



International Communist League statement

For a workers Europe— For socialist revolution!

JUNE 14 — The capitalist rulers of West Europe have escalated their austerity attacks against the working people and intensified racist terror against immigrants and minorities. As proletarian internationalists, we of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) oppose the European Union as an imperialist economic bloc which is a vehicle for capitalist cooperation against the working masses of Europe. The working class must oppose the imposition of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty for "currency union." This treaty is a pact among the capitalist masters of Europe to compete for markets against other world powers, which means increasing attacks against the working class and racial minorities.

The current reactionary onslaught symbolised by Maastricht is a direct consequence of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was the signal event of the 20th century, the first and only victorious proletarian revolution. But the pressure of imperialist encirclement on an economically backward country, the devastation of the Russian working class in the Civil War, and the failure and defeat of proletarian revolutions abroad — in large part due to the betrayals of the West European social democracies — set the stage for a political counterrevolution in 1923-24. This Soviet Thermidor led to decades of misrule by a nationalist, parasitic caste headed by Stalin and his heirs. The ultimate result of the Stalinist betrayals carried out under the lie of building "socialism in one country," whereby workers revolution internationally was subordinated to an accommodation to imperialism, was the capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92. We Trotskyists, who consistently defended the gains of October against imperialism and counterrevolution and fought for proletarian political revolution to sweep away the Stalinist usurpers, today fight for new October Revolutions as the only answer to deepening capitalist reaction.

The destruction of the Soviet Union has led to increased interimperialist conflicts over the redivision of world markets and spheres of exploitation, ultimately threatening World War III. The global system of "free trade" — the economic cement which held together the U.S.-dominated anti-Soviet alliance — is crumbling as the major capitalist powers form rival trade blocs: a German-led European Union, with East Europe as its hinterland; a Japanese-led "East Asian Co-Prospérité

Down with Maastricht!

No to social democratic front men for capitalist austerity!

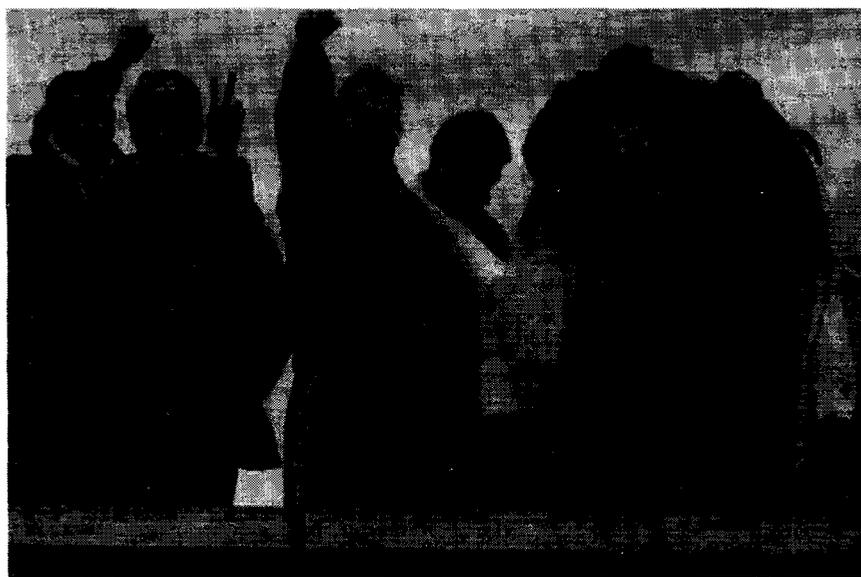


Martin Argles



AP

Tony Blair and Lionel Jospin. Social-democratic governments enforce capitalist austerity, which means racist attacks against immigrants and minorities. Algerian asylum seekers (below) protest in Campsfield detention centre, where they are imprisoned under the Labour government.



Morning Star

Sphere," with Southeast Asia as its low-wage workshop; and a U.S.-dominated North American Free Trade Agreement, for the benefit of the American bourgeoisie, their Canadian junior partners and their lackeys in the Mexican ruling class. As we wrote in a joint declaration of the Spartacist League/U.S., the Grupo Esparquista de México and the Trotskyist League of Canada titled "Stop U.S. 'Free Trade' Rape of Mexico" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 530, 5 July 1991):

"Already at the time of the First World War, Lenin noted that the narrow limits of the capitalist nation-state had become a fetter on the development of the productive forces, producing a struggle over redivision of the world. The various 'common markets' in no way overcome this, but instead intensify interimperialist rivalries. We Trotskyists, communists, struggle for the economic integration of the world on a socialist basis."

The bourgeoisies must sharply increase the rate of exploitation and lower their

labour costs, in order to compete internationally. The social welfare programmes currently under attack in West Europe were granted in the period following World War II, to avert what the capitalists saw as the "threat of Communism." Since the destruction of the Soviet Union, the imperialist bourgeoisies have moved to dismantle the "welfare state."

These austerity drives have provoked defensive workers' struggles, notably in Italy, France, Spain and Germany, often on a scale not seen in decades. In Belgium, Spain and France, Renault workers have staged internationally coordinated protests and plant occupations protesting shutdowns that threatened thousands of jobs. In Germany this March, 85,000 miners throughout the Ruhr and Saar mining regions downed tools against shutdowns and layoffs. In every instance the mass reformist parties have betrayed these struggles, seeking where possible to divert them into the dead-end of parliamentarism. This poses the urgent task of forging a revolutionary leadership of the working class. The ICL fights to build Bolshevik parties to lead the proletariat in struggle against the entire capitalist system and toward the conquest of proletarian state power.

Trying to take advantage of the increasing and massive opposition to the economic austerity policies associated with Maastricht, a number of organisations, centrally including the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel — are staging a "Euromarch '97" in Amsterdam on June 14 to coincide with an EU conference aimed at negotiating the terms of a Maastricht Treaty "Mark 2." The nominal demands of the march are for full employment, defence of social welfare provisions and against social "exclusion." There is *no call* to combat racism or fascism, and the demands which are raised are all couched within a framework which *accepts* the capitalist system.

The intent of the march organisers, who supported the election of the French Socialist Party (PS) and Communist Party (PCF), is simply to pressure the reformist misleaders. For the fake left, prostrating themselves before larger, alien class forces is nothing new. Throughout Cold War II, which began with the imperialists' frenzied reaction to the Soviet Army's intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, such groups as the USec, the British-based Workers Power, and Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party echoed their own ruling classes and labour lackeys in supporting every sort of counterrevolutionary scum in

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Hong Kong: colonialists out, capitalism remains

The latest English edition *Spartacist* (no 53, Summer 1997) contains major articles on China. A decisive turning point in the history of the Chinese Revolution is approaching. Whether the increasingly assertive forces for capitalist restoration succeed in destroying the gains of the 1949 Revolution, or whether they are defeated through the sweeping away of the corrupt Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy through workers political revolution, will not only determine the fate of the Chinese people, but will leave a huge imprint on

the countries of East Asia and beyond.

One article, "Permanent Revolution vs. the 'Anti-Imperialist United Front': The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism", takes up Stalin's historic betrayal of the Chinese Revolution in the twenties and the struggles of the Chinese Left Opposition, reviewing the material in Gregor Benton's *China's Urban Revolutionaries*. Other material includes "Trotsky's Fight Against Stalinist Betrayal of Bolshevik Revolution", which utilises newly available documents published in Valentina Vilikova's

The Struggle for Power: Russia in 1923.

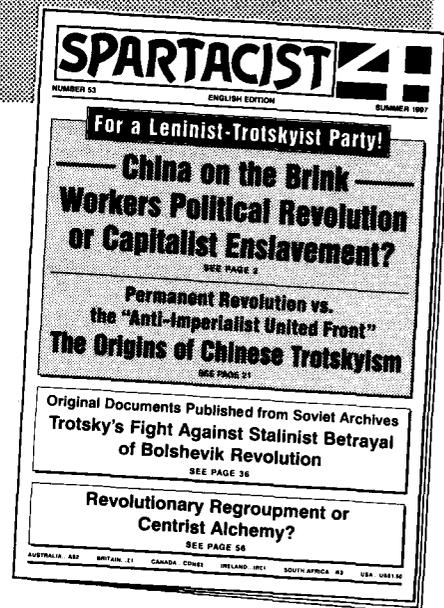
Below we reprint an extract from the article "China on the Brink: Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?", dealing with Hong Kong. As a British colony, Hong Kong was founded by opium peddlers, ruled with racist arrogance (signs in parks read "No dogs or Chinese") and served as a bastion of imperialist super-exploitation and counter-revolution.

Together with Prince Charles, Tony Blair will represent the clapped out British Empire on the occasion of the return of Hong Kong to China. While the "Empire" is finished, Blair is upholding the interests of British capitalism which are very much alive today — fomenting counterrevolution in China through trade and investment.

Yet many groups on the British left are so mired in the pro-imperialist, anti-communist Labour camp they refuse to oppose capitalist restoration in China. Thus Labour-loyal Workers Power, who supported every movement for counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, today writes off in advance any possibility of struggle for proletarian political revolution in China, stating: "In China, as in Eastern Europe, there are no grounds for expecting workers to mobilise in defence of what remains of post-capitalist property relations that were created and imposed on them by an essentially rural-based Stalinist bureaucracy" (*Trotskyist International* no 22, July-December 1997). We fight for unconditional military defence of the Chinese deformed workers state against counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to oust the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy. The struggle for proletarian political revolution in China must be linked to the fight to smash capitalism internationally. For a Trotskyist party in China, section of a reborn Fourth International!

The imminent reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese rule has led to an immensely cynical outpouring of "human rights" verbiage by the former British colonial rulers and the Western media. Ever since seizing the island in 1841 during the first Opium War against China's decrepit Qing Dynasty, the British ran the colony as a virtual police state, brutally oppressing their Chinese subjects. Hong Kong became a haven for both British and Chinese drug smugglers, Chinese warlords and, later, Guomindang crooks fleeing the mainland in 1947-49. But when Mao Zedong's guerrilla army approached Hong Kong at the close of the civil war, Mao called off the advance as he searched, in the face of U.S. hostility, for allies among other imperialist powers. Today, the glitz of Hong Kong's economic "miracle" hides one of the world's greatest gaps between the rich and poor. Some 10,000 hideously exploited workers and elderly people live in steel cages stacked in twos or threes. In February 1996, 24 homeless people died on one night during a rare cold snap.

The wispy veneer of democratic liberties in Hong Kong, which the imperialists scream are about to be trampled on by China, were only granted after the 1984 agreement on the return of the colony to China. In response to the imperialist out-



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TROTSKY

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The project of a European capitalist "superstate" is both utopian and reactionary: utopian in that the imperialist bourgeoisies cannot overcome their conflicting national interests; reactionary in that the moves towards greater economic integration are designed to intensify the exploitation of the working class and racist attacks on immigrants. Economic and political unification of Europe in the inter-

ests of the working masses, and especially of North African, Turkish, Kurdish, Asian and other minorities, can be achieved only through proletarian revolution. As Leon Trotsky explained in a 1919 article, the formation of a Socialist United States of Europe would have profound revolutionary repercussions around the world.

To turn Europe into a federation of Soviet republics is the only conceivable solution to the needs of the national development of large and small peoples without prejudicing the centralist requirements of economic union first of Europe then of the whole world.

The bourgeois democrats have in their time dreamed of a United States of Europe. These dreams found a hypocritical delayed response in the speeches of the French social democrats in the early stages of the last war. The bourgeoisie could not unite Europe as they counterposed to the unifying tendencies of economic development the divisive aims of national imperialism. In order to unite the peoples it is necessary to liberate the economy from the fetters of private property. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat is capable of implementing the requirements of national development within its natural and legitimate frontiers and of co-ordinating nations in a unity of working co-operation: precisely such will be a federation of Soviet republics of Europe founded on the free self-determination of the nations populating it. There is no other solution. This union will be directed against Britain if she lags behind the continent in her revolutionary development. Together with a Soviet Britain the European federation will aim its blows against the imperialist dictatorship of America as long as the transatlantic republic remains the republic of the dollar — until the triumphant shrieks of the New York stock exchange turn into its death rattle.

Bloody chaos still stands over Europe. The old is coupled to the new. Events jostle events and blood congeals on blood. But from this chaos more and more firmly and bravely steps forward the idea of a communist order from which the bourgeoisie cannot be delivered either by its Versailles plots, its mercenary bands, its voluntary lackeys of conciliation and social-patriotism or the great trans-Atlantic patron of all capitalist butchers.

—Leon Trotsky, "Order out of chaos", *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Volume 1 (1973)



LENIN

WORKERS HAMMER

For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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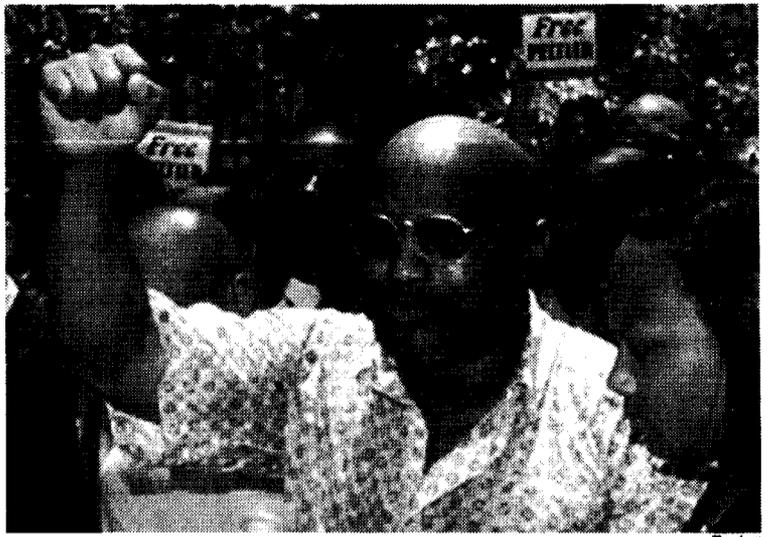
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Drop frame-up charges against former Black Panther!

Geronimo out after 27 years in prison hell



Reuters

JUNE 10 — A jubilant, integrated crowd of some 400 people thronged around Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) this afternoon as he walked out of the Orange County Jail, where he immediately hugged his children and his two grandchildren. This was the former Black Panther Party leader's first taste of freedom after 27 years, well over half his life, in California's prison hell-holes.

In a brief hearing earlier today in Santa Ana, Geronimo was released on \$25,000 bail following the 29 May overturn of a frame-up conviction for a crime *everyone* knows he did not commit. As Orange County Superior Court judge Everett W Dickey announced Geronimo's release this morning, the 200 people packed into the courtroom and another 200 in the hall erupted in loud cheers which were heard floors away. Geronimo's elated supporters then made their way to the jail building four blocks away to greet him after his lawyers had posted bail.

Speaking to his supporters and the press, Geronimo denounced the FBI "Counter-Intelligence Program" (COINTELPRO) which had orchestrated his frame-up and that of countless other black

mittee signs demanded freedom for death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

After a month-long hearing in which over 28 witnesses gave evidence, Judge Dickey ruled on 29 May that Geronimo was denied a fair trial in 1972 because the prosecutor withheld vital evidence from the defence. But Geronimo is still not a free man.

Los Angeles district attorney Gil Garcetti, in a purely vindictive move, has filed notice to appeal Dickey's decision. And even if Garcetti fails in his appeal, he still has the option of forcing Geronimo to go through a new trial. The latter possibility is unlikely, however, as many elements of the initial frame-up engineered by the FBI and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) have now been publicly exposed and key prosecution witnesses are either dead or discredited.

Meanwhile, Geronimo has the legal status of someone who has been charged with a crime but not yet convicted. The state is thus holding an axe over Geronimo's head. It is crucial that all supporters of this unbroken fighter for black rights join in the call raised on Partisan Defense Committee signs outside the courthouse

this country, where a prisoner must admit guilt before he can be paroled.

Geronimo is innocent and the government knows it

Judge Dickey's 29 May ruling came months after a hearing on Geronimo's fifth *habeas corpus* petition, which documented the all-sided collusion of government police agencies to railroad him into prison. The court's decision rips apart both the prosecution's original case against Geronimo and its continued attempts to deny prosecutorial misconduct. It details the D.A.'s failure to reveal that Julius Butler, the key prosecution witness, was an informer for the FBI, the LAPD and the D.A.'s office itself. It asserts that the false testimony at trial by the LAPD and Butler denying that he was an informant "left a grossly inaccurate impression on the jury". The judge's memorandum concludes that "this was not a strong case for the prosecution without the testimony of Butler, and certainly not an overwhelming case in any event".

As early as 1985, a former high-level FBI agent named Wesley Swearingen

fake "confession". Dickey's opinion also covers up for active participants in the railroading of Geronimo and carefully protects those who built their careers on the government's racist vendetta — from Edwin Meese, who presided over the war on the Panthers as then-governor Ronald Reagan's top cop in California, to Richard Kalustian, now a sitting L.A. County Superior Court judge who as deputy D.A. prosecuted Geronimo and paved the way for the fink Butler's admission to the California bar. The government conspiracy against the Panthers which targeted Geronimo among many others was orchestrated right from the top, through the FBI's notorious COINTELPRO operation.

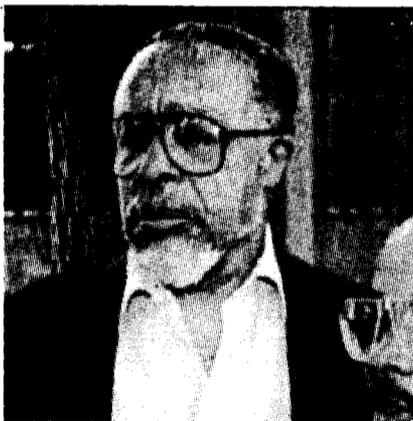
Down with LAPD/FBI COINTELPRO frame-up!

A highly decorated Vietnam veteran, Geronimo returned from two tours of duty in 1968 a determined opponent of US imperialism who was committed to contributing to the struggle against the racist enemy at home. After enrolling in UCLA, he joined the Black Panther Party, the best of a generation of black militants who wanted to fight the oppression of racist American capitalism. Most galling to the government, the Panthers opposed Martin Luther King Jr's passive acceptance of the bourgeois order, asserting their right to armed self-defence in the face of the terror from racist cops in the inner-city ghettos.

Labelling them the greatest threat to the internal security of the US, the FBI declared war on the Panthers and, with the assistance of local police, activated their murderous COINTELPRO operation. FBI chief J Edgar Hoover stated bluntly: "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries." Thirty-eight Panthers were murdered outright; Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were assassinated in their beds in a 1969 raid by a Chicago police hit team under the direction of the Illinois State's Attorney. Countless others were framed up on false charges.

FBI documents from 1969 record the agency's designation of Geronimo as a "Key Black Extremist" and target him for "neutralization" as an effective leader of the Panthers. An FBI memo spelled it out: "Operation Number One is designed to challenge the legitimacy of the authority exercised by ELMER GERARD PRATT, BPP Deputy Minister of Defense." In December of that year, an LAPD Metro Squad and SWAT team commandos armed with M-60 machine guns, tear gas launchers and dynamite subjected Panther headquarters to a five-hour barrage and

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AP

FBI documents from COINTELPRO, the murderous campaign to destroy Black Panther Party, show Julius Butler (above), key prosecution witness against Geronimo, was a government informant.

L.A. FBI Report on Geronimo, 26 June 1970

It is noted, however, that constant consideration is given to the possibility of the utilization of counterintelligence measures with efforts being directed toward neutralizing PRATT as an effective BPP functionary.

L.A. FBI Memorandum, 7 November 1969

For the information of the Bureau, BUTLER was extensively interviewed on 11/4/69, by SA [redacted] and [redacted] at which time he stated he was willing to provide information to the FBI on a confidential basis. Results of the interview will not be disseminated at this time, as additional contact will be made with BUTLER to determine his potential as a PRI.

militants of his era. He described the "madness" he had just left behind: "You have political prisoners on top of political prisoners, I'm only one of a great many." Unbroken and unbowed in his commitment to the fight for black freedom after all these years, Geronimo paid tribute to the numerous other militants who remain behind bars in America's dungeons, including Ruchell McGee and Hugo Pinell.

A number of other former Black Panthers were there to greet Geronimo as he came out. As well, there were numerous people carrying signs demanding "Free Leonard Peltier", the American Indian Movement leader and COINTELPRO frame-up victim who has been imprisoned for nearly 20 years. Partisan Defense Com-

today: *Drop the charges now!*

The Spartacist League/U.S. joins Geronimo's many other supporters in hailing his release from prison. Yet we note with bitterness that the better part of his life has been stolen from him and his family, solely because of his uncompromising commitment to the fight against racist oppression.

We salute the heroic struggle Geronimo has undertaken for the past quarter of a century to prove his innocence and expose the massive government frame-up machine which put him behind bars. Geronimo was denied parole 14 times simply because he refused to renounce the fight to prove his innocence, underscoring the assumption of police and prosecutorial infallibility in

revealed the existence of FBI wiretaps which showed that Geronimo was in Oakland, 400 miles away from the scene of the murder for which he was convicted, at the time it took place! The FBI then claimed those wiretaps had been "lost".

An investigation by lay minister James McCloskey has led to the identification of the likely actual killers. It also came out that the sole eyewitness, the husband of the murder victim, identified a different suspect two years before Geronimo was charged.

Judge Dickey's opinion permits the false conclusion that those in charge of the case were ignorant of Butler's informant status and the benefits he obtained for concocting and attributing to Geronimo a

Elections...

(Continued from page 12)

Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom for at least another fifty years.

Both the Socialist Party and SWP, on both sides of the Irish Sea, pushed for the election of New Labour, not least because, as they saw it, Blair had a better chance of a "peace" deal than the Tories, knowing that any such deal will be premised on keeping the troops in the North. To speak of "working class unity" across sectarian lines, as these two groups are fond of doing, without fighting for British troops out, serves to prettify the role of the imperialist army, who reinforce the viciously sectarian RUC and the Loyalist paramilitaries in anti-Catholic terror.

The Socialist Party bolsters illusions in all manner of imperialist machinations in the North — they even ran in elections for the Stormont talks last May. They have also organised public "discussions" in Dublin and Belfast with Billy Hutchinson, who was convicted of the murder of two Catholics, Michael Loughran and Edward Morgan, and whom the SP try to pass off as a "representative" of the Protestant working class.

For Marxists, it was clear from the beginning that any deal imposed by the imperialists on Northern Ireland would be necessarily unjust and brutal, continuing the oppression of the Catholic minority and offering nothing for the Protestant working class either. The grim truth of this can be seen plainly today, from Loyalist pogroms following last summer's "siege of Drumcree", which were carried out under the protection of the British Army and RUC, to the burning of both Protestant and Catholic churches and the Loyalist murders of Robert Hamill and Sean Brown.

We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops, as a necessary precondition for any just solution. To achieve genuine unity of the Protestant and Catholic working class requires a party committed to overthrowing all the variants of capitalist exploitation and oppression which exists on these islands. We recognise that in Northern Ireland, as in other cases of interpenetrated peoples, there can be no just solution to national oppression within the framework of capitalism. At present, the Catholics in the North are an oppressed minority, but we oppose the forcible reunification of Ireland which would reverse the terms of oppression against the Protestant community, which 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 say: not Orange against Green, but class against class, and fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles.

No to class collaboration!

As revolutionary advocates of the independent mobilisation of the working class we never advocate a vote for bourgeois parties like Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, or for Sinn Féin, a petty-bourgeois nationalist party which stands for a united capitalist Ireland. While it is legitimate to consider critical support in elections to reformist parties such as the Labour Party and Democratic Left, a necessary precondition for applying such a tactic is that they are standing independently of capitalist parties, not in coalition. This is manifestly not true of these parties today, who are running on their track record of coalition with

Fine Gael. The Rainbow Coalition is a popular front, an alliance of "workers" parties with bourgeois parties. A vote for Labour and Democratic Left is thus a vote for class collaboration, expressed in "Partnership 2000", an agreement between the bosses and the workers' misleaders to keep down wages in the face of booming profits. Mass reformist parties, described by Comrade Lenin as "bourgeois workers parties", have their base in the working class and the trade unions, but espouse a capitalist programme.

In the British elections, the SL/B said clearly: no vote to Blair's New Labour, whose programme was unambiguously anti-working class, anti-immigrant and anti-Irish. We extended critical support to Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, noting that in standing candidates in opposition to New Labour and refusing to call for a Labour government, they were in breach of the "eleventh commandment" of



Paul Goulding

1994: TEAM Aer Lingus workers show their anger at Dick Spring.

the British left — including the SWP and SP — that "thou shalt vote Labour" come hell or high water. However, the programme of the SLP is simply "old Labour" reformism, to which we clearly counterposed our Trotskyist perspective for genuine working class power.

This programme for revolution is what fundamentally distinguishes us Spartacists from the rest of the "socialist" left. Here, the election campaigns of the SWP and SP simply do not challenge the framework of capitalism. Significantly, the SWP's statement that "in all cases, we also urge a vote for the left before the naked right wing policies of the PDs, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil" is a nudge and a wink to vote Labour or Democratic Left, and indeed for "progressive" bourgeois candidates.

The Workers Solidarity Movement, while not calling for votes in the election, offers the same sub-reformist drivel as the SWP and SP, in posters which moan about "corruption" among politicians. For all their pretence of opposition to the capitalist system, the WSM's politics are restricted to what they think can be obtained within the capitalist system. At the height of the struggles for abortion rights, the WSM was in a prominent position but restricted their demands to legalisation of abortion information, and steered clear of fighting for free abortion in Ireland. They also gave backhanded support to British imperialism in the North, when they whined that the breakdown of the "peace" process was a "tragedy".

For free abortion on demand! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!

The "liberal agenda" has been generally deemed completed with the introduction of legal but expensive divorce. But the influence of clericalist reaction remains deep and pervasive in Irish society. Neither Labour nor DL, which both oppose abortion, are going to touch the question of abortion rights in the election through fear

of rousing a hornet's nest. The SWP, SP and WSM maintain a scandalous silence about Youth Defence blueshirts, who have besieged the Marie Stopes Reproductive Choices Clinic in Dublin since January, threatening the minuscule family planning services and abortion information that are legally available. We say: Hands off the Marie Stopes clinic! Sweep Youth Defence off the streets! For free abortion on demand!

The Youth Defence anti-abortion bigots contain a hard core of clerical fascists. On a number of occasions, Youth Defence thugs have launched murderous attacks on leftists. Stopping Youth Defence is not only an essential part of the fight for women's rights, it 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

programme for revolutionary struggle.

Down with the government's "law and order" campaign!

All the major parties are pushing "law and order" as a key part of their election campaigns, ostensibly to fight crime and drugs. This reactionary crusade is whipping up vigilante terror, and strengthening the repressive powers of the capitalist state, which will necessarily be used against workers, women's rights activists, Republicans, and the oppressed Traveller population.

The Socialist Party are promoting their very own pro-cop, pro-vigilante campaign. Joe Higgins, the Socialist Party's candidate for Dublin West, has egged on evictions of "drug pushers" by cops and vigilantes. Another leading SP member, Mick Murphy, speaking as a committee member of his particular "anti-drug" campaign, states: "It is the 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). As we have noted, "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!" (*Workers Hammer* no 156, May/June). Ireland's growing number of refugees and immigrants — including from Eastern Europe — will be targets of state and vigilante terror, now meted out to the Travellers.

Forge a Trotskyist party!

With the bourgeoisie crowing about the "death of communism", the "socialism" proffered by the reformist left consists of pleading for modifications to the capitalist system. We believe that it is possible and necessary to bring an end to exploitation and oppression, through overthrowing the capitalist system. Those who create the wealth — the working class — must rule. Our comrades in the SL/B distributed a statement prior to the British elections, titled: "For a revolutionary workers party! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!" which outlined the perspective of Trotskyists today:

"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 Dublin Spartacist Group, part of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). ■

Correction

In *Workers Hammer* no 156, May/June 1997, in describing the Socialist Party's egging on evictions of "drug pushers" by cops and vigilante "anti-drug" campaigns, we attributed the following quotation to Joe Higgins instead of to his comrade Mick Murphy: "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).

Geronimo...

(Continued from page 3)

raided the house where Geronimo was sleeping.

Having failed to murder him, the FBI, LAPD and D.A.'s office then used Julius Butler to frame up Geronimo for the two-year-old unsolved murder of Caroline Olsen on a Santa Monica tennis court. Butler had an axe to grind after being expelled by Geronimo from the Panthers on suspicion of being a fink. With the knowledge of the FBI, Butler fingered Geronimo to the LAPD and then turned over to the LAPD weapons that he claimed belonged to the Panthers.

There is no justice in the capitalist courts!

With Geronimo's enormous victory, his case is now being held up as an example of the justice of the bourgeois legal system. The truth is that Geronimo is a living condemnation of the American capitalist state and the racist injustice of its courts. After 27 years and mountains of evidence demonstrating Geronimo's innocence, the courts have produced a ruling on narrow legal grounds which covers up the scope of this mammoth frame-up and amnesties its perpetrators.

Justice in America is neither blind nor does it carefully weigh the evidence on balanced scales. The courts, like the cops and prison system, are part of the capitalist state, which is not a neutral body but exists to administer the exploitation of the working class by the handful of rulers who own the wealth of society. By its nature, the capitalist judicial system is based on racial discrimination and class bias. Statistics gathered for the 1987 case of *McCleskey v. Kemp* showed that in Georgia a black man who killed a white man was eleven times more likely to be sentenced to death than a white who killed a black. The Supreme Court found this proof of racial bias irrelevant, saying that they could not overturn the death penalty on these grounds because that would put into question the entirety of the criminal justice system in this country!

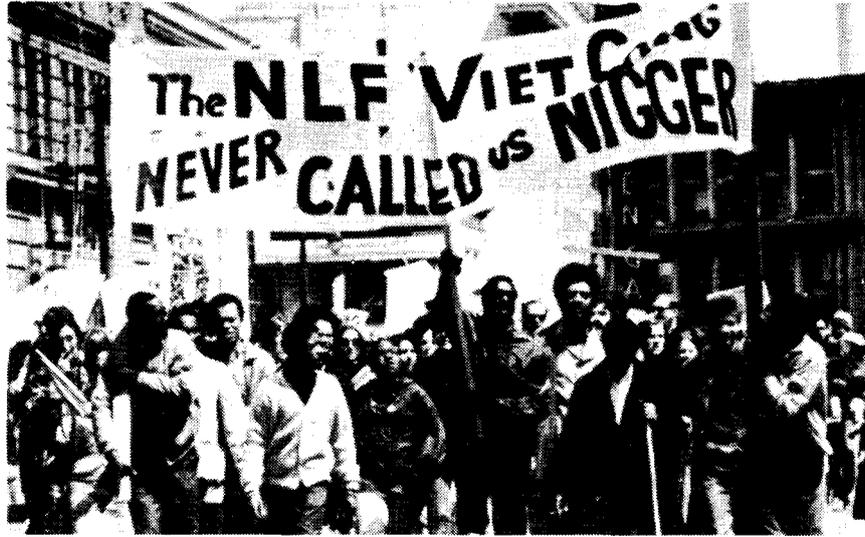
At the same time, to justify its continued rule over the populace while veiling the racial and class oppression inherent in bourgeois democracy, the ruling class

must maintain the appearance that the law applies equally and evenhandedly to all. Unlike the blatant bias shown in the kangaroo court of "hanging judge" Albert Sabo, who has presided over the ongoing frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Judge Dickey has from the outset taken great care to preserve the appearance of impartial justice in Geronimo's case. His ruling, while most heartily welcome, does not change the nature of capitalist injustice.

Nor was this ruling a matter of humanitarian considerations. Geronimo's long-

the racist rulers to want a facelift for the badly tarnished image of the judicial system in Los Angeles, with the obscene display of racist injustice in the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King still vividly imprinted in the consciousness of many. In a country where the gap between rich and poor rivals that in many "Third World" countries, it is useful for the ruling class to confess a past "excess" in order to more effectively exploit and repress the working and oppressed masses.

On 2 June, the *Los Angeles Times*



Banner carried in April 1967 San Francisco protest against Vietnam War captured hatred of many black militants for racist US imperialism at home and abroad.

time support from significant layers of the California labour movement, black organisations and civil libertarians has made it difficult for the ruling class to simply bury him in prison and to hide the facts of his frame-up, which have persisted in coming to light. At the same time, with the unions prostrate and social struggle at an ebb, the capitalist rulers see no immediate challenge to their untrammelled exploitation and oppression. COINTELPRO succeeded in destroying the Black Panther Party and a generation of black militants who identified with it, while others were bought off and co-opted. With the key players in Geronimo's frame-up shielded from harmful exposure, there is no particular reason for the state not to let Geronimo out.

Moreover, there's plenty of reason for

concluded an editorial statement on Geronimo by stating, "Garcetti should close the book on this shameful chapter in law enforcement history." But the frame-up of Geronimo was not some aberration of a time now past. While the government was forced by embarrassing exposure to shelve COINTELPRO in the mid-1970s, America's apparatus of repression is still at work: from the 1985 firebombing of MOVE in Philadelphia which killed eleven black people, including six children, to the horrendous massacre of more than 80 men, women and children outside Waco, Texas in 1993.

Above and beyond these atrocities are the ever-escalating speed-up on death row and the cold-blooded cop executions of black and Hispanic youth on the streets, part of the "routine" cop terror which

stalks the ghettos and barrios across the country. And in his four years in office, Democrat Clinton has presided over an intensifying onslaught on basic civil rights, including slashing prisoners' access to legal defence and gutting the vital *habeas corpus* right of prisoners to appeal their convictions in federal court.

Mumia Abu-Jamal has become a symbol of the racist injustice of capitalism in the US, persecuted by the same COINTELPRO operation that put Geronimo in prison, and Geronimo has consistently spoken up in his defence. An award-winning journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless" for his outspoken condemnation of police brutality, Jamal had been in the sights of the FBI and Philadelphia cops from the moment he joined the Black Panther Party as a teenager. Framed up for the killing of a cop, Jamal was railroaded to death row based on his political beliefs, in a proceeding that was such a mockery of bourgeois justice that he cannot even be said to have had a trial. While a massive international campaign of protest stayed the hand of the executioner in the summer of 1995, Jamal remains on death row awaiting the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's ruling on his petition to overturn his conviction.

It is genuinely obscene to speak of "closing the book" on the frame-up of Geronimo ji Jaga. There is no way to rectify the vicious actions of the ruling class and its state against him — injustice has been irrevocably committed. But we can and will redouble our efforts to win freedom for the many other class-war prisoners and to continue the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party that can fight for a workers government which alone will put an end to racial oppression. As we said in an article on Geronimo's case in 1985:

"The full counterrevolutionary scope of COINTELPRO and its massive crimes against the Panthers and other black militants will be unearthed when the working class, led by a multiracial Trotskyist vanguard party, takes power by smashing the decrepit capitalist system through socialist revolution. The working class will not forget and surely will not forgive such bestial crimes."

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 670, 13 June 1997.

Labour's racist deportations

Anti-immigrant demagogy is the rallying cry of the imperialist rulers today, as it serves their purpose of dividing the workers along racial and ethnic lines in order to prevent them from uniting in struggle against their common enemy: capitalism. Labour, committed to the present capitalist offensive no less than the Tory government it replaced, continues the onslaught against immigrants and workers. The Spartacist League and the Partisan Defence Committee fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, an indispensable part of the struggle for socialist revolution.

We reprint below a Partisan Defence Committee letter sent to Home Secretary Jack Straw on 16 May protesting the brutal treatment of asylum seekers.

We protest the outrageous jailing and deportation of asylum seekers, under the racist laws which Labour helped pass. Fifteen asylum seekers are now in their second week on hunger strike in Winson Green Prison in Birmingham. Like the Rochester hunger strikers last February, they have had to resort to desperate measures to protest their imprisonment as crim-

inals, in conditions of filth and terror. Among them is Lloyd Bent, who, although married to a British citizen, was jailed on his return from a family funeral in Jamaica.

In addition to those in Winson Green, a case of particular urgency is that of Desire Ble, an opponent of the Ivory Coast dictatorship who fled in fear for his life in June 1994. Criminally, Ble's application for asylum was refused as was his subsequent appeal, and his life is now in the hands of the High Court. Amnesty International has publicly stated its opposition to the "forcible" return to the Ivory Coast of any member of the Federation of Students and Pupils of Ivory Coast (FESCI), of which Ble was a leading member. Comrades of Ble have "disappeared" after summons by the police in the Ivory Coast. Ivorian activist Flora Mahan was deported from Denmark where she sought asylum. Upon her return to the Ivory Coast, she was a victim of torture and rape by the airport police, and died shortly after her release.

The *Independent* (1 May) revealed that the Home Office used the recess of parliament during the election period to speed up the process of mass deportations of

asylum seekers, when no one was looking. The Labour Party's bulldog election symbolism was a promise to administer rotting British capitalism with racist brutality equal to their predecessors.

Our fight is for full citizenship rights

The Partisan Defence Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This

purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. For information: phone 0171-485 1396 or write to Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX.

Spartacist forum on Northern Ireland

New Labour flaunts bloody Union Jack — imperialist "peace" fraud fuels Orange terror

British troops out now!

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

Wednesday, 16 July, 7.30pm
Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road
Nearest tube: King's Cross or Chancery Lane
For more information: 0171-485 1396

Austerity elections in France

Jospin will continue war on workers and minorities



Independent

French voters went to the polls in May for the parliamentary elections called by right-wing president Jacques Chirac, who was trying to position himself for renewed assaults on national health insurance, retirement pensions and other social services. As throughout Europe, the French bourgeoisie's attacks on the working class have been carried out under the banner of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which calls for slashing budget deficits as a requirement for member states of the European Union (EU) joining a projected common European currency in 1999. The draconian austerity programme introduced by Chirac's prime minister, Alain Juppé, has provoked a series of hard-fought strikes, most notably the massive strike wave by public sector employees in December 1995.

The Socialist Party/Communist Party (PS/PCF) bloc, tailed by a myriad of "far left" groups, offered nothing more than an updated version of the class-collaborationist Union of the Left governments of former PS president François Mitterrand, which carried out anti-working-class attacks and anti-immigrant terror during the 1980s. The Juppé government's deportations and other racist attacks on immigrants have been met with repeated protest demonstrations, often including sizable contingents of workers. Yet the bankruptcy of the reformist parties has allowed a sinister growth of Jean-Marie Le Pen's fascist National Front (FN), whose stock-in-trade is racist terror against immigrant workers as scapegoats for massive unemployment and economic stagnation. The FN won an ominous 15 per cent.

The newly elected "cohabitation" government of Chirac and Jospin, and including the PCF, will continue the brutal attacks on the working class and poor, police terror against racial minorities at home, and imperialist plunder in African and other French colonies and neo-colonies.

We publish below an abridged translation of a 15 May leaflet by our comrades of the Ligue trotskyste de France.

President Jacques Chirac's aim in these elections is clearly to get a "popular mandate" for the new wave of anti-working-class austerity, layoffs, anti-union attacks and anti-immigrant repression which will be necessary in the coming months in order to satisfy the "convergence criteria" of the Maastricht Treaty. The alternative proposed by Jospin and Hue is a new class-collaborationist alliance uniting the PS and the PCF with bourgeois formations (Radicals, Greens and the ultra-chauvinist Jean-Pierre Chevènement). As good defenders of capitalism, they present nothing but a "left" cover for austerity and racism and promise to up-

hold the capitalist system with a "human face". And the various "far left" groups also accept the capitalist framework.

Workers and immigrants in Italy are today faced with this same type of coalition, as Prime Minister Romano Prodi, with the support of Rifondazione Comunista among others, imposes the austerity measures and anti-immigrant laws that Italian capitalism demands. In these coalitions, which Trotskyists call popular fronts, between bourgeois parties and bourgeois workers parties, like the PCF and the PS, the contradiction between the interests of the workers that the leaders of

are necessary. One industry, one union! All workers must be organised into the unions!

The crisis of capitalism will be resolved not by the ballot box but by class struggle, going beyond the immediate economic needs of workers and youth confronted by plant closings and rising unemployment. A conscious political fight is necessary, taking up the interests of *all* the oppressed and first of all the African and North African component of the private-sector workforce, which is strategically placed in heavy industry, and the "sans-papiers" (undocumented workers).



Eric LeVelly

French workers battle Maastricht-inspired government offensive, December 1995.

these reformist parties claim to defend and what they really stand for — the defence of capitalism — is suppressed with the ready-made excuse that "we can't do anything because our partners won't accept it". The reformist workers parties thus become representatives of a *bourgeois* coalition. Under these conditions, a vote for the parties in these coalitions is a vote for the class enemy. It is a break with the principle of class independence. *No vote for the workers parties in popular fronts! No to class collaboration!*

The spokesmen of the right are proposing to do away with the minimum wage in order to give the bosses the right to hire youth at starvation wages. The power of the working class must be mobilised to impose a sliding scale of wages and hours with no loss in pay in order to spread the work among all the workers and to maintain the workers' standard of living. The attempt to eliminate the minimum wage is also aimed at using youth and immigrants to attack the trade unions. Now more than ever, the unions must fight to organise all non-unionised workers and the unemployed. And against the division of the trade unions along political lines, as is presently the case, industrial trade unions including all workers in the same industry

The oppressed must be organised on the side of the proletariat by a Leninist party, which is a tribune of the people — a party of revolutionary action, not of parliamentary traitors — and which fights for the conquest of power by the proletariat through socialist revolution. For a revolutionary multi-ethnic workers party!

In the post-Cold War world, the collapse of Stalinism and the victory of capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the USSR have brutally unleashed rivalries among the various imperialists which were previously put on the back burner in the face of their common Soviet enemy. The French bourgeoisie, like all the bourgeoisies, must sharply increase the rate of exploitation of "its" working class in order to raise its economic productivity. This means waves of layoffs, massive unemployment among the youth, temporary employment, attacks on women's rights, stagnating or reduced wages, speedup, destruction of social benefits, deportation of workers from the "Third World" who are now deemed "superfluous", etc. The Maastricht Treaty, with its "convergence criteria", simply creates an additional pressure to launch these reactionary attacks within the timetable for establishing the common currency. And

tricht (thus bailing Mitterrand out). These organisations, each to the extent of their forces, share part of the responsibility for the draconian austerity which has accompanied the setting up of this treaty. If tomorrow "monetary union" were abandoned or postponed indefinitely in the face of workers' struggles, it would be a victory for the workers who, throughout Europe, have put up sharp resistance to the capitalist offensive. Down with the capitalist system! Down with the Europe of Maastricht!

Nevertheless, such a victory would necessarily be temporary and reversible. It is impossible, within the framework of the capitalist system, to do away with unemployment, austerity and racism. The latest illustration of this is the crisis of the European automobile industry, whose extent was revealed by the recent fight of Renault workers in Vilvorde, Belgium. With production capacity becoming much greater than market demand, the capitalists have no other solution than to close plants and throw thousands of workers onto the street. This provoked, among other things, the first strike organised on a European level by workers from the various Renault plants and a demonstration in Brussels in support of the Vilvorde workers by tens of

thousands of workers from throughout Europe and from most of the motor industries. The workers' perspective — in the motor industry and elsewhere — must be to set up a planned economy, to organise production on the basis of the needs of the population at the level of *Europe as a whole* under the rule of democratic workers councils. This requires the overthrow of the bourgeoisies and their states. For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The social-chauvinists of the PCF have for years made common cause with bourgeois forces opposed to Maastricht on the basis of protectionism and anti-German nationalism — including with the “republican” chauvinist Chevènement. Presenting “Maastricht” as the sole cause of the anti-working-class attacks carried out by the capitalists of Western Europe deliberately obscures, in the consciousness of the workers and the oppressed, the understanding that the main enemy is their own bourgeoisie, not Brussels or Frankfurt. The defence of the “national interest” ties the workers to their “own” bourgeoisie and inevitably sets them against the workers of other countries. The main enemy is at home! If today the PCF and the PS find themselves side by side on the question of Europe, even though they have divergent positions on Maastricht, it is because both defend the interests of the French bourgeoisie.

Why we are not voting for LO

LO is presenting itself as a proletarian opposition to the candidates of the reformist “left” and talks of building the party which the working class needs. This is impossible for an organisation like LO, which is passive in the face of racist oppression and the fascist threat that today polarises French society. Many workers understand that the attacks against immigrants and their families are attacks against the entire working class. They are a way for the bourgeoisie and its fascist thugs to divide and weaken the working class and to make immigrants the scapegoats for the economic chaos created by the capitalist system. And tomorrow it will be the turn of other layers of society such as women, whom Le Pen wants to confine to the home in order to “free up jobs”. The role of the revolutionary party is to mobilise the social power of the working class to defend all sectors of the oppressed, who have everything to gain from the overthrow of the capitalist system. The working class, because of its role



Reuters/AP

Paris, 23 August 1996: military-style operation evicts immigrants from St Bernard church, smashing through protesters blocking the entrance in solidarity with the immigrants.

— who refused to fight racist terror. We called for “Full citizenship rights for all who got here!” and denounced the campaign of cop terror against minorities, demanding “Down with Vigipirate!” In 1994, we fought side by side with the high-school students who mobilised to defend the girls expelled from school by the racist Bayrou directive because they wore a *hidjeb* (Islamic head scarf). As the Jeunesse spartaciste (youth group of the LTF) wrote in a leaflet: “This directive, which under cover of ‘defence of secularism’ strengthens the hold of religious obscurantism, notably among the girls, aims simply to expel girls of North African descent from school” (*Le Bolchévik* no 131, December 1994-January 1995). [See “France: Racist Edict Targets School-girls”, *Women and Revolution* no 44, Winter 1994-Spring 1995.]

Under the pretext of “defending women”, LO became the spokesman for the government by applauding the racist expulsions along with notoriously anti-immigrant interior minister Charles Pasqua. Remember that over Iran (1978-79) and Afghanistan (1979), where defending women from the slavery of the *chador* (head-to-toe “veil”) was a central and vital

In December 1994 in Lille, LO went beyond what the fascists themselves had dared to do: organising a counterdemonstration to demand the expulsion of girls for wearing headscarves when the high-school students went on strike to defend their schoolmates against expulsion.

LO boycotted the demonstration against Le Pen’s congress in Strasbourg last spring, with the excuse that the protest was controlled by the PS. This argument is sheer hypocrisy coming from the organisation that in Vitrolles called for a vote to PS candidate Anglade, a notoriously corrupt, racist demagogue. LO thus left thousands of youth who want to get rid of the fascist scum politically disarmed, in the hands of the same reformist bureaucrats who try by any means to channel these youth behind the banner of “clean” capitalism. We went to the Strasbourg demonstration with our newspaper and our programme for worker/immigrant mobilisations to smash the fascists, seeking to win from the influence of the reformists and centrists those who want to sweep away fascist barbarism. We intervened in a forum organised by the anti-fascist “Committee of Vigilance” to counterpose our red flag to the tricolour — the flag of World Wars I and II, of the massacres and repression in the colonies (as today in French Guiana) and of racist terror — with which these reformists, in the name of “republican values” and the “democratic image of France”, wanted to rally the youth.

The FN has given a taste of what its programme means in the city councils where it has won control: eviction of ethnic minorities, militarisation of the population through a network of fascist-controlled “associations”, municipal militias, the expulsion of the Jewish writer Marek Halter from the Toulon book fair, etc. The FN is fighting for power, and fascism in power means the physical destruction of the organised workers movement. It means the arrest of leftists and trade unionists, militarisation of labour, gangs roaming the streets and attacking people from communities deemed “abnormal”, war, etc. But LO *does not characterise Le Pen as fascist* because they are seeking to compete on the same terrain as the FN. Remember the televised “debate” between LO leader Arlette Laguiller and FN spokesman Martinez in March 1989! LO’s goal was to convince the racists who were voting for the FN that the latter is fooling them. No debate with fascists! For worker/immigrant mobilisations to smash the fascists before they smash us!

That is why we are not calling for a

vote for LO. Nor do we call for voting for Voix des Travailleurs, an opposition grouping expelled from LO, which stands on the same programme as LO regarding the two crucial questions in this country today: the fight against the fascist threat and against racist terror.

For a revolutionary party!

In order to tail the reformists, the fake revolutionaries hide the class nature of popular-frontist bourgeois coalitions. Thus, the social-democratised Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR — affiliated to the United Secretariat), which is presenting a few candidates on the first round under the slogan “For a left that is 100 per cent left”, calls as usual to “beat the right on the second round” and to “vote left” (the voter being free to choose the percentage). The May issue of *Socialisme International* (SI — associated with Tony Cliff’s Socialist Workers Party in Britain) headlines “Beat the right! Vote left!” With SI acting as electoral agents of the Socialist Party, the majority of SI has now liquidated wholesale into the PS Socialist Youth Movement (MJS). The Gauche révolutionnaire (GR — linked with the Socialist Party in Britain) ran the headline “Out with the government!” and calls for a vote to the PCF on the first round based on the PCF’s opposition to Maastricht, while admitting that this opposition comes from a chauvinist standpoint. GR also calls for a vote to Voix des Travailleurs. While proclaiming its anti-racism during the struggle of the “*sans-papiers*”, GR nonetheless calls for a vote for an organisation which closes its eyes to the question of racist terror.

PO, which unconditionally votes for the reformist parties everywhere and in every circumstance, calls for a “PS-PCF majority”, explaining: “Let’s test the PS and the PCF one more time, so that the workers can struggle and force their representatives to implement their promises, however meagre; and if they refuse, let’s break with the reformist policies in struggle and create the revolutionary alternative that we need so badly” (*Pouvoir ouvrier*, May 1997). Fourteen years of Mitterrand governments showed “one more time” how each new “experience” of “left” class-collaborationist government, which in fact manages the capitalists’ crisis at the expense of the workers and the majority of the population, only demobilises and demoralises the working class. It pushes the petty bourgeoisie and the most backward workers into the arms of reaction and the fascists—who have an easy time presenting themselves as the only “radical” alternative to established order. And what do Jospin and Hue promise except austerity, unemployment and (“left-wing”) racism? PO wants to drive the workers once again into an impasse by calling on them to put a class-collaborationist coalition in power.

The sections of the International Communist League, which are today fighting propaganda groups, embody the revolutionary programme. We intervene with our programme to *provide revolutionary leadership*, and to build a revolutionary party along with those who want to fight to overthrow the capitalist system, by exposing in the day-to-day struggle the role of the reformist and centrist charlatans. We represent the revolutionary Trotskyist nucleus dedicated to building this party — a Leninist party rooted in the working class, a tribune of the people capable of uniting “French” and “immigrant” workers in a common struggle against their common enemy, capitalism. The role of this party is to introduce into the working class the consciousness of its historical interests and tasks. The LTF, French section of the ICL, fights for new October Revolutions led by a reformed Fourth International. ■



Demonstration against Le Pen’s fascist National Front, Strasbourg, 29 March.

in production, is the only class with the power to build a new society. For this, it needs to ally with other layers of society which face capitalist attacks; otherwise, the latter will turn towards reactionary illusions like Islamic fundamentalism and nationalism instead of strengthening the workers’ class struggle.

Thus, during the December 1995 strike wave, we struggled against the working-class leaders — and the entire “far left”

question, LO never bothered about the plight of women, which they now use as a cover for their capitulation to the racist campaign. They had no compunction at the time about being on the same side as the Muslim fundamentalists, whom they so eagerly denounce in this country today. But the real threat in this country today is chauvinist and racist reaction, behind which stands the Catholic church, the historically dominant religion in France.

Workers Power: Heart of Dimness

When the rebel army of Laurent Kabila drove former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko out of the capital city of Kinshasa last month, it brought a new reactionary, pro-imperialist regime to power in Congo (formerly Zaire). Kabila immediately clamped down on all political opponents and banned street protests. Numerous reports indicate that his largely Tutsi forces have carried out massacres of Hutu refugees. One of Kabila's first acts upon entering Kinshasa was to outlaw the wearing of trousers or short skirts by women; his troops enforced the ban by stripping a number of women in the streets.

Having backed Kabila's rise to power, US imperialism is now demanding that the new regime give lip service to a modicum of "democracy" in order to ensure stability in the mineral-rich country. Nonetheless, visiting American Congressman Tom Campbell praised the ban on political parties and protests as "perhaps actually in good judgement". Another Kabila patron, South African president Nelson Mandela, chimed in: "It would be suicidal for him to allow the operation of parties before he has had a firm grip on the government of the country" (*ITN World News*, 28 May).

Some months ago, we wrote that "revolutionaries do not have a side in this conflict", noting that the war between Kabila's forces and the despised Mobutu dictatorship "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" (*Workers Hammer* no 156, May/June 1997). For its part, the British centrist Workers Power (WP) group hailed Kabila's movement as "progressive", lauding it as "a legitimate struggle against the pro-imperialist Mobutu dictatorship" and a "legitimate war of self-defence" by the Tutsi minority in Zaire against communalist terror (*Workers Power*, December 1996). But now that Workers Power can no longer sweep under the carpet Kabila's pro-imperialist, communalist and anti-democratic policies, it has taken to piously intoning that "Kabila is no friend of democracy" (*Workers Power*, May 1997).

Workers Power's methodology provides a case study in centrist opportunism. Kabila's "anti-imperialist" credentials, such as they were, stemmed from the fact that in the 1960s he led a short-lived guerrilla movement in which Che Guevara briefly participated. As Guevara's unpublished memoirs reveal, however, he was quickly disabused of Kabila's leftist pretensions (*Le Monde*, 8 April). When Kabila launched his power drive last autumn, WP quickly latched onto it, consistent with WP's prior support to the neighbouring Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (FPR) regime, which promoted Kabila's rebellion. WP supported the FPR's rise to power in Rwanda in 1994 and continued to back it even afterwards, dubbing its military campaign in eastern Zaire a "just war" in "defence of the Rwandan population against the genocidal raiding parties" by Hutu militias.

For Marxists, the question of extending military support in civil wars and other conflicts is determined by whether the victory of one side or another will further the cause of social emancipation for the proletariat and the oppressed. A case in point in sub-Saharan Africa is our line on

Angola. Before 1975, we gave military support to all three competing Angolan nationalist movements in their struggle against Portuguese colonialism. When the rival independence movements launched into a three-sided civil war against each other following the defeat of the Portuguese, none of these petty-bourgeois forces warranted any support from Marxists. However, when apartheid South Africa — backed by the US — militarily intervened in the conflict in late 1975 on the side of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA and

against pro-imperialist and counterrevolutionary forces. But in every conflict between opposing petty-bourgeois or bourgeois nationalist forces, WP always searches for a so-called "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" side. At bottom, WP's methodology is social-democratic, substituting "classless" considerations (which camp is more or less "democratic" or "genocidal", which best embodies a mythical "anti-imperialist" dynamic, etc, etc) for the historic interests of the international proletariat. In WP's eyes, if the Hutu

Of course, that is precisely what the mullahs did once they came to power. Yet WP never repudiated its support to Khomeini. Likewise, as Kabila's forces closed in on Kinshasa, WP simply "dropped" its call for their "victory" and hoped no one would notice. Now, *Workers Power* (June 1997) blares, "Don't trust Kabila — fight for a workers' republic". Even now, WP promotes the sham "popular committees" set up by Kabila as vehicles for the workers to "press for their demands", while raising ludicrous calls for workers militias



Nelson Mandela (left) patron of Laurent Kabila (right). Kabila's forces have carried out massacres of Hutu refugees.



the FNLA, we then extended military support to the MPLA nationalists, who were aided on the ground by Cuban troops. The defeat of the CIA/South African-organised offensive by the Soviet-backed MPLA/Cuban forces was a blow against imperialism.

In Rwanda and Congo, the Tutsi and Hutu armed forces were qualitatively similar communal-based movements in which neither side posed a military conflict with imperialism. When the Hutu militias had the upper hand, they perpetrated horrific slaughters of Tutsis; the Tutsi forces then carried out indiscriminate massacres against the Hutus. The Tutsis have received the backing of US and British imperialism, while the Hutus were supported by French imperialism, which has been striving to maintain its historic "chasse gardée" (hunting preserve) in central Africa.

The line-up of the competing imperialist camps had its reflection in Workers Power's "international", where WP's support to the Tutsis didn't sit well with its French affiliate, Pouvoir ouvrier (PO). PO publicly attacked the line of its British "cothinkers", using a similar position of Gauche révolutionnaire (GR — affiliated to the Socialist Party) as a foil. PO denounced GR's call for "All power to the FPR!" as "totally opportunist, even treacherous", making the obvious point that the FPR wanted to "establish a new capitalist order albeit one loyal to other masters, Uganda and the USA" (*Pouvoir ouvrier*, September 1994). WP/PO's parody of a "Revolutionary Communist International" is a vivid confirmation of Trotsky's observation that centrism — which, stripped of its revolutionary rhetoric, is defined by its overriding quest for "unity" with the chauvinist social democrats on its own national terrain — is inherently incapable of genuine internationalism.

Throughout the Cold War, WP repeatedly refused to side with the Soviet bureaucratic degenerated workers state

militias carried out a genocidal massacre of Tutsis, this makes the Tutsi-based nationalist movements "progressive".

WP's support to the FPR/Kabila forces denies the fact that under imperialism, "nation-building" in backward countries with interpenetrated ethnic and national populations necessarily means one people dominating the others and seeking to drive them out or eliminate them. In practice, the policy of the "anti-imperialist united front" pursued by these pseudo-Trotskyists stands counterposed to Trotsky's theory and programme of permanent revolution. Trotsky argued that in the epoch of imperialist decay, the unresolved bourgeois-democratic tasks (political democracy, national consolidation, agrarian revolution) in underdeveloped countries cannot be realised by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces, which are inevitably subservient to imperialism. The achievement of these aims requires that the proletariat, supported by the peasantry, seize state power and fight to extend socialist revolution to the advanced capitalist powers.

Marxism is a scientific guide to action, informed and reinforced by empirical evidence. Centristism, on the other hand, is, in Trotsky's words, "crystallised confusion", resorting to equivocation and obfuscation to cover its tailing of alien class forces. This is exemplified most glaringly over Iran in 1979 where, in the name of the "anti-imperialist united front", Workers Power joined with virtually the entire left in hailing Khomeini's "revolution". In bitterly denouncing our revolutionary proletarian opposition to both the shah and the mullahs, WP sneered that our warnings against support to Khomeini "amount to uncritical retailing of the chauvinist rubbish which filled the American press". WP ridiculed the notion that the mullahs in power would "introduce savage Islamic law punishments; stoning, public hanging and whipping" and "enforce the wearing of the veil" (*Workers Power*, February 1979).

and workers and peasants councils in this extremely backward and economically shattered country.

WP disappears the need to link social struggles in Congo with those in South Africa — the industrial powerhouse of this region — which has a huge and combative black proletariat with the potential power to sweep away imperialist domination and carry through a socialist transformation of sub-Saharan Africa. WP's line there is counterposed to the fight for workers revolution, as it looks instead to the ANC-dominated nationalist popular front which suppresses the proletariat on behalf of the Randlords. In the 1994 South African elections, where the Communist Party and COSATU trade-union federation were part of a common slate with the bourgeois-nationalist ANC, WP yearned to give "critical support" to the popular front through the back door, complaining: "Had it been possible to vote separately for the workers' organisations and candidates within the ANC alliance then revolutionaries should have supported these candidates critically" (*Workers Power*, April 1994).

The unspeakable horrors of Belgium's colonial occupation of the Congo were powerfully evoked in Joseph Conrad's classic short novel, *Heart of Darkness*. Today, the horrors of neocolonialism — ethnic and tribal massacres, famine and poverty — are accompanied by the development of a powerful proletariat in the industrial centres of Egypt, the Maghreb, Nigeria and especially South Africa. The promise of liberation lies in proletarian struggle against capitalist imperialism and for socialism, extending to the imperialist centres. Proletarian victory requires the leadership of internationalist Trotskyist parties based on the programme of permanent revolution and steeled in the political struggle against all forms of nationalism and centrist opportunism. Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 670, 13 June 1997.

"Euromarch"

(Continued from page 1)

the former Soviet Union and East Europe. Thus, they backed the Nazi-infested Baltic nationalists; Lech Walesa's Solidarność (the only "union" in the world supported by the Vatican, Reagan and Thatcher); and Yeltsin's coup in Russia in August 1991. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, such groups as the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), the French group affiliated to the USec, are now playing a more open role as left social-democratic pressure groups on the mass reformist workers parties and as advisers to the top union bureaucrats.

While remaining committed to the Maastricht project, Lionel Jospin's Socialists have cynically sought to capitalise on the strong anti-Maastricht sentiment of the working class. Aiming to dampen the labour unrest which has rocked France, the PS mouths empty liberal platitudes about a "reorientation of European construction" around policies which would be "placed at the service of man." But Mitterrand's heirs are no less committed to serving the interests of the Paris Bourse than the Socialist government of yesterday, whose economic programme was encapsulated in *le franc fort* (the strong franc) and Maastricht. The new "cohabitation" government of Chirac and Jospin, and including the PCF, will continue the brutal attacks on the working class and poor, police terror against racial minorities at home, and imperialist plunder in African and other French colonies and neocolonies. Indeed, the fascist Le Pen strongly hinted that his supporters should vote for the candidates of the popular front in the second round of the elections against Chirac & Co.

Echoing Jospin's PS, the march organisers, in a letter to sponsoring organisations, state that the march's basic aim is to "reverse the whole direction of European Union and national governments' economic and social policy." Indeed, the "Euromarch" programme does not even oppose the European Union or the Maastricht Treaty, while its USec organisers boast that endorsers include "those who are against the Treaty in principle and those who are not" (*Socialist Outlook*, March 1997). While some of the participants pay lip service to a "workers Europe" or a "united socialist Europe," all support the social-democratic and ex-Stalinist labour lieutenants of capital—the Party of the Democratic Left and Rifondazione Comunista (RC), who respectively are part of or prop up the pro-austerity popular-front capitalist government in Italy; the PS and PCF in France; Blair's "New" Labour Party in Britain. Thus the British groups involved in the "Euromarch" emblazoned on their press in gigantic letters the call to *vote Labour*.

In contrast, the ICL maintains that effective resistance to the present capitalist offensive requires a revolutionary internationalist perspective and programme. The European bourgeoisies are intent on savage attacks on the working class, slashing jobs, wages and social programmes, hitting hardest at the weakest sectors of society. Immigrants, asylum seekers and racial minorities are made scapegoats by the capitalist rulers, who use racism to divide the working masses and to poison the workers' class consciousness. As capitalist restoration ravages East Europe and imperialist aggrandisement drives the masses of the neocolonial "Third World" into ever more grinding poverty, larger and larger numbers of refugees face refusal of entry or deportation from "Fortress Europe," as well as deadly racist terror at the hands of the cops and the fascists, who have grown dramatically in France, Italy, Germany and Austria.



German Spartakists led anti-fascist protesters in stopping Nazi provocation in Berlin in February.

Fascism feeds off mass unemployment and despair, and across Europe racist terror against immigrants and Roma (Gypsies) is the cutting edge of the capitalists' attacks on the living standards of the whole working class. The interests of the working class and minorities must advance together, or they will fall back separately. Thus defence of the immigrant communities against government and fascist attacks, centring on the demand for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants and asylum seekers*, is key to advancing working-class struggle in West Europe.

Furthermore, as we wrote last year

to meet its own economic criteria for monetary union.

As the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the ICL, noted in our 15 May statement on the French elections:

"If tomorrow 'monetary union' were abandoned or postponed indefinitely in the face of workers' struggles, it would be a victory for the workers who, throughout Europe, have put up sharp resistance to the capitalist offensive....

"Nevertheless, such a victory would necessarily be temporary and reversible. It is impossible, within the framework of the capitalist system, to do away with unemployment, austerity and racism."



Growth of Le Pen's National Front means more fascist terror attacks against immigrants in France.

(*Spartacist* [French-language edition], No. 29, Summer 1996):

"West Europe's dark-skinned proletarians are not just defenceless victims but a very important component of the forces capable of destroying the racist capitalist system. West Indian transport workers and South Asian nurses in Britain, North African Arab and Berber auto workers in France, Turkish coal miners and Kurdish chemical workers in Germany will play an important part in a European proletarian revolution. These workers are a bridge to the workers and peasant masses of the neocolonial Third World, a living link in an international socialist perspective. To transform this perspective into reality requires above all the construction of revolutionary parties, the re forging of the Fourth International based on the principles of Lenin and Trotsky."

For proletarian struggle against the European Union

Now the West European powers are fearful that the main objective of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the pursuit of "currency union," may have to be postponed or abandoned. The French elections were called by Chirac to obtain a mandate for further attacks on the working class, to meet the criteria for monetary union on schedule. However, the victory of the Socialist-led coalition was fueled by the protest vote against the government cutbacks which also provoked massive public sector strikes in December 1995. Imperialist Germany itself now looks unlikely

Some reformist organisations, such as Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and the French Communist Party, present the EU and the Maastricht Treaty as the root cause of rising unemployment, government cutbacks and the general worsening of economic conditions. This obscures the fact that, with or without the Maastricht Treaty, the main enemy of the workers of each country is their "own" bourgeoisie. Here it is important to recall that Thatcher's Britain pioneered the dismantling of the "welfare state" years before there was any serious talk of a common European currency. Throughout most of the 1980s, the government of French Socialist president François Mitterrand (supported by the PCF) pursued a harsh monetarist austerity. As a result, unemployment rose steadily from 6 per cent in 1981, when the "Union of the Left" came to power, doubling by the time Chirac replaced Mitterrand two years ago.

Our opposition to Maastricht and the EU is based on a proletarian-internationalist perspective and is counterposed to the nationalist protectionism pushed by the PCF and the SLP, with their respective calls to "produce French" and to "stop imports of coal" to Britain. In 1992 Scargill, leader of the miners union, shared a platform with Winston Churchill Jr., a notorious racist, in a campaign supposedly to "save British coal." Similarly, Klaus Zwickel, leader of the German IG Metall union, demanded racist "immigration quotas" to "ease the German labour market,"

while the German building workers union organised a demonstration explicitly against Portuguese, Polish and Russian workers. Nationalism is poison to the working class, fanning the flames of racism by pitting sectors of the working class within each country and of different countries against each other.

The power of the working class must be mobilised to fight for a sliding scale of wages and hours with no loss in pay in order to spread the work among all the workers and to maintain the workers' standard of living. The bosses' attempt to create a two-tier wage system is also aimed at pitting youth and immigrants against the unions. Now more than ever, the unions must fight to organise all non-unionised workers and the unemployed. We fight for industrial trade unions, to include all workers in the same industry. The crisis of unemployment and attacks on social welfare have hit women workers the hardest. We demand equal pay for equal work, and free 24-hour day care. To achieve these demands requires the systematic mobilisation of the masses for the proletarian revolution.

The working class must fight racist terror

The deadly danger of such nationalism was clear when this February in Berlin-Hellersdorf the Hitlerite "Young National Democrats" tried to stage a murderous racist provocation under the slogan "Jobs

for Germans First!" But the Nazi skinheads' provocation was spiked by a united-front mobilisation of hundreds of anti-fascist demonstrators. This modest but politically significant victory over the fascists, who were sent scurrying under heavy police protection, required a political battle to counter the demobilising efforts of the social-democratic SPD and PDS. Those who wanted to *stop* the Nazis were mobilised under the leadership of our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD).

At bottom, the reformists look to the forces of the racist capitalist state to deal

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"Euromarch"

(Continued from page 9)

with the fascists. However, any bans or other action by the bourgeois state against the fascists, the armed gangs in defence of capital which the rulers hold in reserve to use against the proletariat, will ultimately be directed against the workers organisations. In contrast, we understand that crushing the fascist gangs requires mobilising the social power of the organised proletariat standing at the head of all the oppressed. This perspective has been exemplified by mass united-front actions initiated by the Spartacist League/U.S., which stopped Ku Klux Klan and Nazi provocations in a number of cities.

It is the policies of the mass reformist parties — which are seen as part of the "establishment," sworn to protect the capitalist status quo which is more and more unbearable — that in fact engender the growth of the fascist menace. These reformists don't offer anything except more austerity, unemployment, attacks on social programmes, mass expulsions of "illegal" immigrants. The fascists then have an easy time presenting themselves in the eyes of the petty bourgeoisie and the most backward workers as the only "radical" alternative to the established order.

It is necessary to counterpose to the chauvinist demagoguery of Le Pen or the Austrian Haider, who promise to end unemployment through the mass expulsion of immigrants, the socialist reorganisation of the European economies which alone can provide jobs for all with a rapidly rising living standard. As Trotsky wrote in 1930 when, under the impact of the Great Depression, the Nazi Party emerged as a real threat to take power:

"The problem of unemployment is one of the most important elements of the political crisis. The struggle against capitalist rationalisation and for the seven-hour working day remains entirely on the order of the day...."

"The *Soviet United States of Europe* — that is the only correct slogan which points to the way out of the splintering of Europe, which threatens not only Germany but all of Europe with complete economic and cultural decline.

"The slogan of the proletarian unification of Europe is simultaneously a very important weapon in the struggle against the abomination of fascist chauvinism, the baiting of France, and so forth."

— "The Turn in the Communist International and the Situation in Germany" (September 1930)

A capitalist European "superstate"?: utopian and reactionary

The European Economic Community, predecessor to the European Union, was set up in the mid-1950s as an economic adjunct of the NATO military alliance against the Soviet bloc. Its precursor was the Cold War Marshall Plan, implemented by U.S. imperialism in the late 1940s. However, since the counterrevolution in the former USSR and East Europe, the reunified Fourth Reich has become more dominant within the EU, with the Bundesbank bent on dictating austerity from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. Germany's renewed drive for hegemony in Europe has generated sharp divisions within the ruling classes of the other EU countries, especially its rivals in two world wars, Britain and France. German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel predicted that the Amsterdam conference may be a "night of the long knives," a chilling reminder that the German Fourth Reich is the successor state to Hitler's Third Reich.

Control over the quantity of money within its boundaries is a basic economic prerogative of a bourgeois state, one necessarily closely linked to other instruments

of economic policy. A stable monetary system based on the "euro" would require tight and permanent restrictions over taxation and government expenditure in all the EU member states. This is precisely what Kohl and the Bundesbank are now demanding. But since capitalism is organised on the basis of particular, national states, itself the cause of repeated imperialist wars to redivide the world, it is impossible to cohere a stable pan-European bourgeois state. A European imperialist

tries, can achieve a rationally planned economy, placing the productive capacity of Europe at the service of the working people of the world. Only on this basis can we speak of a *Socialist United States of Europe*.

The left fringe of European social democracy

The stage for the present attacks on the working class and immigrants in West Europe was set by the counterrevolution-

US president Clinton with France's Chirac and Russian leader Yeltsin at meeting mandating NATO expansion to Eastern Europe. Polish shipyard workers in Gdansk facing imminent plant closure are among victims of capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union.



Reuters

"superstate" can be achieved only by the methods of Adolf Hitler, not those of Jacques Delors, the French social-democratic architect of Maastricht. Should the Maastricht project for a common European currency come into being, it would amount to only a brief, conflict-ridden episode.

The idea of a gradual evolution into a "united states of Europe" under capitalism is a utopian fantasy. Lenin was clear in his denunciation of the concept in 1915:

"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...."

"Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists... but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America."

— "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" (August 1915)

In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, Marx and Engels noted that the capitalist system had created a world market, laying the basis for proletarian internationalism. Only the taking of state power by the working class, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in at least several advanced industrial coun-

try destruction of the Soviet Union. In East Europe and the former Soviet Union, the devastating consequences of capitalist restoration are manifest: from intercommunal slaughter to widespread hunger and homelessness. In Poland and elsewhere, women have been driven from the workforce, while abortion rights have been sharply curtailed. The impact of counterrevolution, both in the former degenerated/deformed workers states and internationally, underscores how profoundly right was the Trotskyist position on the Russian question: for unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, and for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. This remains our program for the remaining deformed workers states of China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba.

In 1979 we said, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan" and "Extend Social Gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan Peoples." We noted that the Red Army was defending the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism, and was on the side of social progress, defending the rights of women against the CIA-backed *mujahedin* reactionaries. From the moment Polish Solidarność consolidated around an openly pro-imperialist programme in the autumn of 1981, we raised the call "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolu-

tion!" Eight years later, we threw our forces into East Germany, seeking to provide revolutionary leadership to the incipient political revolution which erupted with the opening of the Berlin Wall. While Gorbachev gave the green light to capitalist reunification and the Stalinists of the SED/PDS sold out the DDR, we unconditionally opposed capitalist *Anschluss* (annexation) of the East German deformed workers state by West German imperialism. We fought for a "Red Germany of Workers Councils" as part of a Socialist United States of Europe.

Today with the West European bourgeoisies gloating about the "death of communism" and dismantling state welfare programmes, the already very tame mass social-democratic and ex-Stalinist parties have moved even farther to the right. Foremost among them is Tony Blair's "New" Labour in Britain, whose leaders want to refashion it as an outright bourgeois party modelled on Clinton's Democrats in the U.S. Blair's party has dropped its few remaining pretences to represent the interest of the working class and intends to sever Labour's link with the trade unions.

Keeping in step with this shift to the right, a host of pseudo-Trotskyist groups are openly embracing the lie that capitalism can be reformed. One of the smaller centrist outfits participating in the Euromarch campaign, the British Workers Power group (WP) and its League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI), actually maintains that the European Union and a common European currency are progressive, or potentially so. WP took an abstentionist position during the 1992 referendums on Maastricht. Echoing Labour's enthusiasm over the EU "Social Charter," they 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 those gains, or where it has lost them" and they added that "to some extent European workers will be better armed to fight back on a continental scale after the implementation of the terms of Maastricht" (*Workers Power*, June 1992).

Today, these EU socialists still hold that Maastricht is preferable to nationally "isolated" capitalism:

"The national states would carry out equally anti-working class policies whether they were in the EU or out of it. To the extent that they would be thrown back upon smaller markets and face sharper competition, their capitalists would have to launch redoubled attacks."

— "Build a United Socialist Europe!"
Workers Power, May 1997

In its own way, the LRCI is here echoing the threats of the Bundesbank and international financiers that any EU member state which does not accept a common currency will face massive capital flight and suffer economic hardships even worse than those resulting from the Maastricht convergence terms. This same kind of argument is also used by both capitalists and labour bureaucrats to oppose increased wages and benefits within the framework of a particular European nation-state.

The LRCI's own answer to Maastricht is a parody of parliamentary cretinism:

"Dissolve the powerless European parliament and convene a Europe-wide constitu-

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Workers' protests rock Europe: trade unionists march in Paris against threatened closure of Renault plant in Belgium.

ent assembly (organised and defended by the workers' organisations) to tear up the Maastricht treaty and to draw up a new workers' plan for economic and political convergence, designed to meet the needs of the workers, not the ruling class."
— *Workers Power*, January 1997

Why not tear up the NATO treaty, too, while they're about it? Or "open the borders" of the bourgeois states — another utopian demand raised by *Workers Power*? The Maastricht Treaty is an agreement between bourgeois states. As Marx and Engels explained a long time ago, bourgeois states are ultimately based not on parliaments or ministries but on *armed bodies of men*. The working class can tear up the economic as well as the military arrangements of the world capitalist system only by smashing the bourgeois state apparatus and replacing it by the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of a government of workers councils. But this perspective is completely counterposed to the aims of the sponsors of Euromarch '97.

In practice, the "internationalism" of groups like the USec, the LRCI and the British-based centrists of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency boils down to support for "progressive" imperialism. This was graphically illustrated by their joint campaign for "Workers Aid to Bosnia," which was a stalking-horse for NATO/UN intervention on the Bosnian Muslim side, inflaming communalist war in the Balkans. The "Workers Aid" campaign, with its calls to "lift the arms embargo of Bosnia," was a thinly veiled call for imperialism to arm the Bosnian Muslim forces. Capitalist restoration in the bureaucratically deformed workers state of Yugosla-

via led to all-sided communalist massacres among the Balkan peoples, fuelled by rival imperialist intervention forces. As proletarian internationalists, we oppose all the competing nationalist forces, demand the withdrawal of all imperialist troops and called for military defence of the Bosnian Serbs when they were targeted by NATO bombing raids. We recognise that the only just solution to murderous nationalism and communalism lies in socialist revolution to sweep away all the reactionary regimes and to establish a socialist federation of the Balkans.

It is the duty of communists in the imperialist countries to call and work for the military defeat of their "own" bourgeoisie in wars against the colonial and semicolonial countries. Our comrades of the LTF fight against the bloody colonialist machinations of French imperialist troops in Africa. Building for the Euromarch, the British Socialist Party (SP, formerly Militant Labour) declares: "We are internationalists and support greater solidarity and integration of the working peoples of Europe and the world" (*Socialist*, 16 May). The British SP's "internationalism" certainly does not extend to opposition to British imperialism in Ireland. Notorious in Britain for their rejection of the call for British troops out of Northern Ireland, SP meetings in Belfast and Dublin have hosted a representative of the fascist Ulster Loyalist paramilitary groups, convicted for the murder of two Catholics. Scandalously, the British SWP supported the introduction of British troops to Northern Ireland in 1969, on the pretext that they would "save lives."

In stark contrast to this social-chauvin-

ism, the Spartacist League/Britain and the Dublin Spartacist Group call for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland as part of the fight for an Irish workers republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles. As a 21 April SL/B election statement stressed:

"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.... 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."

Against popular frontism

As Lenin indicated, under certain conditions it is a correct tactic for a small revolutionary organisation to give critical electoral support to a larger reformist workers party. The basic condition for such a tactic is that the reformist party in question presents itself as representing the interests of the working class independently of and against the parties of the bourgeoisie. Critical electoral support affords revolutionaries a broader hearing for their own views and puts them in a better position to attract militant workers who become disillusioned when their

participate in any struggles against the fascist forces of Le Pen or against racism.

The USec's LCR and LRCI's Pouvoir Ouvrier both called for votes to pro-Maastricht Socialists and the virulently chauvinist PCF. This flatly negates their respective posturing for a "socialist Europe." In Italy, the USec section serves as a loyal "opposition" within RC, which in turn acts as a prop for the "left-center" capitalist Prodi government. The "Ulivo" (Olive Tree) coalition presides over vicious austerity, murderous attacks on immigrants and imperialist military intervention in Albania. More left-leaning elements in the USec look to the centrist Proposta group led by Franco Grisolia, which also operates within RC as a "left" cover for popular-front betrayal. Proposta expressed its allegiance to Italian imperialism recently by voting in favour of an RC motion which sought to provide a "United Nations" fig leaf for military intervention in Albania. Our comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia denounced the bloody murder of 89 Albanian refugees by the Italian navy and demanded: "Italian imperialism, get your bloody hands off Albania! Full citizenship rights for the Albanian refugees and all immigrants!"

For the communism of Lenin and Trotsky!

The social democrats and ex-Stalinists now present themselves as a "lesser evil," as advocates of a lesser degree of unemployment, cutbacks in social programmes and overall economic hardship. And the "far left" pseudo-Trotskyists have in their



Novosti

1917 Russian Revolution: soldiers demonstrate under banner reading "Communism". For new October Revolutions!

leaders betray, as they inevitably do, their professed principles and programme. Thus, in the recent elections the Spartacist League/Britain campaigned for a vote to Arthur Scargill's SLP, a left split from Blair's "New" Labour Party. The SLP, which stood in opposition to New Labour, espouses a variant of "old Labour" reformism.

Like Lenin and Trotsky, the ICL opposes in principle any type of coalition with capitalist parties ("popular frontism"), whether in government or in opposition, and we oppose voting for reformist parties in popular fronts, like the PDS and RC in Italy and the PS and PCF in France. In its 15 May leaflet, the LTF noted that by running in an alliance with bourgeois formations (including the ultra-chauvinist Jean-Pierre Chevènement) the French reformist parties "thus become representatives of a *bourgeois* coalition. Under these conditions, a vote for the parties in these coalitions is a vote for the class enemy. It is a break with the principle of class independence. *No vote for the workers parties in popular fronts! No to class collaboration!*" The LTF also said no vote to Lutte Ouvrière, who ostentatiously refuse to

turn become the defenders of the "welfare state" status quo. We stand for a fundamentally different programme and perspective: the smashing of the capitalist state, the expropriation of the means of production and the establishment of a planned, collectivised economy under a workers government. We seek to go forward to new October Revolutions throughout Europe and throughout the world. As the Transitional Programme, the founding document of the Fourth International written in 1938, states:

"The Fourth International does not search after and does not invent panaceas. It takes its stand completely on Marxism as the only revolutionary doctrine that enables one to understand reality, unearth the cause behind the defeats, and consciously prepare for victory. The Fourth International continues the tradition of Bolshevism, which first showed the proletariat how to conquer power."

The ICL is dedicated to the task of re-forging Trotsky's Fourth International through intransigent political struggle against the social-democratic and ex-Stalinist betrayers and their centrist hangers-on. Issued for 14 June 1997 "Euromarch" in Amsterdam.

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Dublin Spartacist Group statement on elections

Labour vote plummets after five years in government

We reprint below an adapted leaflet distributed by our comrades of the Dublin Spartacist Group during the Irish elections. The "Rainbow Coalition" government of Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left was thrown out. Bertie Ahern's Fianna Fáil will now form a minority government, in coalition with the Progressive Democrats, relying on the support of a number of "independents".

The big loser was Dick Spring's Labour Party which was reduced from 33 seats in 1992 to 17. Sinn Féin gained its first TD, Caoimhghin O Caoláin, who topped the poll in the border constituency of Cavan/Monaghan, indicating widespread illusions in Sinn Féin's perspective of negotiating a "peace" with British imperialism in Northern Ireland.

The Socialist Party's Joe Higgins got elected as a TD for Dublin West, parroting the bourgeoisie's reactionary "law and order" campaign. Both the SP and the SWP, who ran four candidates, refused even to mention the issue of abortion rights in Ireland, much less call for free abortion on demand. As we said in the leaflet's headline, "Socialist Party/Socialist Workers Party: no alternative to class betrayal of Labour/Democratic Left".

This general election takes place amidst the hype about the booming "Celtic Tiger" economy, in the context of New Labour's victory in the British election, which has aroused expectations of restarting the imperialist "peace" fraud in Northern Ireland. Since the last election in November 1992 southern Ireland has been ruled by coalition governments, the first dominated by Fianna Fáil and the second by Fine Gael, but both including Dick Spring's Labour Party, ever willing to assist the capitalist class. Between the competing electoral alliances, Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats versus Fine Gael, the Labour Party and Democratic Left (DL), there is barely a glimmer of policy difference.

We say: the parties standing in this election offer no solution to any of the burning questions in Irish society — from the oppression of Catholics in the North, to the denial of abortion rights to women, and chronic unemployment and poverty in the South. No vote to Labour and Democratic Left! Both the Labour Party and Democratic Left as part of the "Rainbow Coalition" government have pushed attacks on the working class and the oppressed in the South and look to the imperialists to broker a "deal" in the North, which would necessarily be at the expense of the Catholic minority. The so-called "socialist" organisations running in the elections, Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Socialist Party (SP — formerly Militant) both supported Labour and DL in the last election. Their campaigns feature nothing more than pleas for tax reform,



Government coalition partners, Fianna Fáil's Bertie Ahern and Progressive Democrat, Mary Harney.

and echo the reactionary "law and order" outcry from the major parties. We say no vote to the reformists of the SWP or SP. The Socialist Party are notorious for their refusal to fight for British troops out of Northern Ireland, while the British SWP, in a craven capitulation to imperialism, supported the Labour government's deployment of the army in 1969, and argued against calling for withdrawal, with the outrageous claim that the army's presence would provide a "breathing space" for the Catholics. Today, you will not find the call for withdrawal of their own bourgeoisie's troops from Northern Ireland anywhere in the pages of their British paper, while this demand is relegated to the fine print of the "where we stand" column in the Irish paper. In a capitulation to the forces of clerical reaction, neither the SWP nor the SP is campaigning for the elementary right to free, legal abortion in Ireland.

Marxists understand that the source of exploitation and oppression is the capitalist system. Therefore fundamental change in the interests of the oppressed and working people cannot come through parliamentary elections. What is necessary is revolutionary internationalist class struggle which, pursued to the end, must shatter the framework of capitalism worldwide. This task requires the creation of a Trotskyist party, which understands that for the working class to fight for its historic interests it is necessary to break politically from the reformist misleaders and betrayers of the Labour Party and Democratic Left and the pernicious influence of Irish nationalism, which seeks to unite the working class with its "own"

capitalist class.

The bosses and the reformists push Partnership 2000 and wage-restraint in order to increase the rate of exploitation of the working class and compete with other capitalists internationally. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the capitalists no longer see the need to maintain the modicum of welfare measures which were granted to mollify the working class to head off class struggle. At the same time inter-imperialist rivalries have greatly increased. The Maastricht Treaty codifies harsh austerity measures deemed necessary by the imperialists against the working class within Europe, as well as racist anti-immigrant legislation. In several European countries, workers have engaged in major class battles to defend their living standards against these savage attacks. What is necessary to lead these struggles to victory is a revolutionary leadership. Whatever funding and benefits are commonly attributed to EU membership in Ireland, these are marginal, reversible and, in the case of jobs, have been created because of a literate, low-wage workforce. As with the so-called Asian "Tigers", the touted development of the Irish capitalist economy benefits only the rich and a layer of their middle-class hangers-on, in areas such as "Dublin 4", while working-class slums face dire poverty, and chronic unemployment is used to keep wages down.

Marxists oppose the Maastricht Treaty and the European Union. The EU is an imperialist trade bloc, a vehicle for capitalist co-operation against the working class of Europe. Its precursor, the Common Market, was established as an economic adjunct of NATO, as US imperial-

ism 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 nationalist protectionism pushed by the Irish trade union bureaucracy is no answer to the harsh realities of the international capitalist market but rather divides workers against each other, lines them up behind their capitalist rulers in trade wars, and prepares them to be used as cannon fodder in the imperialist shooting wars that follow. "Neutral" Irish troops have always been involved in imperialism's bloody UN policing operations and today are taking part in the NATO-run carve-up of former Yugoslavia. The fight for a Socialist United States of Europe is a fight for working class revolution in each and every European country, and requires complete opposition to all forms of reformism and social chauvinism.

British troops out of Northern Ireland now!

Among the parties in Ireland who welcomed the victory of Blair's New Labour was Sinn Féin (SF) who editorialised, "Let's hope that Mo Mowlam senses that she has a chance to make history. Her party's victory in Britain leaves her able to set a path for decisive change in Britain's relations with Ireland. She must seize it — and quickly" (*An Phoblacht*, 8 May). What New Labour "seized quickly" was the chance to give Sinn Féin and the Catholic electorate in Northern Ireland a kick in the teeth. When Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness refused to swear "allegiance" to the English Queen, Labour and Tory alike cheered as the facilities of the Palace of Westminster were denied to the newly elected MPs. This fawning loyalty to Queen and country has long been intrinsic to British Labourism. Labour MPs applauded when parliament announced that James Connolly, fatally wounded in the 1916 rising, had been executed by the British butchers. As part of the struggle for a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles, our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain fight intransigently for the abolition of the survivals of feudalism, such as the monarchy and the House of Lords, and as a matter of principle would refuse to affirm allegiance to the Crown. Down with the monarchy!

It was a Labour government that sent British troops into Northern Ireland, introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act and, as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition under Thatcher, joined with her in denouncing the H-Block hunger strikers on their death beds. Blair's New Labour will be no better. On his recent visit to Northern Ireland Blair insisted that Northern

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