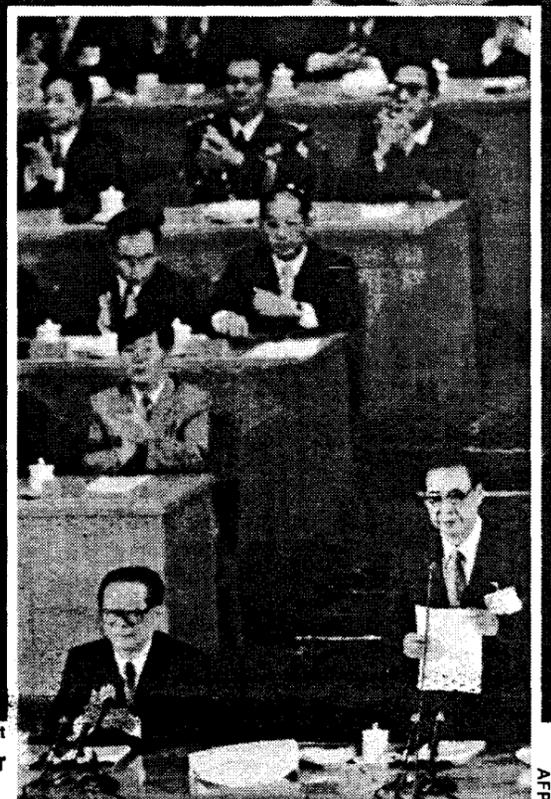
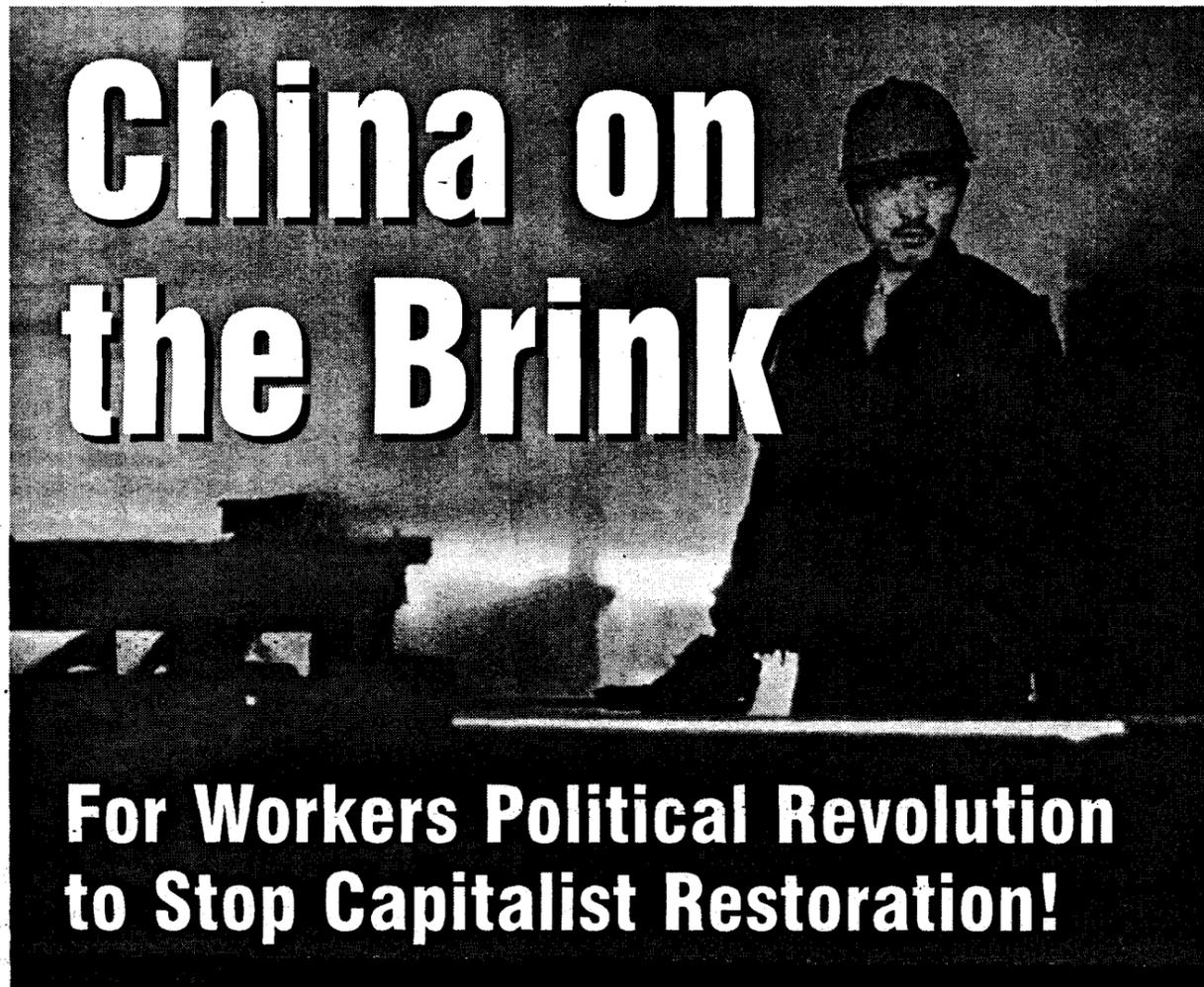




Chinese CP Plans Liquidation of State Economy

China on the Brink

For Workers Political Revolution to Stop Capitalist Restoration!



Plan to sell off state industry announced by CCP chief Jiang Zemin (inset, seated left) at September congress threatens restoration of capitalism, destitution for Chinese workers and peasants.

China is moving rapidly toward a decisive crossroads. More than 15 years of "market reforms" have led to an ever-burgeoning capitalist sector, as more and more workers are subjected to brutal exploitation through direct foreign investment, "joint ventures" and profit-making "collective" enterprises. Now, at the 15th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) held in September, the Stalinist bureaucracy has announced plans to sell off the bulk of state-owned industry.

If implemented, this proposal would mean the liquidation of what remains of the planned, collectivised economy and the restoration of capitalism in China. This starkly underscores the urgent need for a proletarian political revolution which sweeps away the vile Stalinist bureaucracy, replacing it with the democratic rule of workers and peasants councils committed to the fight for socialist revolution throughout Asia and beyond.

While holding on to key strategic industries which account for about half the output of the state sector, the Beijing regime intends to privatise the vast majority of the 300,000 state-owned concerns which form the core of the industrial economy and employ over a hundred million workers. The elimination of state subsidies means that many of these plants would be shut down outright or their workforces slashed in the interests of "profitability," effectively shattering the already cracked "iron rice bowl" of guaranteed lifetime employment and social services. Untold millions of workers would face destitution, losing not only their jobs but the housing, medical care, education and retirement benefits which are tied to employment in state-owned industries.

When China took over Hong Kong on 1 July, we welcomed the removal of the British colonialists while warning that the maintenance of capitalism in this stronghold of the Chinese bourgeoisie would be a dagger aimed straight at the deformed workers state. Now, the plan to privatise a massive number of state industries on the mainland itself can only further strengthen those forces inside and outside China aiming to overturn the remaining gains of the 1949 Revolution.

The latest measures, announced as Chinese premier and CCP head Jiang Zemin prepares for a summit meeting with U.S. imperialist chief Clinton later this fall, have long been demanded by the World Bank and other imperialist agencies. The Clinton administration immediately declared it "salutes and welcomes" the privatisation plan. Beijing has also moved to slash protective tariffs—further undermining the state monopoly of foreign trade—as part of its effort to join the imperialist-dominated World Trade Organization.

Since the introduction of "market reforms" under the late Deng Xiaoping, the corrupt "Communist" bureaucrats have taken every opportunity to enrich themselves and their offspring, the notorious "princelings," as they dream of becoming a new exploiting class in their own right. But there has yet to be a final reckoning with the working masses. While glowingly praising Jiang's privatisation proposal, *Business Week* (29 September) warned that "considering the risks of worker unrest, it's a bold agenda." China, it wrote, "is actually living dangerously close to the edge."

The outpouring of workers during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests

posed the imminent possibility of a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy. That uprising was bloodily suppressed. But in recent years there has been a rising tide of workers struggles against the effects of "free market" measures, initially centred on the capitalist "special economic zones" and now rapidly spreading to state factories in the country's industrial heartland.

Time has grown very short for the Chinese proletariat to defeat those who aim to throw the workers and peasants back to conditions of untrammelled exploitation and servitude. But as we wrote earlier this year, "Acts of militancy on the economic plane are not enough to stop the counterrevolutionary tide. It is necessary for the working class to enter the political plane" ("China on the Brink—Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?" *Spartacist* [English edition] No. 53, Summer 1997). The International Communist League fights to forge the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party needed to lead the Chinese proletariat in a political rev-

olution to stop capitalist counter-revolution.

Turmoil in the Heartland

The 1949 Revolution resulted from the victory of Mao's peasant-based guerrilla forces over the brutal Guomindang regime of Chiang Kai-shek. While overthrowing capitalist rule and liberating the country from the tyranny of landlords and imperialist subjugation, the revolution was deformed from its inception. The Chinese workers were bystanders in the revolution, which brought to power a nationalist, anti-working-class bureaucracy falsely claiming to be building "socialism" in a single, very backward country. With the egalitarian pretences of the Mao years long since discarded, Jiang now resorts to doubletalk about "the primary stage of socialism" to justify the liquidation of the nationalised economy.

While foreign capitalist and domestic "collective" businesses have grown to account for almost two-thirds of China's output since "market reforms" were

continued on page 8

Spartacist League Statement

Deadly Threat to Workers, Minorities Victoria's Secret Spies

SEE PAGE SIX

The Struggle for Revolutionary Leadership Lenin and the Vanguard Party

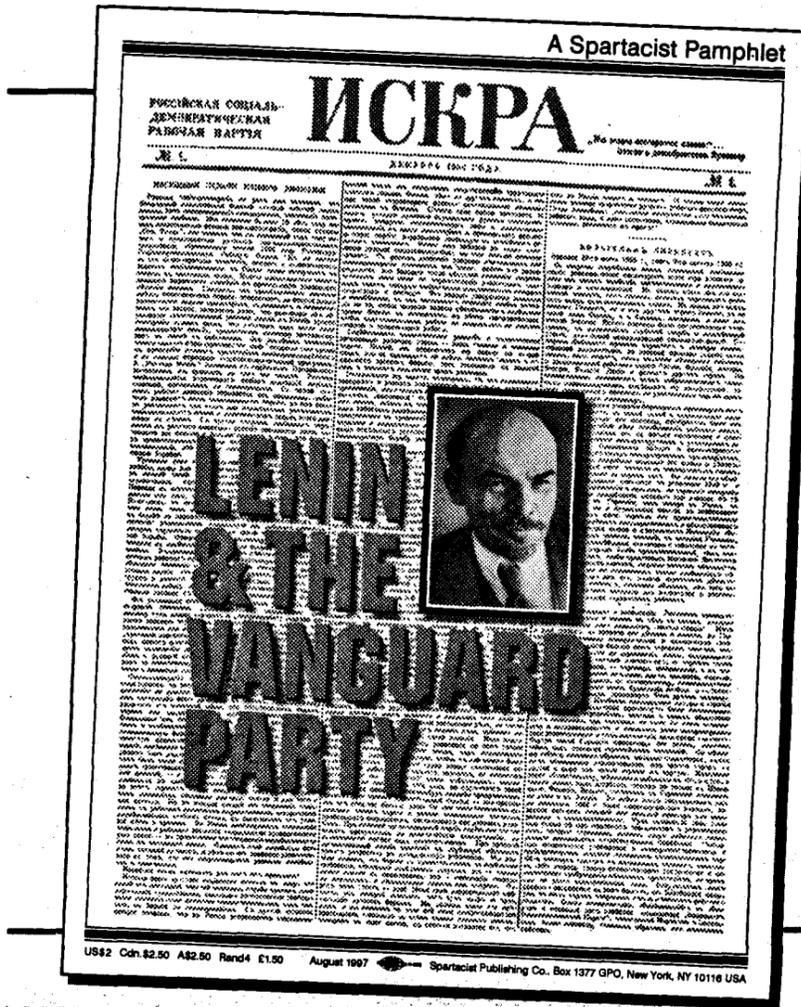
We are pleased to announce the publication of a slightly edited and expanded edition of *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*. The core of the pamphlet, originally published in 1978, is a series of articles by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour tracing Lenin's struggle to build a proletarian vanguard party, from the beginnings of organised Marxism in tsarist Russia in the 1890s to World War I. Supplementing this series are two articles by other leading members of our tendency. "In Defense of Democratic Centralism," included in the original edition, consists of excerpts from a 1973 speech by James Robertson to a conference of a short-lived West German group, Spartacus (Bolschewiki-Leninisten), which was typical of radicalised young West European intellectuals at the time who saw themselves as Trotskyists. Added to the original pamphlet is a presentation to a 1995 Spartacus Youth Club gathering in the San Francisco Bay Area by Al Nelson, titled "The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard Party," which provides a historical and political summation of the question of the Leninist party.

The indispensable role of a Leninist vanguard party in leading the struggles of workers and the oppressed was decisively demonstrated by the 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party. As we wrote in the preface to the new edition:

"We of the International Communist League fight for new October Revolutions. In reissuing *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* we intend to arm those who seek to oppose this system, which is based on the exploitation and oppression of the many by the few, with the program desperately needed to eradicate it. Serving as the memory of the working class, imbuing the proletariat and the new generations of youth with the historic lessons of those who fought before them, is a vital purpose of the vanguard party, necessary to lead the working class to new victories."

Particularly in the case of a pamphlet which is substantially polemical in content, its reissue after a significant length of time poses problems of comprehension and relevance for younger readers. The positions, views, stock of knowledge and terminology prevailing on the left invariably change. In many cases, the groups and tendencies polemicalised against have adopted a very different political stance or have disappeared entirely. The pamphlet nonetheless remains a valuable pedagogical introduction to the history and development of Leninism for youth drawn to radical causes whose notions of the Communist movement are largely derived from bourgeois public opinion, college courses, etc.

The difference between the political conditions and climate of opinion in the post-Vietnam War period, when *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* was written, and



Spartacist pamphlet now available, \$2.50. Order from/make cheques out to: Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co., GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001.

the post-Soviet world of today is especially great. During the 1970s, it would have been very unusual to find a serious left-wing activist, whether in San Francisco, Paris or Calcutta, who did not own a copy of Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* Today, virtually all major left-wing currents have adapted to the bourgeois ideological climate defined by the supposed "death of communism," while youth drawn to struggles against social oppression generally have little knowledge of Leninism or the history of the Bolshevik Party and Communist International.

The bitter, victorious struggle by the heroic workers and peasants of Vietnam against U.S. imperialism produced a sharp radicalisation, especially among student youth. In North America and West Europe, one saw a proliferation of Maoist and ostensibly Trotskyist groups. It is now little known or appreciated that the most significant expression of black radicalism in the U.S. in that period—the Black Panther Party of Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and Geronimo Pratt—labelled itself a "Marxist-Leninist" party.

In the neocolonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, many left-wing nationalists likewise claimed to be building Leninist-type vanguard parties.

Lenin and the Vanguard Party did not primarily address the perversion and falsification of Leninism by Stalinists (including the Maoists) or more leftist variants of petty-bourgeois nationalism. Rather it was centrally concerned with a different current of revisionism which emerged in the mid-1970s. This period saw the beginnings of a rightward turn in Western imperialist countries which a few years later would lead to the anti-Communist frenzy of Cold War II. Reacting to the changing political climate, certain groups claiming the Trotskyist tradition promoted a social-democratic "reinterpretation" of Lenin, asserting that the Bolshevik leader was really committed to building an inclusive mass workers party containing both reformists and revolutionaries. Such a view was put forward by the British section of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

A broadly similar version of Lenin's position on the party question was trumpeted at the time by the tendency led by Tony Cliff, centred on what is now the Socialist Workers Party in Britain and represented in Australia by the International Socialist Organisation. Beginning with Cliff's refusal to defend the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states against imperialism during the Korean War, this tendency has always been a left social-democratic grouping habitually appealing to Cold War anti-Communism. At the same time, Cliff has sought to adapt to the changing political fashions among leftist student youth in West Europe and North America. In the early 1970s, a "Bolshevik" posture was most fashionable in this milieu. Hence in 1975, Cliff came

out with a sympathetic three-volume study of Lenin which, however, portrayed the Bolshevik leader in Cliff's own image as an eclectic left-reformist.

The immediate purpose in publishing *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* was to counter this current of social-democratic revisionism through careful historical study. In practice, Lenin built in Russia a programmatically homogeneous revolutionary vanguard party. However, it was not until and under the impact of the first imperialist world war that Lenin theoretically generalised the concept of a vanguard party of the working class and sought to extend it on an international scale. In its central theme, this pamphlet traces the development of Lenin's ideas on the party question from that of a revolutionary social democrat to the founding leader of the Communist International.

In this regard, the pamphlet's discussion of Rosa Luxemburg's initial opposition to Bolshevism is especially significant. A brilliant Polish Marxist, Luxemburg was a major figure in the left wing of the socialist workers movement in both Germany and the Russian Empire. Her 1904 polemic against Lenin, "Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy," has subsequently been exploited for anti-Communist purposes, both on the left and in bourgeois liberal circles. In contrast to Karl Kautsky—the official theoretician of "orthodox" Marxism at the time, who later became a virulent opponent of the Bolsheviks—"Red Rosa" remained a revolutionary until her murder in 1919 at the hands of German reaction (in collaboration with the Social Democratic leaders). However, a careful analysis of Luxemburg's 1904 polemic demonstrates that her opposition to the Bolsheviks in that period was based on the same theoretical premises as that of Kautsky: the social-democratic concept of "the party of the whole class" and a belief that the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy in Russia would be followed by a lengthy period of bourgeois democracy.

The Russian October Revolution of 1917, prepared and made possible by the entire previous development of the Bolshevik Party, marked the highest political level yet attained by the international proletariat. However, the failure to extend the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries, in large part due to the absence of communist vanguard parties similar to the Bolsheviks, led to the isolation of Soviet Russia in a world dominated by hostile imperialist forces. This isolation conditioned the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state under Stalin and his heirs. Undermined for decades by Stalinist bureaucratic rule and confronted by powerful imperialist states, in 1991-92 the Soviet Union was destroyed through a capitalist counterrevolution.

The aftermath has seen a capitalist offensive against the working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world and a corresponding reactionary ideological climate. Under these conditions, it is crucially important to convey to a new generation of militant workers and leftist intellectuals how this capitalist system of exploitation, oppression and impoverishment can be overthrown and replaced by a just and egalitarian society based on the highest levels of science and technology. It is in the context of this broad purpose that we have republished *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*. Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 673, 5 September 1997

Australasian

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CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mike Wallace

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Hate Trotskyism — Hate the Spartacists

Workers Power's "United Front" With Counterrevolution

The centrist Workers Power (WP) group is clearly in turmoil. By their own report (*Workers Power* No. 7, October/December 1997), the phoney "League for a Revolutionary Communist International" (LRCI) emerged from their August conference deeply divided over the class nature of the state, the overturn of capitalism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere after World War II and the counterrevolutionary restoration of capitalism in the USSR.

For Marxists, these are fundamental and defining questions, at the core of a revolutionary program. But for the LRCI they are merely academic debates. Thus "changes in analysis" can be safely relegated to a future issue of their international journal, not due for publication until January 1998. Yet, as a companion article marking the 80th anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution ("The Left and Capitalist Restoration") makes clear, WP still seeks to justify their sordid history of support to various forces of capitalist counterrevolution, especially Boris Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter-coup of August 1991.

Seizing on the pathetic "coup" attempt by the "gang of eight" Kremlin bureaucrats, Yeltsin's ascendancy, backed by the U.S. and every other imperialist power, subsequently proved to be the key event in the destruction of the Soviet Union. In the absence of mass working-class resistance, the period of open counterrevolution ushered in by Yeltsin culminated in the creation of a bourgeois state. Capitalist restoration was and is an unparalleled catastrophe for the working class, not only in the former Soviet Union but internationally, freeing up the imperialists to unleash attacks on the working masses of the advanced industrial countries and the already savagely oppressed peoples of the semi-colonial world.

In 1991 Workers Power called for a "united front with the Yeltsin forces" declaiming "...it was necessary to form a common front of resistance, a military and class struggle bloc with those forces and with their leaders.... A part of this united front call would have been to fight alongside the 'democrats' and the Yeltsinites to defend all the centres of resistance to the coup including the RSFSR parliament (the 'White House')" (*Workers Power* [Britain], November 1991). One of their members literally stood on Yeltsin's White House barricades. They did so "no matter what the socially counterrevolutionary nature of Yeltsin's programme, no matter how many spivs and racketeers joined the barricades...."

We Spartacists of the International Communist League denounced WP and its ilk as "Traitors, not Trotskyists" for this criminal betrayal. It is no surprise, therefore, that in seeking to "justify" their actions WP aims its polemical fire largely at the Spartacists.

WP adamantly denies that they "supported Yeltsin" or had "illusions in bourgeois democracy" as the Spartacists are so fond of claiming. But why was WP "for blocking with all those forces opposing the coup makers (CSE)"? "It was because the CSE represented the most serious immediate threat to the meagre democratic gains that the workers had wrung from the bureaucracy over the previous years." Thus in the name of defending "democratic gains" WP blocks

with...U.S. imperialist chieftain George Bush who certainly was among "all those forces opposing the coup makers"! "Democracy" versus "Stalinist totalitarianism" was precisely the counterrevolutionary rallying cry of the capitalists and their social-democratic front men.

Indeed, WP views Yeltsin's counterrevolution purely through the eyes of a Laborite parliamentarist. Against "the politically bankrupt Spartacists [who] argue that Yeltsin coming to power...was the decisive turning point in the restoration of a capitalist state," WP paints Yeltsin's counter-coup as "a simple change of government." To this day they



Sygnma

Moscow, August 1991: Boris Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary barricades. Workers Power called for "united front" with Yeltsin's forces. ICL statement said "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

deny that capitalism has been restored in the lands of the former Soviet Union. Russia, they say, is a "moribund workers state," a peculiar, classless formulation invented by Workers Power to deny that capitalist counterrevolution has taken place as a cover for their support to the restorationist forces. This position has made WP look foolish as it obviously flies in the face of reality—so they have begun to modify it, declaring that most of Eastern Europe, which they also labelled "moribund workers states," are now capitalist.

For Workers Power, the essential feature of a workers state is the degree of nationalisation. Claiming that the class nature of the state is merely a reflection of the economy, WP tries to make an ally of Trotsky, quoting (more or less) his statement that "the nationalisation of the land, the means of industrial production, transport and exchange, together with the monopoly of foreign trade constitute the basis of the Soviet social structure." State-owned collectivised property, central planning and state monopoly of foreign trade are indeed the defining features of proletarian property forms—the necessary economic foundations for the development of a classless, socialist society on an international scale. But widespread nationalisations alone do not equal the destruction of capitalism. And in general, in periods of revolution or counterrevolution, the economic forms can be, and often are, at variance with the political character of the state. Trotsky specifically addressed this question in "Not a Workers and Not a Bourgeois State?" (November 1937):

"Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government

for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalised economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a *revolution* or a *counterrevolution*. The victory of one class over another signifies that it will reconstruct the economy in the interests of the victors."

Even by WP's own false criteria, they have a problem, and are obliged to admit that "The monopoly on foreign finance and trade, the planning ministries and many state-owned industries have all been dismantled." So now they are forced to fall back on an absurdity: "difficulties in constructing and enforcing capitalist credit mechanisms mean that thousands

widely distributed in the Soviet Union in opposition to Yeltsin's restorationist drive. We said that what was necessary in August 1991 was a call on Moscow workers to clean out the counterrevolutionary rabble on Yeltsin's barricades. Such an independent mobilisation of the workers could have opened the road to political revolution through a showdown with the imperialist-backed forces of capitalist restoration. While recognising that the state power had been effectively fractured we looked to spark working-class action in defence of collectivised property.

Unable to conceive of an *independent* proletarian policy, Workers Power claims that if "Yeltsin taking power was decisive in the restoration of capitalism, then surely the Spartacists made a mistake. They should have blocked with the Stalinists who opposed him." Spicing up their polemic with a falsehood, WP claims we have never explained why we didn't.

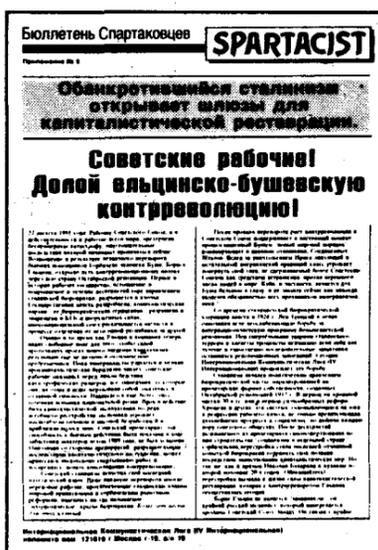
This was an all-sides squalid affair in which *neither* side opposed capitalist "market reforms," i.e., counterrevolution. The "coup plotters" only wanted a more gradual, controlled introduction of capitalism, without the democratic trappings of *glasnost* (openness). As we said in a polemic against the pseudo-Trotskyist apologists for Yeltsin:

"The coup plotters were not only irresolute but didn't want to unleash the forces that could have defeated the more extreme counterrevolutionaries, for that could have led to a civil war if the Yeltsinites really fought back. And in an armed struggle pitting outright restorationists against recalcitrant elements of the bureaucracy, defence of the collectivised economy would have been placed on the agenda whatever the Stalinists' intentions."

— "Cheerleaders for Yeltsin's Counterrevolution," *ASP* No. 143, Summer 1991/1992

WP recalls that "after only three days we immediately called for a breaking of the united front with the Yeltsin forces and advocated mobilising opposition to their 'seizure' of power." They sniff that this "falsifies the Spartacist claim that we politically supported Yeltsin." Actually, it proves exactly what we said of them: during the most critical moments of August 1991, they knowingly supported

continued on page 10



of firms continue to operate when the domination of the law of value would dictate that they should be closed down. In no capitalist country would loss-making production be tolerated on such a scale." Have they never heard of corporate bailouts?

The Russian Question Point Blank

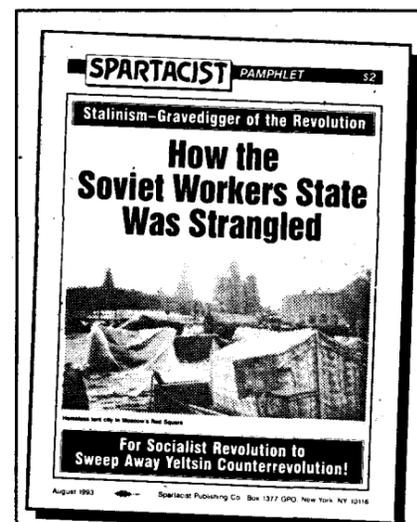
WP sneeringly mocks as "one of the most memorable pearls of Spartacist wisdom" our statement that the August 1991 events "appear to have been decisive in the direction of development of the SU, but only those who are under the sway of capitalist ideology would have been hasty to draw this conclusion at the time" (*Spartacist* No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93). For WP, this means we say "Yeltsin's August coup was decisive but it would have been wrong to have recognised it at the time!" Only those who forsake the proletariat as incapable of becoming a class mobilised for itself through the instrument of a Leninist party would have instantly written off the Soviet degenerated workers state.

For WP, Yeltsin's triumph was a foregone conclusion. We however, stand with American Trotskyist James P. Cannon who wrote:

"We do not examine the Russian revolution and what remains of its great conquests as though it were a bug under a glass. We have an interest! We take part in the fight!"

— "Speech on the Russian Question," *Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, 1939

The ICL distributed tens of thousands of leaflets proclaiming: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" Ours was the first statement



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Blair's Labour Fashions Facelift for the Monarchy

LONDON—She was “the people's princess,” opined Labour Party prime minister Tony Blair after the death of Diana Spencer in a car crash in Paris. Blair and his New Labour Party peddle the obscene myth of a “brave New Britain” in which people are not meant to notice that included in the words of the timeworn hymn “All Things Bright and Beautiful” is the squalid reality of the “rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate.” The “caring” image of Diana is supposed to obscure the gross social inequality and decrepitude of British capitalism in the New World Order.

From the standpoint of the working class, the death of the “Princess of Wales” was not a tragedy; special interest in the affairs of royalty, which places the life of an aristocrat above that of her chauffeur, betrays something of a servile instinct. The archaic institution of the monarchy should long ago have been consigned to the dustbin of history.

When the British ambassador in Paris announced the death of Diana Spencer, her companion Dodi Al-Fayed, who also died in the crash, was reduced to the status of a nameless manservant: in the eyes of the racist British establishment, even this fabulously wealthy, “non-white” Egyptian was not a suitable escort for an English princess.

While huge throngs gathered outside palaces all over London, not everyone bought the hype: TV stations and newspapers got calls and letters objecting to having the Diana saga shoved down their throats morning, noon and night. And amidst the reactionary, oppressive media blitz, we could take some pleasure in the nervous jitters of the establishment, who became fearful that the royal family might be booed at the princess' funeral.

Labourite Bureaucracy Bows to Queen and City

Diana Spencer came from a previously obscure aristocratic family whose wealth—described as “astonishing” by the bourgeois press—dates back to the wool trade in the days of early capital accumulation in the 15th century. Diana met the criteria for a suitable partner for the heir apparent: not a commoner and not a Catholic (and not too bright).

In the eyes of the establishment, “Princess Di” has proven herself of far more use in death than in life. Support for the monarchy has waned considerably in recent years, as even “respectable” media voices have begun mooted the heretical notion of a republic. At the

same time, Britain has seen an accretion of centrifugal forces: the devastation of the country's industrial areas and the vindictive destruction of mining communities in Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire, particularly under the Conservative Thatcher government; the ever-widening chasm between the yuppie denizens in the southeastern “home counties” centred on the City of London financial district and the masses of unemployed elsewhere; the grinding racism against blacks and Asians. The orchestrated outpouring of grief and the ostentatious pageantry for the dead Diana were intended to “rally the nation” around a common cause.

It was Tony “I prefer monarchy” Blair who stepped into the breach to serve “his” Queen, dubbing Diana the “people's princess” and braintrusting Queen Elizabeth's reluctant television appearance praising her former daughter-in-law. In so doing, Blair proved himself a very good prime minister for the British ruling class.

The fake-revolutionary left, ever in Labour's tow, was swept along, nominal disclaimers to the contrary notwithstanding. Diana Spencer may have been the girl from the 10,000 acres next door, but for the centrist Workers Power group, “Her depression, bulimia, suicide attempts and ultimately divorce provided a glitzy microcosm of the plight of millions of less wealthy women” (*Workers Power*, September 1997). That (and more) said, Workers Power assured its readers that it would “not be joining in the wave of national mourning” and even vowed to “do everything” to get the monarchy “scrapped forever”—everything, that is, but oppose Blair's Labour Party at election time.

For our part, we preferred the satirical *Private Eye's* (5 September) take on the matter:

“In recent weeks (not to mention the last ten years) we at the Daily Gnome, in common with all other newspapers, may have inadvertently conveyed the impression that the late Princess of Wales was in some way a neurotic, irresponsible and manipulative troublemaker....

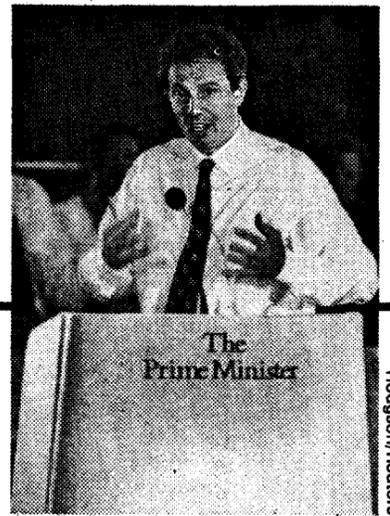
“We would like to express our sincere and deepest hypocrisy to all our readers on this tragic day and hope and pray that they will carry on buying our paper notwithstanding.”

Underscoring the very real powers of the “figurehead” monarchy, this issue of *Private Eye* was effectively banned under *lèse majesté*—an affront to the crown—removed from sale by a number of large news outlets.

Not surprisingly, Workers Power studiously managed to avoid any ref-

erence to Blair's role in propping up the monarchy. Labour ran for office draped in the Union Jack. At the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in Brighton one week after Diana's demise, the Union Jack flew at half-mast. Delegates were addressed by business chiefs and the Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the established (state) Church of England. The “theme” of the conference: “partnership for progress.” “Partnership” of capital and labour under the bloody flag of British imperialism, blessed by the established church, bowing and scraping to the Crown!

Blair's program for “modernising” the monarchy is aimed at providing a facelift for this anachronism in order to *salvage* it and the “United Kingdom” which it symbolises. The United Kingdom means continued national oppression of the Northern Ireland Catholic population as well as of the Scottish and Welsh peoples. Marxists fight for socialist revolution on both sides of the Irish Sea



Hodgson/Reuters

labour, was itself born of the revolutionary overthrow of the feudal order, which in 17th-century England ended with the public beheading of King Charles I, an object lesson in democracy that was repeated in the Great French Revolution of 1789. But once the rising merchant-capitalist interest in the state was secured against the return of the “old regime,” the monarchy was restored in form to exorcise the many-headed spectre of revolt from “below”; the body of the bourgeois revolutionary Oliver Cromwell was exhumed, decapitated and his head fixed on a pike as a “traitor.”

The original “people's martyr” was Charles I himself, who died in defence of “Merrie England.” In place of schism,



Hulton Getty

Duke and Duchess of Windsor, notorious Nazi sympathisers, greet Adolph Hitler in 1937.

—For a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles, as part of a Socialist United States of Europe!

The cult of Diana, the “people's martyr,” can only bolster the reactionary ideology of monarchism transcending the “person” of the monarch. Writer Tom Nairn captures the necrophilic quality of Blair's “project” when he notes: “Modernisation—the chorus of the salvationists—already means something uncomfortably close to resurrection. The modernisers resemble those who used to throng the death-chamber of an absolute monarch moaning, even after the last breath: ‘He hasn't really gone!’; ‘God will not let him leave us!’” (Anthony Barnett, *Power and the Throne* [1994]).

The British monarchy is a relic of feudalism, a pre-Enlightenment system of unabashed class privilege and social deference based on land-holding, at the apex of which was the head, anointed by god, which wore the crown: the king, lord of every man. The “common touch” always had its place in the alchemy of monarchy: “Lady Di” reaching out to touch the sick harks back to the veneration of the monarch's touch as the cure for scrofula, once known as the “king's evil.” “Faith, hope and charity”—the beneficence of the rich to the poor, whose place was to remain poor. And “charity” is what the dispossessed must suffer today in the face of attacks on social welfare and the very idea of social provision.

Today's capitalist society, based on the exploitation of industrial wage

revolution and civil war the monarchy was, and is, meant to represent continuity with the past, gradualness, tradition—to legitimise and to *obscure* the specifically *capitalist* character of this society and its state machine. Hence the “Mother of Parliaments” sits in the royal palace of Westminster and the prime minister is a minister of the Crown.

In the “United Kingdom” there are no citizens, only “subjects,” and treason to the Crown remains a capital offence despite the abolition of the death penalty. Under the 1361 Treason Act, “adultery” involving the wife of the Prince of Wales is punishable by death.

From Cromwell's Roundheads to Lenin's Bolsheviks

Monarchism is opposed not merely to the socialist revolution of the working class but is a retrogression from the rationalism of the bourgeois Enlightenment. From Cromwell's Roundheads to Robespierre's Jacobins to Lenin's Bolsheviks, it was the revolutionary regicides who represented advancement for humanity. Marxism embodies the principles of scientific rationality as the basis for liberating mankind from all forms of social oppression.

Leon Trotsky once described Lenin, leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, as the “proletarian twentieth-century Cromwell.” Trotsky went on to explain that from Cromwell, the “great revolutionary of his time,” British workers would learn “incomparably more” than from all the conciliationist Labour

continued on page 9



Der Spiegel

Britain in decay: Liverpool poor pick through garbage dumps.

For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Racist Capitalism!

On September 27-28 the National Union of Students (NUS) sponsored a "Fighting Racism National Conference" in Sydney. Outraged by the federal government's Wik legislation, the rise of Pauline Hanson's One Nation party and outright fascist National Action provocations in Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, anti-racist youth across the country are indeed looking for a way to fight back. While various ostensibly socialist organisations peddled their wares at the conference, only the supporters of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs put forward a fighting, revolutionary program to smash racial oppression.

We intervened with the Marxist understanding, as an SYC'er said at the opening session, "that racism is inherent to the capitalist profit system. The two foundation stones of Australian capitalism were first of all the bloody massacre and dispossession of the Aboriginal people—the exploitation of whose land provided, and continues to provide, the key source of wealth for the Australian capitalist class. And secondly, the exclusion of Asian and Pacific Island labour."

Against the deeply Laborite NUS leadership and their hangers-on in the left, we exposed the fact that when the ALP went after immigrant students with permanent resident status in 1995, NUS bigwigs, aided and abetted by supporters of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), tried to shaft an SYC protest. We went ahead anyway, demanding "Free education for all, including overseas and immigrant students!" and "Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!"

The conference "featured" a debate between the ISO and the DSP over how best to "fight" Hanson which posed the DSP's civil libertarian "let Hanson speak" line versus the ISO's appeals to the bourgeois state and its Labor councillors to ban bad people and bad ideas. When over 1,000 Asians, students, Aborigines and other

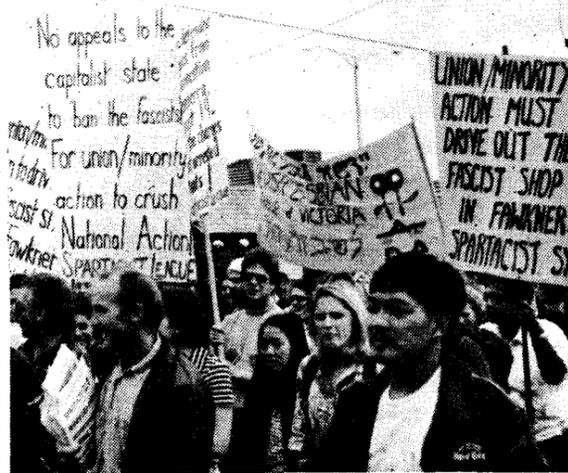
activists angrily protested a One Nation meeting in Dandenong, Melbourne, the DSP came in for a lot of heat from the capitalist media. Their response was to pose as the "reasonable" leftists who are all for demonstrations outside One Nation meetings as long as they don't try to shut Hanson and her racist rabble down (see ASP No. 161, Spring 1997). On the other hand, the ISO, under the guise of agitating for "militant action," pushes petition campaigns, e.g., calling on the Labor-run Marrickville Council to keep this Sydney suburb a "Hanson-free zone."

The first speaker from the floor was a young trade unionist who noted that this Council had imposed a vicious two-tier wage system, an attack on union conditions aimed at young and immigrant workers. He proclaimed, "I support the Spartacist League's call for breaking the working class from the Labor Party and forging a revolutionary party," as opposed to the ISO's crawling before ALP union-busters.

Indeed, the ISO/DSP's entire focus on Hanson was meant to disappear the racist role of the ALP, who, in opposition, like to occasionally posture as opponents of Hanson's xenophobia and crude racism. What ISO/DSP have in common are illusions in the bourgeois state—against the ISO's call on Marrickville Council to "ban" Hanson meetings, the DSP "counterposed" the Council's appointment of "an anti-racist organiser."

Meanwhile, as Spartacist supporters pointed out, the deadly dangerous fascist National Action's Fawcner bookstore/bunker in Melbourne continues to operate. The DSP openly polemicises against mobilisations to drive out the fascist shop. The ISO petitions the local council in Fawcner to shut it down. Declaring that "the fascists are a mortal threat to all workers, leftists, immigrants and Aborigines," an SYC'er nailed the ISO

"which has a program of calling on the capitalist state, the very capitalist state who sends their cops to defend the



ASP photo

Melbourne: Spartacists in protest against National Action "bookstore." For mass union/minority mobilisations to stop the fascists!

fascists against militants and who persecutes leftists and anti-racists as 'violent.' Instead, we counterpose a program of mobilising the social power of the working class at the head of all the potential victims of fascism to actively defend immigrants and actively smash the fascists whilst they're in the egg, and prevent them from ever taking their place at the behest of the capitalists to destroy the workers and wipe out all minorities."

At the conference we held a special video showing of the Spartacist-initiated mass labour/minority mobilisation that stopped a Ku Klux Klan rally in Philadelphia, U.S., in 1988. This action, as with others initiated by our comrades internationally, succeeded because it was based on the understanding that the working class and all the oppressed must be mobilised independently of the capitalist state—the executive committee of the ruling class whose job it is to defend this system of racist exploitation. In contrast to the DSP/ISO who push illusions in capitalism, particularly when run by the ALP, we understand, as one of our comrades stated at the conference, that, "An end to racism will only come by smashing the capitalist profit system that breeds it through building a revolutionary workers party that fights all manifestations of oppression on the road to overthrowing the capitalist state."

Free Quality Education for All!

RMIT: Fake Lefts Play Capitalist Administration's Game

MELBOURNE—Last August militant students staged a 19-day occupation at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in protest against the University Council's decision to extract up-front fee payment from undergraduate Australian students. Unionised workers defied management to ensure the occupiers were not deprived of electricity, phones or plumbing. On the last day of the occupation the National Tertiary Education Union at RMIT stopped work for two hours in solidarity with the students. Faced with the combined action of students and campus unions, the RMIT Administration backed off its

threats to use the cops and courts against the occupiers and dropped their plan to charge students for Internet access. They held tightly, however, to the extension of up-front fees, offering only to hold a "non-binding referendum" on fees as a sop.

Various self-professed leftists at RMIT embraced this referendum, which committed the University to absolutely nothing, as a "victory." The International Socialist Organisation (ISO), Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), Workers Power (WP) and Left Alliance (LA) then worked feverishly to get out a No vote to full fee paying for local undergraduate students. One WP supporter appeared as a Student Union poster boy dubbed "Action Andrew" demanding "Vote you bastards Vote!" as WP, LA and other "leftists" distributed Student Union leaflets proclaiming "If 40,000 people say NO, how can they say yes?" This is textbook parliamentary cretinism, a fatuous insistence on the "power" of voting (in

a non-binding referendum at that). The students did vote No, and the Administration blithely reiterated its decision to extract up-front fees. Of a piece was the DSP's claim that campaigning around the referendum would increase student activism. In reality the Administration succeeded with its diversion, defusing and dissipating student anger—aided and abetted by the fake lefts.

The entire campaign of these "socialists" was explicitly directed at lobbying the University Council which even student occupiers had lambasted as "an un-democratic unrepresentative body... dominated by corporate reps." The Student Union leaflet whined "We only need 2 more people... to be pressured into changing their vote," while the ISO's *Socialist Worker* (10 October) preferred to whinge about the need "to put more pressure on the VC [Vice Chancellor]."

And what were they seeking to win? No "full fee paying for local undergraduate students" (our emphasis). They thus accept the racist, nationalist policies introduced by successive ALP federal governments of charging up-front fees for overseas students and throwing permanent residents off Austudy!

Then there was their call to vote Yes to the question: "Do you think that a university education should be available to all students on the basis of merit, irrespective of their ability to pay fees?" "Merit" is a code-word for keeping working-class, immigrant and Aboriginal kids and mature students, particularly women, out of university. The Student Union leaflet even acknowledged, albeit in small print, that "merit," which they

define as TER (Tertiary Entrance Rank) scores, is not "a viable and fair way to test whether a person should be allowed to study at university" and that education should be "accessible to all." But they called for a Yes vote anyway.

Reconciled to the framework of continued capitalist rule (their occasional "revolutionary" rhetoric notwithstanding), the fake left thus necessarily imbibes the values of the ruling class. In sharp contrast, in rallies and demonstrations, in leaflets and in our press the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for free quality education for all. We call for open admissions to university and a full living stipend for all, including overseas students. We stand for abolishing the capitalist administration—for student, teacher, worker control of the campuses.

The attacks on students take place in the context of a full *third* of youth unemployed. For the capitalist rulers, education for the majority of youth is an overhead expense, justifiable only if they can get back in profit what they have "invested." Those who are able to continue in school graduate with massive HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) debts with few jobs for them after graduation. The significance of the RMIT unions' support for the students is not, as WP would have it, lending backing to the Student Union's narrow, parochial demands, but in pointing to the social power of the working class. It is the working class as a whole that has the power that can and must be brought to bear to overturn the entire capitalist system of poverty, joblessness and war through socialist revolution—the only road to a truly egalitarian society. The Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to win young people to a life-long commitment to fighting for that future. Join us! ■

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Deadly Threat to Workers, Minorities

Victoria's Secret Spies

The Melbourne *Age's* exposure in early October of the Victoria police's massive spying operation starkly reveals for all to see the day-to-day machinations of "official" capitalist state repression. According to the *Age*, under successive Labor governments between 1985 and 1992 the Operations Intelligence Unit (OIU) targeted more than 1,200 individuals and organisations—socialists, including the Spartacist League, trade unions, Aboriginal, immigrant, civil rights groups and women's rights activists.

Liberal Victoria premier Jeff Kennett rallied to the defence of these sinister spies, branding their targets "those who are going to pervert the course of justice and commit acts of crime." Kennett's police chief commissioner Neil Comrie boasts that the spying continues, and all potential opponents of the government are targets for state disruption and provocation: "Some apparently innocuous organisations are nothing but front groups or fundraisers for terrorist activities overseas. And some groups are unknowingly exploited by extremists who use them as a cover to pursue their own agendas" (*Age*, 10 October). Kennett & Co. smear political protesters as "violent" and "extremist" yet it is the capitalist apparatus of state repression that is the source of all manner of violence. The Victoria police are notorious for gunning down 28 people since 1988—Aborigines, the mentally ill and others. In 1995 alone they killed eight.

The great number and diversity of the organisations listed in the *Age* demonstrates that this surveillance was aimed at heading off *any* struggle against the increasingly raw exploitation and oppression of those at the bottom of this society. In fact the ultimate target of the political police is the organised workers movement. Among the organisations in the *Age's* list were at least eight trade unions. The current revelations coincide with far-reaching state and federal union-busting in which the right of workers to picket or even be in a union is under sharp attack.

In order to attack the organised working class, the bourgeoisie is targeting the most vulnerable sections of the population. In this country, dominated for decades by an official policy of "White Australia" racism, it is unsurprising that the OIU's surveillance singles out Aboriginal groups who have protested against black deaths in custody, and

immigrant and minority political organisations. The inclusion of some fascist terrorists cannot disguise that the cops' operation was aimed at those whom the fascists also have in their sights. The rights of labour and minorities must go forward together, or they will fall back separately.

In August 1996, thousands of trade unionists came to the defence of Aborigines under police attack at the massive Canberra demonstration. Such powerful actions, historically all too rare, are deeply alarming to the racist Australian rulers. The state responded by launching a sinister witchhunt, "Operation Veneer," against trade unionists, Aborigines and student activists. The ALP/ACTU tops, seeking to prove their loyalty to capitalism, joined hands with the bosses, and actively set up and purged their ranks.

Now, in response to the large protests against vile racist demagogue Pauline Hanson, the government has increasingly turned to brutal state repression, as mounted cops charge demonstrators, arresting dozens. Even as the cops are caught out for their earlier spying, the "Protective Security Intelligence Group," the OIU's successor, is unabashed about continuing to monitor "extremist" political groups, anti-Hanson rallies and university protests.

A Workers Party Has the Right to Organise!

The government brands leftists as "terrorists" so as to set them up as nameless, faceless victims of capitalist state terror. In 1983 in the U.S. the FBI issued new "Domestic Security Terrorism Guidelines" which sought to equate Marxist political opposition to the capitalist government with criminal "terrorism." A year later, comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. successfully concluded a lawsuit against the FBI, forcing them to retract its "definition" of the SL, which tried to paint us as conspiratorial outlaws. The SL's legal brief noted that we and our political predecessors have been "investigated" by the FBI since the Russian Revolution without the state ever finding any evidence of violent criminal activity. The FBI conceded the basic claim of our suit, that Marxists are not terrorists, and that the Spartacist League is what it says it is: "a Marxist political organization," thus depriving the deadly dangerous secret

police thugs a legal cover for violent measures against us.

The OIU, PSIG and their ASIO big brothers operate in the shadows, seeking to conceal their sinister purpose: the legitimisation of state terror against those who struggle against or expose the machinations of this capitalist society.

sent its prying cops. This is not the first time the Spartacist League has been targeted for surveillance and disruption. In 1977 ASIO paid an agent, one Janet Langridge, to spy on our organisation. After two months as a candidate member of the SL, she voluntarily revealed her spy role, because, she claimed, she came



June 1977: Spartacist League distributed thousands of special supplements, part of widespread campaign exposing ASIO's targeting of our Marxist organisation.

Unlike these stealthy state criminals, we state our aims and program openly. The Spartacist League, Australian section of the International Communist League, stands proudly under the banner of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky in our fight to forge a party to lead the working class to state power through socialist revolution.

The State and Revolution

The *Age's* exposure is surely useful, but while exposure may sometimes hamper the cops in pursuing their disruption against the left, as Marxists we understand that the bourgeoisie will never do away with its political police. They are an essential part of the repressive apparatus on which its state power and class dictatorship rests. To argue otherwise is reformist dreaming. In every state in Australia, starting in the early 1970s, the special branches were "disbanded." Renamed and refurbished, their spooks and provocateurs were restocked with their bugs, black bags and guns, and sent out to hunt reds again.

For the bourgeois liberals of the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties the problem with all this spying is that it undermines public confidence in the state and its police. "We understand the need for an Operations Intelligence Unit..." they say, urging that "the priorities of the police must be made more transparent so that community confidence in their activities can be re-established." Just as the illusions created by the hoopla about Labor premier Cain's "abolishing" Victoria's political police gave the cops better cover, so do calls for "accountability," community control, inquiries, etc. serve to streamline police operations, rendering them more credible and strengthening the bourgeois state.

Our own organisation is among those against which the state of Victoria has

to "respect them and...what they stand for." We immediately expelled her and made a concerted effort to let the workers movement and left know about this ASIO dirty work and the existence of this particular individual.

As we said then, this spying was "an intolerable violation of our democratic rights. We are a fully legal political organisation, entitled to carry on our activities, openly propagating our political views, without subversive infiltration by government bodies." Our aggressive campaign garnered front-page and major TV news coverage across the nation. ASIO and the government were very embarrassed by it. Two years later new laws were introduced which made publicly identifying an agent or employee of ASIO illegal, punishable by jail and fines.

Our forthright campaign was in sharp contrast to the actions of the reformist Socialist Workers Party (forerunner of the Democratic Socialist Party—DSP) around the same time. Instead of expelling self-confessed police spy Lisa Walter, they trumpeted her "conversion" to socialism and kept her in the organisation.

Unlike the DSP and others of its ilk we revolutionary Marxists take as our starting point the fact that society is divided into two hostile classes whose interests are irreconcilably counterposed: workers who must sell their labour power in order to survive, and the property-owning capitalist class to whom their labour power is sold. The state consists in essence of armed bodies of men—cops, courts and prisons—whose purpose is the repression of the working class and oppressed to protect the wealth and power of that tiny minority who exploit the labour of the overwhelming majority. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the



Parliamentary Library, Canberra



no credit



Age

Labor prime minister Ben Chifley (left) established ASIO spy outfit in 1949. Secret police targeted unions, leftists, Aboriginal and Immigrant organisations under Victoria Labor premiers Cain and Kirner.

Russian Revolution, wrote in *State and Revolution*, "The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another." The state and its political police cannot be "cleaned up," reformed or pressured into acting on behalf of workers and the oppressed. It must be *shattered* by workers revolution, replaced by a workers state which expropriates the capitalist class.

Labor Party Whitewash

The Victoria Labor opposition and New South Wales Labor premier Bob Carr denounced the secret police spying and called for an inquiry (a demand since met), all the while claiming their hands are squeaky clean. The Victorian Council for Civil Liberties even says the OIU existed "without, it appears, the knowledge of the Government of the day" (*Age*, 7 October). While much of the fake left is happy to play along with the charade that the Cain and Kirner Labor governments were unaware of these massive spying operations, it's a crock!

Completely committed to the defence of the capitalist system, the Australian Labor Party in power administers the bourgeois state, including, necessarily, its spies and cops. It has an unbroken history of anti-Communist, anti-working class subversion. In fact it was the Labor government of Ben Chifley in 1949 which established the infamous Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), the same year the ALP called out the army to break the coal miners strike.

Also in the ALP's sights at that time were the waterfront unions which had been staging strikes not only over economic demands, but also in support of the Indonesian independence struggle against the Dutch. Today Australia's secret police work hand-in-glove with the blood-drenched Suharto regime against leftist Indonesian and Timorese students and exiles. The White Australia rulers very much need their spies, not least as they feel their imperialist enclave threatened by the very existence of the peoples of Asia. At the same time they lord it over the dark-skinned peoples of the region from Bougainville to Fiji and beyond. Their "intelligence" agencies are deeply enmeshed in attempts to keep it that way.

By 1983 Labor was in power in Victoria and federally. This was during Cold War II, the imperialist offensive against the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states—the Soviet Union, Vietnam, China, East Europe and elsewhere—in which capitalism had been thrown out. The imperialist bourgeoisie's drive for counterrevolution found its domestic reflection in heightened state repression and attacks on workers. As we wrote at the time, "While Hawke/Hayden front for US/Chinese military provocations and war plans against Soviet-allied Vietnam, the political climate is being prepared to strengthen and unleash imperialism's secret police agencies such as ASIO and the state Special Branches against the left" (*Australasian Spartacist* No. 102, June/July 1983).

In 1983 while the Special Branch carried out covert surveillance of the left and workers movement, Cain and Hawke joined together to smash the Builders Labourers Federation—a union led by Maoists and specially targeted for repression for over two decades—and witchhunt its leaders for their opposition to the ALP/ACTU Prices and Incomes Accord, a nationalist, union-busting trap based on the lie that there is a partnership between labour and capital.

More recently, in 1992 under Labor's Joan Kirner, Victoria Police raided the homes of seven students, including members of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO). A smear campaign blamed leftist groups for "violence" at student protests against education cut-backs, naming the ISO, Left Alliance and the "Spartacist" League (the designated misspelling favoured by the FBI), and the



Michael Rayner

Melbourne, September 1994: hundreds from Aboriginal community march in protest against slaying of Colleen Richman by Victoria cops who have gunned down 28 people since 1988.

cops launched a "special investigation unit aimed at cracking the violent socialist organisations," a revival of the "Red Squad."

Reformists, Centrists and ... Political Bandits

Deeply loyal to the ALP, in and out of power, the reformist left covers up the fact that successive Labor governments were responsible for this sinister police spying. Religiously calling for votes to Labor, the reformists cover up the ALP's role to better portray it as a "lesser evil," especially now that it is on the opposition benches. It also reflects their own cringing belief that this capitalist state can really be reformed in the interests of the oppressed. Thus the Freedom Socialist Party's front group Radical Women calls for the police to "be made accountable to the community." For its part, the DSP (which has also called for votes to the bourgeois Democrats!) wants to breathe life into the corpse of the "Campaign for the Abolition of Political Police" which itself was a vehicle for corraling support to the ALP.

More slippery are the centrists of Workers Power. The October/December issue of their paper declares that "the capitalist state...cannot be reformed or 'democratised'.... It must be smashed." Yet their parent British group (in December 1994) called for demanding of a future Labour government "abolishing MI5 and all secret state services." Why is this reformist/utopian demand placed on a Labour government? Because they think a capitalist state administered by Labour is something other than a capitalist state administered by, e.g., the Tories. The deeply Labor Party-loyal Workers Power thus exhibits its touching faith in the reformability of the bourgeois state.

Even more cynical is the Socialist Labour League (SLL)/Socialist Equality Party (SEP) of Nick Beams, part of

David North's "International Committee of the Fourth International" (IC). Nevertheless, they too mouth "orthodoxy" about "the state forces—they are bodies which exist for the express purpose of suppressing opposition to the existing order based on the ever greater



The Monthly Record

1990: ALP foreign affairs minister Gareth Evans greets Indonesian butcher Suharto in Cambodia. Australian-Indonesian counter-revolutionary alliance cemented in blood of 1965 anti-Communist massacre.

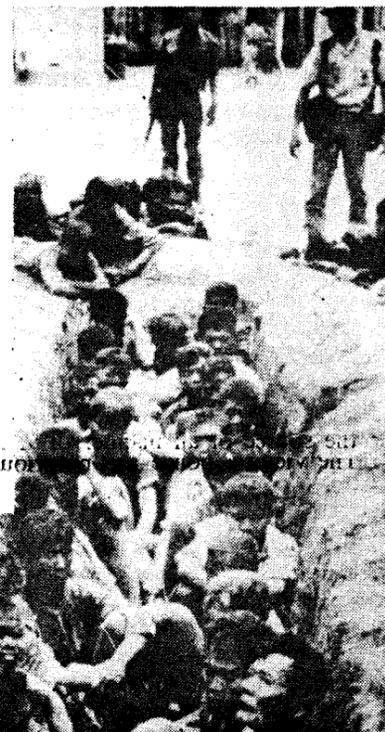
accumulation of private wealth" (*Workers News*, 17 October). This is pretty rich coming from those who are notorious for their long history of dragging leftists through the capitalist courts.

These people and their recent forebears in Gerry Healy's British Workers Revolutionary Party have blocked with quite a number of those "state forces." A secret report by an IC Commission to investigate "the corruption of G. Healy" details payoffs that were received for services rendered to a variety of oil-rich

Arab despots. This included supplying photographs to the Iraqi embassy of a demonstration of opponents of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime in Iraq. An indisputable and monstrous fact is that the Healyites hailed the execution of 21 Iraqi Communists by Ba'ath rulers in 1979.

Several years later, as the British coal miners were gearing up for their heroic 1984-85 strike, the Healyites dropped a carefully timed bombshell publishing a letter by miners leader Arthur Scargill in which he correctly castigated Polish Solidarność as "an anti-socialist organisation." This was a bonanza for the Tory rags of Fleet Street, and fed directly into the MI5-inspired witchhunt of Scargill and the miners. In 1986 the Australian Healyites admitted they had printed the *Bell of Saigon*, an exile organ of the fascist Vietnamese thugs who physically attacked leftist and labour meetings.

Of course the SLL/SEP would like to say this is all past history. But the very same Richard Phillips who declared printing a fascist rag was justified as part of a turn toward "commercial enterprise, commercial print work" today appears in the *Workers News* editorial box. When it serves their opportunist ends, the Northites can spout something resembling orthodox-sounding Marxist rhetoric. But in fact they are, to borrow Lenin's term, "political bandits," i.e., pol-



Russell Press

itical pirates who will show any flag to attack any target.

Unlike the reformists and centrists, we understand that it will take a workers revolution to finally get rid of the capitalists' criminal secret police once and for all. The Spartacist League/Australia, section of the International Communist League fights to forge the necessary instrument to achieve this, a revolutionary workers party committed to the abolition of capitalism around the world.

27 October 1997

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China...

(continued from page 1)

first implemented almost two decades ago, production and employment in state industry has up to now also continued to grow, although at a much slower pace. Lately, in a tentative and piecemeal way, China's central banks have cut funds to less "profitable" state plants, which have in turn taken to laying off workers, withholding wages and charging for previously free social services. This in turn has sparked a dramatic rise of struggles by workers in the aging state industries concentrated in central and north-eastern China.

The year began with a dramatic uprising in the northeastern city of Harbin, when some 3,000 textile workers protested the withholding of four months' pay by occupying train tracks. With rail service paralysed, local and national CCP leaders quickly reached a settlement with the workers. In March, 20,000 workers at a state textile factory in the town of Nanchong in Sichuan—China's most populous province—laid siege to the city hall and held the plant manager hostage until authorities came up with six months' back wages. Four months later, in the Sichuan city of Mianyang, thousands of workers marched through the streets and built roadblocks to protest managers' embezzlement of unemployment benefits after three silk and textile plants closed. Some 80 workers were reportedly arrested and 100 injured after clashes with the People's Armed Police, a force created in the mid-1980s specifically to control mounting urban unrest.

Strikes and social protests have continued to mount. Many of these have been directed against the flagrant corruption of local officials. While news of social turmoil is slow to leak out, in the month of September alone there were reports of a demonstration by angry workers in Sichuan trying to eke out a living after being forced into early retirement and a mass protest in Guangdong province—against the regime's draconian "one-child" policy—which was put down by 1,000 troops and paramilitary forces. Social tensions have also been stoked by widening income disparities between centres of economic expansion along the eastern coastal areas and the rest of the country.

The bureaucracy has tried to keep an iron grip on society as it plunges ever deeper into the "free market." Last year, over 6,000 people were condemned to death, some for crimes as petty as stealing chickens. The barbaric death penalty is part of the bureaucratic arsenal of terror designed to keep the working people and impoverished peasantry in line.

The brittle bureaucratic caste is well aware that it is sitting on a social powder keg. While unemployment officially stands at 3 percent, this figure is not believed by anyone. The mainland Chinese magazine *Outlook* reports that

the urban jobless rate is 7.5 percent while "China's rural areas have about 175 million surplus laborers, representing an unemployment rate of 34.8%" (*Asian Wall Street Journal*, 5 August). Much of this enormous "surplus" workforce, which was spawned by the destruction of collectivised agriculture in the early 1980s, roams the townships and cities in search of work, often leading to bitter conflicts with longtime city residents.

Labour costs are so low in China that many capitalists now prefer to invest there than in bourgeois countries in the region. This has been a factor in the currency crisis now wracking Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. At the same time, as China becomes increasingly integrated into the Southeast Asian economies dominated by the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie—the source of most of China's foreign investment—such events could have a major effect on the



Rural labourers outside Guangzhou (Canton) rail station, part of massive unemployed population created by "market reforms."

mainland economy itself. This only serves to underscore the need for an internationalist perspective, linking the fight of the Chinese masses against capitalist counterrevolution to class struggles throughout East and Southeast Asia, particularly reaching out to the proletariat of Japan, the industrial powerhouse of the region.

Chinese Stalinists Prepare Final Sell-Out

The question is whether the Beijing regime can enforce mass layoffs and cutbacks on a working class which has been taught that the revolution was made for the benefit of "the people." The Stalinist bureaucracy lives in mortal fear of the spectre of the Tiananmen uprising. Popular discontent in 1989 was largely fuelled by rising inflation and the flagrant, filthy corruption of the officialdom. With anger over corruption and economic insecurity growing once again, the bureaucracy is ever-mindful to ward off any possibility of social protest. Many "princelings"—including Deng's son-in-law, head of the mammoth Poly

Group conglomerate—were kept off the new Central Committee. And shortly before the congress, the government announced that a former Beijing party chief and Political Bureau member would face trial and possible execution on corruption charges. A well-connected Chinese writer observed: "The leadership was very nervous people would take to the streets with anti-corruption slogans" (*South China Morning Post*, 11 September).

At the same time, the CCP leadership signalled it would brook no loosening of political controls. Several open letters, including one ostensibly written by former premier Zhao Ziyang—who lost his position for opposing the 1989 crackdown—called on the congress to "revise" the party's depiction of the Tiananmen student protests as an attempt to overthrow CCP rule. All these petitions were dismissed out of hand, and the congress purged former intelligence chief

true in its essentials for the Chinese bureaucracy today:

"It is recruited, supplemented and renewed in the manner of an administrative hierarchy, independently of any special property relations of its own. The individual bureaucrat cannot transmit to his heirs his rights in the exploitation of the state apparatus.... Its appropriation of a vast share of the national income has the character of social parasitism. All this makes the position of the commanding Soviet stratum in the highest degree contradictory, equivocal and undignified, notwithstanding the completeness of its power and the smoke screen of flattery that conceals it."

Capitalist restoration in China would require the consolidation of a new, counterrevolutionary state apparatus, with an attendant legal system codifying private ownership of the means of production. This would necessarily be a bloody process that would throw China into chaos, very possibly including the breakup of the country into regional fiefdoms. It would also turn China into an arena of hot imperialist competition. Moreover, unlike the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, in which the Russian bourgeoisie was destroyed as a class, the Chinese capitalists were able to flee the mainland in the late 1940s, keeping their cohesion as a class. Thus, the Chinese masses now face a powerful predator in the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie.

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

To forge an internationalist, egalitarian-communist party in China requires a political struggle not only against the Stalinist misleaders but also against those who would lead the workers into the camp of "democratic" counterrevolution. Some Tiananmen-era dissidents have been engaged in efforts to organise trade unions opposed to the regime's All-China Federation of Trade Unions. Such activists can be very heroic, going up against capitalist entrepreneurs and their Stalinist police protectors. However, Marxists warn against any ties to pro-capitalist "dissidents" such as Tiananmen veteran Han Dongfang. Han regularly appeals to the U.S.-sponsored International Confederation of Free Trade Unions—which originated in the Cold War against the Soviet Union—for action against the Chinese regime, while his Hong Kong-based *China Labor Bulletin* (January 1997) baldly admits that its chief editor had been featured on the U.S. imperialists' *Voice of America* and *Radio Free Asia*.

Such appeals for (bourgeois) "democracy" are echoed and embraced by various "socialist" groups in the West. The most brazen of these is the tendency led by Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party, including the U.S. International Socialist Organization. Ever since Cliff's expulsion from the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1950 for refusing to defend China and North Korea during the Korean War, the hallmark of this group has been tailing after "democratic" imperialism. This has included cheering such thoroughly anti-democratic and flagrantly reactionary forces as Lech Walesa's Vatican-sponsored Solidarność in Poland and the anti-woman *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan. More recently, Cliff's outfit sided with the political heirs of Guomindang butcher Chiang Kai-shek, who run the brutal capitalist Taiwan regime. As U.S. warships plied the Taiwan Strait last

SPARTACIST

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For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

China on the Brink
Workers Political Revolution
or Capitalist Enslavement?
SEE PAGE 2

Permanent Revolution vs.
the "Anti-Imperialist United Front"
The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism
SEE PAGE 21

Original Documents Published from Soviet Archives
Trotsky's Fight Against Stalinist Betrayal
of Bolshevik Revolution
SEE PAGE 28

Revolutionary Regroupment or
Centrist Alchemy?
SEE PAGE 34

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斯巴克同盟
原则宣言

Declaration of Principles
of the Spartacist League

国际共产主义同盟(第四国际主义者)
International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalists)

Monarchy...

(continued from page 4)

leaders: "The dead lion of the seventeenth century is in this sense immeasurably greater than many living dogs." By the "many living dogs," Trotsky meant those Labour "leaders" who "dare not refuse pocket money to the Prince of Wales" (*Where Is Britain Going?* [1925]).

Today's Labour leadership under Blair differs only in that it has graduated to the post of chief adviser to the Prince of Wales, while seeking to break even the most attenuated organisational connection to the trade unions. But there is nothing new about the Blairites' royal bootlicking. During World War I, Labour Party leader Arthur Henderson was a member of the King's "advisory" Privy Council when the British government ordered the state murder of James Connolly after the failed 1916 Irish Republican Easter Rising in Dublin. Ramsay MacDonald, who in 1924 became the first Labour prime minister, accepted an invitation to the royal court bedecked in the blue and gold-braid costume of the peerage.

Vast sums are lavished on the royals, but it is not its extravagant cost, in and of itself, that makes the monarchy reactionary; the function of the money is to flamboyantly assert social privilege, to loudly proclaim that there is an unequal social place for everyone and that this is historical and inevitable. For the bourgeoisie, the cost of maintaining its sacred cows is quite cheap at the price. More fundamentally, the institution of the monarchy is a constant anti-democratic outrage and potential focus for reaction. In *Where Is Britain Going?* Trotsky tore apart the arguments of Labourite politicians that the royal power was inconsequential since it did not "interfere" in the country's affairs and was at any rate cheaper than electing a president as head of state. The revolutionary leader explained:

"Royalty is weak as long as the bourgeois parliament is the instrument of bourgeois rule and as long as the bourgeoisie has no need of extra-parliamentary methods. But the bourgeoisie can if necessary use royalty as the focus of all extra-parliamentary, i.e., real forces directed against the working class."

It is to the Queen, not Parliament, that the British officer corps swears

year in a provocation against Beijing, the Cliffites proclaimed that "China's claim to Taiwan is a colonialist one. We would oppose any Chinese invasion of Taiwan as an act of imperialist aggression" (*Socialist Review*, April 1996).

In a lengthy article on "China: from Mao to Deng" (*International Socialist Review*, Summer 1997), ISO leader Ahmed Shawki dismisses China as a "state capitalist" society which has "nothing to do with socialism" and makes not one mention of the gains of the 1949 Revolution. Even the bourgeois *Los Angeles Times* (10 August), in an article headlined "How China Beat India in Race for Success," acknowledges that "particularly in the early stages of Communist rule, in the 1950s, the country benefited from the land redistribution, introduction of compulsory universal education, adoption of simplified Chinese characters that led to greater literacy, and the introduction of health and welfare policies and other reforms."

The Cliffites' "theory" of state capitalism—which is counterposed to any Marxist analysis of capitalism—is simply a fig leaf for virulent anti-Communism. Nobody, but nobody—from bourgeois Western ideologists to hard-pressed Russian workers—would buy the Cliffites' idiotic view that the counterrevolution in the USSR in the early 1990s simply involved a shift from one form of capitalism to another. Expropriation of the bourgeoisie and creation of a planned economy is the prerequisite for

ALP Nationalists Push Racist Imperialist "Republic"

With polls indicating widespread public support for a popularly elected head of state, the Howard Coalition government is staging a "Constitutional Convention" in February 1998. The government is appointing half of the 152 "delegates," while voters who care to can mail in ballots for the rest. The convention is to prepare for a future referendum on the question of whether Australia should be declared a republic. While in Britain the Labour Party is feverishly moving to shore up and re-vamp the monarchy, here the bulk of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) is pushing "republicanism," reflecting how the nationalist social democrats perceive serving their "own" ruling class.

As Marxists, we Spartacists are certainly in favour of severing Australia's ties with the feudal relic that is the English monarchy, a nodal point for reaction (including not only the dismissal of the 1975 Whitlam government, but also of Jack Lang's NSW government in 1932). But don't be fooled by the campaign of the self-styled "republicans." Their purpose is to keep the "reserve powers" used to

overturn elected governments, but vested in a strong native presidency (answerable directly to the Australian capitalists) instead of in the English Queen. This is a proposal that even ex-Governor-General (and top ALP) Bill Hayden says he can live with.

This underscores what we wrote last year when then-ALP chieftain Paul Keating was pushing his reactionary, nationalist "aggressively Australian" call for a "republic" by the year 2000:

"Keating & Co.'s 'republic' posturing expresses the strategic interests of jackal Australian imperialism—which in 1942 when Japan's armies took Singapore, switched its alliance from London to Washington—and the gut white racism that is the one true article of Laborite faith. It is designed in part for international consumption; to further 'enmeshing with Asia' (where the English Crown is not flavour of the century), part of the drive for Australian capitalism to engage more directly in the superexploitation of the Asian masses."

—"Down With the Monarchy!"

ASP No. 158, Autumn 1996

Keating also hoped to distract workers and the oppressed from the depredations of 13 years of Labor's

union-busting austerity. His "republic," we said, promised the working masses nothing but "the opportunity to stand in a wholly 'proudly made in Australia' dole queue or have their picket lines attacked by 'all-Australian' cops; Asian refugees languishing in hell-hole concentration camps and Aboriginal youth subjected to murderous state terror would be the victims of armed bodies of men whose allegiance is no longer sworn to the Queen." Today, too, Howard (a monarchist) hopes all the parliamentary claptrap will divert attention from his even more vicious attacks on working people and the oppressed.

In this former British penal colony to which many were transported for their radical activity in sympathy with the French Revolution and struggles against the bloody English domination of Ireland, we fight to sweep away racist White Australian capitalism through socialist revolution. Revolutionary Marxist internationalists are for a republic: a *workers* republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

allegiance. In a crisis situation it is quite conceivable that a right-wing bonapartist coup attempting to restabilise the bourgeois order would seek out the monarchy as a buttress to reactionary mobilisation, and as a sign of "legality" and legitimacy against a weak bourgeois-democratic Parliament. The "private" Council of the Queen is the government-in-waiting of a possible future bonapartism. In 1975, Gough Whitlam's Australian Labor Party government, despite holding a parliamentary majority, was dismissed by Governor-General John Kerr, the Queen's personal representative, using the supposedly moribund "reserve powers of the Crown." Kerr exercised the "royal prerogative" against a government that was the object of a concerted CIA destabilisation campaign.

The late, unlamented Duke of Windsor, the once-king Edward VIII, and his would-be Queen Wallis were notoriously pro-Hitler and conspired with the Nazis to head a quisling government in England after the fall of France in 1940. Labour loyally supported "democratic"

British imperialism—and its colonial empire—during the inter-imperialist conflict. The 1945 Labour government of Clement Attlee and Aneurin Bevan, today regarded by much of the left as the "socialist" pinnacle of "old" Labour, then went to extraordinary lengths to shield the Nazi-loving Duke and the rest of the "royal family" in the "national interest."

It took a revolution, culminating in the workers' seizure of power under Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, to sweep away the Russian tsarist autocracy headed by Nicholas II, a relative of the British royal family. Like their latter-day British Labourite cousins, the Mensheviks served to prop up the old order to the very end. Writing after the Labour/TUC misleaders betrayed the 1926 general strike, Trotsky described the Labourite officialdom as the "backbone" of British imperialism: "If there were not a bureaucracy of the trade unions, then the police, the army, the courts, the lords, the monarchy would appear before the proletarian masses as nothing but pitiful

ridiculous playthings" ("The Errors in Principle of Syndicalism," November-December 1929).

The Spartacist League/Britain fights to build a revolutionary workers party, forged through splitting Labour's working-class base from its thoroughly pro-capitalist, and pro-monarchist, leaders. We uphold the authentic, militant traditions of the working class—not the disgusting parliamentary sycophancy of the Labour Party, but the revolutionary red republicanism of the Chartists of the mid-19th century. We call for abolition of the anachronisms of the monarchy, the established churches and the House of Lords, leading—as the relationship of forces permits—to confrontations over the institution of the House of Commons and the City of London financiers and capitalists it represents. What is needed is a sweeping social revolution culminating with the workers in power, opening a new line of historical development.

Adapted from *Workers Hammer* No. 159, November/December 1997

any development toward an international, classless socialist society. It was on the basis of China's planned economy that workers, peasants, women and national/ethnic minorities made huge strides forward. Trotskyists call for unconditional military defence of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution. Political revolution is premised on the need to defend the socialised property forms through overthrowing the nationalist bureaucracy which acts as a parasite on the planned economy and today prepares to bury it for good.

Two Hong Kong organisations more or less closely associated with the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel—the *October Review* group and the Pioneers—share the Cliffites' affinity for "democratic" counterrevolution. In separate statements on the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese rule, both groups bemoaned Beijing's threat to the thin veneer of "democratic" trappings installed by the last colonial administration while not once calling for opposition to the growing threat of capitalist counterrevolution in China.

Striking a pose to the left of such overt social democrats is the British Workers Power (WP) group and its League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI). Workers Power is an object lesson in Trotsky's description of centrism as "crystallized confusion." In its *Trotskyist International* (July-December 1997), the LRCI calls for "the Trotskyist programme of pro-

letarian political revolution as the only alternative to capitalist social counter-revolution." Yet another article in the very same issue insists that "in China, as in Eastern Europe, there are no grounds for expecting workers to mobilise in defence of what remains of post-capitalist property relations!"

What forces, then, are going to make a proletarian political revolution?! Behind WP's Trotskyist verbiage is a deep-seated affinity for social-democratic Labourism. These centrists cannot conceive of breaking the proletariat from its existing consciousness and winning workers to the cause of revolution. Thus, for Workers Power the call for political revolution has simply been a cover for tailing whatever reactionary force it deemed to be a "lesser evil" to Stalinism. In Poland in 1981, WP supported Solidarność even while admitting that this CIA-backed movement stood for capitalist restoration. Likewise, Workers Power called for a "united front" with Boris Yeltsin as he headed the forces of counterrevolution in the USSR in August 1991.

In sharp contrast, the International Communist League has fought tooth and nail against capitalist counter-revolution. At the time of the Walesa/CIA/Vatican power bid in Poland in late 1981, we raised the call: Stop Solidarność counterrevolution! In 1989, we mobilised all the resources of our international organisation to intervene in the turbulent events in East Germany in opposition to capitalist reunification and for a "red Germany of workers

councils," calling for political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West. And immediately after Yeltsin's power grab in Moscow in August 1991, the ICL distributed tens of thousands of leaflets in Russian calling on Soviet workers to "Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

If Chinese working people are not to suffer the devastation and bloodletting experienced by the masses of East Europe and the former Soviet Union, they must be won to the authentic communism of Lenin and Trotsky. The Stalinists' rush to open the road to full-scale capitalist restoration makes ever more urgent the need to forge a Trotskyist party to lead the workers and peasants in struggle. As we wrote in *Spartacist*:

"The program of political revolution is needed in China today if the workers and impoverished peasant masses are to emerge victorious in the class battles that lie ahead. As part of our fight to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, the International Communist League seeks to build an egalitarian-communist party based on the program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks and the early Chinese Communist Party. Such a party would link the struggle against the corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy in China with the class struggles of the militant Indonesian and South Korean workers against their capitalist rulers, and with those in the imperialist centers such as Japan. Only through extending socialist revolution to these countries will the threat of capitalist re-enslavement be eliminated once and for all and the basis laid for the development of China in a socialist Asia."

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 675, 3 October 1997

Workers Power...

(continued from page 3)

Yeltsin's forces of imperialist-backed capitalist counterrevolution. Now, with boundless cynicism, they try to claim they politically opposed it.

WP's "Solidarity with Solidarność Counterrevolution"

WP's road to Yeltsin's barricades was well-prepared. As we have said:

"While formally adopting a position of Soviet defensiveness in 1980 over Afghanistan, WP condemned the Soviet intervention against imperialist-backed feudal reaction as 'counterrevolutionary' (later also denouncing the Soviet withdrawal as 'counterrevolutionary'). In 1981, they 'critically' championed Solidarność even while admitting that Solidarność in power would mean capitalist restoration. In 1989, while claiming to be against the capitalist annexation of the former DDR by the Fourth Reich of German imperialism, Workers Power sided with counterrevolution at every crucial stage. The following year, they supported the anti-Soviet, fascist-infested nationalist movement in

cluded that this did "not mean that we do not solidarise with Solidarnosc."

At its 1981 congress it was clear that Solidarność had consolidated around a program of clerical reaction and capitalist restoration. It took up the CIA-inspired calls for "free elections" and "free trade unions." We Spartacists said that this company union for the Vatican, CIA and Western bankers was now making an open bid for power based on a program for capitalist restoration. We said, forthrightly, "If the Kremlin Stalinists, in their necessarily brutal, stupid way, intervene militarily... we will support this. And we take responsibility in advance for this; whatever the idiocies and atrocities they will commit, we do not flinch from defending the crushing of Solidarity's counterrevolution" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 289, 25 September 1981).

While we stood militarily with the Polish government in spiking Solidarność bid for power, we said that the Stalinist crackdown would only delay the day of reckoning, for Solidarność would have to be defeated politically within the working class. Thus our call to stop Solidarność counterrevolution was in-

capitulation to the imperialists' genocidal war against North Korea, the Cliffites labelled the Soviet Union "state capitalist" to deny any basis for its defence. In 1980, a month after the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan, WP rejected "state capitalism" and characterised the USSR as a degenerated workers state, a step to the left. A classic example of what Trotsky called the "crystallised confusion" of centrism, WP wrote that "We oppose the invasion of Afghanistan" while opining that it would be "tactically wrong for revolutionaries... to demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops."

After a decade of Cold War anti-Communism, and especially now in this period of "death of communism" bourgeois triumphalism, WP has moved increasingly to the right. Hailing "an end to decades of Stalinist dictatorship," their statement that "All genuine revolutionaries rejoiced at the downfall of these bureaucratic, totalitarian monstrosities" is of a piece with the SWP's obscene gloating that "Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

Specifically against the German Social Democrat Kautsky, who opposed proletarian revolution, Lenin said that "the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one" (*The State and Revolution*). By asserting that workers states could come into existence without smashing "the bourgeois form of state apparatus," the latter-day Kautskyites of Workers Power reveal their true program—pushing social-democratic parties like the Australian Labor Party or the British Labour Party into getting rid of capitalism.

Indeed, WP's Stalinophobic support to every sort of counterrevolutionary scum in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is a reflection of, and capitulation to, the pro-imperialist social democracy, which since 1917 sought the destruction of the October Revolution. From Australia to Europe, wherever the social-democratic parties are fronting for the capitalist offensive, Workers Power can be found behind them. In Britain, they backed Tony Blair's Labour Party, while in the French elections last May they openly called for a vote to the class-collaborationist alliance of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and various bourgeois formations—a popular front. In Australia WP shores up the hold of the racist Labor Party on the struggles of the exploited and oppressed, claiming that workers' illusions in the ALP can only "be broken by putting Labor to the test of office," i.e., vote ALP, no matter what.

At root, the anti-Sovietism of WP expresses their acceptance of the "democratic credentials" of their "own" bourgeoisie as good coin. Indeed, they have deeply imbibed the values of the Australian ruling class, not least its profound anti-woman bigotry. At a large workers demonstration on 12 November in Melbourne, a Workers Power leader, Lloyd, responded with vile misogynist epithets to political debate about their position on the former Soviet Union and their Laborism, twice hurling the word "C-T" at our comrades. This illustrates that the leadership of Workers Power will try to use the most grotesque means to draw a blood line to seal off political discussion. We won't fall for it—we will continue to pursue open political debate because it is through the clash of opinion and test of competing programs in action that Leninist parties are forged.

Workers Power are counterfeit Trotskyists who deny in practice the necessity of building a revolutionary vanguard party to bring to the working class genuine class consciousness—the understanding that it is their historic mission to take state power in their own name. WP fatuously denies the devastating effects of the destruction of the Soviet workers state, saying "the worst of the counter-revolutionary effects of those defeats have already been experienced in the previous period, and do not lie ahead." That's easy for them to say from where they sit in comfort in the West!

On the contrary, we of the ICL recognise that this is a new period in world history, one conditioned by colossal defeats for the proletariat. As Leon Trotsky wrote in his 1937 article, "Stalinism and Bolshevism":

"In these conditions, the task of the vanguard is above all not to let itself be carried along by the backward flow: it must swim against the current. If an unfavorable relation of forces prevents it from holding the positions that it has won, it must at least retain its ideological positions, because in them is expressed the dearly purchased experience of the past. Fools will consider this policy 'sectarian.' Actually it is the only means of preparing for a new tremendous surge forward with the coming historical tide."

Workers Power members who seek Marxist clarity and a forward, revolutionary perspective, the fight for new October Revolutions, would do well to undertake a serious investigation of the Trotskyist politics of the International Communist League. ■

Workers Hammer



Workers Power in the Third Camp: London, 16 May 1990 in anti-Communist "picket" calling for "Hands off the Baltic States" at Soviet consulate; (right) of one mind with anti-Soviet Cliffites over Lithuania.



Lithuania and were caught out collaborating with Russian fascists in sponsoring a 'trade union' speaking tour by one Yuri Butchenko."

— "Chickens Come Home to Roost Over Balkan Betrayal," *ASp* No. 157, Summer 1995-96

Today WP is particularly sensitive on the question of Polish Solidarność. In an anti-Communist lie that could just as easily have emanated from the "free trade unions" gang at ASIS or one of the CIA's labour fronts, WP says that we were in "support of the murder of Polish workers by Stalinists in 1981." By WP's lights, opposition to this capitalist-restorationist "union" (favoured by the CIA, the pope, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and then Labor prime minister Bob Hawke) could only be Stalinist. Acknowledging that all the "dominant tendencies" in Solidarność sought the restoration of capitalism, WP con-

cluded that this did "not mean that we do not solidarise with Solidarnosc." At its 1981 congress it was clear that Solidarność had consolidated around a program of clerical reaction and capitalist restoration. It took up the CIA-inspired calls for "free elections" and "free trade unions." We Spartacists said that this company union for the Vatican, CIA and Western bankers was now making an open bid for power based on a program for capitalist restoration. We said, forthrightly, "If the Kremlin Stalinists, in their necessarily brutal, stupid way, intervene militarily... we will support this. And we take responsibility in advance for this; whatever the idiocies and atrocities they will commit, we do not flinch from defending the crushing of Solidarity's counterrevolution" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 289, 25 September 1981).

Centrist Confusionism and Cliffite Recidivism

WP originated in Britain in a 1975 split from Tony Cliff's virulently anti-Soviet International Socialists (now the Socialist Workers Party). Born of

In the spirit of its Cliffite heritage, the LRCI's August congress took up the question of "the nature of the state form in the degenerate workers' states" involving "the question of whether the state machine was smashed, in the Marxist sense of the term, during the post-war overthrow of capitalism in Eastern Europe, China, Indochina and Cuba, and the related question of whether the state machine had to be smashed to allow capitalism to be restored in the post-1989 period." In a word, their answer is, "No."

WP recognises that Cuba, China and Yugoslavia became workers states. Nevertheless WP's long-standing position is that "Castro and co, like Mao and Tito before them, carried out a counter-revolutionary overthrow of capitalism" (*Trotskyist International*, Summer 1988). So imbued is WP with social-democratic horror of their own bourgeoisie's hue and cry about communist "totalitarianism" that they ludicrously claim that every overthrow of capitalism since the Russian Revolution has been "counter-revolutionary." And what could a counter-revolutionary overthrow of capitalism mean—except, perhaps, a return to feudalism?

Two years ago, WP's refusal to take a stand for military defence of the Bosnian Serbs under massive NATO bombing blew apart the LRCI as most of their New Zealand group and all of their Latin America supporters split away. Revealing a continuing political schism, Workers Power reports that "At the Fourth Congress, the former minority position secured a narrow majority. The Congress adopted the view that the bureaucratic, Stalinist overthrows took place without the smashing of the bourgeois form of state apparatus." Does this mean that capitalism was not really destroyed in Eastern Europe, Cuba, etc. (à la Cliff)? Or does it mean that capitalism can be overthrown without smashing "the bourgeois form of state," an open repudiation of Leninism (à la Karl Kautsky)?

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Southeast Asia...

(continued from page 12)

withering under the grotesque caricature of socialism practised by its bureaucratic rulers, is in the throes of famine. Trotskyists call for unconditional military defence of these deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies. We call for revolutionary reunification of Korea, seeking to mobilise the powerful and combative South Korean proletariat to sweep away bourgeois class rule and smash imperialist depredation.

The growing competition between the U.S. and Japan in the Pacific, and similar developments elsewhere, underscore the Marxist understanding of imperialism as laid out by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin in his 1916 book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in the midst of World War I. Polemicising against German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky's view of an "ultra-imperialism" in which conflicts among the capitalist powers could be peacefully resolved, Lenin insisted rather that the ruthless competition for markets, resources and investments would lead only to more and bloodier world wars unless the imperialist bourgeoisies were overthrown through workers revolution. Today, Kautsky's revisionist notion has been recycled by many leftists who join with various bourgeois ideologues in proclaiming the advent of a "global economy" dominated by "transnational" corporations. Thus, pointing in particular to the rapid industrialisation of Southeast Asia, David North's Socialist Equality Party has asserted that "globalisation" constitutes a "qualitative transformation" of the capitalist system.

In arguing against labour reformists and union-hating "socialists" like the Northites, we stressed: "The growth of internationally competitive manufacturers in East Asia and Latin America is reversible and cannot continue at anything close to the rate of increase of the past few decades. That is a political, economic and, indeed, mathematical certainty" ("The 'Global Economy' and Labor Reformism," Part Two, *WV* No. 661, 7 February). Now that the financial crisis roiling Southeast Asia has made this apparent to all, the Northites talk of "the shattering of the 'Asian miracle' and the collapse of the associated myth that this represented some new and viable path of capitalist development" (*Workers News*, 3 October). This cynical "discovery" only underscores our characterisation of North's outfit as "political bandits" who blithely change their line to suit their immediate purposes.

More significantly, the pro-capitalist labour bureaucracies have used the spectre of "globalisation" and the shift of production to "Third World" countries to line up workers in support of their "own" imperialist exploiters. The American AFL-CIO misleaders agitate for anti-Asian, anti-Mexican protectionism, blaming workers abroad for falling wages in the U.S. In Japan, where workers' living standards and jobs have come under growing attack as a result of corporate restructuring and "downsizing," the labour tops likewise push chauvinist class collaborationism. The Zenkowan dock workers union issued a leaflet in March condemning



Tempo



ASp photo

Left: Women workers play a prominent role in Southeast Asian labour struggles, as in this strike in Indonesia. Right: Spartacist League contingent at Melbourne protest against Suharto dictatorship calls for release of imprisoned workers' leaders, independence for East Timor.

port workers in Southeast Asia for "stealing" jobs, while the Communist-led Zenroren union federation has demonstrated against "unclean" rice imported from Thailand. The union bureaucrats refuse to organise Korean and Chinese minority workers who have toiled in Japan for generations, while segregating immigrant workers recently arrived from Asia and Africa in unions separate from those of Japanese workers. In Australia, the Labor Party and the ACTU union tops actively fuel anti-Asian racism. For years the Maritime Union leaders have railed against "foreign seamen on Australian ships," and the leaders of the CFMEU regularly urge the coal bosses to "get tough on the Japanese." In the recent Hunter Valley coal strike, miners received messages of support from unionists in Japan and elsewhere, yet the prospect of turning such sympathy into class-struggle solidarity action is poisoned by the union tops' chauvinist protectionism.

The political struggle against the chauvinist misleaders of the working class is critical to forging revolutionary vanguard parties of the proletariat from the U.S. to Japan and Australia. As the Spartacist Group Japan, section of the International Communist League, wrote in a recent article (*Japanese Spartacist* No. 18, May 1997):

"We fight for active solidarity with the struggles of militant workers in South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines and throughout Asia. We reach out in the spirit of internationalism also through fighting for full and equal citizenship rights and trade-union rights for all immigrant labourers in Japan, and through fighting every form of racist discrimination against the more than one million people of Korean and Chinese ancestry living here as second-class citizens. The exploited and oppressed 'foreign' workers in Japan are a human bridge to the toilers throughout Asia, toward whose liberation a socialist revolution in the industrial powerhouse of Japan would be a powerful blow."

Asian Tinderbox

The crisis in Southeast Asia has had an explosive effect on the proletariat in these countries. In Thailand, with currency devaluation amounting to a 40 percent cut in real wages and more than 100,000 layoffs looming by the end of this year alone, thousands of workers marched in Bangkok on 14 September under the slogan, "Poor people pay off the debt while the evil capitalists sell off the country." Subsequent protests were joined by rural peasants and broad layers of the middle class. Recalling the protests that led to the fall of the military regime in 1992, the government backed off from implementing some of the measures demanded by the IMF vultures, such as a new oil tax on consumers. Finally Prime Minister Chavalit, a former army general, resigned after threatening a state of emergency which military leaders refused to implement.

The Philippines, where union membership has nearly doubled since 1985, has been hit by a series of strikes recently, including a walkout by 5,000 postal

workers, while thousands of students, teachers, office workers and others joined in a march on Manila for higher wages and against rises in the price of oil and other basic commodities. In Indonesia, thousands of workers at the state-owned IPTN aircraft manufacturer in Bandung went on strike on 13 October to demand extra pay to offset the fall in the rupiah's value and to protest corruption—a sensitive question in a country where Suharto's family and cronies have made fabulous fortunes in state-sponsored business ventures.

Last month, Suharto appointed one Widjojo Nitisastro to be his special "troubleshooter" in enforcing the IMF's dictates. This is the same man to whom Suharto turned in 1966 to "restructure" the economy after the anti-Communist bloodbath the year before that claimed at least half a million lives. From the Indonesian military dictatorship and Mahathir Mohamad's Islamic regime in Malaysia to Thailand's "constitutional monarchy" and the Philippines with its veneer of "democratic" trappings, the imperialist-backed bourgeoisies are more than willing to unleash bloody repression to prop up the system of brutal exploitation.

The emergence of the proletariat in Southeast Asia bears resemblance to the development of the Russian working class under the tsarist autocracy around the turn of the century. Pointing to Russia's "combined and uneven development," where modern industry existed alongside a backward peasant economy, Leon Trotsky advanced the perspective of permanent revolution for countries of belated capitalist development, where the bourgeoisie was incapable of realising the tasks associated with the bourgeois revolutions in West Europe. Only through the proletarian seizure of power, supported by the peasantry, can agrarian revolution, political democracy and liberation from the yoke of imperialism be achieved. This perspective was vindicated by the October Revolution of 1917, in which the numerically small but powerful proletariat, led by the Bolshevik Party, broke the chain of imperialism at its weakest link.

Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks understood that genuine socialist development could only be achieved through the extension of proletarian rule internationally, particularly to the advanced capitalist countries. The nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," pushed by Stalin and his heirs, sabotaged the struggle for socialist revolutions elsewhere and fatally undermined the Soviet workers state, leading ultimately to its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92. Writing in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Trotsky warned:

"The question formulated by Lenin—*Who shall prevail?*—is a question of the correlation of forces between the Soviet Union and the world revolutionary proletariat on the one hand, and on the other international capital and the hostile forces within the Union.... Military intervention is a danger. The intervention of cheap goods

in the baggage trains of a capitalist army would be an incomparably greater one."

This same danger is today fuelling the drive toward capitalist restoration in China, whose Stalinist rulers preach the lie that only through integration into the world capitalist market can the country achieve modernisation and social progress. A Trotskyist party in China would link the fight for political revolution to stop the counterrevolutionary drive with the struggle for socialist revolution throughout the region.

Throughout Southeast Asia, the despotic capitalist rulers promote religious obscurantism and racist xenophobia, at times under the cloak of "anti-imperialism," to deflect plebeian anger over the current crisis. Typical of this are the recent anti-Semitic diatribes by Malaysia's Mahathir singling out Western "speculator" George Soros for causing the financial crisis. At the same time, Malaysia's Islamic regime persecutes Hindus and other minorities. The existence of a powerful Chinese bourgeoisie throughout Southeast Asia has time and again provided fuel for racist demagogues, particularly in Indonesia, where reactionary Islamic forces have fomented anti-Chinese riots whose victims are typically small merchants. And in the Catholic-dominated Philippines, both Chinese and Muslims are subjected to persecution.

The necessity for a proletarian axis to cut through the region's myriad ethnic, communal and national divisions is underscored by the multiethnic character of the working class in these countries. For example, migrant labourers regularly travel between Malaysia and Indonesia, while in Thailand, fully one million immigrants had been absorbed into the workforce until the recent crisis.

Closely linked to the fight to defend immigrants against chauvinist reaction is the need to mobilise the working class to champion the rights of women, particularly against religious fundamentalist forces. Women workers make up as much as half of the proletariat throughout Southeast Asia and predominate in many light industries, such as the Nike slave-labour plants. Young women workers have played a leading and combative role in the recent strikes in Indonesia and were prominent in the Bangkok anti-government protests.

The combative proletariat of Southeast Asia must learn the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution if it is to throw off the pervasive oppression and poverty enforced by its capitalist rulers and their imperialist patrons. Foremost is the need to build internationalist vanguard parties committed to the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, serving as tribunes of all the oppressed. The International Communist League fights to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International to lead the struggle for new October Revolutions from Malaysia and Thailand to Australia, Japan and the U.S. Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 678, 14 November 1997

Contact the Spartacist League

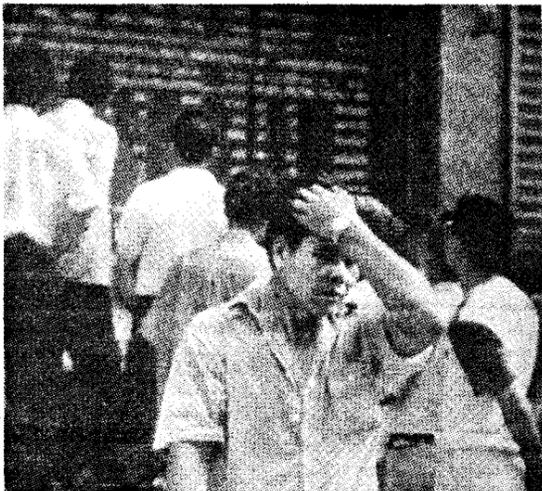
Melbourne

GPO Box 2339, Melbourne Vic 3001
Phone: (03) 9654 4315

Sydney

GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001
Phone: (02) 9281 2181

Capitalist Greed Fuels Worker Unrest

Crisis Rocks
Southeast Asia

Jones/Sinopix



Chris Stowers for Asiaweek

As stock markets crashed throughout Southeast Asia, financial crisis sparked strikes and demonstrations. Right: Bangkok protest demands resignation of Thai prime minister.

For a Socialist Federation of Southeast Asia!

TOKYO, 29 November—The cascading financial crisis which began in Thailand last summer, rapidly engulfing the capitalist regimes of Southeast Asia, is now threatening to spread throughout the western Pacific Rim. After months of economic turmoil and burgeoning street demonstrations, the Thai government resigned earlier this month. October saw significant strikes by workers in the Philippines against the ravages of currency devaluation, fuelling political instability in the run-up to presidential elections next spring, as well as in Indonesia, where the Suharto dictatorship has faced growing popular unrest since last year. In late November the South Korean won went through the floor, sending tremors through the region. Now Japan—the principal industrial and financial power in the region, whose economy has been in a severe slump since the start of the decade—has been badly shaken as its oldest and fourth largest stockbroker, Yamaichi Securities, collapsed, as did a major bank, Hokkaido Takushoku. Meanwhile, the Moody's rating agency is threatening to downgrade the bonds of three large Japanese banks to "junk" status.

The drastic fall in Thailand's currency, the baht, which began in July, touched off a chain reaction of devaluations and stock market crashes—extending to Hong Kong, Tokyo and Wall Street—simultaneously exploding the myth of the Southeast Asian "economic miracle." Following earlier industrial development in South Korea, over the past two decades there has been massive imperialist investment in the Asian "tigers," centrally by Japanese capital. But, as we have noted, "The recent economic boom in East Asia, like all such capitalist booms, generated a drive for ever-greater profits and re-

sulting financial speculation which could not be sustained. It had to crash, and it did crash" ("Black Monday II on Wall Street—'Death of Communism' Myth Goes Splat," *Workers Vanguard* No. 677, 31 October 1997).

The immediate cause for this series of crashes has a lot to do with China, now dubbed the new Asian "dragon." The baht started to fall a day after Hong Kong returned to Chinese control, with the bureaucratic regime in Beijing vowing to maintain the capitalist economy of the former British colony. Dominated by the increasingly powerful Chinese bourgeoisie expelled from the mainland by the 1949 Revolution, Hong Kong is a key gateway for capitalist restoration in the Chinese deformed workers state. As the venal Stalinist bureaucracy accelerates capitalist "market reforms," low-wage labour in privately owned factories on the mainland is greatly undercutting exports from Thailand, Indonesia and elsewhere. The danger of looming counterrevolution was underscored by the effusive welcome by American political and business leaders for Chinese president Jiang Zemin, who visited the U.S. shortly after announcing a plan to privatise the bulk of state-owned industry.

The urgent need for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Beijing bureaucracy and stop the galloping threat of capitalist restoration is today posed pointblank. The fate of China—as well as of the Vietnamese and North Korean deformed workers states—is integrally linked to the region as a whole. Just as the Industrial Revolution beginning in the late 18th century gave birth to what Karl Marx called the gravedigger of the capitalist system—the industrial working class—so too econ-

omic development in Southeast Asia has created a vibrant, young proletariat from Thailand to Indonesia to the Philippines. The road to the emancipation of these workers, and with them the peasantry and oppressed ethnic/national minorities, lies in the fight for a socialist federation of Southeast Asia, linked to the struggle for proletarian revolution in Japan, Australia, the U.S. and other imperialist powers.

U.S.-Japan Rivalry Heats Up

In large part, the industrial boom in Southeast Asia resulted from the massive shift by Japanese corporations to producing electrical appliances, automobiles and other commodities in the region. This process was accelerated following the 1985 Plaza Accord, which the U.S. pushed in order to cut its trade deficit with Japan. In doubling the value of the yen against the U.S. dollar, increasing the price of Japanese exports, the accord impelled the Japanese bourgeoisie both to step up attacks on labour at home and to sharply expand production facilities in low-wage areas. Japanese capital now accounts for more than a third of all foreign investment in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

While rampant speculation helped touch off the recent currency devaluations, there were more fundamental factors at work. While the economies of the region are closely tied to Japan, the currencies—including, until July, the baht—are pegged to the U.S. dollar. Until recently, Tokyo was able to maintain the yen's edge against the dollar. But when the yen dropped precipitously against the dollar, Thai, Indonesian and Malaysian exports became much more

expensive in Japan. With the sharp rise in exports of Chinese manufactured goods, the previously astronomical growth rates of the "tiger" economies slowed to a crawl this year.

Southeast Asia has today become a key theatre for renewed inter-imperialist rivalries—between not only the U.S. and Japan but also Germany, which is rapidly pumping capital into Asia. As long as the USSR existed, the imperialist powers to a certain degree subordinated their conflicting economic interests to further the U.S.-led anti-Soviet alliance. These constraints have been removed with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thus, when the U.S. engineered an infusion of \$30 billion by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to bail out (U.S. banks in) Mexico in 1995, this was openly challenged by Germany and Japan. For its part, Washington refused to join in the \$17 billion IMF bailout of Thailand recently pushed through by Japan—even while insisting on a role in drawing up the austerity measures imposed on the Thai people as part of the "rescue" package. But when the IMF put together another "emergency aid package" for Indonesia last week, the U.S. put its oar in with a \$3 billion contribution.

The explosiveness of U.S.-Japan trade rivalry was underscored recently by the threatened American embargo of Japanese cargo ships (see *WV* No. 677, 31 October). Japan's current drive to establish an "Asian Fund" outside the control of the U.S.-dominated IMF initially drew howls of protest from Washington. November's APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) talks in Vancouver featured more jockeying among the imperialists and between them and their Southeast Asian clients.

The Australian ruling class is deeply conflicted and fearful of the growing rivalries between Japan, their biggest trading partner but also target of their deepest racist fears, and their big brother U.S. "protector." A jackal imperialist power, Australia has moved to reassert domination of "its" backyard. In aid of its puppet Papua New Guinea government which has been waging war against a separatist rebellion on the island of Bougainville, Australia recently sent "unarmed" troops to police a fraudulent "peace" deal.

Even while losing its once hegemonic economic position, U.S. imperialism continues to project its overwhelming military might to subjugate the peoples of the semicolonial countries and to maintain an edge against its imperialist rivals. Japanese imperialism has also been moving to assert itself militarily. After amending the constitutional ban on deployment of military forces overseas, the Japanese government participated in a United Nations "peacekeeping" mission in Cambodia in 1992-93. This summer, as the currency crisis erupted, Prime Minister Hashimoto dispatched three military aircraft to Thailand, supposedly intended to "evacuate" civilians during fighting in Cambodia between Hun Sen's government and his royalist rivals.

Over 35,000 American troops are stationed in South Korea, forming a front line for U.S. imperialist interests in East and Southeast Asia. The collapse of the USSR has greatly increased imperialist pressures against the remaining deformed workers states. In Vietnam, the Hanoi bureaucracy's pursuit of capitalist "market reforms" threatens to undo the heroic victory against the U.S. and its South Vietnamese puppet regime in 1975. And today North Korea,

continued on page 11