



## Tory meltdown at the polls

# New Labour ready to attack workers and minorities

MAY 2 — Election '97: Tory nightmare, Labour avalanche. Blair's New Labour was returned with a massive majority of 179. The Tories — completely routed from Scotland and Wales, widely despised almost everywhere, rent over Europe — are left to "reflect" over their biggest defeat in 91 years. Having pledged his party's soul, and the next government, to profit and the City, Blair received a huge swing from traditional Tory areas. Major's Tories at this point are not a particularly effective instrument for bourgeois rule, and Blair has taken the reins. The sheer size of Labour's victory is ominous; it will be taken as a mandate to carry out New Labour's vicious anti-working class programme. Blair will undoubtedly forge ahead with his project to sever the Labour Party's ties to the unions and to remodel it as a bourgeois party like Clinton's Democrats. Labour's TV broadcast, which sported the British bulldog — symbol of foaming chauvinist, racist British imperialism — trumpeted the message that Labour-ruled Britain will continue the Tories' war on trade unions, immigrants,

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**New Labour  
the business tool  
for new Britain**



Jones/FSP



Chris Harris

Blair wins big in general election. New Labour's "law and order" agenda means racist state terror.

## Spartacist League statement

*The following statement was issued on 21 April 1997.*

The general election signals the likely end of 18 years of Tory rule and its replacement with Tony Blair's New Labour. While it is often difficult to tell the Tory and New Labour election manifestos apart, there are strong factors pulling towards change in the British political landscape. Fundamental to this is the deep schism within the ruling class about Britain's place in the "New World Order", currently being played out in the inter-cine warfare within the Tory party over the European Union — a major issue when Thatcher was removed as leader. For the "Euroseptic" wing, "European integration" is a threat to the sovereignty of the "United Kingdom". This necessarily conflicts with the ruling class's simultaneous desire to keep step with the EU, where most British trade now goes, and to maintain London as a major centre for European finance.

Blair's "project" for New Labour is summed up by his statement: "I want a situation more like the Democrats and the Republicans in the US. People don't even question for a single moment that the

Democrats are a pro-business party. They should not be asking the question about New Labour." Rejecting all pretences to represent the interest of the working class, Blair is striving to sever Labour's historic links with the trade unions and to recast the Labour Party as something akin to the Democrats. In opposition to this development, Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP), has split from New Labour and is running 63 candidates in the election.

The Spartacist League/Britain extends critical support to SLP candidates, recognising that in standing against New Labour the SLP are in breach of the "eleventh commandment" of the British left, that "thou shalt vote Labour", come hell or high water. At the same time there is a clear counterposition between what the Spartacist League stands for and what the SLP represents. At SLP meetings, when Spartacist speakers argue for the communism of Lenin and Trotsky, Scargill responds by dismissing the 1917 Russian October Revolution, offering instead the Labour tradition of Keir Hardie and Nye Bevan (Labour figures from the period of World War I and II respectively) — a

"tradition" that has always defended the interests of British capitalism at home and abroad. The Bolshevik Revolution was the decisive event of this century, showing in living reality that the workers have the power to overthrow capitalism, led by a revolutionary vanguard party.

Marxists understand that the cause of all exploitation and oppression is the capitalist system. Therefore fundamental change in the interest of the working class, minorities and the oppressed cannot come through parliamentary elections, but only through revolutionary internationalist class struggle which, pursued to the end, must shatter the framework of capitalism worldwide. This task requires the construction of a Trotskyist party, which must be forged in a struggle to break the stranglehold of Labourism on the working class. We fight for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a Socialist United States of Europe. This task requires the revolutionary overthrow of British capitalism, resting on the ar-

**Spartacist League statement**

**Critical support to the SLP —  
No vote to New Labour!**

**For a revolutionary  
workers party!  
For a federation of  
workers republics in  
the British Isles!**

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chaic United Kingdom, which is dominated by southern England finance capitalists, whom "Her Majesty's" parliament serves through the policy of divide-and-rule of the working class: English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish (Protestant and Catholic), as well as black and Asian workers from the former colonies.

It is this perspective for revolution, for  
*continued on page 8*

# Drop all charges against the Anti-Klan Three!

*This article is adapted from Workers Vanguard no 666, 18 April 1997.*

Chicago mayor Richard Daley Jr and Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine are cynically decrying the racist terror whose latest victim is 13-year-old black youth Lenard Clark. Yet while they weep crocodile tears over the brutal near-murder of Clark, the "city fathers", their cops and courts are waging a legal vendetta against three opponents of racist terror for the "crime" of protesting against that most savage expression of lynch mob murder — the Ku Klux Klan.

Gene Herson, Labor Coordinator of the Partisan Defense Committee, Jeff Lyons of Refuse & Resist, and Dennis Glass, a young black worker, will stand trial on 5 May. They face from one to two years in jail on trumped-up charges of assault and battery against police stemming from a successful demonstration — initiated by the PDC and the Labor Black Struggle League — which turned back a potentially lethal assault by the Klan terrorists. This

blow against the KKK's racist, genocidal designs was a victory for all working people, blacks and other minorities.

The PDC calls on trade unionists, blacks, gays, immigrants, youth, leftists — everyone the KKK has lined up in its sights — to mobilise in defence of these three anti-Klan militants.

On 29 June 1996 in Chicago's Daley Plaza, thugs from the Arkansas-based "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan", armed with bolt-studded shields and heavy flagpoles wielded as lances, marched provocatively towards the demonstration of over 100 anti-fascist protesters. After the protesters successfully defended themselves and stopped these lynch-rope terrorists, the Chicago police intervened to return the Klan's weapons to them and then turned to exact revenge against the anti-Klan protesters.

At a 28 February evidentiary hearing on a defence motion to dismiss the charges, an eyewitness who had participated in the 29 June protest testified that Gene Herson, one of the organisers of the anti-Klan demon-

stration, was particularly singled out by the cops. Herson was pepper-sprayed in a completely unprovoked attack by police commander Patrick McNulty. Another witness, a volunteer in the AFL-CIO's "Union Summer" programme who was also part of the anti-Klan protest, testified that even after the Klan had been escorted away by the police, a phalanx of Chicago cops waded into the protest swinging their nightsticks against the protesters. He described

openly revive the Red Squad, which for years spied and kept files on everyone from striking bus drivers to the Black Panthers to the PTA. This capitalist "justice system" is a system of racist terror and anti-working-class injustice.

Police violence isn't random, but serves to prop up a decaying profit system. It enforces the Democrats' and Republicans' racist attacks on welfare, immigrants, unions and affirmative action — attacks



Workers Vanguard

Jeffrey Lyons, Dennis Glass, Gene Herson, arrested for participating in 29 June 1996 anti-Klan protest.

how Dennis Glass was simply snatched by the cops for no reason and how Jeffrey Lyons was spread-eagled on a car by police after protesting the arrest of another "Union Summer" participant.

The assaults by the racist rulers of this country on the unions and on welfare and other social programmes benefiting working people and the poor are being enforced through increased state repression aimed at quashing any protest or social struggle. A victory for the Anti-Klan Three would be a critical victory for the right to protest injustice and oppression.

As the defence motion calling to drop the charges vividly documented, the arrest of these anti-racist militants was a blatantly malicious act aimed at justifying the police attacks on the anti-Klan protest and was also one of a series of attempts by the Chicago city government and police to suppress social protest, particularly in preparation for the Democratic National Convention held in Chicago last August. This is also demonstrated in the vindictive arrest and prosecution of the "Chicago Five", who were targeted for participating in protests against the Democratic convention.

Railroading people to jail — particularly blacks — is standard operating procedure for the Chicago police and Cook County state's attorneys. The unfolding cop corruption scandal in the Austin police district has forced the courts to throw out 85 drug cases, and now similar revelations are emerging in the Gresham district on the South Side. Fernanda Royal would still be in police custody, charged with assaulting a Chicago Housing Authority police officer, if dozens of people hadn't seen the cop pump a bullet into her chest for no reason on 4 March and then witnessed the all-out barrage of police gunfire at the Cabrini-Green housing project that followed. Mayor Daley is now driving to

which feed rising Klan terror. The fascist nightriders must be stopped, and what's necessary to do it is a strategy of mass mobilisations of all the Klan's intended victims. The same racist terrorists — Thomas Robb's Arkansas-based "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" — who tried to rear their ugly heads in Daley Plaza on 29 June had also mobilised for a provocation against Martin Luther King Day in Springfield, Illinois in January 1994. In Springfield, Robb's Klan was met by a 500-strong labour/black mobilisation initiated by the PDC for which a hard core of Chicago labour turned out in a sub-zero blizzard. This anti-Klan mobilisation points the way towards mobilising the decisive social power of the organised working class in the fight against Klan/Nazi terror and against the entire capitalist system which breeds it.

Defence of the Anti-Klan Three is a vital necessity for the labour movement and all opponents of racist terror. If the cops get away with framing up these three fighters against Klan terror, it will further embolden the nightriding fascists in their genocidal aim of a "racially pure" America where trade unions don't exist. It is urgent for all anti-racist fighters to come together in united-front action, in which all those who rally together behind the demand "Drop the charges against the Anti-Klan Three!" are free to raise their views. Fill the courtroom beginning 5 May!

\* \* \*

*Merseyside Port Shop Stewards representing sacked Liverpool dockers are among defenders of the Anti-Klan Three internationally who have protested their prosecution. Send letters to: Richard Devine, State's Attorney of Cook County, Richard J. Daley Center, 55 W. Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60602, USA. ■*

## The united front



TROTSKY

*Our campaigning for the Socialist Labour Party in the general election is what communists mean by "critical support" to a working-class candidate standing in an election. Critical support is an application of the tactic of the united front developed by the Communist International in the early 1920s. By proposing urgent united action around concrete issues in defence of the working class, the young Communist*

*Parties sought to win the mass of workers who retained allegiance to the reformist social-democratic parties, proving in struggle the superiority of the communist programme and leadership. Likewise in Britain today, we seek to exacerbate the contradictions between the aspirations and interests of the working-class base of the Labour Party and its pro-capitalist leaders. Leon Trotsky, a leader together with Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revolution, explained this in "Problems of the British labour movement".*

The struggle for a united front has such importance in Britain precisely because it answers the elementary requirements of the working class in the new orientation and grouping of forces. The struggle for a united front will thereby pose the problem of leadership, that is of programme and tactics and this means the party. Yet the struggle for a united front will not in itself solve this task but will merely create the conditions for its solution. The ideological and organizational formation of a genuinely revolutionary, that is of a communist, party on the basis of the movement of the masses is conceivable only under the condition of a perpetual, systematic, inflexible, untiring and irreconcilable unmasking of the quasi-left leaders of every hue, of their confusion, of their compromises and of their reticence.

—"Problems of the British labour movement", January 1926



LENIN

## WORKERS HAMMER

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For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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# Italian navy massacres boatload of refugees

## Imperialist troops out of Albania!

MILANO, 13 April — On 9 April, less than two weeks after an Italian navy ship rammed and sank a boat on the Adriatic Sea filled with desperate refugees fleeing poverty and chaos in Albania, the Italian parliament voted by a large majority in favour of military intervention in that tiny Balkan country. Advance units of a 2500-strong Italian military contingent, to be joined by 3500 troops from France, Spain and other European powers, have already begun landing in the Albanian capital of Tirana. This act of war is aimed at disarm-

offshoot of the former Communist Party. This popular-front government wants to impose its "answer" of blood and tears on the Albanian proletariat. Likewise in Italy, it has shoved austerity measures down the throats of the working class and forced through drastic cuts in the living standards of workers, women and youth. It is this same government that now criminalises Albanian refugees arriving in Italy as part of a furious campaign of racist terror against all immigrants. The anti-immigrant hysteria also serves to fan the flames

den of thieves — under whose cover the massacres in Iraq and Somalia and the partitioning of ex-Yugoslavia took place — has already endorsed the Italian-led intervention force. Echoing widespread imperialist sentiment, RC also called on the government to "openly refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Sali Berisha presidency" and to "supply every assistance and political support to the Fino government" (*Liberazione*, 7 April). In other words, these "refounded Communists" appeal to the Italian bourgeoisie to

would also result in the sending of imperialist troops to crush the Albanian masses.

Grisolia, Ferrando and others who are part of the leadership of RC pass themselves off as Trotskyists, and are accepted as such by the bourgeois press. In fact, they are only the left wing of the bourgeois popular front and its imperialist, anti-worker, anti-woman and anti-immigrant politics.

The comrades of the LTd'I made clear what Trotskyism really stands for in an intervention at a 5 April public forum on Albania organised by the Leoncavallo social centre in Milano. RC leader Fausto Bertinotti spoke and called on the Europe of imperialist bandits to support the Italian government in an intervention "for peace" in Albania. Speaking immediately after Bertinotti, one of our comrades counterposed the need for "strikes and working-class mobilisations against this government" to combat the planned occupation by Italian imperialism. The LTd'I speaker emphasised that support to the popular front "lulls the working class and prevents it from struggling". The comrade continued:

"Rifondazione Comunista distributed a leaflet that said that there is a risk that Albania will turn into 'our Vietnam'. But for communists, workers and the oppressed all over the world, Vietnam was a victory. We want two, three, many Vietnams for Italian imperialism!"

As the LTd'I leaflet (translated below) stressed, Leninists understand that the main enemy is at home. The Italian proletariat must fight in solidarity with the working masses of Albania against the depredations of the Italian imperialist bourgeoisie.

**SPARTACO** 

5 April 1997

In an outrageous and arrogant act of imperialist barbarity, on 28 March the Italian navy ship *Sibilla* massacred 89 Albanian refugees, mostly women and children, by ramming the small motorboat that was taking them towards Puglia on the Italian coast. With inhuman brutality, the police sequestered the 34 survivors, most of whom had just seen their own families murdered, and held them in isolation behind barbed wire for days. They made it impossible for the survivors to come into contact with anybody, including journalists and Caritas charity workers, in order to keep them from telling the truth about what had happened.

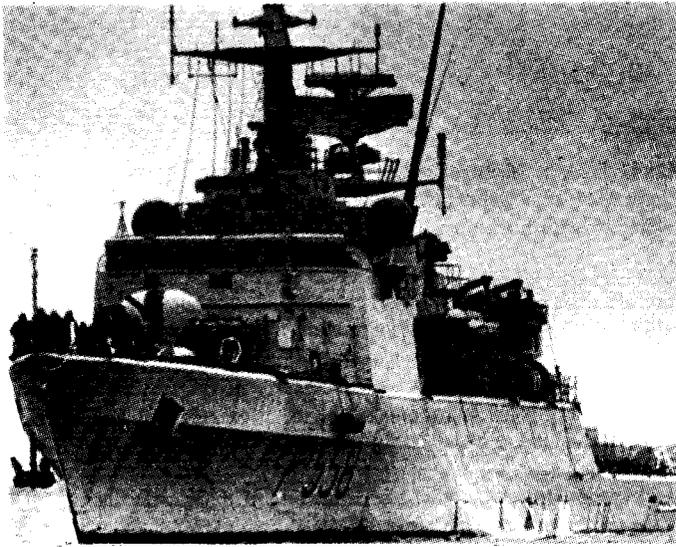
The sinking of the Albanian boat is a clear message from Italian imperialism to the Albanian population that no more refugees will be accepted on the peninsula. This mass murder took place at the high point of a growing campaign of racist terror that has lasted for several weeks. Thousands of Albanians who came to Italy to save their lives have been treated worse than animals. They have been enclosed in concentration camps, repressed and treated by the police as criminals and deported in a totally arbitrary way. Meanwhile, a steady media drumbeat tries to stir up racism within the population.

Now, after imposing a naval blockade, the racist and bellicose Prodi popular-

*continued on page 5*



Desperate Albanian refugees fleeing chaos, poverty. Italian naval frigate *Sibilla* (right) rammed refugee boat, killing 89.



ing the population of Albania, militarily halting the flow of refugees to Italy and restoring and reinforcing a pliant capitalist puppet regime that can oversee and enforce the exploitation of the Albanian masses by Italian capitalism.

As a result of capitalist counterrevolution, the populace of what was already the most economically backward and impoverished country in Europe was driven to such desperation that fully a quarter of Albania's eight million people threw their life's savings into phoney pyramid "investment" schemes promising enormous returns. When the scams collapsed earlier this year, burgeoning mass protests culminated in an armed revolt throughout much of the country. In a bid to restore order, in March the country's discredited right-wing president, Sali Berisha, appointed as prime minister Bashkim Fino from the opposition "Socialist" Party, whose leaders had been thrown in jail by Berisha!

Taking advantage of an Albanian population reduced to near-starvation, Italian imperialism is now intervening in Albania with the excuse of providing "humanitarian aid". In reality, behind this hypocritical cover the army will bring oppression, exploitation and death to the Albanian masses, as it has already to the boatload of refugees. In a leaflet denouncing this imperialist massacre, the Lega Trotskista d'Italia (LTd'I), section of the International Communist League, demanded: "Italy, Hands Off Albania! Full Citizenship Rights for All Albanian Refugees!"

This latest act of imperialist aggrandisement harks back to the Italian invasion of Albania in 1914 and Mussolini's fascist occupation in 1939. The Italian-led imperialist intervention force has been pushed hard by the "left" Prodi government, which is politically dominated by the ex-Stalinist, social-democratic Party of the Democratic Left (PDS) and supported by Rifondazione Comunista (RC), another, nominally more leftist, reformist

of national chauvinism, to bolster ideological support for Italian militarism.

Though a loyal supporter of the governing Ulivo (Olive Tree) coalition, RC was compelled by the pressure of growing discontent among much of its base to vote against the government motion to send troops to Albania. In any case, RC has made it absolutely clear that it has no intention of letting the right-wing popular-front government fall. This was evident in the past few days, as RC parliamentary deputies voted for a motion of confidence in the Prodi government.



Fausto Bertinotti, head of Rifondazione Comunista.

At the same time, RC has very clearly sought to reassure the bourgeoisie of its support for a military intervention under somewhat different tactical circumstances. The resolution that RC presented for a vote in parliament during the debate over the Albanian expeditionary force did not oppose an Italian military intervention *per se* but simply pleaded to "delay the anticipated military mission" until a number of conditions had been met. Among these were calling on the United Nations to provide more of a fig-leaf for the imperialist intervention. In fact, that imperialist

change who will serve as its puppet at the head of the Albanian government.

RC also echoes the racist clamour which is typified by the rantings of Milano's chauvinist Northern League mayor, Formentini, who says, "Every vote for the League means one less Albanian in Milano." For its part, RC calls for "limited and temporary legal papers [for refugees], renewable until the end of the emergency in Albania, eventually bringing criminal elements to justice and seeing to their expulsion." Since in the eyes of bourgeois "public opinion" all Albanians are real or potential criminals, this amounts to supporting their deportations. In any case, RC calls for this openly once Italian imperialism has finished its work of repressing the masses in Albania.

Like much of the centrist and reformist left internationally, the so-called internal "left wing" of RC — led by Marco Ferrando and Franco Grisolia and grouped around the journal *Proposta* — hails the Albanian revolt as "the beginning of the proletarian revolution". In Britain the Workers Power (WP) group are prominent amongst the fake-left enthusiasts of the "Albanian uprising" as are the Liaison Committee of Militants for a Revolutionary Communist International, which left WP in 1995. The armed revolt, which began in southern Albania, was certainly widespread. But this inchoate "people's uprising" — which by all accounts was to some extent fomented by Berisha himself in the northern region, in an attempt to suppress his opponents and to provoke imperialist intervention — not only has no clear proletarian axis, it does not even appear to have a definable working-class component. That said, *Proposta's* anti-Leninist enthusiasm over the "Albanian revolution" has not prevented it from shamelessly capitulating to the warmongering appetites of the Italian bourgeoisie. In a 7 April RC leadership meeting, they voted in favour of RC's motion, which

# Imperialists hands off Zaire, get out of central Africa!

MARCH 30 — As an American military contingent landed in Zaire, on 21 March President Clinton announced the deployment of hundreds of additional US troops to be sent to the nearby countries of Congo and Gabon. An amphibious US warship with a thousand Marines on board is now steaming from the Adriatic to a position off the West African coast near Zaire. Clinton claimed that the US forces were being sent to prepare for a possible evacuation of American civilians from the Zairian capital of Kinshasa. But a fully armed and equipped expeditionary force is hardly necessary to evacuate scarcely 500 people, who could freely leave Zaire any time they want. In fact, this imperialist intervention is aimed at helping police the Zairian masses as US-sponsored rebel forces led by Laurent Kabila prepare to move into Kinshasa to replace the tottering French-backed regime of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

An imperialist military intervention in Zaire was mooted last fall, when France proposed a United Nations "humanitarian" mission supposedly aimed at aiding Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire caught in the fighting between Tutsi rebel forces led by Kabila and Hutu militias backed by Mobutu. The motive for the French proposal was to prop up Mobutu against a growing rebel threat to his regime. After grudgingly agreeing, Washington aborted the intervention by having its Tutsi client forces engineer an exodus of the refugees. Today, it is the US which is spearheading the moves for imperialist intervention in Zaire as Kabila is poised to bring down Mobutu. As we wrote last November when the earlier imperialist expeditionary force was set to descend on the region: "The real aim of the imposing show of military force being readied for central Africa is to affirm the imperialists' 'right' to assert their control over their neocolonial slaves wherever and whenever they please" (*Workers Vanguard* no 656, 22 November 1996).

Nothing is more cynical than the pretence by US imperialism, the most powerful enforcer of reaction and oppression in the world, that it is intervening to defend "humanitarian" principles. The collapse of the Soviet Union removed a countervailing force to US aims of world domination. This emboldened Washington to carry out a string of invasions, from the brutal slaughter in Iraq in 1991 to the racist occupations of Somalia and Haiti. The US claimed to be providing "famine relief" when it led a UN intervention force into Somalia four years ago, but US helicopter gunships were soon shooting down the residents of Mogadishu by the hundreds. We say: *US hands off Zaire! All imperialist forces out of central Africa!*

## Imperialist rivalry and neocolonial satraps

Ironically, it was under the aegis of Washington that Mobutu was installed in power in the 1960s. Determined to retain the vast copper, cobalt, manganese and zinc riches of the country after Zaire (the former Belgian Congo) achieved independence in 1960, the imperialists engineered a rebellion against the first prime minister, nationalist leader Patrice



Zairian dictator Mobutu with former US president Bush. US installed bloody Mobutu regime in 1960s as bulwark against Soviet influence in Africa, now sponsors rebel forces led by Laurent Kabila (right).



G Tillim

Lumumba. The US staged a military intervention under the guise of a UN "peace-keeping" mission. Lumumba was ousted in a US-sponsored coup and turned over to rebel leader Moïse Tshombe, who had him assassinated with the complicity of the CIA.

UN troops only withdrew after installing the butcher Mobutu in power in 1964. Mobutu recruited an army of mercenaries, armed by the US, to put down a nationalist uprising which had been sparked by Lumumba's fall. Backed up by US air support and Belgian troops, the mercenaries then marched on Stanleyville (today Kisangani), indiscriminately massacring the population by the thousands. Since then, Mobutu has carried out an uninterrupted campaign of reactionary terror against his people while robbing the country blind.

As long as the various imperialist powers were united behind the US in an anti-Soviet consensus, regional imperialist rivalries remained muted. Today, however, Washington is engaged in a sharp tug of war with Paris for influence in French-speaking central Africa, historically considered by French imperialism to be its "chasse gardée" (hunting preserve). Some 1200 French "evacuation" troops are currently in Brazzaville, Congo — a former French colony — across the Congo River from Kinshasa. They are joined by 500 troops from Belgium, former colonial

overlord of Zaire. Meanwhile, "retired" French generals have recruited several hundred mercenaries to fight with Mobutu's forces in eastern Zaire, where they carried out a reign of terror against the local population.

With the Mobutu dictatorship about to topple at the hands of US-backed forces, Washington's rivals in the region are jockeying to maintain some influence. At the same time, in order to ensure that the ethnically riven and deeply impoverished country does not come apart at the seams following Mobutu's downfall, the US is putting intense pressure on Kabila to accept a cease-fire and come to power in Kinshasa through an orderly "negotiated settlement".

This inter-imperialist rivalry is the backdrop to the civil war between Kabila's rebels and the Mobutu dictatorship. This is essentially a struggle to decide who will preside over selling off the country's immense mineral riches to the imperialists while lording it over the dreadfully oppressed masses. Revolutionaries do not have a side in this conflict.

Yet the fake-Trotskyist Workers Power (WP) group has unhesitatingly sided with Kabila against the Kinshasa regime, labelling his movement "progressive" and "a legitimate struggle against the pro-imperialist Mobutu dictatorship by an alliance of petit bourgeois opposition forces" (*Workers Power*, December 1996). WP also

argues for support to Kabila's forces because they are supposedly waging a "legitimate war of self-defence" on behalf of the Tutsi minority in Zaire against attempts to expel them. Likewise, Workers Power claims that Kabila's allies in the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) regime on Zaire's eastern border have been waging a "just war" in "defence of the Rwandan population against the genocidal raiding parties" by Hutu militias.

Along the same lines, the Communist Workers Group (CWG) in the San Francisco Bay Area, which is associated with the Argentine Partido Bolchevique por la Cuarta Internacional (Bolshevik Party for the Fourth International, PBCI), campaigned last winter to raise funds for the RPF, with the preposterous claim that the rebellion in Zaire is directed "against the forces of imperialism" and is nothing less than "the mother of all battles for African Liberation"!

In the same vein, Gauche révolutionnaire (GR, the Socialist Party's French co-thinkers) explain that if Paris supports Mobutu, and Washington supports Rwanda and Uganda's governments, the rebellion led by Kabila "has a totally different dynamic". GR explain that the rebellion is today "at a cross-roads": "Either a revolutionary process of reunification and national independence, linked with a mobilisation of the masses and deep social reforms develops. Or sooner or later, rebels will start capitulating to the demands of imperialism and a defeat will be unavoidable" (*l'Egalité* no 52, April 1997). Thus in Rwanda in 1994, GR made the same call for an "RPF final victory" (*l'Egalité* no 32, July-August 1994) — today GR acknowledge that the very same RPF is nothing but a tool in the service of American imperialism!

At the time, GR's support to the RPF was strongly criticised by Pouvoir ouvrier (PO), Workers Power's sister organisation in France, who exposed GR's slogan "All power to the RPF!" as "a totally opportunist, even treacherous position" correctly explaining that "the RPF is the organisation of the Tutsi bourgeois elite in exile who want to regain lost privileges and establish a new capitalist order albeit one loyal to other masters, Uganda and the USA" (*Pouvoir ouvrier* no 28, September 1994). Unfortunately for PO, this criticism of GR's opportunism equally applied to

US/UN  
"humanitarian"  
mission in Somalia  
meant racist  
imperialist terror.



the position... of the LRCI, the "international" which PO is supposed to be part of. Their comrades of Workers Power recently reminded them of this, with keen concern for historical precision: "In 1994 the LRCI gave critical support to the RPF in its struggle against both the Hutu militias and the French intervention forces and advocated that all progressive forces form a military bloc with the RPF to halt the genocide" (*Workers Power* no 206, December 1996). Today, PO's press is still disappearing the support given by its "international" to Laurent Kabila.

PO share the same methodology which led their British comrades in WP to proclaim their previous support to the RPF, and to Kabila today: to search in every conflict between opposing bourgeois nationalist forces for a so-called "anti-imperialist camp" which the proletarian vanguard supposedly has an interest in supporting. The criteria for deciding this "anti-imperialist camp" is in no way one of class, but relies instead on moralist and subjective abstractions (which camp is more or less "democratic", more or less "genocidal", is about to win or lose on the ground, best embodies an "anti-imperialist dynamic", etc). Anyone who tries to guide themselves in the upheavals of the real world with such an anti-Marxist compass necessarily finds themselves tossed back and forth under the particular pressures of different national bourgeois "public opinions".

The policy of the "anti-imperialist united front" pursued by WP/PO, GR and the CWG renounces in practice the Trotskyist theory and programme of permanent revolution. This holds that in backward countries in this epoch, an end to imperialist domination can only be achieved through the seizure of state power by the proletariat — standing at the head of all the oppressed masses — which must seek to extend socialist revolution to the advanced capitalist countries. Trotsky also explained that the subordination of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces in the colonial and semi-colonial world to imperialism makes them incapable of



Hutu refugees in Zaire. Ethnic conflicts in Africa are the legacy of colonialism.

consolidating homogenous nation-states. Already there has been a wave of systematic attacks and large-scale killings of Hutu refugees in east Zairian camps carried out by Kabila's forces and regular Rwandan soldiers allied to him. One aid official accused the rebel forces of aiming for a "final solution". Once in power Kabila's forces will inevitably seek to play off various tribal and ethnic groups to maintain their rule while serving as the agents of imperialist pillage.

#### For socialist revolution throughout Africa!

Of course, there are circumstances in which Marxists give military support to petty-bourgeois forces as, for example, in a direct conflict with imperialist/colonialist forces or when questions like national self-determination are posed, as was the case in the Biafran and Eritrean struggles. But a regime headed by Kabila would in no way be fundamentally different from the present neocolonial regime. Indeed, Kabila has already been granting gold mining concessions to imperialist investors. Eastern Zaire, where most of the country's gold mines are located, was seized by the rebels in January; within weeks they were offering prospecting concessions to foreign compa-

nies. "It is pretty open for business already," gushed a South African investment analyst (*Financial Times*, 25 March).

Kabila's vaguely "leftist" aura is based on the fact that as a young follower of Lumumba in the 1960s, he led a short-lived guerrilla movement in which Che Guevara briefly participated. But now Kabila is, in the words of the *Times of London* (24 March), the "darling of the diplomatic crowd" in Washington and London, and his finance minister is a US-trained economist with a reputation as a "committed free-marketeer".

Kabila is no less pro-imperialist than Mobutu; they are simply allied with different imperialist powers. According to *le Monde* (29 March), Kabila's forces and the RPF army include several dozen "unofficial" US military "advisers". WP itself acknowledges the US ties of the anti-Mobutu forces when it seeks to justify its support to the RPF regime in Rwanda, arguing that "despite the bourgeois nature of the Rwandan regime, and its backing by Uganda and ultimately the USA, this does not remove the progressive character of Rwanda's war against the [Hutu] Interahamwe".

The Interahamwe militias and the former Hutu-dominated regime in Rwanda perpetrated hideous massacres against the

Tutsi population. But WP's support to the "just struggle" of the RPF/Kabila forces denies the fact that under imperialism, "nation-building" in backward countries necessarily means one tribal or ethnic group dominating the others and seeking to drive them out or eliminate them. Especially in Africa, where the imperialist policy of "divide and rule" has created artificial states containing a multitude of peoples, nationalism in power, even the nationalism of a formerly oppressed people like the Tutsis in Rwanda, inevitably strives to compact an ethnically homogeneous state through the brutal methods of forced assimilation, expulsion or genocide directed against racial and national minorities.

The key to social progress and national development in central Africa, with its weak and dispersed working class, lies in an internationalist perspective, particularly directed at the powerful black proletariat of South Africa. Pursuing the regional imperialist ambitions of the neo-apartheid bourgeoisie, Nelson Mandela's African National Congress regime is now acting as the intermediary for negotiations between the Zairian rebels, the Mobutu dictatorship and US imperialism. South Africa's capitalist landlords have been pouring investments into Zaire and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, even as they continue to lord it over the millions of black workers who create their wealth and other oppressed layers of the population.

As we noted in our article last November: "The expropriation of the South African bourgeoisie through socialist revolution and the creation of a black-centered workers republic would mean not only the emancipation of the nonwhite masses in that country but would open the road to social transformation throughout the rest of that horribly impoverished continent." What is necessary is the forging of internationalist Trotskyist vanguard parties to lead the struggle against capitalist imperialism and its neocolonial bourgeois regimes throughout Africa.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 665, 4 April 1997.

## Albania...

(Continued from page 3)

front government — supported by Rifondazione Comunista and whose mainstay is the PDS — is preparing an imperialist military intervention of 5000 soldiers (2500 Italians) which will operate directly on Albanian territory, under the fig-leaf of "humanitarian aid" and UN support. Every communist, every militant worker must condemn this massacre and clearly and explicitly demand: *Italian imperialism, get your bloody hands off Albania! Full citizenship rights for the Albanian refugees and all immigrants!*

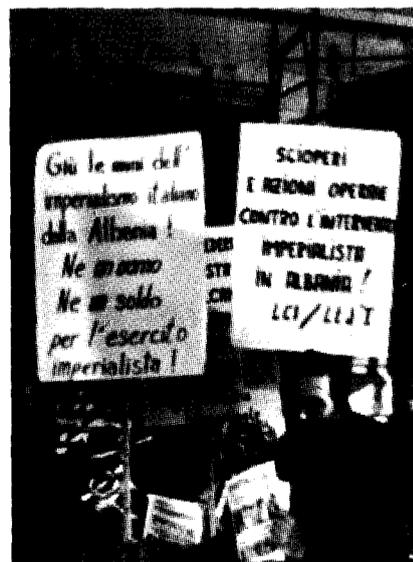
The renewed aggressiveness of Italian imperialism goes hand in hand with the Prodi government's domestic policies of anti-worker, racist and anti-woman austerity. The deaths of the Albanians at sea go side by side with the desperate unemployed in the South who commit suicide and the thousands of industrial murders caused by "accidents at work" — which are destined to increase with the shameful "agreement for work" pushed by the Ulivo, RC and the trade-union bureaucracy. The disgusting Italian/Albanian financial speculation that has reduced thousands of Albanian families to extreme poverty goes with the brutal capitalist exploitation that increases daily in Italy. The bourgeoisie uses the scarecrow of an "invasion of Albanians" to whip up racism against immigrants among the Italian population and in order to find a scapegoat for growing unemployment. It uses the racist terror of

the police and prepares the way for fascists like the "Green Shirts" of the Northern League, who organise anti-Albanian "patrols".

The working class must respond to all of this with: *Worker/immigrant mobilisations to smash racist terror! Organise all immigrants into the trade unions! Workers actions and strikes against the deportations, the naval blockade and the imperialist intervention in Albania! The main enemy is at home!*

The current leaders of the workers movement are the direct authors of the imperialist, racist and anti-worker policies that the Italian bourgeoisie wants. The PDS, including Minister of Justice Napolitano, vigorously supports the military intervention in Albania. Rifondazione Comunista continues to actively support the Prodi government, a support that is indispensable for this government to carry out its policy of tears and blood. For RC, the sinking of the Albanian boat is important only insofar as "Italy dishonours its name in front of all the world". RC supports the possibility that Italy would send "a military force of peace in the name of the UN and the OSCE [European "security" organisation]" (*Liberazione*, 30 March). The interests of more than 2000 Italian capitalist companies are at stake in Albania. Furthermore, the Italian bourgeoisie wants to use Albania as a bridgehead to reinforce its position in the competition for the imperialist division of the Balkans. Mussolini had the same objectives when he sent troops into Albania in 1939. The Ulivo coalition in which RC participates carries out the same policies.

The working class needs to break completely with bourgeois popular-frontist politics. Rifondazione and its left wing, grouped around the paper *Proposta*, try to keep the more leftist elements of the working class tied to the popular front, and are thus an active obstacle to the struggle for the emancipation of the working class.



Milano, 9 April: Trotskyists call for workers actions against Italian imperialist intervention in Albania.

*The Ulivo government is a den of imperialist assassins! RC and Proposta are their tail! Break with the popular front! Not a man or a penny for the imperialist army!*

The situation in Albania is a result of

capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet degenerated workers state and in the bureaucratically deformed workers states of Eastern Europe, which caused the dramatic immiseration of the mass of the population, the outbreak of bloody intercommunal wars in the Balkans and in the ex-Soviet republics, and the furious activity of unscrupulous speculators dedicated to the accumulation of capital by any means. The imperialist powers, involved in an increasingly bitter economic competition, are intervening heavily in these countries to divide the booty represented by the labour market and low-cost raw materials. Reduced to misery by the worst capitalist speculation, a good part of the Albanian population has taken up arms and launched a generalised revolt. But after 40 years of Stalinist domination, in the consciousness of the working class the idea of communism is associated with the grotesque parody of bureaucratic domination of Enver Hoxha. The leadership of the revolt remains within the framework of capitalism and in large part is linked in varying degrees to Italian imperialism, Rome's puppet Berisha, Fino and the other leaders of the Socialist Party.

In Albania as in Italy, the construction of authentic revolutionary parties — multiethnic parties that act as tribunes of the people — modelled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky is more urgent than ever. *For the rebirth of the Fourth International! For a socialist federation of the Balkans in a Socialist United States of Europe!*

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 666, 18 April 1997.

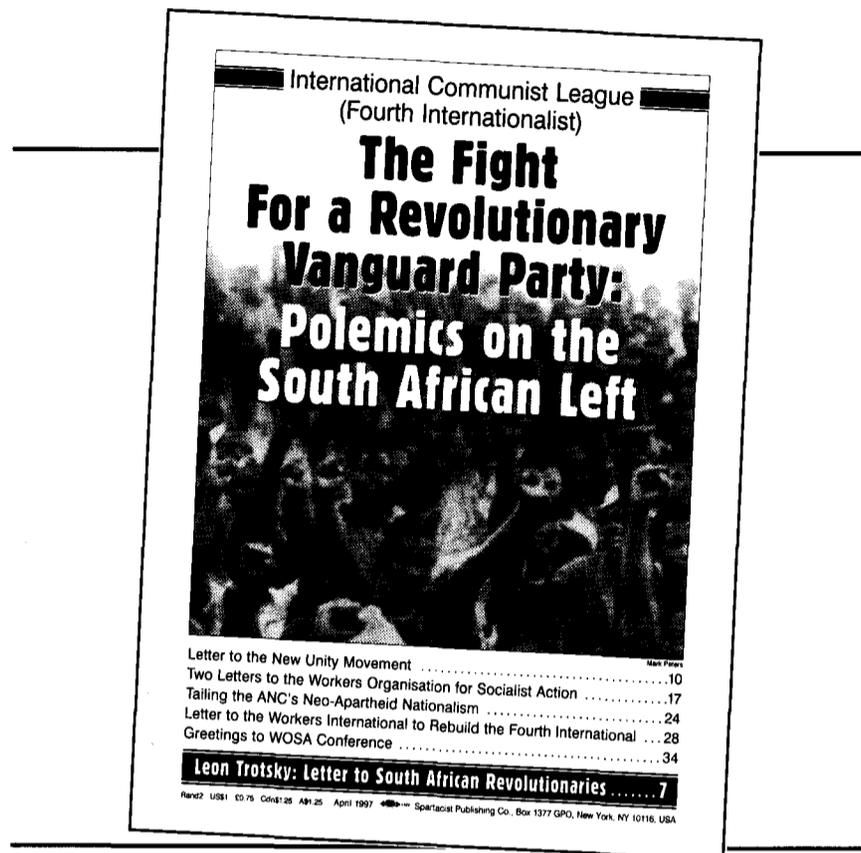
# Polemics on the South African left

We reprint below the introduction to "The Fight for a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left", a pamphlet published in April by the International Communist League.

With the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994 as South Africa's first black president, the African National Congress (ANC) has become the primary political agent for the Randlords and their senior partners in Wall Street and the City of London, bringing to fruition the process of "reconciliation" initiated with Mandela's release from prison. Indeed, Mandela has stated that one of his most important accomplishments has been creating "an investor-friendly environment". Police still break the strikes of black and coloured [mixed-race] workers and expel squatters from their shantytowns as before, but they now do so in the name of a "democratic, nonracial" South Africa. The economic base of the old apartheid system—the superexploitation of black labour by the white capitalists—remains while the political superstructure has undergone a radical change. The "new" South Africa can thus be defined as neo-apartheid.

At the same time, under the rubric of "black empowerment", we are beginning to see the formation of a black capitalist class drawn from the leading cadre of the ANC who now drive BMWs, wear Pierre Cardin suits and have moved into posh, formerly all-white suburbs. This development is personified by Cyril Ramaphosa, former head of the National Union of Mineworkers and subsequently ANC parliamentary leader, now the deputy chairman of New Africa Investments, the country's largest black-owned corporation. In their own way the black masses recognise the bourgeoisification of one-time leaders of the "liberation" struggle whom they contemptuously describe as hopping aboard the "gravy train".

But despite popular denunciations of the "gravy train", black African workers and other toilers remain tied to their exploiters and would-be exploiters by their traditional and continuing support to the ANC abetted by its longtime ally, the reformist South African Communist Party (SACP), which historically enjoys the



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allegiance of advanced sections of the proletariat. To break the chains of neo-apartheid and achieve genuine national and social liberation, the working class must transcend the ideology of nationalism, the false belief that the black African people—brutally oppressed by the white rulers of South Africa—all have a common interest which stands higher than class divisions.

The ideological dominance among the black masses of nationalism in its various forms is also indicated in that the main perceived "radical" opponents of the ANC are the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and AZAPO (the successor to Steven Biko's Black Consciousness Movement). While the ANC/SACP-led Congress of South African Trade Unions is the principal organisation of black labour, another sizable trade-union grouping, the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), is

politically run in bloc by the PAC and AZAPO. The division of the labour movement into two union federations led by rival nationalist parties, as well as a number of independent unions led by leftists, weakens the workers in the day-to-day struggles with the employers and is potentially very dangerous. We stand for industrial unionism. All workers in a given industry should be in one union governed by the principles of internal democracy, with one worker, one vote.

To the left of the ANC/SACP are a number of small groups which claim to be or are generally regarded as Trotskyist. The material in this pamphlet presents a revolutionary Marxist position, theoretically and programmatically, on key questions of debate within the South African left, including elements of the SACP, in recent years: whether South Africa has now become a stable bourgeois democ-

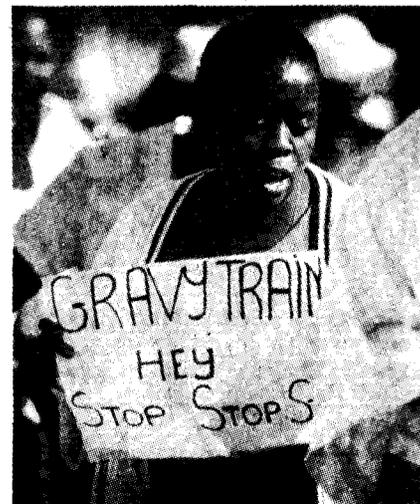
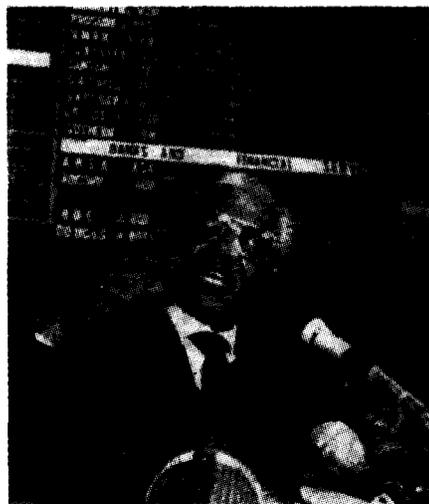
racy, moreover, one which can carry out the ambitious economic and social reforms promised by the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme; how to build a mass workers party, its nature and relation to the trade unions; the doctrine of "socialist nation-building" in the countries of the so-called "Third World".

The core of the pamphlet consists of letters from our organisation, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), to the New Unity Movement, the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) of Neville Alexander and the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International [then associated with the former Workers Revolutionary Party of Cliff Slaughter in Britain]. We are here publishing for the first time a presentation given by a representative of the ICL to a WOSA national conference in 1995. Also included is an exchange with the Comrades for a Workers Government originally published in May 1995 in *Workers Vanguard*, the newspaper of our American section. Additionally, we have reprinted Trotsky's 1935 "Letter to South African Revolutionaries", a letter to his South African supporters which addresses the slogan of a "black republic" and also discusses what attitude, strategy and tactics a proletarian revolutionary vanguard should have towards the ANC.

This pamphlet supplements two previous publications. "South Africa and Permanent Revolution" (published in 1991 as no 8 in our *Black History and the Class Struggle* series) covered the township revolt of the mid-1980s, the rise of a powerful black workers movement and the legalisation in 1990 of the ANC and Communist Party. "South Africa Powder Keg" (*Black History and the Class Struggle* no 12), published in 1995, analysed the neo-apartheid arrangement and put forward a proletarian revolutionary perspective under the new conditions of the Mandela/De Klerk "Government of National Unity".

## Class exploitation and national oppression

The central and underlying theme of the material in this pamphlet is a defence of the Trotskyist concept and programme of permanent revolution in opposition to the various and intertwined currents of nationalism and reformism prevailing on the South African left. The theory of permanent revolution holds that the national bourgeoisie in backward countries is so weak, backward and imperialist-dependent that it can no longer play any progressive role. National liberation and social and economic modernisation in "Third World" countries can be achieved only under the leadership of the working class, through proletarian revolution and its extension to the imperialist centres of Western Europe, North America and



ANC's Nelson Mandela at Johannesburg Stock Exchange on eve of April 1994 election. Striking nurses, September 1995, denounce "gravy train" for ANC front men for neo-apartheid capitalism.

Japan.

Our Marxist understanding that the working class is the only progressive class in the contemporary world, including in backward countries, is in no sense a glorification of trade-union militancy for its own sake. Quite the contrary. The workers in South Africa and elsewhere can achieve a substantial and permanent improvement in their living conditions only by overthrowing the capitalist order and replacing it with a planned, collectivised economy. This, in turn, requires, especially in a country like South Africa, that the working class, under its vanguard party, places itself at the head of all oppressed sections of society. As we wrote in the letter to WOSA (9 March 1995), what is needed in South Africa is a revolutionary workers party which:

"does not simply defend the particular interests of the working class, especially its unionized sector, but is fighting to eradicate all forms of national and social oppression—the mass homelessness in the black townships, the hideous conditions of the millions of Africans still trapped on the 'tribal homelands,' the degradation of women (e.g., polygamy) in rural villages where tribal traditions remain strong. To unite all of the oppressed, a workers party must staunchly champion the democratic rights of those who have cause to feel threatened by the ANC's brand of nationalism—e.g., coloureds, Indians, Zulu villagers, immigrants from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other neighboring African states." [emphasis in original]

Our programme for proletarian leadership in the struggle for national liberation is encapsulated in the formula of a "black-centred workers government". Under a black-centred workers government there would be an important role and full democratic rights for coloureds, Indians and other Asians, and those whites who accept a government centrally based on the black working people. Many South African leftists object to this slogan, arguing that by acknowledging that there are differences and divisions among the non-white masses, we echo the line of the apartheid rulers who constantly played "divide and rule" among the racial groupings, while coercively reimposing tribal identity on urban blacks. These leftists, instead, cling to the ANC-promoted illusion of "nonracialism" which conveniently enables them to ignore the real and dramatic expressions of division along colour, national and tribal lines in Mandela's neo-apartheid state. The nationalist fiction of a "rainbow nation" is their means for denying reality, because they have no programme to change reality.

Just as the theory of permanent revolution would have predicted, this capitalist regime, based on superexploitation of the black proletariat, must frustrate the aspirations of every section of the oppressed. Widespread expectations for better housing and jobs cannot be met; even simple democratic demands such as the right to an education for all children or the right of women to birth control and abortion are denied to the overwhelming majority by social inequality and lack of facilities. If the masses' frustration does not find expression along class lines it will fuel and embitter every other kind of division.

Unwilling to draw a class line against the ANC government, the colour-blind South African "leftists" must be silent or worse as communities which once joined together in defying the apartheid butchers are now pulling apart. Recently some protests of coloured township residents against payment of back rates have been infused with a virulently anti-black thrust [see "Neo-Apartheid Regime: Enemy of South African Masses", *Workers Vanguard* no 662, 21 February]. Capitulating to false consciousness, most "leftists" quietly acquiesce to the ANC view that coloureds might as well be punished for

having had more "privileges" than blacks, and see the police repression meted out to the protests by the regime as justifiable. Meanwhile other leftists tail after "movements" in the coloured community like People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), "anti-crime" vigilantes influenced by Muslim fundamentalists and fundamentally hostile to black rule.

Similarly the "left" generally does not bother to fight for full rights for the "immigrant" workers from elsewhere in Africa who today face unemployment and deportation. A party with a perspective of workers revolution in South Africa would militantly fight the chauvinist attacks on immigrants and seize every such means to extend the struggle beyond the borders of the country to offer the toiling masses of the less-developed regions of the continent a road forward out of hideous poverty and oppression.

In South Africa, class exploitation is integrally bound up with national oppression. Despite a sizable coloured proletariat, especially in the Western Cape, and an urban Indian working class in Natal, the overwhelming majority of workers in the white-owned factories, mines and farms are black Africans. Black Africans make up 80 per cent of the country's overall population, actually more if

"building socialism in one country". The bankruptcy of this nationalist perversion of Marxism is now manifest. As Trotsky predicted, under the economic, political and military pressures of world capitalism the Kremlin bureaucracy disintegrated in the mid-late 1980s. This directly posed the alternatives of proletarian political revolution or capitalist counterrevolution. Given the deterioration of socialist consciousness among the Soviet working class brought about by generations of Stalinist rule, it was counterrevolution which prevailed. The resulting destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 was a historic defeat for the working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world.

This can be seen clearly in South Africa. For decades, the Soviet Union had been the ANC's primary international sponsor, supporting it in various diplomatic forums and providing arms for its symbolic guerrilla actions. As the Kremlin regime fell apart under Gorbachev, the ANC leaders came to terms with the white racist rulers of South Africa and their senior American and British imperialist partners.

During the Cold War, bourgeois-nationalist regimes in Africa and Asia were able to play off Washington and Moscow, thereby giving themselves a certain room

could threaten the control of the reformist bureaucrats and go towards a struggle for power.

Elsewhere, millions of union members, students and others were active in solidarity with the struggle against white supremacy in the apartheid state. Racial minorities and immigrants facing persecution identified strongly with the South African masses. In particular, a South African workers revolution would have an immediate radicalising impact on American black workers, who have historically tended to be a vanguard layer of militant class struggle and social activism in the US. Thus even within the strongest imperialist bastions, revolutionary South Africa will find a powerful echo.

For the perspective of permanent revolution in South Africa to become a reality requires the forging of a *revolutionary vanguard party* modelled on the Bolshevik Party built by Lenin in the Russian tsarist empire, a party which led the first and only successful proletarian revolution in history. This party united the most politically advanced worker militants with the best of the leftist intellectuals. The Bolshevik Party was built through political and polemical struggle against the reformist pseudo-Marxists (the Mensheviks), the populist Social Revolutionaries



UPI



Weinberg/NY Times

Mozambican immigrant workers in South African mines (left), rural family left homeless after white landowner demolished their house. A Bolshevik party in South Africa would champion defence of immigrants, all the oppressed, in fight for workers revolution.

one takes into account the recent wave of immigration from neighbouring African states. As Trotsky wrote to his followers in South Africa in the mid-1930s:

"It is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.

"Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relation between the classes, but also between the races, and will assure to the blacks that place in the state which corresponds to their numbers, insofar will the social revolution in South Africa also have a national character." [emphasis in original]

#### For an internationalist perspective!

Our recognition that proletarian revolution in South Africa is the supreme act of national liberation in no way entails support to nationalism as an ideology or to the project of "nation-building". The letter to the New Unity Movement is primarily devoted to criticising their programme of "nation-building" not only in the particular South African context but also more generally in the neocolonial states of Africa, the Near East and the Indian subcontinent. As Leninists, we defend the democratic right of self-determination — ie, the right to form their own, separate state — for all nations.

The doctrine of "socialist nation-building", while espoused in South Africa by groups claiming the Trotskyist tradition, is closely akin to the old Stalinist dogma of

to manoeuvre. The Mandela regime has no such option as it faces the unbridled domination of imperialist capital on a global scale. Thus Mandela, Mbeki & Co explain away the failure to carry out the promised reforms of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, their drive to hold down wages and so on by pointing to the pressures of the world capitalist market, low-wage competition from East Asia, the harsh demands of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, etc.

In their own way, the bourgeois nationalists of the ANC are expressing an important truth: the condition of the working class and other oppressed toilers in South Africa cannot be determined in national isolation but is integrally linked to the struggle between labour and capital on a global scale. A socialist revolution in South Africa would confront formidable enemies: the Western imperialist powers emboldened and strengthened by the final undoing of the Russian Revolution and determined to obliterate any obstacles. Yet a socialist revolution in South Africa, centred on the black proletariat, would immediately find strategically powerful allies. The "New World Order" is anything but stable. A militant young proletariat in countries such as South Korea and Indonesia poses a challenge to right-wing regimes, while the powerful working class of Western European countries like Italy and France has begun a round of sharp struggles of its own which

and the left nationalists of the various oppressed peoples of the tsarist empire. Similarly, we seek to aggressively confront the different currents of the South African left in political and polemical struggle with the aim of forging the nucleus of an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist party through a process of splits and fusions—revolutionary regroupment—on a clear programmatic basis.

We begin this pamphlet with an article written by Trotsky in 1935 as a letter to South African Trotskyist comrades. At that time South Africa was still a semi-colony of Britain, then the world's dominant imperialist power. Still to come were World War II, the coming to power of the Nationalists and their apartheid scheme in 1948, the "Suppression of Communism", the explosive mass struggles led largely by the ANC, and the emergence of the powerful black trade-union movement. Today the new "black" government presents a very different face of the continued class rule of exploiters and oppressors. But while particular aspects analysed by Trotsky and the corresponding tasks for revolutionists have changed over the last 60 years, the article admirably sets out the basic framework and programme of revolutionary Marxists: the fight for working-class power through the construction of a vanguard party on a programme of complete political independence of the proletariat from its class enemies and unity with its class brothers and sisters around the globe. ■

# New Labour

(Continued from page 1)

minorities, the poor and unemployed. While the Tories' Unionism was totally rejected in Scotland and Wales, Sinn Féin leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness won seats in Northern Ireland, though they will not sit in Westminster.

The Labour Party complied with every racist move of the Tory government on the question of immigration. New Labour seized the mantle of "law-and-order", from support to every bill aimed at stripping away civil liberties to Jack Straw's own planned curfews for youth and, on these questions, placed themselves to the right of the Liberal Democrats, a bourgeois party. Strengthening of police powers means more blacks and Asians killed in police custody. On election day the *Independent* revealed that the Home Office used the recess of parliament during the elections to speed up the process of mass deportations of asylum seekers.

Such racist state terror fuels the filth peddled by the fascist British National Party (BNP) which stood some 55 candidates, polling over 19,000 in London alone. The BNP's election broadcast, blaring out calls for "repatriation" of blacks and Asians, was a disgusting recruitment drive for racist murder. To their credit the SWP's Anti Nazi League wrecked the BNP's election press conference. But the SWP, campaigners for Labour, cannot even begin to fight the capitalist system, which is the breeding ground for fascism. Spartacist contingents at demonstrations against the scheduled BNP broadcast counterposed the slogans: "Voting Labour will not stop the fascists! Trade unions and minorities must crush the BNP!"

Throughout the election period we said forthrightly: "No vote to New Labour!" We distributed thousands of copies of our statement, "For a revolutionary workers party! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!", in London, Glasgow, the north of England and Wales, using the election period to gain a wider hearing for the programme of international socialist revolution.

While myriad fake-left outfits backed Blair and/or the smaller "alternative"

parties in the Labour camp, we gave critical support to the Socialist Labour Party (SLP), which stood as a party of opposition to New Labour. We actively campaigned to get out the vote for the SLP, for Arthur Scargill in Newport East, South Wales, and for SLP candidates in two London constituencies. At the same time, through our statement and interventions in SLP meetings, we counterposed a programme for revolution to the SLP's "old" Labour reformism, raising in particular their lack of any strategy to fight fascism.

Nowhere was New Labour's utter contempt for the working class more clear than in the choice of Tory defector Alan Howarth to stand in the Newport East constituency in South Wales. "It's an insult to our intelligence", one voter told a Spartacist comrade leafleting for Scargill. Newport East, like the former pit villages of Yorkshire, is a traditional Labour area devastated by the killing off of heavy industry. Howarth is the perfect Thatcherite Tory who backed the destruction of the steel and coal industries. Labour MP Paul Flynn from Newport West attended a Scargill campaign rally and took up the cudgels for Howarth, launching a vitriolic attack on Scargill for not calling a ballot in the 1984-85 miners strike. When the strike had already spread through mass picket lines, the call for a ballot was a call for strikebreaking. It was the line of Thatcher, Labour leader Kinnock and the TUC. This standard right-wing attack on Scargill for

his leadership of the miners strike is also the stock-in-trade of self-styled "left" critics of Scargill, Workers Power (WP) and the *Weekly Worker*.

As our statement makes clear, many of the fake leftists in and around the SLP attack Scargill from the right. At an SLP election rally in Vauxhall, London, a WP speaker from the floor honked on about their "revolutionary" programme until a Spartacist in the crowd heckled, "Show us your front page!" with its gigantic "VOTE LABOUR" headline, causing not a few guffaws in the room. WP, for all its championing of a "revolutionary platform" inside the SLP, was for a vote for Howarth against Scargill.

That elements of the Labourite left were riled by our statement is evident in the Internet ramblings of one "Victor Ferrara" of the Liaison Committee of Militants for a Revolutionary Communist International (LCMRCI), ex-WP, fulminating against "Spartacist madness!" Ferrara is outraged that we did not vote "Socialist Party, the Scottish Socialist Alliance, the CPGB or any group that is to the left of the SLP". To the left of the SLP? *These outfits, one and all, were on the bandwagon for a New Labour government.* Scargill spelt out, at the Newport East election meeting: "We campaign for Socialist Labour and that party only." Grotesquely, Ferrara covers up what the pro-Unionist Militant organisation is all about, claiming "the Militants are the only ones which are

running candidates in the six counties with similar positions than the Spartacists". Unlike the Spartacists, Militant are notorious for their refusal to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland and we have exposed their vile support to Loyalist killers like Billy Hutchinson of the PUP. In addition to whitewashing Militant/SP, the LCMRCI shares a bed with the pro-Blair Workers International League, descended from the late Gerry Healy's WRP which ignited the witch hunt of Scargill on the eve of the miners strike.

In Newport East our offer to campaign was accepted by Scargill. We distributed the SLP's election leaflet door to door. Our offer to campaign was turned down by London SLPer Carolyn Sikorski, election agent for Imran Khan in East Ham. The SLP's election results included 1951 votes for Scargill; 2697 for Imran Khan; 1213 for Ken Capstick in Barnsley East & Mexborough; and 1168 for sacked Liverpool docker Mick Cullen in Birkenhead.

Our campaign of critical support to the SLP afforded us a wider audience among those who have rejected New Labour and want to fight for socialism. To such people, the genuine Trotskyism of the ICL is a new phenomenon, a principled organisation which defended Scargill and the NUM against attacks by the capitalist state and anti-communist witch hunts, defended the Soviet degenerated workers state and East European deformed workers states while fighting for proletarian political revolution to sweep out the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, and fights to build an internationalist revolutionary party. In Britain, "Trotskyism" has been besmirched by those who witch hunted Scargill (Healy's WRP and offshoots like the "Socialist Equality Party", or Vanessa Redgrave who ended up voting for the Liberals); buried themselves for decades inside the Labour Party (Militant); or spewed a hatred of the Soviet Union to rival Thatcher's (SWP). Most fake-left groups are so tied to Labour that Scargill often has stood to the left of them on key class questions, particularly the miners strike and the Russian question. But the SLP's programme places it firmly in the mould of Labourite parliamentarism. That is precisely the mould we seek to break in order to build a revolutionary internationalist party of the working class that fights as a tribune of all the oppressed. ■



Protest outside BBC London against BNP broadcast, 24 April 1997.

# Statement...

(Continued from page 1)

working class power, which fundamentally distinguishes us Spartacists from the rest of the "socialist" left in Britain. For the Socialist Workers Party and Workers Power, the refrain is "Vote Labour". While the Socialist Party (formerly Militant Labour) are running candidates, their overriding goal is the same: "Get the Tories out". Labourism has been the main obstacle to revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in Britain and thus a strategic perspective for revolutionaries has been to split the working-class base from the pro-capitalist leadership. When a mass reformist workers party stands independently of bourgeois parties, and ostensibly in the interest of working people, revolutionaries can consider extending critical support, in order to exploit the contradiction between their pro-working class posture and their pro-capitalist programme, to destroy any illusions workers may have in their misleaders. But there is no such contradiction in regard to New Labour in this election.

The Spartacist League/Britain says unequivocally: No vote to New Labour in the general election! New Labour is pledged to maintaining the sickening reality of life under capitalism — keeping the unions in shackles, slashing welfare programmes, waging war on workers,

racial minorities and immigrants, women and youth — everybody who is consigned to the bottom of the heap by rotting British capitalism. Blair's "contract with Britain" is a pact with the bloated City of London, where vast wealth is generated from profits extracted through exploitation of workers around the world.

Britain has a staggering four million unemployed and, within Europe, among the lowest per capita income (lower than Ireland). In the name of "law and order" both parties are committed to strengthening the coercive powers of the capitalist state, especially the cops, who carry out racist murders with impunity, and to continuing deportations of dark-skinned immigrants and asylum seekers. Labour and Tories are committed to maintaining the massive presence of the British Army in Northern Ireland, reinforcing the RUC and the Loyalist gangs who are already on the rampage and are gearing up for a summer of anti-Catholic pogroms.

Imperialist triumphalism over the counter-revolutionary destruction of the bureaucratically deformed workers states in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has impacted widely on the organisations of the working class. The world's ruling classes have pronounced the "death of communism", by which they mean the end of class struggle, and they seek to dispense with the services of reformist parties wherever possible. Blair's goal of severing Labour's link to the trade unions is

in keeping with this triumphalism.

A peculiar feature of British parliamentary politics is that for much of this century England was one of the few countries where the majority of the population was proletarian. Thus the Labour Party, which addressed the concerns of the working class within the framework of parliamentary reformism, was able to succeed within that framework, ie, to get elected as the majority in parliament, and to form a government based on its working-class vote. This is no longer the case. Today the majority of the population in England is not proletarian, which is a reflection of the economic demise of the country and later "the empire". Thus Blair's New Labour is casting about for, and tailoring itself to other social layers, particularly those who swung towards Thatcher in the 1980s and are now disaffected with the Tories.

Blair's New Labour Party has adopted huge chunks of the programme of Thatcherism. But the Iron Lady's devastation of what remained of British industry was aided and abetted by the reformist misleaders in the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy, who betrayed the miners, steel workers and dockers strikes in the name of "new realism", which laid the foundations for Blair's outright hostility to the unions. Today, any workers struggle which does occur, such as that of the Liverpool dockers, is isolated and stifled by the union bureaucracy who are wedded to electing New Labour. Across

Europe workers have engaged in major battles to defend their living standards, as they have done in South Korea and Indonesia. The key factor which is missing is a leadership which links the fight to defend living standards to the need for socialist revolution.

## The Socialist Labour Party: fracture in the Labour monolith

Scargill declares that: "It is clear that New Labour is no longer a party that Socialists can be members of or support. Every New Labour candidate in the forthcoming General Election must accept she or he is standing on behalf of a party that supports the free market and capitalism" (*Socialist News*, March/April 1997).

As an electoral opposition to New Labour the SLP's campaign is partial, consciously refusing to take a stand on whether or not to vote for New Labour where the SLP has no candidates. The SLP also refuses to stand against New Labour "left" MPs — Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Jeremy Corbyn and Dennis Skinner — who are also "standing on behalf of a party that supports the free market and capitalism". Moreover the SLP's programme is nothing but "old" Labour reformism — virtually every plank of their manifesto has featured in Labour manifestos at one time or another in the past. Nonetheless the SLP's candidates, standing in opposition to New Labour, can help undermine the pervasive false

consciousness that there is no alternative for the working class but to vote Labour. As we said during the Barnsley East by-election in which we gave critical support to SLP candidate Ken Capstick:

"The SLP split from the Labour Party offers an opportunity to break the stranglehold of Labourism over the workers movement and an opening for Marxists to intervene to demonstrate the need for an authentic workers party — one imbued with the understanding that the only guarantee of the welfare of the working class and oppressed is through the destruction of a system based on the exploitation of the workers."

— "Vote Ken Capstick",  
Workers Hammer supplement,  
8 December 1996

Critical support is an application of the united front tactic which was developed by the Communist International. It means unity in action among the participating organisations, combined with an opportunity to test out their competing political programmes. The SL/B has extended critical support to the SLP in three previous by-elections, where we actively campaigned for the candidate and distributed their election material. At the same time in our paper *Workers Hammer* and in interventions at meetings we presented our Trotskyist programme, emphasising that only a party which fights for international working-class solidarity across national lines can fight for the interests of the working class. Above all this means fighting against our own imperialist rulers.

We also say categorically: *No vote to the "Socialist Equality Party"* who are fielding candidates in the general election. When they ran in the Barnsley East by-election against the SLP, we pointed out that their forebears, the Workers Revolutionary Party, instigated a massive anti-Communist witch hunt against Scargill and the NUM on the eve of the miners strike. Our leaflet said:

"No worker should vote for the scab 'socialists' of the 'Socialist Equality Party' (SEP) who are the direct and immediate heirs of Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP). Where Blair seeks to shackle the unions, this peculiar 'equality' party, known until recently as the International Communist Party (ICP), opposes the very existence of trade unions. The SEP declares that: 'The trade unions are not workers organisations in any meaningful sense' (*International Worker*, 30 November [1996]). The SEP is a cynical and sinister outfit whose political track record chimes with whatever the imperialist bourgeoisie is pushing."

Their general election campaign is full of the same reactionary anti-union garbage. We noted that their Barnsley East election statement barely mentioned the British Army's presence in Northern Ireland. The current "election issue" of *International Worker* doesn't mention the British troops, in fact the entire issue does not mention the word "Ireland" once!

Nor do we advocate voting for the Socialist Party (formerly Militant Labour) whose campaign is entirely subordinated to electing a Labour government. Nor for the Militant-dominated Scottish Socialist Alliance (SSA) candidates, which include *Weekly Worker* supporter Mary Ward in Dundee. The founding document of SSA calls to "maximise the anti-Tory vote", which is a call for a Labour victory, but which also permits voting for bourgeois parties such as the Scottish National Party! For years Militant have refused to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland; today they support the imperialist "peace" fraud, and have politically embraced representatives of the Loyalist death squads such as Billy Hutchinson.

#### For workers revolution both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish Sea

We agree with Karl Marx that: "It is in the direct and absolute interest of the

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

The working class in Britain has a particular responsibility to oppose the British Army presence in Northern Ireland and to oppose all imperialist machinations there such as the "peace process". We have consistently called for immediate, unconditional withdrawal of troops, and have warned that any imperialist deal would be bloody, would necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority, and would do no good for the Protestant working class either. The reality of this was borne out last summer when a massive wave of anti-Catholic terror following the Loyalist "siege of Drumcree" was unleashed. A statement issued jointly by the Spartacist League/Britain and our comrades of the Dublin Spartacist Group at the time made clear that:

"The 'peace' fraud is premised on the blood-soaked British Army remaining in place — the British government has seized the opportunity to send in over 1000 more troops, including from the Parachute regiment, murderers of 14 Catholics on Bloody Sunday in 1972. We demand: RUC/Army out of Catholic areas! British troops out of Northern Ireland now! A proletarian axis must prevail, as the only way out of the spiral of reaction. Not Orange against Green, but class against class! There is an urgent need for the formation of integrated workers militias — incorporating both Protestants and Catholics — to combat British Army and RUC rampage as well as sectarian terror, both Orange and Green. Forging such militias is integrally linked to the construction of a revolutionary vanguard party that has the confidence of both Protestant and Catholic workers."

These words take added significance as recent Loyalist "ethnic cleansing" rampages in Belfast and a spate of firebombings of both Catholic and Protestant churches indicates that the situation this year threatens to be at least as bad.

While Blair backs Major all the way and makes repeated overtures to the Ulster Unionists in parliament, the SLP calls for withdrawal of troops, but accepts the framework of the imperialist "peace" process, which means at bottom placing confidence in the British state to reach a just solution. Moreover, the "peace" fraud is premised on the army remaining in place. The SLP echo Sinn Féin's call for "all party peace talks" without preconditions. The SLP's manifesto calls for an "Independent, United Ireland", an implicit appeal for a capitalist solution.

Workers Power calls for the British Army to get out, but then simultaneously supports Labour (in Britain and Ireland), while cheerleading the nationalists' capitalist strategy. They say: "We recognise that a progressive solution requires that the working class come to the head of the national struggle. But that does not prevent us from solidarising with those who are fighting for independence under the banner of petit-bourgeois nationalism — i.e. a capitalist united Ireland" (*Workers Power*, April 1996).

We oppose the forcible reunification of Ireland, and recognise that there can be no equitable solution to the national oppression in Ireland within the framework of capitalism. Northern Ireland is a situation of interpenetrated peoples in which the Catholic minority is currently oppressed within the sectarian Orange statelet. But the exercise of self-determination of the Irish Catholic nation would be at the expense of the Protestant community, who would constitute an oppressed minority in a capitalist united Ireland, an outcome they would undoubtedly resist. A proletarian perspective is necessarily internationalist, and requires the mobilisation of the

working class on both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish Sea for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, smashing the Orange statelet in the North as well as the Catholic clericalist state in the South. We fight for an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles. Building Trotskyist parties on both islands is the purpose to which the SL/B and the Dublin Spartacist Group are dedicated.

#### For the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales

Today the England-dominated kingdom is far from united, and English chauvinism is one of the factors fuelling separatist and nationalist sentiment in Scotland and Wales. This chauvinism was shown graphically by Tony Blair who went electioneering in Scotland and pompously declared that even if Scotland achieves a

we recognise the right of Scotland and Wales to self-determination, given the lack of decisive national differences either in language or religion, at the present time we advocate a course of common class struggle. Nonetheless, the attitude of the English bourgeoisie could well drive the Scots and Welsh to separation.

#### Only socialist revolution can eradicate racism and the threat of fascism

Across Europe, escalating racist attacks on immigrants are the cutting edge of the capitalist rulers assault on the trade unions and on workers' living standards. The interests of the working class and minorities must advance together or they will fall back separately. A central slogan which the sections of the International Communist League fight for is: *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants*. While the immigration question is fundamentally



Workers Hammer

Rochester: Spartacist League contingent protests incarceration of asylum-seekers, 15 February 1997.

devolved parliament (with about the same powers as a parish council) "sovereignty rests with me as an English MP, and that's the way it will stay".

We demand: Abolish the survivals of feudalism — the monarchy, House of Lords and established churches! In opposition to all manifestations of English chauvinism we uphold the right of self-determination for the Scottish and Welsh nations; at the same time we oppose all forms of nationalism, which are poisonous to working-class unity, and we fight for a *voluntary* federation of workers republics.

This is in stark contrast to the rest of the "socialist" left, who are generally blind to English chauvinism. Most egregious in this regard are the Socialist Equality Party, who deny the democratic right of self-determination for Scotland (and all other nations). They rail against Scottish nationalism, but do not mention the national oppression of the Scots. A close second among the "socialists for Anglo-chauvinism" is Workers Power, who have slavishly followed the line of Labour for years; in the 1992 election they headlined "No to a Scottish Assembly"; and maintained this line until such time as Blair came out in favour of a referendum for a Scottish "devolved parliament" earlier this year. The *Weekly Worker* waxes eloquent about the right of self-determination, but they actually oppose its exercise and call for a *single* "federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales", neglecting to specify its class character.

For genuine Leninists, the right of self-determination means the right to bring to form a separate state. We seek to choose the class contradiction to the fore, and while

a democratic question, it is strategic to proletarian unity. We fight for worker/minority mobilisations to stop the fascists in their tracks.

The SLP's election manifesto barely mentions the word fascism, and while opposing "all racist immigration laws and the Asylum Act" it does not call for full citizenship rights for immigrants, nor does it outline any programme to fight fascism. The SLP's constitution, which requires a year's residency in Britain for membership, excludes recent immigrants from joining.

The SLP has a base of support in the RMT union in London Underground, but has no perspective to mobilise this workforce, which is racially integrated and strategically placed to fight racist attacks in the city such as the killing of Stephen Lawrence by the fascists. The absence of any strategy to mobilise the social power of the working class to fight racist terror reduces the SLP's statements of opposition to racism to mere platitudes.

The capitalist state, which consists of cops, courts, the army and prison system, exists for the protection of the system based on private property, and is necessarily racist. The SLP's demand for a "complete overhaul of Britain's justice system", indicates that this party can do nothing to halt the rising tide of racist terror, which emanates from the forces of the state and the fascist scum. We agree with comrade Lenin that the proletariat cannot take hold of the existing state and wield it for its own purposes. Workers revolution must shatter the capitalist state, expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class and build a new

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# Statement...

(Continued from page 9)

state power based on the democratic rule of revolutionary workers councils. This elementary understanding of the state is contradicted by Labourite groups such as the Socialist Party, who have always insisted the cops are part of the workers movement, "workers in uniform", and by the SWP who in a recent issue (8 February) of *Socialist Worker*, asked "Are all coppers really bastards?" and answered that they are not, if they "rebel collectively". Taken together with support for struggles of prison guards, this outfit whitewashes the role of the cops and of the state.

We seek to initiate exemplary united-front actions to stop the fascists. In Berlin two months ago our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany led a united-front mobilisation which stopped the Nazis from staging a race-hate march for the chauvinist slogan "Jobs for Germans first". The successful mobilisation sent the fascists scurrying back into their sewers, despite the fact that they had heavy police protection. This success did not drop from the sky, but was fought for and implemented by the Spartakists in the face of stiff opposition from the leadership of reformist organisations such as the SPD, the PDS, and also the anarchists and Autonomes, who were prepared to demonstrate and protest against but not to stop the Nazis, since at bottom they rely on the capitalist state to deal with them. The Spartakists were able to lead workers, youth, leftists, trade unionists, immigrants, Jewish students and others who wanted to stop the fascists. We were able to demonstrate in action the power of our programme for revolutionary struggle.

## The fight for a Socialist United States of Europe

Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, together with the imperialist goal of restoring capitalism in China, means competition between the three main imperialist powers — the US, Japan and Germany — has greatly increased. The issue dividing the British ruling class is not about "UK sovereignty" versus "European integration", but wheth-



John Sturrock/Network

Herolic 1984-85 miners strike. Spartacist League fought for fighting Triple Alliance of rail, coal, dockers.

imperialist trade bloc, a vehicle for capitalist co-operation against the working class of Europe, which Marxists oppose. Its precursor, the Common Market, was established as an economic adjunct of NATO, as US imperialism sought to strengthen Western Europe against the Soviet Union, and French imperialism sought to check the growth of German imperialism. Since counterrevolution in the USSR and Eastern Europe, German imperialism has become more dominant within the EU.

The right-centrist group Workers Power looks favourably on the EU, and have even argued that "the terms of the Maastricht treaty can also be a basis for extending rights and gains from states where the working class never won these gains, or where it has lost them" (*Workers Power* no 156, June 1992). WP refuses to stand in opposition to the anti-working class and racist EU. And when it came to the bloody communalist war in ex-Yugoslavia, WP egged on imperialist intervention. They echoed Thatcher and the US Republican Party in their calls for lifting the (phoney) "arms embargo" and refused to stand for the defence of the Bosnian Serbs when they were being bombarded by NATO imperialists.

The imperialists in Europe are driven by the need to increase the rate of exploitation, and to bolster their competitive

ism. Their "little Englandism" serves to line up the working class with their capitalist masters. The SLP's manifesto says "costly coal imports must be stopped", echoing Scargill during the pit closures in 1992, when he ended up alongside arch-racist Winston Churchill Jr in a campaign to "save British coal". This economic protectionism, opposing foreign goods, pits workers of different countries against each other; it fuels racism and lays the basis for telling workers to fight and die for their "own" ruling class in shooting wars.

Against John Bull chauvinism, against nationalist protectionism and import controls and against the bosses' European Community, we take our stance:

"Only unity on a socialist basis, accomplished by proletarian revolution and the expropriation of the giant monopolies, can institute rational world-wide economic development without exploitation. A socialist united states of Europe can only be created on the basis of the most vigorous struggle against the capitalist Common Market and all it stands for. And only under united control by the workers themselves can the productive capacity of Europe be put at the service of the entire world's working peoples."

— *Workers Vanguard*, January 1973

Imperialist economic competition ultimately leads to war — twice this century it has led to world war, and today it threat-

against class, recognising that the only way to end war is through international workers revolution.

## The fake left in agony over New v "old" Labour

The SLP's split in the Labour camp poses an agonising dilemma for the fake left. Firmly ensconced in the "vote Labour" camp are: the Socialist Workers Party, Workers Power, the Workers International League (WIL), and Socialist Outlook. Their rationale is simply "get the Tories out". The SWP's posters up and down the country proclaim, "We're voting Labour, But we don't trust Blair". In addition, they do call for a vote for SLP candidates, citing as motivation: "But voting for the SLP will not be a wasted vote because it will give Tony Blair a message — get back on board with some socialist policies" (*Socialist Worker*, 19 April 1997). But WP want nothing less than a "Labour landslide", which means voting *against* SLP candidates. They make one exception, for the SLP candidate in Cardiff, whom they claim is standing on a "revolutionary" programme.

Meanwhile another section of the left has opted to work inside the SLP, including supporters of *Weekly Worker*, the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT), supporters of "Workers Struggle" (recognised internationally to those who know them as LCMRCI), and some former members of WP grouped around "Socialist Labour Action" (SLA). While they collectively style themselves a "revolutionary" opposition in the SLP, their opposition to Scargill comes from the right. Prior to joining the SLP, the IBT went on public record advocating crossing picket lines; they also declared retrospectively their support for Militant candidate Lesley Mahmood in 1992, who ran in a by-election on a platform which was clearly for a Labour government. Virtually every one of these groupings maintains an umbilical cord to the "vote Blair" camp: *Weekly Worker* supports the Socialist Party/SSA; Workers Struggle are co-thinkers of WIL (and advocate voting Labour in their own external publication) and the SLA looks to the Labour-loyal Workers Power.

The Scargill leadership has bureaucratically expelled a number of *Weekly Worker* supporters, and recently the entire Vauxhall branch, which comprised a number of these "oppositionists" including WP and Workers Struggle supporters, for unspecified breaches of the SLP constitution. Bureaucratic practices are a feature of every reformist party, from Cliff's SWP, to the CP and the LP, and usually serve to avoid political struggle. The hue and cry over the lack of democracy in the SLP in the pages of *Weekly Worker* and *Workers Power* (the latter being notorious on the left for bureaucratism) mentions none of the political issues on which they campaigned inside the SLP. *Weekly Worker* demanded that the SLP allow Militant/Socialist Party (SP) to join, and that they form an electoral pact with SP candidates, who are for a Labour government (or for anyone against the Tories).

*Weekly Worker* now whines that their supporters were expelled because of *Workers Hammer* polemics exposing the fact that they were on the wrong side of the class line in the 1984-85 miners strike, by calling for a ballot after the strike had taken hold. The call for a ballot was the scabberding cry of Thatcher, Kinnock and the TUC, as a way to end the mass pickets. It was retailed by Workers Power and by the *Weekly Worker* (then called the *Leninist*), who wrote in January 1985: "Those who suddenly discovered the 'unproletarian' nature of ballots, those who used the fatuous argument about 'no man having the right to vote another out of a job' threw out a potentially powerful tactical weapon because of lack of

## What they said...

Reformist SWP and right-centrist Workers Power proclaim their loyalty to New Labour.



er to continue their subservience to US imperialism or to align more closely with German imperialism in the European Union. European "integration" — the attempt to create a capitalist United States of Europe — is a utopian fantasy. The concept was denounced by Lenin in 1915, who wrote: "From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism — i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the 'advanced' and 'civilised' colonial powers — a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary" ("Slogan for a United States of Europe").

Marxists oppose the Maastricht Treaty and the European Union. The EU is an

edge against each other. The ruling classes in Germany, France and Italy are trying to impose the draconian attacks on the working class which Thatcher imposed on the working class in Britain in the 1980s. The cornerstone of internationalism is the Leninist understanding that *the main enemy is at home*. The fight for a Socialist United States of Europe cannot be achieved in the absence of a break with all forms of reformism and social chauvinism.

The Maastricht Treaty dictates harsh austerity measures for the working class. But there are other anti-working class options available to the bourgeoisie. The SLP opposes the European Union from the perspective of nationalist protection-

ens to obliterate humanity by thermonuclear holocaust. Labour has supported British imperialism in every war, and every military intervention abroad — from the mass terror bombing of Iraq in 1991, to policing capitalist dismemberment of Yugoslavia in the guise of "peacekeeping"; they also sent the British Army into Northern Ireland in 1969. The SLP calls for a mere "reduction" in imperialist arms expenditure; Marxists say not a penny, not a man for the imperialist army! British/UN and all imperialist troops out of the former Yugoslavia and out of Zaire! Marxists are for the defeat of their own imperialism in war, and fight to turn imperialist war into a civil war of class

trust in the rank and file, intuitive recognition that Notts sectionism could not be fought with sectionalism, and lack of tactical flexibility."

### "Her Majesty's" parliament is not a road to socialism!

The prospect of governmental coalitions along the lines of the World War II Tory/Labour war-time alliance and the Lib-Lab coalition of the 1970s, looms large in British parliamentary politics. The Tory party is on the verge of a split, and Blair has discussed coalition with the Liberal Democrats. The SLP also expresses an appetite for coalitions with capitalist parties — promising that 63 Socialist Labour MPs could alter "the balance of forces" in parliament. Their manifesto praises the Communist Party of France (PCF) and Rifondazione Comunista (RC). RC, which is a spinoff from the old Italian Stalinist party, is acting as a left prop of the capitalist government which is shoving Thatcherite austerity down the throats of the working class. And the PCF is the historic vehicle for tying the French working class to imperialism through popular-front class collaboration.

In keeping with Scargill's dismissal of the programme of Leninism, the SLP's organisational structure, which seeks bloc affiliation by the trade unions, is antithetical to building a proletarian vanguard party, that is, a party of the most conscious elements of the working class which can translate the historic interests of the proletariat into a fight for socialist revolution. As Marx and Engels stressed in the *Communist Manifesto* every serious class battle is a political struggle, and the Communists are distinguished from other working-class parties because "they everywhere represent the interest of the movement as a whole". In the trade unions, which are defensive organisations of the working class, we fight for the broadest possible unity for the struggle against the bosses. At the same time on the political front we fight to build a Leninist vanguard party, which fights to break the stranglehold of reformism on the working class.

### The lessons of the heroic miners strike of 1984-85

New Labour's "business" manifesto was drawn up under the guidance of Confederation of British Industry head, Adair Turner. It guarantees to continue the Tories' austerity measures against social services and welfare. Blair now boasts that under Labour there will be no secondary strikes, no secondary picketing and no return to the days of strikes without ballots. When Essex firefighters recently balloted in favour of staging "work stoppages" in April, the government responded by drafting in the army for scab

duties. As if on cue, Labour deputy leader John Prescott rushed to add Labour's voice in denunciation of the firefighters.

The trade union bureaucracy, from TUC leader John Monks to the T&G's Bill Morris and RMT "left" Jimmy Knapp, have all toed the line in favour of "unity" and for a Labour victory at the polls. At a recent meeting called to oppose the privatisation of London Underground, Jimmy Knapp announced that "we can stop privatisation by electing a Labour government on May 1". A Spartacist speaker pointed out that the only way to stop privatisation, which inevitably means vindictive attacks on the unions, is through solid strike action of all the Underground unions, with real mass picket lines, which would also deal a blow to the hated anti-union laws. But SLP members present, including Bob Crow, RMT Exec member, and Pat Sikorski, did not oppose Knapp at all, and managed not to mention the word strike. Left reformism is only "left" in so far as it has no practical obligations, such as organising strike action when a union has its back to the wall.

Over the last couple of decades the bosses have attacked unions, jobs and conditions and decimated whole industries reducing hundreds of thousands to poverty and chronic unemployment. At every step of the way the Labourite trade union bureaucracy has proven to be the greatest obstacle to unleashing the social power of the working class. Nowhere was this clearer than in the heroic miners strike of 1984-85. For twelve months, miners in the NUM led by Arthur Scargill faced up to the full force of the capitalist state. In the end the miners were defeated by the Thatcher government, its cops and courts, with the connivance of Labour (then led by Neil Kinnock) and the TUC bureaucracy.

In order to prevail against the bosses and their state it was necessary to spread the strike to other key sections of the working class. But the trade union misleaders actively sabotaged the very real possibilities of strike action by other unions alongside the NUM. At the time of the strike we fought for a *fighting Triple Alliance* of rail workers, dockers and miners. Such united strike action with the miners effectively would have meant a general strike, which goes beyond simple trade union struggle and poses the question of which class shall rule. Scargill refused to struggle for power because it would have meant a political break with the Labour bureaucracy. Even today his idea of "power" does not go beyond a socialist majority in a bourgeois parliament.

The miners strike was an acid test for anyone who aspires to lead the workers movement. The miners strike took place in the middle of Cold War II. The imperialists had intensified their drive to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state and

the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba. The imperialists' anti-Soviet crusade was also reflected in a bitter Cold War II divide within the Labour Party and TUC of the early 1980s, between a CIA-connected right wing and "little England" reformists like Tony Benn. On the eve of the miners strike, Scargill was viciously witch hunted by the TUC misleaders for simply telling the truth about Solidarność anti-socialism. We stood out uniquely for our defence of Scargill. His denunciations of the likes of Solidarność ran strongly against the policies of the Labour Party leaders who enlisted in Thatcher's anti-Soviet crusade. Those who lined up against the Soviet Union also sabotaged workers' struggles at home. While calling for the defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state against international counter-revolution and imperialist attack, we stood for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy that was the gravedigger of the October Revolution.

From the very start what was posed in the miners strike was the necessity to forge a revolutionary leadership through sharp struggle aimed at breaking the stranglehold of Labourism on the working

youth, minorities and women especially hard. One of the sharpest manifestations of this is seen in the generalised attacks on abortion rights. Abortion is an explosive political issue because, at bottom, it raises the question of the equality of women. Engaging deep fears and prejudices which the capitalists stoke in their attacks on health care and other social services, abortion rights are subject to the ebbs and flows of the class struggle. *For free abortion on demand! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*

### For the communism of Lenin and Trotsky!

From day one of the Russian Revolution, the Labour Party opposed it and denounced Bolshevism. Clause IV of the old Labour Party constitution was designed to head off the very palpable possibility of the struggle for proletarian class rule by the working people of the British Isles who found great inspiration in the Russian Revolution. Following World War II the Labour government of Clement Attlee (and Nye Bevan) introduced a massive system of public welfare measures to console those consigned to the bottom of the heap in the system of capi-



Lenin and Trotsky — leaders of the 1917 October Revolution.

class. This perspective remains crucial to addressing battles like the Liverpool dockers whose bitter 18-month struggle began when some 500 dockers were locked out for honouring a picket line set up by their sacked union brothers. Their leadership in the T&G however have given the workers the shaft. What the Liverpool dockers desperately need is solidarity strikes that shut down the port of Liverpool and break the dockers out of the isolation enforced on them by the treacherous union misleaders.

Today the bourgeoisie is intent on breaking the unions in order to drive down the living standards of the entire working class. Directed first and foremost at organised labour, which represents a minority of the working class, these attacks will hit

talist exploitation, ie, the majority of the population, and especially to ward off any serious social struggle.

The Soviet Union politically degenerated under hideous Stalinist bureaucratism; Stalinism criminally undermined the gains of the October Revolution, and sold it out to counterrevolution in 1991, which saw the final undoing of those gains, which were severely attenuated by then. The ruling class which today talks about the "end of history" agree on one thing: there must never again be a repeat of the Russian Revolution. But a new October Revolution is precisely what's needed, and for that we require a party modelled on the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky. Building that party to provide revolutionary leadership is the task of the Spartacist League as part of the fight to reforge the Fourth International.

This important task was explained by Leon Trotsky in the founding document of the Fourth International, *The Transitional Programme* in 1938:

"All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet 'ripened' for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened'; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership." ■

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## Drive Youth Defence Blueshirts off the streets!

Since January, the anti-abortion bigots of Youth Defence have besieged the Marie Stopes Reproductive Choices Clinic in Dublin. In "modern" Ireland, where abortion is illegal in all but the most extreme circumstances, the clerical fascists of Youth Defence have been emboldened by a Garda raid on the clinic on 20 February, in which medical records were seized and a doctor was arrested and interrogated for six hours. The pretext for the raid was a recently publicised allegation that a woman obtained an abortion there more than two years ago. Though no charges have yet been filed, the doctor has been suspended.

The Youth Defence mobilisation is a physical threat and a provocation, designed to ensure that even the minuscule amount of family planning services and abortion information that is legally available is now *in fact* barred by these latter-day Blueshirts. Hands off the Marie Stopes clinic! Sweep the Youth Defence Blueshirts off the streets! For free abortion on demand!

The fundamental right to abortion is a potentially explosive issue within Irish society. Despite recent cosmetic changes such as the introduction of legal (if massively expensive) divorce, Mary Robinson's Ireland remains a deeply reactionary, clericalist society.

Irish women are travelling to Britain to obtain abortions in increasing numbers — 2512 officially reported in the first six months of 1996 alone. Some years ago, a massive social outpouring was precipitated by the "X case", in which a teenage girl was prevented from travelling to Britain to obtain an abortion, until huge protests forced the capitalist courts to relent. Information on abortion provision in Britain became legal in Ireland under the 1995 Abortion Information Act. At the same time, this legislation, which was supported by Labour and Democratic Left, prohibits abortion referrals by doctors and counselling services, and gives the cops powers to seize confidential medical records, as they have done in the Marie Stopes clinic.

The Dublin Spartacist Group (DSG) insists that even the most elementary democratic rights, such as free abortion on demand, cannot be secured through the Dáil, the courts or by voting in referendums. As the current assault on abortion rights in the United States demonstrates, reforms granted under capitalism are reversible and often transitory. What is necessary is the mobilisation of the social power of the working class to fight for free abortion on demand as part of a programme for revolutionary struggle to smash capitalist rule, which must shatter the clericalist state. In contrast to this, the so-called "socialist" left worked overtime to channel the protests for abortion rights



Irish Times

"Moderniser" President Mary Robinson pays her respects at the Vatican. Irish capitalist society remains clericalist and deeply reactionary.

### Free abortion on demand!

in the early 1990s into craven appeals for reform of the constitution, through support to reformist parties — Labour and Democratic Left — in popular-front coalitions with openly capitalist parties such as Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. The popular front, with Mary (I'm against abortion) Robinson as its figurehead, dampened down the fires of protest over abortion rights. At the time of the "X case" protests, the SWP (then SWM), Socialist Party (then Militant) and Irish Workers Group (IWG — part of Workers Power's LRCI) concentrated on the call to "Repeal the Eighth Amendment", to the constitution, without which abortion would still remain illegal. Similarly the Dublin Abortion Information Campaign (DAIC) led by the Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM) campaigned only for abortion information, evading the fight for free abortion on demand in Ireland.

In the 1992 elections the SWM, Militant and IWG all called for votes for Labour and Democratic Left, which renders them incapable of fighting consistently for women's rights. The DSG said: no vote to Labour, the Workers Party or Democratic Left and warned that such class-collaborationist alliances would necessarily be anti-woman, anti-Traveller, anti-working class and pro-British imperialism.

The culture medium out of which vigilante terror has grown is the government's "law and order" campaign, which is a

cover for strengthening the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state. Scandalously, the fake left has bought into this crusade. The Socialist Party's Joe Higgins has egged on evictions of "drug pushers" by cops and vigilante "anti-drug" campaigns, stating: "It is a policy with all the campaigns in Tallaght to work with the housing authorities and Gardai to have those who refuse to stop pushing either convicted or moved out of the area" (*Militant*, no 246, September 1996). A direct product of the so-called "war on drugs" was the brutal murder in 1996 by a vigilante mob of Josie Dwyer, a heroin user who was dying of AIDS. Also targeted are the small but growing immigrant and refugee communities. The Traveller population, who are hideously oppressed in every aspect of life, know exactly what it means to get "moved out" of an area. They are regularly subjected to murderous night-riding attacks on their homes, in the form of both *legal* and *illegal* "removals". *We say: Smash anti-Traveller terror! Trade unionists must defend halting sites against vigilante scum!*

On a number of occasions, Youth Defence thugs have launched murderous attacks on leftists, including an assault with hurley sticks on abortion rights protesters outside the Dáil in 1994. When they attempted a provocation at the 1993 May Day demonstration, swift action by supporters of the DSG, Workers Solidarity

Movement, Red Action and Class War spiked their efforts. Stopping Youth Defence is not only an essential part of the fight for women's rights but is an elementary act of self-defence by the working class as a whole. While women, gays and Travellers may be among the first targets of fascists in Ireland, the ultimate aim of fascism is the destruction of all organisations of the working class. *For trade union mobilisations to stop Youth Defence/SPUC reaction!*

The loyal supporters of Labour and the popular front in Ireland have traditionally sought to pressure the British Labour Party to extend the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland, where over 70 per cent of the population believe abortion should be legal, but the reactionary bigots of Ulster Unionism are just as vehemently opposed to abortion rights as the Catholic-church dominated forces in the south. The Sinn Féin nationalists refuse to touch any social question which will alienate the Catholic hierarchy. The idea that New Labour in government will extend abortion rights is ludicrous; Tony Blair brags about his "Christian socialism" at every opportunity, and has declared that he is *against abortion*.

With clerical reaction so deeply embedded both north and south, the struggle for separation of church and state, for secular education and to break the iron grip of the clergy on health provision, cries out for a socialist revolution. Working class struggle in defence of women's rights in the Republic can be a catalyst for cross-community struggle in Northern Ireland. In the North the British Army, the RUC and the Loyalist terror gangs target the oppressed Catholic minority. The imperialist brokered "peace" fraud, which Sinn Féin hope may be revived with the New Labour government, is premised on the continuing presence of the British Army. It is not an accident that groups like the SWP and SP, camp followers of social democracy, uphold neither the demand for free abortion on demand nor the call for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British Army from Northern Ireland.

Only working class revolution and the establishment of a planned economy can provide the material conditions for women's liberation, freeing them from the domestic slavery of the home to play a full part in social life. This will require at the very least the resources of socialised planned economies throughout these islands. For women to be free the working people must rule. Above all what is needed is a revolutionary Marxist party, vanguard of the working class and tribune of all the oppressed. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For an Irish workers republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles! ■