

Russian Strongman Dances to Washington's Tune

Czar Boris' Electoral Circus

DECEMBER 13—The elections held yesterday in Russia were intended as a fig leaf for the bloody coup carried out by President Boris Yeltsin over two months ago. Since ordering the elimination of the elected parliament (Supreme Soviet) in September, sealed by the October 4 tank assault on the "White House" parliament building which left hundreds dead, Yeltsin has ruled by decree. He granted himself supreme powers and announced a vote "under the barrels of machine guns," as one provincial leader called it. The toothless legislature and makeshift "constitution" put to Russia's voters on December 12 were designed to lend a façade of legality to Yeltsin's dictatorial rule.

But the result was an embarrassment to Yeltsin and his imperialist sponsors. The election saw a huge protest vote, whose main beneficiary was the fascist "Liberal Democratic Party" of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The success of this virulent anti-Semite and crazed Russian nationalist—who wants to reclaim Finland, Poland and the rest of the former tsarist empire—shocked Western capitals, and underlined that the Russian counterrevolution can veer off from the course outlined by Washington and the International Monetary Fund.

Also getting a sizable vote was the refounded Communist Party-Russian Federation (KPRF), which despite its name made utterly clear that it stands for a capitalist market economy. While Yeltsin claimed a majority for his constitution, the regime's own figures of a paltry 53 percent voter turnout was effectively an admission of defeat. Notwithstanding the seemingly strong vote for Yeltsin's nationalist and Stalinist opponents, the new pseudo-parliament is designed to be nothing more than a sounding board for the president's



Would-be dictator Boris Yeltsin after the bloody storming of the Russian parliament White House last October. Der Spiegel

dictates. But given its composition, it could still be a thorn in his side.

The purpose of this electoral farce is to satisfy the "democratic" pretensions of Yeltsin's imperialist back-

ers in Washington. While fervently backing czar Boris' every dictatorial move to push through the "free market" immiseration of Russia's working people and

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After Israel-PLO "Peace" Accords

Zionist Killers Rampage Against Palestinians

Israeli Troops, Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories!

DECEMBER 10—The bitter fruit of the September 13 "peace" agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is being harvested in the blood of the Palestinian people. In recent weeks, Israeli troops and fascistic "settlers" in the Occupied Territories have escalated a terror campaign aimed at murdering grassroots Palestinian leaders and terrorizing the population as a whole. Day after day, heavily armed settlers rampage

through Palestinian communities, burning down Arab homes and schools, stoning cars and firing into crowds of unarmed Palestinian civilians. The Israeli army stands guard over these terrorist pogroms, while shooting down Palestinians who defend themselves.

From the moment it was announced, we condemned the so-called "Gaza-Jericho first" deal between the Zionist "Labor" government of Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasir Arafat as an ignominious betrayal. While supposedly granting the PLO control over these two areas as a step toward autonomy throughout the Occupied Territories, in fact the PLO would act as

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"Peace process" in action: Israeli soldiers take aim at Palestinian youth in Gaza. Baz/AFP



Free Leonard Peltier!

For 17 years, American Indian Movement (AIM) leader Leonard Peltier has been locked away in prison hells for an alleged crime the government knows he did not commit. A victim of the notorious FBI COINTELPRO war against Indian activists, Peltier was framed up in 1977 following the shooting deaths of two FBI agents during a massive siege of the Pine Ridge Reservation, and sentenced to two life sentences. The government assault and the vicious persecution of the AIM activists is recounted in the 1992 documentary by Robert Redford, *Incident at Oglala*.

To combat the enforced poverty, degradation and continued theft of Native American lands by Washington and the energy companies (looking to get their

hands on the rich uranium deposits in western South Dakota), in 1972 residents of Pine Ridge formed the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization and attempted to replace the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)-run tribal government. The FBI unleashed a massive COINTELPRO operation, pouring hundreds of BIA and FBI thugs into the Reservation, to build what one G-man called "a colonial police force" for Pine Ridge.

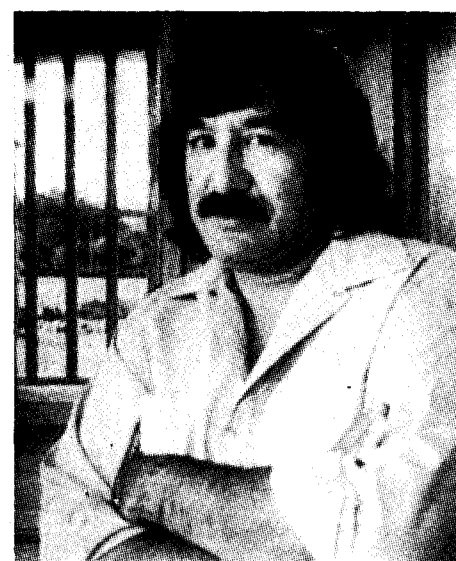
By 1975 Pine Ridge was a war zone. BIA puppet chief Richard Wilson assembled a GOON (Guardians of the Oglala Nation) squad, paid for, armed and trained by the feds, to terrorize the "traditionals" and crush the AIM activists. Between 1973-1976 these paramilitary GOONS carried out more than 300 phys-

ical assaults resulting in at least 69 murders of tribe members in the Pine Ridge area. At the request of "traditionals" at Pine Ridge, AIM activists settled in at Jumping Bull ranch to protect the camp from this government-armed death squad.

In the early morning of 26 June 1975, FBI agents Jack Coler and Ron Williams led an assault on Pine Ridge. At its peak 250 G-men surrounded 30 Indians. Williams and Coler didn't survive. Peltier and three others were charged with their deaths. Charges were dropped against Jimmy Eagle. AIM activists Dino Butler and Bob Robideau were acquitted in 1976 by a Cedar Rapids, Iowa jury who stated they had not believed "much of anything" said by government witnesses and that it seemed "pretty much a clear-cut case of self-defense."

Following their setback in Cedar Rapids, the feds moved the venue for Peltier's trial to Fargo, North Dakota and made sure they locked him away forever. After a series of meetings with the FBI and prosecutors, Judge Paul Benson ruled inadmissible any evidence of anti-Indian violence—rendering impossible an acquittal on grounds of self-defense. The prosecution concealed ballistics evidence that established Peltier's gun wasn't the weapon used in the shooting. One agent, Fred Coward, testified he saw Peltier, whom he'd never seen before, running from the dead agents' car. Coward's positive ID—of Peltier's "profile"—was purportedly made through a low-power rifle scope at a distance of a half mile. The court denied defense requests to have the feat duplicated for the jury. Documents obtained years later revealed that the FBI's own attempts to duplicate such a long-distance rifle scope identification all turned up negative. This fact was withheld at trial.

Around the world, Peltier has come to symbolize racist American injustice



Eli Reichman
American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier.

against the remnants of this country's indigenous peoples. Before counterrevolution triumphed in the ex-USSR, over a million Soviet men and women had sent letters to Washington calling for Peltier's release. Despite the outpouring of support, the capitalist courts are determined to keep this courageous fighter for Indian rights behind bars for life. On July 7 the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals again turned down Peltier's appeal, despite an admission by Prosecutor Lynn Crooks that the government has no idea who shot the two agents.

On November 22 an application for executive clemency was filed by Peltier's attorney, Ramsey Clark. The Partisan Defense Committee has repeatedly protested Peltier's continued imprisonment and contributed to his defense. On December 14 we wrote President Clinton demanding Peltier's immediate release. For more information contact the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, P.O. Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044, (913) 842-5774.

Stop the Persecution of Transit Worker James Frazier

In the early morning hours of October 24, black New York City transit worker James Frazier was driving his car to visit a friend at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn when he was cut off by a police car, on the pretext that the car driven and owned by Frazier lacked license plates. One cop approaching the car shot Frazier from behind—the bullet exiting his left eye. Frazier, who has lost all vision in the eye, was taken to Kings County Hospital, where police told medical personnel that he was "DOA." After they admitted Frazier and treated him anyway, he was brutally assaulted by the cop assigned to "guard" him.

The cops initially charged their victim with possession of a stolen vehicle, operating a car without license plates, possession of a stolen weapon and attempted murder of a police officer. Except for the weapons charge, all these frame-up charges have been dropped.

Upon his release from the hospital weeks later, Frazier went to the Transit Authority for his back pay. Instead he was informed that he was being "terminated." Frazier's union brothers and sisters have rallied to his side. In accord-

ance with a motion passed by TWU Local 100 track division, they have circulated a petition demanding the officers who tried to kill Frazier be charged with attempted murder.

On December 10, Frazier was an honored guest at the PDC's Holiday Appeal benefit for class-war prisoners, where he addressed the 175 participants about the cops' assassination attempt. Frazier next appears in court on January 5 at 9:30 a.m. His union brothers and all opponents of racist cop terror should be there in force. Pack the courtroom: 120 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, Part AP1, 6th Floor.

* * *

We encourage WV readers to continue to support and build the PDC. Become a monthly sustaining contributor. Send a donation of \$5 or more and receive a subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*. For a single copy send \$1 to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. ■



TROTSKY

Workers Must Fight Great Russian Chauvinism!

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union has brought not only brutal economic immiseration but also bloody nationalist strife. Boris Yeltsin's drive to cohere a new strong Russian state, under the guardianship of U.S. imperialism, is intended to suppress the working masses and to subjugate and dominate the non-Russian peoples of the region. Great Russian chauvinism is the common coin of Yeltsin, the



LENIN

fascist Zhirinovskiy and the Stalinist "patriots." Lenin waged political war on Great Russian chauvinism, which bound backward workers to the tsarist autocracy, landlords and capitalists. The Bolshevik cadre were steeled in mortal combat against the fascistic Black Hundreds who launched pogroms against the Jews in the name of "Holy Mother Russia." The Soviet Union can be reformed only on the basis of proletarian internationalism.

Let us consider the position of an oppressor nation. Can a nation be free if it oppresses other nations? It cannot. The interests of the freedom of the Great-Russian population require a struggle against such oppression. The long, centuries-old history of the suppression of the movements of the oppressed nations, and the systematic propaganda in favour of such suppression coming from the "upper" classes have created enormous obstacles to the cause of freedom of the Great-Russian people itself, in the form of prejudices, etc.

The Great-Russian Black Hundreds deliberately foster these prejudices and encourage them. The Great-Russian bourgeoisie tolerates or condones them. The Great-Russian proletariat cannot achieve its own aims or clear the road to its freedom without systematically countering these prejudices.

—V.I. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* (February-May 1914)

The proletarian revolution calls for a prolonged education of the workers in the spirit of the fullest national equality and brotherhood. Consequently, the interests of the Great-Russian proletariat require that the masses be systematically educated to champion—most resolutely, consistently, boldly and in a revolutionary manner—complete equality and the right to self-determination for all the nations oppressed by the Great Russians. The interests of the Great Russians' national pride (understood, not in the slavish sense) coincide with the socialist interests of the Great-Russian (and all other) proletarians. Our model will always be Marx, who, after living in Britain for decades and becoming half-English, demanded freedom and national independence for Ireland in the interests of the socialist movement of the British workers.

—V.I. Lenin, "On the National Pride of the Great Russians" (December 1914)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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Correction

In WV No. 589 (3 December) a front-page box on "Class Struggle Explodes in West Europe" refers to the November 25 Belgian general strike as the country's "first general strike in nearly 60 years." While the accompanying lead article correctly noted that this was the first time since 1936 that the major unions had called a general strike, a workers upsurge beginning in December 1960 spontaneously spread into an effective general strike which shut the country down for several weeks.

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Clinton's Welfare "Reform": Blacks, Poor Will Starve

Yuppie Racism in Action

From medieval Europe to fascistic mercenaries today, "Kill them all, let god sort them out," has been the battle cry of barbarism. This could also be the inscription on the plans by the racist rulers of America to, in the words of Democratic president Bill Clinton, "end welfare as we know it." *Fourteen million* people—over three-quarters of them children, the majority desperately poor blacks and Hispanics for whom the current meager, sub-poverty welfare benefits "guarantee" a life of starvation and raw misery—now face getting cut off without a cent.

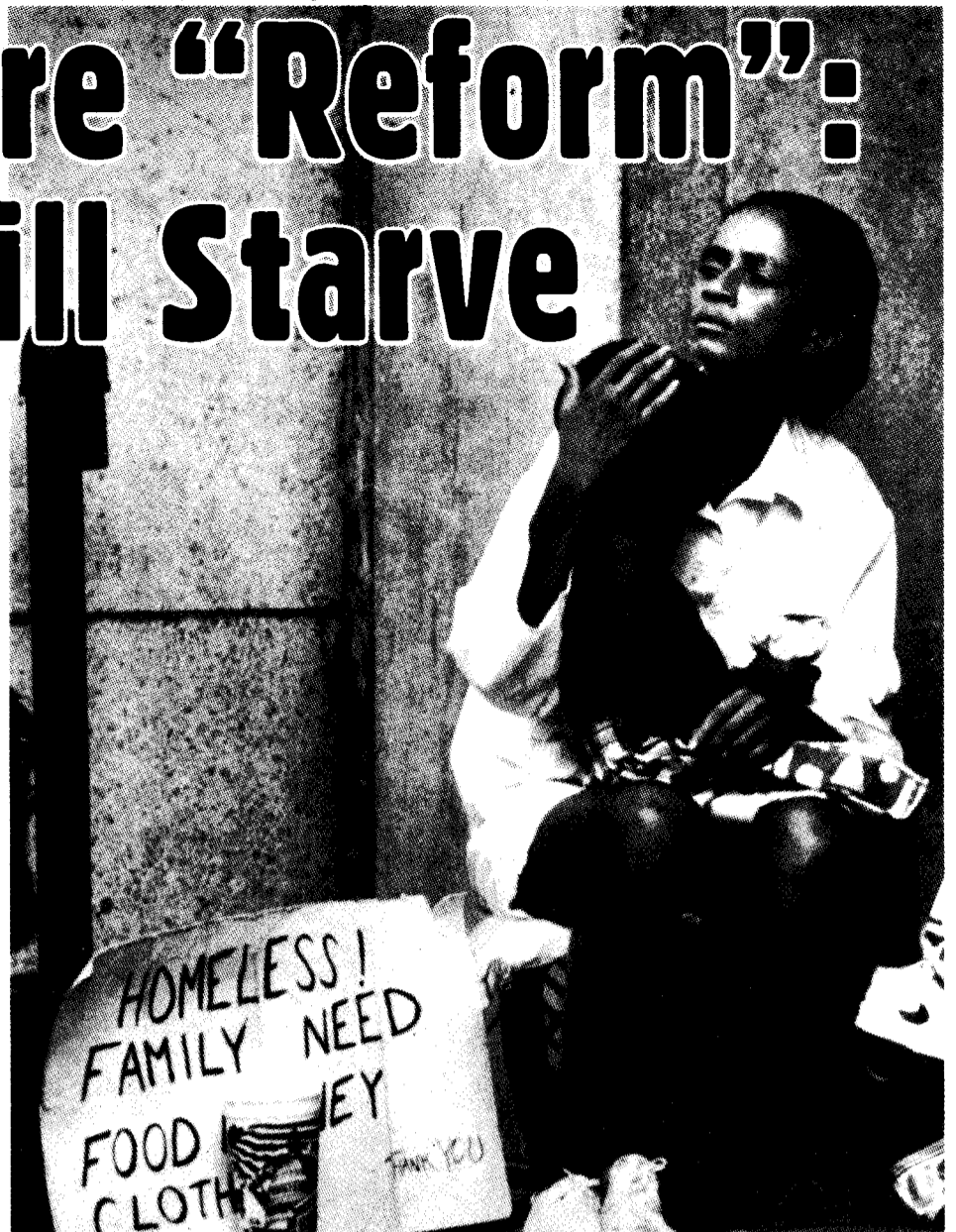
This is a prescription for "Genocide U.S.A."—the headline of our article on the 1988 "workfare" law which Clinton is aiming to enforce with a cruel vengeance. As we wrote at the time: "The aim of this legislation is to see to it that layers of the minority population die, because this decrepit capitalist system no longer needs them" (WV No. 463, 21 October 1988). Today, "two years and out" is the rallying cry of the yuppie racist Democrats in the White House. During the first two years, welfare recipients will be required to enroll in education and job training programs. After that, chop—get a job or starve.

But there are no jobs. By official count, which is only the tip of the iceberg, there are nine million unemployed. In 1992, 1,500 jobs were eliminated every day. Of those "lucky" enough to have employment, over one-quarter of

the U.S. labor force is employed in what is euphemistically called "contingent work"—otherwise known as temporary or part-time jobs. Meanwhile, some 15 million full-time workers have yearly earnings that are below the poverty level. This is the bankrupt capitalist "market-place" into which the racist rulers propose to dump some five million welfare mothers who have few if any skills.

As a measure of the viciousness of the current "welfare reform" proposals, the immediate targets are the most destitute recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). *Newsweek* (13 December) lays it out: "The reformers' real target is the minority of AFDC families—estimates range from 1.5 million to 2 million households—who stay on welfare for eight years or more. As a group these welfare mothers represent the poorest of the poor—the least educated and least employable women in America. Many are inner-city blacks."

Those who are unable to find a job will be pressed into "community service." One recalls Ebenezer Scrooge's retort in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* when asked to give money for the poor: "Are there no workhouses?" A more American image than that of the indentured labor houses of Victorian England is that of the Southern chain gangs of black prisoners breaking rocks. The modern-day equivalent of slave labor will pay no more than current welfare



D. Michael Cheers

payments, which on average amount to less than 50 percent of the official poverty line in the U.S. (In Clinton's home state of Arkansas, which he holds up as a "model" for welfare reform, AFDC benefits are less than 25 percent of federal poverty income!)

The "Republicrats"

Echoing Clinton's "two years and out" plan, the Republicans have their own wel-

fare reform plan which they dub "tough love." Obscenely calling it "a compassionate idea that would give the downtrodden the incentive to change," they propose to raise money for training programs by cutting food programs and barring immigrants from welfare benefits. Any single mother who is unable or unwilling to identify the father of her children will get cut off immediately. The

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S.F. Protest: Stop "Operation Matrix" War on the Homeless!

Mayor Jordan Says: Feed the Hungry, Go to Jail

SAN FRANCISCO, December 6—If the Waco massacre is the signature of the Clinton years, events at the SF "Hall of Justice" this morning bore the seal of ex-chief of police Frank Jordan's reign as mayor. A scene from his vicious, barbaric "Operation Matrix" to "improve the quality of life" (of the rich—the poor are to have no life in this city): supporters of the group Food Not Bombs tried again to simply distribute free food to the homeless and hungry, and five of them were arrested within 20 minutes. Arrests Nos. 1 and 3 were for handing someone a bagel, arrest No. 2 for handing someone a banana, and arrest No. 4 for holding a bag of bagels.

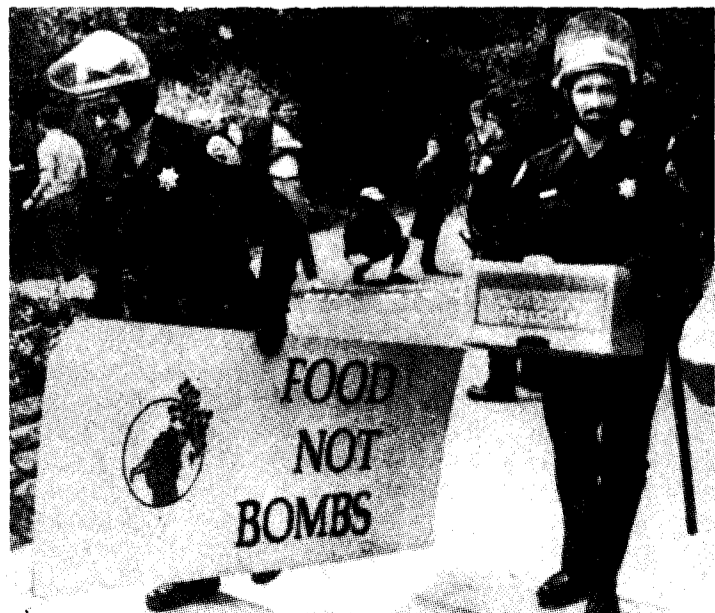
One young man angry at his arrest was manhandled by a group of cops and then dragged into the building and thrown to the floor. The thugs in blue confiscated a box of bagels, some bunches of bananas and a couple of apples. Nevertheless, at least two homeless people got something to eat, including a gay white man in his mid-20s who told *Workers Vanguard* this was his first real food in 72 hours, and a black man who came with his work tools (a squeegee and rag).

Keith McHenry of Food Not Bombs.

one of those arrested, had expected to go to trial today for an earlier arrest, but the charges were dropped. Yet the arrests continue—the group has taken over 575 arrests to date. This is clearly intended to prevent the public distribution of food to the poor while avoiding an embarrassing trial. That could challenge the whole "Matrix" program, designed to harass

the homeless from the city by such measures as handing out citations for sleeping on the street, taking away their carts and destroying their personal belongings. It's not yet formally a crime to feed the poor—the cops just haul you off to jail if you try.

And it's not just right-wing ex-top cop Jordan who's pushing this "let 'em



Fliseler/Oakland Tribune

SF's Golden Gate Park, August 1988: "Food Not Bombs" has been hit with hundreds of arrests for distributing food to the poor.

starve" program: under liberal Democratic mayor Agnos in the late 1980s, SF police regularly busted Food Not Bombs for distributing free food in Golden Gate Park.

The body of a homeless woman found outside the headquarters of HUD in Washington, D.C. last week has caused an outpouring of crocodile tears from the Clinton administration. But the brutal reality of this decaying capitalist society is that scores of homeless die every day. Thousands more live on the edge of extinction on freezing city streets with no shelter, no food and no prospect for help. The message they've received from Republicans and Democrats alike is: go away and die. Plenty of working people in the U.S. keenly feel that they are only one paycheck away from the street themselves. The multiracial working class must send a message of our own: We will not let the poor, the elderly, the oppressed minorities of this country be sacrificed on the altar of capitalist greed.

At SF City Hall on Tuesday, December 14, the Spartacist League, the Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee are protesting Jordan's war against the homeless and poor and demanding that the SF cops keep their hands off Food Not Bombs, who will be doing one of their regular food distributions at the same time. ■

Cuba Caravan: Ramsey Clark and "Pastors for Peace"

Honolulu, Hawaii
November 2, 1993

Dear members of the Spartacist League:

Jan Norden's speech on Cuba, which appeared in the October 8 issue of *Workers Vanguard* [No. 585], contained much valuable information on the situation in that country. In general I agree with the analysis presented. But Norden makes a statement about the Cuba solidarity movement in the U.S. which effectively destroys his credibility among those people he is trying to win to a Marxist outlook. Here is the statement:

"A broad spectrum of reformist leftists in the U.S. and elsewhere have joined forces in a Cuba solidarity movement. For example, people like the 'Committees of Correspondence,' a social-democratic split-off from the Communist Party USA, for whom this waving of the flag of Cuba solidarity is a cheap way of disguising their flight to the right. Because in the 'Cuba solidarity' movement there are now active openly counterrevolutionary forces. There was a recent 'caravan for peace' which got a lot of publicity in Cuba (and very little here) because the American authorities stopped it at Laredo on the Mexican border and wouldn't let it go through. The 'Pastors for Peace' who organized it made a big point of how they were carrying Bibles as well as medicine. But the dead giveaway was the presence on that caravan of one Ramsey Clark, the former attorney general under Lyndon Johnson who ordered the Chicago cops to beat



Former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, AIM activist Dennis Banks, and author Alice Walker arrive in Havana last May with a shipment of medicine.

has to try to cover up this embarrassing position with the rather strange, confusing statements about "openly counterrevolutionary forces."

Norden says that the pastors "made a big point of how they were carrying Bibles." What's this supposed to mean? That they should have made a "small point" of it? That they shouldn't have mentioned Bibles at all? Is it so strange that Christian ministers would want to distribute the Bible? Is distribution of the Bible itself a counterrevolutionary

den see no difference between Ramsey Clark, who has helped to expose U.S. war crimes in the Gulf War, and the dozens of other "openly counterrevolutionary" politicians who supported that war? What's Norden's definition of "counterrevolutionary"? Clark is a bourgeois liberal. If Norden considers "bourgeois liberal" to be synonymous with "counterrevolutionary," it's everyone's right to choose definitions, but this one doesn't really help clarify anything. Will Norden make another speech attacking Lenin for inviting "openly counterrevolutionary forces" represented by Herbert Hoover to help with famine relief in the U.S.S.R. in 1922?

And why did the whole caravan effort not get much publicity? Would Norden care to speculate?

The aims of Norden's statements are transparent: to let those reading *Workers Vanguard* know that SL members or supporters should not participate in these caravans, and that those expressing any interest in actively opposing the blockade must be made to know that this is not the kind of effort that SL approves of. The power of the example of these hundreds if not thousands of people—rank and file unionists, antiwar activists and others—participating in the revolutionary act of challenging U.S. imperialism's strangulation of the Cuban revolution is amply demonstrated by the fact that Norden has to resort to the most shallow, specious and dishonest arguments in order to try to justify SL's abstention from this movement. Norden hides behind these crude arguments and sectarian remarks about the presence of religious leaders. (One wonders if Norden would feel the same way about a religious leader who might support the Partisan Defense Committee's efforts to free Mumia Abu-Jamal—but that's another subject.) The SL would do well to reject these petty excuses for inaction, and join in this movement of internationalist solidarity. To be sure, the way to end Cuba's isolation is through international revolution. But to counterpose the struggle for world revolution to a movement which is directly challenging the imperialist blockade is ultraleft sectarianism. It is not the road to revolution in the U.S. or anywhere else.

Norden's remarks are all the more irritating since they come in the middle of an otherwise very good article. The firsthand account of Cuba today contains many valuable insights. Then one reads these absurd comments about Pastors for Peace and other groups. It is as if one is having a conversation with someone who is being very pleasant and amiable, and then suddenly slaps you in the face.

As a revolutionary Marxist, as a for-

mer member of the YSA who has come to reject the politics of the SWP leadership, I hope that the Spartacist League will abandon this kind of sectarian politics. I hope also that *Workers Vanguard* will introduce (or re-introduce?) a letters section. The absence of a letters section is usually a "dead giveaway" (to use Norden's phrase) that the newspaper is not interested in debate with others outside its own coterie. I hope that is not true in the case of the Spartacist League.

Sincerely,
Marc Vigilmo

WV replies: The sheer vindictiveness of the Clinton administration in persecuting those who seek to show solidarity with embattled Cuba was dramatically shown by its treatment of the "U.S.-Cuba Friendship" caravan last summer. For 23 days, in stifling 100-degree-plus Texas heat, U.S. border officials at Laredo held hostage a school bus stocked with medical relief supplies and its occupants ranging in age up to 87, before finally relenting and allowing them to head on to Cuba. The Cuban press headlined, "Who's Afraid of a Yellow School Bus?" The U.S. media blacked out the incident, as they have the recent challenge to the travel ban (see "Down with U.S. Travel Ban on Cuba!" on page 5). After more than three decades, the existence of a workers state only "90 miles from Florida" continues to irritate U.S. rulers no end.

Certainly many of those who participated in this caravan and donated medicines, clothing, school supplies and other urgently needed aid were defying the vicious U.S. embargo out of solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. We defend them against repression by the American government and support efforts to break through the starvation blockade. But it should be clear from the Bush/Clinton colonial occupation of Somalia in the guise of "famine relief" how the imperialists cynically manipulate humanitarian concerns for reactionary purposes. What reader Marc V. objects to is our warning that *important counterrevolutionary forces now want to junk the embargo and are trying to use the Cuba "solidarity movement" in the service of restoring capitalism on the island.*

Ever since Castro expropriated U.S.



The "Little Yellow School Bus," held hostage by U.S. Customs in Laredo, Texas.

up on the antiwar protesters at the 1968 Democratic convention (along with a lot of other crimes)."

What is the remark about the Committees of Correspondence supposed to mean? That the Spartacist League would prefer this group to *abandon* its efforts to oppose the blockade? If Norden is criticizing the CoC for not being active enough in Cuba solidarity work, why not just say so, instead of implying that SL doesn't want their participation at all? Shouldn't revolutionaries try to pressure other non-revolutionary groups and individuals to participate? Shouldn't the decision of other groups to participate be viewed as something positive? So, according to Norden, it's easy for the CoC to get involved in the Cuba solidarity movement because "counterrevolutionaries" such as Ramsey Clark are involved in it. What does this mean? That revolutionaries should attempt to *stop* Ramsey Clark from participating in these caravans? If an effort like this is attracting "openly counterrevolutionary forces," something must be fundamentally wrong with it. Norden stops short of making such a statement, because it leads to another question: does SL or doesn't SL support the effort to break the blockade? By its abstention from this movement, SL is in practice answering in the negative, and evidently Norden

act? The reader is left in a fog. Maybe Norden should award the Order of Lenin to the Federal border thug at the border in Laredo who ripped a Bible from a minister's hands in the process of assaulting him. After all, the Federal agent was countering the influence of "counterrevolutionary forces," wasn't he? And what effect does Norden think that scene had on Christians around the country?

Christians around the world have been justifiably angry at the policies of the former Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and elsewhere which have persecuted Christians and which have forbidden the dissemination of the Bible. In Cuba this does not happen, and in this case it is the U.S. government which is trying to prevent the distribution of Bibles (along with medicines, bicycles, etc.) in Cuba. Bringing this to the attention of the Christians of the United States will cause more Christians in the U.S. to begin questioning U.S. policy toward Cuba. Why is that so hard to understand?

"But the dead giveaway was the presence on that caravan of one Ramsey Clark." "Dead giveaway" to what? What did Clark's presence "give away"? The presence of "openly counterrevolutionary forces," as Norden puts it? If Clark is "openly counterrevolutionary," then what is Clinton? Or Alpha 66? Does Nor-



New York, September 1991: Following Soviet cutoff of aid to Cuba after Yeltsin's August '91 countercoup, Spartacist League demonstrates in defense of Cuba.

Down with U.S. Ban on Travel to Cuba!

As the U.S. tightens the noose around Cuba, the Clinton administration is treating American travelers to Cuba like criminals. When a group of 175 U.S. citizens returned October 17 from the besieged island, 60 had their passports seized. Some had their film destroyed, educational materials confiscated and souvenirs impounded. U.S. Customs agents handcuffed one woman from this "Freedom to Travel Challenge" tour when she protested the seizure of her personal diary. A four-year-old was forced to hand over his made-in-Cuba licorice and pretzels.

One of the participants in the October "Freedom to Travel" trip to Cuba, Polly Mann, described her return to the U.S. through Houston, where her passport was taken. "As I delivered my bags onto the counter, a man with my passport and customs declaration in hand asked me to accompany him for interrogation. Two U.S. Customs agents in a tiny cubicle who said that they were not arresting me, nevertheless read me the Miranda warning that anything I said could be used against me." Her statement concluded: "I vigorously protest the confiscation of my passport by a government which by the day, by the hour and by the minute, engages in immoral, if not illegal acts.... The Cubans are not my enemy. They are part of my family."

A spokesman for the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) said that the passports were seized in "enforcing the Cuban Embargo Act, the Trading with the Enemy Act and the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992" (Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, 20 October). Due to the expansion of the trade ban to U.S. subsidiaries in other capi-

Feds Seize Passports

alist countries under New Jersey Democratic Congressman Robert Torricelli's Cuban Democracy Act, Cuba will suffer an additional loss of \$800 million this year. The Torricelli bill passed Congress last year only after Democrat Clinton, on the campaign trail in Florida, lambasted the Bush

participants in the "Travel Challenge" were in jail, according to Pam Montanaro of Global Exchange, one of 50 organizations in the Freedom to Travel Coalition. Meanwhile, the *gusano* terrorist organization Alpha 66 is distributing flyers at the Miami airport threatening that "Traveling to Cuba can be



Members of group defying ban on travel to Cuba received *gusano* death threat (shown at left), had passports confiscated by U.S. Customs agents.

administration about missing "a big opportunity to put the hammer down on Fidel Castro and Cuba." The corporate subsidiary trade was concentrated in medicines and food, where severe shortages are causing hardship for the Cuban masses.

In late October Torricelli personally appealed to former Florida D.A. Janet Reno to prosecute American tourists traveling to Cuba for violating the U.S. embargo. He told a meeting of the far-right Cuban-American National Foundation he would not rest until all of the

dangerous to your health." Earlier this year, the Miami-based "Comandos L" group sent a boat to strafe the luxurious Spanish-Cuban Hotel Melia in Veradero with machine-gun fire.

In the wake of the destruction of the USSR and its lifeline to the Cuban deformed workers state, the 32-year-old U.S. embargo has become a virtual starvation blockade. With a disastrous 1992-93 sugar harvest on an island where sugar normally makes up 80 percent of its exports and lacking oil to run its industry, many of Cuba's facto-

ries are shut down and 70 percent of its public transport has been eliminated. Castro is still seeking the will o' the wisp of "peaceful coexistence," hoping to attract sufficient foreign investment from the Latin American bourgeoisies and European imperialists to counter the intractable hostility of Yankee imperialism. Domestically the Stalinist bureaucratic regime is floundering among a series of dead-end alternatives, encouraging the development of a dollar-economy sector and undertaking the decentralization of state farms.

Nevertheless, a September 1993 UNICEF report found the child survival rate in Cuba—which has the core of its collectivized economy still intact—to be the best in all of Central America and the Caribbean and just below the average for industrialized countries. An eye disease epidemic that struck 50,000 Cubans was brought under control thanks to the country's mobilization of the resources necessary to halt it, an effort that has brought praise from international health experts. Cuba's Ministry of Public Health last April called the U.S. embargo "the epidemic's main ally." The sanctions continue to rain their hammer blows on the impoverished Cuban working masses, while the U.S. military blockade supposedly targeting the brutal capitalist dictatorship next door in Haiti ultimately has its guns pointed at Castro and Havana.

Defend Cuba—Down with the U.S. starvation embargo! U.S. out of Guantánamo! U.S./OAS/UN hands off Haiti! Down with the U.S. ban on travel to Cuba! No prosecution of the "Challenge" travelers—Return their passports now!

capitalist interests and sent the Havana bourgeoisie packing off to Miami, the American ruling class has been obsessed with "taking back Cuba." For years they were stymied: their *gusano* mercenaries got creamed at the Bay of Pigs, numerous attempts to assassinate Castro failed, and above all the power of the USSR stood in the way, with a Soviet army brigade stationed on the island as a trip wire. Since the collapse of the Stalinist-ruled Soviet degenerated workers state cut off Cuba's main international support, the imperialists see their big chance to come back. But they are divided over how best to achieve their counter-revolutionary aims. While Washington has tightened the embargo, seeking to squeeze Cuba into submission, many of Clinton's supporters think this will build support for Castro.

The Spartacist tendency has always opposed the embargo, a blatant act of war by the U.S., just as we demand the U.S. Navy get out of Guantánamo, as part of our unconditional defense of Cuba against Yankee imperialism. But it is also our duty to state that a growing wing of the American bourgeoisie now sees the embargo as counter-productive to linking up with and encouraging counterrevolution from within. Thus for anti-imperialists breaking the blockade must be combined with an intransigent stand in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

"Capitalism Through the Back Door"

Capitalist counterrevolution in Cuba need not be only through economic warfare or U.S. imperialist invasion. There is another road, as was demonstrated in East Europe. Or look what is happening in China today. Far from embargoing China, U.S. and Japanese imperialism have greatly expanded their trade and direct investment with an aim toward strengthening counterrevolution-

ary currents within the massively corrupt Chinese bureaucracy.

Let's look closer at Marc V.'s arguments. First, he would identify "counterrevolutionaries" with *gusano* terrorists like Alpha 66, or presumably supporters of the Batista dictatorship around Jorge Mas Canosa's Cuban-American National Foundation. But they're not the only ones trying to bring down the Cuban Revolution. The *New York Times* (25 April) quoted an organizer of the Basta (Enough) "solidarity" group in Key West, which sent an embargo-busting flotilla to Cuba last spring, John Leslie, as saying: "The more openness we can get going, the greater the chance that the embargo can be lifted. Once the embargo is lifted, Castro is gone."

In Miami, Cuban exile leader Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo—the founder of *Alpha 66!*—recently formed a group, *Cambio Cubano* (Cuban Change), which favors "dialogue with anybody" in Havana and calls for loosening the embargo. This is also the line of many pro-imperialist opponents of the Castro regime inside Cuba. In July, Elisardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, who for years has been the main symbol of the liberal "democratic opposition" for Western newsmen, traveled to Washington urging the Clinton administration to drop the boycott. Sánchez argued that "by maintaining open hostility the United States is helping Castro" ("Cuban Dissident, in the U.S., Says Embargo Is a Mistake," *New York Times*, 3 August).

Marc V. asks, "What's Norden's definition of 'counterrevolutionary'?" Clark is a bourgeois liberal." Well, John F. Kennedy was also a bourgeois liberal, and he ordered the Bay of Pigs invasion, not to mention the Vietnam War, which was a counterrevolutionary imperialist war against social revolution. Our reader also objects to saying that the presence of Ramsey Clark on the Pastors for Peace

caravan was a "dead giveaway." "What did Clark's presence 'give away'?" he demands. What was revealed by the participation of LBJ's former top cop, who used to enforce the embargo on trade with Cuba, is that a whole section of the American ruling class considers that the embargo, while once an effective means of imperialist pressure and "containment" of Cuba, has become an obstacle to promoting *internal* counterrevolution. For U.S. imperialism's brutal choke hold visibly demonstrates there is an *external* enemy that makes life worse for each and every Cuban.

Moreover, by extending the embargo with the "Cuban Democracy Act," sponsored by New Jersey Democrat Torricelli (and endorsed by Democratic presidential candidate Clinton when Republican president Bush was still wavering), which tries to enforce the embargo on subsidiaries of U.S.-owned companies in other countries, Washington has come into conflict with U.S. allies. Referring to the recent United Nations vote of 88 to 4 condemning the U.S. boycott of Cuba (only Israel, Paraguay and Albania joined Washington in voting no), a *New York Times* (8 November) editorial argues that the Torricelli Act, which was "meant to isolate the Castro regime, has embarrassingly isolated the United States." Not to mention the fact that American businesses are losing out while Canadian, Spanish, Mexican, French and German companies are rushing to invest in the Cuban tourist industry.

The *Times* editorial favorably cited a study by the Twentieth Century Fund calling for "relaxation of travel bans and the trade embargo as first steps, to be followed by direct negotiations on compensating U.S. companies whose assets were seized after the revolution." This study, *Cuba in Transition*, by Gillian Gunn of the Georgetown University Cuba Project, cites editorials from the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*,

Boston Globe and *San Francisco Chronicle* sounding the same refrain. But it's not just the liberal media. William Ratliff, senior research fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution, and Roger Fontaine, a member of Reagan's National Security Council, wrote in the *Washington Times* calling for "unilaterally repeal[ing] the embargo on everything except military-related technology," and also co-authored an op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* titled "Foil Castro—Lift the Embargo."

The Twentieth Century Fund represents the liberal Democratic establishment (its board includes Kennedy/Carter administration stalwarts such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Ted Sorenson). The study argues that due to economic undermining of the revolution (represented by multiplying capitalist joint ventures, the spread of the dollar economy, etc.), "Cuba is already caught up in a self-reinforcing cycle of economic reform that can only be slowed, not stopped." Their "Plan for Success" is a "peaceful transition" to a "democratic, market-oriented Cuba," even if the resulting government might "still call itself 'socialist'." The alternative they fear would be "violent upheaval" that would produce "uncontrolled immigration," and "peace and stability could take many years to be restored." Indeed, armed resistance to counterrevolution could send shock waves throughout the region.

So yes, Ramsey Clark is a "dead giveaway" that leading U.S. imperialist policymakers are banking on counterrevolution from within Cuba. Gillian Gunn quotes a Cuban economist saying the regime's present policies are leading to "capitalism through the back door." The liberals are *for* this because they want to undo the revolution; we warn *against* this because we fight for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy in order to save the Cuban

continued on page 11



Richards/AFP

Clinton glitterati on the town (left), while welfare mother and kids struggle to survive.



Richards/Magnum

Welfare "Reform" ...

(continued from page 3)

Republicans' ultraright black spokesman Charles Murray put it baldly: "I want to cut everything. I want to get rid of food stamps, subsidized housing—all of it."

Clinton says Murray has the "right diagnosis" but the "wrong prescription." But the Democrats' sometimes efforts to give their "welfare reform" plans a "kinder, gentler" image—by promising real job training programs, childcare and education—are a cynical sham. This is a bipartisan war on the poor. It represents the consensus of the entire capitalist class, a supreme expression of Gore Vidal's statement that there is only one party in America, the property party, with two right wings.

Clinton recently gave the nod to Wisconsin's Republican governor Tommy Thompson to impose a two-year limit on AFDC benefits starting in January. Recipients will be required to work for their benefits in the second year and then it's over, no more cash, not even the offer of continued slave labor for the "community." Another member of the Clinton "welfare reform team" is Michigan's Republican governor, John Engler, who cut 83,000 people off the general assistance rolls in that state in 1991. Only 8 percent found any work and those jobs they found paid on average \$120/week!

Some 21 percent of these "able-bodied adults" had chronic physical or mental problems. Over 35 percent lost their homes, tripling the number of beds in Detroit's homeless shelters. Engler is a quintessential capitalist bloodsucker. Of those he axed from the state's welfare rolls, many supplement whatever meager earnings they have by selling their blood for \$20 a pint.

In the 1980s, Reagan reviled the "homeless who are homeless, you might say by choice." Now Clinton declares that the poor are poor by choice, arguing that his "welfare reform" will "remove the incentive for staying in poverty" and "reinforce the work ethic"! Playing on this theme of the moral turpitude of the poor, a column in the *Los Angeles Times* (22 November) with the Orwellian headline, "Pull the Plug on Welfare to Solve Poverty," asks: "by what moral logic should a taxpayer be asked to give a part of his earnings to sustain a child fathered by a young man who disappears, leaving mother and child wards of the state?"

This is truly perverse. It is the U.S. government that makes receipt of AFDC benefits contingent on there being no "man in the house"! And when a HUD task force proposed to continue welfare payments with a father present, there was a howl of outrage from the same racist crowd that blames poverty on the breakdown of the black family and "deadbeat dads." In fact, the rise of single welfare mothers in the inner cities coincides directly with the disappearance of jobs

for black men—who were among the first to get axed in the massive layoffs of the '80s.

Portraying the "nation's five million welfare families as an indolent lot in need of a moral tonic," Republican conservative Newt Gingrich pronounced, "You can't maintain civilization with 12-year-olds having babies and 15-year-olds killing each other and 17-year-olds dying of AIDS" (*New York Times*, 11 November). So after bilking the economy, deindustrializing the country, eliminating jobs wholesale, smashing unions and turning the inner cities of America into vast urban wastelands of poverty, disease and death, the rulers now deride the poor as "uncivilized."

The "New Democrats"

The *Economist* (13 March) noted that in the 1992 election campaign "welfare reform, and especially Mr. Clinton's embrace of a two-year time-limit on receiving assistance" together with support for the death penalty "were among the most powerful symbols that he was a 'new Democrat'." This year, Clinton, who took time out of his campaign schedule to personally supervise the execution of a brain-damaged black man in Arkansas, donated the White House Thanksgiving turkey to a children's petting zoo grotesquely citing this as his first "official pardon."

A White House aide boasted, "'Two years and out' always looked good in the campaign.... Now that we're here, we have to be willing to say that nobody is automatically entitled to the safety net." Indeed, in America the "safety" net has been replaced by the dragnet. There's no money for welfare, but under Clinton's new racist "anti-crime" bill there's millions for high-tech prisons, a hundred thousand more cops and the electric chair.

This week a proposal by U.S. Surgeon General Joyce Elders to legalize drugs was met with an outcry of protest in Washington. Why? Elders' proposal is eminently sane and rational. The decriminalization of drugs would take the profit and correspondingly much of the violent crime out of dealing. But the rulers of this country are insane and irrational. While they scream about drug-related crimes, the capitalists have a vested interest in keeping drugs illegal precisely because it provides the rationale for gearing up their machinery of death and repression aimed at keeping the working class and oppressed cowed and subservient.

Similarly, "welfare reform" is a broadside attack against all of the working class. In their book, *Regulating the Poor* (Random House, 1993) Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward point out that welfare recipients are to be treated in a manner that is "so degrading and punitive as to instill in the laboring masses a fear of the fate that awaits them should they relax into beggary and pauperism. To demean and punish those who do not work is to exalt by contrast even

the meanest labor at the meanest wages."

In racist America, where labor and wages are only getting meaner and leaner, the overlay to preserving a system of raw exploitation and oppression is the black question. The forcible segregation of the black population in this country at the bottom of society has long been wielded by the capitalist rulers of America as an effective club in retarding working-class struggle. Once serving as what Karl Marx called a "reserve army of labor" to be brought in during economic "booms," under decaying American capitalism ghetto blacks are now deemed to be a surplus population, an "unprofitable" mass not worth even being maintained at the most meager subsistence level.

The calls for "welfare reform" are openly racist, portraying blacks in the inner cities as a lazy and an immoral drain on society, a burden which is costing "hard-working folks." But in absolute numbers the overwhelming majority of the poor, the unemployed, the single welfare mothers are white. The rulers play the race card because that's how they think they can get away with the further impoverishment of the entire working class. And they calculate that the destitute masses of the inner cities have no social power—a calculation which is reinforced by the trade-union misleaders.

These racist labor cops for the rule of capital haven't lifted a finger in defense of the homeless and poor, many of whom are the product of the trade-union tops' giveback contracts over the past two decades which saw the "sacrifice" of hundreds of thousands of jobs, millions in wages and the decline of unionized workers from 29 to 17 percent of the labor force. Now the bureaucrats complain that an influx of workers paid at welfare level would threaten union jobs. A labor movement worth its salt would fight to organize the unemployed, demanding a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to spread the available work around, union-run minority hiring and upgrading programs, a massive public works program at union wages, welfare payments at a living rate—for a start.

The way out of the all-sided desperation, union-busting, poverty, homelessness and racist genocide that is today's America is through sharp and hard-fought working-class struggle. The working people created all the wealth of this country; to claim the fruits of their labor and employ it to the benefit of the majority of society requires breaking the power of the bourgeoisie. The working class has the numbers, the organization and the power to do this. What it lacks is the revolutionary consciousness and leadership to do it. For that we need a workers party, one that doesn't "respect" the property rights of the capitalist rulers, one that will fight as a tribune of all the oppressed, that will organize the power of labor in its own interests and for its own rule through socialist revolution. ■

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Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

Latino Truckers Shut Down L.A. Port

LOS ANGELES—In what began as part of a week-long nationwide independent truckers protest strike against rising diesel fuel prices and NAFTA, nearly 3,000 striking drivers effectively paralyzed the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports for eleven days last month. "Truckers' Protest Shuts L.B., L.A. Ports," reported the *Long Beach Press Telegram* (12 November) and "Truck Strike Taking Its Toll—Port Traffic Down 85%" (13 November). The heavily Latino strikers, many of them Central American immigrants, faced down heavy cop harassment and victimization. Strikers were booked for throwing down cigarette butts while scabs who tried to run down picketers were let go. On November 17, cops used tear gas and rubber bullets in attacking 150 strikers picketing a container rail facility. Two days later, 60 cops in riot gear forced strikers from their rallying site at Terminal Island.

The truckers are mostly short-haul drivers who own their own rigs and transport cargo that is unloaded on the docks to local rail yards for further distribution. Their standard of living has been steadily eroded since trucking was deregulated under Reagan, as the flat rates they are paid per haul have gone down while maintenance, fuel and insurance costs have skyrocketed. The long waits between hauls go unpaid, while the trucking companies that act as brokers take half or more of the hauling fees. The drivers currently want Teamsters Local 692 to represent them, eliminating the parasitic brokers and forcing the companies to accept a contract with health benefits, vacation and sick pay.

The Latino drivers have shown tremendous militancy and solidarity, recalling last year's strike by largely Mexican drywall construction workers in Southern California. Truckers told *WV* that the strike was 98 percent solid, despite the lack of formal organization, mobilizing leaflets or even an office. But like the drywallers, they have been left by the labor bureaucracy to face the cops and companies alone, receiving token support at best. Local 692 tops are eager to get drivers' dues, but haven't lifted a finger to help them on the picket lines, refusing even to aid the legal defense of arrested strikers! Scandalously, some 2,000 Teamsters continued to work in the harbor area during the strike. When the truckers tried to join International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 13, the ILWU tops cynically pleaded that it was outside their "jurisdiction"—and refused to honor the picket lines!

Over NAFTA, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy joined with right-wing billionaire Ross Perot in spreading jingoist poison against Mexican workers. But Latino immigrant workers in the Los Angeles area, from janitors to *drywaleros* and truckers, have injected a militant spirit into the labor movement. They can also serve as a "human bridge" for common class struggle north and south of the border, often against the same bosses (GM, Ford). What's needed is class-struggle leadership with an internationalist program to mobilize the multiracial proletariat against the racist protectionism of the union bureaucracy. Organize the unorganized! Full citizenship rights for immigrant workers—*Migra* cops keep out!

CAT and Staley: Bureaucrats Play Losing "Inside Game"

Some 13,000 Caterpillar workers walked out at the world's largest maker of heavy earth-moving equipment for three days in mid-November, highlighting an ongoing series of bitter class battles in downstate Illinois. The walkout came more than a year and a half after United Auto Workers (UAW) leaders liquidated the union's 163-day strike against CAT. Since that despicable betrayal, Illinois has witnessed a capitalist offensive of lockouts and strikebreaking against coal miners, power workers, teachers and Staley corn processing workers. Now the Ku Klux Klan is threatening to bring its murderous racism and union-busting to Springfield, the state capital, on January 15—Martin Luther King's birthday.

Mass, militant labor struggle is needed to beat back the bosses' offensive. But the union misleaders, including so-called "reformers" cherished by most of the left, have dished up one defeat after another. For all the hot air they blow off at union rallies, the labor bureaucrats all bow before the bosses' bottom line: profits and private ownership. When the capitalist cops,

November 12: Combative Latino truckers struck L.A. ports demanding union representation and contract. Sign in Spanish reads: "Truckers United Will Never Be Defeated!"



courts and politicians say jump, their labor lieutenants say, how high.

In the more than two years since the UAW's contract with Caterpillar expired, the Solidarity House bureaucrats have made *not one attempt to shut down the entire company*, not even during the long Peoria-based strike of 1991-92. Instead they caved in to anti-picketing injunctions and allowed massive scabbing even at struck facilities. After scuttling the strike, the UAW tops then fooled around with an impotent "in-plant strategy" such as refusing voluntary overtime while begging company stockholders and customers to pressure CAT bosses to be "nice" to the workforce! The balance sheet on this losing game is that workers get screwed around by management on the shop floor, while company profits soar (\$432 million in the latest quarter).

Frustrated and fed up, CAT workers have embarked on a series of short, localized strikes. The latest shut-down began on November 11, sparked by the suspension of a union rep in Mossville, Illinois, and quickly spread across the state and to Pennsylvania and Colorado. Company spokesmen immediately threatened to replace the strikers with scabs. UAW members attended special union meetings over the weekend in a mood of apprehension, knowing damned well the cowardly "Sacrifice House" crowd never intended to take the CAT to the mat. Sure enough, the strike was over by the Monday morning shift.

With UAW leaders demonstrating their bankruptcy, Illinois bosses have gone on a union-busting offensive. Their current target is the struggle by 780 members of Allied Industrial Workers Local 837 to win a contract at the Decatur Staley plant. Chief advisers to Local 837 are Jerry Tucker, a St. Louis UAW bureaucrat who until this month led a "reform" caucus called New Directions, and "Corporate Campaign, Inc." honcho Ray Rogers (see "Illinois Workers Rally in the 'War Zone,'" *WV* No. 581, 30 July). In 1986, Rogers led the P-9 Hormel packinghouse workers strike in Austin, Minnesota to defeat by looking to community support and a consumer boycott, while the UFCW International was herding scabs in to work! What was needed was not some new gimmick but old-fashioned class struggle, including a strikers' occupation of Hormel's flagship plant.

Today various fake-left groups promote these characters as an alternative to the proven sellouts around International president Owen Bieber. The social-

democratic "Solidarity" grouping published an article (*Against the Current*, July 1993) praising the Decatur Staley struggle, in which Rogers was working to "isolate the company from the corporate community"(!), while Tucker ran the "in-plant strategy" of "work to rule" (under a company-imposed contract!). But on June 27, Staley management responded by locking the entire membership of Local 837 out of the plant and began hiring scabs. Mass picket lines should have been set up immediately, with a call for the rest of the labor movement to join them and to "hot-cargo" Staley products. But, fearing to tread on the bosses' anti-union laws, Tucker vowed, "We wouldn't ask workers to refuse to handle the products" (*In These Times*, 15 November).

These "reformers" offer nothing but pro-capitalist policies in new packaging. The heart of the "in-plant strategy" is *not striking*—they are pushing the bosses' lie that strikes don't work anymore. No, what doesn't work is strikes led by bureaucratic sellout artists and corporate campaigners who play by the bosses' rules.

At a November 7 rally, Local 837 members and supporters were clearly looking for a fighting program to win: over 150 copies of *Workers Vanguard* were sold and hundreds of the *WV* supplement "Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win" were handed out. Yet demoralization with the bureaucrats' losing strategy was evident: the turnout of a thousand was way down from a previous rally just before the lockout. Those who showed up heard the same poisonous crap pushed by the UAW International and the rest of the AFL-CIO officialdom: lobby Congress, elect phony "pro-labor" Democrats, screw foreign workers. One anti-NAFTA flyer turned Yankee imperialism's rape of Latin America on its head, claiming that the trade pact "undercuts American sovereignty"! But it's American capitalists who are taking over the Mexican economy, not the other way around.

The labor misleaders' push a *defeatist* line, and then alibi themselves by shifting the blame to foreign workers. What's needed is a strategy to *win*, a program to mobilize labor's power—one that shuts down production and rings the factory with mass pickets, while fighting for international class solidarity and labor/black mobilization to stop racist terror. And that requires a class-struggle leadership fighting for a workers party that aims not to appease the bosses, but to expropriate them under a workers government. ■

Angry CAT workers walked out for three days last month to protest suspension of union representative in Mossville, Illinois. Walkout spread to Pennsylvania and Colorado.



Israel...

(continued from page 1)

enforcers of the Zionist occupation and place its "seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses" (WV No. 583, 10 September). The recent settler/army actions represent an attempt to wreck this agreement from the right, through a bloodthirsty fascist revolt carried out in collusion with at least sections of the Zionist political establishment. However, all wings of the Israeli ruling class are committed to the suppression of Palestinian national rights. We demand: All Israeli troops and settlers out of all of the Occupied Territories, now!

Only days before the once-promised December 13 deadline for implementation of the accord, Israel flooded the Occupied Territories with massive troop reinforcements. And on December 9, the anniversary of the Palestinian Intifada revolt, fascist settlers murdered three Palestinian laborers near Hebron. The "peace" deal was brokered by the U.S. in an attempt to impose an imperialist Pax Americana on the Near East. As a result of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, Washington has sponsored a number of "peace" deals as part of a U.S.-dominated "New World Order," including between the Salvadoran guerrillas and America's death squad client state and a bogus "power sharing" agreement between the ANC and the apartheid regime in South Africa. But as the photo-op of Rabin shaking hands with Arafat on the White House lawn is eclipsed by scenes of crazed Zionist zealots and soldiers shooting Arabs in the back, U.S. president Clinton is trying to distance himself from the increasingly bloody "peace process."

Israel barely waited for the ink to dry on the sham accord before resuming—and stepping up—its murderous manhunt of Palestinian activists. In late September, an army raid in the West Bank grabbed PLO "Black Panther" commander Ahmed Awad Ikmail and five others. Days later, troops in the Gaza Strip blasted rocket-propelled grenades at a headquarters of Hamas, which opposes the accord, killing two members of the Islamic fundamentalist group and arresting 16. Army officials claimed "their activities were specifically aimed at smashing Hamas gunmen and not at PLO factions which support the peace process" (London Independent, 4 October). But army death squads have also been going after activists in Arafat's Fatah group.

In late November, troops gunned down the 18-year-old son of a leading Fatah activist in the West Bank town of Ramallah. Several days later, on November 28, an army undercover unit posing as Arab vegetable vendors assassinated 23-year-old Ahmed Abu ar-Reesh and 21-year-old Farid Imtair, members of the youth group Fatah Hawks, as they stood outside the former's house in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip. Shortly before his murder, ar-Reesh



Jerome Delay

Fascist settlers, backed by Israeli army, have been carrying out pogrom against Palestinians in West Bank town of Hebron.

had turned his gun in to Israeli authorities as part of an amnesty program for supporters of the accord. This cold-blooded execution was such a blatant and deliberate provocation that army chief of staff Ehud Barak was compelled to issue an unprecedented apology. But the killing continues unchecked.

Just in the month after the signing of the accord, some two dozen Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers. Two weeks ago, Israeli television cameras captured the horrific scene of a young Palestinian being executed with a bullet through the head, as troops fired directly into Gaza crowds protesting an earlier murder of a Hamas activist. Moreover, three leading Fatah officials in the Occupied Territories have been assassinated in the last three months in mysterious circumstances, killings which Hamas and other anti-Fatah Palestinian groups have explicitly condemned. Particularly given Israel's past campaigns targeting PLO officials for wholesale execution, and the recent exposure of an Israeli spy in the PLO's inner council, the long arm of the Mossad secret service is certainly not to be excluded.

Meanwhile, hard-core racist settlers have been terrorizing Palestinian towns and villages throughout the Occupied Territories. For six weeks now, fascist gangs have blockaded highways with burning tires and stoned cars with Arab license plates. The West Bank town of Hebron has become the scene of a virtually uninterrupted Zionist pogrom, as settler mobs marauded through the streets with clubs swinging and guns blazing, shattering windows of homes and shops, shooting one Palestinian through the head. In village after village, Arab homes, greenhouses, refugee camps and classrooms have been attacked and set ablaze by crazed Israeli fascists. Meanwhile, the army has begun openly recruiting settlers into the armed Civil Guard auxiliary, while Rabin's cabinet

is split over whether to endorse a newly formed settler militia.

The army high command made no secret of its dissatisfaction with the Rabin-Arafat deal. One in five reservists say they will disobey orders to evacuate the territories or ask to be relieved from duty. The army's current behavior brings to mind the so-called "Lavon affair" of the 1950s, when military intelligence agents around longtime "Labor" Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion carried out



Jadallah/Reuters

Palestinians in Gaza demonstrate in outrage over murder of Hamas leader by Israeli troops.

unauthorized raids against Egypt in order to sabotage secret peace talks between then prime minister Levi Eshkol and Egyptian president Nasser. Lavon was forced to resign as "defense" minister—despite his insistence that the attacks had been carried out without his instructions—paving the way for Ben-Gurion's return.

The Zionist "ultras" are up in arms over the prospect of even the most cosmetic concessions to the PLO, particularly the proposed creation of a lightly armed Palestinian police force. Settler spokesman Aharon Domb rants: "Any armed Arab policeman is a terrorist as far as we're concerned, and if we run into him on a highway, I'll open fire." These threats are echoed in the halls of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, by the head of the Molodet party, which stands for the forcible expulsion of the Palestinians. Ultrarightist former military commander Ariel Sharon has called on the settlers to fight any government attempt to remove them.

The aim of the proposed Palestinian force is not to police the violently anti-Arab settlers, but to protect them. PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath made this explicit on the CBS news program *60 Minutes* (5 November). When asked if "a Palestinian policeman, perhaps a former member of the Intifada, is going to

arrest his Palestinian brother to protect an Israeli settler," Shaath replied "yes." The new police force, which is to include a 3,000-strong secret intelligence force to track down Palestinian "terrorists," is being hand-picked by Arafat loyalists in Tunis to weed out potential "troublemakers." The man chosen to be police commander in Gaza served for nearly 30 years as a cop for the Israeli occupiers, until forced to resign by the Intifada uprising six years ago.

Through its capitulation to the Israeli regime, the petty-bourgeois nationalist PLO has encouraged the current wave of Zionist-fascist outrages. Not only have Arafat & Co. backtracked on their previous position for a minimal Palestinian statelet in the Occupied Territories, they have repudiated even the call for getting rid of the militarized settlements. As fascist terror besets the Palestinian people, PLO spokesman Faisal al-Husseini issues impotent appeals for "an international force to serve as a buffer between us and the settlers" (*New York Times*, 9 November). When Palestinian militants fired at a car carrying a leader of the fascist Gush Emunim movement last month, Arafat quickly caved in to demands by Rabin and U.S. president Clinton that he denounce "violence" against settlers—with not a hint of condemnation of the rampant Zionist terror being inflicted on the Palestinian people.

Initial, albeit skeptical, support for Arafat's plan among the Palestinian masses in the Occupied Territories has steadily evaporated as its true content becomes clear. In the first electoral test

of support for the agreement, in student elections at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, an anti-accord political bloc of the fundamentalist Hamas and the self-styled "Marxists" of the Popular Front (PFLP) and Democratic Front (DFLP) defeated a pro-Fatah slate. Even within Fatah, particularly among the young Hawks, there is widespread disgruntlement with Arafat and the accord.

Meanwhile, what passes for a left in Israel marches in lockstep behind Rabin. The Meretz bloc in the Israeli cabinet sees the accord as the culmination of its years of Zionist "dove" appeals for "peace now." Meretz spokesman Yossi Sarid sympathizes with "the sorrow of the settlers" and haughtily dismisses Arafat's apology as "not enough." His colleague Shulamit Aloni insists that Arafat call on the Palestinian people as a whole to condemn "terror."

The Stalinists of the Israeli Hadash parliamentary bloc (whose base is almost exclusively Arab) and the Palestinian

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Workers Vanguard skips a week in December. Our next issue will be dated January 7.

Israel Wants Their Spy Back

Swap Pollard for Mordechai Vanunu!

Heroic Technician Imprisoned for Exposing Zionist Nuclear Arsenal



AP
Mordechai Vanunu's revelations in 5 October 1986 London *Sunday Times* exposed that Israel had hundreds of nukes. Left: Following his abduction in Rome by the Mossad, the courageous nuclear technician flashed message to reporters from police van.

The following letter has been submitted to the New York Times.

14 December 1993

The New York Times
New York, NY

To the Editor:

Amid the campaign by the Israeli government, U.S. rabbis and others for the release of Jonathan Jay Pollard, sentenced to life imprisonment for spying for U.S. ally Israel, a letter to the *Times* (26 November) by an official of the American Friends Service Committee advocated the simultaneous release of Pollard and Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu is the courageous Israeli nuclear technician who in 1986 revealed to the world the existence of

Israel's vast nuclear weapons arsenal. Your editorial of 10 December 1993, "No Special Deal for Mr. Pollard," takes the opposite tack, stating "Mr. Pollard's sentence is harsh, but not unjustly so. Mordechai Vanunu, an Israeli citizen, has sat in Israeli prisons for eight years for disclosing the open secret of Israel's nuclear weapons program."

It was in fact an "open secret" that Israel possessed nuclear weapons, but they had been presumed to be small and primitive. What Vanunu, a technician at Israel's Dimona nuclear facility, revealed was that Israel was the world's sixth-largest nuclear power, providing detailed information, substantiated with scores of photographs,

that Israel had stockpiled at least 200 warheads. For exposing the Zionists' doomsday machine, he was kidnapped in Italy by the Mossad spy agency, hauled back to Israel in a cargo ship, and thrown into a Shin Beth (secret police) dungeon where he remains today.

Workers Vanguard (21 November 1986) newspaper pointed out, "A dozen or so A-bombs could nuke every Arab capital and make Hitler's Holocaust look like child's play.... But 200 nukes would mean the warmongers in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem have a much bigger target in mind: *Russia*. Is this a joint operation with Washington in preparation for nuking the Soviets?... Or are the Israelis preparing to go solo? The

Zionist madmen could very easily—and perhaps deliberately—trip over the trip wire for World War III." Washington targeted Saddam Hussein as a supposed military threat because he might have been building an A-bomb, and now they're doing the same with North Korea—but the Israeli government already has the nuclear capacity to set off a global conflagration.

The Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee have waged an international campaign demanding "free Mordechai Vanunu"; all of humanity owes a debt of gratitude to this heroic man. Sentenced to 18 years in prison, Vanunu has spent virtually all of the past eight years in rigorous solitary confinement, and supporters are increasingly concerned for his health. The European Parliament has three times called for his release; in 1988, Australian MPs nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize. Last year the *Sunday Times* of London, which first printed his revelations, launched a public clemency campaign for Vanunu. Mordechai Vanunu should be freed, now, and if the Israeli government wants Pollard, let them pay for him by releasing Vanunu.

There is a secondary sinister thread to the Pollard affair, and that is the strain of anti-Semitism which runs through this country's ruling class—particularly virulent among the "Moral Majority" right-wing Republicans with whom the Zionists were then in cahoots (e.g., Conragate). Israel is a U.S. ally, but the anti-Semites had a field day with the Pollard trial, questioning the "loyalty" of all Jews in America. We recall the anti-Semitic Cold War witchhunt of the heroic Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were also accused of spying for an ally (the USSR in World War II) and after a frame-up trial were murdered in the electric chair in 1953.

Sincerely,
Rachel Wolkenstein
Staff Counsel,
Partisan Defense Committee

People's (formerly Communist) Party in the Occupied Territories fulsomely support the treacherous Israel-PLO accord. While Hadash leader Tawfiq Zayyad begs the government to disarm settlers "using weapons other than in self-defense"(!), People's Party head Ghazan el-Khateeb denounces Hamas for "sabotaging the peace process" (*People's Weekly World*, 6 November). It is precisely this kind of liberal Stalinist pabulum which fosters the growth of Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas, who seek to enslave Palestinian women behind the stultifying veil. In fact, Hamas quickly arrived at a "live and let live" agreement with Fatah, but we defend them and other opponents of the accord like the PFLP and DFLP against Zionist repression when they undertake actions against armed Israeli occupation forces, whether in or out of uniform.

The fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of Ernest Mandel, in its consistent support for Palestinian nationalism, has gone from enthusing over indiscriminate anti-Jewish terror in the early '70s to now cozying up to this conqueror's "peace." For international consumption, USec leader Salah Jaber makes a passing reference to the accord as a "Zionist diktat" (*International Viewpoint*, October 1993). But in an "Open letter to a friend from Peace Now," Israeli USec leader Michel Warschawsky, lamely criticizing the PLO deal as being "far from satisfying," waxes poetic about the "vision of Israeli-Palestinian co-existence" and the "unconditional joy of peace." This self-styled "Trotskyist" vows his commitment "to bring about the full implementation of the Oslo agreement, in hopes that the new arrangement will prepare the ground for a true peace between Israel and Pales-

tin" (*News From Within*, 5 October). Meanwhile, the quirky ex-Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party supported the accord outright!

The wretched Rabin-Arafat deal is not even the smallest step toward peace in the Near East, much less anything approaching the national emancipation of the Palestinian people. As we wrote at the time of its announcement, the "Gaza-Jericho first" agreement amounts to little more than "'community control' over a couple of impoverished slums." As Israeli and PLO negotiators quibble over the size of the proposed Jericho bantustan (ranging from 10 to 150 square miles), what is emerging is a plan for a series of disconnected, isolated Palestinian "cantons" (in reality, ghettos) in the Occupied Territories, a proposal openly pushed by Sharon (including in private meetings with Rabin). In fact, the essence of this scheme was laid out in the "Allon plan" proposed by "Labor" immediately after the conquest of the territories in 1967.

The ever-expanding Jerusalem metropolitan area already consists of much of the central third of the West Bank. Newly elected Likud mayor Olmert vows to go on "creating facts on the ground," the Zionist euphemism for expropriating Arab land. The Rabin government has just approved a further extension of the limits of Jerusalem—consolidating existing settlements as far east as Jericho and south to Hebron into a new "housing development"—which would effectively split the Palestinian population of the West Bank in two. Meanwhile the Israelis insist on maintaining control over a three-mile strip bordering the Jordan River and a "hill line" to the east of Jericho, as well as roads connecting the numerous West Bank settlements.

The national and social liberation of the oppressed Palestinian masses requires the destruction of the Zionist garrison-state (as well as the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan) through socialist revolution, in which the Hebrew-speaking workers must necessarily play a central role. While demonstrating considerable economic militancy, as in a recent takeover of Tel Aviv airport by El Al strikers, the Hebrew workers must be broken from the stranglehold of Zionist ideology and won to the defense of Palestinian national rights if they are to successfully combat their own exploiters.

Only joint class struggle by all the workers of the region, standing at the head of the peasants and myriad oppressed nationalities, can lead to a progressive, just and equitable resolution to the conflicting national claims of the numerous peoples of the Near East, assuring the right of self-determination for both the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples. The key lies in forging an internationalist Trotskyist vanguard party, in which Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews will be comrades in struggle against the Zionist capitalist exploiters and oppressors. ■

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Russia...

(continued from page 1)

devastation of its industrial base, the imperialists still want to maintain the image that Yeltsin is, in the words of U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher, "the best exponent of democracy and progress in Russia." But while Russia's new mafia millionaires and their big brothers in Wall Street and the City of London feast on Russian caviar, the working masses suffer from widespread and growing malnutrition, homelessness and the destruction of social services. The governor of Nizhni Novgorod province, a pacesetter in privatizing industry, warns: "Unfortunately the next year in Russia will be a year of tremendous inflation, unemployment, strikes, factory closures and very acute political conflicts. I see nothing good in the future."

Yeltsin aspires to be a Russian version of Pilsudski, Poland's dictator in the 1920s and '30s. However, Pilsudski came to power in a bonapartist coup which had both wide popular support and the backing of a cohesive military. Yeltsin has neither. He is a bonaparte, a would-be dictator, but a very weak one, whose firmest support lies in the financial capitals of the West. The army's backing remains tentative and unenthusiastic, and is certainly not to be relied on in the event of a mass working-class upsurge. While the world-historic defeat represented by the destruction of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state has had a devastating impact on the proletariat, several strikes in the weeks before the election point to the possibility of volatile social struggles in response to the ever-deepening immiseration.

Yeltsin's Ukaz Constitution

Even under the most "democratic" capitalist regime, so-called "free elections" serve to distribute power within the ruling class, which exercises its monopoly of control over the media and big money. But in the context of bloody counterrevolution, Yeltsin's elections were intended to give "democratic" sanction to the mass murder of hundreds of defenders of parliament during the October 4 assault on the "White House." More than a dozen political organizations were banned outright for their defense of the former parliament. Class-conscious workers must fight against Yeltsin's anti-democratic ban and call for freeing Rutskoi, Khasbulatov and all the imprisoned supporters of parliament.

A revolutionary workers party in Russia would have fought to independently mobilize the working class and its allies against Yeltsin's bloody assault on parliament, which was aimed at consolidating his bonapartist rule and eliminating what was seen as an obstacle to

the imperialist-dictated "free market reforms." In fighting not only to bring down Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary regime but against all the capitalist-restorationist, chauvinist scum, it was necessary to bloc *militarily* with the Rutskoi/Khasbulatov forces defending parliament, but without giving an iota of political support to Yeltsin's bourgeois opponents.

Appropriately enough, the lower house of the new Russian "legislature" is called the Duma, after the impotent "advisory" council under the last tsar. On the eve of the election, Yeltsin restored the old imperial double-headed eagle as the state symbol of the "new" Russia. This was the same emblem under which the tsarist Duma met—and was repeatedly disbanded—before the 1917 Russian Revolution. One woman, whose relatives fought in the Civil War of 1918-20 against the tsarist White Guards, commented bitterly: "They were fighting against the restoration of that evil eagle that meant poverty and slavery for us simple people. And now it is all coming back."

The new constitution enshrines Yeltsin's right to rule by *ukaz* (decree). The president will have the power to unilaterally appoint the prime minister, the powerful security council, top military commanders, the supreme court and the central bank, to set internal and foreign policy and to reject any Duma legislation. The draft, reports the London *Guardian* (10 November), "gives elaborate details on the many new ways in which parliament can be dissolved." The Duma will not be able to reject—or even consider—presidential decrees. Should it reject the president's candidate for prime minister three times, "the Duma is deemed to have dissolved itself." Yeltsin can declare a state of emergency at his whim. His impeachment is made vir-



Troops guard charred "White House" after Yeltsin ordered storming of parliament.

tually impossible, and the grounds for impeachment do not include violation of the constitution.

While 13 slates were finally allowed to run—ranging from four "reform" blocs to the industrialist Arkady Volsky's Civic Union and the KPRF to the fascist Zhirinovskiy—opposition groups were denied effective access to everything from the airwaves to phones and office space. In one two-week period in November, the favored "Russia's Choice" of Yeltsin crony Yegor Gaidar was given 28 minutes on the main Ostankino TV station, as compared to *ten seconds* for a rival "reform" group headed by liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky. Yeltsin tried to remove the KPRF and another party from the ballot for criticizing the constitution. Yet from early returns, Zhirinovskiy garnered a quarter of the votes, the refounded "Communist" Party and its allies of the Agrarian Union (representing collective farmers) together got 20 percent, and Gaidar got only one vote in seven. The "Women of Russia" slate got over 8 percent.

Some of the smaller Stalinist "patriot" groups—including the outlawed Russian Communist Workers Party of Viktor Anpilov—called for a boycott of the elections. In an article in the *Nation* (6 December), Boris Kagarlitsky, head of the small social-democratic Party of Labor, also argued for this position.

Kagarlitsky cited the Russian workers movement response to the 1905 "Bulygin Duma." This was set up as a sop specifically aimed at heading off the workers uprising. But after the revolutionary upsurge had been decisively defeated, Lenin's Bolsheviks participated in the elections to the third Duma in 1907 as a platform for revolutionary propaganda. As Lenin wrote:

"Active boycott, as the experience of the Russian revolution has shown, is correct tactics on the part of the Social-Democrats only under conditions of a sweeping, universal and rapid upswing of the revolution."

—V.I. Lenin, "Draft Resolution on Participation in the Elections to the Third Duma" (July 1907)

Sham that they were, the current elections did not take place in a period of escalating class struggle; on the contrary, given the present passivity of the Russian proletariat, the call for an *active* boycott policy was empty.

We of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) were for a resounding "no" to Yeltsin's bonapartist constitution. However, in the legislative elections there was no party or group to which revolutionaries could give even the most critical electoral support. The KPRF won votes from many of those who were opposed to the "free market" immiseration represented by the capitalist "reformers" and were also repelled by the violent racism of Zhirinovskiy. Yet this largest of the Stalinist "patriot" organizations ran on the basis of explicit and emphatic support to capitalist "free enterprise." Roy Medvedev's Socialist

Party of Labor (SPT) threw itself into a "Fatherland" bloc with monarchists and Cossacks, which soon fell apart and took the SPT out of the running.

While denouncing Yeltsin for seeking greater powers than even "the pharaoh, the tsar and the general secretary" and condemning "wild capitalism," KPRF head Gennady Zyuganov insisted: "Privatisation is essential" (*Economist*, 27 November). Zyuganov went out of his way to dissociate his party from anything remotely connected to communism. Lauding the Bible and the Koran, he railed, "There are more former Communists in Boris Yeltsin's government than in my party." Adamantly affirming his support to capitalism, Zyuganov complained that under Yeltsin, "no real reforms have yet begun. They promise us a capitalism like Switzerland's, but it's already more like Colombia here, and may soon be Bangladesh" (*London Guardian*, 25 November).

Behind Zyuganov's pseudo-populist rhetoric is a program for a more nationalist, gradual road to the introduction of full-fledged capitalism. Acknowledging the devastating impact of Yeltsin's "shock therapy," this was common coin for all the electoral groupings. Volsky's Civic Union called for "therapy without shock," while Yeltsin minister Shakhrai (running on a slate independent from Gaidar) called for an "active industrial policy" and his running mate Shokhin, a deputy prime minister, warned that "whole regions of Russia could turn into zones of social catastrophe." Even Gaidar, the architect of Yeltsin's "shock therapy" deindustrialization program, cloaked himself in "centrist" language stressing the need for tariffs and "sensible protection" for Russian industry.

The fascist Zhirinovskiy's dramatic vote total is a sinister omen for Jews and non-Russian nationalities. A crazed fanatic who vows to "follow in Hitler's footsteps," Zhirinovskiy spewed anti-Semitic filth and railed during the campaign that he would restore Russia to the borders of the tsarist empire. His TV ads showed Russian toughs beating up a dark-skinned person from the Caucasus. While Gaidar is now posturing as an anti-fascist, Yeltsin/Gaidar gave Zhirinovskiy extra air time because—as an open advocate of autocratic rule—he was one of the few non-governmental candidates to support Yeltsin's constitution. Zhirinovskiy has positioned himself to exploit growing hostility to Yeltsin/Gaidar's economic "shock treatment," directing mass desperation into pogroms against ethnic minorities.

Zhirinovskiy was not alone in pushing unalloyed Great Russian chauvinism. The KPRF's Zyuganov was earlier co-chairman of the fascist Russian National Sobor and a leader of the "red-brown" National Salvation Front. Shakhrai's electoral slate ran on the slogan "Family, Property, Homeland." Gaidar's theme song was titled "Russia Is Risen" and his buttons featured an image of Peter the Great. While thoroughly beholden to Washington, Yeltsin is no less a Great Russian chauvinist than his nationalist opponents. The new constitution does away with even the formal rights to autonomy previously granted to predominantly non-Russian regions such as that of the Volga Tatars and the Chechens in the Caucasus. From the day after parliament was dispersed, Yeltsin and Moscow mayor Luzhkov have waged a pogromist crackdown aimed at driving out dark-skinned people from the capital.

This goes hand in hand with an attempt to expand Russian control in the "near abroad," the non-Russian republics of the former USSR. Largely succumbing to pressure from the military, Yeltsin has explicitly opposed NATO expansion to East Europe. But this is not necessarily counterposed to a pro-Western policy. Washington is in favor of a strong Russian state reasserting its dominance over the domain of the former Soviet Union, so long as it remains a client state subservient to Western interests. As the Lon-

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Stalinism—Gravedigger of the Revolution

How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled

Homeless tent city in Moscow's Red Square.

For Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Yeltsin Counterrevolution!

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Cuba Caravan...

(continued from page 5)

workers state and extend revolution throughout the hemisphere. Gunn confirms our reports that there was "widespread unease" over Castro's July 26 announcement legalizing the holding of dollars, out of fear that this would "foment social inequality," particularly since "black Cubans are less likely than white Cubans to have wealthy relatives abroad." *The program of "capitalism through the back door" is a mortal threat to the Cuban workers state, and is the main danger threatening Cuba today.*

Those who defend the Cuban Revolution must beware of imperialist liberals who seek to use the "solidarity movement" as a Trojan horse, calling to end the embargo and pretend the siege has been lifted, in order to foment counter-revolution inside the ramparts.

Beware of the Hooverites

This is not the first time in history such questions have arisen. Thinking he has nailed us, Marc V. asks rhetorically if we're going to attack Lenin "for inviting 'openly counterrevolutionary forces' represented by Herbert Hoover to help with famine relief in the U.S.S.R. in 1922." First of all, we didn't criticize Cuba for accepting aid from the Pastors for Peace. We defend the right of the besieged deformed workers state to get aid where it can, at the same time as we warn of the dangers of dollarization of the economy. But what about Herbert Hoover's "efforts" on famine relief? In point of fact, after the defeat of the imperialist expeditionary forces and White Guards by Trotsky's Red Army in the Civil War, Hoover *did* attempt to bring in counterrevolution under the cover of famine relief.

In the face of a catastrophic famine, in mid-1921 the Soviets set up an "All-Russian Committee for Aid to the Hungry," including former members of the Provisional Government, prominent Kadets and other non-Bolsheviks, in order to draw funds and support from abroad in the face of this disaster. A few months later, bowing to desperate need, the government concluded an agreement with Hoover's American Relief Administration (ARA). But Hoover, then U.S. Secretary of Commerce, hoped to use the famine to weaken the Soviet government and promptly began maneuvering, refusing to deal with the Bolshe-

vik authorities and attempting to treat the predominantly bourgeois committee as a virtual shadow government. ARA personnel engaged in espionage. The situation grew so threatening that after barely a month of its functioning, the Bolsheviks had to dissolve the committee, and when it refused to disband, had the leading bourgeois members arrested!

You can read about this in volumes 1 and 3 of E.H. Carr's *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923*. Moreover, in a series of messages Lenin declared, "Hoover must be punished, he must be *slapped in the face publicly, for all the world to see, and the League of Nations Council as well*" (11 August 1921). And again, "concerning the 'Hooverites,' their every step should be watched...while the worst of them" must be "tracked down and caught" (5 September 1921). While the Soviet government found it necessary to deal with Hoover, Lenin insisted that workers send their contributions independently of the bourgeois authorities: "Do all our representatives abroad know that everything should be done to support workers' collections (in aid of the starving) *directly to us?*"

So Lenin, too, warned about counter-revolutionary forces seeking to manipulate relief aid and called on workers to organize independently. And the Communist International, while appealing to workers for donations for Soviet Russia, emphasized that the key aid to the embattled workers state was through using the proletariat's organized strength to stay the hand of the bourgeoisie, and for the proletariat to "come together for the common defensive struggle against capital" at home. A classic example of this was the 1919 Seattle General Strike sparked by the port workers' refusal to ship containers labeled "sewing machines" which turned out to be guns for the counter-revolutionary Whites. So today, while we are for efforts to gather humanitarian aid for Cuba, we must point out that these goods cannot make a dent in the embargo—for Cuba the caravans are important mainly for their propaganda value. To bust the blockade and defend Cuba it is necessary to make socialist revolution throughout Latin America and in the belly of the imperialist beast!

Popular-Front "Solidarity Movement"

Our reader also objects to our noting that the Pastors for Peace emphasized that they were carrying Bibles as well as medicine. "Is distribution of the Bible itself a counterrevolutionary act?" he demands. But the use of religion is not an insignificant factor in counter-revolu-

tion. Recall, for instance, the role of the Catholic Church, the godfather of Polish Solidarność. While we warned in 1981 that this favorite "union" of Reagan and of anti-Communist Pope John Paul Wojtyla was pushing for restoration of capitalism, calling to "Stop Solidarność counterrevolution!" the bulk of the left hailed Walesa's outfit. Some even raised "solidarity" aid which was funneled, along with millions of dollars from the U.S. government, through the conduit of the "AFL-CIA." Eight years later, Solidarność came to power and promptly proceeded to restore capitalism.

Marc V. asks what of religious leaders who may have supported the Partisan Defense Committee's efforts to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal? Not only have we approached pastors and priests, we have sought support from black Democratic Party politicians such as Congressman Ron Dellums and Pennsylvania state senator David Richardson on behalf of the former Black Panther on death row. Or in another example, in 1974, we held a protest in New York City in support of striking British miners, which was endorsed by Paul O'Dwyer, then president of the New York City Council. In the first case, opposition to the racist death penalty is a straightforward defense of democratic rights. In the second case, there was a working-class struggle which an individual capitalist politician supported for his own reasons, in this case hatred for British imperialism and his support for Irish nationalism, which enabled us to garner labor backing.

But that is different from joining with a whole section of the bourgeoisie on their program. There is a history to this question as well, the history of the popular front. The reader writes that he is a former member of the YSA, youth group of the Socialist Workers Party. His views in fact coincide with the policies of the SWP in the Vietnam antiwar movement. Arguing that they were organizing a "single issue" coalition to "bring the troops home," they built a popular-front movement on the program of the Democratic Party "doves." While they only succeeded in getting a couple of capitalist politicians, such as Senator Vance Hartke, up on the platform in their "National Peace Action Coalition," the presence of Hartke was a "dead giveaway" to the *bourgeois* class content of this "peace" movement. Their program coincided with those imperialist spokesmen who sought to cut American losses as they were being defeated by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese.

A *Spartacist* supplement (July 1971) headlined "Against NPAC Pop Fronts:

For Class Action Against the War," noted:

"NPAC is a Popular Front combining the SWP with the liberal bourgeoisie and Cold Warrior 'socialists,' through which the SWP can 'lead' masses of people and rub shoulders with Vance Hartke and Victor Reuther. The SWP is able to 'lead' these masses through the oldest opportunist sleight-of-hand in the world—by adopting the liberal bourgeoisie's program!"

We demanded, "No Liberal Bourgeois Speakers at Anti-War Rallies," "For Labor Political Strikes Against the War," "Break with the Capitalist Parties—For a Political Party of the Working Class," "Smash Imperialism—All U.S. Troops Out of Asia Now" and "Victory to the Indochinese Revolution—No Confidence in Sellout 'Leaders' at Home or Abroad!"

When in July of 1971 the SWP used NPAC's so-called "non-exclusion" policy to keep Vance Hartke on the platform and forcibly exclude communists who tried to shout him down, its pact with the bourgeoisie was sealed in blood. And when U.S. troops were withdrawn from Vietnam after the 1973 Paris "peace" accords, the SWP's vaunted "antiwar" movement suddenly disappeared, although the fighting went on for two more years, for it was built not on a program to defeat imperialism through socialist revolution, but on social-chauvinist appeals for "our boys" (the American army).

Today, the role of the Ramsey Clarks is to once again trap would-be radicals in the bourgeois confines of the popular front. They are aided by the likes of the Committees of Correspondence, the right-wing split-off from the CPUSA. For them, "Cuba solidarity" work is indeed a cover for their program of pressuring the Democratic Party (only now without any "Communist" pretensions). Viscerally opposed to a *class* program of proletarian internationalism, they are doing the donkey work for the liberals who want to get the Clinton administration to replace its "outdated" and "counterproductive" policy with a more effective program for counterrevolution. And like the Stalinists in the 1930s heyday of the People's Fronts, they are livid when the Trotskyists expose their shell game by revealing that their "alliance" with the "progressive" bourgeoisie spells doom for the workers' cause.

The best defense of the Cuban Revolution is internationalism, and not the search for political blocs with any wing of the class enemy. It is particularly incumbent on revolutionaries in the U.S. to defend tiny embattled Cuba through proletarian action against the vengeance of the Yankee ruling class. ■

don *Economist* (4 December) noted in an editorial entitled "Russia Resurgent," "America might even think its interests were being served if Russia acted as a neighborhood cop."

Resurgent Great Russian chauvinism is a deadly danger to the proletariat, whose *multinational* character was shaped by the integrated, collectivized economy in the former Soviet Union. Nationalist demagoguery, whether coming from Washington's man Yeltsin, the fascist Zhirinovskiy or the Stalinist "patriots," serves to divide the workers and chain the Russian masses to their would-be exploiters.

For Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Yeltsin!

Whatever the outcome of the elections, it will not solve the fundamental problems facing the fledgling Russian capitalist class. Harvard "shock therapy" architect Jeffrey Sachs complains that only \$1.5 billion of the \$13 billion in International Monetary Fund aid has actually come through. The *Economist* (6 November) notes that direct foreign investment—barely \$100 million in 1992—"is so small that no one in the government appears to be bothering to measure it." Meanwhile, inflation this autumn averaged 20 percent a month, double the rate a year ago. And while

formal unemployment stands at under a million, some five million or so are effectively unemployed, laid off or on unpaid "vacation." The lack of fuel means that millions have no heat or hot water during one of the bitterest winters in years.

With the elections over, the Kremlin intends to begin implementing massive closures of bankrupt firms, with even Yeltsin's ministers predicting an unemployment rate of 14 percent—some 10 million jobless—by the end of next year. Whether or not they are able to carry out such a drastic IMF-style "shock therapy" is another matter. But the sheer economic chaos and economic looting is already driving the country to ruin.

A bellwether for the possibility of mass social struggles in the coming period is the recent strike in the Vorkuta coal fields, which has long been a bastion of support for Yeltsin. The Independent Union of Miners (NPG), which was formed with the aid of U.S. imperialism via the anti-Communist AFL-CIO bureaucracy, opposed a one-day strike in early September of 500,000 workers organized by the ex-Stalinist miners union. The NPG also backed Yeltsin's dissolution of parliament later that month. But with over two months of unpaid back wages, the Vorkuta NPG leaders organized a hunger strike in November, culminating in a one-day

walkout on November 11. On December 6, they struck again for five days, calling off the walkout on the eve of the elections only after Moscow promised yet again to pay up. But the relatively privileged miners still face massive pit closures if Yeltsin/Gaidar have their way.

Another strike over back payment of wages by gas industry workers in the Siberian city of Nadym virtually shut down the area before ending in victory in early December. Even the pro-Yeltsin *Izvestia* (3 December) reported: "Economic demands receded into the background, while people were urged constantly to vote against the government and to boycott the referendum on the constitution." Thousands of angry strikers surrounded the government's negotiators when they arrived at the airport, and picket signs read: "The thieving government should resign!"

The drive by the new rulers of Russia to consolidate a capitalist state, whether according to the plans of the IMF "shock therapists" or more corporatist-nationalist schemes, portend a horrendous destruction of the living standards of the working class. Burgeoning discontent could explode, whether in inchoate plebeian outbursts, economist trade-union struggles or more political mobilizations against the thieving blood-

suckers. However they arise, it is necessary to put forward a program to deepen defensive struggles, to extend them and transform and lead them toward a working-class political struggle for power. Along this road, what will be necessary is the formation of authentic, elected soviets to unify the proletariat in combat for socialist revolution and to serve as the framework for a reconstituted proletarian state power.

The morale of the proletariat of the former Soviet Union is currently shattered. But to recognize this is not to see the working class condemned to some generations of small and modest economic struggle. The recent strikes demonstrate that the potential is much more explosive—that the Russian proletariat can be impelled, without any particular political consciousness, to challenge the trivial, black-market capitalist class that is coalescing in the ex-Soviet Union. But to take what is impelled by increasing immiseration, unemployment, hunger and exploitation and turn it toward advancing the condition of the working class and its allies requires a revolutionary leadership in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

Down with Yeltsin and his *ukaz* constitution! For proletarian revolution to reforge an authentically egalitarian and voluntary union of soviet republics! ■