

## Dogfight in Moscow

MARCH 23—The ongoing feud between Russian president Boris Yeltsin and the Russian Congress headed by Ruslan Khasbulatov has now erupted in the sharpest political crisis to confront the counterrevolutionary regime since Yeltsin seized the helm in August 1991. On March 20, Yeltsin proclaimed direct presidential rule—bonapartist dictatorship—and called for an April 25 plebiscite to back him. Yeltsin's move has created a wide split among the rulers of the rudimentary capitalist state. Notwithstanding fatuous boasts by Yeltsin's imperialist braintrust that Russia could smoothly proceed to full-fledged capitalism in 500 days, the weak counterrevolutionary regime is at an impasse.

"Yeltsin's Big Gamble," as *Time* (29 March) termed it, could be his undoing. Vice president and longtime opponent Aleksandr Rutskoi, an Air Force general with his own bonapartist ambitions, denounced the move for threatening a "split in state and society." Yeltsin's justice minister resigned in protest. Head of the Constitutional Court Valery Zorkin and the prosecutor-general also came out against Yeltsin. The ministers of defense and internal security reportedly signed Yeltsin's decree—which, mysteriously, has yet to be published—but the chief of his Security Council refused. And in Russia's outlying regions and autono-

mous republics, there is precious little support for the would-be autocrat.

While Yeltsin's decree amounted to declaring a coup d'état, both president and "parliament" have held back from attempting a show of force—precisely because a direct clash would only demonstrate their weakness. Yeltsin has not called on the military or police to move against his opponents, and if he did, it is not at all clear which way they would move. The heads of the army and security

services have vowed to remain neutral in the political confrontation. For its part, the Supreme Soviet has gone slow, rejecting calls to immediately impeach Yeltsin. The main parliamentary group, the Civic Union of Rutskoi and industrialist power broker Arkady Volsky, is pushing for a compromise, perhaps keeping Yeltsin as a figurehead favored by the imperialists while easing Rutskoi into power.

As we go to press, it is not at all clear how the stand-off in Moscow will re-

solve itself. Given all the wild cards in play, including widespread disgust with Yeltsin among junior military officers, anything is possible, including civil war. There is talk of dual power, with comparisons to 1917 between February and October. But this is not a struggle between counterposed class forces, the proletariat vs. the bourgeoisie. *Behind the confusion and incessant maneuvering is the fact that this is a faction fight between different wings of the capitalist counterrevolution.* Both Yeltsin and the opposition are treading warily for fear of unleashing "chaos" on the streets. *The working class must oppose moves from any corner to place its neck in the yoke of a bonapartist dictatorship.*

Yeltsin, uncritically echoed by much of the U.S. press, has depicted his parliamentary opposition as a hotbed of unreconstructed Communists. "Russia cannot stand another October Revolution," he railed, posing the battle as one "between the people and the former Bolshevik anti-national system." Khasbulatov, a former ally who backed Yeltsin (as did Rutskoi) in the August 1991 counter-coup, dismissed this crude attempt to play the "Communist card." The underlying differences are between those who would tear down Russian industry and reduce the country to a raw materials

continued on page 10



Vassily Korneyev

Anti-Yeltsin army officer addresses rally outside Russian parliament. Only road forward out of counterrevolutionary chaos is a working-class fight for power.

## Russia's New Exploiters

The American press has painted the standoff between Russian president Yeltsin and the Russian Congress as a battle between capitalist "free marketeers" and recalcitrant "Communists." In fact, both the Yeltsinites and their opponents denounce each other for "Bolshevism." Yeltsin press secretary Vyacheslav Kostikov railed that the Congress' decisions in early March signaled a "slide back to Soviet communist power," while parliamentary leader Ruslan Khasbulatov attacks Yeltsin's "pathological" desire to eliminate the parliament as a "genetic link with Bolshevism." More importantly, both sides are for a capitalist market economy, which means utter impoverishment for the working people of the former Soviet Union.

The restoration of capitalist rule has put the very existence of the Soviet proletariat at stake. If the Yeltsinites have their way, it will lead to a shutdown of vast sections of industry. Following dictates of the IMF, government plans call for privatizing over 5,000 medium and large-scale enterprises, employing seven million workers, in 1993 alone. Part of the purpose is to cut these plants

off from state credits, which would mean that most would go under (unless they can get foreign financing). The industrial managers grouped around Arkady Volsky (allied with Russian vice president Aleksandr Rutskoi) denounce the Yeltsinites' plans for "Kuwaitization" of the economy,

in which Russia would only produce raw materials like oil for export to the West.

The Volskyites demagogically appeal to workers' legitimate concern for their livelihoods. Marxists fight to defend the industrial base of the country, and thus oppose the wholesale "privatization"—meaning shutdown—of productive capacity. We are outraged at the tearing down of a modern industrial economy and military powerhouse built up through

decades of sacrifice by the multinational Soviet working people. Despite the warping influence of Stalinist bureaucratic arbitrariness, in many areas Soviet technology and science—especially in basic research and military-related fields—is as good as or better than anything in the West. The MIG-29, for instance, is superior to the planned next-generation European fighter jet. Today major scientific institutions are being dismantled and sold off for a song to Western firms.

But the national-"patriotic" forces around Volsky/Rutskoi are no less committed to capitalist restoration than are the Yeltsinite "democrats." They too are subordinate to the laws of the capitalist world market, and they (along with the yuppie "entrepreneurs") are massively looting state property in cahoots with Western imperialists. All the contending factions derived from the disintegrated Stalinist bureaucracy are the enemies

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## Capitalism Without Capital



Moscow stock exchange, where yuppie entrepreneurs dream of becoming junior partners of Wall Street, Frankfurt bankers and Japan Inc.

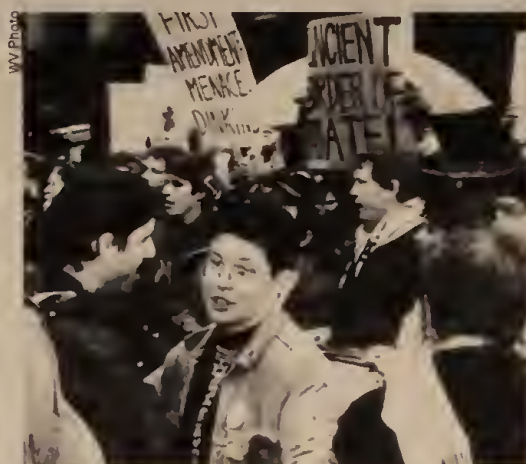


# —NYC St. Patrick's Day— Cops Bust 230 Gay Rights Supporters The Wearin' o' the Blue

March 17 was a green-letter day for anti-gay bigotry. From the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City's arch-reactionary Cardinal John O'Connor blessed the parade as Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly led contingents of bagpiping cops up Fifth Avenue. Earlier, Kelly's cops arrested 230 members and supporters of the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO), who were banned from even holding a separate protest march against their exclusion from the parade, which the organizers claimed was a Catholic religious procession. So zealously vindictive were parade marshals that they physically kicked out the dissident Division Seven of the Hibernians, who in 1991 had invited ILGO to march with them.

The cardinal bragged at that morning's mass, "Neither respectability nor political correctness is worth one comma of the Apostles' Creed.... What others may call bigotry, Irish Catholics call principle." Leaving aside whether O'Connor

New York City Irish lesbians and gays excluded from St. Patrick's Day parade.



(whom *Newsday* dubbed a "celestial ward boss") speaks for all Irish Catholics, his "principle" was to use the state to keep homosexuals off Fifth Avenue.

Stalin once asked, how many divisions does the Pope have? Well, in New York City, the cardinal evidently has the NYPD. From arresting abortion clinic defenders (including four members of the Spartacist League) last summer to the persecution of ILGO, O'Connor thinks he can run New York City like Vatican City.

Facing phalanxes of police (3,800 cops altogether), some 1,000 defiant protesters marched anyway, carrying signs reading "We're Here, We're Queer, and So Was Cardinal Spellman!" "Separation of Homophobic Sexist Church & State!" and "First Amendment Menace: David Dinkins," and chanting, "2, 4, 6, 8—How do you know St. Pat was straight?"

Four people were arrested for painting "Bigotry Is a Cardinal Sin" on the sidewalk opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral. After filling up two city buses with protesters, the cops left them handcuffed for up to six hours, not even allowing them to use the john. We say: Down with anti-homosexual bigotry! If Irish gays want to march, let them!

Unlike in Ireland, where contingents of gay organizations have marched unevenly, New York's St. Patrick's Day parade has become a referendum on the question of gay rights. The Ancient Order of Hibernians and O'Connor sought to exclude ILGO, while the latter has looked to the courts for redress. Mayor Dinkins has tried to play both sides. In 1991 he marched with ILGO as they were pelted with beer bottles, and this year he went to court to award the parade to another Hibernian group (headed by former City Council president Paul O'Dwyer) who would allow gays to march. But when the reactionaries threatened to pull out and a federal court overturned the ruling, Dinkins caved in and got an injunction against ILGO's pre-parade protest march. While Dinkins and Governor Cuomo stayed home, several mayoral candidates, including Rudolph Giuliani and Herman Badillo, made their bid for the bigot vote (and a blessing from His Eminence) by marching.

It's disgusting for people to be banned because of their sexual orientation. But it is dangerous to appeal to the racist, reactionary capitalist courts to rule on who gets to march. This state is not a neutral arbiter of disputes, but an enemy of the oppressed. And as Dinkins proved with his anti-gay injunction, so is the Democratic Party. A revolutionary workers party, which fights for the rights of all oppressed people, will separate the church and state for good. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the cardinal can officiate over religious ceremonies, but the streets (and the Church's multibillion-dollar real estate holdings) will belong to the people. ■



TROTSKY

## John Reed on the Russian Revolution

*Decades of Stalinist misrule atomized and paralyzed the Soviet proletariat, destroying the revolutionary and internationalist consciousness which prevailed in the period after the October Revolution of 1917. To smash the capitalist counterrevolution which has inundated the former Soviet Union, the workers will have to reappropriate their Bolshevik legacy. In a recently published manuscript from March 1918, American*



LENIN

*Communist John Reed, author of the compelling eyewitness account of the Russian Revolution, Ten Days That Shook the World, described the sentiments which animated the revolutionary workers of Russia.*

It is difficult for the bourgeoisie—and especially so for the foreign bourgeoisie—to understand the ideas that move the Russian masses. It is all very easy to say that they have no sense of Patriotism, Duty, Honor; that they do not submit to Discipline, or appreciate the Privileges of Democracy; that in short they are Incapable of Self-Government. But in Russia all these attributes of the bourgeois democratic state have been replaced by a new ideology. There is patriotism—but it is allegiance to the international brotherhood of the working-class; there is duty, and men die cheerfully for it—but it is duty to the revolutionary cause; there is honor, but [it] is a new kind of honor, based on the dignity of human life and happiness rather than on what a fantastic aristocracy of blood [and] of wealth has decreed is fitting for 'gentlemen'; there is discipline—revolutionary discipline, as I hope to show in these pages; and the Russian masses are showing themselves not only capable of self-government, but of inventing a whole new form of civilization.

Standing alone, as it does, the only live thing in the universe, there is a strong probability that the Russian Revolution will not be able to defy the deadly enmity of the entire world. But whether it survive or perish, whether it be altered unrecognizably by the pressure of circumstance, it will have shown that dreams can come true, that the race may be to the strong, that the toiling masses can not only conquer, but build.

—John Reed and the Russian Revolution: Uncollected Articles, Letters and Speeches on Russia, 1917-1920 (1992)

## Sundiata Acoli Must Be Free!

On February 22, former Black Panther Party member Sundiata Acoli made his first appearance before the Parole Board at Leavenworth federal penitentiary. Acoli has spent 20 years in prison hell for surviving a murderous cop assault on 22 May 1973 which left one of his comrades dead and another, Assata Shakur, severely wounded. In a classic example of racist capitalist "justice," the two black militants who survived were convicted on charges of killing one of the killer cops and their own comrade! Assata Shakur escaped from prison in 1979, and was given asylum in Cuba (see "Free Sundiata Acoli!" WV No. 569, 12 February).

Acoli faced the Parole Board without his attorney, Sofiyah Elijah, who officials outrageously barred from the proceedings. The hearing

ended without the panel making a recommendation, and it is expected the Parole Board will rule within 90 days.

Five days after the hearing Sundiata wrote WV informing us that following our article "the response in support letters has been very good." It is desperately necessary to step up the fight to free Sundiata Acoli. Flood the Parole Board with letters now! It will take a massive outpouring of support to win Sundiata's freedom. We urge readers to send letters demanding Sundiata Acoli's release to: New Jersey State Parole Board, CN-862, Trenton, NJ 08625; fax (609) 984-2190. Send copies and write for more information to: Sundiata Acoli Freedom Campaign, P.O. Box 5538, Manhattanville Station, New York, NY 10027.

## Corrections

In the article "Greece Rocked by Strike Wave" in WV No. 565 (11 December 1992) we incorrectly reported that the Greek Communist Party (KKE) had formed the Synaspismos alliance with the Eurocommunist KKE (Interior), whereas the alliance was with a split-off from the KKE Interior.

The scales of two maps illustrating the article "Yeltsin Whitewashes Reagan's Spy Mission" in WV No. 571 (12 March) were incorrectly cited in the key. In the map on page 7, the actual scale was

1:28,000,000, not 1:34,000,000; on page 8, the actual scale was 1:9,300,000 rather than 1:6,500,000.

In "South Africa 'Power Sharing' Swindle," WV No. 571 (12 March), there is unclarity in a paragraph which refers to two separate organizations, both known by the initials "NUM." At its November conference, a New Unity Movement (NUM) leader scored the stage-managed CODESA talks. The reference to "former NUM leader and ANC honcho Ramaphosa" is to the former head of the National Union of Mineworkers. ■

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (USPS 098-770) published biweekly, except 2nd issue August and with 3-week interval December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Domestic subscriptions: \$7.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers Vanguard, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

No. 572

26 March 1993



# After Twin Towers Blast Feds, Media Whip Up Anti-Arab Scare



WV Photo

We haven't commented thus far on what happened at New York City's World Trade Center on February 26. We don't know what happened that day and we sure as hell don't have any trust in this government's pronouncements. What is known for sure is that the explosion that took place in a parking garage killed six workers in the Twin Towers, and injured hundreds more who struggled down the darkened, smoke-filled stairwells.

Hundreds of federal agents poured into New York City and announced they had "solved" the case in record time, "discovering" a virtual road map of clues that took the FBI straight to the door of Mohammed Salameh, a Palestinian immigrant in Jersey City. The "solution" gave them another opportunity, with plenty of help from an obedient press, to again crank up their anti-immigrant "terrorism" scare.

According to the feds, the whole thing was masterminded by an NYC cab driver, an Egyptian immigrant under the "spell" of a blind Muslim cleric presiding over a mosque in a third-story walkup in Jersey City. So they are out to deport Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman for failing to admit to immigration his polygamy and "crimes of moral turpitude"—allegedly writing bad checks in Egypt. The FBI, still bitter about the acquittal of El Sayyid Nosair, who was accused of the 1990 killing of Zionist terrorist Meir Kahane, ransacked the apartment of Nosair's cousin and then arrested him for "resisting arrest."

The press has been howling about "illegal aliens" and calling for even more draconian immigration laws, and for proscribing "undesirable organizations." But buried on the inside pages is the fact that the accused "terrorist ringleaders" have for years run a Brooklyn recruiting office for anti-Communist cutthroats to be sent to Afghanistan, where the CIA and their Saudi allies ran a bloody war against the Soviet-backed reform regime in Kabul. Washington's fundamentalist "freedom fighters" took aim at every manifestation of social progress, especially for women enslaved under the veil.

But the fact that this month's "ringleaders" are last year's CIA "assets" hasn't stopped the feds from embarking on a witchhunt against the Arab immigrant community and organizations. Tabloid headlines scream of "Terror Plots" and "Radical Muslim Seized as Bomber," and the Jersey City mosque was the target of a provocative Zionist

demonstration and later rock-throwing vandals.

In recent years, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hysteria has been a constant theme in the American government's search for scapegoats. Qaddafi, Khomeini and Saddam Hussein have become Washington's favorite bugbears. Arab Americans like the "L.A. Eight" are arrested on bogus terrorism charges. The anti-Arab scare today is akin to the perennial anti-Semitism of demagogues like the tsarist Black Hundreds and fascists, from the Nazis to the KKK, who labeled Jews the root of all evil. The bourgeois-aristocratic French ruling class at the turn of the century also labeled Jews as traitors. The German socialist August Bebel called anti-Semitism the "socialism of fools."

We're reminded of the movie *Ship of Fools*, when a German anti-Semite rants that "It is a historical fact that the Jews are the basis of our misfortune." A Jewish passenger ironically agrees. "Of course, the Jews and the bicycle riders." Perplexed, the anti-Semite asks, "Why the bicycle riders?" He is answered, "Why the Jews?" So why the Arabs?

Stop the racist witchhunt against the Arab community! ■

## San Francisco Bay Area Labor Black League Protests Racist Frame-Up

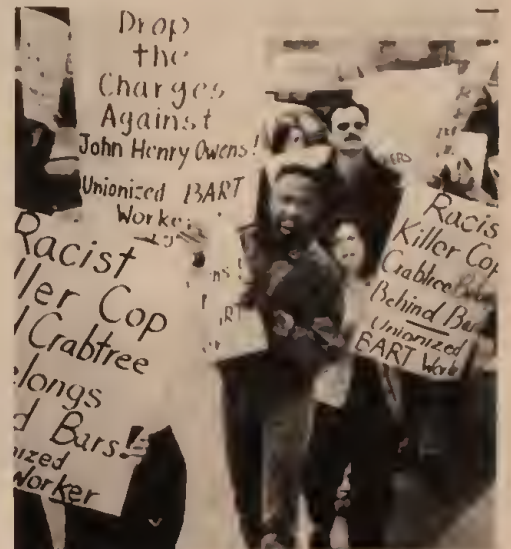
OAKLAND, March 16—Over 60 people demonstrated outside the Alameda County courthouse today in defense of John Henry Owens, a 20-year-old black youth. Owens is the victim of a racist frame-up because last November 15 he survived an assault by BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) cop Fred Crabtree, who killed Owens' 19-year-old unarmed black friend Jerrold Hall with a shotgun blast to the back of the head. But in the typical fashion of twisted capitalist "justice," the D.A. exonerated the cop while Owens was charged as an "accomplice" in the "murder" of his friend, an obscene

charge later changed to robbery.

The demonstration, initiated by the Labor Black League for Social Defense, demanded "Drop the charges against John Henry Owens!" Among the demonstrators were members of numerous Bay Area labor unions, including unionized BART workers. Demonstrators chanted "Racist killer cop Crabtree belongs behind bars!" After a brief court appearance, Owens' defense attorney Ed Xavier announced to the crowd that the trial had been scheduled to begin June 15.

"The only reason John Henry Owens is on trial is because Jerrold Hall was

**Demonstration calls for dropping charges against John Henry Owens, framed up after BART transit cop killed Jerrold Hall.**



Calvert/Oakland Tribune

killed and they've got to have a scapegoat," said one union steward. BART workers told WV that they had fought to pass a motion for the unions to mobilize a labor-centered demonstration in front of the courthouse to defend Owens and call for racist killer-cop Crabtree to be brought to trial. While the motion was defeated, it received widespread support in the two labor unions representing the integrated BART workforce, especially among maintenance workers organized by the Service Employees International Union.

Outrageously, the BART cops are also affiliated with the SEIU. The cops, racist thugs and hired strikebreakers for the bosses, have no place in the labor movement!

The demonstration was a small example of the crucial and central role labor must play in the fight against racist terror. Included among the signs carried by demonstrators were: "For Labor/Minority Mobilizations Against Racist Terror!" "Rodney King, Patrick Mason, Jerrold Hall—Victims of Racist Cop Terror." "Break with the Dixiecrat Democratic Party—Build a Workers Party" and "Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!" Among the participants were the Spartacist League and a group of students from UC Berkeley brought

out by the campus Spartacus Youth Club, as well as supporters of the Berkeley newspaper *Diatrice*. (The Revolutionary Trotskyist League and Revolutionary Workers League each sent two people, who eventually felt compelled to join the protest, though the Berkeley rad-lit "Copwatch" stayed on the sidelines.)

LBL spokesman Hursey Bush pointed to the acquittal of the cops who heat Rodney King, which "put wind in the sails of the racist police terror and murder. The Labor Black League for Social Defense is for labor/black mobilizations for militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist suppression that is capitalist America." This strategy is counterposed to the pro-Democratic Party liberals and fake-lefts, who preach reliance on phony FBI investigations and impotent civilian review boards. The LBL spokesman concluded: "John Henry Owens faces six years in prison, his only crime being that he survived Crabtree's racist murderous assault.... What's needed is a workers revolution to smash capitalism, to smash the system of racist oppression."

For more information about the Labor Black League and its activities, write: Labor Black League for Social Defense, P.O. Box 751, Oakland, CA 94604, or call (510) 839-0851. ■

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# Spartacists Always Said No to Mitterrand

## French Elections: JCR and the Popular Front

On March 21, French voters went to the polls in the first round of a legislative election marking the eclipsing of Socialist Party (PS) dominance in French politics, and possibly the end of the PS itself. While "socialist" president François Mitterrand has two years to go in his seven-year term, the size of the vote for the conservative coalition victory means that after the second round of voting is held next week, a right-wing government will have the whip hand. Government policy will accelerate the anti-worker, anti-immigrant course already undertaken by the social democrats in office. Since coming to power a dozen years ago, Mitterrand's PS has loyally administered the affairs of the French bourgeoisie, imposing anti-worker policies every bit as reactionary as its predecessors. Under the tight-money policies of the current PS cabinet headed by Pierre Bérégovoy, a favorite of the international hankers, unemployment is back up to double digits, as it has been for much of the "socialist" reign in office.

Mitterrand presided over a "popular front" coalition uniting the mass reformist workers parties with marginal representatives of the bourgeoisie. In this way the proletariat was bound hand and foot to the capitalist order. Strike struggles were undercut and betrayed, including rail workers in 1986-87, nurses and Paris subway workers in 1988-89 and Renault auto workers in 1991. The Communist Party (PCF) hacked the Mitterrand regime to the hilt during 1981-83, when it had a few ministerial portfolios, and also later from outside the cabinet. When the Union of the Left won the 1981 vote, hundreds of thousands of Parisians thronged to Place de la Bastille singing "La vie en rose" (for the symbol of the PS) and hoping for "change." But 12 years later, there is pervasive disenchantment: anger among the working class, and desperate fury among youth condemned to unemployment and among "immigrants" (including millions of North Africans born in France) beset by racist repression.

Once again, as in the late 1930s and 1940s, the popular front has paved the way for reaction by dissipating a revolutionary forward thrust by the masses. Today, the French bourgeoisie thinks it has rid itself of the spectre of the 1968 youth upsurge and general strike. It hopes that the crumbling of Stalinism in East Europe and the former Soviet Union will spell the end of the PCF. And more than a decade in office, shoving brutal austerity

policies down the workers' throats, could finish off the corruption- and scandal-ridden PS. But the capitalist parties are afraid that they could become the object of working-class unrest, as happened during the short-lived Chirac cabinet of 1986-88. The conservative Union for

what was previously the largest party in France in a "big bang" following the electoral defeat of the left.

Rocard would like to see a "broad-based" coalition of the left and center, like the American Democratic Party, built on the ruins of the PS, including ex-CPers

only dream of being the fringe of a new popular front. The LCR's slogan: "reconstructing hope!"

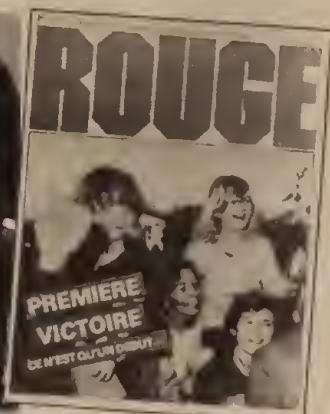
In this context, last fall the LCR youth group, Jeunesses Communistes Révolutionnaires (JCR), was summarily cut off by their parent group. "It had become a



"No to NATO Popular Front!" proclaimed Ligue Trotskyiste de France at time of Mitterrand's election in 1981.



Der Spiegel



Fake-Trotskyists of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire hailed "victory" of Mitterrand's "Union of the Left" coalition.

French Democracy (UDF) and Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR), running in tandem, vow to continue the PS's austerity policies plus selling off more nationalized industries and banks. Le Pen's fascist National Front (FN) increased its score over the last legislative elections, while the "mainstream" bourgeois parties take up its anti-immigrant program and fascist violence continues unabated.

A new element in the current balloting is the presence of ecologist/"Green" parties competing for the middle-class vote and acting as potential swing parties in a "center-right" cabinet. Mitterrand's former ecology minister Brice Lalonde has been offering his services to RPR leader Balladur. Former PS defense minister Chevènement—who split from Mitterrand out of nationalist pique over the subordination of the French army to the Americans in the Gulf War, and then led the Citizens Movement calling for a "no" vote against the Maastricht Treaty on European monetary union in a referendum last September—is calling for a "refoundation of the left." Meanwhile, former prime minister Michel Rocard is calling for the "recomposition" of the Socialist Party leading to the death of

and the various eco-spinoffs of the Mitterrand coalition. But with the Socialist-led coalition expected to lose up to 200 of their 270 seats in the assembly, possibly including Rocard's, the "big bang" could turn out to be a big fizzle.

As a *fin de règne* (end of reign) atmosphere envelopes the splintering Socialists, the erstwhile "far left" is also wallowing in demoralization. Having bought the bourgeois lie of the "death of communism" crowned by the August 1991 collapse of the Stalinist regime in the USSR, they are viewing the March 1993 electoral debacle of the social democrats as the "death of socialism." Setting the trend is the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) of Alain Krivine, part of Ernest Mandel's pseudo-Trotskyist "United Secretariat" (USec). Having searched for years for a new/broad/mass "vanguard" to tail after, these one-time New Leftists are now seeking "new terrains" of struggle. At its congress last year, the LCR majority spoke of dissolving itself in order to become "an organized current in a broader party," and at a March 17 LCR electoral meeting in Nantes, Krivine declared "we do not claim to be Trotskyists."

Last winter Krivine & Co. helped cobble together an electoral platform for the March vote under the label, "Pledge to Change to the Left." Among the participants are Chevènementists such as Max Gallo, the "Socialist Left" of former LCR leader Julien Dray (associated with the perennial USec dissident Matti), and various former PCF dissidents including the "refoundateurs" (refounders) of Charles Fiterman and the "reconstructeurs" (reconstructors) of Marcel Rigout (*Libération*, 4 December 1992). And don't forget the ex-PCF "renovateurs" (renovators) of Pierre Juquin, whom the LCR supported for president in 1988. From the would-be Democrats in the center to the reconstructed Guevarists of the now not-so-far left, they're just reshuffling the debris of the mass reformist parties. If Rocard wants to be the Bill Clinton of France, the "Change to the Left" coalition can

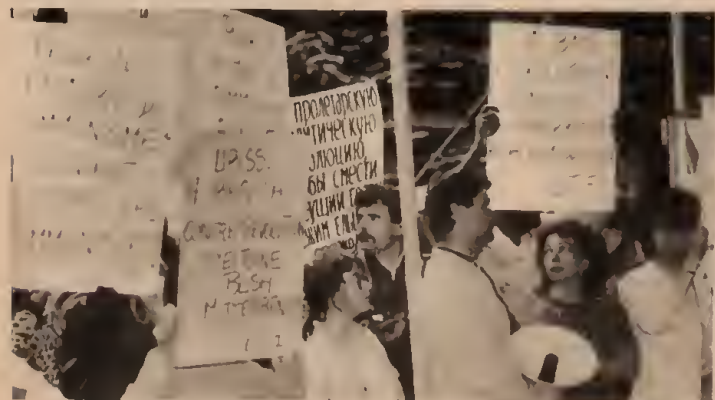
dogmatic sect," said Alain Krivine. "They organized debates with the Spartacists.... We disagreed about everything" (*Libération*, 3 December 1992). Actually, after debating last September with the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF), section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), the JCR leaders have done all they could to keep away from the ICL. We wrote of the JCR in our article "The New Anti-Spartacists" (WV No. 562, 30 October 1992), in response to JCR leader Damien Elliott's diatribe Spartacist-baiting a left opposition in the USec's Algerian section. (Elliott's piece is available in English in No. 7 of our series, *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League*, which reprints opponents' attacks on us.)

After being chucked out by Krivine, the JCR has been in considerable turmoil, with some locals seeking to crawl back to the LCR. In the March elections, some JCR members ran on the "Change to the Left" ticket, while in the 13th Arrondissement of Paris, the JCR presented Raymond Debord as a candidate on a "Workers Opposition Slate." In treating centrist groupings, it is necessary to respond to their often glaring contradictions. Thus in the leaflet which is translated below, our comrades of the LTF offered to give conditional critical support to the JCR candidate, *provided he unambiguously refuse to call for votes to any parties of a popular front*.

But on this key question the JCR has been deliberately ambiguous. When an LTF supporter asked during the closing electoral meeting of the JCR on March 13 whether the JCR would call for a vote to the PCF and/or PS on the second round of voting, the speaker, candidate Debord, refused to answer.

\* \* \*

Mitterrand's candidates, totally discredited, are getting ready to undergo a crushing defeat in the March '93 legislative elections. The anti-worker popular front of class collaboration is dead, and its decomposing corpse poisons the organizations which claim to stand for



Le Bolchéviek

June 1992 Lutte Ouvrière fête: LTF/ICL protests exclusion of gays and Trotskyists. LO buys the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" hype and capitulates to workerist backwardness.



the working class. After 12 years in office, Mitterrand has opened the road to the right wing just as Léon Blum did in his time (not to mention Allende in Chile).

The PCF, already on its knees because of its participation in Mitterrand's first government, is today hit smack in the face by the collapse of Stalinism and the triumph of the counterrevolution in the former USSR and Eastern Europe. The PCF has no other perspective except to start over and, like Sisyphus, push for a new Union of the Left popular front. On the so-called far left, the LCR, which actively supported Mitterrand's candidacy and proclaimed victory in 1981, pushed by the winds of the Cold War has congealed into a social-democratic organization and has run aground in the wreckage of PCF and PS "dissidents." The LCR too is trying to reconstitute a new version of the Union of the Left with its "Pledge to Change to the Left" electoral bloc.

"Twelve years is enough!" cries the JCR-*L'Egalité*. The former youth organization of the LCR, expelled last November by Krivine, is presenting a candidate in the 13th Arrondissement of Paris "under the banner of workers opposition" to the Mitterrand government and to its "anti-worker, anti-youth, anti-migrant policies." But for 12 years the LCR persisted in giving its votes to the Mitterrand coalition, of which, in 1981, it bragged that it was the "fourth component"—actually the fifth wheel. Comrades, to offer to the working class a class alternative today, one has to have opposed the popular front from its inception in 1972. This is what the ISt/ICL has done, and its French section, the Ligue Trotskyiste, is well known for having never called for a vote to Mitterrand.

In July 1992, at a JCR day school, its leader Damien Elliott even publicly praised us for our principled opposition to a vote for workers parties in a popular front, a bourgeois political formation. Nonetheless, he refused to take a position against a vote for Mitterrand in 1981. Many JCR members really want to oppose the popular front. To do this they must break forthrightly with the



Le Bolchéviek

JCR leader Damien Elliott.

all-too-long history of the LCR's capitulations. They must break decisively not only with the "refoundation of the left," but also with the popular-frontist politics of the LCR-USec and all the housebroken "far left."

The JCR claims to offer a revolutionary alternative to young militants who have gone into opposition to the discredited USec, which supported Mitterrand and other popular fronts around the world and is complicit in the destruction of the workers states, on whose ruins the barbarity of imperialism's "New World Order" is taking shape. Their "workers opposition" slate says it is "in total opposition to advocates of unity with the bourgeoisie and the rich." A good formula, and we can only see it as a step in the right direction if this declared "total opposition" expresses itself in clear responses to the key questions. Were that the case, we would be led to consider critical support to the "Workers

Opposition Slate." But clarity is precisely what is lacking in this platform, which crystallizes the centrist confusion of the JCR. Let's look at it more closely.

First of all, one notes that nothing is discussed "beyond the hexagon" [France], and even less on the question of questions for revolutionaries, the Russian question. Not a word on the historic defeat for the international proletariat represented by the disappearance of the USSR as a degenerated workers state with the consolidation of a capitalist-restorationist state under Yeltsin's rule. Why is this so, given that the international bourgeoisie trumpets the "death of communism," and many workers who saw the USSR as the "socialist homeland" are trying to orient themselves? It seems that the JCR spokesman is relieved, thinking that the Russian question is no longer on the agenda, since he decided that Yeltsin's coup d'état marked the end of the Soviet workers state. A Trotskyist candidate would take advantage of an electoral campaign to address these workers, explaining to them how Trotsky fought against Stalinism from the beginning and warned that it was undermining the gains of October.

This omission is no accident. At the time, the position of the JCR leadership was in fact veiled support to Yeltsin. As we wrote in an "Open Letter to the JCR-*L'Egalité*" regarding Damien Elliott's pamphlet, "From the Fall of Stalinism to the Formation of the CIS": "Elliott is quite categorical on the point that Yeltsin's coup unleashed the counterrevolution, but by equating the social forces represented by Yeltsin, the putschists and Gorbachev, and by implying that those few thousands actually on the Yeltsin barricades were 'winnable,' Elliott implies that it didn't matter if they supported Yeltsin.... He thinks that Yeltsin is a counterrevolutionary but he wants to 'fraternize' with his shock troops instead of smashing them!" (*Le Bolchéviek* No. 120, September 1992). In contrast, the ICL distributed thousands of leaflets titled "Soviet Workers: Smash Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" across the USSR. If such a workers' mobilization had taken place, it would have constituted the beginning of proletarian political revolution to restore power to the workers in the workers state.

And what about the Gulf War? Many JCR militants have gone into opposition to the USec because they wanted to fight their own imperialism which massacred Iraqis (some of them even wore our slogan as a badge, "Sink Bush and Mitterrand in the Gulf!"). Today they can hear their candidate Debord call for "stopping the colonialist, racist and imperialist policies of France"—that is, a democratic capitalist France! There can be no "halt to imperialist policies" without the destruction of imperialism, which is simply the highest stage of capitalism. Against the centrist Kautsky, who also asserted that imperialism was a policy, Lenin polemicized in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* that this means "[to counterpose] another bourgeois policy which. [Kautsky] alleges, is possible on this very same basis of

finance capital.... The result is a slurring-over and a blunting of the most profound contradictions of the latest stage of capitalism, instead of an exposure of their depth; the result is bourgeois reformism instead of Marxism."

Reformism means support to one's national bourgeoisie, especially against its foreign rivals, right up to support in an inter-imperialist war. The JCR platform calls for a bourgeois protectionist program. What other interpretation is possible when, in the framework of "left politics" it calls for a "break with the logic of Maastricht and the dictates of the EEC," for a "state monopoly of foreign trade," for the "reorganization of trade with all countries"....in the context of capitalism? It's the same language that the PCF used in its "programs" for an "advanced democracy," which prepared the ground for signing the Common Program [of the popular-front Union of the Left] in 1972. And today we're seeing a chauvinist protectionist campaign at a time when trade war between the various imperialist brigands is accelerating.

It is in this hexagonal [French-centered] and protectionist framework that Raymond Debord puts forward his program, which comes down to reforming the bourgeois state and its institutions. In the JCR's electoral program, one can find one or two demands from Trotsky's Transitional Program, softened, isolated, separated from the perspective of mobilizing the proletariat to take power—and thus negating the function of such demands: "It is necessary to help the masses, in the process of the daily struggle, to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution" (Transitional Program). On the contrary, the JCR program asserts that one can satisfy the needs of the masses within the limits of capitalist property and the capitalist state: "Another policy aimed at the satisfaction

of social needs and the defense of the most underprivileged would necessitate harsh measures which wouldn't stop at encroaching on the prerogatives of the possessing class." Even clearer, the *L'Egalité* supplement dated 6 February takes as its own the shopworn remedies of reformism, which the PCF and Lutte Ouvrière (LO) are so fond of, by calling to "make the rich pay and create jobs!"

The JCR correctly accuses the LCR of wanting "to restore the power of parliament in a framework that one supposes is that of the Fifth Republic," (*L'Egalité* No. 18, February 1993). But this is in order to propose a "really democratic" parliamentary democracy. The JCR leadership, in a style worthy of Lambert or Matti, calls for "the liquidation of the anti-democratic institutions of the Fifth Republic" in order to install a "single parliamentary assembly, elected proportionally," where—in a perversion of the revolutionary measure of the Paris Commune which destroyed the bourgeois state—elected representatives would be paid "the average salary of a worker." Sort of a democratic and cheap Fourth Republic!

Not that cheap, in reality. The JCR leadership, which (let's not forget) claims to be for working-class independence, in the same breath demands "public financing of parties under conditions of strict equality." No doubt Raymond Debord and his pals dream of replacing their subsidies from the LCR with the largesse of the bourgeois state, to plunge with glee into what Engels rightly called "bourgeois piggishness." Almost 80 years ago, Lenin exposed the material roots of opportunism: the buying off of the leaderships of workers organizations by the bourgeoisie, their integration into the capitalist state. It is the institutionalization of this corruption which the JCR leadership is demanding! After all,

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# Young Spartacus

## Cops, Klan Target Black Protests in Deep South

# Down With the Confederate Flag and Monuments to Slavery!

Monuments, statues and flags glorifying white supremacy litter the Southern landscape today. A battle is on in states across the South between racist defenders of lynch mob rule and fighters for black rights. In Memphis, anti-racists have mounted protests against a statue honoring Nathan Bedford Forrest, the Confederate general who founded the Ku Klux Klan. Meanwhile in Mississippi, the tombstone portrait of James Earl Chaney was recently riddled with bullets, just as hearings began on the suspicious "suicides" of 24 young black males found hanging in Mississippi jail cells since 1990. (Chaney was a black civil rights activist who was murdered with his comrades Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner in 1964 by a lynch mob led by the local police.)

Focusing on a fight over the Georgia state flag, which combines the Confederate battle flag with the state seal, the "Sons of Confederate Veterans," with a membership list including Jesse Helms, Patrick Buchanan and William Westmoreland, are digging in to defend the symbol of their heritage of white ruling-class privilege. (Shelby Foote, the popular historian and commentator on the PBS mini-series "The Civil War," who harks back to a mythical genteel and benevolent slaveowning South, only recently resigned from this reactionary cabal.) Anti-racist fighters, especially black students, are mobilizing across the South in protests against them.

Four states of the old Confederacy (Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina) fly a version of the Confederate flag as their official state banners. The Confederate flag, above all other symbols, is a call to arms for resurgent racist terror, and has been taken up by race-haters from the Deep South to Howard Beach, New York to South Africa to Germany. In Georgia, students from the Atlanta University Center, including members of the Spartacus Youth Club, marched to the state capital on February 12 and sent the flag of slavery up in smoke. This student protest



Bridges/Atlanta Journal and Constitution



Anderson/Times-Picayune

Left: Atlanta student protesters burn Georgia state flag of white supremacy in front of capitol. Above: Louisiana state representative Avery Alexander is attacked by New Orleans cops at protest against racist monument to Confederate officers.

was met by a massive show of police force—phalanxes of cops were mobilized while police helicopters buzzed over the protesters' heads, a calculated move to terrorize the students and intimidate Atlanta's black population.

Some state legislators, with an eye on the big money and the hundreds of black athletes expected to pour into Atlanta during the 1996 Olympic Games, moved to remove the Confederate flag as Georgia's official banner. In cities across Georgia, black officials eagerly took down the racist flag. Then the cracker contingent in the legislature mobilized in defense of their racist standard, including lobbying to cut off state funding to black Atlanta. Faced with losing the vote in the state legislature, the liberals caved in. The bill to change the state emblem was defeated.

Meanwhile, in Louisiana this month David ("Klan in a suit") Duke and his

Luckovitch/Atlanta Journal and Constitution

Confederate flag-waving followers gathered in New Orleans, to "rededicate" a monument celebrating a battle which signaled the destruction of Reconstruction and the re-establishment of white supremacy. The (anti-) "Liberty Monument" commemorates the 1874 Canal Street Battle in which the White League, a reactionary force led by ex-Confederate officers, defeated a black militia.

On March 7, "former" KKK Grand Wizard Duke and his ilk were protected by the racist police, who savagely attacked a group led by black legislator Avery Alexander that came out to protest Duke's rally. Alexander, an 82-year-old black civil rights movement veteran, was pushed and held in a choke hold by one white cop while another menaced him with a baton. Four other anti-fascist protesters were arrested. This brutal cop attack has outraged the black community. Backed by student groups and black legislators, Avery Alexander has vowed to maintain weekly protests at the site.

The local press railed against the black protesters and defended the monument on the grounds that (white) Louisianans took up arms against Reconstruction because of "vote stealing and bribery" under the "Yankee military occupation" (Times-Picayune, 9 March). This white-washing of history and apology for white supremacy is typical of Southern white liberals who retail the racist myth of marauding Yankee "carpetbaggers." Yet the corruption scandals surrounding Louisiana white Dixiecrat politicians are legendary. The platform of the 1870s White League was virulently racist: "our hereditary civilization and Christianity menaced by a stupid Africanization, we appeal to the men of our race...to re-establish a white man's government."

The monument to the White League's defeat of Reconstruction is a living rallying point for fascists precisely for its

obscene celebration of the Confederacy, chattel slavery and the victory of Jim Crow. A statue of Martin Luther King Jr. was painted white in the pre-dawn hours of Sunday, March 20 by defenders of the racist Liberty Monument. We say that removal of the Liberty Monument is a necessary act of public sanitation!

You can't fight racist reaction by relying on the Democrats. Black elected officials, who are in fact the enforcers of racist capitalist oppression in urban centers throughout the South today, occasionally focus on symbols of the Confederacy in order to refurbish their credentials with their constituency. But the "New South" black Democrats, like Atlanta's mayor Maynard Jackson, are directly responsible for ordering heavy police attacks against black students—including beating and tear-gassing students back into their dorms when they protested the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King last year.

Ever seeking to conciliate old Dixiecrat racists, the black pols are having a tough time finding any "middle ground" to stand on. Thus in Richmond, Virginia a black city councilman's proposal to place statues of civil rights movement heroes alongside statues of Confederate racists like Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson was shot down by a white councilman, who attacked the idea as akin to "putting a toilet in your living room."

Our 3,000-strong labor/black mobilization in Atlanta to stop the fascist Klan and Nazi skinheads in January 1989 showed the strategy and power necessary to bring down the flag of slavery for good. Against illusions in the Democrats, we in the Spartacus Youth Club fight to win students to ally with the power of the labor movement to fight racist terror and finish the Civil War through socialist revolution. Then the Confederate monuments will be truly "gone with the wind"! ■





# Defend Gay Rights

## Letter

18 March 1993

Dear Young Spartacus,

The article "New York Curriculum Battle: Flashpoint for Anti-Gay Bigotry" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 568, 29 January) sparked debate in the New York Spartacus Youth Club, including discussion in its last two meetings. The article addressed the anti-gay backlash in New York City over the "Children of the Rainbow" multicultural public school curriculum championed by now-deposed schools chancellor Joseph Fernandez.

There were two points of criticism of the article. Some comrades felt that the article needed a sentence making clear that the fundamental root of anti-gay bigotry lies in the sex role norms of the patriarchal nuclear family, a bourgeois institution. The last paragraph of the article says that "key to defeating the anti-

gay witchhunters" is a program for "an end to material want" and a "socialist future of equality and abundance." But the article does not address the central point that a workers revolution will lay the basis for ending anti-gay bigotry by providing the material means to replace the nuclear family (i.e., by socializing domestic labor) and permitting free personal relations to develop.

A second point of debate was over the means by which many black and Hispanic parents in Brooklyn and Queens have been mobilized for the anti-gay witchhunt. The article says, "New York's anti-gay bigots appeal to the economic resentments of struggling working-class and minority families by portraying gays as a privileged elite who already wield too much power," and this is said to be "akin to the anti-Semitic portrayal of Jews as 'privileged' money-lenders...." This analysis was disputed on the grounds that anti-gay bigotry is fueled

in times of economic crisis not by demagoguery about the economic status of gays, but by heightened demagoguery about the indispensability of "traditional" families and related religious blather.

The youth club went back and reviewed our basic documents on the communist program to combat homosexual oppression, published at the time of the Spartacist League's fusion with the "gay liberationist-communist" Red Flag Union (see special fusion supplement in *WV* No. 172, 9 September 1977), and what we said and did during previous anti-gay witchhunts.

At the time of the 1979 trial of the right-wing killer of San Francisco mayor Moscone and popular gay Democratic supervisor Harvey Milk we also noted that bigotry in the working class was fueled by a perception of gays as a well-off community that was "gentrifying" working-class neighborhoods and supporting city administrations engaged in attacks on working-class livelihoods. And while gays and lesbians exist in all sectors of society, the visible "gay community" tends to have the petty-bourgeois character of

those who can "afford" to come out.

These factors play a role in New York City where the liberal Dinkins administration, which has a visible gay constituency, gives the working class "doomsday" hudgets—and under pressure from the right is now backtracking on gay rights. The recent battle over school curriculum was Round One of the 1994 mayoral elections, in which a right-wing bid is coalescing around Republican candidate Giuliani, with Puerto Rican school board member Ninfa Segarra mobilizing behind the arch-reactionary Cardinal O'Connor in the name of Catholic unity.

As we stated in 1979: "The alliance of lifestyle radicalism, reformism and the Democrats can provide only token reforms which enrage 'middle American' backwardness and touch off new waves of the same old backlash. The working class, armed with a vision of a truly free society, is the only social force which can defend all the oppressed and lay the basis for a new society through uprooting the material bases of social oppression" (*WV* No. 324, 22 June 1979).

Comradely,  
Jon W.

## Murder...

(continued from page 12)

link is the doctor." The assassination of David Gunn shows the workings of a right-wing terrorism campaign. And it is working.

Anti-abortion terror is the extralegal arm of a crusade that was orchestrated straight from the Reagan-Bush White House. They went after abortion rights in court, cut off funding to hospitals and clinics, and encouraged these domestic contras. The combined effect has been chillingly effective in its campaign to close down the clinics and cut off access to abortion for thousands of women. An article in the *SF Weekly* (17 March) notes that in 1993, legal abortions are not available in 83 percent of the counties in America. Medical schools are also intimidated: in 1985 some 22.6 percent of obstetrics programs in the U.S. trained doctors to perform abortions; by 1991 this was down to only 12.4 percent.

Many "pro-choice" supporters, particularly the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), looked to the election of Democrat Bill Clinton as the key to defeating the anti-abortion bigots. On the other side, Randall Terry said, "Our worst political



Deadly  
"wanted poster"  
distributed by  
anti-abortion  
thugs of  
Operation  
Rescue targeted  
David Gunn.  
Poster listed  
Gunn's clinic  
schedule and  
phone numbers.

nightmare has come upon us. A baby-killing, pro-Sodomite, pass-out-the-condoms-in-school, back-slidden President is headed for the White House." At least temporarily, the violence has escalated, as the clinic blockaders, after a decade-plus of support from the White House, feel abandoned at the top and have increased their night-riding terror.

It is notable that bourgeois feminist groups who have fervently supported Clinton have been noticeably silent around the murder of David Gunn.

Now the NOW/NARAL bourgeois feminists are pushing a "freedom of choice" bill in the Democratic Congress, and enthusing over Clinton's female attorney general, asking former Florida prosecutor Reno to "crack down" on anti-abortion mobs and to come up with a federal law against blocking access to clinics. It is obvious that such "no blocking" laws will be used against strikers who try to shut down plants and keep out the scabs.

And while Clinton's campaign promise to respect "choice" for women helped

him win the election, formal legality of abortion won't help poor, minority and working-class women get abortions if there's no doctors around to perform them, no clinics left to perform them in, and they don't have the money to afford them. That is why the Spartacist League fights for free abortion on demand, and calls on labor and all supporters of abortion rights to defend the clinics. As an SL spokesman said at a Columbia University speakout against the murder of Dr. Gunn:

"Bill Clinton is not going to defend the clinics. Bill Clinton stands for the racist death penalty, he stands for 'workfare,' to force poor mothers on welfare to leave their children alone or starve. The Arkansas abortion law is one of the worst in the nation. The FBI is not going to defend abortion clinics! And we can't look to the bosses' parties to defend our rights. The Spartacist League stands for mobilizing the unions and all the intended victims to use their social power to defeat the bigots in the streets. Only working-class rule will ensure women's equality." ■

## SYC Protests...

(continued from page 12)

quite a few students to stop and listen and buy *Workers Vanguard*.

The CCNY rally became a heated political debate between the revolutionary Trotskyist program of the Spartacists and the "state capitalists" of the League for a Revolutionary Party (LRP). Walter Daum, a spokesman for the LRP and an instructor at City College, asked and was given the right to speak at the SYC rally. Incensed at our placard reading, "Capitalist Counterrevolution Means Misery for Women! Defend Abortion Rights in ex-USSR, Poland, Germany!", Daum frothed: "Are women better off in China, in so-called 'socialist' China where abortion is imposed?"

Amid shouts of "Yes!" the rattled professor climbed down off the snowbank as SYC member Semeon Gregory explained:

"In China, before the revolution women had their feet bound and were horribly oppressed. Counterrevolution in China would be a great setback. In Poland, abortion has recently been outlawed by Lech Walesa, leader of Solidarity, the only union Reagan ever loved, sponsored by the CIA and the Vatican—and supported by the LRP over here. Some people like the LRP who claim to fight for abortion rights actually were on the same side as clerical-nationalists like Solidarnosc, and with Khomeini in Iran, with the *mujahedin* in Afghanistan, with Yeltsin."

Daum went apoplectic. The cops failed to shut down our rally and Daum failed to shout it down, eventually scurrying back to his office as protesters chanted: "1, 2, 3, 4—Free abortion's what we're for! 5, 6, 7, 8—Separate church and state!" ■

## Spartacist Educational Conferences

### New York City

3 p.m.

### James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism

Speaker T Marlow, Spartacist League

7 p.m.

### Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution! The Rise and Fall of the Black Panthers: A Revolutionary Marxist Analysis

Speaker Don Alexander, SL Central Committee, former Black Power militant

P.S. 41, 116 W. 11th St. (near 6th Ave.)

For more information, or to obtain readings, call (212) 267-1025

Saturday, April 10

### Chicago

11 a.m.

### James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism

Speaker Emily Turnbull, co-editor of *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism*

### Vancouver: Labor/Minority Mobilization Drives Off Skinheads!

An eyewitness account of the January 22 mobilization of 3,000 trade unionists, leftists, gays, minorities and youth that put the Nazis on the run.

3 p.m.

### Nationalism and Counterrevolution

Speaker Y Rad, Trotskyist League of Canada/Ligue Trotskyiste du Canada

University of Illinois, Chicago  
1007 W. Harrison  
Behavioral Science Building (BSB) Room 145

For more information, or to obtain readings call  
Chicago Spartacist League (312) 663-0715  
Trotskyist League of Canada (416) 593-4138

Saturday, April 10



# Russia's Exploiters...

(continued from page 1)

of the working people. The key to saving industry and the proletariat is a struggle for state power—socialist revolution to establish effective centralized planning in a reformed Soviet federation based on proletarian democracy and socialist internationalism.

## Yeltsin's "Shock Therapy": Third World Immiseration

What is behind the political crisis in Russia is not a struggle between socialism and capitalism, nor between democracy and totalitarianism, but the utter failure of Yeltsin's economic policies and, more broadly, the dilemma of a counterrevolutionary regime seeking to impose capitalism without capital. Acquiescing to Washington's diktat in the futile hope of securing a massive infusion of Western aid and investment, the Yeltsinites imposed an economic "shock treatment" crafted by Harvard boy Jeffrey Sachs. Since Yeltsin's January 1992 decree "freeing" prices on basic commodities, the working masses have been plunged into unprecedented impoverishment.

Three months later, the government statistical agency reported that 90 percent of workers in Russia were earning below the then subsistence wage of 1,500 rubles a month. Per capita income in real terms at the start of 1993 was 43 percent of what it was two years ago, and even this figure disguises the Third World poverty facing millions of the most downtrodden. A handful of speculators have become overnight dollar millionaires (or ruble billionaires!), and certain sectors of the proletariat, like miners and transport workers, have been

is 1.5 percent, but many workers are sent home on "forced vacation" on as little as one-fifth of their normal wage.

And the hardest hit have been women, who formerly made up 51 percent of the workforce. Yeltsin's labor minister Melikyan declaims, "I seriously don't think women should work while men are doing nothing." Many women are being driven into prostitution to support themselves and their children. ABC News' *Prime Time Live* (18 March) reported on a doctor in Moscow who became a prostitute because it was the only way to provide for her seven-year-old son.

Yeltsin's opponents point to the widespread devastation his policies have wrought on the entire Russian economy, warning that this level of immiseration could set off a social explosion that

to the old "military-industrial complex," Volsky & Co. vow to maintain a strong Russian state and demand the continued flow of government subsidies to the country's key heavy industries.

Last summer Volsky, who heads the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and was a former adviser to Gorbachev, declared that Yeltsin's "democrats have already shown they are unable to ensure a decent existence for the people 80 percent of whom today live below the poverty line" (*Moscow New Times*, July 1992). Vladimir Ovchinnikov, general director of the Aleksandrov Radio Factory, Russia's largest producer of TV sets, declared that "real power is in the hands of directors because the livelihoods of tens of millions of people depend on them, and their workers believe in them."

This was not mere demagoguery. Many fearful workers now look to the managers—most of them derived from the former *nomenklatura* (Stalinist bureaucratic elite)—to restore a semblance of the "good old days" under Brezhnev, when Soviet enterprises provided their workforce with low-rent housing, inexpensive meals in the factory cafeteria as well as meat to take home, summer vacations on the Black Sea, etc. As one woman who now makes 3,000 rubles a month as a cook in a children's hospital said, "We worked hard, and now we have nothing. With pleasure, I would go back to the old days" (*Washington Post*, 27 January).

But the factory managers are no less intent than Yeltsin's sponges on being the new exploiters of Russia's proletariat in collaboration with international capital. Where the Volskyites differ with Yeltsin is in *how* to develop Russian capitalism. They look to Deng's China as a model, where the bureaucracy maintains firm political control and continues to cultivate a strong heavy industry and military sector while gradually shifting vast chunks of the economy over to capitalism. But where China remains a deformed workers state, Russia has a (weak) capitalist state.

Volsky & Co. argue that, particularly in the absence of significant Western investment, it is necessary for the new state to directly oversee the development of a capitalist economy through a *corporatist* policy not dissimilar to that carried out by Mussolini in Italy in the 1920s and '30s. This policy was already advanced in the waning days of the Gorbachev era by "black colonel" Viktor Alksnis, who called for the introduction of capitalism through a Pinochet-style regime.

In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937), Trotsky noted: "Stalinism and fascism, in spite of a deep difference in social foundations, are symmetrical phenomena. In many of their features they show a deadly similarity." In effect, the corporatist wing of the counterrevolution seeks to resurrect Stalin's heavy-handed

bonapartist regime on capitalist social foundations, maintaining a streamlined state sector as a motor force for a new capitalist economy.

No less than the Yeltsinites, the corporatists see the need to use the whip of repression to discipline the proletariat in order to facilitate the primitive accumulation of capital. To make Russian industrial goods cheap enough to compete on world markets, such a regime would lay off millions of "redundant" workers, while those who remained on the assembly lines would be subjected to harsh speedup. The slashing of real wages brought about under the Yeltsin/Gaidar "shock treatment" would be maintained and likely intensified by police-state regimentation of the labor force. Trade unions would be permitted only as pliant tools of the corporatist state, and strikes would be suppressed as "unpatriotic." Notably, it was Rutskoi, Volsky's main political ally, who played hard cop in smashing the Russian air controllers strike last summer.

## Gorbachev's Perestroika: First Stage of Descent into Chaos

The Soviet economy was integrated on an all-Union basis and enterprises were designed to take maximum advantage of economies of scale. In some cases, to be sure, the Stalinist technocrats indulged in industrial gigantism for its own sake, going beyond the limits of economic rationality. But whether economically optimal or not, in many industries just a few factories supplied vital inputs for scores of enterprises from eastern Siberia to the Baltic republics. For example, 70 percent of all the different types of machine tools made in the USSR were produced in one enterprise and in no other.

Clearly, such a system could work only under centralized direction where a given enterprise was ordered to supply other enterprises at a set price. Otherwise managers could ruthlessly exploit their monopoly position, selling to the highest bidder while enterprises which could not afford to pay would have to cut back their output. That is exactly what happened when Gorbachev scrapped centralized planning in January 1988 and decreed that all Soviet enterprises were to become self-financing on the basis of *khosraschet* (cost accounting). Consumer goods managers cut back shipments to state shops, where prices were still fixed, diverting output to private "cooperatives" where mafia-like entrepreneurs practiced price extortion. Producers of industrial and intermediate goods likewise jacked up their prices.

By 1990-91, as inflation was eroding the value of the ruble, the industrial supply system degenerated into crude barter deals negotiated on the basis of economic blackmail. For example, the managers of the Sverdlovsk transformer factory refused to deliver transformers to the huge Uralmash engineering complex unless the latter provided them with a list of items including piping, scrap metal, kitchen fittings, rest home passes and a telephone for the apartment of the doctor looking after the director's wife! Managers were no longer concerned about their enterprises' long-term development because they doubted whether they had a future themselves.

Growing nationalist disintegration added another element to the economic chaos, as factories dependent for parts and supplies upon warring republics like Armenia and Azerbaijan ground to a halt. National republics also imposed export restrictions on goods in short supply, especially if they could be sold on the world market for hard currency. Simultaneously, the new nationalist regimes, spearheaded by Yeltsin as president of the Russian republic, started refusing to turn over the central government's share of tax collections, causing the burgeoning inflation of the final Gorbachev period. *Less than 30 percent* of all taxes collected in the first nine months of 1991



Old-age pensioner begging in Red Square.

Korneyev/AFP



Swersey/NY Times

Workers at huge Vaz auto plant in Togliatti, where old Stalinist managers want to become new capitalist owners.

granted wage increases to keep up with the galloping inflation. But the average worker in Russia today receives two-thirds of the 6,000 rubles a month considered the bare survival minimum. Even *Time* magazine (22 March) concedes:

"Yeltsin and his team of shock therapists have been at the task since the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, producing few successes and much turmoil, hardship and anxiety."

Today Russian workers can survive only by also engaging in petty trade and deal-making or, if they have a *dacha* (house in the country), by growing food crops in their backyard. An engineer recently quit his job at a Moscow nuclear power station in order to protect the potato crop on his *dacha* from thieves! An 84-year-old pensioner stands on the freezing streets to sell a carton of milk or a pack of cigarettes at a markup to people who don't want to wait two hours on line. The official unemployment rate

would sweep away the fledgling "market economy." Inflation has climbed to nearly 50 percent a month, with the price of a standard basket of goods having increased almost a *hundredfold* in the past two years. Production dropped by 24 percent last year alone. Yeltsin's scheme to privatize the entire economy in one quick fix by distributing 10,000-ruble shareholding vouchers to the population has been a scam from start to finish. In February, angry protesters blocked the streets of Leningrad to demand their money back from fly-by-night con artists who ripped off at least 350,000 vouchers by promising an instant return on their "investment."

While the Yeltsinites' social base is in the new "robber baron" entrepreneurial elite, the opposition—centered on the Civic Union bloc of "industrialist" Volsky and militarist vice president Rutskoi—draws its support from the country's factory managers. Appealing



went to the central government. To make up the shortfall of rubles, the Gorbachev regime ran the printing presses overtime.

In other words, Yeltsin *deliberately sabotaged* the Soviet economy and then exploited popular discontent over rising prices and shortages to push through the counterrevolution. By the summer of 1991, most working people were indifferent to the fate of the Gorbachev regime. Many believed *falsely* that things could not get worse. And some bought the line that only a rapid move to a full-fledged market system could restore the health of the economy.

### IMF Orders Surgery Without Anesthesia...

The collapse of the industrial supply system, which began under Gorbachev, was greatly accelerated with the breakup of the USSR formalized in December 1991. A month later, Yeltsin lifted controls on consumer prices, implementing the IMF "shock therapy" under his economic "expert," the obscure academic Yegor Gaidar. A year after Yeltsin seized power in the August 1991 counter-coup:

- Industrial production in Russia had fallen 27 percent.
- Investment in plant and equipment had fallen 55 percent.
- Prices had increased 1,560 percent.
- Real wages had fallen 32 percent.

While working people are struggling to survive in an increasingly ugly and violent society, the new entrepreneurs flaunt their wealth: "Representatives of the New Class can be seen waving their



Women in Moscow (left) and La Paz, Bolivia protest desperate conditions on International Women's Day. Western imperialism seeks to reduce Russia to status of neocolonial Latin America.



Would-be Tsar Boris with Russian Khasbulatov, speaker of Russian parliament, a former Yeltsinite.

gold cards in Western-style grocery stores, dining at hard currency restaurants, and driving around town in Mercedes and BMWs" (Washington Post, 1 February).

The *New York Times* (2 August 1992) painted a glowing portrait of a typical new entrepreneur, Natalya Maloletneva, a manager of a Moscow clothing store who bought a controlling interest when the shop was privatized last spring. She claims she purchased her share for 60,000 rubles from personal "savings." The *Times*' glorification of Mrs. Maloletneva provoked a biting letter to the editor from an émigré Soviet academic, who pointed out that as a highly paid university professor he would have had to save every last kopek of his salary for ten years to amass 60,000 rubles. Clearly Maloletneva was skimming off the profits of the enterprise she was entrusted to manage on behalf of the Soviet working people. No wonder Russia's new capitalists are known as the mafia.

But the new "biznez" barons and "hrokeri" fear that the hatred of the masses will lead to a new regime that will confiscate their ill-gotten wealth. As a self-described "middleman" in Lenin-grad put it: "Everything we do is aimed at a quick profit. We buy, we sell, and we get out. Only a fool would invest his

money in a long-term business in Russia" (Washington Post, 30 September 1992). Wall Street and Frankfurt bankers, German and Japanese industrialists, and Texas oilmen are not fools. And they aren't investing their money in Russia either.

On the contrary, there has been massive looting of the Russian economy in the past couple of years. One out of every three barrels of oil and one out of every two tons of nickel leaving Russia is smuggled out, while fully 80 percent of the raw materials ticketed for the Baltic port of Kaliningrad never arrives there. Marc Rich, the strikebreaking owner of Ravenswood Aluminum in the U.S. (currently living in Switzerland to evade tax and fraud charges), boasts trading revenues of \$2.5 billion per year in natural resources from the former Soviet Union.

Everything in Russia is for sale for hard currency these days, from religious icons peddled by Orthodox priests to high-tech weaponry supplied by financially strapped arms factories. Iran is rumored to have acquired two Soviet-made nuclear warheads. Last year as much as \$15 billion in hard currency was siphoned out of Russia into private bank accounts in the U.S. and West Europe. This is more than twice the \$7 billion in net aid and credits which the Yeltsin regime got from Bush's America, Kohl's Germany and its other imperialist godfathers. Meanwhile, the scramble for dollars which can be safely stashed in foreign bank accounts continues to drive down the value of the ruble at Moscow's limited currency exchange. In the past six months, the exchange rate has gone from just over 200 rubles to the dollar to nearly 800, figures wildly out of kilter with the actual state of the Russian economy.

### ...But Refuses to Pay the Bill

Yeltsin, Gaidar & Co. expected to be rewarded with \$24 billion in IMF aid as a first installment for torturing the working masses through economic shock treatment. But the IMF demanded as a condition for disbursing funds that Russia raise its internal price of oil to world-market levels while exporting more to repay its foreign debt. This would mean instant bankruptcy for most of Russia's industrial enterprises, which were geared to consuming energy for a small fraction of the cost extorted by the Seven Sisters cartel and the Arab oil sheiks.

The London *Economist* (24 October 1992), the house organ of international financiers, argued half seriously that "Russia would be economically better off if every Russian worker, except those in the country's mining, oil and transport industries (who would be needed to ship raw materials to the West) simply stopped working!" Western bankers are demanding that Yeltsin reduce the post-Soviet Russian economy to conditions *structurally more primitive* than that of tsarist Russia, where foreign capital

promoted heavy industry.

The Kohl regime initially rewarded Gorbachev for selling out East Germany to the Deutsche Bank in early 1990 with \$47 billion in "aid," promising more to come. The rulers of the Fourth Reich envisioned their own neocolonial empire in the former Soviet bloc, extending from Siberia to the Balkans. But with its vindictive destruction of the East German economy following capitalist reunification, the Bonn government went heavily into debt as millions of unemployed East Germans were put on the dole. Last spring Kohl announced, "we Germans have reached the limit of our capacity to help" Russia and the other former Soviet republics. Since then Germany has entered a deepening recession, widening its budget deficit and making large-scale aid to Russia even less likely.

As for Washington, Reagan/Bush transformed the U.S. into the world's largest debtor to pay for the massive military buildup against the Soviet Union. Now Clinton is pushing to subsidize high-tech industry while raising taxes and cutting social programs for the poor and elderly. Aside from a \$1.5 billion credit to buy U.S. grain and other goods in 1992, what Washington has allocated to promoting capitalism in Russia is truly peanuts. Even a relatively modest shift of 10 percent of U.S. imperialism's Cold War military budget would mean some \$35 billion a year in aid to Russia. But with the American rulers intent on maintaining their military hegemony at any expense, no less a White House crook than Richard Nixon today appears as about the only farsighted representative of this ruling class in arguing for aggressive aid to Russia.

Japan—the only major imperialist power with a large financial surplus—has not and will not give the Moscow regime any yen at all unless it gets back the Kuril Islands, which the Red Army took at the end of World War II. But for Yeltsin to sell Russian territory to an imperialist power and historic enemy would enormously intensify nationalist and popular opposition to him. In any case, while Tokyo might cough up \$5 or \$10 billion to grab the strategic Kurils, Japan Inc. is not presently interested in making Russia as such a subsidiary. Japan's empire-building ambitions remain focused on the Far East, above all the reconquest of China.

The bottom line is that Yeltsin did not get the deutschmarks, dollars and yen he was counting on.

### Factory Managers Ignite Hyperinflation

Yevgeny Yasin, a prominent economist in the "industrialist" camp, described Russian society under Yeltsin as well as in Gorbachev's last years as a pyramid with the top broken off. Power descended to the next highest level, mainly made up of managers in big enterprises. The vice general director of

the huge Vaz Auto Works in Togliatti—which produced 60 percent of all cars in the USSR—states: "Management, in a sense, has become the owner of Vaz... we run the company as if we owned it, although we don't really." But as Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* of the capitalist aspirations of sectors of the Stalinist managerial bureaucracy: "It is not enough to be the director of a trust; it is necessary to be a stockholder."

While many factory managers denounced Gaidar as the arch-enemy, bent on bankrupting their enterprises on orders from the IMF, the main beneficiaries of the "shock treatment" were in fact the managers in consumer goods and food processing. Since their prices were increasing 50 percent faster than the wages they paid, they were swimming in profits. Managers in heavy industry and munitions go around Gaidar's attempt at tight money by granting open-ended credit to one another. In the first five months of 1992, inter-enterprise debt increased from forty billion to two trillion rubles. The managers also wielded the threat of massive social unrest should a cutoff in industrial subsidies lead to widespread layoffs, arguing that only they could contain workers' anger. As Volsky put it, "they keep the people from taking to the streets."

So that the managers would keep on keeping the people from taking to the streets, Yeltsin abandoned any attempt to control the money supply. In April he offered an additional 200 billion rubles in enterprise credits. The following month three stalwarts of the "industrialist" party were appointed to key economic ministries. In June the managers placed their man, Viktor Gerashchenko, in charge of the central bank. Gerashchenko in turn extended 1.5 trillion rubles in credit to the managers, an amount greater than the entire money supply generated by all Soviet governments over the previous 40 years. The resulting hyperinflation has all but destroyed the ruble as a medium of exchange. Increasingly, Russians speak of two classes in their country: those

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# Russia's Exploiters...

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who have access to dollars or other hard currencies, and those who earn rubles.

In the present conditions of counter-revolutionary chaos, curbing inflation means first of all slashing enterprise payrolls through mass layoffs. This is already beginning to happen. In Ivanovo, a textile center northeast of Moscow known as the "city of single women" for its predominantly female labor force, output has been cut in half by the shortage of cotton due to the breakdown in the transport system and the civil war in the Central Asian republic of Tadjikistan. On paper 6,500 are still employed by the Frolov textile factory, but only 2,000 of them come to work. The other 4,500 are told to stay home, where they receive 1,035 rubles a month, about \$1.50 at the rapidly depreciating exchange rate.

## Only Socialist Revolution Can Save the Soviet Working Class

Such desperate conditions can easily and suddenly produce an angry explosion among the toiling masses. To prevent this, the capitalist-restorationist forces of all contending factions seek to erect a strong state capable of crushing popular unrest before it gets out of hand. What exists today, in Russia as in the other former Soviet republics, is not a counterrevolutionary order but rather counterrevolutionary chaos. The restorationist forces—both the pro-Western "democrats" around Yeltsin and the nationalist-corporatist camp of Volsky/Rutskoi—are weak and internally strained. There is no coherent capitalist class. The armed forces are rife with discontent, and it is uncertain that they could be used effectively to suppress mass struggle.

The consolidation of the counter-revolution therefore depends on the continuing passivity, paralysis and misleadership of the working class. The Stalinist "patriots" join hands with outright fascists in a "red"-brown coalition, while giving a left cover to the Volsky/Rutskoi



Der Spiegel photos  
**Arkady Volsky (above), head of the "party of managers," and Aleksandr Rutskoi, Russian vice president (right), leaders of nationalist-corporatist forces.**



Alexander Zemlianichenko  
**Former acting prime minister Yegor Gaidar, architect of IMF-dictated "shock treatment," was sacked in December, signaling crisis of Yeltsin regime.**

corporatists. This is expressed, for example, in their call for "workers' privatization." Thus Vladimir Isakov of the Russian Communist Workers Party demanded that parliament pass legislation "so that work collectives can become the owners of their workplace." Boris Kagarlitsky's Labor Party, a social-democratic outfit deliberately modeled on its British namesake, likewise calls for the "transfer of property to the work collectives"—which in the mouths of these "leftists" includes managers having a majority of the shares (see "Stalinist Has-Beens: Left Wing of Nationalist Counterrevolution," WV No. 561, 16 October 1992).

The main trade-union federation, the FNPB led by Brezhnev-era Stalinist hacks now reinforced by social democrats like Kagarlitsky, also supports the corporatist faction. Meanwhile, the CIA-sponsored "free" trade unions, embracing a section of the coal miners as well as air controllers and railway engineers, have supported Yeltsin under the illusion that capitalist restoration will lead to living standards comparable to those in the imperialist West of which they have an idealized picture. Strikes and threats of work stoppages by coal and oil workers have in recent years focused on securing better selling conditions for "their" prod-

ucts. But while these workers are for the moment better off, the counterrevolution has already reduced Russia to conditions of neocolonial degradation comparable to, say, Mexico or Brazil.

With the collapse of Stalinist rule in the Soviet bloc, most of the left internationally has bought the bourgeois line that centralized planning is inherently inefficient and bureaucratic, and that a market system is the only viable way to organize an economy. In Latin America, petty-bourgeois nationalists out of power, like the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, are now calling for worker participation in privatized factories and farms, i.e., the utopia of a "people's capitalism."

While historically associated with anarcho-syndicalism, calls for giving property rights to work collectives in Russia today are not merely utopian but are above all intended to give pseudo-populist legitimacy to a nationalist-corporatist regime. Volsky himself proposes "to encourage collective ownership by workers" (*Izvestia*, 30 September 1992), and the government even refers to this as a "fourth variant of privatization." In many large enterprises, such as the Vaz Auto Works, 25 percent or more of the stock has already been given to the work collectives under the Yeltsin/Gaidar regime in order to make privat-

ization more palatable. This translates into zero influence on enterprise policy, which remains firmly in the hands of the old management. In any case, what would "workers' privatization" mean under conditions of hyperinflation, economic disarray, mass unemployment and nationalist fratricide?

We want a modern economy in place for the Soviet working people to take over when they regain power. But that economy will not be preserved through corporatist capitalism in the epoch of imperialism's decay. A few hard-fought strikes where the workers win something would do much to reverse the demoralization and atomization of the Soviet proletariat and provide an opening for revolutionary intervention. The situation cries out for a genuinely Bolshevik party, based on the principles of Lenin and Trotsky, to lead the multinational working class of Russia and the other former Soviet republics against the mafioso entrepreneurs, the managers who would be stockholders, and their imperialist godfathers.

Down with Yeltsin and the Russian parliament—For a workers government based on soviet democracy as in October 1917! For a planned, collectivized economy based on a reformed Soviet Union! ■

## Dogfight...

(continued from page 1)

exporter (Yeltsin/Gaidar) and nationalist-corporatist elements (Rutskoi/Volsky) who want to maintain an industrial base for a strong state, but would be no less dependent upon imperialism.

Yeltsin's attempt to impose bonapartist rule has been endorsed, if not directly braintrustered, by Washington. The Russian president suffered a humiliating political defeat in December when the Congress forced him to sack acting prime minister and IMF "shock therapist" Yegor Gaidar. When Yeltsin revived his threats to emasculate or disband the parliament, Khasbulatov reconvened the Congress in early March to strip the president of his emergency decree powers. German Chancellor Kohl then "leaked" a request from Yeltsin for Western backing for an anti-Congress coup. Washington gave an immediate green light if the Russian president "suspends an anti-democratic Parliament." Moving to bolster Yeltsin's credentials, the Clinton administration hastily summoned the Russian president to an April "summit" in Vancouver.

Following Yeltsin's pronouncement, White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos heaved, "President Yeltsin has proposed to break a political impasse by taking it to the people. That is appropriate in democracies." Plebiscites have certainly been the appropriate "democratic" fig leaf for every bonapartist dictator from Napoleon to Hitler to Pinochet. In this, as in other things, Yeltsin has borrowed a trick or two from the arsenal of the Stalinist bureaucracy he faithfully served for many years.

Speaking of the 1936 Stalin Constitution, Leon Trotsky noted in *The Revolution Betrayed*: "The democratic ritual of Bonapartism is the plebiscite. From time to time, the question is presented to the citizens: for or against the leader."

Dotting the i's and crossing the t's, *Newsweek* (29 March) openly calls for "a Pinochet-type leader," and Henry Kissinger has been repeating the name of the bloody Chilean dictator he helped put in power as the model for a strongman regime in Russia. But Pinochet could rely on an army built on Prussian militarist traditions which had repeatedly been used to massacre the workers. Yeltsin certainly can't count on the fractured ex-Soviet army. And no one has yet seized power by plebiscite. The only reason Yeltsin could even contemplate it is because of the paralysis of the disputing bourgeois factions, which lack any significant social base, and the absence of the working class as a contender.

In good part because of Yeltsin's weakness, the Western imperialists are hedging their initially strong support to the Russian president. While the otherwise staid *New York Times* (22 March) issued a ringing editorial call "To the Barricades With Mr. Yeltsin," an op-ed piece by Sovietologist Abraham Brumberg was far less sanguine, fretting that Yeltsin's "illegal seizure of power may well plunge Russia into the abyss he says he wants to avoid." By his March 23 press conference Clinton had moved from exclusive support to Yeltsin to backing "all reformers throughout Russia."

What is evident from the past few days is that neither Yeltsin nor his bourgeois opponents have any active popular support—street demonstrations on either

side have been limited to a few thousand hard-core supporters. Disaffection with Yeltsin is pervasive, with his base of support confined to a narrow layer of pro-Western intelligentsia and yuppie speculators. In his Saturday night speech, would-be Tsar Boris vowed to denationalize the land, hoping to recreate a smallholding peasantry as a bastion of conservatism. Yet this is vehemently opposed by millions of collective farmers. Meanwhile, the cities are starving.

Amid economic chaos and immiseration, skyrocketing crime and disintegration of the social fabric, there is widespread sentiment for a "strong hand" and order. Yet a capitalist-bonapartist dictatorship will not alleviate the suffering of the masses but only provide the whip of repression for further exploitation of the Soviet working people on behalf of international finance capital. The only order that promises a future for the working masses is a return to the dictatorship of the proletariat, based on the rule of workers councils (soviets), as established by the Bolshevik power in 1917.

While the Western imperialists, grotesquely echoed by numerous fake-lefts, hailed Yeltsin's August 1991 counter-coup as a "struggle for democracy," we called: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" We warned that in its drive to ride roughshod over the Soviet working people, the counterrevolution would necessarily have to take the road of bonapartist dictatorship. Last August we cited Leon Trotsky's warning in the late 1920s: "Is it actually likely that in the event of the defeat of the [proletarian] dictatorship, bourgeois democracy will replace it? No, that is the least likely of all possible variants." The nascent bour-

geoisie, wrote Trotsky, would have to go beyond a transitional regime to consolidate "a more serious, solid, and decisive kind—in all probability, a Bonapartist or, in modern terms, a fascist regime."

In the absence of proletarian struggle, Russia is barreling toward bonapartist dictatorship, one way or the other, whether under Yeltsin or Rutskoi or more extreme nationalist/fascist forces. The disarray and division among Russia's new would-be exploiters creates an opening for independent working-class action. Some hard-hitting strikes right now in defense of workers' livelihoods, against the "privatization" schemes aimed at shutting down "bankrupt" factories, could—in the context of a weak capitalist state—put the proletariat on the road of struggle against all the contending bourgeois factions. But the former official trade unions, backed by the various Stalinist fragments and their "red"-brown coalition, are lined up firmly behind the Volsky/Rutskoi corporatists, while CIA-sponsored "free" trade unions like the Kuzbass miners remain loyal to Yeltsin.

The urgent need is for an authentic Bolshevik leadership committed to the struggle against all wings of capitalist restoration. The greatest crime of the Stalinist usurpers was to atomize and demoralize the proletariat, sapping its consciousness and confidence in itself as a class, physically liquidating the cadres who formed the living link to the 1917 October Revolution. Today the Soviet workers must reappropriate the revolutionary internationalist heritage and program of Lenin's October, carried forward today in the International Communist League's struggle to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International. ■



# French Elections...

(continued from page 5)

he who pays the piper calls the tune. The JCR platform also demands a "purge and reorganization from top to bottom of the police"—the police of Bousquet and Papon [police chiefs under Pétain], who rounded up Jews for the Nazi death camps, who carried out the anti-Algerian pogrom of 17 October 1961, and who today carry out a racist reign of terror in the [heavily immigrant] suburbs! Reform of the police is a typical demand of reformists who create the criminal illusion that the bourgeois state can be reformed. Fortunately, many of the exploited and oppressed in this country understand better than the "Marxist" charlatans who lead the JCR that this bloody repressive machine is and will remain their implacable enemy. What authentic Marxists must teach them is how to put it definitively out of commission, by counterposing the power of the organized proletariat mobilized in struggle to install its own state power. In contrast to the Marchais, Krivines and Debords, we Trotskyists say, "Cops out of the suburban ghettos!" "Worker/immigrant mobilizations against racist terror!" "Defense squads to defend immigrant neighborhoods!"

A year and a half ago, the JCR took up in their "Action Program" the demand for "full citizenship rights for immigrants," and wrote that "to finish once and for all with the fascists, the self-defense of youth, workers, immigrants and their organizations is indispensable" (*L'Egalité* supplement, September 1991). Yes, but with the approach of the legislative elections, the leaders of the JCR have thrown out their off-and-on pretensions of anti-fascist struggle. In fact, the word "fascist" doesn't even appear in their electoral platform.

During the February 6 demonstration, the JCR distributed a special *L'Egalité* supplement published for the occasion entitled "French and Immigrants, Let's Not Let Ourselves Be Divided." No perspective for mobilizing advanced elements of the working class and youth in struggle against segregation and racist terror, but a hodgepodge of "pedagogical" arguments aimed at opening the eyes of "workers who let themselves be taken in by racist speeches." These backward workers could learn, for example, that "driving immigrants out of their jobs and out of France wouldn't be an answer to the problem of unemployment."

In this unsavory sermonizing, taken straight out of the usual arsenal of the PCF and LO reformists, there is no lack

of denunciations of the "hillionaire Le Pen." But by presenting Le Pen, not as the fascist that he is, but as a bourgeois politician like the others (distinguished only by his populist demagogy), the Marchais [PCF] and Laguilliers [LO] justify their criminal passivity in the face of the fascists. However, a year ago *L'Egalité* stated that "only the working class and its organizations can stop the National Front, stop them by fighting on the basis of its own demands." To those militants in the JCR who want to fight against the National Front with more than words, we say that it is high time to counter fascist crimes with mass united-front worker/immigrant mobilizations, based on the unions, to crush these thugs before they crush us.

Raymond Debord tops off his program by calling for a "workers and people's government." Not long ago, the JCR press talked about a workers government. The slogan for a "workers government" is part of the fundamental political arsenal of communists, an evocative propagandistic description—and thus popular in the best sense of the term—of the dictatorship of the proletariat: a government based on organs of workers power born of the extraparlimentary mobilization of the proletariat which destroyed the bourgeois state. It is on the basis of this perspective that we try to mobilize the proletariat, as an independent class, against all the varieties of parliamentarist class-collaborationist traps which the Marchais, Krivines & Co. are actively trying to rebuild.

The Stalinists presented the "popular front" as an alliance between the workers and the petty bourgeoisie—the "popular classes"—to establish (bourgeois) parliamentary democracy "against reaction." In reality the popular front is a tool for subordinating the working class to the bourgeoisie, thus paving the way for reaction. The formulation "workers and people's government" also implies a bloc between the proletariat and a so-called "popular class." It tries to reconcile the irreconcilable: the dictatorship of the proletariat, and parliamentarism (which is a form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie). Nothing is new under the pale sun of centrism. As long ago as 1918-19 the master of centrism, Kautsky, tried to reconcile the soviets with bourgeois parliamentary democracy, the catastrophic result of which is well known—the defeat of the German Revolution.

Let's come back to the JCR's claim to be "in total opposition to the advocates of unity with the bourgeoisie and the rich." What does this mean concretely? We must demand that the comrades of the JCR take a position. For revolutionaries to give critical support

to a JCR candidacy, it must break clearly with the popular front. The editorial in *L'Egalité* No. 18 (February 1993) notes that in the parliamentary elections, the JCR will support "candidates who declare they are clearly revolutionary and anti-capitalist, candidates who are against the government and against any compromise with the reformists." They then called for a vote for LO candidates.

It takes gall to pretend that LO is "revolutionary," or even "against the government." In *L'Egalité* No. 15 (October 1992)—after the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty and LO's scandalous abstention which helped to save the moribund Mitterrand regime—they wrote, "LO has its share of responsibility in the victory of the September 20 'yes' vote, as the workers will no doubt remind them." Obviously, the JCR leadership preferred to forget this for the purpose of its petty maneuvers! LO is fishing in the same electoral pond with the fascist Le Pen, competing with him for the votes of the racist "man in the street" through fear-mongering demagogy. Those whom the leadership of the JCR presume to call "revolutionaries" (LO) recently boasted of having participated in a vile racist segregationist act: the expulsion of a young woman of North African origin from a high school in Villeneuve-la-Garenne because she wore an Islamic scarf in the classroom. What JCR member who really wants to fight racist segregation could possibly campaign for LO today?

Further on in the 7 February editorial, one finds the call to vote for LCR candidates, "where they don't support the 'pledge to change to the left.'" We don't know of any such LCR candidates, and the very fact of running on the slate of Krivine & Co. contradicts all pretense of opposing the popular front. They are involved up to their necks in endless maneuvers with Fiterman, Gallo and ecologists of various stripes.

To be concrete on this key question, what is Raymond Debord's position regarding his "recommendation to vote" in the second round of the elections? It is striking that the phrase "popular front" to characterize the Mitterrand coalition does not even appear in his propaganda, thus leaving room to maneuver. Will Debord call for a vote for PS or PCF candidates? Does his announced opposition to the Mitterrand government stop when matters get serious? If the JCR stated straightforwardly that they supported no candidates of popular fronts—in decomposition or in formation—we Trotskyists would give critical, very critical, support to their candidate, despite his rotten program.

In 1917, the Bolsheviks gave no support to the Mensheviks and SRs in the numerous elections which took place between February and October. They said "Down with the capitalist ministers!" They, too, demanded concrete steps and clear answers!

Comrades of the JCR, you are at a crossroads. You can take the road toward authentic Trotskyism, which will lead you to the principled positions of the ICL, or sink into the centrist swamp, which can only lead to an LCR of the

second mobilization. The recent pro-LCR split of *L'Egalité-Sociale*, which fed off the centrist confusion and compromises of the JCR leadership, just took precisely that road. What *L'Egalité-Sociale* did was take to its ultimate conclusion the "political solidarity with the LCR" proclaimed by the JCR leadership. To repeat, in July 1992 Elliott praised the Spartacists' opposition to voting for "workers" candidates in the popular front. But a JCR spokesman explained in *L'Egalité* No. 10 (March 1992) that "we would have liked to have seen the two biggest workers parties, the PS and the PCF, unite in these elections and break with the government...when we are faced with PS or PCF electoral slates, yes, we will call to vote for them, in order to defeat the right." Later on, the JCR leadership nurtured a careful ambiguity on voting PS-PCF. The February *L'Egalité* earnestly asks, in the headline of an article, "Should We Vote for the Left in the Second Round?" being careful not to give the slightest response. So, listening to these declarations, you can line up either with the Ligue Trotskyiste on the key question of class independence, or with the LCR as an extra-parliamentary prop of the Socialist Party.

The question of voting for mass reformist parties poses a principled question which does not allow for the slightest ambiguity: one must draw the class line by posing as a minimum condition that the reformist parties stand in these elections independent of all bourgeois allies, before even considering giving them critical electoral support. It is thus that we envisaged giving critical support to Marchais, PCF presidential candidate in 1981, put outside the popular front by the first shocks of the Cold War—support that we withdrew after the racist attack in Vitry, in December 1980, which was the price of admission paid by the PCF to the bourgeoisie and its social-democratic water boys, in order to re-enter the popular front. (Conversely, the right centrists and Stalinophobic Workers Power vote on principle—from the first round on—for the candidates of the reformist parties, even when they are part and parcel of a popular front.)

While the JCR leadership along with the Socialist Party, the party of the racist government, signed the call for the February 6 "anti-racist" demonstration, the Ligue Trotskyiste offered anti-racist workers and youth a revolutionary pole with a picket alongside the demonstration and a prominently displayed banner: "Mitterrand, 12 Years of Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Soviet, Anti-Working-Class Policies—No to Class Collaboration! For a Workers Government!"

The situation here and internationally demands a revolutionary leadership. This party can only be based on the principles and program of the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky, who said, "In reality, the People's Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism."

Ligue Trotskyiste de France  
12 March 1993

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## KKK Connection and Florida Assassination

# Abortion Doctor Murdered by "Right to Life" Terrorists

David Gunn, a dedicated doctor who traveled long, lonely hours providing abortion services for women in the Deep South, was murdered on March 10. He regularly made a weekly 1,000-mile circuit of six clinics to perform abortions when no other doctors could be found. When Dr. Gunn arrived at the Pensacola Women's Medical Services Clinic that Wednesday, the god squads from "Rescue America" were outside as usual, harassing the staff and terrorizing the patients. As he stepped out of his car in the parking lot, one of their number drilled three bullets from a .38 into his back at pointblank range.

Dr. Gunn, 47, had for years been a courageous fighter for women's rights. He began work at a public hospital in Brewton, Alabama. "He told me he came to Alabama because it had the highest infant-mortality rate in the nation, and he wanted to try to turn that around," said his son, David Gunn Jr. (*New York Times*, 14 March). Ten years ago, when an elderly doctor got too sick to work, an abortion clinic director in Columbus, Georgia found Dr. Gunn. "We called every doctor in every town from Columbus to Atlanta," she explained. "They would not answer our calls, or they would hang up on us, or they would tell us they were scared."

The clinic director continued, "A clinic would call, and he'd say he would help out until they found someone else.

But no other doctor would do the work, and so David was there forever. He eventually gave up his private practice and spent most of his time on the road, living out of hotels."

David Gunn was a prime target of the bigots, who have branched out from mobbing patients (and bombing clinics) to terrorizing doctors. Under the "No Place to Hide" campaign, initiated by Operation Rescue's Randall Terry, the bigots track abortion doctors, follow their children to school, telephone their elderly parents in the middle of the night to tell them their children are dead. A "wanted" poster with Dr. Gunn's name and picture on it was distributed by Operation Rescue (OR). The flyer detailed his "regular itinerary" as he moved from clinic to clinic. He was followed late at night, sent hate mail, death threats, screamed at by fanatics yelling "Murderer!" Then he was killed.

Right-wing terror against abortion clinics and doctors is escalating. In 1992, clinic bombings were at record levels across the country. Dr. Warren Hern, of the Boulder Abortion Clinic in Colorado, said, "I am sitting here behind my desk, looking out a bullet-proof window. I work in four layers of bullet-proof windows. Death threats are so common they are not remarkable." Ron Fitzsimmons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, said on the Phil Donahue Show (15 March) that

after David Gunn's murder, "I was getting phone calls all day long from physicians who were looking for bullet-proof vests, trying to find out how they can hire a guard dog or security guards, barbed-wire fences. It's really a war out there."

In response to the wave of outrage over the murder of Dr. Gunn, some spokesmen for "respectable" anti-abortion groups claimed that the killer was a lone wacko. Not so. The assassin, Michael Griffin, had been working with Rescue America, whose Pensacola leader is one John Burt, who was in front of the clinic on March 10. The sinister Burt is a "former" Ku Klux Klansman who participated in the lynch mob violence against school integration in St. Augustine, Florida in the 1960s. In December 1984, when three Pensacola abortion clinics were bombed, Burt called the bombers "heroes" (see "Defend Abortion Clinics," *WV* No. 371, 25 January 1985). As well as providing "family counseling" to the murderer Griffin, Burt has admitted he was the "spiritual adviser" of two men arrested in the 1984 Pensacola bombings.

In fact, many "right-to-lifers" brazenly excused the murder of David Gunn. Rescue America head Don Teshman said: "While Gunn's death is unfortunate, it is also true that quite a number of babies' lives will be saved." (Rescue America is raising funds for



Miller/Montgomery Advertiser  
Dr. David Gunn

Griffin's defense.) And OR head Randall Terry remarked, "we must also grieve for the thousands of children that he has murdered." In launching his "No Place to Hide" campaign, Terry said, "the weak  
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## Spartacus Youth Clubs Protest Murder of Dr. David Gunn



Young Spartacus  
Washington, D.C., March 18—SYC protest at Howard University against murder of Dr. Gunn.

## Defend Abortion!

Spartacus Youth Clubs at Howard University in Washington, D.C. and at the City College of New York (CCNY) called rallies on short notice to defend abortion rights and protest the murder of Dr. David Gunn in Pensacola, Florida. The Ku Klux Klan connection in the assassination of Dr. Gunn was a topic of discussion and outrage among women at Howard University, a black Southern campus. On Thursday, March 18, SYC member Liisa Martin rallied students to take a stand against this ominous KKK/"right to life" offensive against women:

"The anti-abortion groups who harass, threaten, terrorize and bomb clinics—and now murder doctors—call themselves the 'right to life' movement. But as we have pointed out, this movement has death written all over it. The deranged bigot Michael Griffin, who murdered Dr. Gunn in such a cold-blooded and cowardly fashion, was with the group 'Rescue America' which was

founded by a so-called 'former' KKK member. Not a strange coincidence. The program of the Klan and Nazis for women is 'Kinder, Kirche, Küche' (children, church and kitchen). The Klan has been known to parade around in their hoods and robes with signs with coat hangers on them. They want to force women back into deadly back-alley abortions.... The Spartacist League has been in the forefront of organizing integrated labor mobilizations to stop Klan and Nazi terror. This power should also be utilized to defend the clinics from these terrorists. Defend the clinics! Take a stand! Free abortion on demand!"

That same day at Harlem's CCNY campus, New York City police tried to close down the SYC rally. After failing to convince SYC members that they didn't have the "right" to protest, the cops then declared that a hullhorn was *verboden*. Undaunted, the rally spokesman jumped on top of a snowbank and hollered at full lung power, attracting  
*continued on page 7*



Young Spartacus  
New York City: Spartacus Youth Club speakout at City College to defend abortion clinics against right-wing terrorist attacks.