

## Elections '96: Welfare Bashing and American Chauvinism

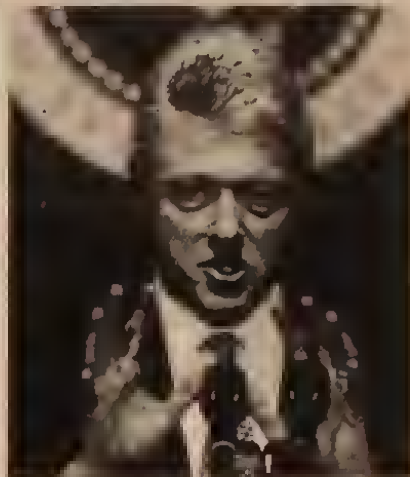
AT&T began the new year by announcing it would lay off 40,000 employees. The next day the *Wall Street Journal* headlined: "Stock Prices Start 1996 With Surge." Last week, the Labor Department reported that more than 700,000 new jobs opened up in February. This news drove the stock market down by 170 points, its sharpest drop in five years. In launching a series of articles on "The Downsizing of America," the *New York Times* (3 March) carried a chart contrasting rising corporate profits with announcements of mass layoffs with the title "Workers Fall, Business Rises." This was taken straight from the famous words of German revolutionary leader Rosa Luxemburg, who summed up the carnage of World War I in the phrase, "Profits rising, proletarians falling."

The continuing fall in the living standards of the mass of the American population is the backdrop to the 1996 election campaign. With ever broader layers of the working people sinking into despair and the racist rulers slashing away at every social program introduced in the past 60 years, both parties of American capitalism are engaging in an orgy of scapegoating, seeking to blame Mexican immigrants and black welfare mothers for the misery produced by the workings of the profit system. Every four years, the U.S. presidential elections wallow in the mean, racist cesspool that is American bourgeois politics: from Georgia Democrat Jimmy Carter's appeal to "ethnic purity" in 1976 to George Bush's race-baiting use of black convict Willie Horton in '88 to Clinton's well-publicized execution of a brain-damaged black man in the '92 campaign. It's become standard procedure to pick some representative or sector of the oppressed to bash on the way to the White House.

The current election campaign is a free-for-all of racist, anti-immigrant and anti-woman bigotry and untrammelled capitalist greed. Republican multimillionaire Steve Forbes, who jets around in a private plane with the emblem "Capitalist Tool," pushes a "flat tax" panacea which would mean a bonanza for big business (and himself). Republican

*continued on page 9*

### Profits Rising, Workers Falling—Capitalists Seek Scapegoats



Ruling-class politicians scapegoat the oppressed for mass unemployment, impoverishment created by capitalism. Sinister "America First" racist Buchanan pushes rabid anti-immigrant chauvinism, Republican front-runner Dole caters to Christian Coalition anti-abortion bigots, Democrat Clinton boasts of slashing welfare.



### For a Workers Party to Fight for All the Oppressed!

## Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!

### Zionist "Anti-Terror" Crackdown Targets Palestinian Population

MARCH 10—The supposed Palestinian "autonomy" achieved by the vaunted "peace process" was shown to be the fiction it is last week. Israel and its Palestinian Authority puppet police terrorized the Arab population of the Occu-

pied Territories following a string of bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Israeli troops dynamited homes and dragged off Arabs in the village of Al Fawwar in the West Bank. Simultaneously, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasir Arafat's cops raided dozens of mosques, schools and community centers in Gaza, rounding up hundreds more. In what has become the norm in recent years, Arab areas in the Occupied Territories have again been "sealed off" from Israel, depriving Palestinian workers of what meager liveli-

hoods they still have. Now Israeli troops have cordoned off virtually every Palestinian village and town, effectively turning them into prisons.

This Nazi-like "collective punishment" was justified by the "Labor" government of Prime Minister Shimon Peres as retaliation for a series of bombings which took the lives of some 60 people. Incessant, grinding repression and deliberate starvation policies have led Palestinian youth to undertake suicidal terror attacks on Israeli soldiers and murderous settlers. Such desperate acts are at least

directed against the Israeli rulers and their dogs of war. But there can be no justification for indiscriminate terrorist attacks like the two successive Sunday bombings of public buses in Jerusalem and another in a crowded shopping district in central Tel Aviv. From the standpoint of the working class and the struggle for national equality, these are criminal acts which target an entire people as the "enemy," mirroring the chauvinist outlook of the far more deadly Israeli rulers themselves. Among the 18 people who died along with the suicide bomber in a Jerusalem bus on March 4 were nine Israelis, six Romanians, an Ethiopian and two Arabs.

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# Partisan Defense Committee

## CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

### UMWA Striker Sent Back to Prison Pending Appeal Free Jerry Dale Lowe!

On February 24, an appeal was filed in U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the conviction of United Mine Workers (UMWA) militant Jerry Dale Lowe, who was framed up for the shooting death of a scab contractor in the seven-month UMWA strike against Arch Mineral in 1993. In early January, Lowe, who had been confined to his home, was sent back to federal prison after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit refused to reconsider its denial of an earlier appeal.

Lowe, a fourth-generation miner, faces nearly eleven years with no possi-

bility of parole after his conviction on trumped-up charges of "interfering with interstate commerce." While the coal bosses sought to pin the scab's death on Lowe, prosecutors had no evidence to charge him under state laws—for anything. So the Clinton-appointed U.S. Attorney in Charleston, West Virginia, Rebecca Betts, whose previous law firm represented Arch Mineral, cooked up a story turning the scab contractor into "interstate commerce." But as Circuit Court judge Diana Gribbon Motz wrote in a dissenting opinion when Lowe's appeal was first turned down: "There

Lea and Jerry Dale Lowe.  
Labor must fight for framed-up miner's freedom.



was no evidence that the vehicle had ever been used outside the state of West Virginia, in connection with interstate commerce or otherwise."

Seven other unionists facing state charges in the frame-up accepted plea bargains before their case went to trial. Jerry Dale Lowe has been made to face the wrath of the ruling class alone because UMWA president Richard Trumka, now secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, has refused to lift a finger in Lowe's defense. Miners, Teamsters, transport workers and all of labor must stand with him and fight for his freedom. It is this kind of solidarity which can defeat the government's union-busting repression. An injury to one is an injury to all!

We print below excerpts of a letter from Lea Lowe, Jerry's wife, to the Partisan Defense Committee.

February 7, 1996

This letter is to give you an update on Jerry's situation. Since the 4th Circuit turned down the first appeal the Prosecutor put in an objection to allow him to remain out on home confinement. He had to go back to jail until they sent him on to a Federal Facility.... This was a great disappointment to us considering we plan to appeal this as far as possible, and felt they should have at least waited until we were through. It could have saved the taxpayers a lot of expense, but I guess that's the last thing on their mind. I suppose it's easy to do what you want when it's somebody else's money. That's probably why the Federal Government is in the shape it's in now.

All of us are particularly concerned with the interstate commerce issue, which is not just a local issue but a national one if they allow this to stand as it is now. It would almost virtually cause any strikes in the future to be stopped by the Government at their will. The Teamsters would be especially affected. I know this is only the stepping stone of the Federal Government to be able to have more power on a local level to intervene in future strikes. As you know the companies are getting richer and the working men and women are either barely sustaining or getting poorer. There seems to be no relief.

This whole mess seems to be pure retaliation from both the State and Federal authorities for not pleading guilty and handing them their case on a silver platter. I believe if someone is not guilty they should not have to plead guilty just to lessen the government's paperwork. I shudder to think of probably the thousands of people now in prison who are as innocent as Jerry. I recently read an article that told of almost a hundred who were totally released from Death Row!

There definitely needs to be a change but I don't know where it will start. In order for the Fourth Circuit to keep this case as it is they almost literally had to change the Interstate Commerce meaning. The definition is first the person must be in Interstate Commerce. Then they must be carrying passengers and property or cargo. In order for the Fourth Circuit to pass this off they made the "driver" of the vehicle the passenger.

This was purely a local dispute taken over by the Federal Government because of political reasons. I hope the Supreme Court can see through this case the Federal Court has blown out of proportion and rectify it for us. Regardless of how the newspapers have made him out to be, Jerry has always been a hard worker and good provider and never been in any trouble of this nature before. It's not fair that this has had to happen to a hard working decent man.

We do appreciate the exposure on the case, the local paper has not bothered to pursue anything on the local level. They could have had a big story if they would have handled it right but I'm sure the coal company probably threatened to withdraw their ads or something because it just didn't seem normal the way they handled it. Well I'm pretty busy right now, but wanted to get this out to you since you've been so good to support us.

Thanks So Much,  
Lea Lowe

Jerry Dale Lowe is one of 17 class-war prisoners in the stipend program of the PDC. Write to him at: Jerry Dale Lowe, #044-93-088, L Unit, Federal Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 6001, Ashland, KY 41105. ■



TROTSKY

#### Paris Commune, 1871 The First Workers Government

This month marks the 125th anniversary of the proletarian uprising which created the Paris Commune on 18 March 1871. All the bourgeoisies of Europe joined in a frenzy of reactionary hatred against the insurgents, finally unleashing a white terror which slaughtered 20,000 workers. Yet despite its brief existence, barely more than two months, the Paris Commune served as a beacon for revolutionary workers around the

world, foreshadowing the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Karl Marx saw in the Commune the realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat, sweeping away the repressive organs of the capitalist state and establishing the political rule of the working class as the necessary first step to the creation of an international egalitarian, classless society. The Commune's separation of church and state has a striking relevance today in the face of resurgent religious reaction. As we fight to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution, we honor the heroic Communards of Paris who paved the way.

The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the Administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workmen's wages....

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old Government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the "parson-power," by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies. The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the Apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of Church and State. Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it....

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of Labour.

—Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (June 1871)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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15 March 1996

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## Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

No. 45 WINTER-SPRING 1996

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# "Socialist" Scabs Squirm

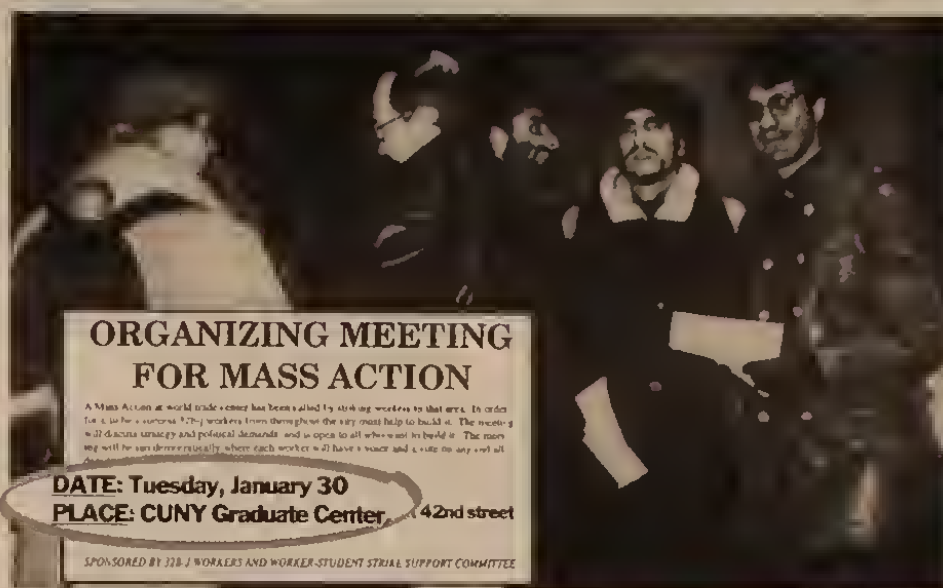
The following letter was abridged for space.

New York  
21 February 1996

To the Editor of Workers Vanguard:

I am obviously the supporter of the International Bolshevik Tendency you accuse of scabbing on the recent Service Employees International Union (SEIU) strike in New York City ("Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!" *Workers Vanguard*, 2 February). Your next issue carries a piece entitled "Scab 'Socialists' Caught Out at CUNY" (16 February), in which you label as "scabs" the twenty or so leftists who showed up for a strike-support meeting at City University of New York Graduate Center on the evening of January 30. I write in order to answer these shameful libels—as well as your idiotic reports of "skulking," "scurrying" and "sputtering"—with a statement of the facts about both the SEIU strike at the *Village Voice*, where I have been a union steward for ten years, and the meeting at CUNY Grad.

First, it should be noted that the six cleaning and maintenance workers at the *Village Voice* were not on strike against the *Voice* or the owner of the building that houses it. Their employer is the Building Maintenance Services Corporation, a management firm that contracts with the *Voice* and other companies. The picketers outside made it clear from the



Caught in the act: fake leftists planned to hold "strike support" meeting behind the picket lines in struck CUNY Grad Center.

quired a high degree of class consciousness. This is not likely to be brought about by isolated leftists in the workplace offering themselves up as human sacrifices to the boss. It may sometimes be the duty of Marxists to risk their livelihoods—or their lives—to influence the outcome of collective struggle. But, in this situation, to take a "principled" stand and be victimized without the remotest chance of altering the behavior of a single other worker is the action of someone

that the *Voice* not pay the company for their services for the duration of the strike. The publisher agreed. We also donated \$1500 from our own strike fund to the six SEIU strikers in our building, and collected \$1500 more for them among union members in the shop. Each worker thus received a total of \$500 in strike-support contributions.

We were not among the initiators of the strike-support meeting at CUNY. But in our judgment there would, in fact, have been nothing wrong with holding this meeting at CUNY Grad with the permission of the picketers; strikers often make dispensations for people to enter struck facilities for special purposes. But, since the SL's ranting did manage to confuse a few of the strikers, the organizers decided to hold their meeting on the sidewalk outside; not a single person in attendance that night entered CUNY Grad, and, contrary to your reportage, several SEIU militants participated actively in the meeting. While we were planning a strike rally for the following day, SL members spent their time approaching participants individually to inform them that I was a "scab."

The SL is hardly qualified for the role of the left's moral policeman. During the crucial PATCO strike of 1981, air traffic controllers, unlike the SEIU, appealed to other workers and to the public at large to boycott the airlines, and also set up picket lines to try to shut down the airports. Yet taking a train instead of a plane was apparently too much of an inconvenience for the jet-set socialists of the SL leadership, who flew routinely throughout the strike. When several SL members (who were later among the

founders of the External Tendency, precursor of the BT) objected to this flouting of the union's call for a boycott of scab services, the Robertsonite leadership even made flying during the strike a point of honor, castigating those who objected as "moralists" and "trade-union fetishists." The SL's injunction that all leftists should have pointlessly risked their jobs during the SEIU strike may sound a lot like moralism. But a genuine moralist must at least believe in the morality s/he preaches. You, on other hand, give hypocrisy a bad name.

Jim C.

*WV replies:* No self-respecting trade unionist, no supporter of the workers movement, and certainly no communist, crosses picket lines, ever.

Whining apologies for scabbing by self-styled "revolutionaries" seem to be quite a thriving cottage industry these days. In addition to the "Bolshevik" Tendency (BT) missive—which is nearly twice as long in the original—we have received an even lengthier diatribe along the same lines from an even tinier grouplet with the grandiose title of Communist Workers Organizing Committee (CWOC). During the four-week strike by the SEIU Local 32B-32J building workers, the BT didn't put out a single statement on this major union struggle. The CWOC did manage to upload a strike support statement on the Internet...on March 1. Hello? The strike ended on February 4. Echoing the BT, their strategy for "victory" called for "mass picketing" outside and "strike support committees" inside the struck buildings—of those who crossed the picket lines!

The cynicism of Jim C.'s contemptuous alibi for scabbing does not detract from the seriousness of the question. Solid picket lines that *nobody* and *nothing* crosses are not only central to winning labor battles, they go to the core of the question of workers revolution—the need to unite the working class in struggle around its common class interests. As Leon Trotsky noted in the Transitional Program, "strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army."

Crossing a picket line is *scabbing*, pure and simple. Jim C. tries to paint this elementary working-class principle as some outlandish Spartacist invention, pointing to all the workers in commercial buildings who crossed the strikers' lines. Everyone else was doing it, he argues, so do you call them all scabs? As Marxists, we understand that the level of consciousness of the working class is

continued on page 4

## An Appeal to the Members of All Unions From the Striking Members of Local 32B-32J

PLEASE DON'T CROSS OUR PICKET LINES

35,000 of us have been striking since and will continue to strike until we win. This is your strike too. It is critical to the survival of organized labor. We are all part of the same labor movement and all of us must put the good of the labor movement first. The outcome of this strike will affect you and your family.

If the multi-millionaire bosses of real estate can crush our union it is simply a matter of time before your employer decides to crush it.

A day late, a dollar short: on February 4, the last day of the strike, Local 32B-32J tops finally called on all workers to honor their picket lines.

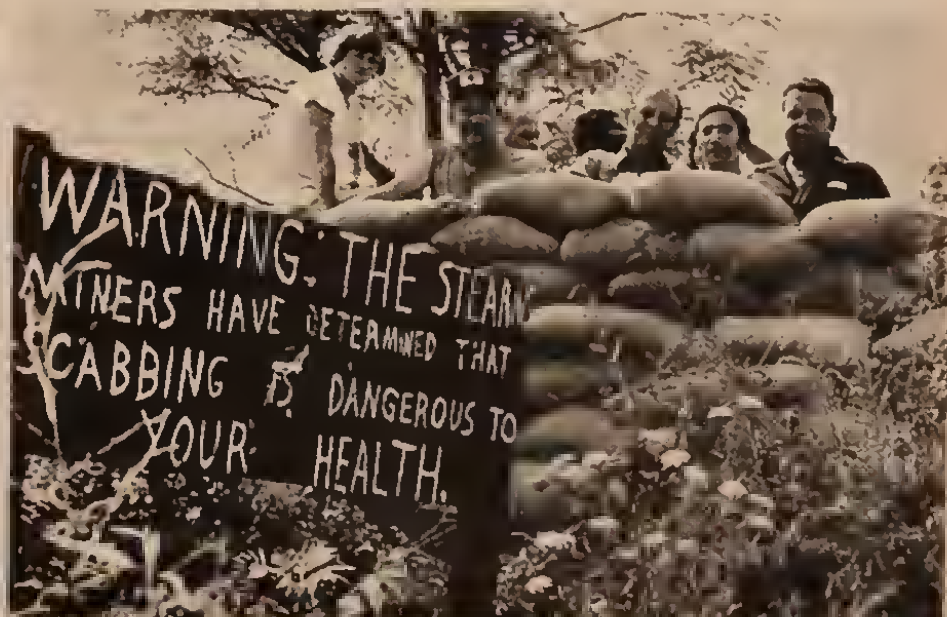
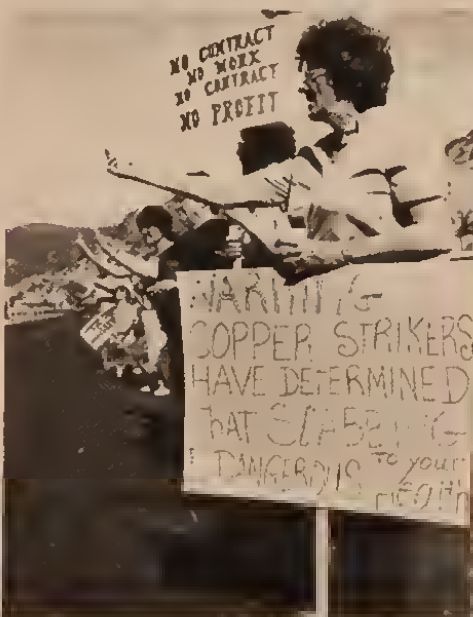
start that they were not appealing to *Voice* employees to stay away, but were there to prevent anyone else from entering the building to do their jobs. Neither I nor any of my fellow union members did the work normally performed by strikers—the defining activity of a scab in the eyes of any trade unionist, or, for that matter, anyone else outside the Spartacist League.

The situation at the *Voice* building (which contains one other firm as well as some residential tenants) could be compared to that of an industrial park, where there is a single entrance for a variety of different companies. According to the SL's definition of a scab—apparently anyone who, for whatever reason, enters a worksite at which pickets are present—all workers in such a park allowed by the picketers to go to their jobs in the non-struck firms would be "scabs." So too was every typesetter, secretary, dishwasher or desk clerk who went to work in the more than 1,000 commercial buildings affected by the SEIU strike.

The SEIU would indeed have won the strike in a matter of days if all workers in the affected buildings had stayed off the job in solidarity. But such an action would in most cases have been a sympathy strike—i.e., a strike against employers other than those of the aggrieved union—and would have re-

more interested in saving his or her soul than helping to win a strike. It is self-martyrdom, not Marxism.

Instead of making an empty moral gesture, I, as part of a shop stewards' committee, met with the *Voice*'s publisher to demand that the cleaners sent by the management company to do the strikers' work—the only real scabs at the *Voice*—be expelled from the paper's offices, and



Picket lines are the battle lines of the class struggle: 1984 Phelps Dodge copper miners (left) and 1977 Stearns, Kentucky coal miners (right) send warning to scabs.



(continued from page 3)

Yet the BT masquerades as an organization which claims to offer an alternative, indeed a revolutionary, leadership for the working class. To justify his treachery, Jim C. pleads that he was only doing what other backward workers did. In fact, the BT & Co. demonstrated less working-class consciousness than even many ordinary, *non-union* FedEx workers, who honored the 32B-32J picket lines despite the fact that they were also not directed against "their employer."

Even the *Wall Street Journal* (17 January) acknowledged during the strike that in the not-so-distant past, as a labor expert they quoted put it, "There used to be families that grew up believing that crossing a picket line is the equivalent

ety of Newspaper Editors because they would have had to cross the picket line of the broadcast employees union NABET, then on strike against NBC. In the Spring of 1977, even *King Gustaf of Sweden* refused to cross a picket line of Bay Area Rapid Transit workers in California.

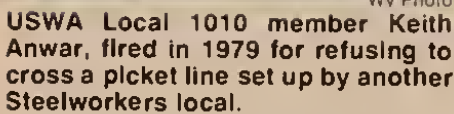
Jim C. raises a bunch of specious arguments to cover his tracks. The *Village Voice* building, a lower Manhattan office building, is like an "industrial park," he claims. What a joke! But even if we were talking about a real industrial park, the BT's line would be an alibi for strike-breaking. In the *maquiladora* "free trade" assembly plants in Mexico, for example, as we have noted, the few strikes that have succeeded are ones where workers from one factory succeeded in *shutting down the entire industrial park* by mass picketing at the entrances.

In fact, Jim C. concedes that "the SEIU would indeed have won the strike in a matter of days if all workers in the affected buildings had stayed off the job in solidarity." But he dismisses this possibility out of hand, calling it a "sympathy strike," just like the bureaucrats do when they want to hide behind the capitalists' laws against "secondary strikes." This isn't a matter of declaring a sympathy strike but a simple matter of honoring picket lines outside your workplace.

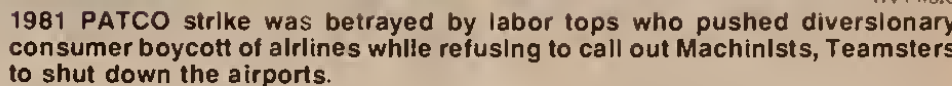
In Britain, the BT recently put out a leaflet praising Liverpool dockers who were fired for not crossing a picket line, and calling to "Throw the Scabs Off the Liverpool Docks!" The strikers actually sent delegations around the world to picket ships that had been loaded by scabs in Liverpool. In Newark, as in other ports, longshoremen refused to handle the cargo, respecting the British dockers' picket lines. By Jim C.'s twisted logic, he would have had no principled reason not to cross those lines either.

The one substantive political argument the BT raises in its letter, which could be titled "In Defense of Scabbing," is the claim that a scab is only someone who does "the work normally performed by strikers." This is the retrograde line of the craft-union bureaucrats, who peddle this excuse to justify crossing the strike lines of other crafts. With the BT's line, no strike on the railroads, in construction or the newspaper industry—where the workforces are divided into numerous craft unions—could ever win. Fundamentally Jim C.'s argument is counterposed to the fight for industrial unionism.

The BT's acquiescence to divisions within the working class fostered by the bourgeoisie shows up as well in its revoltingly "color-blind" attitude to black oppression. When Jim C. and his BT pals attended a recent New York SL forum on the "Class-Struggle Road to Black Liberation" to defend his scabbing, they had not one word to say about the forum's topic. And this in discussing a strike whose ranks included mostly black, Hispanic and immigrant workers! Nothing new here from an outfit which sneered at our mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the Klan and Nazis as "ghetto" work. Likewise in Canada, the BT capitulates to the Anglo-dominated status quo, calling for a "No" vote in



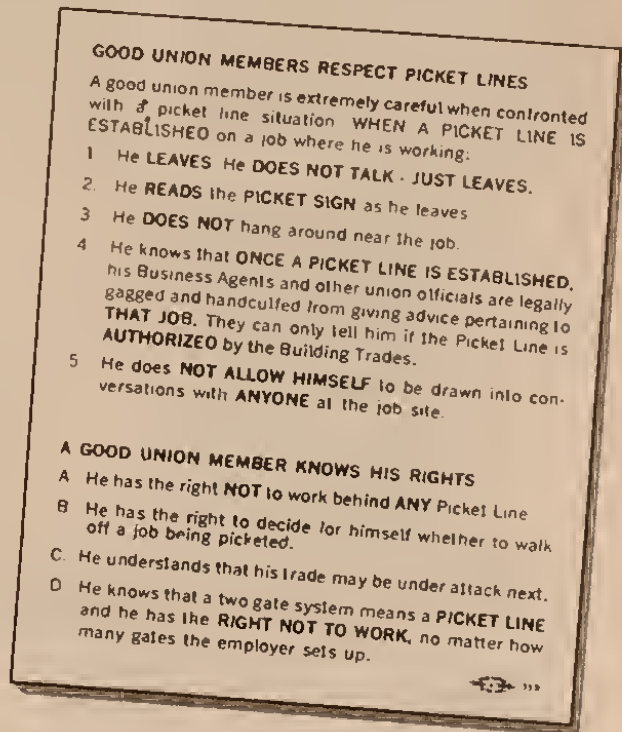
Indeed, until just a few years ago, even bourgeois politicians who were trying to pass themselves off as "friends of labor" knew that you don't cross picket lines. During the 1976 Democratic Party presidential primaries, several of the candidates didn't show up to speak to the Soci-



At bottom, the BT tails after the union bureaucracy, whose pro-capitalist politics lead them to degrade *every* working-class principle, resulting in the current devastation of the organized labor movement. This can be seen in the 1981 PATCO strike. In the BT's lying rendition, the striking air traffic controllers set up picket lines "to try to shut down the airports," as well as calling for a (consumer) boycott of the airlines, and the Spartacist League "flouted" this call. In fact, it was the Spartacist League which *uniquely* fought for mass pickets

coal fields, for decades a single picket was enough to shut down a pit. And woe to those who tried to cross. As a sign outside a fortified UMW picket station in Kentucky in 1977 read, "Warning: The Stearns Miners Have Determined That Scabbing Is Dangerous to Your Health." Or as Jack London put it in his famous poem, "The Scab": "No man has a right to scab so long as there is a pool of water to drown his carcass in, or a rope long enough to hang his body with."

The BT is not alone in its predilection for scabbing. Social democrats like the International Socialist Organization regularly cross picket lines. During the 32B-



**Machinists union card: respecting picket lines is elementary trade-union principle, today flouted by bureaucrats and scab "socialists."**

to shut down the airports. The PATCO and AFL-CIO tops *refused* to picket at entrances for Machinists and Teamsters—whose labor kept the airports functioning—fearing that this would mean a confrontation with the capitalist state. (By Jim C.'s logic, they weren't scabbing either, since they weren't working in the control towers!) To cover their betrayal, the bureaucracy substituted the cheap ploy of appealing to passengers outside the terminals not to fly. When his subterfuges are stripped away, Jim C.'s "charge" against the SL is that we refused to buy into the impotent diversionary consumer boycott.

In fact, at a Spartacist League/Britain public class last month, a London BTER acknowledged, "Now it's true that there was no physical picket line at the airport." In other words, the accusation that the SL scabbed on the PATCO strike is just another BT lie. But then, for these sophists the existence of a picket line is irrelevant: "It's not a geographical or physical thing," the London BTERS protested. Apparently for the BT, picket lines are metaphysical phenomena, while they readily waltz across the actual "geographical, physical" strike lines.

In fact, picket lines are a very "physical thing": they are the battle lines of the class war. In periods of intensified workers struggles, this is clear to any worker. In bastions of union strength such as the

The intrepid picket line crosser Jim C. blusters that it "may sometimes be the duty of Marxists to risk their livelihoods—or their lives." But not for him, and not now. Unlike such petty-bourgeois dilettantes, Trotskyists take the class struggle seriously. When we call on other workers to honor pickets, we practice what we preach. Several SL supporters lost their jobs because they wouldn't cross the building workers' picket lines during the recent strike. The "Bolshevik" Tendency quitters who were once in our organization might recall the case of steel worker Keith Anwar in Chicago, who was fired in 1979 for respecting picket lines set up by another United Steel Workers local. For the sneering traitors of the BT, this is "self-martyrdom." For communists it is a question of standing with our class. ■

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# As Striking Teachers Fight Union-Busting

## "Sewer Socialists" Campaign in Oakland

OAKLAND, March 11—The 3,500 members of the Oakland Education Association (OEA) have been on strike for three weeks now. Nearly three out of four students continue to boycott classes in support of the teachers. The teachers' demands for smaller class sizes and higher wages have struck a real chord in this 93 percent minority school district, in a state that has dropped to second from the bottom in per-student spending nationally. This sharp drop in education funding was largely a result of the racist-inspired "tax revolt" Proposition 13 passed in 1978.

The tens of thousands of black, Latino and Asian parents who want the schools to be a place for their kids to get an education have allied themselves with the striking teachers. Desperately needed is a class-struggle leadership that can turn this strike into a fight for quality, integrated public education for all, appealing to the entire labor movement, students and the black and Latino population to join in building pickets lines that can't be crossed. The teachers' strike is an opportunity to wield the labor/minority power that can be used to fight against racist cop terror, vicious anti-immigrant hysteria and the grinding all-sided oppression of workers and minorities under capitalism.

But the strategy of the OEA leadership accepts the miserable limits that the capitalist system places on education, playing into the school board's hands by focusing solely on the money spent on the bloated school administration. To that end, the OEA tops are banking on pressuring the Democratic Party city administration to intervene on the strikers' behalf, while pushing a slate of "progressives" to unseat the worst union-haters on the school board. Scandalously, the wretched AFL-CIO bureaucracy has joined hands with the Chamber of Commerce, the school board and the reactionary, pro-Farrakhan Oakland NAACP leadership to denounce and scab on the strike (see "Victory to Oakland Teachers Strike!" WV No. 640, 1 March).

### From "Copwatch" to the School Board?

The strike has drawn unusual attention to Oakland's city council and school board elections, which take place on March 26. A layer of aging New Leftists and "socialist" careerists are using these elections, and the strike, as their opportunity to make it into the "big time" of municipal politics.

The elections take place in the context of increasingly contentious Democratic Party politics, with council member Ignacio de la Fuente positioning himself as the "progressive" challenger to Oakland's current Democratic mayor, Elihu Harris. Oakland's next-door neighbor, Berkeley, has lately reverted to its historically conservative norm, with a new "pro-business" mayor and city administration seeking to wipe out the city's reputation as a haven for radicals. So Oakland, especially the petty-bourgeois Oakland Hills and North Oakland districts adjacent to Berkeley, has become home to a host of reformists seeking to launch their electoral careers. They hope to follow in the footsteps of Sheila Jordan, who as a supporter of the reformist group Solidarity launched her career in bourgeois politics with a 1987 run for Oakland School Board as a Democrat.

The OEA leadership has endorsed a slate of four candidates for School Board,

three Democratic Party candidates and one Gerald Sanders, a supporter of the minuscule "Communist Workers Group," a split from the "Bolshevik" Tendency. In his campaign leaflet, Sanders tacks on a call for "an independent party built by working people" which will "fight to bring about a workers government." But these are just rhetorical trappings for Sanders' real program, which is carefully tailored to stay within the bounds of what is acceptable to the pro-Democratic labor bureaucracy, including the stand-

Area. And Oakland is the birthplace of the Black Panther Party, where Bobby Hutton was gunned down by the cops as part of a racist police vendetta against the Panthers nationally.

### "Sewer Socialists" Push Illusions in Capitalist State

Sanders isn't the only pseudo-leftist trying to ride the coattails of "progressive" Democratic Party types into office in these elections. Running for city council in District 1 is Larry Shoup, a sup-

portedly devoted to the reformist proposition that the capitalist state can be made to represent the interests of working people. Mellor offers no other perspective than pressuring the existing pro-capitalist, pro-Democratic labor tops to form a reformist, British-style labor party. Mellor's program, which doesn't oppose the death penalty, or defend abortion rights or immigrants, is scripted not to offend the racist, pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy.

The essence of Mellor's politics, like those of Sanders, can be seen in his attitude toward the enforcers of capitalist state rule. Labor Militant is notorious for its position in favor of bringing cops and prison guards into the labor movement. Mellor's election program calls for "labor/community committees" to "oversee police operations." In his *AFSCME Activist* newsletter, Mellor seems to have a special fondness for the "correctional officers" that the bureaucracy has brought into the union by the tens of thousands. In a recent issue, Mellor sympathetically published the complaints of North Carolina prison guards who were forced to undergo training with one-second doses of the pepper gas they routinely blast at prisoners. Mellor also laments that the "union movement is weakened" by efforts of "correctional officers" in New York to leave AFSCME. Cops and prison guards are the deadly enforcers of this racist, capitalist system—they have no place in the labor movement. Remember George Jackson, shot dead by prison guards at San Quentin!

At times, the Spartacist League has given critical support to working-class parties or candidates who in some way offer a chance to draw a class line against the capitalist parties and class collaboration. But not one of the "leftists" running in the Oakland elections poses a break from bourgeois politics on any decisive question facing the proletariat today. Especially in the wake of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, these left tails on the Democratic Party increasingly drop even the posture of a separation from the capitalist parties.

They are more reminiscent of the election campaigns of the right wing of the pre-World War I Socialist Party, represented by the likes of Milwaukee mayor Victor Berger. These "sewer socialists," as revolutionary-minded workers called them, were supporters of the AFL bureaucrats with their narrow craft unionism and anti-immigrant and anti-black racism, who went on to support their own bourgeoisie in the imperialist slaughter of World War I. Of course, the Mellors and Sanders are willing to sell pretty cheap, but then you get what you pay for! ■



WV Photo

**Strike rally, February 20: Teachers' fight must unite labor with black and Latino poor to smash union-busting and racist cutbacks in Oakland schools.**

ard social-democratic nostrum of "taking money from the corporations" to stop the decline of the schools. Sanders' "program" is so thoroughly reformist and colorblind that it says not one word about the racist assault on immigrants, abortion rights for women, or even cop terror against the Bay Area's black and Hispanic poor and working people.

Moreover, at a campaign appearance Sanders pointedly refused to criticize his Democratic Party slate partners and instead embraced them, saying that if the slate got elected it could effect "immediate changes." It's not surprising that Sanders was endorsed by the main bourgeois daily, the *Oakland Tribune*, whose editors know radical window-dressing when they see it. With nearly 40 percent of black youth in California caught in the jaws of the criminal injustice system, and with living and working conditions about as bad as they have ever been for the mass of poor, black and immigrant working people in Oakland, left-talking black liberals like Sanders can be of use to the local bourgeois establishment.

In particular, Sanders helps to obscure the necessarily racist nature of capitalism's thugs in blue. For the last several years he has been known around the Bay Area as a spokesman for "Copwatch," a Berkeley organization whose main aim is "reform" of the capitalist police. Sanders, who declared, "We are not anti-police," pushes the dangerous illusion that the enforcers of racist, capitalist rule can be held "accountable." Tell that to the families and co-workers of Aaron Williams, Nathan Cosby, Luke and Raphael Grinage, Jerrold Hall and the scores of other victims of racist police terror in Oakland and the rest of the Bay

Area. And Oakland is the birthplace of the Black Panther Party, where Bobby Hutton was gunned down by the cops as part of a racist police vendetta against the Panthers nationally.

porter of the reformist Committees of Correspondence (CoC). Shoup, endorsed by two Democratic ex-mayors of Berkeley, is running as a candidate of the bourgeois Green Party as well as the Peace and Freedom Party, that halfway house for pro-Democratic Party reformists. The CoC hoped to hit the big time when they fled the reformist Communist Party in 1991, jettisoning the "Communist" label which got in the way of their electoral ambitions and union careers. You won't find a hint of even pale pink in Shoup's campaign, which is indistinguishable from that of any other Democratic Party liberal.

Running for city council at large is Richard Mellor, a supporter of the Labor Militant group and kept "oppositionist" in AFSCME Local 444. Mellor is the only "leftist" candidate to even make a pretense of criticizing "Republican and Democratic big business politicians." But Mellor's campaign is single-

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# Young Spartacus

Part One of this article, on "The Origins of Anarchism" and the views of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, appeared in Workers Vanguard No. 640 (1 March). Part Three will deal with the Paris Commune and the split in the First International.

While Proudhon's writings were influential among politically active and advanced French workers, he did not strive to become the leader of an organized movement. The anarchist movement as such originated with Mikhail Bakunin in the 1860s. Proudhon was basically a theorist whose views remained fairly consistent over his 25 years as a radical publicist. By contrast, Bakunin was a political adventurer who operated with very different programs in different movements and milieus. Some latter-day anarchists like Sam Dolgoff argue that Bakunin's views and activities before the mid-1860s—which are quite embarrassing for them—have little or nothing to do with anarchism. However, there are important elements of continuity in Bakunin's checkered career.

Mikhail Bakunin was the eldest son of an aristocratic Russian landowner, a

by Joseph Seymour

man of considerable culture and respect for education but of conventional political views. Typically for a young Russian nobleman, Mikhail was sent to a military academy and upon graduation became a junior officer in the tsarist army. But Bakunin lacked the discipline for a military career and after a few years got himself dismissed from the service. He then drifted into a bohemian existence in Moscow's intellectual circles. There he established friendly relations with Alexander Herzen, the future founder of Russian populism. But Bakunin was in no sense a political radical when in his mid-twenties he left Russia to study philosophy in Germany.

When Bakunin arrived in Berlin in 1840, intellectual life was dominated by the Hegelian Left—its adherents and opponents. This current of democratic-minded intellectuals was being radicalized by the increasingly repressive policies of the new, more reactionary and pietist Prussian king. Fundamentally, the Hegelian Left was an expression among educated German youth of the growing contradiction between the rapid development of bourgeois societies in West and Central Europe and the monarchical

History Today



Mikhail Bakunin first gained prominence as a left-wing, pan-Slavic nationalist in the 1848 Revolutions. His participation in the May 1849 Dresden uprising led to imprisonment for eight years.

## MARXISM VS. ANARCHISM

### From 1848 to the Bolshevik Revolution

regimes derived from the feudal past. That contradiction would soon explode in the Revolutions of 1848.

Bakunin became a member in good standing of the Hegelian Left, his outlook at the time being indistinguishable from mainstream European radicals of the 1840s—the soon-to-be "red '48ers"—except for a penchant for extremist rhetoric. His first writing as a self-declared

pendence to a democratic revolution within Russia itself was especially significant, not least in the ever-watchful eyes of the Isarist autocracy.

#### Bakunin as a Left-Wing Pan-Slavic Nationalist

During the epochal year 1848, Karl Marx acted as the leader of an organized group based on a definite program best

### Part 2

## Mikhail Bakunin—Founder of the Anarchist Movement

revolutionary, "Reaction in Germany" (1842), contains the famous aphorism: "The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too."

To his credit, Bakunin became an ardent supporter of the struggle for the independence of Poland, which had been subjugated and divided between the Russian, Prussian and Austro-Hungarian states. The cause of Polish national liberation from the tripartite oppression of the Romanovs, Hohenzollerns and Habsburgs was near and dear to the hearts of virtually all radicals of the 1840s. But for a young Russian nobleman to link the struggle for Polish inde-

expressed in the recently published *Communist Manifesto*. By contrast, Bakunin acted as a footloose political adventurer who had scarcely any impact on the momentous events in which he participated. He went from Brussels to Paris, from Paris to various cities in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire looking for action or fleeing the authorities.

Nonetheless, it was during the revolutionary *annus mirabilis* that Bakunin emerged as a distinct personality on the European left. He did so not as an advocate of anarchism—the basic doctrine of which had already been developed by Proudhon, with whom Bakunin was per-

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sonally acquainted—but rather as an advocate of a leftist version of pan-Slavic nationalism. He first voiced this program at the Slav Congress in Prague in June 1848 and elaborated it a few months later in a pamphlet, *Appeal to the Slavs*.

To understand pan-Slavism, including its Bakuninite variant, it is necessary to recognize that at this time all the Slavic peoples, except for the Russians, were subject to foreign rule. The Western Slavs (Czechs and Croats) were incorporated in the German-dominated Austro-Hungarian empire. The Southern or Balkan Slavs (Serbs and Bulgars) were under the yoke of Ottoman Turkey. And the Poles were subjugated by two Germanic states and the Russian state of their fellow Slavs.

Pan-Slavism was essentially a right-wing ideology which sought to invest Russian imperialism, especially in the Balkans, with the spurious mission of "national liberation." Bakunin, however, gave pan-Slavism a leftward twist by linking Russian support for the liberation of the Western and Southern Slavs to the establishment of a democratic republic in Russia. Referring to the Slav Congress, his *Appeal* states:

"[W]e made a strong appeal to that great Russian people which, alone of all the Slavs, has been able to preserve its national existence. We entreated the Russians to give serious thought to what they know only too well—that their nationality and their greatness mean nothing so long as they themselves are not free, so long as they permit their power to be used as a scourge against unhappy Poland and as a perpetual threat to European civilization.

"This is what we have done and what, jointly with the democrats of all countries, we have demanded: LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY OF NATIONS, within which the Slav peoples, free like these and in fraternal contact with all, but united in a closer alliance among themselves, may soon be transformed into a vast democratic State."

—reproduced in Sam Dolgoff, ed., *Bakunin on Anarchy* (1972)

Bakunin was here projecting onto Russia a political and social revolution modeled on the Great French Revolution of 1789, that is, a radical bourgeois-democratic movement based on an uprising of the urban lower classes (centrally the artisan proletariat) combined with a mass peasant revolt. But the Russia of the 1840s had no significant urban bourgeois sector which could initiate and direct a popular revolution against the tsarist autocracy. In their own way, the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders (like the Czech Ferdinand Palacky) who organized the Slav Congress in Prague understood this and therefore dismissed Bakunin's notion of a "democratic pan-Slav state" as utopian fantasizing. Except for the Poles, oppressed by the Russian Slavs, the nationalist movements among the Western and Balkan Slavic peoples looked to the tsarist autocracy or the Habsburg monarchy to champion their cause.

Bakunin's *Appeal* concludes with a vague call for social revolution:

"We need to transform the material and moral conditions of our present-day existence, to overturn, from top to bottom, this decrepit social world which has grown impotent and sterile and incapable of containing or supporting so great a mass of liberty. We must, first, purify our atmosphere and make a complete transformation of our environment, for it corrupts our instincts and our will by constricting our hearts and our minds. The social question thus appears to be first and foremost the question of the complete overturn of society."

From a Marxist standpoint, two things are striking about this passage. First, the

WORKERS VANGUARD





Polish insurgents forge arms to fight tsarist Russian rule in 1863. Bakunin abandoned pan-Slavic nationalism and developed anarchist doctrines following defeat of Polish national uprising.

"we" on whose behalf Bakunin claims to speak are not workers or peasants or even the oppressed and exploited classes as a whole. He is literally appealing to all Slavs of *all* social classes. Secondly, and partly for that reason, Bakunin's call for a social revolution lacks any concrete programmatic content, and is little more than high-flown rhetoric. A constant feature of Bakunin's outlook was an explicit rejection of Marx and Engels' insistence on the laws of history as the basis for elaborating a program for achieving the revolutionary objective. When the historical materialist outlook is rejected, what remains is at bottom moralism in place of a class analysis.

Bakunin's program and views were subjected at the time to incisive criticism by Friedrich Engels in his article "Democratic Pan-Slavism" (February 1849). This polemic is significant primarily because it anticipates the later debate between scientific socialism and anarchism. Engels goes to the heart of Bakunin's worldview: the belief that national and social liberation is basically an act of will which can be achieved in any place at any time and under any economic conditions. Engels explains:

"There is not a word about the actually existing obstacles to such a universal liberation, or about the very diverse degrees of civilisation and the consequent equally diverse political needs of the individual peoples. The word 'freedom' replaces all that. There is not a word about the actual state of things, or, insofar as it does receive attention, it is described as absolutely reprehensible, arbitrarily established by 'congresses of despots' and 'diplomats.' To this bad reality is counterposed the alleged will of the people with its categorical imperative, with the absolute demand simply for 'freedom'....

"Justice,' 'humanity,' 'freedom,' 'equality,' 'fraternity,' 'independence'—so far

we have found nothing in the pan-Slavist manifesto but these more or less ethical categories, which sound very fine, it is true, but *prove absolutely nothing* in historical and political questions. 'Justice,' 'humanity,' 'freedom,' etc. may demand this or that a thousand times over; but if the thing is impossible it does not take place and in spite of everything remains an 'empty figment of a dream'." [emphasis in original]

Today, no less than in 1848, genuine universal freedom, equality and fraternity will require decades of economic development which can be achieved only under a world communist system.

Marx and Engels understood that there was no social basis for a bourgeois-democratic revolution in tsarist Russia at the time. Hence they recognized that, whatever confused notions might exist in Bakunin's head, pan-Slavism could only serve as a cover for tsarist Russian intervention in Central Europe and the Balkans. In fact, just a few months after Engels wrote his polemic against Bakunin, the Russian army in alliance with the Habsburg forces suppressed the bourgeois-democratic government of Louis Kossuth in Hungary.

In one important respect, Marx and Engels' views on the national question during the Revolutions of 1848 were proven wrong by the future course of history. They assessed the aspirations of East European nationalities to national independence according to their ability to consolidate modern independent nation-states favorable to economic development. They distinguished between "revolutionary-democratic" and "reactionary" nations on the basis of whether their national struggle contributed to the European revolutions or impeded it. Like Bakunin, Marx and Engels were adamantly committed to an independent Poland, since the partition of Poland was the cement that bound together the reactionary Holy Alliance of Prussia, Austria-Hungary and Russia. But they believed that the Western Slavs (Czechs and Croats) were incapable of an independent national existence and would over time assimilate into the larger German and Hungarian nations.

A later Marxist historian who is highly critical of Engels' views on the Slavic question, Roman Rosdolsky, noted, however, that Marx and Engels were right in assessing the forces in the struggles in 1848-49, commenting that the role played by the "old civilized nations" (Germans, Hungarians and Poles) was "revolutionary wholly and overall, while the struggle which the Slavs waged against them benefitted the counterrevolution" (*Friedrich Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen Völker,"* 1981). Bakunin's hopes for the oppressed Slavic peoples to play a revolutionary role in

1848 were dashed. The Slav Congress which met in Prague in June of that year was split between a radical wing which looked toward joint action with democratic movements in Germany and Hungary and a right wing which sought "autonomy" for the Slav regions within the framework of the Habsburg monarchy. The Sabor (Diet) of the Southern Slavs meeting at the same time in Zagreb was firmly dominated by the right wing which expressed loyalty to the Habsburgs and pledged to remain within the Austrian Empire; only a small minority sought to link their national struggle to the revolutionary struggle against the feudal monarchist regimes.

Although the *Communist Manifesto* anticipated the struggle for power of the proletariat as a class for itself as the only road to the liberation of humanity from exploitation and oppression, Marx and Engels still looked toward the democratic bourgeoisie to play a revolutionary role in bringing economic development to the more backward regions, including by military conquest, as Napoleon's armies had once combated reactionary and clericalist forces in the areas they occupied. The Revolutions of 1848 demonstrated to Marx and Engels that the bourgeoisie—already fearful of the aroused plebeian masses—would no longer stand on a democratic program of "liberty, equality, fraternity." The defeat of these revolutions thus conditioned Marx and Engels' evolving views on the national question. The prospect of assimilating small nationalities such as the Czechs and Croats in the context of a European-wide social revolution had been removed from the historical agenda.

Over the next decades, Marx and Engels recognized that the conquest and incorporation of more backward regions by more advanced capitalist states would only perpetuate the enslavement of these oppressed peoples as well as of the proletariat of the oppressor nations. In a 10 December 1869 letter to Engels, Marx argued for Irish independence from England and pointed out:

"It is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland.... The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland.... The English reaction in England had its roots (as in Cromwell's time) in the subjugation of Ireland."

## Bakunin's Confession to the Tsar

The counterrevolution which swept across Central Europe in mid-1849 found Bakunin in the eastern German state of Saxony. Like Engels in the Rhineland and Baden, he chose to engage in a rearguard action—an uprising in the city of Dresden—against overwhelming military odds. Unlike Engels, Bakunin did not escape safely into exile. He was captured by the Saxon authorities, who turned him over to the Austrians, who after a few years turned him over to the Russians.

Shortly after he was imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg in 1851, a senior police official urged Bakunin to confess his crimes to the tsar as if to his "spiritual father." Amazingly, Bakunin did so:

"My confession to you, as my sovereign, would consist of the following words: Sire! I am entirely guilty before Your Imperial Majesty and before the laws of the fatherland....

"Yes, Sire, I shall confess to you as to a spiritual father from whom a man expects forgiveness, not here but for the other world; and I pray God that He inspire in me words that are simple, sincere, heartfelt, without contrivance or adulation; in a word, worthy of finding access to the heart of Your Imperial Majesty."

—The Confession of Mikhail Bakunin (1977)

From the Decembrists of the 1820s to the populists of the 1870s to the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries of the early 20th century, thousands of Russian revolutionaries had faced execution, imprisonment and hard labor in Siberia. Yet with the sole exception of Bakunin, no prominent Russian revolutionary ever addressed an abject personal appeal to the tsar.

But it would be wrong to regard Bakunin's confession as a repudiation of his views or even a hypocritical ploy to secure his freedom or get his sentence commuted to banishment to Siberia. The main theme of this lengthy document is to win Nicholas I to the cause of revolutionary pan-Slavism. In particular, Bakunin appeals to anti-German sentiment supposedly shared by all true Slavs:

"Hatred for the Germans is the primary basis of Slav unity and mutual understanding among the Slavs. It is so strong, so deeply engraved in the heart of every Slav, that I am even now convinced, Sire, that sooner or later, in some way or another, no matter how political relationships in Europe are defined, the Slavs will throw off the German yoke, and the time will come when there will be no Prussian or Austrian or Turkish Slavs....



Friedrich Engels polemicized against Bakunin's call for a democratic pan-Slavic state as "an empty figment of a dream."

"You, Sire, know how deep and powerful are the sympathies of the Slavs toward the mighty Russian Tsardom upon whose support and assistance they have relied, and to what extent the Austrian government and the Germans in general have feared and do fear Russian Pan-Slavism!"

The basic program put forward in the "Confession"—a federation of free Slavic peoples—is thus the same as that of the 1848 *Appeal*, only now to be achieved with the aid of the tsarist autocracy rather than by its overthrow.

The "Confession" should not be dismissed as the aberrant act of a desperate man having no relationship to Bakuninist anarchism as a doctrine or a movement. As we have seen, a central premise of anarchism was that there existed a *universal morality* transcending class divisions and conflict. From Bakunin's standpoint, it was just as possible to win the Tsar of all the Russias to a program of national and social liberation as to win an intellectually inclined nobleman, a worker or a peasant. And, in fact, a decade after writing his "Confession," when he had escaped from Russia and was safely domiciled in London, Bakunin again *appealed to the Tsar* to lead the Slavic national liberation movement! In an 1862 pamphlet, *The People's Cause: Romanov, Pugachev, or Pestel*, he stated:

"We should most gladly of all follow Romanov, if Romanov could and would  
continued on page 8



While imprisoned in Russia in the 1850s, Bakunin wrote fawning appeal to Tsar Nicholas I (above) to lead national liberation of Slavic peoples.



## Anarchism...

(continued from page 7)

transform himself from a Petersburg Emperor into a National Tsar.... We would follow him because he alone could carry out and complete a great, peaceful revolution without shedding one drop of Russian or Slav blood." [emphasis in original]

While Nicholas I judged Bakunin's "Confession" to be a "very curious and instructive" document, he decided to keep its author in the harsh confines of the Peter and Paul Fortress. It was not until 1857 that Bakunin, largely through the intervention of his family, was released from prison and banished to Siberia. A few years later he escaped from there, made his way across the Pacific and ended up in London, where he became part of Alexander Herzen's circle. At that time Bakunin's politics were still a leftist—but virulently anti-German—version of pan-Slavic nationalism. In a letter to his sister-in-law in 1862, he wrote: "I am busy solely with the Polish, the Russian, and the pan-Slav cause, and am preaching, systematically and with fervent conviction, hatred of the Germans" (quoted in E.H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin* [1937]).

Bakunin's career as a left pan-Slavic



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**Alexander Herzen, Bakunin's close colleague, was the founder of Russian populism, a doctrine of peasant-based socialism.**

nationalist came to an end with the defeat of the Polish national uprising against the tsarist autocracy in 1863. He tried to reach Poland so he could personally join in the fighting but ended up stranded in Sweden. He and Herzen put out literature calling on Russian democrats to support the Poles and appealing to Russian soldiers not to fire on their Polish brothers. At the same time, Bakunin was highly critical of the aristocratic leaders of the Polish rebellion for opposing an agrarian revolution. His disillusionment with



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**Garibaldi's insurgents land in Sicily in 1860, overthrowing local Bourbon monarchy and launching campaign for unification of Italy. Italian national revolutionaries, soon disillusioned with the conservative unified bourgeois state, became the first adherents of Bakuninism.**

Polish nationalism led him to abandon pan-Slavism as well. So Bakunin turned to greener pastures and accordingly devised a new political doctrine.

### Birth of the Anarchist Movement

In 1864, Bakunin went to Italy where he became part of the circle around Princess Zoe Obolonsky, a wealthy Russian noblewoman who supported radical causes. It was through the largesse of this Russian princess that Bakunin was able to form his first secret society. Its initial recruits were mainly declassed intellectuals who had been involved in the Italian nationalist movement but had become disillusioned with the conservative, unified Italian bourgeois state arising from the Risorgimento. When Princess Obolonsky moved to Switzerland a few years later, Bakunin followed his patroness there, and he would remain in the Alpine republic, with occasional forays abroad, until his death in 1876.

It was during his Italian sojourn that Bakuninist anarchism originated both as a doctrine and movement. In calling for a revolution in the name of anarchism, Bakunin looked to the same social strata—only now located in southern Europe—to which he had previously appealed in the name of democratic pan-Slavism: declassed intellectuals like himself, impoverished artisans and other urban plebeian elements, poor peasants and rural laborers. The 1866 *Revolutionary Catechism*, written for the International Brotherhood, is a clear and cogent statement of Bakunin's program. His subsequent writings are in large measure an elaboration and defense of the positions outlined in this seminal document. The *Catechism* asserts what would become the basic negative principle of anarchism: "the radical dissolution of the centralized, aggressive, authoritarian State, including its military, bureaucratic, governmental, administrative, judicial, and legislative institutions" (reproduced in Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy*). This document also states the basic positive element of the anarchist program: "The internal reorganization of each country on the basis of the absolute freedom of individuals, of the productive associations, and of the communes" (emphasis in original). These autonomous communes would freely federate into autonomous provinces which, in turn, would freely federate into autonomous nations.

The society projected by Bakunin is in many ways an attractive one. Unlike the reactionary bigot Proudhon, Bakunin's views on social questions were genuinely libertarian (except for a strong dose of anti-Semitism). He was a believer in sexual freedom and equality: "Religious and

civil marriage to be replaced by free marriage. Adult men and women have the right to unite and separate as they please, nor has society the right to hinder their union or to force them to maintain it." Bakunin also supported the rights of children against tyrannical and abusive parents, an unusually progressive attitude at the time. As for the aged: "The old, sick, and infirm will enjoy all political and social rights and be bountifully supported at the expense of society." At the end of the day, the communist and anarchist visions of what constitutes a good society converge. The difference—and it is the difference—is how to get there.

A careful and critical reading of the *Revolutionary Catechism* in this regard reveals obvious contradictions. Bakunin, whose own nature was highly combative, was not so naive as to think that relations between provinces and nations would always be free of conflict. He therefore projected an international tribunal with considerable powers:

"The International Tribunal shall have no other function than to settle, without appeal, all disputes between nations and their respective provinces....

"No federated nation shall make war against another federated country. If there is war and the International Tribunal has pronounced its decision, the aggressor must submit. If this doesn't occur, the other federated nations will sever relations with it and, in case of attack by the aggressor, unite to repel invasion."

An international body which has the power to sanction military action against an "aggressor" nation is in fact a *global super-state*, whatever Bakunin chose to call it, which clearly would possess an

organized military force to "repel invasion."

The fundamental contradiction in the *Revolutionary Catechism* and of Bakuninist anarchism in general is between its advocacy of economic equality on a worldwide scale and extreme political decentralization. Even in the 1860s, vast inequalities separated the different regions of Europe, not to speak of the rest of the world. Bakunin's program called for every commune to provide free education for all children. Very good. But how could the children of illiterate peasants in southern Italy or Spain receive the quality of education provided for the children of skilled craftsmen in the relatively prosperous cities of Switzerland or western Germany? Raising living standards in Spain to approach those of Switzerland would require a massive reallocation of world resources toward the less developed countries, which is scarcely consistent with local autonomy and decentralization.

Obviously, some communes and provinces would have far higher living standards than others due to differences in natural resource endowment, industrial development, the cultural level of population, etc. Yet none of Bakunin's numerous writings on anarchist federalism addresses this question. How, for example, will the terms of trade be determined between communes, provinces and nations which export agricultural produce and those which export manufactured goods? Through market competition? Bakunin would have rejected this out of hand. By the decisions of an international tribunal? Then how would such decisions be enforced?

Had the question of overcoming economic inequalities between regions been posed to Bakunin and his followers like Kropotkin, they undoubtedly would have responded: the wealthier communes, provinces and nations will voluntarily share their resources with the poorer ones. "Man," prescribed Bakunin, "should wish the freedom, morality, and humanity of all men in the interest of his own humanity, his own morality, and his personal freedom" (*The Knouto-German Empire and the Social Revolution* [1871]). Despite the militant atheism of Bakunin, Kropotkin & Co., classical anarchism was at bottom a secular form of Christian millennialism. On the morrow of the revolution, mankind would undergo a moral regeneration and henceforth live according to the precept: love thy neighbor as thyself. This idealist vision underlay the political conflict between Bakuninist anarchism and the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels, which expresses the interests of the modern industrial proletariat.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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# Elections...

(continued from page 1)

Front-runner Robert Dole is Mr. Balanced Budget, trumpeting his prowess in greasing through devastating cuts in welfare, Medicare and education which will mean millions more poor and minority women and children on the street. Democratic incumbent Clinton has revived his '92 campaign pledge to "end welfare as we know it," while deploying thousands more cops and troops to police the Mexican border against Latino immigrants. On the far right wing of this racist pack is Pat Buchanan, whose fascistic demagoguery feeds on and fuels the current climate of social reaction fostered by both bourgeois parties.

That the likes of a Buchanan could gain "respectability" and a national platform with his anti-Semitic diatribes and pseudo-populist rhetoric against "New York bankers" is an ominous sign of the times in Clinton/Gingrich's America. He is a certified "America First" racist, who refers to all Mexicans as "José" and trafficks in "yellow peril" anti-Asian chauvinism; who wraps himself in the Confederate flag, the symbol of slavery and banner of the KKK; who champions the anti-abortion "right to life" terrorists and spews venom against gays. Buchanan seeks to make himself a spokesman for an enraged white suburban "middle class," petty-bourgeois layers buffeted by economic insecurity and prey to racist fear-mongering. This is the same phenomenon which is producing a sharp rise in fascistic militia movements and fundamentalist religious frenzy.

While Buchanan echoes the militia shock troops of reaction and fundamentalist fanatics like Pat Robertson in railing against a "New World Order," which they use as code words for their anti-Semitic fantasies of a "Zionist" conspiracy to rule the world, he has gained prominence precisely in the Washington-dictated New World Order proclaimed by fellow Republican George Bush. Behind this is the push to make American capitalism "lean and mean" in the context of heightened interimperialist rivalry following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. While mainstream commentators bewail the Republican right's "isolationist" stance, there is in fact a bipartisan consensus for U.S. domination of the world. When Buchanan and the rest of the Republicans were baying for Cuban blood recently, Clinton obliged by endorsing diehard anti-Communist Jesse Helms' bill to tighten the starvation embargo against the embattled bureaucratically deformed workers state in the Caribbean.

Today most of the left seizes on Buchanan to push their usual "fight the right" rhetoric as an excuse for lining up behind "lesser evil" Clinton, just like they did in '92. In contrast, we Trotskyists fight to break the working class from the partner parties of American capitalism, of which Buchanan is today the most malignant representative. What is needed is a revolutionary workers party which champions the cause of all the oppressed and fights for international socialist revolution to expropriate the profit-gouging bourgeoisie—the only way out of capitalist decay and devastation.

## Proto-Fascist Buchanan on the Loose

Pat Buchanan's views on race were described by his former boss Richard Nixon as "segregation forever." Buchanan hails the Confederate battle flag as "a symbol of defiance, courage and bravery." He has praised Hitler as "an individual of great courage, a soldier's soldier," denied the mass murder carried out in the Nazis' Treblinka death camp, and castigated Holocaust survivors for "group fantasies of martyrdom and heroics." As Ronald Reagan's chief speech writer, Buchanan pushed for his boss to visit the SS cemetery at Bitburg, Germany in 1985. Two years later, he

launched an unsuccessful crusade to prevent the deportation of Estonian Nazi death camp commandant Karl Linnaas to the Soviet Union to be tried for his war crimes.

Buchanan's fascistic proclivities have a strongly clerical bent. He was raised in a family which idolized Catholic reactionary demagogues like Spanish dictator Franco, Depression-era fascist radio broadcaster Father Coughlin, and the rabid, red-haiting Senator Joe McCarthy. Today Buchanan's staff is chock-full of white-supremacists like Larry Pratt, a campaign co-chairman who took a leave of absence after his association with the Aryan Nations and Nazi skinheads became known. Little wonder that Buchanan's candidacy is supported by David Duke, the "former" Klan leader and founder of the "National Association for the Advancement of White People." Reminiscent of Hitler's "national socialism," Buchanan vituperates against *Jewish* capitalists like the Goldman Sachs investment firm, and Jewish government officials like Treasury Secretary Robert

troopers in the 1930s, because they do not face any real internal challenge to their rule. On the contrary, for the past two decades they have smashed unions, totally impoverished and decimated the inner cities and driven down living standards for the overwhelming majority of Americans...and gotten away with it."

—"Feds Target Everybody,"  
WV No. 623, 19 May 1995

While labor struggle is at an ebb, the vast and growing economic disparity between rich and poor is creating conditions for massive social unrest—and also expressing itself in the discontents that fuel nativist racism. If the Buchanan candidacy shows anything, it is that very little separates "mainstream" rightist reaction from outright fascism.

As Ross Perot did in 1992, Buchanan trumpets the anthem of economic nationalism. This is anomalous for a contemporary Republican politician, but it is a conscious appeal to the "Reagan Democrats" who have been alienated by Gingrich's "Contract with America." As the Republican Congress began "balancing the budget" not only by axing wel-



AP photos

**Buchanan's heroes: anti-Communist witchhunter Senator Joe McCarthy and anti-Semitic clerical-fascist Father Charles Coughlin.**

Rubin and Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan.

While all the candidates are trying to capitalize on anti-immigrant racism, Buchanan rails against black and Latin immigrants as a threat to the "Euro-American" gene pool, and calls for closing the borders to all immigrants for five years. Buchanan's nativist anti-immigrant racism harks back to the mid-19th century "Know Nothings," who answered the first waves of immigration from Central and Southern Europe with virulent anti-Catholic hate-mongering. The Jesuit-trained, Roman Catholic Buchanan may have changed the tune to fit the times, but it wasn't that long ago that the Klan was lynching "Papists" in the American "heartland."

While Buchanan's rhetoric and attempts to mobilize white middle-class resentment are hallmarks of fascism, he is still operating within the framework of bourgeois electoralism. Fascism is a movement of enraged petty-bourgeois and lumpen elements organized as shock troops of capital to smash an insurgent proletariat, pulverizing its organizations, and to terrorize the oppressed. In the U.S., nativist fascist formations like the KKK have at times assumed mass proportions, as in the 1920s, while acting as anti-union goons in the 1930s and auxiliaries to Dixiecrat segregationists during the civil rights era. Wherever they raise their heads, the labor movement in alliance with blacks and all other potential victims of fascist terror must mobilize to stop them in their tracks.

However, as we noted in commenting on Clinton's push for police-state measures in the wake of the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building last April:

"The U.S. rulers do not presently need to unleash their fascist dogs of war, as the German rulers did with Hitler's storm

fare, Medicaid and other programs for minorities and the poor, but also by going after Medicare and Social Security, even backward white workers were outraged. Buchanan recognized that the white backlash/tax revolt line had lost much of its potency and credibility. But at this juncture, virtually the entire bourgeois media, Wall Street financiers and captains of industry—as well as dyed-in-the-wool conservatives like Rush Limbaugh and the Heritage Foundation—have said in unison that Buchanan's opposition to international trade pacts is bad for U.S. business.

Even more problematic for the Republicans is the question of abortion. Buchanan is acting as spokesman for the most bigoted and intransigent elements in the fundamentalist anti-abortion right. In the primaries, all the Republican candidates have catered to the Christian Coalition in opposing abortion. But Dole & Co. are well aware that even a majority of people who consider themselves Republicans oppose an outright ban on abortion, and that the 1992 platform's hard anti-abortion stance was a big factor in losing to Clinton. Despite the increasing religiosity and weirdness of American society, it remains the case that most people don't want the government in their bedrooms.

## Break with the Partner Parties of Capitalism!

During last year's Machinists strike against Boeing, Buchanan showed up on the picket lines to rail against the aerospace giant for shipping work to plants in China. That this crypto-fascist, a millionaire union-basher who opposes raising the minimum wage, can get a hearing among some backward white workers is a measure of the prostration of the American labor movement under its pro-capitalist, pro-Democratic Party

leadership. The AFL-CIO tops, old and new, have presided over the step-by-step decimation of union gains and decent-paying jobs over the last two decades, during which real wages have fallen by over 20 percent. Pushing for protectionist trade war against Japan and blaming foreign workers (and immigrants) for unemployment here, the Democrats and bureaucrats have provided fertile soil for Buchanan's fascistic ravings.

For the Democrats, the Buchanan candidacy is a blessing in disguise, enabling them to mobilize popular support behind welfare-basher Clinton as a supposed way to fight the "extremist right." An anti-Gingrich, anti-Buchanan "Fight the Right" march has been scheduled for April 14 in San Francisco, endorsed by newly elected black Democratic mayor Willie Brown, the National Organization for Women and Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, with the reformist left clamoring over each other to be its "best builders." The popular-front politics of lesser-evilmism, which seeks to maintain the status quo with only some minor reforms, cannot address the worsening situation of hard-pressed working people and minorities, which requires a *radical* solution attacking the roots of their deprivation in the capitalist system.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the conditions of black people in this deeply racist country. The impoverished ghetto masses have been deemed expendable by the politicians of both parties. The destruction of unionized industrial jobs has had a particularly heavy impact on the black working class. Higher education is being subjected to a racist purge as affirmative action programs are rolled back across the board. And with the drive to reverse many of the (limited) gains of the civil rights movement, the black petty bourgeoisie is also under heavy fire. Nation of Islam demagogue Louis Farrakhan feeds off despair among the black middle class, while Buchanan exploits the frustrations of the white middle class in the service of racist reaction. Farrakhan's Million Man March last October, far from combatting the all-sided assault on minorities, dovetailed with Clinton/Gingrich's program to blame black people for their own oppression. No wonder the capitalist rulers praised this march for "atonement."

The revival of the labor movement fighting for its own class interests necessarily requires a program to fight for all the oppressed. Unionizing the South cannot even be conceived of without a struggle against black oppression, and specifically against the strikebreakers and lynchers of the Klan. To organize the burgeoning garment industry sweatshops requires a fight for the rights of women and immigrants, including demands for free 24-hour day care and full citizenship rights for all. And this means first of all a political struggle to oust the pro-capitalist, die-on-your-knees union bureaucracy which keeps working people chained to their exploiters through the Democratic Party. While new AFL-CIO head John Sweeney is recruiting young activists for a "union organizing" drive this summer, his greater program is for them to rally the ranks to pull the lever for Clinton in November.

In a country where CEOs make 190 times the average workers' wage, where the president of AT&T was rewarded with a four-fold increase in salary over the last ten years (to over \$3 million a year), plus \$9 million in stock options last year alone, for handing out 125,000 pink slips, the raw material for an explosion of class struggle is obvious. Pennyante reformism and Democratic Party liberalism are incapable of ameliorating the conditions which give rise to the likes of a Pat Buchanan. What's needed is a fight for working-class political power, for a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie. A multiracial revolutionary workers party must be built that fights to seize the productive wealth of this society from its greedy, incompetent owners and put it in the service of all. ■



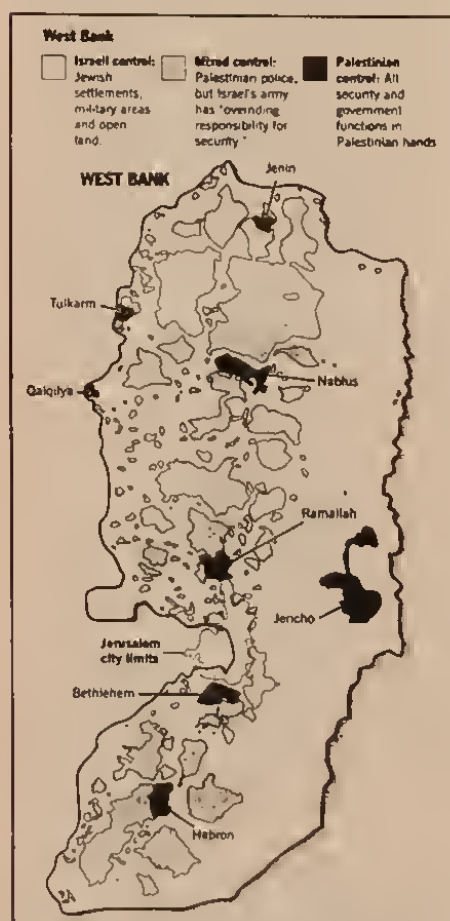
# Israel...

(continued from page 1)

The response to the bombings laid bare the true nature of the Israel-PLO "peace" accord of September 1993. We warned at the time that the essence of this "Pax Americana" was that "the PLO will take over the job of policing the Palestinian masses" (WV No. 583, 10 September 1993). Today, while unemployment in Gaza reaches 60 percent, Arafat's Palestinian Authority now has close to 30,000 cops—fully 70 percent of all its public employees—all to police an "autonomous" area which covers only a portion of the tiny Gaza Strip and a small fraction of the West Bank. In the wake of the bombings, Arafat was summoned to a humiliating late-night meeting where an Israeli general gave him his marching orders, while U.S. ambassador Martin Indyk ranted, "We want more stick and less carrot from Arafat."

Now the *New York Times* (9 March) points to the "unusual level of intelligence sharing and collaboration among the C.I.A., Shin Bet and the Palestinian secret police" in a crackdown against the Islamic fundamentalists of Hamas. While Hamas has been singled out as the main target, the crackdown is and has been directed against all opponents and critics of the slavish "peace" accords and the Zionist occupation. In the run-up to the Palestinian council elections in January, Arafat's goons threatened and arrested even dissidents within his own Fatah organization, as well as supporters of the pro-accord ex-Stalinist Palestinian People's Party.

In the last few years, Hamas has managed to capitalize on Arafat's groveling before the Zionist rulers by claiming the mantle of intransigent opposition to the occupation. Hamas and its military arm, the Qassam Brigades, do indeed have a sordid history of sending their supporters out to be "martyred" by carrying out stabbings and other murderous attacks just as likely to be directed against Israeli working people—and Palestinian women and leftists—as against the army and its settler auxiliaries. But Hamas and the Qassam Brigades denied any role in the latest terror bombings. In fact, they have refrained from any attacks for the past seven months, seeking an accommodation with Arafat and hoping to avoid a loss of support among the war-weary Palestinian masses.



Washington Post map  
Palestinian "autonomy": impoverished ghettos (black areas) surrounded by Israeli occupation army and armed Zionist settlers.



Israeli soldiers attack Palestinian demonstrators last December in West Bank town of Nablus.

Responsibility for the Jerusalem bombings was claimed by a previously unknown group calling itself "The Cells of the Martyr the Engineer Yahya Ayyash—the New Pupils," who said the attacks were carried out to avenge Ayyash's assassination by the Israeli secret police. Ayyash was a Hamas bomb "engineer" who was killed in his Gaza home on January 5 when he picked up a cellular phone implanted with a radio-triggered bomb.

The bus bombings came six weeks after Ayyash's killing, but two weeks after Peres announced new Israeli elections for May 29, as he rode a wave of sympathy generated by the assassination of his predecessor Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing Israeli. Literally in a matter of hours, Peres' hefty lead over his right-wing Likud opponent Benjamin Netanyahu was wiped out. Several days after the Tel Aviv explosion, amid charges by Arafat that rightist Israeli forces collaborated in the terror bombings, a Palestinian arrested for complicity in the attacks claimed in a TV interview that their purpose was to "work to the benefit of the Likud" and thus to destroy the "peace process."

Whatever Byzantine conspiracies may or may not be going on, it would not be out of character for sections of the Israeli military and secret police to engage in such provocations. The influx of Near Eastern (Oriental) Jewish immigrants in the 1950s was provoked in good measure by Israeli Mossad terror bombings of synagogues and other Jewish institutions in Baghdad and elsewhere. Moreover, it is a fact—only recently noted in the Western press—that Hamas was set up with the encouragement and support of the Israeli military and secret police.

Hamas (the acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement) is a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, a clerical-fascist movement which was founded in Egypt in 1928. During the 1950s and '60s, it became a semi-clandestine right-wing opposition, funded by Saudi petrodollars, to the nationalist Nasser. The Brotherhood spread to the Gaza Strip, which has been under Israeli occupation since the 1967 war. In 1986, the Israeli military governor of Gaza, General Segev, openly admitted that Israel funneled support to the Brotherhood "in order to help create a force that would stand against the leftist forces which support the PLO" (quoted in Graham Usher, "What Kind of Nation? The Rise of Hamas in the Occupied Territories," *Race & Class*, October-December 1995).

Fearing a loss of influence when the Intifada uprising broke out in December 1987, the Brotherhood announced the formation of Hamas as its "national lib-

eration" movement. While supporters of Arafat's Fatah and other secular nationalist groups like the PFLP and DFLP and the People's Party were rounded up and arrested by the thousands, Hamas was allowed to function openly, its spokesmen featured on Israeli TV. Hamas was banned only when it began launching attacks on Israeli soldiers nearly two years into the Intifada. Even then, as *Race & Class* remarks, Hamas' main activity "was less a national struggle than a vicious social offensive against all manifestations of 'un-Islamic behaviour', especially in Gaza where women

nating Israeli reliance on Palestinian labor, while Peres and the Zionist "left" proclaim an apartheid-style policy of "separation of peoples, not territories." One aim of this is to create a cheap, pliant labor force for future U.S./Israeli-financed "industrial parks" in the Occupied Territories; in the meantime, the Palestinians are to starve.

Many Palestinian intellectuals are sharply critical of the PLO's capitulation to Israel and alarmed at the rise of Islamic fundamentalism among the once relatively cosmopolitan Palestinian people. Among the most perceptive is Columbia University professor Edward Said, who resigned from the PLO's Palestinian National Council in 1991 in protest over Arafat's diplomatic maneuvers. In his new book, *Peace and Its Discontents* (Vintage Books, 1996), Said eloquently denounces the new Palestinian Authority as a "kingdom of illusions, with Israel firmly in command" and remarks that "a slave mentality prevails among Arab leaders, for whom a favorable reception in Washington is the summit of their political lives." But, in the final analysis, Said can only throw his hands up in despair, longing for the days of a mythical "Palestinian revolution" and "the secular ideals of liberation and enlightenment."

Yet the current situation is simply the end-product of that earlier era of PLO nationalism. Well aware that it had neither the social nor military power to defeat the Zionist Goliath, the PLO looked for support first to the bourgeois and feudal Arab regimes and then directly to Israel's imperialist patrons in Washington. And no wonder. These petty-bourgeois Palestinian nationalists were themselves striving to become the exploiters of the working people of their "own" nation. This bankrupt program



Zionist rulers seized on criminal Jerusalem bus bombing to launch wave of terror against the entire Palestinian population.

were forced to wear the headscarf" (for more detail, see "Palestinian Women and the Intifada," *Women and Revolution* No. 39, Summer 1991).

That this outfit can now posture as a militant opposition to the Zionist occupation speaks volumes about the political bankruptcy of the petty-bourgeois Palestinian "left" nationalists. The PFLP and DFLP have virtually collapsed, after first attempting to form a bloc with the Islamic fundamentalists. Meanwhile, Arafat's Fatah has become little more than a Palestinian police force for their Israeli masters.

After two years of "peace" and "autonomy," the plight of the Palestinian masses is today, if anything, worse than it has ever been. Construction of settlements—and highways banned to Palestinian traffic—in the West Bank continues to increase. Repeated closures of the Occupied Territories, justified in the name of "security," are aimed at elimi-

has led not to Palestinian national liberation but to ever more catastrophic massacres and defeats at the hands of both the Zionists and the Arab regimes.

It is only the proletariat of the Near East, including the Hebrew-speaking workers of Israel, whose historic interests lie in sweeping away the imperialist-dominated system which has fostered national oppression and fratricide. Particularly in a region of interpenetrated peoples inhabiting the same territory, socialist revolution is the only means of achieving national justice and equality for all the peoples of the region. The Israeli and Arab capitalist regimes, who variously compete and collude with each other in oppression and exploitation, must be overthrown. The key to that lies in the formation of Trotskyist vanguard parties, sections of a reborn Fourth International, which can lead the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East. ■



# S.F. Cops...

(continued from page 12)

The cops feel they have a green light to continue the kind of murderous rampage they conducted under the last mayor, former police chief Frank Jordan. This included the beating to death by police of a black man, Aaron Williams, outside his home in the Western Addition last June. Another black man, William Hankston, was shot by cops in the back of the head at pointblank range and killed last September as he tried to ride away on a bicycle.

Brown has tried to put a "minority-friendly" face on the SFPD by firing Jordan's police chief and appointing an Asian chief—former SWAT cop Ed Lau—and a black assistant chief, Earl Sanders. On February 12, a "town hall" meeting billed as "Let's Heal the Wounds" was held in the Western Addition where Sanders addressed an audience including many victims of racist police attacks and their relatives. Willie Brown himself put in a grandstanding appearance. Sanders got a standing ovation when he said, "When I take off this uniform and I'm not visibly the assistant chief of police, I know I'm a candidate to be just another n----- beat up by the police" (quoted in the *New Bayview*, 16 February).

For stating a fact known to all present, Sanders was later "called on the carpet" by the police chief and ordered to "go to the stationhouses" to explain himself to cops "upset by the remarks" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 February). But putting black faces in City Hall and at the head of the police does nothing to change the status quo of racist state terror. As Aaron Williams' aunt, Lonette

Robinson, bitterly noted at the Western Addition meeting, "We saw the policemen who killed him still working out there on the street... It's a slap in the face that they're still working, and my nephew is in the cold ground" (*Sun Reporter*, 15 February). Following an FBI "investigation" into Williams' killing, the Justice Department announced none of the guilty cops would face federal civil rights charges.

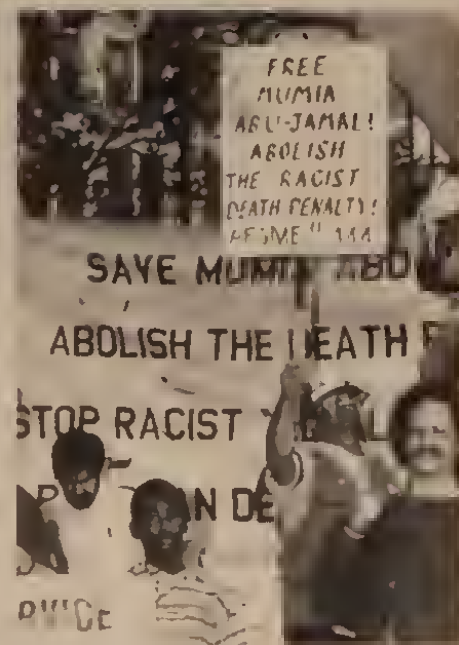
While the March 3 demonstration was in part intended to call for "police accountability," the brutal truth is that the police are accountable only to the ruling class. Demands for civilian review boards promote the liberal illusion that the thugs in blue can be made to answer to those they are paid to brutalize and oppress. Cops are the armed fist at the core of the capitalist state, and racist oppression is their job. Urban police forces have increasingly been given a free hand to maraud at will, often in the name of the "war on drugs"—in reality a war on blacks in particular and minorities, the poor and working people in general. As a speaker for the Spartacist League said at a March 6 press conference held on the steps of the Hall of Injustice to protest the recent arrests:

"The young people arrested on Sunday got a taste of the program of repression being pushed by both the Democrats and Republicans. The ruling class is throwing a whole generation on the scrap heap, especially blacks. They don't have education or jobs for them, just prisons. We in the Spartacist League are building a revolutionary party to fight for a socialist revolution, for a world in which those who labor will rule, to put an end once and for all to the race-terrorists in white sheets and blue uniforms, as part of the fight for a socialist future for us all." ■

# Vote No on California Death Penalty Props 195 and 196!

SAN FRANCISCO—California governor Pete Wilson, together with organizations of prosecutors, police and prison guards, has placed two initiatives on the March 26 state ballot which would further expand the number of death-penalty offenses on state law books. Propositions 195 and 196 would add three more to the existing 19 "special circumstances" calling for execution in murder cases, most notably for murders committed during carjackings and drive-by shootings. These measures would give a further racist twist to the grisly apparatus of legal lynching by focusing on crimes which are "special" only in that they are overwhelmingly crimes occurring in the ghetto and barrio. The state is deliberately seeking out blacks and Latinos to kill.

State repression has been escalating throughout the U.S., with the "Golden State" in the vanguard. Since 1980, the state's prison population has soared from 23,000 to 134,000, with 18 new prisons built. A recent survey showed that in California 40 percent of young black men are caught "in the system" of capitalist "justice"—the highest proportion in the country—compared to 5 percent of young whites. A new study reports that while blacks are only 7 percent of the state's population, they make up 18 percent of those arrested, 32 percent of prison inmates and 43 percent of those sentenced under the new "three strikes and you're out" law. California already



WV Photo

**Oakland: Hundreds of trade unionists rallied last August for Mumia Abu-Jamal and against the racist death penalty.**

has nearly 450 people on death row—more than any other state—the majority of them black and Latino. The death penalty is an exercise in naked state terror against the oppressed, and in this deeply racist country it embodies the capitalist system's impulse toward genocide.

*Vote no on Props 195 and 196! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■*

# Geronimo...

(continued from page 12)

Swilly bragged about the killing.

Others speaking out at the press conference included Wesley Swearingen, the former FBI agent who exposed the feds' destruction of wiretap transcripts proving that Pratt was, in his words, "set up"; and Emory Douglas, one of six former Panthers who have come forward in recent years as alibi witnesses; and the mayors of Compton and Pasadena, California.

Pointing out evidence from the new legal brief, attorney Hanlon referred to a 1972 handwritten note from a policeman to Richard Kalustian, the D.A. who prosecuted Geronimo and is today an L.A. Superior Court judge, which stated, "It all began with the FBI." The context of the racist frame-up of Geronimo was the expansion of FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover's sinister Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), a murderous war against the Black Panther Party and other radical groups in which dozens of Panthers were killed. Many more were ensnared in racist frame-ups and sent to prison for years. Among them were Mumia Abu-Jamal, who as a teenager was a leading member of the Philadelphia Black Panthers and who now sits on Pennsylvania's death row after being framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philly cop.

In December 1969, Chicago police gunned down Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in their sleep. Four days later, the LAPD, with its Criminal Conspiracy Section (a special anti-Panther hit squad), made their move on Geronimo, who had been targeted for "neutralization" because he was an effective and well-known Panther leader. Over 140 cops launched a five-hour, middle-of-the-night attack on L.A. Panther headquarters. In his remarks at the press conference, Leo Branton, a retired attorney who in 1971 had represented the Black Panthers, described the cop assault as worse than anything he had seen as an infantryman in World War II. Geronimo escaped the bullets fired at his bed only because he slept on the floor due to spinal

injuries he received in Vietnam. It was after this botched attempt to assassinate Geronimo that the LAPD and FBI cooked up their scheme to frame him up for an unsolved murder, part of the nationwide plot to exterminate the Panthers.

Swearingen's book, *FBI Secrets: An Agent's Exposé* (South End Press, 1995), lays out the history of the FBI's murderous plots against young black militants. He writes that "after witnessing twenty years of FBI wrongdoing," he was not surprised to learn that Geronimo "was framed for murder" as "a target of COINTELPRO." Swearingen tells of no less than three sets of FBI wiretaps (by the Oakland, San Francisco and L.A. Bureau branches) on the Panther offices which proved that Geronimo was in Oakland—400 miles away—at the time of the Santa Monica murder.

Swearingen describes an April 1972 meeting of the FBI's Los Angeles "racial squad" to discuss the frame-up of Geronimo, where a supervisor explained how the LAPD would not tell the jury that the victim's husband had "identified at least three other suspects before he identified Pratt." The key government witness in the 1972 trial, Julius Butler, repeatedly perjured himself on the witness stand. Suppressed by the prosecution and unbeknownst to the jury was the fact that Butler, a former L.A. county sheriff's deputy, had been informing for the FBI and LAPD as a member of the Panthers. (Two former LAPD officers who were intimately involved in the frame-up have stated that Butler was an informant as early as 1966.) At the same "racial squad" meeting, the supervisor noted that the FBI would "close our informant file on Butler during the trial so that Butler can say he is not an FBI informant."

Other Panthers could have testified at the trial that Pratt was in Oakland with them on the day of the Santa Monica killing but did not do so because of what they now realize was COINTELPRO—exacerbated antagonism between opposing wings of the Black Panther Party. It was only after Geronimo spent two decades in prison that various former Panthers, including Bobby Seale and David Hilliard, came forward to make statements backing up Geronimo's alibi.

In the past two years, Geronimo has received increased international attention and media coverage. In 1994, a FOX TV series relying heavily on McCloskey's research and other sources compellingly detailed the proof of his innocence. Many civil rights and labor organizations have taken up the call to free Geronimo. At the time of Geronimo's last parole hearing in 1994, two Los Angeles SEIU locals organized a spirited protest outside D.A. Garcetti's office. This union, with a largely black and immigrant membership, has suffered brutal police attacks itself in its campaign to unionize low-paid workers in L.A. Other unions representing millions of workers have come out for Geronimo, including the SEIU International, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, California Teachers Association, Chicago ATU transit workers and others.

Geronimo ji Jaga is the victim of a real capitalist state conspiracy. The key to the fight for his freedom, and that of Mumia Abu-Jamal and all other victims of the racist "justice" system, is to wage

a class fight, mobilizing the unions in alliance with black and Latino organizations and all opponents of ruling-class repression. Both Geronimo and Mumia are imprisoned because of their political beliefs, because they are advocates of the poor and oppressed. In taking up such struggles, the labor movement can gather strength for battle against the capitalists.

As Partisan Defense Committee Counsel Valerie West remarked, "While we must pursue all available legal channels to free Geronimo, it is the organized strength of the working class that has the power to free Geronimo. We cannot rely on the courts which have rubber-stamped every effort by Republican and Democratic governments to erect a wide array of police-state measures."

Demonstrations for Geronimo are being planned. For more information, call the PDC in Los Angeles, (213) 380-8239, or Oakland, (510) 839-0852. An intensified campaign of publicity and protest of workers, students and minorities is necessary to smash this frame-up and free Geronimo ji Jaga! ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

Court Hearing March 28 for Former Black Panther

## Free Geronimo!

Late last month, Los Angeles Superior Court judge James Bascue ordered L.A. district attorney Gil Garcetti to appear in court on March 28 to respond to a *habeas corpus* petition filed on behalf of former Black Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt). The order came just two days after Pratt's attorneys, Johnnie Cochran and Stuart Hanlon, filed the papers to overturn his conviction for a murder the government knows he did not commit.

On February 26, a crowd of a hundred journalists and enthusiastic supporters of Geronimo's fight for freedom jammed a Los Angeles press conference held to announce the filing of the petition. Cochran, who was Pratt's lawyer at his 1972 trial, said Geronimo is "a man being held in prison because of his political beliefs, one of the longest held political prisoners in the United States." Geronimo has been imprisoned for more than 25 years, the victim of a conspiracy between the FBI and the L.A. Police Department which framed him up for the 1968 murder of school teacher Caroline Olsen in Santa Monica.

Geronimo has been denied parole 13 times because he has refused to bow before his captors and admit to a crime they know he did not commit and to renounce his dedication to the cause of black liberation. This principled fighter for justice has endured relentless persecution and harassment in California's prison hellholes, including punitive transfers far away from family, lawyers and supporters. A federal court jury found in 1981 that Geronimo spent eight years in solitary confinement in retaliation for his political associations and beliefs. At a 1987 parole hearing, the D.A.'s representative summed up the state's argument for why he should be denied parole, saying that he "is still a revolutionary."



Muwakkil/L.A. Sentinel

February 26: Attorney Johnnie Cochran (at podium) announcing new appeal to overturn racist political frame-up of former Black Panther Party leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt).

At the February 26 press conference, Jeanne Hamilton, a juror in the 1972 trial, spoke movingly of the state's suppression of evidence in their railroading of Geronimo:

"Never, ever in our discussions did we ever talk about the FBI. We had no clue as to their involvement.... The jury was never informed that Mr. Olsen [the victim's husband] had made three previous eyewitness identifications [of other suspects]. The jury was never informed that the FBI had a COINTELPRO program and targeted Mr. Pratt for 'neutraliza-

tion.' The jury was never informed that the FBI had wiretapped the Oakland and Los Angeles Black Panther headquarters and had documented evidence that Mr. Pratt was in Oakland at that time. The jury was never informed that the FBI activities had caused a split in the Black Panther Party resulting in members being forbidden to come to Mr. Pratt's defense. And lastly, the jury was never informed that Julius Butler [the state's key witness against Geronimo] was an FBI informant.... If we had known these facts there is no doubt in my mind that we would not have reached a guilty verdict."

Lay minister Jim McCloskey of Centurion Ministries detailed some of the evidence from his 1992-93 investigation into Geronimo's frame-up, centrally the identity of the likely murderers of Caroline Olsen, Larry Hatter and Herbert Swilly. The two, now dead, were petty criminals on the fringes of the Black Panther Party and associates of the cop agent Julius Butler. Four of their childhood friends have stated that Hatter and

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## Willie Brown's Cops Bust S.F. Protesters

SAN FRANCISCO—On March 3, police here arrested some 130 protesters against police brutality who were demonstrating to mark the fifth anniversary of the vicious racist beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles cops. Police spokesmen lied that the protesters were arrested for ignoring "repeated warnings not to block traffic." In fact, according to Keith McHenry of Food Not Bombs, which helped organize the protest along with Copwatch and other groups, the protesters were marching in a police-designated lane on their way to the "Hall of Justice" downtown when they were rushed by the cops, surrounded and arrested *en masse*, including even those on the sidewalk.

In a similar incident last July, nearly

300—including five children—were arrested at a march in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the renowned black journalist and political prisoner on Pennsylvania's death row. Charges of "blocking traffic" are a transparent ruse to harass opponents of the SFPD's deadly racist violence. The mass arrest on March 3 is an outrageous and arrogant attempt to silence blacks, Latinos, homeless people, striking workers and anyone else in the cops' cross hairs. We demand: *Drop all the charges now!*

It has been only two months since Willie Brown took office as the city's first black mayor, with the full backing of the city's union bureaucrats and of self-proclaimed "leftists" such as the Communist Party and the Commit-

Rally at SF Hall of Justice March 6 to protest arrests of over 100 demonstrators against police brutality.



WV Photo

tees of Correspondence. We warned against any support to this capitalist politician, pointing out how he pitched himself as a "progressive" to blacks, Latinos and trade unionists, while simultaneously pursuing—and receiving—the endorsement of the racist Police Offi-

cers Association and big downtown moneybags like Walter Shorenstein by running a "law and order" campaign (see "S.F. Labor Tops Back Black Front Man for Capitalist Rule," WV No. 633, 17 November 1995).

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