

## Racist police rampage against minorities, youth

### Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and their families

The Criminal Justice Bill (CJB), passed into law on 3 November, supplies the bosses' cops and courts with an arsenal of repressive laws targeting workers, youth and minorities. Providing a foretaste of what is in store under the "new" CJB, the cops have repeatedly attacked anti-Bill protests. On 9 October, a march of over 50,000 people in London was blocked and charged by hundreds of police in riot gear at the entrance to Hyde Park. As night fell, the cops carried out repeated baton charges,

injuring scores of demonstrators (30 of whom required hospital treatment) and arresting 48.

The next day, the cops launched into a witch hunt against anti-CJB militants, blaming "a hard core of 2000 anarchists and far-left activists" for planning the confrontation, and singling out the anarchist Class War group. Then on 19 October they turned on a protest outside Parliament, with truncheons flailing. In Scotland seven anti-Bill protest organisers were charged with breaching existing public order legislation. Drop all the charges against anti-Bill activists! Down with the cops' witch hunt against anti-Bill militants!

*continued on page 10*



Dan Chung

Vicious cop assault on anti-Criminal Justice Bill demonstration in London, 9 October.

## 25 million walk out against austerity



## General strike rocks Italy

MILANO—Twenty-five million people joined the nationwide general strike on 14 October. More than three million, possibly five million, protested in the streets of 97 cities. This massive strike was the largest in decades, perhaps the largest since the immediate postwar period. Eighty per cent participated around the country, 90 per cent in industry and the public sector, almost 100 per cent in the "red belt" of central Italy. Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi had doubted that the strike would be general; speaking before 200,000 in the Piazza San Carlo in the Northern industrial bastion of Torino, home of Fiat, a leader of the CISL union federation declared, "This was not a general strike, it was a total strike." Even in the South, in Catania and Palermo (Sicily), the walkout was complete.

This massively successful display of proletarian power was preceded by weeks of explosive and largely spontaneous workers protest strikes by hundreds of thousands against the government's pension-slashing austerity budget. From Berlusconi, who had gone off on a junket to Moscow in order to be out of the country on the 14th, came the

arrogant response that "not one, not ten, not 100 general strikes can change the budget". The prime minister spent the day swilling vodka with would-be Tsar Yeltsin and lamenting that economic "reform" was so much harder in Italy because of parliamentary constraints. The aspirations of the leader of the right-wing coalition government (which for the first time since WW II includes fascist ministers) to become a new strongman are patently clear: one protester's sign declared, "Mussolini had the balconies, Berlusconi isn't satisfied with six TV channels", referring to the three channels owned by the media magnate's Fininvest chain, and the three "public" channels he now controls as head of the government.

Commenting on the general strike and Berlusconi's high-handed response, Mas-

simo D'Alema, head of the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS), remarked: "A democratic government cannot refuse to take this into account." In the same vein, Eugenio Scalfari, editor of the liberal bourgeois daily *La Repubblica* (15 October) wrote in a front-page editorial, "The people protest in the streets, but then they return to their houses and to work. Fortunately. If they remained in the streets to protest not four hours like yesterday but for two whole days, any government would fall like a house of cards." Scalfari and D'Alema are imagining a parliamentary shuffle bringing in a popular-front cabinet.

Yet scarcely two years ago, in October 1992, the PDS reformists were being chased from speakers' platforms under a

hail of coins and bolts from their own members, enraged by the sell-out of hard-won union gains. *La Stampa* (15 October), house organ of Fiat boss Giovanni Agnelli, commented on the "miracle in Milano", that this time "the coins (and bolts)" against the union tops were "no longer in fashion". A real, unlimited general strike would pose the question of power, particularly amid the turmoil of this "hot autumn" of class struggle in Italy. But by itself it would not resolve that question. There has never been a lack of militancy in the Italian working class. The key question is that of revolutionary leadership.

Berlusconi is widely despised. A typical poster on 14 October read, "I repent, I

*cont...*

Declaration of fraternal relations  
between Luta Metalúrgica (P...  
the International Com...

## Militant's French cohorts in a frenzy

# Down with gangsterism in the workers movement!

We reprint below a letter sent to our comrades of the Ligue trotskyste de France (LTF) from Militant's Committee for a Workers International (CWI), and the reply from the International Communist League (ICL). The Spartacist League of Britain and the LTF are sections of the ICL.

21st October 1994

TO: Central Committee of the LTF  
FROM: International Secretariat of the CWI

For the last year your behaviour towards our French section, the Gauche revolutionnaire/JCR, has become more and more provocative—obstructive behaviour at our meetings and public initiatives, slanders, insults (“fascists”, “cops”). However up until now you had stopped short of physical violence—although the way in which you disrupted our forum at the Lutte Ouvriere fete in May stopped just short of it.

In the last week you have crossed over the threshold:

—on the evening of the 12th of October our comrade Raymond Debord was attacked outside his apartment in Paris by four of your members, three of whom we know by name, the fourth by sight. He was warned that the next time he would finish up in hospital.

—after our French comrades wrote to you protesting at this attack you sent an insulting reply which didn't even mention this incident but instead invented an attack against your comrades at the University of Tolbiac on the 11th October, presumably to justify your own subsequent behaviour.

—on Tuesday 18th October a female immigrant comrade of ours was followed from her home for 45 minutes by one of the four attackers of the previous week.

We are obliged to conclude that these attacks and harassment of our comrades are either now the official policy of your group, or else you have lost control of your members.

We will not tolerate your attacks on our comrades. If they do not cease immediately we have full confidence that our French section will know how to deal

with the problem in the appropriate way. They will have our full support.

New York  
5 November 1994

International Secretariat  
Committee for a Workers International  
London

Dear Comrades,

We are in receipt of your letter to our French section, the Ligue Trotskyste (LTF), purporting to be a description of the recent violent confrontations between your French section (GR/JCR) and our comrades. Your letter is a transparent effort to create a slanderous smokescreen to obscure the aggressive gangsterism unleashed by your leader in France, Raymond Debord, against our comrades, and to provide a basis for further provocations against our organization. Throwing in for good measure a claim that an LTF comrade followed a woman immigrant comrade of yours from her home—a highly inflammatory charge which is absolutely untrue—you choose to simply deny your comrades' October 11 attack on our sales team at the University of Tolbiac as an invention of ours, although the incident was witnessed by dozens of students. Moreover, the LTF immediately issued a leaflet at Tolbiac (attached), denouncing the cowardly unprovoked attack in which our comrade Pierre was hit from behind without warning and knocked to the ground by Debord's number one goon, Gérald.

Your comrades' violent assault was intended to stop us from distributing a leaflet in defense of Maghrebian women high school students being expelled from school by the Bayrou edict of the racist French government. The attack at Tolbiac was the continuation of the gangsterist vendetta begun by Raymond Debord at the summer camp of the Youth Against Racism in Europe (JRE/YRE), an organization which is politically led by your Committee for a Workers International. What is most laughably transparent about your present letter is that you manage to say nothing whatever about the camp which was in fact largely dominated by Raymond Debord's personally instigated campaign of violence and slander against the ICL/LTF and the eventual failure of that campaign.

To refresh your memory: at the camp Raymond Debord attempted to prevent

ICL comrades from selling our pamphlet on “Militant Labour's Touching Faith in the Capitalist State.” The pamphlet (which includes the complete text of the GR/JCR's own polemic against the ICL as well as our reply exposing your organization's line of relying on the capitalist state to fight fascism) was evidently so damaging to Debord that he not only assaulted our salesmen, but even strong-armed one of the YRE's own French members when she was buying a copy. We immediately protested this attack to the JRE/YRE leadership, to other organizations present, and in a leaflet distributed to camp participants (also attached) which linked your organization's line that the racist cops are “workers in uniform” to Debord's own attempt to play thought-policeman of the left.

The camp leadership sought to alibi Debord's conduct by keeping up a steady stream of anti-Spartacist slanders, threats and “jokes” in the camp newsletter, but nonetheless Debord's conduct became such a scandal—and so unpopular among camp participants (including among some of your own members)—that the camp leadership finally backed off from its earlier threat to exclude the LTF from the camp. Your French comrades' unprovoked assault on the LTF on the Tolbiac campus was Debord's next move. It will not succeed any better.

The day after the Tolbiac attack, the LTF sought out Raymond Debord and informed him firmly that we would hold him responsible for any future assaults on our members. In response to our warning, Debord then phoned the LTF saying he wanted to discuss how the escalating violence could be stopped and offering to come to our office right away (at 11:30 at night!) to talk about it—surely a very strange suggestion to make if his earlier encounter with us had been as portrayed in your letter (and as you now describe it in your public press). The LTF replied in writing (a copy of this letter was immediately sent to you in London) that ending the violence was very simple: if your organization has ceased the gangsterism against our comrades, it's over. Subsequently we received the GR/JCR letter to which you now refer, and now your own cover-up letter.

To restate the obvious: gangsterism on the left has a long and despicable history. It is characteristic of the Stalinist and social-democratic bureaucrats who have much to fear from the criticism of revolutionaries. As the GR/JCR letter itself shows, your



TROTSKY

### The Fourth International on South and Central America

The Fourth International led by Russian Revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky fought to uphold the genuine Marxism and internationalism of the Bolshevik 1917 Revolution. In its manifesto of 1940, the Fourth International underscored the critical relevance of permanent revolution: that the solution of the burning democratic tasks, including genuine national emancipation, was conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat, as part of the struggle for world socialist revolution.

The theses of the Fourth International state: “South and Central America will be able to tear themselves out of backwardness and enslavement only by uniting all their states into one powerful federation. But it is not the belated South American bourgeoisie, a thoroughly venal agency of foreign imperialism, who will be called upon to solve this task, but the young South American proletariat, the chosen leader of the oppressed masses. The slogan in the struggle against violence and intrigues of world imperialism and against the bloody work of native comprador cliques is therefore: the Soviet United States of South and Central America”....

The perspective of the permanent revolution in no case signifies that the backward countries must await the signal from the advanced ones, or that the colonial peoples should patiently wait for the proletariat of the metropolitan centers to free them. Help comes to him who helps himself. Workers must develop the revolutionary struggle in every country, colonial or imperialist, where favorable conditions have been established, and through this set an example for the workers of other countries. Only initiative and activity, resoluteness and boldness can really materialize the slogan “Workers of the world, unite!”

—Manifesto of the Fourth International (May, 1940)



LENIN

## WORKERS HAMMER



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# Labour Party backs anti-union laws Rail union bureaucrats choke signalworkers strike

At the end of September, the RMT bureaucracy rammed through a sell-out ending the signal workers dispute. For four months, the union misleaders pursued a defeatist strategy of one- and two-day work stoppages. Anxious at all costs to avoid a conflict with the government's anti-union laws, the RMT tops refused to picket out the industry, thereby putting other members of the rail unions in the position of working on strike days. The union bureaucracy extended craft unionism to its logical back-stabbing conclusion. This was a naked betrayal of elementary labour solidarity, which is the basic precondition for the working class actually winning anything through its own efforts in struggle against the bosses and their government.

The *Financial Times* (29 September) noted that the company, Railtrack, had "achieved most of what it wanted in the modernisation of working practices". Thus, in exchange for modest pay increases, the company will institute "flexible rostering", with shifts ranging up to twelve hours; work loads will be increased, with a wider range of duties; and company job evaluations will be introduced, with management given the right to determine "suitability" for promotion.

Most of the "left" enthused over the outcome. *Militant* (7 October) wrote: "After 16 weeks, the longest strike in the history of the rail industry has seen a victory." Except that there was neither a victory nor a 16-week strike! *Socialist*



Left to right: John Prescott, Margaret Beckett and Labour leader Tony Blair, united in Labour's bid to run capitalism.

*Organiser* (6 October) claimed that the strike had put "some new life back into the labour movement. Activists were once again rattling collecting tins on the streets...." But what kind of "solidarity" is it that means only a minority of rail workers go on strike, while the majority show up for work? The government did not succeed in totally defeating the signal workers. But those who enthuse over a "strike victory" here tacitly accept the bureaucracy's lies that real gains can be made by playing by the bosses' rules, by staying within the law and having workers

scab on each other.

The sell-out was accepted *unanimously* by the RMT executive. So much for the so-called "left" on the executive! And in settling when they did, the bureaucrats left London tube workers in the lurch, and let Tony Blair off the hook. As one signal worker observed:

"They [strikers] were also sickened by the neutral attitude of Labour's leaders throughout this dispute. It would not surprise me if a wish to avoid embarrassment at Labour's conference and prevent the Tories highlighting Labour's 'unfashionable' links with the unions was a factor in the RMT leadership's decisions to end the dispute at virtually any cost."  
—*Socialist Organiser*, 6 October

the short run, you may imagine you can save yourselves embarrassment by attempting to intimidate us from exposing Debord's antics. In fact your leader in France is a loose cannon; neither we nor you can predict what this unstable poseur is likely to come up with next in the way of atrocities, political or otherwise.

Our tendency has a long and proud record of intransigent defense of workers democracy. One of our earliest campaigns in this vein was our defense of the British United Secretariat supporter Ernie Tate when the Healyites (to whom we actually stood closer at the time in terms of formal political positions) sought to stop him from selling a USec pamphlet, using violence and then a suit against him in the bourgeois courts. Very recently we were actively involved in the defense of supporters of Tony Cliff's British SWP (no friends of ours or of workers democracy) when they faced fascist attacks in Toronto, and we are now protesting the repressive South Korean regime's arrest of Cliff's cothinkers in that country. Our principled anti-sectarian defense of the rights of all leftist, minority and labor organizations extends equally to the GR/JCR which recently had a member arrested during the protests against the Bayrou edict. Perhaps our policy is incomprehensible to your Raymond Debord, who probably interprets it as a sign of weakness. Let you and him be in no doubt: we will be as vigorous in defense of ourselves as we are in defense of others.

Against gangsterism, in defense of political debate, International Secretariat, for the ICL(FI)

French section does not distinguish between physical violence—which has no place in the workers movement—and the dissemination of forthright revolutionary criticism which is the right and duty of any revolutionary organization.

Your Raymond Debord has particularly strong reasons to want to prevent our voice being heard, as his recent political record is a particularly dirty trail of wild political zigzags, including his flirtation with the anti-Semitic French version of the "red"-brown coalition through the *Idiot Internationale* (it was our article and our intervention exposing this at your public meetings in May which prompted the lying accusations that we "disrupted" your meetings). Debord certainly finds very useful the drawing of a blood line between our organizations to keep his own members politically in line as he gyrates—from his joint venture with "intellectual" fascist ideologues to his present uncritical tailing of the anti-woman Muslim fundamentalists in France who are hypocritically defending Maghrebian high school women's right to an education, in hopes of building themselves a base among second-generation youth.

Every GR/JCR member who can be induced to participate personally in assaulting our comrades is then tied with bonds of guilt to the reformist political line that cops are "workers in uniform," which as you are aware is a source of considerable dissatisfaction within the GR/JCR and elsewhere in your international. It serves a similar purpose for you to claim that we called you "cops" because we denounce your pro-cop line, or "fascists" because we exposed Debord's *Idiot Internationale* escapade. In

strong Labour Party in Parliament...." Webb's services were enlisted by Labour Party leader Arthur Henderson, who had earlier accepted a seat in the cabinet to help the British bourgeoisie prosecute the imperialist war. In his January 1918 booklet *The Aims of Labour*, Henderson had written: "Revolution is a word of evil omen. It calls up a vision of barricades in the streets and blood in the gutters [and] is alien to the British character" (quoted in *The Labour Party—A Marxist History*, Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein).

The British Labour Party is a social-democratic party of class betrayal, no different in substance than, for example, the German SPD (which has neither Clause IV nor the trade union bloc vote). For Labour "lefts", however, Clause IV is "proof" of the supposed "socialist" character of the Labour Party. Miners leader Arthur Scargill recently declared that Clause IV "is an unambiguous challenge to capitalism" that "represents the very soul of the Labour Party" (*Labour Briefing*, November 1994). *Socialist Organiser* (6 October) says: "Defend Clause Four/Keep Labour a workers' party!" Similarly, the front page headline of *Socialist Outlook* (22 October) reads: "Defend Clause 4! Fight for socialism!"

By presenting the Labour Party as more left than it is, the pseudo-Trotskyists seek to justify their own opportunism, which boils down to preaching that the Labour Party can be transformed into a revolutionary party, or that it can be "pressured" in that direction. An example of this is the centrefold spread in *Workers Power* (November 1994) which calls for a "campaign against Blair", to launch a "real fight" to "force Labour to act in the workers' interests". But if Labour can be forced to "act in the workers' interests", then what's the point of trying to build a revolutionary vanguard party? In fact, the *Workers Power* article omits any mention of the need for such a party.

The misnamed International Communist Party (ICP)—the British followers of David North—claim that the social-democratic parties worldwide, including the Labour Party, "have abandoned their past reformist programmes and allied themselves directly with the capitalist class". As if the Labour Party bureaucrats haven't been allied with the bourgeoisie since the inception of the party! So now according to the ICP, the Labour Party is no different in any respect from the Tories and Liberals; and, moreover, the trade unions are thoroughly bourgeois "degenerate structures".

What this boils down to is this: yesterday, when the bureaucrats ostensibly were not allied with the capitalists, it was okay to lick their boots. This is what the ICP leaders did when they were part of Gerry Healy's WRP, most notably on the eve of the miners strike when Healy/Hyland viciously red-baited Scargill for his correct statement that Polish Solidarność was anti-socialist. This was used by the Fleet Street press and the TUC tops to isolate the striking miners. Today the ICP simply tells the workers to turn their backs on the unions, which of course would only enable the pro-capitalist bureaucrats to further entrench themselves. For the ICP, you either kiss the bureaucrats' ass, or run away from them; what is excluded is to engage in political struggle against the social-democratic class-traitors.

The Labour Party can neither be transformed into a revolutionary party, nor can it simply be ignored. It must be split, and its working-class base regrouped into a Leninist party. A key task for revolutionaries is the fight for class-struggle leadership within the trade unions. An upsurge of class struggle in the factories and in the streets, impacting on the Labour Party, would provide the best opportunity for Marxists to intervene politically to split the base from the tops of the Labour Party. ■

# Tony Cliff's US cohorts: gusano socialists?



WV Photo

ISO echoes counterrevolutionary call for mass exodus from Cuba.

We have for years insisted that the so-called "Third Camp", which during the Cold War claimed to be for "Neither Washington nor Moscow", was in fact the camp of pro-imperialist counterrevolution. In the last several days, this has been confirmed in the starkest way. We are referring to the despicable line on Cuba taken by the social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the US and the International Socialists (IS) in Canada.

At an 8 September demonstration in San Francisco called to "Stop the War Against Cuba", a group showed up carrying signs calling on the US to "Open the Border—Asylum for Refugees Now". Was this a provocation by counterrevolutionary exiles, known as *gusanos* (worms) in Cuba, seeking to bleed the Cuban Revolution? No, the placard was signed by the ISO. Not a mention of defending the Cuban Revolution against Yankee imperialism—which they don't.

Then in Canada, our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste (TL) noticed that the IS in Vancouver had organised a tiny "anti-fascist" demo timed to compete with a 10 September Cuba solidarity rally. When TL comrades challenged them, "Do you defend Cuba against American imperialism?" the ISers refused to say. When the September issue of their paper, *Socialist Worker*, came out, you could see why.

The paper has two articles on Cuba, vilely retailing the lies of the imperialist media and the US government. One piece, "Let Them ALL In", claimed that Cuban "refugees" are "desperate for a taste of freedom". So for the IS social democrats, racist US imperialism and the *gusano* heaven of Miami's Little Havana—that notorious centre of drug trafficking, mafia activities and fascist terror—represent "freedom".

Even more scandalously, the second piece in *Socialist Worker*, "Behind the Crisis in Cuba", actually *hails* a counterrevolutionary riot on the Havana waterfront on 5 August by would-be hijackers and black market criminals. According to the IS:

"Demonstrations estimated to be over 10,000 erupted in Havana days before the recent exodus to the US began from Cuban shores.... [P]olice and rapid response teams were unable to stop the

resistance....

"Cuban workers and peasants have begun to break the hold of a repressive regime. Cuba today has nothing to do with socialism. But the promise of real socialism, socialism from below, has been rekindled.

"Solidarity with Cuban refugees is a critical step in ensuring that that flame continues to burn."

In referring to the anti-communist outburst as a heroic "resistance", the IS echoes every imperialist agency and *gusano* mouthpiece. And they make crystal clear that their supposed humanitarian "concern" for Cuban refugees is a political ploy to keep the "flame" of counterrevolution burning.

This lying account comes straight from Washington. The mob in Havana is "estimated to be over 10,000". Estimated by whom? Reporters from Agence France Presse said "more than 200" marched down the street chanting "freedom" and throwing rocks at store and hotel windows. Cuban government spokesmen put their number at 700. The *only* source claiming several thousand or more anti-Castro protesters is...the *US State Department*.

There were more than 10,000 people in the streets of Havana on 5 August, but as we reported in our last issue, these were workers and residents of central Havana who rushed to the scene to disperse the rioters (see "Clinton's Provocations Threaten Cuba", *Workers Vanguard* no 605, 2 September). And the counterrevolutionaries were swept away not by the police, but by a spontaneous outpouring followed up by construction worker brigades and the "rapid response teams" of the unions, party organisations and neighbourhood Committees to Defend the Revolution, armed only with wooden clubs and steel pipes. Significantly, the photos show that black Cubans were prominent in the front lines defending the revolution.

The *gusano* scum were dispersed by a mass mobilisation of those who understood that the fate of the revolution is at stake. And this was followed up two days later by a mammoth commemorative rally of 700,000 in honour of the black policeman who was killed by the would-be hijackers on 5 August. There have since been demonstrations of tens of thousands in Mariel, Camagüey, Guantánamo, and

on repeated occasions in Havana.

As for the IS' talk of "socialism from below", what they would like is a Labourite gloss on capitalist exploitation, but the actual content of their "democratic" counterrevolution is a witches' cauldron of crazed nationalist hatreds. Just look at Romania, where "freedom" unleashed an orgy of terror against Roma (Gypsies), Jews and Hungarians. Their favourite example of "anti-Stalinism" is the counterrevolutionary nationalist Solidarność led by Lech Walesa. Solidarność was inspired by Wojtyła the Pope and financed by the Vatican Bank and the CIA, mostly through the AFL-CIO and a host of West European social-democratic conduits.

This is the IS' idea of "socialism from below": counterrevolution in all its ugly manifestations. And the victory of Walesa & Co has led to the immiseration of the Polish working masses. Cuban working people are holding on against terrible odds, suffering from lack of food and medicines as a result of the imperialist embargo. And the smarmy IS social democrats spit on them.

Castro's Cuba is not "socialist", but rather a deformed workers state in which a narrow, nationalist bureaucratic caste sits atop the collectivised economy and deprives the working class of direct political power. As we did in Poland, we fight in Cuba for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy which undermines the defence of the revolution. As we wrote last issue:

"We Trotskyists, who fight for revolutionary proletarian democracy based on workers councils (soviets) to replace the bureaucratic regime, stand shoulder to shoulder with the working masses defending Cuba against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. Our defense of the socialized foundations of the Cuban deformed workers state is part and parcel of our fight for international socialist revolution."

## Defend the Cuban Revolution!

After Castro's 1959 overthrow of the US-backed dictator Batista and the expropriation of foreign and Cuban capitalists the following year, the Yankee imperialists provided a safe haven (and staging base) for the counterrevolutionary scum fleeing the social revolution. For more than 30 years, Washington has kept its borders open to "Cuban refugees", who were accorded privileged treatment and automatic asylum denied any other national group. In contrast, Haitian refugees who make it to Florida have long been locked up and returned to the brutal military dictatorship propped up by the US.

In mid-August, facing a wave of *balseros* ("raft people") made desperate by the US' starvation embargo and encouraged to head into the Florida Straits by Washington's Radio/TV Martí, Clinton cut off the automatic right of asylum for Cubans. This was applauded by the most rabid counterrevolutionaries around the Cuban American National Foundation headed by Jorge Mas Canosa, who want to stoke up internal tensions in Cuba. But many other Miami exiles oppose this, including Republican Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (a prominent defender of the *gusano* terrorist who blew up a Cubana airliner), and Republican Congressman Lincoln Díaz-Balart (who incites assaults on the pro-Havana Antonio Macco Brigade). The ISO, along with

these right-wing Republicans, wants to return to the pre-18 August US policy, which is to "destabilise" Cuba by encouraging a mass exodus. No less than the policy of Mas Canosa and Clinton, this is a line of fostering counterrevolution.

This should come as no surprise from the likes of the ISO: their British mentor Tony Cliff in the early 1950s refused to defend Stalinist-ruled North Korea against the war by "democratic" US imperialism. The Cliffites have similarly scabbed on the Cuban Revolution from Day One, calling Cuba a "state-capitalist" regime not qualitatively different from impoverished Haiti. And when Boris Yeltsin staged a counter coup in August 1991 in Moscow, unleashing the collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state and destruction of the remaining gains of the 1917 October Revolution, Cliff & Co hailed this counterrevolution as a "New Russian Revolution"!

The Cliffites share a common, scummy heritage with Max Shachtman, the renegade from Trotskyism whose politics gave rise to the earlier incarnation of the International Socialists in the US. In April 1961, Shachtman supported Democratic president Kennedy's Bay of Pigs invasion against Cuba. Left Shachtmanite Hal Draper denounced his former mentor as a "State Department socialist", and the Berkeley Young People's Socialist League refused to let Shachtman speak at their meeting. Cliff's IS/ISO have long been State Department "socialists". Now, with this further example of their counterrevolutionary appetites, they can aptly be called "*gusano* socialists".

The Stalinophobic IS/ISO fundamen-



Bohemia

Counterrevolutionary scum riot in Havana, August 5, hailed by ISO.

tally identify with capitalist imperialism. In making common cause with the bourgeoisie against Stalinism in the name of "democracy", they end up in league with every known brand of fascism and nationalist bigotry, because that's what counterrevolution produces. Their alliance with Miami *gusanos* was prefigured by their fulsome support to Yeltsin's coup, which has called forth a zoo of anti-Semitic blackshirts, from Pamyat to Zhirinovskiy. This is the real content of the ISO's "socialism from below".

The Spartacist contingent at the San Francisco protest took the side of Cuban workers and peasants against the US drive for counterrevolution. Our signs declared: "Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution! Down With the Imperialist Embargo!" "Stalinist Bureaucracy Undermines Cuban Deformed Workers State—For Workers Political Revolution!" and "Defense of Cuba Begins at Home! For Class Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism!"

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 606, 16 September 1994.

# WIL and the age of consent

## State out of the bedroom!

In the current climate of “family values” hysteria, most of the left in Britain and the US has hopped on the bandwagon of a reactionary crusade against the rights of women, gays and children, aimed at bolstering the institution of the family and organised religion as fundamental props of bourgeois rule. The ICL has stood out in its opposition to these attacks on women, children and homosexuals and we have consistently defended these victims of special oppression. Unlike the rest of the left, who do not take the struggle beyond the confines of prevailing bourgeois opinion, we take seriously VI Lenin’s conception of the vanguard party as a “tribune of the oppressed”.

It was with some interest therefore that we read an article entitled “Socialists should fight age of consent laws” by Tony Fox in *Workers News* (May-June 1994), published by the Workers International League (WIL). Fox rightly explains that these laws are used by the state “to victimise and harass young gays” and that “socialists must go beyond a liberal/democratic position if they are to persuade the best elements of militant gays and lesbians to see that their fight for liberation is part of the struggle of the working class and the oppressed as a whole”. While WIL stand to the left of the spectrum of pseudo-socialist capitulation to the bourgeoisie’s reactionary moral crusade, they nevertheless fall into the same trap: looking to the racist, anti-woman and homophobic bourgeois state to establish a societal norm.

The real nature of WIL’s position comes out in their haste to distinguish themselves from the Spartacist League. Fox takes issue with a statement which appeared in a US Partisan Defense Committee letter (printed in *Women and Revolution* no 43, Winter 1993-Spring 1994) defending victimised teacher, and North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) associate Peter Melzer, where we say that “Whatever consensual sexual activity one engages in is nobody else’s business.” Similarly, they object to our call for “government out of the bedroom”.

So what is Fox’s and WIL’s real problem? The vendetta against Melzer and NAMBLA was a straightforward intersection of blatant homophobia with reactionary “age of consent” laws. For years NAMBLA has been the target of a vicious vendetta for advocating the right of consensual sex between minors and adults. Our comrades of the Spartacist League/US have stood forthrightly in their defence against the vituperous ire of the radical/liberal milieu. Fox doesn’t tell us where WIL stands on the issue but does accuse us of failing to:

“recognise that there is a qualitative difference between child and adult sexuality which corresponds to the difference between physical and psychological childhood and adulthood. It ignores questions of power and dependency relations, of the impossibility of free and equal sexual relations between a child and an adult”.

The ICL does no such thing, a fact which the WIL ought to know by reading our journal *Women and Revolution*. We refer readers to the articles “Children, Family and State—Something About Incest” (*W&R* no 28, Spring 1984) and “Children, Sex, State Witchhunters: The Uses of Abuse” (*W&R* no 29, Spring

1985). But we do insist that sex involving young people is not *a priori* a crime. We point out that “age of consent” laws seek to straitjacket the sexuality of young people. In addition to calling for a radical lowering of the legal age of adulthood, we are in favour of replacing the whole network of “age of consent” legislation with the principle of effective consent,



Edward Sykes

Gay rights demonstration, London 1992. Revolutionary party champions the rights of all the oppressed as part of struggle for workers revolution.

applicable to people of all ages.

Of course human sexuality is a pretty complicated business, and particularly so at puberty when one is socially and psychologically ill-prepared for the surge of hormones. The guiding principle of sexual relations ought to be nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding. Determining effective consent can sometimes be tricky, particularly when young people are involved with older ones. The WIL in fact poses the problem correctly when they say “The removal of age of consent legislation would open up the necessity of examining each individual case as it arose; child abuse or natural sexual experimentation?” However, then they assert that “Social interference in the bedroom is, of course, absolutely necessary in cases of child abuse.” They conclude that it is necessary to give critical support to “progressive social legislation”, ie posing the capitalist state as the arbiter. What the WIL refuses to acknowledge is that to not view such relationships individually is to call for the application of a uniform set of values, ie a moral criterion. In the hands of the bourgeois state, such “social legislation” is necessarily reactionary.

Fox’s mechanistic division of adult and child sexuality is also rather dim, particularly as his article acknowledges the absurdity of the various “ages” of consent in existence across Europe. Hence in Holland the age of consent is twelve, in Britain it is 16 (except for male homosexuals), but in many parts of the US it is 18! This might be news to WIL, but a 16-year-old regarded as a consenting adult in England or Holland, would be considered a child in parts of the US.

Fox also objects to our recent *W&R* headlined “The ‘Date Rape’ Issue: Fem-

inist Hysteria, Anti-Sex Witchhunt”. Like the bourgeois furore over child sexual abuse, the “date rape” hoax is cynical and dangerous precisely because it invokes government authority to intervene as some sort of moral gendarme in our most intimate affairs. Moreover, it fuels a state-sponsored campaign of sexual regimentation in the service of bolstering the

reactionary institution of the family. On the issue of “date rape”, feminists are in cahoots with religious reactionaries in support of moralist repression. All this in a country which has no separation of church and state and in which the English monarchy is the ideological assertion of gross social privilege and rigid social hierarchy.

Rape and child abuse are terrible crimes, and we certainly do not oppose the prosecution of individuals who commit such brutal assaults. But in recent years the issue of “child abuse” and “date rape” have been politicised and become moral categories which the government has seized on to mount their reactionary “family values” campaign; it has nothing to do with “protecting” children or women. For the bourgeoisie, sex and reproduction must be tied to the morality of the monogamous family—the means of raising the next generation of wage slaves. Ken Loach’s moving film, *Ladybird, Ladybird* highlights this question. The film’s protagonist, whose only crime is being a poor single mother, has her children cruelly seized from her by a vindictive state.

At least once a month some new scandal breaks out about state-enforced child abuse—be it physical, sexual or mental in the children’s “homes” run by local councils. From the physical and mental torture of “pin down” to their prison-like environment, these homes are just about the last place any decent person would want a child to end up. Moreover the state’s “concern” over children is so much hypocrisy; 30 per cent of children in Britain live below the official poverty line and social services have been slashed.

A particularly vicious case of government child abuse was perpetrated by the

British state, when as part of its “family values” campaign the government bought into the hoax of “satanic abuse” witch hunt popularised by a layer of Christian fundamentalists. In 1991 in the Orkneys, nine children were seized from their homes in pre-dawn raids by British social workers. Separately held in foster and council homes across Scotland and denied communications with their families, the children were repeatedly interrogated, tricked and lied to for five weeks, while their parents fought unfounded allegations of ritual sex abuse. Yes, these children were outrageously abused, as were their parents, by the government. A report into “satanic abuse” commissioned by the Department of Health, and prepared after a three-year investigation by anthropologist Jean La Fontaine, could find no evidence of its existence. Instead, La Fontaine concluded that it is a modern phenomenon “comparable to the witch-hunts of early modern Europe” (*Guardian Weekend*, 10 September).

Fox advocates “identity politics” and self-organisation as a means for the oppressed to fight oppression. This is a version of sectoralism, which posits a separate programme for each oppressed group. At bottom sectoralism denies that the working class can transcend its present level of consciousness and carry out a genuinely liberating social revolution. This requires the forging of a Bolshevik party which would function as a tribune of all the oppressed. But the WIL, which tailends the deeply social-chauvinist Labour Party, cannot fight for such a revolutionary workers party.

Fox takes his anti-Bolshevism a step further when he says that “socialist revolution itself will not automatically liberate gays, or for that matter, women or national minorities”, adding that these “struggles would still have to be fought—conceivably even against a revolutionary government”. The Russian Revolution itself is the best refutation of this argument. This could not have happened without the many-year struggle waged by the Bolshevik Party against the myriad forms of social, sexual and national oppression—as well as class oppression—prevailing in the feudally encrusted tsarist empire. The early foundations of the Soviet workers state led by Lenin and Trotsky included measures which have been unparalleled in any liberal-democratic capitalist society since. This included the declaration of the “absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured, and no one’s interests are encroached upon”—a measure that Fox and WIL presumably find objectionable.

At bottom WIL’s line accepts the bourgeois and social-democratic lie that equates the Stalinist perversion of the programme of communism with the Bolsheviks. This stands them in opposition to Trotsky and the Left Opposition, who fought to uphold the banner of Bolshevism against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Throughout Cold War II, WIL supported every imperialist-backed counter-revolutionary movement in the Soviet bloc including the anti-woman *mujahedin* cut-throats in Afghanistan and the CIA-backed, clerical-reactionary Solidarność in Poland.

Socialist revolution will of course not wipe out anti-gay or racist attitudes overnight. A genuine workers state would immediately remove the juridical bases for the oppression of women, children and homosexuals and lay the foundation for replacing the family, which is the root cause of their special oppression. As communists, we fight for a society where sexual relations between people can be truly loving and voluntary. And that requires sweeping away this rotting capitalist system through socialist revolution. Down with reactionary “age of consent” laws! Government out of the bedroom! ■

# Declaration of fraternal relations between Luta Metalúrgica (Brazil) and the International Communist League

The following declaration is the result of intensive discussions indicating wide-ranging programmatic agreement between the International Communist League and the Luta Metalúrgica (Metalworkers Struggle) group of Brazil. Luta Metalúrgica recently broke from Causa Operária, which is part of the tendency led by Jorge Altamira's Argentine Partido Obrero. The initial basis for these discussions was a common principled programmatic position of proletarian opposition to popular fronts, including calling for no vote to any candidates of such class-collaborationist formations. Another key issue bringing our two organisations together was the Leninist understanding of the role of the revolutionary party as a "tribune of the people" in fighting all forms of special oppression.

\* \* \*

"The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.... [T]he crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International."

—Leon Trotsky, "The Transitional Programme" (1938)

The Luta Metalúrgica group of Volta Redonda, Brazil and the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) concur in this declaration of fraternal relations as part of the urgent struggle to overcome the crisis of proletarian leadership through reorganizing the Fourth International as the democratic-centralist world party of socialist revolution.

"The question of questions at present is the People's Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical maneuver, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the People's Front. In reality, the People's Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism."

—L Trotsky, Letter to the Dutch RSAP (July 1936) [emphasis in original]

Ever since Marx and Engels' struggle for the basic principle of the revolutionary independence of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie, genuine Marxism has fought against class collaboration. The fight by Lenin and the Bolsheviks against Kerensky's Provisional Government (which Trotsky later called the greatest historical example of a popular front) culminated in the most important victory of the world proletariat: the October Revolution of 1917. In opposition to the betrayal of the Stalinists, social democrats and centrists, the Fourth Internationalists under Trotsky's leadership fought head-on against all support to popular fronts, which in France and Spain led to terrible defeats for the proletariat, thereby paving the way for the second imperialist world war.

In our times, the struggle against popular-frontism draws a line between revolutionary Marxism and all variants of opportunism. In Chile, Allende's Unidad

Popular tied the combative proletariat to the institutions of the bourgeois state, preparing the bloody outcome in Pinochet's 1973 military coup. Already in 1970 at the time of Allende's election, when all the fake-Trotskyist tendencies advocated one or another type of support to the popular front, the Spartacist tendency (today ICL) warned:

"It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

—[Spartacist no 19, November-December 1970]

With the election of Mitterrand's popular front in France in 1981, once again the Spartacists warned against any support to this class collaboration, while pseudo-Trotskyists (from Mandel and Moreno to Lambert and Altamira) hailed it as a "victory" of the working class. The politics of popular-frontism led to more defeats from Bolivia to El Salvador, Nicaragua and many other countries.

Today in South Africa, the nationalist popular front around the African National Congress led by Nelson Mandela ties the black workers to the bourgeois state apparatus which maintained the murderous regime of apartheid. It is the duty of revolutionaries to urgently warn against any political support to, or confidence in, the "power-sharing" government, which is already attacking the black and "coloured" [mixed-race] workers. We note the importance for revolutionary workers in South Africa of the struggle against the popular-frontism of the reformist Brazilian Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT—Workers Party), and of the events in South Africa for the workers and radical youth in Brazil.

In Brazil the left is impregnated with nationalism and popular-frontist reformism. At present its various tendencies are competing with each other to see who can best capitulate to the Frente Brasil Popular (FBP), the open coalition of Lula's PT with bourgeois politicians. This front does everything possible to demobilise the exploited and oppressed, in this country which has a highly combative proletariat and is experiencing deep social unrest. The trade union bureaucrats and their leftist advisers insist that instead of fighting, the working people must "wait" for Lula to be elected and not "frighten" his bourgeois allies. The Stalinists (PPS and PCdoB [People's Socialist Party, formerly the pro-Moscow CP, and Communist Party of Brazil, formerly pro-Albania]) with their doctrine of class collaboration—who supported the bourgeois governments of Sarney, Collor and Itamar Franco—are now part of the popular front led by Lula. While the Mandelites of Democracia Socialista and the Lambertistes of O Trabalho [Labour] revel in their by now traditional role as faithful servants of the leadership of Lula & Co, the Morenoites of the PSTU [United Socialist Workers Party] strike a hypocritically "critical" posture at the same time as they have openly joined

the FBP.

To the left of these tendencies are the centrists of Causa Operária (CO) [Workers Cause, aligned with the Argentine Partido Obrero of Jorge Altamira]. The comrades of Luta Metalúrgica were originally recruited to CO because they believed it represented a revolutionary, Trotskyist opposition to the popular front. But already in the 1989 elections, at the same time as it "criticised" the popular front, CO voted for the popular front's candidate, Lula. Thus its "criticism" had no consequences in deeds, serving only as a fig leaf for its vote in favour of class collaboration.

Facing the 1994 elections, CO has been spinning around, first seeking to make a "distinction between supporting Lula and campaigning for him, and possibly calling for a vote to the candidate of the PT" (*Circular Interna* [Internal Bulletin], 1 April 1994), later feigning a position of "no vote to the candidates of the Frente Brasil Popular" (*Causa Operária*, 12 June), only to wind up with the call to "vote for Lula and the worker and peasant candidates" (*Causa Operária*, 1 August). CO thereby reproduces the fake Trotskyists' typical trick of arguing that a vote for the "workers candidates" of the popular front (in this case including its presidential candidate) is somehow "different" from voting for the popular front as such.

For these petty bourgeois who peddle their wares in the shadow of the popular front, "leftist" phrases are not to be taken seriously but serve only to prettify tailing after their reformist masters! Their line has nothing to do with that of Trotsky, who characterised the support by Andrés Nin's POUM to the Spanish popular front as a betrayal and stressed, regarding the popular-front government: "It is necessary to openly and boldly mobilize the masses against the Popular Front government" ("Is Victory Possible in Spain?" April 1937).

We note that this "national-Trotskyist" tendency [of Altamira] has traditionally justified its betrayals through Menshevik stageism and references to the "anti-imperialist united front", the formula used by Guillermo Lora (former ally of Jorge Altamira's Partido Obrero in Argentina and CO in Brazil) in Bolivia to justify his shameful capitulation to a whole series of popular fronts.

Against this Menshevism, in a document (April 1994) opposing CO's line, the comrades of the Volta Redonda cell (Luta Metalúrgica) characterised the FBP as "a class-collaborationist front", a popular front. They demanded "that Causa Operária break with the PT and the popular front in all its variants.... The elementary duty of all revolutionary Marxists is to irreconcilably struggle against the popular front in the elections and to have absolutely no confidence in it." The CO leadership suppressed this clear denunciation, together with the entire last part of the document, in CO's *Circular Interna*. A subsequent document (July 1994) that the comrades wrote against CO's capitulation ended with the clear slogan: "For a revolutionary workers party—No vote to the popular front and Lula." The International Communist League has raised the same posi-

tion of intransigent proletarian opposition to the popular front.

II

The world situation today has been profoundly affected by the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe. Far from representing a "victory" or mere "episode" as the fake Trotskyists claim (including CO, which virtually kept its members away from all discussion of the Russian question), the restoration of capitalism in the USSR—resulting from the encirclement and enormous pressure of imperialism and prepared by decades of Stalinist betrayals—represented a great defeat for the workers of the world. Its repercussions for the semi-colonial victims of imperialism are very clear from Iraq to Haiti, with the growing military adventures of Yankee imperialism, which today threatens to strangle the Cuban deformed workers state (undermined from within by the Castro bureaucracy).

In the present "new world disorder" there are growing inter-imperialist rivalries, fratricidal inter-ethnic wars, fascist attacks against immigrants and dark-skinned workers in Europe, assaults against the rights of women. At the same time, unrest throughout the world—symbolised by the revolt of Indian peasants in the south of Mexico, the victorious Air France strike, youth mobilisations against fascists in Europe and many other events—brings opportunities for revolutionary intervention by the proletariat. It is more urgent than ever to forge the international Leninist vanguard party.

Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, taught us that those who do not defend conquests already won will never be able to win new conquests. He showed the dual character of the [Stalinist] bureaucracy, a narrow nationalist caste resting atop the gains of October: at times it was obliged to defend these conquests in its own partial and contradictory way, while undermining them through betraying the world revolution and trampling proletarian democracy.

Trotsky and James P Cannon, founder of North American Trotskyism, compared the revolutionary policy towards the USSR to the situation of a bureaucratized trade union. Conscious workers defend the union against the capitalist government and the bosses, while fighting for a revolutionary leadership to throw out the treacherous bureaucrats. Likewise, it was the duty of the world proletariat to give unconditional military defence to the USSR, while fighting to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy through proletarian political revolution, indispensable for preventing capitalist restoration. During the entire period of the Left Opposition and the struggle for the Fourth International, Trotsky emphasised that "Defense of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies, irrespective of the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict, is the elementary and imperative duty of every honest labor organization" ("War and the Fourth International", June 1934).

The CO leadership never talked about

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# Brazil: IMF candidate wins election

## Lula popular front chains workers struggle



Brazil president-elect Cardoso.

Gurgel/Manchete

The 3 October national elections in Brazil resulted in solid victory for Fernando Henrique Cardoso, whose (thoroughly bourgeois) "social-democratic" party, the PSDB, was allied with a bloc of rightist parties and local political bosses. While characterised by plenty of government "dirty tricks" in favour of the official candidate, the vote was a stinging defeat for Cardoso's main electoral opponents, the Frente Brasil Popular headed by Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT—Workers Party). Only four months ago, Lula was riding high with over 40 per cent support in the opinion polls, more than all other candidates combined. Now Cardoso has been elected on the first round of the voting, with more than 54 per cent of the valid votes.

Cardoso rode to victory on the coat tails of the currently popular "Real Plan" which he designed as outgoing president Itamar Franco's treasury minister. Named after a new currency (the *real*—the most recent in a long series of monetary units introduced to "cure" Brazil's spectacular financial instability), the plan was based on linking the currency to the American dollar, slashing public spending, continuing privatisations of state-owned companies and attracting foreign investment.

While for the moment it has dramatically reduced inflation from 50 per cent to less than 6 per cent a month, this International Monetary Fund-style "stabilisation" scheme is aimed point-blank against the working class. Budget cuts and privatisations mean even more mass layoffs and poverty, in a country where more than 12 million people earn less than the starvation minimum wage of US \$71 a month and 5 million work without receiving any cash wages at all. Moreover, these "quick cure" plans have a tendency to go down in flames after a few months, which is why it was introduced only in July. Leading businessmen (97 per cent of whom supported Cardoso, according to one poll) temporarily held off price increases in order to prevent a Lula victory, and the government concealed unfavourable economic figures to help the

official candidate.

The Real Plan spelled electoral disaster for Lula, who quickly cut short opposition to the scheme after accurately denouncing it as a crude electoral gambit. Rather than mobilise workers action against the anti-working-class plan, the PT-aligned CUT (United Workers Federation) sought to quickly end strikes by the powerful São Paulo metalworkers as well as by 50,000 members of the oil workers union. All along, the PT's campaign aimed at proving its respectability and fitness to administer Brazilian capitalism. Programmatically this was underlined at the party's April conference, where abortion rights and other "controversial" planks were scrapped from the PT's longstanding (reformist) programme. Sealing alliances with bourgeois politicians, Lula succeeded in making himself virtually indistinguishable from Cardoso—whom he accused of "stealing" his programme!

In numerous meetings with São Paulo moguls, Lula promised support to large-scale budget cuts and vowed that, far from touching capital's interests, his government would be good for Brazilian big business. On a junket to Wall Street he announced that the PT had abandoned its previous call for a moratorium (not even repudiation) on payments to foreign banks and governments; he was asking only for a "renegotiation" of the foreign debt, which totals \$135 billion. This year Brazil already renegotiated financing on a third of the debt; the PT accepted the onerous terms and wanted to do the same with the rest, promising to keep feeding the bloodsucking international financiers who drain 12 billion dollars from the country each year.

During a June visit to Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Lula promised a "coalition government". After Cardoso met with Archbishop Arnos of São Paulo, a close Lula adviser, Lula proposed a "co-operation agreement" with the PSDB, a call soon echoed by Cardoso's own running mate. In the final stretch, the PT candidate averred that the PT had to "flexibilise" its programme even further

in order to garner support from the "middle class" (*Folha de São Paulo*, 3 October). As if all this weren't clear enough, Lula reiterated that if Cardoso were elected he would support him and possibly "participate" in a Cardoso government (*El Diario/La Prensa* [New York], 30 September).

With the "choice" between IMF-ordered cutbacks and layoffs administered by Lula or by Real Plan "wizard" Cardoso, Brazilian voters decided to go with the latter, who at least promised to deliver "stability" by slashing the savage inflation. "Historic" populist leader Leonel Brizola was reduced to insignificance in the vote, with his nationalist PDT (Democratic Labour Party) receiving only 3 per cent in its traditional stronghold, the state of Rio de Janeiro.

### No vote to the popular front!

Claiming some 600,000 members, the Brazilian PT has been the flagship for a Latin American "left" which—after the collapse of Stalinism led it to junk all reference to class struggle or revolution—set up the "Foro de São Paulo" to bring together Mexican Cardenistas, Nicaraguan Sandinistas and a host of others on the basis of verbiage about a "democratic revolution". At the same time, the PT has been a key point of reference for debates in South Africa on the question of a "workers party", with both the Communist Party (now in the ANC/De Klerk government) and leftist critics in WOSA (Workers Organisation for Socialist Action) looking to Lula's party for inspiration.

Around the world, pseudo-Trotskyists of various tendencies, and particularly Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat, have seen the Brazilian PT as a model of a non-Stalinist "democratic socialist" party in which they hoped to achieve mass influence by acting as leftist advisers to Lula & Co. Consequently they have systematically painted up this pale pink party in bright red colours. A recent article by American Mandelite George Saunders claims:

"The PT is neither a bourgeois populist nor a social democratic nor a Stalinist party.... To the contrary, the PT consciously calls itself revolutionary socialist and has adopted revolutionary socialist policies and perspectives (most recently at its national gatherings in June 1993 and April 1994)... As I have indicated, most of the ranks and leaders of the PT have consistently rejected both populist and Popular Frontist conceptions and pressures."

—*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, September 1994

This fairy tale is a lie from start to finish.

Not a social-democratic party? Following the recent vote, José Dirceu, the secretary general of the PT who is leader of the dominant tendency, Articulação, declared: "The party is a left social-democratic party. Its objectives are to democratise the political institutions, wealth and power" (*Folha de São Paulo*, 5 October). A "revolutionary socialist" party? While the June 1993 PT statement has a dash of leftist verbiage, the programme is entirely one of "structural reforms" to "democratise the state", "redistribute income" through "progressive tax reform", "democratise land ownership" through agrarian reform, etc. By the PT's April 1994 election platform all "revolutionary" window-dressing has been excised (see *International Viewpoint*, December 1993 and July 1994, for the text of these thoroughly reformist documents).

And far from "rejecting popular-frontist conceptions", the PT set up a popular front, both in the 1989 presidential elections and again this year, as a guarantee to the international and domestic bourgeoisie. Aptly named, Lula's Frente Brasil Popular (FBP) is a class-collaborationist coalition tying the workers movement and left to the politicians and institutions of the bourgeois state. Reaching out to the armed forces, Lula promised to triple the military budget and called for establishing the previously nonexistent post of defence minister as a seal of approval for the military. This recalls the "constitutional guarantees" Salvador Allende gave to the Chilean military, paving the way for the

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Goldgrub/Jornal do Brazil



Workers Party (PT) candidate Lula (above, centre) campaigning in recent elections. PT leaders gave guarantees to capital by forming the Brazil Popular Front together with minor bourgeois parties.



# Brazil...

(Continued from page 7)

September 1973 Santiago coup. In Brazil, it echoes the way the reformist left chained the workers movement to "progressive" bourgeois politicians and officers, setting the stage for the bloody 1964 military coup which ushered in two decades of brutal army rule.

As in the case of Allende's Unidad Popular and Mitterrand's Union de la Gauche in France, the position of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) towards the FBP in the Brazilian elections was for no vote to any of the candidates of the popular front. Given the character of the PT as a workers party with mass support, we would seek to intersect working-class discontent towards the PT's class-collaborationist electoral campaign, calling on the PT to repudiate its guarantees to and alliance with the bourgeoisie and run on a class-against-class basis. Such a break would be the minimum precondition for any kind of critical electoral support. If it had the resources, a Trotskyist party in Brazil would have run in these elections against the PT, putting forward a programme to fulfill the toilers' urgent needs through socialist revolution.

This has also been the position of a small group of revolutionary workers who, continuing their longstanding fight against popular-frontism, have broken from the swamp of the fake-Trotskyist left in Brazil (see the "Declaration of fraternal relations between Luta Metalúrgica [Brazil] and the International Communist League [Fourth Internationalist]", in this issue). In a recent issue of their bulletin (*Luta Metalúrgica*, September 1994), these comrades write:

"The Popular Front and the CUT have demobilised struggles in order to play strictly according to the electoral calendar (Lula 94!!)...."

"The PT and Popular Front's minimum wage proposal is lower than that put forward by ["centre-right" candidate] Quéricia; the bourgeois candidate Brizola has a harder position on privatisations than Lula, etc, and there is no class cutting edge differentiating the FBP candidacy from the bosses' candidacies; the FBP is one more among the variants of bourgeois politics in the institutional framework. And when the Popular Front has been the government (São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Volta Redonda, etc), it acts the same as governments of the bosses, attacking the rights of public employees and so on...."

Calling for united strike action, including the occupation of landed estates and factories, and the preparation of a general strike against the ravages of the Real Plan; for "defence of Cuba", "Yankees out of Haiti", a fight against racial oppression and to "defend the rights of women, Indians and homosexuals", the comrades of Luta Metalúrgica raise as their slogan for the elections: "a broad campaign together with the workers of the city and the countryside and the youth for a null vote and for the construction of a true workers party, the revolutionary party". The statement ends with the call for "Proletarian opposition to the popular front—For workers mobilisation to defeat the Cardoso/IMF hunger plan! For a workers and peasants government!"

## Powerhouse of Latin American labour

Brazil, in territory the fifth-largest country on the planet, is the colossus of Latin America: its 158 million inhabitants make up half the population of South America. With the tenth-largest economy in the world, it is a case study in combined and uneven development. Glaring regional differences divide the

country. Huge, cosmopolitan cities like São Paulo are surrounded by desperately impoverished shantytowns (*favelas*) and dominate a countryside mired in backwardness and illiteracy. There are 32 million people living in hunger, 20 million unemployed and underemployed, 12 million *sem terra* (landless peasants). Export-led industrialisation produced a huge, highly combative proletariat, with hundreds of thousands of workers in high-tech "multinational" industries. The Brazilian working class is the powerhouse of the Latin American proletariat.

For years, the Brazilian bourgeoisie kept the lid on through a combination of nationalist populism and iron-fisted repression. In 1963-64 large-scale mobilisations by land-hungry peasants reached the point of threatening the bourgeois-nationalist regime of President João



Killing of street children by death squads of police and drug traffickers is rampant in Brazil's shantytowns. Above, six killed in Duque de Caxias suburb of Rio de Janeiro, November 1991.

Goulart. The example of the Cuban Revolution had helped radicalise a new generation of leftists, many of them impatient with the sterile reformism of the pro-Moscow Communist Party. In April 1964, the Brazilian military took power in a coup d'état planned in close co-operation with Lyndon B Johnson's White House. This coup decapitated the left and labour movement, setting the stage for the dictatorships that took power a few years later throughout Latin America's "Southern Cone"—in Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina.

The generals' Brazil was a living hell for leftists tortured in prison cells, and for the working people as a whole, whose real wages were slashed by 30 per cent from 1964 to 1974. Precisely for this reason, the country was a paradise for investors; the military boot suppressed attempts by the working class to defend itself against the most brutal super-exploitation. In the early 1970s, the economy "took off" at a rate surpassing any other "underdeveloped" capitalist country, except oil producers. Far from a "free market" success story, the "Brazilian miracle" developed under military technocratic state control. Massive foreign investment, which increased by 25 per cent a year after 1970, led to imperialist corporations controlling not only the car and pharmaceutical industries but also industries which had traditionally been the domain of Brazilian capital, such as beverages, textiles and machinery.

While urbanisation and industrialisation grew apace during the 20 years of military rule, Brazil's income distribution became one of the most starkly polarised in the world. A burgeoning population in the *favelas* provided cheap labour but a scanty internal market. By the end of the 1970s, inflation was skyrocketing and a massive wave of strikes, centred on São Paulo's "ABC" car manufacture zone, had begun to rock the regime (see "La-

bor Shakes Generals' Brazil", *Workers Vanguard* no 256, 16 May 1980). In an attempt to head off widespread radicalisation, the generals decreed a limited and controlled *abertura*—a political "opening" designed to be a face-lift for the dictatorship. The safety valve for discontent was supposed to be the regime's kept "opposition", the MDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement), an umbrella group bringing together a range of bourgeois politicians, union bureaucrats (called *pelegos* in Brazil), and even a sector of fake leftists.

## PT reformism shackles mass struggles

Meanwhile, the traditional populists were quite incapable of leading a struggle against the military regime. This was the backdrop for a sector of MDB-linked

*pelegos*, led and symbolised by "ABC" metalworkers leader Lula, to begin talking about a "workers party". Reflecting the broad and militant strike wave, the result was a break from the openly bourgeois parties and the official launching of the Partido dos Trabalhadores in February 1980. In the spring 1982 elections, the slogan of Lula's bid for the São Paulo governorship was "worker vote for worker". The new party had a big popular appeal; many famous entertainers and sports figures (among them soccer great Pelé) gave it their support.

Yet from the beginning the PT leadership, with close links to the liberal wing of the Catholic Church, quite consciously limited the party to a reformist programme. The PT's February 1980 manifesto calls for "democratic control over the state bureaucracy and the decisions made by the big companies". Stressing its national character, the party eschewed affiliation to any international grouping (although the CUT labour federation in 1992 joined the US-aligned International Confederation of Free Trade Unions). It refused to challenge the limits set by the bourgeois state in this country where capitalist rule has meant military terror, super-exploitation and hunger for millions. Accommodating the anti-communist winds blowing from Washington, the PT eulogised Poland's Solidarność; in early 1981, Lula joined his personal hero, Lech Walesa, at the Vatican for an audience with Polish Pope Wojtyła.

Soon enough, the meaning of reformism was brought home to thousands of workers when the PT started winning city elections. While PT administrations collaborated with layoffs and brutal budget cuts in several regions, the most famous case was that of São Paulo mayor Luiza Erundina's breaking of a major municipal transport workers strike. The PT's reformism was instrumental in allowing the military to make an "orderly transition",

hand-picking civilian president José Sarney in 1985. As in other Southern Cone countries, the military torturers and executioners went free; the military brass, withdrawing from the limelight, made it clear that not only would the armed forces' "institutionality" remain intact, but they would keep a close eye on political developments.

Bringing up the PT's rear was the whole gamut of the "Marxist left". The two sizable Communist Parties (the pro-Moscow PCB and formerly pro-Albania PCdoB) originally criticised the PT from the right for being too "hard" on the traditional populist parties, only to jump on the bandwagon when Lula's popularity grew. A slew of fake-Trotskyist tendencies had participated in the PT's founding. The Mandelites, ironically going under the name Democracia Socialista, served as hatchet men for the Lula bureaucracy. The O Trabalho group, followers of French pseudo-Trotskyist Pierre Lambert, sought to be loyal left advisers. The PT was also home for many years to Convergência Socialista, section of Nael Moreno's International Workers League, which achieved a certain implantation in some union sectors, as well as the small centrist group Causa Operária, linked to Jorge Altamira's Argentine Partido Obrero.

The Brazilian PT is the first organic mass labour-based party to arise in this region where the left has historically been dominated by petty-bourgeois nationalism and Stalinism. Yet although it arose out of militant workers strikes, the PT has never gone beyond social-democratic reformism. It is dramatic proof of Lenin's classic statement that revolutionary consciousness can only be brought to the workers from without.

Genuine Trotskyists would have sought to intervene inside the PT, particularly in its early years, to break out a section of the party fighting on a revolutionary programme against the reformist Lula leadership. Such a tactical orientation in fighting to build an independent Leninist vanguard party is in sharp contrast to the perpetual entrisism and tailism of the fake Trotskyists. Even after a red purge beginning with the expulsion of Causa Operária and extending to Convergência, they continue to vote Lula. Today, the Morenoites, while openly admitting that the FBP is a popular front, are an official part of this class-collaborationist lash-up.

In the 1989 presidential elections, the PT formalised its class collaboration with the formation of the first edition of the Frente Brasil Popular. It presented bourgeois politician José Paulo Bisol as Lula's vice presidential running mate and received support in the second round of voting not only from Brizola's PDT but from Cardoso's PSDB (Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy). A sleazy provincial politician, Fernando Collor de Mello, backed by a coalition of right and "centre" parties, narrowly defeated Lula in the vote.

Taking office on a "clean government" platform, Collor de Mello soon imposed a "neo-liberal" shock treatment centred on Thatcherite privatisations and accom-

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# Declaration LM and ICL...

(Continued from page 6)

such classic works by Trotsky as *In Defence of Marxism* (written against Shachtman's petty-bourgeois opposition, renegades from the defence of the USSR), because it has had a neo-Shachtmanite position towards all the conflicts between the capitalist enemies and the USSR. After the Altamiraites hailed the Islamic "revolution" of the feudalist hangman Khomeini in Iran, they opposed Soviet intervention in Afghanistan against the "holy warriors" who were fighting to overthrow the left-nationalist regime for the "crime" of legislating education of women and agrarian reform. The CIA armed the anti-communist fanatics with enormous amounts of weapons and money so that they would kill Soviet soldiers on this battlefield of Cold War II. In Brazil the ultra-reactionaries of Family, Tradition and Property staged marches to the cry of "Russians out of Afghanistan", and the fake Trotskyists had the same position! The Spartacist tendency, following the principles of Trotsky's Fourth International, defended the USSR and the women and oppressed of Afghanistan, saying "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

When in Poland Solidarność consolidated as a clerical-nationalist movement for capitalist restoration under the aegis of the Vatican and Reagan, the Brazilian PT praised the "example" of Walesa; Lula in particular sought to identify himself with this puppet of imperialism. The question of Solidarność was an acid test for every tendency which called itself Trotskyist. The pseudo-Trotskyists shouted their "solidarity with Solidarity". While Moreno called for "All power to Solidarity", Altamira called for "the seizure of power by Solidarity". In contrast the Spartacists said, "Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution!" As the Luta Metalúrgica comrades stated in their July document, "the worker" Walesa whom the fake Trotskyists followed "was the best and principal instrument of imperialism and the Vatican for counterrevolution". As the ICL warned, the victory of this anti-communist movement has brought terrible suffering to the working people of Poland.

The CO leadership had the gall to attack the Luta Metalúrgica comrades for daring to tell the truth, evident to millions of class-conscious workers, that the destruction of the deformed workers state of East Germany through its annexation by German imperialism was a defeat for the workers of the world. While the ICL threw itself into fighting against capitalist unification and for a red Germany of workers councils as part of a socialist Europe, Altamira claimed that "the phony 'unification' of Germany must...open up, sooner rather than later, a great mass mobilisation and a revolutionary situation from which no country of Europe will be exempt" (*Prensa Obrera*, 3 July 1990). Far from producing a "revolutionary" situation, German reunification brought a rise in racist terror, unemployment for millions with the closing of factories, destruction of conquests for the working people, with especially brutal results for working women.

Whereas the Spartacists organised a protest in New York against Gorbachev and Yeltsin's 1991 withdrawal of the Soviet brigade [from Cuba], which gave imperialism a green light for a possible invasion, CO's newspaper (12-18 October 1991), far from protesting, proclaimed that the event had no importance because "the presence of Soviet troops has nothing to do with defence of the island...."

Today CO publishes a resolution (17 July 1994) of its national congress, on Clinton's threat to invade Haiti, which does not even mention the urgent danger facing the Cuban Revolution.

The low point came when Yeltsin seized on the failed coup by the "Gang of Eight" in August 1991 to launch a campaign to completely destroy what remained of the gains of October and the Soviet state. In the USSR the ICL distributed thousands of leaflets with the urgent call, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" While the Morenoites hailed the "new Russian revolution", the absurd line of Altamira was that US imperialism gave its support not to its man Yeltsin but to the "Gang of Eight"—in other words, that for the Soviet workers the basic thing at that time was to fight against these Stalinist has-beens and not against Yeltsin, Bush's man and the spearhead of open capitalist counterrevolution. CO repeated the phony propaganda that a "mass mobilisation" defeated the Gang of Eight's botched coup.

It is obvious why Altamira and CO don't want their members to find out about Trotsky's line on the Russian question! It is no accident that a tendency which capitulates to class collaboration with its "own" bourgeoisie collaborated to the imperialist campaign against the conquests of the October Revolution, a campaign which culminated in the destruction of the USSR.

### III

The Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky proclaimed that "The black question has become an integral part of the world revolution." Brazil has the largest black population in the world after Nigeria, and as part of the Brazilian working class, black and mulatto workers have enormous potential power. The struggle against the oppression of blacks in Brazil is a strategic question of the proletarian revolution. As Cannon noted in his essay on the Russian Revolution and blacks in the US (1961), it was Lenin and the Bolsheviks who insisted that black oppression is a special question which requires special attention and work by the revolutionary party.

As Lenin said in *What Is To Be Done?* the vanguard party must be the "tribune of the people", fighting to mobilise the power of the working class against every kind of oppression. The urgency of this is seen in Brazil, where death squads constantly kill black "street children". In the steel mills, black workers are condemned to die from leukaemia.<sup>1</sup> But the attitude of the fake left in Brazil, which follows the social-democratic PT and the bureaucracy of the CUT [pro-PT labour federation], is the narrow "trade unionist" and economist position which Lenin's Bolsheviks fought against.

This is seen in the most scandalous way in the case of Causa Operária, which, as the Luta Metalúrgica comrades have noted, has been wilfully blind to black oppression. CO did not even take up this question in the 6600 lines of its collection of basic documents from 1979 to 1988 (*Bases Programáticas*). This collection was published just when tens of thousands of blacks were marching through the streets during the centenary of the abolition of slavery, shouting slogans against the brutal racism of present-day Brazil and trying to pull down the statue of the racist mass murderer Caxias!<sup>2</sup>

In an important effort to confront this strategic question, Luta Metalúrgica

<sup>1</sup>[Blood disease caused by fumes from the blast furnaces, which are run mainly by black workers. When Luta Metalúrgica denounced this, the companies said this disease is "genetic" for blacks. — Translator's note.]

wrote a document in August 1993 for the meeting on "The CUT's Role in the Struggle Against Racism". In this document, which reflected a transitional period in the group's development and was marked by some important weaknesses (such as the slogan for black fractions in the unions), the comrades called for worker-peasant militias for self-defence in the struggle against racist terror, denounced forced sterilisation of black women and criticised the fake left's silence on black oppression, which went hand in hand with the fact that the bulk of the "left" voted for a starvation minimum wage (less than 100 dollars a month) that condemns millions of blacks to superexploitation. In the recent period, in a significant internationalist effort, the comrades translated the document "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom" (1967), in which the Spartacist League/US elaborated the programme of revolutionary integrationism.

As the tribune of the oppressed, it is indispensable that the Leninist party raise the banner of struggle against the oppression of women, rooted in the institution of the bourgeois family—a question of utmost importance in Brazil—as part of the programme of permanent revolution. The defence of the rights of Indians and homosexuals is an important element in the fight against the bourgeois prejudices that poison the consciousness of the working people and against the nationalist fake left which reproduces the social values of "its own" bourgeoisie.

What Trotsky said in 1939 about blacks in the US applies today as well:

"We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class.... If it happens that we...are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie."

—[Leon Trotsky, "Plans for the Negro Organization" (April 1939)]

The black question in Brazil, as in the US, is not a national question, and the fantasies of black nationalism regarding "self-determination" are an obstacle to the struggle against oppression. The only road for black liberation is that of the socialist revolution, carried out by the proletariat under the leadership of a multiracial Leninist party. This means that it is indispensable to forge black cadres of the internationalist Trotskyist party. Inspired by the heroism of such fighters as Zumbi, João Candido, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Frederick Douglass, John Brown and Sojourner Truth, the beginning of joint study on the black question is an important element of these fraternal relations.

### IV

The comrades of Luta Metalúrgica ended their April document against the popular front by citing what Trotsky wrote on Spain in the 1930s: "For a successful solution of all these tasks, three conditions are required: a party; once more a party; again a party!" Calling for "a revolutionary regroupment that takes the form of the construction of a Trotskyist party with a firm Marxist programmatic base", they emphasised: "The key to a well-founded revolutionary regroupment is therefore a deep-going struggle for internationalism and the transitional programme."

Essential to this effort is the fight to forge cadres of a Leninist nucleus. The

<sup>2</sup>[Founder of the Brazilian army, who won the 1864-70 war against Paraguay (thereby depopulating that country) and bloodily suppressed black and peasant rebellions. — Translator's note.]

party is built, in Lenin's words, "from the top down", on the basis of the Fourth Internationalist programme. In its beginnings—in contrast to the fake left's hollow "mass" pretensions—such a nucleus has to be a fighting propaganda group. In Brazil it is a priority to publish a Trotskyist journal in line with the real size and work of the group, in order to carry out propaganda for the revolutionary programme. With the authority earned in years of bitter working-class struggles, the comrades of Luta Metalúrgica face the need to polemicise against those who besmirch the name of Trotskyism—in the first place the centrists of Causa Operária; to seek the possibility of regroupments through splits and fusions; and to recruit youth so that a new generation of revolutionaries may enter the struggle against capitalist barbarism. The effort to build a propaganda group will certainly involve difficult decisions on priorities, which will need to be resolved through collective discussion.

The rotten values of semi-social-democratic groups like the PSTU and CO are shown not only over such issues as their support to "strikes" by the police (the professionals of anti-worker and racist repression) and calls for a more "people's" police. They are shown as well in the open disdain of CO's leaders towards the revolutionary workers of Luta Metalúrgica, whom they defame as "ignorant" and backward. We jointly declare a pitiless struggle to politically unmask these petty bourgeois who tail the popular front and lose no opportunity to keep their mouths shut regarding the oppression of blacks and women.

For us internationalism is not a pretty sentiment for Sunday speechifying and resolutions. It is the struggle to build a world party based on revolutionary democratic centralism, quite opposed to the national federations of innumerable nationalist opportunists. Luta Metalúrgica's record of struggle against the popular front and for finding a proletarian programme against black oppression has a deep-going parallelism with the struggle of the Spartacist tendency since its foundation, and provides a solid basis for going forward together. We underline the need to carry out joint work, in full consciousness of the difficulties posed by geographic distance and other obstacles; overcoming these difficulties will require conscious, mutual efforts. We note as an urgent task the study of Portuguese by the comrades of the ICL, and of Spanish and English by comrades of Luta Metalúrgica.

Our perspective is for these fraternal relations to be a step towards the fusion of our organisations, uniting our efforts in the struggle for communism throughout the planet. The realisation of such a fusion would represent an important extension of the ICL. We fight to reforge the Fourth International on the basis of the communism of Lenin and Trotsky and the rules set forward in the "Transitional Programme":

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's programme on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International."

20 September 1994

—Approved by Luta Metalúrgica, 22 September 1994.

—Approved by the International Secretariat, International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), 26 September 1994.

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# Brazil...

(Continued from page 8)

panying massive layoffs in steel, light and power, etc. At the same time as he was gouging the working people, Collor was soon up to his neck in a labyrinthine scandal of payoffs. A groundswell of popular rage broke out in a massive movement demanding "Collor out!" Bringing together militant workers, student youth, *favela* dwellers, housewives and the rural poor, the mobilisations showed a potential to strike at IMF-imposed austerity and the roots of poverty and oppression: the capitalist system. But in the absence of a revolutionary leadership, the reformist PT—after first trying to ignore the anti-Collor protests—joined forces with the bourgeois opposition to head off the danger, containing the crisis within the parliamentary framework.

With the aid of Lula and the PT/CUT bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie gave Collor the hook (but no jail time) and replaced him with his vice president, Itamar Franco. The PT pledged its co-operation with Franco, who included

"ex-PT" ministers in his cabinet.

## For workers revolution!

Today, Lula vows to keep the Frente Brasil Popular going after the election—although it will almost certainly fall apart in the face of enticements to various of its elements to join Cardoso's regime. Yet the prospects for Cardoso's popularity are limited. This politically seething country with its huge working class will continue to be the scene of convulsive struggle, and the eventual popping of the "Real Plan" balloon could set off major class battles.

The key to unchaining the power of Brazil's proletariat is forging a revolutionary internationalist workers party, breaking the working-class base of the PT from the pro-capitalist leaders and fighting for the programme of workers power. Such a party must be a Leninist "tribune of the people". In Brazil this means taking on the issue of black oppression, which has been an "unspoken question" on the Brazilian left, which echoes the bourgeoisie's myth of "racial democracy". More than half of Brazil's population consists of

blacks and mulattos, who are concentrated in the proletariat and poor peasantry. Not only is discrimination rife and the starvation minimum wage used to generate immense profits from the superexploitation of blacks, in recent years Brazil's army and police death squads, financed by prominent businessmen, have become infamous worldwide for their savage massacres of black street children (the *meninos da rua*) in Rio de Janeiro and other parts of the country.

Under the sway of the narrow, economist worldview of the PT and CUT bureaucracy—and reflecting at bottom the social values of its "own" nationalist bourgeoisie—the Brazilian left, including its "Trotskyist" components, has turned a blind eye as well to the oppression of women, discrimination against homosexuals and the barbaric extermination of Indian peoples by profit-crazed prospectors and ranchers. The Brazilian proletariat can liberate itself only by taking on the historic mission of emancipating all the oppressed, smashing the rule of capital and putting this country's immense resources and energies at the service of the working people. Leading the millions

of land-starved peasants, the working class must establish its own rule as part of a Socialist United States of Latin America, fighting to extend revolution to the imperialist heartland, the United States. This is Trotsky's programme of permanent revolution.

Indeed, the construction of a Brazilian Trotskyist party with a strong black leadership component would strike an important chord from Harlem to Johannesburg. The internationalist programme would provide a powerful beacon not only for the workers and peasants of Brazil but for the beleaguered toilers of countries like neighbouring Bolivia, where capitalist governments have decimated the working class; for the oppressed masses of Haiti and the embattled workers of Cuba, starved by imperialism's embargo and threatened by counterrevolution; and South African workers whose strikes are being broken by Mandela's nationalist popular front. While Lula's popular front flounders, the urgent need is to build a Trotskyist party of workers revolution in Brazil, in the fight to reforge the Fourth International.

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# Racist cops...

(Continued from page 1)

The CJB is an all-sided assault on even the most elementary democratic rights, including the "right to silence". It targets Travellers, Roma (Gypsies), Irish citizens, blacks and Asians. More particularly the CJB is designed as a piece of anti-working-class legislation to curb and if need be smash working-class resistance by illegalising such actions as flying pickets, used during the miners strike of 1984-85.

Massive trade union mobilisations drawing on the support of minorities and militant youth are desperately needed to stop this state offensive. It is the absence of such concerted trade union force so far that has allowed the cops to act with impunity against anti-CJB protesters. But to mobilise the unions poses a political struggle to break the unions from the social-democratic reformism of Blair's "law and order" Labour Party.

The CJB gives the cops greatly enhanced "stop and search" powers, reminiscent of the old "sus" laws, which were aimed particularly at the black and Asian communities. On 23 October Nigerian-born Joseph Nnalue became the latest victim of state terror. After falling from a second-floor flat in southwest London, Nnalue died pinned to the ground by immigration cops who had raided his home. Outrageously an ambulance did not arrive till 25 minutes after the fall! Nnalue's brother-in-law commented that, "This is another Joy Gardner", referring to the cop murder of the Jamaican-born Hornsey mother last year.

Then on 26 October, Kurdish leader and European representative of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), Kani Yilmaz was detained on his way to a meeting with MPs at Westminster. Yilmaz planned to detail the horrors of the Turkish government's heightened repression against Kurds. Last year the Ankara regime reportedly spent US \$7 billion on its murderous repression against Kurds in southeastern Turkey, killing thousands and destroying hundreds of Kurdish villages. Branded a "threat to national security" by Home Secretary Michael Howard, Yilmaz faces deportation. We demand Yilmaz be freed immediately!

In Germany the government has gutted the right to asylum. Earlier this year they banned the PKK and 35 other Kurdish organisations. They followed this up with detentions of hundreds of Turkish leftists and Kurds for deportation to Turkey. On



Martin Argles

## Criminal Justice Act targets workers, youth and minorities.

14 April of this year demonstrations in major cities across the world were organised by the Partisan Defense Committees to protest this outrage.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the European bourgeoisies have been whipping up an increasingly virulent hue-and-cry about "Islamic fundamentalism", as a pretext for racism. London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) has been the scene of a witch hunt inspired by Zionists and the British state. This campaign has set its sights at banning an unappetising right-wing Islamic group called the Hizb ut Tahrir. We oppose such bans, which play into the hands of racist anti-Asian and anti-Muslim hysteria, and set a precedent to be used against the left. At the same time, we defend the victims of fundamentalist terror (unlike the SWP's press, which shamefully has not uttered a word in defence of Taslima Nasrin, the prominent Bangladeshi woman writer forced to flee to Sweden).

The bourgeoisie's claim to be for religious tolerance is racist hypocrisy—this country has an established *Christian* church! And it was the US (and also British) imperialists that armed the counterrevolutionary *mujahedin* to the teeth against the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan, and that today is bankrolling some of the same cut-throats in Bosnia.

In France Gestapo-style attacks and round-ups of North African workers and their French-born children have intensified. Meanwhile the French government's racist

# Irving...

(Continued from page 12)

was seen last April in Lansing, Michigan where the cops maced the trapped anti-fascists and then arrested eight of them. By wilfully going into these pens the RWL and the ISO demonstrate that they have no strategy for, or even commitment to, stopping the fascists.

At the anti-Irving protest, the Nazis were given police escort out of the building while demonstrators chanted, "Cops and the Klan work hand in hand!" Indeed here was a textbook lesson in the role of the capitalist state and their armed thugs in blue—not "neutral arbiters" but fascist protectors. The capitalist rulers keep the fascists in reserve, and will turn them loose when "normal" police repression no longer suffices to maintain their rule of exploitation and oppression of the many by the few.

To see whose interests the fascists serve one need only look at Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union. The collapse of the former workers states in these countries (however deformed by the bureaucratic Stalinist regimes there) and the victory of the forces of capitalist counterrevolution has led directly to a rise in fascist terror attacks. As their bankrupt economies go down the tubes, the capitalists are taking aim at foreign-born workers and desperate refugees.

Bayrou circular victimises young Muslim women, threatening them with exclusion from state schools for wearing the headscarf. Our comrades of the Ligue trotskyste de France have stood forthrightly against the Mitterrand/Balladur government's racist attacks, fighting for worker/immigrant mobilisations against racist terror and segregation.

In Britain and across Western Europe "Fortress Europe" anti-immigrant racism has in turn given fascist outfits like the BNP the green light to mount their murderous attacks. The working class must combat all forms of racist terror through massive trade union/minority mobilisations! Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and their families!

Yet fighting for hard working-class struggle in defence of all the oppressed is the last thing the fake left have in mind. Pro-Labour outfits like Scottish Militant instead bleat about "forcing" the Labour Party to "reverse its spineless lack of opposition" to the CJB. Moreover both the

The immigrant-bashing by both the Democrats and Republicans here in the US gives the green light to the fascists.

## For trade union/minority mobilisations to stop fascist terror!

Our strategy is to mobilise the organised power of the multiracial working class, together with minorities and all the intended victims of racist terror, to crush the fascists in the egg. This strategy comes from Leon Trotsky—a leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution—who called for a workers united front to stop Hitler's Nazis from seizing power in Germany. Last January, the SYC helped mobilise to stop a KKK provocation on Martin Luther King Day in Springfield, Illinois. More than 500 protesters, the core of which were workers from the integrated unions in Chicago, braved state harassment and arctic weather to come out to confront the Klan terrorists.

The working class has the numbers, the organisation and above all the social power to stop the fascists and to put an end to this decaying capitalist system which breeds them. The SYC, a school of action for young revolutionaries, is fighting to help build a revolutionary workers party which can do just that. Join us!

Spartacus Youth Club  
17 October 1994

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SWP and Militant believe that cops—the same thugs who attack anti-CJB protests, who brutalise minorities and striking workers—are "workers in uniform", while Workers Power champions the right of the cops to strike. The capitalist state, whose core is this very police apparatus, is "an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another" (VI Lenin, *State and Revolution*).

The Labour Party doesn't even oppose the CJB, while Tony Blair boasts that many of the bill's provisions were his own! The fake left wants to channel disgust with the government into support for electing a Labour government, which will make full use of the capitalist state to crack down on the workers and oppressed. What is desperately needed is a revolutionary party, forged through hard political struggle against the Labour and trade union misleaders—to lead the working class to power through socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers state. ■

# Italy...

(Continued from page 1)

voted for Berlusconi." But what's needed to sweep away the Berlusconi government and smash his austerity programme is all-out workers resistance, including strikes, plant occupations, the formation of workers councils and workers militias. This would pose a situation of dual power. And a genuinely Bolshevik vanguard party must be built in order to lead the workers' struggles beyond economic militancy in the direction of a fight for workers rule. For otherwise, decisive sectors of the Italian bourgeoisie are pushing for a "strong state" to destroy the workers' gains, whether under the aspiring Bonaparte Berlusconi (called "Berluskaiser" by his ally Bossi of the Northern League) or the "progressive" popular front led by the PDS.

## Hot autumn of workers struggle

Every day since late September, tens of thousands of workers took to the streets to protest against the deep and deadly pension cuts proposed by Berlusconi. On 28 September, 200,000 workers struck and marched in cities around the country. From Palermo to Milano, workers held assemblies in the middle of roads and blocked railway stations. Brescia had four de facto general strikes of 25,000 each. Fiat's giant Mirafiori works repeatedly struck and filled the streets of Torino. Massive daily protests semi-paralysed Genova for two weeks; on the eve of the national strike an opera concert was held "for labour and culture" in the port city. "What better way... to fly to the biggest Genovan protest than on the wings of Verdi and Puccini?" commented *La Repubblica*.

On 14 October, 350,000 marched in Milano, 250,000 in Firenze (Florence), 200,000 in Torino and Roma, 150,000 in Bologna, Napoli (Naples) and Genova, 70,000 in Palermo, 50,000 in Bari, etc. Seven special trains and 300 buses brought strikers to the regional Firenze demonstration. In many cities, the marches stretched for kilometres, and most demonstrators never made it to the end. All schools closed down for the day and hundreds of thousands of students marched in spirited contingents that arrived together from hundreds of schools and universities. In Roma, youthful student demonstrators enlivened the marches by singing a rap version of *Bandiera Rossa*. Many pensioners marched and there were also large PDS and Rifonda-

zione Comunista (RC) contingents.

Comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia and other sections of the International Communist League sold some 640 copies of the LTd'I paper *Spartaco* in Milano 14 October, while another 80 were sold in Palermo.

The semi-anarchist Autonomia Operaia (Workers Autonomy) chose to have their own separate marches in Milano and some other cities. The syndicalist CUB/COBAS (rank-and-file committees) held a national demonstration of 50,000 in Roma in the afternoon. But many youth from the *autonomo* milieu and many COBAS members chose to march with the mass of the workers in their own cities. And *Corriere della Sera* (15 October) noted the spectacle, "never before seen", of the head of the COBAS at Alfa Romeo, Corrado Delle Donne, speaking from the same platform as the official union leaders. In Genova, workers carried signs saying, "Berlusconi, remember Tambroni!" They were recalling the massive working-class mobilisation there in 1960 when port workers closed down a fascist meeting and fought it out with the cops, eventually leading to the downfall of the Christian Democratic/fascist Tambroni government.

October 14 was not just a parade, like so many Italian "general strikes" in the past. One striker declared, "This is only the antipasto." A national mobilisation has been scheduled for 12 November, when the CGIL-CISL-UIL union federations are planning to bring one million workers in a march on Roma. In addition to the eight hours of officially authorised strikes leading up to the 12th, there are already other spontaneous strikes and actions all over the place. Already on 22 October, some 50,000 students and youth from around Italy marched in Napoli.

In the 27 March elections, Berlusconi won many votes by promising a "new Italian miracle" to revive the economy and provide one million new jobs. Now the bitter reality of mounting unemployment, falling wages and brutal cuts is staring everybody in the face. The prime minister is increasingly isolated. He is presently immersed in what seems to be a battle with the magistrates over their corruption investigation into his Fininvest empire. The cabinet is beginning to fragment in the face of the demonstration of social power and combativity by the working class. Labour minister Mastella (whose son and wife joined the protests) wants to cut a deal with the unions on pension cuts. Meanwhile, fascist MSI deputies in parliament assaulted a left-wing speaker last week in the raging fight

over the government's political purge in the RAI state television system.

## Popular front chains workers

The possibility of hard class struggle to bring down this reactionary regime — only months after the bourgeois elections — and smash the vicious austerity programme is palpable. But the reformist leaderships — principally the two offshoots of the Communist Party, RC and PDS — are moving might and main to block this road by tying the working class to the bosses in a class-collaborationist front. The head of the CGIL, Sergio Cofferati, summed up the politics of the trade-union bureaucracy and the anti-Berlusconi popular front immediately after the general strike, saying: "Now the government must bargain with us." The RC and PDS want to use these massive strikes as a pressure tactic to modify the budget and make the "sacrifices more equal".

RC president and senator Armando Cossutta talks of waging a battle in parliament with the help of mass pressure in the streets. D'Alema, head of the PDS, says: "We are a responsible force, we don't want to damage the country and the markets", adding: "The days are over when the left thought that it could do it alone" (*L'Unità*, 15 October). In order to show its "responsibility" to the bourgeoisie, the PDS is now pushing the "unity of all democrats", ranging from Rifondazione Comunista to the recycled Christian Democrats of the Popular Party (PPI), and is even flirting with the racist populists of the Northern League. RC says it has no "prejudices" against the PPI, and an interview with RC leader Bertinotti was recently run in the League newspaper *L'Indipendente* (21 August).

Sensing the possibility of bringing down Berlusconi, the "progressive" popular front is looking to the bourgeois state apparatus. Two days before the general strike, on 12 October, RC, PDS and the COBAS of Alfa Romeo demonstrated shoulder to shoulder with the Northern League in front of the Milano courthouse in solidarity with the "anti-corruption" magistrates. Among their chants was "Maroni, arrest Berlusconi" — a truly grotesque call on the Northern League minister of the interior to arrest the head of government. Such dangerous illusions in the *mani pulite* (clean hands) judicial operation that is jailing many leading politicians could help pave the way to a bonapartist crackdown *against the left*.

Also on 12 October there was a sinister police and prison guard "strike". As 20,000 cops rallied in Roma at the call of the cop

"union" SIULP, Cofferati (CGIL) and D'Antoni (CISL) addressed the uniformed thugs from the platform as "fellow workers". On 5 October, some of these same police violently charged into unemployed workers who were demonstrating in front of Palazzo Chigi (the prime minister's offices) with signs denouncing "Berlusconi". And on 11 October, police in Torino tried to beat up several hundred militant anti-fascist demonstrators at the university. A month earlier, on 10 September, police in Milano waded into a demonstration in defence of the *autonomo* social centre Leoncavallo, attacking everybody in sight and launching a massive manhunt.

During the 14 October general strike, an SIULP cop was allowed to speak from the platform in Roma, and received applause. The vice president of the CGIL, Guglielmo Epifani, said, "We thank the forces of order who are here to guarantee the peaceful carrying out of this extraordinary demonstration." But while the police were given a place of honour, one group that was notable by its absence in the demonstrations on the 14th was *immigrants*. The chauvinist reformist leaderships have criminally refused to mobilise the Italian workers movement against anti-immigrant attacks by fascists and police, while the PDS and RC have actually called for "cleaning out" immigrant squatters' camps. The Trotskyists warn that the cops and courts and capitalist politicians represent the class enemy. We demand cops out of the unions, and call for worker/immigrant mobilisations to stop racist terror.

## Forge a Trotskyist party!

As the Stalinists and ex-Stalinists embrace the bourgeoisie and its state ever more openly, what's urgently needed is a struggle for authentic communism. Among those in Italy who falsely claim to represent Trotskyism, two leaders of an opposition current in RC, Marco Ferrando and Franco Grisolia, authored a half-page article in *Il Manifesto* (11 October) in which they never once mention revolution, communism, socialism or even workers power, nor do they warn of the popular front or class collaboration, or distinguish themselves from RC's support to racist killer cops and bourgeois magistrates. Ferrando/Grisolia's maximum programme is for a general strike that would be a "political defeat for the government", as they call vaguely for "the liberation of forces and energy from below for the real alternative".

So while the PDS calls for a "democratic alternative" and RC for the "progressive alternative", these pseudo-Trotskyists call for a "real alternative". Yet in the March elections, Ferrando/Grisolia called for RC members to "participate actively in the front lines of the electoral campaign of the party in the central struggle against the right" and called to vote for all the candidates of the popular front, including the openly bourgeois politicians (*Proposta* no 3, March 1994). They, along with the Stalinist rump in the RC, the born-again social democrats of the PDS and the syndicalists of the COBAS, perpetuate the belief, deeply rooted in Italy, that the only "alternatives" are either popular-front parliamentarism or a syndicalist ignoring of political struggle.

This heritage has been a curse of the Italian workers movement ever since the early 1920s, when militant socialist workers of the Northern industrial belt seized the factories... and sat there. What was needed then was a tempered Bolshevik leadership that could overcome this false polarisation between parliamentary class collaboration and militantly apolitical workers struggle. That was also lacking in the workers insurrection betrayed by the Stalinists in 1943-45, during the militant worker and youth struggles in 1968-69, and again today. It is to the task of forging such a Leninist party that the Lega Trotskista d'Italia directs its efforts. Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 609, 28 October 1994.

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## Hitler-lover David Irving run out!

# US: Hundreds rout Nazis in Berkeley!

For years, the Spartacus Youth Clubs have exposed the sinister and dangerous role of David Irving, a Nazi apologist who hides his fascist brownshirt under "academic" robes. We've protested Irving's speaking tours as nothing other than platforms to mobilise the forces of racist terror and genocide around the world. In 1988, comrades who later went on to found the Dublin Spartacist Group were among the organisers of a 500-strong demonstration that stopped Irving at Ireland's Trinity College in Dublin. In 1989, the Berkeley SYC organised a militant protest against Irving when he was giving a fascist speech. So it's with considerable pride that we reprint below the Berkeley SYC leaflet describing our 13 October united-front demonstration which successfully thwarted Irving and his fascist pals.

\* \* \*

The Spartacus Youth Club congratulates the hundreds of anti-fascist militants who answered our united-front call to "Stop Hitler-lover David Irving!" last Thursday night. The Nazis who hosted Irving no doubt thought they could cash in on the anti-immigrant hysteria being whipped up behind Proposition 187 to recruit and organise for their racist terror. Together we made sure that they didn't get away with it.

Irving, who was originally scheduled to appear at Alumni House on campus, was billed as an "author and historian". But as our leaflet, which was distributed in the thousands at Cal and other campuses, pointed out: "This isn't just some crackpot, raving right-wing 'academic'. Behind the white shirt and tie of this so-called 'historian' is the fascist brownshirt of Nazism. Irving denies the Holocaust in order to recruit and organise the perpetrators of new fascist depravities."

Irving has been a star attraction at meetings of fascist terror gangs from the British National Party, to the Hitlerite "Nationale Offensive" in Germany, to the white-supremacist Heritage Front in Canada, to the Klan and Nazis in the US. He whips up the fascist thugs who have been waging a campaign of terror and murder against immigrants, minorities, gays, blacks and anti-racist protesters around the globe.

When Alumni House got wind of our protest call, they yanked Irving's event permit, citing the "potential for danger". But we and hundreds of others under-

stood that the real potential for danger would be if Irving's appearance went unopposed. Chanting "Stop Hitler-lover David Irving—Smash fascist terror!" nearly 100 protesters gathered outside Alumni House. In addition to the SYC and the Spartacist League there were trade unionists from the Labor Black League for Social Defense; a contingent of the Jewish Student Union from Berkeley High School; numerous Cal students; some supporters of the International Socialist Organization, the Revolutionary Workers League and the Revolutionary Trotskyist League.

### Nazis disarmed—swastikas destroyed

When we confirmed that Irving and his Nazi rat pack were meeting at the YWCA (where they had secured a room by concealing their purpose) we marched straight there. Crossing campus the crowd swelled to some 300 protesters—blacks, Jews, Asians, whites, Latinos, students and workers! Chanting "Nazis out!" we marched directly into the meeting room. Most of these would-be Hitlers scurried into the corners of the room, cowering like sewer rats. A couple of the fascists tried to attack demonstrators with chairs. Another was swinging a camera tripod. They were effectively disarmed.

Swastikas—the symbol of Nazi genocide—littered the floor. The anti-fascists made short shrift of them and the other Nazi insignia. Irving himself was seen sprawled across a collapsed table amidst a pile of his videotapes and other fascist



Berkeley riot cops protecting Nazis attack anti-fascist protesters.



Young Spartacus

Anti-fascist protesters march into Nazi rally site in Berkeley, California on 13 October.

filth. One quaking Nazi dropped hundreds of swastika stickers.

Berkeley and UC cops arrived to defend the fascists. A supporter of the Spartacist League described the scene: "The cops went crazy. They were grabbing signs out of people's hands, they were jabbing people with billy clubs, they hit one woman really hard several times in the back. I tried to pull her out, I got hit in the stomach." A young black woman who was videotaping the protest was savagely attacked and had to go to the hospital. A *Workers Vanguard* photographer had her glasses knocked off and stomped on by the cops. At least three other anti-fascist protesters were sent to the hospital, with head and body injuries.

In Berkeley, where you don't have the right to smoke a cigarette, there is now some bellyaching about the "right" of a gang of Nazis to organise for gas chambers! The fascists are not just right-wing ideologues with racist "ideas". They are paramilitary action squads whose programme is to kill, culminating in genocide. The murder of an Ethiopian youth in Portland, Oregon by Nazi skinheads, the charred body of a black man who was

set on fire by Klan members in Florida—are not "free speech". The hundreds of us who acted to stop the fascists on Thursday night understood that this was an elementary act of self-defence and defence of all the intended victims of fascist terror.

### No reliance on the capitalist state!

The SYC sought to bring together all those who agreed on the need to stop Irving's fascist provocation in a united action in which the diversity of political views and strategies of all participating groups would be represented. The Berkeley High Jewish Student Union responded with their own leaflet as did the International Socialist Organization [ISO] and the Revolutionary Workers League [RWL].

Now the ISO is denouncing "violence". Not fascist violence, not the violence of the club-swinging cops—no, the ISO is smearing the anti-fascist protesters! "It was a few bad apples acting in the heat of the moment", ISO leader Brandon Rees told the *Daily Cal*. Obscene, but nothing new. In January 1993, members of the Canadian International Socialists linked arms to bolster a line of cops in Vancouver who were trying to force back anti-fascist militants.

The ISO's cringing desire to be respectable in the eyes of the powers that be flows from a belief that the capitalist state can either be pressured or reformed into stopping the fascists. Despite their sometimes more "radical" posture, such a view is also shared by the RWL. Both groups have herded militants into fenced-in police pens set up to contain anti-fascist demonstrations in the Midwest. The SYC has repeatedly warned that these pens are deadly traps, leaving protesters completely at the mercy of the racist cops with their guns, their tear gas, their nightsticks and their horses. This

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