

Roll back bosses' offensive! Defend immigrants against racist attacks!

Workers struggle across Europe

At the end of October, militant Air France strikers surged onto the runways of Paris airports and sent the French government reeling. The combative strikers stopped planes and battled it out with riot police, soon becoming "total masters of the place" in the words of the authoritative Paris paper *Le Monde*. Inspired by their courage and determination, other workers sought to join the strike. The conservative cabinet of Prime Minister Balladur capitulated, scrapping its "restructuring" plan to slash thousands of jobs.

The *Financial Times* (1 November 1993) summed up the impact: "Workers across Europe appear to have taken strength from the spectacular victory of Air France employees.... In Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain and France, employers are facing increasing militancy as they demand job cuts and flexibility." Very soon this fighting spirit was expressed in a series of sharp labour battles. On 24 November, striking coal miners in Metz, France fought a pitched battle with the police. The next day, hundreds of thousands of Spanish workers took to the street to protest the



Barcelona, 9 November 1993: SEAT car workers march in protest against plant closure.

Julian Martin/AP

Socialist government's wage-slashing "social pact". And on 26 November, a one-day strike in Belgium against a government austerity plan shut the country down tight. In Italy, Spain and France university and secondary school

students were protesting plans to drastically slash expenditures on education. Spanish unions have called a nationwide general strike for 27 January against the government's plans to junk restrictions on layoffs and firings that have existed

since the Franco era.

While workers across the continent are fighting back, hard, they are engaged in sharp *defensive* battles. West Europe is in the throes of the deepest

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Northern Ireland: Major/Reynolds demand Republican capitulation

British troops out now!

No just solution without workers rule!

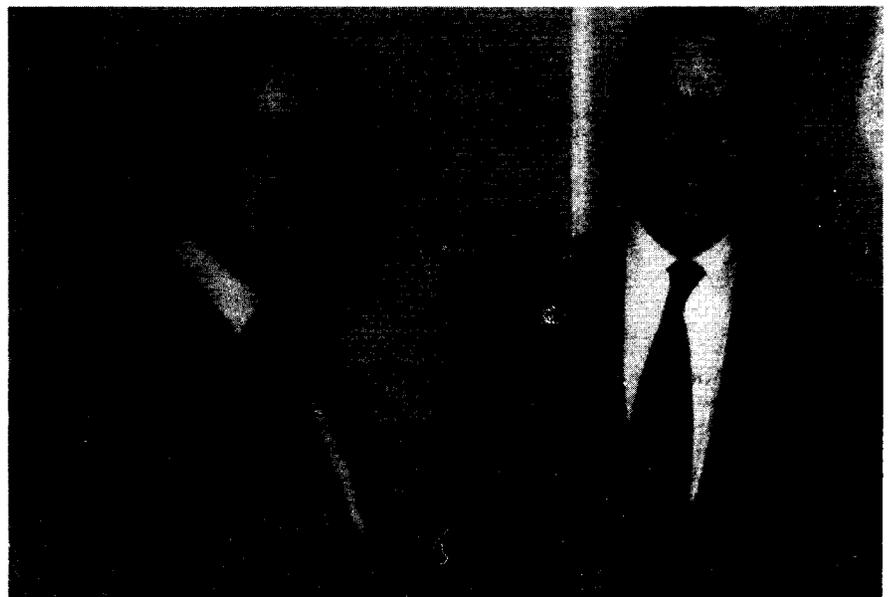
Hyped up in grandiose terms as "a solemn commitment on the road to peace", the London and Dublin governments issued their joint "peace" declaration on 15 December. The declaration lays out the terms on which the blood-soaked British imperialists and the clericalist southern state will allow Sinn Féin to sit at their sordid "negotiating" table. The prominent Republican, Bernadette McAliskey, aptly described it as "a fraudulent document whose intent is to deceive; to create illusions of agreement where none exists, and to hint at the existence of concessions where none are contemplated" (*Guardian*, 31 December 1993). Even more to the point is the comment of a Belfast Catholic woman: "Do you know what this peace deal means? It means a Catholic will be shot dead tonight" (*Independent*, 16 December 1993).

In the last issue of *Workers Hammer* (no 138, November/December 1993) we warned: "Any imperialist 'deal' will be bloody and brutal and will necessarily be

at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. And it would not do any good for working-class Protestants either." The declaration itself, all the subsequent to and fro about "clarification" and the various threats, which could quickly and easily be transformed into greater repression of the oppressed Catholics and heightened communal violence, serve to illustrate that under capitalism there can be no progressive solution to the situation in Northern Ireland. Only victorious workers revolution, forged with the revolutionary unity of the working class, Catholic and Protestant, can bring about any just or democratic solution in this circumstance of interpenetrated peoples.

The Major/Reynolds deal dictates that the IRA, and the IRA alone, must renounce violence. A member of the IRA military command noted that "The offer of Major and Reynolds consists solely in demanding that we give up the armed struggle and then, in negotiations, decide how we are to hand over our weapons

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Albert Reynolds (left) and John Major: partners in bloody imperialist "peace" fraud.

AP

Islamic fundamentalists target Bangladeshi writer

On 29 November, 5000 Muslims, almost all men, stopped traffic in the streets of Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka. They were "praying" that the popular poetess, essayist and novelist, Taslima Nasreen be hanged. Her crimes? "Blasphemy" ("writings which conspire against Islam" by openly portraying and discussing female sexuality) and "treason" — for courageously denouncing Muslim-communalist reprisals against Bangladesh's Hindu minority in the aftermath of the destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya, India on 6 December 1992.

Echoing the late Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini's call to murder British-Indian Muslim novelist Salman Rushdie for his *Satanic Verses*, a fatwa (Islamic death edict) had already been issued on 24 September 1993 and a "reward" of 50,000 Takas (£850) put up. The murderous witch hunt has been whipped up by clerics who formed a "Taslima Nasreen Peshan Committee" (literally, "Commit-

tee to grind down Taslima Nasreen"). "She is worse than a prostitute," fulminated Maulana Azizul Haque, the mullah who has called for her execution. 'She demands "freedom of the vagina"... This is against the Koran and Allah, it's blasphemy'" (*Guardian*, 10 December 1993). These are the same forces that viciously repudiated and cast out the thousands of their own womenfolk raped by the Pakistani army during the war for independence in 1971. Now Nasreen lives under constant threat of assassination.

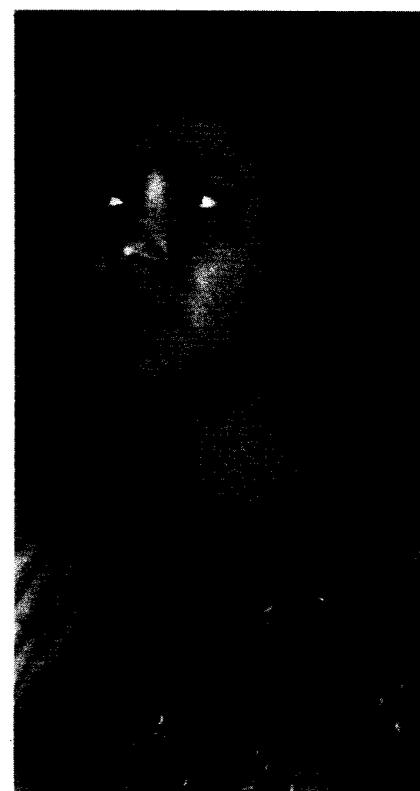
Meanwhile Nasreen, her passport vindictively seized by the government headed by woman prime minister Begum Khalida Zia, remains defiant: "I will be the last to seek asylum in foreign countries. I will die here, and out of my ashes hundreds of Taslimas will be reborn" (*Independent on Sunday*, 5 December 1993). On 9 October 1993, when the reactionary fanatics managed to sponsor a general shutdown in the rural Sylhet district, 15 student organisations took to

the streets of Dhaka to protest against the fatwa. Noted writers such as Allen Ginsburg, Günter Grass, John Irving, Norman Mailer and Amy Tan, as well as Salman Rushdie, have come out in support of Nasreen. It is the duty of the international working class to rally to her defence.

Taslima Nasreen first shot to fame and attracted the hatred of the fundamentalists in 1991 with her essay anthology, *Selected Columns*. In it she attacks the Koran, quoting from it to prove that religion "discriminates against women and treats them like sexual commodities" (*India Today*, 15 December 1993). The immediate focus of the mullah's vituperative wrath is her immensely popular recent novella *Lajja* ("Shame"), released in February 1993. *Lajja* depicts a Hindu family attacked by Muslim communalists in Bangladesh, following the razing of the mosque at Ayodhya. By July, when the Bangladesh government banned it as "inflammatory", it had already sold 60,000 copies.

In India the Hindu communalists and fascists of the Bharatiya Janata Party/Vishwa Hindu Parishad (BJP/VHP) combine have attempted to utilise *Lajja* for their vile communalist ends, publishing a pirate edition of the book. Their only concern is to stoke the fires of anti-Muslim pogroms, in particular against Muslim Bangladeshi immigrant "infiltrators" who have fled from the horrendous poverty of Bangladesh to the slums of West Bengal and cities like Delhi. Nasreen herself says: "I am very pained at what is happening with my book in India. I condemn the politics of the BJP and the Jamaat-e-Islami [the main Muslim fundamentalist party in Bangladesh] equally" (*India Today*, 31 October 1993).

It takes more than just obvious, elementary decency for any individual to take a stand like Nasreen has done in situations like Bangladesh today: it takes courage, especially if you are a woman, expected — in Nasreen's words — to remain "veiled, illiterate and in the kitchen" (*Independent on Sunday*, 5 December 1993). And the deadly campaign directed at her highlights the fact that the struggle



Ashoke Chakrabarty

Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen: target of Islamic fundamentalist anti-woman campaign.

for women's liberation on the subcontinent is inseparably tied to the fight against religious obscurantism, caste-based bigotry and bloody communalism which could plunge the masses into horrors surpassing those of the 1947-49 Partition, which was a direct product of British imperialism's divide-and-rule policies. It will only succeed on the programme of Permanent Revolution, the revolutionary seizure of power and overthrow of capitalism by the working class, at the head of its peasant allies and the oppressed, and led by a genuinely communist — Leninist-Trotskyist — party. Defend Taslima Nasreen! For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For a socialist federation of South Asia! ■



TROTSKY

The Third International on the fight against colonial oppression

The Third International of Lenin and Trotsky codified the revolutionary Marxist position on the national and colonial question. Karl Radek, addressing the second congress of the Third International in 1920, at the time of the Irish struggle for independence, stressed that the British proletariat will never liberate itself from the yoke of capitalism without stepping into the

breach for the colonial liberation movement. The question of Irish national self-determination was not completely resolved at that time. The partition left a Protestant majority statelet in which the Catholics remain oppressed. There cannot be any just solution under capitalism for such situations of interpenetrated peoples. Today, just as in 1920, revolutionaries have a special duty to combat the imperialist oppression of their own ruling class and their Labour Party henchmen.

The Labour Conference at Scarborough passed an important resolution in which it demanded the independence of India and Egypt. Not a single Communist stood up to tell the Conference that the MacDonalds support the British bourgeoisie fooling British workers when they talk about the independence of India, Ireland and Egypt. It is simple hypocrisy and swindling that these same people, who could not even rise to the level of characterizing General Dwyer as a common murderer in Parliament on the occasion of the Amritsar bloodbath, pretend to be the defenders of colonial independence. We greatly regret that our party comrades who are in the Labour Party did not tear the mask off these swindlers' faces. The International will not judge the British comrades by the articles that they write in the *Call* and the *Workers Dreadnought*, but by the number of comrades who are thrown into gaol for agitating in the colonial countries. We would point out to the British comrades that it is their duty to help the Irish movement with all their strength, that it is their duty to agitate among the British troops, that it is their duty to use all their resources to block the policy that the British transport and railway unions are at present pursuing of permitting troop transports to be shipped to Ireland. It is very easy at the moment to speak out in Britain against intervention in Russia, since even the bourgeois left is against it. It is harder for the British comrades to take up the cause of Irish independence and of anti-militarist activity. We have a right to demand this difficult work of the British comrades.

—Second Congress of the Communist International, 25 July 1920



LENIN

WORKERS HAMMER



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For a Socialist United States of Europe!**

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AIDS and the Fourth Reich's Blood Business

London: For Labor/Minority Mobilizations to Stop the Fascists!

For worker/student action

Smash public sector pay freeze!

For a full, living grant for all students!

In demonstrations and college occupations in London, Glasgow and other cities across Britain last December students protested the government's latest attacks on education which aim to slash student grants by 30 per cent over the next three years and cut the tertiary intake by 3.5 per cent. The National Union of Students (NUS) have called a "day of action" on 20 January. For students forced to eke out a living on starvation-level grants the cutbacks are another kick in the teeth. Colleges today are overcrowded and understaffed. And of those that do manage to graduate (usually after having accumulated a massive debt) many have only the dole queue to look forward to. Under new government proposals unemployed youth face reduced or no income support at all.

Spartacist League (SL) comrades intervened at meetings and occupations in Glasgow and London. At an 8 December student mass meeting at Glasgow University an SL supporter emphasised that the attacks on students do not take place in isolation. Attacks on workers, women and minorities come from a capitalist system

locked in deep recession. What's needed is working class/student action against the cutbacks. *Free, quality education for all! Open admissions to all tertiary institutions! For a full living grant! For staff/student/campus worker control of the universities!*

But during last year's actions the NUS and student union bureaucracies worked overtime to sabotage student militancy. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supporter Andrew Brammer was suspended for fighting the cuts (see SL leaflet below). At Guildhall University on 1 November the student bureaucrats opposed an occupation. And when police and security guards barred students from the LSE campus, General Secretary of the School, Tesha Fitzpatrick, alibied the cops, complaining that the march had been "hijacked by the Socialist Worker element" (*London Student*, 13-26 January).

Faced with the NUS' sabotage many students looked to the reformist SWP and Militant as an alternative. But the SWP and Militant's anti-Tory rhetoric is a thin cover for their strategy of channelling student anger into support for the pro-capitalist

Labour Party. A Labour government will be just as vicious as the Tories in carrying out capitalist austerity—the point is to fight to overthrow capitalism. Loyalty to the Labour Party invariably converts into support for the capitalist state apparatus. At the Strathclyde student occupation on 8 December the SWP joined with the hated campus cops to exclude SL supporters from entering the occupied building. Meanwhile SWPers inside (some of whom sat around playing cards with the cops) pretended to "negotiate" with the campus management. In reality they were making pathetic *appeals* on campus administration principals to endorse their campaign against the cutbacks.

Attacks on education, health and social services aim to place the burden of capitalist crisis firmly on the backs of workers and the oppressed. Kenneth Clarke's budget last year announced a three-year pay freeze (a virtual ten per cent pay cut) for the five million strong public sector workforce spread through post offices, railways and councils across the country. In November last year 300,000 civil servants struck for a day against government privatisation plans. But the desperately

needed class-struggle fightback against the capitalist attacks is the last thing the Labourite trade union misleaders want. Instead they have worked to kill any working-class action.

From fighting the rise of the fascist BNP to protesting education cutbacks thousands of youth have been forced into action against this decrepit capitalist system. But in and of themselves youth do not have the social power to combat and defeat capitalist attacks. Young people need to take a side with the working class. The wealth of this country is created by the working class—white, black, Asian, women and men. It is they that have real social power. This potential power was illustrated recently when militant Air France workers fought and defeated Mitterrand/Balladur's vicious wage slashing and redundancy plans. The impact of this strike was not lost on the thousands of students who demonstrated shortly after and found the government in retreat and backing off from threats to cut back housing benefits. French bourgeois spokesmen are now raising the spectre of May 1968, when massive student protests ignited a general strike of ten million workers and directly posed the question of which class shall rule.

What's needed is a revolutionary workers party forged in political battle against the Labour and trade union tops and committed to achieving workers rule. Only then can we begin to build a planned, socialist, egalitarian society that guarantees jobs, education and quality health care for all—a society free once and for all from capitalist economic chaos, racism and fascist terror. The SL is dedicated to this struggle. ■

Guildhall University: anti-communist witch hunt spiked

We reprint below a Guildhall University Spartacist Society leaflet of 14 December 1993 in response to a sinister violence-baiting attack on us by the Student Union executive. At a 15 December executive meeting the student bureaucrats were challenged by SL supporter Michael Collins along with three campus supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and two anarchists who joined us to protest this slander. After some initial backtracking and squirming the executive meeting eventually passed a motion retracting the point regarding the Spartacist League from their 9 November minutes. We count the spiking of their attack as a small victory, not just for us but for all campus leftists and students. And while SWPers on campus were rightly prepared to protest this anti-communist attack it should also be noted that the SWP policy of excluding the SL and other left groups from their "public meetings" is a dangerous attack on the principle of workers democracy.

"Lessons of October 16: London cops protect fascists against anti-racist protesters." This announcement of a Spartacist forum at Guildhall has triggered an anti-communist witch hunt by the Student Union exec, who accuse us of "promoting violence".

On 9 November, the SU executive passed the following resolution:

"...It was agreed that banning such publicity [Spartacist's] would not be infringing anyone's right to 'Freedom Of Speech' as the S.U. had a clear policy of not promoting violence.... The executive abhors violence of any kind and will not support any group which condones violence. To this effect any organisation approaching the Union, (found upon investigation [to] condone such views) for Club & Society status would be rejected.... Martin proposed that the Spartacists were such a group and as such their budget proposal be rejected by the executive."

The political significance of this is to outlaw the presence of our Marxist organisation here and set us up for repression at the hands of the capitalist state. The SU exec are small potatoes, but their attack can set a precedent for more sinister forces, like those who beat and jailed anti-fascist protesters on 16 October, to go after us. Bad things tend to happen to people who are labelled "violent". This SU exec motion targets our organisation, but it's also an implicit condemnation of all those anti-fascist youth who came out on 16 October because they wanted to crush the fascists. They were prevented from doing so by the cops who viciously attacked the protesters and made sure they got nowhere near the BNP headquarters.

The attempted censorship of the Spartacists at Guildhall is an assault on the democratic rights of students to open political discussion, debate and association. Who will be next? Black or Asian or gay students protesting racism or homophobia? The demand that this SU exec motion be rescinded is an elementary act of self-defense for Guildhall students.

The Spartacist forum on the "Lessons of October 16" told the truth: that 16 October was not a victory, that the strategy of mobilising anti-fascists to pressure the state to ban the fascists is a disaster; that there is a desperate need instead for a strategy that sees the state and cops for what they are—enemies of the working people. We hailed the courageous action of anti-fascist youth who drove the BNP scum out of Brick Lane in September. But we have insisted, including at the forum advertised in the "offending" poster, that *what are urgently necessary is mass trade union/minority mobilisations to drive the fascists off the streets.*

We are communist revolutionaries who expose the role of the Labour Party and the TUC bureaucrats. These bureaucrats

seek to keep the struggles of the working class and oppressed within the confines of decaying capitalism. *The capitalist state is not neutral.* Reformist organisations such as the SWP, like their cronies in the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy, preach that the capitalist state can be pressured to act against the fascists and that the cops are part of the workers movement. This undermines the necessary struggle of the working class to smash capitalism.

We defend the NUS against the government attacks which aim to silence student protest. However, we are opposed to government funding of student organisations because in the last analysis they are constrained to do the bidding of their paymasters. "He who pays the piper calls the tune."

A perfect example of this occurred in the SU General Meeting on 1 November, when a motion was presented by the SWP (and supported by the Spartacists) for an occupation to protest student grant cuts. SU exec members spoke against this motion, whining that they would be fined if the occupation went ahead. They sabotaged militant action against the government's cuts because it would jeopardise their funds. You can't fight the government's policies if you're in their pay!

Recently the NUS suspended Socialist Workers Party supporter Andrew Brammer from office for fighting the government grant cuts. These bureaucrats want to clean out leftists and anyone who threatens to struggle against the capitalist government's attacks on student grants. Brammer should be reinstated!

We fight for free university education for all to make universal access to education a reality—for open admissions and free tuition, with full state-paid grants to cover living expenses; for universities under student/teacher/worker control!

The SU exec, as a pretext for their little witch hunt, lyingly claim the SL has

requested a "budget"—NO! We have not asked for and WOULD NOT TAKE their money. The SU exec happily took the blood-soaked money of the Territorial Army who set up a recruitment table at the Freshers Fayre in September; the TA is a reserve force for the British Army who massacre Catholics and Republicans in Northern Ireland and participated in the slaughter of over 100,000 Iraqis in 1991 during the Gulf War. The SL fought to drive the TA recruiters off the campus. Who can swallow that the SU exec "abhor violence of any kind"!

The overwhelming violence in this sick society comes from the capitalist ruling class. As long as their profit system exists, whether run by Labour or the Tories, the bourgeoisie *will continue to use violence every day* against the working class and minorities in order to preserve its own class rule. Ask the miners whose picket lines were attacked by rampaging cops during their heroic 1984-85 strike, which was sold out by the treacherous TUC bureaucrats and Labour Party. Or ask Winston Silcott who to this day languishes behind bars, still a frame-up victim of when the racist cops invaded Broadwater Farm in 1985. We stand for the right of self-defence against cop and fascist attacks. Free Winston Silcott now!

Capitalism breeds imperialist war, racism and fascism. Quaddus Ali is still in a coma after having been viciously beaten by fascist scum whom the cops—that the SU executive are so fond of—protect. And what about Guildhall student Joy Gardner, murdered last July in cold blood by the cops?

The anti-communist motion to censor the Spartacists at Guildhall contains an implicit threat to the democratic rights of anyone wishing to openly advocate their views on this campus. It must be defeated now! An injury to one is an injury to all! Support us in demanding: Rescind the SU exec motion! ■

Conference votes "community control" of cops

YRE stewards anti-fascists onto the electoral road

Since its inception in 1992 the Militant's Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE) has initiated and built anti-fascist demonstrations that have attracted many thousands of militant youth across Europe. But the Militant/YRE's ultimate allegiance to Labourism and the capitalist state is never far from the surface. This was clearly demonstrated at the YRE's first all-Britain national conference on 2-3 December 1993, attended by some 200 people, where Militant sought to reassert its line that the racist union-busting cops are part of the workers movement.

When YRE members and other anti-fascists drove the BNP fascists out of their sales pitch in Brick Lane, in east London last September, it inspired anti-racist youth throughout the country. Tens of thousands turned out on 16 October hoping to strike a blow against the BNP. At the time we in the Spartacist League (SL) warned that behind the militant-sounding rhetoric of the YRE, as well as the SWP's Anti Nazi League, lay a suicidal programme of seeking to pressure the racist capitalist state. Both the Militant and SWP appealed to Bexley Council to close down the BNP headquarters, and both groups preached that the cops were "workers in uniform" or should be accorded trade union rights. In contrast, the SL banner on 16 October read: "Not wretched appeals to the capitalist state! For trade union/minority mobilisations to smash the fascists!"

The massive cop assault against the anti-BNP marchers on 16 October was a brutal confirmation that the capitalist state (the bodies of armed men committed to defend capitalist rule) will defend its fascist scum. The cops could attack the crowd with impunity because the march organisers had refused to fight to bring out the trade unions. The real lesson of 16 October was the need to mobilise the power of the proletariat; to do that requires breaking with the reformist strategy of subordinating the workers movement to the capitalist state.

In the lead up to the YRE conference Militant made its pro-cop line even more explicit. *Militant* (26 November 1993) ran an article endorsing trade union rights and organisation for cops, explaining that this would "allow for the individual rights of policemen and women" and draw "the lower ranks back towards the working class". At the conference itself Militant

rammed through a resolution that called for a "police force under control of elected committees representing the whole community", thereby retailing the dangerous illusion that the front-line troops of capitalist violence and repression can be neutral or even serve the interests of the working people and oppressed minorities. Underscoring Militant's craven capitulation to the imperialist state, the conference voted down a resolution committing YRE to the elementary demand of immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern

the labour bureaucracy's phoney line that the way to get rid of the fascist scum is to defeat them at the ballot box. The TUC bureaucrats boycotted the 16 October rally in Welling because it posed a potential confrontation with the fascists *on the streets*. Instead they backed a deliberately diversionary Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) demonstration miles away from the BNP HQ. Now the TUC has initiated an "anti-racist" rally for 19 March in Tower Hamlets (east London), leading up to this spring's local elections. As the Liberals and Labour Party expose each other for



Riot police block anti-racist militants from marching against BNP headquarters, 16 October 1993. Militant/YRE call for trade union rights for bosses' thugs in blue.

Ireland. And when Workers Power put forward a motion stating there is "no peaceful parliamentary road to socialism", Militant supporter Hannah Sell complained that the YRE should not be knocking on doors "calling for blood in the streets" and even opposed a statement explicitly committing the YRE to socialism.

In the face of the Militant's crass reformism, centrist groups like Workers Power (WP) and the Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL) claimed to be the "revolutionary wing" of the YRE. WP presented a motion asserting that the police are "racist to the core" and cannot be "reformed or made accountable". But WP last year *supported* the right of cops to strike against the Sheehy proposals. What's more their YRE conference bulletin (4 December 1993) argued that "police constables should have the right to organise against the upper ranks and the government" while *simultaneously* claiming that "Labour local authorities should block funding to the police". How about that for centrist double talk!

What Militant, WP and RIL have in common is their support to Labourism, and today these fake leftists are pushing

openly catering to racism in east London, we are supposed to believe that voting in these characters is the way to stop Derek Beackon and the BNP.

Smart bureaucrats like T&G general secretary Bill Morris hope to enlist the services of groups like YRE and ANL in an attempt to divert anti-fascist sentiment into the dead-end of parliamentarism. Previously the trade union tops have relied solely on the ARA, which is closely tied to a number of Labour MPs. Writing in the *Tribune* (19 November 1993), Morris criticised the ARA for "regarding other groups and individuals as rivals rather than potential allies". Clearly interested in such overtures, the YRE conference passed a resolution, proposed by the national officers, which "welcomes" the TUC rally. The same resolution announces that the YRE is planning a number of rock benefits along the theme of "Don't Vote Nazi". For its part, the RIL intervened to amend the motion with its proposal to find suitable Labour candidates standing on an "anti-fascist", anti-cutbacks minimum programme. Meanwhile the ANL has announced its own Eastertime carnival. (We recall the last big ANL carnival, in

1978, organised miles away from a fascist march through Brick Lane the same day.)

Capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, along with deepening economic dislocation, has spawned the rise of deadly fascist terror across Europe. Having earlier been cheerleaders for the Lech Walesas, Boris Yeltsins and other agents of capitalist counterrevolution in the East, today the social democrats, ex-Stalinists and fake left seek to divert anti-fascist sentiment into the trap of bourgeois parliamentarism. In an article entitled "Left swing keeps fascists out", *Militant* (10 December 1993) cheered on the recent electoral victory in Italy of the popular front (cross-class) coalition headed by the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) over the fascist MSI. In local elections in Brandenburg in eastern Germany, Militant supporters called for "defeating the right" by voting for either social democratic parties (PDS or SPD) or the petty-bourgeois Greens. In Britain the fake left calls for putting in a Labour government, at a time when the Labour Party's policies are virtually indistinguishable from the Lib Dems or Tories.

In the 1930s, the Stalinists and social democrats pushed the rotten lie that fascism could be stopped by making an alliance with the "progressive" wing of

the bourgeoisie. Refuting this treachery, the American Trotskyists pointed out:

"...the best of the workers must be organized into Workers Defense Guards, prepared and trained to smash the fascist gangs. There is no other way. The fascist gangs do not believe in abiding by the results of the ballot-box, or by any other peaceful procedure. On the contrary, the fascists plan to come to power by physical violence against the labor movement and anti-fascists generally. To appeal to 'democracy' against the fascists is like trying to stop bullets with the biblical edict 'Thou Shalt Not Kill.'"

— *Socialist Appeal*, 14 March 1939

For militant youth who are serious about the struggle against fascism the YRE conference, replete with its centrist WP/RIL fringe, offered only the same treacherous pro-Labour and popular front track that has been trodden many times before by reformist betrayers. The fight against fascist terror must be based on the clear understanding that the capitalist state is not a neutral arbiter in society but the enemy of workers and minorities. We of the SL offer a revolutionary alternative — the forging of a Trotskyist party based on a programme for workers revolution. ■

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Sinister RCP defends fascists

Reprinted below is a leaflet produced by the Glasgow Spartacist League on 24 November 1993.

While thousands recently mobilised against the fascist BNP HQ in Welling, the existence of which has led to a deadly escalation of fascist terror against blacks, Asians, Jews, Irish, gays and the left, one fake-left organisation, the grotesquely misnamed Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), went on a campaign footing in defence of the BNP's "democratic rights", seeking to sabotage the ANL/YRE-led "Unity" demo of 16 October. At Glasgow University, the RCP sided with student union bureaucrats in an attempt to block funding for buses to the 16 October demonstration.

What the RCP tries to deny is the simple fact that fascism is a programme for genocide. They outrageously describe the fascists as "scapegoats" (leaflet, "The dangers of anti-fascism") and have become self-appointed lawyers for BNP thugs arrested by the cops. What sort of "left" organisation is it which says that the BNP is a "joke" composed of "eccentrics" and "idiots" who are "laughable"? Tell the families of Stephen Lawrence, Rolan Adams and Quaddus Ali! In fact, the RCP alibis racist murders.

The genuine fear of fascist terror experienced by fascism's potential victims means nothing to the "anti-racist" RCP. In the aftermath of the election of BNP'er Derek Beackon in the Isle of Dogs, which provoked outrage and working-class strike action from trade unionists and minorities, where was the RCP? On television defending "free speech" and "democratic rights" for fascists.

Instead of standing with the targets of fascist terror, leading RCP'er Kenan Malik, in an article in the *Independent* (23 September) proclaimed: "I find myself feeling far more sympathetic to the Islanders [who voted for the BNP's explicit policy of 'rights for whites'] than... 'anti-Nazi moralists'", adding that "For many Islanders voting BNP provided the perfect two fingers to the political establishment, right and left". In the RCP's twilight world BNP "Island" sympathisers are oppressed colonial victims of ANL "missionaries". No! They are the potential agents of fascist terror which seeks to implement its programme in blood.

Today the fascist thugs organise against minorities and the left—vulnerable layers of society. Tomorrow these shock troops of capitalist rule will, if allowed to continue unchecked, put a noose around the neck of the organised working class. That is why they must be crushed now. This is recognised by all genuine anti-racists and anti-fascists, but not the RCP, who create a false schism between state racism and fascist terror. "Fortress Europe" and the wave of anti-immigrant hysteria which it has unleashed fuel the fascists.

On 16 October the state and its racist thugs in blue defended the BNP fascist scum and attacked anti-racist militants. We of the Spartacist League consistently fought against all suicidal calls on the bourgeois state to ban the BNP peddled by the reformist SWP/Anti Nazi League and Militant/YRE. Our banner on the 16 October march read "Not wretched appeals to the capitalist state! For trade union/minority mobilisations to smash the fascists!" But while the RCP postures

as opponents of the SWP's Labourism and its reformist strategy of appealing to the racist capitalist state to "ban" the fascists, it is from the perspective of defending the "democratic right" of the fascists to mobilise! The RCP even manage to "review" Hitler's *Mein Kampf* without mentioning anti-Semitism! Rather they claim it "gushes with adolescent patriotism"! It speaks volumes that this outfit can publish a leaflet titled "The dangers of anti-fascism"!

This dubious and sinister organisation has a history of apologising for racist terror and of being on the bosses' side in any class conflict.

- During the 1983 Warrington print union battles in defence of the closed shop, the RCP opposed this as "undemocratic"—so did Thatcher and her mounted thugs in blue.
- In the heroic 1984-85 miners strike, the RCP continued to defend the bosses' "democracy" by calling for a ballot after the strike had begun. This was the line of the coal bosses and the scabs. Not content with calling a ballot, the RCP proceeded to organise conferences of "working miners", ie scabs! RCP *llder máximo*, Frank Richards/Füredi got a taste of what striking miners thought of this when they jumped him and broke his glasses at a miners demo in Notts.
- Fervently anti-Soviet, the RCP declared the Soviet Union to be the "enemy of the working class", supported counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność and cheered for German capitalist reunification.
- During the height of bourgeois hysteria around AIDS, the RCP pushed the right-wing fundamentalist garbage about AIDS



RCP pamphlet: Under which flag does the RCP march?

being a "gay plague".

- And what of the RCP's much touted "anti-racist" front group Workers Against Racism (WAR)? In 1986 the RCP's newspaper (*the next step*, 7 February), printed an interview with an avowed racist pig who boasted how his son terrorised blacks and Asians in East London. The same year, the RCP recruited an "ex"-member of the fascist British Movement, (see *Workers Hammer*, nos 77 and 84).

The RCP believes that the working class is politically dead, and therefore necessarily appeals to the same social base of petty-bourgeois despair and lumpen rage as do the fascists. As we have said before—beware the RCP!

We of the Spartacist League seek to build mass trade union-centred/minority mobilisations to crush the fascist menace and to build a revolutionary party—in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky—which can put an end to capitalist rule and its fascist legions forever. ■

Colonialist pigs bar Jamaican visitors

We print below a letter sent to the Home Office on 23 December by the Partisan Defence Committee protesting the outrageous detention and expulsion of Jamaicans who came to Britain for holiday visits in late December. Many of them were held at gunpoint, branded "Yardie" criminal drug-dealers, herded in handcuffs, denied adequate food and visits from relatives and, in some cases, strip-searched. One passenger held at the Campsfield Detention Centre near Oxford, which was specifically designed to intern refugee-seekers, said "We were treated like murderers". While some were eventually granted temporary admis-

sion to the country, 27 were expelled and flown back to Jamaica on Christmas day.

The British government is now moving to enforce visa requirements for visitors from countries of the former colonial empire, targeting in particular black African and Caribbean countries. According to a report by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, Britain's jails hold up to 10,000 people a year whose only "crime" is fleeing the ravages of war and oppression, from the communal carnage in ex-Yugoslavia to official terror against the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. This obscenity is part and parcel of the anti-immigrant hysteria that has swept

Europe in the wake of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet and East European workers states. Expressed in its most naked form by fascists like the British National Party, the programme of jailing, deporting, and in the case of Joy Gardner *murdering* dark-skinned foreign-born workers is the response of the British bourgeoisie to the economic crisis besetting the capitalist system. The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) fights for full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers, from Tokyo to San Francisco to London to Berlin.

The Partisan Defence Committee emphatically protests the blatantly racist mass detention of passengers on a Christmas charter flight from Jamaica on Tuesday, 21 December. Of the 353 passengers, 190 were detained for hours by immigration officials at Gatwick Airport. Outrageously, 48 have already been deported, while 29 remain held in detention camps that echo the grotesque detention of Arabs during the Gulf War. Another 45 have only been granted temporary admission. We demand that all detainees be released immediately and that *all* restrictions be lifted from all the passengers.

This outrage flows from the Asylum and Immigration Appeal Act which targets in particular peoples from Britain's former colonial empire. And this is just the most recent of the growing number of atrocities which are an expression of the racist "Fortress Europe" frenzy sweeping across Europe, including Britain. Working people will not forget the murder of

Jamaican-born Joy Gardner, killed after her flat was stormed by immigration officials and the police. We say: Down with the racist Asylum and Immigration Appeal Act! Close the detention centres! We demand the immediate release of the 29 detained passengers! ■



Morning Star

Tamil refugees detained at Harwich in the '80s. Murderous "Fortress Europe" anti-immigrant frenzy has intensified.

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San Francisco, September 18—PDC, Spartacist and Labor Black League supporters outside governor Pete Wilson's office protesting racist war on immigrants

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Workers struggle...

(Continued from page 1)

economic crisis in more than half a century. Unemployment is over 10 per cent in Germany, formerly the "locomotive" of the European capitalist economy, over 12 per cent in France, and over 20 per cent in Spain, Greece, Ireland and Finland. Along with soaring unemployment there is a full-scale onslaught against the "welfare state", from Scandinavia to the tip of Italy.

In Germany, metal industry employers have simply ripped up existing contracts for 3.3 million workers from January 1994. German bosses' spokesman Klaus Murmann has called for a "prolonged onslaught" on wages and "the whole array of fringe benefits, holiday entitlement and social security payments" (*Financial Times*, 10 December 1993). In one year 500,000 metal workers' jobs have gone. But the protectionist demands of the social-democratic union tops to "defend German industry" undercut the need for international resistance to the capitalist offensive.

The capitalist offensive in the West is a direct result of the triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the former USSR—a colossal defeat for the world proletariat, with corresponding impact on the consciousness and confidence of the most advanced sectors. Capitalist rulers no longer feel it is vital to fend off the "threat of Communism" by means of reforms and palliatives designed to buy off working-class resistance. A race is now on to boost profit margins by lowering production costs in the interests of "greater competitiveness".

The postwar accommodations and mechanisms of institutionalised class collaboration are increasingly being replaced by open assaults on the working class. Envious ruling-class eyes are turned on the "Anglo-Saxon" economies, where ten years of Reagan/Thatcherism have already ripped through the living conditions and trade-union organisations of the working class. Privatisation of government-owned concerns in order to break strong unions and bolster debt-ridden government treasuries (pioneered by Thatcher's Britain in the 1980s) is planned across the continent.

The bourgeoisies are hoping to use their reformist "labour lieutenants" to shove their "reforms" down the throats of the working class. But contrary to the hopes and expectations of the European bourgeoisies, the working class has reacted fiercely to the capitalist offensive, often repudiating their own leaders. When Air France union leaders wanted the strikers to go back before the government caved in, the workers refused. And when a year ago, the Italian ex-Communist union leaders tried to sell the elimination of the *scala mobile* to their ranks, thousands of workers pelted them with coins, bolts and vegetables and tried to storm the speakers podiums. Today, following the collapse of Stalinism, militant class struggle in West Europe can have a powerful effect in reawakening the class and socialist consciousness of the proletariat of the former Soviet bloc.

Trade war and capitalist austerity

With the end of the Cold War, the post-World War II anti-Soviet alliance has come unglued, laying bare the permanent rivalry between the various imperialist powers, particularly between the three giants of modern imperialism, the United States, Japan and Germany.



Milano, 28 October: Workers out in force during four-hour general strike in Italy against layoffs and unemployment. Reuters

Each of these countries is aiming to fashion a trade bloc: the US through NAFTA, Japan through a new version of the "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere", and Germany through the European Union, including the projection of incorporating "East-Central Europe" (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Croatia) as its immediate hinterland. The bitter economic competition points toward global trade war, while ultimately a new redivision of the world can only come about through a third inter-imperialist world war...only this time by nuclear armed powers.

The US retains significant economic, military and geographical advantages over its rivals, largely stemming from its double success in defeating Germany and Japan, while simultaneously eliminating Britain as a serious competitor, in the course of World War II. The US economy is the world's largest, and still the most productive. Its "backyard", to north and south, contains no sizeable independent imperialist competitor: in that sense America's "home market" extends over an entire hemisphere. Militarily the United States currently holds a decisive lead, including an armed presence on both its major competitors' territories. This military superiority was used to bloody effect with the subjugation of semi-colonial Iraq in 1991, guaranteeing the American stranglehold on vital oil supplies. US financial and industrial capital is tightly interwoven with that of Britain, giving it a major position in the European capital markets which still centre in London.

The US is also an aggressive competitor of Japan in the race to dominate China, which (although still remaining a deformed workers state) is being increasingly drawn directly into the world capitalist market. Not least, from a capitalist standpoint, the US imperialists benefit from the lack of political class consciousness within the American working class, brought about through a combination of economic prosperity in the 1950s and '60s, pounding ideological campaigns of anti-Communism, and endless exploitation of the racial division in the proletariat stemming from the unfinished business of the Civil War. After a humiliating defeat by the Vietnamese peasants and workers, over the last two decades the American bourgeoisie has succeeded in driving down working-class living standards and mauling the trade-union movement.

Germany presents a very different picture. It coexists with three other sizeable, if second-rank, imperialist powers (Britain, France and Italy), which will continue to chafe at German domination of Europe, whatever their current

or future tactical alliances. Although by far the largest and most productive economy in Europe, on a world scale it stands at a severe competitive disadvantage by virtue of the great concessions made by the West German bourgeoisie to the working class, during the decades of Cold War. Workers in the former West Germany have the highest wages and shortest working week in the world (except for the small Scandinavian countries), with an average six weeks paid vacation on top of public holidays. These conditions were granted to the West German proletariat in order to secure stability, and to reduce the potential attraction of the full employment and large-scale social provisions of the Stalinist-ruled DDR (East Germany) next door.

Germany's leader, Helmut Kohl, promised that the capitalist unification of Germany would see a "blooming economy" sprout up in the former DDR. It has in fact reduced the East to a wasteland of demolished and disused factories, where the lives of millions have been turned upside down and near destroyed. Colossal unemployment is barely concealed behind a myriad of make-work, fake-work and short-time schemes. The financial cost of this policy of capitalist destruction has been immense—and the German ruling class is determined that either the German workers or its imperialist competitors will foot the bill for the tremendous government borrowing. Punitive high interest rates (spread across Europe via the now-defunct European Monetary System) have exacerbated the recession in other countries, while drawing foreign capital to Frankfurt. But meanwhile the strong D-mark has eaten away at Germany's export industries. In this context, tensions between Germany and its imperialist partners/competitors in Europe have inevitably grown. But rather than getting caught up in inter-imperialist rivalries through protectionist demands, workers must fight for a socialist United States of Europe.

Following the *Anschluss* (annexation) of the DDR, Germany in one sense faces the most acute social and economic crisis, but it does so coming from a position of immense wealth and trading advantage. In the cases of Spain, Italy and Belgium, the bourgeoisie bought social peace through rampant government borrowing. The Italian economy has run for years on escalating state borrowing, much of which went to feed the rampant corruption permeating economic and political life. This system was tolerated as an underpinning for the permanent rule of the anti-Communist Christian Democrats and their Socialist allies.

The Italian bourgeoisie wants to crack down on the working class, regularise the functioning of the state apparatus, tame the Mafia, tax the petty bourgeoisie and drain dry the oceans of red ink that state-owned companies float upon. For this they require a "strong state": a regime capable of pushing through massive layoffs and cuts in wages and social provisions in the face of a strong working class. While the crumbling of the governing parties under the blows of anti-corruption investigations led to a surge in the vote for the fascists and rightist Northern League in recent municipal elections, the Milano stock market, the American embassy and the pope opted for the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which touts itself as "the force of stability, security and government" in a chaotic Italy. While these ex-Communist social democrats have vowed to impose anti-working-class austerity, a new "popular front" centred on the PDS could run into resistance from militant workers determined to defend their livelihoods and smash the fascists.

Smash fascist attacks!

Meanwhile, the fascists feed off economic crisis and desperation with ever more ominous terror attacks against immigrants. Taking their cue from top politicians who are whipping up anti-immigrant hysteria, such as conservative French interior minister Pasqua, the fascists scapegoat "foreigners" as supposedly responsible for unemployment. The crescendo of xenophobic nationalism is also fuelled by (and contributed to) counterrevolution in East Europe and the former Soviet Union.

As in Hitler's Third Reich, Gypsies (Roma) are targeted for pogroms, from Romania to Poland. Across West Europe, thousands of immigrants were assaulted last year, attacked by knife-wielding skinheads, thrown from trains, their homes firebombed. Racist murders have skyrocketed—primarily in Germany but also in Britain, Belgium and elsewhere. Malian immigrant Makone M'Bowie, shot in a Paris police station last April, was one of five victims of racist police murders in France in a matter of months.

Immigrant workers constitute one of the most militant sectors of the West European workers movement. A significant defeat for the fascists on the streets, administered by an integrated workers mobilisation, would have a big impact on the course of the class struggle in Europe. Moreover, Kurdish and Turkish workers joining in militant social struggle in Germany would find an echo among the volatile proletariat of Turkey. And a working-class offen-

sive in France with combative North African workers playing a leading role could decisively alter the axis of political struggle in Algeria, where Islamic fundamentalists dominate the opposition to a military bonapartist regime.

West Europe is sharply polarising. Responding to the rise in fascist terror, tens of thousands, particularly youth, have taken to the streets from Rome to London and Berlin. Sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) have intervened in the burgeoning anti-fascist protests with a programme aimed at centrally mobilising the power of the working class, including its sizeable immigrant component. In France, the Ligue Trotskyste appealed to transport and other workers to block deportation trains leaving Paris and raised the demand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

In Germany, when the threat of fascist attacks loomed on the 60th anniversary of Hitler's taking of power, 30 January of last year, as bourgeois politicians and reformists held impotent candle-light vigils, the Spartakist Workers Party sought to mobilise the powerful German labour movement.

Trotsky's appeal to the German workers movement, "For a Workers'

avert a wave of workers struggles coming off the Air France strike by pushing a new popular front. In particular, this has taken the form of a mobilisation "in defence of secular education", culminating in a mammoth march in Paris on 16 January protesting plans by the conservative government of Prime Minister Balladur to subsidise private schools. Yet the capitalist austerity programme being implemented by Balladur (as well as the attacks on immigrants) are only a continuation of the policies of the previous social-democratic cabinet. Indeed, the job-slashing head of Air France is a Socialist, and Socialist ministers of education have granted aid to private schools.

Uniquely in the French left, the Ligue Trotskyste consistently opposed a vote to the Mitterrand popular front even before it was elected in 1981, warning that this reformist figurehead for the bourgeoisie would bring Cold War militarism and anti-working-class austerity.

Transitional Programme for proletarian revolution

The fact that even capitalist spokesmen are talking of a shorter working week and popular fronts of various kinds is an indication of the seriousness

International in 1938, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, usually known as the Transitional Programme:

"The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of daily struggle find a bridge between present demands and the socialist program of revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

Such a programme must hammer home the "one final conclusion": that the bourgeoisie cannot satisfy the most basic needs of the working people, and therefore its exploitative rule must be overthrown.

Numerous groups claiming to be Trotskyist, in contrast, have attempted to truncate the Transitional Programme in an opportunist manner. They take a single demand, water it down, and try to

work-sharing "cost-neutral" to companies. This plan has long been pushed by the social-democratic-led CFDT union federation, which calls for "reduction of working hours" to 32 hours with a "wages counterpart"—ie, a pay cut (*Libération*, 26 October 1993). The Communist-led CGT opposes a wage cut, but in the name of "realism" calls for a 38-hour working week. CGT leader Viannet declared flatly "there will be no 32-hour week", denouncing the Senate bill because it "awakened tremendous hopes" among jobless youth (*Le Monde*, 9 November 1993).

The next link down the chain is the Mandeliste LCR, with its call for a "35-hour working week with no cut in wages, on the way to a 30-hour week" (*International Viewpoint*, May 1993). The LCR's 35-hour week demand is echoed by its former youth group, the JCR, now allied with the Labourite British Militant. Revolutionaries of course would support struggles by mass trade unions for such a demand, for example the strike by the German IG Metall union several years ago. But for a small propaganda group claiming to be Trotskyist to make this a focus of their agitation is another matter. LCR supporters played a prominent role in the recent Air France strike, but they do so from the narrow standpoint of militant trade-unionism and over the years have become deeply embedded in the reformist union bureaucracy.

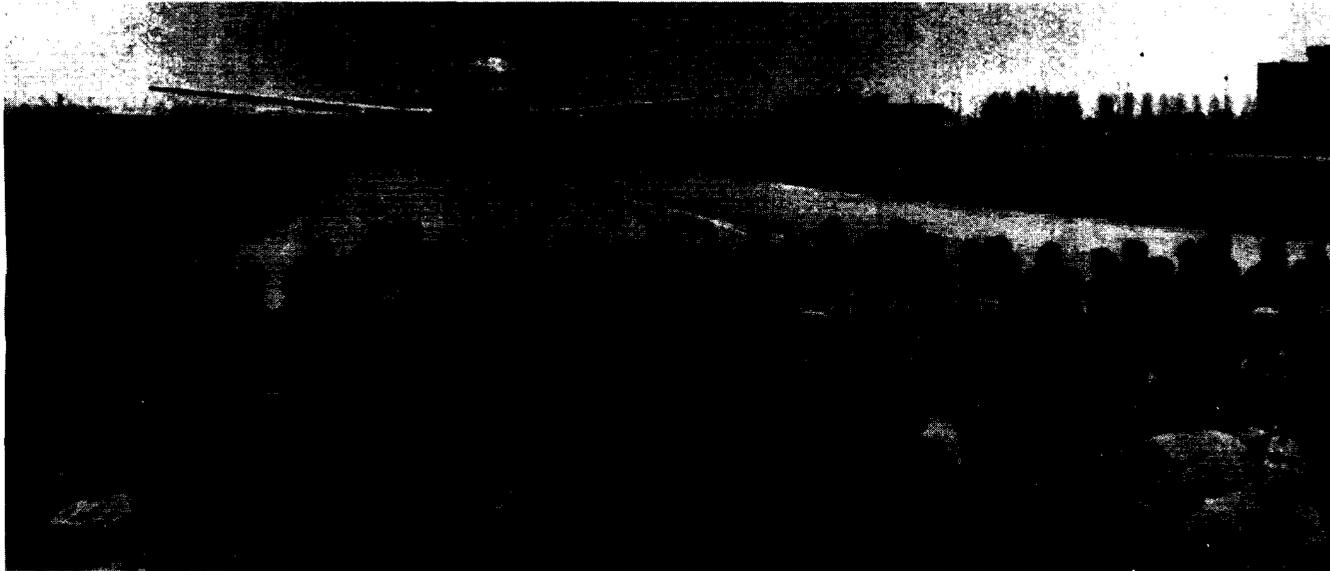
Far from having anything to do with the Transitional Programme's call for jobs for all, the LCR's plan explicitly concedes that this will lead only to a "significant cut in unemployment". And their whole programme is presented as policy for a new "left government"—ie, a popular front—within the framework of bourgeois parliamentarism. In his March 1935 statement "From the CGT's Plan to the Conquest of Power", Leon Trotsky criticised the social democrats for speaking only of nationalisation of credit and key industries. But today, Krivine's LCR takes a line well to the right of the reformist bureaucrats Trotsky was denouncing. The LCR calls for nothing beyond "nationalisation of the credit system", and indeed vows: "Our approach is not to limit private property on principle!"

Trotsky also asked pointedly *who* will nationalise the banks, introduce a shorter working week. He insisted: "It must be said in no uncertain terms: only a revolutionary government of the workers and peasants, prepared for implacable struggle against all the exploiters, can apply the plan, complete it, develop it and go beyond it along the socialist road." But where the social democrats talked vaguely of implementing their programme "independently of the political regime", the LCR explicitly calls on the capitalist state. Its appeal for a movement for a shorter working week focuses on getting parliament to pass "an enabling act setting the legal week at 35 hours" (*Rouge*, 14 October 1993).

The Mandelites' "transitional method" is directly counterposed to Trotsky's Transitional Programme. Far from seeking to win the working class to a revolutionary understanding that mass unemployment can be eliminated only through the proletarian conquest of power, the LCR/JCR accept the capitalist "logic" of the trade-union bureaucracy. The 38-35-32-hour numbers game is a "sliding scale" of bourgeois reformism. The LCR/JCR's bastardisation of Trotsky's programme could be called, "From the Larrourou Plan to the Popular Front".

The reformist content of the fake-Trotskyists' various "plans" is underscored by their *economism*. The Transi-

continued on page 8



Air France strikers block runway in Paris. Workers took on government, bosses, cops and won!

Informations Ouvrières

United Front Against Fascism" (December 1931), emphasised the need to "elaborate a practical system of measures" against the Nazi gangs, emphasising: "Every factory must become an antifascist bulwark, with its own commandants and its own battalions." But the social-democratic and Stalinist misleaders of the workers movement feared the spectre of workers revolution more than they did the rampaging fascists, and Hitler was allowed to take power without a shot being fired. The response to the Nazi takeover by the panicked Stalinists was the policy of the "people's front"—class-collaborationist alliances which subordinated the proletariat to a supposed "democratic" bourgeoisie. From the Spanish Civil War of the late '30s to Allende's Chile in the early '70s, the popular front in fact served not to fight fascism but to strangle workers' struggles. Warning against this danger, Trotsky wrote in 1938: "People's Fronts on the one hand—fascism on the other; these are the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against the proletarian revolution."

Today, faced with militant workers struggles, sections of the Italian bourgeoisie look to the ex-Communists of the PDS as their saviours in a new popular front motivated by the growth of the MSI heirs of Mussolini. In France, the discredited Socialists of President Mitterrand are seeking to

of the crisis facing West Europe. But however sugar-coated, such schemes are at best diversions. After World War I, the German social democrats wrote full employment into the constitution of the Weimar Republic, yet just over a decade later the republic collapsed under the Nazi onslaught as a quarter of the workforce was jobless. In contrast to bourgeois/reformist frauds, Marxists fight for a *sliding scale of working hours*, to divide the available work among all workers (including the unemployed), *with no loss in pay*. To ward off the ravages of inflation, we demand a *sliding scale of wages*.

But these cannot be isolated reform measures. On the contrary: although what's involved here is simply a defence of the elementary right to a job, *jobs for all* cannot be secured under capitalism. Production for profit requires each capitalist (and the capitalist class of every country) to drive down labour costs in order to successfully compete. Full employment requires a *planned economy based on collectivised property*. To establish such an economic system, the working class must carry out a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, expropriating the bourgeoisie through the creation of a workers government, that is, the *dictatorship of the proletariat*.

This basic point is driven home in the programmatic statement adopted by the founding conference of Trotsky's Fourth

pass it off as a panacea, while talking of an amorphous "transitional method". They want to sell the working class a bridge without the other end, turning a weapon of revolutionary agitation and organisation into a grab bag of gimmicks for left-talking business unionists or a utopian plan for radical reform *within capitalism*. The United Secretariat (USec) of Ernest Mandel has made a profession of this kind of gutting of the Trotskyist programme, centrally denying the need for an independent proletarian revolutionary vanguard. Currently, in France, the supporters of Mandel's USec, Alain Krivine's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), are advancing an ultra-reformist "alternative economic programme", complete with recommendations for tax policy and import controls. A key plank in this platform is the call for a 35-hour week.

One can see here what might be called a syphilitic chain leading from the top-most bourgeois circles through their labour lieutenants down to their "far-left" camp followers. Thus in early November, the French Senate passed a bill offering compensation to employers who undertake to reduce the working week by 15 per cent. This proposal was dreamt up by one Pierre Larrourou of the prominent Arthur Andersen management consulting firm, who has been propounding a plan of tax breaks and wage cuts to make the "revolution" of

Workers struggle...

(Continued from page 7)

tional Programme was written not as a menu of reformist and subreformist demands, but to put forward a strategy for revolutionary struggle against all aspects of capitalist exploitation and oppression. Thus it necessarily raised the need to fight against the oppression of women and youth, against imperialist militarism and colonialism. Trotsky explicitly links economic struggles to the fight against fascism, noting: "Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. *Strike pickets* are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure." Demands such as the sliding scale of wages and hours must be linked to the fight to defend immigrants through labour/minority mobilisations, defence of abortion rights, and opposition to imperialist wars and colonialist adventures such as against Iraq and Somalia.

Reforge the Fourth International

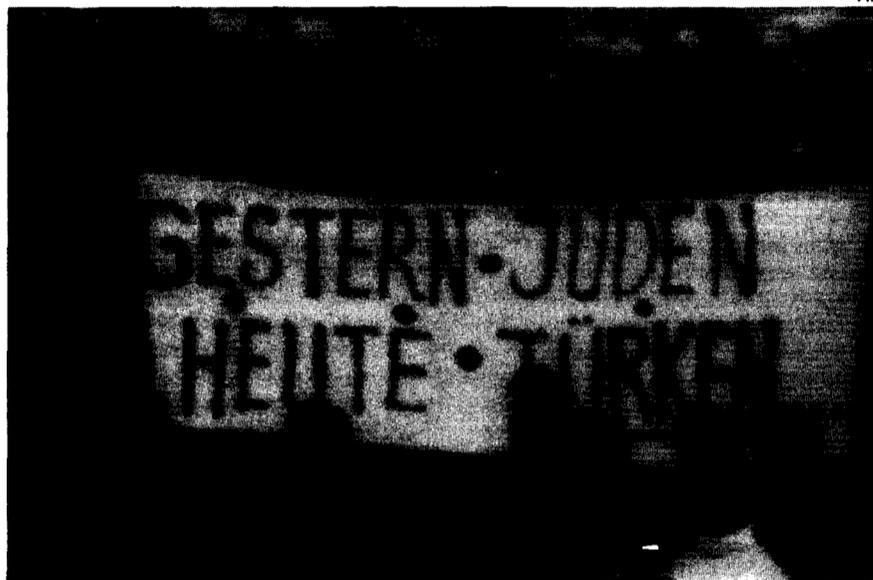
The bourgeoisie was shaken up last autumn when the French government invoked the spectre of a social explosion, the "shadow of May '68", in giving in to the Air France strikers. An article in *Le Monde* (6 November 1993) asked, "What is there in common between May 1968", when youth took aim at "consumer society", when "dissident ideologies had the wind in their sails", when unemployment was 2.7 per cent, and "this somnolent France of 1993, where ideologies no longer have a hold, where recession keeps up unemployment and strikes are at a record low?" The working class is certainly on the defensive, but hardly asleep. Defensive struggles can rapidly go over to a challenge to the capitalists. Today the bourgeoisie proclaims the "death of Communism", but in the 1950s they also declared the "end of ideology", and that didn't stop the outbreak of significant social struggles a few years later. What is key is the question of leadership.

The present period is marked above all by the impact of the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe. In the West, this event has had the greatest impact on the reformist (and centrist) left which, having swallowed the bourgeoisie's lies about the "death of Communism", now finds itself at sea. The Stalinist bureaucracy, in justifying its nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country", denied the possibility of workers revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of the West—and did its best to prevent such revolutions. Ultimately the isolation of the Soviet degenerated workers state led to its collapse, under the economic and military pressure of imperialism. Trotsky had repeatedly warned of precisely this possibility, if the bureaucracy was not swept away through proletarian political revolution restoring the original internationalist programme of Lenin's October.

The political rearming of the workers movement requires that an authentic communist vanguard be reforged, that the most advanced workers internationally be brought to an understanding of why the Soviet bloc workers states collapsed...and why revolution did not spread to the West. So what about the original May 1968? Sparked by a wave of militant student protests, ten million French workers struck and occupied the plants in a near-revolutionary atmosphere. Immigrant workers from Spain,



Above: French students take to the streets in Paris last month protesting government's plans to divert money to private schools. Below: Protest in Solingen, Germany last June after fascist firebombing of Turkish family. Banner reads: "Yesterday Jews, Today Turks".



Algeria, Portugal and elsewhere joined in. Enterprises from the car factories to the Folies Bergères ground to a halt. For a period the government was paralysed; the president, De Gaulle, went to West Germany in search of reliable army units. Across the world, hundreds of thousands saw in the French May events affirmation of the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat, dramatically disproving then-fashionable New Left theories that the working class was hopelessly bought off by postwar "affluence".

But from a revolutionary standpoint the May '68 upsurge was defeated. Centrally responsible was the Stalinist Communist Party (PCF), the main party of the French working class. Far from seeking to form soviets (workers councils) and workers militias as the basis for pushing forward to the seizure of power, the PCF called for parliamentary elections and worked overtime to terminate the strike movement by negotiating a series of economic concessions. The Stalinist reformists showed themselves once again as loyal defenders of French capitalism in crisis, and a roadblock to proletarian revolution. Lacking clear direction, the strike wave receded. The moment of revolutionary opportunity had passed.

While mouthing some of Trotsky's slogans, Mandel & Co during this moment of crisis for French capitalism in fact refused to fight for the goal of revolution. Writing in the *New Left Review* (November-December 1968), Mandel argued:

"As the PCF is not a revolutionary party, and as none of the vanguard groups as yet has at its disposal a sufficient audience in the working class, May 1968 could not terminate in a seizure of power. But a general strike accompanied by factory occupations could and

should terminate in the conquest of anti-capitalist structural reforms, in the realization of transitional demands—i.e. in the creation of a dual power, an empirical power of the masses opposed to the legal power of Capital. To realize such a dual power, a mass revolutionary party is not indispensable...."

For Trotsky "the strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow." Mandel, in contrast, argued not for a programme leading to the conquest of power by the proletariat but for a series of "structural reforms". And dual power (a contest of strength between a shaken bourgeois state and an insurgent working class) cannot be the programmatic goal—a ball perched on the point of a cone will fall one way or the other, but it will fall. Dual power will either become the "legal power of labour" (ie the armed rule of the proletariat and the suppression of the old exploiting class), or it will usher in counter-revolution.

Earlier, at the height of the mushrooming Belgian general strike which paralysed the country for three weeks during December 1960-January 1961, Mandel had as the main headline of his paper *La Gauche* the call for "structural reforms". This included some selective nationalisations, public works, planning of the capitalist economy, and tax reform, all to be brought before the Belgian parliament by the Socialist Party. Mandel's plan of 1961 clearly foreshadows Krivine's scheme of '93.

Rather than fight for an independent revolutionary vanguard, Mandel tailed after the left-talking union bureaucrat Renard. On 1 January 1961, *La Gauche* headlined in red, "Organise the March on Brussels". But when Renard turned down this call, Mandel did an abrupt

about-face, and six days later *La Gauche* declared: "Any march which aimed to concentrate on one day and go up against [the] concentration of repressive forces would naturally be folly." The next week, he added:

"We are reproached with having put forward the slogan of a march on Brussels.... Since we note that this demand has not been taken up by the leaders, we yield, but we recall that at the moment our announcement of last week appeared, no indications of this were yet known."

Openly admitting that his demands were determined by the bureaucrats, this was a direct declaration of political bankruptcy by Mandel.

The job of revolutionaries is to pose the objective tasks and needs of the working class, not to reflect the limitations of the current or spontaneous consciousness of the working class. Only on this basis will the indispensable instrument of the revolutionary party be forged. This is not to say that small revolutionary groups can jump over their own heads, even in revolutionary situations, or make up through will power and healthy lungs for non-existent roots in the working class. An insurrection cannot be mounted simply because it is posed. But the programmatic tasks facing the working class do not change because the instrumentality is lacking or weak. The recent wave of class struggle in West Europe points to the potential for new situations like Belgium 1961 and France 1968. The key is to prepare for this by intervention in the class struggle to forge the revolutionary party.

The workers movement in recent years has clearly been reeling under the hammer blows of a capitalist offensive, leaving in its wake broken strikes, decimated unions and widespread disarray. It was in another period of capitalist crisis and proletarian retreat, in December 1921, that Lenin's Communist International issued an appeal for the workers united front, noting: "The world economic crisis is growing more acute. Unemployment is increasing. In practically every country international capital has gone over to a systematic offensive against the workers, as shown primarily in the fairly open efforts of the capitalists to reduce wages and to lower the workers' entire standard of life." The theses "On Tactics", approved by the Comintern's Third Congress earlier that year, stated:

"The Communist Parties should be concerned not with the viability and competitive capacity of capitalist industry or the stability of the capitalist economy, but with proletarian poverty, which cannot and must not be endured any longer. If the demands put forward by the Communists correspond to the immediate needs of the broad proletarian masses, and if the masses are convinced that they cannot go on living unless their demands are met, then the struggle around these issues becomes the starting-point of the struggle for power. In place of the minimum programme of the centrists and reformists, the Communist International offers a struggle for the concrete demands of the proletariat which, in their totality, challenge the power of the bourgeoisie, organise the proletariat and mark out the different stages of the struggle for its dictatorship."

This was the forerunner of the Fourth International's Transitional Programme.

Today there is no mass Leninist international. The central task facing revolutionaries is through propaganda and intervention in the class struggle to reforge a Trotskyist Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

Abridged from *Workers Vanguard* nos 591 and 592, 7 and 21 January 1994.

Ireland...

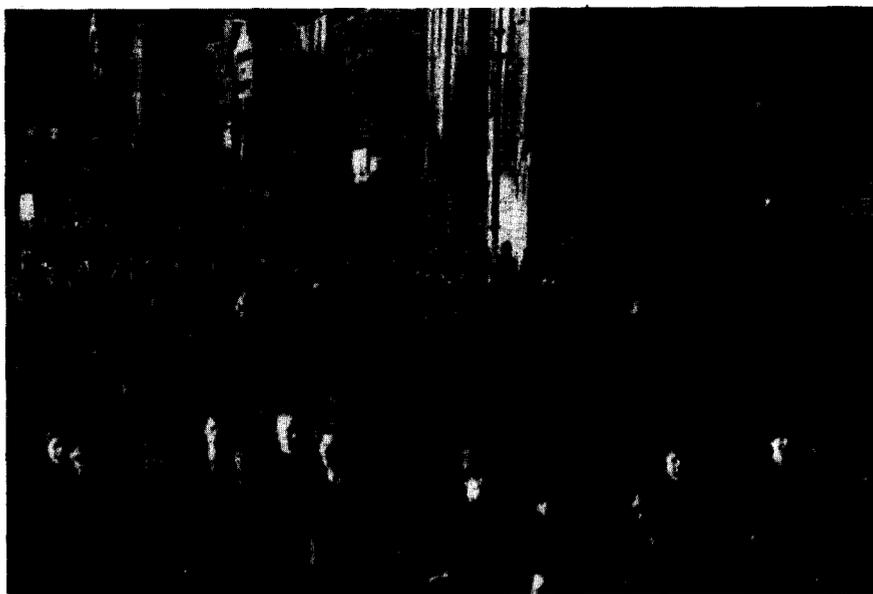
(Continued from page 1)

definitively" (*Morning Star*, 17 January). Major reiterated that British imperialism has "no selfish or strategic interest" in Northern Ireland, a euphemistic way of saying that they would like to be rid of the burden and cost of their operation in Northern Ireland. But that does not make the British ruling class, after 800 years of murderous rampage and subjugation in Ireland, suddenly neutral, as they and their hangers-on—from the British Labour Party to Reynolds' coalition partners of Dick Spring's Irish Labour Party to John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in Northern Ireland—claim.

The British Army with its shoot-to-kill policy is and will remain in place. Together with the viciously sectarian RUC/RIR they will continue to collude with the fascist Loyalist paramilitaries in their murder campaign against Catholics. Despite various cosmetic gestures to scale down the army's presence in Catholic areas, army checkpoints around the Falls Road enclave in Belfast, for example, only search vehicles leaving the area, not those entering it. On Saturday, 8 January UFF/UDA killers narrowly failed in a communalist mass murder attempt when they fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a crowded bar in the Falls Road. Two British marines were recently acquitted for the murder of Fergal Caraher, a Sinn Féin member gunned down by an army patrol in South Armagh. And the southern government will continue to assist the British in repression of the IRA and Republican sympathisers through extradition and "cross border security" arrangements. We demand the immediate unconditional withdrawal of the British Army! Smash the RUC/RIR! Free all Republican prisoners!

Major and the Imperialist "gauntlet of peace"

There is substantial disgruntlement with the Major/Reynolds declaration amongst Republican ranks. The IRA has pointedly refused to end its "military campaign", while in London "... ministerial frustration is growing that Sinn Féin and the IRA cannot—or will not—grasp the opportunity to end the 25-year conflict" (*Guardian*, 3 January). Major continues to look to James Molyneaux's Ulster Unionist Party to aid his shaky and unstable parliamentary majority, and the British ruling class has long established links with the Ulster Unionists. While their interests do not always coincide, they do not at this point intend to abandon their old allies. And although



Bloody Sunday, January 1972: British paratroopers shot dead 13 demonstrators in Derry civil rights march.

No credit

Ian Paisley fulminated that Major had "sold Ulster to buy off the fiendish Republican scum", it is notable that the Loyalist UVF murder gang said that it was "pretty happy" with the declaration. At the same time the fascist UDA has drawn up a "doomsday" blueprint for repartition replete with "ethnic cleansing", expulsion and internment for Catholics. This chilling scenario has been endorsed by reactionary bigots in Ian Paisley's DUP as a "valuable return to reality" (*Guardian*, 17 January).

Whether or not Gerry Adams and other Sinn Féin leaders are willing or have the ability to sell these negotiations to IRA activists and an angry and rightly mistrustful Catholic population, Sinn Féin and the IRA bear great responsibility for building deadly illusions in the prospect of an imperialist-brokered settlement. Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness even now is willing to let the British Army remain for up to eight years. Gerry Adams complains that the Major/Reynolds declaration falls far short of proposals that he came up with in discussions with SDLP leader Hume, particularly in failing to accept the formula of "self-determination for the Irish people as a whole". But Sinn Féin acknowledges that the as yet unpublished Hume/Adams agreement affirms that the "consent and allegiance" of the Unionists is necessary to any settlement—and is predicated on the absurd notion that the British imperialists will now "persuade" the Unionists to agree to a united Ireland.

Sinn Féin explicitly model their "peace accords" on imperialist-brokered negotiations in areas like South Africa or Palestine. *An Phoblacht* (11 November 1993) claimed: "Attempts are being made

to take the gun out of South African, Palestinian and Salvadoran conflicts. Conflict areas throughout the world are being transformed from theatres of war into political arenas."

But in Israel/Palestine there has been a massive escalation of terror by Zionist troops and settlers against the Palestinian people. And the bogus "power sharing" deal between the ANC and the apartheid butchers has meant continuing black deaths in the townships and no end to the poverty and exploitation of the working-class masses.

The Catholics are an oppressed minority in Northern Ireland. They live within the same territory as the Protestants, who fear becoming a minority, oppressed and discriminated against within a capitalist united Ireland. The Protestants are not just a "tradition" within one Irish nation, nor have they now crystallised into a separate nation, but they are a distinct community defined in large part against the Irish Catholic nation, as well as distinct from the English and Scottish nations. The withdrawal of British troops is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for a just solution to the national question: the outcome would depend heavily on the *subjective factor*—the presence or absence of a revolutionary leadership of the working class. We oppose the forcible reunification of Ireland, which would only compact the Protestants behind the Loyalist bigots, precluding a polarisation along *class* lines and instead laying the basis for a communal bloodbath and forced population transfers. We fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation in the British Isles. We do not raise the slogan of "a united socialist Ireland"—in the context of a proletarian solution, the Protestants may yet be incorporated in a common Irish nation, which they would at present vehemently reject; they may develop a more distinct national identity; or they may find a democratic accommodation with the Catholics outside the framework of strictly national solutions under the rule of the working class.

Furthermore, why should any Protestant worker (or Catholic worker for that matter) be interested in a united capitalist Ireland? The economy is in dire straits, dependent on European Community subsidies. With mounting unemployment, government job slashing and strike busting, the influence of the Catholic Church in education and attacking women's rights, and draconian anti-Republican laws, the Irish clerical state is about as anti-working class, anti-women and anti-Republican as you can get. The hallmark of Mary Robinson's presidency and the coalition government, especially of Dick Spring's Irish Labour Party, is the willingness to strike a deal with British imperialism and the Loyalist politicians at the

expense of the oppressed Catholic minority in the North. The southern bourgeoisie fears the spill-over of a "destabilisation" of the North and the potential explosion of anti-imperialist sentiment from the workers. In 1972 the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry touched off work stoppages and the torching of the British Embassy in Dublin, while after IRA member Bobby Sands died on hunger strike, two hunger strikers were elected to the Dail in the June 1981 Irish elections.

The British and Irish fake left have either lined up to take up their place in the pro-imperialist "peace" movement and/or as critics of the IRA from the standpoint of more militant nationalism. A British *Militant* editorial (17 December 1993) claims that "peace" would be seen as a "great step forward". They add: "An agreement is still possible and with it a reduction in the intensity of the violence. This would give the chance to the trade unions to unite Catholic and Protestant workers in common struggle." At a recent national Youth against Racism in Europe conference, *Militant* explicitly opposed the call for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. Instead they propose as a "solution" the creation of a Labour Party in the North on the same mould as the reformist pro-imperialist British Labour Party.

When the "peace" negotiations hit the headlines, the SWP's initial response was to implore John Major to talk to "all parties". Realising that he has actually done this they now whine that "Socialists welcome the possibility of peace. But we remain sceptical about the deal and critical of the Republican politics which have carried Gerry Adams down this road" (*Socialist Review*, January 1994). Revolutionaries are more than "sceptical" about bloody imperialist schemes for the oppressed and more than "critical" of pro-capitalist nationalist politics.

The SWP/Socialist Workers Movement (SWM) sometimes calls for "troops out"—except when it counts! The SWP's conception of the imperialists as peace-makers harks back to 1969 when they endorsed the troops being sent in by a Labour government—which was also a capitulation to illusions then prevalent in some sections of the Catholic community that the troops would protect them from Protestant bigots.

Both *Militant* and the SWP/SWM have been talking a lot about building "working class unity" around economic and social issues like jobs, unemployment, medical services and housing. Such struggles may well be openings to forge cross-communal workers unity, but without the infusion of a revolutionary transitional programme that transcends the immediate economic or social demands and which addresses the oppression of the Catholic minority, the presence of the troops and the national question, these struggles are doomed to be episodic and engulfed by communal division. Instead, both the SWP and *Militant* enthuse over the pro-imperialist "peace rallies" organised by the trade union bureaucrats.

Other organisations like Workers Power (WP)/Irish Workers Group (IWG), the Workers International League and the Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL) criticise the "peace" deal, but from a Green nationalist perspective. Thus, notwithstanding occasional "socialist" phraseology, all of them support "self-determination for the Irish people as a whole", which boils down to a denial that the Protestants are a distinct community. Rejecting a revolutionary proletarian solution, WP/IWG and RIL appeal to bourgeois forces. Thus, even as they denounce Reynolds and the IRA for making deals with British imperialism, WP/IWG raise the ridiculous demand

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Springfield, Illinois

Anti-fascists confront KKK

CHICAGO—Aided, abetted and protected by a massive show of armed police force, the Ku Klux Klan staged racist provocations in eight state capitals on the Martin Luther King holiday weekend. But despite the cop mobilisations, and major efforts by liberals to “ignore the Klan”, wherever the cowardly nightriders came out into the daylight, they were confronted by outraged anti-fascists.

The focal point of the battle against the Klan provocations became Springfield, Illinois, where uniquely a struggle was waged to mobilise the social power of organised labour and the black community. This was met by a frenzied response from the government and others like the AFL-CIO bureaucracy who sought to sabotage any effective response to the fascist terrorists.

On Sunday, 16 January, some 500 people braved arctic temperatures and a blinding snowstorm to prevent a provocation against Martin Luther King Day. This significant event was forged by the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), the legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League. Late on in the mobilising effort, the PDC had to wage a battle in the federal courts against Illinois Secretary of State George Ryan’s move to effectively rescind a permit the PDC had already been granted to demonstrate within view of the Klan provocation. The state’s concerted efforts

to prevent anti-Klan protests are part and parcel of yuppie racist Clinton’s America. Today all the Democrats have to offer blacks is more prisons and boot camps for youth.

The call “All Out to Stop the KKK” struck a responsive vein of anger and discontent among wide sectors of the population, from the factories to the ghettos and college campuses. More than 100,000 leaflets building this anti-racist action were distributed. What prevailed in Springfield on 16 January was a labour-centred mobilisation in defence of black people and all intended victims of Ku Klux Klan terror. “Those of us who are here, we are the hard core of the union. We are the hard core of this movement”, said John Hill, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer of Chicago’s Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 308, which endorsed the demonstration and chartered a bus for ATU members to be there.

This demonstration represented a diverse social and political spectrum united in struggle against the Ku Klux Klan—blacks and unionists from Springfield and as far away as Chicago and St Louis, contingents of students from Chicago State and the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Jews, Catholics, gays and leftists. The work of Chicago transit workers in ATU Locals 241 and 308 was crucial. They brought out inte-

grated rail and bus workers, men and women, who formed the heart of the union marshals, ensuring the anti-Klan demonstration was militant, disciplined and democratic from beginning to end.

Endorsers included the presidents of heavily black union locals representing tens of thousands of Chicago-area workers, as well as the regional offices of the United Auto Workers, the United Electrical Workers and the United Rubber Workers. In Springfield, representatives of Local 73 of the Service Employees International Union endorsed and helped build the rally. Endorsements were also received from trade unionists as far away as Italy, Britain and Japan.

Faced with a multiracial crowd determined to stop the race haters, Secretary of State Ryan deployed his special police to sneak the Klan like rats through underground tunnels into the Capitol building and then behind a maze of barricades and hundreds of riot cops in front of the East steps. Ryan’s top cop “Jack” Pecoraro said that his “best piece of luck Sunday was simply the weather”, with a wind chill of 16 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, because otherwise “it could have been a larger crowd”. Indeed, much larger.

Various left groups—the Cliffite International Socialist Organization (ISO), the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL, sister organisation of the British

RIL group) and its all-purpose front group NWROC, and Progressive Labor Party (PL)—came with small groups of supporters, refusing to act in coordination with each other, much less with us. The PDC had invited—early on, in writing, and again on site—various anti-Klan forces to join in a unified opposition to the Klan in which the diversity of political views and strategies of all participating groups would be represented. But sectarianism and arrogant petty-bourgeois opposition to a disciplined working-class mobilisation unfortunately was paramount for them. These “left” fakers have no political strategy to mobilise the working class because they don’t think it can be done.

Barely 45 minutes into their pathetic performance, the drowned-out Klansmen crawled back into their holes with their cop escorts. The ISO and PL left before the KKK did, and the RWL hit the road as soon as the Klan was gone. The triumphant labour/black mobilisation reassembled those hard-core forces that had stuck through the bitter cold and held their ground until the Klan had left town. The labour/black mobilisation formed up and marched away from the Capitol chanting, “KKK—No way! We stopped your march today!” and “Springfield—Too hot for the KKK!”

For a fuller report get *Workers Vanguard* no 592, 21 January 1994.

Ireland...

(Continued from page 9)

that the anti-Republican government of southern Ireland provide armaments and aid to northern Catholics. Meanwhile, the RIL’s idea of the role of “worker/community defence guards” would be to “demand that the IRA provides equipment and training”.

Marxists point out that the IRA’s tactic of individual terror runs counter to the communist strategy of mobilising the working class to overthrow capitalism. However, when the IRA strikes a blow against the imperialist oppressor or Loyalist fascist killers, we defend the perpetrators of such acts against capitalist retribution. We take a different attitude to indiscriminate terror such as the Enniskillen, Teebane or Shankill bombings, which are criminal acts from the standpoint of the working class. The logic of nationalism is “the only good one is a dead one”: why not bomb a pub, it’s only filled with lots of people who practice the other religion. Workers Power shares the IRA’s nationalist framework. Thus, they earlier defended the Enniskillen atrocity. And while today WP criticises the Shankill bombing as “adventurist”, it refuses to attack this *sectarian* bombing which indiscriminately killed Protestant civilians.

The WP/IWG’s occasional orthodox-sounding statements criticising the SWP and Militant’s reformist economism are only a cover for their own petty-bourgeois despair. Thus, *Workers Power* (January 1994) devotes a centrespread to belittling and debunking as “sentimental stories” those instances where Catholic and Protestant workers have transcended the

communal divide, from the 1907 Belfast dockers strike to the 1930s unemployment struggles. Thus, they dismiss the joint unemployment marches as “spontaneous” and tending “to take place in the communities coincidentally, but separately”. In fact, in 1934, Protestant workers from the Shankill, under the leadership of Communists, marched to join the *Wolfe Tone* commemoration in the South, carrying a banner “Break the connection with capitalism”. This was a consciously anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist act by Protestant workers, who were rebuffed by the IRA.

Forge a revolutionary workers party

In the tsarist “prison house of peoples” the Bolsheviks championed the fight for liberation of oppressed nations and nationalities, but the core of the revolutionary struggle was Russian workers rising up against Russian rulers. In contrast the Protestants are an insecure, reversible majority in the context of interpenetrated peoples, and therefore much less easily polarised along class lines.

But the instances of workers solidarity in the North, however fragile and fleeting, indicate that the opportunity can arise for a revolutionary organisation to intervene, altering the course of the conflict towards a class determination and proletarian revolution.

Before the Shankill bombing in October, the mainly Protestant workforce at the key Shorts plant in Belfast struck in protest at the UVF killing of a Catholic worker, Jody Reynolds. Today Shorts workers face 400 sackings. The government’s “Fair Employment Commission” wants the company to fire Protestants

with long service before more recently hired Catholics: ie to abandon “last in, first out”, which would instantly set workers from the two communities against each other. The demand for a sliding scale of hours, to divide the available work among *all* the workers, gives a completely different perspective of class struggle unity, cutting against the divide-and-rule consequences of sectarianism. A Marxist cadre is required to lead, and can only be forged in the struggle for, such a perspective.

We fight for:

- Militant opposition to British imperialism, anti-Catholic discrimination, and sectarianism! For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British Army! For programmatically based anti-sectarian, anti-imperialist workers militias to combat Orange and Green terror and imperialist rampage!

- We fight for full democratic rights for the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland: no discrimination in housing and hiring! But such demands must be linked to class demands which transcend the bounds of bourgeois democracy and simple trade union struggle, to provide jobs and a decent income for all. For a sliding scale of wages and hours! Expatriate the bourgeoisie—for a centralised planned economy to rebuild the capitalist economic wasteland!

- For a relentless struggle for separation of church and state throughout the British Isles! The smashing of the clerical state in the South is interlinked with the breaking of the Unionist stranglehold over Protestant workers in the North! In turn, the struggle against clerical reaction, North as well as South, is necessarily linked to the liberation of women. As opposed to Sinn Féin and the social-

democratic forces of Dick Spring and Mary Robinson, who both bow to the Catholic Church, we fight for free abortion and contraception on demand!

- The great miners strike of 1984-85 showed how workers struggles can inspire the proletariat and oppressed throughout the British Isles. The key lies in the forging of Trotskyist vanguard parties, in which Catholics and Protestants, English, Welsh, Scottish, blacks and Asians will fight together as comrades for a proletarian future.

Opportunists and reformists, who adapt to different forces depending on the national terrain, are incapable of principled proletarian internationalism. We note, for example, that Workers Power/IWG, which today seek to present themselves as “opponents” of a sell-out to British imperialism, have simultaneously given political support to the virulently anti-worker, anti-Republican coalitionist Irish Labour Party, while currently calling for a government of the chauvinist Labour Party in Britain.

- We recognise that in the context of interpenetrated peoples there can be no just resolution of the national question within a capitalist framework. An independent Ulster statelet would at best maintain the Catholics as an oppressed people, while a reunified capitalist Ireland would only reverse the terms of oppression. We fight for an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles. This leaves open the resolution of the Protestant question, but certainly under workers rule, in the triumph of revolutionary class unity over communal/national division, a range of flexible, democratic and equitable solutions would be opened up. Forward to a Socialist United States of Europe! ■

Russia...

(Continued from page 12)

gang gave the fascist Zhirinovskiy extra air time during the election period, as he was one of the few non-governmental candidates to support Yeltsin's constitution. Indeed, Zhirinovskiy made it clear that he himself hoped ultimately to wield the bonapartist powers provided to the president under the constitution.

Appropriately enough, the lower house of the new Russian "legislature" is called the Duma, after the impotent "advisory" council under the last tsar. On the eve of the election, Yeltsin restored the old imperial double-headed eagle as the state symbol of the "new" Russia. This was the same emblem under which the tsarist Duma met—and was repeatedly disbanded—before the 1917 Russian Revolution. One woman, whose relatives fought in the Civil War of 1918-20 against the tsarist White Guards, commented bitterly: "They were fighting against the restoration of that evil eagle that meant poverty and slavery for us simple people. And now it is all coming back." And having restored the tsarist double-headed eagle, Yeltsin officially "rehabilitated" the counterrevolutionary Kronstadt mutiny of 1921, which was crushed by Lenin and Trotsky's Red Army.

The new constitution enshrines Yeltsin's right to rule by *ukaz* (decree). The president will have the power to unilaterally appoint the prime minister, the powerful security council, top military commanders, the supreme court and the central bank, to set internal and foreign policy and to reject any Duma legislation. Yeltsin can declare a state of emergency at his whim.

Some of the smaller Stalinist "patriot" groups—including the outlawed Russian Communist Workers Party of Viktor Anpilov—called for a boycott of the elections. In an article in the *Nation* (6 December 1993), Boris Kagarlitsky, head of the small social-democratic Party of Labour, also argued for this position.

Kagarlitsky cited the Russian workers movement response to the 1905 "Bulygin Duma". This was set up as a sop specifically aimed at heading off the workers uprising. But after the revolutionary upsurge had been decisively defeated, Lenin's Bolsheviks participated in the elections to the third Duma in 1907 as a platform for revolutionary propaganda. As Lenin wrote:

"Active boycott, as the experience of the Russian revolution has shown, is correct tactics on the part of the Social-Democrats only under conditions of a sweeping, universal and rapid upswing of the revolution."

— V.I. Lenin, "Draft Resolution on Participation in the Elections to the Third Duma" (July 1907)

Sham that they were, the current elections did not take place in a period of escalating class struggle; on the contrary, given the present passivity of the Russian proletariat, the call for an *active* boycott policy was empty.

We of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) were for a resounding "no" to Yeltsin's bonapartist constitution. However, in the legislative elections there was no party or group to which revolutionaries could give even the most critical electoral support. The KPRF won votes from many of those who were opposed to the "free market" immiseration represented by the capitalist "reformers" and were also repelled by the violent racism of Zhirinovskiy. Yet this largest of the Stalinist "patriot" organisations ran on the basis of explicit and emphatic support to capitalist "free enterprise". Roy Medvedev's Socialist Party of Labour (SPT) threw itself into a "Fatherland" bloc with monarchists and Cossacks, which soon fell apart and took the



Der Spiegel

Troops guard charred "White House" after Yeltsin ordered storming of parliament.

SPT out of the running.

While denouncing Yeltsin for seeking greater powers than even "the pharaoh, the tsar and the general secretary" and condemning "wild capitalism", KPRF head Gennady Zyuganov insisted: "Privatisation is essential" (*Economist*, 27 November 1993). Zyuganov went out of his way to dissociate his party from anything remotely connected to communism. Lauding the Bible and the Koran, he railed, "There are more former Communists in Boris Yeltsin's government than in my party." Adamantly affirming his support to capitalism, Zyuganov complained that under Yeltsin, "no real reforms have yet begun. They promise us a capitalism like Switzerland's, but it's already more like Colombia here, and may soon be Bangladesh" (*Guardian*, 25 November 1993).

Behind Zyuganov's pseudo-populist rhetoric is a programme for a more nationalist, gradual road to the introduction of full-fledged capitalism. Acknowledging the devastating impact of Yeltsin's "shock therapy" was common coin for all the electoral groupings. Volsky's Civic Union called for "therapy without shock", while Yeltsin minister Shakhrai (running on a slate independent from Gaidar) called for an "active industrial policy". Even Gaidar, the architect of Yeltsin's "shock therapy" deindustrialisation programme, cloaked himself in "centrist" language stressing the need for tariffs and "sensible protection" for Russian industry.

Zhirinovskiy was not alone in pushing unalloyed Great Russian chauvinism. The KPRF's Zyuganov was earlier co-chairman of the fascistic Russian National Sobor and a leader of the "red-brown" National Salvation Front. Shakhrai's electoral slate ran on the slogan "Family, Property, Homeland". Gaidar's theme song was titled "Russia Is Risen" and his

buttons featured an image of Peter the Great. While thoroughly beholden to Washington, Yeltsin is no less a Great Russian chauvinist than his nationalist opponents. The new constitution does away with even the formal rights to autonomy previously granted to predominantly non-Russian regions such as that of the Volga Tatars and the Chechens in the Caucasus.

This goes hand in hand with an attempt to expand Russian control in the "near abroad", the non-Russian republics of the former USSR. Largely succumbing to pressure from the military, Yeltsin has explicitly opposed NATO expansion to East Europe. But this is not necessarily counterposed to a pro-Western policy. Washington is in favour of a strong Russian state reasserting its dominance over the domain of the former Soviet Union, so long as it remains a client state subservient to Western interests. As the *Economist* (4 December 1993) noted in an editorial entitled "Russia Resurgent", "America might even think its interests were being served if Russia acted as a neighbourhood cop".

Resurgent Great Russian chauvinism is a deadly danger to the proletariat, whose multinational character was shaped by the integrated, collectivised economy in the former Soviet Union. Nationalist demagoguery, whether coming from Washington's man Yeltsin, the fascist Zhirinovskiy or the Stalinist "patriots", serves to divide the workers and chain the Russian masses to their would-be exploiters.

For socialist revolution to sweep away Yeltsin!

Whatever the outcome of the elections, it will not solve the fundamental problems facing the fledgling Russian capital-



Der Spiegel

Capitalist immiseration and poverty in Moscow.

ist class. Harvard "shock therapy" architect Jeffrey Sachs complains that only \$1.5 billion of the \$13 billion in International Monetary Fund aid has actually come through. The *Economist* (6 November 1993) notes that direct foreign investment—barely \$100 million in 1992—"is so small that no one in the government appears to be bothering to measure it". Meanwhile, inflation this autumn averaged 20 per cent a month, double the rate a year ago. And while formal unemployment stands at under a million, some five million or so are effectively unemployed, laid off or on unpaid "vacation". Lack of fuel means that millions have no heat or hot water during one of the bitterest winters in years.

A bellwether for the possibility of mass social struggles in the coming period is the recent strike in the Vorkuta coal fields, which has long been a bastion of support for Yeltsin. The Independent Union of Miners (NPG), which was formed with the aid of US imperialism via the anti-Communist AFL-CIO bureaucracy, backed Yeltsin's dissolution of parliament in October. But with over two months of unpaid back wages, the Vorkuta NPG leaders organised a hunger strike in November, culminating in a one-day walkout on 11 November 1993. On 6 December, they struck again for five days, calling off the walkout on the eve of the elections only after Moscow promised yet again to pay up. But the relatively privileged miners still face massive pit closures if Yeltsin/Gaidar have their way.

Another strike over back payment of wages by gas industry workers in the Siberian city of Nadym virtually shut down the area before ending in victory in early December. Even the pro-Yeltsin *Izvestia* (3 December 1993) reported: "Economic demands receded into the background, while people were urged constantly to vote against the government and to boycott the referendum on the constitution."

The drive by the new rulers of Russia to consolidate a capitalist state, whether according to the plans of the IMF "shock therapists" or more corporatist-nationalist schemes, portends a horrendous destruction of the living standards of the working class. Burgeoning discontent could explode, whether in inchoate plebeian outbursts, economist trade-union struggles or more political mobilisations against the thieving bloodsuckers. However they arise, it is necessary to put forward a programme to deepen defensive struggles, to extend them and transform and lead them towards a working-class political struggle for power. Along this road, what will be necessary is the formation of authentic, elected soviets to unify the proletariat in combat for socialist revolution and to serve as the framework for a reconstituted proletarian state power.

The morale of the proletariat of the former Soviet Union is currently shattered. But to recognise this is not to see the working class condemned to some generations of small and modest economic struggle. The recent strikes demonstrate that the potential is much more explosive—that the Russian proletariat can be impelled, without any particular political consciousness, to challenge the trivial, black-market capitalist class that is coalescing in the ex-Soviet Union. But to take what is impelled by increasing immiseration, unemployment, hunger and exploitation and turn it towards advancing the condition of the working class and its allies requires a revolutionary leadership in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

Down with Yeltsin and his *ukaz* constitution! For proletarian revolution to reforge an authentically egalitarian and voluntary union of soviet republics!
Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 590, 17 December 1993.

Russia : fascists feed off capitalist reaction

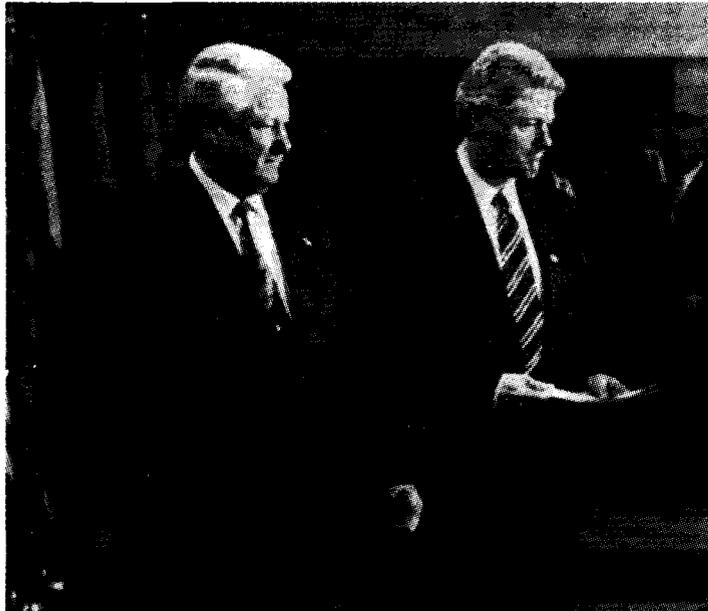
Yeltsin dances to Washington's tune

The elections held in Russia in December 1993 were intended as a fig leaf for the bloody coup carried out by President Boris Yeltsin over two months ago. Since ordering the elimination of the elected parliament (Supreme Soviet) in September, sealed by the 4 October tank assault on the "White House" parliament building which left hundreds dead, Yeltsin has ruled by decree. He granted himself supreme powers and announced a vote "under the barrels of machine guns", as one provincial leader called it. The toothless legislature and makeshift "constitution" put to Russia's voters on 12 December were designed to lend a façade of legality to Yeltsin's dictatorial rule.

But the result was an embarrassment to Yeltsin and his imperialist sponsors. The election saw a huge protest vote, whose main beneficiary was the fascist "Liberal Democratic Party" of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The success of this virulent anti-Semite and crazed Russian nationalist—who wants to reclaim Finland, Poland and the rest of the former tsarist empire—shocked Western capitals, and underlined that the Russian counter-revolution can veer off from the course outlined by Washington and the International Monetary Fund.

Zhirinovskiy's dramatic vote total—about 23 per cent—is a sinister omen for Jews and non-Russian nationalities. A crazed fanatic who vows to "follow in Hitler's footsteps", Zhirinovskiy spewed anti-Semitic filth and railed during the campaign that he would restore Russia to the borders of the tsarist empire. His TV ads showed Russian toughs beating up a dark-skinned person from the Caucasus, while Zhirinovskiy threatened to expel one million Azerbaijanis from Russia. Zhirinovskiy has positioned himself to exploit growing hostility to Yeltsin/Gaidar's economic "shock treatment", directing mass desperation into pogroms against ethnic minorities and whipping up Great Russian chauvinism.

Touring Austria, Zhirinovskiy stayed with a former member of Hitler's Waffen SS. After having been expelled from Bulgaria, he was then refused entry to Germany, whose government claimed that it could not tolerate Zhirinovskiy's extremist views on European borders and would not allow him to use the country as a "platform for his right-wing slogans" (*Guardian*, 30 December 1993). US president Clinton has announced he will not meet with Zhirinovskiy on his trip to Moscow. Of course, the same imperialists who hypocritically denounce Zhirinovskiy are busy implementing racist terror at home and backed not only Yeltsin but every variety of fascistic and bourgeois nationalist in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltics and elsewhere in an effort to undermine



New York Times

Boris Yeltsin and his US imperialist backer, Bill Clinton. Crazed Russian fascist, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (above). His "Liberal Democratic Party" is a product of capitalist counterrevolution.

the former Soviet Union.

In the aftermath of the elections Yeltsin, partly in an effort to appease nationalist-minded officers who voted heavily for Zhirinovskiy, has cancelled some of the proposed cuts in the armed forces. Meanwhile, the Western imperialists—nervously seeking to prop up their ally Yeltsin—made concessions to the Russians in the recent negotiations over NATO. Thus, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (which all enrolled in the so-called Partnership for Peace), along with Lithuania were for the time denied membership in NATO itself. This produced substantial dismay among the East European capitalists, terrified by the spectre of resurgent Russian nationalism. And notwithstanding strenuous opposition from Ukrainian nationalists, Yeltsin and Clinton are putting the squeeze on the Ukraine to dismantle its nuclear arsenal, in exchange for nuclear fuel and a reduction of its debt to Russia.

Yeltsin's ukaz constitution

Also getting a sizeable vote was the refounded Communist Party-Russian Federation (KPRF), which despite its name made utterly clear that it stands for a capitalist market economy. While Yeltsin claimed a majority for his constitution, the regime's own figures of a paltry 53 per cent voter turnout was effectively an admission of defeat. Notwithstanding the seemingly strong vote for Yeltsin's nationalist and Stalinist opponents, the new pseudo-parliament is designed to be nothing more than a sounding board for the president's dictates. But given its composition, it could still be a thorn in his side.

The purpose of this electoral farce was to satisfy the "democratic" pretensions of

Yeltsin's imperialist backers in Washington. While fervently backing czar Boris' every dictatorial move to push through the "free market" immiseration of Russia's working people and devastation of its industrial base, the imperialists still want to maintain the image that Yeltsin is, in the words of US secretary of state Warren Christopher, "the best exponent of democracy and progress in Russia". But while Russia's new mafia millionaires and their big brothers in Wall Street and the City of London feast on Russian caviar, the working masses suffer from widespread and growing malnutrition, homelessness and the destruction of social services. The governor of Nizhni Novgorod province, a pacesetter in privatising industry, warns: "Unfortunately the next year in Russia will be a year of tremendous inflation, unemployment, strikes, factory closures and very acute political conflicts. I see nothing good in the future."

Yeltsin aspires to be a Russian version of Pilsudski, Poland's dictator in the 1920s and '30s. However, Pilsudski came to power in a bonapartist coup which had both wide popular support and the backing of a cohesive military. Yeltsin has neither. He is a bonaparte, a would-be dictator, but a very weak one, whose firmest support lies in the financial capitals of the West. The army's backing remains tentative and unenthusiastic—as underlined in the recent elections—and is certainly not to be relied on in the event of a mass working-class upsurge. While the world-historic defeat represented by the destruction of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state has had a devastating impact on the proletariat, several strikes in the weeks before the election point to the possibility of volatile social struggles in response to the ever-deepening immiseration.

Even under the most "democratic" capitalist regime, so-called "free elections" serve to distribute power within the ruling class, which exercises its monopoly of control over the media and big money. But in the context of bloody counterrevolution, Yeltsin's elections were intended to give "democratic" sanction to the mass murder of hundreds of defenders of parliament during the 4 October assault on the "White House". More than a dozen political organisations were banned outright for their defence of the former parliament. Class-conscious workers must fight against Yeltsin's anti-democratic ban and call for freeing Rutskoi, Khasbulatov and all the imprisoned supporters of parliament.

A revolutionary workers party in Russia would have fought to independently mobilise the working class and its allies against Yeltsin's bloody assault on parliament, which was aimed at consolidating his bonapartist rule and eliminating what was seen as an obstacle to the imperialist-dictated "free market reforms". In fighting not only to bring down Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary regime but against all the capitalist-restorationist, chauvinist scum, it was necessary to bloc *militarily* with the Rutskoi/Khasbulatov forces defending parliament, but without giving an iota of political support to Yeltsin's bourgeois opponents.

Yeltsin's victory last October gave a major impetus to the growth of reactionary and chauvinist forces. Thus, the mass deportation by Yeltsin of non-Russians from Moscow in the immediate aftermath of the dispersal of parliament was a green light for Zhirinovskiy's poisonous racism. And significantly, while the Western bourgeois press constantly touts Yeltsin's "democratic" credentials, the Yeltsin

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