

Snowden blows whistle on Obama's spy apparatus

Disclosures make mockery of Obama's vows to rein in U.S. war measures

BY JEFF MACKLER

President Barack Obama's well-publicized May 23 speech to the nation was aimed at moderating the present U.S. dictum that the country is and should remain in a never-ending state of war—that is, the undeclared, undefined “war on terror.”

This “war,” codified since 9-11 in the Patriot Act and the associated Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, has been routinely reaffirmed and expanded in scope by the Obama administration. It has been routinely employed to justify endless National Security Agency, FBI, and a myriad of other public and private government-funded spy operations that violate with impunity democratic rights and civil liberties at home and justify real wars abroad in which the Pentagon and privatized mercenary Blackwater-type death squads murder oppressed people around the world. Indeed, close to half of the U.S.-paid armed forces operating in Afghanistan today—hundreds of thousands of trained killers and their back-up operatives—function as private mercenary armies.

Judging that perhaps some embarrassing excesses have been committed in this “perpetual” state of war, President Obama suggested that the “Authorization for Use of Military Force” measures approved by Congress after the Sept. 11, 2001, bombings committed by Egyptian terrorists, might be modified a bit to avoid “keeping America on a perpetual wartime footing.”

He added, “Unless we discipline our thinking and our actions, we may be drawn into more wars we don’t need to fight, or continue to grant presidents unbound powers more suited for traditional armed conflicts between nation states.” The latter, as we all are supposed to understand, are being “phased out.” We can only assume, therefore, that the trillion-dollar annual military budget will be largely restricted to America’s “non-traditional” daily wars, conducted around the world largely in secret!

The Obama speech was laden with tedious and moralizing platitudes devoid of a single specific measure to remedy



Tony Savino / Socialist Action



(Left) Edward Snowden.

The “humble” and posturing president also suggested that he and his successors might be restricted a tad in utilizing the present “kill list” to murder suspected terrorists, and that ways might even be found to limit torture and indefinite detention with regard to the hunger-strikers at the imperial U.S. military base in Guantanamo, Cuba. These prisoners have been held for years without charges, access to attorneys, or any other form of due process—and often have been subjected to torture.

Obama discussed only his short list of possible government transgressions, while promising to ask their very perpetrators, as if he himself was guiltless, to investigate themselves! Virtually absent from the president’s discourse were references to the vast array of blatant violations of fundamental rights that any “democratic” society would take for granted.

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the avalanche of crude, brutal, illegal, unconstitutional, racist and even genocidal measures that today define the daily ruling-class policies and practices of a declining social order. The president’s speech was prompted by recent

revelations that one or more of his spy agencies had wiretapped the home, office, and cell phones of some 20 Associated Press reporters and previously, their counterparts at *The New York Times*.

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UPS workers reject health-care concessions

By DAVID BERNT

The grassroots rank-and-file Vote No movement against the proposed UPS contract won a major victory when the contract was rejected in several regions of the U.S. The tentative agreement, which covers 235,000 Teamsters nationally, passed by a narrow margin, 53 to 47 percent. However, the Teamster (IBT) constitution requires all supplemental agreements to be approved for a national contract in order to go into effect. An unprecedented 18 regional and local supplements were rejected, including the largest supplement covering the Central Region.

While members voted “no” for several reasons, including the contract’s failure to deal with harassment, forced overtime for drivers, and low wages for part-time workers, the most important one by far was health-care concessions. Despite promises that he would hold the line on health care, lead Teamster negotiator Ken Hall ultimately agreed to concessions that would affect 140,000 members covered by a company-run health plan. Under the agreement, those members would be moved to a union-administered plan with reduced benefit levels.

The contract was rejected in regions affected by the health-care changes—mainly the Central and Western regions. The contract passed nationally because of wide “yes” margins in the Southern region and most of the East Coast, where members were unaffected by the proposed health-care concessions.

After the proposed contract was released, rank-and-



file activists immediately began organizing for a “no” vote. Members leafleted outside of hubs across the country. A Vote No Facebook page has attracted over 3000 members. Teamsters for a Democratic Union, a nationwide reform caucus, helped coordinate “vote no” campaigning and was critical to publishing information and analysis of the proposed agreement.

Local 89 in Louisville, Ky., which represents 10,000 UPS members, called for a “no” vote on the national contract. Local 89 officers campaigned for a “no” vote and the local’s steward council endorsed the same position. When the local was unable to come to agreement on its local supplement with the company, the IBT sent out UPS’s final offer for a vote with a special enticement: a \$1000 bonus just for Local 89 members. Despite the attempt to bribe the local’s combative

rank and file, however, Local 89 members rejected the contract and their supplement by an 8 to 1 margin.

The IBT was forced, after the resounding rejection of the negotiated health-care concessions, to admit that their health-care givebacks were the most important reason why the contract failed to pass. The “no” votes have forced Ken Hall and Teamster President Jimmy Hoffa back to the table to negotiate a better deal.

UPS is now feeling the heat of the rank and file, who have upset the company’s efforts, along with its willing partners in the IBT, to appease its major customers who wanted an early deal to ease strike fears. The company, in a press release, tried to head off speculation of a strike by saying they expected to reach agreement with the IBT soon on a renegotiated contract.

Teamster negotiators need to be reminded that it is the company that is on the defensive. Rank-and-file work-

ers intend to do just that. Demands include first and foremost a health-care plan that maintains current standards. Additionally, many members are calling for more full-time jobs, better contract language, and higher part-time wages. These are demands that a company that made \$4.5 billion in profits last year can easily afford.

No Vote activists fully intend to keep the pressure on the IBT to negotiate the best contract possible. As TDU put it, “We’ll keep voting No until UPS gets it right.”

Teamsters at UPS stand to get a better deal than initially negotiated only because the rank and file stood up and voted no. How much better of a deal depends on how much pressure the ranks continue to put on the leadership. ■

A WORKERS’ ACTION PROGRAM TO FIGHT THE CRISIS

We propose an **EMERGENCY CONGRESS OF LABOR** to discuss and take steps to implement the following demands —

1) **Bail out the people, not the bankers! Open the account books of the banks to full public inspection. Nationalize the banks to be supervised by workers’ committees.**

2) **No foreclosures! No forced evictions! Cancel usurious debt payments, and reduce mortgage payments in proportion to their capitalist-caused decline in value.**

3) **Full employment at union wages! An emergency public works program to employ all jobless workers and youth! Employ people to build what we need — low-cost quality housing, efficient mass transportation, cheap and renewable sources of power, schools, clinics — and to conserve our water, forests, farmland, and open space.**

4) **Immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops and mercenaries from Iraq & Afghanistan! No war on Iran! Close all U.S. bases abroad! No money for the military — use funds instead for public works! Convert the war industries to making products for people’s needs and to combat global warming.**

5) **Reduce the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay, and cut the retirement age to 55. Provide unemployment and retirement payments at the level of union wages and benefits.**

6) **To combat inflation: A sliding scale of wages and pensions that matches the rises in consumer prices. To combat high medical costs: A free, universal, public health-care system.**

7) **Immediate citizenship for all undocumented workers. No job discrimination; equal pay for equal work — regardless of gender, sexual orientation, skin color, or national origin.**

8) **Nationalize manufacturing, big agribusiness, energy, and transportation corporations and place them under the control of elected committees of workers.**

9) **To mobilize support for the demands it adopts, the EMERGENCY CONGRESS should organize ACTION COMMITTEES in every workplace and neighborhood threatened by the crisis. These committees can draw up more concrete demands than the ones outlined above.**

10) **To put all these measures into effect, we need a LABOR PARTY — based on a fighting union movement and all people who are oppressed and exploited. For a workers’ government!**

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Obama's climate plan falls short

By CHRISTINE FRANK

At Georgetown University on June 25, President Obama gave a major speech outlining his proposals to mitigate and adapt to climate change after making mention of its importance in his inaugural address several months ago.

Obama presented what he called “a new national climate action plan,” which calls for cutting carbon pollution and protecting the country from the impacts of extreme weather. He plans to accomplish this by using less dirty energy, more clean energy, and wasting less. How profound! Despite using adjectives such as ambitious and bold, his plan is anything but that.

The administration has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17% from their 2005 levels by the end of this decade, a paltry amount compared to the massive reductions that are needed. Global-warming pollution will be regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Clean Air Act, a law that has been around for 43 years and could have been used from the get-go when carbon dioxide emissions began to spike in the 1970s, but has never been given the teeth to halt pollution. Reformist environmentalists have been calling for this for decades now.

In regard to dirty fossil fuels and in keeping with his “all-of-the-above” energy strategy presented earlier this year, Obama assured us and the Energy Giants that their production will not “suddenly stop.” In fact, he wants to strengthen the position of the United States as a top natural gas producer, promising to work with industry to make drilling safer and cleaner. Anyone who believes that is sorely deluded.

Part of this strategy is to aid other countries to switch to natural gas as “a transition fuel.” This will mean more domestic fracking of natural gas for export and the building of dangerous liquefied natural gas (LNG) ports. Its sale to other nations will be worked into global free-trade agreements. In regard to the import of filthy, carbon-intensive tar sands crude from Canada, Obama danced around the issue of the Keystone XL Pipeline by saying that the State Department is still evaluating it in terms of “national interests.”

Nothing was said about phasing out coal-fired power plants. Apparently, EPA regulation will ensure the installation of more effective pollution-control devices on old and new electrical utilities, so we needn't worry. He mentioned that his budget calls for Congress to end tax breaks to Big Oil and increase investment in renewable energy.

Obama promised to double the amount of energy from wind and solar power by increasing renewable energy capacity on public lands. This will probably mean more capital-intensive mega-projects that disrupt ecosystems. The preferred alternative is locally produced and distributed rooftop wind and solar installations in urban centers and on industrial brown fields; this would be far more ecological and efficient since the generated electricity would not have to be transported through a massive grid at long distances.

Federal facilities are to get 20% of their energy from renewable sources within the next seven years. Military bases have been mandated to install three gigawatts of re-



newable power—the Pentagon being the largest consumer of energy. Among “renewables,” Obama also included biofuels, which use cropland to grow fuel stocks rather than food, and dangerous nuclear reactors.

With the optimistic hope to reduce atmospheric carbon by three billion tons, Obama's energy-efficiency measures aim to get cars and trucks going twice as far than the current standard on a gallon of gasoline. There was no mention whatsoever of clean mass transit replacing private motor vehicles to haul passengers and freight. In addition, appliances would be upgraded and buildings retrofitted to reduce energy use and provide jobs. None of this is either new or earthshaking in scope.

To aid local governments in adapting to the harsh impacts of climate change, Obama vowed to help fortify coastlines and restore natural barriers to withstand rising sea levels and storm surges, and to strengthen infrastructure items such as power grids, water systems, and fuel supplies so that services do not break down and, paralyze urban centers—as was the case with Superstorm Sandy.

He also proposed stricter construction standards for new buildings that could be struck by natural disasters. However, if sea levels continue to rise as more land ice melts, no amount of coastal reinforcement will hold back the water. Further global heating must be nipped in the bud, and that will take vastly more effort than the administration intends to exert.

All of Obama's proposals are to be market-based and are designed to enhance the unsustainable growth economy that is already devouring resources beyond Earth's capacity. As long as costly wars are waged for access to more hydrocarbons, minerals, and metals, there is no way to meet planetary needs. As long as commodity production for private profit exists, there is no way to meet human

needs either. As long as it's business as usual, there is no way to save Mother Earth for human habitation.

With the 12 warmest years occurring in the last 15, Arctic sea ice shrinking to the smallest extent and volume on record, and ocean temperatures soaring, the greatest urgency is required. Over the last year, the nation's weather has swung from a combination of prolonged heat waves, extreme drought, and wildfires to wet and soggy conditions for months on end. A one-foot rise in sea level on the Mid-Atlantic coast was a major contributor to Hurricane Sandy's powerful storm surge last year. Plus, diminished snowpacks in the thirsty inter-mountain West have led to chronic drought and drinking-water shortages.

Given the magnitude of the problem that humanity faces, Obama's greenhouse gas reductions are wholly inadequate. That is simply because the president is beholden to his masters, the Carbon Barons, who do not want to relinquish control over their fossil-fuel-powered economy.

In order to cool down the planet and prevent further ocean acidification, atmospheric carbon must be drawn down to a safe 300-325 ppm. That requires that we take radical measures to reduce to zero *all* greenhouse gas emissions from *all* sources as soon as possible—with an immediate and massive conversion to wind, solar, geothermal, and benign micro-hydropower.

If we combine that with recycling, retooling industry for the green production of basic necessities, and switching to organic farming, there is still the chance that we can prevent catastrophic climate change and ensure a relatively decent way of life for future generations.

This is our only hope, but it will be accomplished, not by putting our faith in a Democrat in the White House, but in the power of the masses of working people and oppressed to change things once they are aroused to act. ■

Ecosocialism builds in the Bay Area

By MARC ROME

OAKLAND, Calif.—The 400 ppm measurement of the earth's warming gas, carbon dioxide, on May 19, and the demonstrated failure of the market system to avoid averting this dangerous climate milestone, has highlighted the task of building a mass movement to challenge the 1% purveyors of climate-altering gases. The enormity of this challenge and how it can be met was discussed at a June 14 panel in Oakland with representatives of several socialist organizations who have rallied around the banner of the Bay Ecosocialist Project (BEP). This project has been motivated in part by the 50,000 who mobilized this Feb. 17 in Washington, D.C., against the Keystone XL pipeline and the successful April 20 ecosocialist conference in New York, which attracted 240 participants.

A lively exchange took place at the Oakland forum between panelists who included initiators of the BEP—Socialist Action, Solidarity, the International Socialist Organization, and independent socialist activists. Their responses to a series of questions from the facilitator animated a crowd of 80 people, among whom were a diverse group of other socialist organizations and radical thinkers.

The discussion grappled with a wide range of ideas, including the meaning of ecosocialism, its theoretical roots, and the ways that socialism's best traditions can be employed as the basis to develop a program of action to advance the struggle for genuine environmental sustainability and to meet the needs of people throughout the entire planet.

While discussing differences of opinion about how to orient to the mainstream environmental organizations, such as

350.org and the ultimate purpose of the Bay Ecosocialist Project, one crucial point upon which almost everyone in the room agreed was that a social revolution is necessary to solve the climate-change problems that capitalism has created.

The organizers of the forum announced a follow-up meeting a week later to continue organizing. The meeting was attended by 23 people—including members of several different labor unions, the Committees of Correspondence, the IWW, and the Peace and Freedom Party. The participants agreed to build a conference in the fall or winter to bring together a wider range of ecosocialist thinkers and independent environmental activists in order to clarify the goals of the Bay Ecosocialist Project through an open, democratic process.

The conference can allow the key question left open at the June 14 forum, among

many others, to be addressed. If revolution is the solution to climate change, a viewpoint unequivocally embraced by Socialist Action, how could such a bold strategy be advanced?

The interests of working people, the 99%, sharply diverge from those of the carbon-polluting profiteers—giant oil corporations and the militaries that defend them. But mass anti-capitalist consciousness has yet to develop. This requires that practical steps be taken to mobilize huge numbers of working people, allied with the poor and specially oppressed sections of the population, in struggles to defend their health and livelihoods—and to protect and restore the planet. To be effective, such a mass movement would need to raise bold demands that are counter to the failed market-based solutions for climate change that have been put into practice by defenders of the capitalist status-quo.

What's ultimately at stake? The habitability of the planet for all living things. ■



Revolt spreads in Turkey

By YASIN KAYA

ANKARA—“This is just the beginning, the struggle will continue!” This is the slogan now echoing through the streets and parks of Istanbul, Ankara, and many other Turkish cities.

As we reported in last month’s *Socialist Action*, the anti-government riot that was a response to the police brutality against those protesting redevelopment plans for Istanbul’s Taksim Square and Gezi Park on May 31 continues to grow. The protests have spread around Turkey as millions of people protest against Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s authoritarian, neo-liberal AKP (Justice and Development Party) regime.

After a fierce struggle with the police, the people forced the cops out of the square and the park. Gezi Park became a meeting and living place for some 20,000 protesters—a temporary peoples’ commune.

Riot police stormed Taksim Square and neighboring Gezi Park with water cannons and tear gas as they drove protesters out on June 15 and June 16. Erdoğan, it seemed, had hoped to end the protests as he ordered the police to attack innocent people. However,

his move backfired.

As protesters evacuated the area, the movement spread to many other parks in major cities, where people meet to discuss ways to go forward. Most significantly, thousands gathered at Abbasağa Park, and currently, thousands of people gather in public parks each day at around 9 p.m. to make plans democratically for future protests and marches.

Meanwhile, one brave man, Erdem Gündüz, stood still in Taksim Square. This quickly became a new form of protest. Many join Gündüz in Taksim Square, and in many places across Turkey, standing silently still, just staring ahead. This act of civil resistance paralyzed the police. They know how to shout “Freeze, police.” But they are at a loss when it comes to suppressing “frozen” protesters.

More importantly, the street demonstrations continue. For example, hundreds of thousands gather in Istanbul, Ankara, and many other cities, denouncing the release of a police officer who many believe deliberately shot in the head Ethem Sarısülük, a 26-year-old industrial worker during the Gezi Park protests in Ankara on June 1.

(Left) New York City demonstration in solidarity with pro-democracy protesters in Turkey.

As a result of these protests, cracks within the power bloc are more apparent than ever. The AKP leadership can hardly handle the rising tension between Erdoğan’s supporters and Fethullah Gülen, a religious cleric who resides in Pennsylvania. Indeed, the transformation of these tensions into a crisis, would mean a split for the AKP.

Perhaps more importantly, the AKP government is losing its international allies. As is well known, the AKP enjoyed the full support of the major imperialist rulers since coming to power in 2002. Significantly, the U.S. Barak Obama administration assigned Erdoğan a big role—to be the leader of the Greater Middle East project. That includes overthrowing the Syrian Assad regime as well as the Iranian government. Now, the U.S. and many other imperialist countries are reconsidering whether such a controversial figure as Erdoğan is really suitable for achieving that goal.

As the AKP is heading into a crisis, Erdoğan becomes even more authoritarian. He uses public funds to finance the gathering of thousands of his supporters. At the rallies he enflames his base with hate speech against the anti-government protesters.

The police arrest Twitter users, socialists, and many others. There are increasing numbers of reports of torture. Erdoğan wants to convey to the imperialist powers: “I am still the boss. Trust me. Only I am capable of doing what you want in the region.” However, if the people’s determination continues, the AKP government has no future, and that would be a huge blow to imperialist plans in the Middle East.

Although the government is heading towards a huge crisis, the popular movement still lacks leadership. Organized labour’s participation is unsatisfactory, to say the least. The protesters, especially the younger ones, do not have any faith in the political parties and their leaders. This causes them to turn away from the existing organizations. They raise demands for “horizontality,” “no party flags and banners,” and “non-partyism.” Instead of forming independent labour and youth organizations, they rely on spontaneity. A central task for all socialists is to raise awareness that only with structured people’s democratic organizations, and only with revolutionary socialist parties, can bourgeois rule be overthrown.

The protests in Turkey are imbued with an internationalist spirit. They were influenced by their sisters and brothers in Egypt and Tunisia. Now their protests inspire the ones in Brazil, and even in nearby Bosnia and Bulgaria. Another key task is to transform this internationalist sentiment into acts of concrete international solidarity. ■

Reproductive rights supporters mobilize in Texas

By CHRISTINE MARIE

An extraordinary mobilization of support for abortion access in Texas last month has stimulated the imagination of reproductive justice activists everywhere. On June 25-26, close to 200,000 people around the country stayed up past 4 a.m. to watch the livestream of Texas State Senator Wendy Davis wrapping up an 11-hour filibuster that effectively, if temporarily, killed Senate Bill 5.

The bill, which banned abortions in the state after 20 weeks, also legislated unnecessary and expensive improvements to existing clinics and was designed to lead to the shuttering of all but five of the state’s 42 abortion clinics in a state 773 miles wide and 790 miles long.

While most mainstream news and blog commentary has focused on the heroism of Davis—whose pink Mizuno sneakers have become an internet meme—it is the images of chanting feminist protesters filling the gallery and the balconies of the rotunda of the state capitol building that are thrilling veterans of the original fight that culminated in the landmark *Roe v. Wade* victory in 1973. The nearly 2000 demonstrators of all ages who were mobilized inside the legislative building filled the space with the sound of resistance to the lawmakers’ attempt to turn back the clock, and the spectacle was unquestionably reminiscent of the historic demonstrations in Wisconsin and Ohio against union-busting in 2011.

While the mobilizations in Texas have not come anywhere close in size to the mammoth protests of tens of thousands two years ago, the fact that there was an echo of those historic mass actions has placed this tactic on the agenda for the movement nationally. Texas activist Jessica Luther, writing on the “Feministing” blog on June 28, explained that the Senate filibuster supporters’ mobilizations came after an earlier protest in which 700



showed up at House hearings to tell their abortion stories and after 1000 appeared to protest the House vote.

The Texas protests were possible at this time of only modest independent political activity because a female Democratic Party politician, supported by Cecile Richards—the popular president of Planned Parenthood and daughter of former Texas governor Ann Richards—took an unusual stand. As Sarah Posner stated in a *Guardian* newspaper article on June 28, “For pro-choice activists, it has felt far too infrequent that they have seen a Democrat—much less one from a deep red state like Texas—unabashedly support reproductive rights without an ounce of ambivalence or calls for elusive common ground.”

The question now is whether or not activists who know that the Democratic Party cannot be relied upon to secure reproductive justice will be able to seize on this opening and begin the process of putting young women into the streets on a regular basis.

The test begins on Monday, July 1, when right-wing Texas Governor Rick Perry opens a second special 30-day session of the legislature called specifically to pass

(Left) Pro-choice activists filled the gallery of the Texas state capitol while Sen. Davis delivered her filibuster.

the bill just sandbagged by the Davis filibuster. At the 43rd National Right to Life convention in Dallas on June 27, Perry upset party regulars by crudely calling out Senator Wendy Davis as a single mother and daughter of a single mother who should know that every “life” matters, but he successfully rallied the right for the coming confrontations.

The showdown unfolding in Texas is a challenge to feminist activists nationwide. Will the effort expended by women from every part of the state to build the recent actions be the beginning of massive mobilizations capable of pushing the War on Women, or will this explosion of militancy be subsumed by a Davis run for governor on the Democratic party platform and calls for more women to run for office?

In lieu of a call for a national action in Texas, the call by WORD and other organizations for solidarity actions around the country are certainly steps in the right direction. Already Ohioans, inspired by the Texas women, have called a protest to take on a similarly restrictive bill pending in their own legislature.

To be effective, these calls for action need to emanate from ad hoc coalitions involving both mainstream reproductive justice organizations and activist formations of young women, women of color, and the female immigrants leading so many movements for social change.

The situation certainly demands action. According to Katie Glueck writing for Politico, “Nearly a dozen states have passed 20-week bans on most abortions, and they have gone into effect in seven states.” In addition, the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a 20-week fetal pain bill, although it’s unlikely to get a vote in the Democratic-led Senate. All of these bills challenge *Roe v. Wade* and have been introduced to provide the Supreme Court the opportunity to reverse that historic decision. ■

Lynne Stewart denied compassionate release

BY JEFF MACKLER

When I visited Lynne Stewart last month at FMC Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas, she wondered in a dark moment whether the cynicism of the Justice Department and the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) might descend to such depths as to deny her the then expected compassionate release.

It crossed her mind that those agencies might cite as grounds for denial the fact that her initial rounds of chemotherapy had slightly reduced in size some of the malignant tumors in her lymph nodes, sternum, and back—although they had left unaffected the most threatening of her Stage Four breast cancer tumors in her lungs.

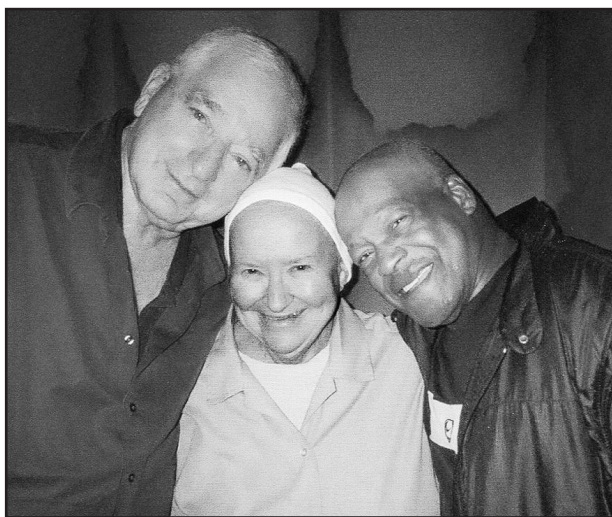
At that moment Lynne had good reason to expect that her release was imminent. The FMC warden had recommended it, and New York-based probationary officials had inspected and approved an appropriate Brooklyn family residence where she would reside during treatment and for permanent proper care. Lynne even pointed to statements from her Fort Worth hospital oncologist to the effect that it was likely that they would not see each other again, implying that she too recognized that Lynne's only serious hope for life was to be rapidly transferred to the world-renowned Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

On June 25 Lynne's most feared outcome was confirmed in a three-paragraph letter from BOP General Counsel Kathleen M. Kennedy in Washington, D.C. Kennedy denied Lynne's request because Lynne's "health is improving" and her situation is "not extraordinary and compelling."

Lynne's response, "Disappointed but not devastated" (on this page), indicates that her legal team intends to appeal this decision to Judge John Koeltl, the judge who initially sentenced her to 28 months in prison but who later acceded to political pressure, ordered a new sentencing hearing, and condemned Lynne to 10 years at FMC Carswell.

Stewart's case is the first in many years to expose yet another blatant government violation of U.S. law, this one mandating compassionate release in specified circumstances that particularly apply to Lynne. Indeed, this 1984 law has been virtually ignored, according to the government's own study, with barely a dozen people being granted compassionate release yearly out of hundreds of thousands of federal prisoners over the past 30 years.

The scientific community considers Stage Four breast cancer to be incurable. But many prominent institutions have noted that with excellent medical care and high patient motivation, life can be extended in some circumstances for several years. But the Fort Worth



medical facility that FMC Carswell uses and the conditions under which Lynne is permitted to receive treatment are far from "excellent." She is shackled hand and foot and around her belly while traveling to and from this facility. The results of her treatments are routinely withheld for months while necessary follow-up treatments are delayed, as was the case when cancer that was first discovered in one lung had metastasized to the other and beyond.

Yet the most optimistic prospects for Lynne to live a

(From left) Jeff Mackler, Lynne Stewart, and Lynne's husband Ralph Poynter at FMC Carswell on May 31.

few more years, provided that she receives "excellent" treatment, are used to reject her request! In the BOP's view, Lynne must not only be dying but virtually near death to qualify for compassionate release. The fight for her release now, Lynne repeatedly states, is a matter of life and death.

Lynne's request is pending that the U.S. Supreme Court hear her appeal of the frame-up terrorist conspiracy charges against her as a result of being the lead counsel in the internationally watched case of the "blind sheik," Omar Abdel Rachman. The appeal could be decided soon. If the hateful authorities at the BOP continue to reject her compassionate-release request, she could well be found innocent yet be too close to death to experience but a few weeks or months as a vindicated and free woman.

There is no time to delay! Join the fight for Lynne's life and freedom now. Call today:

- US Bureau of Prisons Director Charles E. **Samuels**: 202-307-3198-ext. 3
- US Attorney General Eric **Holder**: 202-514-2001
- President Barack **Obama**: 202-456-1111

Jeff Mackler is head of the West Coast branch of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee.

Disappointed but not devastated

My Dear Friends, Supporters, Comrades:

I know we are all disappointed to the marrow of our bones and the depths of our hearts by the news that the Bureaucrats, Kafka like, have turned down my request for compassionate release.

Let me say, that we are planning ahead. The letter from the BOP (soon to be posted on the website, LynneStewart.org) is flawed, to put it mildly. Both factually and medically it has major problems. We intend to go to court and raise these in front of my sentencing Judge Koeltl. At the first sentencing he responded to a query by one of the lawyers that he didn't want me to die in prison—we'll see if he can now live up to that. He is of course the same Judge who increased my sentence to 10 years—but this IS very different and we can only hope that we can prevail. Stay tuned for what we need from you. We will never give up.

In the meantime, once again, I grieve for my children and grandchildren, who love me so much and

had such great expectations of enjoying life together again in our beloved NYC and not just trying to, in the prison visiting room. My Ralph, too, whose dedication and love are only exceeded by the work he does on my behalf—but he is a born fighter and although he hurts, it all comes more naturally to him.

But for everyone else, I hope that your affront at this crass bureaucratic denial of the request which you by your signatures and letters and phone calls demanded — How far can we let this go? when a 73-year old woman who IS dying of cancer (maybe not on their timetable,) her life of good works ignored, be shunted aside ... "she does not present circumstances considered extraordinary and compelling ... at this time." We must show them that I cannot be ignored, that YOU cannot be ignored."

Fight On — All of Us or None of Us. An affront to one is an affront to all.

Love Struggle,
Lynne Stewart

Court ruling: Victory for same-sex marriage rights

By ANN MONTAGUE

On June 26 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Defense Of Marriage Act (DOMA) as unconstitutional. This legislation was promoted and signed by President Bill Clinton in 1996 and denies any of the over 1100 federal benefits to same-sex couples.

The Court's 5-4 majority decision was clear and simple. Writing for the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy described DOMA as imposing "a disadvantage, a separate status, and so a stigma upon all who enter into same-sex marriages made lawful by the unquestioned authority of the States." This, he said, violates the right to liberty and equal protection under the law.

The decision means that in the 12 states and the District of Columbia where same-sex marriage is legal, those couples will qualify for all federal benefits currently available to heterosexual couples. Other states, however, may still define "marriage" as they choose.

The Supreme Court also tossed out California's Proposition 8 on technical grounds, which let stand the opinion of the U.S. Court of Appeals in regard to a legal suit against the referendum measure. If Prop. 8 had been allowed to become state law, it would have re-



voked the right of same-sex couples to have their marriages recognized in California.

Days later, on June 28, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court confirmed that the stay had been lifted, which immediately prompted a wave of same-sex weddings throughout the state. And on June 30, Supreme Court Justice Kennedy issued a denial of a last-ditch appeal by proponents of Prop. 8 to have the Court overrule the Ninth Circuit ruling.

Nadine Smith of Equality Florida spoke for many when she posted a video saying, "We are left out and left behind." But these decisions are still

victories that should be celebrated.

For those of us who never would have chosen gay marriage as a defining issue of our movement, the fact is that huge members of our brothers and sisters did choose it. There was a mass movement in our community and they were energized around an act of civil disobedience.

I was living in a small coastal town in Oregon when the mayor of San Francisco in 2004 directed city offices to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples in violation of state law. My first thought was, "That's nice." But I soon saw that something else was happen-

ing as I watched the huge numbers of people line up and wait for hours to fill out their paperwork. And then couples in my small town and elsewhere in Oregon would call me and say, "We are going to San Francisco and wait in line as long as it takes."

It had become a mass movement of people standing up for equality and against discrimination. Surely, ending employment discrimination was more important. But Marriage Equality was moving people, a lot of people. In the beginning there were no major LGBT organizations, NGOs, or self-serving politicians creating this movement.

After the decisions were announced, it was encouraging to watch the interviews with the plaintiffs, lawyers, and demonstrators who all spoke about the people in the 38 states that are left out of these decisions. There was also talk about the "momentum" that these decisions have created for other issues—first and foremost, the pressure to pass the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA).

For at least two people, the Supreme Court decisions had an immediate effect. Within 30 minutes of the DOMA ruling, a New York City immigration judge stopped deportation proceedings for a Colombian man married to a gay U.S. citizen. ■

The roots of the economic crisis in the United States



Tony Savino / Socialist Action

(Left) Actors parody the bankers at Wall Street protest in 2008.

By BRUCE PARDOLL

A comprehensive understanding is greatly needed of how the present U.S. economic crisis came about, and how things have considerably worsened not only since December 2007—when the Great Recession began—but also since 1974 (when wages for the working class began a steady downward slide).

Marxism is uniquely qualified to give a real in-depth analysis of how capitalism works. And it can explain the current economic crisis in more objective terms than most current explanations, which tell us that, willy-nilly, the subjective greed of bankers, billionaires, hedge fund investors, real-estate agents, and financial traders of all kinds led to a “Casino Capitalism” and often to deliberate financial fraud.

That’s true enough, but there’s much more to it. We are told by the liberal media that the Financial Services Modernization Act of 1999 overturned the parts of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 that had put up walls between speculative investment banking on one hand, and commercial banking on the other, forbidding the financial industry to group together mortgage and other portfolios in order to sell them as investments.

In a word, “derivatives,” which are investments in already existing investments and loans, came into extraordinary wide use based mostly on the booming real estate market—hence “mortgage securities.” (Subsequently, there were automobile securities, credit card securities, and other securities based on debts). In other words, banks, hedge funds, insurance companies, and other financial institutions made it their business to radically increase the selling of debt.

Again, that is all true enough. However, studying structural changes in the economy over a longer period of our economic history will tell us much more about *why* Glass-Steagall was overturned to begin with. And it will also give us understanding of the rather profound ideological changes this nation has experienced since the demise of New Deal liberalism starting in the 1970s, in order to complement and reinforce those structural changes.

The mainstream explanations of the financial crisis given above comprise only a surface analysis that doesn’t explain the underlying material forces that greatly pressured investors to buy into home mortgage derivatives, and then invent an array of new ones that had never existed before. The implication given us by the mass media and mainstream liberal economists is that if these risky investments had not taken place, the economy would just be humming along with fairly constant economic and profits growth—in a

Marxism is uniquely qualified to give an in-depth analysis of how capitalism works.

word, a stable economy in line with the 10-year boom of the 1990s.

U.S. in the world economy since 1945

To begin, we should note the fact that World War II never touched American shores. War production eliminated the Great Depression and spurred the greatest decade of U.S. economic growth (5.9%) of the 20th century. By the end of the war average white workers, almost 30% of whom were unionized, saved fully 25% of their gross wages. The U.S. was now by far the #1 economy in the world! Except for the neutral nations, Europe lay in ruins. The stage was set for the U.S. to dominate the world economy.

As early as 1944, when the U.S. and its allies knew it was only a matter of time before they would win the war, the Bretton-Woods Agreement, whose major architect was John Maynard Keynes, was agreed to by all the capitalist allies. It called for the dollar to be pegged at 1/35th of an ounce of gold and for the rest of the world’s currency values to be pegged to the dollar. Fixed exchange rates between various currencies were established.

The dollar was the world’s “reserve currency,” which meant that a huge portion of the “commodities markets” (in capitalist terminology, raw materials like metals, minerals, grains, but most importantly, oil) had to be traded in dollars. Ditto with large balances of payments between most nations.

After the war, even before the famed Marshall Plan was enacted, the U.S. gave \$13 billion to the destroyed European countries, including West Germany. Japan was also given substantial reconstruction aid. Another \$13 billion was given to Europe from 1948-52 under the auspices of the Marshall Plan.

There was an implicit proviso attached to the United States’ “generosity” toward Europe. Trade barriers were to be brought down—all the way down. Europe was inundated with American products. By 1953, more than 60% of all the world’s goods were produced in the United States. Europe prospered too, but its bigger ticket items couldn’t compete with those of the U.S.; cars, TV’s, hi-fi record players, and radios, for example, earned booming profits for the U.S.

But even with European imports from the U.S. exceeding exports, European capitalist economies benefited. Retail sales in Europe of American as well as their own goods expanded their economies and provided employment. The Europeans invested a good portion of their profits into capital technology to increase their own manufacturing industries.

And so, slowly but surely, Europe and Japan eventually caught up, mostly through technological advances in production that effectively equaled and in some sectors exceeded U.S. productivity and quality of goods. The United States still ruled supreme through the 1960s—with some European and Japanese products, such as VW bugs and Honda motorcycles, beginning to do quite well in the U.S. marketplace.

The latter part of the 1960s marked a kind of turning point: first of all, inflation related to large budget deficits from the Vietnam War spending occurred. (Large budget deficits meant the government had to print and borrow more money to cover the deficits; the increase of the money supply devalued each dollar’s worth and hence prices resulting from the oversupply went up.)

In response to what was deemed to be too much inflation, the Federal Reserve induced “fiscal tightening” by raising interest rates, resulting in less business and consumer borrowing, and therefore downturns in production and higher unemployment. This happened in the first “Nixon Recession” of 1969-71.

The reason this kind of fiscal action is frequently taken in the face of high inflation is because it is deemed preferable to have a temporary economic downturn than to allow the currency instability that arises from rapid growing inflation. There is, among other things, the likelihood that foreign nations with much lower inflation rates will not want to sell their own goods and services to the U.S. at dollar value because the dollar has been devalued through inflation. Hence, they’ll look for markets elsewhere in the global economy, or otherwise lower their production and grudgingly sell what they can at lower prices to the U.S.

In any event, this was the fundamental cause of fiscal tightening *back then*. In response to higher U.S. deficits, inflation, lower growth, and perceptions of faltering U.S. economic growth, major advanced capitalist nations and their investors asked to be paid in gold for U.S. Treasuries and other American securities they were holding. Under the Bretton-Woods Agreement, this was their right.

In August 1971, another watershed event in capitalist history occurred. Nixon took the dollar off the gold standard. The new “floating” value of all world currencies was still to be pegged to the dollar, but from now on, the dollar’s value was theoretically backed by the value and stability of the U.S. economy itself. This made the question of value very abstract and subject to speculation. For the first time in world history, all currencies were fiat paper currencies, unbacked by precious metals of any kind. The values of currencies were “floated” in *currency markets*, making for greater currency instability.

But Nixon, an advocate of monetarism (but not quite the same as Milton Friedman) brought forth what was perhaps the first giant step towards neoliberalism. Many monetarists pushed a *laissez-faire* economic regime. Federal Reserve Bank control over the money supply, primarily by regulating the interest rates on borrowing, would be the solution to prevent the U.S. economy from overheating (overproduction) or excessively cooling down (underuse of productive capacity). Milton Friedman was always against increasing the money supply to the point of rapid inflation. Nixon was not necessarily opposed to this.

However, U.S. monetarism supplied no solutions for underdeveloped nations around the world, no matter

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Revolution? No thanks, we're autonomists!

By ANDREW POLLACK

This is the first of two articles reviewing Marina Sitrin's "Everyday Revolutions: Horizontalism and Autonomy in Argentina" (Zed Books, 2012).

Marina Sitrin is one of the most prolific, visible, and eloquent theorists of "horizontalism" and "autonomy" (hereafter referred to jointly as horizontalist autonomy). Thanks to her years of activism and journalism in Argentina and the U.S., and the writings and speeches based on them, I believe she now surpasses John Holloway as the most prominent exponent of the "don't take power" school of thought.

So a critique of her works is not meant to single her out as politically worse than any of the school's other thinkers or practitioners, just as the most (at least for now) important.

As I write this, teachers in Greece are preparing for a strike tomorrow (Tuesday, May 14), likely to be followed by another strike on the 17th, and the distinct possibility of solidarity strikes on both days. The government has responded by threatening to impose—for the third time this year—"mobilization" orders, in essence breaking the strike by enrolling all teachers overnight into the military, and thus making it "illegal" for them to walk off their jobs.

What would the theory of horizontalist autonomy advise the strikers to do in the face of the government's threat? What would these theories have to say about the hope of Greek workers in general to build a different society, one in which their own ruling class, and their partners in the "Troika," can no longer exploit them—in which in fact there is no ruling class?

In the introduction to the book, Sitrin says (referring to movements she has studied in Argentina and elsewhere): "These movements define themselves as autonomist precisely because they do not want to take over the state, and see themselves in a position different and separate from the state, therefore autonomous. They do not desire state power, as many left-wing groups and political parties have in the past, but rather want to try to create other forms of horizontal power with one another, in their communities and workplaces. This concept of power and revolution is about a total transformation of society, but one that takes place and continues to expand from below. As the Zapatistas in Mexico say: 'From below and to the left.'"

The movements in Argentina, she writes, "are prefiguring the change that they desire." They are "creating horizontal relationships ... with a focus on that relationship deepening and expanding. This conceptualization of rev-



Tony Savino / Socialist Action

olution as an everyday transformation, not a storming of the Bastille, is an important distinction put forth at the outset of the book."

Now Greek workers—and those of many other countries on the continent—have engaged in repeated general strikes in recent years, none of which have yet substantially altered the balance of power, much less overthrown the state. Millions of Europeans are wondering what changes in strategy, tactics, and goals might reverse that situation.

Clearly, Sitrin would not recommend to them that they try to overturn the states that have tried to crush or outlaw their strikes, the states that have imposed the savage cuts demanded by the IMF and the corporations. For her, Greek and other workers should "prefigure," they should "transform," and not with a long-term vision, but simply on an "everyday" basis.

But let's leave aside even the question of trying to dismantle such pernicious states. Sitrin's advice is of even more immediate danger: While acknowledging the repressive role of the state, and the concrete consequences that role has for the very movements she defends, she has no suggestion at all for how these movements might defend themselves. Or to be more precise, her advice is to sidestep the state, to avoid confrontation with it.

On page 12 she writes: "In the later sections of this book I discuss what happens when the state becomes cog-

Sitrin argues for 'everyday revolutions,' not as building blocks to change society as a whole but as substitutes for such a revolution.

nizant of a society moving ahead without it. It is in these moments that those creating these vast new landscapes face some of the most serious challenges. It is most often, in this time of reaction to and from institutional power, that autonomous communities are defeated.

Inherent in the role of the state is its resistance to people organizing outside of it, much in the same way as corporations resist parallel economies; it is here that often these institutions apply direct repression and cooptation, or a combination of the two."

Her answer to this threat is simply to point with satisfaction to the beginnings of signs that those movements that have been repressed and/or coopted have begun rebuilding themselves. That's it.

What's worse, Sitrin takes this approach a step further, and argues for a more general approach of non-confrontation. On page 13, in the section, "Challenging the contentious framework," she criticizes sociologists studying social movements who assume the latter are always "in a contentious re-

(Above) Occupy Wall Street.

lationship to the state, or another form or institution with formal 'power over,' whether demanding reforms from or desiring another state or institution."

This framework, she argues, "is not sufficient in explaining these contemporary, autonomous social movements, because of these movements' choice not to focus on dominant institutional powers (such as the state), but rather to develop alternative relationships and forms of power. This reconceptualization of power is linked to the nonhierarchical and directly democratic vision of their organizing."

This should sound familiar to those who remember the heated debate within the Occupy movement around whether to place demands on the 1% or its state, with the overwhelming majority of those most frequently active—usually heavily influenced by anarchism—arguing against placing demands for just the reasons Sitrin spells out.

Elsewhere in the book Sitrin argues for "everyday revolutions" not as preparatory steps, as building blocks, to a revolution to change society as a whole, but rather as superior substitutes for such a revolution. She explicitly counterposes storming the Bastille, or soviet taking power through an insurrection, to building co-ops and self-managed factories and participatory neighborhood health or education groups,

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Prison authorities try to silence Mumia

The California-based Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal has released the following statement by Mumia's attorney, Rachel Wolkenstein.

June 29, 2013—Just days after Mumia's appeal argument challenging the state's "secret sentencing" of him to life imprisonment without parole, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections cut off Mumia's phone calls for two weeks.

Late Thursday evening, June 27, Mumia called his wife, Wadiya Jamal, and told her he was "written up" for a phone interview with Philadelphia attorney Michael Coard, on his WURD program, "Radio Courtroom," and didn't know when he would be able to call next.

The next day Mumia's phone calls were stopped for two weeks.

This is the first time since 1995, with the infamous Department of Correction (DOC) attempt to stop Mumia's radio commentaries and punish him for the publication of his book, "Live From Death Row," that Mumia has received any prison disciplinary action. Punishing Mumia for his speech and writing was found unconstitutional by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, as a violation of his First Amendment right to freedom of speech. See *Abu-Jamal v. Price*, 154 F3d 122 (3rd Circ. 1998).

In another act of harassment, the DOC refuses to process contact visitation between Mumia and his son, Jamal Hart. In August 2012, Hart had a four-hour

contact visit without incident with his father, the first contact visit between father and son in 30 years. But the DOC is refusing to grant additional contact visits.

These are attacks on Mumia—in an attempt to isolate Mumia from his family and supporters and to silence him. These harassments and restrictions of Mumia's rights to speech and communication and his human right to have contact with his family must be fought—immediately and loudly.

The state was defeated in its three-decades-long vendetta to "legally lynch" Mumia. But the state has not stopped in trying to silence him. In general population since Jan. 26, 2012, Mumia has continued recording his incisive indict-

ments of U.S. imperialism. His journalism and political commitment since his youth is publicized in the acclaimed new film "Long Distance Revolutionary." His innocence and frame-up conviction is exposed in the new short film, "Manufacturing Guilt."

Mumia will not be silenced. We will not tolerate him being harassed. We need to fight to keep his voice in the public and to have contact with his family. We need to ensure Mumia has contact visitation with his family.

Write, call, email and fax the central offices of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections: John E. Wetzel, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, 1920 Technology Pkwy, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050. Phone: (717) 728-2573. Fax: (717) 728-0312. Email: ra-contactdoc@pa.gov. ■



(Left) Rally participants in Hong Kong hold up photo of Edward Snowden.

... Snowden reveals Obama spy operation

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There was no mention of ongoing FBI threats to fine internet companies who refuse to install devices in their equipment to facilitate government surveillance of every person in the country. That such devices are operative is beyond doubt, but we are told that the acquired information is funneled into a “non-government-associated” holding apparatus, accessible only when permission is granted by some secret government oversight body—to be sure, one “sworn” to protect our constitutional rights from people or institutions like the president, the NSA, the FBI, and all the others who might be tempted to abuse them.

Snowden: Spy in from the cold

To the great embarrassment of Obama and his posturing co-conspirators at every level of government, within days of his “pledge of openness” speech, the lid was blown off any and all pretence of democratic functioning in the U.S. This took place when a 29-year-old former CIA intelligence technician, Edward Joseph Snowden, currently employed at Booz Allen Hamilton, a multi-billion-dollar government-contracted spy agency, publicly announced what no one could deny—that he was the source of the British *Guardian* and *Washington Post* revelations during the previous week.

Snowden disclosed secret and long-standing FISA court orders demanding that virtually all of the nation’s internet providers—including Yahoo, Microsoft, Paytalk, AOL, Apple, Facebook, Skype and YouTube—allow for the unprecedented, secretly conducted, and ongoing government sweep of phone calls, audio and video chats, e-mails, photographs, documents, connection logs, and other communications used daily by American citizens.

The government spy program, code-named Prism, supposedly allowed corporations like Apple Computer to officially deny that they were the “direct” source that inspected the information or allowed immediate government access to it. They could point out instead that they served as merely a conduit that funneled all such information into Prism. In all, the whistleblowers reported that the NSA collects phone records on 3 billion private communications per day!

The leader of the Senate Foreign Intelligence Committee, Diane Feinstein, blithely dismissed the revelations en-

tirely, insisting that since they were FISA court-ordered—that is, issued by a secret court with virtually no government oversight—they were perfectly legal. Feinstein did indicate that some unnamed government officials had been “briefed” on the matter.

While government officials also retorted that all three branches of government had “signed off” on the telephone spying, a top ACLU official, Anthony Romero, denounced the program as a fundamental violation of civil liberties, saying, “A pox on all three houses of government,” regardless of what hidden approval devices were employed.

Another just-released 18-page presidential memo has Obama, according to Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill, writing in *The Guardian*, ordering intelligence officials to “draw up a list for potential overseas targets for U.S. cyber attacks.” This never-published October 2012 Presidential Policy Directive 20 states that Offensive Cyber Effects Operations “can offer unique and unconventional capabilities to advance U.S. national objectives around the world with little or no warning to the adversary or target and with potential effects ranging from subtle to severely damaging.” The same objectives can be perpetrated within the U.S., says Obama’s directive, but only with prior orders from the president, except in cases of “emergency.”

This alone should cause some anxiety among activists who might suffer under the illusion that Facebook and other such social media devices can function as a permanent democratic instrument to challenge capitalist abuse and power and to organize mass opposition. With a push of the government’s “emergency” button, these new and undoubtedly valuable but ultimately limited forms of communication can be expected to be shut down in an instant.

And thus, in a matter of days, the Obama administration’s effort to posture as defenders of civil liberties went up in flames, and the police-state-type mechanisms that had been meticulously put into place and illegally used for more than seven years, officially, were exposed around the world. What a small layer of political activists had justifiably taken for granted for decades and longer is now the public knowledge of millions—and exposed by a handful of leakers who will inevitably face severe government persecution. How could it be otherwise?

Edward Snowden was one of some 1.4

million intelligence technicians, operatives, security specialists, or just plain spies who have earned—after the minimum of a one-year investigation—top-level national security classification status. Moreover, all of these individuals work for a mushrooming number of government and privatized spy agencies charged with collecting data from every conceivable source. Indeed, the very rivalry between many of these agencies has fueled internal debates as to whether or not their efforts should be coordinated and the results “shared” to increase their efficiency and avoid duplication of effort.

It was these very “sharing” concerns that allowed Snowden, a relatively low-level employee at Booz Allen who specialized in such technical coordination, to gain access to the data of multiple agencies and their associated collections of government-classified documents. As with Bradley Manning’s leaks of millions of pages of classified “dirty-op” material to Julian Assange’s WikiLeaks—including the release of videotapes of deliberate murder—this once again reveals that capitalism recognizes no limits when it comes to advancing its interests.

It is critical to state that Snowden’s revelations, the magnitude of which have yet to be determined, go far beyond the spy network daily used against U.S. citizens in violation of their rights to privacy, free speech, and association. It is highly probable that Snowden’s computers, four or five of which he is reported to keep in his possession at all times, contain classified material that includes the illegal U.S. spy operations conducted against virtually all nations on earth. This material ranges from military secrets to private-sector intellectual property and data on scientific breakthroughs that relate to key aspects of capitalist production and trade, to documents of the very government and private banking institutions that collectively constitute the core operations of all U.S. rivals.

Snowden has demonstrated that the U.S. government installed listening devices and other means to spy on all participants, including heads of state, during the 2009 meeting of the G-8 nations. This form of espionage was extended to the Washington and New York offices of the European Union, the Brussels-based EU headquarters, and some 38 foreign embassies and missions. European and Chinese leaders have responded with fury to these revelations.

Snowden has now been charged under the Espionage Act with at least three violations, which would total some 30 years in prison, assuming he is extradited, indicted, and convicted. The government is looking for other avenues to persecute this bright and conscience-driven youth, who has little or no previous political experience. Major pressure was exerted on the Chinese government to extradite Snowden from Hong Kong, where he was reportedly in hiding with fears for his very life at the hands of U.S. operatives. The Chinese government was in no hurry to accede to the barrage of U.S. demands, especially when it learned from Snowden’s revelations that it too had been subjected to illegal U.S. spy operations. Undaunted, the courageous Snowden continues to release swaths of illegal and secret U.S. government spy operations, creating an unprecedented nightmare for Obama and the U.S. government.

It is interesting to note here that both Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden state that they took care to not release material that might cause harm to U.S. spies or otherwise directly jeopardize their operations, a form of innocent self-censorship in this writer’s view, that they perhaps believed might limit government efforts to lock them in jail forever—if not worse. This distinction was also employed by the *Washington Post* and other media who in the past, as with *The New York Times*’s 1971 release of the Pentagon Papers and the more recent Wikileaks material, actually submitted the materials they received for prior government perusal—that is, censorship.

In the case of the corporate media, it is simply a matter of doing the bidding of the U.S. ruling elite while attempting to maintain the semblance of a “free press” at the same time. A 1996 *Times* article noted that the Pentagon Papers, which revealed secret U.S. operations in Vietnam over the course of some 25 years, “demonstrated, among other things, that the Lyndon Baines Johnson Administration had systematically lied, not only to the public but also to Congress, about a subject of transcendent national interest and significance.” The Pentagon Papers, were not declassified and publicly released until June 2011, that is, some 40 years after they were first leaked by RAND Corporation top-level military analyst and former Pentagon military specialist, Daniel Ellsberg.

The prosecution and punishment of the leakers remains a top priority, with government officials already investigating how to inflict the greatest harm to Glenn Greenwald, one of the country’s most democratically minded bloggers and the British *Guardian* reporter who first exposed this most recent wholesale violation of fundamental rights. Greenwald has toured the country and the world for years warning of the dangers of today’s unchecked surveillance and the resulting criminal acts perpetrated in the name of national security. This includes a national tour last year, when Greenwald minced no words in damning the government’s persecution of 700,000 members of the U.S. Muslim community since 9-11.

These latest revelations are but the tip of the iceberg. It is only a matter of time until the thousands and more of the millions of U.S. spies “come in from the cold” to expose the daily police-state measures, engineered wars, and mass murders that constitute a key portion of ruling-class policy today.

What Snowden has revealed with regard to government spying differs little from the ever-deepening coordinated military-police measures being put into place in preparation for quelling the massive protests the ruling elite fully

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expect as their ongoing austerity measures inflict deepening misery on U.S. workers.

There was little specific mention in Obama's May 23 oration on the drone bombings that have to date taken the lives of almost 5000 civilians around the world, including a number of Americans in foreign countries deemed to be "terrorist suspects" and killed by some remote satellite-guided drone operator halfway around the world. The president did suggest that perhaps the Pentagon, rather than the CIA, might be assigned to drone warfare, thus leaving the CIA free to focus on perhaps more important objectives, including economic and military espionage.

Stealing corporate secrets, patents, research, and "intellectual property rights" of America's corporate competitors—an activity always considered fair game in today's thus-far mostly non-military competition for global economic domination, ranks high in top corporate circles. To be accurate, Obama did pledge that drone "signature strikes" would perhaps now continue with some vaguely-stated congressional or secret "public oversight," as opposed to the present criteria of murdering people because they live in a region alleged to be in the vicinity of "terrorist operations." The latter are defined as any that challenge the ongoing U.S. wars and interventions against their countries.

As in the decade of the Vietnam War, where the unofficial U.S. objective was, perhaps humorously stated, to "teach the Vietnamese not to invade the land that they were born in," a war that slaughtered four million Vietnamese, terrorists are defined as anyone who opposes U.S. occupations and the rape of their country. In decades past this included the South African forces of the African National Congress, today the governing party of that nation.

To be sure, Iraq and Afghanistan were excluded from the president's new and non-specific guidelines because these are "real wars," as compared to Pakistan, where thousands of civilian drone murders have been systematically documented even though the U.S. is not "officially" at war in that country. Given this "fact," the U.S. admits to no drone killings there, a fiction necessary to maintain a semblance of credibility—that is, to everyone except the Pakistani victims.

The use of surveillance drones to daily spy on American citizens was excluded—at least for the time being by the "democratic" chief of state. Again, maintaining the fiction of U.S. capitalist democracy at home still concerns U.S. policy makers, although this fiction stands exposed today more than ever as a crude fraud. The most recent revelations include evidence of the use of drones for U.S. domestic surveillance.

The FBI's subpoenaing 24 members of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization to appear before a Chicago Grand Jury investigating terrorism tells us that the now officially-admitted spying on virtually the entire nation will be accompanied by persecution and imprisonment of social activists merely because of their political views. This attack on a socialist organization, the first in a generation, and on a group prominently involved in the U.S. antiwar movement and in the leadership of the broadly representative United National Antiwar Coalition, is an ominous sign that worse is to come. The list of antiwar and social justice organizations that have reported and proven government and police surveillance is ever increasing.

On the trade-union front, Obama ne-



glected to explain why top government officials threatened to use the military to break strikes by the Longview, Wash., longshore strikers last year and in the not-so-recent past, when the striking ILWU was threatened with "national security" injunctions and the use of Navy crane operators to break a West Coast ILWU strike.

The monstrous persecution of "whistle blowers" like Bradley Manning—who exposed hundreds of thousands of pages of illegal government spying around the world as well as revealing videotape proof of the conscious murder of U.S. and foreign journalists, as well as civilians, by U.S. helicopter pilots who followed orders to gun down the innocent—never made the president's list of democratic concerns. Persecuting the truth tellers rather than the murderers is standard U.S. policy—necessary, again, to defend the "national security" interests of the U.S. elite.

The shattering of fundamental constitutional rights is today commonplace in today's legal system. In the name of the war on terror, attorney-client confidentiality has been eliminated via "legalized" electronic surveillance. In the case of Lynne Stewart her private government-taped conversations with her client, Sheik Omar Abdel Rachman, were introduced in court as evidence against her—yet another example of trashing democratic rights in the fake war on terrorism.

Immigrants & Muslims persecuted

Obama also declined to mention that his administration has deported more immigrants, 300,000-plus over each of the past three years, than any administration in history—criminalizing, again in the name of national security, the poorest sectors of the working class, who labor most often at sub-minimum wages to satiate agri-business and other corporate requirements to remain competitive in world markets.

Furthermore, the Obama administration is using the immigration system to expand surveillance of the entire U.S. population. A FOIA request submitted by immigrant rights groups in 2011 revealed that Secure Communities, a program used to deport immigrants through the jail system, is the precursor of a national biometric database called Next Generation Identification, which is currently being developed by the FBI. And the latest immigration reform proposal expands E-verify to cover all workers in the U.S. Soon everyone could be required to show a biometric ID when applying for any job. It's clear from these few examples that attacks on immigrants are attacks on all workers.

Since 9-11, the ever-expanding

Homeland Security apparatus has investigated more than 700,000 Muslims, again with the "justification" that this community represents a threat to the nation's "national security." There were no Obama apologies for these blatantly racist persecutions, as there are none for the "stop and frisk" legislation wherein hundreds of thousands of Black and Brown working people are daily harassed, persecuted, and jailed. The U.S. today imprisons the largest number and percentage of its population than any nation on earth. It ranks first as well in the number of executions, in both cases the majority victims of Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans.

With regard to his just admitted, and still unpunished, and therefore impliedly justified, civil liberties incursions, Obama pledged "to strike an appropriate *balance* [sometime in the future] between our need for security and preserving those freedoms that make us who we are." His contemplated formation of an "independent board" to preserve civil liberties, as if the myriad of Constitutional/Bill of Rights protections and the entire system of judges and juries sworn to defend them were no longer adequate to guarantee these rights, is more than ironic.

Preparation for deep repression

These measures signal that the U.S. ruling class has been well aware of the massive mobilizations of workers around the world who have gone to new lengths to challenge the austerity measures imposed on them by a failing world capitalism that has no choice but to resolve its contradictions at the expense of the great majority. This includes the increased use of force, violence, and repression in its multiple forms to thwart the inevitable concerted fightbacks ahead.

... Autonomism

(continued from page 7)

all busily occupying (pun intended) themselves with their little everyday revolutions, and spreading their example bit by bit—and not, god forbid, preparing themselves for what Sitrin herself sees as an inevitable attack by the state!

For revolutionaries, those struggles—like the ones engaged in by the heroic teachers of Greece—are means of accumulating the self-confidence needed for workers to take power as a class through their democratic organs of struggle. But for Sitrin, they must limit their scope and ambitions (in much the same way as the liberal wing of Solidarnosc demanded a "self-

limiting" revolution—one that ended up handing power back to Capital against the wishes of genuine Polish revolutionaries).

In the next article, I'll look at some more examples of problems with horizontalist autonomy as revealed in this book.

Let me close here by noting in passing that given all the above, it's not surprising—although extremely disquieting—to read on pages 99-100 a passage from Grace Lee Boggs explicitly counterposing Martin Luther King Jr. to Malcolm X, insisting that the (supposed) absolute nonviolence of the former should have been adopted by the Black movement of the 1960s, and even blaming its downfall at least partly on its failure to have done so. ■

World capitalism faces perhaps its greatest crisis in the modern era. Its solution, with few if any exceptions, is to make working people and the most oppressed pay the price of the system's universal economic failures. The tens of trillions of dollars exacted through near-universal austerity measures are used to bail out a system with no recourse other than more of the same—if not famine, endless wars, and the destruction of the environment.

What the capitalist minority fears most is the conscious organization by dedicated, disciplined, and deeply rooted revolutionary fighters of the vast majority, who alone can challenge its rule and replace it with an egalitarian society where the fulfillment of human needs of the earth's people and the construction of a world free from war and environmental destruction trumps the dictatorship of the capitalist profiteers.

This dictatorship reveals its sharp teeth in the threatening code words imbedded in President Obama's still guarded rhetoric, including his promise of "democracy" for all. Behind this stilted language, always inclusive of explicit "national security" justifications for repression, murder, and war, stands a failing system preparing to use any all means necessary to achieve its politically and morally degenerate ends.

Today, U.S. capitalism still rules with the relative consent of the majority, who despite their growing anger and frustrations, retain the illusion that their lives can be improved, in time, by the operation of the system rather than through their active intervention as revolutionary subjects.

But the ruling rich nevertheless constantly prepare for the time when these illusions are shattered, and mass working-class forces led by conscious revolutionary socialist fighters and parties that have earned a reputation for being the most consistent representatives of the broad workers' movement in all its manifestations begin to call into question the system itself.

We can see important institutional elements for future repression being methodically moved into place, from major infringements of civil and democratic rights, to preparations for mass arrests, detentions, and imprisonment. A whiff of fascist repression is in the air, awaiting the time when its real expression becomes a requirement for continued capitalist rule. Between now and then, time remains to organize the working-class millions to defend their own interests and thwart this onslaught with a power far beyond the control of any and all would-be tyrants. ■

A longer version of this article is available at www.socialistaction.org.



Celia Sanchez (left) with Haydee Santamaria in action as guerrilla fighters in the Sierra Maestra.

in the Sierra Maestra.

While small of stature with a fragile appearance, she proved herself to be tough and resilient, capable of the physical hardship of living in the mountains and engaging in combat. She seemed not only accepted by the men and commanders with whom she worked but was respected and relied upon. Her intellect was said to match Fidel's, and she became his official facilitator. People would go to her to get to him.

All of that alone is enough of a story! But what strikes me, fills me with female pride, is how true to herself she seemed to remain. She was very flexible, able to walk in many worlds. By planting flowers, collecting cuttings of coleus from women around the country who supported the Revolution and planting them in the rebels' hideout camps, she shared her love of nature.

The attention she had once given to the poor mill workers' children was turned to the individuals who had made huge personal sacrifices to serve in the Rebel Army. She attempted to make their lives better. She was a fierce protector of Fidel; at the same time, she would diplomatically challenge him when necessary. She was someone who, given an idea, made it come to fruition.

Too often women who have entered leadership roles in male-dominated fields claim "progress" by moving horizontally and replacing the patterns and customs of men. Celia, on the other hand, seems to be an example of real progress, as she took on leadership by moving forward (vertically) in her own unique way.

While organizing military units, doing rigorous and dangerous clandestine work in the countryside, and strictly maintaining guerilla protocol, she also kept the comfort of others as one of her priorities. This meant new shoes for the soldiers

marching long distances, canned milk for families with babies that were supporting them, extra blankets for the extremely cold nights, etc.

This is just one example of how her thinking well for the whole group boosted morale, and therefore led to the successes the rebel forces experienced. I think it is fair to say she did not deny the positive aspects of her female gender conditioning, while almost simultaneously adopting tough, decisive action when it was called for.

There has always been much speculation about Celia's relationship with Fidel. I like that Nancy Stout gives little importance to the details of their friendship although she does record that Fidel proposed marriage twice to Celia after they defeated Batista. She declined each time, saying that she "could see right through Fidel—and that's not very romantic." Stout might be right in reporting this, but I think that by that time Celia was older and had recognized the importance of her independence. At any rate, they seemed to maintain their soulmate closeness despite Fidel's romantic affairs with other women.

Besides chronicling the extraordinary life of Celia Sanchez, this book also gives an inside and suspenseful account of the staging of the Cuban Revolution by this disparate and mostly very young group of individuals.

The book documents the chaos that accompanied the days after the Jan. 8, 1959, entry into Havana, the 1962 trip to the UN when the Cuban delegation chose to stay in Harlem, the redistribution of property, and (even today) the lingering divisions in all Cuban families between those who stayed in Cuba and those who left, those who supported the new government and those who did not. These topics are related with personal anecdotes that make them all come that much more alive in the reader's imagination.

Alice Walker in her Foreword, finishes by saying how much she loved this book and in the end just wanted to turn to page one and start reading it all over again.

I agree. ■

New book on Celia Sanchez — key Cuban revolutionary leader

By JUANITA RODRIGUEZ

Nancy Stout, "One Day In December: Celia Sanchez and the Cuban Revolution." Forward By Alice Walker.

The oppression of women worldwide has drastically limited the way we have learned history. Usually we have been left out of the story, as if half the population were not present, did not exist, did not contribute to the flow of events!

The story of the Cuban Revolution has pretty much been the same. The world all knows of Fidel, Che, Frank Pais, and Camillo Cienfuegos. In "One Day in December," we finally learn of the key role that a woman, Celia Sanchez, played in launching the war, in winning the war, and in facilitating the new government in Cuba.

Celia was from a large family, the daughter of a doctor who after his wife's death, preferred that his family live alongside the mill workers rather than in a more prestigious neighborhood. After the untimely

death of her young sweetheart, Celia devoted herself to personal growth, community charity work, and following her own interests. At the same time she meticulously supported her father.

This is a pattern that later served her well as she applied it to her relationship with Fidel. Remarkably, for a Cuban woman in the 1950s, she knew how to work with and interact among powerful men; at the same time, she almost naturally assumed leadership.

Her experience in running her father's medical office, personally greeting all of his patients over the years, and her interest in community and serving less advantaged people, prepared her for taking on the responsibility of developing support networks, military units, and undercover allies in her region when she turned her talent and energy towards the Revolution. Her love of the natural world and fishing gave her knowledge and awareness that contributed first to planning the landing of the Granma and later to the hiding and survival of large numbers of rebel soldiers

... Economy

(continued from page 6)

how big or small they were. In this age of late 20th-century and 21st-century globalization, the IMF intervenes, as it has all over the globe in "Third World" nations. (And now it is even participating in bailouts of "First World" economies in Europe).

The scheme is always the same: in exchange for bailout money, the IMF (and now the European Union and the eurozone) imposes draconian cuts in social and educational spending, lowered wages, massive layoffs, and the privatization of public infrastructure and numerous public services in order that the indebted nation will balance its budget and pay off its debts to mostly rich foreign investors.

Falling rate of profit

Now, back to the real economy of goods and services: It is here that Marxist political economy sheds light on what has transpired since the 1970s. As mentioned before, there were more foreign products showing up in the U.S., such as VW bugs and vans in the 1960s. In the '70s the trend accelerated. You had Datsuns (now called Nissans) and Toyotas in greater numbers. Ditto German cars like BMWs and Mercedes. There were also numerous retail discount outlets such as Kohl's, K-Mart, Walmart, and Target whose stocks eventually became predominantly foreign—especially Third World foreign—as the decades wore on.

The cost of increasing competition in the real global economy means capitalists buying more and more high priced technology in order to increase productivity, which adds tremendously to overhead costs. This doesn't even necessarily open new markets; it just allows you to compete with other countries producing the same exportable goods and services.

It is very important to realize that "capital goods"—factory machinery, other technology involved in goods and services production, gigantic ships for transport of goods and people, airplanes for the same purpose, the buildings in which goods production takes place, skyscrapers and other buildings to house offices, and trains, buses, and large trucks to also transport people and goods—these are the most colossally expen-

sive things in the world. If you are going to pay the enormous costs of these huge capital expenditures, you had better make enormous profits.

But now, with all the giant corporations basing operations in countries throughout the world, intensely competing with one another, profit rates have a long-range tendency to fall as overhead expenses increase. One of the ways to bring down production costs is to pay less and less to labor; destroy workers' unions, outsource labor to poor nations, and so on. The other cost saver for the capitalists is to get their taxes cut: the more drastic the better.

Nevertheless, this mad race among so many competitors to produce more at less cost per unit of production inevitably leads to market gluts of overproduction. That is exactly what happened during the recessions of 1969-71; 1973-75; 1979-80 (the "stagflation" recession under Jimmy Carter); 1981-82 under Reagan (unemployment reached 10.8%); the eight-month recession of 1991-92, and another eight-month one in the early 2000s; and, finally, this Great Recession we've been mired in since December 2007.

These binges of overproduction are related to what mainstream economists call "capacity utilization." In order for today's industries to pay back the debts they've incurred for the very expensive technology they have purchased to increase productivity, they have to operate at full or nearly full capacity.

The trend since the 1970s in the United States has been a decline in economic growth, notable decline in workers' wages, and an overall tendency for profit rates to decline. As you will shortly see, economic statistics illustrate the U.S. decline dramatically. And it is the declining rate of profit, which, in a sense, forced "financialization" to expand massively, from 8% of all U.S. corporate profits as Ronald Reagan took office in 1981 to as high as 41% in 2008, depending on which statistical sources you consult.

In a word, banks and investors lost confidence in the profitability of much of the real economy. Today, the percentage of corporate profits that are financial is still at 33%, according to many government sources; and the major investments are still in the speculative bond markets, the stock market—both of which are bubbles waiting to burst—and derivatives. That's right, these are the same investments based mainly

on real estate and debt that were the proximate cause of the crash of 2008!

And now, here are statistics to support our case: First, "The Boom & the Bubble: the U.S. in the World Economy" by Robert Bremer (whose stats come from a wide array of respected public think tanks), and secondly, from an important study by respected researchers Ergodan Bakir and Al Campbell, "Neo- Liberalism, the Rate of Profit and the Rate of Accumulation," appearing in *Science and Society* (July 2010).

Gross profit rates in the U.S. were 20.8% between 1959-69; 17.9% from 1969-79; 15% from 1979-90; 11% from 1991-2000 (during the ballyhooed Clinton years); and 8.3% in 2001. After-tax profit rates were 6% in 2000, 5% in 2005, an upward spike to 6.75% in 2007 (due in large part to rapidly growing real estate and derivative sales profits in the first half of the year), and then back down again to 5.9% in 2008.

Marx's "Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall" seems to be borne out in what has transpired in the last 40-plus years. And profits today? Well, this writer would have to say, "Of course, they are up in many companies!" What would you think in the face of steeply declining wages since 2008?

In a *New York Times* October 2012 reprint (of an article written in April of 2012), economic analyst and reporter Catherine Rampbell reported that the median loss of income to American families during Obama's first four years in office was nearly \$3000 per year.

As for the big banks, none of them can be reported to have made *authentic* profits. They no longer are required to report the market worth of assets gone bad. They are permitted to report the values of bad assets as still having the values they were bought for! That's why the bank bailouts in the form of "quantitative easing" through the Federal Reserve Bank and Treasury Department have given the big banks \$8-12 trillion since October 2008 at taxpayer expense, mostly to the richest holders of U.S. Treasury Bills.

In the real economy, the "C.I.A. World Factbook" of 2007 stated that the U.S. share of the world's manufactured goods production was 21%, as compared to more than 60% in 1953. Fewer statistics better illustrate the decline and future fall of the American economic empire. ■

By ANDREAS SARZEKIS

As we go to press on July 1, employees of the public Hellenic Radio Television (ERT) are continuing to occupy the studios, manage programming, and stay on the air—despite the government’s shutdown. Newscasts are regulated by a committee of journalists. Below is an earlier report on the mass support for the ERT workers.

ATHENS—Everyone agrees, in Greece and elsewhere: the wild decision of Prime Minister Samaras to announce, at midday on Tuesday, 10 June, the closing of the public audio-visual service ERT for the same evening is surprising and, of course, requires explanation. And a massive response!

In the final analysis we come back to the incredible truth: the government has handed over to the Troika, currently on an inspection trip, the 2000 job cuts demanded as immediate proof of governmental effectiveness in implementing the imposed plan of dismissal of tens of thousands of civil servants.

Samaras lays off 2670 workers today and promises to recreate a public channel of 600 employees. Those are the figures, and we must think that this is—if not the only explanation—the principal one to this foolish takeover by force: We are talking about a coup d’etat!

This coup d’etat was not completely impromptu. Everyone knew of the threats of “reorganization” of ERT, and a constitutional expert had produced a plan that Samaras wants to implement but one which the author is now refusing to take part in as long as ERT remains closed! This is one of many political contradictions that have exploded since Tuesday, opening a crisis within the government—the “interior troika,” as it is called here.

Indeed, Samaras, product of the most reactionary and nationalist right and surrounded by advisors open to the far right, made an arrogant decision, believing that the last surveys giving him two points more than Syriza empowered him to rule without having to worry about tedious democratic procedures any more. The result: the ministers of Pasok and Dimar [parties in the governing coalition] did not sign

Greeks mobilize against public TV shutdown



the decision to close ERT, and today the only group supporting the takeover by force of the right (New Democracy) against ERT is the nazis of Chryssi Avgi (Golden Dawn)!

However, as soon as the decision was known, an exceptional mobilization started. Since Tuesday, the buildings of ERT in the Athenian suburbs have been surrounded by thousands of people, activists or not, with support from artists and various personalities. The confederation of unions in the private sector (GSEE) and the federation of the public sector unions (Adedy), which had recently refused to support the teachers’ strike, were obliged to call on Thursday for a general strike that was quite successful.

Protest meetings took place everywhere in the country. The occupation in front of ERT was massive, even if the place is rather out of the way. Most important perhaps, is to see side by side the trade-union, political, associative flags of various currents that usually do everything not to demonstrate together. This de facto unity in the fight, linked to a very cordial environment, is for the moment a pledge of determined resistance: KKE (Greek CP) has welcomed to its TV channel the news programmes produced by the ERT journalists; the radio of Kokkino (Syriza) is connected permanently to the takeover mobilizations. It is clear

that Samaras had not envisaged such a broad response to its small manoeuvre.

International solidarity, which has been very strong, going as far as some not very diplomatic statements by foreign governments, is felt to be an invaluable help. It gives a very practical meaning to the slogan of “Troika out!” at last Sunday’s demo in Athens concluding the Altersummit. In this context, it illustrates what for three years has been too weak: that international solidarity reinforces the working-class response in Greece. This solidarity must continue and intensify.

On Thursday, the police entered the ERT buildings in Salonica to evict the workers occupying their workplace. Although Samaras is obviously destabilized at the moment, it is known that the only answer will be repression. There has to be the strongest solidarity for the defence of ERT and all jobs!

The struggle continues, with a solidarity concert Friday at the ERT location. There is, of course, a common feeling in Greece that the current struggle in Taksim Square in Turkey has a lot in common with the popular assemblies at ERT! ■

Andreas Sartzekis is a member of OKDE-Spartakos, Greek section of the Fourth International, which is part of the coalition of the anti-capitalist left, Antarsya.

... U.S. hands off Syria!

(continued from page 12)

that is, a society where the vast majority organize society in their own interest free from capitalist and imperialist exploitation in its myriad forms. The construction of a deeply rooted revolutionary socialist party in Syria is a prerequisite to the achievement of this objective.

All out against the U.S.-orchestrated wars in Syria and the Middle East! Self-determination for Syria! U.S. out now! ■

United Statement and Call for Action to Oppose U.S./NATO and Israeli War on Syria

**No more wars!
U.S. out of the Middle East!
National Days of Action:
June 28-July 17**

The White House’s June 13th announcement that it would begin directly supplying arms to the opposition in Syria is a dramatic escalation of the U.S./NATO war against that country.

Thousands of U.S. troops and intelligence personnel are training opposition forces and coordinating operations in Turkey and Jordan.

Israel, the recipient of more than \$3 billion annually in U.S. military aid has carried out heavy bombing raids against Syria. The Pentagon has developed plans for a “no-fly” zone over Syria, threatening a new U.S. air war.

The pretext for this escalation is the assertion, presented without any actual evidence, that the Syrian government has used chemical weapons in the conflict that has been raging for more than two years.

Like their predecessors, President Obama and other top U.S. officials pretend to be concerned about “democracy” and “human rights” in Syria, but their closest allies in the campaign against Syria are police-state, absolute monarchies like Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Once again the so-called “Responsibility to protect,” R2P, is used as a pretext for NATO to dom-

inate this region.

Just as the false claim of “weapons of mass destruction” was used as justification for the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, the allegations that chemical weapons were used by the Syrian military is meant to mask the real motives of Washington and its allies. Their aim is to carry out “regime change,” as part of the drive to create a “new Middle East.”

The invasion of Iraq in 2003, the U.S.-backed Israeli war in Lebanon in 2006, the 2011 NATO bombing of Libya, the now-escalating war in Syria and the growing threats against Iran are part of a coordinated regional effort by the United States, Britain and France to dominate this oil-rich and strategic region.

The U.S. government cuts basic services and has eliminated hundreds of thousands of public sector workers jobs in the last three years in the name of a discredited austerity which has destroyed the economy, but has unlimited billions available for wars of aggression and NSA surveillance of almost every American.

We join together to call for National Days of Action, June 28- July 15, 2013, to demand:

- Stop the U.S./NATO/Israeli war and all forms of intervention against Syria!
- Self-determination free from outside intervention for the Syrian people!
- Fund people’s needs, not the military!
- U.S. Out of the Middle East!

Endorsers:

**United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC)
ANSWER Coalition (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism)
United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ)**

AFI3RM
All-African People’s Revolutionary Party (GC)
Alliance for a Just and Lasting Peace in the Philippines
Arab Americans for Peace
Arab Americans for Syria - AA4S
BAYAN USA
CRI-Panafricain



(Above) Photo taken by resident that purportedly shows a bomb explosion in the Syrian city of Homs, July 22, 2012.

Freedom Road Socialist Organization
Global Network Against Nuclear Power in Space
Green Party of the United States
Honduras Resistencia USA
International Action Center
International Coalition to Free the Angola 3
Iran Working Group VFP
KmB Pro-People Youth
March Forward!
May 1 Workers and Immigrant Rights Coalition
Pakistan USA Freedom Forum
Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL)
Revival of Panafricanism Forum
SI Solidarity with Iran
Socialist Action
Syrian American Forum
The Green Shadow Cabinet
U.S. Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)
U.S. Peace Council
Ugnayan (Linking the Children of the Motherland)
Veterans For Peace
World Can't Wait
Akbar Muhammad, International Representative, Nation of Islam
Ardeshir Ommami, President, American Iranian Friendship Committee (AIFC)
David Swanson, RootsAction
Glen Ford, Black Agenda Report (organization for identification purpose only)
Heidi Boghosian, Executive Director, National Lawyers Guild
Jill Stein and Cheri Honkala, candidates, Green Party
Jim Lafferty, Executive Director, National Lawyers Guild/Los Angeles
Margaret Flowers & Kevin Zeese, PopularResistance
Margaret Kimberley, Black Agenda Report (organization for identification purpose only)
Nada Khader, WESPAC

Prof. Jared Ball, radio host
Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general
Ron Jacobs, journalist
Sami Ramadani, journalist and scholar
Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival
ANAKBAYAN Los Angeles and San Diego
BAYAN-SOCAL
Bob Carter, Justice for Palestinians, Houston (organization for identification purpose only)
Coalition to Stop \$30 Billion to Israel
Community Futures Collective
Eugene E Ruyle, Peace and Freedom Party
Habi Arts
Kevin Akin, California State Chair, Peace and Freedom Party
LEF Foundation
Los Angeles Peace Council
Maine Code Pink
Peace and Freedom Party, Santa Cruz County
Peoples Video Network
Philly Against War
Puerto Rican Alliance-LA
RI Peoples Assembly
RI SOS Save Our Schools Coalition
RI Unemployed Council
Sabah Jawad, Iraqi Democrats Against Occupation
School of the Americas Watch - LA (SOA Watch-LA)
SiGaw-GABRIELA USA
Southern California Immigration Coalition (SCIC)
Stop the War Machine, New Mexico
Teach Peace Foundation, Sacramento, Calif.
The Dream Team 2013, RI
Union of Progressive Iranians
West County Toxics Coalition, Richmond, Calif.

U.S. hands off Syria!

EDITORIAL

In early June, the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) initiated discussions among all major U.S. antiwar coalitions regarding the critical need for united local and regional antiwar protests to counter the escalating U.S. and U.S.-backed attacks on Syria. The result was an agreement with UNAC, ANSWER, United for Peace and Justice, the International Action Center, Veterans for Peace, World Can't Wait, and now hundreds of other groups for June 28-July 17, 2013 actions in cities across the country.

The central demands of the protest are:

- Stop the U.S./NATO/Israeli war and all forms of intervention against Syria!
- Self-determination free from outside intervention for the Syrian people!

The joint statement (see text on page 11) recognized that there has been a “conflict that has been raging [in Syria] for more than two years.” Indeed, the signers have evidenced a variety of often counterposed positions on the Syrian civil war, with some forces, including Socialist Action, seeing its origins in the fully justified massive uprising of the Syrian people against the repressive and reactionary Assad dictatorship.

Others partaking in this worthy united effort to stop U.S. intervention in all of its forms and support the right of the Syrian people to self-determination, have declined to take any position on the matter. This includes UNAC, which aspires to unite all activists against the policies of U.S. imperialism. And finally, there are those in the movement who support the Assad regime in one form or another.

All of the endorsers agree, however, that the steady and now rapidly increasing U.S.—as well as Israeli—political, economic, and military intervention has no objective other than “regime change,” that is, the replacement of the Assad regime with one more amenable to advancing the interests of U.S. imperialism to dominate the region and its people and resources in neo-colonial fashion. None of the signers harbor any illusions that the U.S. aim is to provide “humanitarian” aid to the oppressed Syrian people or to help establish any form of democracy in Syria or anywhere else in the Middle East; hence the unity statement includes the demand, “U.S. Out of the Middle East!”

The essential facts of the varying forms of U.S. intervention in Syria have been known from the beginning. Today, fewer people than ever believe that the military support from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Libya to the Islamic fundamentalist components of the opposition, often allied with al-Qaida, represented the independent decisions of these repressive and reactionary governments.

These facts were dramatically shown by *The New York Times* in late June with a detailed account of Libyan military forces of the fundamentalist variety regularly sending massive quantities of heavy weapons from the former Gadhafi army to its Islamic co-thinkers in Syria. This alone demonstrated in bold relief that the U.S. has been willing to allow aid to go even to its professed radical Islamist enemies, provided only that they momentarily advanced U.S. political and economic interests in the Middle East.

These interests also dictated a two-year diplomatic and military effort to patch together a new regime in Syria that would maintain that nation's essential military, political, and economic structures—and preferably without having to include Assad. To date every U.S. effort to achieve this goal, from the international conferences overseen by U.S. Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and John Kerry to the more recent shift to some form of Geneva conference, have come to naught.

The massive U.S. diplomatic and military pressures on the broad array of opposition forces have proven incapable of uniting them in a common effort to replace Assad with a credible alternative acceptable to imperialism.

Until recently, a major obstacle to this U.S. effort was



Khalil Hamra / AP

Self-determination, free from outside intervention, for the Syrian people!

the undeniable fact that most of the popular Syrian fighting forces had rejected an imperialist-imposed solution. This component of the opposition was based on disparate units of the former Assad army that had refused his orders to slaughter the opposition's initial mass protests, and the numerous and still present Local Coordinating Committees, which aim to organize community defense organizations and provide vital social services to the country's massively destroyed infrastructure.

However, recent gains by Assad's army, bolstered by Hezbollah fighting units from Lebanon, have strengthened the impulse among some desperate rebel sectors to call on the Obama administration to provide them with a massive amount of arms to defeat Assad's tyranny. This is a mistaken tactic on their part. History has repeatedly demonstrated that imperialist arms *never* come without fatal strings attached. The Iraqi, Afghani, and Libyan people have learned this lesson all too well. Imperialist intervention produced nothing less than compliant U.S. puppet regimes, exploited to the hilt by their new masters.

In the meantime, the ideological character of the armed struggle has significantly changed due to the strengthened role within it of Islamist fundamentalist groups, many of whom have the vision of imposing a reactionary clerical regime on Syria and isolating the country's non-Sunni population. Concerns have mounted in Washington regarding the fact that the shipments of arms that its Persian Gulf allies are making to the rebels—which have recently included anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons—mainly favor Islamist-oriented units. The disruptive dangers of a heightened radical Sunni-Hezbollah conflict on its border, including possible intervention by Iranian troops, are of particular concern to Israel.

The Islamist presence, along with the gains by the Assad-Hezbollah military alliance, are major factors that have contributed to the recent declaration by the Obama administration that it would more openly and directly supply arms to sectors of the Syrian opposition. Obama announced the shift in tactics on the eve

(Above) A Free Syrian Army fighter fires at government troops near Idlib, June 15, 2012

of his departure for the G-8 conference in Northern Ireland, at which the major imperialist countries were planning to discuss the Syrian issue.

For public consumption, President Obama justified the increased U.S. intervention with the claim that the White House now had “high confidence” that the Assad regime had employed the chemical poison sarin on two occasions during combat in Aleppo. (To date, however, no reliable evidence of the use of sarin has been released.)

In preparing its deeper involvement in the Syrian conflict, the White House also evidently sensed that the time was right to leak to the press some information concerning its earlier covert military aid to the anti-Assad opposition. This echoed reports from sources in the Jordanian government and elsewhere. Thus, the *Chicago Tribune* and other media outlets reported in late June that since late 2012, if not earlier, CIA and U.S. special operations troops have trained several hundred Free Syrian Army troops with materiel including anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons.

The training has been conducted both in northern Jordan—using the ruse of U.S. “war games” with the Jordanian army—and in southern Turkey. But according to the British *Guardian* (March 8, 2013), Jordan now seems to be the preferred scene for U.S. training efforts, since Turkey has allowed radical groups like the al-Nusra Front to become dominant on the northern front, while focusing its own efforts on combating the national struggle of the Kurds.

Socialist Action fully supports the June/July actions jointly called for by the major portion of the U.S. antiwar movement and its allies among oppressed people. These protests express our common opposition to all imperialist interventions and afford the peoples of these nations the best opportunity for determining their own futures. Were it not for imperialist intervention over the past century and more, the world would indeed be a qualitatively different place.

While it is undeniable that the very forces that initiated the just struggle against the Assad dictatorship have been seriously weakened, if not marginalized, their ongoing efforts to coalesce the broadest forces possible, today and in the future, regardless of the outcome of the present civil war, will prove decisive.

The fight for freedom and democracy in Syria is in our view inseparable from the fight for socialism—

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