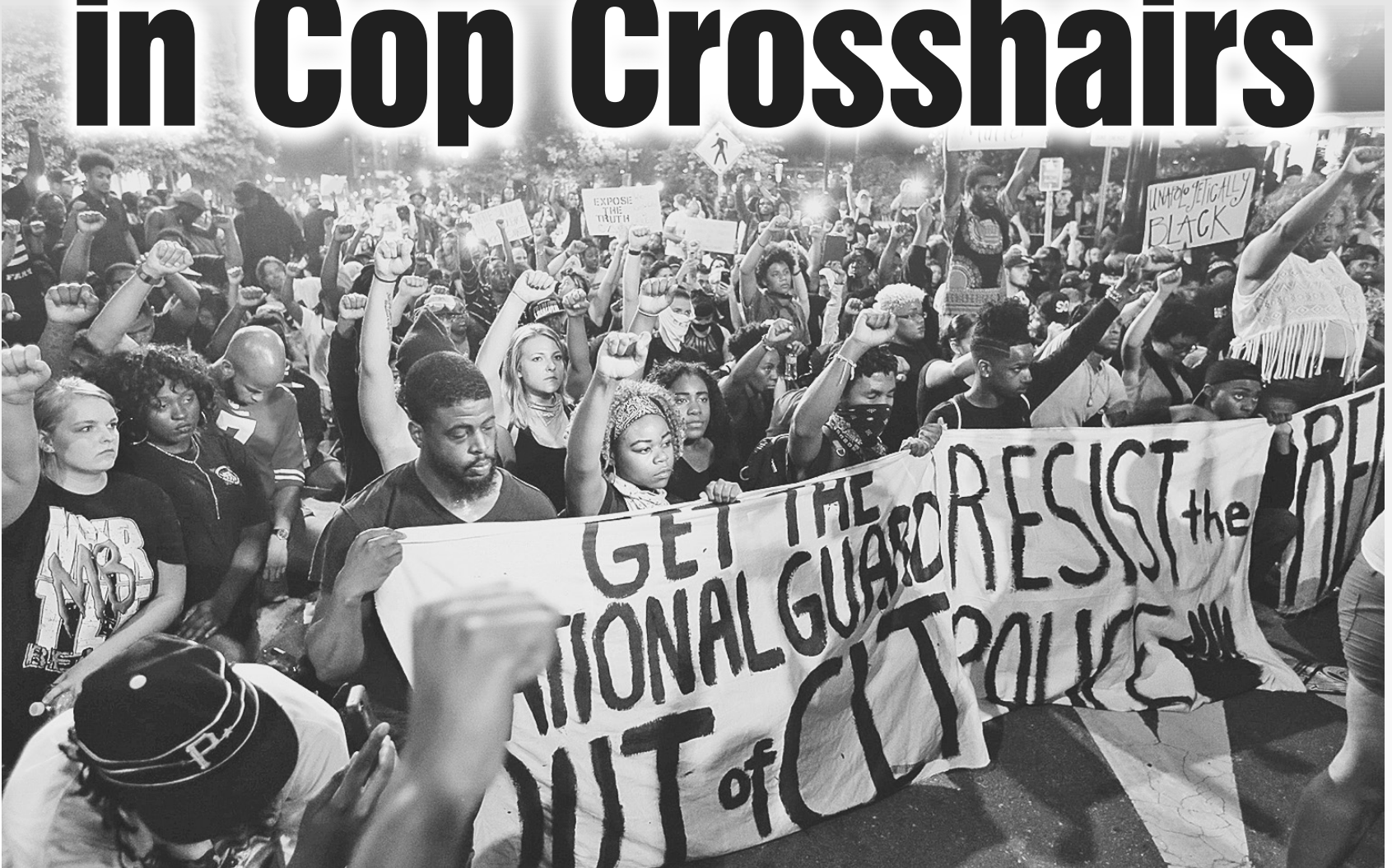


Charlotte, North Carolina

Black People in Cop Crosshairs



Reuters

Charlotte, September 23: Demonstrators protesting cop killing of Keith Lamont Scott call for National Guard to get out.

On September 20, Keith Lamont Scott became one of the latest victims of the racist executioners in blue. The 43-year-old father of seven was gunned down by the police in broad daylight in the parking lot of the suburban apartment complex where he lived with his family, just minutes from the campus of the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. The small portion of the cops' own video footage that was released after days of protests shows Scott walking slowly backwards from his parked vehicle with his hands by his sides. He is then shot four times by a black undercover officer who is off camera. Contrary to the police lie that Scott "posed an imminent deadly threat," he was quite simply killed for the "crime" of sitting in his own car while waiting for his son to get off the school bus.

Keith Scott is one of over 800 people killed by the police in the U.S. so far this year; roughly one in four were black. Only a few days before the Scott killing, 40-year-old Terence Crutcher was shot dead by a Tulsa, Oklahoma policewoman as he held his hands above his head. On September 27, Ugandan immigrant Alfred Olango was blown away in El Cajon, a San Diego suburb, for holding an electronic cigarette. On September 30 and October 1, two black men, Reginald "Junior" Thomas and Carnell "CJ" Snell, were killed in the

Break with the Democrats! For a Workers Party!

Los Angeles area. The bitter reality is that in a country whose capitalist economy was founded on chattel slavery, black lives don't matter to the ruling class. The cops are armed thugs enforcing a system in which workers are brutally exploited and the mass of the black population is forcibly segregated at the bottom of society. This is why the fight against racist cop terror must be linked to the fight for the working class to overthrow this whole rotten, capitalist system through socialist revolution. A team of comrades from *Workers Vanguard* traveled to Charlotte the weekend following the killing of Keith Scott to distribute our Marxist propaganda and argue for this revolutionary perspective with those who had taken to the streets in protest.

The cops in "open carry" North Carolina didn't even bother to pretend that a black man might have the same rights as a white man to carry a firearm, immediately justifying their shooting of Keith Scott by claiming he was armed. They later announced that Scott drew their attention while they were waiting to serve a warrant on someone else because he was supposedly rolling a marijuana "blunt" inside his vehicle, demonstrating that the racist "war on drugs" is a license for the cops to kill black people. Scott's wife and

other witnesses to the shooting all maintain that he was not armed. When our team visited the memorial set up for Scott in the parking lot where he was killed, we heard a neighbor who was lighting candles on the memorial ask who people were supposed to believe, the neighbors who were there, or the cops?

The cops and their media mouthpieces then resorted to the tried and tested technique of character assassination of Scott himself. Burying or disappearing the fact that they gunned down a family man, married for 20 years, disabled and recovering from a traumatic

brain injury, the capitalist press has instead grotesquely tried to depict Scott as a lifelong criminal. Scott's wife, Rakeyia, courageously filmed and made public her own cellphone video of her husband's killing. She repeatedly appealed to the cops that her husband was not armed and explained that he suffered from a brain injury for which he had just taken medication.

Police Riot Against Protesters

As word of the killing spread on the evening of September 20, protesters chanting "Black lives matter!" took to the streets in Scott's University City neighborhood. They were met with riot cops who tear-gassed the protesters. The following night, hundreds took to the streets in Charlotte's Uptown, the second-largest banking center in the U.S., where gleaming skyscrapers, luxury hotels and expensive restaurants

continued on page 10

Young Spartacus

Origins of Scientific Socialism

by Joseph Seymour

See Page 6



Expropriate the Drug Companies! EpiPen Price Gouging

Keeping an EpiPen at hand is a matter of life and death for millions of children and adults in the U.S.—people who have severe allergies to bee stings or common foods like milk or peanuts. Available by prescription only, the auto-injectors deliver emergency doses of epinephrine (adrenaline) intended to stop anaphylactic reactions that can kill in minutes. Epinephrine has been available for a century and is dirt cheap. The pens themselves cost next to nothing to make. It stands to reason that lifesaving devices like these should be available everywhere and that a person who might die without one should not have to worry about paying. But in capitalist America, Mylan Pharmaceutical has steadily jacked up the price from about \$100 when it bought the patent nine years ago to an obscene \$600 for every two-pack sold today. Mylan does not actually manufacture the device itself. The *San*

New York, September 14: Protest against skyrocketing drug prices outside office of Mylan pharmaceuticals.

Jose Mercury News (1 October) reported that, after reverse engineering an EpiPen, two Silicon Valley engineers estimated that it would cost only \$8.02 to make.



TROTSKY

The Capitalist State Cannot Be Reformed

The cops who continue to gun down black people with impunity and the intelligence agencies who spy on everyone are parts of the bourgeois state. This state exists to defend the interests of the capitalist ruling class through the use of violence against workers and the oppressed. In January 1920, Gregory Zinoviev, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, wrote an appeal to the Industrial

Workers of the World, the leading American syndicalist organization at the time. Seeking to win the IWW to Communism, he explained key lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution, which included a Marxist understanding of the nature of the state.

The war and its aftermath have revealed with startling clearness the real function of the capitalist state, with its legislatures, courts of justice, police, armies, and bureaucrats.

The state is *used* to defend and strengthen the power of the capitalists and to oppress the workers. This is particularly true in the United States, whose Constitution was framed by the great merchants, speculators, and landowners with the deliberate purpose of protecting their class interests against the majority of the people.

At the present time the government of the United States is openly acting as the weapon of the capitalists against the workers....

Any worker can see this fact with his own eyes. All the people vote for governors, mayors, judges, and sheriffs; but in time of strike the governor calls in the militia to protect the scabs, the mayor orders the police to beat up and arrest the pickets, the judge imprisons the workers for “rioting,” “disturbing the peace,” and the sheriff hires thugs as deputies to break the strike.

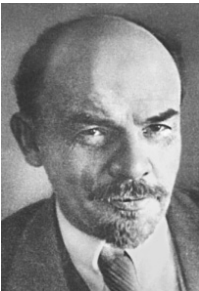
Capitalist society all together presents a solid front against the worker. The priest tells the worker to be contented, the press curses him as a “Bolshevik,” the policeman arrests him, the court sentences him to jail, the sheriff seizes his furniture for debt, and the poorhouse takes his wife and children.

In order to destroy capitalism, the workers must first wrest the state power out of the hands of the capitalist class. They must not only *seize* this power, but *abolish the old capitalist apparatus entirely*.

For the experience of revolutions has shown that the workers cannot take hold of the state machine and use it for their own purposes—as the Yellow Socialist [i.e., reformist, social-patriotic] politicians propose to do. The capitalist state is built to serve capitalism, and that is all it can do, no matter who is running it.

And in place of the capitalist state the workers must build their own *workers’ state*, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

—Gregory Zinoviev, “Appeal to the IWW,” reprinted in *The Communist International in Lenin’s Time: Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920*, Vol. 2 (Pathfinder Press, 1991)



LENIN

Small wonder, then, that a tidal wave of outrage has swept over the pharma parasite. Much of the anger has rightly been directed against Mylan’s cavalier CEO, Heather Bresch. The company chief has watched her personal salary rise even faster than the price of the EpiPen—Bresch draws down a cool \$18 million a year. Bresch is the daughter of a West Virginia Democratic Senator; she got her first job at Mylan because of her father.

Called to testify before a Congressional oversight committee, she deadpanned: “Price and access exist in a balance, and we believe we have struck that balance.” Tell that to the people who have no health insurance or who cannot pay the astronomical out-of-pocket costs under their policies! They are left to choose between groceries, utilities or medicine for themselves and their families. Some gamble on keeping an EpiPen past the expiration date. Others resort to stocking prefilled syringes or vials of epinephrine as a substitute. Apart from the added risk of getting a dose wrong or puncturing a vein, the minutes lost in attempting to fashion a homemade injection while constricted breathing and lowered blood pressure set in could be fatal.

The pricing scandal has provoked much liberal hand-wringing and calls for more competition against Mylan’s near monopoly. “Bring a comparable product to market,” they say, or produce a generic version that is not quite as expensive. Such alternatives still allow Bresch and her investors to keep their profits while other companies get to muscle in on the action. Mylan’s own proposal is a “savings card” scheme in which the company may offer up to a 50 percent discount—leaving the cost at a still outrageous \$300!

Price gouging by pharmaceutical companies is not new. Before EpiPen there was Daraprim, an anti-malarial drug commonly used nowadays to treat AIDS patients. Last year, “pharma bro” Martin Shkreli, CEO of Turing Pharmaceuticals, became the “most hated man in America” when he raised the price of the drug from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill overnight! Shkreli eventually resigned under pressure, only to be replaced by one of his close associates—who kept the price at \$750.

It seems that when it comes to the most vital medicines, that’s when the capitalists raise the prices the most. In the late 1980s, with the AIDS epidemic raging, the Reagan administration finally threw a sop to HIV victims and allowed AZT, one of the first anti-retroviral medications, to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Patients were forced to fork over \$10,000 a year for AZT treatment in a desperate attempt to stay alive. As we wrote in 1987: “The U.S. ‘health care’ system with its medicine for profit is a market in death. The pharmaceutical giants eye potential profits, while insurance vultures deny coverage to those judged ‘bad risks’ for AIDS.”

Under capitalism, the development and sale of medicine is driven by profit and medical care is rationed. The wealthy, who are always assured of the best health care, are concerned about the price of an EpiPen to the extent they have stock in Mylan. But for the working class and poor, who often struggle to get any care, the cost of medicine matters very deeply. We call for quality health care for all, free at the point of delivery, and for the expropriation of the parasitic drug companies, which are a menace to public health. Assuring such basic human needs requires socialist revolution to overthrow the whole capitalist profit system. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD



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ISO on Syria

Pimps for U.S. Imperialism

For five years, the U.S. imperialists and a host of lesser powers have been stirring the Syrian cauldron, inflicting unspeakable suffering on the peoples of Syria. Today, much of the country is a wasteland, hundreds of thousands have been slaughtered and more than half the population has been driven from their homes, either as internally displaced persons or as refugees abroad.

As Marxists, we fight for a socialist federation of the Near East based on proletarian revolutions that sweep away the capitalist rulers of the region. We say the international proletariat has no side in the Syrian civil war between the brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad, rooted in the Alawite religious minority, and the various rebel groups dominated by different Sunni Islamists, some of which are backed by the U.S. But working people have a side against the U.S. and other imperialist powers such as Britain and France. Thus, while implacable opponents of everything the reactionary cutthroats of the Islamic State (ISIS) stand for, we take a military side with ISIS when it aims its fire against the imperialist armed forces and their proxies in the region, including the Kurdish nationalist forces in Iraq and Syria. At the same time, we also oppose the other capitalist powers involved in Syria—such as Russia, Iran and Turkey—and demand that they get out.

Our political position is framed by the Marxist understanding that U.S. imperialism is the greatest enemy of the world’s workers and oppressed. In standing for the defense of ISIS against the blows of the imperialists, we recognize that any setback for Washington coincides with the interests of the international proletariat, both in the Near East and, crucially, here in the U.S. We aim to turn the multi-sided disillusionment and anger of working people in the U.S. into class struggle against their capitalist rulers. It is through such struggle that the proletariat can be won to the need to build a revolutionary workers party that will lead the fight for socialist revolution to destroy the imperialist beast from within.

This Marxist understanding is rejected



Reuters

June 16: U.S. airstrike in city of Manbij, Syria. The city was laid waste by weeks of imperialist bombing.

by reformist groups like the Stalinoid Workers World Party (WWP) and Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL). Denying the possibility of international proletarian revolution, both groups are virtually uncritical of Assad’s capitalist regime, falsely painting his dictatorship as progressive and anti-imperialist. For all their anti-imperialist posturing, both WWP and PSL have many times found themselves on the same side as U.S. imperialism. WWP celebrated the 2008 election of Barack Obama, who has continued and intensified U.S. military intervention in the Near East. More recently, both groups cheered on the Kurdish nationalists who in late 2014 were combating ISIS in Kobani, even as these nationalists were acting as the ground troops for the U.S.

And then there is the thoroughly wretched International Socialist Organization (ISO), historically allied with the international tendency led by the late Tony Cliff. The ISO recently ran an article by Ashley Smith titled “Anti-Imperialism and the

Syrian Revolution” (socialistworker.org, 25 August), which is essentially an apology for U.S. imperialism. Smith’s article criticizes, among others, WWP and PSL for their support to Assad. But what the ISO counterposes to this is support to the “democratic” rebels, and through them, to the U.S., the world’s foremost imperialist power.

While claiming to stand against U.S. intervention in Syria, the ISO, in fact, complains that the U.S. has not intervened enough. According to the ISO, Assad is still in power “thanks in no small measure to the fact that the U.S., while accepting some supplying of the rebels, denied these forces the heavy weaponry they pleaded for to stop the regime’s assault.” Later in the article, Smith bemoans the fact that early in the civil war “the U.S. blocked the shipment of heavy weaponry, such as anti-aircraft systems, that would have strengthened secular and democratic forces that have borne the brunt of the Assad regime’s terror.”

Letter

Fascist Menace at Murray State

Chicago
16 September 2016

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

I wasn’t shocked to hear my alma mater, Murray State University, would be welcoming the white nationalist “Traditionalist Worker Party” to campus when classes resumed in August. Defending his decision to allow it to disseminate propaganda on campus, university president Bob Davies referred to a “Marketplace of Ideas,” and went on to say the university’s role is “to hear all ideas and to test them.” I’m not sure where Davies has been for the past century, but *the “ideas” of fascist race-terror have been “tested,” in a “Marketplace of Ideas” that begins with a recruitment table but ends with the lynch rope and the gas chamber!*

The obvious hypocrisy at the heart of this “Marketplace of Ideas” hailed by Davies is it apparently overlaps with the staff of the campus newspaper being dragged before the board of trustees for devoting an issue of the paper to s-e-x (God forbid!) in 2010 and campus staff tearing down propaganda aimed at organ-

izing a protest against Mitch McConnell’s commencement address in 2013.

This has nothing to do with any professed dedication to a “Marketplace of Ideas,” but everything to do with campus administrators’ need to keep these shock troops of reaction in reserve in light of recent protests on college campuses. When students, workers, and the oppressed mobilize, the administration will mobilize its own thugs—extending from the campus cops to the race-terrorists their “Marketplace of Ideas” cultivates!

When I left Murray State, there was no “campus left” to speak of. But on many college campuses, ostensible leftists affiliated with the ISO, SAIt, or other reformist groups will inevitably call for increased power for administrators to ban these groups. This reflects their petty bourgeois social composition and opportunist program, which relies on clinging to the bourgeois state and basking in the illusion it can be made to act in the interests of workers and the oppressed, filtered in this case through

the public university. *This is nothing less than a betrayal of the working class and the oppressed!* When empowered, the administration will not clamp down on the race-terrorists, it will use the power accorded to it to smash the left, trade unionists, and the oppressed.

The only way out is to *smash the embryonic fascist threat* while it is still small and *extend the fight against the race-terrorists to the system which produces them: U.S. imperialism*. To do this, the social power of America’s multiracial working class must be mobilized by a political party with such a perspective. The Spartacist League/U.S., uniquely on the American left, has this perspective and can lead into battle those for whom racist U.S. imperialism’s “Marketplace of Ideas” has never meant anything other than training for servility against those for whom the “free speech” rights of the Nazi/KKK/Skinhead killers rank more highly than the lives of working people and the oppressed!

Comradely greetings,
A WV supporter

The ISO deceitfully paints the Sunni Islamist-dominated rebellion in Syria as a “popular struggle against dictatorship and for democracy.” To be sure, the Cliffites have long had a certain penchant for Islamic fundamentalism, having, for example, supported the coming to power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 2012 (only to then support the military coup against it a year later when its rule proved to be unpopular). In Syria, the ISO has embraced some deeply reactionary Islamic fundamentalist forces. One of the slogans of what the ISO calls the “Syrian Revolution” was: “Christians to Beirut, Alawites to their graves!”

For the ISO, the alpha and omega of all struggle is “democracy.” There is no such thing as abstract democracy, which always has a class content. Capitalist democracy is the dictatorship of the capitalist class over the working class and oppressed. For genuine Marxists, the starting point is the class line: what furthers the cause of the working class and the struggle for its rule, which on an international basis would lay the material groundwork for a classless, stateless communist society. This requires, first and foremost, the political independence of the working class from all agencies of the bourgeois order—such as the Assad regime and, most certainly, U.S. imperialism.

In his article on Syria, Smith attacks hawk Hillary Clinton *from the right*. He notes that “she calls for the U.S. to enforce a no-fly zone in Syria, and some of her advisers support air strikes against the Assad regime for the stated aiming [sic] of stopping attacks on civilians.” “But,” Smith then goes on to lament, “Clinton certainly does not support the original aspirations of the Syrian Revolution” because, “at most,” she and Obama advocate “a negotiated solution that preserves the core of the Syrian state.” The ISO’s article is essentially a call to arms for U.S. imperialism to increase its support of the rebels in Syria.

The ISO goes so far as to claim that “the U.S. retreated in general from outright regime change as its strategy in the Middle East after the failure of its invasion and occupation of Iraq.” Tell that to Libya’s Muammar el-Qaddafi! In 2011, in an operation heavily pushed by Clinton, the U.S. and NATO intervened in support of Libyan rebels against Qaddafi, resulting in his lynching that October. Like it does in Syria today, the ISO then supported the Libyan opposition, sundry forces that included Islamists, monarchists and CIA assets that from the beginning appealed for imperialist military intervention. We had no side in the Libyan civil war, but once the U.S. and European imperialists intervened we declared, “Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!”

Today, Libya is in the throes of chaos as Islamist and tribal factions compete for control of this oil-rich country. All these forces are hostile to the interests of working people and the oppressed. At the same time, the imperialist-installed Government of National Accord (GNA) and its current allies are acting as the proxy ground troops of U.S. imperialism as it pursues ISIS forces in Surt (Sirte), against which the U.S. has launched over 200 airstrikes since early August. The tribal forces that now claim adherence to ISIS truly stand in the tradition of these cutthroats, having carried out numerous atrocities, including the February 2015 beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic migrant laborers in Surt. But as opponents of U.S. imperialism, we stand for the military defense of ISIS forces in Surt against the U.S. and its GNA proxies.

Anti-Communism Is at the Root

In his article, Smith writes, “How could opponents of U.S. imperialism end up supporting a dictator [Assad].... The answer starts with the Stalinist left’s support of Stalin’s Russia and Mao’s China during the Cold War era. It supported those state capitalist dictatorships not only as opponents of U.S. imperialism, but as positive models of socialism.” Rather, one should ask, how could the supposed socialists of the ISO end up embracing U.S. imperialism? The answer starts with their

continued on page 5

LIU-Brooklyn

Teachers Stave Off Union Busting Attack, For Now



September 7: LIU-Brooklyn faculty and students picket campus during union-busting lockout.

table in the absence of union struggle.

The fact that an employer could impose a lockout in New York City, a “union town” in a state that has the highest rate of union membership in the country, says volumes about the dire state of the unions and is bad news for the entire labor movement. Other unions clearly had a stake in defending the LIUFF, but the union tops did not even pull out their own members who kept on working during the lockout. Meanwhile, some faculty from LIU-Post, who are under a separate union contract, reportedly scabbed and taught classes at Brooklyn during the lockout. A crucial step to winning any labor struggle on the campus is shutting down the university. Students should have held support rallies outside, not inside, LIU’s gates and boycotted all classes. *Picket lines mean don’t cross!* All the campus workers should be in one union!

The LIUFF is a small union of professors, who constitute a petty-bourgeois layer without a lot of social weight. In order to win, they need to be under the wing of the broader union movement in New York City, from transit workers to Teamsters. The lockout elicited broad sympathy among workers across the city. But, disdaining the kind of battles it would take to beat back such attacks, the labor bureaucrats in the city offered little more than paper statements of “solidarity” while their own members crossed picket lines. The union misleaders did nothing to mobilize their members to build mass picket lines that could stop scabs and deliveries.

After the lockout ended, the LIUFF proclaimed victory at a press conference with a crop of city council members and union presidents, including Barbara Bowen of CUNY’s Professional Staff Congress (PSC) and Randi Weingarten of the American Federation of Teachers, to which both LIUFF and PSC are affiliated. Weingarten and Co.’s main theme was unity against “the Trump effect.” Adorned with Hillary Clinton campaign garb, Weingarten appeared to be at a Democratic Party lovefest. Promoting the class-collaborationist myth of shared interests between labor and management, she proclaimed, “America is better than this divisiveness.”

Instead of forging a fighting alliance of the labor movement, the union misleaders pour money into electing “lesser-evil” capitalist politicians, as they did with Bill de Blasio and Barack Obama. Under the guise of school “reform,” the Obama administration has overseen a massive assault on public education and teachers unions. The starting point for successful class struggle is to break with the Democratic Party, which, no less than the Republican Party, represents the interests of the capitalist ruling class.

For Worker/Teacher/Student Control of the Universities!

Reflecting the trend in the rest of the country, tuition at LIU has risen drastically in the last couple decades. Since 1995, on average, tuition and fees at private universities have jumped 179 percent. With total student debt climbing to over \$1.2 trillion, many recent graduates are headed for a bleak future of low-wage and

Permanent Jobs for Adjuncts! End the Two-Tier System!

For professors and librarians at the private Long Island University’s Brooklyn campus, the fall semester began with a union-busting attack by the administration: a 12-day lockout. Citing the “historical likelihood of a strike,” the university banned from campus hundreds of its full-time and part-time faculty represented by the Long Island University Faculty Federation (LIUFF) over Labor Day weekend. Faculty email accounts were blocked, health care coverage was cut off, and many LIU professors were forced to apply for unemployment. The administration brought in scabs—either administrators or unqualified replacement teachers. It was the first lockout of higher education faculty in the U.S. and it targeted a union that has repeatedly dared to strike in the past.

The lockout elicited outrage among students on the Brooklyn campus, which has the highest percentage of blacks, Latinos and women of all the LIU campuses. Gouged some \$35,000 a year for tuition, they face a lifetime of paying back student loans. With the campus in chaos and classes taught by strikebreakers or canceled altogether, students accused LIU president Kimberly Cline of defrauding them. Daily student solidarity protests demanded, “Let them teach! Let us learn!”

Since she arrived in 2013, Cline has sought to promote a prettier picture to Wall Street by boosting LIU’s balance sheet at the expense of unionized workers. Four other unions on the Brooklyn campus have been working without contracts: secretarial and clerical workers, carpenters, engineers and maintenance workers, and janitors. Since March 2012, the clerical workers have not had any wage increase and are increasingly struggling to make ends meet as they’re forced to

cover their health insurance premiums.

In the case of the LIUFF, the administration doggedly tried to bully the union into accepting a rotten contract and to drive a wedge between full-time faculty and low-wage adjuncts. The union was seeking pay parity with faculty at the LIU-Post campus in suburban Long Island, where full-time faculty make \$10-15,000 more a year. For its part, the university proposed slashing adjuncts’ hours while gutting their benefits fund, increasing the workload of librarians, decreasing benefits to all new hires and implementing an onerous review process for tenured faculty.

The administration ended the lockout on September 15 after facing a barrage of negative publicity. While the union stood fast against attempts to pit sectors of the faculty

against one another, the conflict at LIU-Brooklyn has merely been kicked down the road. LIUFF members returned to work while agreeing to continue negotiations. Dropping its demand for a five-week contract extension, the union accepted a nine-month extension, with wages and benefits remaining frozen. The university gloated over the union’s agreement “not to strike” for the course of the academic year, pleased that the possibility of strike action had been moved from the start of the semester to right before summer. In return, the administration acceded to a union request for a “professional mediator to facilitate a fair contract.” There should be no illusions in “neutral” mediation based on the false hope that a mediator will pressure management for concessions at the negotiating



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slsycla@sbcglobal.net

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Sunday, October 16, 2 p.m.

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125 14th Street

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(between Oak and Madison,
8 minute walk from Lake Merritt BART)

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

ISO on Syria...

(continued from page 3)

abandonment of the defense of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states. The ISO was founded on virulent anti-Communist hostility to the Soviet Union, home of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, the world’s first and only successful workers revolution. Rejecting defense of the workers states inevitably leads to embracing one’s “own” ruling class.

The October Revolution of 1917 was the shaping political event of the 20th century. The seizure of state power by the working class led to the political and economic expropriation of the capitalist exploiters, laying the basis for a planned collectivized economy. But in the context of unprecedented devastation caused by World War I followed by nearly four years of civil war, continued isolation and economic backwardness, a conservative bureaucratic caste under the leadership of Joseph Stalin was able to seize political power from Soviet workers beginning in 1923-24. This was a political, not a social, counterrevolution. The Stalinist bureaucracy continued to rest parasitically on the proletarian property forms created by the October Revolution. The bureaucracy’s false dogma of building “socialism in one country,” its conciliation of imperialism and its systematic erosion of the political consciousness of the Soviet working class ultimately paved the way for capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92.

Through all those years, genuine Trotskyists fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. Based on our defense of the gains of the Russian Revolution and our program for new October Revolutions around the world, we fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist



AFP
U.S. Special Operations forces in northern Syrian province of Raqqa, May 2016.

bureaucracy and replace it with a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. This is the program we pursue today toward the remaining deformed workers states: China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam.

For his part, the ISO’s political godfather, Tony Cliff, broke from the Trotskyist movement in 1950, opposing defense of North Korea and China against U.S. and British imperialism in their counterrevolutionary Korean War. Cliff would go on to found what later became the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which was allied with the ISO until the early 2000s. In the U.S., the ISO’s precursors emerged from the followers of Max Shachtman, who broke from Trotskyism in 1940 and would quickly go on to reject the Soviet Union as a workers state. Where Shachtman called the Soviet Union a “bureaucratic collectivist” state, Cliff labeled it “state capitalist.” But the aim was the same: to renounce defense of the October Revolution.

In his article, Smith writes that those who argue that “the U.S. government is pulling the strings in the rebellion in Syria” display an arrogant dismissal “of the capacity of exploited and oppressed people to fight for liberation.” In reality, it is the ISO and its forefathers that have a long history of not only dismissing but opposing the struggles of the exploited and oppressed for liberation. Following the peasant-based 1949 Chinese Revolution, which liberated that country from capitalist rule, Shachtman signed a declaration denouncing the Chinese Communists titled, “Stalinism Is Not Socialism,” which was translated into Chinese. His *Labor Action* (28 September 1953) proudly boasted: “This leaflet had been dropped over China by U.S. bombers in May 1950 presumably through the sponsorship of the State Department.”

The ISO was founded in 1977, when these descendents of Shachtman allied themselves to the British SWP and formally adopted Cliff’s “state capitalist” line. During the Cold War, the Cliffites claimed to be “third campist” against both the U.S. and Soviet Union. In reality, the “neither Washington nor Moscow” crowd has always found itself in the camp of Washington whenever there has been a hard counterposition between imperialism and the degenerated and deformed workers states.

The Cliffites supported all manner of reactionary forces opposed to the Stalinists in power—from the sadistic, CIA-backed Afghan *mujahedin* who butchered school teachers for teaching girls to read to the Vatican-backed, anti-Communist, anti-Jewish and anti-woman Solidarność movement in Poland. In August 1991, when Boris Yeltsin’s imperialist-backed forces of counterrevolution staged a coup



Reuters
October 2011: Then-secretary of state Hillary Clinton flashes “V for Victory” sign at end of visit to Libya. U.S./NATO airstrikes aided in overthrow of Muammar el-Qaddafi and led to Libya being torn apart by warring factions.

temporary jobs and debt peonage. While full-time faculty salaries stagnate, a burgeoning layer of university administrators bathes in growing compensation. At LIU, the already-bloated salaries of top administrators doubled between 2008 and 2014. In 2014, President Cline made almost half a million dollars—the median income for a private university president.

This is all the more grotesque when one considers the university’s growing reliance on a supply of highly-educated but low-paid contingent faculty, or adjuncts. Decades ago, most college faculty members were tenured or tenure-track. Today, most are non-tenured, and half of those work part-time. Adjunct faculty members rely on temporary contracts with restricted hours, often having to teach at multiple schools. Generally lacking any means for voicing grievances or seeking advancement, a third of adjuncts live near or below the poverty line and one in four are enrolled in at least one public assistance program. A 2012 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “The Ph.D. Now Comes with Food Stamps,” detailed the condition of what is aptly termed “adjunctivitis”:

“Some are struggling to pay back student loans and cover basic living expenses as they submit scores of applications for a limited pool of full-time academic positions.... Many bounce on and off unem-

ployment or welfare during semester breaks. And some adjuncts have found themselves trying to make ends meet by waiting tables or bagging groceries alongside their students.”

Hiring adjuncts is one way the campus administrations cut costs by not providing health insurance and other benefits. The proliferation of glorified temps at universities is an example of what is happening to the American working class in general. Temporary contract workers, who toil side by side with permanent employees for a fraction of the pay and no benefits, have been increasingly used to undermine union protections, divide the workforce and erode workers’ living standards.

The LIUFF is one of the very few faculty unions at a private institution, including both permanent and temporary instructors. Having gone on strike six times since it was formed in the early 1970s, the union has in recent years won some gains for adjuncts. In its last strike in 2011, adjuncts won paid office hours and maintained the benefits trust fund that helps to defray the cost of health insurance. We demand: **Down with the two-tier system!** All faculty should get permanent contracts, with the same benefits and job protections as tenure-track.

The fight to gain and extend union rights on campus is a fight against the administration, which runs the university on behalf of

the ruling class. The universities train the next generation of ideologues, technocrats and managers needed by the capitalists to run their system. When it comes to the education of those the capitalists exploit and oppress, they invest only as much as they expect to realize in profit.

Private universities like LIU should be nationalized and run by those who work, teach and study there—abolish the administration! Against the race and

in Moscow, the Cliffites triumphantly proclaimed: “Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

Today, the ISO paints Vladimir Putin’s Russia as a continuation of the Soviet Union, with Smith writing that “Russia—profoundly weakened since its defeat in the Cold War a quarter century ago—is reasserting its imperial power through its all-out support for the Assad regime.” Post-Soviet Russia is a *capitalist state*. That the ISO has joined the U.S. rulers’ current anti-Russia hysteria is predictable and fits neatly with the Democratic Party circles that they inhabit.

For Smith, the main enemy in Syria is Assad and “Russian imperialism.” Russia is not imperialist but rather a regional power that inherited the nuclear arsenal and industrial infrastructure of the former Soviet Union (see “Is Russia Imperialist?” WV No. 1071, 10 July 2015). Such is the ISO’s vitriol against Russia that Smith even attacks the presidential candidates of the bourgeois Green Party to whom the ISO is giving electoral support this November. He complains that Jill Stein and her running mate, Ajamu Baraka, “have appeared on Russia’s state-sponsored, English-language RT television network to speak in opposition to U.S. war crimes, while remaining silent about Putin’s and Assad’s atrocities.”

The Syrian civil war has seen plenty of atrocities committed against civilians from *all* sides, from minorities slaughtered or driven out of their villages and towns by various rebels to the bombing of Aleppo by Russian and Syrian forces. But the greatest enemy of the Syrian masses is U.S. imperialism, whose wars across the Near East, including airstrikes in Syria, have slaughtered hundreds of thousands of people. As for the Green Party, it is hardly an opponent of U.S. imperialism. Stein’s election platform calls for cutting in half the U.S. military budget, which is many times more than the combined total of all its imperialist rivals. So Stein is for fewer bombs than Hillary, but is nonetheless dedicated to preserving an arsenal to enforce the predatory and murderous interests of America’s rulers abroad.

The ISO’s grotesque line on the Syrian civil war did not fall out of the sky. Its origins lie not in Syria or the Near East. Rather, it is the continuation of their repeated abject capitulation to and support for U.S. imperialism, originating in their unbridled hostility to the Soviet Union. Having time and again supported “democratic” imperialism against Soviet “totalitarianism,” it is hardly a stretch for the ISO to stand on the side of U.S. imperialism in Syria in the name of “democracy.” ■

class bias that permeates higher education under capitalism, we demand open admissions and no tuition with a paid living stipend, as part of the fight for the right to free, quality, integrated education for all. Such a perspective is linked to our fight for a socialist future where the resources and wealth of society are dedicated to the advancement of everyone and not to the exclusive benefit of a tiny capitalist class of filthy rich exploiters. ■

A Spartacist Pamphlet

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Then and Now

Minnesota, May 1934: At the Battle of Dupont Run, thousands of strikers and supporters routed cops and undermining special deputies.

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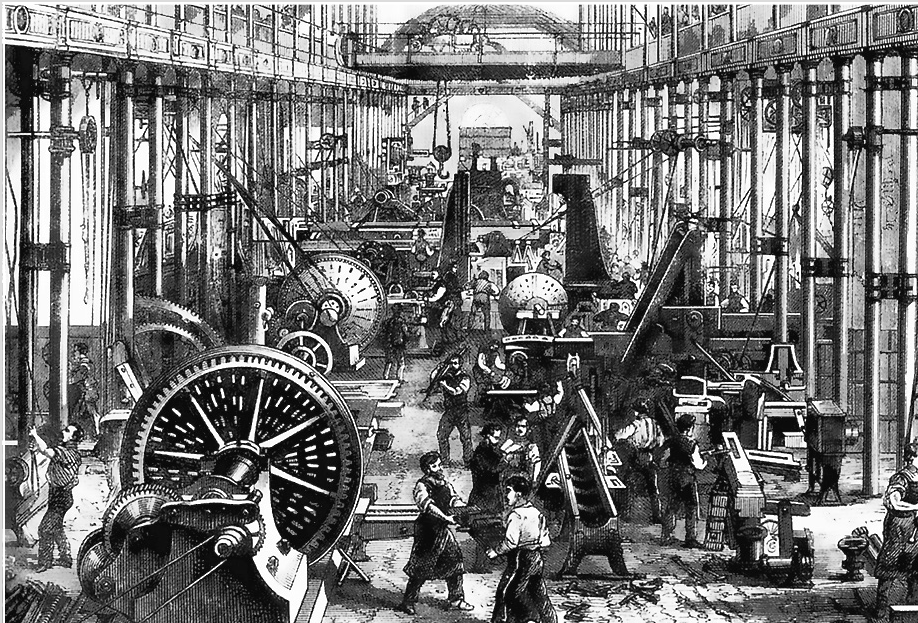
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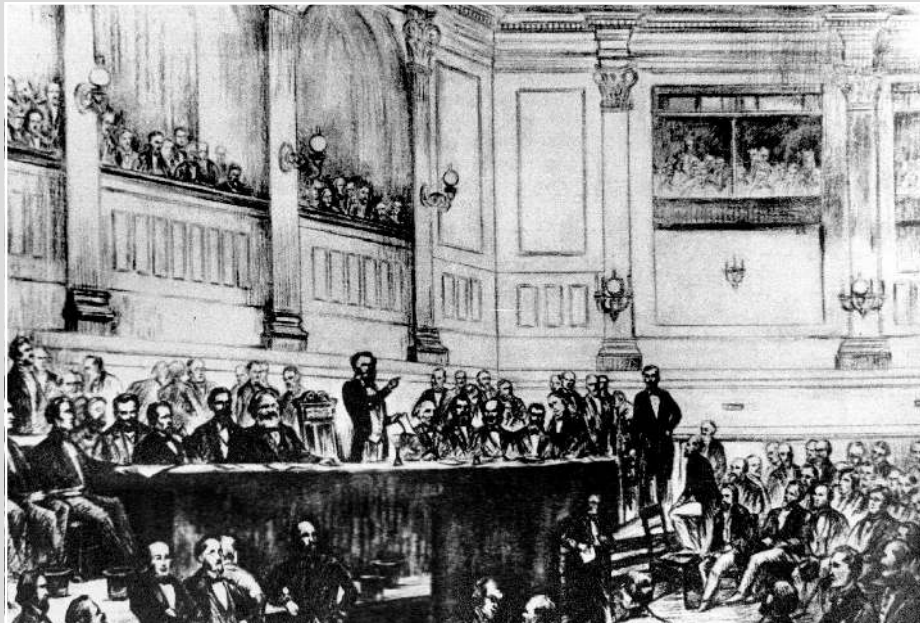
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Young Spartacus

Origins of Scientific Socialism



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E. Schumann

Left: 1868 illustration of factory in Chemnitz, Saxony. Right: Marx at inaugural meeting of the International Workingmen's Association in London, 1864. As the industrial proletariat grew with advances in manufacturing during the second half of 19th century, Marxism displaced utopian socialism.

By Joseph Seymour

The following is an edited version of an August 20 talk given in the Bay Area by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour.

There does not exist in the U.S. a major party or mass movement that calls itself socialist, much less Marxist. So those of you who are not members of the Spartacist League, how did you come to be sufficiently interested in, or sympathetic to, Marxism to attend this class and presumably do the preparatory readings for it?

Probably you have confronted the contradiction between your own liberal beliefs and values and the realities of American society. You're likely outraged by racist police atrocities, the rampant killing of unarmed black men who are not even engaged in what's considered a crime in the U.S. today. You're likely appalled by the vast and growing economic gulf between the wealthy and the rest of the populace. This was the main focus of the Occupy movement of a few years ago. In short, you want to change society in the U.S., and presumably in the rest of the world, according to your beliefs and values so as to create a good and just society.

If so, you're in very good company. Obviously, Karl Marx did not begin as a Marxist. He began as what could be called a liberal idealist. This is how Marx expressed his personal philosophy in an essay on graduating from the German equivalent of high school at the age of 17:

"History calls those men the greatest who have ennobled themselves by working for the common good; experience acclaims as happiest the man who has made the greatest number of people happy....

"If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all; then we shall experience no petty, limited, selfish joy, but our happiness will belong to millions, our deeds will live on quietly but perpetually at work, and over our ashes will be shed the hot tears of noble people."

—"Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession" (1835)

Most of the members of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs

were originally motivated by sentiments, though not as eloquently expressed, similar to that of the young Karl Marx. I myself traversed the path from liberal idealism to Marxism as a high school and college student in the late 1950s and early '60s. I don't know how political philosophy is taught in the U.S. today in middle school and high school. In my day, we were taught that the principles underlying American society and its government were expressed in the famous passage in the 1776 Declaration of Independence: "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." I believed that at the time.

In the late '50s and early '60s, the U.S. was engaged in the so-called Cold War with the USSR, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Any high school or college student who was seriously concerned with politics had to confront the question of whether capitalism or socialism was the better economic system, that is, better in terms of their own basic beliefs and values. I did not support communism as practiced in the Soviet Union.

Nonetheless, I concluded that socialism, not capitalism, better corresponded to my own liberal principles. If all men have a right to the pursuit of happiness, then they should have equal material resources to do so, at least initially. Obviously, someone born into an affluent or even average middle-class family in the U.S. was much better positioned to pursue personal happiness than someone born into a peasant family in India or Brazil. In other words, I drew socialist conclusions from liberal premises. And this was not unusual at the time. A number of my classmates in high school and college pretty much thought the same way.

Now, there were two basic differences between what I would describe as my liberal idealist concept of socialism and Marxism. One, I viewed socialism primarily as a means of bringing about an egalitarian redistribution of consumption levels, or living standards, especially on a global scale. I did not then view socialism primarily as a means of raising production and labor productivity to a far higher level than that prevailing in even the most advanced capitalist countries of North America and West Europe.

It's quite possible, even likely, that some of you have been engaged in environmentalist causes and campaigns. We've written a fair amount on environmentalist radicalism as an intellectual current and movement. Several years ago we wrote a reply to a lengthy letter to *Workers Vanguard* by a left-wing environmentalist, in which we explained our differences with what could be called the environmentalist worldview or mindset. A key passage from that response is:

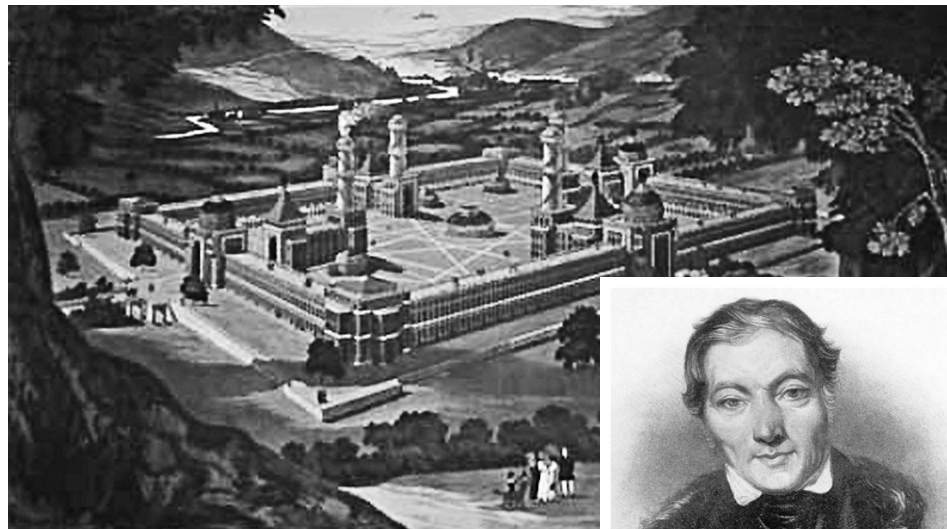
"The basic goal of Marxist socialism is to liberate the creative powers of humanity, which have been shackled by the capitalist system and earlier forms of class-divided society. Marxists regard the development of the productivity of human labor power as the prime mover of social evolution and the underpinning of historical progress."

—"In Defense of Science and Technology," WV No. 843, 4 March 2005

The other major difference between my liberal idealist concept of socialism and Marxism was that I had no idea how to achieve the kind of society I thought *should* exist, but did not. It was an ideal, not a guide to action. If all men have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, how come they actually *don't* have these rights and never have had? There have been constant wars throughout history, wars in which not only soldiers but also civilian populations including children have been killed en masse. Slavery and the subjugation of one people by another have been commonplace throughout history. In fact, the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, was himself a slaveowner. He justified black chattel slavery in practice, if not at the level of political philosophy.

When I first encountered Marxism, black people in the American South were deprived of all democratic rights and lived under a racist police state. Blacks in South Africa, the large majority of the population, were exploited and oppressed by a privileged white minority. The Arab and Berber populations of Algeria were subjugated by French colonial rule.

So how did one explain the contradic-



F. Bate; W.H. Brooke (inset)

Above: 1838 engraving of New Harmony commune in Indiana as envisioned by 19th-century utopian socialist Robert Owen (inset).

tion between liberal and humanitarian principles, principles that I believed in at the time, and social reality past and present? Marx answered that question. He explained: “Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development which this determines” (*Critique of the Gotha Programme* [1875]). In other words, what is generally considered to be right and wrong, the kind of behavior that is rewarded or punished, is basically determined and conditioned by the level of production and, in class society, how that production is organized.

But let’s start with pre-class society. In particular, let’s consider infanticide, the deliberate killing of newborn children. Today, infanticide is almost universally regarded as a horrific crime, and also an unnatural act on the part of mothers whose children are killed. However, for almost the entire history of our species, infanticide was commonly practiced. The development of agriculture, the cultivation of plants for food, and the raising of livestock for meat occurred only about 10,000 years ago. In the countless millennia before that, human beings lived by gathering plants in the wild and hunting game for food. However, a hunter-gatherer economy can sustain only a very small population relative to the potential reproductive capacity of the human species, especially in the face of sudden changes in climatic conditions such as severe drought.

Our Stone Age ancestors therefore had to and did practice population control. One means was for women to nurse newborn children as long as they possibly could in order to delay subsequent pregnancy. But the main means of population control was infanticide, especially of females. In the main, this was done just by depriving newborn children of the nurturing care needed for them to continue to live. A modern American anthropologist, Marvin Harris, has written in this regard: “Infanticide during the paleolithic period could very well have been as high as 50 percent—a figure that corresponds to estimates made by Joseph Birdsell of the University of California in Los Angeles on the basis of data collected among the aboriginal populations of Australia” (*Cannibals and Kings* [1977]).

The level of production and how that production is organized not only determines how people—most people in most times—behave, but also how they think. Let’s consider religion, or, particularly, the rejection of religion. Since you’ve come to a class on Marxism, I assume that you’re atheists. If some of you are not, and believe in an omnipotent supernatural being, then we’ll have a very interesting discussion after this class.

But unlike the people in this room, there were no atheists in medieval Europe. Or at least if there were, they didn’t let it be known. Everyone, however great their differences over religious doctrine, believed in a supreme being who not only created the world, but actively intervened in the everyday lives of men and women, for good or ill depending on their behavior. In the literature and documents of the time, there are no references to the term or, more importantly, the concept of atheism. There were frequent accusations that some people worshipped the devil but not that they denied the very existence of God. Personally, I have always found the devil a much more interesting imaginative creation than the Judeo-Christian concept of God. This is purely a personal prejudice, not the Spartacist party line.

Atheism as a distinct intellectual current arose during the Renaissance, in the 16th and 17th centuries. This was the period that also saw the birth of modern science. Disbelief in all-powerful supernatural forces coincided with increasing knowledge of natural forces. Science provided a more realistic and effective understanding than religion of the workings of the natural world. Equally importantly, the application of scientific knowledge through technology mitigated the often

destructive effects of natural forces on human lives.

You will notice that I’m wearing eyeglasses. Like many people, my eyesight has deteriorated over time. It’s not a problem for me, because I can acquire and use corrective lenses and adjust the necessary correction every few years. Eyeglasses were first invented in Italy in the late 13th century. However, for many centuries they were a luxury item accessible only to the wealthy. It was only in the 19th century that eyeglasses became available to many people, if not most people, in the Western world. Before then, if your eyesight was deteriorating you had no material means to rectify that condition. So doubtless many resorted to idealist means, that is, they prayed to God to restore their former eyesight.

There’s an interesting historical connection between atheism and optics. One of the main intellectual forerunners of atheistic materialism was Baruch Spinoza, who lived in Holland in the 1600s.



1907 painting “Spinoza and the Rabbis” depicts Baruch Spinoza, 17th-century philosophical forerunner of atheistic materialism and craftsman of high-quality lenses. Spinoza was driven out of Amsterdam’s Jewish community for heresy.

He was born into a wealthy Jewish family, but he was expelled from the Jewish community in Amsterdam as a heretic for questioning the literal truth of the Old Testament. He then made a living by grinding high-quality lenses for microscopes and telescopes. In that way Spinoza acquired knowledge of the most advanced science of his day, not only at the theoretical level but also in a practical hands-on way.

After he died, Spinoza became associated with materialism in a different sense, in the conventional vulgar use of the term meaning money-grubbing acquisitiveness. It became fashionable for wealthy men who considered themselves modern-minded to collect lenses made by Spinoza. Pretty soon the demand for Spinoza-made lenses exceeded the remaining supply. So enterprising craftsmen fabricated lenses that they claimed had been found in Spinoza’s old workshops. Fake Spinoza lenses became like the fake Rolex of the day.

Since the Renaissance, there has been an enormous expansion of scientific knowledge and corresponding applied technology. Nonetheless, religion continues to be a significant component of popular culture, especially in the United States. How come? In the modern world, religious belief is no longer primarily a subjective response to the destructive forces of nature. Rather, it is a subjective solace to the destructive forces of capitalism—the sufferings caused by war, economic immiseration, national, racial and class oppression.

One of Marx’s best-known expressions is that religion is the opium of the people. However, the passage from which this phrase comes is rarely quoted in its entirety. And when it is, it’s usually interpreted in a way contrary to Marx’s intent. Marx was not here addressing pious Christians, exhorting them to go cold turkey on their religious addiction. Rather, he was addressing his fellow atheistic and politically radical intellectuals. He was arguing against the notion that religious belief among the masses could be

dispelled through rational argumentation. Thus he wrote:

“*Religious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also a *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.

“To abolish religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is to demand their *real* happiness. The demand to give up illusions about the existing state of affairs is the *demand to give up a state of affairs which needs illusions.*”

—“Introduction to Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law” (1844)

In other words, the mass of people will forego the illusion of happiness in an afterlife only when they believe in the possibility of real happiness in this life.

In a broad historical sense, that is actually what happened in much of Europe in the latter part of the 19th century. The spread of atheistic materialism among

intellectual collaborator of Marx. In this work, Engels contrasted the early schools of socialism that were prevalent in the first part of the 19th century with the doctrine and program developed by Marx and himself, which became the dominant current in the workers movement in the latter part of the 19th century. In particular, he discussed the movements associated with Robert Owen, Charles Fourier and Henri de Saint-Simon. Why did Engels describe these movements as utopian?

One major reason was that the leaders of these movements appealed to members of all social classes including especially the supposedly benevolent and enlightened members of the ruling elite. The main socialist current in the early 19th century in Britain and also the United States was inspired by the ideas and activities of Robert Owen. Owen started out as an industrial capitalist, a factory owner in Scotland. However, he developed a deep-going sympathy for what was then called the laboring classes. In 1813 he wrote a book titled *A New View of Society*, in which he expounded his socialist theory and program. He dedicated a section of this book to the prince regent of Britain.

Some of you may be thinking, “How could Robert Owen, an experienced businessman, be so naive as to imagine that the British royal family would introduce socialism into their realm?” However, most of the social groups in the U.S. today that call themselves socialist, even Marxist—such as Socialist Alternative and the International Socialist Organization (ISO)—do effectively the same thing. To be sure, they do it in a less upfront and more camouflaged way than did Owen. Socialist Alternative and the ISO are not calling on the Obama administration to introduce socialism into the U.S. But they do appeal to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party to carry out policies that would benefit the working class at the expense of the capitalist class: for example, massively cutting the military budget while proportionately increasing government expenditure on things like education and public health.

But let’s return to the early, pre-Marx schools of socialism, which were a lot more interesting as well as honorable than the small-change reformist groups that we see in the U.S. today. Let’s consider the changing socioeconomic conditions that gave rise to the early socialist movement, and its support among significant sections of the working, lower classes. Until the late 18th century, almost all non-agricultural goods, for example many of the items that you see in this room—chairs, tables, books, clothes, shoes—were made by independent artisans using hand tools and working in small shops. The original and literal meaning of the term “manufactured” is “made by hand.”

What is called the Industrial Revolution began in England and Scotland in the late 18th century. Increasingly, goods were made in factories using machinery driven

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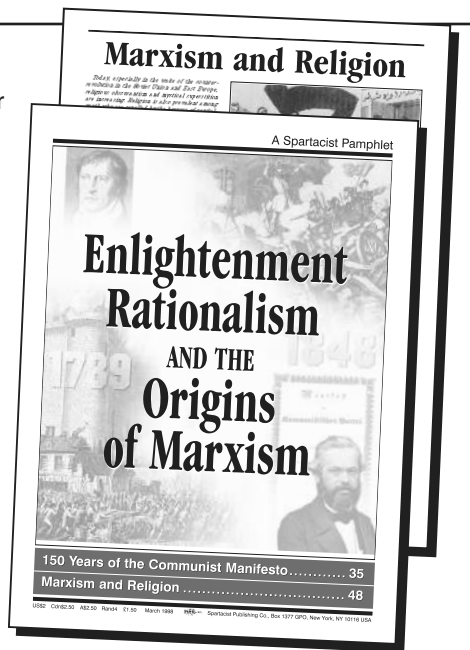
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Scientific Socialism...

(continued from page 7)

by steam power. The flood of cheaper factory-made goods drove a large fraction of the artisan population into economic ruin, what was called “pauperism” in the language of the day. Destitute artisans were forced to become factory workers, a condition in every way worse than when they were independent artisans.

Owenite socialism appeared to offer a way out of that dilemma. The crux of its program was the formation of economically self-sufficient communities based on pre-industrial technology. These communities would include farmers and various kinds of artisans—masons, carpenters, weavers, shoemakers—who would produce the necessities of life in the traditional way. The goods would then be pooled and distributed equitably among the members of the socialist communities.

A number of attempts were actually made to establish Owenite collectives or communities, especially in the northern part of the United States, where land was cheap and the governing authorities at the time somewhat more tolerant of such social experiments. The Owenites envisioned that such socialist communities would coexist within the broader capitalist economy and society. More and more people would see for themselves that this was a much better way of organizing society. They would then form additional socialist communities, which would gradually and eventually displace capitalism. In other words, the Owenites projected that socialism would be brought about by force of example, rather than by force of force.

The movement inspired by the ideas of Charles Fourier played a somewhat similar role in continental Europe to that of Owenism in the English-speaking world, though it was not as influential. Like the Owenites, the Fourierists advocated economically self-sufficient collectives (they called them phalanxes, I don’t know why) based on pre-industrial technology. There was, however, a very important difference in everyday life in a Fourierist phalanx and an Owenite community, and that difference profoundly influenced the later Marxist concept of a future communist society.

Robert Owen adhered to conventional social and sexual morality. The basic social unit in an Owenite community was the nuclear family. Charles Fourier was a radical sexual libertarian. A distinguishing feature of his vision of socialism was the liberation of women from their age-old condition of oppression and subservience. He not only championed the

full social, economic and political rights for women, but also—and this was very unusual at the time—their right to sexual gratification. He condemned the petty tyranny of the patriarchal family, in particular the sexual repression of youth by their parents and other authorities, notably the Christian churches.

The Fourierists were the original socialist advocates of replacing the family by communal means for nurturing and socializing children. They believed this could be attained in the here and now—or more precisely, in the there and then. We Marxists understand that such a radical change in social institutions, and in gender and generational relations, requires a society of material abundance in the future, and a corresponding change in cultural attitudes.

Interestingly, one of the earliest attempts to actually establish a Fourierist phalanx took place in, of all places, Romania. A wealthy but eccentric Romanian nobleman and landowner decided to set up a different social organization based on Fourier’s principles for the peasants who worked on his estate. One of these principles was what in the 19th century was called “free love.” It turned out that these young Romanian peasant men and women enjoyed their newfound sexual freedom. Reports of the strange and scandalous goings-on on this estate soon reached the local Christian clergy and government



Andrei Stroe

Romanian statue commemorates Teodor Diamant, founder of 19th-century Fourierist commune.

Saint-Simon was a wealthy French nobleman who, among other things, claimed descent from Charlemagne, the founding father of the European feudal state. Far more honorable, from our standpoint, he also served as a French officer in aiding George Washington’s army in the War



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1832 illustration depicts Saint-Simonians engaging in communal labor. The ideas of Henri de Saint-Simon (right), an advocate of centralized planning and production, inspired an early technocratic socialist movement.



L. Deymaru

officials. According to some accounts, they organized a right-wing mob to attack and destroy the Fourierist commune. The peasants bravely defended their “free love” commune but were overcome by superior force.

Unlike Owenites and Fourierists, the Saint-Simonians were not primarily concerned with a more egalitarian distribution of the means of consumption. Rather, they were concerned with increasing production, especially industrial production. Henri de

Independence against Britain. He was actually a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, which Washington formed for his veteran officers. Interesting guy.

Even in the very early stages of industrial capitalism, Saint-Simon recognized severe irrationalities in this economic system. Some factories went bankrupt and closed down, not because they were technologically deficient but because their owners had misjudged future market conditions. Technical innovations that would increase labor productivity were not utilized because their inventors lacked financing. There were periods even in the early 19th century when production as a whole declined rather than increased. As a result many workers were thrown out of their jobs and suffered economic immiseration. Saint-Simon himself, strictly speaking, was not a socialist. Rather, he was an advocate of what could be called centralized capitalist planning under the direction of bankers.

However, after he died, in 1825, his followers took the next logical step. They advocated the socialization of the means of production under a centralized administration. In their own words:

“A *social* institution is charged with these functions which today are so badly performed; it is the *depository* of all the instruments of production; it presides over the exploitation of all the material resources; from its vantage point it has a comprehensive view of the whole which enables it to perceive at one and the same time all parts of the industrial workshop.... “The social institution of the future will direct all industries in the interests of the whole society, and especially of the peaceful laborers.”

—“Exposition of the Doctrine of Saint-Simon” (1830), quoted in George Lichtheim, *The Origins of Socialism* (1969)

This is the germ of the Marxist program of a centrally planned and administered socialized economy. We owe this to the Saint-Simonians. While the Saint-Simonians considered that the working class would greatly benefit from such an economic system, they did not consider that it was the workers who would institute or govern this new social order. That role they assigned to what we call the technical intelligentsia, scientists and engineers. The Saint-Simonians believed that scientists and engineers were committed above all to the rational organization of society and the economy, to increasing production. In this respect the Saint-Simonians expressed liberal idealism in its technocratic variant. They also expressed intellectual elitism.

We sometimes encounter similar attitudes today among young intellectuals—typically university students—who have been newly won to socialism. They think that pretty much everybody like themselves can be convinced of the superiority of socialism. Why is such a belief illusory?

Let’s consider, in particular, the technical intelligentsia. In all capitalist societies, scientists and engineers are a privileged social group whose material interests are much more closely aligned with the capitalist class than the working class. Most engineers are employed by large corporations. Their financial rewards and career advancement depends on their contribu-

tion to the corporation’s profits. The men who design new cars for General Motors and Ford and who develop new oil fields for ExxonMobil and BP, are often part of or work closely with these firms’ top management. To be sure, most scientists are not as directly tied to large corporations. Usually they’re employed by universities or government agencies. Nonetheless, their research is ultimately determined by the interests of the capitalist class.

In the latter part of the 19th century, the early schools of socialism were displaced by the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels. In fact, very many more people learned about the ideas of Owen, Fourier and Saint-Simon from Engels’ *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* than from reading the original writings of these pioneer socialists. There developed political parties and affiliated trade unions supported by millions of workers, whose official program and doctrine was Marxism.

This development was not mainly because Marx and Engels had provided a more realistic and profound analysis of capitalism, although they did do that. Rather the further development of industrial capitalism created the preconditions for a proletarian revolution leading to a socialist society. The steady increase in production and labor productivity indicated the possibility of eventually eliminating material scarcity entirely, that is, creating a society in which the means of consumption are freely distributed to everyone or, in Marx’s words, “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”

At the same time, the progressive development of labor-saving technology pointed to the possibility of radically reducing the total labor time necessary to

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Snowden...

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serial exaggerator and fabricator” and had “caused tremendous damage to national security.” White House press secretary Josh Earnest dismissed calls for a pardon and demanded that Snowden return to the U.S. to face prosecution.

Outrageously, the *Washington Post*, which was one of the newspapers that profited from the publication of Snowden’s revelations in 2013 (and won a Pulitzer Prize for its reporting), joined the chorus baying for his head on a pike. Glenn Greenwald excoriated the *Post* in an article on *The Intercept* (18 September) for having “achieved an ignominious feat in U.S. media history: the first-ever paper to explicitly editorialize for the criminal prosecution of its own source.” The dispute over whether to prosecute or pardon Snowden has particularly divided the capitalist Democratic Party and its supporters. One side, as expressed in the official petition to Obama, considers Snowden an “American patriot,” the other reviles him as a traitor. Either way, their starting point is how to best advance the interests of U.S. imperialism.

The prevailing view among libertarians and liberals (as well as their reformist hangers-on) is that Snowden the patriot did something great for his country by exposing what they consider the excesses of state surveillance, i.e., spying on everyone rather than just “terrorists.” Stone himself falls into this camp. In a recent interview with *Democracy Now!*, the filmmaker lamented that the NSA spymasters “failed to do their job” in the case of the September 11 attacks and “haven’t really utilized those tools [of cyberwarfare] for defense.” In other words, if the government just properly deployed its repressive arsenal, Americans could have their civil liberties without sacrificing national security. In this vein, it is no accident that a few prominent capitalists have signed on to the Pardon Snowden appeal, as their own communications are susceptible to getting vacuumed up by indiscriminate domestic spying.

The purpose of the NSA and other imperialist spy agencies is to secretly carry out dirty deeds on behalf of the tiny capitalist minority that rules over the vast majority. The trappings of “democracy” under capitalism are a mask to obscure these inner systematic workings that will not fundamentally change, no matter how many whistles are blown by insiders or cosmetic reforms adopted by Congress. Only victorious socialist revolution can abolish the capitalist state’s secret agents and their intrusions into our lives.

The new film deserves high marks for humanizing Snowden and portraying his political evolution from an unquestioning partisan of the reactionary “war on ter-

ror” to a critic of mass surveillance who was willing to risk his own life to expose the truth amid a sea of lies. This biopic, which comes two years after Laura Poitras’s Oscar-winning documentary *CitizenFour*, makes clear Snowden’s deep disappointment with the Obama presidency because of its expansion of Bush-era spying and prosecution of whistle-blowers. However, the movie’s ending vastly overstates the extent of the policy changes that resulted from Snowden’s revelations. Similarly, the pardon campaign trumpets supposed “historic strides in our fight for surveillance reform.”

A much more accurate picture is provided by the *New York Times* (1 May

growing. The Freedom Act, an Orwellian misnomer, extended the draconian Patriot Act and codified in law the very surveillance dragnet that Snowden lifted the veil on.

In any case, legal niceties, which exist on paper for public consumption, are hardly barriers to government snoops. A decade ago, revelations of the widespread violation of the constitutional prohibition on warrantless search of American citizens’ communications caused the Feds considerable embarrassment. Important details of such internet data mining, done in cahoots with the telecom giants, were provided at the time by retired AT&T worker Mark Klein (see “Phone Worker



NSA’s Utah Data Center, built to store the huge amounts of electronic communications swept up by the government.

2015) headline: “Why the N.S.A. Isn’t Howling over Restrictions.” The reference is to the USA Freedom Act, touted as having ended the NSA’s bulk collection of domestic phone metadata. In reality, the bipartisan legislation merely transferred the responsibility for storing this data to the phone companies, which are required to provide the NSA access upon court-approved request. The idea was suggested to Obama in 2013 by then NSA director Keith Alexander as a ploy to appear responsive to privacy concerns while offloading costs to the telecoms and preserving programs deemed more vital to his collect-it-all regime.

One senior intelligence official later admitted to the *Daily Beast* (14 May 2015): “What no one wants to say out loud is that this is a big win for the NSA, and a huge nothing burger for the privacy community.” To all but the willfully blind, the situation is clear: The NSA still amasses metadata from most communications, the government can still acquire such records from private companies and the bulk collection of actual content is

Exposes Government Spying Network,” WV No. 953, 26 February 2010). To get around the inconvenience of the Fourth Amendment, among other things Washington pays its British junior partners to tap and hand over a huge proportion of all internet traffic.

Whatever the arguments of Snowden’s liberal proponents, Obama is not about to grant a pardon. The official response to a June 2013 White House website pardon petition with over 150,000 signatures proclaimed: “Mr. Snowden’s dangerous decision to steal and disclose classified information had severe consequences for the security of our country.” The Obama administration is notorious for having thrown the book at whistle-blowers. It has charged eight of them under the 1917 Espionage Act—more than double the number under all previous presidents combined. One of the victims of this vendetta is Chelsea Manning, who was sentenced in 2013 for disclosing military and state secrets to Wikileaks. In the most recent affront, Manning, who is transgender, was sentenced to two

weeks in solitary as punishment for having attempted suicide in July. Manning’s case has received less prominence than that of Snowden because the victims of the crimes she exposed were Iraqis, not U.S. citizens. **Free Manning now! Hands off Wikileaks’ Julian Assange!**

Early in his first White House bid, Obama famously declared “no more secrecy” only to outdo all his predecessors in creating the world’s most outsized spying machine. As intelligence expert James Bamford described in a *Foreign Policy* article (7 September):

“Although other leaders may have created more oppressive spying regimes, none has come close to constructing one of equivalent size, breadth, cost, and intrusiveness. From 22,300 miles in space, where seven Advanced Orion crafts now orbit; to a 1-million-square-foot building in the Utah desert that stores data intercepted from personal phones, emails, and social media accounts; to taps along the millions of miles of undersea cables that encircle the Earth like yarn, U.S. surveillance has expanded exponentially since Obama’s inauguration.”

Both the main bourgeois candidates in the upcoming presidential election are dedicated to building on this legacy. In June, Hillary Clinton proposed “an intelligence surge to bolster our capabilities across the board with appropriate safeguards,” while Donald Trump celebrates NSA surveillance as a commonplace of modern life in America, whose population should just shut up and accept it. Snowden will get no relief from the next Commander-in-Chief: Clinton wants to put him on trial, and Trump has called for his execution.

A favorite liberal canard is that greater oversight and transparency will rein in the NSA and its ilk, hence calls for a more robust Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, court. This body—the pinnacle of the reforms coming out of the 1970s Church Committee review of domestic spying on black militants and Reds—was rightly referred to as “a rubber stamp” in the movie. Irrespective of any checks and balances, the U.S. imperialist behemoth will seek to spy on who it wants, when it wants. But it is not omnipotent.

The multiracial working class, with its hands on the levers of production, has the potential power to bring the capitalist exploiters to their knees. Unlocking this power requires a complete break from the Democratic Party and illusions in bourgeois democracy. Our aim as Marxists is to build a revolutionary workers party—a tribune of the people—that can lead the working class in sweeping away capitalist class rule and replacing it with a workers government. Then and only then will U.S. imperialism’s spying, lying and violence at home and abroad come to an end and the full extent of its bloody crimes and secrets be laid bare to the world. ■

Young Spartacus

produce both the means of consumption and the means of production. In a fully communist society, most time will be what is called free time. Everyone will have the available time and access to the material and cultural resources to fully develop their creative capacity. Everyone will have the opportunity, for example, to engage in research in particle physics, if they want, or to investigate the archeological remains of ancient civilizations, if they want—or to do both, one one year and one the next.

Now, you may think, “Well, that’s a wonderful vision of the future, but how do we get there?” What are the social forces capable of overthrowing capitalism, instituting a planned collectivized economy to open the road to communism on a global scale? In a word: the proletariat.

During the latter part of the 19th century, the further development of capitalism resulted in the increasing demographic and social weight as well as the better organization of the working class. Conversely, there was a decrease in the demographic and social weight of petty

proprietors. Many of the sons and daughters of peasant small-holders left the family farm and got jobs in factories or other industrial facilities. Likewise, so did the sons and daughters of artisans and shopkeepers.

At the same time, the destructive irrationality of the capitalist system—based on the private ownership of the means of production and the anarchy of the market—came increasingly to the fore. Periodic economic crises resulted in a massive decline in production. Millions of workers lost their jobs. Factories and other productive facilities were idled.

There is only one progressive solution to that contradiction: proletarian revolution. As Engels explained, in the concluding section of the book that you’ve read:

“The proletariat seizes the public power, and by means of this transforms the socialised means of production, slipping from the hands of the bourgeoisie, into public property. By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their social-

ised character complete freedom to work itself out. Socialised production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy of social production vanishes, the political authority of the State dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organisation, becomes at the same time the lord over Nature, his own master—free.”

A decade or so after Engels wrote this, capitalism entered a new historical period, a period that is still with us. This is the epoch of modern imperialism. One of its main features is increasing conflicts between the major capitalist nation-states over raw materials and spheres of exploitation on a global scale. These conflicts have led to two world wars between the major capitalist states. The Second World War ended with the use of a qualitatively more powerful weapon based on a radical breakthrough in technology: the liberation of nuclear energy through the splitting of the atom. In 1945, the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on the civil-

ian populations of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

There’s a commonplace, somewhat vulgarized, notion that Marx and Engels believed that the proletarian revolution leading to a socialist society was historically inevitable. They did not. And this is clearly stated in the beginning of their most famous and widely read work, the *Communist Manifesto* (1848):

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

“Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or”—I repeat, *or*—“in the common ruin of the contending classes.”

With the development of nuclear weapons, the destructive irrationality of the capitalist system threatens to destroy civilization if not to annihilate mankind as such. And with that uncomfortable thought, I’ll conclude. ■

Charlotte...

(continued from page 1)

abound. Activists described how a prayer vigil and march that night turned into a scene of police violence when the cops unleashed tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets on marchers in front of the upscale Omni Hotel.

In the chaotic scene caused by the police assault on the demonstration, 26-year-old Justin Carr, who had joined the protest on his way to work, was fatally shot in the head. The police claim that another civilian shot Carr, although protesters who were present at the time told us that they believed Carr may have been shot “pointblank” by a police rubber bullet. While the truth behind Carr’s killing may never come to light, it is clear that those responsible for creating a deadly environment were the cops. In a TV interview, Carr’s mother said of her son, “I know that he died for a cause.”

Not missing a beat, Republican governor Pat McCrory declared a state of emergency in Charlotte and the National Guard was deployed to protect the capitalists’ sacred Uptown real estate. The Democratic Party mayor declared a midnight to 6 a.m. curfew, which ensnared several people who weren’t even protesting. Throughout the week, the cops kept rounding up activists for blocking roads and purported looting of businesses like fast-food joints days earlier.

Extraordinary security measures were announced for the home NFL game that weekend, and local news whipped up hysteria about the “safety” of the fans. Phalanxes of riot cops stood ready to “protect” some 70,000 fans from about 200 protesters, who carried posters ranging from “Don’t Demonize My Blackness” and “Silence=Violence, Am I Next” to “Love Is Unstoppable.” Vans and trucks full of riot cops and National Guardsmen raced around the city to confront what were often no more than dozens of protesters. The state of emergency and curfews have now been lifted, and the National Guard withdrawn. Yet many people are still facing prosecution; over 80 people were arrested during the protests and arrest warrants have been issued for almost 100 more. *Release the arrested protesters! Drop all the charges!*

Democrats, Reformists Push Police Reform

Charlotte is a textbook case of why capitalist Democratic Party politics and schemes for community control of the police are a dead end. Living under a liberal Democratic mayor, a “progressive” black police chief and a black president made no difference for Keith Scott when he came into the crosshairs of the killer cops. Yet black preachers, Democratic Party operatives and the “radicals” who tail them descended on Charlotte to repackage the same old schemes to reform the police and divert the protests into the safe channels of electoral politics. Leading this effort was the Reverend William Barber II, Democratic Party darling and president of the North Carolina NAACP, who called on protesters to “march and vote together.” With North Carolina a swing state in the Clinton-Trump contest, the Democrats were particularly eager to tamp down images of militant black protesters.

The reformist Workers World Party (WWP) also showed up to promote liberal demands for an “independent investigation” into Scott’s killing and for a freeze on federal funds to the Charlotte police department. This amounts to appealing to the imperialist Obama administration, which is the pinnacle of the whole apparatus of racist capitalist oppression and which is carrying out daily bombing raids against dark-skinned peoples abroad, to help black people at home. WWP also supports the Charlotte Uprising group’s demands for “community control of the police, starting with the creation of a civilian oversight board that has the power to hire and fire officers.”

In fact, Charlotte already has a Citizens Review Board, which was set up in 1997 after three black men were killed by white officers and was given expanded powers in 2013. This made no difference for Keith



Getty

Charlotte, September 21: Police in riot gear menace protesters.

Scott or for Jonathan Ferrell, a black man who was shot ten times by a Charlotte cop after he sought help at a white family’s home following a car accident in 2013. Even though that cop was indicted for manslaughter, he predictably walked after a mistrial. Schemes for community control of the police only serve to sow illusions that workers and the oppressed can have a say in running the forces of state repression, which exist only to “protect and serve” the interests of the capitalist class *against* those very same workers and oppressed people. The WWP cynically tries to cover up its role as promoters of this deadly illusion by simultaneously calling to “Abolish the Police!”—a utopian call on the capitalist state to dissolve itself.

“New South”: Liberal Veneer for Vicious Racism

A 35 percent black city of just under a million people, Charlotte is held up as a symbol in the “New South” of what the *New York Times* calls “racial amity.” In the shadow of the Uptown bank towers, the NASCAR Hall of Fame and the headquarters of Billy Graham’s right-wing evangelical association are sites like Romare Bearden Park (named after the renowned black artist) and a center for African-American Arts and Culture. But the genteel veneer is thin—as in most Southern cities, you can’t go a couple of blocks without seeing a historical marker commemorating the bloody rule of the Confederate slavocracy. It took a bloody Civil War to abolish slavery, yet the promise of black freedom was betrayed when the Northern capitalists ended the period of Radical Reconstruction. The black population throughout the U.S. was consolidated as a specially oppressed race-color caste, forcibly segregated at the bottom of the social and economic order.

The white propertied classes subjected black people to legally enforced racial segregation, stripped them of all democratic rights and held them down through terror, especially lynching. In North Carolina, the former slaveowners mobilized the “White Supremacy Campaign” in order to pit poor white sharecroppers against black freedmen, breaking up the alliance between white populists and black Republicans known as the Fusion movement in the 1890s. Despite the smashing of legally enforced Jim Crow segregation in the South through the struggles of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and ’60s, the de facto segregation of black people north and south was not uprooted.

From chattel slavery to wage slavery, the racial oppression of black people is materially rooted in the social and economic structure of American capitalism. This is evident not only in the statistics of those killed, arrested and imprisoned by the U.S. “justice” system, but also in the poverty rates of cities like Charlotte where three times as many blacks and Latinos live in poverty as whites, while 36 percent of black and 39 percent of Latino children are poor. Black people are forced by the capitalist economy into segregated housing and schools, are the last hired and first fired in the workplace, and are subjected to chronic unemployment and mass incarceration. Because black oppression is integral to the very workings of the

capitalist system in the U.S., it will take a third American revolution, a socialist revolution, to achieve black liberation.

Racism has long served the capitalist rulers in propping up their oppressive system by keeping working people divided so that they cannot unite in joint struggle against the exploitative profit system. Many white protesters in Charlotte carried signs with slogans like “White Silence Is White Violence” as if all white people who don’t speak up are implicated in the crimes of the rapacious rulers of this country and their cops. This deflects respon-



WV Photo

Protest against racist cop terror outside NFL game in Charlotte, September 25.

sibility for racist police terror away from the capitalist rulers who not only oppress black people and other minorities, but also viciously exploit workers of all races.

The Social Power of the Working Class Is Key

A number of activists from around North Carolina described to us how white-supremacists are now increasingly crawling out of the woodwork in their towns and cities, emboldened by the Trump campaign. Racist Ku Klux Klan terror in the South has historically served as an auxiliary to the forces of the state in subjugating black people and keeping trade unions out. Today, the South remains a bastion of open shop, low-wage exploitation for capitalist industry; North Carolina has the lowest unionization rate of any U.S. state. Any fight to organize the “right to work” South poses the centrality of the fight for black rights in the fight to defend the working class as a whole. Yet the existing pro-capitalist trade-union misleaders barely lift a finger to organize the millions of non-union Southern workers into what could be strong, multiracial unions. Instead, they pour massive amounts of union funds into election campaigns for the racist, capitalist Democrats.

At an integrated rally of more than 500 on September 24 in a park opposite the complex of court and police buildings in Uptown Charlotte, protesters expressed to us their immense frustration over the lack of a solution to the epidemic of cop terror. There was a palpable sense of despair that after two years of protests around the country in response to one police killing after another, nothing has changed. This was captured in a poster at the rally outside the football game the next day: “I Can’t Believe We’re Still Pro-

testing This.” A popular sentiment among protesters who were tired of impotently pleading with the powers that be was that only by shutting things down would the rulers respond. Some protesters tried to shut down the surrounding highways while others argued for consumer boycotts of big businesses. These tactics were often tied up with illusions in local community control: promoting local businesses and community-organized social work.

The understanding that protest action needs to hit the capitalists in their pocket-books in order to have some impact is the beginning of wisdom. But, as we explained in our discussions, the power to do so rests not with small groups of activists nor the consumer, but with the multiracial working class. It is the working class whose labor keeps the wheels of the economy turning; thus it has the power to stop the flow of capitalist profit. And black workers form a strategic component of the U.S. working class. In Charlotte we often used the example of the powerful and heavily black and Latino transit union in New York City, whose members can cripple the finance capital of the world by striking. The power of the working class should be mobilized in demonstrations against cop terror, ensuring that black youth do not stand alone against the bloody might of the armed forces of the state. In itself, this won’t put a stop to cop terror, but it would go a long way toward forging the fighting unity of the workers and oppressed against the capitalist order.

The key to unlocking that power is a fight

against the existing leadership of the trade unions and their reformist hangers-on, who tie the workers politically to capitalist parties like the Democrats and Greens. What is needed is a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions. Not surprisingly, the prospect of such working-class struggle seemed either remote or impossible to most of the protesters we spoke with. It was often when we pointed to the need to study the history of class and revolutionary struggle in the U.S. in order to understand why the working class is key that protesters got copies of our publications, including our journal *Black History and the Class Struggle*. As for the idea of “community control” of the local economy and social programs, we explained that small-time local capitalism and social work are no solution to the rampant homelessness, unemployment and poverty faced by millions under capitalism. Only by ripping the banks and industry out of the hands of the capitalist class and reorganizing the economy on a socialist basis under workers rule can the wealth created by working people be dedicated to quality education, housing, health care and jobs for all.

We in the Spartacist League seek to win anti-racist activists to the understanding that only the overthrow of the capitalist system through the revolutionary struggle of the working class leading all of the oppressed can put an end to cop terror. Linking up the anger of the oppressed with the power of the workers in a fight to sweep the capitalist state apparatus into the dustbin of history and establish a workers government requires the leadership of a multiracial, revolutionary workers party. We are committed to forging such a party through struggle. *For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■*

South Africa...

(continued from page 12)

September 29, promising that, if a majority voted for classes to resume, it would call on the government and police “to protect the university’s property and safeguard the lives of all students and staff.” As one student put it, “this probably means we can expect army presence—people who are trained to kill.” Other students denounced this sham poll, in which less than half of the student body voted to return to class, noting this fearmongering tactic was an attempt to break their strike. On the other hand, the ANC youth group, which has called for an end to the protests, congratulated those students who voted to return to class. On September 29, the government declared that “university students are being influenced by ‘regime change agents,’” and instructed the cops to act in an “uncompromising way” if the protests continue. As one headline put it: “Zero Tolerance.”

The SACP has denounced the protesters and urged students to isolate “the tiny minority of violent and destructive elements.” Drawing an explicit parallel to the state massacre of 34 striking platinum miners in Marikana in 2012, the higher education minister, Blade Nzimande, threatened the student protesters that they would be “dealt with.” These are the same words that he and other SACP leaders used when they played the role of bloodhounds against the miners and their union. An indication of the resonance that this strike still holds for the black working class and students was shown in a chant by Wits students: “Kill us like you killed people in Marikana.” The slogan “we can’t breathe” has also been a refrain at some protests, recalling the last words spoken by Eric Garner as he was being choked to death by New York City cops in 2014.

It is imperative that the trade unions mobilize their power in defense of the protesters. Students have appealed to the organized labor movement to join their struggle, and on September 23 they marched on COSATU headquarters demanding: “We want COSATU to say when are they calling workers to mobilise.” However, with the exception of staff and teachers at some universities, the union leadership has refused to do so. COSATU and the SACP issued a joint statement on September 21 that hailed the government’s green light to fee increases as “progressive” and lectured the students to redirect their protests from the campuses and the government to institutions of capital. They thereby attempt to divert the students’ anger away from the government, which in fact rules on behalf of capital.

The supposedly more militant metal workers union NUMSA shares the same programmatic framework. While their September 30 statement condemns the violence against the protesters, it also calls on the very state that is carrying out these attacks to investigate itself for “offenses.”

We reprint below a September 22 leaflet issued by Spartacist/South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

* * *

The response was immediate. On 19 September, within hours of higher education minister Blade Nzimande giving university administrations the green light

to increase fees by up to 8 percent next year, students across the country mobilised to shut down campuses and renew the mass protests for free education. Blade’s pronouncement is rightly seen as a slap in the face to the hundreds of thousands who protested last year and early this year. The fact that he also announced the government’s “commitment” to help cover the cost of increases for students from households earning less than R600,000 [US\$44,000] per year is faint solace. This just means keeping the price of higher education at its current level for students from poor and working-class families, who are already crushed by mountains of student debt or excluded outright by high fees. In neo-apartheid South Africa, where race and class largely overlap, the exclusion of the poor and workers from higher education means the continued exclusion of most blacks and coloureds. We support the students’ protests against fees and call for *free, quality education through to tertiary, with a state-paid living stipend. Abolish the student debt!*

Nzimande (who is also general secretary of the SACP) responded to the renewed protests by trying to ridicule the student protesters, portraying them as a bunch of hooligans and/or idiots who want to “destroy our universities in the name of defending no-fee increases for the rich” and are being “misled” by various rogues pursuing “their own narrow political agenda.” With these grotesque slanders, Dr. Nzimande is in good company with the vice-chancellors and other senior managers who earn millions running elite universities like Wits University and University of Cape Town on behalf of the big bourgeoisie. They have issued a steady stream of vomitous press statements depicting militant student activists as little more than violent thugs. This is reminiscent of the racist stereotypes spewed by the apartheid regime during the Soweto uprising of 1976. At the time, thousands of protesting students, workers and township poor were referred to as “tsotsis” [gang members] and “rioting mobs” to justify being mowed down by the apartheid police state. One statement issued by Wits University’s Senior Executive Team on 20 September promised to “identify” and prosecute “those who perpetrated acts of violence on our campus today.” It should not be very hard for the Wits administration to identify the source of violence on their hallowed campus: The administration themselves have paid millions for hundreds of private security guards, many of them equipped with riot gear, to occupy the campus and suppress student protests together with cops from the Metro Police.

Like cops and security guards everywhere, those on Wits and other campuses act as the armed enforcers of the capitalist ruling class to quell social protest seen as “disruptive” to the day-to-day workings of the racist capitalist system. In the past two days alone, cops have repeatedly fired on protesters with stun grenades, tear gas and rubber bullets, injuring and arresting dozens. Yesterday, one female student was badly burned by a police stun grenade while students tried to protest in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. Along with cops and security guards, university administrations across the country have used a whole slew of court interdicts, trumped-up disciplinary charges and other repressive measures to isolate and harass those activists identified as “ring-leaders” of last year’s protests against fees

and outsourcing. *Drop all the charges against anti-fees and anti-outsourcing protesters! Reinstate all suspended and expelled activists now! Cops and security guards off campus! Abolish the campus administrations—for student-teacher-worker control of the universities!*

The fact that dozens of the more militant student activists from last year’s protests have been disciplined and even expelled from campuses without any large protests in opposition is one measure of the demobilising and treacherous role played by the leadership of the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA). The PYA—an alliance of the ANC Youth League, Young Communist League and South African Students Congress—is the “junior” version of the ANC/SACP/COSATU Tripartite Alliance, which acts to contain social unrest and maintain the capitalist “stability” demanded by the Randlords and ratings agencies.

As the dominant political force in most of the protests, the PYA leaders largely sought to ride the wave of student militancy during last year’s protests, and many are attempting to do so again this year when student anger is at its height. But as soon as Zuma announced in October last year that there would be no fee increase for 2016, the PYA began working overtime to stop further protests, openly acting as the lackeys of the university management. This went as far as the national PYA leaders’ January 2016 press conference denouncing Fees Must Fall protesters who wanted to continue protesting as “counter-revolutionaries” seeking to “hijack” students’ grievances for “regime change,” even implying that they were trained by the CIA. A PYA press statement declared: “There is no reason for strikes to continue when the people’s government has addressed all relevant immediate concerns of students.”

Those student militants revolted by this kind of self-serving treachery need to understand that it is not just a result of the personal qualities (or lack thereof) of the individual sell-out leaders. Underlying their treachery are the bankrupt *politics* of their parent organisations, which are based on nationalism and class-collaboration. These politics cannot be wished away or swept under the rug in the name of achieving an illusory “student unity,” as many activists seem to hope—they must be argued and fought out in the open. They are not limited to the university terrain, but are the same politics responsible for betraying the promise of liberation from white minority rule. As the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance become increasingly discredited, a host of political misleaders—from black nationalists like the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Pan Africanist Congress/Student Movement, to the reformist leaders of the metalworkers union NUMSA—are trying to re-package and sell alternative versions of these pro-capitalist politics as something “new.”

The extreme racial and class divide in the education system is but one measure of how the legacy of apartheid—from “Bantu education” to the Group Areas Acts to the migrant labour system—continues to stamp every aspect of life in South Africa. This is not a “mistake” or an “oversight” that could be fixed if only the ANC would return to the “good old

days” of the bourgeois-populist Freedom Charter. Far from being a “people’s government,” the Tripartite Alliance government is a *bourgeois* government that has administered *neo-apartheid capitalism* for over 20 years. This flowed from the whole political framework of the ANC-led Congress Alliance, which was always premised on maintaining capitalism. The result was the negotiated settlement that ended formal apartheid in 1994 while preserving the power of the Randlords, a betrayal of black freedom. The massive profits of the (still mainly white) South African capitalists continue to be derived from the superexploitation of the mainly black working class.

The true face of neo-apartheid was shown most clearly with the Marikana massacre in 2012, when the cops gunned down 34 striking mineworkers—a massacre reminiscent of the crushing of black dissent under apartheid. Marikana showed not only the racist, repressive nature of the “new South Africa,” but the enormous potential power of the South African proletariat. In the face of the government’s brutal crackdown, the mineworkers remained defiant, keeping the mines shut until they finally won their demands. This is the kind of social power that must be brought to bear in solidarity with the protesting students, who are under the gun of the same capitalist state that has the blood of Marikana on its hands. The working class must stand at the head of the struggles of all the oppressed in a struggle to overthrow capitalist rule. Mobilising this potential power is above all a political question, the question of *leadership*. What’s desperately needed is to break with the Tripartite Alliance and forge a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, rooted among the most class-conscious workers, armed with a revolutionary Marxist programme and capable of acting as a tribune of all the oppressed.

Such a party must be built in sharp opposition to all variants of nationalism and based on the strict political independence of the working class from the capitalist state and *all* bourgeois parties. Julius Malema’s EFF is no different from the ANC in its thoroughly bourgeois programme, notwithstanding its use of more “radical” populist rhetoric. The bankruptcy of the EFF’s bourgeois nationalist populism was crassly demonstrated just last month, following the local elections, when the EFF voted in Johannesburg, Tshwane and elsewhere to back the white-racist, union-busting Democratic Alliance—the “lesser devil,” by Malema’s lights—in forming minority governments.

Against all the schemes for “cleaning up” the racist capitalist system, what’s needed is to fight for a *black-centred workers government* to break the power of the Randlords, expropriate capitalist property and begin the socialist reconstruction of society. Workers revolution—including the necessary international extension to the advanced capitalist countries that dominate the world economy—alone can open the road to the liberation of the black masses and do away with the myriad forms of oppression that capitalism rests upon and reinforces. Spartacist/South Africa fights to build the Leninist-Trotskyist party needed to lead this struggle. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Mass Student Protests Demand Free Education Now

South Africa



Skuy/The Times



Reuters

Johannesburg: Wits University students march against tuition increases, September 21 (left); neo-apartheid cops attack student protesters, October 4 (right).

OCTOBER 4—A showdown is taking place in South Africa between university students on one side and campus administrations and the state on the other. Student protests which started last year under the call “Fees Must Fall” (see “Student Protests Shake South Africa,” WV No. 1082, 29 January) have resumed and been met with massive state repression. Yesterday, at Johannesburg’s University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), protesters stopped an attempt to restart classes. In retaliation,

the administration today unleashed cops and security guards to crush any protest, turning the campus into a virtual war zone.

For two weeks, campus administrations and the government have unleashed private security guards and cops—many of whom are organized in the trade-union federation COSATU—on protesting students. Braving tear gas, pepper spray, stun grenades and rubber bullets, the protesters have succeeded in shutting down almost every university in the country. The

bourgeois-nationalist Tripartite Alliance government—composed of President Jacob Zuma’s African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU—together with the capitalist media have violence-baited the students and threatened them with even greater state repression. Scores have been arrested, even more have been attacked and injured, and many have been thrown out of their dorms.

On September 28, the University of

Johannesburg was transformed into a battleground as private security guards attacked and pepper-sprayed students and journalists and threatened female students with rape. In scenes reminiscent of the apartheid era, police at Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape shot rubber bullets at protesters and dragged students across the ground to police cars.

The Wits administration carried out a bogus referendum via text message on

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Give Back His Passport!

Drop All Charges Against Edward Snowden!

The release of Oliver Stone’s sympathetic and powerful biopic *Snowden* has rekindled the national debate over the fate of the courageous NSA leaker. Three years ago, Edward Snowden became Washington’s “Public Enemy Number One” after he turned over to various media outlets a trove of classified documents proving the colossal scale of U.S. government spying and its shredding of basic democratic rights. The target of an intense international manhunt, Snowden was forced into exile in Russia, where he remains on a temporary residence permit. Unable to travel because his passport was revoked, he is still wanted by the Feds on theft and espionage charges.

By shining a bright light on the government’s all-pervasive snooping, Snowden provided an invaluable service to working people and the oppressed the world over. The ultimate target of the capitalist state’s

spying and repression is the working class. From the beginning, we have demanded: Hands off Snowden! It is in the interests of the proletariat, in the U.S. and internationally, to rally to Snowden’s defense and oppose those forces that want to curtail dissent and future exposures of the sinister activities of U.S. intelligence by locking him up in one of the country’s many torture-ridden dungeons. **Drop the charges now! Reinstate Snowden’s passport!**

Timed to coincide with the opening of the movie, in mid September the American Civil Liberties Union, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International launched a campaign urging President Barack Obama to pardon Snowden. The plea for clemency predictably sparked an immediate backlash, with the House Intelligence Committee issuing a report that claimed Snowden “was, and remains, a

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Reuters

October 2013: In wake of Snowden’s NSA leaks, demonstrators rally in Washington, D.C., against mass surveillance.