

Would-Be Czar Boris' Bloody Monday

Yeltsin Coup Serves Washington

OCTOBER 5—As flames leapt from the Russian parliament on Monday, the capitalist rulers from Washington to Bonn cheered on their man in Moscow, Boris Yeltsin. Hundreds have been killed and some 1,600 arrested as a state of siege was imposed on the Russian capital. Ten oppositional newspapers ranging from the so-called left to the nationalist right have been banned, all other media are under strict censorship. All political organizations involved in demonstrations defending the parliament have been banned as has the display of communist symbols such as the hammer and sickle. The smoke-charred "White House" and the blood in its corridors are the face of the capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed the Soviet Union, the homeland of the October Revolution of 1917.

Just over two years ago, Yeltsin had stood outside the same building as he seized power from the disintegrating Stalinist bureaucracy which for decades ruled the Soviet degenerated workers state. This ushered in a period of counterrevolutionary chaos as the capitalist-restorationist regime, in the absence of working-class resistance, managed to cohere a bourgeois state apparatus, although weak and fragile. At the same time, the capitalist-restorationist forces split into bitterly hostile factions, headed by the Yeltsin presidency and the Russian parliament presided over by Aleksandr Rutskoi and Ruslan Khasbulatov. By destroying the parliament, Yeltsin has also taken aim at the layers of ex-Soviet bureaucrats in regional councils around the country. A bloody curtain has now been drawn on the initial, "democratic" phase of the counterrevolution.

The tank shells slamming into the "White House" on the morning of October 4 were the opening shots of a bonapartist regime aimed at brutally suppressing any kind of resistance to "free market" immiseration. For months, Western capitals and the world bankers cartel, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have been pushing Yeltsin to clear out the obstacles to deepening the economic "shock treatment," whose next stage is mass layoffs of millions of workers and devastation of industry. Two days before Yeltsin decreed the dissolution of the parliament on September 21, the IMF put a scheduled \$1.5 billion loan to Russia on hold until the government carried out promised economic "reforms." The U.S. threw its full backing behind Yeltsin's coup. Hours before the military assault on the parliament, the view from



Boris Yeltsin, goaded by Clinton and IMF paymasters, ordered storming of Russian parliament.

Washington, according to an ABC-TV correspondent, was that they would "be quite happy" to see Yeltsin "break a few eggs to make this omelet."

Only hours after arresting Rutskoi and Khasbulatov, the Kremlin issued decrees vastly expanding the state of emergency. Security forces were authorized to conduct searches without court warrants and to set up checkpoints on main roads and at transportation facilities. Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov said the capital would be "cleansed" of "undesirables." Already 600 parliament supporters are being held in a sports stadium in Krasnaya Presnya district. The banned groups range from various "Communist" parties

to the "left-right" National Salvation Front and the fascistic Russian National Sobor. The outlawed papers range from the chauvinist *Sovietskaya Rossia* and the virulently anti-Semitic *Den to Pravda*, formerly the premier organ in the Soviet Union and now connected to the Communist Party-Russian Federation, which was established in February of this year as a claimant to the legacy of the old CPSU.

Rutskoi/Khasbulatov and the fascist-infested "red-brown" coalition that supported them are no less hostile to the working class than is Yeltsin. But, as we wrote last March, when the squabbling capitalist-restorationist factions were

heading for a showdown: "The working class must oppose moves from any corner to place its neck in the yoke of a bonapartist dictatorship" ("Dogfight in Moscow," WV No. 572, 26 March). Today the already widespread fear and distrust of would-be czar Boris has been enormously intensified. Even Western correspondents report overwhelming popular hostility to Yeltsin's "bloody Monday" massacre. The urgent and immediate task of the working class and its allies is to prevent Yeltsin, in the wake of this coup, from consolidating an effective police state. Class-conscious workers must demand an immediate end to the

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Reuters

New World Disorder and the Collapse of Stalinism

Cuba in Peril

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Blacks and the Cuban Revolution

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WV Photo



Hampton, Virginia: Hundreds March

Racist Frame-Up of Basketball Star Allen Iverson

Allen Iverson has been featured in *Sports Illustrated* (26 July) and is considered by many professional scouts to be the finest high school athlete in the country. But instead of attending college and competing on court, he has been condemned to five years behind bars for the "crime" of fighting back against a racist provocation. Iverson was sentenced on September 8 by Judge Nelson T. Overton, and is currently in the Newport News prison farm, where he won't be eligible for parole for ten months. Three other young black men were also sentenced to jail as a result of the same incident (one, Melvin Stephens, is free on bond pending appeal, but Iverson and

two others have been denied an appeal bond).

Along with Michael Simmons, Samuel Wynn and Melvin Stephens, Allen Iverson was arrested after a clash at a local bowling alley last Valentine's Day. The incident began when a group of white bowlers hurled racist slurs at Iverson and his friends. After the melee ended, the young black men were charged and later convicted of "maiming by mob." The white racist provocateurs, of course, weren't charged at all.

The sentences meted out to the "Hampton Four" are a gross racist injustice which has galvanized thousands in outrage in the Virginia Tidewater area.



TROTSKY

Cuba and Trotskyism

With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the Cuban deformed workers state is in mortal danger. The Castro regime has facilitated Cuba's isolation with its fealty to the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country"—opposing social revolutions in Latin America in the interest of befriending bourgeois-nationalist regimes—and its denial of workers democracy for the Cuban masses. Key to extension of the revolution is the ouster of the nationalist

Castroite bureaucracy through proletarian political revolution. From the time of its inception as the Revolutionary Tendency of the now-reformist Socialist Workers Party, the Spartacist League has fought for unconditional military defense of the Cuban Revolution while opposing any illusions in Castroite Stalinism.

The Cuban Revolution has exposed the vast inroads of revisionism upon our movement. On the pretext of defense of the Cuban Revolution, in itself an obligation for our movement, full unconditional and uncritical support has been given to the Castro government and leadership, despite its petit-bourgeois nature and bureaucratic behavior. Yet the record of the regime's opposition to the democratic rights of the Cuban workers and peasants is clear: bureaucratic ouster of the democratically-elected leaders of the labor movement and their replacement by Stalinist hacks; suppression of the Trotskyist press; proclamation of the single-party system; and much else. This record stands side by side with enormous initial social and economic accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution. Thus Trotskyists are at once the most militant and unconditional defenders against imperialism of both the Cuban Revolution and of the deformed workers' state which has issued therefrom. But Trotskyists cannot give confidence and political support, however critical, to a governing regime hostile to the most elementary principles and practices of workers' democracy, even if our tactical approach is not as toward a *hardened* bureaucratic caste....

Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerrilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime. The creation of such regimes has come about under the conditions of decay of imperialism, the demoralization and disorientation caused by Stalinist betrayals, and the absence of revolutionary Marxist leadership of the working class. Colonial revolution can have an unequivocally progressive significance only under such leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. For Trotskyists to incorporate into their strategy revisionism on the *proletarian* leadership in the revolution is a profound negation of Marxism-Leninism no matter what pious wish may be concurrently expressed for "building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." Marxists must resolutely oppose any adventurist acceptance of the peasant-guerrilla road to socialism—historically akin to the Social Revolutionary program on tactics that Lenin fought. This alternative would be a suicidal course for the socialist goals of the movement, and perhaps physically for the adventurers.

—Revolutionary Tendency, "For the Rebirth of the Fourth International" (June 1963), *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9



LENIN

On September 25, hundreds marched past the Hampton Circuit Courthouse, chanting "It's 1993, and we're still not free" and "Free the Hampton Four." At an earlier protest September 14, over 700 angry protesters rallied. Supporters of the four have formed SWIS (from the initials of the last names of the young men). Joyce Hobson, a teacher and SWIS founder, denounced the sentencing, saying, "We're beginning to see Klansmen in robes of another color."

One teacher described Allen Iverson as "the kind of student you like to teach. He listens, he's respectful, and he's very enthusiastic." But it didn't make any difference in the racist courts. This Hampton courthouse travesty, like the 1989 Virginia Beach cop riot, shows that even privileged black star athletes and college students are targeted by the racist cops and courts. On Labor Day 1989, Virginia Beach police rioted against Southern black students at a weekend celebration of black fraternities and sororities. The cops brutally beat and arrested over a thousand black students for jaywalking, not wearing a shirt, or any other excuse they could make up to stomp on black youth.

Among those at the Hampton rallies were longshoremen from the local community. At the September 25 protest, Newport News shipyard workers told a WV supporter that they had raised the "Hampton Four" case in their Steelworkers local meeting, but it was referred to the International. The predominantly black unions of the Tidewater area are a potential beachhead of labor power in the "open shop" South. In 1983, when the Norfolk school board voted to abolish busing, 10,000 predominantly black workers and youth poured into the streets to protest, as hundreds of International Longshoremen's Association members carried signs say-



Biever/Sports Illustrated

Allen Iverson

ing "ILA All the Way Against Segregated Schools."

Under militant class-struggle leadership, the labor movement can and must be in the forefront of the fight against racist attacks. We need to build a multiracial workers party independent of the capitalist parties—the Democrats and Republicans—that will mobilize the power of those who produce the wealth in this society, to fight on behalf of all the oppressed and for a workers government. Free the Hampton Four! ■



Silver/Hampton Roads Daily Press

Hampton, Virginia: Hundreds rally September 14 against racist frame-up of the Hampton Four.

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WORKERS VANGUARD



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Scabherding Union Tops Bust the Guild for Murdoch

OCTOBER 4—At noon today almost 300 members of the Newspaper Guild at the *New York Post* took down their picket line and lined up to "reapply" for jobs that some of them had held for more than four decades. Driven to the wall by the new owner of the *Post*, media mogul and global union-buster Rupert Murdoch, the Guild struck a week ago. Murdoch had demanded the virtual obliteration of the Guild through a four-month "free-fire zone" during which he could arbitrarily dismiss any worker without having to pay the millions in severance pay they had been "guaranteed." Over 200 members were slated to be fired, so they fought. Their signs read "No Justice, No *Post*." When they were defeated, it wasn't by Murdoch, but by the *scabherding of the union tops*. Their knifing of the Guild is a threat to all labor.

All summer the architect of the "Fortress Wapping" newspaper war in London prepared the ground for smashing the Guild—abetted by the traitors in the *Allied Printing Trades Council*. Hammered by their union tops and Democratic governor Cuomo's demand for "shared sacrifice," all nine production unions, including the key pressmen and drivers, made huge givebacks to Murdoch. Led by Allied head George McDonald, the scabherding union tops swore they would keep the paper open if the Guild struck.

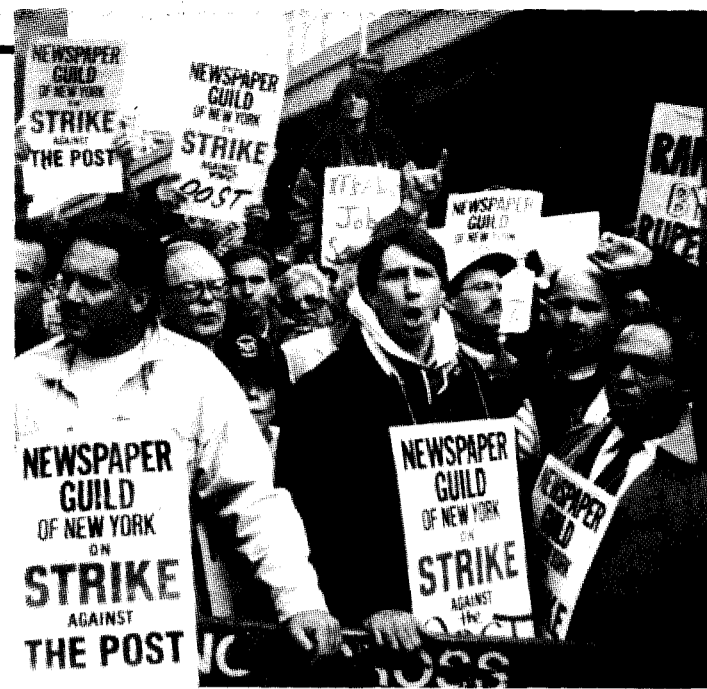
But in a dramatic turnaround, when

the reporters and editorial, clerical and advertising workers of the Guild set up their picket line on September 27, a handful of pressmen successfully appealed to the drivers and the rest of the production unions to honor the line. Murdoch's presses never started. McDonald and the Allied union bureaucrats went berserk, desperately trying to force unionists to cross the picket line. But pressman Phil Meyer, whose family has been at the *Post* for 40 years, said they weren't going in: "I don't care who told them to cross." For three days the Guild's line held.

Murdoch responded by threatening to walk away from the deal to buy the *Post*, and his flunkys on the Allied council whipped up a campaign to return to work. Finally, on Thursday night, scabherder McDonald and Pressmen's union chief Edward Flemming led one group of production workers after another across the Guild's lines, as NYC cops kept Guild members penned up behind police barricades. A few pressmen, including a cleanup crew, honored the lines to the end. Strikers angrily burned copies of the scab *Post* as the trucks rolled. Harry Leykis, Guild unit chair at the *Post*, bitterly told *Workers Vanguard*, "if we could have all the union people that George McDonald has put out of work it would go from here to Wall Street."

At a Guild meeting on October 3, the union voted to give in to Murdoch's

September 30: Newspaper Guild strikers shout "Don't be a scab!" as Allied Printing Trades bureaucrats break strike.



WV Photo

terms. Workers with decades at the paper were told they will have to beg for their jobs, with seniority and severance pay down the drain. The existence of the Guild at the *Post* is in question, as Murdoch may replace over half its members. Clearing \$605 million last year, he relishes breaking unions in his far-flung businesses, which include Fox TV, a cable empire and newspapers from Australia to Britain.

The crushing of the Guild strike by the open strikebreaking of the labor bureaucracy is a threat to the existence of every newspaper union. The *New York Times* in particular is preparing to reap the benefits of this defeat—the Guild contract there expired last March.

For the last three years, the only "tabloid war" in New York has been a war on the unions. At the *Post*, the union tops have enforced givebacks (with the lie they are "saving jobs") to an endless succession of "rescuers" at the sleazy, right-wing scandal sheet: bankrupt developer Peter Kalikow, financial con artist Steven Hoffenberg, junk king and nut case Abe Hirschfeld, casino hustler and landlord Donald Trump, and now the king of union-busters, Murdoch.

Over at the *Daily News*, labor-hating U.S. News publisher Mort Zuckerman set the table for Murdoch last winter, when he threw 170 Guild members at the *Daily News* on the street. At that time, McDonald demonstrably moved across the negotiations table to sit with the bosses.

At yesterday's Guild meeting that voted to end the *Post* strike, one angry

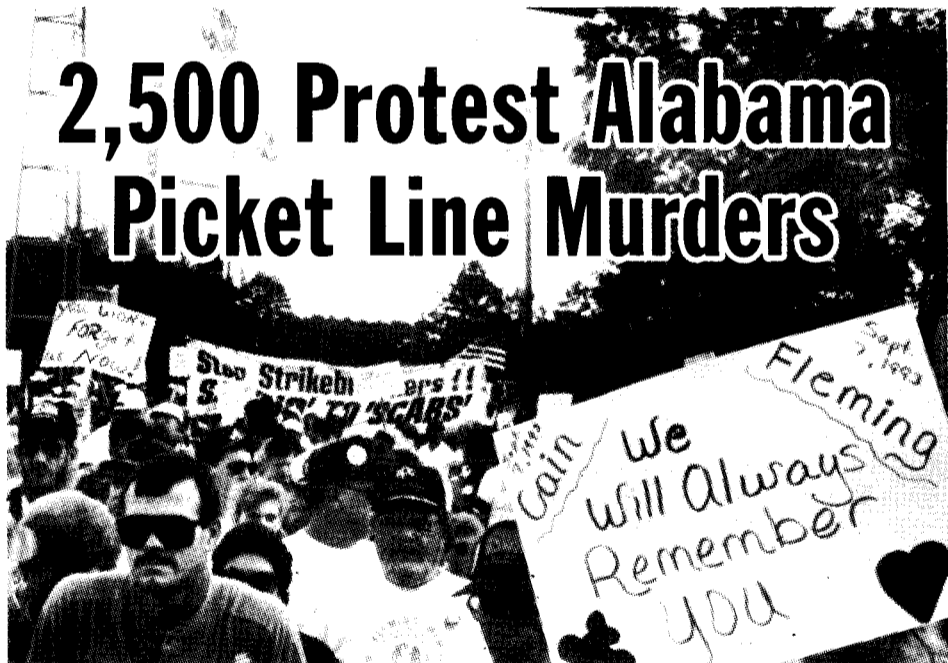
worker demanded to know, "When are we going to stand up and fight back?" The *Post* strike comes on the heels of the 1990-91 *Daily News* strike, where the militant solidarity of the pressmen and drivers in particular kept the scab *News* off the streets. Thousands of New York unionists came out to solidarity rallies. But the bureaucrats, including the Guild's Barry Lipton and "militant" Juan Gonzalez, diverted the *News* strikers into a useless and impotent consumer boycott which eventually delivered them into the hands of British tycoon "Cap'n Bob" Maxwell.

At the beginning of the *Daily News* strike, the Spartacist League issued a special *Workers Vanguard* supplement calling for ousting the pro-capitalist labor traitors and pointing the way to victory:

"Labor's strength lies in organization, unity, militancy, and a leadership with a class-struggle program and the determination to win. Against the bosses' cynical attempts to pit unemployed black and Hispanic workers against the unions: fight to create jobs through a shorter workweek and no loss in pay, set up union-run minority recruitment and training programs, at full union scale and at the bosses' expense. We need, *here and now*, a massive display of working-class power, crossing all the craft and race lines. *To stop the scabs, strikers should occupy the Daily News and surround it with the New York City working class.*"

That's what it will take to win a strike against the ruthless newspaper barons. And to carry out such a class-struggle program it's necessary to drive out the labor traitors who are destroying the unions. ■

2,500 Protest Alabama Picket Line Murders



WV Photo

COLUMBIANA, Alabama—Over 2,500 unionists rallied here September 26 to honor Keith Cain and Walter Fleming, two striking members of United Steelworkers Local 15015 who were murdered in cold blood. As Cain and Fleming were at their posts on the picket line outside the National-Standard plant September 7, they were deliberately run down by a scab.

Attending the memorial rally were members of 52 of the 63 unions in this "open shop" state. Miners and paper workers joined steel, rubber and auto workers to chant "Scabs must go!" and "We are one big union!" Workers came from Tennessee, Florida and Mississippi, as well as striking steel workers from La Place, Louisiana. Defying a court injunction, workers took to the streets and marched two miles to the plant chanting "Scabs out!" Integrated groups of bystanders cheered the marchers as they passed. It was striking that here in the Deep South there were virtually no

Confederate flags in evidence.

At the plant entrance, marchers joined picketers shouting "Take the gate!" calling to shut the plant down at the next shift change. USW president Lynn Williams, dressed in tasseled loafers, fled the scene with the rest of the AFL-CIO tops. Even as unionists die on the picket line in Clinton's America, the bended-knee strategy of the union bureaucracy is to appeal for "peace" and beg Congress to outlaw "permanent replacement workers." But the marchers here wanted to avenge the murder of their brothers by *cleaning out the scabs and shutting down the plant.*

Outrageously, since the day Cain and Fleming were run down, at least ten strikers have been charged with felonies and misdemeanors for defending themselves against scabs. Drop the charges! For mass picket lines to shut down National-Standard! Walter Fleming and Keith Cain gave their lives—Win this strike! Unionize the South! ■

Spartacus Youth Clubs Class Series

The Fight for Socialism

Next class:
Wed., Oct. 13, 6:30 p.m.

"The Russian Revolution of 1917"

San Francisco State University
Student Union, Room B114

For more information: (415) 777-9367

SAN FRANCISCO

Next class: Thurs., Oct. 21, 8 p.m.

"How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled"

UC Berkeley, West Madrone Room,
ASUC Student Union Building

For more information: (510) 839-0851

BERKELEY

First class: Sat., Oct. 16, 4 p.m.

"The State"

Spartacist Public Office,
41 Warren St.

(1 block south of Chambers,
between Church & West Broadway)

For more information: (212) 267-1025

NEW YORK CITY

Next class:
Sat., Oct. 16, 2:30 p.m.

"Race and Class in Capitalist America—For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!"

University of Wisconsin
See "Today in the Union" at
Memorial Union for room number

For more information: (312) 663-0715

MADISON

Next class:
Thurs., Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m.

"The Marxist Understanding of the State and Imperialism"

Harvard University
Sever Hall, Room 111

For more information: (617) 492-3928

BOSTON

Biweekly class at UCLA

Call for time and location

For more information: (213) 380-8239

LOS ANGELES

RWL Hypocrisy

From MOVE to Waco to the "L.A. 4"

Last spring the racist rulers of this country breathed a collective sigh of relief when the urban ghettos and barrios did not explode in massive outrage over yet another racist verdict in the trial of the four L.A. cops who brutally beat black motorist Rodney King. An arsenal of police-state terror had been mobilized to crush any peep of protest. Two days later, on April 19, the government turned its guns on the Branch Davidian religious commune outside Waco, Texas, murdering nearly 100 men, women and children because they were, in the words of the feds, "hostile to law enforcement." Now the forces of capitalist "law and order" have their finger on the trigger as they await the outcome of the trial of the black youths accused of the vicious attack on white truck driver Reginald Denny.

The contrast between the kid glove treatment given to the racist cops who sadistically tortured Rodney King and that meted out to these black youth, who have been dubbed the "L.A. 4," drives home the race and class bias that weighs the scales of "justice" in capitalist America against the working class, blacks and all the oppressed. A lynch mob of more than a dozen L.A. cops savaged Rodney King. Only two were ever convicted and given slap-on-the-wrist sentences. But until now these cops have remained free while the two black men accused of beating Reginald Denny have already spent 16 months behind bars.

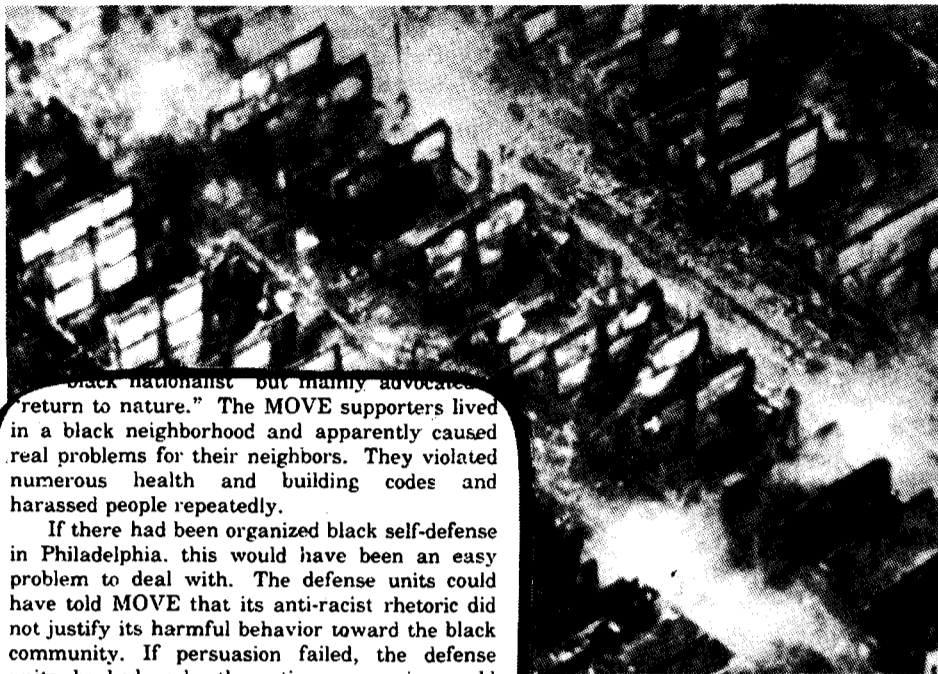
But this does not take away from the fact that whoever was responsible for beating Denny to within an inch of his life—purely on the basis of the color of his skin—are guilty of a hideous crime. In trying to do to "whitey" what the cops did to Rodney King, the lumpen youth at the corner of Florence and Normandie were reflecting a false ghetto consciousness that doesn't recognize the difference between a Simi Valley cop and a white worker.

Guilty Liberal Alibis

It would seem to be elementary for communists to oppose random attacks on white workers. But this has provoked a hysterical response from members of the Revolutionary Workers League, a self-proclaimed "Trotskyist" organization (at least on those rare occasions that it travels under its own name). At UC Berkeley, RWL members shriek that the "L.A. 4" trial is nothing less than the trial of the "L.A. rebellion." Well, that is certainly the line of the capitalist rulers of America. TV ran endless reruns of the vicious attack on Denny, designed to portray the multiracial plebeian upheaval over the racist acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King as nothing other than a "race riot."

Conveniently left out of this equation are the courageous black people who risked life and limb to *rescue* Denny. The aim of the bourgeoisie was to whip up a racist "law and order" frenzy among the white population. Those leftists who rally to the defense of the "L.A. 4" are helping the bourgeoisie to harden the racial lines that divide the working class of this country and prevent them from engaging in united class struggle against the common enemy, the racist capitalist rulers.

The RWL's response is cheerleading for lumpen rage, not Marxism. Communists fight to build a revolutionary party as a tribune of all the oppressed. We solidarized with the multiracial outrage against racist cop terror that shook



black nationalist but mainly advocated "return to nature." The MOVE supporters lived in a black neighborhood and apparently caused real problems for their neighbors. They violated numerous health and building codes and harassed people repeatedly.

If there had been organized black self-defense in Philadelphia, this would have been an easy problem to deal with. The defense units could have told MOVE that its anti-racist rhetoric did not justify its harmful behavior toward the black community. If persuasion failed, the defense units, backed up by the entire community, could have intercepted MOVE members on the street and administered some more powerful forms of persuasion.

Fighting Worker
June 1985

UPI
1985 MOVE massacre: Cops murdered eleven black people, burned down neighborhood in Philadelphia. RWL grotesquely called for "black self-defense" to "deal with" the MOVE "problem."

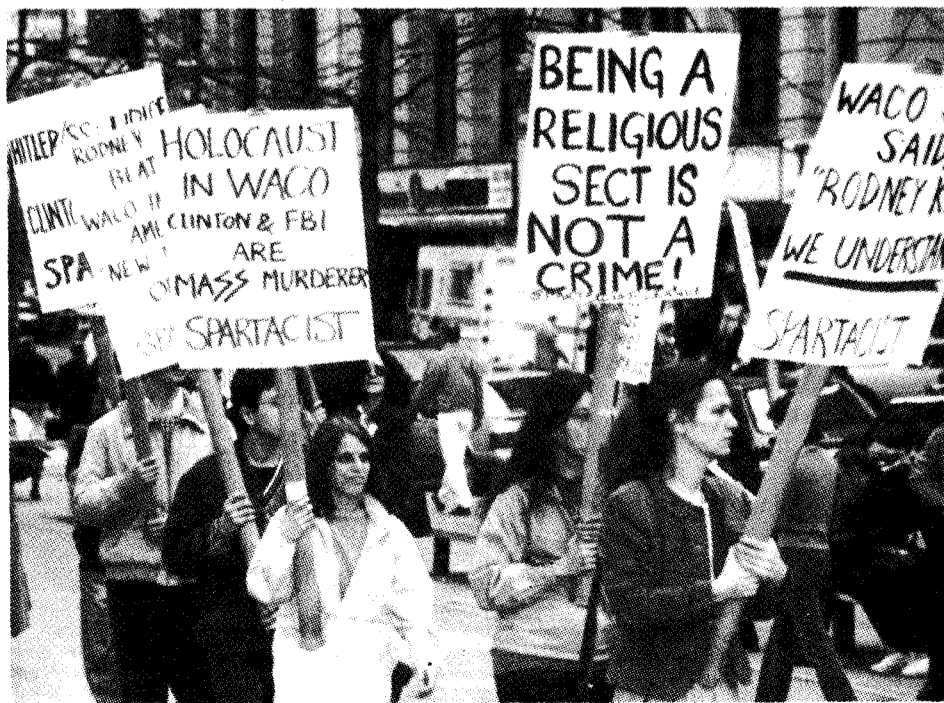
L.A.—and reverberated in sympathetic protests across the county—as we sought to mobilize and transform this outrage into revolutionary *class* consciousness. As we demanded, that required bringing the power of the organized working class to bear in defense of the ghettos and barrios.

In the immediate aftermath of the L.A. upheaval, the RWL's press *Fighting Worker* (May-June 1992) denounced as an "outrage" the arrest of those accused of what they described as the "apparent assault" on Reginald Denny and demanded that "all prisoners taken during the rebellion be released immediately with the charges dropped!" But now, with the trial going on and the papers filled with graphic descriptions of the assault not only on Denny but on Hispanics and Asians, and the harrowing scene faced by blacks who rushed to the intersection to help, the cynical leaders of the RWL are whistling something of a different tune.

After feeding their members a steady diet of slanders that the Spartacist League's refusal to defend the "L.A. 4" is "racist," the latest issue of *Fighting Worker* (September 1993), discovers a "problem" with the slogan "Free the

L.A. 4." Instead they argue that "we must fight to end the racist prosecution of the LA 4+ and we must build independent worker/black tribunals, which alone can administer real justice in this case...." The same demand was also raised by a tiny outfit called the Revolutionary Trotskyist League (RTL) who argue: "It is up to the integrated workers militias and tribunals that will defend the Black communities against the capitalist state to stop excesses by Black youth, not the racist capitalist state. Such is the ABC of the class struggle that the SL ignores."

It is the ABC of Marxism that the racist cops are the armed thugs of the capitalist state whose purpose is to defend the interests of property against the working class and oppressed. To call for "militias" to curb the "excesses" of black youth, or to stop "other violent crime" as the RWL writes in its Detroit election program, is to call for racist vigilante squads with a "labor" cover, for the workers to enforce capitalist "law and order." This can only translate into a fake-left version of Guardian Angel-style vigilantism, i.e., "integrated" gangs who keep the neighborhood "safe" for the local proprietors. Similarly the demand for "workers tri-



WV Photo
New York City federal building, April 19: Spartacists immediately organized international protests after Clinton government massacred members of small religious group in Waco, Texas.

bunals" *under capitalism* is just play acting, where it isn't directly a workers auxiliary to the capitalist state! Communists fight for workers militias and integrated defense guards as the embryo of the struggle for *proletarian state power*.

As we wrote in our special WV supplement (4 May 1992) on the Los Angeles upheaval:

"The Rodney King verdict has illuminated the whole *system* of American capitalism, built on a bedrock of racist oppression. It cannot be reformed, it must be smashed. The question is how. The situation cries out for revolutionary leadership, to organize the social power of labor and unite behind it all the oppressed in a struggle for state power that gets rid of the whole rotten racist capitalist system and opens the road for genuine emancipation for all."

But, the idea that what is required is a socialist revolution is more than the RTL and the RWL think that their audience can bear.

Lawyers for Mass Murder in Waco

The bottom line is that both organizations have a rather touching faith in the rule of bourgeois "democracy" (especially as administered by the Democratic Party). This was more than apparent in their response to the hideous incineration of 86 innocent men, women and children at the Branch Davidian commune near Waco, Texas. Ordered by Democratic president Clinton and his top cop Janet Reno, the intended message of this massacre—the biggest government slaughter of American civilians in this century—was that anyone who gets in the way of the "New World Order" will be crushed.

The Spartacist League made the biggest outcry we could. In emergency protest demonstrations from New York to Washington, D.C. to the Bay Area we drew the connection between rampant racist police terror and Waco, with signs reading "Rodney King Beating, Waco Inferno: America's 'New World Order'" and "We Will Not Forget: MOVE Massacre, Desert Slaughter in Iraq, Waco Holocaust." But when we raised a banner declaring "Waco Holocaust—Clinton/Reno/FBI Are Mass Murderers" at the Lesbian, Gay and Bi March on Washington in April, it drew howls of derision from members of the RWL and its front group, the National Women's Rights Organizing Coalition (NWROC).

At best they shrugged that the Waco massacre was "irrelevant" and had nothing to do with the D.C. gay rights demonstration. Our banner sure wasn't in keeping with the "Hail to the Chief" red-white-and-blue spirit of this march which was parading for Clinton to hold to his electoral promise to end the ban on gays in the military. To call Clinton a mass murderer was also not in keeping with the spirit of the RWL/NWROC contingent which simply sought to apply the most "militant" pressure to the Democratic White House with idiotic chants like "You made a promise, don't back down—Lift the ban or we'll burn this town!" (Expressing their role as a pressure group on the Democratic Party, after the Washington march the RWL complained that the leaders of the demo "made no demands on Clinton!")

To date the RWL has said not one word in print about Waco, which is a statement in itself. But on Cal campus their members have tried to whitewash this massacre by comparing the Branch Davidians to the crazed anti-abortion terrorists of Operation Rescue and even the

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Polish Elections Reject Solidarność

WARSAW—In the September 19 elections for Poland's parliament, working people, women and youth registered their verdict on four years of capitalist restoration with a resounding thumbs down. The parties of Solidarność counterrevolution were trounced, and two parties associated with the former Stalinist regime, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the Polish Peasants Party (PSL), together won over a third of the votes and two-thirds of the 460 seats in the Sejm, the lower house of parliament. Shivers went down the spines of anti-Communists and financiers as election results showed that "they"—the "forces of the old order"—are back. Actually, the victors are no more "communist" than is Mr. Solidarność, Lech Walesa himself. But the dramatic Polish vote symbolizes a turnaround across East Europe, as wide layers of the population realize that they have been hoodwinked by promises of a "free market" paradise.

The various components of the fractured Solidarność movement were decimated. The Democratic Union (UD) of incumbent prime minister Hanna Suchocka, the Thatcherite "Iron Lady" who was the favored candidate of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Clinton White House, came in a distant third with barely 10 percent of the vote. Suchocka's former coalition partners in the Liberal-Democratic Congress (KLD) and the Christian Nationalists (who ran as part of the overtly clerical-chauvinist "Fatherland" bloc) failed to get into the Sejm at all. President Walesa had set up a "Non-Party Bloc to Support Reform" (BBWR) as a vehicle for his bonapartist appetites, but the BBWR just managed to squeak in above the 5 percent vote now required for parliamentary representation, running behind the Union of Labor (formerly Labor Solidarność) and



Former press spokesman of Polish Stalinist regime, Jerzy Urban, celebrates election success of Democratic Left Alliance.

the fascistic Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN).

Despite its unabashed commitment to capitalism, the SLD's sweeping victory marks a sharp protest by the working people against the IMF-dictated capitalist "shock therapy" administered by the Solidarność parties, which has resulted in widespread poverty and an unemployment rate approaching 20 percent. The vote was also a clear message against the draconian abortion law pushed through the Sejm earlier this year as part of the Catholic church's crusade to turn Poland into a Vatican-dominated theocracy.

Four years after their Stalinist predecessors surrendered power to Solidarność, ushering in the destruction of the bureaucratically deformed workers state, the "renovated" Social Democrats (SdRP) who dominate the SLD look set to take the reins of government in a now capitalist Poland. Coming after an electoral victory by ex-Stalinists in Lithua-



Ravages of capitalist restoration: striking workers from Ursus tractor factory march in Warsaw, August 1992.

nia, and amid growing support for former Stalinist parties in Hungary and elsewhere in East Europe, the election results set alarm bells ringing in Western capitals. "The West won't like the outcome of Sunday's vote," commented an editorial in the *New York Times* (23 September), voicing concern that "it may dampen enthusiasm for reform elsewhere in the former Communist bloc." Two days after the Polish elections, Washington's man in Moscow, Boris Yeltsin, carried out his oft-repeated threat to disband the Russian parliament.

Ex-Stalinists Push Hoax of Capitalism With a "Human Face"

From the moment Walesa dismissed the Sejm in June following a vote of no confidence in the Suchocka regime, the keynote of the Solidarność parties has been to keep the SLD out of office, warning that it would be a "catastrophe for Poland." Walesa's BBWR, which is modeled on a similar "non-party" formation with the same initials set up by interwar fascist dictator Pilsudski, was created with the explicit aim of preventing a "left" victory. The Christian Nationalists, who hark back to the anti-Semitic Endek/NSZ pogromists of the '30s and '40s, carried out provocations outside SLD meetings. Marian Krzaklewski, head of the Solidarność union federation, which ran its own candidates, warned of political strikes in the event of an SLD victory, though he later retracted the threat.

On the eve of the elections, Walesa and Suchocka staged elaborate ceremonies celebrating the departure of the last Russian troops from Poland and the reinterment of the corpse of nationalist World War II idol Sikorski. The uncoined purpose of these chauvinist displays, timed to coincide with the anniversary of the 1939 Soviet occupation of eastern Poland, was to tar the SLD with the brush of Russian "Bolshevism." Despite its professed electoral neutrality, the Catholic hierarchy mobilized the

priests to warn against a vote to those "who oppose our national traditions and faith." The U.S. weighed in with a heavy-handed endorsement of the Solidarność regime: Clinton enthused in a much-publicized letter to Suchocka that "all Polish people can take pride in how much has been accomplished in just four years."

But the mass of the Polish population knows only too well what has been "accomplished" in the past four years, and this time even many people leaving Sunday mass didn't obey the priests' injunctions. The right to a job, access to education and medical care, social security for the elderly have all been ripped away. As living standards plummet, the incidence of TB has been climbing since 1990. Women needing an abortion must either travel abroad or pay 10 million zlotys (over \$500)—four months' wages for a worker—to get one illegally in a state clinic. Anti-Semitism is rife—even Suchocka was Jew-baited during the election campaign—while Roma (Gypsies) and other minorities are subjected to racist attacks by the cops and pogromist mobs.

Meanwhile, the *nouveau riche* entrepreneurs ostentatiously flaunt their wealth. When the government organized a lavish affair to celebrate the "miracle on the Vistula"—Pilsudski's defense of Warsaw against the Red Army in 1920—



Voters massively rejected Thatcherite prime minister Hanna Suchocka and Lech Walesa, shown kissing hand of his godfather, Polish Pope John Paul Wojtyla.

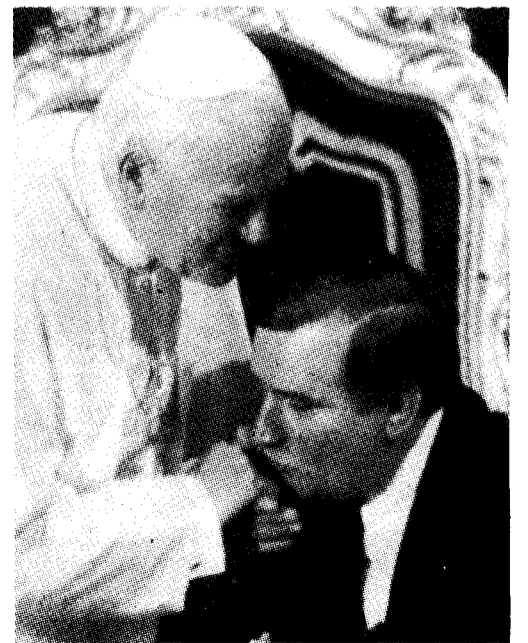
enraged readers of *Gazeta Wyborcza* (25 August) said: "The elite enjoy themselves like a king's court on the eve of revolution," "exactly like a ball on the Titanic." Former prime minister Bielecki was nearly lynched when he responded to an election meeting by "joking" that his audience did not yet look like starving Somalis.

In striking contrast particularly to Russia, where working-class passivity has bred pervasive apathy and cynicism, Polish workers have engaged in militant struggle against the ravages of counter-revolution virtually from the outset, beginning with a massive rail strike in the spring of 1990 and continuing through last winter's tumultuous coal strike. The voter turnout in this election was significantly higher than in the last parliamentary poll two years ago, with many women and young people casting their ballot for the "left." An unemployed young woman in the textile center of Lodz, which has been devastated by factory closures, said she was going to vote for the SLD because "The church has been ruling for too long." Another worker said, "I am voting for the old communists because the brick factory I used to work in was ruined by privatization."

But aside from vague promises to increase pensions and slow down the "shock treatment," the Social Democrats offer nothing to the workers, women and youth who look to them but the hoax of "capitalism with a human face." Under the leadership of 39-year-old Aleksander Kwasniewski, who was the minister of sports in the last Stalinist government, the SdRP has remodeled itself as a slick, yuppified, right-wing social-democratic party. The party tops parlayed their old bureaucratic sinecures into "free enterprise" fiefdoms, and the red necktie of the Stalinist careerist "is now replaced by elegant suits from Pierre Cardin" (*Warsaw Voice*, 19 September).

The SLD election program does not so much as mention the word "socialism." On abortion and the death penalty, it notes only that it is necessary "to consider the opinion of society," while Kwasniewski warns party members against taking part in "anticlerical activity." Jeffrey Sachs, architect of Poland's "shock treatment," certified that the SLD "campaigned on a platform of capitalism and integration with Western Europe" (*New York Times*, 20 September). The SLD left no doubts on that score when it voted earlier this year—despite

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New World Disorder and the Collapse of Stalinism



WV Photo

CUBA IN PERIL

We print below an edited speech by Jan Norden, editor of Workers Vanguard and member of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League/U.S., at Columbia University in New York City on September 10.

To talk about Cuba, we have to talk first about the Russian Revolution. Because you can't understand what's going on in Cuba today outside of the context of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which is the crux of it.

The Russian October Revolution of 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky was the key event of this century, a turning point in world history, when for the first time the working class, at the head of all the exploited and oppressed, took the reins of power on an internationalist program pointing to world socialist revolution. The Soviet Union which came out of that revolution, even after Stalin's usurpation of political power at the head of a conservative bureaucracy, was a determining factor in the struggles of the 1930s, of the Second World War, of the postwar colonial independence movement; Soviet military strength and particularly its nuclear arsenal stayed the hand of the imperialists for 45 years of Cold War and so-called "détente." Today, in like fashion, the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucratic regime in August 1991 leading to the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state has had and is having consequences throughout the world. The would-be masters of the world in Wall Street, the White House and the Pentagon crow of the "death of communism" and proclaim a "New World Order" dominated by the United States, with some "multilateral" cover from its appendage, the United Nations.

Imperialist blockade and counter-revolution in USSR produced severe food crisis in Cuba. Above: anxious crowd in town of Cárdenas clamors for holiday pastries on July 26.

You can see this just by looking at the front page of today's papers, where we see two events that are a direct result of the collapse of Stalinism. On the one hand you have the bloody mass murder of a hundred or more Somalis, a truly wanton slaughter mostly of women and children, by U.S. helicopter gunships. This was billed as a "humanitarian" intervention to feed the starving Somali people, remember?—we said at the time this was hogwash—but it soon showed itself

to be an effort to demonstrate U.S. power to its imperialist allies (as in the Persian Gulf War), and recolonize a part of Africa in the process. And on the other hand you have this "peace" agreement between the Zionist state of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Yasir Arafat's PLO received considerable support from the Soviet Union and the Soviet client state of Syria, as well as from the Saudis and other Gulf "oildoms," as we dubbed them. After the Gulf War against Iraq, which the U.S. never would have dared undertake as long as the Soviets were a factor, this all dried up. So now you have a "peace" of the oppressor, in which the PLO is to police the Palestinians on behalf of the Zionist masters, and paymasters. And it will be signed in



Spartacist solidarity demonstration outside Cuban UN Mission in New York, September 1991, protesting Gorbachev's treacherous withdrawal of Soviet aid.

Washington next week with Clinton as the godfather to this Pax Americana.

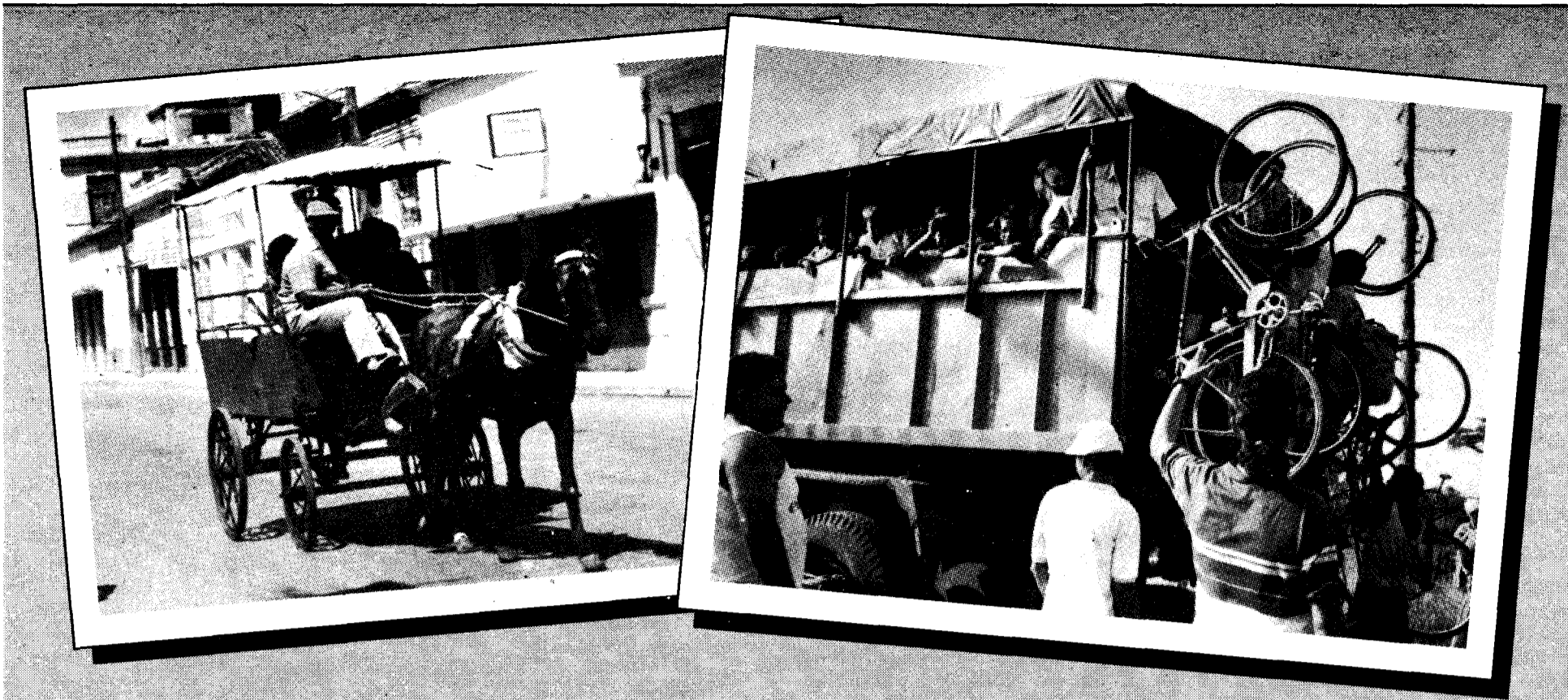
The Yankee imperialists feel they now have a free hand to go after all their enemies. And right at the top of their "enemies list," as Nixon called it, whether there is a Republican or a Democrat in the White House, is Cuba. Three and a half decades after the revolution, American rulers are still so incensed at the effrontery of the semicolon not just in its backyard but on its back doorstep overthrowing capitalism, and the fear that this could inspire revolution elsewhere in their Latin American neocolonial empire, that Washington is determined to strangle the island, which it is continuing to do with its draconian embargo. That was intensified last year with the passage of the Torricelli Amendment, which would never have been passed without the support of the Democrats. And they're still squeezing.

Cuba is a key question for revolutionaries around the world, particularly in the U.S. and Latin America, and it has been a defining issue for the Spartacist tendency from our origins in the Revolutionary Tendency of the Socialist Workers Party. While the SWP was hailing Fidel Castro as an "unconscious Trotskyist," the RT noted that his petty-bourgeois nationalist guerrilla movement, which originally sought to carry out a program of bourgeois-democratic reforms, saw itself forced to expropriate the capitalists, both foreign and domestic, as the only alternative to submission to or defeat by U.S. imperialism. And that while the origins of Castro's 26th of July Movement were different from the Stalinist parties, the nature of the Castro regime and its political program were qualitatively the same as the Stalinist-ruled degenerated and deformed workers states. As we emphasized, the formation of a deformed workers state around late 1960 was due to a particular set of circumstances, including the simultaneous sharp hostility of the U.S. to a revolution on its back doorstep, and a hesitation to intervene for fear that it would spread through Latin America.

So amid all the initial enthusiasm for Castroism on the left, the Spartacist tendency, based on a Marxist analysis, held that Cuba was a *deformed workers state*, which we unconditionally defend against counterrevolution and imperialism. And we have insisted that this narrow, nationalist, bureaucratic regime was a roadblock to extension of the revolution, that there has to be a proletarian political revolution in Cuba to open the way forward. If "socialism in one country" was a nationalist lie and an impossibility in the giant Soviet Union covering a sixth of the globe, the Castro-Stalinist version of socialism in one small Caribbean island 90 miles from the most powerful imperialist power on earth is far, far more so. And now with the demise of the Soviet degenerated workers state, which provided three-quarters of Cuba's trade and vital oil supplies as well as a military presence as a trip wire against U.S. invasion, the situation of Cuba has become precarious in the extreme.

In our article "May Day in Havana" in WV No. 576 [21 May], we noted that the biggest threat to Cuba today is slow strangulation by U.S. imperialism's starvation blockade. We wrote, "Isolated, the Cuban Revolution cannot survive: 'socialism on one island' has no future. The bureaucratic leadership of the Cuban deformed workers state is driven to seek accommodation, 'peaceful coexistence,' with

Bureaucratic Castro Regime at a Dead End— Defend Cuba Against Imperialism and Counterrevolution!



WV Photos

Coping with fuel shortage in Cuba: horse-and-buggy taxis, bicycles and passengers piling aboard flatbed truck.

'enlightened' capitalism." While calling for workers political revolution and a Leninist-Trotskyist party in Cuba, we emphasized that "only a perspective of workers revolution, of proletarian uprisings across Latin America and beyond, into the belly of the imperialist colossus, can offer a road forward to the Cuban masses." Far more than ever, in this bleak situation the focus of defense of Cuba is *international*, particularly in Latin America, and it is an important task for revolutionaries in the U.S. And the decisive aid is not just collecting medicines

birth is 72 years for men and 76 for women. The literacy rate of 96.2 percent is above that of the U.S.; 88 percent of school-age children go to secondary school; there is a huge number of university students and graduates, a majority of whom are women.

You could go on like this at length. Cuba had the second-highest food intake per capita in Latin America, with a calorie consumption of over 3,100 a day. Ninety-five percent of the population has electricity. With 22.5 percent of the workforce employed in industry (and another

from China, and Cuba started producing its own bikes. They also began manufacturing carts to serve as horse-drawn taxis—it's infuriating to see this forced regression to a pre-motorized state. And if you have to go further than a bicycle or horse and buggy will take you, you wait at a transport point. There is a policeman at each one of these points, and he simply flags down every passing state-owned vehicle—whether it's a flatbed truck, or a bus, or a little car—and it stops, and people are put on it. People often have to wait for two hours for long-distance transport, but it works and we saw very little discontent with that.

The blackouts when we were there were about eight hours a day per neighborhood. They went up to 16 hours a day in August when they shut down some industries altogether for vacation, although now they have been reduced again. It's put in the paper when you're going to have it. So some people we met, they had a blackout that afternoon when we were sitting there, and the mother of the family was saying how silly her sister-in-law was, who had defrosted the refrigerator that morning; if she had just read the papers, she would have had it defrosted for her that afternoon. Of course, given the paper shortage it is extremely hard to get a newspaper at all: they eliminated all of the dailies except *Granma*, cut them back to weeklies.

But what may become the focus of the crisis here is the question of food. Hungry bellies cast a lot of votes, as the Sandinistas found out in 1990. Whereas people will put up with a lot if they have a perspective, there's no prospect of it ending, and it is really, really

bad—there is *very* little to eat. Here let me read you the ration list in Centro Habana: Bread—one roll a day. That's it. Rice—five pounds a month. Sugar—six pounds a month. Cooking oil—half a pound a month. Dried beans—*ten ounces* a month. Cigarettes—well, they have tobacco, so they get four cartons a month. Chicken—*half a pound every two months*, "cuando llega" (when it arrives). Eggs—16 a month. Fish—two pounds a month, that's the main source of protein, which they continue to get because Canada lets Cuba fish off Newfoundland. And milk is available for children up to the age of seven, but nobody else.

One scientist who we talked to was in his mid-30s, and he explained that it's not just the lack of food, but how demoralizing this is. He said, "Ten years ago, I would have never bought anything on the black market, I support the revolution. But you have a family, you have kids, so you go out and you buy some milk on the black market, and then you feel so awful. You just feel demoralized because you've done it."

So what can be done about it? Well, a good part of the food shortage is a result of the fact that they decided, within the framework of COMECON, the Soviet bloc "common market," to concentrate on sugar production and import food from the Soviet Union. But now that is gone. Cuba is a very fertile island, and has the capability of producing many foods. We saw a lot of brigades out building vegetable gardens in the workers' housing districts. One friend said he planted garlic in his patio, "Well, not really planted, I just threw the seeds

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StarPicture Group

Fidel Castro and Mikhail Gorbachev in Havana, 1989.

by various solidarity committees, though that is needed, but by struggle for proletarian revolution *here* and in the key industrial centers of Latin America—Mexico, Brazil, Argentina.

Cuba in Extremis

We recently returned from a two-week trip to Cuba, in which we traveled across the island, so I would like to give you some impressions of the situation in Cuba today. In the first place, it's important to emphasize that this tiny island achieved the highest standard of living for the working class of anywhere in Latin America. The official statistics list a Gross Domestic Product of \$2,500 per person. That is roughly the same as Argentina, but you can't directly compare statistics for a workers state with those for a capitalist country. For one thing, the level of inequality is immensely less in Cuba. You can just see that the working-class districts in and around Havana and Santiago de Cuba are much better off than the huge slums surrounding Buenos Aires.

And you see it in a host of statistics: infant mortality in Cuba is now down to 9.3 per thousand, less than New York City, and it has continued to fall during this severe economic crisis. The Cubans say proudly that despite all the shortages they haven't closed a single hospital—compare that to Harlem and recall Sydenham Hospital. Life expectancy at

16 percent in construction and transport), it was far and away the most industrialized country in Latin America. With a 1988 industrial output per capita of \$1,335, Cuba was closer to the level of a backward European country, like Portugal (\$1,591), which many of Cuba's statistics are similar to. But all of a sudden, this country has been brutally thrown back into a pre-industrial period.

Today Cuba is now facing the most serious and critical moment since the revolution, something that everyone there understands. The situation is excruciating, because they are caught between the American blockade and the collapse of the Soviet bloc. People will tell you that from 1989 on, as the Soviet bloc began crumbling—with capitalist-restorationist governments in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and the capitalist reunification of Germany—they never thought they would even make it this far. Their attitude is, well, we're somehow here, but it can't go on.

The fact that Cuba has been able to hold out against this tremendous pressure is a direct result of the collectivized property. Take the question of energy and transportation. Due to the Soviet cutoff of oil to Cuba, energy supplies were slashed to about 30 percent of what they were. That meant a number of industries have been cut way back, and transport was effectively militarized. They imported more than a million bicycles



Agencia de Información Nacional (Cuba)

A million people celebrate May Day in Havana, 1993.

Havana Report

The following is excerpted from a letter by a leading comrade of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada.

This was our fifth trip to Cuba in as many years; we were last there in February 1992, though we hadn't been to Havana since summer 1990. It was clear that the situation in the country is *much much worse* even than last year. This is true at every level; the economic collapse, of course, but also a dramatic growth of social parasitism and a clear erosion of consciousness among the population. On every one of these counts, we were powerfully and negatively reminded of our trip to the Soviet Union in winter 1988-89. Barring dramatic changes in the international situation, a counterrevolutionary showdown cannot be far off, and I would not be very sanguine about the possibilities for successful political revolution.

We were last in Havana in 1990, and previously and more extensively there in 1989. The contrast today was striking. The city is visibly crumbling amid massive barely disguised unemployment. Power blackouts often amount to 12-16 hours a day, meaning what industry there is can barely function. The bus system has all but collapsed due to lack of fuel and spare parts. Shortage of even basic building materials means that there is no building repair or construction in the city (except for tourist hotels). Whole sections, and not just in Old Havana, are literally collapsing into rubble. People look gaunt and malnourished, and we were told repeatedly that petty crime (especially against tourists, of course) is sharply on the rise.

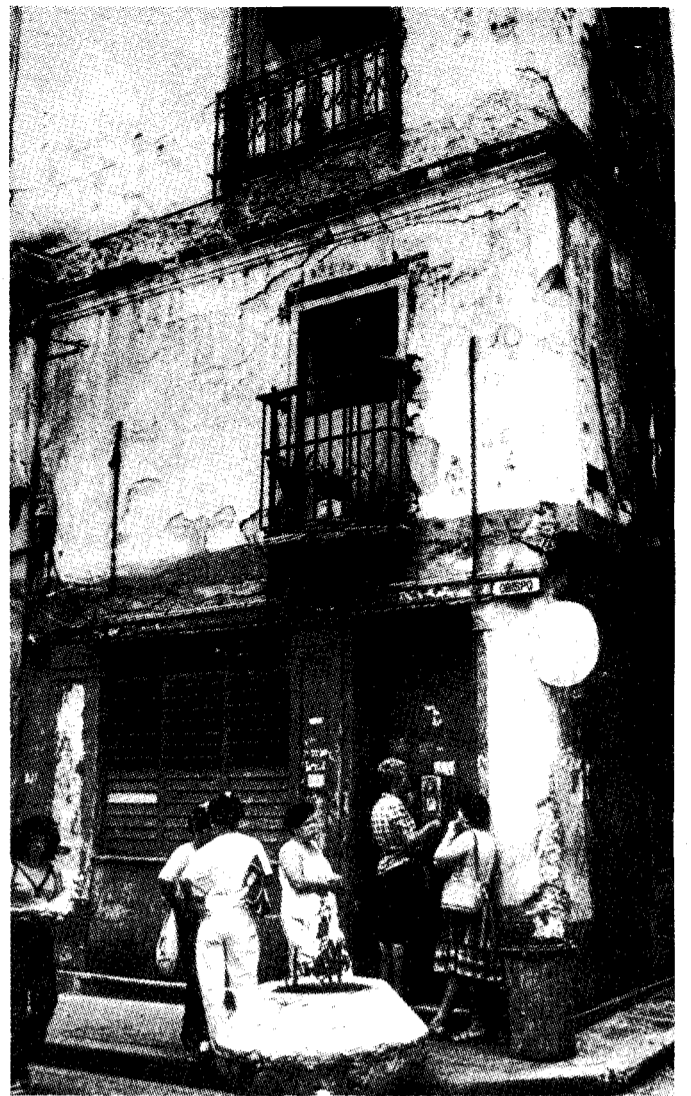
We took one of our standard three and a half hour walks from Old Havana through what was once the main shop-

ping district, then to the university area and finally the tourist stretch around La Rampa. The shops in Havana, like the Soviet Union, were always shoddy and ill-stocked. But now literally 95 percent of them are completely shut down, seemingly abandoned. Those few that remain open either sell the rationed basic food-stuffs (and there are always huge lines outside them), or are one of a handful of establishments where the store itself is shut but a small table with children's toys or cheap trinkets is set up on the pavement in front. Even here, what little is available can only be purchased with ration tickets. Bookstores in Havana still have some works by Marx, Engels and Lenin as well as technical texts, but otherwise feature only pathetic displays of six-year-old copies of the Spanish-language editions of *Moscow News*, *New Times* and other former Soviet and East European publications.

The economic crisis combined with the disastrous harvest have cut the daily rations to bare subsistence level. Until earlier this year the meat ration consisted of a small piece of chicken every two weeks. Now meat is out of the diet altogether, except for young children who still get a tiny ration. Pork, formerly the staple meat, hasn't been available (except on the hard-currency black market) for many months. Milk is only available for children aged seven or younger. Bananas and most other fruit are only for the tourist industry. For those in the cities, the basic diet is a small portion of bread, rice and beans. Tens of thousands of people are leaving Havana and the other cities to return to the countryside (the government encourages this migration), where they can at least live off the land.

About the only "treat" left in Havana

Crumbling buildings in Havana, as Cuba reels under blackouts, severe food rationing and shortages of basic construction materials.



Cambio 16

that doesn't require hard currency is the immense open-air Coppelia ice cream parlor. When we went there, on a weekday afternoon, the lines to buy a small dish of ice cream were more than two hours long. To add insult to injury, tourists paying with dollars get to go to the front.

The day after we arrived, Castro made his announcement that it would now be legal for Cuban citizens to hold hard currency. This was largely an acceptance of reality, as the economy increasingly de-

pends on the tourist industry for dollars, and jobs in resorts like Varadero or Cayo Largo are seen as plum positions because they give individual access to hard currency. But this legalization of personal hard-currency holdings will further dramatically increase social differentiation.

In the tourist resorts tips used to be forbidden; now they are standard and expected. We heard several stories of skilled workers and professionals including doctors who quit their jobs in order

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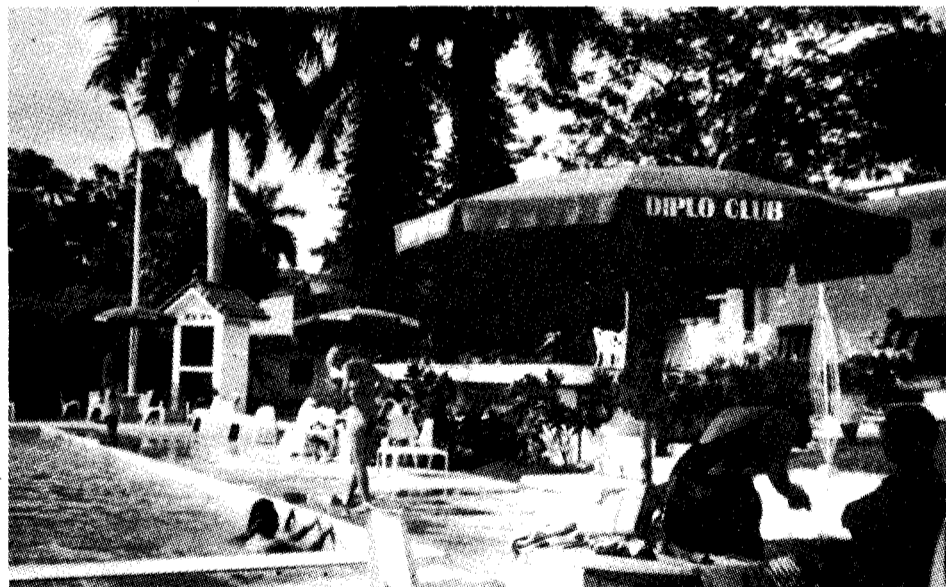
Cuba...

(continued from page 7)

there and within a few weeks it was flourishing." But this is the tropics, and sometimes the lush foliage is deceptive. For example, they successfully managed to adapt milk-producing cows by crossing Holsteins and Cebus. But they need imported feed—tropical grasses are not very nourishing, full of water—for which they now have to pay hard currency, that Cuba doesn't have, to Canada.

Various people we talked to argued that to solve the food crisis what Cuba needs is a "New Economic Policy," like the NEP in the Soviet Union during the 1920s, allowing small peasants to market their own produce. In fact there are relatively few independent peasants; most are in the cooperatives, and then there are the state farms. But in any case an NEP won't solve the problems. In the Soviet Union, as soon as they opened up private trade—which Lenin frankly said was a retreat toward capitalism, a temporary retreat—they got what Trotsky called the "scissors crisis," a disproportion between industrial and agricultural prices and production. Peasants wouldn't produce because they couldn't buy anything with the proceeds. Well, in Cuba, they're way out on one end of the scissors, and it doesn't matter if peasants get paid in pesos or dollars, because there's very little industrial production to supply the products they need.

It would be possible to achieve a considerable increase in food production by undertaking a serious mobilization of the working people. But to do this would require real implementation of workers democracy, for the workers themselves to decide on what needs to be done to meet the crisis. And such a mobilization



WV Photo

Parallel economy provides luxury for those on "dollar track." Above, poolside at exclusive Havana "Diplo Club."

would go in the opposite direction from introducing capitalist market mechanisms. So while the Cubans still have various things like the Student Work Brigades and Youth Army of Labor dating from the first years of the revolution, the government has not expanded these. There is migration out of the cities, people going back to their rural family homes, but it is overwhelmingly individual. And in any case, the most basic point is that *Cuba cannot overcome this crisis by retreating to a pre-industrial society and seeking agricultural self-sufficiency.*

Or take the case of this strange eye disease, what they named "optic neuritis." Last March, they found out by accident about the existence of this epidemic, because the authorities in Pinar del Río province in the west kept asking for more medicines. The doctors decided from the evidence that vitamin deficiency is one of several possible contributing causes.

With the food shortages, which have cut the rations down to something like 1,200 calories a day, even though no one is starving there's a real danger of malnutrition. The government decided to produce a B-complex multivitamin pill, and within 35 days from finding out about the existence of the disease, they started production of this pill. They now produce eleven million of those pills a day; there are eleven million people in the country. These pills are given to the family doctors—yes, they make house calls—who go around and distribute these pills. Once a month you get a package of 30 pills for yourself, another 30 for each child, for everybody in the household.

So faced with an emergency, they were able to take some basic measures and intervene effectively, with the result that the number of new cases has dropped dramatically. This is fundamentally a

demonstration of the strength of the collectivized economy to rapidly mobilize resources. But it also shows most dramatically how grim the economic situation is in Cuba today.

Castro Bureaucratic Regime at a Dead End

In the title for this talk we said that the bureaucratic Castro regime is at a "dead end." Trotsky insisted that if the parasitic bureaucratic caste in Russia were not ousted in time by workers soviets, the Stalinist betrayers of the revolution, by blocking its extension internationally, would lead to social counter-revolution, as has now occurred in East Europe and the Soviet Union, as threatens China and Vietnam, and today looms over Cuba.

So what are the prospects for Cuba today? Without considerable state aid from a far more powerful workers state, the deformed workers state on this island of eleven million people cannot survive on its own forces, and no such aid is available. That is clear. The Castro regime is pretty aware of its prospects as well, which is why it is trying to present itself as Latin American nationalists, pushing José Martí instead of Karl Marx. And it is consciously introducing measures leading to a capitalist market and capitalist property relations. Castro made a speech six or eight months ago where he said, we desperately need dollars, we do not have oil to sell, what we have is beach to sell. So that's what they're doing. So far, these are joint ventures, mostly with Spanish or Canadian corporations, they are contracts of limited nature, of five years, and the actual property is retained by the Cuban state. But there is a discussion of going far beyond joint ventures in the tourist trade,

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Blacks and the Cuban Revolution



Mario García Joya

Literacy brigades, Havana 1961. Blacks, poor benefited most as Cuban Revolution overthrew capitalist misery and oppression.

The following is an edited excerpt from a speech by Marjorie Stamberg of the Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee at Howard University in Washington, D.C. on September 25.

The Cuban Revolution had a huge impact on American radicals, black and white. Two issues were to shake the U.S. out of the torpor of the 1950s Cold War McCarthyism: Cuba and the civil rights movement. This was just after the Montgomery bus boycott and at the beginning of the freedom rides and the sit-in movement in Greensboro. So when in 1960 Fidel Castro came to the United Nations, refusing to stay in some fancy mid-town hotel but instead moving into the Hotel Theresa in Harlem where he met with Malcolm X, black people lined the streets.

In Cuba, where about a third of the population is black, and especially in Havana, and in Santiago province which is majority black and had a crucial participation in the insurrection, one of the first acts of the revolution was to formally abolish discrimination. In many ways Havana was a Southern city—there were restaurants blacks couldn't go into, for example. And slavery was not abolished in Cuba until the 1880s.

After the revolution, Cuba provided exile for such black radicals as Robert Williams, the Monroe County, North Carolina NAACP leader who advocated black self-defense, the author of *Negroes with Guns* who was framed up on kidnapping charges in 1961 after he led militant self-defense against the Klan.

More recently, it has offered haven to Assata Shakur, one of the New York Black Panthers, who has been living in Cuba since the early '80s. And Cuba's fate has been bound up with black struggle, for example, in the over 400,000 troops who served in Angola defending that country against the South African puppet Jonas Savimbi and direct South African invasion. And in black Grenada, where Cuban construction workers were killed in the 1983 U.S. invasion.

These two issues, of the Cuban Revolution and of the emerging civil rights movement, were the two central questions around which our tendency, the Spartacist League, was forged. Both centered on the necessity for a conscious revolutionary vanguard at the head of these struggles. In the civil rights movement, the absence of such leadership meant that in the split between the radical "black power" wing and the reformist "nonviolent" preachers, there was not the revolutionary leadership to win those radicals away from a ghetto-based vision to see the need for working-class power.

The black question in Cuba has come up lately with a book *Castro, the Blacks and Africa* (1988), by Carlos Moore, an Afro-Cuban writer who left the island in 1963. That alone tells you a lot, because he left when Cuba was implementing socially revolutionary measures and under greatest attack from U.S. imperialism.

Carlos Moore says that there was always racism in Cuba. It certainly had a legacy of slavery no less than the U.S.

And the anti-slavery struggle was closely linked to the struggle for independence in the 19th century—Antonio Maceo was a black freeman who led the *mambises*, the "swamp fighters" who rose up against the Spaniards in 1868, and Maceo also played a major role in the 1898 uprising, which the U.S. eventually moved in to head off.

Moore also claims that there was racism after the revolution. Well, blacks were among the most enthusiastic early supporters of the revolution. They were the majority in Oriente province, where much of the fighting took place, and also in the sugar mills, where they lived in semi-slave conditions. In contrast, the early refugees who fled the revolution were overwhelmingly white.

Contrary to Moore, under the revolution there were tremendous strides made in abolishing discrimination and oppression of blacks. And blacks benefited disproportionately as the revolution raised the poor out of poverty. But the Castroites left it at that. They didn't actively seek to promote black leaders, black proletarian leaders, and instead sought to cohere a privileged petty-bourgeois caste dominating the state, which meant that the top Communist Party leadership remained very white, with the signal exception of Juan Almeida, who was one of the top commanders of the army.

One of the conflicts that Robert F. Williams had there was with the Cuban CP, which like the CPUSA was promoting Martin Luther King and his pacifist liberalism. Williams had enough experi-

ence to know in his gut that the CP was stone reformist. He saw how they supported the "peaceful legal" types in the civil rights movement, whose politics the radical black movement was breaking from. Cuban officials gave Williams a hard time in broadcasting his "Radio Free Dixie," for instance complaining about a show he did on jazz, saying it was "decadent" music!

In the middle of all this came the Sino-Soviet split. Cuba, which was economically dependent on the Soviet Union for its survival, supported the Soviets, whereas the radical rhetoric of the Maoists appealed to Williams. Eventually, the Cubans shut down "Radio Free Dixie" because of his support for the Chinese, and Williams went to China. But we said at the time that China was just "Stalinism under the gun," and despite its more radical posture, because the main target of U.S. imperialism was the Soviet Union, we said that the Mao regime could eventually get together with the U.S. And that's exactly what happened. Williams eventually returned to the United States in 1969, where he, like many disillusioned black radicals, attempted to make his peace with the American bourgeois order.

To return to Carlos Moore, he sees Cuban politics as a fight between Hispanics and blacks, says that revolution "duped" blacks, and downplays their central role in the revolution. Moore cites repression of Afro-Cuban religious groups, and in fact these groups were viewed apprehensively in the early days. He is also a hard opponent of Cuba's intervention in Grenada and Angola, claiming that because of the presence of Cuban troops in Angola the South Africans might have used nuclear weapons against black Africans! These are cynical



The Crusader

Robert F. Williams, hounded by FBI for advocating black self-defense, was given asylum in Cuba.

pro-Savimbi arguments. The fact is that the defeat of the South African apartheid army's offensive at Cuito Cuanavale in Angola in 1988 was decisive in opening up the latest round of anti-apartheid struggle.

Stalinism and nationalism—whether Latin American anti-Yankee nationalism, or black nationalism—were not able to give a revolutionary answer to black struggle. American black radicals who looked to Cuba had tremendous potential. But they did not have a Trotskyist program of *revolutionary integrationism*—that only through socialist revolution can black people be emancipated and fully integrated into an egalitarian society. The multiracial proletariat under communist leadership must take aim at all manifestations of discrimination, from Woolworth's in the '60s to Denny's today, drawing on the power of black industrial workers in the struggle against black oppression throughout society.

Both black separatism and liberal integrationism had no program for urban ghetto blacks in the North, and no program for revolutionary-minded black radicals like Williams and many others who were attracted by the black power movement. ■



Ocean Press photos

September 1960—Harlem greeted visit of Castro, who met with Malcolm X at Hotel Theresa.

Cuba...

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and in basic industry as well. They already have joint ventures with the Canadians to explore oil drilling.

Then on the 26th of July, the 40th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba, Castro made his speech in which he announced that it would be legal to hold dollars in the country. This will likely be a watershed. Interestingly, they didn't have a mass anniversary demonstration this time. A lot of the underground discussion was that, in addition to the very real economic reasons why it was difficult for them to mobilize for a mass celebration—they had just had a million people in Havana for May Day, the biggest ever—we heard from people in the Communist Party that they were worried that if they had a mass gathering, when Castro got to the point of announcing legalization of dollar holdings, there could be a big "No!" coming from party militants in the crowd. So instead the speech was given before 4,000 top leaders in a Santiago theater and broadcast over TV.

Legalizing holding the dollar, on the one hand, was a recognition of reality, because there are a lot of people who have dollars in Cuba now. Tourism is a fairly big industry—it has increased 40 percent a year for the past four or five years. In addition, the Cuban exiles in Miami, the *gusanos*, send money in. So partly what they wanted to do is get some of the huge quantities of dollars out from under the mattresses, so that they could use that foreign exchange in order to finance imports. And to do that they reorganized the network of dollar stores to sell to Cubans, something akin to the "Intershops" that they had in East Germany. But mainly, making the dollar legal tender opens a huge breach in the state monopoly of foreign trade, one of the fundamental economic requirements for the existence of a workers state. It will open the floodgates toward the dollarization of the economy.

So in exchange for getting some hard currency, the regime is setting up the dollar as the sought-after goal. Recall that in East Germany, the DDR, they had what we called the "D-mark elections" on 18 March 1990. We fought hard against that, and the Spartakist Workers Party was alone in taking a clear stand of "No to capitalist reunification!" The decisive point was when Gorbachev gave the green light to West German annexation, but key to the vote was when West German chancellor Kohl offered a one-to-one exchange rate of DDR marks to D-marks. And that was prepared by the whole previous period, when the DDR government actually encouraged people, by its policies, to focus on getting D-marks. So this can have a very powerful counterrevolutionary effect.

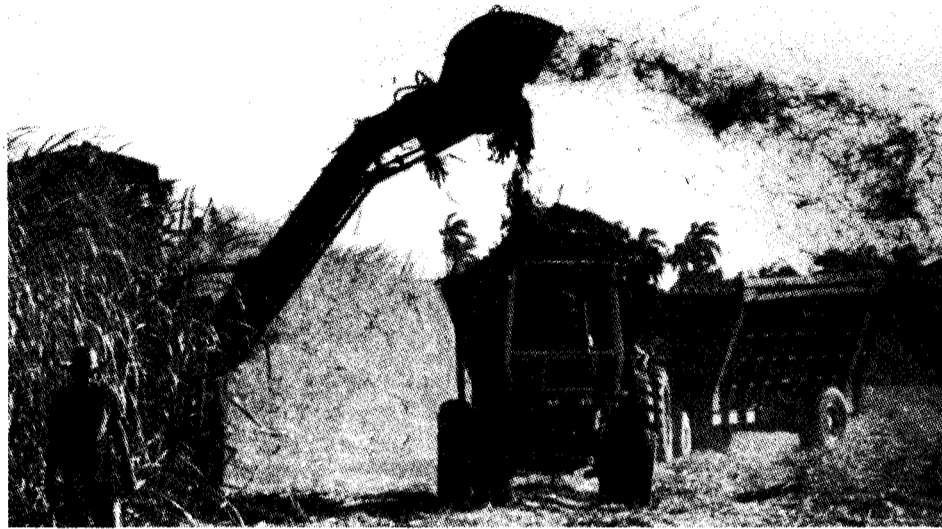
The decision to legalize dollar transactions is really playing with fire. A recent article in the *New York Times* (1 August) reported that even some of the most rabid *gusanos* in Miami, for instance, want to lift the American blockade because they want to flood the Cuban economy with dollars. The question is, to what degree will the regime be able to stay on top of this? Lenin said of the Russian Revolution that the Soviet Union would be more threatened by the economic undermining of the revolution than by the guns of the imperialists. And Trotsky, in his analysis of Stalin's USSR, *The Revolution Betrayed*, said:

"Military intervention is a danger. The intervention of cheap goods in the baggage trains of a capitalist army would be an incomparably greater one. The victory of the proletariat in one of the Western countries would, of course, immediately and radically alter the correlation of forces. But so long as the Soviet Union remains isolated, and, worse than that, so long as the European proletariat suffers reverses and continues to fall back, the strength of the Soviet structure is

measured in the last analysis by the productivity of labor."

For tiny Cuba, this is true ten times over.

In the meantime, the combination of severe economic crisis and rapidly advancing dollarization is creating explosive resentments in the population. You're developing sort of a two-track society, those people that are on the dollar economy and those people that are on the peso. All proportions guarded, it recalls something in *900 Days*, Harrison Salisbury's book about the siege of Leningrad, that there were two types of people: those that had no flesh on their bones, and the people who did have flesh on their bones—and if they did, you wondered who they were eating. Well, in Cuba today, there is a whole nation of thin people, and if you see people who are fat, or just a little chubby, you



Der Spiegel

Cuba ended semi-slave conditions for agricultural workers and developed sugar combine, mechanizing cane harvest. But after cutoff of Soviet fuel millions of tons went unharvested.

know they have access to the dollar. They work in tourism, live off the proceeds from prostitution, maybe in the upper bureaucratic elite. The vast majority of the party members, of course, *don't* have access to dollars, so it's no wonder they're hostile to it.

And here I want to talk about one of the most dramatic and sensitive results of this economic crisis: the impact on black people. Blacks by and large won't have legal access to dollars. The *gusanos* in Miami are overwhelmingly white. So the explosive growth of social tensions is going to exacerbate race tensions. And it's already happening. For the first time, in the inner cities of Havana and Santiago, with the layoffs that have come from the fuel crisis, and with the situation of extreme hunger, there are now large numbers of youth who have nothing to do and are on the streets. Their only access to money is to swarm around the tourists, and engage in begging or petty thievery.

This is particularly shocking because Cuba made great strides in racial equality, and many of the cadres of the state are black. If you look at the Ministry of Interior personnel and army officers there's a very high percentage of blacks. But blacks were concentrated in two areas, central Havana and downtown Santiago, and for other reasons the government had decided they weren't going to rebuild the central cities. It was a peasant revolution, so they were going to improve life for the peasantry. And they've made tremendous improvements there. But downtown Havana is pretty run-down, and it's very heavily black. And with the economic crisis, what the regime labeled a "special period in peacetime"—such classic bureaucratism—there is a process of lumpenization that hits these areas first. As one of our friends remarked, "Old Havana is coming back."

Now I want to emphasize that this is an *indirect* result of the economic crisis. We visited other areas, for example walking through a huge housing district of Havana called Alamar, where some 700,000 overwhelmingly working-class residents live, very integrated, right on the ocean front, and there's a real

collective attitude about dealing with the shortages, and a lot of innovation—they just introduced "train-buses" that hold over 300 people, to commute to downtown. Alamar was the product of a planned economy. But now the dollar is coming in, and the bald fact is that unemployed blacks in the central cities will have no legal way to get dollars.

Meanwhile, there is a whole layer of so-called "yummies"—the "Young Upwardly Mobile Marxists" who want to make it even if the system alters its social content to go over to a capitalist economy. These are the people who are currently in these economic think tanks, whose career choice is to be the Gaidars of the counterrevolution in Cuba—like Yeltsin's "Harvard Boy" in Russia. Right now they are advising the regime with

some degree of influence. On our trip we were given a lecture by one of them. Their view is that there has to be unemployment in Cuba, that you need more introduction of the free market, and so forth.

Now these are not marginal people, but constitute the core of the new layer of the bureaucracy that has been promoted recently. The foreign minister Roberto Robaina, economics minister Carlos Lage, and so on. Some of them talk in private of following "the Chinese road." But it's obvious that tiny Cuba can't do what a huge country like China could for a period—introduce huge chunks of capitalist economic measures while maintaining Stalinist bureaucratic rule. And even there it's heading pell-mell for counterrevolution, as we wrote recently in *Workers Vanguard*. In Cuba, the more right-wing elements are already looking further and are dreaming of some kind of peaceful counterrevolution, i.e., some kind of social-democratic variety of capitalism.

At the end of his July 26 speech, Castro put forward a whole series of slogans, which were: "Save the fatherland, save the revolution and save the gains of socialism!" When a Stalinist starts talking about preserving the gains of socialism, hold on to your wallet. You have to realize, they claim that they *have* socialism. So when they talk of only preserving the *gains*, what they mean is they're going to try to keep as much of the elements of social equality that they can—the health system, the education system, and so on—while introducing rampant capitalism in the economy. But this idea of sort of molting into a tropical Sweden, a "third way," is reformist utopianism of the first water. The bigger danger right now is not a *gusano* invasion, but rather development of internal counterrevolutionary forces under the extreme pressure of the imperialist blockade.

For Workers Political Revolution—Defend Cuba Through International Socialist Revolution!

The Castro regime has hunkered down into a bunker mentality, as was exem-

plified by the Stalinist show trial of General Ochoa in 1988, who was executed evidently for talking back to El Jefe and his immediate boss, Raúl Castro, and to appease Yankee imperialism. This was hailed or alibied by a whole bunch of leftists, including the long-since ex-Trotskyist and now explicitly anti-Trotskyist SWP, and the National Lawyers Guild, the same types of Stalinist fellow travelers who white-washed the Moscow purge trials in the '30s. As we have repeatedly written, *you don't defend Cuba by executing its generals*. We pointed out how Stalin nearly killed the Soviet Union by the purge of the general staff around Marshal Tukhachevsky in 1938-39. His "evidence" of treason later turned out to be Nazi "disinformation," but the real reason was he suspected the Red Army of being a nest of "Trotskyites" and internationalists.

In the aftermath of the Ochoa trial, Castro carried out a purge of the interior ministry and offered to cooperate with Washington in the "war on drugs." More recently they cashiered the head of the National People's Assembly, Cuba's "parliament," Carlos Aldana, on charges of having favored Sony in some financial transactions. Actually, Aldana was a well-known Gorbachevite, so this was really a political purge. During the mid-1980s, Cuba went through what the regime called a "rectification process," in which some of the more notoriously corrupt and right-wing elements were weeded out. But subsequently, they have brought in some younger ministers who are all markedly rightist in their politics.

What's needed in Cuba is not one of the many bureaucratic purges that the Stalinists resort to when their policies lead them to a dead end, but a proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucracy that is leading the country to counterrevolution, and to replace it with a regime based on democratic workers soviets, in which all parties that stand for and defend the workers state can put forward their programs. This revolution requires above all the construction of a Trotskyist vanguard party in Cuba to lead it. The Castro regime is viscerally hostile to this. If at first it didn't have a consolidated bureaucracy—decisions were taken more often with whoever was sitting with Castro in his jeep—it was nevertheless *bonapartist* rule by a petty-bourgeois layer that was separate from and hostile to the working class. And they were quick to arrest the Cuban Trotskyist group associated with the Posadas tendency in 1963, and rearrest them in the mid-1970s for the "crime" of breaking the ban on more than one party.

The Spartacist League has fought for workers political revolution and unconditional defense of Cuba for more than three decades. The SWP, on the other hand, tries to hark back to a heroic period of the 1960s and the figure of Che Guevara. They translated a book by Cuban economist Carlos Tablada on *The Economic Thought of Ernesto Che Guevara*. Now this is pretty funny. Under the planning system set up by Guevara as minister of industry, price accounting was done away with, calculations were done in physical units, so that the economic planners had no way of figuring out relative costs. This led to the brink of disaster symbolized by the failure of the 1970 sugar harvest of "10 million tons." There's an apocryphal joke about this, that Castro gets up before the Council of Ministers and says, "Che, I don't understand how you could have done this. I mean, we were all sitting around this table, and I asked 'Who here is an economist?' And you raised your hand." Che responds, "Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you asked, 'Who here is a communist?'"

But basically what they want to say is there should be a return to the ideals of Che's pamphlet "Man and Socialism in Cuba," where he polemicizes against material incentives. There is a constant tension among Stalinist rulers between

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material incentives, brutal repression and an idealist emphasis on "moral incentives." Now we see in the case of Cuba, that after abolishing the peasant markets in 1986 because they were bringing back capitalist market relations, yesterday the Castro regime announced it was reintroducing peasant markets (without middlemen, for now). This kind of zigzagging is typical for this petty-bourgeois caste that sits atop the property forms of a workers state but seeks to reconcile them with imperialism.

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

So what about Cuba? We found a lot of interest there in our analysis of the counterrevolution in East Europe and the Soviet Union. Everyone knows this is behind Cuba's crisis; Castro even admitted such a discussion was necessary, *later*. But to the extent that you can discern a political drift it is to the right. There is depoliticization of the youth, and we were looking for it, but a lot less than we expected. We found a number of young people who were not party members but did very much support the revolution. However, even in their case, their consciousness is very much impregnated with Stalinism.

There is a kind of internationalist awareness, with people proud of Cuban intervention in Angola and, for example in a sugar mill we visited, of building sugar mills in Nicaragua and Vietnam. Yet this is still Cuban nationalist in content rather than proletarian internationalist. So that while Castro presented Nicaragua with a sugar mill, he also told the Sandinista leaders a week after they took power that Nicaragua should not be "a second Cuba"—in other words, no social revolution. Just as he told Chilean



Ernesto Fernández

Heroic Cuban fighters celebrate victory over U.S.-backed invaders at Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón) in 1961.

leftists to follow the "democratic" path of Allende's Unidad Popular, which then led to the bloody Santiago coup of 11 September 1973. Tomorrow is the 20th anniversary of that tragic event. Castro visited Chile in that period and even stood shoulder to shoulder with General Pinochet reviewing the supposedly "democratic" Chilean army. And even when it was pushing guerrilla warfare in the late 1960s, the Cuban Stalinist regime was opposing socialist revolution. At the 1966 OLAS conference Castro delivered a blistering denunciation of the Guatemalan MR-13 guerrilla group as Trotskyists because they called for socialism.

The central contradiction for Cuba is

sion won a certain amount of support in the short run. Brezhnev's "great powerism" granted a certain legitimacy to the Soviet Stalinist regime so long as living standards were rising. But the long-term effects of that program guaranteed the destruction of the remaining *communist* consciousness of the Soviet proletariat, ultimately leading to the destruction of the Soviet Union and a counterrevolution marked by rabid nationalism.

During July they held a meeting of the Latin American left in Havana, the "Forum of São Paulo." Not even a hint of aid to revolutionaries elsewhere in Latin America. On the contrary, Castro spent most of his speech telling stories



Sygnma

Castro praised Allende's "peaceful road" in Chile. Shown here with General Augusto Pinochet, "constitutional officer" who carried out bloody September 1973 coup against popular-front government.

that the Castro regime attempted to legitimize and mobilize support for the regime on the basis of Cuban or Latin American nationalism, which they are now doing in a more pronounced way. While this has won them support, it is fundamentally counterposed to proletarian class consciousness, and ultimately spells defeat for the Cuban Revolution. Likewise Stalin's appeal to Russian nationalism in the face of the Nazi inva-

about his participation in the Hispano-American Summit of heads of state in Brazil, and he told his supporters to get out of the guerrilla business and repeatedly praised the "strength of the unarmed masses"! Meanwhile, the program of the Forum called for "combining the market with democratic development and social justice." This kind of social-democratic crap is what Lula of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT), for example, is running

Havana Report...

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to get work as waiters. The average monthly salary is about 200 pesos. While the official U.S. dollar exchange rate is about one to one, the black market rate is now 80 to 1. So, a \$5 tip in a restaurant is equivalent to *two months' pay*. More to the point, you can actually buy something (children's shoes, some bread, a can of Coke or a beer) in a hard-currency store, while there is essentially nothing available to buy with pesos.

A couple of times we were told the same "joke"—that the wealthiest Cubans today are the prostitutes. This is likely close to the truth, though the pimps are surely wealthier. Prostitution in the resorts and around Havana's tourist hotels is rife and unconcealed, as the

militia simply turns a blind eye. The same applies to petty hustling for currency exchange, which remains illegal.

The bureaucracy's turn to overwhelming reliance on tourism for hard-currency earnings may be simply for lack of any perceived alternative, but at every level it helps to erode consciousness among the population. A fitting symbol of this is the famous Habana Libre hotel, which was known as the Habana Hilton until it was expropriated after the revolution. Now the hotel is managed in a joint venture with a Spanish company, and is known as the Guitart Habana Libre.

In 1990 we attended the annual July 26 rally in Plaza de la Revolución which was spirited, well-organized, and as usual massive with at least half a million people cheering and chanting "*socialismo o muerte*" (socialism or death). Fidel gave the standard three hour speech, Daniel Ortega at his side. This was also carnival week, and later thousands upon thou-

sands flocked to the rides and celebrations near the Malecón, eating and drinking till all hours. This year, celebrations of July 26 were canceled altogether. Instead Fidel gave his speech at a relatively small indoor meeting in Santiago and people gathered around television sets to watch, hoping that power blackouts wouldn't interrupt the coverage.

Fidel & Co. have been respected by a population which knew that, for all the problems, things were far worse before the revolution. Now this generation is growing old, dying off. Even here, there is ample evidence of souring on the regime, and even on the revolution itself.

Meanwhile, for much of the younger generation it is hard to believe that *anything* could have been worse than the situation today. Even the country's justly famous medical system is going downhill, as basic medicines become increasingly unavailable thanks to the U.S. blockade and foreign-currency short-

on in next year's elections as he hobnobs with international bankers. And that program offers no aid whatsoever to an embattled Cuba. Castro's program of hemispheric coexistence with the Latin American bourgeoisies and their Yankee imperialist patrons certainly won't defend the existence of a workers state.

So how can Cuba be defended? As we have said, the fundamental defense of Cuba is outside the island, the need for revolutionary struggle in Latin America, in the U.S. and elsewhere. The prospects for Cuba are indeed bleak, but that only makes all the more urgent the need to fight, and the obligation to raise a Trotskyist program to defend the revolution, centrally through revolutionary struggle internationally. And this fight itself could change the outcome. Talking of mass struggle in Latin America in defense of Cuba against counterrevolution is not just a pipe dream. Just look at the thousands who turned out when Castro visited Brazil and Bolivia recently. And it makes a difference in this regard if the Cuban working people are prepared to fight to defend their revolution. Because their holding out against a murderous economic blockade is an inspiration to the Latin American masses.

But more than the will to fight, what's needed is a revolutionary program. In Cuba, and here, this means drawing a balance sheet of the Castro regime, understanding that the Stalinist program of socialism in one country, or a bloc of countries, or a single island, is a program for disaster. This program of defeat must be replaced with the proletarian internationalist program of permanent revolution, to mobilize the mass of the downtrodden and the rural and urban poor of Latin America behind the working class led by Trotskyist parties in a fight for workers revolution. And this fight must extend right into the "entrails of the monster," as José Martí called the United States, for it is socialist revolution *here*, in the imperialist center, that is the only guarantee that Cuba can be truly free of imperialist domination and able to proceed toward genuine socialism, a classless society built on material abundance rather than grinding scarcity.

We must raise the issue of the defense of Cuba prominently in our work in the U.S. and particularly in Mexico, explaining that the key is struggle for socialist revolution internationally. The Cuban masses' will to resist must be an inspiration to us to fight for that program. Cuba alone can't survive, but it is not inevitable that Cuba be alone. We of the International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, are fighting to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International on this program of world socialist revolution, which was the program of the October Revolution and the very reason for existence for the Communist International. We urge you to join us in this struggle. ■

ages. From several discussions, we got a sense that the kind of depoliticization among the younger generation that occurred in the USSR is very prevalent in Cuba as well.

It is better for the workers of Cuba and the world that Castro is trying to "hold the line" and not simply surrendering outright to imperialism as did the Stalinist regimes of the USSR and most of East Europe in the end. But by itself this solves nothing at all. Castro remains a forthright partisan of "peaceful coexistence," "hemispheric détente," etc. Indeed all the more so as the revolution is increasingly under siege. And Cuba itself is in profound crisis, with the rhetoric of "socialism or death" ringing increasingly hollow for broad sections of the population. Revolutionary internationalism—in this context mainly socialist revolution in the United States—is the *only* road to save the Cuban Revolution. ■

Yeltsin Coup...

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state of siege, to the censorship, to the ban on political parties, and call for the immediate release of all anti-Yeltsin prisoners.

A massive anti-communist witchhunt is now under way. In the longer term, the real purpose of Yeltsin's coup is to ward off the spectre of working-class resistance to the ravages of capitalist restoration. Watching the results of the September 19 Polish elections—where a population fed up with three years of capitalist “shock therapy” threw out the IMF-backed Solidarność parties and handed a resounding victory to the former Stalinists—the imperialists were worried at the prospect of the “Polish scenario” spreading to Russia.

Today, Yeltsin is firmly in the saddle in Moscow. Whether or not elections for a new rubber-stamp “legislature” take place as scheduled in December, and even if they are combined with a presidential vote, today's masters of the Kremlin and their imperialist backers are intent on riding roughshod over any political opposition and imposing dictatorial rule. In our article, “How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled” (WV No. 564, 27 November 1992), we warned: “For Yeltsin and other restorationists to nail down a solid capitalist regime, sooner rather than later a bloody reckoning is likely, signaling to the masses that there is a new order.”

But as they carry out their draconian economic program, and Russia's far-flung regions flagrantly disregard Moscow's writ, there will be continued turmoil. The Russian bourgeois state remains weak and fragmented, a stable capitalist class has yet to be congealed and the ever-deepening immiseration of the working people can well lead to explosions of class struggle in the coming period. The overriding necessity for the multinational Soviet proletariat lies in forging the nucleus of an internationalist vanguard party, which fights for socialist revolution to sweep away Yeltsin and all the would-be exploiters.

Split in the Counterrevolutionary Camp

The Western media describes the anti-Yeltsin forces centered on the Russian parliament as a “hard-line,” “conservative” opposition to “free market reforms” who somehow want to restore the old Soviet system. In his speech announcing the storming of parliament Yeltsin railed that the forces opposing his *diktat* were “Communists seeking revenge,” and that “Those waving red flags have once again covered Russia with blood.” In reality, Rutskoï and Khasbulatov were once key Yeltsin supporters, standing shoulder to

Aleksandr Rutskoï (left), former Yeltsin ally turned rival, was key player in capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the USSR. In Yeltsin's August 1991 counter-coup, Rutskoï organized defense of Moscow's “White House.”



shoulder with him on the White House barricades in August 1991 as he seized power following the botched Kremlin coup.

Since then, however, the forces of capitalist counterrevolution have divided into two rival camps, though their differences are by no means irreconcilable. While personally a total opportunist, Yeltsin has taken on the role as the main agent of Western imperialist in transforming Russia into a subservient neocolony of Wall Street and Frankfurt. Rutskoï and Khasbulatov put themselves forward as spokesmen for more nationalistic forces, occasionally demagogically denouncing the IMF and Western capitals for seeking to degrade and impoverish Russia. They wanted to appeal to elements in the military, who chafed at seeing the one-time global superpower turning into a neocolonial vassal of the West; and to the corporatist faction of industrial managers, who didn't want to see their plants shut down on the altar of IMF monetarism.

So why didn't the parliamentary opposition succeed in rallying support from either the officer corps or the industrialists? And given the increasingly desperate economic straits of the masses, why was there no popular outpouring of opposition to Yeltsin's presidential coup? To answer these questions we must look at the various contending forces in post-Soviet Russia.

The nationalist-corporatist faction of the nascent Russian capitalist class, whose chief political representative is Civic Union leader Arkady Volsky, seeks to maintain the core of the existing industrial structure. Given the non-profitability in the world capitalist market of the giant enterprises built to function in a centrally planned Soviet-wide economy, the only way to presently keep them afloat is by massive subsidies from the central bank, leading to a hyperinflationary budget deficit. For the last couple of years, Volsky & Co. have been engaged in a tug of war with the “shock treatment” economists represented by

Yegor Gaidar, Yeltsin's former prime minister. Using the parliament as a battering ram against the president, they put in one of their own, Viktor Gerashchenko, as head of the central bank, and achieved a momentary victory by forcing Yeltsin to dump Gaidar last December.

The present political showdown began when Yeltsin, under pressure from international financiers, named Gaidar first deputy prime minister a few days before decreeing the dissolution of parliament. A former chief economist of the World Bank, Stanley Fischer, observed: “The IMF's tough stance in recent weeks has had a positive effect because it has helped persuade Yeltsin that it was time to act, both in getting back Gaidar and confronting his opposition in parliament” (*Financial Times*, 23 September). Moreover, immediately upon dissolving the Russian parliament, Yeltsin's first military move was to surround the central bank with troops and take it over. One would think that Volsky & Co. would have strongly supported the parliamentary opposition. Instead, the corporatists pushed for a compromise solution, to combine parliamentary and presidential elections, and ended up in Yeltsin's camp. Why?

As capitalist forces, in the first place the “industrialists party” requires social and political stability. Volsky and his fellow managers know that even a “slowed-down” introduction of the market will produce massive unemployment and potentially explosive social unrest. Thus they have always sought a solid “united front” of the nascent bourgeoisie, and have been pushing for a bonapartist regime, whether headed by Rutskoï or Yeltsin or someone else. But when parliament's defiance of Yeltsin was taken to the streets last weekend, threatening to ignite a civil war, this pushed Volsky & Co. from neutrality into Yeltsin's arms. Moreover, these well-versed businessmen are fully aware that they need massive infusions of Western cash even to maintain, much less modernize, Russian factories. The imperialists hold the dollars and D-marks, and Yeltsin is their man. But the imperialists are not irrevocably wedded to IMF-style monetarism, and might acquiesce to a more corporatist policy, particularly in light of the Polish elections.

Even more than looking to the industrialists, former air force general Rutskoï counted on support from the military. If anything, a significant section of the officer corps is undoubtedly more sympathetic to Rutskoï's brand of hard Russian nationalism than Yeltsin's subservient accommodation to the U.S. However, after Yeltsin's September 21 pronouncement the military high command declared “strict political neutrality,” which under the circumstances clearly favored Yeltsin.

But it was by no means given that the military would move to disperse the parliament. Senior generals had declared their reluctance to use the military, and many troops from Moscow had been sent out of the city to harvest potatoes and keep them away from the political showdown. The military high command feared the prospect of a civil war which would lead to a split in the army and a total disintegration of the Russian state. This

fear sharpened over the weekend, after the Kremlin issued an ultimatum that the parliament be cleared out by Monday. On Sunday a protest of some 15,000 people organized by the “red-brown coalition” broke through police lines and armed Rutskoï supporters launched attacks on the Moscow mayor's office and the Ostankino television complex.

At a meeting of the collegium (council) of generals, late Sunday evening, the top military leaders saw the spectre of division of the army. “Even so, the top council had lengthy deliberations before finally throwing its support wholeheartedly to Yeltsin,” said military sources, according to the *Washington Post* (5 October). In the final analysis, the key was who controlled the payroll. A Reuters dispatch (4 October) by Carol Giacomo observed: “Senior U.S. officials have said the military backed Yeltsin because their leaders understand Khasbulatov and Rutskoï do not have any better answers than Yeltsin about the economy and realise Yeltsin has the support of the international community and thus access to financial aid.”

“Red-Brown Coalition” Repels Working Class

The decisive factor conditioning the character and the outcome of the showdown between the Russian parliament and Yeltsin was the absence of the working class as an active force. Commenting on the prevailing mood on the streets of Moscow, the *Los Angeles Times* (23 September) remarked, “Suppose they had a coup and nobody cared?” The long-running feud between the Kremlin and the White House is generally (and rightly) regarded as a squabble between corrupt and cynical factions. Insofar as Rutskoï et al. are identified with any political line, it is extreme Russian nationalism, which is linked to reactionary social policies. For example, last summer the parliament proposed to outlaw the right of abortion, which was legal and free under the old Soviet system.

Among the militant defenders of the Russian parliament were a host of ostensibly communist groupings, including the RKR of Viktor Anpilov and ex-general Albert Makashov, who were key leaders in the streets, and the RPK of Anatoly Kryuchkov, who appeared at Rutskoï's side on the White House balcony. From the outset, these remnants of the petty-bourgeois Stalinist bureaucracy have supported the restoration of capitalism. When the crowd gathered at the Lenin statue in October Square and headed off toward the parliament on Sunday, there were many red flags flying—along with the monarchist black, yellow and white banner. This time they forcefully smashed through the thin lines of riot police, who offered little resistance, and some of whom went over to the demonstrators. The *New York Times* (4 October) was venomous in bemoaning the “relative ease with which Mr. Yeltsin's enemies were able to move through the police lines Sunday afternoon.”

For almost two weeks there had been a stand-off between the competing bourgeois-restorationist factions. Those who gathered before the White House were politically supporting one wing of the capitalist-restorationists. But with the fight taken to the streets, had there been a significant split in the state apparatus, opening up a clear power vacuum, there would have been an opportunity for a proletarian mobilization independent of both camps seeking to sweep away all the capitalist forces. But the unrest did not reach that point, and the working class saw no one fighting for its interests.

For all their red flags the Stalinist “patriots” are tightly bound to the monarchist/fascist scum and act as lackeys for the corporatist wing of the fledgling bourgeoisie. They are hostile to the independent mobilization of the working class, opposing every strike, from the air controllers last year to the recent Ukrainian miners strike. Their crude mix of Russian chauvinism, virulent anti-Semitism and racism against minor-

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How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled

Homeless tent city in Moscow's Red Square.

For Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Yeltsin Counterrevolution!

August 1993 Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

ities from the Caucasus and elsewhere has made them despised by all but the most backward, lumpenized elements of the working class.

The ex-Stalinist official "union" federation, the FNPR, is part and parcel of the corporatist faction and a constituent element of Volsky's Civic Union. The newspaper *Rabochaya Tribuna*, one of those banned by Yeltsin, was jointly published by the FNPR "unions" and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. At the beginning of the two-week standoff, the FNPR made some noises about considering strikes to defend democratic institutions, but following Volsky's tack, on Monday morning they issued a call for pro-Yeltsin "law and order."

Given the passivity of the working class, acquiescence to the West has fundamentally conditioned the outcome of power struggles among the Moscow ruling elite since the post-Brezhnev years, consistently tilting the balance in favor of those forces who are more pro-Western, and more acceptable to the West. Thus in 1987 Gorbachev came out on top of his "hardline" opponent Yegor Ligachev, who was initially a principal architect of perestroika. The same was true in August 1991 when Yeltsin faced off against the "gang of eight," elements of the Gorbachev regime who sought a gradual transition to capitalism, carried out through the bureaucratic apparatus, while maintaining a unitary USSR. The same pattern prevailed in the last two weeks. At bottom, this is a by-product of Stalin's "socialism in one country," which denied the possibility of proletarian revolutions in the imperialist West and preached the pipe dream of "peaceful coexistence."

Post-Soviet Russia: Immiseration, Looting and Chaos

When Yeltsin took over the Kremlin and then announced the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991, Western



October 3: Anti-Yeltsin forces rolled over riot police, but pro-capitalist parliament leaders feared civil war and Western disapproval.

governments and the media proclaimed a new era of "democracy" and "free market" capitalism. The reality has been economic collapse and social chaos. The breakdown of social order has reached a point that deadly diseases like cholera and diphtheria have reappeared, especially in regions of the former USSR ravaged by ethnic blood feuds and civil war such as the Caucasus and Central Asia. The *Washington Post* (20 August) summed up the condition of Russia after two years of capitalist counterrevolution:

"Unemployment looms as antiquated Soviet factories teeter on the edge of bankruptcy. Already, 4 out of 5 Russians are said to be living below the poverty level. Secessionist pressures are mounting inside Russia, while civil strife threatens its borders. A power struggle in Moscow has nearly paralyzed the government...."

Yeltsin now clearly has the whip hand in Moscow. But Moscow is not Russia. The economic chaos engendered by cap-

italist counterrevolution has unleashed disintegrative forces throughout society—political, social, economic and regional. Vast quantities of raw materials are being smuggled out of the country by black market "entrepreneurs"; the effective currency is the dollar, not the ruble; regional bureaucracies jealously husband their industrial and extractive resources for their own benefit with little regard to the central non-government.

This situation cannot continue indefinitely. Western imperialism demands counterrevolutionary order in Russia, not counterrevolutionary chaos. Putting the Russian capitalist house in order will mean first and foremost teaching the workers that capitalist exploitation functions on the twin threats of starvation and repression. As Yeltsin—or his successor—moves to crack the whip against the working class and national minorities, what is posed in the coming period is a series of defensive struggles against

mass layoffs and against attacks on women's rights and further bonapartist measures. Out of these struggles will come a new layer of revolutionary fighters, proletarian internationalists, to provide the kernel for a Bolshevik party worthy of the name.

The task facing genuine communists in Russia is to wage an arduous propaganda struggle to overcome decades of Stalinist poison which atomized and paralyzed the Soviet working class, as it rooted out its revolutionary traditions and sapped even the most elementary class consciousness. The Russian revolutionary workers movement—out of which the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky was crystallized—was steeled through years of patient Marxist education, illegal organization and combative mass struggles, not only around the immediate economic interests of the working class but against all manifestations of tsarist autocracy and pogromism. Not for nothing did Lenin insist that the proletarian party must serve as a "tribune of the people." Only on the basis of the most deep-going proletarian internationalism could the workers of tsarist Russia and their Leninist vanguard strive to effect a socialist revolution in one of the most backward countries of Europe and bring together more than a hundred disparate nationalities in common class struggle.

The current generation of Soviet workers must now retrace the steps of their predecessors. As we wrote in "How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled":

"What is required above all is a revolutionary leadership capable of overcoming the divisions inspired by chauvinism and nationalism, clearing away the decades of false consciousness fostered by Stalinism, and linking the struggles in the ex-USSR to that of the world proletariat."

The International Communist League fights to build a Soviet section of a reborn Fourth International. *For socialist revolution to sweep away bloody Yeltsin's starvation regime!* ■

Poland...

(continued from page 5)

significant internal opposition—to support Walesa/Suchocka's privatization bill. Now deputy leader Leszek Miller pushes tax breaks for foreign investors and vows: "We will not do anything without prior consultation with the IMF." And Kwasniewski assured visiting U.S. Senator Richard Lugar that "there are no strong anti-NATO sentiments inside his party" (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 September).

Itself a popular-frontist formation including a nationalist group and police "trade unionists" (as well as the majority of the pro-Solidarność Polish Socialist Party), the SLD immediately issued craven appeals to the openly bourgeois parties to join it in a "grand coalition," even proposing to keep the monetarist Suchocka on as prime minister! The Social Democrats have also offered themselves up as gendarmes for Walesa's bonapartist drive, promising to give him

"the authority necessary to fulfill the role of an arbiter intervening in crisis situations" and to support rule by decree "in precisely specified cases" (*Trybuna*, 8 September). Miller even called for an "above-party" government of "national salvation."

Given its parliamentary weight—the largest vote secured by any party since 1989—the SLD has no need to beg the Solidarność parties to join it. But in the classic manner of the popular front, the Social Democrats seek to subordinate themselves to the openly bourgeois parties as protective coloration for their own treachery to the working class. However, Suchocka & Co. have turned a deaf ear to the SLD's pleas, while Walesa has even made noises about dissolving the Sejm, blustering: "I won't allow any restraint on the reforms, even if I have to use Yeltsin's variant" (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 28 September). Walesa's ambition to play the role of Pilsudski has long been obvious, but making it happen in the face of a combative proletariat and a hostile population is another matter.

For a Polish Trotskyist Party!

The Spartakusowska Grupa Polski (SGP), section of the International Communist League, declared in the current issue of its paper that "there's nothing for the working class to vote for in the upcoming election" (*Platforma Spartakusowców*, Summer/Fall 1993). In contrast, the fake-Trotskyists of *Dalej!*, supporters of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat, raised the hackneyed appeal to "fight the right," calling for a vote to the SLD and the Union of Labor. This was echoed by "Socialist Solidarność," followers of Tony Cliff, who called for a vote to the Solidarność union as well. The "Workers Self-Government" group, connected with the Morenoite tendency, while nominally disavowing support for "any coalitions or organ-

izations," gave its members "a free hand" to "vote according to their own conscience" (*Samorzadnosc Robotnicza*, August/September 1993). Given this outfit's record of promoting ultrarightists like Solidarność 80 and the KPN, this could mean anything.

Now that the former Stalinists have become confirmed "free market" Social Democrats, the fake-leftists chase after them as readily as they earlier clamored for "solidarity with Solidarity." To justify their support for Ronald Reagan's favorite "union," they enthused that ten million Polish workers can't be wrong, dismissing the images of Walesa kneeling to the Pope. Even now, they sneer at the SGP's insistence on the centrality of the struggle against anti-Semitism and anti-Roma (Gypsy) racism, against women's oppression and anti-gay bigotry, against resurgent Polish nationalism and clericalism. But the election results show these questions are not irrelevant to the workers. "When the Pope came to Poland, Walesa as head of state drops to his knees and kisses his hand," complained one worker at the Gdansk shipyard where Solidarność was born. "Not all of us would drop to their knees to the head of the church."

When Walesa & Co. first made their bid to restore capitalism in Poland in late 1981, we Spartacists said, "Stop Solidarność counterrevolution!" While calling for proletarian political revolution against the bankrupt Stalinist bureaucracy, we took a clear stand against the clerical-reactionary forces which sought to destroy the social foundations upon which the Polish deformed workers state was based. Even as we swam against the stream of mass support for Solidarność, we noted that the historically socialist-minded Polish proletariat's infatuation with clerical reaction would not last long.

Today we warn just as strongly against illusions in the pro-IMF Social Demo-

crats. The ex-Stalinist OPZZ trade-union federation has worked overtime to hold back strikes, which OPZZ chief Ewa Szychalska justified with the explanation that an SLD electoral victory "will be beneficial for the working people" (*Trybuna*, 21 September). But not fighting won't be beneficial for the working people. This criminal passivity is an open invitation to sinister ultrarightist groups who posture as a "populist" opposition to Walesa, like the KPN and Solidarność 80, headed by rabid anti-Semite and anti-Communist Marian Jurczyk. KPN *wodz* (leader) Leszek Moczulski, who denounces women in the workforce as a Communist "device," calls for "a brutal and sharp restoration of order." Ominously, this summer's parade by the KPN's paramilitary arm *Strzelec* (The Shooter) included a small army unit.

The Polish working class has demonstrated its capacity for struggle against the new exploiters. But just as there is no capitalism with a "human face," there can be no return to the days of the Stalinist regime, whose all-sided lie of "socialism in one country" paved the way for counterrevolution. It is necessary to forge an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist party, which acts as a "tribune of the people" and is committed to the struggle for world socialist revolution. In fighting to build such a party, the SGP calls on the working class to combat all forms of oppression, raising the call for free abortion on demand and for workers mobilizations to stop racist attacks.

In the struggle for socialist revolution and the liberating ideals of a truly communist society, Polish workers must reappropriate the heritage of Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish Jewish woman who embodied this country's contribution to internationalist class struggle. For a Polish Trotskyist party as part of a reborn Fourth International! ■

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2,000 Run Nazi Fascists Out of Town!

Auburn, New York

The neo-Nazis of the U.S.A. Nationalist Party thought they could strut through Auburn, New York with their swastikas on September 25, the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. Behind a line of riot cops, the fascists rallied on the steps of the Auburn courthouse under a huge Confederate flag. But when they tried to march to Freedom Park—a memorial to the great abolitionist and leader of the Underground Railroad for escaped slaves, Harriet Tubman—2,000 outraged anti-fascists filled the streets and stopped the Nazi vermin in their tracks. As the would-be goose-steppers scurried out of town like rats, hundreds celebrated in Freedom Park.

Auburn is a predominantly white town whose main "business" is incarcerating a lot of black people in a state prison. Defying the Auburn mayor's suggestion that townsfolk "ignore" the fascists and attend a local tomato fest (!), the many intended victims of the fascists—Jews (including Holocaust survivors from the Auschwitz death camp), blacks, gays and

Demonstrators cheer after routing the Nazis in Auburn, September 25.



Nett/Syracuse Herald American

hundreds of youth from upstate New York campuses—put themselves forward to make sure the fascists were driven back. The National Women's Rights Organizing Coalition (NWROC) had the largest organized contingent with about 100 people from Albany and Michigan.

From the bombing of NAACP offices

in California to the desecration of Jewish cemeteries in New York, to the bombing of an abortion clinic in Pennsylvania, the fascists are stepping up their cowardly nightriding attacks—and their broad daylight rallies to recruit new shock troops. The rot of the capitalist economy, the rising unemployment and despera-

tion are the conditions which fuel the growth of these race-haters who serve the capitalist class and target minorities as scapegoats for widespread discontent. What's necessary is to mobilize the social power of the integrated working class in massive labor/black mobilizations to decisively defeat the fascists. ■

RWL...

(continued from page 4)

Ku Klux Klan! An *integrated* religious sect, living together communally in Texas—Klansmen? Does the RWL know what country they're living in? Do they care? The KKK kills people who live in integrated communes. In this case, the Klan didn't have to—Clinton and the FBI did it, and the RWL didn't make a peep.

Operation Rescue is a reactionary political organization with a base of fanatics who bomb abortion clinics and target doctors for assassination. The Branch Davidians, a fundamentalist Christian sect with a 50-year history, harmed no one. Their "crime" was to legally acquire more guns than the state thought they should have. So the state wiped them out. And this was Texas, where every 90-year-old white grandmother packs a pistol in her cookie jar—not to mention Ross Perot's arsenal.

As for the tiny RTL, their members called for a "workers tribunal" to "investigate" murdered Branch Davidian leader David Koresh for "child abuse." They're offering their "proletarian" services to Janet Reno who cynically wielded the charge of "child abuse" to alibi the murder of the children who lived in this religious commune.

Racist State Terror U.S.A.

As we wrote of the Waco holocaust: "Like the massacre of the Philadelphia MOVE commune in 1985, the Waco holocaust was intended as a deadly warning to all those who 'have a hostile attitude' toward this racist ruling class" ("Waco and the White House, First the Massacre, Now the Lies," WV No. 575, 7 May). This was not lost on other victims of the U.S. government. Bob Buck, a West Virginia steel worker, who was railroaded into jail for defending his union during the bitter strike against Ravenswood Aluminum in 1991-92, wrote in a letter to the Partisan Defense Committee: "They were so damned concerned for the children they unleashed an armed assault on the house they lived in and filled it full of bullet holes; they were so concerned for the children they turned off the water and power to them and then knocked down the walls these children had their backs to, gassed them, and ultimately burned them to death. Ain't America

great. I'm glad Mrs. Reno isn't concerned about me."

This man, in jail for defending his union's picket lines, raised his voice in protest over Waco. Not the scab "socialists" of the RWL who have an established record of blithely waltzing across picket lines. They not only scab, they alibi it by declaring that the elementary trade-union principle that "picket lines mean don't cross" is yet another "sectarian" invention of the Spartacist League.

Delbert Africa, who is serving a 30-to-100 year sentence for the "crime" of surviving the 8 August 1978 siege



Q Sakamaki

RWL wants to "rebuild" a "militant" version of liberal Democratic Party-led civil rights movement.

by 600 cops on the MOVE house in Philadelphia, also wrote in protest over the Waco massacre: "You know what disturbs me about the situations like that murder of Branch Davidians in Waco? The fact that so many supposedly knowledgeable people will accept the damn government's propaganda about the people the govt. is getting ready to massacre."

But what would the "knowledgeable," even self-professed socialist, "people" of the RWL care what a member of the MOVE organization has to say? They alibied the 1985 firebombing of the Philly MOVE commune. An article in

Fighting Worker (June 1985) peddles the government's story that the MOVE "problem" had to be dealt with:

"If there had been organized black self-defense in Philadelphia, this would have been an easy problem to deal with.... If persuasion failed, the defense units, backed up by the entire community, could have intercepted MOVE members on the street and administered some more powerful forms of persuasion."

Despicable! Eleven black people, including children, had just been incinerated and the RWL's response was to declare that it would have been better if they had been pummeled by "workers defense guards"! But organizations like the RWL rely on the hope that people have a short memory.

Militant Liberalism and the Democratic Party

Now the RWL and its all-purpose front group NWROC posture as the "militant" answer to racist police and fascist terror. Most recently, they organized campus and other youth in upstate New York for the demonstration that drove the fascists off the streets of Auburn (see article above). That the would-be Hitlers of the U.S.A. Nationalist Party were stopped from carrying out their racist provocations was a victory for all the intended victims of fascist genocide.

The struggle against fascism and the racist cops is serious business. It requires a proletarian socialist perspective—one firmly grounded in the understanding that the capitalist state is the main, most deadly, armed enemy of the working class and oppressed. It requires the leadership of a multiracial workers party that will bring the *social power* of labor to bear on behalf of all the oppressed in the fight for socialist revolution.

This isn't what the RWL has to offer. On the contrary, their standard fare is militant protest politics...in the service of the Democratic Party. Take the RWL's "Fighting Worker Slate" in the recent Detroit elections. On campuses, the RWL rides on NWROC's reputation as the militant, in-your-face abortion clinic defenders. But in their election campaign, there was no mention of abortion rights—until we published an article scandalizing them for it ("RWL in Detroit Elections: Abortion Rights in the Closet," WV No. 578, 18 June). Then they finally put in the "A" word, but they couldn't choke out the words "socialist revolution."

While perverting Malcolm X on the "bullet or the ballot" to justify their "fighting" electoralism, the RWL's election slate mourned that Martin Luther "King's dream of equality and an end to racism is still unrealized. We need a new mass civil rights movement that can make that dream a reality." The RWL built a contingent for the August 28 demonstration in Washington, D.C. called by Coretta Scott King to commemorate the 1963 "March on Washington." Thirty years ago, Malcolm denounced the "farce on Washington" as a sellout to the racist Democrats of any struggle for black freedom. In 1963 it was a farce, in 1993 it was a groveling appeal to Clinton.

The RWL mimics the militant liberalism of the early New Left—when SDS went "part of the way with LBJ." Their program was bigger, better, more massive, more militant "street action"...in order to pressure the Democrats. But as the Democrats rained down death on the Vietnamese workers and peasants, many youth got fed up. Face to face with the hard realities of imperialism, the New Left split and many of them went in some pretty weird directions but some were won to genuine communism.

From MOVE to Waco to the "L.A. 4," as well as Auburn and abortion defense, the RWL can't see the *class* line...which is also why they can't see picket lines. They want to be the left wing of whatever is moving and shaking. So on abortion defense they do their militant stuff while carefully keeping their ties to NOW (and calling on these bourgeois feminists to form a third party). They oscillate in response to popular pressures, which can be pretty right wing. So in L.A. they feed into the bourgeoisie's portrayal of the 1992 upheaval as an anti-white "race riot." And by their silence and cynical sneers against the Spartacists over Waco, they alibi mass murder by the government.

Three former youth members of the RWL's Bay Area local got fed up with endlessly trying to pressure pro-Democratic Party liberals to "fight," by posing as militant lesbians, militant clinic defenders, militant (fill in the blank)... anything but militant young communists. So they split and joined the Spartacus Youth Club to openly fight for Trotskyism. Like, why be a retro New Leftist in the RWL closet when you can come out as a real red with the SL/SYC. ■

S.F. City Hall Assaults the Homeless

SAN FRANCISCO—For two months, squads of cops have been sweeping through the city, rousting the poor from parks and alleys, trashing their bedrolls and blankets, and issuing citations for “public nuisance crimes.” The victims are packed off to roam outlying districts, to Berkeley, to jails already so overcrowded that the city has to rent prison space in neighboring Alameda County. In the works are plans to seize the grocery carts homeless people use to haul around their meager possessions. Mayor Frank Jordan calls it “Operation Matrix,” a.k.a. “Operation Quality of Life,” and his aim is to drive the weakest and most abused victims of capitalist greed somewhere else to die.

There are more than 10,000 homeless people in San Francisco, whose bourgeois boosters promote it as a prime tourist and business travel destination. The downtown moneybags want to clean out the “riffraff.” Now you’re a criminal in SF if you lose your job and apartment and freeze your butt off trying to sleep on a park bench or in a doorway. And it’s literally a crime to feed the starving: dozens of people from Food Not Bombs have been arrested in the last couple of months ... for giving away food in public! They are maliciously charged with “felony conspiracy,” to maximize jail time. On September 29, police waded into a protest rally called by the group at City Hall and hauled off more than 35 to jail. Drop all charges against Food Not Bombs supporters now!

While capitalist recession and general decay have thrown thousands more onto the streets, the “housing” available to them in this sky-high-rent city has

shrunk. Mayor Jordan is determined to reduce it further: last July 11, he had about 20 squatters forcibly evicted from a vacant building. Beginning in August, the Transbay bus terminal was locked down at night, driving 300 homeless people who had been sleeping there back to the streets.

Now Jordan has a scheme to force those who receive a \$345-a-month “general assistance” pittance to turn over up to 80 percent of it to the city, which will then pay slumlords for rooms in rat-infested, firetrap “residence hotels.” A similar scheme of former mayor (now Democratic U.S. Senator) Dianne Feinstein, dubbed “Hotel Hotline,” was an enormous scam, steal-

ing from the poor to further enrich slumlords who were paid for empty rooms with the seized welfare money!

Those consigned to these rat holes can pay with their lives. On September 8, the South-of-Market Folsom Street Hotel burned to the ground, killing John Jordan and injuring 13. Jordan was on general assistance. The building had been cited for code violations going back to 1989, including no fire doors and rooms without smoke detectors. The building’s owner, one Charlie Patel (who got a cut of the “Hotel Hotline” loot), owns a string of these deathtraps, including the Mission Hotel, recently selected for Jordan’s new program—which (surprise!) turns

out to have been plastered with citations by building inspectors. Indeed, “most of the city’s homeless hotels have repeatedly been cited for unsafe and unhealthy conditions” (*Chronicle*, 16 September).

Mayor Jordan has also put on the November ballot a “Proposition V” requiring anyone on welfare to be fingerprinted in the name of fighting mythical “welfare fraud.” This racist outrage aims to drive the poor and minorities off the welfare rolls to starve. The mayor’s “liberal” Democratic opponents on the Board of Supervisors, including its president Angela Alioto and that darling of the “left,” Terrence Hallinan, are decrying the “heartless” mayor, proposing an “amnesty” for the victims of “Operation Matrix”—offering, in sum, to make it equally legal for the rich and poor to sleep in doorways and beg for crumbs. Meanwhile, they pass vicious, racist budget cuts which are literally killing the poor.

Getting the homeless a decent place to stay, impossible as long as the vicious capitalist class remains in power, can be solved overnight by a revolutionary workers government: just requisition the needed space from fancy high-rise hotels and the mansions of the rich. Tear down the firetraps, and put up the homeless in the Hilton, the St. Francis and Pacific Heights! And by taking the productive forces out of the hands of capitalist parasites and founding a planned, socialist economy, the victorious workers will be able to provide jobs for all and eliminate starvation. Down with Jordan’s murderous campaign against the poor! Decent housing and jobs for all!



In San Francisco it's a "crime" to feed the homeless. Above, cops prepare to arrest "Food Not Bombs" protesters in 1988.

Rick Gerharter

Jamal...

(continued from page 16)

Americans—and that was lawful. We imported human beings from Africa—and that was lawful. We subjected them to slavery—and that was lawful,” he said, adding that the U.S. government’s dropping of the atomic bomb and ravaging of Vietnam, Nicaragua and Cuba were all “lawful deeds.”

A message was read from Ray Martinez Jr., a Philadelphia union official for SEIU Local 668, who urged the audience to “spread that word—an innocent man is on death row. Only through our combined efforts—and definitely

with labor’s support—can Mumia stand a chance to achieve his rightfully deserved freedom.”

“Jamal’s case is what the death penalty is all about,” PDC spokesman Cooperstein said. “We do not accord this government the right to say who lives and who dies. The American capitalist class has sought to maintain itself by repeated exemplary executions for the sheer purpose of instilling terror, just like the lynch rope.” Reviewing the U.S. ruling class’ long history of terror—from the 1887 Haymarket martyrs and IWW hero Joe Hill to the Scottsboro Boys and the ‘50s anti-Communist electric chair murders of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg—Cooperstein warned: “the impending

sentence of death against Mumia threatens to be the first political execution since the Rosenbergs.”

“Our strategy is mass labor-centered protest, like those around the world that saved the life of the Scottsboro defendants,” he concluded: “We place no faith whatever in the justice of the courts, but look instead, as James P. Cannon said, to the supreme court of the masses.... Ultimately it is only socialist revolution that can end the system of capitalist lynch law and guarantee the rights of the oppressed. In a socialist America, with Geronimo Pratt in the ministry of justice, Mumia Abu-Jamal in the ministry of information—then and only then can you start to speak of justice.”

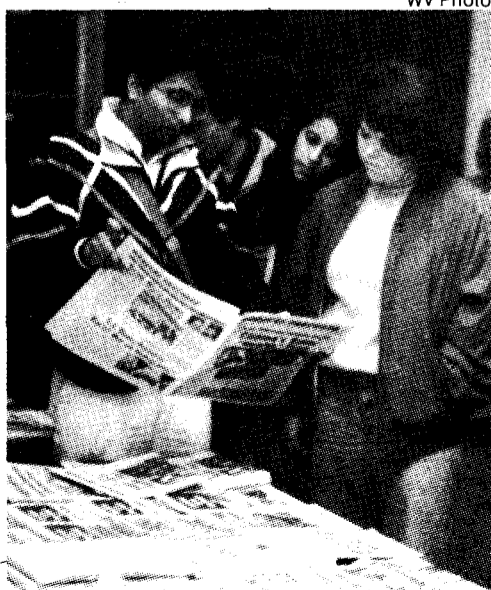
Fred Horstmann of the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal made an appeal for funds for the legal team and investigation. Over \$1,500 was raised at the rally. Much more is needed. Send money to help pay for Jamal’s legal defense to the fund set up by attorney Leonard Weinglass: tax-deductible contributions can be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked “Jamal,” and mailed to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Avenue, No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001.

Join the PDC campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal—write: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, (212) 406-4252. ■

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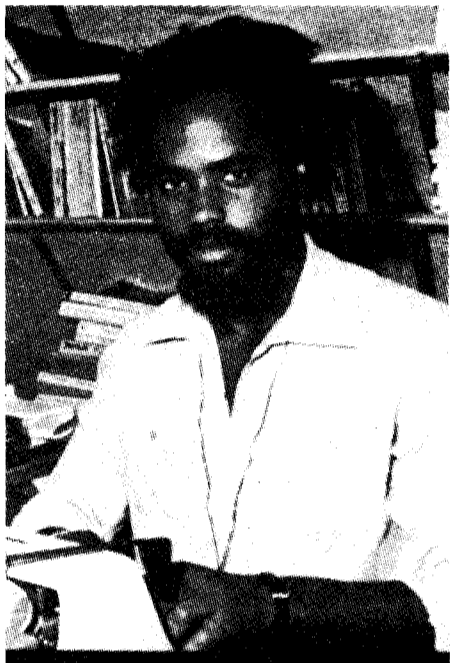
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Wadiya Jamal at NYC Rally The Fight to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal

On October 1 about 150 people came out for a Partisan Defense Committee rally in New York City on behalf of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. A former Philadelphia Black Panther Party spokesman, award-winning radio journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless" and sup-



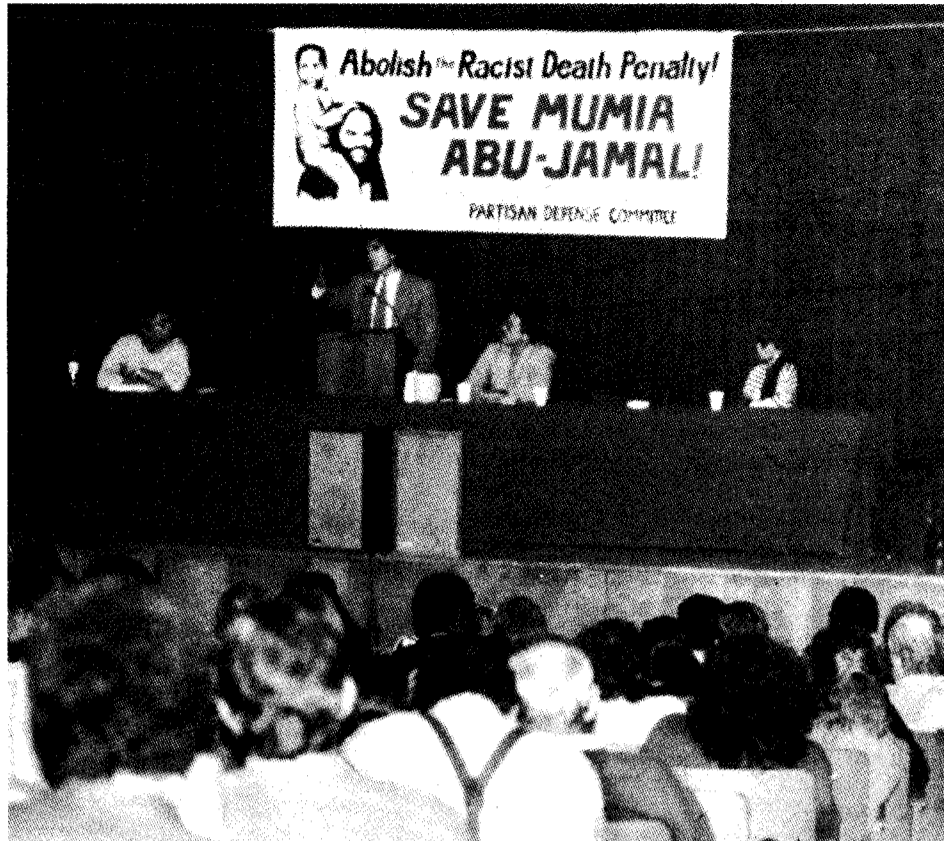
Mumia Abu-Jamal

Philadelphia Magazine

porter of the MOVE organization, Jamal was framed over a decade ago on charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer, and was sentenced to die for his political views.

Jamal's message to the audience, taped from death row at Pennsylvania's Huntingdon prison, had a powerful impact. "I come to you from the land of the dead, with the vibration of life. This place is a place where the living are entombed by law, a law with an accent on force, a law with an absence of justice, a law that protects the outlaws of wealth and power, yet which spits on the poor and powerless," he said. Mumia concluded, "This government, which bombed babies in Philadelphia and in Baghdad, which mows down children in Somalia, is sowing the seeds of their own destruction. It is a time, not for confusion, but for opportunity, to transform what is into what must be."

Wadiya Jamal, Mumia Abu-Jamal's wife, spoke quietly and movingly to the crowd. "Twelve years is long enough for an innocent man to be sitting on death row, separated from his family, separated from his children, that he cannot physically touch," she said. "Mumia continues to be strong," she went on. "I never, in the 12 years, have had a sad letter, visit or phone call."



WV Photo

Dan Williams, co-counsel for Jamal, speaks at New York City rally, October 1.

Dr. Alan Berkman spoke powerfully from the audience about Mumia Abu-Jamal. Berkman served eight years in prison in the "Resistance Conspiracy" case, in which six activists (including Susan Rosenberg and Marilyn Buck) were framed on charges of conspiracy to bomb the U.S. Capitol and other buildings following U.S. imperialism's bloody rape of Grenada in 1983. Dr. Berkman recalled his meeting with Jamal in prison, noting that Mumia, while fighting his own death sentence, was always busy helping others with their court cases as well.

Jamal's cause is winning national and international attention, including a recent Harlem "literary evening" of readings from Jamal's work by actor Danny Glover and others. Building for the

New York rally, PDC spokesman Paul Cooperstein and Wadiya Jamal spoke on WBAI-FM, and on Clayton Riley's WLIB radio show on September 30 alongside State Senator David Paterson and *Amsterdam News* editor Wilbert Tatum, who said it was urgent that journalists especially take up the case of Jamal, a black writer imprisoned for his outspokenness.

Dan Williams, Jamal's co-counsel with Leonard Weinglass, described the legal team's efforts to win a new trial for Jamal, who has exhausted his automatic appeals and could, under law, be executed at any moment. Williams pointed out the grotesque distinction between "legality" and "illegality" in this racist country. "We exterminated native

continued on page 15

U.S./UN Butchers Out of Somalia!

OCTOBER 4—The colonial occupation of Somalia, under the guise of a "humanitarian" mission, has become increasingly bloody as U.S./UN forces wantonly slaughter black Africans. But last Sunday, in the latest battle in the capital of Mogadishu, for the first time the American forces suffered heavy casualties at the hands of the lightly armed Somalis, who shot down three U.S. Blackhawk helicopters. At least a dozen American soldiers were killed and about 75 wounded. This amounts to almost a quarter of the "elite" hit squad of 400 U.S. Army Rangers Clinton sent to Somalia a few months ago. Now Clinton is sending in more troops, heavy battle tanks and deadly C-130 gunships to wreak a bloody revenge.

Seven of the U.S. commandos are listed as missing in action. At least one, a pilot of the downed Blackhawk, was captured by forces loyal to defiant clan chieftain Mohammed Farah Aidid. This U.S. pilot, speaking on a video made by a freelance Somali journalist, plaintively admitted, "innocent people being killed is not good." He should know. With their overwhelmingly superior firepower, the American forces have slaughtered and mutilated hundreds of Somalis. There are truckloads of dead. Mogadishu hospitals are overflowing with at least 500



Jubilant Somalis hold up piece of U.S. helicopter shot down over Mogadishu.

wounded. "People are lying all over the floors in pools of blood," reported a Canadian journalist.

Nonetheless, the Somalis are jubilant that they were not simply defense-

less victims of another one-sided massacre by the U.S./UN "peacekeepers." Cheering crowds in Mogadishu displayed the corpses of two U.S. soldiers while a child danced atop a UN military vehicle.

For the racist pigs of the U.S. ruling class, the deaths of some 20 American soldiers count infinitely more than the hundreds of black Africans butchered by the U.S./UN forces since they occupied Somalia last December. Even before last Sunday's battle, there were increasingly strident calls in Washington to withdraw before the Somalis took out more U.S. soldiers. Senate Republican leader Robert Dole has called for getting out of Somalia, and Democratic Senator Robert Byrd warned, "we will be drawn further into this quagmire, with a very real prospect for the loss of American lives."

At the same time, there is a strong sentiment in the U.S. ruling class to avenge itself against Aidid for bloodying its military forces. One recalls that in the late 19th century a small British colonial army in the Sudan under General "Chinese" Gordon was wiped out by the Mahdi, an Islamic visionary. The British then sent in a far bigger expeditionary force under General Kitchener to exterminate the Mahdist movement.

The exploited and oppressed peoples throughout the world can only welcome the stinging humiliation of the American imperialist adventure in Somalia. As Clinton lashes out, we demand: U.S. imperialism get out of Africa! ■