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In Haiti and Everywhere:

Imperialist Backing = Backstabbing

Less than three years ago, U.S. imperialism was riding high. George Bush, Stormer of Deserts, Line-Drawer in the Sand, Conqueror of Kuwait and Scourge of Saddam, enlisted the whole United Nations in his Gulf adventure, reached 91 percent popularity in the polls and stood astride the world like a colossus. Over the bodies of tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians, he proclaimed his New World Order.

Bush's successor inherited the crisis in Iraq — plus those in Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti — and finds the world order in utter disarray. Weasel Willie Clinton's promise to save the Bosnians went through innumerable twists, affirmations and denials, and now lies in shards. The Bush-Clinton expedition to Somalia suffered an ignominious defeat.



Port-au-Prince: Young Haitians demonstrate against military regime.

NO U.S. INTERVENTION!

Over Haiti, the U.S. government is at war with itself, grappling over whether to leave the bloody military regime in power (as the CIA, the Pentagon and some senators demand), or restore the popular President Jean-Bertrand Aristide (under highly compromised conditions), as the State Department and other establishment members would like.

On the one hand, the retreat on October 11th of the ship carrying U.S. and Canadian forces makes the "world's sole superpower" look feeble, so the U.S. may have to retaliate against the junta and its supporters. On the other hand, after the abject failure of the U.S./U.N. occupation of Somalia, many Americans are fed up with military adventures

abroad. Demagogic politicians are playing on this feeling, expressing racist unwillingness to send soldiers to die for another "ungrateful" Black country.

As we write, the U.S. along with the United Nations and the Organization of American States, is considering sending troops to Haiti. This intervention would take place under the guise of restoring democracy and defending the masses from the military thugs who overthrew Aristide in 1991. Despite the facade, such a move must be opposed as a grave danger to the working people of Haiti.

We are against *any* U.S. military presence in Haiti, not
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COFI and LRP Report

Our Australian section has undergone a split. Details of their political struggle will shortly appear in a new issue of *Workers Revolution* magazine. Meanwhile the comrades have issued the following announcement:

The former Workers Revolution Group has become the League for the Revolutionary Party (Australia). An extensive internal political struggle took place over the last four months, as a result of the drive by a minority of the group to replace the revolutionary program of the COFI. In essence, the Workers Revolution Tendency, led by former WRG Secretary Paul White, sought to undermine the Leninist concept of the revolutionary vanguard party with a counterposed theory of spontaneous militancy.

This conception was given theoretical cover by the false claim that "Lenin became a Luxemburgist" on the question of class consciousness. This theoretical development complemented a growing tendency toward capitulation to the labor aristocracy in the practical interventions of the group. Our central message to our fellow workers of the imperative need for revolutionary leadership became consistently subordinated to calls for left-wing militancy.

The Revolutionary Party Faction was formed in opposition to the political degeneration represented by the WRT. From the very outset the faction fight revealed a degree of moral and political degeneration on the part of Paul White unexpected by his revolutionary opponents. At the start of the dispute, White poisoned the discussion by announcing his intention to split the organization, and proceeded accordingly. White and his WRT demonstrated a system of political differences which included dishonesty, slander, and serious violations of discipline and the norms of organizational behavior.

After intensive discussions and a full-scale conference, the organization was forced to expel the centrists White and Sillins as a consequence of their actions. We believe the degeneration embodied in the WRT was a reflection of the initial defeat of the workers' movement in Victoria and the steadily developing political crisis of the Labor gov-

ernment. However, our class is now returning to mass action, and this has fortified our commitment to carrying out our central task of building the party through active openly revolutionary intervention in the developing class struggles. The faction fight deepened our understanding of the communist method.

To this end, our conference decided to change our name to the LRP (Australia). This reinforced our agreement with the political program of the LRP (USA), FRP (Sweden), COFI and the continuity of revolutionary Trotskyism. The newly elected Secretary is Geoff Boucher.

The COFI section in Sweden, the FRP, is now producing the fourth issue of *Röda Arbetet*. An FRP representative recently held discussions with several left groups in Russia. Distribution of our book, *The Life and Death of Stalinism*, has been extended in the former USSR as a result of the trip.

FIGHTING THE RIGHT-WING LEFT

The LRP (USA) has been busy on several fronts. In New York, our contingent on a recent demonstration against intervention in Somalia marched under the slogans: "U.S./U.N. Out of Somalia and Haiti!", "Down with the Democrats & Republicans — the two parties of war, racism and unemployment!" and "Socialist Revolution is the Only Way to Smash Imperialism!" The demonstration was called by the pro-Stalinist Workers World Party and its numerous front groups, under slogans which implied that war could be ended and significant reforms achieved under decaying capitalism.

LRP supporters who are hospital workers participated in demonstrations against layoffs at Columbia Presbyterian and Bellevue Hospitals. It became obvious that the usual reluctance of the hospital union bureaucrats, 1199 leader Dennis Rivera and Local 420 leader Jim Butler, to mobilize against the cuts was heightened by their desire to provide a stable climate for the re-election of Mayor Dinkins.

We also intervened in political meetings centered on the question of supporting Dinkins. At a rally in Crown Heights after the state issued its report on the riot in that community (see this issue's article on cop violence), the LRP was the only group to call for Black and working-class armed self-defense in response to the ruling class's build-up of the police. Panelists, including supposed socialists Lenni Brenner and Elombe Brath, tried to suppress our intervention while allowing other speakers to raise their pro-Dinkins line.

At another meeting, broadcast over "alternative" radio station WBAI before the elections, social-democrat Manning Marable and other leftists promoted the phony lesser evilism of endorsing Dinkins and the Democrats. Again, only the LRP spoke for rejecting the Democrats in favor of mass action and building a revolutionary party. The WBAI moder-

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Write for a complete list.

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Proletarian Revolution

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U.S. Military in Somalia: 'Restoring Hope' for Imperialism?

by Eric Nacar

In a clumsily staged publicity stunt last December, U.S. Marines rolled ashore in the Somali capital of Mogadishu — to face a battery of television lights and Western journalists. "Operation Restore Hope" was ostensibly a United Nations expedition to relieve famine and defend civilians from clan leaders, called "warlords" in the U.S. press. In reality, it was an effort by George Bush to score cheap points for imperial intervention. In this he was seconded by every bourgeois politician, notably Bill Clinton, Ross Perot and Jesse Jackson.

Under the world's real warlords, Bush and Clinton, 5000 U.S. and 23,000 allied troops have massacred hundreds of civilians and bombed much of Mogadishu into rubble. The invaders have amply proved that their presence has nothing to do with humanitarianism and everything to do with bolstering imperialism's ability to dominate the world.

This fall the intervention looks a lot less triumphant. Dozens of U.S. and other U.N. troops have been killed and many more injured. Responding to the U.N.'s onslaught, a few hundred Somali soldiers and civilians humiliated the imperialists by repelling a brutal attack on October 3, capturing prisoners and dragging American bodies through the streets. Not since Islamic militants forced Ronald Reagan to turn tail and pull the Marines out of Lebanon in 1984 has imperialist militarism been so publicly embarrassed.

PRESSURE TO WITHDRAW

A large fraction of the U.S. Congress, acting under pressure of public opinion, declared itself ready to "cut and run." Clinton, however, given his record as a draft dodger during the Vietnam war, couldn't get away with a pullout the way the macho militarist Reagan could. Besides, in Lebanon Reagan could depend on the Syrians to maintain some stability; in Somalia, if the U.S. left, the U.N.'s position would be impossible and the Somali clan chiefs could not restore order. Colin Powell had noted that withdrawal would be "devastating to our hopes for the New World Order."

Therefore Clinton doubled the U.S. force in Somalia and said it would stay another six months until we "finish the work we set out to do" — that is, preserve imperialist "stabilization" in general and the U.S.'s role as the world's top cop in particular. He quickly threatened massive retaliation if any U.S. prisoners were harmed.

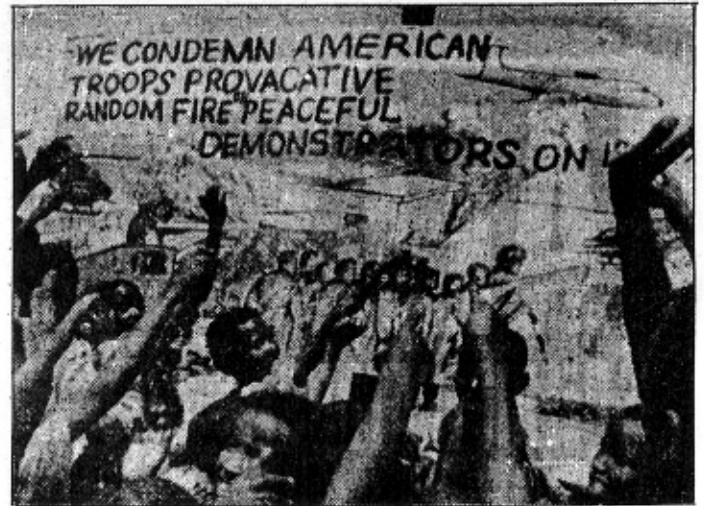
At the same time, Clinton sent out placating signals to recalcitrant "warlord" Mohammed Farah Aidid, whom the U.S. had demonized to gain public support for its bloody efforts in Mogadishu. Aidid responded by making peaceful statements and releasing prisoners. Clinton in turn withdrew the Rangers hunting Aidid, and the U.S. drew back from its mistake of concentrating on Aidid as the enemy. Without Aidid, the U.S. had found it couldn't put together a decisive bloc of Somali power brokers to front for imperialism.

Whatever happens, one thing has been proved: the "Vietnam syndrome," whose supposed demise George Bush hailed after the Gulf War, is still very much with us. Bush had to amass overwhelming force for a quick victory over Iraq, because a drawn-out campaign with many U.S. deaths would have made the war highly unpopular. U.S. workers do not accept risking American lives for goals they don't accept. For many whites, "saving" Black Africans, "ungrateful" ones

to boot, has a low priority — especially at a time of severe economic crisis at home. Despite their present mixed consciousness, workers know their goals and those of the imperialist politicians are very different. They are very suspicious, and their underlying anger can erupt at any time. The Administration doesn't want Somalia to be the spark.

We revolutionaries take great satisfaction that an expedition designed to refurbish the image of U.S. militarism has resulted in making further interventions a lot harder for the ruling class. After the Somalia debacle, the possibility of sending U.S. forces to Bosnia is nil for the time being, and the military brass is already worried about other missions:

With increased violence in Haiti and after the troubled mission to Somalia, senior Pentagon officials have begun



Mogadishu: Somalis protest U.S./U.N. mortar attack on civilians outside major hospital.

to question the wisdom of putting more American troops into a potentially dangerous, unpredictable and hostile environment. (*New York Times*, Oct. 8.)

Indeed, imperialism has suffered a notable defeat. We can thank the population of Mogadishu for its heroic battle and its willingness to take on our common enemy.

'WHITE MAN'S BURDEN' AGAIN

When Bush sent the troops in, he orchestrated a public opinion campaign that was a pack of lies and distortions. First, the famine was no longer raging. For two years the imperialists had let hundreds of thousands of Somalis starve to death without concern (not to mention the tens of thousands murdered by forces trained by the U.S.). And it was the decades of imperialist looting that made food aid necessary in the first place. The main cause of the famine was pressure by the World Bank and other imperialist financiers to make Somali farmers grow cash crops for export, not food.

Second, the claim that military forces had to stop the theft of 80 percent of food aid was an outright lie. When they got there, they took over the massive food distributions already being handled successfully by Somalis and international relief organizations. The huge imperialist military presence cost five times more than all the food contributions!

Finally, the claim that the entire population was helpless

and at the mercy of armed gangs was false, patronizing and racist. Although fighting still raged in Mogadishu and the port city of Kismayu, and although the breakdown of central authority had brought about the collapse of society to the local level, Somali villages and some regions were functioning as they had for centuries before the imperialists arrived.

The current occupation of Somalia revives the "white man's burden" propaganda under which 19th-century colonialists conquered the bulk of Black Africa. Again it is only beneficent imperialists who are supposed to know how to turn barbarism and chaos into civilization and stability. And again masses rebel, unaccountably resistant to being insulted, assaulted, rounded up and killed in their own land.



American troops "restore hope" in Somalia.

The British had ruled the northern part of the country as "British Somaliland" and the Italians the south as "Italian Somalia" until the Somali people bade them good riddance at the time of independence and unification in 1960. Of course, the imperialists never really left Africa: in Somalia as elsewhere, they substituted indirect neo-colonial rule for outright colonialism.

Now the Italians are back, along with Canadians, French, Belgians and Americans, not to mention troops from Pakistan, Morocco and other clients of the Big Boys. The Somali intervention also signals the re-emergence of German militarism. The 2000 German soldiers are the first on the ground outside Germany since 1945.

In the absurd Newspeak of imperialism, the Germans are U.N. "peacekeepers," not to fire unless fired upon, while the U.S., Italian, Pakistani and other troops who have perpetrated massacres are "peacemakers," allowed to fire at will. This is in fact the first use of "peacemakers." Somalia was meant to be a test case for the U.N.'s growing role as an enforcer of imperialism's "New World Order."

The stepped-up intervention by the imperialists does not mean that they want to restore direct colonialism in Somalia or other former colonies. In the final analysis, they had to abandon direct rule and settle for neo-colonial front-men: this was the only way to contain the revolt of the anti-imperialist masses. A contributory reason was the unwillingness of the workers at home to sacrifice lives and livelihoods to defend their bosses' colonial domination. But as the world crisis of capitalism deepens, imperialism's ability to rule

through its neo-colonial compradors is declining every day.

Some historical background helps to account for the present situation in Somalia.

'SOCIALIST' NEO-COLONIALISM

After nine years of independence, general Mohammed Siad Barre took power in a coup in 1969. When the U.S., British and Italians reduced their aid, he quickly declared himself a "socialist," nationalized some of the few industries, and invited the Soviet Union in. In return for funds from the USSR to develop agriculture and to arm and train his troops, he let the USSR build a large naval base at Bardera, the first permanent Russian military presence on the Horn of Africa.

He put up big posters of Marx, Lenin and himself all over the country and drew the hostility of the U.S. and its client government in neighboring Ethiopia.

But Somalia was far from socialist. The proletariat and other exploited classes did not run the country. Siad Barre's "socialism" was an opportunistic mixture of nationalism and dependence on the USSR, devised to build up a local bourgeois and bureaucratic ruling class that could keep for itself a larger portion of the surplus value produced by the farmers and workers.

Under neither colonialism nor independence had a significant working class arisen in Somalia. Much of the country is desert, and the imperialists saw little worth developing, save a strategic military position on the Red Sea coast near major shipping routes. Although some large-scale grain farming grew up with government help, under Siad Barre the economy remained backward, with camel-herding one of the major economic activities. What working class did arise in the coastal cities worked mostly in retailing, warehousing, transportation and docking. Government repression and lack of big industry kept the workers atomized and disorganized.

In 1975 a workers' revolution overthrew the monarchy in neighboring Ethiopia. But it was defeated and drowned in blood by the top military officers, now also calling themselves socialists. They butchered unionists and leftists in a "red terror." In the ensuing chaos, ethnic Somalis in southeast Ethiopia rose up fighting for unification with Somalia, and Siad Barre's troops invaded Ethiopia toward the same end.

In a diplomatic shuffle, the U.S. abandoned the Ethiopian military, while Russia deserted Somalia for the strategic advantage of an alliance with Ethiopia. Siad Barre cut his ties with Russia and invited the U.S. in, turning over the Soviet-built base at Bardera. He took down the posters of Marx and Lenin (but left up those of himself) and stopped speaking about socialism.

The U.S., despite its opposition to the Ethiopian junta and its Russian allies, feared the instability that dismemberment of Ethiopia would bring and did not give Somalia enough military aid to win the war. Russia's substantial aid — weapons, advisors, money — helped Ethiopia triumph.

For more than ten years, Siad Barre's military clique continued to loot the country and fall deeper into debt to the imperialists. He had long before lost any allegiance from the poor farmers, herders and laborers. He progressively alienated the clan and regional leaders, landowners and businessmen until he was left with no base of support. Clan-based uprisings broke out in more and more areas of the country.

When the Soviet Union collapsed and withdrew from the continent, the formerly "socialist" bourgeois forces, now openly pro-U.S., overthrew the military dictatorship in Ethiopia and took power in its major colony, Eritrea. The

U.S. no longer needed impoverished Somalia as a counterweight to Ethiopia and left Siad Barre to his fate. In 1991 his army collapsed and he fled the country. Mogadishu fell to various clan militias, which were already fighting among themselves. No new central government replaced Siad Barre, and the country sank into generalized civil war.

IMPERIALISM MOVES IN

The economic situation worsened with the frequent wars and recession of the 1980's. With the final social breakdown and imperialist abandonment (except for attempts at debt collection), farming fell off, transport decayed and urban commerce slowed greatly. Masses of country-dwellers fled to the cities seeking food and fleeing the different militias, little more than bands of gangsters. All classes of society broke down to local and regional units, scrabbling to stay alive. Famine engulfed the country: no one could fill the central vacuum of power and reimpose centralization.

The theory of permanent revolution, worked out by the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, shows that pre-capitalist property forms and social institutions are thoroughly penetrated by the dominant capitalist forms and relations in this epoch. Therefore it is impossible to rely on the bourgeoisie,

followed by other imperialist and client-state troops.

Shortly after the landing, U.S. Special Envoy Robert Oakley embraced two big "warlords": Mohammed Ali Mahdi, a business owner who proclaims himself president of the whole country from time to time, and General Aidid, who had ousted Siad Barre and is a partner of the biggest dealer in the khat (a stimulant drug) trade. But the U.N. seemed to be backing a third, General Mohammed Siad Hersi Morgan, son-in-law and military chief of Siad Barre, whose credits include the 1989 bombardment of the northern city of Hargeisu that exterminated 50,000 people.

When the U.N. invaded, their spokespeople naturally condemned all the warlords as equal thugs and criminals. Equally naturally, the imperialists tried to cut deals with these criminals as they had with Siad Barre and the other criminals who had preceded them. The U.N. forces on the one hand worked to disarm the militias' machine-gun trucks and cashier the militiamen: on the other hand, they allowed some militias to keep their arms and even paid their members to work as guards.

Since the humanitarian publicity campaign was only a pretext for the restoration of neo-colonial "order," the U.N. soon started pushing around and shooting any Somalis who



U.N. seeks imperialist "stability" in Somalia through armed intimidation.

even of an oppressed nation, to destroy conditions that seem on the surface to be pre-capitalist. Only the working class can do this, in the course of achieving its own socialist revolution and abolishing *all* forms of exploitative property.

Similarly, the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries cannot allow the disintegration of whole states, as is happening in Africa as well as the ex-Stalinist region. The collapse of *any* state is dangerous; it suggests the possibility of the mass overthrow of others. Hence the disintegration of Somalia had to be halted. Subordinate to this overall goal were the long-term possibility of exploiting Somalia's oil potential and its strategic location.

The pressure to send troops to Bosnia was evidence of the growing sense of urgency for an imperialist united front to show who runs the world. Together with Bush's need to refurbish his own image, this finally galvanized the U.S. into action. The strident publicity campaign convinced most people in the imperialist countries of the humanitarian value of the invasion. Even many Somalis, tired of chaos, war and hunger, were willing to give the invaders a chance. And so the Marines landed, on a groundswell of public acceptance,

challenged them or just got in the way — for example, by failing to stop quickly enough at U.N. checkpoints. Inevitably the U.S. and other troops killed women and children who were in the wrong place at the wrong time. By early February, the honeymoon was over and the first of many massive demonstrations against the U.N. and especially the U.S. took place in Mogadishu.

Although the mass reaction against the racist U.N. intervention was inevitable, no leadership with a history of fighting for even a bourgeois version of national liberation has so far arisen, to our knowledge. Thus authority has fallen to Aidid, who for the moment became the U.N.'s official enemy. Like Manuel Noriega and Saddam Hussein before him, he was a devil created by the imperialists themselves.

The U.N. desperately needs a neo-colonial Somali puppet executive and even legislature. But by the time of the invasion, the militias had given up on taking over the whole country and were contesting enclaves and regions. The former Somaliland had effectively seceded under a government of traditional local and clan leaders, and the U.N. is dealing with them as acceptable neo-colonial clients. In the south,

however, the war goes on. Most industry, large-scale agriculture and ports and other major cities are in the South, so the struggle there is more bitter and intractable. Northern Mogadishu had fallen under the control of Ali Mahdi, while the southern part of the city is run by militias called the Somali National Alliance (SNA) under Aidid.

None of the militia leaders had any objection to the U.N. presence or strategy of establishing puppet regimes; indeed, all have volunteered for the role. But at the beginning of the summer, Aidid's SNA, feeling menaced by the U.N., started joining and even sponsoring the growing demonstrations against the imperialist presence. The SNA regrouped and initiated hit-and-run attacks against U.N. infantry patrols, largely Pakistani army units.

The SNA's aim was to pressure the U.S. to favor Aidid in setting up a puppet government: if begging and co-operating didn't work, armed attacks might. The successful battle with Pakistani troops (24 killed) in June led to the U.S. effort to arrest Aidid. This meant bombing whole blocks of Mogadishu where he was thought to be staying and sending the Delta Force to rappel from helicopters into deserted courtyards and squatters' encampments. The predictable results were the arrest and manhandling of 37 Somalis on one occasion who turned out to be U.N. employees, plus the killing of hundreds of people in or near SNA units.

U.S./U.N. OUT OF SOMALIA!

The effect of the U.S.'s Rambo-like raids drove many Somalis to support him and even see him as a folk hero, a local David against the invading Goliath. Aidid wanted no such thing: he used the masses to make the point that the U.S. couldn't put together a new comprador coalition without him. Now he and his rivals will jockey for the top puppet post as they and the imperialists try to curb mass upheaval.

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

Vol. 5, No. 1

Letters from Germany by Sam Gordon from the period of Hitler's rise to power, with an introduction by Mildred Gordon MP.

The Coming to Power of Hitler by "Etchebehere," an on-the-spot account by an Argentinian militant, with an introduction by his widow.

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Just as Bush kept Saddam Hussein in power after the Gulf War to repress rebellious Kurds and Iraqis, Clinton now embraces the ex-devil Aidid.

Struggles against imperialism deserve the support of working-class people everywhere. We communists side with the masses in Mogadishu when they demonstrate or fight against the U.N. troops. While warning of the inevitable betrayals of Aidid and the SNA bandits', as long as they actually fought with the masses against the U.S./U.N. invaders, we supported a *military* bloc with them.

One goal of the U.S., to retain its hegemony over the other imperialists, is bound to fail in the long run. The latter, while happy to ensure repression in Africa, see no reason to share the blame for atrocities committed disproportionately by the U.S. and end up with a minor share of the spoils. It probably won't happen this time, but the war of imperialism against the peoples of Africa and the rest of the "third world" will inevitably become a fight among the imperialists to re-divide their spheres of influence.

The cracks are starting to show in Somalia. Italian troops had re-entered Somalia very gingerly after a 32-year absence, to the jeers of Somalis who still remember their repressive rule. They learned from their past and the U.S.'s blunders to be sparing with massive firepower for the moment and rely on dealing with potential clients. The Italians demonstratively maintained contacts with the SNA while the U.S. sent out the posse, and withdrew from Mogadishu after the summer massacres. They reflect the concerns of all the West Europeans over the showy and ineffective tactics of the U.S.

REVOLUTIONARY ALTERNATIVE TO NATIONALISM

The debacle in Somalia shows with brilliant clarity the failure of the nationalist "solution" to imperialist oppression. The phony socialist "anti-imperialist" Siad Barre was a puppet first of the Soviet imperialists and then the U.S. All the radical bourgeois nationalist leaders in Africa promised socialism and freedom from imperialism to the revolutionary masses. But the nominal political independence they offered could not overcome imperialism's economic control. Now, with the masses bled dry, they are groveling with further "realistic" concessions to imperialism: run our economies, send in "peacekeepers," just let us keep our posts.

The world economic crisis is driving the imperialists to despoil Africa to the point of devastation. It also forces them to challenge each other over the spoils. Ultimately, unless proletarian socialist revolution prevents it, this will mean another world war even more catastrophic than the last. No nationalist (i.e., capitalist) strategy can do anything but move this process along, impoverishing and killing masses of African workers and peasants along the way.

While communists defend struggles against imperialism despite the betrayals and crimes of capitalist misleaders, we work to build a genuine revolutionary leadership in every country. This means an authentic communist — not Stalinist or social-democratic — party which recognizes the need for international socialist revolution as the solution to the disaster in Somalia. Although the working class in Somalia is marginal, together with the more numerous working classes of Ethiopia and other nearby countries, it could build a powerful proletarian internationalist party.

Such a party in Somalia would fight for its class, supported by the peasants, artisans and peddlers, to take power in an all-out revolution against every imperialist and comprador. It would strive to build a world communist party for the all-African workers' revolution, from South Africa to the Sahara — a crucial battle in the world communist revolution. ●

To Strike or Not to Strike?

The Class War in Illinois

by Bob Wolfe

The class struggle in the U.S. is approaching a new turn. Not only are some labor leaders sounding off at the passivity of Lane Kirkland and the AFL-CIO. More important, a labor battle in the Midwest, like the Hormel strike of the mid-1980's, is teaching workers lessons about American capitalism that cannot be learned from bureaucrats or books.

On June 26, several thousand workers joined in an enthusiastic rally in Decatur, Illinois. They formed a human chain linking the local A.E. Staley Manufacturing Company plant to a Caterpillar factory three miles away. Sponsored by Staley Local 837 of the Allied Industrial Workers (AIW) and the Caterpillar Local 75 of the United Auto Workers (UAW), the rally represented workers who have been under heavy attack by their bosses.

It also solidarized with the striking United Mine Workers (UMW) and with utility workers locked out by the Central Illinois Public Service Company. The sponsoring locals call Illinois a "war zone." In our conversations with Staley workers, they also stressed the importance of their struggle for the rest of the U.S. working class. Local 837 President Dave Watts put it this way: "Decatur has drawn a line. Labor is going to take this country back."

The next day, nearly 800 Staley workers were locked out of the corn-processing refinery (owned by the multinational giant, Tate & Lyle) that produces soft-drink sweeteners, corn oil and other products. The lockout is designed to break Local 837's year-long resistance to management's onerous new contract. Trying to reduce costs while squeezing out more productivity, Staley demanded changes in work rules and grievance procedures that would allow the bosses to run roughshod over workers' rights. When the workers turned down Staley's demands, management went ahead to impose its changes when the old contract expired last September 30.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STALEY

The Staley struggle has the attention of class-conscious workers looking for a victory that will begin to reverse the tide of defeats suffered over more than a decade. Thus it raises fundamental questions about how to overcome the capitalist offensive. Since the system is in genuine crisis with profit rates far too low, workers are being forced to sacrifice. Fewer workers must produce more and get less in return.

Individual strikes conducted in "normal" unionist fashion

— by locals against particular plants, or even by international unions against entire corporations — don't work. The best they have achieved are mixed results: tiny gains joined to givebacks. Crippling defeats are much more common. And the situation is getting worse — in an atmosphere where huge firms lay off thousands of workers almost daily. No wonder



Decatur, Illinois: Staley workers on picket line.

the number of strikes has plummeted in recent years.

Workers everywhere are asking: what do you do when militant strikes don't work any more? Communist workers hold that the working class can only defend itself through proletarian socialist revolution. But for now the overwhelming majority of workers don't see this as realistic. As well, given the past history of Stalinism and social democracy, many workers doubt that socialism represents their interests.

The fact remains that today small gains cannot be won by small means. Real gains, however modest, will be achieved by mass upheavals that challenge the whole system. We believe that socialist revolution is the only way to retain these gains — and, most critically, that revolution is the only way for the working class to save itself from the greater misery the system has in store.

Even though most workers don't buy this yet, when pushed to the wall they are forced to fight back. To do so they choose what seems to be the most realistic alternative available. That's what's happening at Staley: one alternative

is being tested out.

Arguing against a strike, Local 837's leadership turned to the "corporate campaign" strategy. (For background, see our account of the "Battle of Hormel" in PR 26.) Dave Watts brought in Ray Rogers, head of Corporate Campaign, Inc., to run it. In addition, Jerry Tucker, leader of the New Directions opposition in the UAW, organized an in-plant strategy based on "working to rule": screwing up production by doing only what supervisors tell you to do.

THE CORPORATE CAMPAIGN

Rogers and Tucker are reformists who argue that the trade unions must adapt to changing conditions under capitalism. What separates them from the rest of the union leadership is their willingness to go further in mobilizing the ranks. In this, they reflect a layer of lower bureaucrats who fear that the crisis of the unions is more imminent than AFL-CIO chairman Kirkland imagines.

Rogers and Tucker espouse a brand of labor populism that seeks to put capitalism under democratic control. Whereas Rogers focuses on public relations gimmicks to expose corporate evils, Tucker is an out-bureaucrat trying to reform the union movement. Both are unpopular with the AFL-CIO leadership, but some of their ideas are being adopted by union bureaucrats nonetheless. Even Tucker's UAW enemies are willing to use his in-plant strategy in places like Caterpillar where they recently suffered defeat.

At Staley, given the complexity of running a plant more like a chemical refinery than a goods-producing factory, worker resistance appears to have affected production. There is also a vast difference in experience between workers and their supervisors. Worker seniority averaged about 26 years, whereas most supervisors had less than 5 years in the plant. This discrepancy resulted largely from a management purge when Tate & Lyle took over Staley in 1988. To run a tighter ship, the older, paternalistic supervisors were replaced by people more dependent on the workers to run the plant.

COMPANY PROVOCATIONS

Nevertheless, the corporate campaign/in-plant strategy did not stop the bosses. In March, Staley imposed the most brutal feature of its new "contract": rotating 12 hour shifts, three days on and three days off, alternating days and nights. These schedules played havoc with workers' lives (especially women with children) They allowed the bosses to impose long hours while reducing overtime pay.

As a sign of things to come, Staley brought in 200 workers from other plants to replace Decatur workers who resisted the new hours. But when the union leadership continued its work-to-rule strategy, the confrontation was postponed and the replacement workers were sent back.

Tucker and the local leaders interpreted Staley's moves as a sign that the in-plant strategy was hurting the company. But although they projected optimism and claimed they were refusing to allow Staley to "instigate" a strike, Tucker and the union leaders were allowing management to call the shots. Staley had shown it was prepared to escalate, and the workers' success in cutting production was hardly a situation management would tolerate for long.

As tension mounted, the company tried a new provocation. On June 16, Staley fired Gary Taylor, charging him with using the company's communications system to send union messages. As word of the firing spread, workers walked out and held a mass grievance meeting at the union hall. When they attempted to return to work the next morning, they were locked out. Management insisted workers had to sign indi-

vidual contracts as a condition for returning to work.

But this illegal tactic backfired. Staley had acted prematurely, even for the government's National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which routinely supports bosses. Here it was forced to rule against management. Staley was forced to retreat and end the lockout after 32 hours.

Despite this bungled attempt, Staley's management was determined to regain control of the plant. In defeating the first lockout attempt, workers demonstrated their high level of solidarity and their readiness to fight the bosses. But a new confrontation was inevitable. And in the early morning hours of June 27, management escorted the night shift out of the plant. The long lockout was under way.

WORKERS' STRIKE OR BOSSES' LOCKOUT?

Since June 27, union and management have been fighting a war of attrition. Workers chant "one more day," a vow to outlast the bosses. They express confidence that Staley will need six months to a year to get the plant fully operating. In the meantime, the union has been relying on the corporate campaign. While handfuls of pickets man the plant gates, scabs enter and leave without difficulty.

Although it faces reduced orders and profits, Tate & Lyle has over \$4 billion in assets (including Domino Sugar, Western Sugar, and Redpath) and appears willing to absorb losses in order to smash the union. Staley is being aided by Archer-Daniels-Midland, an agribusiness giant that owns stock in Tate & Lyle. ADM has set up a pipeline with Staley to pump in starch slurry. It is also rumored that ADM is shipping products in Staley containers to allow Staley to meet its orders and maintain customers.

Clearly the workers now face an uphill battle. Rogers and Tucker gave Staley time to probe for weaknesses and to plan its offensive, even though at the beginning of the struggle the union acknowledged that a lockout was a serious threat. A brochure, *Crisis in Decatur*, put out by Local 837 and Corporate Campaign, states:

In short, Staley is doing everything possible to instigate a strike, and if that doesn't happen, the company is ready to impose a contract or lock the workers out. In the event of a lockout or strike, Staley has made it clear it will bring in replacement workers — many of whom have already been trained — to take the jobs.

While Staley was preparing for a confrontation, Rogers and Tucker continued to tell workers that pressure tactics could avoid a showdown. Had the in-plant strategy been a way to build support for a militant mass strike linked to other struggles, the decision to postpone striking could have been tactically justified. But it was not a tactical retreat to gain momentum for a confrontation: Rogers and Tucker sought to *substitute* pressure tactics for mass struggle. They raised illusions that an all-out fight could be avoided.

The argument made all along was that the corporate campaign and in-plant strategy were needed because a strike would be a disaster. But now that the workers are locked out, they are in effect forced to operate as if on strike.

The labor leaders would certainly prefer labor victories to defeats, either by strikes or (preferably) by more passive means. But as brokers in the sale of the workers' labor power, they have their vested interest in maintaining capitalism. They are aware of the simmering volcano among workers. Loyalty to the system leads them constantly to prevent mobilizations, since explosions by a working class with enormous power endanger profits and the whole system.

Even left bureaucrats like Tucker favor mobilizations only when the ranks can be thoroughly controlled, and when

the situation itself limits the workers' options. Direct combat with the forces of capital and its state must be carefully limited. Any actions to widen strikes or strike-like activity beyond controlled solidarity efforts, consumer boycotts and lobbying is to be headed off. The Rogers and the Tuckers want working-class explosions as little as do the Kirklands.

STALEY AND HORMEL

As in the defeated Hormel strike, they stress external political pressure rather than stopping production. Repeating the story of Hormel, they refuse to shut down the plant (or, better yet, seize and occupy it) because they hope the company cannot function without experienced workers.

The Corporate Campaign's retrogressive features are even more pronounced in the Staley struggle. At Hormel, workers were ready to close the plant when the bosses tried to reopen it with scabs. They accepted Corporate Campaign's external strategy as the main focus after the National Guard intervened, when workers were misled into believing they no longer had the ability to close the plant down.

At Hormel, the Corporate Campaign was imposed on an ongoing strike: at Staley, it is a substitute for strike action. Workers on strike at Hormel went to other company plants to get them to join the strike. Staley workers emphasize they're in a lockout, not a strike. While this is in part a tactical defensive posture to win support and gain unemployment insurance (not available to strikers in Illinois), this method tends to put workers in the role of victims.

Perhaps the most dangerous difference with Hormel is that workers at Hormel had a better understanding of scabs.

At a meeting of the Staley support committee in Chicago, the Staley workers' line was that they could "understand" why people who haven't worked in a long time would scab. They felt sorry for them. Scabs are not the problem, they said; it's the company. As one put it, "we're capable of busting heads," but that is not the image they wished to project.

The workers are hardly pacifist; they are being dangerously misled. Their wrong attitude toward scabs flows from the false strategy of not shutting down the plant through mass action. If workers were actually trying to close the plant, they would have a different attitude toward cops and scabs who try to break their picket lines.

As the struggle drags on, the danger is that cracks in workers' unity will appear. Workers will be under tremendous pressure to return to work. They will feel the pull from their families to break ranks and go back to work, as at Hormel. Under these circumstances, a "soft" attitude towards scabbing will only make it easier for some to return to work. Whereas at Hormel, workers wore buttons like "pick a scab and make it bleed," expressing their contempt for the lowest thing a person could do to fellow workers.

Workers need to regain their understanding of class solidarity and their hatred of scabbing. Under some circumstances it is possible to take a soft line towards scabs — that is, to appeal to them to come out and join the struggle. But scabs will not be convinced by talk not backed up by determined mass action. Without the stick the carrot can't work.

While it is self-defeating to accept scabs, this attitude in part is a reaction to management's efforts to pit employed workers against the unemployed. The Staley workers' desire

How Did Workers Win in the 1930's?

As a result of bureaucratic betrayals, many workers are demoralized. Today that is beginning to change. But the defeatist mood is still used by left bureaucrats and phony socialists to cover their own retreat from the struggle; they substitute "innovative" tactics like corporate campaigns, in-plant strategies, plant closing legislation and demands for new labor laws for class war.

With conventional wisdom, they argue that the 1990's are not the 1930's. Multinational corporations and changing conditions mean workers can no longer win strikes. But reducing the 1930's to a period of trade union militancy distorts history. The Great Depression was by no means an easy time for strikes. Mass unemployment made strikes difficult and dangerous — bloody defeats were suffered by workers confronting scabs, private armies and state repression.

How then was the CIO built? Was it the leadership of the bureaucrats led by John L. Lewis and his pawn, the Stalinist pseudo-Communist Party, that overcome the bad conditions to build industrial unions? Hardly! Lewis and other bureaucrats placed themselves at the head of a working-class explosion and worked to contain the struggles within the narrow confines of the unions.

What built the CIO was the mobilization of masses of workers and unemployed that threatened the property and the very existence of capitalism. As a result of the Great Depression, workers were forced into mass action to survive; sit-down strikes and general strikes were among the weapons employed. Capitalism was forced to accept some working-class gains (like trade unions) only in the face of the prospect of a workers' revolution.

The lesson of the 1930's isn't that militancy could win in the "good old days." Trade union militancy was not the answer to the problems of the 1930's, nor is it an answer today. And even mass action is not enough if the working class cannot build its revolutionary leadership to fight for socialist revolution.

By the end of the 1930's, the wave of radical struggle was beginning to subside, curbed by Lewis and the Stalinists. Capitalism was still in a depression (World War II was necessary for capitalism to recover). Even though the Communist Party was small, it played a huge role in the CIO unions in the 1930's. It attracted a wide following among radicalized workers who were drawing revolutionary lessons from the mass anti-capitalist struggles. It used its authority, gained by claiming the banner of communism, to prevent the workers from challenging the Democratic Party and the government. Under the impact of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the USSR, the Communist Party was a crucial force for reformism in the U.S.

During the post-World War II boom, militant strikes could win temporary gains for some, creating illusions that workers could win a decent life under capitalism. Today, as in the 1930's, workers have to turn to revolutionary methods to survive. Capitalist reaction is making it virtually impossible for workers to defend their past gains using existing weapons. Every strike faces state repression as well as open strikebreaking and scabs.

As trade union reformism collapses, workers will be forced to find new, more powerful weapons. Revolutionary explosions, only hinted at by the Los Angeles rebellion, will be the order of the day.

for working class unity is sincere. But the only way to realize working-class unity is through mass action. Mass confrontations with the bosses will force everyone to choose sides. It will also present the opportunity for revolutionaries to put forward our alternative, the program of jobs for all and other measures to overcome the class divisions.

'SHUT THE WHOLE NATION DOWN!'

At the June 26 rally, a member of Grain Millers Local 103 at an Archer-Daniels-Midland unit addressed the crowd:

I don't have a speech or anything to say to anybody except we need to band together. I tell you: if the union heads could get off their power trips and band every local union together, we could do a lot of things, but the way it is set up now, it's not going to happen.

If the UAW, the AIW and every other International union could sit down together and get us all together, we could shut this place down. There ain't nothing moving when we're on strike, no matter if it's a Staley, Caterpillar or anything. We can shut the whole town down. We could shut the whole nation down. That's the only way we're going to have any progress. That's the way I feel about it. It all has to be one big international union.

These comments drew tremendous, well deserved applause. There is tremendous sentiment for united action to stop the assault on the working class. There is a profound awareness of the rot in the bureaucracy. Yet there are stumbling blocks. Staley workers display a contradictory understanding of working-class power. On one hand, they accept that they're in a "war zone" and are trying to mobilize their fellow workers. On the other hand, a deep sense of constraint tempers their actions.

GENERAL STRIKE NEEDED

There is a potential to overcome the narrowness and the pacifist, legalist limitations of the Corporate Campaign strategy. Start from the call to "shut the whole town down," "shut the whole nation down" and the real chord it struck among the workers assembled in Decatur. A struggle to launch a general strike, including mass action at the plant itself, is the only way left for the Staley workers to win.

In a leaflet distributed in Chicago and Decatur, the LRP located Staley within the overall class struggle:

Life under capitalism has gone from bad to worse. The bosses and their media blame working people for being too 'greedy' and not willing to sacrifice enough. They save their greatest wrath for the most oppressed: Blacks, Latinos, women and immigrant workers. ... They tell the better-off (but increasingly hard-pressed) white workers that social decay is the fault of the poor — rather than the capitalists themselves and the system they profit from. They aim to get us to fight each other, not them. That's what's behind racism, sexism, U.S. flag-waving and the raging anti-immigrant hysteria.

But the [class] war has not been entirely one-sided. Coal miners, utilities workers, Caterpillar Tractor workers, Staley workers and others have been forced into struggle. And the bosses got the scare of their lives last year when Los Angeles erupted in protest against police brutality and the outrageous exoneration. The capitalists and the media want us to believe that L.A. was mainly a riot by Black hoodlums. But in reality L.A. showed Black, Latino and white workers looking for a way to fight back against the real criminals, the cops and the capitalists. People showed they were sick of joblessness, vanishing public services, racism, poverty and misery.

The working class has to relearn that it does have the power to stop this rotten system in its tracks and overthrow it. Reality is already forcing that lesson upon us.

THE BUREAUCRATIC 'REVOLT'

A small but growing number of "left" labor bureaucrats have started complaining about the inactivity of their "movement" — and urging Lane Kirkland to at least threaten what amounts to a general strike. This is a sure sign the bureaucracy is frightened of the capitalist attack, which is threatening to undermine *its* position, not just the workers'. It also reflects the rising frustration and potential explosiveness of the class they rest on.

In July, UAW Secretary-Treasurer Bill Casstevens implored Kirkland to think about calling all workers out so as to win pro-labor legislation. Congress, he wrote,

may just force us to ask all people who believe in fairness and the democratic process to take to the streets in support of fairness and democracy, and remain there until it is achieved.

The labor movement has been on the defensive for far too long now, and it's time we say enough is enough. We must be willing to stand up and be counted on the side of fairness and democracy, even to the point of doing what some would consider radical. If we do not, those who say the labor movement has lost its clout and is no longer needed will convert swelling their ranks manifold.

The issue is right — the time to act is now!!

Marshall Hicks, president of the Utility Workers Union of America, wrote to the AFL-CIO chief in August, urging that he plan for a "nationwide work stoppage":

If the trucks don't roll, the trains don't roll, the planes don't fly, coal and oil doesn't move, the government's employees are not on duty, and the machinery shuts down all over the country, the Congress may well discover just what "gridlock" can do for a good cause. I understand this is a very serious undertaking and may well result in some difficulties, but the cause is just and it's time we really make labor's voice heard and understood.

And Dennis Rivera, president of 1199 National Health Union as well as a high official in the New York Democratic Party, weighed in with a *New York Newsday* column:

My frustration is not with the politicians, who are acting predictably, but with the AFL-CIO, which is hardly acting at all. Under Lane Kirkland's leadership, the AFL-CIO has become almost irrelevant. And that's despite the fact that 50 percent of the Democratic National Committee's funds come from unions!

If the AFL-CIO can't make a serious fight ... our labor movement will slip deeper into its death-like coma.

These angry bureaucrats are hardly revolutionaries. Casstevens was the UAW official in charge of betraying the Caterpillar strike. Rivera, writing in the newspapers, asks only for demonstrations, not strikes. The calls for workers to "take to the streets ... and remain there" and for a "nationwide work stoppage" were made in personal communications within the bureaucracy, not publicly circulated. Heaven forbid that workers hear such ideas! Still, the letters show what is boiling under the surface of events.

We have a different attitude towards a general strike from even the angriest-talking bureaucrats. We do not fear its "difficulties," the fact that workers may get out of hand. Communists campaign for a general strike because it will advance the fight for revolutionary leadership and socialism.

Mass consciousness comes from mass acts, not the other way around. Workers acting together, bringing the economy

to a halt, will learn their own power. Most will initially engage in a general strike to win immediate gains. But a general strike poses the question of who controls society, who controls property, who controls the state. In the course of a general strike, revolutionaries have great opportunities to show our fellow workers the key lesson of the struggle — that to gain their goals, they must oust their present leadership and overthrow capitalism and its state.

Authentic communists make no bones about it. Our goal is to build the revolutionary workers' party and make the socialist revolution; otherwise there is no hope for our class. A mass upheaval is inevitable. Workers are beginning to move in that direction. Because genuine revolutionaries are now gaining ground only slowly, the mood is still one of contradictory class consciousness. But the movement is occurring; the prospects for revolutionaries are rising again.

In our leaflet, we pointed to the bureaucrats' mumbling about general strikes: they have to be pushed but cannot be trusted. They will always betray the workers to preserve capitalism. "A serious fight for a general strike means a fight against the union bureaucrats and other misleaders."

Central Illinois can become the launching pad for a united working-class counterattack. It requires a struggle against not only the most fossilized AFL-CIO bureaucrats. It also must take on types like Rogers, Tucker, Hicks and Rivera who claim to stand for rank and file participation or toy with mass militancy and general strike verbiage.

In the war zone in Illinois, a general strike against layoffs, union-busting, wage reduction is the way to begin. It will have to grow into a political strike which includes conscious opposition to racism, unemployment and all other anti-working class attacks.

THE REVOLUTIONARY ALTERNATIVE

Even though revolutionaries are only a small force today, there is every reason to expect a rapid growth in the coming years. The major barrier to revolutionary development, the Stalinist Communist Party that tied workers to the capitalist Democratic Party in the 1930's, has collapsed, along with the statified capitalism of the Eastern bloc. The whole era of

middle-class bureaucratic usurpation of Marxism has disintegrated. Even though many workers still falsely identify authentic communists with the frauds of the past, the actual conditions of life are changing — and with them will go such misconceptions. Already we in the LRP are slowly but surely gaining larger audiences here and abroad.

The most advanced workers have to join with us now or critical opportunities will be missed. In struggles like Staley, even a small revolutionary caucus fighting for a general strike could have a tremendous impact on the course of events. The longer workers continue without building our revolutionary class party, the gloomier the picture will get. The crisis of the system ultimately leads to depression, war and fascism.

There is an alternative. Under capitalism, the wholesale substitution of machinery for workers, which today allows the bosses to lay off so many, means disaster. Under a revolutionary workers' state it would be a blessing. We could all work less while our incomes go up as more and more production becomes possible.

We live in a world where the technology and organization of production already exists to let everyone look forward to being fully clothed, fed and housed. Under socialism, where production would be devoted to use and human needs rather than profit, society would not need to restrict the development of abundance as it does now.

In this society the government, the entire state apparatus, the courts, the cops and the capitalist politicians, Democratic and Republican, serve the interests of the bosses, our enemies. In L.A., it took mass rioting and the threat of more upheavals simply to get two ruthlessly brutal cops convicted (and two more got away free!).

Workers' explosions are inevitable as capitalism continues to decay. The key question is whether revolutionaries can gather enough forces in time to win the working class to the program of socialist revolution. Reformism, the belief in a "kinder and gentler" capitalism, is a deadly mistake — especially now, when the most fundamental rights of working people are threats to the system. The ruling class is turning to anti-union and racist attacks to take back every hard-won gain. Either we destroy the system or it destroys us. ●

Independent Political Austerity Again

In our last issue, two lines in a short article on p. 14 were inadvertently omitted. We present it again, in full, with an update.

A featured speaker at the Labor Notes conference was Bernie Sanders, "independent" congressman from Vermont and a self-styled socialist. Sanders said:

I know the Congress does not have a good name with you, and it should not have a good name with you. Have no faith that it will do the right thing.

Sure enough, a few weeks later Sanders cast a key vote for Bill Clinton's tax and budget bill when it narrowly passed the House of Representatives.

Among other things, Clinton's bill raised taxes on social security benefits for retired couples earning more than a lofty \$32,000, cut Medicare and Medicaid payments by \$68 billion and slashed raises for government workers. Its token increases in taxes on corporations will be easily evaded.

Bill's bill is part of his austerity package aimed at shaving the budget deficit in the interest of Wall Street. As Kweisi Mfume, head of the Congressional Black Caucus, complained when Clinton agreed with conservative senators to slash Medicare and Medicaid further, the original deal had already cut key provisions to the bare bone. Of course, like Sanders,

he and the rest of the Caucus had voted for this austerity bill.

A genuine socialist — a revolutionary — would have fought against such a measure and used the Congressional pulpit to expose Clinton's phony populism and subservience to big business. Sanders and his fellow "socialists," Democrats Dellums of California and Owens of New York, have proved again they are agents of capital, not the working class. Inside or outside the Democratic Party, reformism stinks.

Labor Notes, Solidarity and all the "progressives" who cheer Sanders & Co. today will have to answer to the working class when it rises up in outrage tomorrow.

That was in June. Clinton's bill finally passed in August, by an even narrower margin. It contained still deeper cuts in Medicare and further austerity measures. The tax provisions were unchanged. Yet all the liberal Democrats voted for it. Mfume said, "Many people in this particular party that I'm a member of realize that we really don't have a choice."

Exactly. If you're stuck with capitalism, your choice is austerity. Period. That's why capitalism is for capitalists. Workers need socialism and their own party, a proletarian revolutionary party. ●

Haiti

continued from page 1

because we favor the continuation in power of the military and police butchers now running the country, but because we understand the nature of U.S. imperialism. U.S. capitalism is the main supporter of the criminal junta, as it is of such gangsters everywhere. The CIA surreptitiously aided the bourgeois opposition after Aristide's election, and the U.S. has no intention of clearing out the armed thugs now — even if Aristide is brought back as a figurehead.

As the U.S./U.N. intervention in Somalia shows, when imperialism sends in troops even on a "humanitarian" mission, the result is repression and slaughter. Moreover, this administration extended Bush's criminal repatriation of Haitian refugees who risked their lives on the high seas, and it continues to return them to the junta's torture chambers. Clinton is no friend of the Haitian people. The first priority of U.S. troops in Haiti would be to disarm the masses and protect the army thugs.

Moreover, the U.S. ruling class *needs* the military gang, even if junta chief Raoul Cédras has to go. Aristide, for all his willingness to accommodate to the needs of capital, cannot simply order his followers to sit back quietly and take the pittance imperialism puts on their plate. They are angry; they want justice and immediate improvements in their lives. Some are armed. If the U.S. destroys the Haitian military, who will keep the masses down? Another direct U.S. occupation will not wash. So the Haitian army has to stay, under the veneer of "professionalization" via U.S. aid.

'WORLD ORDER' UPSIDE DOWN

That's why Clinton is vacillating. In early October his Secretaries of Defense and State made asses of themselves at a Congressional briefing, practically begging to know whether anyone happened to have a handy foreign policy lying around. Every other bourgeois politician and editorialist is sounding off and demanding decisiveness.

Examples: on the right, the *Economist* magazine demands the resignation of Secretary of State Christopher and his replacement by one with "some all-purpose set of principles [to] provide an important rudder." And on the left, Michael Kinsley in the *New Republic* notes that Clinton simply reflects "a citizenry that also does not know its own mind" — blaming the public for the ruling class's indecision. Very helpful: not even these symmetrical well-wishers of U.S. imperialism can say what the proper principles might be.

The problem is that imperialism as a whole, not just Clinton, has no clear strategy. As we commented when it was first celebrated under the previous administration:

The media notwithstanding, George Bush's New World Order is little more than a catchphrase. Of course, something has to replace the Cold War and its institutions, some arrangement has to govern the newly prominent imperialist rivalries. But what will be the actual international mechanisms to defend "stability" and "order"? Bush hasn't said, because he doesn't know. (PR 39.)

Nor does anyone yet. The U.S. lacks the economic domination over its imperialist rivals to call the shots in places like Bosnia and the ex-Soviet republics. And it lacks a powerful pseudo-socialist counterweight that can tell the masses of the oppressed countries they have to keep their struggle within capitalist limits, as the USSR used to do.

As for the petty "warlords" like Cédras in Haiti and Aidid in Somalia, their strength is their weakness: if the U.S. smashes them, which it obviously can do, it has no one to keep the masses in place. That's the reason Bush let Saddam Hussein stay in power after Iraq was devastated in the Gulf War. It is also a reason the U.S. only talks about defending beleaguered Bosnia: it can't afford to weaken the local rulers.

Clinton's situation is ironically similar. Even though Clinton's foreign policy is floundering, imperialists everywhere — even his rivals — need the U.S. to play the lead role: there is no other candidate.

ACCORD = ACCOMMODATION

Clinton & Co. persuaded Aristide to sign the Governor's Island accord with Cédras, under which the president gets his office back — but the junta stays in the saddle, barely slapped



U.S. "peacekeeping" troops. Slick Willie the Weasel and whole ruling class are debating how to use them.

on the wrists for the thousands it murdered since the coup.

The Accord calls for the U.S. military to go to Haiti, under the rubric of a U.N. multinational force. One of their tasks is the "reorganization, professionalization and training of the Armed Forces of Haiti and the monitoring of its performance." Michel François, the Port-au-Prince police chief responsible for much of the post-coup butchery, is one such U.S.-trained professional, a Fort Benning graduate.

As well, the Accord allows for U.S. "technical advisers" to make sure that Haiti's economy remains dependent on the U.S., the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Aristide, whatever his pious wishes, found no way to counter imperialism's financial demands during his seven months in power — and has signed away any intent to do so now.

The U.S./U.N./O.A.S. sanctions that have been re-imposed are an equally disastrous "solution." They have been openly violated by U.S. companies taking advantage of Haiti's \$2-or-less-per-day wages, and they never prevented capitalists from salting their profits away out of the country. But they do mean that commodities needed by the masses are available only at unaffordable prices, if at all. The fuel embargo in particular hurts food supplies and hospitals, while the military protects its separate three-month supply.

As for which side the U.S. forces are on, imagine if on October 11th they had been opposed at the Port-au-Prince docks by a group of workers demanding that the imperialists go home. Instead of abjectly retreating, they would have shot the place up, as the Rangers did in Somalia — and, for that

matter, as the U.S. has always done in Haiti.

There is a long history of U.S. intervention in Haiti that shows the true intent of imperialism. It began in 1804, when the U.S. declared an embargo against Haiti's revolutionary government, the result of a victorious slave rebellion.

CENTURY OF U.S. DOMINATION

In this century, thousands of marines landed in 1915 under the pretext that U.S. and European interests were threatened, opening up a 19-year military occupation. The U.S. forces treated the Haitian population with brutality and racism. They seized the banks, imposed a new constitution, reinstated forced labor for agricultural workers, censored the press and arrested political dissidents.

Thus began eight decades of political and economic control by the U.S., colluding with Haitian capitalists and landowners. The mass of Haitians were kept in poverty and illiteracy under a perpetual reign of terror. As a result, U.S. capitalism gained millions of dollars in profits squeezed out of workers forced to accept the lowest wages in the hemisphere.

More recently, the U.S. backed the murderous Duvalier dictatorship from 1957 to 1986. A Marine Corps detachment was stationed in Haiti to "reorganize" the Haitian army and police force — the same excuse given for U.S. intervention today. (See "Clinton Bushwhacks Haitians," *PR* 43.) After the last Duvaliers fled in 1986, the U.S. backed a series of repressive military regimes with arms, training and money. Today's butchers are in large part a product of the U.S. government's "aid" to Haiti.

When the junta ousted Aristide, they closed down the unions and other working-class and mass organizations, cancelled wage gains won under Aristide and lengthened working hours. Capitalists in Haiti and the U.S. were delighted. But the flood tide of refugees landing in Florida, together with the U.S. authorities' merciless and racist treatment of thousands of persecuted people, caused a worldwide outcry. Imperialism needed a cover.

Hence the Cédras-Aristide Accord. Aristide has never been eager to mobilize masses, and so he depends on U.S. power to restore him to office. Wavering between his mass base and his base masters, he has changed his mind repeatedly on whether Cédras should be tried for his crimes or let go. The Haitian working class will have to overcome its illusions in Aristide, their supposed benefactor.

THE PROLETARIAN ANSWER

As working-class revolutionaries, we address our program not to the rulers of the world but to the oppressed and exploited. Many on the left beg Clinton to act (to send troops and/or enforce the blockade); our job is to help the working classes of the world figure out *their* actions and responses. They demand that imperialism oust the junta; we call for forcing imperialism get out of the way. Let the Haitian masses arm themselves and take care of their torturers, as they began to do when Aristide was elected.

In any mass struggle against the military, we stand with Aristide and his supporters. That is a simple question of self-determination: the Haitian people have the right to choose their government without imperialist interference. Our Leninist position of military/technical support means giving absolutely no political endorsement to bourgeois politicians like Aristide. It means defense of the organizations and struggles of the workers and peasants, above all against the Aristide-backed U.S. or other "advisers" who will try to disarm them.

It is critical to understand that there is no solution for the Haitian working masses in Haiti alone. Haiti's crisis is

international; international capitalism — imperialism — rules world markets and credit institutions. Haiti needs not only a liberating national revolution but an international one. A Haitian proletarian revolution that seized capitalist property, repudiated Haiti's debt to the IMF and the imperialist banks — and called on workers and peasants across the Caribbean and Latin America to do likewise — would jolt the foundations of imperialism's shaky world order. ●

COFI

continued from page 2

ators quickly cut us off. When WBAI solicits you for a donation, ask them why you should pay for a station that suppresses genuinely alternative views when there are so many others that do it for free.

On November 6, LRP comrades joined in a mobilization against a fascist march in New Hope, Pennsylvania.

We also intervened successfully at public meetings in New York and Chicago featuring Neville Alexander, the leader of South Africa's Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA). Alexander argued for a broad mass workers' party in opposition to the ANC/Communist Party Alliance, currently selling out the basic demands of the Black masses. LRPers spoke for a mass workers' party, but contended that such a party could only provide a real alternative to the ANC/SACP misleaders by openly fighting for socialist revolution as the only solution to the Black workers' demands. WOSA opposes such a campaign, favoring instead one for reformism today, revolution bye-and-bye. Future issues of *Proletarian Revolution* will examine revolutionary strategy and the workers' party movement in South Africa.

The LRP has continued its activities at the City University of New York, where sales of *PR* have been higher than ever. This fall we have had two forums on campus with lively discussions. The first compared the middle-class-led struggles of the 1960's with the potential for working-class action today in the context of capitalist crisis. The second analyzed the fake revolutionary solutions of nationalism and Stalinism.

We continue to hold monthly discussions in New York for readers and friends of the LRP. Recent meetings have discussed the failures of integrationism and nationalism for U.S. Blacks, and Clinton's "New World Disorder" and his floundering foreign policy. The next will take up NAFTA.

In Illinois, we joined in several support rallies for the locked-out Staley workers (whose struggle is analyzed in this issue). Supporters in Chicago organized an LRP forum on Marxism and Stalinism. Readers in the Chicago area can now contact the LRP at POB 256523, Chicago, IL 60625.

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PLO Sells Out Liberation Struggle

The "historic handshake" at the White House on September 13 between Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestine Liberation Organization's Yasir Arafat will go down as an historic betrayal of the Palestinian struggle for liberation. Heralded as the legitimization of a "peace process," the agreement sanctioned by the leaders of world imperialism in fact ratifies the continued denial of the basic rights of a beleaguered people. The only peace it will bring is that of a graveyard.

THE PLO'S SURRENDER

The PLO leadership affirmed the "right" of Israel to hold the land from which Palestinians have been expelled and renounced "terrorism and other acts of violence" — in effect a renunciation of the right to resist oppression. But Israel still detains thousands of political prisoners, brutally rules the occupied territories militarily and keeps millions of exiles from their homeland. In a word, the PLO surrendered.

At the price of giving up the right to resist oppression, the PLO "won" an elected Palestinian Council with the right to do little but collect mail and garbage in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Israeli forces will be withdrawn only from Gaza and the town of Jericho for now. Rabin will not even end the "closure" of the territories that prevents Palestinian workers from getting to their jobs in Israel.

Most ominously, in the guise of gaining "their own" police force, the masses will face the PLO's military units (which have already begun collaborating with the Israeli armed forces to "secure" the territories against militants.) Much of Gaza is reportedly controlled by armed Palestinians, so the PLO will be undertaking a task Israel is eager to relinquish. And given the overcrowded, jobless hellhole of Gaza created by imperialism, it is no wonder that people look for radical solutions (including fascistic Islamic fundamentalism).

NO PALESTINIAN STATE

There will be no Palestinian state. Israel still controls the West Bank (which the treaty delicately calls "disputed" territories), and the PLO has accepted the continuation of the 144 Israeli settlements there. Even settlements in the PLO's designated areas will be under Israeli control. Moreover, the PLO agreed to give Israelis free access to the roads of Gaza and Jericho after the Israeli army pulls out.

Although Arafat proclaimed that "Soon the Palestinian flag will fly on the walls, the minarets and the cathedrals of Jerusalem," in reality the deal he signed says the opposite: Jerusalem remains under Israeli rule.

To spell this out, Israel Shahak, head of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, cites Rabin himself, who said:

The four crucial issues around which negotiations with the Palestinians have revolved are: united Jerusalem, the fate of the settlements, the redeployment of the Israeli army and the enforcement of domestic security in the Gaza Strip. . . .

The entire united Jerusalem will be outside the autonomy. We ourselves obtained this concession from the Palestinians — from those with whom one should make such deals — without any American promises as in the Camp David agreements. Jewish settlements will be placed under an exclusive Israeli jurisdiction; the Autonomy Council will have no authority over them. The forces of the

Israeli army will be redeployed on locations determined only by us, unlike the Camp David agreements which mandated a withdrawal of the Israeli army forces. In the agreement we reached we didn't consent to use the formula "withdrawal of Israeli army forces" except when it applied to the Gaza Strip. In application to all other places the only term used is "redeployment." . . .

I prefer the Palestinians to cope with the problem of enforcing order in the Gaza. The Palestinians will be better at it than we were because they will allow no appeals to the Supreme Court and will prevent the Association for Civil Rights from criticizing the conditions there by denying it access to the area. They will rule there by their own methods, freeing — and this is most important — the Israeli army soldiers from having to do what they will do. All Gaza Strip settlements will remain where they are. The Israeli army will remain in the Gaza Strip to defend them, and to guard all confrontation lines. It will also control the Jordan river end to end, and all the bridges on it. (*Yediot Aharonot*, Sept. 7)

Israel will still receive its multi-billion-dollar annual subsidy from the U.S., while the new Palestinian council will get a pittance. The aim of the deal is to suppress the Arab resistance to occupation, not reward it.

Edward Said, member of the Palestinian National Council (the PLO's bypassed parliament), summed up the Arafat-Rabin deal with the bitter comment that "the PLO has transformed itself from a national liberation movement into a kind of small-town government." But the truth is even harsher: the PLO has taken the side of the oppressor against the Palestinian resistance.

THE DEAD END OF NATIONALISM

The parallel between the PLO and South Africa's ANC is striking. Both led national struggles powered by mass rebellions. But as bourgeois outfits they insisted that the class struggles be subordinate to "liberation." On the verge of sharing power with the apartheid regime, the ANC has increasingly revealed its capitalist colors, abandoning one after another its promises of equality and economic gains. The PLO likewise betrays its mass base in the interest of an even feeble "share" of power.

Worldwide revulsion over the slaughter of millions of Jews in Europe during World War II was converted by the victorious imperialist powers into sympathy for the Zionist project of establishing an exclusively Jewish state in a country where the majority population was Palestinian. An entire people was displaced when Israel was established at gunpoint in 1947-48. Over a million were forced into exile.

The PLO originally called for a "democratic secular" state in all of Palestine, without racial privileges for the Jews. The resistance movement would have thought it a gross betrayal to legitimize Israeli settler colonialism. But by the 1970's the PLO had tacitly accepted the formula of a Palestinian "mini-state" comprising Gaza and the West Bank. Now Arafat has settled for far less, a shameful surrender of Palestinian rights for a mini-taste of state power.

As sincere capitalists, the PLO's leaders have always looked to imperialism, above all the U.S., to win them territory and legitimacy. But imperialism requires unchallenged control over Middle Eastern oil, so it is determined to suppress all militancy. Israel's Iron Fist in the territories and

neighboring Arab states (invasions of Lebanon, bombings of Iraq) is a necessary extension of imperial power.

The PLO's position was weakened further by the fall of the USSR (which supported its moderate resistance) and the military defeat of Iraq, so it felt more vulnerable than ever to the masses' volatility. The *intifada*, the rebellion raging since late 1987, has increasingly slipped out of PLO control. Thus they turn to the one regional power that can defend their interests — the "eternal" enemy, Israel.

Israel and its senior partners can never accept a true

Under imperialism's watchful eye, Arafat and Rabin agree to PLO capitulation.



Palestinian state. For the Zionist rulers, recognizing Palestinian rights on terms remotely approaching equality would call into question Israel's existence as a colonial-settler state built on the expropriation of the another people who formed the majority on the present Israeli territory before 1948. For imperialism, it would mean independence for the Middle East's bitterest and most heroic fighters. Not even a tamed and collared PLO can be trusted to hold them back without relying on Israel's army.

BOURGEOIS SUPPORT FOR PLO

Much support for Arafat's rotten deal comes from the middle classes in the occupied territories, largely made up of people whose families resided in the West Bank or Gaza before 1948. The poorer refugees who come from what is now Israel and who live in the camps supply the bulk of *intifada* activists and Islamic militants. The class question divides Palestine as it does everywhere else: bourgeoisies can accept subordination if exploitation and profits are allowed, but the working masses need genuine liberation, which can come only through socialist revolution.

The national character of the struggle takes its strength from the unity and determination of an oppressed people. But nationalism inevitably subordinates the class struggle, and now the masses are being set up to pay for the ruling-class deal. Today the nationalists — in Palestine, South Africa and elsewhere — have especially little to offer working people. Capitalism on a world scale is in a depression that immiserates the "third world" countries most of all.

Imperialism more than ever needs local compradors to help maintain stability and keep the world safe for profits, so it incorporates former enemies like the ANC and PLO. The absence of the USSR, which served as a prop for world imperialism in much of the "third world," deepens this need.

The sight of bourgeois "liberators" so easily joining the oppressors should teach working-class fighters the essential lesson: the working-class needs its own independent organi-

zation dedicated to the elimination of imperialism, the proletarian revolutionary International. The time to start building it and its national sections is now.

LEFT POLLYANNAS

One of the provisions of the September 13 agreement declares that the PLO "represents the Palestinian people." This has long been the position of many pro-nationalist leftists in the West unwilling to criticize the PLO. An especially grotesque line came from the Socialist Workers Party. Labeling the deal a "victory" for the PLO and the *intifada*, a *Militant* editorial said:

The ending of Israeli military rule over the territories and the transfer of decision-making power over wide areas of social and economic life to an elected Palestinian Council opens up new political space for Palestinian fighters to advance their struggle for an independent state. (Sept. 27.)

Sure, if calling a halt to a struggle constitutes an "advance." The editorial's opportunist optimism continued: **The Clinton administration, which has thus far balked at providing significant funds, should provide massive aid to the Palestinians with no strings attached.**

Sure, and pigs should fly — with no strings attached. If you can believe Arafat's capitulation was a victory, then you can believe imperialism is benevolent.

Some weeks later the *Militant* retracted its "victory" proclamation. But it still refused to warn the Palestinian masses of the PLO's treachery, insisting that the deal allowed "openings" for militant mass action.

Similar was the pious hope expressed by Kevin Barry in a lead article in *News & Letters* (October):

One can point to emancipatory possibilities flowing out of the new situation created by the peace negotiations, if the Arab and Jewish masses take history into their own hands.

Of course the masses will fight back. But they do not need advisers who cannot tell defeat from victory. When the working classes do act in their own name and their own interests, the first thing they will do is tear up this ignominious treaty subordinating one people to another.

Compare this "left" pollyannaism with the obverse optimism of Israeli commentators. Israeli "dove" Amos Oz told the BBC that "this is the second biggest victory in the history of Zionism" (after Israel's triumph over the Arab states in 1948). And according to the Jerusalem magazine *Challenge*,

Israeli analysts are blunt. Aharon Barnea, a leading columnist at the daily *Yediot Aharonot*, writes on September 10th that by signing the declaration of principles the Palestinians recognize the defeat of their guiding principles, the principles that had transformed them into a fighting people, into a military and political movement: the right of return, the right to self-determination, and the right to independence.

Shlomo Gazit, a retired intelligence colonel, writes in the same paper on September 9th, under the title "We Won," that the Palestinians have finally accepted their defeat in the five wars since 1967 and now they have had no choice but to accept humiliating terms. "Twenty-five years of military occupation bear fruit today." Gideon Eshet, economic analyst of *Yediot Aharonot*, writes on September 14th "Not only will they not have a state, they won't even have a banana republic."

The right-wing triumphalists are far closer to the truth than the rosy-eyed leftists who can't believe that the nationalists they have tailed for so many decades would actually live up to their bourgeois program. ●

Europe: 'United We Crumble'

by Sy Landy

Once again imperialism is trying to forge a unified West Europe, a Leviathan superstate. But the only statesmen available for the task are Liliputians.

For example, in Italy the politicians are busy putting each other in jail for corruption. In Germany, three members of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's cabinet, plus one Social Democratic leader, were forced to resign in disgrace. Kohl's ideological ally, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, aptly commented that Kohl "has the sure touch of a provincial politician." Still, he compares well in Lady Thatcher's mind with British premier, John Major, as minor a politician as there is — except for Labour Party leader John Smith, who fully lives up to the banality of his name.

However, France has provided the most thoroughgoing alternative vision: not in the shopworn seediness of President François Mitterrand but in the example of former Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy, who committed suicide last spring after his dilapidated Socialist Party suffered a dismal electoral defeat. This is at least a personal way out of the intense social and economic crisis tearing apart bourgeois Europe.

CAPITALISM BREEDS FASCISM

Mediocrity is no excuse for these political leeches and the bloodthirsty imperialist powers they lead. They are engaged not only in undercutting the living standards of West



Workers' unity in action. Left: 70,000 steelworkers march in Bonn. Placard reads: "German and foreign workers, one class, one united fight." Right: Anti-fascist rally in London.

European and immigrant workers, but in carrying out policies that encourage the scourges of racism and incipient fascism now menacing the continent. Their conflicts with each other reflect not only their petty personal rivalries and tawdry national disputes but far deeper schisms in capitalism.

SIGNS OF TURMOIL

The fundamental reason for the drive toward capitalist unity is the international class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat. It is also the reason for the string of setbacks that show the drive is doomed to failure.

• The Maastricht treaty, calling for major steps toward economic and political unity in this decade, has run into heavy resistance throughout the European Community (EC), especially in Denmark, France and Britain.

• Centrifugal pressures are building up among peoples seeking greater separation from their own capitals: in Scotland and Wales in Britain, Languedoc in France, Catalonia in Spain, among the Flemish in Belgium, etc.

• Native West European workers and petty bourgeois are being whipped up against workers from the Caribbean Africa, the Middle East, Asia and East Europe. As more refugees from the East seek entry, new restrictions and racist, ultra-nationalist and fascist groups are growing.

• Most importantly, restive working classes exploded last fall in mass mobilizations and strikes. Today the workers are still seething but are searching for an effective defense against the capitalist attacks on their lives and livelihoods.

In late October, the French government backed down from its threats of wage cuts and layoffs after Air France workers reacted with a powerful strike. The *New York Times* noted that prime minister Edouard Balladur had made an "extraordinary retreat," out of fear of a massive proletarian upsurge like that of May 1968:

Mr. Balladur ... judges France to be ripe for a social explosion of the sort that rocked the country a quarter-century ago.

Underlying the political turmoil is economic chaos. Major monetary disturbances drove apart the competing European currencies last fall and this summer, forcing the Exchange Rate Mechanism, the regulation controlling the

fluctuation permitted among different currencies, to be abandoned. A U.S. diplomat observed:

The dream of a unified, decisive Europe which assumes a major world role is not likely to be realized. The task instead, for as long as can be imagined, is going to be maintaining the most constructive possible situation in a Europe tending dangerously to instability and irresponsibility. (*New York Times*, August 8.)

Such comments reflect the fears of the capitalists over the growing economic emergency and the difficulties they foresee in suppressing the further responses of angry workers. Their fears are justified. Behind the European crisis lies the fact that the international capitalist economy is now plunging into a world-scale depression. The collapse of Stalinism, supposed to have signaled capitalism's historical triumph, turns

out to have been the harbinger of a new historical crisis.

Among the world's industrial powers, the sharpest crisis is in Europe. Western Europe's economy is larger than the U.S.'s or Japan's but suffers from major weaknesses. Official unemployment rates, for example, have been over 10 percent in Britain, France and Italy in 1992 and 1993, compared to about 7 percent in the U.S. and 2 percent in Japan. Inflation in 1992 was at 5 percent in Europe, compared to under 3 percent in the U.S. and under 2 percent in Japan (these official figures understate reality, but the comparison is valid). Europe's economy is expected to contract further this year.

A key reason for this weakness is that the European workers won big social gains in the years after World War II. For the capitalists, these gains cut into profits and are now

Hopes for unity were further accelerated by economic decline. But although the dominant capitalists favored limited forms of supra-national sovereignty to fortify Europe against its world rivals, others objected, recognizing that European unity meant unity against other regions, thereby raising risks to their foreign investments. In some cases, the fall of national barriers meant the loss of state subsidies, which would prevent important national capitals from competing with more powerful and efficient firms in other countries.

THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE

Germany stands above the other powers, and therefore European unity inevitably rests on German predominance. The fear of German hegemony is an important reason why

the others waver — and why, short of war, real unity is not possible for the bourgeoisie — even though it is constantly pressed toward that goal. There is nothing altruistic about capitalists. They want unity — but not at their own expense.

Optimism about further economic and political unity peaked in the 1980's, and in the decisive year of 1992 all was supposed to be cemented with the Maastricht treaty. But that is when chaos broke loose.

Concerned to avoid major confrontations with their own working class, the stronger German imperialists tried to pass their crises on to lesser rivals. When West Germany absorbed East Germany, the bourgeoisie faced mass unemployment and the threat of social unrest. The few measures taken to alleviate misery represented

a burden the German bourgeoisie didn't want. One measure of the cost of unification is that the state budget deficit increased from \$8 billion in 1989 to \$83 billion in 1991. Debt payments drained \$65 billion from the economy in 1992 alone — 3.5 percent of Germany's GNP — and absorbed 50 percent of savings. This year, interest payments will alone absorb 18 percent of state spending.

The German bourgeoisie attempted to extract a wage freeze from the trade unions, but that wasn't enough for the capitalists. When Kohl at first refused to raise taxes on workers and cut unemployment rations, the President of the Germany's central bank, the Bundesbank, resigned.

The bankers were right — in the sense that the bourgeoisie is confronted by the past gains of the working class that stand in the way of competitive profits. German workers work shorter hours than workers in any other imperialist country — an average of 37 hours weekly, as compared to 39 in Britain and France, 40 in the U.S. and 42 in Japan. They also have the highest social benefits (now higher even than



seen as significant obstacles to international competition. As well, Europe is not one country: it has no single central bank or currency, which means that economic policies and conditions vary across borders. And although internal customs barriers have fallen, there are still few large trans-European companies that can rival the top U.S. and Japanese firms, even when operating within Europe itself.

LIMITING RIVALRIES

Therefore, Europe's capitalists are propelled toward unity in order to consolidate larger capitals. The EC grew out of efforts to limit the rivalries that had led to two world wars. Its goals are to eliminate internal customs barriers, establish a joint external tariff and a common agricultural policy. Today, the bourgeoisies are trying to strengthen the EC in order to prepare for escalating imperialist competition. As long as national divisions remain, European capital will not overcome the relatively small size of its firms, still partly barred from continent-sized markets.

Sweden); for example, unionized German industrial workers get 40 paid vacation days and holidays annually, compared to 35 in France and Britain, 25 in Japan and 23 in the U.S.

But the Kohl government better senses the threat posed by the undefeated German workers. When Kohl tested the workers in May 1992 by provoking a public workers' strike, a walkout by half a million workers forced him to back down.

The Bundesbank had an answer to the crisis. With the mounting state debt threatening the market value of the German mark, it raised interest rates to near record levels. With all other European currencies tied to the mark, this had the effect of sucking funds into German banks from the other countries, whose currencies were significantly weakened. All pretense of European monetary order collapsed.

As a result, the Italian lira was quickly devalued by 7 percent. With the British pound dropping an enormous 16 percent, the Bank of England lost a quarter of its foreign exchange reserves in just one day of trading. The \$13 billion war chest accumulated specifically to defend the pound in just such a situation was wiped out in one blow. Sweden's bankers drove up interest rates to 75 and then 500 percent in order to stop the run on the krona, and are now terrified that banks will have to be nationalized to save it. And when the same moves reappeared this summer, the Bank of France gambled away 90 percent of its foreign exchange reserves in a futile effort to defend the franc.

IMPERIALISTS AND STALINISTS

In response to the crisis, in which Germany's industrial production fell by over 6 percent since 1991, the German rulers placed national interests above those of its "partners" and smashed the illusion of European unity. The peaceful unification of imperialist powers proved to be a pipedream.

Since Willy Brandt's government in the late 1960's, Germany has pursued a successful policy of economic penetration of Stalinist East Europe, while maintaining loyalty to the West in the Cold War. Germany became an important economic factor in several Stalinist countries through a subterranean competition with the U.S. — which accelerated as the USSR and its hegemony decayed. East Germany was heavily subsidized by Bonn, and its regime became increasingly the latter's junior partner.

Then the Berlin Wall came tumbling down, the result of a push by the workers. Kohl had no choice but to welcome the events: West German capitalism had to incorporate the East to prevent the development of proletarian revolution.

In fact, the collapse of Stalinism had set up a dangerous vacuum in the East, pushing Germany's hand. The U.S. has wanted Germany and Japan to rearm and thereby play a more helpful role in maintaining imperialism's grip on the world. But it finds such rearmament tolerable only if it doesn't rock Washington's dominant but slipping position.

So Germany and Japan have moved carefully. Both Germany and the U.S. are intent on solidifying Russia as a regional military power. Otherwise Germany would be forced to play the stabilizing role in the region for imperialism — an eventuality the U.S. is wary of.

CAPITALISTS AND PROLETARIANS

The vacillating politics toward unity that characterizes the other European powers follows from their national capitalist interests and their varying ties to the United States. Britain and France especially are centered on the fear of German power, and they wrestle with the question of whether German domination can best be undermined in or out of Maastricht.

Amid the shambles left by Europe's lurches toward unification, one fact stands out. Marxists have long pointed to a central contradiction of capitalism: that while each capitalist class is inherently national, the system's economic drives force it to move beyond national boundaries. When there has been capitalist unity, it has been under the domination of imperialist powers. And whereas Japan and the U.S. are the sole superpowers in the Pacific and North America, Europe has several imperial contenders. Capitalist unification of Europe is possible, but only through conquest, as when Germany ruled most of Europe during World War II. And even then the unity can last for only a historical moment.

WAR OF ALL AGAINST ALL

Capitalism is inherently divided. Capitals inevitably compete with one another. They form monopolies and cartels which in time inevitable break down, so that competition reoccurs on a more centralized and rapacious level. The same is true of national capitals and the nation states interpenetrated with them that defend their interests. They form international blocs, even "united nations," only to fall apart and at each others' throats at the next stage. Capitalism is the "war of all against all."

Capitalism cannot exist without competition. But competition is not its fundamental driving force, even though it appears that way to the individual capitalists, corporations and states. As Marx pointed out, competition is the mechanism through which the system compels its individual capitalist units to execute its inner laws.

For example, a capitalist thinks that competition makes him cut wages and replace labor with machinery. But from the vantage point of the system — and of the proletariat, which has to see the system as a whole — the reality is the reverse. Capitalism's laws of motion require increasing mechanization per worker to intensify exploitation and keep profits up. Each capitalist, whatever his wish, must try to comply. Competition simply selects which ones fail to survive.

That is what lies behind the imperialist struggle among Germany, Japan and the U.S., as well as behind all the squabbles over European unity. The issue is whether official unity or overt nationalism is the best form for combatting the working class. Either way, through either the EC or a looser association, each national imperialism seeks to better its position against its rivals. As well, each operates as part of the whole system in carrying out the attack on the working classes at home and overseas through neo-colonial pawns.

The currency crisis provoked by Germany forced many of the weaker bourgeoisies to launch sharp domestic attacks. Italy adopted an austerity package slashing \$75 billion from public spending this year through wage freezes, rampant inflation and the destruction of the workers' pension and medical plans of workers. Britain privatized the coal mines in an attempt to slash the state's budget deficit.

These moves provoked enormous class struggles: a series of general strikes in Italy, huge protests and a campaign for a general strike in Britain, mass strikes and street fighting in Greece. The pressure on the lesser imperialist powers extended as far as Australia: as we reported in *PR* 43, there was a one-day general strike and other strike action last fall. And Australian capitalism is now gearing for another onslaught.

The German bourgeoisie too has to take on its powerful working class. The government now plans to cut unemployment benefits from 68 percent of wages to 64 percent. Competition among workers is to be encouraged. The head of the Association of German Industry noted that West European labor costs had to fall if its industry is to remain competitive:

"Right on our doorstep in Eastern Europe, for the first time we have a vast pool of cheap and highly trained labor." (*New York Times*, August 8.) He added that West European labor costs will have to fall for European industry to stay competitive.

THE MAASTRICHT DEBATE

That is, the European bourgeoisie is salivating at the prospect of super-exploitation in East Europe, the kind the U.S. enjoys in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, and



500 French workers storm police barricades, protesting layoffs.

that Japan has in Asia. Europe's workers will have to fight to stop the destruction of their postwar gains in the face of the worst economic conditions since 1950.

In the disputes over the parliamentary votes and referendums on Maastricht, one side believed in a joint attack to enforce austerity. Others thought that their national capitals would be betrayed by too many concessions to foreigners. They tried to line up the workers of their nation against the workers of other nations.

As we have noted, capitalism in the imperialist epoch is driven toward greater centralization. It outstrips national boundaries and creates a world economy. This process objectively lays the basis for the international unity of workers' states and the communist future of humanity. But under capitalism it manifests itself as cartels, totalitarianism, imperialism — the counterrevolutionary answer to authentic internationalism. Sections of the bourgeoisie, threatened by the system's drives, try to halt them through measures like trust-busting, reactionary nation-building, national chauvinism, racism and — ultimately — fascism.

OPPORTUNIST LEFTISTS

The revolutionary working class opposes the bourgeois attack in all its forms. We do not choose which mechanisms should be used to assault us. We base our position on the interests of the workers as a whole, including those in the former colonial countries still under imperialism's sway. In the votes over European unity, therefore, the communist position is to oppose both sides. In doing so we call for a fight against the expansion of anti-immigration regulations and for working-class mobilizations against racist and fascist thugs.

In contrast, some left organizations, like the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel and the Spartacists, urged a "No" vote against Maastricht in France on

the grounds that this was the popular working-class position: The France that said "no" is that of hard work and hard times, of people whose basic economic insecurity makes them less than mesmerized by the charms of a single currency. Those on the left who fought for a "no" addressed the central task of not leaving this constituency in the hands of reactionary forces. (*International Viewpoint*, Oct. 12, 1992.)

The most striking thing about the referendum was the clear and overwhelming class division between "yes" and "no," with the working class voting 60 percent against. (*Workers Vanguard*, Oct. 2, 1992.)

These are efforts to tail the current consciousness of workers. They try to hide the central role of the nationalist bourgeoisies in the anti-Maastricht campaign and the fact that the racists and fascists are fundamentally tied to capitalism and a capitalist side. Thereby they capitulate to them. They claim that opposition to Maastricht meant a rejection of imperialism, not the choice of national imperialism over the Europe-wide version.

The Spartacists added the claim that "Outright rejection of the EC treaty ... would have been a decisive defeat for the social-democratic lackeys of the Paris bourse and a humiliation for the entire European bourgeois order." Not quite: a massive abstention — opposition to *both* bourgeois sides — would have dealt a blow not only to the bourgeois "internationalists" but also to the national chauvinists.

For clarity, compare this with our position *against* NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement (see PR 42). The NAFTA issue is not a choice between a nationalist imperialism and a unified imperialism; NAFTA is fundamentally an effort to reinforce U.S. domination of Mexico, the exploitation of Mexican workers — and thereby to deepen the exploitation of U.S. and Canadian workers. To oppose NAFTA does not mean defending a national imperialism over a North American one. Working-class opposition to NAFTA must sharply combat the chauvinist AFL-CIO leaders and others who seek to whip up hostility toward immigrants and all Asian and Latino workers.

WORKERS' VS. BOSSES' UNITY

The West European working classes are slowly recovering from decades of containment by Stalinist and Social Democratic reformists. These counterrevolutionary forces, rooted in the middle classes and the labor aristocracy, are being drowned by the economic crisis. Many workers are currently caught up in the nationalist undertows. But despite all the attempts to turn "natives" against immigrants, to foist racial and nationalist solutions on our class, the proletariat will inevitably erupt against the attacks. This will initially take the form of general strikes and mass defensive actions.

Such class actions will bring unity into motion. Success depends on how rapidly the most advanced workers can recreate revolutionary parties and the authentic Fourth International. Proletarian unity is the path to the united socialist states of Europe, the only genuine European community.

Capitalism can succeed in forging unity only along the path of fascism and World War III. A capitalist "European Community" would be another Hitlerian Leviathan state. It is instructive to note that, like the last time, this unity would result not from the bourgeois "internationalist" option but from the national chauvinist alternative. All bourgeois schemes, whether of Liliputians or Leviathans, point to the same bloody end. ●

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Vietnam: the 'Working-Class War'

by Dave Franklin

Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam, a book by Christian G. Appy published this year, is the most piercing and informative work yet on U.S. imperialism's carnage and defeat in Vietnam. In part an effort to counter right-wing notions that Vietnam was a just war that "the left" wouldn't let America win, the book also raises questions that liberals and even leftists avoid.

Appy is successful in achieving these goals because he examines the U.S. participation in the war through the lens of class structure and class conflict. He details the lives of American soldiers in Vietnam: their class backgrounds, military training, war experiences (both as victims and victimizers, as well as the post-combat attempts of survivors to deal with what they lived through. He provides a human and realistic account, using personal interviews and rap sessions with scores of veterans. He combines this personal touch with facts, figures and information. But he fails to draw the revolutionary conclusions that flow from this material.

CANNON FODDER

The book doesn't pretend to be a comprehensive analysis of the Vietnam War. Its central point is that the U.S. armed forces — particularly the enlisted men following orders, doing the fighting and suffering the casualties — were overwhelmingly and disproportionately from the working class.

By itself, this is nothing new: recruits for modern imperialist armies in general have come from the proletariat. This stems from both the working class's numerical predominance in capitalist society and the ruling class's penchant for having those less fortunate do its dirty and dangerous work.

But Appy demonstrates how this rule was particularly acute in Vietnam. Unlike World War II, whose vast scale demanded a mobilization of all social strata, Vietnam was more limited, and the military was determined to channel bourgeois and even middle-class youth away from combat. This was done through a variety of methods: student deferments, payoffs to doctors to declare potential recruits unfit, technical deferrals, draft board biases, connections (like Dan Quayle's) that get you into the stateside National Guard.

As well, the middle class was obviously under far less economic compulsion to enlist. Appy estimates that working-class and poor youth composed a full 80 percent of the enlisted ranks. (This figure is actually low in that it excludes youth from "white collar" families, many of whom are in fact working-class.)

One might assume that Blacks, getting screwed every other way in this society, would make up a disproportionately high percentage of the war casualties. Actually, Black casualties for the entire war were only slightly disproportionate. However, in the early part of the war, Black casualties were running at nearly twice the rate of white. Only after intense reaction from the Black movement and the increasing radicalization of Black youth did their percentages drop.

Appy also points out that the number of working-class war casualties as a whole in 1969, the year of highest American fatalities, roughly matched the number of American workers who died that year in industrial accidents. What a perfect demonstration of capitalism's consistently deadly use of its workforce — in war and "peace."

Vietnam added another sick twist to the use of workers as cannon fodder. The U.S. military command preferred a conventional set-piece war where superior firepower could be

brought to bear in massive actions. But in Vietnam they faced a mobile guerrilla army with popular support in the countryside. It was the latter's strategy of countless small actions over dispersed territory (including the extensive use of mines and booby traps) that prevailed.

To get even a limited engagement, the typical invaders' tactic was to send patrols on hot, long treks through rice paddies or dense jungles. The brass's actual hope was that such patrols would actually get ambushed: that way artillery and air power could be called in to maul the enemy (even if



U.S. "grunts" used as bait in Vietnam War.

that meant chalking up heavy "friendly fire" casualties). In a word, the infantry "grunts" were used as expendable bait. As one highly-decorated machine-gunner summed up the nighttime version of this tactic:

The purpose . . . was for you to walk up on Charlie and for him to hit you, and then for our hardware to wipe them out. We were used as scapegoats to find out where they were. That was all we were — bait. They couldn't find Charlie any other way. They knew there was a regiment out there. They weren't looking for just a handful of VC. Actually, they'd love for us to run into a regiment which would just wipe us out. Then they could plaster the regiment (with air strikes and artillery) and they'd have a big body count. The general gets another damn medal. He gets promoted. "Oh, I only lost two hundred men, but I killed two thousand." (p. 184.)

While Appy focuses on the plight of the U.S. soldiers, he does not miss the point that the main victims of the war were Vietnamese, from the North and the South. Between 1.5 and 2 million were killed during the war — not to mention other casualties and destruction. A great many casualties were civilians, most of whom died at the hands of American

forces. This is not surprising, since, as Appy notes, the thrust of U.S. policy was a racist attitude toward Vietnamese. All "gooks" were potential enemies to be watched, interrogated — and, if caught "where they weren't supposed to be" or among "Vietcong sympathizers," killed.

'PRO-WAR' WORKERS?

Another key point for Appy is countering the notion that the working class was the bastion for pro-war feelings in the country. Among the informational nuggets:

One survey, taken in the same year the media invented the term *hard-hats* (1970), found that 48 percent of the northern white working class was in favor of immediate withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, while only 40 percent of the white middle class took this dove position.

And when the entire working class including Blacks was included, the percentage for withdrawal went up.

The working-class youth that volunteered for service did not do so out of any John Wayne-type patriotic fervor. In fact, a large-scale survey in 1964 found the biggest single reason for volunteering was to avoid being drafted! This was even more so when the survey was repeated in 1968. Patriotism was the answer of only 11.2 percent in 1964 and 6.1 percent in 1968.

At the same time, there was a more pronounced opposition among workers to anti-war demonstrators than to the war itself. Why? Appy is right on the money.

This, I think, indicates that working-class anger at the anti-war movement — primarily a middle-class movement — often represented class conflict, not conflict over the legitimacy of the war. (p. 41)

He quotes a firefighter who lost his son to the war:

It's people like us who give up our sons for the country. The business people, they run the country and make money from it. The college types, the professors, they go to Washington and tell the government what to do. ... But their sons, they don't end up in the swamps over there, in Vietnam. They're deferred ... Let's face it: if you have a lot of money, or if you have the right connections, you don't end up on a firing line in the jungle over there, not unless you *want* to. ...

I think we ought to win that war or pull out. What the hell else should we do — sit and bleed ourselves to death, year after year? I hate those peace demonstrators. Why don't they go to Vietnam and demonstrate in front of the North Vietnamese? ... The whole thing is a mess. The sooner we get the hell out of there the better. (p. 42.)

This viewpoint illustrates vividly what Marxists call mixed consciousness. Here elementary working-class resentment towards the war is welded in contradictory fashion to reactionary sentiments.

Another example, from a returning veteran:

Last week, I had to be in Chicago; I ran into a "Resist the Draft" rally on the street. At first I smile: kids at it again, just a fad. Then I started getting sore. About how I had to go and they could stay out. Cosco went in and he was the straightest guy I ever knew. My Negro buddy didn't like the war, but he went too. I just stood there and got sore at those rich kids telling people to "resist the draft." What about us poor people? For every guy who resists the draft one of us gotta go and he gets sent out into the boonies to get his backside shot at. One of their signs read "We've Already Given Enough." And I thought, "What *have* they given?" (p. 301.)

Again, mixed and contradictory views. But even in confusion, this analysis demolishes the "Resist the Draft" posi-

tion, exposing its class bias and inability to do anything about capitalist militarism. And that position was characteristic of the liberal anti-war movement: not only did it have a middle-class social base, it had a middle-class political program.

Many black soldiers, Appy notes, had a somewhat different attitude toward anti-war views, if not "the movement." They saw Black leaders — Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, SNCC, the Panthers, Muhammed Ali — taking strong positions that the war was imperialist and racist. One soldier said:

We didn't really feel that we were fighting for our country; half the brothers felt it wasn't even our war and were sympathetic with Ho Chi Minh.

Appy demonstrates the class gap between the working-class soldiers and the middle-class and bourgeois anti-war movement. But he does not draw the conclusion that capitalism is inevitably imperialist, the fundamental enemy of working people everywhere.

Why was the U.S. in Vietnam? Capitalism, in this epoch of imperialist decay, is impelled to maintain a system of oppressed nations as sources of cheap labor and raw materials. The Stalinist leaders of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front (NLF) themselves stood for a form of statified capitalism — Ho Chi Minh's Stalinists had butchered revolutionary Vietnamese workers led by Trotskyists after World War II in order to accommodate to French and U.S. imperialism. Still, the fight for national independence was a blow to the world imperialist system. The "domino effect" of a defeat would reverberate across the "third world" and was a real concern for the imperialists.

Appy avoids any anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist conclusions. In fact, while touching at certain points on a "big picture," e.g. some history of Vietnam and aspects of American foreign policy, he does not coherently address the relation of the war to the world in which it took place. He obviously feels the war was "wrong" but does not clearly say *why*. Without seeing the class reasons behind the seemingly irrational actions of the U.S., the imperialist intervention is reduced to a "mistake," missing the essence. It helps build the illusion that imperialism can be re-directed and reformed.

REVOLUTIONARY ANTI-WAR STRATEGY

Appy's inability to draw anti-imperialist conclusions becomes acute when he addresses the issue of the main victims of the war, the Vietnamese, and what they should have done. He says, "One might argue, as I have, that atrocity was intrinsic to the very nature of American intervention in Vietnam, that given the policy of fighting a counterrevolutionary war on behalf of a client state incapable of winning widespread support among its people, American atrocities were inevitable." (p. 267.)

But he evades the question of whether the Vietnamese were right to defend themselves, even if under Stalinist leadership. Instead, he levels his major criticism against "radical" American opponents of the war. Describing those who sided with the NLF as a tiny minority of students, he says: "Those who did embrace America's official enemy contributed to the isolation of the anti-war movement." He thus implicitly *opposes* any support for the fight against imperialism — or at least for Americans solidarizing with such a fight.

The revolutionary position was to give "military," not political, support, to the Stalinist-led forces — that is, to fight for the defeat of the U.S. without indulging in any glorification of the NLF. Imperialism was the biggest criminal and the immediate danger to the workers of the world.

The key to building a working-class anti-war movement is to link opposition to the war to defense of the interests of



Washington, 1969: Angry students carry casket with names of Black GI's killed in Vietnam.

the working class, not to middle-class moralism. Pacifism, draft resistance and conscientious objection are strategies that have always been rejected by the working class in practice. Proletarian communists say that revolutionary workers should go to war with their class brothers and take the only possible course for defending our class: turning the imperialist war into a class war.

To this end, revolutionaries help their fellow soldiers understand the imperialist and class nature of the army and the war; we raise, for example, the demand that the officers should be chosen by the soldiers themselves, so that workers are not turned into cannon fodder by racist, incompetent and anti-working class officers. We fight for full political and union rights for soldiers. We oppose class privileges for bourgeois youth: no student deferments, no special officers' academies, no ROTC. We show that military training and arms are essential tools for building a workers' militia *at home* that can defend strikes and working-class communities against cops, scabs, thugs and fascists — and can be turned into a weapon for proletarian revolution.

This program is based on the "proletarian military policy" developed by Lenin and Trotsky. To our knowledge, the LRP is the only tendency in the U.S. today that upholds it. (See the article "Marxism and the Draft" in *Socialist Voice* No. 9 and our pamphlet, "No Draft" is No Answer!)

The revolutionary strategy against the Vietnam War was adopted by no section of the anti-war movement, not even that led by self-proclaimed revolutionaries. Of course, the revolutionary position would have been met with hostility, at least initially, by most American soldiers and workers (including those Appy interviewed and quoted). It would have been misunderstood as a way to get Americans killed.

But this would have changed over time. By the latter part of the war, opposition *within the army* was rampant. Orders were being ignored or disobeyed, soldiers were refusing to fight. "Fraggings" (attempted murders using fragmentation grenades) of officers by their own troops were becoming commonplace. An organized core of militants, anti-imperialist in tone, was emerging, for example in the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. As Appy shows, many Black soldiers saw right through the war's racist foundations. By 1971, a retired officer and military analyst was forced to write:

By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state of approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers, drug-ridden and dispirited where not near-mutinous. (p. 247.)

In this situation, a political program to win revolutionary-minded soldiers to the notion of American GI's turning their guns around — and connecting this with defense of the Vietnamese — was quite possible.

MIDDLE-CLASS OPPOSITION

While Appy doesn't spell out his politics, his emphasis on the soldiers' class resentments towards the anti-war activists meshes with a view expressed in a review of his book by an admirer of one of the main organizations responsible for the character of the U.S. anti-war movement, the SWP.

Appy describes the attitudes of the working class at home, whose sons were doing the fighting, and debunks the "Archie Bunker" hard-hat stereotype — the myth that most workers supported the war.

But he does make the point that there was a "class" antagonism between the working class and the antiwar movement. . . . "Working-class people opposed college protesters largely because they saw the antiwar movement as an elitist attack on American troops by people who could avoid the war."

For those who participated in the anti-Vietnam War movement, this statement is an oblique endorsement of the approach that was taken by the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) and the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC), coalitions that were led by the Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party. Their strategy was oriented to building massive demonstrations around the slogan, "Bring the Troops Home Now!" — a slogan that was crafted to appeal to the deep-seated concerns of the working class and American GIs. (Joseph Ryan, in *Socialist Action*, June 1993.)

In reality, the SWP more than anyone else was identified with the passive, legal peace marches that it policed for the benefit of grateful liberal politicians. Its strategy catered to middle-class draft-dodging. And while its slogan "Bring the Troops Home Now" sounds today like a call for sympathy

with American workers, hardly anyone took it in that spirit then. It was a patriotic appeal to reformists, especially in the Democratic Party, who didn't want it said publicly that the U.S. was waging war against Vietnam for imperialist reasons.

A similar appeal pervaded the short-lived movement against George Bush's Gulf War in 1990-91: "Support Our Troops, Bring Them Home Now." Both slogans fail to distinguish between identifying with the dangers soldiers face and the reactionary role they are called on to play. Thus they provided backhanded support to the imperialist war efforts and left the field to the liberal compromisers.

Appy does not connect his sympathy for the war's working-class victims to any idea that American workers (and Vietnamese) could actually resist in a class-based opposition. Why does he come up empty after so many insights? The reason can only be cynicism towards the capacity of our class to fight against misery and defeat the capitalist enemy.

Appy recognizes that mainstream liberalism itself escalated the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. But his alternative is to praise other liberals like Martin Luther King Jr., who in the last years of his life articulated opposition to the war. But King was a barrier to developing a more radical and even revolutionary leadership against the war and for Black liberation. So despite his body blows to the limitations of the middle-class protest against the Vietnam War, Appy ends up with his own version of middle class patronization.

REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP AND THE MILITARY

It is a tragedy that a revolutionary leadership was not built during the Vietnam War. For all its problems, the anti-war movement contained many dedicated activists who could have been won to a revolutionary pole. Working-class resistance to capital's offensive "at the point of production" was seething, and a rank and file upsurge in the early 1970's coincided with increased working-class opposition to U.S. American involvement in Vietnam. Coupled with the mass soldiers' dissension, the sparks could have built quite a fire.

Viewed in isolation, the conditions for an American revolution were not at their ripest during the Vietnam War: the imperialist economy still had life left in it, so it was difficult to dispel illusions in the system held by many workers. But the winning and cohering of huge sections of workers and soldiers and revolutionary-minded students into a revolutionary vanguard was possible. The domination of left-reformist politics, not objective events alone, was decisive in leading the anti-war movement to a dead end instead of a revolutionary beginning.

It is equally a tragedy that no proletarian leadership existed in Vietnam. (The Stalinists had cut it off at the roots

in the 1940's.) For revolution is always an international question. The Vietnamese section of an internationalist party could have fostered a policy of revolutionary fraternization with American soldiers, appealing to them as class brothers. The NLF did make significant overtures to Black soldiers (to the Panthers in particular), and not without impact. "No Vietcong ever called me Nigger" said something real.

But the NLF, like the American anti-war left, had a middle-class leadership, and its effect was limited by that reality. A genuine Vietnamese workers' revolution would have had a decisively stunning impact on black American workers who were experiencing great radicalization at home and on the entire American working class struggle. Its potential effect on a whole round of revolutionary situations around the world can't be underestimated.

Looking at the military now, it might seem that the potential for revolutionary organizing has disappeared. The U.S. military now appears "leaner and meaner," a disciplined all-volunteer force that showed it could more or less efficiently implement imperialist demands in the Persian Gulf. But the volunteer army retains a mostly working-class base that serves largely out of economic compulsion. The "Vietnam syndrome" remains: there is still a great fear in the ruling class of alienating not only the working-class public but also its volatile military base, 30 percent Black and Latino, by any expensive, prolonged venture with high casualties.

That is why the U.S. has limited its heroic efforts to intervening in small countries like Panama and Grenada, where the mismatch would be of almost comic proportions. In Iraq, the U.S. faced a demoralized foe on open terrain favorable to the full use of its sophisticated arsenal, in particular air power, so it could minimize its own casualties. Where there is the slightest risk the Pentagon backs off or withdraws quickly, as in Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti today.

As the world economic crisis deepens and imperial rivalries heat up, military forces will build up everywhere. (Even now, the U.S. has cut precious little of its armed forces as a "peace dividend" in the wake of the collapse of the Cold War.) If the imperialist capitalist system remains, not just another Vietnam but another world war is inevitable. The draft will have to be re-introduced, jingoism will rise and working-class youth will again be ordered to serve as bait on an even more massive scale in imperialist wars.

Understanding this eventuality is not enough: revolutionists must prepare for it. *Working Class War* is not just a good history book, it is a tool that shows the need for a working-class answer to war. Building the proletarian vanguard in and out of the military is critical. It is unfortunate that its author casts himself in opposition to it.●

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Yeltsin Coup Aims at Workers

by Walter Daum

This was the third time that President Boris Yeltsin had tried to dissolve the Russian parliament. Unlike the verbal and electoral clashes last December and March, this round he succeeded. The latest confrontation culminated in a day of street violence by parliamentary backers on October 3, followed by Yeltsin's forces storming the parliament's "White House" with tanks and troops on October 4. Several hundred people were killed.

In the process of his coup, Yeltsin also shut down regional legislatures, imposed a state of siege on Moscow, arrested hundreds of opponents, seized trade union funds, banned the press that opposed him and censored even papers supporting him. That didn't stop Bill Clinton and crowds of Western capitalist politicians and pundits from hailing him as the last hope for "democracy" in Russia.

In contrast to the bourgeois line, there is evidence in eyewitness reports from Moscow that the violence was provoked by the Yeltsinites. Police unexpectedly let demonstrators through their lines on the 3rd; the snipers allegedly firing at civilians from the parliamentary side were really KGB sharpshooters backing Yeltsin. One moderate paper asked:

Could this have been a trap to encourage the violent elements on parliament's side to provide the justification the government needed to respond with the force it had sworn not to initiate? (*Moscow Tribune*, Oct. 5.)

Ironically, the White House was the building Yeltsin had strutted outside of when he first gathered the reins of power from the collapsing coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991. Then it was the putschists who attempted blatant dictatorial measures. Now it is Yeltsin who is trying them out.

RULING CLASS DIVIDED

The fundamental cause of the two-week showdown between Yeltsin and the parliament is the economic collapse of Russia (along with the other countries of the ex-USSR.) Production is in catastrophic decline, trade across the new national boundaries is restricted, crime is rampant and everyone besides speculators and bosses is losing wages, apartments, health care and all the conditions for decent living.

At the time of Yeltsin's coup, there was a growing strike movement in the working class against the miserable and worsening conditions. The blow against parliament also served to strengthen the rulers against the class they exploit. The economic collapse is not just a plot by bourgeois forces maneuvering to restore private property across the region. It is a function of the laws of motion of capitalism. The Stalinist states for years led the way down the road of capitalist decay: they were the last to modernize industry, the first to destroy basic gains of the working class and abandon it to degradation and environmental destruction.

As we pointed out many years ago, the USSR's statified capitalist system was fundamentally backward and weak. Undermined by the remaining gains of the workers' state that had been overthrown by the Stalinist bureaucracy on the eve of World War II, the Soviet economy was in a state of stagnation and permanent crisis.

The Stalinists were desperate to adopt the whole gamut of bourgeois techniques: mass unemployment and inflation to drive down the living standards of the working class, squeeze higher profits out of intensified labor and thereby modernize the economy. All Soviet rulers from Stalin on had seen this necessity. Gorbachev's *perestroika* was the most thorough-

going attempt to discipline the proletariat by reforming the system from within. But it only disorganized the economy further and worsened the crisis.

The ruling class split. Some wanted to return to Stalinist political rule, drop Gorbachev's reforms and rein in the volatile working class (control the press, ban strikes) — while staying on the road of economic bourgeoisification. The 1991 putschists represented this wing. Others wanted to go faster in privatizing the nationalized industries and ending the last remnants of working-class gains embodied in state property.

This variegated faction backed Yeltsin but was itself divided. It included the rising comprador bourgeoisie, the mafia types and bureaucrats-turned-bankers bent on looting whatever parts of the decaying economy they can't sell to the



Moscow, Oct. 2: Anti-Yeltsin striking force opposed coup under Czarist and Soviet flags. Between "Red-Browns" and Yeltsin, workers had no side.

West. Its program was the "shock therapy" promoted by Western financiers for the ex-colonial nations: "freeing" prices (that is, allowing astronomical inflation) and cancelling vital social services. This wing also contained high-level bureaucrats heading the big state enterprises, who hoped to take them over as *their own* private property.

The autumn events in Moscow have been totally distorted by the U.S. media. The Russian parliament, or Congress of People's Deputies, was not a bastion of "hard-line" Stalinists and fascists, as Yeltsin's cheerleaders say; it was not composed of Communist Party appointees but of elected delegates. It called the Russian presidential election in 1991 that started Yeltsin on the road back from political exile. Its leaders, speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov and Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi (the latter elected on Yeltsin's ticket), stood with Yeltsin against the putsch — and later sided with him when he led the destruction of the Soviet Union and ousted Gorbachev from power.

The 1991-vintage Yeltsinites split into hostile factions when the economic crisis deepened. Yeltsin backed the compradors, whose austerity program had accelerated the industrial collapse and mass misery that have plagued Russia. His rivals spoke for the industrial managers, who feared that the Yeltsinites' uncontrolled pillaging would wreck their industries and undermine their aspirations to become bourgeois magnates. Being in closer touch with workers, they

Spartacists Rejoin 'Red-Brown' Bloc

The Spartacist League, which first took the line of supporting neither of the two vile ruling-class factions, has since decided to give "military support" to the parliamentary side. The excuse? "The Rutskoi/Khasbulatov forces ... at that moment were viewed by Yeltsin and his imperialist sponsors as an obstacle to the consolidation of a strong counterrevolutionary regime." (*Workers Vanguard*, Nov. 5.)

Their original article had noted that the Rutskoi crew was noted for its extreme Russian nationalism (the Spartacists still refuse to name it imperialism, despite their decision a year ago that Russia has become a capitalist state), and that its fighting forces were largely the "Red-Brown" bloc of Stalinists, monarchists and fascists. The new line avoids such a portrayal, indeed any sharp criticism, of the SL's new allies. Perhaps they think this gang will help restore their beloved Stalinist "workers' state."

The military support tactic is justifiable when one ruling-class camp poses a more immediate danger to the working class — as did the Stalinist putschists in August 1991. But it requires the harshest attack on the workers' enemies, above all those they are temporarily blocking with, to avoid political confusion. This the SL does not do. Thus their support is political, not just military.

The Spartacists have a long record of fondness for Stalinist counterrevolutionaries. No wonder they have turned back to the faction they marched with in 1991 (see *PR* 43, p. 18), even though in 1992 they pointed out, correctly, that "Any bloc with, any conciliation of these reactionary 'national patriots,' no matter how many red flags are present, only furthers their goal of bloody fascist counterrevolution."

No more need be said.

saw the outrage that could trigger a proletarian explosion.

But Rutskoi & Co. are no friends of the working class. They are ardent Russian imperialists: Rutskoi denounces Yeltsin's subservience to the West, calls for military intervention across the ex-Soviet empire and favors restoring the USSR under Russian domination. The Rutskoi-Khasbulatov bloc also takes reactionary positions on abortion and gays.

During the fall showdown, the industrialists, led by Arkady Volsky of the Civic Union, argued for a compromise between the two sides and ended up backing Yeltsin. They saw the need to unite the ruling class around a Bonapartist figure, and for that Yeltsin is the leading candidate. They also need Western capital and understand that Yeltsin is the one who can tap that limited pipeline for the moment.

On the parliamentary side was also the "Red-Brown" bloc, the alliance of hard-core Stalinists, fascists and monarchists whose reactionary patriotism pits them against the marketeers and pro-Western Yeltsinites. Khasbulatov had addressed this grouping shortly before the coup. As well, from the limited information available as we write, it seems that these elements formed the bulk of the parliamentary forces who stormed the Ostankino television center and other buildings on October 3. That is probably why few workers defended the White House, despite the obvious danger of Yeltsin's anti-working class moves. There was little or no enthusiasm for either side in this ruling-class clash.

Even though Yeltsin smashed parliament, the parliamentarians had laid the basis for his coup. Parliament had given Yeltsin emergency powers, replaced elections for local administrators with presidential appointments, sabotaged the local soviets and concentrated legal powers in the president's hands. Moreover, it had brought Yeltsin's chief privatizer, Yegor Gaidar, into the government and approved his far-right economic policies.

WHICH WAY FOR THE WORKING CLASS?

Victory in the showdown may not leave Boris Yeltsin triumphant for long. The ruling class remains divided regionally, even if the industrialists are now backing Yeltsin's dictatorial direction. Most important, the working class has not been defeated head on.

But the time for workers to organize and act independently is running short. Yeltsin already plans to cancel presidential elections until 1996. Even if he allows new elections for a revised parliament, the threat of Bonapartism followed by fascism has been distinctly posed. The immediate

task is to oppose Yeltsin's dictatorship and fight for an end to the state of emergency, the political bans and censorship.

Socialist revolution is the only way out of the capitalist crisis that is bringing about depression conditions everywhere, not just in the ex-Stalinist states. That means not restoring the former Stalinist system but creating a genuine *workers' state* run by workers' soviets without bosses and bureaucrats.

Under present conditions, a key demand of revolutionary workers must be to stop the privatization and disorganization that is bringing industrial production to a standstill. Workers' management would enable production and exchange among industries (and across national borders) to revive. Another essential demand is the arming of the working class and the formation of workers' militias for self-defense against all the Bonapartists, putschists and criminals.

VIEWS FROM THE LEFT

According to a report from the Kas-Kor Information Center, an anarchist labor-oriented group in Moscow, at least one leading Russian leftist urged support for the parliament: **Moscow City Soviet member Boris Kagarlitsky, who is in charge of liaison between the deputies' meeting and the trade unions, declared ... that the struggle to defend the parliament remained the principal thrust of the activity of all progressive organizations in Russia. Thanks to the actions of the people's deputies, Kagarlitsky said, other forces such as the trade unions had obtained a breathing-space and an opportunity to prepare for further actions under the conditions of a "liberal-fascist" regime.**

Kagarlitsky and other Moscow Soviet members were arrested after the October 3 events. (They had "no connection with the rebellion," according to the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, and were later released.)

The Kas-Kor Center, itself banned by Yeltsin's Ministry of Justice on October 4 along with various Stalinist and nationalist organizations, declared that it supports neither Yeltsin nor Rutskoi but rather "called upon people to stop work and create popular organizations from below." Other working-class organizations, like the miners' union, the air traffic controllers and the independent union federation SOTSPROF, had urged support for Yeltsin against parliament last spring; we do not yet know their attitude toward the fall confrontation.

Neither Yeltsin nor Rutskoi-Khasbulatov should have been supported by workers, even tactically. Both factions aimed to solidify capitalist power at the workers' expense.

Yeltsin, given his austerity program, his Bonapartism and his backing by the military, is the most acute danger. But the parliament leaders have their own anti-worker and chauvinist program and had become dependent on the fascistic bloc. They offered no alternative and little breathing space.

Compare this fall's clash with the August 1991 coup attempt. Then the state of emergency and the ban on strikes on working-class political activity were declared by the hard-line putschists, not the pseudo-democrats. They were the acute danger that had to be stopped, and that meant that workers' organizations had to form a temporary military bloc with the liberal capitalist forces. In contrast to 1993, there were some workers' actions in 1991 against the coup. As we wrote at the time, "The junta would have cracked down on workers' rights at once, while the 'democrats' will take longer." (PR 40.) Now the Yeltsinites are doing as predicted.

THE NATURE OF THE EX-SOVIET UNION

Our analysis that the Stalinist USSR was a form of capitalism for the past 50 years has run into considerable opposition from the middle-class left. We are constantly asked, how can the Stalinist bureaucracy have been a ruling class when it collapsed so easily? And, how can it have been capitalist when they're *now* restoring capitalism? Such questions are clarified by the current crisis.

In the revolutionary events of recent years in East Europe and the USSR, the Stalinist bureaucracy was forced out of political power. Communist Parties were abolished and top leaders were ousted, to be replaced by pro-bourgeois figures. But otherwise the *nomenklatura* remained. Lower level officials, provincial leaders and economic bosses retained their posts — changing only their ideology from dogmatic pseudo-Marxism to an equally religious "free-market" capitalism. The parliamentarians and Yeltsinites battling it out in Moscow are all ex-CPers; the main change is that the ruling class has been augmented by private entrepreneurs.

In this year's conflict, the pro-Western faction has won out. But that does not mean that the state sector will be

eliminated, neither immediately nor in the long run. As after the shock therapists' electoral defeat in Poland, where ex-CPers will head the new government with a full commitment to cooperate with the IMF & Co., the Western bosses are fully capable of living with social-democratic agents in power. After two years of shock therapy, current estimates are that only 10 percent of capital is privately owned. Even the *Economist*, a bourgeois journal that sees privatization through rose-tinted glasses, estimates that by the end of 1993 only a third of heavy industry will be in private hands.

The role of the Civic Union is indicative. These bosses stand against hasty privatization, not because they are dedicated to workers' gains but because they want the property for themselves. Statified property does not in itself mean working-class rule.

Although the form of regime changed from one-party rule to parliamentarism, the class content did not. Workers recognize a distinct class of bosses and the continuity of exploitative relations on the job. The workers remain exploited and alienated from their labor; the surplus value they produce now as then goes to pockets and purposes they have no say over.

Leftists blinded by petty-bourgeois illusions look not at production but at the market: if exchange wasn't "free," it couldn't have been capitalist. For them, the capitalist class described by Marx, capitals *sharing* the surplus value collectively extracted from the workers (through credit, stocks and state property), is a total mystery.

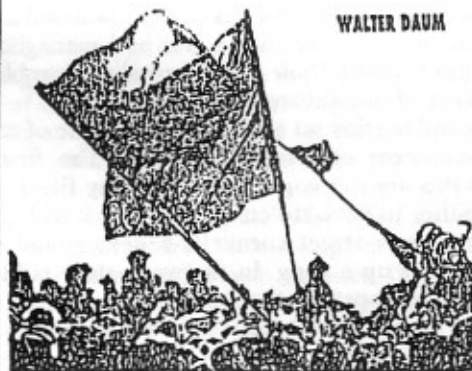
In sum, while the Stalinist *parties* collapsed between 1989 and 1991, the dominant class did not. The latest ruling-class conflict advances the internal transformation of Stalinist capitalism. It also makes crystal clear that no wing of the ex-Stalinist bureaucracy represents working-class interests, even in the most deformed or degenerated fashion.

Finally, the fact that the Stalinists can make the transition from full statification without a civil war shows that their class nature has not changed. They are capitalist now and they were capitalist all along. ●

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Cop Brutality

continued from page 32

everyday cop brutality, well known in the urban ghettos and barrios, lies full-scale, officially sponsored criminality.

Listen to ex-cop Bernard Cawley, called "the Mechanic" because he regularly "tuned people up" — beat the hell out of them. Asked if he beat up those he arrested, he replied:

No. We just beat people up in general. If they're on the street, hanging around drug locations. It was a show of force.

Cawley described in detail how cops, using weapons technically banned by department rules but approved by their superiors, entered a building and "just started beating people up." They also raped, robbed, made fraudulent arrests and burglarized apartments to find drugs and guns to sell. (They protected high-level dealers.) In a word, they were criminals, brutally violent and heavily involved in the drug trade.

Most of their victims were Black and Latino, Cawley admitted. The residents of Black and Latino areas hated cops: "You'd hate the police too, if you lived there," he matter-of-factly informed the Commission members, who of course never will live there.

Then there was the witness the press called the "good cop turned bad," Kevin Hembury. He detailed the "blue wall of silence" — the rule that "cops never rat on each other, that ratting on corrupt cops is worse than corruption itself." This testimony went unchallenged. Lesson: when *any* cop says that another cop did not beat a victim, his word is worth zero. To be a cop is to be, by profession, a liar.

Don't get the idea that Big Business really meant business with these revelations. While the hearings blamed small-fry scum, witnesses testified that the commanding officers knew what was going on and did nothing. *Newsday's* authoritative investigative journalist, Sydney Schanberg, called it a "whitewash." Indeed, the hearings proved that corruption and brutality are routine, condoned by the brass, the courts and the whole ruling class. The revelations will not stop the cops' crimes or their race hatred. As Cawley said,

Who's going to catch us? We're the police. We're in charge.

His sentiment was echoed right after the hearings by the head of the Housing Police Benevolent Association, Timothy Nickels. This cop leader said of Washington Heights, a largely Dominican neighborhood,

That area up there should be firebombed itself. They should level that place up there.

Nickels' remark about wiping out thousands of families came after the killing of a housing cop. Washington Heights had also been the scene of anti-police riot in 1992.

A racist comment by a top cop is nothing new. But local officials, supposedly sympathetic to their constituents, tried to downplay it. City Councilman Stanley Michels said, "I'm sure it was done in emotion . . . in anger at the loss of one of their own, for which we all feel terrible." Councilman and prominent Latino Democrat Guillermo Linares said that "the community had been too concerned with finding the culprit to be offended by Nickel's remarks." Michels and Linares' instant reaction was essentially the same as Nickels': to defend "one of their own" — a cop, an agent of the state.

Columnist Les Payne pointed out that the media and the Commission buried another fact: the police in the late 1960's had aided the massive "hard drug offensive" on the streets

of Harlem. This was done not simply "for lavish profits":

I submit that, faced with possible organized street resistance, many police back then reasoned that their jobs would be easier if black youths were strung out on heroin than high on Fanon and Malcolm X. (*Newsday*, Oct. 3.)

Why is there such brutality among cops? Why do "community leaders" cover up for their blatant racism? Why do cops and their bosses condone and encourage the drug plague? The answer is that a central purpose is to keep the outrage and militancy of the working class, especially its most volatile sections, from turning into fighting opposition.

RACE, CLASS AND COP VIOLENCE

The cops are the mercenaries of the ruling class, hired to defend capitalist rule from the oppressed and the exploited. The bourgeoisie does not create its armed minions out of "Robocop" machines that can be turned off and on at the flick of a switch — although it might like to. It molds its cops out of layers in society that it can use against the masses.

At times of relative social peace, when the level of class struggle does not demand that police operate in an open counterrevolutionary role, their official job is to "fight crime." Since working people are the greatest victims of everyday crimes, this creates the impression that cops do some good. But it is an illusion. Cops are recruited from the start to be patrollers and discipliners of those "usual suspects" of criminal activity — poor working people, especially people of color. Cops join the force expecting to harass and intimidate such people — in the name of law and order.

Thus the ruling class hires some of the most degenerate elements in society: scum who get off by using a gun against the poor and powerless. No wonder the cop force is rife not only with corruption but racism and sexism. It is only natural that cops who first enlist to repress the working class and poor easily also choose to sign up on the payroll of drug dealers — who also thrive off the poor.

Cop violence is today associated in the minds of most workers with race, not class. And for good reason: most cop atrocities are attacks against Black people like Rodney King. That is why the ideology dominating the newspapers and TV aimed at the working class paints Blacks as nothing but muggers, drug-pushers and gang members.

The conditions of capitalism itself do create a layer of Black criminals, mainly hoodlums who prey upon the Black working class penned up with them in the slums. Crime is their way to make a buck, and drugs spread as people seek a way to escape. But the liberals' idea that more cops is the answer to the criminal element is no answer: it means feeding more fuel to the fire.

Today's Black working class youth hold few illusions of making it in racist America. The few doors to upward mobility that opened in the 1960's have been slammed shut; the rungs on the social ladder that a few had managed to climb are caving in beneath their feet. Capitalism is robbing a whole generation of any future.

The ghettos and barrios act as jails where people of color are given life sentences of relentless misery. The first to remind them of this are the cops. For a cop, any Black in a car is assumed either to have stolen it or bought it with drug money; any Black on a street corner is a dealer; and two youths together make up a gang. In the wage-slave jail that is the inner city, the cops are the wardens, patrolling the corridors to make sure nobody escapes. At any time they are allowed to knock heads. After all, "We're in charge."

Ex-cop Cawley tried to deny the obvious racism of police

brutality by saying that minority cops were also involved. That's true: cops are trained to see poor and marginal workers as threats to the conduct, values and property they are paid to protect. Color becomes no barrier. Cops, Black and white, seek approval from those who count — the ruling class.

Despite the disdain that well-manicured upper-class ladies and gentlemen express over the crude brutality of the cops, they need these mercenary criminals to defend their system. Their underlying problem is not that the police are too powerful and too violent — but that when push comes to shove, they won't be powerful or violent enough.

IRON FIST AND VELVET GLOVE

The factors that led to the L.A. explosion — rising unemployment, falling wages and the decay of public services, all enforced by racism and police violence, exist across the country. Another provocation like the first not-guilty verdict over Rodney King could detonate a rebellion. One way or another, mass working-class upheavals are around the corner.

Since L.A., the ruling class has had a two-fold program for securing their domination of the urban centers. The first is to cover up the most blatant crimes of their system like cop terror. Secondly, they are *increasing* the role of the cops and other armed forces in preparation for urban unrest. Because of the worsening crisis of their profit system, they need to further undermine the conditions of the workers. But since resistance is inevitable, they know they must prepare for explosions, even if they would prefer to avoid them.

This dual attempt to stabilize the cities began in L.A., where the politicians and media pushed for a retrial and conviction of the cops who beat Rodney King. They also placed L.A. under occupation during the retrial to deter or crush any popular protest against the cops and courts. (See "Los Angeles: Racism and Revolution" in *PR 44*.)

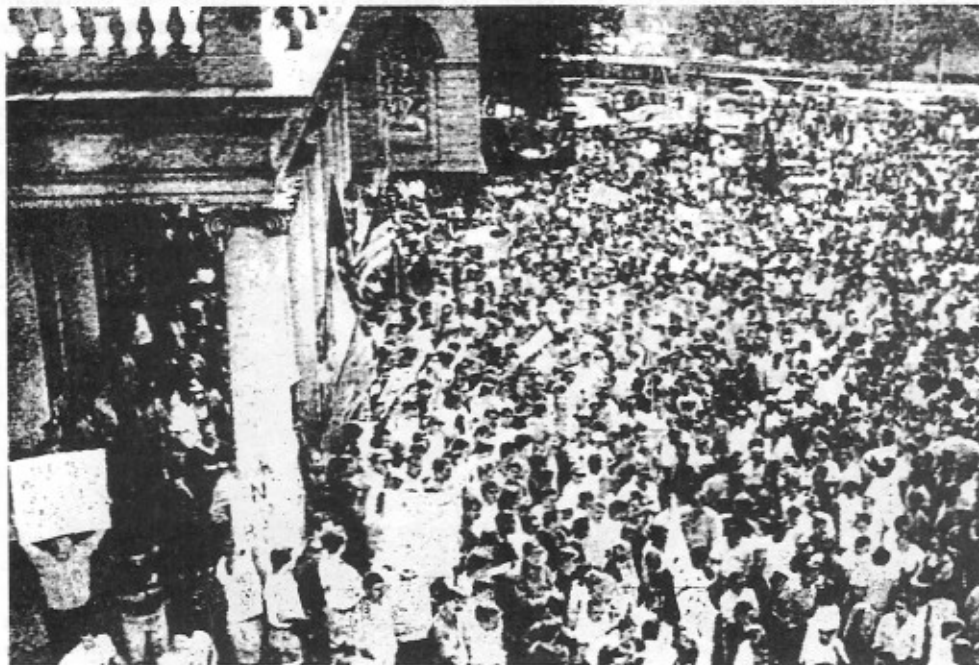
The ruling class has to extend this program across the country. That's one reason they chose Bill Clinton to be President. After the L.A. riot, George Bush made racist statements that threatened to provoke more mass protest. Clinton talked about restoring Americans' faith in the system — that is, covering up the most offensive and unjust aspects. He adopted the *image* of a populist — a leader who supposedly defends the interests of all people, not just big business.

This was a guise for his real aim: to continue the attacks on wages, jobs and social services. Linked with this is another part of Clinton's strategy which has received little attention: putting another 100,000 cops on the streets in the next four years. Within the velvet glove of empty promises and media glitz, the iron fist of the state is being toughened.

Clinton's phony populism isn't just an attempt to avoid the need for organized violence against rebellious workers: it is itself preparation for such violence. Only with an image of racial and economic evenhandedness can the ruling class hope to get away with armed force. Clinton appointed women as Attorney General (chief national cop) and Supreme Court justice, and sprinkled his cabinet with Black and Hispanic faces, to establish his phony democratic character.

Nationwide, shows of force in working-class neighborhoods have already become more frequent. Parts of Miami were under police occupation in September during the trial of killer cop William Lozano. The streets of Detroit were saturated for the Malice Green verdict in August. South Central L.A. is still a site of military exercises officially described as "preparation for dealing with a civil insurrection."

This is the fist of dictatorship concealed by Clinton's populist "democracy." We warn our fellow workers: while Clinton and the capitalists he represents want to avoid major



New York, Sept. 1992. Rabble-rouser Rudy Giuliani, now mayoral victor, whips up cops' anti-Black riot at City Hall.

confrontations for now, they are preparing a bigger, more organized armed force. Have no illusions in capitalist democracy — we must prepare to defend ourselves!

THE NEW YORK ELECTION

This dual strategy was seen in New York City's mayoral election. Sectors of the ruling class wanted a liberal populist mayor who, like Clinton, would try to avoid antagonizing the masses too much. In 1989 they had chosen David Dinkins, a Black Democratic politician, in the hope that he would quell the anger of workers, Blacks and other people of color in the mounting economic crisis. (See "Cops, Pops and Other Worms in the Big Apple" in *PR 44*.) In office, Dinkins slashed all municipal social services — except the police force.

This year many capitalists felt it was time for the naked fist to show. A big issue was made out of Dinkins' handling of the 1991 Crown Heights riot. Claiming the mayor was soft on Black rioters, and playing on the fears of other ethnic groups in ultra-demagogic fashion, the media and politicians demanded that Dinkins crack down unhesitatingly on future popular protests. Ever the obliging servant of Wall Street, Dinkins declared his absolute readiness to send in the troops against any future civil unrest. Last year he had made a show of force by occupying Washington Heights with thousands of cops when a Grand Jury exonerated a cop whose murder of a Dominican youth had set off the 1992 riots.

In the vote Dinkins was defeated by the Republican candidate, Rudolph Giuliani. Nobody can doubt *his* commitment to police racism: he was the featured speaker at a riot last

year of 10,000 soused and jeering cops at City Hall that called Dinkins "nigger," denigrated him and all Blacks as "washroom attendants" and beat up Black passers-by, media crews and youth. Giuliani's campaign featured constant attacks on crime, the traditional code for keeping Blacks down.

After Dinkins' four years of "increasing the peace" by cooling off minorities and unions, New York's ruling class has more trust in Giuliani to carry out the harder line they know will become necessary as economic conditions worsen. Tough-guy Giuliani has promised more job and service cut-backs. But even he must still wear a shred of the velvet glove. He has promised to appoint Blacks, Latinos, women and even gays to high office. And he talks now of considering an "independent" prosecutor to oversee the cops, if not the civilian review board that Dinkins favored.

CAPITALISM'S AUTHORITARIAN 'DEMOCRACY'

Capitalism is based on the ruling class's exploitation of the working class and therefore on the irreconcilable conflict between these two classes. The bourgeoisie's ability to en-



Site of Malice Green's murder by Detroit police.

force these conditions, its ability to rule, rests in the final instance on its monopoly of armed force.

In most of the world, capitalist power rests on barely concealed if not naked military-police dictatorships. The exceptions are the limited bourgeois democracies of a small minority of rich, imperialist countries, including the U.S.

Capitalist "democracy" works by clouding the class nature of society from the majority of the population. First, the rulers maintain divisions within the working class to prevent workers from understanding their common class interest and uniting in struggle. Second, they use the super-profits extracted from the rest of the world to sustain a privileged middle class of bureaucrats, intellectuals and managerial workers. As well, they promote an aristocratic layer that politically dominates the working class. The middle class and labor aristocracy think they have a stake in the system and work to defend it against the disaffected working class.

In the U.S., the working class has been kept down by the racist divisions, through the vicious oppression of Blacks as well as other people of color. For example, most Black workers have been forced into accepting far less pay than most whites. White labor aristocrats have been tricked into believing that allying with the ruling class against Blacks is necessary to defending their income and living standards. Even poorer whites, Latinos, and Asians see Blacks as rivals for jobs. In reality, the enforced low pay of Blacks allows the

bosses to bring down all wages.

As well, access to the privileged middle class by a handful of people of color and workers has propped up the illusion of opportunity for all. The middle class returns the favor by derailing the struggles of the oppressed when they demand their own slice of the pie. Preaching faith in the system, the middle-class misleaders — from union bureaucrats to Black and Latino "community leaders" — have been decisive in keeping struggles within the bounds of capitalism and leading them to defeat. During the L.A. rebellion it was these elements who continually called for civil peace — as if peace between oppressed and oppressors is a solution.

The crisis of the world economy is rapidly undermining the U.S. bourgeoisie's ability to rule democratically. The profits which once sustained the American middle class are falling, and that class is disintegrating, through the cutting of many bureaucratic and skilled salaried jobs — along with the illusions it fostered in the "American Dream."

But knocking off the middle class is not enough. Past workers' gains — minimum wage laws, social services and trade union rights — are all restrictions on exploitation which the bosses need to abolish to save their system. This means that the rulers will be forced to resort to much more vicious attacks, not just on Blacks and Latinos but on all workers. For capitalism to survive, democracy will have to be replaced by more open and widespread repression, including naked military dictatorship. Not today, but tomorrow will arrive earlier than many think.

This trend toward authoritarian rule can be seen by comparing the ruling class's responses to the 1991 L.A. riot and to the ghetto rebellions of the 1960's. Back in the '60's, the economy was booming; capitalism could afford some reforms. Illusions in reform solutions were also cultivated by removing the worst segregation laws and instituting penny-ante detours like "affirmative action" and "community control."

But today, amid an international crisis growing deeper than that of the 1930's, the capitalists can no longer afford such reforms. Their agenda is to take, not give. So after the riots, the promises to "rebuild L.A." and solve urban poverty were a total lie. All that Clinton has done was to promise to hire thousands more cops to prevent further upheavals.

THE COMING CLASS BATTLES

Not only will the harassment and violence by the cops get worse, particularly for people of color; with so many people losing hope of improving their lives under this system, even small struggles can quickly gain support among workers in general. In such times the cops will be more anxious than before to quickly smash actions that threaten to gain mass support. Major confrontations with the cops will be a stark feature of the coming workers' struggles.

As we have often pointed out, there are different levels of racism among whites in our class. But racism today is mixed with respect for Blacks who fight against injustice. White workers took to the streets along with Latinos and Blacks during the L.A. rebellion. Outrage over the beating of Rodney King and other racist atrocities is real for overwhelming numbers of white workers.

Most white workers believe that police brutality is mainly reserved for Blacks and Latinos. They don't yet see that the

attacks will be coming at them too. This reality will force them in the near future to choose between continuing to accept racism or joining the fight against it.

It will become more obvious that the predominantly white police force identifies with the whites who represent law, order and capitalist domination, not with the lower ranks of white workers. For example, in New York, Irish immigrants are being targeted for brutal treatment by the cops. Irish-Americans have had a great presence historically in big-city police departments; there are still many Irish cops in New York, Commissioner Raymond Kelly only being the best known. However, more recent immigrant workers are learning something else. Neither Kelly's ethnicity nor his whiteness prevents the police from savaging Irish workers — no more than past Black commissioners like Ben Ward or Lee Brown cared about stopping cop violence against Blacks.

COPS REPRESS ALL WORKERS

Immigrants are concentrated as day laborers in the building and construction industries, longshore and other sectors of the economy hard-hit by the crisis. Many have lost their jobs and gather on the stoops and streets of their neighborhoods, drowning their sorrows and loitering aimlessly. The cops react to them as a "criminal element" — almost every edition of New York's Irish newspapers runs stories of cop beatings of Irish workers. While the scale of daily brutality against whites is incomparable to that suffered by Blacks, it does expose the *class* nature of cop violence.

The true role of cops as ruling class mercenaries, not just racially motivated thugs, will become fully clear when American white workers join their Black and Hispanic class sisters and brothers in struggle. Then the cops will be called on to smash their picket lines, break up their demonstrations and terrorize their most militant leaders — as they have done countless times in U.S. history. It is already happening in France, Germany, Italy and other countries where workers have raised the level of class struggle.

As its economic pie shrinks, capitalism will increase its attacks on the whole U.S. working class and try to whip up every division within it. Number one, of course, is to turn whites against Blacks. But it also seeks to set Latinos and Blacks at each others' throats in the quest for disappearing jobs and wage crumbs. It also sets various ethnic and immigrant groups (within the same "race") at war with each other. It pits the native-born workers against the foreign-born.

Divide-and-conquer doesn't stop there. It tells desperate

middle-class people, petty shopkeepers, backward workers and lumpen proletarians that unionists, strikers, Blacks, Latinos, Asians, immigrants, Jews, gays, etc. are what's stopping them from getting ahead. Thus it whips up the base for fascist bands and Ku Klux Klan lynch mobs.

COPS BREED NAZIS

The police — and those sections of the army who are willing to fight the working class — will not be enough to defend capitalism in the crisis it is moving toward. Even military dictatorship will not preserve capitalist rule when that requires smashing working-class resistance altogether. The ruling class will need not just the traditional government forces but the most vicious forms of mobilized racism and reaction possible.

The police today not only recruit the ordinary run of uniformed hoodlums. They are also a breeding ground for Klansmen and organized Nazis. Given their social loyalty and training, large detachments of the police would openly join with the fascist mobs rather than defend capitalist "democracy" if those become the ultimate choices.

The cops will take their place as auxiliaries to fascist bands. Unlike cops, fascism relies on more than force to keep the masses down: it also has a demagogic, nativist social and political message that even pretends to criticize capitalism itself — but in the form of "rich Jews," "rich gays," "rich Koreans," "rich Japanese," "rich career women" — as if the specific races, ethnic or sexual identities were the problem. Fascism becomes more popular as the economy declines; the vote last year for David Duke in Louisiana is only a foretaste. Fascism is capitalism's "final solution."

When the social crisis of capitalism fully explodes, the working class will have to be prepared for self-defense — *armed* self-defense. But that is not all. In order to reach the exploited and oppressed of all nationalities and races, workers must join their armed power to their own political and social program, a program that really meets the needs of the masses. That requires a working-class revolutionary party.

The working class is producing once again a small but growing revolutionary layer of young proletarians. It is critical that this layer join in the fight for the authentic communist program, including the goal of a revolutionary workers' state to abolish capitalist oppression once and for all. Leadership by the workers' revolutionary party is the vital ingredient needed for arming the proletarian masses against the ever more brutal assaults of our class enemies as they try to preserve their privileges and their rotting system. ●

The Democratic Party: Graveyard of Black Struggles

A Proletarian Revolution Pamphlet by Sy Landy

These articles, reprinted from the press of the League for the Revolutionary Party, are primarily concerned with the aspirations and actions of Black people as they have interacted with the electoral process. They analyze political campaigns spanning the decade 1983-1992, ranging over politicians from Harold Washington and Louis Farrakhan to Bill Clinton, with special attention to Jesse Jackson. They detail the role of the Democratic Party in absorbing and derailing struggles for equality and justice.

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PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Fall 1993

Race, Class and Cop Brutality

by Matthew Richardson

The racist brutality of this country's system of "law and order" is being exposed under a glaring light. Its crimes have been on the front pages regularly. For example:

• In New York, an official inquiry into police corruption publicized the "rogue cops" who systematically beat, shot, robbed and raped in Black and Latino neighborhoods. Dubbing entire communities "drug areas," they attacked innocent bystanders as well as petty criminals while protecting drug lords and the drug trade itself — for a price.

• In Los Angeles, U.S. District Court Judge John Davies gave two of the cops who assaulted Rodney King jail sentences so low they violated legal guidelines. (The other police perpetrators got off!) Explaining his decision in court, this maggot magistrate said he was "fraught with sympathy" for the police.

• In Detroit, two cops were found guilty of murdering Black unemployed steel-worker Malice Green. They didn't actually plan to kill him: their routinely crippling attack on a defenseless Black just got a little out of hand.

Behind the increasing number of "exceptional" cases of cop violence and government collusion is the *fundamentally* racist and anti-working class nature of all capitalist "justice." The "rogue" actions and "excessive force" bemoaned by press and politicians are a necessary and inevitable consequence of a class system in which exploitation is rooted in racial oppression.

The moderate verdicts handed down by the jury in the Reginald Denny case are a small exception, a partial victory. The prosecutors tried to use the trial to condemn the Los Angeles explosion as a whole: the videotaped assault by young Black men on passers-by at one street corner was singled out for massive publicity, while the 55 deaths and thousands of injuries of working-class people, mostly by the notoriously ruthless and racist L.A. cops, went unpunished.

The scheme failed. According to the press, the prosecutors complained that the verdicts were influenced by a desire to keep the peace in Los Angeles. The ruling class feared that heavy convictions might spark further rebellions.

Nevertheless, there is no proof of "equal justice" in the mild sentences granted to rioters, "parallel" to the slap on the wrist given to the cops who battered Rodney King. Mass

upheaval can sway juries and force the courts to bend. But real justice cannot be achieved under a system run by and for an oppressive ruling class.

Many working-class people, especially Blacks and Latinos, already see the brutality of the cops and courts as an immediate life and death question. This will become a key



Los Angeles cops attacking striking Latino janitors in 1990. Beating Rodney King was routine behavior for these hired thugs of capitalism.

rallying point for the masses as they engage in greater struggles in the near future. But more is needed: a fight to develop and disseminate a strategy for mass armed self-defense. A promising sign is that small but growing numbers of radicalized workers, particularly Black and Latino youth, are seeking revolutionary means to get rid of the butchers and plunderers who rule over our lives.

This article demonstrates the inextricable connection between racist cop violence, criminality and the capitalist system. In a follow-up article we will present the program of armed workers' self-defense that revolutionaries fight for as part of our strategy of socialist revolution.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: COPS = CRIMINALS & LIARS

The recent hearings into corruption in the New York City Police Department by the Mollen Commission shocked middle-class public opinion. They showed that beneath the

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