



Re-Create
the Fourth International

ISSN 1073-523

Published by the LEAGUE FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Racism Rules: The Fraud of U.S. Democracy

by Arthur Rymer

"The System Works." The U.S. ruling class breathed a collective sigh of relief when Al Gore conceded the presidency to George W. Bush. There would be no more "prolonged agony," no more indecision — above all no mass protest.

Yes, *their* system worked. Tens of thousands of Black people and others were denied their right to vote, but this didn't stop the Republican Supreme Court, backed by the Republican administration and legislature of Florida and the Republican Congress, from stepping in to decree Bush the president. And the Democrats went along, with minimal complaint.

Preserving the "rule of law" — however unlawful — was the priority. As Chief Justice Rehnquist bluntly put it, when it comes to the presidency "there is no right of suffrage" — the Constitution says almost literally that the ruling class shall choose the president, not the common people. And as Justice Scalia accurately pointed out, counting all the votes would indeed have meant "casting a cloud on what [Bush] claims to be the legitimacy of his election," since counting votes "is not a recipe for producing election results that have the public acceptance democratic stability requires."

That is indeed how the electoral system works. It was designed in the 18th century as a compromise between Northern capitalists and Southern slave-owners. (See the box on page 10 for more on this history.) Today its methods include not just official fraud so prevalent in Florida (and elsewhere), but an array of tricks to keep working-class voters, mainly Black, from voting: police roadblocks in Black neighborhoods, false criminal accusations, "lost" registrations, missing ballot boxes, early poll closings, unavailable interpreters for Haitian and Puerto Rican voters, and much more.

This time, however, there was a major glitch. The electoral squabble threatened U.S. imperialism's international prestige, and more. The specter of thousands of Black people taking to the street to denounce their disenfranchisement could have sparked a deeper and bigger movement against the racist system.

The five-week legal and political conflict over Florida attracted far more interest than the interminable pre-election race between two barely distinguishable candidates — because it exposed a good part of the dirt that American "law and order" rests on. The revelations about racism, fraud and judicial bias were undermining regard for bourgeois legality and exposing the capitalist class power that hides behind the facade of democracy.

DEMOCRATS' BETRAYAL

But where was the outrage? Among Blacks, voters and non-voters alike, there was plenty. Some Democratic politicians and journalists howled out of partisan pain. But the Democratic Party as a whole played its traditional role. Black leaders like Jesse Jackson and labor leaders like John Sweeney obediently called off the protest rallies they had planned when Bush won the initial Florida count by a few hundred votes. Then they sat by quietly when Gore insisted on downplaying racism in favor of a focus on electoral technicalities and waging only a legal and public relations campaign. When Gore's "fight" failed and the Supreme Court stopped the count, Sweeney and Jackson came up with feeble "Count Every Vote" marches — too little and far too late.

Jackson, according to the January 2 *Village Voice*, had been ordered to make peace with Bush by Wall Street financial backers of his Rainbow-Push Coalition. He telephoned Bush to "heal the nation and bring it together" — a far cry from Jackson's previous declarations that he

rejected Bush's legitimacy "with every bone in my body and every ounce of moral strength in my soul." Thus he carried out his class interests, selling out the rights of working-class Black voters. Even the most liberal Democratic Party leaders preferred to surrender their chance to win rather than encourage a mass struggle for democratic rights.

The final insult came on January 6, when Congress met to ratify the Electoral College vote. *Not one* Democratic Senator out of the 50, not even one of the handful of so-called progressives,

continued on page 9



Protesters condemn electoral fraud in Florida. Republicans stole election, Democrats preferred to lose than fight for democracy.

LRP/COFI Report

The LRP went through an emergency relocation this fall. We had to leave the building where we had been headquartered for over 20 years on 30 days notice. Sky-high rents in lower Manhattan forced us to move out of the area, and we had to put in a good amount of money and an even larger amount of labor into fixing up our new office.

We sincerely thank friends and readers who have helped out by donating time and money during this period. There is a lot more to be done in the office, and as this report shows, our work internationally and at home must continue. Please donate what you can; any amount is appreciated. Also tell us of any bookstores that might carry our publications.

A note of apology to subscribers: As a result of the stress on resources, this issue of *Proletarian Revolution* is slimmer than usual. We will be back to our regular format next issue. Meanwhile write in if you are interested in receiving any sample leaflets or materials on the work we've been doing.

OVERTURNS IN NEW YORK TRANSIT

In December, members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 (New York City's subway and bus workers) voted to sweep out the machine which has run the Local for 25 years. The old guard had fallen apart following the exposure of big givebacks in the contract and the wholesale robbery of the Local treasury; it ran two competing slates against the opposition New Directions (ND) caucus. ND, featuring a number of closet and ex-socialists, won over 60 percent of the vote.

In the Track Division, Eric Josephson, an open revolutionary and LRP supporter, narrowly won election as Division Committee Vice-Chair. ND had run an incomplete slate, owing to the unjust, bureaucratic disqualification of one of their Vice-Chair candidates. Though ND gave last-minute support to another "independent" candidate, Josephson's hard campaigning and long-time reputation as a fighting shop steward won him the victory. (See PR 60 for background.)

Josephson campaigned for militant, mass action to stop the bosses' attacks. The LRP also gave critical support to ND in order to support workers' efforts to remove the old guard, a significant obstacle to mass struggle. Clearing the field of the sellout bureaucrats would also open the way to exposing the vacillating reformism of ND.

In Josephson's campaign literature and discussions with the ranks, he consistently criticized ND for its failure to fight the

MTA's and Mayor Giuliani's strike-breaking injunctions in 1999, and for allowing the militant strike movement to be strangled by James's Executive Board. Despite the old guard's hysterical red-baiting and accusations that ND was "strike-happy," ND at best has occasionally allowed that strikes may be necessary. They spent the election running away backward from strike talk, emphasizing their real strategy of bringing the capitalist's cops and courts into the unions and building coalitions — that is, popular fronts — of politicians and the "riding public" against MTA service and job cuts. In fact, no candidate even wanted to mention the members' unanimous strike vote of December 1999 — with the exception of Josephson, who proudly reminded the members that he had raised the strike motion.

LRP campaign leaflets are available on request. Further details of the campaign will appear in our next issue.

1199 HOSPITAL WORKERS

An LRPer in the 1199 Healthcare Union spoke out at a Joint Delegate Assembly this past fall against the union leadership's stomping for Gore. In several meetings, we noted that delegates associated with both the Workers World Party and the International Socialist Organization kept their mouths shut over the union's love affair with the Democratic Party. The ISO was particularly opportunist: they didn't speak up even to advocate voting for Ralph Nader, even though their organization was campaigning head over heels for him. (See page 3.)

CHICAGO TEACHERS

The Chicago public schools have seen escalating attacks in recent years. Today Mayor Daley's handpicked board is imposing racist and union-busting attacks under the code words "re-engineering" and "intervention." At certain schools where standardized test scores are low, the board has been given sweeping powers to fire teachers. The use of one test to evaluate students and teachers is arbitrary and is meant to scapegoat them for the failures of the system itself. It is the system that shoves students from working-class and poor families, disproportionately students of color in Chicago, into the most decrepit schools to begin with.

Not surprisingly, union chief Thomas Reece, who helped write re-engineering and intervention into the teachers' contract, opposed a motion for a fightback raised by an LRP supporter at the October delegate assembly. The reformist opposition group in the union, PACT (ProActive Chicago Teachers), also failed to back the motion. Scandalously, some PACT members even opposed it! This struggle will continue and can have an impact beyond the

continued on page 13

How to Reach Us

LRP Central Office & New York	P.O. Box 769 New York, NY 10033 (212)-330-9017 e-mail: LRPNYC@earthlink.net website: www.LRP-COFI.org (773)-463-1340
Chicago Australia	League Press P.O. Box 578 Carlton South, Vic. 3053
Germany	KOVI-BRD c/o Buchladen 'Le Sabot' Breitestr. 76 53111, Bonn e-mail: KOVI.BRD@t-online.de

Proletarian Revolution

Published by the Socialist Voice Publishing Co. for the League for the Revolutionary Party (Communist Organization for the Fourth International). ISSN: 0894-0754.

Editorial Board: Walter Daum, editor; Evelyn Kaye, Sy Landy, Matthew Richardson, Bob Wolfe. Production: Leslie Howard.

Subscriptions: \$7.00 for 8 issues; \$15.00 overseas airmail, supporting subscriptions and institutions. Workers on strike, on workfare or welfare, or unemployed may subscribe for \$1.00, prisoners at no charge.

Send to: **Socialist Voice, P.O. Box 769, New York, NY 10033.**
E-mail: LRPNYC@earthlink.net

Nader: Saving Capitalist America from Itself

by Dave Franklin and Matthew Richardson

Ralph Nader's presidential campaign started with a bang but ended with less than a whimper.

The bang came with Nader's announcement that he would extend the massive November 1999 protest in Seattle into an electoral campaign to challenge both the Republican and Democratic Parties and the big corporations they serve. He denounced the political system run by big business and condemned an economic boom that filled corporate pockets while leaving workers behind. And he seemed absolutely uncompromising in his hostility to the Democrats, refusing to withdraw even if it cost Al Gore the presidency.

Nader's claim to be the "scourge of corporate America" was echoed by a host of prominent liberals, celebrities and even self-proclaimed socialists. They promoted Nader as a courageous opponent of the powers-that-be and a defender of "grass-roots democracy." And all this seemed to be confirmed by the Gore campaign, which viciously attacked Nader as a "spoiler."

When the November election standoff threw the country into a political frenzy and exposed its fraudulent democracy, the scene appeared set for Nader to seize the moment and stand up for justice. But when tens of thousands of Black Floridians saw their right to vote stolen, Nader refused to speak out. Whereas Gore dodged the issue of racist disenfranchisement, Nader didn't even see its importance. When outraged voters marched in the streets in protest, Nader joked about tossing a coin to choose the president. The "consumer watchdog" who had railed for decades against corporate criminality turned out to be a complacent lapdog for a monumentally criminal political system.

Radicals who supported Nader because they believed his campaign could advance the fight against corporate power should be outraged at this betrayal. We hope it prompts them to think again about Nader in particular and the strategy of supporting middle-class reformers in general.

THE CLASS QUESTION

Seriously confronting the capitalist corporations requires a challenge to the capitalist system as a whole. Marxism teaches us, and many radicals learned from the battles in Seattle and elsewhere, that this challenge can only come from the working class and its struggles.

Marxist revolutionaries can use elections to encourage working-class struggle and promote socialist consciousness among workers. The only campaign that can further these aims is one based on working-class independence from the capitalist ruling class. But middle-class populist candidates like Ralph Nader, however radical or "independent" (and we will show that Nader was not very), only reinforce workers' disbelief in their own class's ability to fight and to produce its own leaders; they bolster vain hopes that a savior will come and solve workers' problems. That is why it is a basic Marxist principle that revolutionaries can only endorse independent working class electoral campaigns.

Nader chose the Green Party as the most politically convenient mechanism for his program. The Green Party is not a workers' party, it is not a mass organization or an instrument of struggle. It is a *middle-class*, overwhelmingly white, *electoral machine*. While Nader enjoys working-class support in some areas (and caught the ear of labor bureaucrats in the UAW and Teamsters earlier in the year), most of his electoral support was not surprisingly based among middle-class liberals.

Some socialists in Nader's camp argued that despite problems,



Ralph Nader, "champion of democracy," refused to protest racist disenfranchisement of thousands or stolen election. Liberalism, Democratic or "Third Party," is no answer for working class.

he was building a movement that had to be supported. The International Socialist Organization (ISO), for example, argued that the campaign could lead to working-class independence:

Nader isn't a socialist, but his demands for national health care, trade union rights and social policy are far to the left of the mainstream parties. His campaign provides a focus for labor and anti-globalization activists to break with the Democrats. This could open the way to the development of an independent working-class political party. (*Socialist Worker*, July 21.)

The Socialist Alternative group, whose central strategy is to build a mass reformist labor party in the U.S. as a supposed step toward a revolutionary workers' party, worried about Nader's selection of the Green Party as his vehicle:

The danger is posed that the Greens may consolidate to their program and party an important layer of voters (including many workers and youth) and the newly emerging movement that began in Seattle. This will hold back for many years the struggle to build a mass working-class party based on the trade unions. (*Justice*, Sept.-Oct.)

But still they backed Nader, saying that they are "campaigning for the creation of a new, broad workers' party to emerge from Nader's campaign." It'll never happen.

The problem was not just Nader's non-socialism or the middle-class Greens. We will show in this article that Nader's program, despite its numerous reforms, was poisonous for the working class.

All political understanding begins with a recognition of the fundamental class division in society: the working class versus the ruling capitalist class. Nader's political perspective is that of his base of support, the middle-class layers caught in the middle of the class struggle and seeking to bridge the class divide. Thus Nader sought to unite America's classes with appeals to nationalism. He cited small business, not the working class, as the key to his economic perspective. His campaign did not even represent a break from the Democratic Party — as we will show, Nader's aim with his campaign was to either push the Democratic Party to the left to a more liberal program, or to begin to challenge the Democrats not with a working-class party but with a new liberal party. Moreover, his campaign was not a continuation of the activism sparked by the

success of Seattle — for example, he played no role in the protests against the Republican and Democratic Party conventions. His campaign was a diversion of potential mass struggle into the bourgeois electoral arena.

As the crisis of capitalism develops and working-class struggles intensify, future populist politicians will emerge claiming to be even more hostile to corporations and even more militant champions of democracy than Nader, only to similarly act to divert workers from a real struggle against the system. While Nader is openly pro-capitalist and even wants to save “American corporate capitalism from itself” (as his web site asserted), future populists will denounce capitalism and hail socialism. In this they will be aided by self-proclaimed socialists eager to jump on the bandwagon. That’s why it is important to expose not only the true nature of the Nader campaign but also the role of socialists who joined his campaign and vouched for its political worth.

NADER AND THE DEMOCRATS

According to Nader, the Democratic Party is “no longer the party of working families” since it is led by the Democratic Leadership Council of Clinton and Gore. Instead it has politically merged with the Republicans to become what he calls the “Republocrats.” Gone is the party whose “core principles” Nader repeatedly expresses his longing for, the Democratic Party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. Nader has based his whole career on winning mild reforms through his access to Congressional Democrats. Now he complains that access has dried up.

The Democratic Party was never a party of the workers; it has always been a party of capitalism. The “old” Democratic Party was not just the party of New Deal reforms but also of Southern racism and imperialist wars. Even its “reforms” were capitalistic: under Roosevelt in the 1930’s, the Democratic Party saved capitalism in the face of growing working-class struggles by locking the trade union bureaucracy into the bourgeois legal system and misdirecting the volatile class struggle into electoral politics. Nor was Roosevelt above using federal troops to break strikes, imprisoning socialists under the Smith Act and sending thousands of Japanese-Americans to concentration camps during World War II. Truman in the 1940’s won the world war by dropping the atomic bomb on Japanese civilians, started the imperialist war in Korea and initiated the persecution of left unionists and intellectuals that culminated in McCarthyism.

When the “new Democrats” Clinton and Gore starve Iraq, bomb Serbia, end welfare, tighten immigration controls and enforce the death penalty, they have not had to borrow from the Republicans. The Democratic Party has a full record of war, racism, imperialism and austerity of its own.

Nevertheless, Nader thinks he can prevent further Democratic crimes by reviving Democratic Party liberalism from the outside. The Green Party placed great pressure on its local affiliates not to run candidates where they could cost Democrats an election, and denounced some local Greens for doing just that. Nader went so far as to call press conferences to personally endorse a number of Democrats in Senate races. Following this lead, a web-site was

constructed by Nader supporters to facilitate a trade-off of votes between Gore and Nader supporters, whereby Nader voters would vote for Gore in contested states and Gore supporters would back Nader in “safe” Democratic areas.

As the race between Gore and Bush tightened, Nader was faced with the choice of either ending his campaign or threatening to take enough votes away from Gore to enable Bush to win. He continued, and thereby seemed to confirm his image as an intransigent opponent of the Democrats. But he explained that he supported the Democrats’ liberal wing and that his campaign aimed to get them elected. The Green campaign would mobilize and register many new voters, he argued, and once they had voted for him for president they would overwhelmingly vote for Democrats in local races and thus help the Democrats to win control of the Senate.

In particular, Nader celebrated the possibility of his campaign potentially helping to elect Democratic Party leader Dick Gephardt as Speaker of the House. According to the *Washington Post* (August 17):

Nader himself believes he may be more help than hindrance to the Democrats. If he can reach a fraction of the tens of millions of people who either don’t vote or back independent candidates, he would send a signal to the Democrats without handing Bush the White House. He also reckons the groundswell of support for the Greens may help the Democrats win back the House. People who did not turn out at the last election may vote for Nader as president, at the same time picking a Democratic candidate for House or Senate races. “Anyone who says I may cost Gore the election has to concede that I may put Gephardt back as speaker. That’s a nice prospect for the Democrats,” he says.

In another interview Nader claimed to have met with Gephardt and received his tacit approval:

It was clear from my meeting with Gephardt a few weeks ago that he is not displeased with this candidacy. [He’s looking at] a few close Congressional District races. A few thousand votes here and there, and he’s the speaker. That’s pretty important . . . (LA Weekly, June 30/July 6.)

That his campaign was only the latest effort to breathe life into the dead body of Democratic Party liberalism was best summarized by Nader in a contentious interview with Jesse Jackson. Nader declared: “Jesse, we are simply attempting to do from the outside what you failed to accomplish inside [the Democratic Party].”

NADER’S REACTIONARY NATIONALISM

Revolutionary socialists are dedicated to proletarian internationalism, the cause of uniting the world’s workers and oppressed peoples across national divisions against their national ruling classes. We fight nationalism as a reactionary ideology that ties the masses to their oppressors, suggesting they have more in common with the rulers of their respective countries than with their fellow workers across borders. Above all, in the heart of the bloodiest empire in history, we take every opportunity to defend peoples under assault from American imperialism.

For Nader, in contrast, it is nationalism that drives his

Marxism, Interracialism and the Black Struggle

A Proletarian Revolution pamphlet by Sy Landy

An overview of the Marxist understanding of revolutionary proletarian interracialism and the historical course of the U.S. Black struggle. The pamphlet discusses the idea of Black liberation through socialist revolution as the alternative to integrationism and nationalism, whose failure it analyzes in detail.

\$3.00 from: Socialist Voice Publishing Co., P.O. Box 769, New York, NY 10033.

opposition to "corporate globalization" and free trade agreements. So-called "globalization" and its associated deals are chiefly characterized by the extension of exploitation of the semi-colonial world by the imperialist powers, most prominently the U.S. The American capitalists are then able to intensify their exploitation of American workers by using the threat of competition from foreign or immigrant workers to lower wages and working conditions at home.

The solution to the capitalists' globalization attacks is a united struggle of workers internationally against imperialism. But pro-capitalist union bureaucrats anxious to avoid the class struggle push another strategy: protectionism. They prefer to unite with American bosses who fear losing out in international competition in a campaign for trade restrictions and the protection of American industry and American jobs. Thus steel bosses and the steelworkers union came together in a campaign against the importation of steel from China; and the Teamsters joined with local trucking companies in protesting Mexican truckers' transporting goods into the U.S. Auto companies and the United Auto Workers union have long engaged in Japan-bashing and anti-Asian campaigns.

Ralph Nader has joined this protectionist crew and added his own nationalist twist. His main reason for opposing the NAFTA treaty and international trade bodies like the World Trade Organization (WTO) is his concern for U.S. interests. Polite statements of concern for super-exploited workers in foreign lands aside, when Nader opposed NAFTA and GATT, he complained that these agreements compromised American sovereignty by subjecting the country to unelected foreign courts, and that the agreements would lead to the export of "American jobs" to foreign countries. In reality, it is American capitalism that dominates the world economy and demands cheap labor at home and abroad. The U.S. is hardly subject to foreigners: it subjects workers and even capitalists in the world's poor countries to its dictates.

In June, President Clinton violated the NAFTA trade deal by banning the entry of Mexican trucks into the U.S. A boon to U.S. truck company owners, Clinton's policy was an attack on Mexican workers, resulting in many layoffs. Nader celebrated the policy, saying it was the only way to protect American drivers from the threat of overloaded Mexican trucks driven by unqualified, poorly paid Mexican drivers. Nader would never dream of the alternative of supporting Mexican truck drivers' efforts to build strong unions and win better safety and working conditions. Nor could he imagine that American truck drivers are also forced to overload their trucks and work long hours that make them a danger on the roads.

Nader's America-first nationalism led him to strike a non-aggression pact with the openly racist, Hitler-admiring and homophobic Pat Buchanan — who split to the right from the Republicans to run his own campaign in the Reform Party. Nader and Buchanan indeed had a good deal in common: they agreed on opposing NAFTA for protectionist reasons, keeping China out of the WTO, banning Mexican truckers — and even supporting the partisan effort to impeach Clinton.

This unholy union was shown in a number of joint appearances. For example, Nader joined Buchanan in an internet chat sponsored by *Time* magazine in November 1999, where he was asked, "Mr. Nader, do you support Mr. Buchanan's presidential campaign?" Rather than express outrage at the suggestion that he would endorse such a reactionary, Nader allowed for the possibility: "Since I am going to decide whether to run early next year, I can't support any one at this point."

When asked whether his cooperation with Buchanan on trade issues was simply a practical bloc with someone who was really his enemy on major issues, Nader sharply condemned the suggestion. He declared: "Nonsense. We've discussed this for five years. We've held press conferences. And it's a cooperation of



Let nationalism bridge the class divide: the reformist left's Nader and the far-right's Pat Buchanan shook on it.

convictions that we must defend and improve our democracy so that we can agree to disagree freely."

In response to a questioner who asked about his criticism of corporations, Buchanan said:

Let me say that my criticism of American corporations is that so many of them are ceasing to be American in their outlook, in their interest and in their concern. They're turning their backs on their country, and their workers.

And Nader embellished Buchanan's claim:
About two years ago, I sent letters to some of the largest American corporations. I asked since they were born in the U.S., since they made their profits off the labors of American workers, since when they get in trouble they go to Washington for corporate bailouts by U.S. taxpayers, and when they get in trouble overseas they call the U.S. Marines, I suggested that these companies pledge allegiance to the American flag.

Nader and Buchanan wrap themselves in the American flag in order to tie U.S. workers to U.S. bosses. They are contemptuous of workers abroad and fear the possibility of working-class alliances across borders. Whether he likes it or not, the "anti-corporate" Nader promotes U.S. imperialism and with it the dominant U.S. corporations around the world.

Nader's flag-waving was not just verbal. At his "super-rallies" around the country, a huge American flag was on the stage backing him up — symbolic of the imperialism he defends.

DOUBLE-TALK ON FOREIGN POLICY

Nader's pro-imperialist nationalism is also clear in his immigration policy. At first glance his statements on the subject sound progressive. For example, he called for granting all immigrants full citizenship rights and de-criminalizing the border between Mexico and the U.S. He says that the U.S. should stop supporting dictatorships that drive workers to emigrate in a desperate search for jobs and freedom.

But on closer inspection, Nader's policy is just a touchy-feely liberal version of America-first anti-immigrant nationalism. Immigrant workers would be allowed entry only for "a short period of time," high-tech workers would be barred, with immigrants being allowed in only to perform work "that Americans don't want to do." (Speech in Oakland, Oct. 10.) Nader recognizes that this would necessitate a huge strengthening of U.S. borders. Contrary to his claims of favoring de-criminalization,

Nader's policy could only result in the super-criminalization of the borders — how else to keep "too many" immigrants out and to make sure those who get in will be doing the jobs "Americans" don't want?

Nader's insular nationalism also shows up in his refusal to comment on almost any issue of "foreign policy." He avoided taking a stand against U.S. imperialist attacks that took place during his campaign, like the bombing of Serbia or Clinton's sending a billion dollars in aid to the Colombian military to boost its struggle against left-wing guerrillas.

The one exception to this silence was the violent struggle between Israel and the Palestinian people. Nader spoke supportively of the Palestinians' right to their own state and sympathized with the Palestinians facing Israel's overwhelming superiority in arms. He also called for suspending U.S. aid to Israel.

But his actual position amounted to neutrality between oppressor and oppressed. He defended Israel's need for security and called on Israel to use "non-lethal force" — presumably to keep suppressing the Palestinians. (Speech in New York, Oct. 7.) The Palestinian state he supports is the subdivided Bantustan that Israel would agree to, since he supports the fake "peace process" designed to quell Palestinian unrest with minimal promises. Above all he welcomes the U.S.'s role as a power broker: the U.S. has the military and economic clout to "be a much more constructive leader," he said.

In the same vein, the Green Party declares its support for "international multilateral peacekeeping to stop aggression and genocide." Of course, the very imperialist forces who would do the "multilateral peacekeeping" with the Greens' approval are the biggest perpetrators of "aggression and genocide." That Nader and the Green's nationalism and support for "multilateral" imperialist military interventions means what it says can be seen in the example of the German Green Party. There they have joined the Social-Democratic government, and their leader Joschka Fischer was the foreign minister who oversaw Germany's part in the NATO bombing of Serbia.

NADER ON THE STRUGGLES OF THE OPPRESSED

Throughout his public life, Nader has stood aloof from struggles against racism, sexism and the oppression of gay people. In his presidential campaigns Nader has come under increasing pressure to take a stand on these issues.

During his 1996 campaign he obstinately refused to do so, at times saying that such issues are unimportant, distracting and divisive. At other times he expressed pure contempt for people's oppression, as when he derided struggles for women's and gay rights as "gonadal politics."

This campaign saw Nader dodging struggles against racism. At major speeches in Chicago and New York he left the subject unmentioned until it was raised by questioners in the audience. He has formal positions in favor of affirmative action and against

police brutality and the death penalty — in the abstract. But he says nothing against the threatened execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, framed as a "cop-killer" in Pennsylvania; nor did he oppose George W. Bush's execution of Shaka Sankofa in Texas during the campaign. His running mate, Winona LaDuke, does demand clemency for political prisoner Leonard Peltier, an American Indian Movement organizer who has been in federal prison for over 20 years.

At one press conference, Nader was asked by a Green Party member about the Sankofa, Abu-Jamal and Peltier cases. He refused to make any statement of support, explaining that there are many abuses of justice, and "There just isn't enough time to keep focusing in an important way on each one." Nader has the time to study the personal stories of white people who die in car crashes because of poor seat belts, but not the time to study and speak out when Black people are strapped down to be executed by the state! Liar! No wonder Nader's candidacy was largely ignored by Black and Latino voters.

Similarly, Nader has a formal position in favor of abortion rights for women. But when asked about the possibility of a Bush victory leading to a reconfigured Supreme Court that would overturn the Roe v. Wade decision, he dismissed the idea that abortion rights would ever be attacked, and complacently replied that if the Supreme Court did overturn abortion rights it would be no problem, since the issue would then be left to the states. Many state politicians, however, are eager to restrict or eliminate abortions; that was why abortion rights were fought for and won nationally a quarter-century ago.

What Nader overlooks is that social reforms and democratic rights are won by mass struggles. Abortion rights will be lost and the death penalty will not be stopped without mass actions — and that is exactly the point that should be made by a candidate claiming to run on "the spirit of Seattle."

In fact, throughout Nader's career he has pursued a legalist strategy of reforms, combining court cases with lobbying liberal politicians. He made his name in the 1960's with the book *Unsafe at Any Speed* that exposed dangerous design flaws in cars. Whatever the book's virtues, consider the timing. These were the years when tens of thousands of Black people were marching in the streets for civil rights and an end to Jim Crow segregation, facing police dogs, water cannon and gunfire — when hundreds of thousands were protesting the U.S.'s murderous war against Vietnam. And Ralph Nader wrote a book about unsafe cars! Throughout his career Nader has ignored every major social struggle — from Vietnam and Black Power, through U.S. imperialism in Central America and the Middle East, to the defense of abortion rights.

Nader contends that fights over Blacks' and women's rights can be "divisive." These are central issues of U.S. politics, and any leader who doesn't stand openly for them is appealing to reaction. Indeed, in his acceptance of the Green Party nomination in June, Nader openly courted conservative voters. An interviewer quoted him: "I always framed things as an appeal to traditional values. . . I was always careful to appeal to conservatives." Is it any wonder that he downplays the concerns of Blacks and women?

ISO: NADER'S LAWYERS ON THE LEFT

Given all this, how could groups that regard themselves as revolutionary and socialist endorse a U.S.-nationalist, pro-capitalist liberal whose methods of struggle are lawsuits and electoralism, not mass action?

The ISO followed a two-pronged strategy. In public, they covered up Nader's political warts, while in the relative privacy of their theoretical magazine they concocted Marxistist justifications for crossing the class line.

I Would Like More Information About the LRP/COFI

Name

Address

Send to:

LRP, P.O. Box 769,
Washington Bridge Station, NY 10033

The public face of the ISO's campaign — its leaflets, speeches, placards and the like — gave the Green Party candidate a hero's welcome. Take their brochure "Why You Should Support Ralph Nader for President." In addition to trotting out a list of Nader's progressive stances like curbing corporate excess and defending the environment, the brochure mildly criticized his "mistake" in not being more outspoken on racism. But it did not mention Nader's pro-capitalism or nationalism, and certainly didn't trouble the reader with the ISO's own belief in socialism.

In their newspaper readers were told a bit more: that Nader's campaign could be used to build an ongoing movement against a range of injustices and even for socialism. But *Socialist Worker's* references to socialist ideas were not counterposed to Nader's capitalist politics; they were presented as the best way to continue Nader's campaign — since Nader's own vision of social change was declared to be "limited."

The truly determined would find a "Marxist" critique of Nader's views and an explanation of how supporting Nader could further the cause of socialism in an article by Joel Geier in the ISO's theoretical magazine, *International Socialist Review* (August-September). Geier attempts to link the ISO's support for Nader with the Marxist tradition by inserting a quote from a letter by Frederick Engels to Friedrich Sorge, which condemned sectarian tendencies among U.S. socialists who were standing aside from the development of a workers' party.

ENGELS ON WORKING-CLASS INDEPENDENCE

Engels argued forcefully for active participation by socialists in the United Labor Party of New York, founded by the city's Central Labor Union, which was running the middle-class reformer Henry George for mayor in 1886. The CLU, New York's "parliament of labor," comprised two hundred unions representing tens of thousands of workers.

The most relevant portion of the Engels quote reads:

In a country that has newly entered the movement, the first really crucial step is the formation by the workers of an independent political party. That the first program of this party should be muddle-headed and extremely inadequate, and that it should have picked Henry George for its

figurehead, are unavoidable if transitory evils. The masses must have the time and the opportunity to evolve; and they will not get that opportunity until they have a movement of their own — no matter what its form, providing it is their own movement — in which they are impelled onwards by their own mistakes and learn by bitter experience. (November 29, 1886.)

Geier makes the leap of comparing the situation confronting Engels in 1886 with the 2000 election:

The new radicalization is the best hope for the revolutionary left in a generation. It would be self-destructive to find barriers or obstacles to support or involvement with this emerging movement. Yet it is easy to seize on some of the many real limitations of Nader, the Greens, or the current level of this new left as the excuse to stand aside. . . . The Nader campaign is but one transitory episode in the new radicalization.

The primary "limitation" of the Nader/Green campaign for Marxists, however, is that it was in no way what Engels called the crucial step: "the formation by the workers of an independent political party." Even Geier admits that "Though Nader addresses workers' concerns, he is not building or advocating a class party, nor is his appeal to workers that they should be a self-active class." That alone invalidates the Engels comparison.

While Engels' hostile attitude toward Henry George and his petty-bourgeois views was clear, the ISO acclaims Nader and downplays his "limitations." Moreover, Engels was writing at the dawn of the imperialist epoch, while today U.S. imperialism straddles the world. To cheerlead for a candidate who echoed the rotten American chauvinism of the pro-imperialist labor bureaucracy makes a travesty of Marxism.

While Engels regarded George's leadership as an "evil" that would prove "transitory" when the workers inevitably clashed with their petty-bourgeois leaders, Geier echoes the label "transitory" only to misrepresent where Nader's campaign was heading. He says of it:

Most significantly, it has opened up working-class politics. A few million workers and students have been won to the idea of a vote against corporate capitalism. It is raising the

"Third Parties" and Marxism: the Case of Henry Wallace

The most illuminating comparison to the Nader campaign is that of Progressive Party candidate Henry Wallace in 1948. The end of World War II had seen a massive upsurge of labor struggles and a desire to defend and extend gains won during the New Deal. With the support of many workers, and the backing of the then-prominent Communist Party, Wallace, who had been Vice President under Roosevelt, broke from the Democrats and challenged the emerging bipartisan Cold War policy. But the Progressive Party was a bourgeois party aimed at re-creating the New Deal coalition of labor and the bourgeoisie.

Even though Wallace's campaign enjoyed far more working-class support and association with class struggle than Nader's, revolutionaries at the time opposed it as a detour from the class struggle and a barrier to the development of independent class politics. Working-class support for Wallace and class collaborationist moods within the intelligentsia and labor aristocracy revealed themselves even among the Trotskyists in the U.S., the Socialist Workers Party. James Cannon, leader of the SWP, outlined clear reasons for not supporting this bourgeois candidacy. In words that today seem almost directed against socialists

supporting Nader, Cannon explained:

It has been argued that "we must go through the experience with the workers." That is a very good formula, provided you do not make it universal. We go with the workers only through those experiences which have a class nature. We go with them through the experiences of strikes, even though we may think a given strike untimely. We may even go with the workers through the experience of putting a reformist labor party in office, provided it is a real labor party and subject to certain pressures of the workers, in order that they may learn from their experience that reformism is not the correct program for the working class.

But we do not go through the experience of class collaboration with the workers. . . .

The party must be educated and re-educated on the meaning of class politics, which excludes any support of any bourgeois candidate, and requires even the most critical attitude toward a labor party when we are supporting it. ("Summary Speech on Election Policy," *SWP Internal Bulletin*, February 1948.)

question of an independent working-class party.

Geier says that even though Nader was not for working-class independence, his electoral campaign points in that direction. But he gives no evidence for this claim. In fact, the last time Joel Geier was involved in middle-class radical electoralism, the Peace and Freedom Party of 1968, that effort was transitory only to Gene McCarthy's run for the Democratic nomination, where the bulk of Peace and Freedom advocates ended up. Nader too has set the stage for himself or other liberals to lead yet another movement into the Democratic deathtrap.

Hostility toward petty-bourgeois leaders of workers' movements was also the trademark of Lenin and Trotsky, even when they advocated the tactic of critical support for non-revolutionary working-class parties. Lenin famously advocated support for a British Labour Party leader "the same way as the rope supports a hanged man" — to expose his betrayals to the workers and "accelerate [his] political death." Geier ignores this, as well as the history of non-working-class third parties in U.S. history.

CARRYING THE OLD BAGGAGE

The ISO itself is building not an independent working-class struggle but a base on middle-class college campuses. Sympathy in that milieu compelled them to support Nader. But as even Geier characterizes this new radicalization:

Like all previous radicalizations it begins with contradictory, even confused, consciousness. No new left emerges by immaculate conception with full-blown revolutionary socialist consciousness. The origin always is a peculiar mixture of liberal and conservative beliefs with radical ideas. The liberal-conservative ideas are baggage from the past. The radical ideas are incomplete, a jumble that arises from struggles that begin without worked-out political programs. They are the future of the movement, an alternative that is in the process of formation. These different strands of the consciousness cohabit in uneasy tension in the new radical mood.

Geier's method of analysis here is not Marxist and is downright dangerous. He describes progressive and reactionary ideas in the Seattle protests as if they were simply all mixed up in the mind of the average protester rather than promoted by distinct political and class forces. Mixed and contradictory consciousness exists, but there is also a clear struggle between forces representing progressive and reactionary sides of the struggle.

The Seattle events were important, but in reality there is no

reason to think they mark the development of a new mass anti-capitalist movement, a new left, or anything of the sort. Seattle was big because of the coincidence of various class interests. The desire of a genuinely developing new radical layer among a significant minority of college students to protest against the most extreme forms of capitalist power and greed coincided with the desire of union bureaucrats and other professional reformist liberals to march for nationalist protectionism.

The fact that the labor bureaucrats have run away from Seattle, and that subsequent protests in the U.S. were far smaller, is indicative of the problem. Radical youth tried to repeat the experience in Washington in April and against the Republican and Democratic conventions over the summer, but these actions were relatively small and dispirited.

To the extent that the conflict within the movement reflects a division between a new radicalism and an old conservatism, Nader and the Greens are part of the "baggage from the past," the more conservative section of the movement which try to conservatize and derail it further. Supporting Nader's candidacy only contributes to that process.

THE LOGIC OF LIBERALISM

The absence of a challenge to the Democratic Party from the left allowed the ISO previously to sit out U.S. elections, refusing to vote for the Democratic Party and instead propagating socialism and building "the movement" of the day. Backing a liberal candidate like Nader is a significant step for the ISO, comparable to a recovering alcoholic breaking down and having "just one drink" — it will inevitably lead to a binge of opportunist tailing of middle-class reformists.

Joining a liberal campaign was only the logical conclusion of the ISO's political evolution. Always looking to water down their socialism to a form palatable to their campus audience, the ISO has long toyed with liberalism. It has raised populist slogans condemning "corporate greed" rather than capitalism, and advocated mindless liberal aims like "People Before Profits."

Any movement that such methods build is easily taken over by pro-capitalist politicians who can readily echo the same sentiments in order to keep the movement within limits the system can tolerate — just as the Nader campaign effortlessly married the same slogans to electoralism, pro-capitalism and nationalism. Geier states: "Forced beyond liberalism, Nader now champions the historic American left tradition, populism." How Nader's populism differs from liberalism is anyone's guess, for Geier certainly doesn't explain it. If it were true, someone should tell Ralph Nader, who hasn't spoken of breaking from liberalism.

At various points the ISO complained that Nader doesn't take his anti-corporate politics to their "logical" socialist conclusion, or his anti-Democratic Party politics to the "logical" conclusion of building a working-class party. This is the essence of what's wrong with the ISO's politics. If socialism is the logical result of liberalism, building the socialist party of the future requires no fundamental break with Naderism; socialists just have to be the most consistent and effective Naderites. Seeing liberalism, populism and electoral reformism as logical roads to socialism, the ISO supports them as "next steps" that can be taken now. In sharp contrast, in this epoch of imperialism Lenin and Trotsky regarded reformism — and bourgeois liberalism all the more so — as *counterrevolutionary*, not limited forms of progressivism.

But while the ISO hopes to use campaigns like Nader's to build themselves and "the movement," the bourgeois campaigns are actually using them. The real role of the ISO is to build up misleaderships for the working class which can entrap future class struggles and lead them to defeat. That is the true logic of socialist support for Nader. ●

LRP vs. ISO:

Authentic Working-Class Trotskyism vs. Middle-Class Opportunism

Includes articles from *Proletarian Revolution*.

- ISO vs. SWP: Who's More Opportunist? (2000)
- New Twists on Old Theories of the USSR (1986)
- Unresolved Contradictions of Tony Cliff (1985)
- Women & the Family: The Ties That Bind (1989)
- ISO Polices the Left (1995)
- ISO's Right Turn to Labor (1996)
- Australia: Wharfies Betrayed (1998)
- Chicago Moratorium Debate (1999)
- Surviving the ISO (1999)

Send check for \$2 to:

S.V. Publishing

P.O. Box 769, Washington Bridge Station, NY, 10033

Racism Rules ...

continued from page 1

decided to support the Congressional Black Caucus's challenge to Florida's electors. Of course, the Black Caucus members will show the limits to *their* principles by sticking with the Democratic Party that once again betrayed their constituents.

MARXIST VIEW OF THE CAPITALIST STATE

In dramatic fashion, the electoral farce has affirmed the Marxist understanding that bourgeois democracy masks the dictatorship of the capitalist class over the workers. While the contests between Democrats and Republicans reflect differences within the ruling class, the two parties are united in defending the interests of the capitalist bosses at the expense of the working class.

As working-class socialists, we supported no bourgeois side in this election. Voting for Democrats or Republicans means supporting both parties' attacks against the working class and especially its most oppressed layers.

Moreover, the interests of the working class cannot be won through elections. The working class cannot gain state power through elections. Even when working-class or "socialist" parties are voted into office, the state remains capitalist as the bourgeoisie retains control over the apparatus of repression — the army, courts, police, etc. A fight for the real interests of workers requires mass struggle to smash the capitalist state. It means the building of a revolutionary party to lead the fight for socialist revolution and the creation of a workers state based on proletarian democracy.

For all the heat generated by the competing parties in the post-election squabbling, for weeks the wiser heads in the ruling class were able to treat the whole affair with relative detachment: in the end it did not really much matter to them who won. Compare 1992: then, Bush the Elder's inability to soothe the anger that sparked the Los Angeles "riot" drove ruling-class opinion to Clinton's side. This time the bourgeoisie saw no immediate cause for worry, and neither candidate stood out as a significantly better bet for the capitalists. That is a major reason for the near-tie vote.

The electoral standoff could only have taken place because of the low level of organized class struggle on the U.S. scene — along with the absence of any powerful challenger to America's predominant imperialist position. Had the bourgeoisie felt that their state power was in any way threatened, cooler heads would have prevailed and compelled one or another of the contenders to concede without further fight. But they figured their Jacksons and Sweeneys would be enough of a border guard against unrest.

Bourgeois democracy in reality means the dictatorship of the capitalist class over the working class and all oppressed peoples, with only the slightest veneer of mass participation. The "democracy" so proudly hailed in the U.S. keeps elections safe for capitalism by insuring that only the super-rich and those backed by giant corporations get to compete. And when that isn't enough, the state authority steps in with methods lawful and unlawful.

Both bourgeois parties violate their own election laws and engage in obscene spending orgies to win office. In the 1996 presidential race, Clinton and Gore beat the Republican crooks at their own game, breaking laws that would get any ordinary government worker fired in a second. In contrast, Teamsters president Ron Carey was booted from office for electoral improprieties (involving illegal funds going to the Clinton campaign) that pale in comparison.

This year Florida revealed how the electoral machinery down to the grassroots level is controlled by flunkies from both parties. Across the country, Democrats and Republicans in every state control the ballots, the vote counting process, registration, the



Jesse Jackson promised no compromise and mass protest, but soon offered Bush cooperation and avoided DC inauguration protests.

ability to get on the ballot, etc. Gore and the Democrats worked hand-in-hand with the Republicans to keep Ralph Nader out of the televised presidential debates. In Democratic-controlled districts, they screw Republicans, and the Republicans do the same where they rule. And they join together to screw everyone else.

DEMOCRATS SELL OUT THEIR VOTERS

Thanks to the dogfight in Florida, the corrupt nature of the U.S. electoral system has been bared before the eyes of the working class here and internationally. The evidence points to the conclusion that Gore would have won Florida and the presidency if all who tried to vote had been allowed to do so and had their votes counted. But the Democrats ignored the fact that tens of thousands were denied the vote, concentrating only on voters whose votes never got counted.

Gore, like Bush, is a loyal member — and servant — of the capitalist class. But the Democrats, unlike the Republicans, rest on a base of Black voters and organized labor. That is why Gore had to be more careful than Bush in waging the post-electoral battle — mobilizing his constituencies can easily get "out of control" and encourage struggles that will threaten the capitalist system. Thus Republicans could organize a "bourgeois riot" by their hired operatives to stop the recount in Miami. But the Democrats had to ensure that their protests were first peaceful and then non-existent.

This sellout was nothing new. The Democratic Party under Clinton and Gore has taken the side of the bosses and racists against the workers and the oppressed in myriad ways — welfare "reform," NAFTA, the health care debacle, the "three strikes" crime bill, new anti-immigrant laws, keeping the U.S. military in Puerto Rico, doubling the prison population, the "effective death penalty" act and putting even more cops on the street to intimidate people of color and the poor. It is not only "Governor Death" Bush who has committed murder in the name of the death penalty; Gore, like Clinton, also championed state killing as he challenged Bush for the racist law-and-order vote.

The unquestioning support of the Democrats by labor leaders as well as Black and Latino leaders is exactly the reason Clinton/Gore have gotten away with all of their attacks on workers and oppressed peoples. For all the reactionary rhetoric of Reagan and Bush the First, even they never dared to dismantle the welfare system and impose "workfare" to undermine union jobs. They feared the protests that such moves would unleash. But Clinton got away with it because the leaders of the mass organizations were committed to supporting him for re-election no matter what — and

therefore committed to preventing mass action. Far from being the "lesser evil" for workers, for the past eight years the Democrats have been the greater evil that was capable of forcing anti-worker attacks down our throats.

The crimes of the Clinton administration extend far beyond attacks on workers in the U.S. They have repeatedly used the repressive might of both the U.S. military and economic dominance to bully nations all over the world. They have bombed Serbia, Iraq, the Sudan and Afghanistan. The embargo on Iraq alone has resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths. IMF domination of economies in Latin America, Asia and Africa is deadly to workers and oppressed peoples.

GORE AND THE BLACK VOTE

Given the unappealing choices available, half the electorate remains too disgusted or demoralized to bother voting at all. But this year 51 percent of eligible Blacks voted, up from 48 percent last time. Many Black people who had never voted before went to the polls this time, believing they had a real stake in this election.

Why is this? With the supposed economic "boom" now fraying at the edges, many Black people — both working-class and better-off — are becoming aware that their economic and political gains are precarious in this racist society. And the rabid impeachment campaign against Clinton impelled by the far-right-led Congress in 1998 made the Republicans look even more threatening to Black rights. There was also a concerted registration drive by Democratic strategists, who saw that Blacks would be the most reliable voting base for Gore. Special efforts were made in key states like Florida.

Nationwide 90 percent of Black voters chose Gore, as did 63 percent of Latinos and 62 percent of union members. (The latter figure is due to the 25 percent Black and the growing Latino presence in the unions, since only a bare majority of white unionists went for Gore.) Non-union white workers who voted, as far as can be determined, preferred Bush by a small margin.

In Florida, 94 percent of Black voters supported Gore. The Black turnout leaped from 10 percent of all voters in 1996 to 16 percent — an increase of 350,000. (Blacks are 13 percent of the voting-age population.) A top reason was anger at Governor Jeb Bush, who had moved to end affirmative action in the state. Last March, 50,000 people rallied against Bush's moves, the largest civil rights protest in Florida history.

But because of the racist exclusions, 16 percent of the ballots cast in majority-Black Florida precincts were thrown out, more than twice the percentage thrown out from white precincts. Worst was Duval County, which contains the city of Jacksonville and a large poor and working-class Black population: in some Black precincts there, 30 percent of ballots were excluded.

Ironically, Gore's failure to win Florida decisively was the fault not just of vote fraud (or of Ralph Nader, as some Democrats claim), but of the racist "law and order" policies strengthened by the Clinton/Gore administration. Florida is one of nine states that bar convicted felons from voting for life; this law permanently disenfranchises about 14 percent of Florida's Black residents, 31 percent of the state's Black men. Tens of thousands of Blacks in Florida who might have voted for Gore were barred from the polls because Clinton/Gore policies put them in jail.

Racism Still Rules the Constitution

Gore won the national popular vote by about half a million, while Bush was awarded a majority of the Electoral College that actually elects the president. This contradiction brings out the built-in anti-democratic structure inscribed in the U.S. constitution, of which the Electoral College is not even the worst.

From the beginning, voting qualifications and procedures have been a matter of states' rights. Not only did most states limit voting to white men who owned property; some states even required voters to belong to a particular religious group. The system has only conceded voting rights to masses as a result of struggles. In Rhode Island, one of the last states to grant the right to vote to all white males, it took an armed attack on the state capital before universal white male suffrage was enacted. Black males only gained the right to vote with the Fifteenth Amendment, added to the Constitution in 1870, while women gained full voting rights in 1920 with the 19th Amendment. Nevertheless, Blacks were denied the vote through Jim Crow laws and Ku Klux Klan terror. Even with the legal gains in the 1960's as a result of the mass Civil Rights struggle, intimidation continues — as Florida demonstrates.

The Electoral College was initially established for two reasons. One was to add voting strength to the Southern slave states: Black slaves counted as "three-fifths of a man" for the purpose of apportioning representatives, even though they counted not at all for voting or any other civil rights. Another reason was to insert an elite layer between the popular vote and the presidency — hence the Supreme Court's "no right of suffrage." In theory at least, whatever the popular vote, the electors can overturn the wishes of their constituents, as actually happened more than once in the 19th century.

The three-fifths rule increased the South's strength in the House of Representatives and lasted until the Civil War. The U.S. Senate is biased even more grossly: each state, no matter

how small, gets two senators. This imbalance is carried into the Electoral College, since the states get as many electors as they have senators and representatives together.

The effect this has on presidential elections is complicated. First, since most states require a block vote — that is, all the state's electoral votes go to the winning candidate even if that candidate won by a narrow margin — a big margin in one state means no more than tiny margins in other states; Gore's 1.5 million vote lead in New York, for example, could not overcome a deficit of a few hundred in Florida. A candidate who wins narrowly in many states but loses by larger margins in a few big states (as Bush did) can thus become the legal winner.

Second, the College is weighted in favor of small-population states, since it incorporates the Senate's inequality, even though today the House is apportioned according to population. That tilts the balance of power away from urban states where Blacks and the working class generally are strong, towards the whiter, more rural states. Given that abolishing the Electoral College requires a constitutional amendment, which means ratification by three-quarters of the states, this institution will not be altered peacefully while racism rules in the U.S. It will take a massive upheaval for the bourgeoisie to surrender so useful a tool.

The last time a presidential election was so close in the Electoral College was in 1876. Republican Rutherford Hayes was handed the White House after a deal with the Democrats that promised the white rulers of the Southern states that the last of the Civil War Union troops would be withdrawn from the South, so that the rights that Blacks gained during the revolutionary post-war Reconstruction period could be taken away. The whole history of Jim Crow laws, and the racist brutality that went with them was built on the 1876 precedent.

It is absolutely characteristic of U.S. "democracy" that the 2000 election also turned on the disenfranchisement of Blacks. ●

Tragically, many Black workers, as well as Latino and white, were misled into supporting Gore despite the fact that he represents the enemy class — as the Democratic Party's record demonstrates. The Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) that Gore, Clinton and Lieberman all belong to has turned the Democratic Party to the right and downplayed even mild reforms against racial injustice along with its assaults against the working class.

In this election, the DLC aimed to recapture the once solidly Democratic racist vote in the South, but this strategy failed miserably: Gore won not a single Southern state outside of Florida. The regions Gore won nationally are the strongholds of the working class and above all of Blacks. Indeed, it is only the Black vote that keeps the Democratic Party alive on a national level. Rarely have so many been betrayed by so few.

BREAK FROM THE DEMOCRATS!

The bourgeoisie's electoral crisis highlights the crisis of leadership facing the working class. It is a crime that the leaders of our class allowed thousands of workers' votes to be stolen without mobilizing massive outrage. Workers now face threats from both ruling-class parties as Bush continues Clinton's assault on the most vulnerable layers of our class. Bush is likely also to look for a military intervention abroad, in an effort to gain the "legitimacy" he couldn't win in the election. The liberals, with their party out of power, will adopt a leftish posture and claim that the only way to stop Bush's attacks is to vote Democratic in 2002. This will be the stock answer of union bureaucrats, community leaders and the like, when they are looking to avoid real struggles. It will be a central task of revolutionaries to try to guide struggles away from the Democratic Party electoral trap and toward mass confrontation with the ruling class.

Many Black and Latino workers understand that the outright fraud in the 2000 election was not an aberration but was inherent in a racist, undemocratic system. Certainly white workers also developed greater contempt for the whole process, but far too few opposed the racist exclusions.

Capitalism is a decadent system that offers no future for workers of any color. Black workers in this country, already pushed to the wall by racist and class attacks, have the capacity to play a leading role in the development of communist consciousness in our class. The fact that racism and exploitation are so interrelated makes it necessary and possible for this consciousness to develop, and it will if a vanguard takes the lead.

A key step would be a sharp break from sellouts like Jesse Jackson and a turn toward massive explosive action like general strikes against the capitalist attacks. In Los Angeles in 1992, when pro-capitalist misleaders like Jackson and Minister Farrakhan tried to quell the rebellion, they were disregarded by the masses, led in large part by youth. Had there been even a small revolutionary nucleus on the scene in Florida, there would have been a real chance for mass action linking the disenfranchisement of American Blacks, Haitians and Puerto Ricans to the overall attacks on the oppressed and the working class.

THE WORKERS' PARTY WE NEED

There was no choice for workers in this election. As our accompanying article on the Ralph Nader campaign shows, a third bourgeois party is no answer either. But there was also no revolutionary party to offer a real alternative.

In going to the voting booth in greater numbers, Black workers recognized that a political answer is necessary to the growing threats. That they, along with other workers, could be misled again into the Democratic Party trap is the responsibility of the misleaders of all colors who teach that workers have no power and must rely on either benevolent saviors or so-called lesser evils.

Likewise, the many Black, Latino and white workers who sneer at the capitalist parties and therefore the voting booth who have found no real answer to powerlessness and desperation. Political attacks from the ruling class do require a political response. Unless we form a working-class political party we are accepting the rule of the capitalist parties.

Workers and all people of color do have a stake in the struggle for democratic rights, including the right to vote. While the working class cannot attain power through bourgeois-democratic means, working people must make use of democratic rights under capitalism to build their own organizations of struggle: the trade unions, organizations of the oppressed — and most of all, the revolutionary party. Revolutionaries always join our brothers and sisters in struggles to defend democratic rights. In doing so we point to the ability of the working class to bring down this wretched system of exploitation, oppression and sham democracy. It is vital therefore that revolutionary workers and youth join protests like the counter-inaugural rallies in Washington this January 20 — both to challenge the electoral fraud and to fight the illusions in the out-of-power Democratic Party that the demonstration leaders will inevitably push.

The working class needs a political alternative that meets the needs of our class and a strategy based on our class's power. Our strength is not in the bourgeoisie's elections but in collective struggle. Most essentially it is in the power of the working class to run the economy and to shut the profit-making system down. We need a workers' party that can offer leadership to every struggle in order to win workers and the oppressed to revolutionary consciousness. Such a party will be dedicated to overthrowing both the capitalist economic system and the state that defends it. It will be a revolutionary socialist vanguard party of the working class.

Masses of workers and the oppressed will not join such a party today. But small numbers of workers and youth already see the need to get rid of capitalism; they must begin to build such a party now. The League for the Revolutionary Party fights for this goal today. More must join us if we are to win greater numbers of workers and youth to our banner tomorrow. ●

*Down with the Democrats and Republicans,
Two Parties of Racism, Austerity, Imperialism and War!
Smash Racism through Socialist Revolution!
Build the Revolutionary Party of the Working Class!*

Subscribe to Proletarian Revolution ...

\$7.00 for eight issues

Begin with Issue No. _____

... and get a free sample issue for a friend!

Your name

Friend's name

Address

Address

Pay to: *SV Publishing*, P.O. Box 769, New York, NY 10033, USA

Publications of COFI

Communist Organization for the Fourth International

Proletarian Revolution

Organ of the League for the Revolutionary Party (U.S.)

\$1 per issue; \$7 for eight issues,
\$15 for institutions or airmail

The Life and Death of Stalinism: A Resurrection of Marxist Theory

The definitive analysis of Marx's theory of capitalism
and the statified capitalism of the Stalinist countries.
by Walter Daum \$15.00

Marxism, Interracialism and the Black Struggle

Black liberation through class struggle as the
alternative to the failures of integrationism and
nationalism.

by Sy Landy \$3.00

Pamphlets

Fight Police Terror!

No Support to Capitalism's Racist Anti-Worker
Police! by Evelyn Kaye \$1.00

South Africa and Proletarian Revolution
by Matthew Richardson. \$3.00

**The Democratic Party: Graveyard of Black
Struggles** by Sy Landy \$2.00

**Armed Self-Defense and the Revolutionary
Program** by Matthew Richardson 75¢

"No Draft" Is No Answer!
The Communist Position on Imperialist War \$1.00

**The New "Labor Party": Democratic Party
Advocates?** by Bob Wolfe \$1.00

**Propaganda and Agitation in Building the
Revolutionary Party** by Matthew Richardson 50¢

The Specter of Economic Collapse

Articles from *Proletarian Revolution*, 1983-1999
by Arthur Rymer \$2.00

Haiti and Permanent Revolution
by Eric Nacar \$2.00

**Bolivia: the Revolution
the "Fourth International" Betrayed**
Articles by the Vern-Ryan Tendency \$1.00

**Permanent Revolution and Postwar Stalinism:
Two Views on the "Russian Question"**
Documents by Chris Bailey of the British WRP
and Walter Daum and Sy Landy of the LRP. \$3.00

What's Behind the War on Women?
by Evelyn Kaye. 50¢

Twenty Years of the LRP by Sy Landy,
plus COFI Political Resolution 75¢

Australia: League Press, P.O. Box 578, Carlton South, Vic. 3053
Germany: KOVI-BRD, c/o Buchladen 'Le Sabot', Breitestr. 76, 53111 Bonn
U.S.: SV Publishing Co., P.O. Box 769, New York, NY 10033

LRP/COFI Report

continued from page 2

bounds of the CTU. We urge interested readers in the Chicago area to get in touch with us.

POLICE BRUTALITY

LRPers in New York, Chicago and Washington were active in several actions against police brutality, in defense of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and in defense of immigrant rights.

In Minneapolis last July, an LRPer spoke at a rally against police violence, emphasizing the need to challenge the existing leaderships of the working class, like the unions, to organize a defense. In the process of such struggles an alternative can be built. The bulk of the left in Minneapolis, as elsewhere, remains uninterested in criticizing the union and community leaders for their inaction. The lack of mass mobilization has allowed the police to continue their above-the-law rampage unhindered.

A recent horror in Minneapolis was the murder of Alfred "Abuka" Sanders, a Black community activist who participated in protests in defense of Mumia. He was shot at 35 times after cops stopped him in an alleyway — after being chased for driving "erratically." We will continue to join in all possible actions protesting police atrocities to fight for strategies by which the working class and oppressed peoples can best defend themselves.

COFI/GERMANY

Sy Landy, National Secretary of the LRP, visited Germany in June. He held initial discussions with a number of comrades coming out of the Pabloite and Cliffite milieus. Unfortunately, the planned meeting between COFI and the Ukrainian Revolutsiyna Robitnycha Organyzatsiya (Revolutionary Workers Organization) fell through and had to be re-scheduled. See PR 61 for a contribution by the RWO.

Our German COFI representative intervened at several anti-fascist demonstrations last year. COFI's leaflet (see our website or write to us for it) pointed out that while it was necessary to confront fascists on the streets today, smashing fascism definitively requires a class-conscious working-class solution.

A new issue of *KOVI-Dokumente* is out. See the ad below.

INTERNATIONAL DEBATE ABORTED

In August, two LRP comrades traveled to São Paulo, Brazil. The Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI; Internationalist Bolshevik League) of Brazil and the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR; Revolutionary Workers' Party) of Argentina had issued a call for an international debate to include the "Russian question" and the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The LRP responded with an article in their *Tribune of Debates* (see our website). We pointed out that both organizations regard themselves as Trotskyist but hold the "orthodox" Pabloite view that the Stalinist states were workers' states, which implies that socialist revolutions can be made without the working class and without a revolutionary workers' party. This theory not only relies on a false historical view about the Stalinist takeovers after World War II; it also invites dangerous capitulations in the struggles facing the working class and oppressed today. (See "Was Trotsky a Pabloite" in SV 3 or on our website for more on Pabloism.)

Neither the LBI nor the POR sees any need for a class analysis of the degeneration of the Fourth International. Nor do they question the false conceptions held in common by the family of pseudo-Trotskyism today. Nevertheless, we welcomed the opportunity to debate, since both groups had broken to the left

from their predecessors.

Despite the fact that the LBI and the POR had been planning these discussions for two years, at the last minute their inability to resolve a fight over a secondary question forced the cancellation of the planned conference. We held discussions with members of each group, but the abandonment of the conference signaled their willingness to put petty organizational interests and secondary questions ahead of serious political debate. Neither group has come to grips with the failure of the conference and their approach to international work.

The LBI went so far as to completely falsify the content of their discussions with us. For example, they stated "For the LRP, the USSR was transformed into a capitalist country at the beginning of the 1930's, but after World War II converted itself into a 'social-imperialist' country. (See *Luta Operária*, Sept. 2000, on their website at www.lbi.com.br.) As anyone who is familiar with the LRP at all would know, we do not believe that the USSR became capitalist at the beginning of the 1930's. In fact we have attacked that position, put forward by Cliff, which in effect attributes giant gains of the workers' state to capitalism.

Nor do we ever say that the USSR was "social-imperialist." By attributing this term to us, the LBI seeks to back up their lie that "the LRP faithfully reproduces the old Maoist thesis." In reality we have always analyzed the USSR's imperialism as particularly weak — in contrast to Mao's theory, which justified China's alliance with U.S. imperialism.

Another cheap lie: on Cuba, the LBI accuses us of "theoretical ignorance and opportunism in the face of Yankee petty-bourgeois pressures" — on the grounds that we allegedly say that the USSR exploited its satellites just as the U.S. exploits Latin America. In fact we have explained how and why the USSR subsidized rather than exploited Cuba (see PR 39). And despite Yankee pressure, we have always defended Cuba against U.S. imperialism.

The LBI's inability to deal with our actual view reflects the collapse of their "deformed workers' state" theory, which was unable to foresee the fall of Stalinism. No group in the Pabloite milieu, who all believe that these countries were workers' states until the early 90's, has been able to avoid the inherent reformism in the notion that a return to capitalism has occurred without violent counterrevolution.

Readers interested in the LRP's analysis can check our website or our book, *The Life and Death of Stalinism*. ●

KOVI-Dokumente V (Dezember 2000)

Kommunistische Organisation für die Vierte Internationale

- Das Verhältnis der Arbeiterklasse zur Pressefreiheit (L. Trotzki)
- Wider die Verblödung: Antifaschismus ist kein Spielball der herrschenden Klasse! (Helmut Grimm)
- Krise in der 'Internationaler Sozialismus-Tendenz' (SWP-GB, ISO-USA, Linksruck) (Matthew Richardson)
- Sieg der palästinensischen Intifada!
- Antisemitismus und Zionismus: Produkte des Imperialismus
- Antwort auf Oleg Schejín zu Tschetschenien (Gemeinsame Erklärung der KOVI und der 'Revolutionären Arbeiterorganisation der Ukraine')
- KOVI-BRD Flugblatt zum Naziaufmarsch in Siegburg am 2.9. Preis: DM 2,50 (plus Porto)

KOVI-BRD c/o Buchladen 'Le Sabot', Breitestr. 76, 53111 Bonn
E-Mail: KOVI.BRD@t-online.de
KOVI-website: http://www.lrp-cofi.org/KOVI_BRD

Intifada ...

continued from page 16

“protection” to choke in isolation and economic backwardness.

CLINTON'S LAST MANEUVER

To prevent the struggle from widening in this key region, outgoing President Bill Clinton has worked to render his final services to U.S. imperialism by presenting the Palestinians with an offer he thinks they cannot refuse. While superficially more generous than anything ever promised under the Oslo framework, it remains a recipe for dispossession.

With the acquiescence of a kept press, the U.S. government has portrayed the offer as representing 95 percent of the post-1967 occupied territories. In fact, it allows for a drastic expansion of the boundaries of Jerusalem, Israeli “buffer zones” and other exceptions, so that the areas remaining under Israeli control will amount to 35 percent of the West Bank. In all, the proposed Palestinian mini-state will amount to only 15 percent of Palestine as a whole.

Israel would keep control over international borders, gradually ceding to an “international” force that would include Israeli troops. The Palestinian “state” would be armed only to the extent necessary to suppress its own populace, next door to the most heavily armed state in the Middle East. Such “sovereignty” and “statehood” is farcical at best.

REFUGEES ABANDONED

Most contemptibly, Clinton's plan denies the right of return to the majority of the millions Palestinian refugees in nearby Arab states. Only a token few would be allowed to return to land and homes under Israeli control, while more would be allowed to resettle in a Palestinian statelet already full of impoverished refugee camps. Most would allegedly be “absorbed” into the countries where they are now held hostage — and which have disenfranchised, exploited, scapegoated and oppressed them for nearly half a century.

The motivating force behind this plan is the racist fear by the Israelis of the so-called “demographic problem,” a problem that was “solved” in the 1948 “War of Independence” through a massive campaign of murders and expulsions, ethnic cleansing on a grand scale. To preserve the “Jewish character” of the Israeli state and minimize the risks associated with Palestinian uprisings, a Jewish majority must be guaranteed, within both the boundaries

of Israel itself and Palestine as a whole. For the sake of this racial and religious supremacism, millions of Palestinians are to remain dispossessed with the seal of approval of U.S. imperialism.

Instead of the grand compromise and supreme peace offering it is portrayed as, Clinton's plan is what can be expected from imperialists: an insult to Palestinian self-determination, a death-trap in the guise of a state. Yet this is not enough for the Israelis. Prime Minister Ehud Barak, facing a tough re-election campaign against Sharon, has insisted on further concessions by the Palestinians.

Rather than reject Clinton's offer outright, Arafat has responded with a “yes, but” and posed five “reservations,” mostly for clarification. Only on the right of return did Arafat object to Clinton's proposals. The intensity of the Intifada has made it impossible for Arafat to immediately accept Clinton's proposed satrapy, but his subservience to his imperialist masters remains clear.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM

The central problem is not one plan or another. All these agreements and treaties have been symptoms of the basic problem, the dispossession of the Palestinian people as a whole and the denial of their right to self-determination. Zionism, Israeli nationalism, relies on the assertion by force that only Jews have national rights in Palestine. Self-determination for the Palestinians would require the right of exiled Palestinians to return to their homeland, and for refugees both inside and outside of Palestine to return to their homes. It would entail the elimination of the state of Israel as a separate Jewish state, defined by its religious and racial exclusiveness, in favor of a single united Palestine with democratic rights for all its citizens.

To achieve this goal requires an anti-imperialist struggle, since Israel is a heavily subsidized, heavily armed outpost for the United States serving to help repress mass struggles. It has played this role well repeatedly, as during the 1970 “Black September” massacre in which the Israeli Mossad helped prop up the Jordanian monarchy against a mass uprising. Thus the struggle demands working-class leadership and a genuine socialist solution.

NATIONALISM NO ANSWER

In contrast to this is the repeated willingness of the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships of the Palestinians to betray even their own limited nationalist program. As early as 1988, at the height of the last Intifada, Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization signaled, by renouncing its former program for a democratic secular state in all of Palestine, that it was prepared to come to some kind of accommodation with Israel and its U.S. backers. The Oslo agreement and the present slaughter resulting from it are just the latest in a long string of betrayals, going back as far as the Black September uprising, which the PLO's armed groups refused to support on the grounds of non-interference in the affairs of a “brother” Arab regime.

The fact that Arafat, after years of taking marching orders from the U.S., has reluctantly changed tack is due solely to the action and determination of the Palestinian masses. Elements of his own Fatah movement, once the dominant faction in the now-defunct PLO, have spoken with fear of the possibility of civil war should Arafat disregard the masses' anger and try to patch things up with Israel.

Today, Islamist groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

Vol. 7, No. 4

From Syndicalism to Trotskyism: Writings of Alfred and Marguerite Rosmer

252 pp. £6.95 plus postage (Europe £2.00; USA \$4.00 air, £2.00 surface; other rates on request).

Order from: Socialist Platform Ltd, BCM Box 7646, London WC1N 3XX, United Kingdom.

www.revolutionary-history.co.uk

Lebanese Hezbollah pose as an alternate leadership to Arafat's Fatah. With acts of individual and small-group heroics (suicide bombings, guerrilla attacks on Israeli troops, and kidnappings) they can appear to be striking blows against the Israeli oppressor. But their elitist strategy is no substitute for the action of masses. They choose terrorism as a pressure tactic on the imperialists rather than mass self-defense of the workers and oppressed. Their reactionary program offers no solution to the plagues of unemployment and misery afflicting the Palestinian workers, and promises only heightened sectarian divisions which can only serve the interests of the Israelis and the imperialists.

Nor can pan-Arab nationalism provide a solution: it also remains within a bourgeois framework. The venality of the Arab bourgeoisie and its various regimes was shown in the recent "emergency" summit of the Arab League, which fulminated loudly against Israel's latest atrocities but committed itself to no action whatsoever, as well as in the pressure on Arafat by the monarchs and autocrats of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to accept Clinton's machinations. Promises of even the most elementary material aid to the Palestinians, such as medical supplies, have been minimal, let alone offers of military aid. The rulers of the Arab world are terrified of their own people, who are brutally oppressed and subject to superexploitation at the behest of the imperialist powers which the various regimes serve as clients.

THE WORKING-CLASS SOLUTION

Against the Goliath of Israeli military might and its U.S. backing (over \$5 million per day in military aid alone), we need not more Palestinian Davids but a revolutionary army. Instead of cheering for elitist bands of Islamist guerrillas, relying on quisling PNA police in league with the CIA, or waiting for the corrupt bourgeois Arab regimes to arm the masses, the Arab masses will have to arm themselves and make use of their power as workers to organize the struggle against Zionism.

Ten years ago, general strike action during the last Intifada united Arab workers throughout Palestine. Since then the Israelis have consciously implemented a policy of reducing their reliance on Arab labor. Israel imports thousands of immigrant workers from non-Arab countries, resulting in increased unemployment both for Israeli Arabs, at about 30 percent, and for those in the West Bank and Gaza, at 50-70 percent. Nevertheless, with no stake in the capitalist system that rests on the oppression of the masses, the working class remains the only force capable of leading the Palestinian people in a victorious struggle for national freedom.

Moreover, on a regional level, the working class as a whole remains very powerful, from the many-millioned mass of Egypt's workers to the brutally superexploited migrants in the oil fields of Arabia. Any proletarian uprising in the Middle East would threaten U.S. hegemony over the world's oil supply and would therefore face imperialist intervention, both from the U.S. directly and from Israel. Consequently, the liberation of Palestine and conquest of Palestinian self-determination is inextricably linked with the emancipation of the working class throughout the Middle East and the formation of a socialist federation of workers' states.

RE-CREATE THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

Victory will require the building of an international revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, a re-created Fourth International. Comprised of workers both in the oppressed nations and among the imperialist powers, it would fight for the international

unity of the working class in the struggle against imperialism, for the self-determination of oppressed nations and the masses' democratic rights, and against Zionism and all forms of reactionary bourgeois nationalism. It would fight for the reconstruction of the world economy on a socialist basis, eliminating the material basis for all forms of national oppression and chauvinism.

*Self-Determination for Palestine:
All of Israel is "Occupied Territory"!*

For Mass Armed Self-Defense!

Down with Anti-Arabism and Anti-Semitism!

Smash Zionism through Workers Revolution!

Down with Imperialism and the Phony "Peace Process"!

For a Socialist Federation of the Middle East!

Re-create the Fourth International!

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF STALINISM

A Resurrection of Marxist Theory
by Walter Daum

The Marxist analysis of Stalinism that makes today's events understandable and shows the working-class way forward.

A thoughtful, and indeed in many ways, an ideologically exciting book. Whether you accept its main thesis or not, and . . . this reviewer does not, it will still challenge your presuppositions and force you to rethink your ideas from top to bottom in the most rigorous way. And unlike most would-be Marxist texts these days, it is written in intelligible English, which is no small gain as well.

Al Richardson, Revolutionary History

The analysis of Stalinism as a "deformed capitalist state" made by Walter Daum is very persuasive. The idea that it was a particular form of state capitalism because of its origins in a defeated workers revolution has much to commend it. . . . Read this book by all means. . . . But heed our "health warning." His aim . . . is not to give Trotskyism a decent burial: on the contrary, he wants to revive the corpse and give it a facelift.

Communist Review

\$15 from Socialist Voice Publishing Co.,
P.O. Box 769, New York, NY 10033

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Winter 2001

Defend the Palestinian Intifada!

by Joseph Andrews

Since the end of September, demonstrators throughout Palestine have been locked in a volatile struggle against the occupation forces of the state of Israel, perhaps the most widespread struggle since the previous "Intifada" ten years ago. With machine guns, rocket launchers and helicopter gunships, the Israelis have murdered hundreds of Palestinians, a third of them children, and wounded thousands more, losing only a few of their troops in the process. Yet the vastly outgunned Palestinians have continued to fight.

Thirteen of those killed have been so-called Israeli Arabs, Palestinians living in the Israeli state proper. As these second-class citizens of Israel rebelled against both their own ghettoized conditions and in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Israelis responded in true apartheid fashion with indiscriminate shooting and police-supported pogroms by Israeli civilians. The ferocious response showed that the rebellion has proven what Israelis would prefer to forget: that every city or kibbutz marks the spot of a destroyed and expropriated Palestinian town or village, that *all Israel is "occupied territory."*

'PEACE PROCESS' SPARKED EXPLOSION

The spark for this conflagration was a provocation by Ariel Sharon, the Israeli official responsible for the 1982 massacre of 2000 Palestinians in the Lebanese refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. With an armed guard of 1000 Israeli troops, Sharon "paid a visit" to prayer services at the Al-Aqsa mosque on September 28. But the powder had been packed for over seven years by the "peace process" that began with the Oslo accords.

Under cover of the supposed peace negotiations, the population of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza has doubled and the territory they cover has tripled. "Access roads," open only to Jewish settlers and Israeli troops, have been built throughout the territories, bisecting the area into isolated and unviable patches of land — Palestinian villages and towns isolated from each other by a series of checkpoints and barriers.

It was on this colonial basis that the Oslo process projected the establishment of "sovereignty" for the Palestinians. Not only were Palestinians required to forego all claim to the 78 percent of Palestine territory encompassed by the state of Israel, as well as accepting the continued occupation of 59 percent of the West Bank, but they were to do so *without* control over their airport, any international boundaries or any movement between the scattered fragments of the Palestinian Bantustan. Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA) would have as its primary task the domestic repression of Palestinian militancy. And the millions of Palestinians in diaspora could hope at most for a token few to be allowed to return to their homeland.

Israeli government propaganda and its echoes in the U.S. media strive mightily to portray the current uprising as orchestrated by Yasser Arafat to extract more "concessions" from



Palestinian youth armed only with a rock faces down Israeli tank. We say: Down With Imperialism and the Phony Peace Process! Smash Zionism Through Workers' Revolution!

the Israelis. But it is clear that the uprising is directed nearly as much against Arafat and his collaborationist role as against the Israelis. While there have been incidents of Palestinian policemen turning their guns on Israeli soldiers, on most occasions they appear to have kept their distance and neutrality while their people get massacred. On occasions when Israelis have had to face gunfire, it has mostly been from street fighters whom, under the terms of the Oslo accords, Arafat and his police have tried to disarm.

ARAFAT'S PNA POLICES MASSES

Even when the Israelis have begun a strategy of deliberately firing upon cadres of Arafat's Fatah and the police, this pattern has remained in place. Since October's meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, Palestinian police officials have consulted with CIA operatives, including director George Tenet, on how to get the uprising under control.

Arafat's whole political strategy is based on appealing for a U.N.-backed force to "protect" the Palestinians from the Israelis and patrol the current boundaries of his PNA Bantustan. Even this demand has been categorically rejected by the U.S. and Israel. But even in the event that such a force were put together, it would represent a danger for the Palestinian masses: it would be devoted to disarming them and would serve to etch the present untenable boundaries in stone, leaving the Palestinians under their

continued on page 14