “socialism” through market reforms. While some youth looked to Western-style capitalist democracy, the protests were dominated by the singing of the *Internationale*—the international workers’ anthem—and other expressions of pro-socialist consciousness.

Various workers organizations that appeared during the protests had the character of embryonic organs of workers class rule. “Workers picket corps” and factory-based “dare to die” groups, organized to protect student protesters against repression, defied the Deng Xiaoping regime’s declaration of martial law. Workers’ groups began to take on responsibility for public safety after the government in Beijing melted away and the police disappeared from the streets. It was the entry of the Chinese proletariat into the protests, in Beijing and throughout the country, that marked an incipient political revolution. After weeks of paralysis, the CCP regime launched a bloody crackdown on June 3-4 in Beijing.

The workers showed enormous capacity for struggle and forged links with soldiers, some of whom refused to fire on protesters. But on their own, they did not arrive at the understanding of the need for a political revolution to overturn the deforming rule of the CCP bureaucracy. To imbue the working class with this consciousness requires the intervention of a revolutionary Marxist party.

The imperialists will never relent until they have crushed the Chinese deformed workers state and are free once again to plunder the country at will. The imperialist-dominated world capitalist order, with its drive to control markets and drive down workers’ wages and living conditions, is incompatible with development toward socialism. To open that road requires workers revolutions in Japan, the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries. In fighting for this program, we seek to link the struggles of workers in the imperialist centers with defense of gains already won, including those of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, November 6, 7:30 p.m.

Contradictions of the Civil Rights Movement

SFSU, Cesar Chavez Student Center Room T-153

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

CHICAGO

Saturday, October 25, 2 p.m.

The Capitalist State: An Instrument of Organized Terror Against the Workers and the Oppressed

University of Illinois-Chicago Addams Hall, 2nd Floor, Room 200 830 S. Halsted Street (Take Blue Line to UIC-Halsted)

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

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, November 5, 6:30 p.m.

1917-1992: The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union The Fight for New October Revolutions

University of British Columbia Irving Barber Learning Centre, Rm. 315 Information and readings: (604) 687-0353 trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, November 5, 7:00 p.m.

The Communist Manifesto

UCLA, Kerckhoff Hall, Room 152

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

TORONTO

Thursday, October 30, 7 p.m.

Government Out of the Bedroom! Down With Tories’ Crackdown on Prostitution!

University of Toronto Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2114 100 St. George Street

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

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, October 21, 7 p.m.

The State: Reform vs. Revolution

City College of New York NAC Rm. 1/209 138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue (Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)

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

Visit the ICL Website: www.icl-fi.org

斯巴达克派

SPARTACIST

托洛茨基主义关于中国“市场改革”的分析



保卫中国畸形工人国家！
为无产阶级政治革命而斗争！

妇女革命

俄国革命与妇女解放

Defend Chinese Deformed Workers State!
For Proletarian Political Revolution!

China’s “Market Reforms”: A Trotskyist Analysis

The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women

No. 8 \$1 (28 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to:

Spartacist Publishing Co.

Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Ferguson Two Months Later Thousands Protest Racist Cop Terror

The following article is based on a report from a Workers Vanguard sales/reporting team in the St. Louis area.

Two months after a cop gunned down unarmed black teenager Michael Brown, the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson remains a focal point for anger over racist cop terror. Since the initial outpouring of protest following Brown's killing, St. Louis-area cops have blown away three more black people: Kajieme Powell on August 19, Michael Willis Jr. on September 17 and 18-year-old Vonderrit Myers, mowed down in a hail of 17 bullets by an off-duty white cop in the city's Shaw neighborhood on October 8.

The episodic flare-up of protests in the wake of the National Guard siege of Ferguson in August has elicited a vicious racist backlash, centered on expressions of solidarity with Darren Wilson, Brown's killer. Ominously, Ferguson police sported "I Am Darren Wilson" wristbands until the Depart-

ment of Justice, in the interest of cleaning up the image of the thugs in blue, called for them to be removed in late September. Black protesters outside of the Cardinals baseball playoff game on October 6 were met with racist vitriol from white fans, including chants of "Let's go, Darren!" One of these bigots had "I Am Darren Wilson" taped to his replica jersey.

The extended weekend of October 10-13 saw a series of protest events, including marches, sit-ins, meetings and civil disobedience, initiated by Hands Up United, a black youth activist group formed after Brown's killing. Two days before these "Ferguson October" protests, the shooting death of Myers had local residents and activists back out in the streets, facing cops in riot gear.

In the largest draw of the weekend, thousands marched through downtown St. Louis on October 11. In addition to a core of local residents, a broad multi-



Reuters

Police confront protesters in Ferguson, October 10, two days after an off-duty cop gunned down another black youth in nearby St. Louis.

racial mix of trade unionists, anti-racist activists, leftists and students from across the country took part. That night, there were protests at the Ferguson police station and a sit-in at a QuikTrip gas station in the Shaw neighborhood, where several were arrested. Civil disobedience actions two days later resulted in additional arrests.

The central demand of the organizers of the "Ferguson October" protests was for Darren Wilson to be prosecuted. At the October 11 march, there was widespread and justified anger that 64 days after Brown's death, the cop who killed him still walks free, while black youth keep getting shot down.

continued on page 8

Outrage over Police Massacre of Students in Guerrero

Mexico

MEXICO CITY, October 13—Several mass graves have been found in the outskirts of Iguala, Guerrero, which may contain the burned remains of 43 rural teachers-in-training from the Ayotzinapa teachers college who went missing following clashes with police over two weeks ago. A local drug cartel known as Guerreros Unidos (United Warriors)—allegedly linked to the wife of the Iguala mayor—is said to have collaborated with the police in the attacks on the students, during which at least six people were gunned down, and dozens disappeared. Results of DNA tests have not yet been released to confirm the identities of the bodies in the graves, but many fear the worst. Since the gruesome massacre, Iguala's mayor and his wife—both members of the bourgeois Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)—as well as the police chief have reportedly gone into hiding.

Events in Guerrero have sparked an international outcry from many different quarters. The Obama administration, which has mercilessly gone after Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden for lifting the veil on the dirty deeds of the U.S. imperialists, has demanded a "transparent investigation." Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) promised that there will be no room for impunity, as he dispatched the newly established



Reuters

October 3: Ayotzinapa teachers-in-training protest in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, one week after massacre and disappearance of their fellow students.

Gendarmería and other federal forces to take over police functions in Iguala. As our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México warned in the September 29 leaflet translated below, there must be no illusions that justice for the workers and poor will come from any agency of the bourgeois state.

Several mass protests have taken place in Guerrero state, Mexico City and elsewhere. On October 2, the annual demonstration commemorating the victims of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre of student protesters in the capital became a massive display of solidarity with the Ayotzinapa students and their families. Tens of thousands came out across Mexico and inter-

nationally on October 8 to demand that the students be returned alive.

* * *

In three separate violent incidents that began as an attack on rural *normalistas* [teachers-in-training] in Ayotzinapa, municipal police under PRD command and armed civilians opened fire in Iguala, Guerrero, on September 26-27, leaving at least six people dead and 17 injured, with dozens still missing. The despicable PRD mayor of Iguala ranted that the students from Ayotzinapa "were hired to come and cause trouble." This is just the latest attack against *normalistas*, who study in very poorly equipped schools and often

graduate only to swell the ranks of the unemployed, while much of the school-age population, especially in rural areas, attends schools without teachers, electricity or even buildings. Workers at the nine rural teachers colleges in Guerrero state went on strike today to protest the attack. Active and massive solidarity with the students of Guerrero is needed: *An injury to one is an injury to all!*

As we wrote in December 2011: "The demands of rural *normalistas* have changed very little in the last 50 years, and in all this time the response of the ruling capitalists/landowners—especially but not only in Guerrero—has varied from class disdain to the most vile police/military brutality." At the time, the police had shot down two *normalistas* while they were protesting on the Autopista del Sol Highway that ends in Acapulco after winding through Guerrero, one of the poorest states in the country. Lacking any independent social power, these desperate students seek to make their struggle known, often by occupying buildings, taking over city buses or blocking highways—and they far too often face brutal state repression. What is necessary is to link the struggle of these students with other struggles, based on the understanding that the working class has social power. With its hands on the means of production and with its ability to withdraw its labor, the working class can bring down capitalism and the armed bodies of men (the army, the police, the courts and the prisons) that defend capitalist exploitation of labor.

continued on page 10