

## Price Explosion, Looming Hunger, Bloody Nationalism

# Breakup of Soviet Union Spells Disaster

### Soviet Workers: Smash Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!

JANUARY 6—In late December Boris Yeltsin formally took over the Kremlin and booted out Mikhail Gorbachev in the name of the Russian nation, thereby eliminating the last remnants of the central Soviet government. A week later he "liberalized" prices, eliminating all but a few price subsidies, tripling the price of bread, quintupling the price of fuel and sending the price of meat soaring, so that a pound of sausage now costs two months pension. In the name of introducing "free market" capitalism, "Tsar Boris" slashed the living standards of Soviet working people by 75 percent overnight. The imperialists in Wall Street and Washington, Berlin and Tokyo proclaimed total victory in the Cold War against "Communism." "The Soviet Union itself is no more," exulted Bush, calling it "a victory for the moral force of our values."

On paper the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was replaced by a  
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Sheehan/Newsday

Angry women, desperate to feed their families, in Moscow store. Yeltsin's "free market" price-gouging threatens mass hunger for Soviet people.

## 75,000 Slaughtered, Death Squad Killers to Get Amnesty

# El Salvador: There Is No Peace

### For Class War Against Pax Americana in Central America!

Two minutes before midnight on December 31, negotiators for the leftist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the rightist government of El Salvador signed a "peace" agreement at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York. Upon hearing the news over the FMLN's Radio Venceremos, guerrillas on the Guazapa Volcano just outside San Salvador and in rebel camps throughout the tiny Central American country rang in the New Year by firing off their AK-47 rifles in celebration.

The next day, 100 guerrillas entered the Salvadoran capital unarmed, announcing they were going to form an FMLN party, and a 36-hour "peace festival" was held in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral. Youths danced in the street sporting FMLN headbands.

There can be no doubt that the Salvadoran masses breathed a sigh of relief at the announced end of a decade of bitter armed conflict, which has taken a toll of more than 75,000 lives. The FMLN guerrilla coalition has been pushing for the last two years for a settlement to call off the fighting and allow it to "reincorporate" its members into "legal" social and political activity. Likewise, there is plenty of evidence that ultrarightist sectors of the army and of the ruling ARENA (Republican Nationalist Alliance) party resisted the accords up to the end and will do their best to prevent their implementation. But the  
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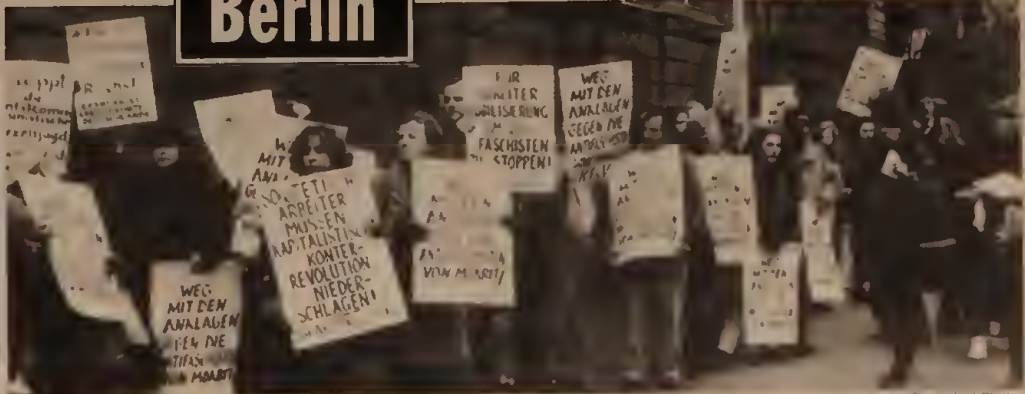


Chauvel/Syigma

November 1989: Bodies of Jesuit priests and their housekeeper gunned down in massacre ordered by army tops, covered up by U.S. embassy.



# Berlin



Spartacist spokesman Renate Dahlhaus and supporter Michael Philippsen (speaking), with supporters at December 4 demonstration outside courthouse in Berlin. For workers mobilization to stop the fascists!

## Anti-Fascists Win in Moabit Trial

After a defense campaign that lasted almost three years, on December 4 a Berlin court dropped the charges against Spartacist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) spokesman Renate Dahlhaus and acquitted SpAD supporter Michael Philippsen. At stake was the right to self-

defense against Nazi terror. This significant victory for anti-fascists would not have been possible without the mobilization of widespread public support, including almost 300 organizations and individuals who joined in demanding the charges be dropped. It came amid witch-

hunt trials against leaders and border guards of the annexed East German (DDR) workers state, including former DDR chief Erich Honecker, whom they want to skewer in the very same courthouse. That is the vengeful "justice" of the Fourth Reich.

Representative of the broad backing for the Moabit anti-fascists were the 90 supporters who turned out for a rally before the trial. Among them were representatives of the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, successor to the Stalinist ruling party of the ex-DDR), itself a major target of the Social Democratic-led witchhunters; the KPD/ML (Communist Party of Germany/Marxist-Leninist); the Iranian leftist group Rahe Kargar and the Cuba Si solidarity group, together with a group of high school students. From Hamburg came a contingent of SpAD supporters, immigrants and veteran anti-fascists. A protest statement to the court from the women's group of the East Berlin Jewish community was read, which stated:

"We must not shrink back, even if every protest action is condemned as 'hooliganism,' 'ultraleftism,' 'Stasi collaboration,' etc. and the judiciary defends violent criminals, not their victims... As Jews in Germany we have had enough bitter experiences and recognize the terrible danger represented by trials such as the present Moabit case. We must act TOGETHER against it. Before it's too late."

Dahlhaus and Philippsen were initially charged along with six others, the charges against whom were earlier dropped. Their alleged "crime": defend-

ing themselves and other patrons of a restaurant frequented by immigrants and leftists in the West Berlin working-class district of Moabit against an attack by pistol-waving Nazis. The incident came during the January 1989 election campaign of the fascist "Republikaner"; inside the café a Spartacist video was being shown of the successful mobilization that stopped the KKK/skinheads in Philadelphia in November 1988.

The state's star witness was none other than Carsten Pagel, the Berlin Republikaner Führer who led the 1989 assault. Trial proceedings began on May 24 with a sinister provocation as the fascist Pagel marched into the courtroom accompanied by a three-man bodyguard which the judge refused to identify. (They were later revealed to be plainclothes police.) In response, the lawyers for Dahlhaus and Philippsen filed motions to remove the judge from the case on grounds of prejudice. This led to an adjournment of the trial.

The court rejected the motions, but that did nothing for the state's case, which began unraveling the minute proceedings resumed on December 4. The three Nazi "witnesses" lied and blatantly contradicted one another. One accused a big man with a small beard, or maybe it was a small man with a big beard, or (according to Pagel) it was a beard like "Lenin and Trotsky wore." Or, the defense attorney ironically interjected, perhaps it was a beard like that of the state's attorney. The Nazi gunman in the Moabit attack said he had been advised

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### Chaos or Communism



TROTSKY

The counterrevolutionary Yeltsin regime in Russia and its counterparts in the other republics of the disintegrating Soviet Union are plunging the population into abject misery amid bloody nationalist conflagration. Restoration of capitalism in the ruins of the Stalinist bureaucracy which betrayed the October Revolution promises brutal dictatorship and economic ruin rather than the myths of "democracy" and "prosperity." To carry out the destruction of the Soviet workers state

they must come up against and destroy the powerful Soviet proletariat. Writing in the heat of the Russian Civil War, Bolshevik leaders Preobrazhensky and Bukharin spelled out the alternatives posed for humanity as "chaos or communism." The outcome depends on revolutionary leadership.

The revolution as it develops becomes a world revolution for the same reason that the imperialist war became a world war. All important countries are interconnected, they are all parts of the world economy, nearly all of them were involved in the war, and were united by the war in a common understanding. In all countries alike, the war produced terrible devastation, led to famine, and to the enslavement of the proletariat. Everywhere it promoted the gradual decomposition and decay of capitalism, and ultimately caused a revolt against the savage discipline in the army, the factory, and the workshop....

We are thus confronted by two alternatives, and two only. There must either be complete disintegration, hell broth, further brutalization and disorder, absolute chaos, or else communism. All attempts that have been made to reestablish capitalism in a country where for a time the masses have had power in their own hands, confirm this statement of alternatives. Neither the Finnish bourgeoisie nor the Hungarian bourgeoisie, neither Kolchak nor Denikin nor Skoropadsky, was in a position to restore economic life. They were unable to establish even their own bloody system upon a firm footing.

The only issue for humanity is communism. And since communism can be realized only by the proletariat, the proletariat is today the true saviour of mankind from the horrors of capitalism, from the barbarities of exploitation, from colonial policy, incessant wars, famine, a lapse into savagery and brutalization, from all the abominations that are entailed by financial capital and imperialism. Herein lies the splendid historic significance of the proletariat. The workers may suffer defeat in individual battles, and even in individual countries. But the victory of the proletariat is no less certain than the ruin of the bourgeoisie is inevitable.

—Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (1919)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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## The Post Office Drives You Crazy

29 November 1991

Dear Editor:

Since the post office has been the site of two multiple shootings by angry fired workers in the past month, I wanted to write and give your readers an inside view of working conditions. In short, they're brutal and atrocious—as the nine armed attacks by former employees over the last eight years resulting in 32 deaths testifies.

Workers in my post office are outraged that the Postmaster General has ordered background checks on all current and former postal workers as though we were the criminals, when the real criminals are postal management and the U.S. government. There hasn't been a nationwide strike since 1970, and particularly since PATCO was busted in 1981 (significantly, the same period that these postal murders have occurred) management has turned the screws ever tighter, getting more work out of fewer workers. While the volume of mail has increased several-fold (especially the hated "junk mail"), management's stated goal is to massively reduce the workforce. While there has been some automation, increased exploitation has been accomplished by straight-out harassment, speedup and

firing of recalcitrant workers.

The Royal Oak, Michigan post office, where the last attack occurred, sounds like a real hellhole, with workers disciplined for whistling or going to the bathroom "too often." These conditions are pervasive throughout the postal system. Forced overtime is a way of life; most routes cannot be completed in less than 10-12 hours. Carriers often have to deliver the last part of their routes

after dark. Safety and health conditions are a joke. Back and neck injuries are endemic and management has a policy of obstructing all workmen's comp cases. Recently in my office, management unsuccessfully attempted to fire *everyone* who had a workmen's comp claim pending.

But it is still difficult to fire postal workers, a legacy of civil service. This leads to intense and ongoing harassment



Paul Felton

Conditions at the Royal Oak, Michigan post office—where on November 14, former employee Thomas McIlvane shot and killed four managers—were notorious. *Labor Notes* (January 1992) reports that the previous month, a Congressional aide had toured the facility responding to worker complaints. Workers on the afternoon shift taped leaflets to their shirts asking for "HELP!" against the "postal terrorists" of management.

of workers whom management wants to get rid of. Daily lectures and frequent surveillance out on the delivery routes are just a couple of their methods. I have also seen hoses get right up in workers' faces and yell at them, attempting to incite the worker to push or punch management (this is an immediate firing offense). And this is the only job that I've worked where I saw management make a man cry (he was sitting in his jeep bawling after a horrible hoot with the boss).

We weren't allowed to vote at all on our last union contract, which was settled through hindering arbitration. It brought us more of the "two-tier" setup, increased use of "casual" workers (who work for 89 days only, with no union protection, no benefits, and substandard wages), contracting out and a tiny wage increase.

All in all, it's a wonder more postal workers haven't gone crazy. In the absence of strike action and with our union bureaucrats selling us out in every conceivable way, the intense pressure and exploitation have driven some postal workers to desperate and crazy acts. What we really need is some hard class struggle. It'll take a workers revolution to sweep away our exploiters once and for all.

Diana C.,  
Bay Area letter carrier

## People with AIDS

21 November 1991

Dear Editor:

The piece on "Magic" Johnson and his announcement of his HIV serostatus ("Magic Johnson and the AIDS Crisis," No. 539, 22 November 1991) was probably one of the most in-depth articles I have read in your publication since I've taken the editor's position here. There are, however, grave errors in the defining terms that were used for *people with AIDS*. We are not "AIDS victims" and we have been working very hard for a great many years now at coalitions across this country to eliminate the idea that AIDS is a "death sentence." Both of these presuppositions were used in the article. The usages marred it

considerably for people living with AIDS and HIV.

So let's set the record straight. People have a right to choose what they will be called. You are not a socialist pig or, if you were an African-American, for instance, would I call you a nigger. We do not appreciate being called victims. The term is pejorative and does not affirm the fact that people are living and fighting back the many bodily and social infections that plague us. As appreciative as we could be that socialists would be concerned with our plight, paying closer attention to our movement and calling us by the terms with which we would dignify ourselves serves us better.

Aside from those mistakes, which cut deep into our psyche and hearts, the article was an accurate one that did reflect the inhumanity that has been brought to focus for so many of us. Now if a few more would look at the picture before them, the changes we all seek to make might become manifest sooner.

Thanks for your concern and considerations.

Sincerely,  
Bree Scott-Hartland  
Editor, People With AIDS  
Coalition Newsline

*WV replies:* We applaud the brave efforts of all those fighting for their lives against the terrible scourge of AIDS. We do use the term "AIDS victims," as well as "people with AIDS," "HIV-infected people" and so on. As we noted in replying to a letter in *Women and Revolution* (No. 36, Spring 1989), we do

not consider the term "victim" to be denigrating in any way. Thus to say that European Jews were victims of the Nazi Holocaust is not "pejorative," and doesn't deny their desperate fight for survival. It must be said bluntly that people with AIDS really are being victimized horribly by this racist, homophobic society. Denouncing the vicious bigotry heaped on those known to be infected with the HIV virus, we demand that all necessary social resources be expended to find a cure or containment for the ravages this virus is inflicting on humanity and to provide decent treatment to ease the suffering of the sick. Like the current cholera epidemic in Latin America and the renewed outbreak of TB here, the AIDS pandemic highlights the brutal inequalities and savage degradation inflicted by this capitalist society. That among other reasons is why we are socialists. ■

## The Menace of David Duke

Ridgetop, TN  
24 December 1991

To the Editor:

In articles of 22 November 1991 ("KKK Duke Rides Racist Backlash" [WV No. 539]) and 27 December 1991 ("U.S. Economy Dead in the Water" [WV No. 541]), you point to the anxieties and fears of "lower and middle class whites." These are being fed by growing economic desperation which fascist scum (esp. David Duke), in turn, are attempting to channel into racist backlash against blacks.

Why have you abandoned a class analysis of this backlash? "Lower class" and "middle class" are categories of crude (bourgeois) sociological investigations of, e.g., income levels and styles of consumption. In fact, in the 22 November 1991 article, it's precisely that type of "analysis" that, quite frankly, comrades, you wallow in. (For example, "He [Duke] did best among white families between \$15,000 and \$30,000, while only a third of white families earning more than \$75,000 voted for him.") That "analysis" was, at any rate, taken straight out of the *New York Times* of 11.18.91.

We both know that a class analysis takes as its point of departure the objective position of individuals and social groups in the social order, that is, their relation to the means of production. From this perspective, the forms of awareness in and through [which] individuals and social groups live and experience the conflicts of our era can be elaborated; and, in this context, the crude categories of bourgeois sociology receive their insertion and acquire their proper meaning.

You know this, so what gives? I wonder whether you are not masking the potential proletarian character of some of Duke's white support. Does the term "lower class," once properly understood, have a counterpart among a layer of the U.S. working class? If so, then say it. Trotsky surely never had any problem saying such. (With reference to the capitulatory policy of KPD he states that it "would completely push the middle classes and the still vacillating sections of the petty bourgeoisie, as well as considerable sections of the proletariat itself, to the side of fascism." "Germany, the Key to the International Situation"

in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, NY, 1974, p. 125.) Now no one is accusing you of having a "capitulatory policy" in the face of the fascists. Far from it. The problem lies elsewhere. To quote Trotsky again (in his construction of a speech Thälmann should have made to German workers): "...[B]eware of throwing dust in their eyes...closing our eyes to facts... It is necessary to state what is" ("Against National Communism," *ibid.*, p. 110).

Comradely,  
V. Barnes

*WV replies:* Why don't you refer to Duke's working-class support, the writer asks. Are you afraid to tell the truth? But to talk about proletarian support to the KKK/Nazi David Duke would be misleading, both in terms of *why* people support him, and *who* they are. Duke does not attempt to appeal to workers as such—and obviously not to the millions of black workers. Rather, like countless racists before him who have played the "populist" tune, he appeals to "poor whites" and to those who see themselves as being on the lower rungs of the "social

ladder." That is, the "lower" and "middle class" whites—a category which would include many workers along with white cops and white shopkeepers.

The absence of pseudo-working-class demagoguery by fascist Duke distinguishes him from the Nazis, whose formal name was the "National Socialist German Workers Party." Duke does not make a pitch to proletarian sectors, and the "backlash" that V. Barnes refers to is not working-class but racial in character. In fact the closer one gets to the core of

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# El Salvador...

(continued from page 1)

Salvadoran people are not "winners" as a result of the agreement—the sugary claim of everyone from FMLN comandante Shafik Handal to the *New York Times* to Salvadoran president Alfredo Cristiani.

The heralded "New York Accords" will not bring "peace and stability" to El Salvador, much less "promise to bring social justice," as the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) announced. Rather, while the guerrilla/counterinsurgency war may be ending, the class war in the cities and countryside will continue and likely even escalate. For the Salvadoran ruling class is one of the most brutally oppressive in the Americas, indeed the world: its blood-drenched guard dogs in the military and security forces are pathological killers. No piece of paper will stop them. And the imperial overlords in Washington, for all Bush's talk of "international law," launched their "New World Order" by wantonly slaughtering over 100,000 Iraqis in the one-sided Persian Gulf "war."

We Trotskyists of the International Communist League say frankly to the workers and peasants of El Salvador, to the working people of the United States

**Protesters rounded up by National Guard in San Salvador: tens of thousands have been murdered by U.S.-backed death squad regime.**

surrogates in San Salvador, and is imposing a Pax Americana.

**"Blood Will Flow"**

The brief "Acta de Nueva York" signed by the Salvadoran belligerents, and negotiated under the auspices of departing UN Secretary General Javier

minister) replaced with a National Civilian Police open to former FMLN combatants.

The economic reforms include a promise to enforce the 245-hectare limit on landholdings that has been on the books for years (part of the counterinsurgency "land reform"), and allowing workers to buy 25 percent of government enterprises being privatized! In principle, peasants in FMLN-held areas are to be allowed to keep the land they are occupying, although this will be decided on by another ad hoc commission. This is all to be overseen by a Peace Commission (COPAZ), already set up, including representatives of the FMLN, the military and each of the parliamentary parties. *But with all the paper reforms and layers of commissions, state power is firmly in the hands of the capitalist class and enforced by the same murderous armed forces who have ruthlessly run El Salvador for the past 60 years. And the guerrilla army is to be disbanded.*

FMLN leader Handal claims, "We have won peace." But it isn't peace, and the rebels haven't won. Comandante Alfredo of the National Army for Democracy says that the FMLN plans "to fight for a share of power in the Legislative Assembly and the municipalities" (*El Diario/La Prensa*, 2 December 1991). But power isn't shared out in bits and pieces. Engels defined the state as based on "special bodies of armed men" committed to defense of the property of the ruling class, as Lenin elaborated and drove home in laying the theoretical underpinnings for the 1917 October Revolution. This crucial understanding is not hard for the Salvadoran working masses to grasp, for to enforce horrendous superexploitation the essence of state power has been laid bare, without the "democratic" trappings which so mystify the population in the rich imperialist centers.

Many of the crucial "details" of the accords are still cloudy. The FMLN says the guerrillas aren't disarming, though their military structure will disappear. According to some claims, "The government agreed that in the areas of FMLN control the police force can be under its supervision" (*People's Weekly World*, 12 October 1991). But at most this would mean that in the remote hills, ex-guerrillas might serve as the (impotent) local administration. In the cities and big agro-exporting industries, the police will enforce the bosses' "law and order." Like the Sandinista Police in Nicaragua, any "leftist" cops will be used to break workers strikes. Whatever the "purges" or "reductions," the Salvadoran capitalists are not dissolving *their* armed forces, which defend their property and their class rule.

This bloodthirsty ruling class is very careful to protect their killer elite. Under pressure from the Americans, last September a court found Colonel Guillermo Benavides guilty of the November 1989

murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter. "He who pays the mariachi picks the song," commented one of Benavides' lawyers about U.S. arm-twisting. But the court did not convict the troops who carried out the massacre, despite their confessions. Most importantly, they did not go any higher up in the military hierarchy, despite evidence that the killing was ordered by then chief of staff (now defense minister) Emilio Ponce. On January 3, the Salvadoran minister of the presidency, Oscar Santamaría, announced that the government would decree a general amnesty when the cease-fire went into effect, thus absolving the mass murderers.

Besides, any FMLN guerrillas who join a police force with even the "cleansed" remnants of the anti-communist death squads are taking their lives in their hands. An example of the "moderates" in the military is government negotiator Colonel Mauricio Vargas. On November 24, Vargas said that an alleged FMLN violation of its unilateral truce could "provoke" attacks by ultrarightists, "such as the assassination of Rubén Zamora," a dissident Christian Democratic politician formerly linked to the FMLN. The next day a car carrying Zamora's bodyguards was attacked. Zamora, who calls Vargas a "realist," credits him with having revealed the plot. The CISPES newspaper *Alerta!* (December 1991/January 1992), which reports this on page one, quotes Colonel Vargas on page two saying that "In the post-war period the blood will flow." He should know.

## The "Reincorporation" of the FMLN

When the initial Salvadoran peace accords were negotiated at the UN last fall, Tim Golden wrote in the *New York Times* (26 September): "Despite the global shift that helped to unseat their Sandinista patrons in Nicaragua and



Reuters

**Imperialist-brokered "peace" demands dissolution of leftist FMLN guerrilla army.**

and the world, that the Pax Americana proclaimed at the UN will at best only shift the terrain of battle from the hills of Morazán and Chalatenango to the city streets, factories and rural plantations. And the "peace" accords will surely be used to cover the depredations of the notorious death squads, who target leftist political and labor leaders and activists, just as they mercilessly shot down Jesuit priests and conservative Archbishop Romero, bombed union halls and executed thousands of militants over the last decade. These hit squads are not "rogue elements"—they act on orders from the top levels of state power. And the only "peace" they want is the peace of the grave.

The demise of the guerrilla war in El Salvador, like the 1990 election defeat of the leftist Sandinistas by contra-linked forces next door in Nicaragua, directly reflects the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in East Europe and the Soviet Union. For the fighting in the isthmus was no isolated "regional conflict" but a hotspot of U.S. imperialism's anti-Soviet Cold War. The origin of the Salvadoran conflict was when the Reagan administration soon after taking office in 1981 vowed to "draw the line" against "Communist subversion" in Central America. And now that Salvadoran guerrillas are no longer seen as a "surrogate" for the "Evil Empire," Washington tightened its purse strings on its

Pérez de Cuéllar, declares that the parties had reached agreement on all substantive questions and that execution of the accords "will put a definitive end to the Salvadoran armed conflict." Those agreements have not been spelled out in public, however. There are references to a lengthy document of 75 or, alternatively, over 100 pages, in addition to accords previously arrived at in the floating negotiations. There is a timetable requiring agreement by January 10 on the timing and means for dissolving the military structure of the FMLN, signing of a final peace accord in Mexico City on the 16th, and a nine-month cease-fire to go into effect on February 1.

Laudatory newspaper reports say the accord "comes close to restructuring all the country's key institutions as well as its political and social life," including "an overhaul and reduction of the 53,000-member armed forces, a new civil police force, economic and social reforms and a reformed judiciary and electoral system" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 January). The military is to be reduced by half over two years, its counterinsurgency battalions dissolved, and its mission restricted to defense of national borders. A commission will rule on removing military men accused of gross corruption and human rights violations. The Treasury Police and National Guard are to be dissolved and the National Police (presently under the defense



Hoselros/NY Times

**Bush and his butcher: meeting with ARENA head Cristiani.**

**WORKERS VANGUARD**



isolate Fidel Castro in Cuba, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front ...remains probably the most militarily potent insurgency that Latin America has ever seen." This is true. While Che Guevara's guerrilla band in Bolivia was crushed in the egg, Castro's 26th of July Movement and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas both fought for about three years in the hills and jungles, and came to power largely due to the internal collapse of the corrupt Batista and Somoza dictatorships under the pressure of insurgency. The FMLN, on the other hand, fought a U.S.-supplied and U.S.-advised army to a draw for over ten years.

In part, the Salvadoran "peace" accords grew out of this military stalemate, in which neither the guerrillas nor the government army could foresee defeating the other side. This was brought home by the November 1989 FMLN offensive, in which rebel forces managed to dig in and hold on to sections of the Salvadoran capital for days, despite heavy aerial bombing, and then withdraw in good order—but didn't spark a mass insurrection that alone could have overwhelmed the army. This was not just a military question. For as we wrote at the time, just like in 1983 when the guerrillas were also within striking distance of taking power, contrary to Reagan's nightmare visions of a spreading Communist "red tide," the FMLN did not aim at military victory but at a negotiated

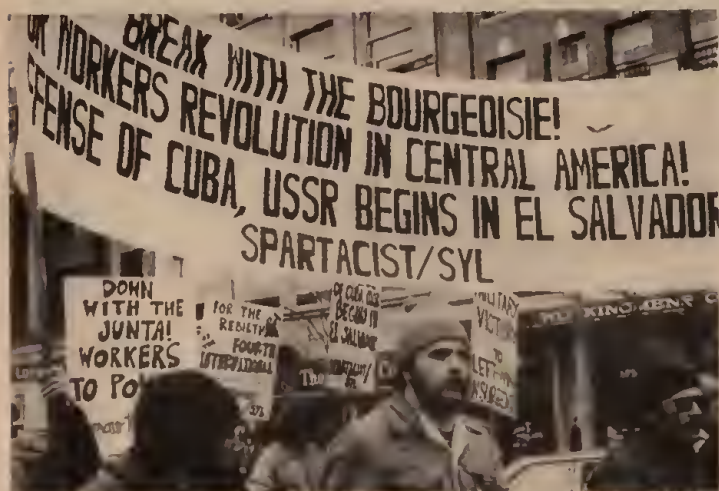
**May Day 1989 in San Salvador. Combative, defiant Salvadoran unionists still face death squad terror, army guns.**

Washington did indeed start putting pressure on its Salvadoran clients. So the stage was set for "peace."

**For Workers Revolution, North and South!**

Now guerrilla comandantes and army generals hobnob in the UN corridors.

Sieve Cagan



WV Photo

Spartacist League called for military victory to leftist rebels in El Salvador, opposed U.S. anti-Soviet crusade (above: Boston 1981). Popular-front left tried to exclude any reference to USSR from "solidarity" demos. But when Kremlin Stalinists capitulated to Bush's "New World Order," it cut ground out from under Nicaraguan Sandinistas, Salvadoran guerrillas.

settlement because that was the only basis on which they could form a "popular front" with the "democratic" bourgeois sectors.

Despite Washington's anti-Soviet Cold War II crusade, this line was also pushed by the Sandinistas, Castro and the Soviet Stalinists, all of whom aimed at "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism. And then with the "global shift" represented by the collapse of Stalinism, the Salvadoran guerrillas gave up any pretense of struggling for "socialism." In 1989, top FMLN comandante Joaquín Villalobos openly renounced any residual attachment to Marxism. And the September 1990 FMLN "Proclamation to the Nation" calling for a "Democratic Revolution" didn't even make the usual ritual incantation of "socialism" in the by and by that was standard fare for Third World Stalinist-nationalists, who for decades justified their class collaboration with sections of the bourgeoisie by claiming to fight for a "democracy" as the first step in a "two-stage revolution."

Thus "cleansed" of Marxist stigma, the FMLN leaders hoped they would become acceptable "conversation partners" for Washington. The pliable Cristiani is a "moderate" in the spectrum of the fascist ARENA. The party's leader, death squad kingpin Roberto ("Blowtorch Bob") D'Aubuisson, is dying of cancer. And with the Bush regime seeking to reduce its military commitments,

Villalobos sits down with Ponce. U.S. assistant secretary of state Bernard Aronson lounges with bathrobed FMLN leaders in their New York hotel. Peace is breaking out all over, or so it is reported. But the prospect for the impoverished masses of El Salvador is not rosy at all. The Cristiani government simply dissolved the government agency which for years had subsidized basic foodstuffs, and now it is seeking to break public sector unions by wholesale privatization of government-owned enterprises. The model of the ARENA "moderates" is to become like the "Asian dragons," in particular Taiwan. This is where D'Aubuisson and numerous other Salvadoran military officers were trained in anti-Communist terror. To clean up their image, they want to return to the Kuomintang-style police-state measures from which the death squads originated.

In this there is not much political space for combative unions or any kind of an organized workers movement. And the likes of Villalobos could very well go along with this. In a recent article, he noted that "the insurgent military force is almost totally peasant" (*Barriada Internacional*, October 1991), and it is quite possible that peasant-derived "civilian police" could be used against labor.

Today, in the face of the Salvadoran "peace" accords, a genuinely communist workers party is more urgently needed than ever. Back in January 1981, at the

time of the FMLN's failed "general offensive," we called "For Workers Revolution in El Salvador!" and warned that "Popular Frontism Disarms Masses Before White Terror" (WV No. 271, 2 January 1981). While consistently calling for military victory to the leftist insurgents over the murderous junta and death squad "democracy" in Salvador, we have insisted that even in a heavily peasant country the working class is the only social force that can lead a struggle to liberate all the exploited and oppressed. This was the lesson of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia—led by Lenin and Trotsky and subsequently betrayed by Stalin—and it is no less valid today.

But this task falls not only on the embattled workers of tiny El Salvador, a country the size of Maryland which is known as the "Tom Thumb of the Americas," but on the international working class, in particular the many-million-strong proletariat of Mexico and the United States. The decade-long civil war in El Salvador produced a mass exodus of Salvadorans, estimated at one million (a fifth of the entire population), of whom over 750,000 ended up in the U.S. They are concentrated in key metropolitan areas (130,000 around New York, tens of thousands in Washington, D.C., up to 500,000 in Los Angeles and elsewhere in California). Here this heavily proletarian and young population has been drawn into the union movement, where they are playing an active role (L.A. janitors, NYC hotel workers, D.C. restaurant workers). These militants can be a bridge to the North American workers.

Over the past decade as well, the question of El Salvador has been a key issue on the U.S. left. The reformists sought to build popular-front coalitions with Democratic Party liberals, on the program of "U.S. Out of El Salvador" and "No More Vietnams," and sealing off the "solidarity movement" from the Spartacists, who called for "Military Victory to Salvadoran Leftists!" and declared "Vietnam Was a Victory—2, 3, Many Defeats for U.S. Imperialism!" CISPES and parallel groupings like Sam Marcy's Workers World/All-Peoples Congress outfit used goon squads to attempt to exclude SL-led anti-imperialist contingents from Salvador marches, and when that failed they called on the capitalist cops! They were particularly incensed at our call "Defense of Cuba and USSR Begins in Central America," saying this was an ultraleftist red herring that didn't fit in with their "principles of unity." But now the deepening collapse of the Soviet Union has turned the screws on the Salvadoran guerrillas and the Cuban Revolution!

The "agreement" to disband the FMLN is the culmination of the guerrilla commanders' bankrupt popular-front policies. We Trotskyists can and do claim full vindication for our program of anti-imperialist class struggle at home and abroad. With the same internationalist program it is necessary to redouble efforts to combat counterrevolution, from El Salvador to the Soviet Union, unconditionally defending the Cuban deformed workers state against Yankee imperialism, and fighting for workers revolution in the belly of the imperialist beast. ■

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# Barbara Kopple's Film *American Dream* Which Side Are You On?

In 1985 some 1,500 packinghouse workers in Austin, Minnesota defied their International union leaders and launched a militant strike against one of the giants of meatpacking, Hormel. This strike electrified the labor movement like no other since the PATCO air controllers strike of 1981: here was a group of workers in a small Midwest company town, pushed to the wall by concessions and crippling speedup, who were reviving some of the militant traditions that had built the unions—labor solidarity, mass picketing and roving pickets.

The strikers of Local P-9 were met with injunctions, jailings, National Guard troops and the strikebreaking maneuvers of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) International leadership. Fed up with givebacks, workers throughout the region wanted to go to Austin to help win this one. Despite its small size, the *Hormel* strike sums up the situation of labor in the '80s, a symbol of the defeats the working class suffered in a series of bitter strikes: Greyhound, Phelps-Dodge, Eastern. The defeat at Hormel dramatically showed that the workers of P-9 were battling not just the company, but centrally *their own union misleaders*. That is the heart of the crisis of American labor.

This struggle is the subject of *American Dream*, a documentary produced and directed by Barbara Kopple. The film, which due to a dispute over distribution rights has been shown only at a few film festivals, won Kopple her second Oscar. Kopple got her first Academy Award in 1977 for *Harlan County, U.S.A.*, the gripping chronicle of a 13-month coal miners strike in Brookside, Kentucky (see "Blood and Coal: *Harlan County, U.S.A.*," in *WV* No. 144, 11 February 1977). Through interviews and historical footage, as well as some powerful picket line scenes culminating in an armed confrontation between strikers and scabs, *Harlan County* illustrates why, in the words of the famous miners' union hymn, "there are no neutrals here."

In contrast, *American Dream* is a desperate search for neutrality as the class struggle hammers home the truth of the miners' song. History is omitted, important participants are disappeared and key battles are missed, as Kopple's camera has an annoying penchant for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Kopple's quest for an America free from "corporate irresponsibility" is the perennial will o' the wisp of the popular front of Democrats and union bureaucrats, which seeks to paper over irreconcilable class conflicts. Failing to recognize the picket line as the battle line of the class war, she ultimately turns the movie into a justification for scabbing.

National Guard sent by Democratic governor against striking Hormel meatpackers in Austin, Minnesota, January 1986.



## Hormel Strike: P-9 Pride and Labor Cops' Treachery

*American Dream* ends up on the wrong side of the class line for the same reason the strike was lost. The strike leadership headed by P-9 president Jim Guyette, and their allies from Ray Rogers' "Corporate Campaign, Inc." and a host of fake-socialist organizations, although lined up against the open traitors from the UFCW International, never broke from the hope that somehow they could plead or "pressure" the capitalists into a settlement through appeals to corporate "conscience," consumer boycotts and reliance on the bosses' courts and Democratic Party politicians. To fight the AFL-CIO bureaucracy's sabotage, what was urgently needed was a leadership that could break from this popular-front class collaboration. *Workers Vanguard* said at the time:

"But the call for a consumer boycott against Spam and Dinty Moore Stew is a diversion from the crucial struggle to shut down Hormel. Twin Cities auto workers, Iowa meatpackers, Chicago newspaper strikers—labor organizations from all over the Upper Midwest must mobilize to flood Austin with thousands of unionists who can send the scabs scurrying! There must be political strike action to beat back the National Guard strikebreaking!"

—*WV* No. 396, 31 January 1986

And while much of the left was cheerleading for Rogers and Guyette, we

warned: "As long as the P-9 strike remains an isolated war of attrition, it will be lost."

### UFCW Pushes "Equal Concessions"

The Austin local came into existence in 1933, through a plant seizure led by Frank Ellis and other former members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). It was a battle that paved the way for organizing packinghouses throughout the region and contributed as well to the 1934 Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamster strike in which there was virtual dual power in the city.

As a result of the '33 strike and a number of job actions in succeeding years, the union won wages and benefits from Hormel that put it at the top of the industry and kept it there for decades. But the limitations of simple trade-union militancy were shown by the 1940s, when Ellis was drawn into the United Packinghouse Workers (CIO) bureaucracy and the Local 9 contract hardened into a no-strike "permanent working agreement." In the late '60s, the Packinghouse Workers were absorbed into the Amalgamated Meatcutters, and then a 1979 merger led to the creation of the UFCW, where the social democrats hold the whip hand.

In the 1980s Kopple began working on a documentary about the troubles facing meatpacking workers. She went to Worthington, Minnesota where Swift closed its plant and sold it to another firm that rehired a small fraction of the former workforce at \$5.50 an hour. Such conditions were rampant after 1983, when Wilson Foods declared bankruptcy and the UFCW tops agreed to a 25 percent pay cut.

One scene early in *American Dream* shows Lewie Anderson, director of the UFCW's packinghouse division, meeting with resentful and rebellious local union officers at Wilson. (Anderson was a business agent at UFCW Local 222 in Dakota City, where strikers fought pitched battles against Iowa Beef Processors to win a union in 1969, followed by bitter strikes against IBP in 1972, 1977 and 1982.) The ranks stubbornly resist Anderson's pressure for wage cuts, but he finally makes "common sense prevail" after throwing a violent tantrum.

This betrayal opened the floodgates to concessions in meatpacking. As Dave Hage and Paul Klauda, reporters who covered the Austin strike for the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, write in their book *No Retreat, No Surrender: Labor's War at Hormel* (William Morrow, 1989):

"It took just four months for Wilson's biggest competitors to adjust. By September 1983 the \$10.69 rate had fallen to \$8 at Morrell and to \$8.25 at Swift Independent Packing, after both firms threatened to close plants if workers refused the cuts. Armour was sold to ConAgra, which shut down thirteen plants on one Friday afternoon and reopened them the following week with nonunion workers earning \$6 an hour. Iowa-based Rath Packing followed Wilson's lead into bankruptcy court. Oscar Mayer initiated talks to cut wages as well."

What was urgently needed at this point was industrywide action, using mass pickets and plant seizures, to enforce the uniform national wage and launch an all-out drive to organize the low-wage, high-injury IBP and ConAgra plants. That meant class war in the most literal sense (in '69 there were machine guns and tanks guarding the Dakota City plant and



Striking meatpackers turned out to stop scabs. Kopple's film tries to "humanize" scabs, even riding with them as they drove up to cross the picket lines.



WV Photos



two workers were killed). Far from organizing unified resistance to these attacks, however, UFCW head William Wynn and his hatchet man Anderson acted as company cops. As occurred in auto, steel and countless other industries, the bourgeoisie and the labor traitors worked in tandem to use the threat of runaway shops, foreign competition and plant closings to extract massive givebacks.

The policy Wynn and Anderson lauded "controlled retreat" meant wholesale surrender. But when Hormel, a \$30-million-a-year profit maker, said "me too" to the wage cuts, Local P-9 refused to huckle under. Reflecting deep anger and a will to fight against the wage cuts, more than half the workers at Hormel's two other largest plants—in Ottumwa, Iowa and Fremont, Nebraska—demanded Wynn approve P-9 roving pickets that would shut down their plants too.

## "Corporate Campaign" Diversion

P-9's adviser Ray Rogers was already well known for his leading role in the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union's (ACTWU) 1980 settlement with Southern textile giant J.P. Stevens, in which the union gained a foothold in a handful of the company's plants in return for giving up the right to organize the vast majority of J.P. Stevens workers at another 70 plants. This outcome—a defeat for labor—won praise from union bureaucrats for Rogers' "corporate campaign" strategy of mobilizing pressure instead of power: high-profile public relations, consumer boycotts, intervening at stockholder meetings, etc. Guyette hired Rogers to run such a campaign against Hormel in December 1984 (reportedly, only after the vegetarian Rogers extracted a promise that P-9ers would prevent undue cruelty to hogs being slaughtered!).

*American Dream* is at its best in exposing Rogers' losing strategy and illustrating the vacuum of leadership in P-9. The film records Rogers promising a P-9 mass meeting that "we can pull off a major victory" and shows union members and supporters repeatedly chanting Rogers' favorite slogan: "We're gonna win!" For months before the strike began, union members were kept busy "bannering" banks and canvassing residential neighborhoods.

To Rogers, the strike, which began in August 1985, was just another component of his PR campaign, and picket line activity was consciously downplayed, even after the company resumed limited production at the Austin plant using management personnel in October. As Corporate Campaign, Inc. activist Hardy Green later wrote:

"According to Rogers, too often strikes lose power because workers remain isolated and inactive on picket lines in front of their plants while the company takes other steps to make up for lost production. Rather than fall into this trap, P-9 would put a minimum number of pickets outside the Austin plant and send the rest out to build the fight across the country." [emphasis added]

—On *Strike at Hormel* (Temple University Press, 1990)

For Rogers, and Green, "the fight" meant "Cram Your Spam"—an impotent consumer boycott against Hormel products which was a conscious diversion from the roving pickets and mass support which could have brought Hormel to its knees. The P-9 leadership ordered members to obey the subsequent anti-picketing injunctions, a legalistic policy that helped to doom the strike after Hormel reopened full production with newly hired scabs in January 1986.

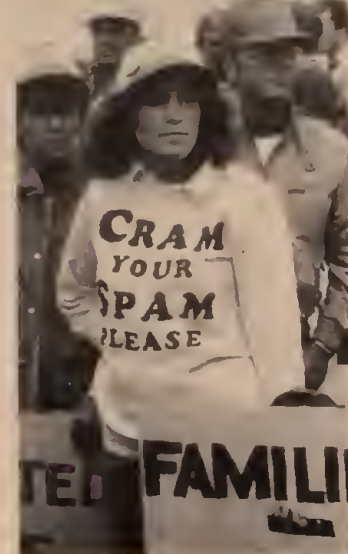
Even after Minnesota's Democratic governor Rudy Perpich tried to smash the strike by sending in 800 National Guardsmen, P-9 members—in defiance of their own leaders—demonstrated the will to shut down Hormel. On January 31, for example, when the Guard was

temporarily withdrawn, some 400 strikers and their supporters effectively took over the streets leading into the facility, turning scab cars back onto I-90. Such actions took place repeatedly, though usually on a smaller scale. Kopple "misses" all of this.

The movie does however record the civil disobedience actions organized by Rogers later on—a desperate attempt not to shut down the plant but to plead with the "consciences" of the hogs. The strikers urgently needed a leadership to show how to fight; Rogers showed them how to lie down. Questioned by *New York Times* reporter William Serrin as the strike heads toward defeat, Rogers can only innumerate about "the various types of victory and defeat you can have."

The Hormel strike generated an enormous amount of support activity, most of it centered in the Minnesota labor movement. The bulk of this was organized by two leftist-led coalitions: the National Rank and File Against Concessions (NRFAC), which was led by supporters of the Stalinist reformists of the Communist Labor Party (CLP), and the Twin Cities Support Committee, whose guiding lights included a couple of social-democratic outfits posing as Trotskyists—the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) and Socialist Action (SA).

Kopple's documentary completely omits this factor in the strike. Yet the



Hardy Green  
Consumer boycott was diversion from fight to shut down Hormel.

echelons of labor that hacked P-9—iron ore and steel workers, auto workers, meatpackers, machinists and others—could have collectively shut down the state in response to Perpich's mobilization of the National Guard. But that would have meant breaking with the Democratic Party (in particular the "Farmer-Labor" charade of the Minnesota party) and confronting its loyal handmaidens in the trade-union bureaucracy, something the strike support organizers wanted to avoid at all costs.

Such groups in fact sought to tie the strike to the Democrats. Thus one of



Minneapolis Star and Tribune

IWW-led sitdown strike organized the meatpacking industry in southern Minnesota in 1933.

the Twin Cities Support Committee's "accomplishments" was to get Carleton College professor (now U.S. Senator) Paul Wellstone active in the campaign. Hage and Klauda report that in late January Wellstone traveled to Austin with United Auto Workers Local 879 president Tom Laney to try to persuade Guyette to call off the strike!

What Hardy Green was to approvingly write about the reformist Socialist Workers Party's role in the strike applied equally to the rest of the opportunist "left":

"The Socialist Workers Party was, in leftist argot, almost completely 'tailist'. Whatever strike tactics P-9's leaders chose, the SWP supported."

To a man, these groups uncritically went along when in March the P-9 leadership gave up the struggle to shut down Hormel's production and consolidated on a program of suing the UFCW International in the courts of the capitalist state and promoting the diversionary consumer boycott. This decision signaled the death of the strike. While promoted as a move against the UFCW International, this capitulation actually cleared the way for Wynn's goons—backed by the capitalist state—to move into Austin and seize the local.

## "Pick a Scab—Make It Bleed"

The star of *American Dream* is Lewie Anderson, portrayed by Kopple as a man in the middle, caught between corporate irresponsibility and unrealistic union ranks. We see Lewie on the road, in an airport, wolfing down a sandwich, at a union meeting, on a picket line. We see Lewie in negotiations, and we are told that he represents 100,000 UFCW members at 95 companies. He is the perfect vehicle for Kopple, who defends the UFCW International backstabbers as "well-meaning people" caught in the middle. "You can see the twists and turns and the very hard decisions that all these people had to make under this economic crisis," she said in an interview in *LRA's Economic Notes* (May-June 1991).

Kopple is correct about one thing—the bureaucrats are "in the middle." But "there are no neutrals" in the class war, and Anderson, like his counterparts in the rest of the trade-union bureaucracy,

is an agent of capital within the workers movement. The problem with *American Dream* is that it takes their side, and therefore the side of the scabs.

Anderson took over in 1980 as the UFCW's packinghouse director. He was groomed for this role by his predecessor Jessie Prosten, who like UFCW chief William Wynn is a darling of the liberal Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). (Another lead-assed DSA bigwig who helped bust the Hormel strike was Machinists International president William "Wimpy" Winpisinger, the betrayer of PATCO, who among other things attempted to block a \$10,000 donation to P-9 from a Twin Cities Machinists lodge.) After loyally sabotaging the Hormel strike and nine years of catastrophic sellouts, his authority "as thin as piss on a flat rock." Anderson was dumped by Wynn in 1989.

Kopple's documentary confirms that, as P-9ers suspected during the strike, Lewie Anderson was meeting secretly with an anti-strike group of union members dubbed the "P-10ers," coaching them on how to sabotage the struggle. As Hormel is reopening the plant in January, we see Anderson threatening a P-9 audience of almost 2,000 workers:

"I'll tell you there will be no blocking of the entrance and egress to that plant. That plant will operate, people will come in. The state police will come down on them and just crush people.... If the state police can't do it, they'll bring in the National Guard to do it, but it will be done."

Anderson knew what was going to happen not because he had a crystal ball or Marxist clarity—he knew exactly what the state was planning because he helped them do it.

Kopple's camera then takes the audience with the "P-10ers" through their conversion from opponents of a strike into outright scabs, replete with recriminations and tears flowing. It is Kopple's concentration on the trials and tribulations of the scabs that explains her absence at key turning points on the picket lines. Challenged about this at a discussion after the Chicago Film Festival showing of *American Dream* on October 20, Kopple argued for the need to "humanize" the scabs: "People

(continued on page 10)

Levine/Minneapolis Star and Tribune

WV Photo

Woyke/Austin Daily Herald

From left: Corporate Campaign Inc. head Ray Rogers proclaiming "victory" on police loudspeaker; P-9 president Jim Guyette; UFCW packinghouse director and scabherder Lewie Anderson.





Soviet Union...

(continued from page 1)

"Confederation of Independent States." But in reality, the dismembering of the USSR does not leave a consolidated capitalist counterrevolution, but a bloody mess. After six years of Gorbachev's perestroika the economy is in a complete shambles, the ruble is practically worthless, industrial production is plummeting and the harvest is down 15 percent from last year. The liberal Scottish economist Alec Nove, long considered the leading Western expert on the Soviet economy, predicts:

"The immediate outlook is stormy, with a grave danger of chaos caused by—and causing—a breakdown in food supplies to Moscow, St Petersburg and other major industrial areas; an energy crisis; the collapse of transport; strikes and civil disorders."

—Independent [London], 3 January

The former Soviet republics are fighting with one another over economic resources and above all military forces. Yeltsin's Russia and the Ukrainian government are fast heading toward a showdown over which will command the Soviet navy's Black Sea fleet. In the Caucasus, Georgia is rent by a civil war between competing nationalist cliques. The war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave is escalating wildly following the withdrawal of Soviet troops. The Central Asian republics are volatile, as Islamic fundamentalists and Turkic nationalists strive to fill the power vacuum left by the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Even U.S. secretary of state James Baker worries that the breakup of the Soviet Union could lead to "a situation created there not unlike Yugoslavia with nukes."

While his Western imperialist godfathers cheered on as Yeltsin pulled down the red flag from the Kremlin and replaced it with the tsarist emblem, there was no cheering from the Russian people. And while Western TV on New Year's Eve kept repeating "From Times Square to Red Square," few corks were popping in Moscow (who could afford champagne?). The popular mood was one of dread in the face of Yeltsin's "free market" shock treatment. "We will all die of hunger," exclaimed a nurse in a children's hospital, when she found that a plate of dumplings in her local café



Tbilisi, Georgia—Bloody conflict between nationalist cliques rages as USSR breaks up.

now costs her a full day's wage. An older woman who survived the siege of Leningrad in World War II, where her five brothers and sisters were killed, stood in a store and wept, "I can't live through that again."

A pensioner, who identified himself only as Leonid, declared: "The time will come to take a machine gun.... For now it's calm, it's the first day. But we veterans say there will be blood spilled in Moscow, and the women will start it because they have to feed their families."

For decades Soviet working people have regarded a stable cost of living and low prices for basic foodstuffs along with guaranteed employment as their right. Yeltsin's massive, frontal attack on living standards is intended to demonstrate he has the power and ruthlessness to oversee the exploitation of the Russian workers on behalf of international capital. The *Wall Street Journal* (27 December 1991) headlined an article on the elimination of price subsidies, "Yeltsin, Russia's Designated Savior, Acts to Underscore Decisiveness." But Yeltsin is not the would-be savior of Russia; rather he would sell out Russia's mineral wealth, collectivized property and manpower to Western and Japanese financiers and multinationals.

Soviet Workers: Seize Control of Food Distribution!

Yeltsin and his economists promise that hardships will be of short duration, while the higher prices will supposedly

spur an increase in supply. But while Yeltsin's hotshot Western economic advisers keep chanting "supply equals demand," the stores are now just as empty as before even though prices have risen four- or fivefold. Nonetheless, there are *sizable stocks of food* in government warehouses and hoarded by private speculators. For months farmers have been holding their products back from state procurement agencies in anticipation of the introduction of "free market" prices. And in recent weeks criminal gangs have stolen food from government warehouses, nursery schools and factory cafeterias in order to sell it in the private markets.

The elimination of price subsidies means a massive redistribution of income from working people to what Russians call "the mafia"—the interpenetrated cliques of corrupt officials, petty entrepreneurs and criminal gangs. Looking at empty store shelves and extortionate prices, Moscow workers are convinced the mafia is selling plentiful supplies of meat abroad for precious hard currency rather than near-worthless rubles. Moreover, the entire supply system is totally paralyzed in the face of expected hyperinflation. Yeltsin's former finance minister Yevgeny Saburov denounced the price "reform" as "irresponsible," noting that most enterprises negotiate their contracts at the beginning of the year, but these negotiations were put off and now most plants have no more than two weeks of supplies.

Yeltsin's Western imperialist godfathers and even many fellow Russian counterrevolutionaries fear that his New Year's price shock will backfire. Russian "free market" economist Grigory Yavlinsky—an author of the notorious 500-days-to-capitalism program last year—argues that without the privatization of industry and agriculture, and a balanced state budget, the price increases will lead only to accelerated hyperinflation and the further "dollarization" and "harterization" of the economy. Another prominent "free market" economist, Nikolai Shmelyev, likens the New Year's price shock to the amputation of an arm without anesthesia. And he adds: "The patient's hands are not tied. What if he picks up a knife and attacks the surgeon?" (*Los Angeles Times*, 2 January).

Why, then, have the victims not yet attacked the pro-capitalist butchers? Why have the widely predicted food riots not yet occurred? The quiescence, even paralysis, of the Soviet working masses reflects the absence of revolutionary leadership, and the *misleadership* by those Stalinists who falsely claim to be communist and to oppose Yeltsin's drive toward capitalist restoration. Following the botched Kremlin coup and Yeltsin's countercoup in August, remnants of the "patriotic" wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy regrouped as an opposition. On the November 7 anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Stalinist oppositional groupings were able to tap into the widespread fear of "free market" economics. As many as 90,000 people, predominantly working-class, marched through central Moscow to denounce Yeltsin and Gorbachev.

But what is posed now is not a protest rally hut *action* in the streets and in factories against the counterrevolutionary government and mafia. The longer an effective fight is not mounted, the more demoralizing the situation becomes. Workers committees must be set up to seize the government warehouses, confiscate the private hoards and oversee the distribution of food and other consumer necessities. This requires the formation of *workers defense committees*, i.e., the nucleus of workers militias, in coordination with pro-socialist elements of the still-existing Soviet Army. The struggle for control over the food supply can open the road to the overthrow of the capitalist-restorationist Yeltsin regime and its counterpart in the Ukraine and other republics. For what you have in the disintegrating Soviet Union today is a series of "governments" that are counterrevolutionary through and through, intent on dismantling the Soviet degenerated workers state. This creates an impossible, explosively unstable situation which can only lead either to collapse into capitalist chaos, degradation and ultimately fascist rule, or to a workers political revolution to establish genuine soviet power.

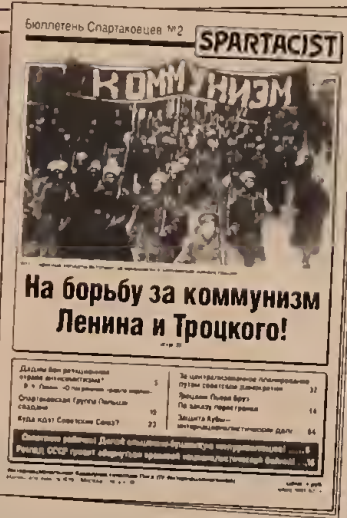
The Stalinist "patriots" have no intention of overthrowing Yeltsin, much less fighting for a regime of proletarian political power based on soviet democracy. In fact, the "Toiling Russia" grouping has called for a January 12 protest demonstration against the price increases in which they actually invited Yeltsin as "the President of Russia to come to Manezh Square to speak before us"! Viktor Anpilov and other leaders of the misnamed Russian Communist Workers Party (RKRП) seek to become a quasi-parliamentarist loyal opposition while accepting capitalist restoration. Shot through with Russian nationalism (often linked to vile anti-Semitism), the Stalinist "patriots" likewise accept the breakup of the Soviet Union. Only the working class under a Leninist-Trotskyist leadership can reforge the Soviet Union and save Russia, the Ukraine and other republics from becoming degraded neocolonies of Wall Street, Frankfurt and Tokyo.

Reforge the Soviet Union on Leninist Principles!

Yeltsin's New Year's price shock intensified the conflict between Russian and Ukrainian nationalists over economic and military power, and exposed the fictitious nature of the so-called "Commonwealth of Independent States" as a successor to the USSR. The vice president of the Ukrainian National Bank, Aleksandr Savchenko, on a visit to Paris stated: "The word commonwealth is in small letters. In a month, no one will talk about it anymore" (*Newsweek*, 30 December 1991). In fact no one is talking about the "CIS" even now. This fiction played no role in the recent hostile exchanges between Moscow and Kiev.



Moscow: Demonstrators with red flags rally in Red Square near Lenin's tomb.



Critical review of P. Broué's *Trotsky*, a revisionist attempt to make the co-leader of the October Revolution "likable" to pro-perestroika capitalist-restorationists.

"Detend Cubal" Press release from Spartacist demonstration in New York, Fall 1991.

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### Spartacist Bulletin No. 2 (in Russian)

Contents:

Introduction: "Fight for the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!"

"Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" and "Nationalist Bloodbath Threatens In Soviet Breakup" (translated from *Workers Vanguard*, Nos. 533 and 534, 30 August and 13 September 1991).

Lenin against "Anti-Jewish Pogroms," reprinted with introductory note.

Also contains:

Agreement for common work between Polish Trotskyists and ICL.

Sverdlov, fighter for proletarian revolution.

"Where Is the Soviet Union Going?" (adapted from *Workers Vanguard*, Nos. 520, 521 and 522, February-March 1991).

"For Central Planning Through Soviet Democracy!" In-depth articles on Soviet economy, COMECON and the myth of "market socialism."

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The Ukrainian and also Byelorussian governments implored Yeltsin to postpone the New Year's price shock for fear of the ensuing social unrest. But Yeltsin disregarded these concerns and declared that Russia would go ahead no matter what. The capitalist-restorationist regime in Kiev had no choice but to raise prices in line with Yeltsin's Russia. Otherwise the Ukraine would have suffered a massive outflow of food and other consumables to Moscow, Leningrad and other Russian cities.

The Ukrainian Federation of Independent Trade Unions voiced a strong protest over the price increases, demanding the indexation of incomes. However, the regime of Leonid Kravchuk—a long-time Stalinist apparatchik who played the Ukrainian-nationalist card quite late in the game—is trying to blame the hardships of capitalist restoration on Russian economic dominance. The nationalists are stepping up their demands for a separate currency, customs stations, border guards, trade protectionism. The principal Ukrainian-nationalist outfit, Rukh, has called for "closing the borders" with Russia.

The attempts at national economic self-sufficiency will bring even greater economic chaos and immiseration for the toiling masses of the Ukraine. Almost all of the Ukraine's trade is with Russia and the other Soviet republics. The coal and metallurgical region of the Donbass in the eastern Ukraine was heavily geared to production for the Soviet military arsenal. This region now faces mass unemployment as part of the counterrevolution being spearheaded by Yeltsin, including slashing the military budget on orders from his masters in Washington and Berlin. Only the reintegration of the Soviet Union on the basis of proletarian political power can save the working masses of the Ukraine and Russia from impoverishment and fratricidal war.

The economic conflict between Moscow and Kiev has gone hand in hand with their struggle over the Soviet military forces. The Ukrainian regime claims sole command over Soviet armed forces on its territory and has declared that all officers and enlisted men must take an oath of allegiance to the Ukrainian flag by the end of this month or be transferred to other republics. Contending the Ukraine is a "maritime power,"

Kravchuk is demanding control over the Soviet navy's Black Sea fleet.

In response the Yeltsin regime ordered the navy's newest and largest aircraft carrier, the *Admiral Kuznetsov*, transferred from the Crimea to the Arctic port of Murmansk. The Russian parliament is now up in arms against the latest Ukrainian moves, with its speaker, Ruslan Khashulov, denouncing any attempt to "seize our fleets, our armies, to put them under their jurisdiction, to force them to take loyalty oaths." According to the 6 January Moscow evening TV "News 1" broadcast, in the Black Sea fleet home port of Sevastopol "there are political meetings at which

Now Soviet troops in the Caucasus as well as Central Asia are being attacked and abused by local nationalist bands. And officers and enlisted men alike face desperate economic conditions, whether they remain in the service or return to civilian life. The *Boston Globe* (22 December 1991) reports:

"The first rumblings of discontent are beginning to surface, with border troops in the south threatening acts of disobedience if they feel they are being abandoned. The risk of local military unrest—mutinies, clashes with the local authorities or revolts—cannot be ruled out, many Soviet observers feel."

The discontent among the Soviet officer corps has found a spokesman in Yel-



Moscow, November 7—Trotskyists of the International Communist League raise banner of Fourth International at Revolution Day demonstration.

the sailors are demanding that the navy not be handed over to the Ukraine." One can see the beginnings of war fever.

The various nationalist politicians and movements seem to regard the Soviet armed forces as a kind of pie to be divided among them. But it is far from given that the military cadre will remain passive as the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state fractures and disintegrates along national lines. Many officers feel angry and humiliated over Gorbachev's abandonment of East Europe and the collapse of Soviet power.

tsin's own vice president, Aleksandr Rutskoi, a former air force general. In the last period of the Gorbachev regime Rutskoi, who set up a group called "Communists for Democracy," represented the openly capitalist-restorationist wing of the decomposing Kremlin oligarchy. But in recent weeks Rutskoi has been voicing the concerns of conservative elements in the armed forces. He lashed out at Yeltsin's policy to cut to the bone military procurement. And he harshly criticized the New Year's price shock, declaring: "Everything is sliding

into an abyss: the economy, finances and the main thing—the people's faith." There is widespread talk of a military coup, with Rutskoi's name prominently featured.

At the same time, one can see outright fascists looming, like "Liberal Democrat" Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who is now organizing hunger marches. A former "dissident," Lev Timofeyev, predicts: "We will soon have 40 million unemployed, and not the kind of unemployed you have in the West, but hungry mobs. The leader who survives in such a situation will be the leader who is willing to create detachments of storm troopers to control the crowds. In other words, a fascist-type leader." In fact, capitalism cannot be imposed by "peaceful, democratic" means; it will take a hard-fisted, brutal regime. That is what Tsar Boris's "reforms" portend.

In general, the attempt to restore capitalism without major injections of capital poses big problems. Throughout East Europe, Western capitalists have been reluctant to rush in because they can't make a short-run profit. Instead, they have used nationalism as a battering ram to mobilize counterrevolutionary forces in what is essentially a wrecking operation. Nationalism is also the reactionary last resort of the decomposing Stalinist bureaucracy. So that looking at events from Yugoslavia to the Soviet Union, nationalism is not merely the result of counterrevolution but a driving force for capitalism in the absence of capital.

The remnants of the Stalinist bureaucracy—whether military or civilian—have no intention of opposing the drive toward capitalist counterrevolution, despite occasional foot-dragging. Only the working class under a Leninist-Trotskyist leadership can save the Soviet Union from dismemberment, capitalist exploitation and impoverishment, fratricidal war and imperialist subjugation. It is urgently necessary to build a new Bolshevik party in the Soviet Union, uniting the most class-conscious workers with revolutionary Marxist intellectuals. Only the program of proletarian internationalism, carried out by a communist vanguard with a multinational cadre, can reforge the Soviet Union on the basis of national equality and socialist economic planning. ■

## Letters...

(continued from page 3)

the organized industrial working class, the less is the attraction of Duke's racist appeal. Although perhaps less so in the Deep South, the workplace is one of the more integrated areas of American society. And Duke's base is largely rural-to-suburban in character (white suburbs of largely black New Orleans and the Bible Belt backwaters north of Baton Rouge).

The race question is key to American fascism, and increasingly so for American bourgeois politics overall. Andrew Hacker notes in his article, "Playing the Racial Card" (*New York Review of Books*, 24 October 1991), that the New Deal coalition was broken up as the result of the civil rights movement, with the Republicans using racist imagery (Willie Horton, "affirmative action") to paint the Democratic Party as a "black party" rather than its earlier posture as the party of the "common man." It is this racist hysteria that Duke is whipping up and feeding off.

V. Barnes wants a formalistic solution to a real problem, namely that American workers do not have political class consciousness. Duke appeals to them as members of the white race, not as proletarians, using images of black welfare mothers as scapegoats for economic hard times. As we noted in WV No. 539:

"In the absence of a working-class socialist opposition, Duke's racist demagoguery finds a ready constituency.... Only integrated working-class struggle against capitalist exploitation can cut

through the racist false consciousness of Duke's present supporters, isolating and smashing the hard core of fascists."

Above all, we concluded, "To put a stop to Duke and his ilk requires the building of a revolutionary workers party which would mobilize the social power of labor in the interests of the black poor and all the oppressed and exploited in a struggle against increasingly vicious, decaying American capitalism." ■

## Moabit...

(continued from page 2)

by the cops to carry a pistol. Moabit was, after all, a "hostile" area for fascists.

Pagel bragged that they had held up against the restaurant window election posters with the Republikaners' racist message of "Foreigners Out." This macho fascist scum had some difficulty describing how a 5'3" Jewish woman "intimidated" him—would-be *Führer* of the "master race"—by supposedly wielding a ten-foot ladder. Following this "testimony," an exasperated prosecutor and judge announced the acquittal and dropping of charges against the Moabit anti-fascists.

### Turkish Worker Acquitted

This victory comes on the heels of the acquittal of Ayhan Öztürk, a young Turkish worker who defended himself and his Turkish and German friends against an armed Republikaner attack in November 1990. One of the Nazi terrorists was killed in the attack. Tried on murder charges brought by Pagel, Öztürk

was found innocent on grounds of self-defense.

Capitalist reunification of the German Reich has opened wide the floodgates of official state racism with an all-party attack on refugees, at the same time as it has wrecked the economy of the former DDR and brought about mass unemployment there. This has fueled murderous fascist terror, from "night and fog" firebombings of hostels where Bonn pens up asylum seekers, to the six-day racist anti-"foreigner" pogrom in the mining town of Hoyerswerda near the Polish

border. As SpAD spokesman Renate Dahlhaus told the support rally before the trial:

"When it became known that the Nazis wanted to 'celebrate' the [1938] *Kristallnacht* pogrom in the working-class city of Halle, we proposed a mobilization centered on the trade unions to stop this monstrous provocation. Our proposal was first taken up and then sabotaged by the Social Democratic party and union bureaucrats. But it is the organized labor movement that has the social power to sweep the fascists off the streets and beat back the capitalist offensive that feeds Nazi terror." ■

## Student Killed by German Fascists

Following a vicious fascist attack by West Berlin skinheads wielding a baseball bat, 19-year-old student Mete Eksi died on 13 November 1991 after three weeks in a coma. Eksi was a German citizen of Turkish descent. The Berlin immigrant community responded with a funeral march of up to 10,000 organized by the Turkish Parents Association. Prominent in the integrated march were African, Asian and Near Eastern mourners as well as Turks and Kurds. Our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) carried signs declaring the workers will avenge the death of Eksi and calling for full citizenship rights for immigrants.

The November 15 march was to end

in a rally in front of the Schöneberg city hall in West Berlin. Before the speakers could start, police attacked from three directions, charging in military formation through the crowd, which included a large number of women, elderly, and young children in carriages and their mothers' arms. The cops of the capital of the German Reich beat immigrant youths to the ground with truncheons resembling the weapon the fascists had used to bludgeen young Mete to death. The SpAD denounced this totally unprovoked racist police riot and the cynical attempt by police spokesmen to blame the victims, and vowed to continue the fight to mobilize the organized working class to sweep the fascist filth off the streets.



# GM...

(continued from page 12)

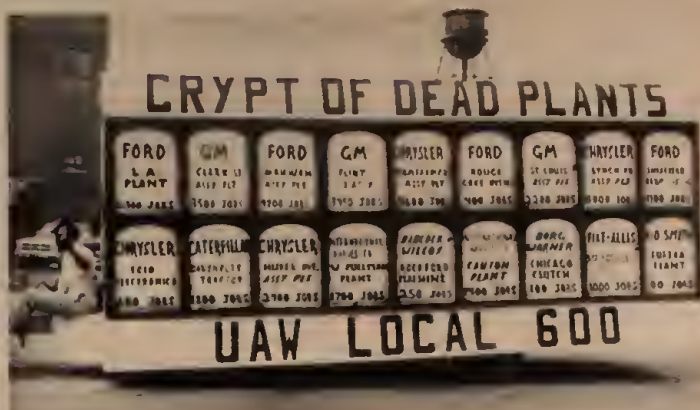
Motors wants us to do, we're prepared to try to deliver," says Perdue. What GM wants the union to do is roll over and play dead. And UAW officials from Bieber on down are making a convincing show of it.

Last October, the UAW called a selective strike at the giant construction equipment manufacturer, Caterpillar Inc. The UAW represents 16,000 CAT workers (down from 40,000 in 1979), and after more than two months, the combined strike and a lockout of the York, Pennsylvania assembly plant has 10,000 CAT workers on the bricks. The *Wall Street Journal* (27 December 1991) declares, "Caterpillar Strike Is a Big Risk for UAW," noting that: "The dispute comes as companies such as General Motors Corp. are announcing drastic cuts in their work forces. With scant public sympathy or government protection for unions, the number of major strikes dwindled to 44 last year from 187 in 1980."

The unions could get plenty of support from millions of workers in the U.S. if they played hardball against the hosses. But just look at the bureaucrats' handling of the Caterpillar strike. The UAW's

selective strike lets CAT bosses pile up inventory and wait out the strikers! Instead of solidarity, Bieber pushes racist protectionist poison pitting American workers against their class brothers and sisters abroad. In response to the recent job massacre, the UAW called to "revise anti-U.S. GM corporate policies that favor production in Mexico and other countries at the expense of U.S. workers and support the giveaway of the U.S. domestic market to predatory Japanese producers willing to stop at nothing to gain U.S. market share."

What auto workers desperately need is a revolutionary, internationalist leadership to unite Mexican, Japanese, Korean and North American workers in common battle against the labor traitors and capitalist hosses who have ripped up the unions. A recent *New York Times* (20 December 1991) column by economics writer Leonard Silk asked, "Will Recession Revive Unions?" Silk quoted the *Times'* former labor correspondent A.H. Raskin as saying that "the most important requirement for a revival of the labor movement today is 'commitment'—the commitment of labor leaders to rank-and-file members and to the jobless, poor and unorganized." But as Mr. Raskin—a certified redbaiter at the labor-hating *Times*—well knows, the commitment of the AFL-CIO brass is to the capitalists,



WV Photo

Solidarity House company cops collaborated with capitalists to turn Detroit into a ghost town.

whose labor lieutenants they are.

The workers movement needs a leadership committed to the fight for a workers government to transform society from top to bottom. Capitalism made Michigan into a mecca for millions of immigrant and black workers. Today it has turned the Motor City into a ghost town, hitting blacks the hardest of all. A workers revolution in this country would institute socialist economic planning, rebuilding the antiquated factories

and the crumbling roads and bridges, constructing schools, hospitals and decent housing for all. Break from the Democrats! For a workers party! The productive apparatus of this country was built by the blood and sweat of generations of workers. Seize it, fix it and use it to provide the goods needed by working people and the poor instead of lining the pockets of the capitalists, who would do to the world what they've done to Detroit. ■

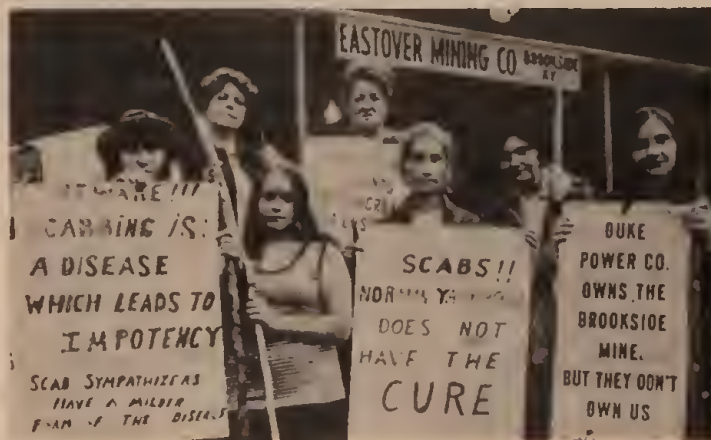
# Hormel Strike...

(continued from page 7)

shouldn't have to cross a picket line." She admitted that "when I made *Hormel County*, I would never talk to a scab," but argued that the Hormel strike was "different." Yet P-9er R.J. Bergstrom sounds a hell of a lot like a coal miner in the film, when he says of his brother Ron, "If he crosses the line he's a scab, and there's nothing worse than a scab." So does strike activist Vickie Guyette (Jim's wife), who told Hardy Green, "We should have broken the scabs' kneecaps the first time they tried to cross the line." During the strike P-9ers issued a button that said, "Pick a Scab—Make It Bleed." UFCW workers at the Ottumwa plant who honored P-9's roving picket line put out another that declared, "I Won't Cross a Picket Line for Anyone!" What's "different" is not the Hormel strike but Barbara Kopple.

## For Mass Picket Lines and Plant Occupations

Local P-9 reasserted labor's picket line principles when on January 21 its roving pickets began to appear at Hormel plants across the country. The Ottumwa facility was completely shut down, as workers honored the P-9 lines for weeks. Hundreds honored the roving pickets in Fremont, Duquaque and elsewhere. According to *American Dream*, 571 Hormel workers outside of Austin ended up getting fired for honoring P-9 picket



Eart Doffer

Harian County, U.S.A.: Brookside women in bitter 1974 miners strike understood that picket lines mean you better not cross. Somehow Barbara Kopple forgot.

lines. But these casualties, along with the hundreds of P-9ers who wound up permanently replaced by scabs, came not as a result of the roving pickets—which struck a powerful blow against the company—but of the decision by Guyette, Rogers and the P-9 executive board not to attempt to shut down Hormel's flagship plant in Austin.

Various social democrats like *In These Times* writer David Moherg say that in the face of the Guard, the strikers should have crawled back to work and used slowdowns, work-to-rules, etc. In contrast, longtime labor reporter "William Serrin suggests that rather than adopting such a 'wimpy' in-plant approach, P-9ers

should have seized the Austin facility" (*On Strike at Hormel*). That is exactly what the Spartacist League insistently advocated in the pages of *Workers Vanguard*: "For Mass Labor Action to Smash National Guard Strikebreaking! Shut Down Hormel!" (31 January); "The hard truth is that the Austin plant must be shut down, and soon, or the strike will lose" (14 February); "Hormel has the plant, not P-9.... [the strikers] should lock the gates of the Austin plant from the inside, and throw away the key!" (14 March). And in explaining the defeat, we wrote:

"Under the circumstances the only way to shut down the plant was to take it out of the company's hands, the very same way the Hormel strikers did it in 1933. A plant seizure would have thwarted Hormel's strikebreaking plans: the forces of capitalist 'law and order' treat strikes much more respectfully when the workers are holding millions of dollars worth of equipment—equipment financed with the giveaways robbed from the workers!" —"Hormel Strike Knifed," WV No. 400, 28 March 1986

Guyette said in late 1986, "A plant shutdown was rejected in favor of the roving pickets, in part because we heard that the company had armed guards in the plant." But that wouldn't have posed an insurmountable problem to a leadership committed to mobilizing united working-class power instead of pressure. The bottom line is that Guyette and Rogers were no more willing to take on the "DFL" strikebreakers and the capitalist state than were the UFCW traitors Wynn and Anderson. As we

put it then, "Labor's ties to the Democrats are a noose around P-9's neck."

## For Class-Struggle Leadership!

Scabherder Lewie Anderson gets the last word in *American Dream*—which incredibly bills him as a leader of the anti-concessions movement! Having helped Hormel eat Local P-9 alive, Anderson rails against corporate "barbarians" and asserts that such ills "can't be dealt with just on the picket line." In her remarks in Chicago, Barbara Kopple harped on this same theme of "total corporate irresponsibility" which is part of "the larger question," a "systemic problem," part of "broader economic forces," ad nauseam. The none-too-subtle message here is that workers should stay off the picket line and head for the voting booth.

From Anderson and Kopple to Rogers, Guyette and their "leftist" cheerleaders, there is a shared assumption—that somehow in the "court of public opinion," or through the Democratic Party, the bosses will be brought to heel by the government, and workers can live the "American Dream." But the state is the capitalists' state, and the dream was always a lie, especially for women, blacks and other minorities, and especially now. To put an end to the chain of defeats that began when the AFL-CIO heavies knifed the PATCO air controllers in 1981, continuing through the Hormel betrayal and going on today, working people must be broken away from the Democratic Party and organized in powerful working-class action.

Because of the straitjacket imposed on the working class by what turn-of-the-century Cleveland robber baron Mark Hanna called "my labor lieutenants," militant strikes in the United States have often been led by self-professed radicals and leftists, from the IWW to the Stalinists and Trotskyists in the 1930s. It says a lot about the state of "the left" in this country that the plethora of "Marxist" groups present in the Hormel strike—except the Trotskyist Spartacist League—helped to kill it, either openly siding with the strikebreaking UFCW tops or by reinforcing illusions in the losing strategy of the P-9 leaders.

The key to unleashing the power of the labor movement and getting rid of the whole class of capitalist "harracudas" is the construction of a genuinely revolutionary workers party. ■

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# 50,000 NYC Construction Workers March for Jobs

Despite a subzero wind chill, tens of thousands of union construction workers marched across the Brooklyn Bridge into Manhattan December 19 to rally at City Hall for jobs. The crowd of 50,000 workers from 17 building trades unions chanted "We want union jobs!" The unemployment rate among construction workers is over 50 percent. Last year alone, NYC lost 170,000 jobs—38,000 of them in construction.

The rally was organized by the labor bureaucracy of the building trades, along with contractors and even real estate bosses, to pressure Democratic Party mayor David Dinkins and plead with George Bush for public works programs. But instead of blaming the capitalists who have let the infrastructure of New York City go to hell, the labor aristocrats denounced "illegal aliens working on City and State construction jobs" and



WV Photo

called for strengthening the racist cops! This disgusting chauvinist crap is poison to the workers movement. The blame for the crisis of American capitalism must be placed where it

belongs—on the bosses.

Instead of marching to City Hall to listen to flag-waving hoopla, this massive display of union power should have gone right past City Hall to Wall

Street. Let's see how long the Stock Exchange continues to soar when the center of finance capital is choked off by workers playing hardball for a change!

## Justice Department Takes Teamsters Election

"The government will have wasted \$40 million in Teamsters money if Carey isn't elected," quipped the *Wall Street Journal*, quoting a cynical "labor consultant." The haughty *New York Times* editorialized, "Virtue Triumphs at the Teamsters." What they are celebrating is the big-time payoff of the government's 40-year vendetta against one of the largest and most powerful American unions. Despite the claims of junior G-men like the Teamsters for a Democratic Union, these elections are no victory for the Teamster ranks—they were a government operation from start to finish, designed to keep the union under the thumb of the capitalist state.

It was an unexpected trouncing of the venal and corrupt incumbents in the "Marble Palace" headquarters of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. New York United Parcel Service Local 804 president Ron Carey and his slate swept the December voting, taking 48 percent of the vote. Retiring IBT chief William McCarthy's heir designate, national freight director R.V. Durham, got only a third of the votes. And Secretary-Treasurer Walter Shea pulled only 16 percent in the mail ballot. Shea's slate lost two VP candidates on the way to the polls: Chicago Local 705 head Daniel Liguoritis withdrew after shooting his son in the union hall, and NYC heavy "Joe T." Trerotola was forced out by the feds.

Carey exploited the ranks' hatred for the picards at the top, running ads in the government-controlled *Teamster* magazine with a picture of three pigs "feasting on your dues." The Durham gang fired back with a (disputed) story of Carey scabbing on a 1962 UPS strike. The government flooded the union with more than a thousand agents for the election. Almost 150 Teamster officials, including many candidates, were thrown out of the union by federal election officer Michael Holland after "quasi-judicial proceedings" in front of government administrator Frederick Lacey. Holland bragged to the *Washington Post* that he was making the rules and "I'm making the judgment on what's kosher." All the candidates were U.S. government-approved, Grade A labor fakers.

This was a product of the "consent decree" arrived at between the IBT bureaucracy and the Justice Department, which threatened a RICO suit to hogtie the union. Washington isn't worried about "democracy" or "corruption" in the labor movement. A member of the NY State Organized Crime Task Force

pinpointed the real reason behind the government's vendetta against the Teamsters: "they could still tie the nation up in knots if they wanted to" (*Time*, 24 June 1991).

Predictably, the "leftist" cheerleaders of Carey are jubilant; they have been in the feds' corner for years. Socialist Action licked their chops last summer: "Election of the Carey Slate could be

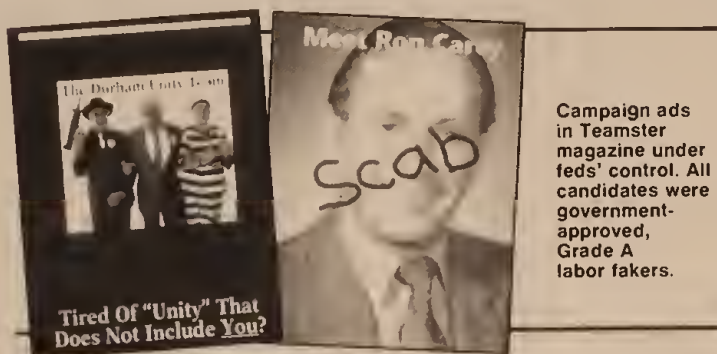
date?" The reformist Communist Party, which was backing the Durham slate, complained that Carey is outside the Democratic Party fold: "Until the mid 1980s he would never have been labeled a reformer. As a registered Republican, he was among the more conservative New York City Teamster leaders. At one point Carey tried to get his local to wildcat as a protest against anti-Vietnam War

contract by a four-to-one margin. To defend their jobs and working conditions Teamsters will have to employ the class-struggle tactics that built the union, from the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis general strike of 1934 to the "hot-cargoing" and militant picket lines that organized over-the-road drivers. These are the very tactics that the capitalists have outlawed in the courts and Congress.

The liberals and social democrats greeted Carey's election as a huge victory for the working class, just like they cheered the victory of Arnold Miller's Miners for Democracy in the Labor Department-run elections in the United Mine Workers in 1972. But very quickly, the miners who had elected Miller were wildcatting against the capitalist state and burning the sellout contracts of the Labor Department's hand-picked president.

When it counted, and the entire American reformist left was embracing Miller, we told coal miners the truth, that Miller would "keep faith only with the Labor Department/liberal Democrat cabal which installed him at the head of the UMW" (see the *Workers Vanguard* pamphlet, *The Great Coal Strike of 1978*). We summed up:

"This is the real lesson of the UMW elections. For communists, whose fundamental aim in the labor movement is to transform the unions into a tool of the revolutionary will of the proletariat, no reform can increase the power of the working class if it is won by placing the unions under the trusteeship of the capitalist state, thus destroying the first precondition for their mobilization in the struggle to smash that state." ■



Campaign ads in *Teamster* magazine under feds' control. All candidates were government-approved, Grade A labor fakers.

a big step in mobilizing the ranks." The *Labor Notes* crowd, and the TDU's *Convoy Dispatch*, trumpeted in headlines that "Carey Slate Sweeps." (The TDU, which advised the feds during the assault on the union, had a few of their candidates elected on the Carey slate.) One anti-communist Philly TDUR crowed: "This, to me, is like what happened in Eastern Europe" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 December 1991).

So who is the Teamster hureaucrat *In These Times* calls the "insurgent candi-

demonstrators" (*People's Weekly World*, 9 November 1991). Of course when Carey won, the CP changed its tune: "Unity is the most important task right now."

But whichever capitalist party has its man in the Marble Palace, Teamsters will get the shaft. The union has been decimated by deregulation, givebacks and "double-breasting"—creating non-union subsidiaries. Membership is down almost 800,000. Car haulers have already thrown back the bureaucracy's lousy

## Drop the Charges Against NYC Transit Worker Ray!

The following is a letter by the Partisan Defense Committee to Manhattan district attorney Robert Morgenthau

2 January 1992

Dear Mr. Morgenthau:

We are writing to protest the despicable treatment of transit worker Robert Ray, whom you are scapegoating on murder charges stemming from the August 28 Union Square derailment.

The blood of the five passengers killed is on the hands of the Transit Authority which has let the subway system rot. Not only has the TA refused to install modern computer switching and speed controls as have other transit

systems, at Union Square even the antiquated signals and tripping devices were positioned so they couldn't stop the derailment.

Overworked and underpaid like his co-workers who drive, maintain, repair and clean the trains, Mr. Ray is being used as a scapegoat by the TA and city officials whose budget cuts are preparing future "accidents." Transit Authority policies kill and maim transit workers: Daniel Walsh, Robert Nicholson, James Byrne, Frank Davila, David Davis, Stewart Melsinker and Jesse Cole are just some of those killed on the job in the past few years. Not one TA official has been charged with these

killings. But now Mr. Ray is facing up to 25 years in prison, so that the TA can continue its union-husting and life-threatening policies.

The denial of bail to Mr. Ray illustrates that he is being railroaded. Following the accident he identified himself to policemen on the spot, then stayed at the scene for hours. Bail is denied solely to hinder Mr. Ray's ability to defend himself.

The Partisan Defense Committee demands that Robert Ray be immediately released and that the charges be dropped.

Paul Cooperstein,  
for the PDC



# WORKERS VANGUARD

## THE BANKRUPTCY OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM



Watts/Black Star

### GM Job Massacre

#### Bush, Big 3, UAW Tops United in Racist Japan-Bashing



Yates/Picture Group

One week before Christmas, General Motors chairman Robert Stempel gave GM's holiday message to 400,000 auto workers via a closed-circuit television hookup to plants across the U.S. and Canada. He announced that 21 GM plants are being shut down by 1995. The world's largest auto manufacturer is wiping out 74,000 more jobs, on top of the 130,000 jobs it has axed since 1986. CNN underscored the dramatic significance of GM's jobs massacre by broadcasting Stempel's kiss-off talk live. This was the nail in the coffin of the economic "recovery" that the Bush administration had been conjuring up for months. Now White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater admitted, "the people of this country know the economy is in trouble and it doesn't make any sense to play games."



Der Spiegel

**Merry Xmas from GM: CEO Robert Stempel "downsizes," axing 74,000 more jobs.**

The week before, Caterpillar, Xerox and TRW had announced big layoffs. Since October, announced layoffs have been running at over 5,000 a day. Not just sounding the retreat for U.S. manufacturing, this tidal wave of firings speaks volumes about the moribund state of American capitalism. The *New York Times* (16 December 1991) spelled it out: "The thousands of jobs being trimmed from the nation's work force by IBM, General Motors, Xerox and other major corporations are never coming back." The "downsizing" of "the General" will result in a GM less than half the size it was in 1985. Pan Am, the nation's "flagship airline," finally shut down. The U.S. economy is in Chapter 11, and the bosses are handing out pink slips galore while the stock market soars.

Back in the years following World

War II, when Washington and Wall Street were in the flush of their self-proclaimed "American Century," GM head and "Defense" Secretary Charles Wilson boasted that "what was good for our country was good for GM and vice versa." What's good for GM isn't good for the workers, then or now. But Wilson's rosy capitalist logic and self-serving shortsightedness have a lot fewer adherents today because it is crystal clear: the American economy is dead in the water. As we wrote in the lead article of our series on "The Bankruptcy of American Capitalism" last issue:

"Even as the ideologues and spokesmen of U.S. imperialism crow about the supposed victory of 'free market' capitalism in the Cold War, the American economy is in a shambles. The Pentagon's awesome military firepower, which laid waste to Iraq, rests on a shrinking and obsolete industrial base, a bankrupt financial system, and a working class whose conditions of life have been deteriorating for two decades. Now the patriotic hoopla over the Gulf War has disappeared, as a lingering recession adds to the overflow of economic misery. Bush's posturing as master of the world is increasingly resented by working people, who cannot make ends meet whatever they do."

—WV No. 541,  
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#### Racist Japan-Bashing and Executive Greed

His re-election campaign threatened by the downward economic spiral, Bush postponed his scheduled Japan trip and then turned it into an exercise in gunboat diplomacy. Seeking to steal the thunder from the Democrats, who are leading the charge for new anti-Japanese protectionist legislation, Bush is bringing along an entourage of 21 corporation hewigs to lecture Tokyo about "unfair trade practices." In this coterie of trade warriors are the heads of the Big Three, including Lee Iacocca, No. 1 flag-waving Japan-basher and top hog at the protectionist trough. But Japan Inc. is returning the fire by pointing to the astronomical pay of Iacocca & Co. "High Pay of CEOs Traveling with Bush Touches a Nerve in Asia," headlined the *Wall Street Journal* (30 December 1991).

Over the past two decades, while the living standards of the American working class were slashed worse than anything since the 1930s Great Depression, the earnings of the corporate chiefs have skyrocketed. The heads of the country's largest corporations now average \$2 million a year in salaries, over 90 times what a production worker earns. Chrysler boss Iacocca got \$4.65 million

last year, along with \$700,000-plus in stock—more than the total income of 150 auto workers—plus proceeds from the sale of his two houses to Chrysler! Bush's fellow travelers also include: Phillips Petroleum CEO C.J. Silas (over \$4 million), American Express' James Robinson III (\$3.5 million), Textron chief B.F. Dolan (\$2.5 million). GM's Stempel rakes in \$2.18 million (his predecessor Roger Smith was pensioned off with \$1.2 million a year).

Iacocca's current haul is down from \$23.6 million in 1986, and GM got rid of board member H. Ross Perot with a "golden parachute" totaling \$700 million. As the U.S. economy sinks into a bottomless pit, American capitalists are continuing the LBO and takeover spree of the Reagan decade by shamelessly looting the companies they head.

#### UAW Tops Push "Buy American" Sucker Bait

Over and over again, the United Auto Workers bureaucracy, currently headed by Owen Bieber, has joined with the auto bosses to push giveback contracts down

the throats of auto workers with jingoist appeals to "Buy American" and calls for trade protectionism against Japan. "Sacrifice House" sold the 1990 GM contract to the ranks with promises of a few extra months of supplemental unemployment benefits and pension hikes for those who make 30 years, in exchange for giving management the option to eliminate 100,000 jobs. So Stempel just exercised his "option." With GM threatening to cut even more jobs, Bieber is hinting that the UAW would reopen their current contract for even more concessions!

Today the average age of a GM worker is 45 years, with 20 years of seniority. As they hit an older workforce with speedup and layoffs, the company is trying to "whipsaw" UAW locals against each other to see who will fork over the most givebacks. The bidding has already begun. David Perdue, president of the 3,200-member UAW local in Arlington, Texas, has offered to renegotiate work rules to make the plant more attractive to GM than the Willow Run plant near Ypsilanti, Michigan. "Anything General

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#### Hormel Strike: P-9 Pride and Labor Cops' Treachery Which Side Are You On?



Union, Minnesota Star and Tribune

#### Barbara Kopple's Film *American Dream*

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