

## WikiLeaks Reveals Truths

WikiLeaks' exposure of the inner workings of the American capitalist ruling class has injected a bit of truth into the coming elections. In the last several months, hacked emails from Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign have shined a spotlight on the threadbare pretenses of the Democrats as the "lesser evil." No less than the other major party of the bourgeoisie, the Republicans, they are a corrupt political machine that represents the interests of big business tycoons and the banks. The leaks underscore that, on top of rigging the primary process to try to ensure another reign of the Clinton dynasty, the Democratic Party is steeped in cro-

### Democrats Go Ballistic

nyism, corporate sycophancy and public deceit.

The dangerous demagogue and billionaire Donald Trump and his right-wing supporters like fascist David Duke have cynically welcomed the leaks for exposing government corruption. Meanwhile, scrambling to distract from their own machinations, the Democrats and the compliant liberal media have all but branded WikiLeaks founder Julian

Assange as Moscow's agent, invoking the spectre that Russia is sabotaging American "democracy."

The delightfully entertaining email dumps confirm the fraud of capitalist democracy, which is simply democracy for the profit-driven rulers, the bourgeoisie. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution explained, capitalist governments are "instruments for the oppression of

workers by the bourgeoisie, institutions of a hostile class, of the exploiting minority." The working people "never decide important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks" (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, 1918).

In 2008, Barack Obama, still pushing his "hope and change" ruse, had practically his entire cabinet mapped out by Wall Street financiers. WikiLeaks revealed a list of recommendations for cabinet level positions made by then-Citigroup banking executive Michael Froman, a longtime Obama consigliere

*continued on page 6*

## Obama Slams Door on Haitian Migrants

On September 22, President Barack Obama abruptly closed U.S. borders to Haitians uprooted by the succession of natural disasters (including cholera brought in by UN troops from Nepal) that have ravaged their impoverished homeland. Since the 2010 earthquake that left more than 200,000 dead and over one million homeless, most Haitian migrants have been granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS). That allowed them to enter the U.S. and work legally while requesting permanent status. With the sudden reversal of that policy, thousands of desperate Haitians are stuck in border towns like Tijuana, sleeping in shelters or on the streets. Others, who present themselves at border crossings, are locked up in detention centers and put on a fast track for deportation. A journalist for fusion.net aptly observed: "The U.S. policy change is like getting invited over to someone's house then getting arrested when you ring the doorbell."

Most of the Haitians arriving at this country's southern border have come from Brazil, where they had gone by the tens of thousands after the devastating 2010 quake in search of work. Many toiled there building stadiums for the World Cup and the Olympics, but those jobs have dried up. Thousands of men and women, often with their children and even newborns, set off on the arduous overland journey, traversing dangerous jungles, mountain ranges and as many as ten national borders, in the expectation that they would be granted TPS upon their arrival at the U.S. border. Among those now stuck at the border are Haitian men who have been separated from families because many women and children were granted priority to enter the U.S. before the door was slammed shut.

Jeh Johnson, the secretary of Homeland Security, sought to justify the deportations by claiming that conditions in Haiti had "improved sufficiently." That cruelly



DPA

Tijuana, Mexico: Desperate Haitians seeking entry to the U.S., October 5.

## Let Them In! No Deportations!

cynical statement was made barely a week and a half before Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti, killing more than a thousand people, uprooting crops, leveling homes and triggering another widespread cholera epidemic. A *New York Times* (17 October) report described hundreds of villagers on the southwestern peninsula of Haiti forced to seek shelter in caves and scavenge the fields for remnants of destroyed crops to stave off starvation.

The huge number of people killed and left homeless by "natural" disasters in Haiti is a direct result of the imperialist plunder that has left the country destitute and lacking in basic infrastructure. In contrast to Haiti, there was not a single death in Cuba when it was also hit hard by Hurricane Matthew. A social revolution in Cuba overthrew capitalism more than 50 years ago, establishing a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The advantages of Cuba's

collectivized economy over capitalist free-market anarchy are evident not least in the way Cuba deals with natural disasters.

The real reason for the racist targeting of Haitian migrants by the Obama administration has nothing to do with conditions in Haiti and everything to do with pandering to anti-immigrant sentiment in the run-up to the U.S. elections. The choice between presidential candidates Donald

*continued on page 3*



# Black Filmmaker Under Fire Down With Witchhunt Against Nate Parker!



Reuters

Before the much-anticipated Nat Turner biopic *The Birth of a Nation* even hit the theaters, Nate Parker, the writer, director and star of the film, became engulfed in a racist witchhunt. Parker and the film’s co-writer Jean Celestin have been pilloried as “rapists” over sexual assault charges leveled against them 17 years ago when they were students at Penn State University. The media frenzy led to boycotts of the film and a chorus of denunciations by many feminists and black commentators. The public condemnation of Nate Parker has been conveniently timed to contain the potential impact of a story where black slaves are depicted not as mere victims, but in violent rebellion.

After a trial in 2001, Parker was found

not guilty of raping a white fellow college student by a nearly all-white jury in a conservative Pennsylvania county. Celestin received a guilty conviction that was later overturned on the basis of ineffective legal representation. This is hardly insignificant in a country where accusations of rape have long been used as the pretext for barbaric lynchings of black men or to railroad them to prison—from the Scottsboro Boys to the Central Park Five. Parker is just one of many black men accused of rape who have been deemed guilty not only before a conviction, but even after an acquittal.

The firestorm of controversy over Nate Parker partakes of centuries of engrained hysteria about black male sexuality and the supposed purity of white womanhood.

A statement of support by four of Parker’s former Penn State classmates notes the “violently hostile racial climate” at the university during the time. Believing Parker and Celestin were wrongfully accused, they point to the “gross and blatant mis-information campaign” around the case, adding that “the media has cherry picked the most salacious elements while ignoring the actual record.”

The incident moreover took place at the height of the 1990s “date rape” scare which, far from combating the brutal reality of violence against women, whipped up anti-sex panic and strengthened the powers of the cops and the university administration. Since then, the campus morality police have increasingly sought to redefine the drinking and screwing that young people have always engaged in as rape. We do not claim to know what happened on the night in question, nor can those dragging Parker through the mud. Ambiguities about consent do and must occur, particularly when the people know each other. But the assumption that any woman under the influence cannot possibly consent to sex is both demeaning and dangerous to women. Rape is a heinous crime of degradation and terror; it should not be equated to any experience of unpleasant or drunken sex.

Two months before the film’s release, the media mob latched on to the 2012 suicide of the alleged victim in order to vilify Parker for not taking enough responsibility or expressing the right amount of remorse—for an offense that he has steadfastly maintained his innocence of! In a smear piece in the *New York Times* (19 August), black feminist professor Roxane Gay stated she would refuse to see the movie because she could not “separate the art from the artist.” She lambasted Parker for his “inadequate act of contrition,” a branding reminiscent of Puritan punishment. Those deemed to be “sex offenders” today face a similar fate—a lifetime of humiliation and repression.

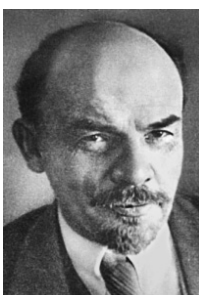
The reviews of *The Birth of a Nation* have overwhelmingly been dominated by the dredged-up rape allegations, burying the movie’s depiction of the brutal history of chattel slavery. In a statement to the *New York Times*, some family members of Parker’s accuser noted, “We are dubious of the underlying motivations that bring this to present light after 17 years, and we will not take part in stoking its coals.” The witchhunt against Parker feeds into the misogyny, anti-sex hysteria and insidious racism that have long been used as a means of social control and a weapon against the oppressed in capitalist America. ■



TROTSKY

## The 1956 Hungarian Political Revolution

*This October marked the 60th anniversary of the attempted proletarian political revolution in the Hungarian deformed workers state. The uprising was crushed through military intervention by the Soviet Union’s Stalinist bureaucracy. The capitalist rulers have always portrayed Hungary 1956 as an anti-communist rebellion for capitalist democracy. In fact, the Hungarian Revolution was an attempt by the working class to*



LENIN

*throw off Stalinist bureaucratic rule and open the road to socialism. We reprint below an excerpt from a 1957 article by Shane Mage, who was at the time a left oppositionist in Max Shachtman’s Young Socialist League and became one of the founders of the Spartacist tendency. Mage’s piece was directed against Herbert Aptheker, a leading member of the American Communist Party, who defended the crushing of the workers uprising by the Kremlin by characterizing it as a capitalist counterrevolution.*

Nothing at all justifies the Western claim that the revolution was essentially a struggle for the “democratic” return of “peoples capitalism.” The Western version of the “counter-revolution” thesis, like the Stalinist one, is false because it ignores the key factor in the revolution—the working class.

The Hungarian working class, even though it may have been confused about many things, did not fight for “Western-style” democracy—it fought for *socialist* democracy.... The workers council of the 11th District of Budapest showed this when it demanded “free elections in which only those parties may participate that recognize and have always recognized the Socialist order, based on the principle that means of production belong to society.”

But the decisive refutation of the idea that Hungary was returning to “Western-style democracy” is the simple fact that the workers all over Hungary, in the heat of the revolution, created their own *Workers Councils* as organs of the political rule of the working class. What has this to do with capitalist “democracy”? To smash the threat of capitalist restoration, the Hungarian workers would merely have had to exert the power that already lay in their hands, to give all power to the workers councils and not, as in so many past revolutions, give up their power to a capitalist parliament.

To grasp the loathsome hypocrisy and mendacity of the capitalist “friends” of the Hungarian revolution, the reader need only ask this question: What would be the attitude of these Dulleses, Mollets, and Edens if the workers of Paris, London, or Detroit were to form *their own* workers councils and attempt to establish a “Socialist order, based on the principle that means of production belong to society”?

—Shane Mage, “‘Truth’ and Hungary—A Reply to Herbert Aptheker,”  
*The Hungarian Revolution* (1959)

## WORKERS VANGUARD



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

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

*Workers Vanguard* (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. Email address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net). Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

The closing date for news in this issue is November 1.

No. 1099

4 November 2016

## WV Goes to Eight Pages

Beginning with this issue, the biweekly *Workers Vanguard* will be reduced from 12 to eight pages. This is a necessary retrenchment to bring the work of the Spartacist League/U.S. into line with our current capacities. We may produce 12-page issues when warranted.

We do not take this step lightly, as *WV* has appeared in a 12- or 16-page format for several decades. But our current situation is that a thin layer of cadres in the central party leadership is responsible in an overlapping way for *WV* and the English-language edition of the ICL’s theoretical journal *Spartacist* as well as for giving administrative leadership to the SL/U.S. and heavily to the International Secretariat.

To allocate even more of our limited resources in an attempt to preserve a 12-page paper would limit our ability to intervene in protests and labor struggles where they do break out in the U.S. and to take advantage of international opportunities. Readers of *WV* know that in the recent period countries like South Africa and Greece have been volatile, while in Britain there has been an increase in political ferment with the emergence of a large movement behind left Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn. In Quebec a few years ago, there was a high level of student struggle where timely intervention enabled the ICL’s Canadian section to establish a branch in Montreal.

The core of our cadre was won to Trotskyism in the period of radicalization spurred by the civil rights movement and then by the U.S.’s losing war in Vietnam as well as the 1968 French general strike. In subsequent decades, new recruits came more slowly. With the destruction of the Soviet Union through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, communism is viewed in most countries as utopian, at

best. The workers movement has been in a deep historic trough, with little social and class struggle in the U.S., reducing our opportunities for intervention and recruitment. We do have a layer of younger comrades who carry out the day-to-day central leadership functions. At the same time, the SL/U.S.’s historic leadership often plays a decisive role in sorting out knotty political questions here and internationally.

Following our last national conference, the incoming Central Committee took note of our paucity of resources and authorized the production in cases of emergency of eight-page issues of *WV* (“Fighting for Revolutionary Continuity,” *WV* No. 1088, 22 April). Since that time it has become evident that what was conceived of as an emergency measure is actually a necessity. We tried increasing the number of archival pieces, reprints from our Marxist forebears, but to select these pieces and motivate their relevance to today’s readership requires significant work and places demands on the time of the same cadres involved in leading the party. We have reprinted more articles from other sections of the ICL, but these sections also have limited resources and much less frequent press. We will continue to have such archival and international pieces but without relying on them to simply fill 12 pages.

Cutting back to eight pages is the most minimal step we can take to maintain a quality biweekly *Workers Vanguard* without grinding up our cadre. As we have noted before, *WV* is essential to our existence as a fighting propaganda group. Its frequency allows us to intervene and be a factor as events unfold, serving as a collective organizer for our international tendency while influencing the consciousness of the several thousand people who read or peruse our press every two weeks. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

# NYPD Guns Down 66-Year-Old Black Woman

Her name was Deborah Danner. She was a 66-year-old black woman, who struggled with mental illness for three decades. On October 18, cops responding to a 911 call forced their way into her apartment in the Bronx. NYPD sergeant Hugh Barry shot Danner twice in her own bedroom, fatally wounding her. Cops alleged that Danner threatened Barry with a pair of scissors and later swung a bat. The truth is she was executed for being mentally ill and black.

Danner's death was chillingly foreshadowed in an essay she wrote in 2012 titled "Living with Schizophrenia." She described the grueling reality for people with mental illness who often end up socially isolated, with inadequate medical treatment (or no treatment at all), unemployed and/or homeless. Danner wrote, "We are all aware of the all too frequent news stories about the mentally ill who come up against law enforcement instead of mental health professionals and end up dead." According to data compiled by the *Washington Post*, nearly a quarter of people shot and killed by cops in 2016 were mentally ill. This violent repression attests to the attitude of the capitalist rulers, who view many people—especially the poor, black and mentally ill—as expendable.

Danner's essay invoked Eleanor Bumpurs, a 66-year-old mentally ill black



Deborah Danner

Facebook

woman who was killed by the racist cops almost exactly 32 years before Danner was. Bumpurs was confronted in her Bronx apartment by a dozen cops equipped with mace, U-shaped steel "restraining bars," riot shields and bulletproof vests because she had fallen behind on her rent. One cop pumped two shotgun blasts into her.

At the time of Bumpurs's killing, the mayor of New York City was the racist pig

Ed Koch, who positively grooved on the repression and suffering of black people and Latinos. Today's mayor, Democrat Bill de Blasio, was elected on promises of enacting reforms that would benefit minorities and the poor. Did his election end up mattering for people like Deborah Danner? Certainly not. Different mayor, same old story. De Blasio vows to never have another killing like Danner's happen again. Two years ago he said the same thing about Eric Garner. Like Sergeant Barry, Garner's killer Daniel Pantaleo, was put on desk duty. Since that time Pantaleo has been rewarded with around \$65,000 in overtime and other earnings on top of his salary, though he remains under federal investigation.

On October 25, the Sergeants Benevolent Association (SBA) placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times*, in which SBA president Ed Mullins lashed out at de Blasio and Police Commissioner James O'Neill for criticizing the police. Mullins justified the grotesque killing of Danner by portraying her as a deadly threat. *The real deadly threat is the trigger-happy cops!* Whenever the thugs in blue get any criticism, they howl and bark about being "victims," seeking to advance their bonapartist agenda to stand above law as judge, jury and executioner.

It's been two years since Black Lives Matter protests sprang onto the national scene after the racist cop killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. Protests against cop terror have shined a light on the racist reality of American capitalism. But the reality is that these protests cannot stop cop terror.

Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained that the police are "a professional caste of men trained in the practice of violence upon the poor." The cops' role is to execute capitalist "law and order" by breaking strikes, terrorizing the ghettos, raiding immigrant homes, repressing protests, etc. They are a crucial part of the capitalist state apparatus—together with the military, prisons and courts—the purpose of which is to maintain the dictatorship of the capitalist class.

To sweep away the vicious cop thugs and the capitalist system they "serve and protect" will take a socialist revolution. As Marxists we say the working class is the only force that can overthrow capitalism. To make the working class conscious of its role as the gravedigger of capitalism requires the intervention of a vanguard party that will fuse the power of the working class to the anger of the ghettos and barrios. This is the party the Spartacist League seeks to build. ■

## Migrants...

(continued from page 1)

Trump and Hillary Clinton, as we headlined our previous issue, pits a "Racist Bigot vs. Imperialist Hawk." On immigration policy, while Trump revels in racist demagoguery, Clinton has expressed no significant differences with Deporter-in-Chief Obama, who has expelled more immigrants than any president in U.S. history. We call for full citizenship rights for all who have made it here. No deportations! As for the thousands of Haitians now stuck at the U.S. border and across Central America, we say: Let them in! Down with Obama's racist exclusion of Haitian migrants!

The U.S. imperialist rulers have a long history of discrimination and abuse directed against Haitian migrants. In 1981, President Ronald Reagan signed an agreement with infamous Haitian dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier allowing the U.S. to patrol Haiti's coastal waters and repatriate any Haitians it picked up. Over the next decade, under that program some 25,000 Haitians were interdicted at sea. During the early 1990s, Haitians were targeted in the racist, anti-AIDS hysteria: in the U.S. they were banned from donating blood, and hundreds trying to enter the U.S. were imprisoned based on their HIV-positive status.

In September 1991, masses of Haitians took to overcrowded boats desperately seeking to flee the reign of terror unleashed following the coup against radical populist



Reuters

Les Cayes, Haiti, devastated by Hurricane Matthew, October 5.

priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide. During the U.S. presidential election campaign the following year, Democratic candidate Bill Clinton denounced President George H. W. Bush's interception of Haitians at sea and promised to grant "temporary asylum" to all those fleeing the murderous regime. As president, Clinton cynically dismissed his earlier promise as "campaign rhetoric" and maintained Bush's racist policy. Forty thousand Haitians were intercepted and most were transported by the U.S. Coast Guard back to Haiti where the military torturers awaited them on the docks.

The racism and anti-communism underlying U.S. policy are underscored by the contrast between the abuse meted out to Haitians and the reception accorded to Cubans, who are welcomed with open arms. Counterrevolutionary Cuban *gusanos* (worms) are automatically declared political refugees and put on a fast track to permanent residency, social benefits and, ultimately, citizenship (historically, a similar policy applied for the Vietnamese "boat people"). This policy is in the service of the U.S. imperialists' longstanding goal of overturning the Cuban Revolution and re-establishing capitalist exploitation in that country.

### A Century Under the Boot of U.S. Imperialism

Haiti was born of a great slave rebellion against the French colonial overlords from 1791 to 1804, out of which emerged the first black republic in the modern era. For over two centuries, the vengeful rulers of

the U.S., at first including slaveowners, and other major capitalist powers have been making the Haitian masses pay in blood and gold for their successful revolution. Over the last one hundred years, Haiti has been subject to repeated imperialist military occupations. The first U.S. occupation lasted from 1915 to 1934, during which U.S. troops drowned an anti-imperialist revolt in blood. Washington installed and backed a series of brutal, corrupt dictatorships, including that of "Papa Doc" Duvalier. His son, "Baby Doc," was driven from the country in 1986 by a popular revolt, and others in his cabal took over. Massive social discontent eventually led to the election of Aristide in 1990—seven months later, he was overthrown by the military. In 1994, following a starvation embargo imposed by President Clinton, American Marines invaded the country to quell growing turmoil. Aristide was reinstalled on condition that he agree to a drastic austerity program.

Clinton imposed the virtual abolition of import tariffs, flooding the country with cheap American-grown rice. Masses of ruined farmers and their families were driven off the land. Haiti, once self-sufficient in production of this staple food, now imports up to 90 percent of its rice. Not content with Aristide's prostration before the imperialists' demands, "peace-keeping" troops led mainly by the U.S., Canada and France landed in Haiti in 2004 and the deposed Aristide was whisked out of the country on a U.S.-chartered jet.

A UN occupation force was installed

in 2004 and bolstered following the 2010 earthquake. These UN forces were responsible for introducing cholera to Haiti, as the UN only recently saw fit to admit (see "UN Admits Causing Cholera Epidemic," WV No. 1095, 9 September). Since Hurricane Matthew, at least 1,000 more Haitians have died from cholera, bringing the total death toll from the disease to over 9,000. UN "peacekeepers" have repeatedly backed violent assaults by the Haitian police on demonstrations and poor communities.

It was to shore up this bloody occupation force that President Obama dispatched 20,000 combat troops in the guise of a "relief effort" soon after the 2010 earthquake. U.S. officials also ordered a naval blockade of Haiti to prevent the desperate population from fleeing to the U.S. In the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, more than 2,000 U.S. troops were again dispatched to Haiti, supposedly for "disaster relief." The imperialist occupation of Haiti under whatever guise can only reinforce the abject conditions endured by that country's population. We demand an end to the UN occupation of Haiti and call for all imperialist troops and police forces out now!

We support the struggles of the Haitian masses against their oppressors. At the same time, we understand that their oppression will not be overcome through struggle limited to Haiti itself. The only way out of the misery imposed on neocolonial Haiti lies through proletarian socialist revolution throughout the Caribbean and, crucially, extending into the North American imperialist heartland. Haitian workers in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere, many of whom are organized within major trade unions, can serve as a vital bridge linking the struggle for national and social emancipation in Haiti with the fight for socialist revolution in the imperialist centers of North America. The key is to build revolutionary workers parties to lead the workers in this struggle. ■

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# Abolish “Sex Offender” Registries!

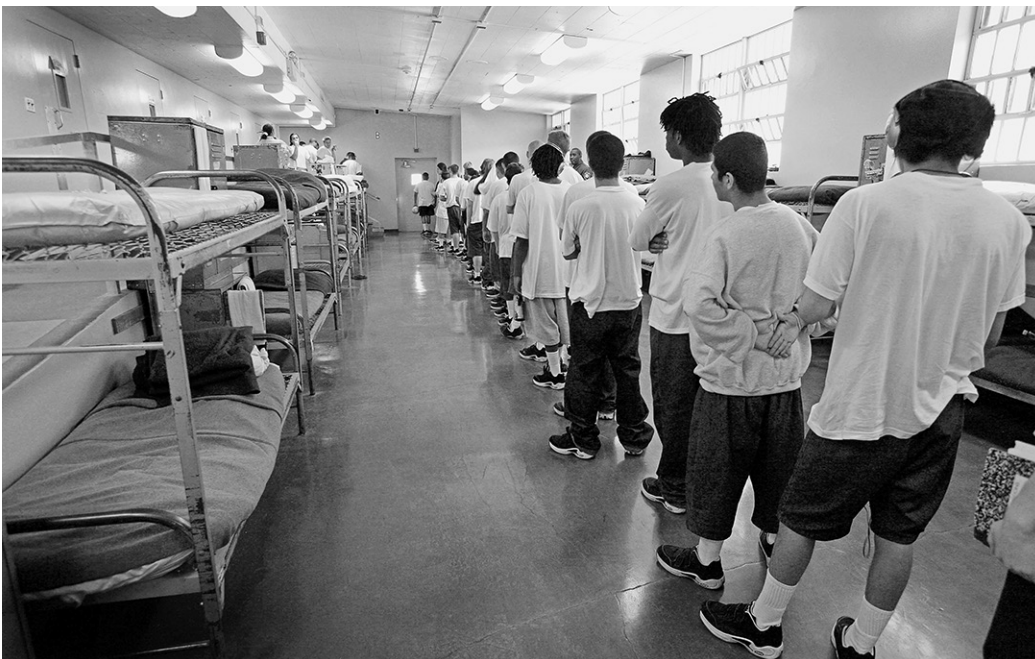
So vast have governmental sex offender registries become, trapping hundreds of thousands in their nets of public shaming and lifelong hounding, that even some who were most vociferous for their creation are now sickened by their effect on juveniles. A case in point is Patty Wetterling who, following the 1989 abduction and disappearance of her eleven-year-old son, became an early and prominent advocate of such registries. As reported by Sarah Stillman in “The List” (*New Yorker*, 14 March), Wetterling now has serious misgivings. Following a meeting with a ten-year-old boy in a juvenile sex offender “treatment” facility, Wetterling said: “I kept thinking about this kid, who goes away, gets sex-offender treatment...and is on the public registry—this young person who really wants to return to school, to learn, to make friends, but can’t have a second chance. That’s a life sentence for this kid.”

The *New Yorker* article also recounts the story of Mark Lunsford, who successfully lobbied for draconian measures against sex offenders following the rape and murder of his daughter in 2005. Some time later, his own teenage son faced being placed on a sex offender registry for heavy petting with a 14-year-old girl! It is no longer unusual to find articles in the capitalist press highlighting cases of teenage boys, most often white and from “middle-class” families, whose lives are being ruined over consensual sexual encounters. Even the rabidly right-wing *New York Post* (25 July) ran an opinion piece titled “Bogus ‘Sex Offender’ Labels Are Ruining Lives.” This media attention reflects a growing backlash among the white petty bourgeoisie against the state’s horrific abuse of their children in the name of supposedly *preventing* child sex abuse. Of course in racist capitalist America, black people, Latinos and the poor have always faced the brutal intrusion of the capitalist state into their family life.

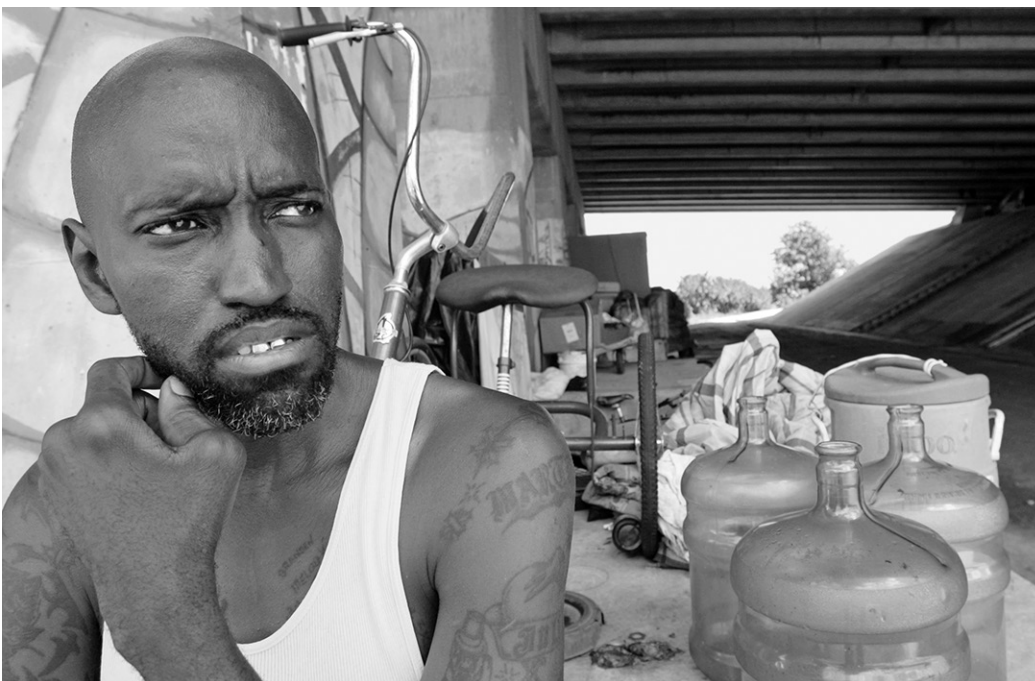
A 2013 Human Rights Watch report, “Raised on the Registry: The Irreparable Harm of Placing Children on Sex Offender Registries in the US,” describes how youth offenders are subject to registration “for crimes ranging from public nudity and touching another child’s genitalia over clothing to very serious violent crimes like rape.” The report describes the devastating effects of being forced to register:

“Youth sex offenders on the registry experience severe psychological harm. They are stigmatized, isolated, often depressed. Many consider suicide, and some succeed. They and their families have experienced harassment and physical violence. They are sometimes shot at, beaten, even murdered.”

According to a 2000 Department of Justice report on sexual assaults, 14 years old was the most common age for both victims and offenders. This statistic reflects the reactionary age of consent laws, which deem all youth under a certain arbitrary age (16, 17 or 18 years depending on the state) as incapable of consenting to sex. This turns teenagers and young adults into criminals for having sex with younger teens, even when the sex was in fact consensual. Deemed “Romeo and Juliet” romances, such relationships can have truly tragic endings for the young men, and less often women, who get branded child abusers for the rest of their lives. With laws apparently designed by Alice in Wonderland’s Queen of Hearts, in some states teenagers who take nude selfies and engage in “sexting” are guilty of “distributing child pornography” and “sexual exploitation of a minor” (namely themselves). If that weren’t bad enough, children as young as nine have been convicted and put on registries for pranks like pulling down a classmate’s pants or for



Above: Prison dormitory for juvenile “sex offenders” in Stockton, California, 2007. Below: One of over 70 people registered as sex offenders living in encampment under bridge, Miami, 2009.



play-acting sex with other children. The Human Rights Watch report details cases where a conviction at the age of ten or eleven remains a scarlet letter well into adulthood, and sometimes for life.

## Victimless “Crimes” and Victims of the State

The victims of the government-orchestrated hysteria against “sex crimes” are not only children and young people. Public urination can land you on a sex offender registry in at least 13 states. In New York State, so can visiting a prostitute. Of course, former governor Eliot Spitzer, who signed one of the most repressive sex offender laws ever, didn’t have to register himself when he was caught in 2008 paying for a high-priced call girl. Once someone is listed on a public registry for sex offenders, almost all of his personal information—including address, employer and a photograph—becomes easily available online under screaming headlines like “PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM SEX OFFENDERS.” In a *New York Times* op-ed piece, “Regulating Sex” (27 June 2015), Judith Shulevitz described the “dire and lasting consequences” of being placed on a registry:

“Depending on the state, these can include notifying the community when an offender moves into the neighborhood; restrictions against living within 2,000 feet of a school, park, playground or school bus stop; being required to wear GPS monitoring devices; and even a prohibition against using the Internet for social networking.”

In California, 20 percent of those on the list have nowhere to live because of these restrictions. In some states, they can even be banned from homeless shelters. Online registries facilitate violent acts like the murder in 2013 of a South Carolina man and his wife by neo-Nazis.

The violent abuse and rape of children is a terrible crime. But once “child abuse” becomes a political football, the capitalist state willfully refuses to distinguish between Jack the Ripper and teenagers having consensual sex. The conflation of crimes like rape with children “playing doctor” serves to whip up a crazed, witchhunting climate in which the powers of the capitalist state can be legitimized and strengthened under the guise of “protecting” children and women. The bourgeois state is not a neutral arbiter or protector of the whole citizenry; it exists to assure the maintenance of capitalist rule through repressing the working class and the oppressed. The frenzied morality drive against everything from online pornography to child sexuality by the government, churches and media also serves ideologically to distract working people from the real evils of this decaying capitalist system.

The Spartacist League is opposed to all laws criminalizing consensual sex. We oppose all laws against “crimes without victims” such as prostitution, drug use and pornography. By the logic of this twisted and puritanical society, physical pleasure is equated with “sin” and the cruelest physical and psychological torments constitute “justice.” It is in this framework that the capitalist state punishes teenagers, with their raging sex hormones, for engaging in the very acts that biology drives them toward during puberty.

We stand against the persecution of anyone who engages in consensual intergenerational sex. The only guideline for sex should be effective consent: mutual agreement and understanding by the parties involved at the time—regardless of age, gender or sexual preference. For decades, we have defended NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Associ-

ation), which advocates for the right of youth to enter into sexual relationships with older people, against state persecution. *Down with reactionary age of consent laws! Government out of the bedroom!*

As Marxists who oppose the vengeful religious precepts of retribution and penitence on which the whole capitalist system of punishment is based, we are for the abolition of all sex offender registries. This means not just for juveniles but for everyone. Many of the people on these lists were convicted as adults for “crimes” in which there was no victim—consensual sex with minors, paying for sex, or even looking at or communicating with someone on the internet. But even for those guilty of terrible crimes such as murder and rape, Marxists don’t subscribe to the reactionary view that people must continue to be punished (even after serving prison terms) by being excluded from society for life.

## Perpetual Punishment: Cruel and Usual

There are already close to 850,000 people on sex offender registries in the U.S., about one-quarter of them convicted as juveniles, and the numbers are growing. Federal law requires those as young as 14 to be placed on public registers for sex crimes. The campaign for ever more repressive measures is aimed at reinforcing conservative “family values” in order to regiment youth and the population more broadly into submitting to the exploitative rule of the capitalists. Yet the very “family values” espoused by the proponents of these registries are in practice being undermined when hundreds of thousands of parents and children cannot live under the same roof due to the restrictions imposed. This effect of the sex offender registries on families was highlighted by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in August when it ruled that amendments to Michigan’s Sex Offender Registration Act (SORA) could not be applied retroactively. Comparing SORA to “the ancient punishment of banishment,” the court decision said:

“SORA brands registrants as moral lepers solely on the basis of a prior conviction. It consigns them to years, if not a lifetime, of existence on the margins, not only of society, but often, as the record in this case makes painfully evident, from their own families, with whom, due to school zone restrictions, they may not even live.”

While a few states have tinkered with the provisions for placing juveniles on sex offender registries to make them slightly less onerous, the gears of government repression grind on. Anthony Metts, whose story appeared in the *New Yorker*, is a case in point. In Texas in 2003, this young Mexican-American fresh out of high school was pressured by cops into acknowledging that he had engaged in consensual sex with teenage girls a couple of years younger than him, including when he himself was still a minor. He was hit with two felony indictments for “sexual assault of a child” and got ten years of extra-harsh probation: no alcohol, no internet, no going near schools, parks, bus stops, malls or movie theaters, or living within 1,000 feet of a “child-safety zone.”

But things got worse. His photo went on a sex offender registry and expensive and sadistic “treatment” and therapy, for which he had to pay, was required. For refusing to undergo the “peter meter” test (the humiliating “penile plethysmograph,” in which a gauge around the penis measures size changes while sexual images are shown), Metts was jailed for ten days. He got fired from his job. After marrying and having a daughter, he learned he could neither live with her nor even see her without supervision. He is currently serving a ten-year prison sentence for

# Socialist Alternative Witchhunts Reds

## Portland

On our subscription drive trip to Portland State University this year, our comrades were busy discussing the revolutionary Marxist political program advanced in *Workers Vanguard* with interested students when a group of people approached our literature table and launched into a hysterical screaming fit. Foaming with rage at our opposition to reactionary “age of consent” laws and our forthright defense of NAMBLA (the North American Man/Boy Love Association) against state repression, they slanderously raved about predator “pedophiles” and “child rape.”

Were these Christian fundamentalist yahoos? No, in fact they were supporters of Socialist Alternative (SAlt), a refor-

mist organization most recently known as the best builder of the “movement” for imperialist running dog Bernie Sanders. In line with its promotion of capitalist politicians, SAlt deeply imbibes the perverse morality of the bourgeois rulers’ anti-sex witchhunt. At our table in Portland, they sought to wield family-values demagoguery to try to silence the reds and drive us off campus.

When the gathering crowd of students showed no signs of taking up pitchforks against us—instead, several approached us to buy our literature and ask thoughtful questions—one of SAlt’s cohorts called the cops in a failed attempt to have us arrested! That these purported socialists would appeal to the racist strikebreaking cops to silence their opponents in the workers movement is a grotesque measure of SAlt’s political bankruptcy. But it is entirely in keeping with their profoundly

anti-Marxist position that cops are “workers in uniform” who should be welcomed into the unions.

Helping lead SAlt’s Moral Majority squad in Portland was one Justin Norton-Kertson, who is seemingly no stranger to staging such provocations. In May 2015, Norton-Kertson reportedly assaulted a supporter of Class Struggle Workers-Portland (affiliated with the Internationalist Group) who had the temerity to criticize SAlt at a public meeting. As recounted in an “Open Letter to Socialist Alternative and 15 Now PDX” by Class Struggle Workers-Portland (21 May 2015), “Justin Norton-Kertson, the main spokesman for 15 Now PDX and a supporter of Socialist Alternative, physically attacked one of our comrades” and “proceeded to threaten further physical violence, repeatedly threatened to call the police, and repeatedly made vile sexist

remarks to female trade unionists who objected to his aggression, threats and torrent of abuse.”

SAlt has a long history of prostration before the class rule of the bourgeoisie, the state that defends it and the revolting morality that is used to ideologically preserve it. In contrast, as genuine Marxists, our purpose is to forge a revolutionary workers party that serves as a tribune of the people, able to react, as Lenin explained in *What Is To Be Done?*, “to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects.” Groups like NAMBLA who are slandered, framed up and witchhunted by the capitalist state must be defended! Only a party that actively champions the rights of all the oppressed can lead the struggle for proletarian socialist revolution. ■

petty probation violations such as failing to charge the electronic ankle bracelet monitoring his movements. His story, with variations, is like that of thousands of other people convicted of *nothing* that would be a crime in any rational society.

This past February, President Obama signed the International Megan’s Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders (IML). This law mandates the State Department to mark the passports of every American convicted of sex crimes involving minors with a “unique identifier” and to “alert foreign governments when those Americans travel abroad” (*Wall Street Journal*, 29 March). Failure by a registrant to provide advance notification to the government of his or her travel plans is punishable by up to ten years in prison. This recalls the 1938 Nazi policy of marking passports of Jewish citizens of Germany with a glaring red letter “J.” Not only does IML compromise the right of citizens to travel freely and violate their privacy; it puts their very lives and those of their companions at risk.

### From “Satanic Abuse” to “Children Who Molest”

To her credit, journalist and author Judith Levine has long stood for the abolition of sex offender registries as “cruel and unusual punishment, excessive even for people who have committed heinous crimes” (*Counterpunch*, 24 October 2014). Levine’s powerful book *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex* (2002) helped expose the roots of the anti-youth, anti-sex panic and the invention of “children with sexual behavior problems” and “children who molest.” After a brief period of more open attitudes toward teaching children about sex and their bodies in the 1960s and 1970s, U.S. bourgeois society, with its fanatical religious component, has increasingly returned to the Victorian



Rob Tornado

myth that children are asexual beings. In fact, sexuality is part of the makeup of humans from infancy. As Levine writes:

“A wide range of sexual behavior is normative in children. In spite of a paucity of empirical data, we know that masturbation is ubiquitous from early on, more noticeably among little boys than little girls. So is ‘playing doctor,’ inserting fingers into orifices, and other such pastimes. In the so-called latency years, from about seven to eleven, children continue to masturbate, touch each other, and have crushes on their classmates and friends.”

Levine cites a UCLA study that found that three-quarters of kids had engaged in masturbation or some kind of sex with other children before the age of six. Levine goes on to note: “Was there a ‘pernicious influence’ of such experiences, a ‘main effect’ correlating early sex play with childhood distress or later maladjustment, as many psychologists hypothesize? ‘No such correlations were apparent,’ the California group concluded.”

At the head of the campaign to pathologize childhood sexuality in the late 1980s

was Kee MacFarlane, who infamously led the interrogation of 400 children from the McMartin Preschool in Southern California at her “Children’s Institute.” Her lurid charges fueled a “Satanic ritual abuse” witchhunt against day-care workers. As we wrote in “Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria” (*Women and Revolution* No. 45, Winter-Spring 1996), despite a 1994 U.S. government report announcing that there was no factual basis for satanic cult conspiracy theories, “the witchhunt’s nationwide apparatus of sex cops, prying social workers and quacks, bolstered with millions of dollars, prestige and power, remains firmly in place.”

In 1988, MacFarlane’s collaborator Toni Cavanagh Johnson coined the term “children who molest.” Johnson is now a widely cited, self-published “authority” on supposedly abnormal sexual behaviors in children and their “treatment.” Johnson’s advice includes telling parents to seek professional help if any child from kindergarten through fourth grade “asks others to take off their clothes.” And what passes for therapy for children ensnared in today’s witchhunt are methods based on those employed in the 1950s and ’60s to try to “cure” gay people.

### Children, Family and the State

Far from protecting children, the capitalist system and its state are the biggest abusers—condemning millions of children to poverty and homelessness, not to mention destroying the lives of those caught up in the juvenile “justice” system, who are disproportionately black and Latino. As we wrote in “State-Branded ‘Sex Offenders’: Pariahs for Life” (*WV* No. 1030, 20 September 2013): “The U.S. imperialists bomb children across the globe even as millions go hungry in this country, where the infant mortality rate ranks 51st in the world.” Maternal mortality rates are on the rise in the U.S., where black women are three times more likely to die giving birth than white women.

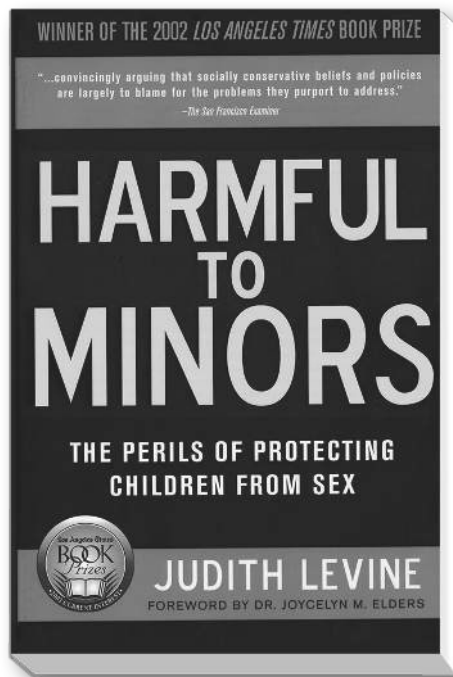
Periodic scare campaigns—from the

“reds under the beds” and anti-homosexual witchhunts in the 1950s to the “war on terror” and “sex offender” panics today—not only reinforce state control over the population, but also serve to drive people deeper into the repressive confines of the family and religion. In fact, the family under capitalism is the main mechanism for the oppression of women and youth and a means for the bourgeoisie to inculcate social conformity and subservience to authority. The institution of the family reinforces, as Friedrich Engels put it, “the supremacy of the man over the woman, and the individual family as the economic unit of society” (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* [1884]). The family, the state and organized religion form a tripod of oppression propping up the capitalist order.

In this vicious class-divided society, the family is an economic and sexual prison house of frustration and oppression. As we wrote in “The Uses of Abuse” (*Women and Revolution* No. 29, Spring 1985): “Raping, beating and otherwise abusing children are utterly horrendous crimes—yet state intervention, with its cruel tortures of prison cells and sadistic punishments, its barbed-wire-surrounded orphanages and reform schools, is often not much better.” Our goal as communists is a society in which the institution of the family can be *replaced*, in which the constraints of economic necessity, which force families together and break them apart, are removed. In such a society, sexual relations can be truly voluntary and the guilt and shame pounded into all of us can be lifted.

It is a tough, no-win dilemma for teenagers under capitalism: whether to stay with your Bible-Belt beating parents, or take your chances in the cruel state apparatus of “therapy” and foster care. For youth, especially gay and transgender, who are kicked out of their homes or forced to run away, their alternative is often selling sex and living on the streets. In response to this dilemma we demand, as our youth organization did in its founding program in 1971: “a radical lowering of the legal age of adulthood and free housing, food and a stipend provided for young people who do not wish to remain at home” (*Youth, Class and Party*).

As Marxists, we know that to tear down all of bourgeois society’s repressive laws governing sexuality requires a proletarian revolution to abolish capitalism and establish a workers government; and that will be only the first stage of revolutionary change. The *goal* of world socialist revolution is to create an international communist society in which the institutions of the state, organized religion and the family will have withered away, a world in which truly free individuals in conditions of material plenty will create their own relationships, freed finally and forever from class oppression and social coercion. ■



Judith Levine

Judith Levine’s book exposes roots of anti-sex panic.



WikiLeaks...

(continued from page 1)

and now U.S. trade representative, most of which were adopted.

Clinton’s permanent love affair with Wall Street is demonstrated in leaked transcripts of her lavishly paid 2013 speeches to finance plutocrats. She reassured the bankers that a politician needs “both a public and a private position”—the “private” being secret deals and the “public” being lies to her constituents. In excerpts of a discussion with the CEO of Goldman Sachs, Clinton expressed a touching concern for wealthy people who experience “bias” for leading “successful and/or complicated lives.”

This summer, the trove of hacked emails belonging to the Democratic National Committee (DNC) prompted the resignation of DNC chair and Clinton crony Debbie Wasserman Schultz. The emails revealed a party ploy to undermine Bernie Sanders and steal the thunder from his “political revolution” jingle, which was creating a youthful fan base of Sandernistas along with some not insignificant labor union support.

In one email from March, a DNC official noted that while Clinton already



February 5: Julian Assange speaks from balcony of Ecuadorean Embassy in London.

ripped off “important elements of Bernie’s ideas and rhetoric,” she should throw a bone to Sanders’s “self-righteous ideologues” at the convention: “We want them to go home happy and enthusiastic in working their asses off for Hillary.” Certainly Sanders is doing his share to achieve that. From the get-go, Sanders made it clear he would never break loyalty, either to the Democrats or to the economic system of the “billionaire class.”

Clinton’s attempt to present a populist face with slogans like “Wall Street must work for Main Street” is hogwash. As a former six-year board member of Wal-Mart, she couldn’t bring herself to support even Sanders’s modest push for a \$15 federal minimum wage. But her loyal supporters in the trade-union bureaucracy, which acts to bind the workers to the capitalist order, were unfazed. In other WikiLeaks revelations, one Hillary toady, American Federation of Teachers top Randi Weingarten, is captured devising strategies to punish unions who refused to back Clinton to the hilt. For example, Weingarten wrote, “we will go after” the



Svoboda fascists in Maidan Square, Kiev, February 2014. Right-wing coup in Ukraine was backed by U.S. and EU imperialists.

National Nurses United “and there [sic] high and mighty sanctimonious conduct.”

Dr. Strangelove in a Pantsuit

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has promised to pull more skeletons out of the closet before Election Day. Unable to deny the current revelations and in a panic to cover up future ones, the Democrats are claiming that both Assange and Donald Trump are agents of an evil empire and that the Russian government is responsible for hacking the emails. Resurrected Cold Warriors from the *New York Times* have been especially fervent in promoting this Russia-bashing, as exhibited by their August 31 headline: “How Russia Often Benefits When Julian Assange Reveals the West’s Secrets.” Meanwhile, MSNBC (or, as rad-lib journalist Jeffrey St. Clair aptly calls it, MSDNC) host Joy Reid railed on Twitter against “authoritarian, communist Russia.”

Capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92 destroyed the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state. The imperialist rulers had long fought to overturn the collectivized economy issuing from the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Today, Washington’s demonization of the Vladimir Putin regime—which has committed numerous atrocities, not least the murderous colonial occupation of Chechnya—is in the service of the imperialist drive to curtail capitalist Russia’s strength as a nuclear-armed regional power and potential rival.

Clinton has made it clear to neocons and militarists that she is ready for a war with Russia, for instance by calling for a no-fly zone in Syria. Trump’s less belligerent stance toward Putin seems rational in comparison. Journalist and filmmaker John Pilger recently noted: “Trump is loathed by those with power in the United States for reasons that have little to do with his obnoxious behaviour and opinions. To the invisible government in Washington, the unpredictable Trump is an obstacle to America’s design for the 21st century” (johnpilger.com, 27 October). In fact, Trump, with his venomous racist and sexist outbursts, is a gift that keeps on giving for the Democrats, as he drives black, Latino and women voters into the arms of the widely despised Clinton.

As for Clinton’s claims that Russia is trying to “influence the outcome of the election” in favor of Trump, it is Washington that virtually copyrighted “regime change.” The blood-soaked U.S. rulers have a long history of “influencing” elections in other countries, or simply organizing coups or direct military intervention, from the Bay of Pigs and Allende’s Chile

to Libya and backing and bankrolling the 2014 fascist-spearheaded coup in Ukraine.

Imperialist Lies and Retribution

Assange first appeared on the American rulers’ hit list for releasing a massive leak of files documenting torture and civilian deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq back in 2010. Since then, he has been witchhunted and threatened with arrest if he leaves the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where he has been confined as a de facto prisoner for four years since Ecuador granted him political asylum. Sweden’s request for extradition on bogus sexual assault allegations is in the direct service of sending him to the U.S. so he can be jailed, likely on espionage charges (see “Hands Off Julian Assange!” WV No. 1010, 12 October 2012). Undoubtedly under pressure from the U.S., the government of Ecuador recently cut off Assange’s internet, claiming that it did not want to facilitate a “major impact” on the presidential election. Happily, it seems that this maneuver is not affecting the planned WikiLeaks releases.

To get a sense of Assange’s potential fate, one need only consider the situation of Chelsea Manning. Over six years ago, Manning, a former army private, gave WikiLeaks the notorious “Collateral Murder” video showing the gunning down of Reuters reporters and Iraqi civilians by the U.S. military, along with numerous military logs and diplomatic cables. Subjected to the torture of solitary confinement, she now languishes in prison with a 35-year sentence. In September, Assange bravely said he would turn himself in to U.S. authorities if Obama granted clemency to Manning. Unlikely. The Obama administration used the 1917 Espionage Act against leakers and whistle-blowers more than all prior administrations combined. As for Clinton, her venom against Assange was captured in her quip: “Can’t we just drone this guy?”

By unmasking the bourgeoisie’s lies and intrigues, courageous individuals like Assange, Manning and Edward Snowden have carried out a service to workers and the oppressed throughout the world. Early on, liberals celebrated WikiLeaks’ revelations about Bush-era war crimes and spying. Then, when the media seized on

the spurious rape accusations to smear Assange, many jumped ship. Now, under the “Dump Trump” hype (read “Vote Hillary”), more liberals have thrown Assange under the bus in the fear that negative publicity about Clinton will lead to a Trump victory. Assange made his political proclivities clear, aptly declaring that the major party candidates amount to a choice between “cholera or gonorrhea.”

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

Deception, manipulation and dishonesty are the normal workings of a political system whose purpose is to protect the profits and rule of a tiny class from the masses of the population they exploit. American history teems with examples of fabrications and manipulation used to coerce a reluctant populace to go to war and to justify repressive measures. For his part, Assange hopes his releases will bring about a degree of government “transparency.” But asking the executive committee of the ruling class to be transparent to the masses is like asking the fox to announce his intentions to the chickens. Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained that secret diplomacy is “a necessary tool for a propertied minority which is compelled to deceive the majority in order to subject it to its interests.”

Elections under bourgeois democracy allow the oppressed masses to “choose” who will subjugate them during the next few years. Regardless of who becomes the next Commander-in-Chief, the government is not “ours,” but part of the machine to maintain capitalist class rule. Because they sometimes use kinder words, the Democrats are often more effective at carrying out attacks on the working class and the oppressed than Republicans. As Gore Vidal, the late great American author remarked:

“There is only one party in the United States, the Property party...and it has two wings: Republican and Democrat. Republicans are a bit stupider, more rigid, more doctrinaire in their laissez-faire capitalism than the Democrats, who are cuter, prettier, a bit more corrupt—until recently (nervous laugh on that)—and more willing than the Republicans to make small adjustments when the poor, the black, the anti-imperialists get out of hand. But, essentially, there is no difference between the two parties.” —“State of the Union” (1975)

Every exposure of the rulers’ deceptions is of value to the working class, but it is going to take more than leaks and whistles to fundamentally change this rotten society. The manifold discontent engendered by endless war, racial oppression, economic misery and state repression needs to be directed against the capitalist class enemy, with the social power of the multi-racial proletariat mobilized on behalf of all the exploited and oppressed. For such a struggle to go forward to victory, it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party to lead a socialist revolution that breaks the power of the bourgeoisie and establishes workers rule. ■

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6

WORKERS VANGUARD

South Africa...

(continued from page 8)

Committee (a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League) stated:

“We stand in solidarity with the protesting students and their demand for free quality education, without which black youth are condemned to low-paid jobs or forced into South Africa’s existing unemployed masses. A mere 3.2 percent of black youth aged 18 to 29 attend schools of higher education, and of that figure, 85 percent drop out.”

That the student protests have continued in the face of fierce repression is one expression of the volatile situation throughout the country. The protests have tapped into the profound discontent of the oppressed over the betrayed promises of liberation from white minority rule. The Tripartite Alliance leaders are widely discredited among workers, the township poor and youth, not least due to the naked police repression the government metes out. The true face of racist, neo-apartheid South Africa was shown most starkly in the police massacre of 34 striking miners in Marikana in 2012. That some of those being rounded up in the student protests today are leaders of the Tripartite Alliance’s own youth organizations is an indication of the loss of authority of the former “liberation struggle” leaders. Having awakened widespread expectations of a better life for the improv-

Send Protest Letters!

We call on trade unions, student organizations and anti-racist activists internationally to stand in solidarity with the South African student activists. Send protest statements demanding the release of all arrested protesters and the dropping of all charges to: Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, Private Bag X1000, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa; email: presidentrsa@presidency.gov.za and Dr. Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, Private Bag X174, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa; email: Sako.M@dhet.gov.za.

secution is part of a transparent, coordinated attempt by the bourgeois state to crush the mass protests for free higher education by cutting off their head. From Pretoria to Cape Town to Durban, student leaders have been arrested, detained and threatened with arrest by the cops. Protest leaders at Wits have been told of a “hit list” drawn up by police and university managements, who are working hand in hand to target student militants. According to the police, more than 500 people have been arrested in connection with FMF protests over the past eight months. At University of KwaZulu-Natal, eleven

of the academic programme, enforced through the barrel of a gun. Police occupation forces have not only dispersed and hunted down protesting students, going so far as shooting a Catholic priest who tried to protect protesters who sought refuge in his church. They have also opened fire on individuals trying to attend classes, as well as campus workers who have simply tried to defend students from police violence. This weekend saw the Wits administration imposing a 10 p.m. curfew—a racist clampdown on black students, who are the overwhelming majority that live on campus. Even those who complied with this lockdown and stayed in their res halls have been assaulted and shot at by police. Many students have rightly defied this curfew, which they’ve denounced as [Wits vice-chancellor] “Habib’s Apartheid.” *Down with the racist Wits curfew!*

The student protesters have fought militantly and bravely to shut down the universities as their only means of disrupting the system and voicing their anger at being excluded—financially and through racist discrimination—from higher education. Campus workers at Wits and other universities have downed tools in solidarity with the students and in opposition to the police clampdown, as have some, mainly black, academic staff. But achieving the protests’ just demands is going to come down to a battle of class forces in society, and the reality is that in and of itself stopping the academic programme does little to hurt the interests of the mainly white capitalist ruling class that the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance government and the university vice-chancellors alike serve. The students don’t just need convincing and compelling arguments on their side, they need *social power*. These apartheid-style police state tactics need to be met with mass, militant protest centred on the country’s overwhelmingly black proletariat which has the ability to hurt the capitalists where it counts—their profits. The working class uniquely has this power, based on its organisation and central role in the system of capitalist production.

The key to unlocking this power is a *political* struggle against the labour lieutenants of capital who currently occupy the leadership of the working-class organisations. The leaders of the SACP and COSATU have made it perfectly clear where they stand with numerous statements denouncing the protests as “violent” and calling for them to end. That is not an accident, but flows from their pro-capitalist, class-collaborationist politics. As part of the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance, together with the bourgeois ANC, the SACP and COSATU tops are directly responsible for the attacks that this capitalist government carries out on workers and the oppressed as part of administering the neo-apartheid system. This includes state persecution of student leaders like Mcebo Dlamini, notwithstanding the fact that he



Reuters Johannesburg: Student leader Mcebo Dlamini, manhandled by police during protest at Wits University, October 4.

and many other protest leaders are part of the Progressive Youth Alliance, the junior affiliate of the Tripartite Alliance. While not part of the Tripartite Alliance, the leaders of NUMSA, AMCU and other “independent” unions fundamentally share the same pro-capitalist programme. To date, they have at most declared verbal “solidarity” with the student protests, while refusing to mobilise their base to defend the protesters against the capitalist state.

The working class needs a revolutionary vanguard party that acts as a tribune of all the oppressed, based on an understanding of the proletariat’s historic role as the gravedigger of capitalism and on the strict political independence of the working class from the capitalist state and *all* bourgeois parties. In neo-apartheid South Africa, where racial and class oppression continue to overlap heavily, the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism is inextricably tied to the fight for the national liberation of the black majority, in which the proletariat must take the lead—the fight for a *black-centred workers government*. This means a sharp political struggle against all variants of nationalism—the lie that the black population as a whole shares a common interest standing higher than class divisions—which deny the class struggle and subordinate the proletariat to its class enemies. We of Spartacist/South Africa are dedicated to the perspective of building the Leninist-Trotskyist party needed to put an end to racist neo-apartheid as part of the struggle for new October Revolutions around the world. Every student or teacher who cares about education, every class conscious worker must demand: *Free all student protesters! Drop the charges! No cops on campus! Forward to free, quality education for all!* ■



AFP

January 2014: Striking platinum miners near Marikana, site of 2012 massacre carried out by ANC-led government.

erished black masses, the Tripartite Alliance leaders have fronted for the racist, exploitative capitalist system under which these expectations can never be met. We reprint below an October 19 statement by Spartacist/South Africa.

\* \* \*

On Sunday, in an early morning police raid on Wits Junction residence, police arrested Mcebo Dlamini, former Wits SRC [Student Representative Council] president and a prominent leader of the Fees Must Fall (FMF) protests. Dlamini faces trumped up charges including assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, public violence and theft. Today he was outrageously denied bail after the state prosecutors argued he is a “flight risk” because he was born in Swaziland, outside the colonial-drawn South African borders! Dlamini’s per-

students have been in prison for a month. At the University of Cape Town, student leader Masixole Mlandu was denied bail last week and faces at least a week in Pollsmoor, a maximum-security prison infamous for brutality, where the white-supremacist apartheid regime routinely sent black liberation fighters to teach them a lesson. Another student arrested this weekend at Wits was abducted by the cops and dumped in Limpopo after reportedly being stripped naked and tortured.

The capitalist state and university administrations have increasingly responded with naked police repression, bolstered by cynical, racist propaganda smearing the protesters as “violent thugs” who are violating the rights of a “silent majority” that “just wants to learn.” This hypocrisy was laid bare for anyone who cares to see during the past few weeks, as one university after another ordered the resumption

Spartacist South Africa

Newspaper of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

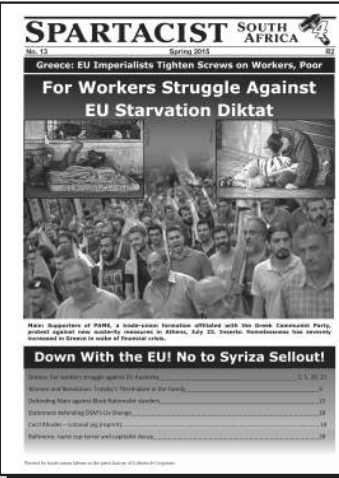
Issue No. 13 (28 pages) US\$1 R2 Subscription (4 issues) US\$4 R10

Make checks payable/mail to:

Spartacist Publishing Co. Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## South Africa



Reuters



Gallo

Left: Students demanding free education demonstrate outside parliament in Cape Town, October 26. Right: Police fire tear gas and rubber bullets at Wits University students, Johannesburg, September 21.

# Free Student Protesters! Cops Off Campus!

OCTOBER 30—South Africa's neo-apartheid government has ramped up its violent repression against university students fighting for free, quality education for all. Campus strikes and protests roiled South Africa late last year, leading the government to freeze previously announced university fee increases. Mass protests flared up again in September

when the higher education minister (and head of the Communist Party), Blade Nzimande, announced that fees would once again be increased. As described by our comrades of Spartacist/South Africa in a September 22 leaflet, the Tripartite Alliance government of the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and Congress of South

African Trade Unions (COSATU) sent their cops and campus security guards to brutally suppress these protests with clouds of tear gas, hails of rubber bullets and mass arrests (see "Mass Student Protests Demand Free Education Now," WV No. 1097, 7 October).

In the weeks since, the repression has intensified. The police announced this

week that 831 "Fees Must Fall" protesters have been arrested since February! On October 20, Tshwane University of Technology student leader Benjamin Lesedi Phehla was killed after a car plowed into a student march. An October 25 protest statement sent to the South African government by the Partisan Defense

*continued on page 7*

## Defend Standing Rock Activists!

On October 27, police and National Guardsmen brutally attacked some 200 protesters attempting to block construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota. Over 140 people were arrested and more than 50 injured as the cops deployed Humvees, armored trucks and a bulldozer to clear a protest encampment and push activists off the land. Police shot protesters with rubber bullets, gassed them with pepper spray and caged some in what activists described as dog kennels. Since August, police have arrested more than 400 people on charges of criminal trespassing, participating in a riot and resisting arrest. We say: **Drop all the charges! Hands off the protesters! National Guard out!**

As for the DAPL itself, Marxists have no reason to either support or oppose it. In general, oil pipelines serve a socially useful function of transporting fuel and are overall safer than other forms of oil transport. But cutting corners to boost profits is the name of the game for the energy barons and the capitalists in every industry. There is concern that an oil spill would threaten the Standing Rock Sioux reservation water supply. In order to combat the capitalists' cost-saving schemes, which are often the cause of pipeline leaks and other industrial accidents, what is needed are fighting unions that would enforce union control of safety standards and practices in construction, operation and maintenance.

Then, both the Sioux and workers on the job

would be better off. But such a perspective is not that of Terry O'Sullivan, head of the Laborers union, which represents construction workers on the DAPL. In a September 6 statement that drips with racist vitriol, O'Sullivan condemned the Communications Workers of America, the Service Employees International Union and other unions supporting the protests for having "sided with THUGS against trade unionists."

For all his revolting bigotry, O'Sullivan hardly has a monopoly within union officialdom when it comes to siding with the bosses in the name of protecting jobs. The way forward is the forging of the unity of the workers and oppressed under a new leadership. As we observed in "Standoff at Standing Rock" (WV No. 1096, 23 September): "A class-struggle union leadership would insist on full pay for the workers every day, whether construction is carried out or not. Workers shouldn't suffer if the pipeline is delayed—the company should!"

The escalation of repression at Standing Rock is of a piece with centuries of racist atrocities against American Indians, whose near-extirpation was integral to the consolidation of U.S. capitalism. To this day, Native Americans are disproportionately mired in poverty. Only the destruction of American capitalism through socialist revolution and the inauguration of an era of socialist development will redress the great historic crimes against American Indians and lift them from material scarcity and oppression.



McCleary/Bismarck Tribune

October 27: Police attack protesters near Dakota Access Pipeline site.