

**Chinese CP plans liquidation of state economy****China on the brink****For workers political revolution to stop capitalist restoration!**

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

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

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

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

China aiming to overturn the remaining gains of the 1949 Revolution.

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

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

The outpouring of workers during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests posed the imminent possibility of a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy. That uprising was bloodily suppressed. But in recent years there has been a rising tide of workers struggles against the effects of "free market" measures, initially centred on the capitalist "special economic zones" and now rapidly spreading to state factories in the country's industrial heartland.

Time has grown very short for the Chinese proletariat to defeat those who aim to throw the workers and peasants back to conditions of untrammelled exploitation and servitude. But as we wrote earlier this year, "Acts of militancy on the economic plane are not enough to stop the counterrevolutionary tide. It is necessary for the working class to enter the political plane" ("China on the Brink — Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?" *Spartacist* [English edition] no



Plan to sell off state industry announced by CCP chief Jiang Zemin (in fascists were seated left) at September congress. (Photo by AFP) and cam-

53, Summer 1997) The International Communist League fights to forge the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party needed to lead the Chinese proletariat in a political revolution to stop capitalist counter-revolution.

Turmoil in the heartland

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

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

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

The year began with a dramatic uprising in the northeastern city of Harbin, when some 3000 textile workers protested the withholding of four months' pay by occupying train tracks. With rail service paralysed, local and national CCP leaders quickly reached a settlement with the workers. In March, 20,000 workers at a state textile factory in the town of Nanchong in Sichuan — China's most populous province — laid siege to the city hall and held the plant manager hostage until authorities came up with six months' back wages. Four months later, in the Sichuan city of Mianyang, thousands of workers marched through the streets and

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Rallying round the Queen**Blair's Labour fashions facelift for the monarchy**

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On the right of self-determination for Scotland

[To the Spartacist League]

12 September 1997

I went last night and voted Yes. Yes in the referendum and it appears this morning (12/9/97) that that is a majority position among those who voted.

Now that the dust is settled, I feel that even after...reading the "WH Referendum article", which you kindly e-mailed to me, I'm still not happy with the stated position. This is very unusual for me in that normally, I read a WH article and find it stating what I think and/or I am persuaded and impressed with the depth of analysis. So I think I will pursue this in the interests of clarification.

My "natural" starting point, as a member of the Scottish Working Class, is that I am opposed to any increase in taxation

for my class. A simple defencist position! I feel that the whole point of the tax-raising powers given to the Scottish Assembly is that they are aimed *very specifically* at the working class, in that there is reference only to the basic rate of tax and no other. The intention of pro-unionist Tory Blair is quite clearly that if the Scots want devolution, they'll pay for it through the nose. My "natural" starting point is to oppose the position of the class enemy.

When I read the WH article, I see that the main thrust of the article is based on the Leninist position of "the right of nations to self-determination". OK! But does that apply here? We're not dealing with a movement to achieve nationhood now, but a very specific limited devolution bill, who's main architect, the pro-unionist Labour Party, sees it as bulwark against Scottish Nationhood.

The WH article states "...the question for Marxists is: how best, under the given historical situation, to break the hold of nationalism and chauvinism on the working class (in effect to get the question "off the agenda") and open the road to revolutionary struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie." The other main party of the pro-capitalist alliance, the SNP, clearly expect devolution and the Scottish Assembly to continue to raise the prospect of an independent Scottish bourgeois state. I gave up crystal ball gazing when I waved goodbye to Ted Grant, but it seems to me that you cannot state with anything resembling certainty that this piece of legislation and the resulting Scottish Assembly will in any degree take the national question off the agenda. It is indeed much more likely that the Scottish Assembly will keep it firmly *on the agenda*.

So, it seems to me that there is contradiction in the logic flow of the article leading to "The 'devolution' referendums offer only a restricted form of regional parliamentary administration. Nevertheless, as an elementary (if limited) extension of bourgeois democratic form, we advocate a yes-yes vote to a Scottish parliament including with tax-varying powers...."

Unfortunately, I myself, cannot come up with a clear-cut Trotskyist position and recognise that there are problems with "Yes, No", but I am certainly not happy about advocating any kind of support for increased taxation on the Scottish Working Class to provide Blair's "parish council". Not so much "No Taxation Without Representation" but "Increased Taxation Without Adequate Representation".

I know that as I'm not a member of the Spartacist League, I have no right to take part in a debate on its policies, but as a firm supporter of the organisation, rather than just dumbly accepting things, I would like to point out that I consider it partly mistaken in its analysis of the devolution issue....

Denis

WH replies: Comrade Denis's letter raises some important issues arising from our article, "On the referendums in Scotland

and Wales" (*Workers Hammer* no 158, September/October 1997). He questions whether the Leninist position of the right of nations to self-determination means that revolutionaries should have advocated a yes vote in Blair's referendum on a "devolved" parliament for Scotland, with extremely limited powers, including the power to raise taxes, even though this could well result in higher taxes on the Scottish working class. We believe that the substantive issue in the referendum was the right to establish a Scottish parliament, and that to have advocated a "No" vote on the question of tax-varying powers would have been tantamount to advocating a parliament with even fewer powers than Blair was prepared to concede. To reject the right of a Scottish parliament to raise taxes would have constituted a concession to English chauvinism, and would have contradicted the Leninist position on the national question, which includes not only the right to levy taxes, but to secede, ie to set up a separate state.

As part of its commitment to British capitalism, Blair's government is pledged to big tax breaks for the rich, while bleeding the poor and dismantling what welfare provision still exists. The proletariat will never be "adequately represented", to use Denis's words, in even the most democratic bourgeois state. Nothing short of the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class will redress the fundamental class inequality of the capitalist system.

We uphold the right of self-determination for the oppressed nations of Scotland and Wales; at the same time we oppose all forms of nationalism, which is a bourgeois ideology. This means first and foremost opposing the dominant nationalism, English chauvinism — which has always been peddled by the Labour Party — as well as the nationalism of the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. Thus the right to self-determination for Scotland and Wales is neither solely nor primarily a matter for the working class of Scotland and Wales, but must be aggressively defended by the English working class. This is in keeping with Karl Marx's position that it was in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to oppose the subjugation of Ireland. A correct approach on the national question is also in the direct inter-

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Labourism, monarchy and revolution



TROTSKY

While the pro-capitalist Labour Party upholds reactionary institutions like the monarchy, Marxists seek to sweep away this anachronism, along with the established church and the House of Lords, as part of the fight against capitalist class rule. To this end, we struggle to win Labour's working-class base to a revolutionary programme and party. In a 1925 polemic against the Labour misleaders, Bolshevik leader Leon



LENIN

Trotsky emphasised that the British workers must be imbued with an understanding of the traditions embodied in the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries and the Chartist working-class movement of the 19th century.

The French bourgeoisie, distorting the Great Revolution, adopted it and, having reduced it to petty coin, put it into general circulation. The English bourgeoisie has erased even the memory of the revolution of the seventeenth century, and recasts its entire past in the form of "gradual changes." The vanguard of the English workers should discover the British Revolution and should find in it, under its ecclesiastical garment, the powerful conflict of social forces. Cromwell was by no means a "pioneer of labor," but in the drama of the seventeenth century, the English proletariat may find great precedents for revolutionary action. This tradition, which is also "national," is fully justifiable and fully in place in the arsenal of the working class.

The proletariat also has another great tradition in the Chartist movement. An acquaintance with these two epochs is indispensable to every class-conscious English worker. An explanation of the historical thought of the seventeenth century and of the revolutionary content of Chartism is one of the most important tasks devolving upon English Marxists....

If we may resort to a rather farfetched comparison, we might say that the Chartist movement may be compared with the prelude, which gives in undeveloped form the musical themes of the entire work. In this sense, the English working class can and should read in Chartism not only its past, but also its future. Just as the Chartists discarded the sentimental preachers of "moral action," having gathered the masses under the banner of revolution, so the English proletariat will be obliged to cast out from its midst the reformers, democrats, and pacifists, and rally around the flag of a revolutionary action.

— Leon Trotsky, *Where Is Britain Going?* (1925)

WORKERS HAMMER

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

Published by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

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Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU

Subscriptions: £3 for 1 year, Europe outside Britain & Ireland £4, overseas airmail £7

Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
Printed by Cherwell Valley Lithographic Ltd (TU). ISSN 0267-8721

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Racist terror and anti-immigrant frenzy in Blair's "New Britain"

In the early hours of 26 August, unknown arsonists poured petrol through the letterbox of an Asian home in Oxford and set it alight, the ensuing fire killing nine-year-old Anum Khan and her 15-year-old brother, Majid. On 14 September a young black father, Ronnie Hinkson, was stabbed to death outside the Bar Zaar wine bar in Camden, north London. The *Caribbean Times* (10 October) reported the presence of more than 100 witnesses and that the police had stated that the 20-strong gang of murderers was white. Yet the first of only two arrests made in the case so far was of a black friend of Hinkson who had himself been knocked unconscious by the murderers. Official counts of racist attacks, a fraction of the true number, show 12,220 incidents in England and Wales in 1995-96, the highest in Western Europe.

Jack "Law and Order" Straw, the Home Secretary, has announced his new Crime and Disorder Bill will mandate longer prison sentences for crimes shown to have "racist intent". But interpretation of "racist intent" and its imputation is in the hands of the capitalist state. Darcus Howe recalls in the *New Statesman* (3 October) that the first Race Relations Act, passed by the Labour government in 1965, was first put to use in the arrest and imprisonment of blacks protesting racism. It doesn't require a crystal ball to predict, as does Howe, that "the first to be apprehended under new Labour's new anti-racist laws will be blacks and Asians". The *modus operandi* of New Labour is the cynical packaging of "anti-racism" as a cover for introducing more repressive legislation.

The Blair Labour regime is on a mission to "modernise" the machinery of state racism. This is the meaning of the "reforms" of the legal system, and of the "anti-racist" and "anti-corruption" image overhaul slated for the military and police. The Blair "project" consists of rendering more efficient the forces for repression that necessarily strike most viciously at racial minorities and immigrants, ultimately aiming for the trade unions.

The government has commissioned a broad ministerial "review" of policies dealing with asylum seekers; meanwhile, Roma (Gypsies) fleeing persecution in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are met on these shores by a torrent of racist hysteria.

Thirteen of the caged refugees whose revolt at Campsfield detention centre in August was put down by riot cops, are now being dragged through the courts facing criminal charges; and the ripping away of Income Support and Housing Benefit from asylum seekers by Major's Tories continues under New Labour, ensuring that desperate people remain

Labour government can rely on the complicity (however "critical") of the Labour lefts and the Labourite fake-socialist organisations, who insistently preach to the workers and oppressed the lie that capitalism — specifically through the instrument of this Labour government — can be reformed. The Socialist Workers Party, having campaigned for and rejoiced at



Jeff Moore

Family of Ibrahima Sey, killed by cops using CS gas in March 1996.

destitute. We say: *Drop the charges against the Campsfield asylum seekers! No deportations! Asylum for refugees! The fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants is part of the fight to overthrow the capitalist system whose war on the foreign-born is the bitter fruit of the counterrevolutionary post-Soviet disorder.*

Jack Straw has upheld the cops' lethal use of CS gas, just two weeks after an inquest jury returned a verdict of "unlawful killing" in the case of the death of Gambian asylum seeker Ibrahima Sey, who died in March 1996 after up to eight cops pinned him to the ground and blasted him full in the face. Young black men — Winston Silcott, the M25 Three, all victims of racist frame-ups — rot in jail under the Labour "modernisers" as they did under the Tories. It's the same capitalist state that keeps them there — only under new management — and until it is demolished by a workers revolution it will remain racist to the core.

In implementing its programme, the

getting Labour in, now tirelessly works to build the illusion that the capitalist government can be made to re-order its priorities to serve the interests of the working class. But among the lobbies, the complaints about "Blair's wrong choices" (*Socialist Worker*, 4 October) and all the policies "we didn't vote for", barely a word is uttered about Labour's racist agenda.

Workers News (October 1997), paper of the centrist Workers International League, which carries on about "Blair's iron heel" squashing democracy in the Labour Party, says not one word about the New Labour heel on the neck of immigrants and minorities. The Workers Power (WP) group, among the most die-hard "Vote Labour" "revolutionaries", now editorialise about "New Labour's hard edge" (*Workers Power*, October 1997), warning of Blair's attacks on the working class and the welfare state. "We've got to fight him on every front: education, health, crime and union rights", says WP, but *not once* does the editorial even mention the "hard

edge" of race terror and the urgent need to mobilise against it. In an article on the cop killing of Ibrahima Sey in the same issue, WP portrays racist police as an aberration, droning on about "the need for a national campaign to expose and fight police brutality and racism", but carefully avoiding mentioning the current Labour masters of the bourgeoisie's police. Workers Power's real solution boils down to "labour movement and community-controlled monitoring of police activities", feeding the illusion that the cops can be something other than brutal enforcers of capitalist repression.

The Labourite left's illusion-mongering, their strategy of lobbying "their" capitalist government to tax the rich and serve the poor is counterposed to putting forward the necessary revolutionary programme which seeks to mobilise workers in struggle against Labour-administered capitalist austerity and racism.

In the face of a threatened BNP rally in London's East End on 20 September, there was no attempt by the SWP/ANL to mobilise their thousands-strong membership, much less a mass trade-union presence, to stop the fascist meeting. This is not surprising, given that the politics of the SWP/ANL's "anti-fascism" under the last government consisted mainly of calls on the state to ban the fascists and campaigning for Labour where fascists were standing in local elections. Breeding such deadly illusions in the capitalist state always serves to demobilise anti-fascist struggle. As we wrote of the struggle against the BNP in Welling (*Workers Hammer* no 141, May/June 1994), it is the "organised working class that has the social power to crush the fascists and put an end to the capitalist system that breeds them. We repeat: what is necessary is a political struggle against Labourism inside the unions — that the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, seeking to ingratiate itself with the country's bankers and bosses in anticipation of getting into No 10, fear above all militant class struggle in the streets and factories."

The task we are committed to, the job of revolutionary Marxists, is to break the illusions workers have in Labourism in order to build the multi-racial Leninist-Trotskyist workers party necessary to lead the struggle for socialist revolution. ■

NOVEMBER 1 — The Roma (Gypsy) asylum seekers who have been arriving in Dover are fleeing hideous persecution in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. But for the Labour government, firebombings and murderous cop and skinhead attacks back home do not constitute grounds for refuge in Britain.

Labour immigration minister Mike O'Brien responded with special broadcasts on Czech and Slovak television and radio, warning asylum seekers that they are not welcome here and threatening to use the full force of British law against those dubbed abusers of the asylum procedures. Many have been refused entry to Britain and have been left destitute in Calais.

The gutter tabloids screeched about a "Dover Deluge". And the *Independent* (20 October) headlined: "Gypsies invade Dover, hoping for a handout."

Asylum for Roma (Gypsies)!

Like European Jewry historically, the stateless Roma have constituted a minority in countries where they have settled. And, like the Jews, they have been persecuted everywhere, especially in Central Europe. Under Hitler's Third Reich they shared the same fate as the Jews. Six months after the Nazis adopted plans to annihilate the Jews in January 1942, the "Final Solution" was extended to the Gypsies. As many as 500,000 died in death camps.

The destruction of the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe, which were fatally undermined by Stalinism, has exposed the Roma to increased prejudice and murderous racist terror. Even bourgeois commentators noted that,

"Gypsies, persecuted since medieval times, enjoyed some security under communism" (*Observer*, 26 October). Václav Havel's "velvet" counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia (over which the bourgeoisie internationally gushed) declared Romanies to be stateless and they were brutally driven from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. When Roma and Sinti (also Gypsies) refugees in Poland were targeted for a racist roundup and deportation in 1996 at the hands of the ex-Stalinist social-democratic government, our comrades of the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski called for urgent mass mobilisations by the workers movement in defence of Roma/Sinti refugees.

As a result of this latest wave of

racist hysteria the Labour government has signalled new plans for a fast-track, hard-line approach to "reduce" the backlog of asylum seekers and "simplify" the appeals procedure aimed at keeping asylum seekers out. This comes alongside recently revealed designs to imprison refugees on a floating platform on the Thames. Last year the number of asylum applications was less than 30,000, which is a dramatic drop from the previous year. The Blair government has stepped up the racist "Fortress Europe" attacks on the right to asylum. The anti-immigrant witch hunt whipped up by the ruling class serves to keep the multiracial working class divided along ethnic and national lines. The workers movement has a vital interest and a duty to come to the defence of minorities. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees!

Italy: anti-worker popular front in turmoil

The following article is adapted and abridged from *Spartaco* no 51 (October 1997), published by the *Lega Trotskista d'Italia*.

OCTOBER 14—After 17 months of escalating attacks on workers, immigrants, pensioners and youth, last Thursday Prime Minister Romano Prodi submitted the resignation of the Ulivo (Olive Tree) coalition government centred on the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS). The government’s move was triggered when its “left” prop, Rifondazione Comunista (RC), withdrew its support to Prodi on the eve of a parliamentary vote on a new austerity

called in opposition to the RC-supported Prodi/PDS government. RC felt compelled to call a similar anti-austerity demonstration in Rome for the following Saturday. Meanwhile, from Naples to Milano, tens of thousands of students have been mobilising against increased government funding for private Catholic schools. The latest, flagrant capitulation by the phoney “Communists” of RC is bound to increase disgruntlement and frustration among leftist workers and youth. But even had RC chosen to remain outside the government, it would only have done so in order to try to channel a proletarian revolt into

struggle to a level that was impossible for previous governments to obtain. This “leftist” government has introduced a series of austerity budgets, reintroduced lower wage levels in the South, pushed through more “temporary labour” agreements and continually increased taxes. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie has imposed mass layoffs, factory closures and increased exploitation. And for the first time since Mussolini’s fascist regime, Italy’s bloody imperialist troops have occupied Albania.

Immigrant workers, superexploited as low-wage manual labourers and sup-

encouraged by the politics of the “left” government. On the one hand, the government makes the petty bourgeoisie, Bossi’s social base, pay for austerity. On the other hand, the Prodi regime exacerbates divisions in the working class by fomenting racist terror through deportations and repression of immigrants. The Northern League is so emboldened by the situation that it has begun to directly attack the economic organisations of the working class. In August, a union hall in Varese was attacked by vandals; the following month, two trade unionists were attacked with iron bars as the League organised a campaign of burning union cards.

Instead of giving these scum a well-deserved lesson, the trade-union bureaucrats’ answer was to mobilise a million workers on 20 September under the nationalist slogan, “Italy is not to be divided.” The demonstration was supported by all the governing parties, aspiring bonapartist and former judge Antonio di Pietro, the sinister right-wing ex-P2 “Masonic” Lodge and... RC. For the first time since the fall of the fascist regime, the tricolour of Italian nationalism was as visible as the red flag at a mass workers demonstration. The demonstration was so reactionary that the fascist president of the Campania region, Antonio Rastrelli, decided to participate and praised the “magnificent welcome” he received (*Corriere della Sera*, 21 September).

SPARTACO 

Newspaper of the
Lega Trotskista d'Italia

package which slashes pensions and social services in order to meet the Maastricht Treaty requirements for entry into the European Monetary Union. But RC backed down and agreed to vote for the austerity budget and Prodi has announced that the “centre-left” government will continue in office. To cover its left flank, RC is trumpeting a bogus “compromise” involving minor reductions in funding cuts and a vague promise by the government to aim for a 35-hour workweek.

In the frenzied parliamentary manoeuvring that followed Prodi’s threatened resignation, most of the bourgeoisie made it clear that they wanted RC’s participation in the government in order to avoid a massive proletarian revolt against the new austerity bill. Right-wing opposition leader and former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who offered to join in a “grand coalition”, joined with the fascists in denouncing the latest deal as a sell-out to the “Communists”. But President Luigi Oscar Scalfaro pushed Prodi and RC to reach an agreement, fearful that a change in government would endanger the chances of Italy joining the Monetary Union.

The reformist RC — which like the social-democratic PDS is descended from the now-defunct Communist Party — has been under intense pressure from all sides. It withdrew its support to the Prodi government in the wake of a series of mobilisations and assemblies by its proletarian base denouncing the government’s refusal to reconsider pension cuts and to concede a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. At hundreds of angry meetings in factories centred in the northern industrial belt workers have passed resolutions opposing any cuts in pensions, health care, etc. Feeling the heat from the base, 200 delegates of the CGIL trade-union federation in Torino booed CGIL head Sergio Cofferati last week when he defended pension cuts.

The syndicalist-influenced COBAS (“rank-and-file committees”) organised for a march in Rome on 18 October against the new austerity bill, explicitly



Workers protest Ulivo coalition government austerity cuts, November 1996.

pressure for a new, more “left” bourgeois coalition government like Lionel Jospin’s Socialist-led government in France.

In the autumn of 1994, millions of workers rallied in town squares throughout Italy under the illusion that a “left” government would improve things. Thanks to Massimo D’Alema’s PDS, Fausto Bertinotti’s RC and the heads of the main, social-democratic-led CGIL union federation — as well as of the smaller, more right-wing CISL and UIL federations — the end result of those mobilisations was the anti-worker, anti-immigrant, anti-woman “left-centre” Prodi government. Aided by the centrists around *Proposta* in the RC minority, the reformists succeeded in using the workers’ militancy to pull the cart of their parliamentary ambitions. Today it is clearer than ever that a Leninist vanguard party to fight for proletarian power must be forged in irreconcilable opposition to both bourgeois parliamentary reformism and the dead end of “apolitical” syndicalism. This is what the *Lega Trotskista d'Italia* (LTdI), section of the International Communist League, fights for.

The popular front opens the road for the fascists!

With the support of RC and the various union bureaucrats, the bourgeois government of Prodi, D’Alema & Co has managed to meet the hitherto unsatisfied needs of the bourgeoisie and to throw back the gains obtained through working-class

pressed through racist terror and mass deportations, have been made scapegoats for the misery which capitalism is imposing on the majority of the working class. Women are increasingly pushed out of production and into the home to look after the aged, children and the sick who are the prime victims of social service cuts. Even as funding for state schools is slashed, full state funding of Catholic schools is becoming a reality for the first time since Italy’s unification in the late 19th century, facilitating the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s spread of anti-woman poison and its indoctrination of new generations to prostrate themselves before “god, nation and family”. Differences in wages and working conditions between North and South are being deepened by law, while the army has been sent into entire areas of the South.

The Ulivo coalition — a popular front of workers parties and bourgeois parties which subordinates the proletariat to its class enemy — got the workers’ support on the basis of “fighting the right”. But like all popular fronts, it opens the road to fascism. By tying the workers to the wagon of the bourgeoisie, the popular front paralyses and disarms the working class, sowing criminal illusions that the fascists can be stopped through “parliamentary democratic” means. The popular front also exasperates the petty bourgeoisie, who see the working-class organisations as being responsible for their ruin.

The “secessionist” delirium and racist, anti-union terror spread by Umberto Bossi’s fascist Northern League are

Ulivo, fascists foment racist terror

The purpose of these demonstrations is to cement the popular front with nationalist chauvinism, which feeds racism and supports the bloody imperialism of the Italian bourgeoisie. The popular front is in the front line of a renewed racist witch hunt, fully supported by the bourgeois mass media. PDS minister of the interior Giorgio Napolitano has presented a draft law against immigrants which, if approved, would make immigration even harder and deportations easier. The PDS mayor of Rimini, Giuseppe Chicchi, openly labels immigrants “parasites” and has called for regional passports for immigrants. This fascist-type proposal was naturally supported by the fascist National Alliance and the Northern League.

Napolitano’s police have already launched a large-scale manhunt and mass deportation of Albanian refugees, many of whom fled the misery and chaos produced by Italian imperialism in Albania. These criminal deportations are part of Italian imperialism’s neocolonial assault on Albania, which includes the sinking of a refugee ship in which 89 people died last March.

The incitements to racist murder coming from the state and the Northern League were taken up in Torino on 20 July, when a band of racists beat up Abdallah Doumi and then drowned him in the Po River. On 4 September in Prato, six immigrants were hospitalised after a Molotov cocktail was thrown into a garage where they were sleeping. And there

are many other cases both reported and unreported by the press.

For worker/immigrant mobilisations to smash the fascists!

The destruction of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of Eastern Europe has heightened inter-imperialist rivalry for redivision of the world market into new spheres of exploitation. As the masses of the neo-colonial "Third World" are forced into deeper poverty, large numbers of refugees seek a means of survival in the imperialist countries. Intent on increasing the rate of exploitation, the European bourgeoisies are savagely attacking the working class and use immigrants as the scapegoats for the growing misery, unemployment and other evils of decaying capitalist society. Racism is used to divide the working class and to lower its level of consciousness.

As Marx said regarding black slavery in the United States: "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." Immigrant workers are concentrated in the most dangerous, most difficult and lowest-paid jobs. What's needed is a fight for *unionisation of all immigrant workers* and for *equal pay for equal work!* This requires mass class struggle and a hard political fight against the union bureaucracy, the PDS and RC — who deepen the divisions within the working class by supporting differing wage levels, racist deportation laws and agreements on temporary jobs. It's necessary to fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants and their families*, including the right to health care, education and abortion! Anyone who has made it to this country must have the right to stay here!

In September, workers from Torino's Fiat Mirafiori factory and surrounding areas provided a good example of how the Northern League can be smashed by dispersing an anti-union provocation organised by the CLP, destroying their literature table and propaganda and teaching some of these sewer rats a well-deserved lesson. This type of action must be generalised and carried out by the organised workers movement along with immigrants, Rom (Gypsies), women, gays and all potential victims of the fascists. But for this to be possible, the working class must make a clean break with the racist and nationalist policies of the popular front and with the organisations which promote these policies. For workers actions against the deportations! For union-based workers militias to defend immigrant communities!

The racist, nationalist appeals for "jobs for Italians" must be opposed by the fight for all existing work to be divided at no loss in pay among *all* workers, Italians or immigrants! Against the high cost of living, it is necessary to fight for a real *sliding scale of wages* which covers inflation 100 per cent! Because capitalism isn't capable of satisfying these basic demands and guaranteeing a decent life, we must fight for workers power.

RC: loyal supporter of the popular front

During last December's RC congress, the majority voted for a motion which promised "absolute" and "determined" opposition to the pact between the government and the unions. RC then voted in favour of the government's programme of two-tier wages and temporary jobs. RC leader Bertinotti has repeatedly thundered that "social welfare will be the mother of all our battles". But from the very beginning, RC supported the finance decree which lays the basis for further cuts in social spending, and RC parliamentary spokesman Giuliano Pisapia has praised the proposed racist anti-immigrant law for

having "many positive aspects" (*Liberazione*, 17 August).

While RC voted against sending imperialist troops into Albania — because its vote wouldn't have affected the outcome and because RC considered it inopportune, given the lack of a United Nations fig leaf for the intervention — RC's Senate fraction recently voted *in favour* of prolonging the presence of Italian troops there for a further 45 days. RC also supports the deportation of Albanian refugees, demanding only that "the repatriation be organised in a rational and realistic



Action Press



Cordon Press

Mobilisations of skinhead stormtroopers and Umberto Bossi's fascistic Northern League in early 1990s. Popular-front government's assault on immigrants, women, workers opens the road for the fascists.

way" (*Liberazione*, 30 August).

Despite politics which should disgust anyone who considers himself a leftist, RC tries to maintain the support of its base by depicting its support to the Ulivo coalition as the "lesser evil" while on the other hand rhetorically pushing for a "more leftist" version of the popular front. The model currently in fashion with RC is Jospin's popular front, which includes the French Communist Party. But despite illusions spread by RC, Jospin's government is no less anti-worker and racist than Prodi's.

It is not a question of Ulivo's policies being too far to the right. *Any* popular front in power is a bourgeois government that is necessarily imperialist, anti-worker, racist and anti-woman, opening the road to the fascists. In a coalition between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat it is inevitable that the bourgeois parties, however much they are in a minority, determine the politics of this bourgeois coalition. For this reason the LTd'I opposes, in principle, any political support to the popular front. And we were against any electoral support to the PDS and RC in the 1993 and 1996 elections.

The long left tail of the popular front

A section of RC's membership is becoming increasingly intolerant of the daily capitulations of its leadership. But even had pressure from the base forced the RC leadership to break with the Ulivo coalition, this would only have been a momentary tactical manoeuvre, in no way signifying a break with RC's popular-frontist perspective, which is deeply rooted in decades of Stalinist politics. RC is not reformable. Like the PDS, it is a bourgeois workers party, which represents an obstacle to the real emancipation of the working class. These parties must be split, separating the healthy elements at the base from the treacherous reformist leadership, in the fight to build a Leninist party. Many "leftist" groups do quite the opposite, acting as waterboys for the popular front.

The Bologna-based *Socialismo Internazionale*, which is linked to Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party in Britain, is one

of the left tails of RC and the popular front. *Socialismo Internazionale* (June 1996) saluted the Ulivo election victory, saying "this can't be considered as anything other than an important success for the working class. For the time being, the right isn't in government." A headline in the same issue read, "Prodi! We Didn't Vote for Cuts and Sacrifices!" But the anti-abortion bourgeois politician Prodi and the Ulivo coalition promised bloody austerity and have carried it out — and that's exactly what SI voted for! This same issue is entirely dedicated to immi-

grants and the Northern League. But it never comes out against all deportations, for organising immigrant workers into the unions, for full citizenship rights for all immigrants or for equal pay for equal work — nor does it ever criticise RC for its support to the current racist campaign.

But the main obstacle preventing leftist members of RC from finding a proletarian revolutionary perspective is the so-called left wing centred around "Motion Two" and *Proposta*, whose role is precisely to keep them tied to the politics of the popular front. In *Proposta* (July-August 1997), RC minority leader Marco Ferrando lists a series of correct examples of the leadership's capitulations to the anti-worker policies of the Prodi government. He even criticises the "culture of the lesser evil" which has been RC's main argument for supporting the Ulivo coalition. But this is the same argument used by *Proposta* in voting for the Ulivo popular front and even for the Vatican-linked Popular Party inside the Ulivo coalition.

Last year, *Proposta* (13 June 1996) hailed the formation of the Ulivo government with the very same logic of the "lesser evil", crowing that "the right has been defeated and this is a good thing". And a year earlier, *Proposta* (May 1995) affirmed: "The fight against Berlusconi's right is, and remains, the main task of communists." In every electoral campaign, which is what counts most for a parliamentarist organisation like RC, *Proposta* puts aside its criticism and dedicates itself to voting and gathering votes for the popular front. Trotsky's statement in "Centrism and the Fourth International" (February 1934) that "for a revolutionary Marxist, the struggle against reformism is now almost fully replaced by the struggle against centrism" is truer than ever today.

Bertinotti hopes to pressure the PDS and the Ulivo, while *Proposta* speaks about reforming RC. This is what Trotsky called "the syphilitic chain of the popular front". It is largely thanks to the rhetoric with which RC covers the Ulivo's left flank and the same kind of left cover which *Proposta* provides to RC that the working class has until now accepted cuts

in social spending which in large part it managed to resist from Berlusconi in 1994. On one important occasion, the "Motion Two" leaders even managed to provide the bourgeoisie with proof that they were more trustworthy than the RC leadership. At an October 1995 RC leadership meeting, *Proposta* leaders Grisolia and Ferrando voted against a majority motion in favour of a vote of no confidence to bring down the government then headed by Lamberto Dini. In the end, the 24 RC parliamentarians changed their minds and saved the government by ab-

staining on the vote.

What shows most clearly how *Proposta*'s criticisms of the RC majority never go beyond the confines of popular-front politics is the total absence of any mention of the racist politics of RC and, in general, a complete blindness regarding all forms of special oppression. The syphilitic chain of the popular front is, in fact, a chain of racism and chauvinism.

Build a Leninist-Trotskyist party!

As do social democrats and Stalinist remnants in other countries, the Ulivo, RC and its left tail, *Proposta*, present themselves as the "lesser evil" in a world in which the collapse of the Soviet Union has ushered in greater poverty, exploitation, unemployment and oppression for the overwhelming majority of the earth's population. They want to make workers believe that to "limit the damage" there is no practical alternative to an alliance with the bourgeoisie.

We fight for a fundamentally different programme and perspective. Along with Marx, we're deeply conscious that "the emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself" and that every political alliance with the bourgeoisie serves only to prop up this decaying capitalist system which is the basis for every existing form of exploitation, oppression and discrimination. For this reason, we seek to build a revolutionary party modelled on Lenin's Bolshevik Party — the expression of the complete independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, the tribune of the oppressed and the historical memory of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard.

We know that this requires intransigent struggle against the centrist and reformist traitors of the workers movement. Those youth and workers who are disgusted with the never-ending class-collaborationist politics of the misleaders of the workers movement and who want to fight for a socialist future must draw the necessary lessons. Break with the popular front! Join the LTd'I in the struggle to build the revolutionary proletarian party in Italy, section of a reborn Fourth International. ■

Rallying round the Queen

Blair's Labour fashions facelift for the monarchy

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

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

When the British ambassador in Paris announced the death of Diana Spencer, her companion Dodi Al-Fayed, who also died

ily correct himself for referring to the execution of Prince Charles instead of King Charles I.

Labourite bureaucracy bows to Queen and City

Diana Spencer came from a previously obscure aristocratic family whose wealth — described as "astonishing" by the bourgeois press — dates back to the wool trade in the days of early capital accumulation in the 15th century. Diana met the criteria for a suitable partner for the heir apparent: not a commoner and not a Catholic (and not too bright). In his column in the *Nation* (22 September), Alexander Cockburn remarked: "The adoration now poured on her is reminiscent of the groveling of Edmund Burke in 1790 toward that adornment to the feudal corruption of the French Bourbons, Marie Antoinette."

In the eyes of the establishment, "Princess Di" has proven herself of far more use in death than in life. Support for the monarchy has waned considerably in recent years, as even "respectable" media

get their act together: fly the damned flag outside Buckingham Palace at half-mast and make a credible show of mourning. It was Blair who dubbed Diana the "people's princess" and braintruster Queen Elizabeth's reluctant television appearance praising her former daughter-in-law. It was Blair who saw to it that the funeral would be an affair of state and chose a Saturday "so that working people would be free to stand along the streets or watch on television" (*Newsweek*, 15 September). In so doing, Blair proved himself a very good prime minister for the British ruling class.

The fake-revolutionary left, ever in Labour's tow, was swept along, nominal disclaimers to the contrary notwithstanding. Diana Spencer may have been the girl from the 10,000 acres next door, but for the centrist Workers Power group, "Her depression, bulimia, suicide attempts and ultimately divorce provided a glitzy microcosm of the plight of millions of less wealthy women" (*Workers Power*, September 1997). That (and more) said,



North News

personality who by chance and/or design has been iconised and thus commodified and sold by the uncontrollable, all pervasive power of capital."

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

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

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

Underscoring the very real powers of the "figurehead" monarchy, this issue of *Private Eye* was effectively banned under *lèse majesté* — an affront to the crown — removed from sale by a number of large news outlets. The Blair government has seized on the uproar over "paparazzi" to push for further assaults on freedom of the press, while a sensationalist new book on *The Royals* by American writer Kitty Kelley has been banned from sale or publication in Britain under the country's already draconian libel laws.

Not surprisingly, both Workers Power and the CPGB studiously managed to avoid any reference to Blair's role in propping up the monarchy. Labour ran for office draped in the Union Jack. At the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in Brighton one week after Diana's demise, the Union Jack flew at half-mast. Delegates were addressed by business chiefs and the Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the established (state) Church of England. The "theme" of the conference: "partnership for progress". "Partnership" of capital and labour under the bloody flag of British imperialism, blessed by the established church, bowing and scraping to the Crown!

Blair's programme for "modernising" the monarchy is aimed at providing a facelift for this anachronism in order to *salvage* it and the "United Kingdom" which it symbolises. The United Kingdom means continued national oppression of the Northern Ireland Catholic population as well as of the Scottish and Welsh peoples. Marxists fight for socialist revolution on both sides of the Irish Sea — For a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles, as part of a Socialist United States of Europe!

The cult of Diana, the "people's martyr", can only bolster the reactionary ideology of monarchism transcending the "person" of the monarch. A recent opinion poll found 54 per cent in favour of the Prince of Wales standing aside, with Prince William succeeding the Queen. Writer Tom Nairn captures the necrophilic quality of Blair's "project" when he notes:



Hulton Getty



Socialist Worker

The monarchy is a relic of feudalism and class privilege that also serves as a potential focus for reaction. In 1940 the Duke of Windsor (left) conspired with the Nazis to head a quisling government in Britain.

in the crash, was reduced to the status of a nameless manservant: in the eyes of the racist British establishment, even this fabulously wealthy, "nonwhite" Egyptian was not a suitable escort for an English princess. To this day his father, who owns the posh Harrods department store, is denied a British passport.

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

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

It was Tony "I prefer monarchy" Blair who stepped into the breach to serve "his" Queen. He was key to urging the royals to

Workers Power assured its readers that it would "not be joining in the wave of national mourning" and even vowed to "do everything" to get the monarchy "scrapped forever" — everything, that is, but oppose Blair's Labour Party at election time.

In the same vein, but even more nauseating, was the so-called Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), a small group which formerly published the *Leninist*. The CPGB's *Weekly Worker* (4 September) carried a front-page eulogy by chief spokesman Jack Conrad. While allowing that "even a bourgeois republic is preferable to the anti-democratic monarchy", Conrad outdid even Blair himself in his treachery musings for the "troublesome princess" who "represented a soul in a soulless world": "Her brief 36 years epitomise the struggle and fate of the 20th century

“Modernisation” — the chorus of the salvationists — already means something uncomfortably close to resurrection. The modernisers resemble those who used to throng the death-chamber of an absolute monarch moaning, even after the last breath: ‘He hasn’t really gone!’, ‘God will not let him leave us!’ (Anthony Barnett, *Power and the Throne* [1994]).

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

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

The original “people’s martyr” was Charles I himself, who died in defence of “Merrie England”. In place of schism, revolution and civil war the monarchy was, and is, meant to represent continuity with the past, gradualness, tradition — to legitimise and to obscure the specifically capitalist character of this society and its state machine. “Above all things our royalty is revered”, prescribed historian Walter Bagehot in the middle of the last century: “Its mystery is its life. We must not let in daylight upon magic.” Hence the “Mother of Parliaments” sits in the royal palace of Westminster and the prime minister is a minister of the Crown. His official residence — with a “civilian” policeman at the front and the Queen’s Guards at the rear — is in Downing Street, which was named after a notorious parliamentary turncoat in the court of King Charles II.

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

From Cromwell’s Roundheads to Lenin’s Bolsheviks

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

Leon Trotsky once described Lenin, leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, as the “proletarian twentieth-century Cromwell”. Trotsky went on to explain

that from Cromwell, the “great revolutionary of his time”, British workers would learn “incomparably more” than from all the conciliationist Labour leaders: “The dead lion of the seventeenth century is in this sense immeasurably greater than many living dogs.” By the “many living dogs”, Trotsky meant those Labour “leaders” who “dare not refuse pocket money to the Prince of Wales” (*Where Is Britain Going?* [1925]).



Samuel Cooper

Spartacists fight for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles. Oliver Cromwell (above), called the “great revolutionary of his time” by Leon Trotsky.

Today’s Labour leadership under Blair differs only in that it has graduated to the post of chief adviser to the Prince of Wales, while seeking to break even the most attenuated organisational connection to the trade unions. But there is nothing new about the Blairites’ royal bootlicking. During World War I, Labour Party leader Arthur Henderson was a member of the King’s “advisory” Privy Council when the British government ordered the state murder of James Connolly after the failed 1916 Irish Republican Easter Rising in Dublin. Ramsay MacDonald, who in 1924 became the first Labour prime minister, accepted an invitation to the royal court bedecked in the blue and gold-braid costume of the peerage. More recently, the snivelling former Labour deputy leader, Roy Hattersley, earnestly replied when offered a post in some minor ministry, “Does this mean I get into the Privy Council?”

While posturing as a “socialist alternative” to Blair — whose election it nonetheless supported — Tony Cliff’s Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is firmly embedded in the syphilitic chain of Labourism. At the time of the 1977 Silver Jubilee, a carnival of reaction celebrating Queen Elizabeth’s 1952 coronation, the SWP called for organising “red” jubilee celebrations so workers could “add to the fun”. At least then the Cliffites said “Stuff the Jubilee — Roll on the Red Republic.”

Today, even such pseudoradical *verbiage* is off the agenda, as the SWP joins with the imperialist bourgeoisie in wallowing in the supposed “death of communism”. Under the respectful headline, “A Death Is Used for Cynical Ends”, *Socialist Worker* (6 September) moans about “an attempt to rehabilitate the battered institution of the royal family”, but complains only about Diana’s “life of privilege” and the “cost” of the royals. Meanwhile the SWP “lobbies” the capitalist government administered by Blair’s Labour Party to “Tax the rich” and “Scrap the Royal Yacht”.

It is not its extravagant cost, in and of itself, that makes the monarchy reactionary; the function of the money is to flamboyantly assert social privilege, to loudly proclaim that there is an unequal social place for everyone and that this is histori-

cal and inevitable. For the bourgeoisie, the cost of maintaining its sacred cows is quite cheap at the price. More fundamentally, the institution of the monarchy is a constant anti-democratic outrage and potential focus for reaction. In *Where Is Britain Going?* Trotsky tore apart the arguments of Labourite politicians that the royal power was inconsequential since it did not “interfere” in the country’s affairs and was at any rate cheaper than electing



Workers Hammer

a president as head of state. The revolutionary leader explained:

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

It is to the Queen, not Parliament, that the officer corps swears allegiance. In a

supposedly moribund “reserve powers of the Crown”. Kerr exercised the “royal prerogative” against a government that was the object of a concerted CIA destabilisation campaign.

The late, unlamented Duke of Windsor, the once-king Edward VIII, and his would-be Queen Wallis were notoriously pro-Nazi and conspired with the Nazis to head a quisling government in Britain after the fall of France in 1940. Labour loyally supported “democratic” British imperialism — and its colonial empire — during the interimperialist conflict. The 1945 Labour government of Clement Attlee and Aneurin Bevan, today regarded by much of the left as the “socialist” pinnacle of “old” Labour, then went to extraordinary lengths to shield the Nazi-loving Duke and the rest of the “royal family” in the “national interest” while overseeing sinister “rat line” schemes that saved thousands of Nazi war criminals for use against the Soviet Union.

It took a revolution, culminating in the workers’ seizure of power under Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks, to sweep away the Russian tsarist autocracy headed by Nicholas II, a relative of the British royal family. Like their latter-day British Labourite cousins, the Mensheviks served to prop up the old order to the very end. Writing after the Labour/TUC misleaders betrayed the 1926 general strike, Trotsky described the Labourite officialdom as the “backbone” of British imperialism: “If there were not a bureaucracy of the trade unions, then the police, the army, the courts, the lords, the monarchy would appear before the proletarian masses as nothing but pitiful ridiculous playthings” (“The Errors in Principle of Syndicalism”, November-December 1929).

The Spartacist League/Britain fights to build a revolutionary workers party, forged through splitting Labour’s working-class base from its thoroughly pro-capitalist, and pro-monarchist, leaders. We uphold the authentic, militant traditions of the working class — not the disgusting parliamentary sycophancy of the Labour Party, but



Asian Times

The Queen on recent visit to India. Her presence in the subcontinent (along with Labour foreign secretary Robin Cook) evokes bitter memories of past Empire rule, built upon brutal subjugation of colonial peoples, like the Amritsar massacre in 1919.

crisis situation it is quite conceivable that a right-wing bonapartist coup attempting to restabilise the bourgeois order would seek out the monarchy as a buttress to reactionary mobilisation, and as a sign of “legality” and legitimacy against a weak bourgeois-democratic Parliament. The “private” Council of the Queen is the government-in-waiting of a possible future bonapartism. In 1975, Gough Whitlam’s Australian Labor Party government, despite holding a parliamentary majority, was dismissed by Governor-General John Kerr, the Queen’s personal representative, using the

the revolutionary red republicanism of the Chartists of the mid-19th century. We call for abolition of the anachronisms of the monarchy, the established churches and the House of Lords, leading — as the relationship of forces permits — to confrontations over the institution of the House of Commons and the City of London financiers and capitalists it represents. What is needed is a sweeping social revolution culminating with the workers in power, opening a new line of historical development. This article first appeared in *Workers Vanguard* no 675, 3 October 1997.

Rail...

(Continued from page 12)

proclaimed him already guilty. The *Guardian* (20 September) headlined "Manslaughter inquiry begins", while the vile yellow rag, the *Sun* (24 September) issued a "Do you know him?" hotline for any scum to phone in dirt on the driver. We demand: Hands off Larry Harrison!

When Larry Harrison took over the train at Cardiff he found that the Automatic Warning System had been logged "non-operational". This system uses loud hooters to warn the driver that the train has passed a warning signal and is approaching a red signal where the train

accepted the withdrawal of the second driver from the cabs of high-speed trains. ATP was not in operation at the time of the Southall crash and the driver was alone in the cab.

The link between safety on the railway and defence of union conditions on the job could not be clearer: privatisation means union-busting, attacks on working conditions, slashing of jobs and safety measures. Britain has one of the most expensive transport systems in the world, with dysfunctional trains that passengers are accustomed to arriving two-plus hours late. Nothing short of socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist system will satisfy the basic need for a safe, efficient rail system.

words, Labour upholds all the anti-union laws which outlaw the class struggle necessary to fight capitalist piracy. The rail union leaders are reformists thoroughly committed to "backing Blair" before and since the general election. Hiding behind the anti-union laws, they are utterly incapable of defending workers against capitalist union-busting attacks. This was clearly shown when the privatisation of British Rail was completed without any significant strike action opposing it.

This applies not only to the likes of ASLEF's Lew Adams or RMT leader Jimmy Knapp. Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP) claims to be a "socialist" opposition to Labour and has a strong base in the RMT in London Underground. Its paper *Socialist News* (September 1996) says: "Socialist Labour is now the party for railway workers and all trade unionists to join. Unlike New Labour, our party calls for the entire rail industry into public ownership and eventually, in a socialist system, into common ownership". But when the question is posed concretely as in London Underground, Bob Crow, assistant general secretary of the RMT and leading SLP spokesman, offers the same do-nothing strategy as Knapp.

Just before the general election, at a rail meeting called to oppose privatisation of the Underground, Knapp said: "we can stop privatisation by electing a Labour government on May 1". A Spartacist spokesman pointed out that the only way to stop union-busting privatisation is through solid strike action of all the Underground unions, with real mass picket lines to shut down the tube system tight, which would also deal a blow to the hated anti-union laws. SLP members present, Crow and Pat Sikorski, did not oppose Knapp at all, and couldn't bring themselves to utter the word "strike".

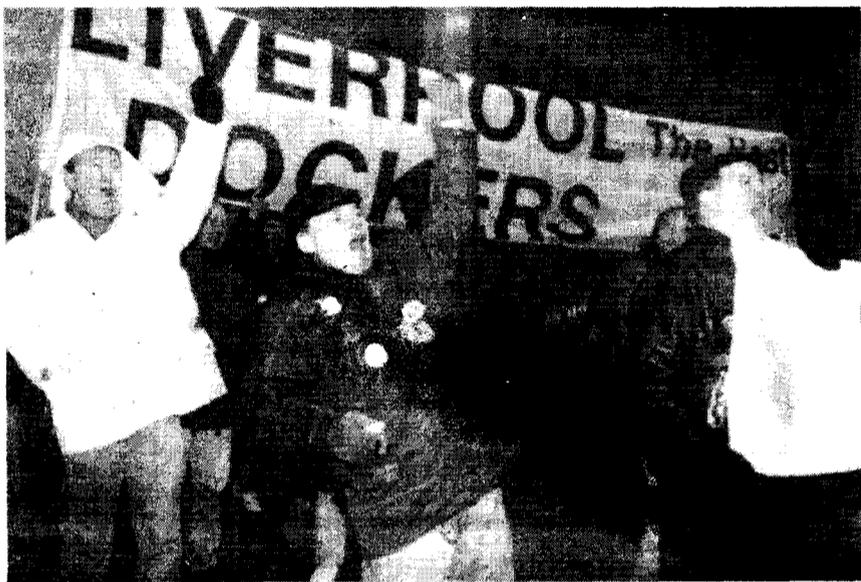
At LUL's Acton Works in London, workers who overhaul safety critical equipment were facing compulsory redundancies under Labour's privatisation deal with Adtranz. But after a 10 October union demonstration against the planned sell-off (which has since been put on hold), Bob Crow insisted in a TV interview that they were not protesting against the Labour government but against policies put in place by the Tories. During one- and two-day tube strikes in 1996, the RMT instructed station staff (who had themselves voted to strike) to go to work, while RMT drivers were on strike. Such

putting of one section of the membership against another weakens the power of the union and is poisonous to workers' consciousness. Also divisive is the presence of different unions (whose leaders blithely order scabbing on one another's strikes) in the Underground system. We fight for industrial unionism: one industry, one union to fight united against the bosses and their government.

The fight for revolutionary leadership

As in the RMT, the SLP's obeisance to Labour's dictates has also been deadly to the Liverpool dockers' struggle. On the grounds of adherence to the anti-union laws, the TGWU and the rest of the TUC have criminally disowned the dockers, who are still fighting for reinstatement two years after being locked out for refusal to cross a picket line. At the 1996 TUC conference, Arthur Scargill argued for a one-day strike each week in support of the Liverpool dockers. But the real perspective of the SLP is to call for pressure on the Labour government. At a conference of dockers support groups in July, members of the Spartacist League argued against a motion presented by Jimmy Nolan (member of the SLP and chairman of the dockers shop stewards committee), which called upon "the government to intervene in the long-running Liverpool Docks dispute in order to return the sacked dockworkers to their rightful place of work in the port of Liverpool". Our comrades pointed out that any "intervention" by the government would likely be the kiss of death. We said what the dockers need is solidarity strikes and mass pickets that shut down the port of Liverpool and break the dockers out of the isolation enforced on them by union misleaders. But in keeping with the SLP's defeatist perspective in the face of the anti-union laws, Nolan dismisses the possibility of class struggle alongside the dockers.

Such class struggle would of necessity mean coming up against the anti-working class Labour government. What militants need is a *revolutionary leadership in the unions* linked to a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, breaking the political stranglehold of Labourism on the working class, and winning the best elements to a communist programme. To save the working class and oppressed from further devastation requires working-class rule and the establishment of a rationally planned economy on an international scale. ■



Morning Star

Liverpool dockers uphold the principle that picket lines mean don't cross.

must stop. The rail-industry rulebook says that a train must be taken out of service if a fault is found prior to the train leaving the depot. But Great Western ran the train back to London regardless.

After the 1988 Clapham train crash, which killed 35 people, Automatic Train Protection (ATP), which automatically brakes a train at signals, was promised throughout the Intercity network by the Tory government but then abandoned as a hazard to plans to privatise the railway because of the cost. Rail workers are facing increased pressure to keep the trains running by managers seeking to avoid fines. But union "leaders" have meekly rolled over for the rail bosses: last year, in return for Great Western's empty promise of introducing ATP, ASLEF

The havoc wreaked by privatisation of British Rail can already be seen in the creeping privatisation of London Underground (LUL), with much work relating to safety contracted out to private companies. Cost-cutting to prepare for privatisation, set out a few years ago in the LUL Company Plan, decimated the workforce. Such "savings"—cutting train guards and station staff—lead to horrors like the nine-year-old boy dragged to his death in October by an Underground train when his coat was caught in train doors.

Smash the anti-union laws!

Tony Blair boasts that under Labour there will be no secondary strikes, no secondary picketing and no return to the days of strikes without ballots. In other

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Letter...

(Continued from page 2)

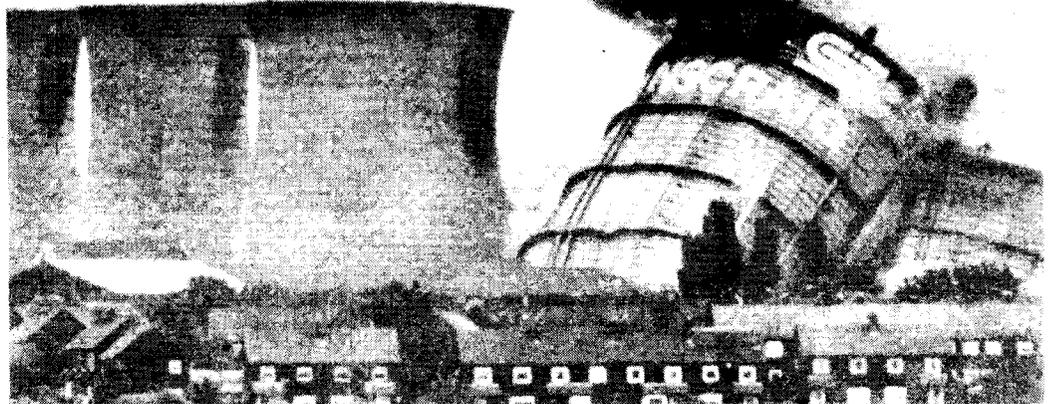
est of the entire working class of these islands — English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish — in order to overcome their national divisions and clear the way for successful proletarian revolution.

As a Leninist "tribune of the people" we seek to address not just the economic exploitation of the working class but all forms of oppression. Our attitude to the national question is essentially a negative one, based on *opposition* to national oppression. In the struggle to bring revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat, our tasks in regard to the national oppression of Scotland and Wales are not dissimilar to those Lenin outlined in 1914 in regard to the national question in the Tsarist empire. That prisonhouse of peoples was overthrown by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Lenin wrote:

"In this situation, the proletariat of Russia is faced with a twofold or, rather, a two-sided task: to combat nationalism of every kind, above all, Great-Russian nationalism; to recognise, not only fully equal rights for all nations in general, but also equality of rights as regards polity, i.e., the right of nations to self-determination, to secession.

Colin McPherson

1996 destruction of Ravenscraig steelworks in Scotland symbolised gutting of British industry as bourgeois wages war on jobs, trade unions.



overthrow the British ruling class — English and Scottish. To achieve this consciousness requires a break with the politics of Labourite parliamentarism.

The referendum results in Scotland showed a decisive "Yes" vote both for a Scottish parliament and for tax-varying powers. National oppression in Britain today has been heavily conditioned by the steep decline of British imperialism and

"Home Counties".

There is a rich and powerful history of militant class struggle in Scotland, embodied in the tradition of "Red Clydeside". But decades of arrogant, chauvinist Westminster rule and Labourite betrayal of class struggle, crucially the great miners strike of 1984-5, have fuelled the growth of nationalist sentiment among *all* classes in Scotland and ugly chauvinist reaction in England, which often takes the form of complaining that Scotland "costs too much" in welfare "handouts". For this we point the finger squarely at the Labourites and the trade union bureaucracy, who have systematically betrayed working-class struggles. This rise of sentiment for some form of self-government is evident in the growth of the bourgeois Scottish National Party. This also lies behind the fact that the Labour Party, which for decades has been the dominant *Unionist* party in Scotland, changed its policy and advocated "devolution" in the aftermath of the 1992 election as an expedient, fearful as they were of losing support to the SNP.

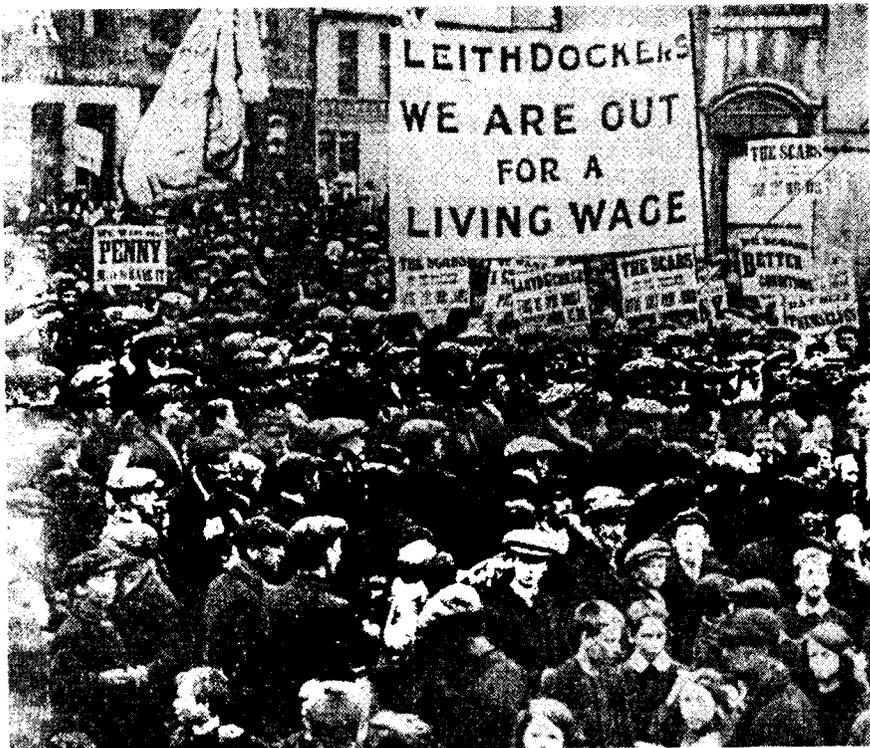
We do not believe for a moment that, in and of itself, the establishment of a "devolved" Scottish parliament will take the national question off the agenda. Blair's "project" for a devolved parliament aims to "update" and preserve the oppressive rule of the South of England-centred bourgeoisie, just as he is committed to the preservation of the monarchy. Moreover, his insistence on the question on taxation was widely unpopular in Scotland when it was first announced. Scots voted "yes" not out of some perverse desire to pay more taxes but in opposition to the arrogant rule of Westminster, which Blair embodies. However, Denis's "simple defencist position" of opposition to giving the Scottish parliament the right to raise taxes poses the question within a narrow economic framework. Moreover, this position would mean that taxation of the Scottish population (including the working class) remains

the sole prerogative of the Westminster parliament.

Denis rightly rejects the Labourite parliamentary cretinism of organisations such as Scottish Militant Labour. Since Labour adopted Scottish devolution as a policy, Militant has capitulated to Scottish nationalism and English chauvinism simultaneously. These "empire-loyal" socialists have made open appeals for popular-front alliances with the bourgeois nationalist SNP. Thus they presented the Scottish referendum as a means for peddling illusions in the proposed bourgeois parliament in Edinburgh: "for socialists, a double yes vote and the creation of a parliament in Edinburgh won't be the end of the matter. We will then turn our attention to the fight to turn it into a body which will serve the people instead of the rich... a body that will fight for change and social justice" (*Scottish Socialist Voice*, 29 August).

Marxists advocate the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales as part of a programme for the revolutionary overthrow of the British ruling class and their "United Kingdom". We recognise that the attitude of the English bourgeoisie could well drive the Scots and Welsh to separation. But given the lack of decisive national differences either in language or in religion, at the present time we advocate a course of common class struggle against the British state.

What is required in order to vastly improve living standards for the working class and oppressed is a thoroughgoing socialist revolution, which will re-industrialise the country and develop the means of production in a rationally planned economy. Recognising the right of Scotland and Wales to self-determination, we fight for workers revolution to smash oppressive Westminster rule and replace it with a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a United Socialist States of Europe. ■



No credit

Leith (Edinburgh) dockers battle for better pay in 1913. Rich history of militant class struggle in Scotland.

And at the same time, it is their task, in the interests of a successful struggle against all and every kind of nationalism among all nations, to preserve the unity of the proletarian struggle and the proletarian organisations....

— "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (1914)

The fight against bourgeois nationalism

In the case of the secession of Norway from its then-oppressor nation, Sweden, Lenin stressed that it was the duty of socialists in Sweden to uphold the right of Norway to secede, and that this position benefited the working class of *both* nations:

"The close alliance between the Norwegian and Swedish workers, their complete fraternal class solidarity, *gained* from the Swedish workers' recognition of the right of the Norwegians to secede. This convinced the Norwegian workers that the Swedish workers were not infected with Swedish nationalism, and that they placed fraternity with the Norwegian proletarians above the privileges of the Swedish bourgeoisie and aristocracy."

Similarly, a commitment by the working class in England to place fraternity with the working class in Scotland above national divisions will strengthen the proletariat on both sides in the struggle to

the capitalist destruction of industry, which was pursued with particular vindictiveness by Margaret Thatcher. This impacted unequally on Scotland, Wales and much of the North of England, formerly centres of proletarian militancy. The misery of working people and the poor in these regions strikes a sharp contrast with the accumulation of vast wealth by the City fat cats, whose idea of an economy does not extend beyond the English

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CPGB capitulates to English chauvinism

In our last issue we noted that the British "socialist" left are characterised by their adaptation to pervasive English chauvinism. A polemic by the "Communist Party of Great Britain" proves there is no shortage of "socialists" who "recognise" the right of nations to self-determination in words, only to renounce it in deeds. The CPGB attacks us for our Yes-Yes position:

"SL wants to 'seek to hasten the demise of the archaic "United Kingdom"'. Yes, comrades, but in a *positive* fashion, not a negative way. Not by a reactionary break-up of the UK along national — or regional — lines."

— *Weekly Worker*, 2 October

The CPGB advocated *abstention* in the referendum, rejecting the right of even a

limited parliament for Scotland, which is a shameful capitulation to English chauvinism. Their "positive" position is based on denying the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales by calling for a *single* "federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales", of unspecified class character.

In the general election the CPGB stood candidates as part of the Scottish Socialist Alliance, which is dominated by Scottish Militant Labour — an organisation which does not raise the elementary demand for British troops out of Northern Ireland, and is notorious for its political embrace of Loyalist death-squad representatives like Billy Hutchinson.

China...

(Continued from page 1)

built roadblocks to protest managers' embezzlement of unemployment benefits after three silk and textile plants closed. Some 80 workers were reportedly arrested and 100 injured after clashes with the People's Armed Police, a force created in the mid-1980s specifically to control mounting urban unrest.

fight of the Chinese masses against capitalist counterrevolution to class struggles throughout East and Southeast Asia, particularly reaching out to the proletariat of Japan, the industrial powerhouse of the region.

Chinese Stalinists prepare final sell-out

The question is whether the Beijing regime can enforce mass layoffs and cut-

the labour force in state plants was begun.

The CCP bureaucracy hopes to transform itself into a new exploiting class through a "cold" transition to fully fledged capitalism. They have certainly gone a long way down this road, much further than the Soviet Stalinist regime had before its downfall. Yet despite differences of degree, what Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky wrote in his definitive 1936 work analysing the Stalin regime, *The Revolution Betrayed*, holds true in its essentials



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

Strikes and social protests have continued to mount. Many of these have been directed against the flagrant corruption of local officials. While news of social turmoil is slow to leak out, in the month of September alone there were reports of a demonstration by angry workers in Sichuan trying to eke out a living after being forced into early retirement and a mass protest in Guangdong province — against the regime's draconian "one-child" policy — which was put down by 1000 troops and paramilitary forces. Social tensions have also been stoked by widening income disparities between centres of economic expansion along the eastern coastal areas and the rest of the country.

The bureaucracy has tried to keep an iron grip on society as it plunges ever deeper into the "free market". Last year, over 6000 people were condemned to death, some for crimes as petty as stealing chickens. The barbaric death penalty is part of the bureaucratic arsenal of terror designed to keep the working people and impoverished peasantry in line.

The brittle bureaucratic caste is well aware that it is sitting on a social powder-keg. While unemployment officially stands at 3 per cent, this figure is not believed by anyone. The mainland Chinese magazine *Outlook* reports that the urban jobless rate is 7.5 per cent while "China's rural areas have about 175 million surplus laborers, representing an unemployment rate of 34.8%" (*Asian Wall Street Journal*, 5 August). Much of this enormous "surplus" workforce, which was spawned by the destruction of collectivised agriculture in the early 1980s, roams the townships and cities in search of work, often leading to bitter conflicts with longtime city residents.

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

backs on a working class which has been taught that the revolution was made for the benefit of "the people". The Stalinist bureaucracy lives in mortal fear of the spectre of the Tiananmen uprising. Popular discontent in 1989 was largely fuelled by rising inflation and the flagrant, filthy corruption of the officialdom. With anger over corruption and economic insecurity growing once again, the bureaucracy is ever-mindful to ward off any possibility of social protest. Many "princelings" — including Deng's son-in-law, head of the mammoth Poly Group conglomerate — were kept off the new Central Committee. And shortly before the congress, the government announced that a former Beijing party chief and Political Bureau member would face trial and possible execution on corruption charges. A well-connected Chinese writer observed: "The leadership was very nervous people would take to the streets with anticorruption slogans" (*South China Morning Post*, 11 September).

At the same time, the CCP leadership signalled it would brook no loosening of political controls. Several open letters, including one ostensibly written by former premier Zhao Ziyang — who lost his position for opposing the 1989 crackdown — called on the congress to "revise" the party's depiction of the Tiananmen student protests as an attempt to overthrow CCP rule. All these petitions were, dismissed out of hand, and the congress purged former intelligence chief and Politburo member Qiao Shi, who also called for a softer line towards the Tiananmen events. Such calls do not necessarily come from the left. They are often linked to demands for "free elections" and the "rule of law", echoing the imperialist spokesmen who insist that moves towards capitalism must be consolidated through the establishment of a bourgeois regime.

For all of its ostentatious corruption and evident identification with rich investors, the Stalinist bureaucracy remains a brittle caste which continues to rest on the economic foundation, however attenuated, of the deformed workers state. Beijing has time and again announced capitalist measures only to back off in the face of threatened social unrest. The government first announced it would "smash the iron rice bowl" in 1987. Yet it took almost ten years before any serious effort to cut back

for the Chinese bureaucracy today:

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

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

For a Leninist-Trotskyist party!

To forge an internationalist, egalitarian-communist party in China requires a political struggle not only against the Stalinist misleaders but also against those who would lead the workers into the camp of

"democratic" counterrevolution. Some Tiananmen-era dissidents have been engaged in efforts to organise trade unions opposed to the regime's All-China Federation of Trade Unions. Such activists can be very heroic, going up against capitalist entrepreneurs and their Stalinist police protectors. However, Marxists warn against any ties to pro-capitalist "dissidents" such as Tiananmen veteran Han Dongfang. Han regularly appeals to the US-sponsored International Confederation of Free Trade Unions — which originated in the Cold War against the Soviet Union — for action against the Chinese regime, while his Hong Kong-based *China Labor Bulletin* (January 1997) baldly admits that its chief editor had been featured on the US imperialists' *Voice of America* and *Radio Free Asia*.

Such appeals for (bourgeois) "democracy" are echoed and embraced by various "socialist" groups in the West. The most brazen of these is the tendency led by Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party, including the US International Socialist Organization. Ever since Cliff's expulsion from the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1950 for refusing to defend China and North Korea during the Korean War, the hallmark of this group has been tailing after "democratic" imperialism. This has included cheering such thoroughly anti-democratic and flagrantly reactionary forces as Lech Walesa's Vatican-sponsored Solidarność in Poland and the anti-woman *mujahedin* cut-throats in Afghanistan. More recently, Cliff's outfit sided with the political heirs of Guomindang butcher Chiang Kai-shek, who run the brutal capitalist Taiwan regime. As US warships plied the Taiwan Strait last year in a provocation against Beijing, the Cliffites proclaimed that "China's claim to Taiwan is a colonialist one. We would oppose any Chinese invasion of Taiwan as an act of imperialist aggression" (*Socialist Review*, April 1996).

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

The Cliffites' "theory" of state capitalism — which is counterposed to any Marxist analysis of capitalism — is simply a fig-leaf for virulent anti-Communism. Nobody, but nobody — from bourgeois Western ideologues to hard-pressed Russian workers — would buy the Cliffites' idiotic view that the counterrevolution in

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SPARTACIST 4

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斯巴达克同盟
原则宣言

Declaration of Principles
of the Spartacist League

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

ISSN 0951-1795 DAB 02/97 C0461/25 March 11/97 No.40/20 Rate 11/97 £3.25 21/25

Ireland...

(Continued from page 12)

targeted a lone paper seller at the Socialist Party's (SP) literature table. They began menacing the SPers, shouting "Baby murderers!" as they brandished their gory posters. Two supporters of the Dublin Spartacist Group (DSG) came from our nearby table to help protect those being menaced. After making a quick call on a mobile phone, the Youth Defence thugs began pushing, then punching, first the SP supporter and then the supporters of the DSG. During the struggle, the SP's literature table was knocked over, one of our comrades was very nearly thrown over a wall with an eight foot drop to a concrete floor, and at least one SP supporter was bloodied and bruised. Within minutes, the Gardai arrived and informed SP and DSG supporters that they, who had just been attacked, now face possible charges of assault levelled by Youth Defence!

This is the latest in an escalating series of attacks by Youth Defence, whose storm troopers are the cutting edge of a reactionary drive to wipe out the minuscule amount of family planning services and abortion information that is legally available in Ireland. Since January of this year, the Youth Defence bigots have besieged the Marie Stopes Reproductive Choices Clinic in Dublin, which was raided by the cops, and a doctor was arrested on suspicion of having carried out an abortion there. Youth Defence has picketed the clinic daily with up to 50 bigots aggressively abusing and intimidating any woman entering the clinic. *Defend the Marie Stopes Clinic! For free abortion on demand!*

Ominously, at the beginning of this university year, Youth Defence have raised their heads at UCD, Trinity College and Dublin City University. In the past, mobilisations of Trinity students have driven the likes of British fascist David Irving off campus. Students at UCD and Trinity have also been active in mobilisations for abortion rights and in protests against the horrific state ban on a young woman travelling to England for an abortion in 1992, known as the "X case". In 1988, the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC), a reactionary anti-abortion outfit with connections in the higher echelons of society secured the first of a series of court injunctions against students at UCD, and later Trinity College and the Union of Students in Ireland in an

attempt to stop them distributing telephone numbers for abortion services in Britain. Students defied the injunctions and distributed abortion information, resulting in massive fines.

The DSG has insisted for some time

while maintaining the separate political identity of the participating groups. Not simply students, but campus workers and other trade unionists have a stake in stopping the fascists.

We fight for trade union mobilisations



Dublin Spartacist Group

Dublin Spartacist Group at 1994 protest against Youth Defence anti-abortion bigots.

now that Youth Defence harbours a fascist core that harks back to the Blueshirts who in the 1930s sent contingents blessed by the Church to fight for Franco and fascism in Spain. They seek to implement their programme in *action*, particularly targeting those fighting for women's abortion rights. In October 1992, Youth Defence laid into Democratic Left supporters with snooker cues outside the Pipers Inn in Dublin. At the May Day demonstration in 1993 they tried to stage a provocation, but their efforts were spiked by an action initiated by supporters of the DSG. In July 1994, forty of these thugs launched an organised attack, ready-equipped with hurley sticks, on abortion rights protesters outside the Dáil.

What is necessary and possible is a united-front mobilisation to stop Youth Defence thugs from getting on campus. Minorities, gays, leftists and women all have an interest in stopping Youth Defence from getting a toe-hold on the campuses where they will not only distribute their anti-woman filth, but will carry out physical assaults. United-front action means "march separately, strike together", that is, unity in action against the fascists,

to stop Youth Defence/SPUC reaction. Mobilisations of the organised working class, with the power to shut down society, are critical to driving the fascists back into their holes. But for this to be achieved it is necessary to politically confront the reformist misleaders of the Labour Party/Democratic Left and trade union bureaucrats who tie the working class to the capitalist order.

The reaction of left groups such as the Socialist Party, the Workers Solidarity Movement and the Socialist Workers Party has been to turn a blind eye, and hope the clerical fascists will go away. This is a dangerous game, which can only embolden the fascists. The reformist organisations bear their share of responsibility for the fact that outfits like Youth Defence today feel the wind in their sails; their bottom line is to channel all protests for women's rights into support for the wretched Labour Party in elections, while peddling illusions in legal reforms through the courts. The DSG said no vote to the Labour Party and Democratic Left who were running on their track record in government as the "Rainbow Coalition" in alliance with Fine Gael, a bourgeois party.

The right to abortion is an explosive question in Irish society. Despite cosmetic changes such as the introduction of legal (if massively expensive) divorce, abortion is unavailable. The Irish state is deeply reactionary and sets the stage for an offensive by SPUC and Youth Defence. The fight to win and retain abortion rights must be part of the struggle to overthrow the clericalist capitalist state and replace it with workers rule based on soviets.

Working in the shadows behind SPUC and Youth Defence are such outfits as Opus Dei and the Knights of Columbanus, sinister arms of the Catholic Church. Outfits like SPUC and Youth Defence, in addition to the vigilante mobs who conduct pogromist attacks on Travellers, usually under the protection of the cops and courts, provide a fertile culture medium for Irish fascism. However, the Socialist Party is notorious for condoning vigilante groups which are the shock troops of anti-Traveller pogroms; their particular variety of sewer "socialism" has led them to embrace Billy Hutchinson, a convicted UVF killer of two Catholics, in meetings in Belfast and Dublin. Neither the SP nor the SWP even mentioned abortion rights in their general election campaigns.

Appealing to the cops and courts to stop the fascists is a suicidal strategy. Cops are not neutral, nor "workers in uniform" as the Socialist Party and Socialist Workers Party would have it. The capitalist state, its cops and courts know which side they are on when it comes to the workers movement and oppressed. The cops are the "armed fist" of the capitalist state, there to defend the bosses and their private property. Similarly, appeals to the university administration (which are bastions of reaction) for bans are counterposed to and will only demobilise the necessary united-front action to stop the fascists. Moreover such bans, if implemented will more likely be used against defenders of abortion rights.

The fight for separation of church and state is integral to the struggle for elementary rights for women. Only working class revolution and the establishment of a planned, collectivised economy can provide the material conditions for women's liberation. For women to be free the working class must rule. This requires above all a revolutionary party, the vanguard of the working class, a tribune of all the oppressed. We are fighting to build such a party, on the programme of Lenin and Trotsky, which will lead the working class to power. ■

the USSR in the early 1990s simply involved a shift from one form of capitalism to another. Expropriation of the bourgeoisie and creation of a planned economy is the prerequisite for any development towards an international, classless socialist society. It was on the basis of China's planned economy that workers, peasants, women and national/ethnic minorities made huge strides forward. Trotskyists call for unconditional military defence of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution. Political revolution is premised on the need to defend the socialised property forms through overthrowing the nationalist bureaucracy which acts as a parasite on the planned economy and today prepares to bury it for good.

Two Hong Kong organisations more or less closely associated with the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel — the *October Review* group and the Pioneers — share the Cliffites' affinity for "democratic" counterrevolution. In separate statements on the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese rule, both groups bemoaned Beijing's threat to the thin veneer of "democratic" trappings installed by the last colonial

administration while not once calling for opposition to the growing threat of capitalist counterrevolution in China.

Striking a pose to the left of such overt social democrats is the Workers Power (WP) group and its League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI). Workers Power is an object lesson in Trotsky's description of centrism as "crystallized confusion". In its *Trotskyist International* (July-December 1997), the LRCI calls for "the Trotskyist programme of proletarian political revolution as the only alternative to capitalist social counter-revolution". Yet another article in the very same issue insists that "in China, as in Eastern Europe, there are no grounds for expecting workers to mobilise in defence of what remains of post-capitalist property relations".

What forces, then, are going to make a proletarian political revolution?! Behind WP's Trotskyist verbiage is a deep-seated affinity for social-democratic Labourism. These centrists cannot conceive of breaking the proletariat from its existing consciousness and winning workers to the cause of revolution. Thus, for Workers Power the call for political revolution has simply been a cover for tailing whatever

reactionary force it deemed to be a "lesser evil" to Stalinism. In Poland in 1981, WP supported Solidarność even while admitting that this CIA-backed movement stood for capitalist restoration. Likewise, Workers Power called for a "united front" with Boris Yeltsin as he headed the forces of counterrevolution in the USSR in August 1991.

In sharp contrast, the International Communist League has fought tooth and nail against capitalist counterrevolution. At the time of the Walesa/CIA/Vatican power bid in Poland in late 1981, we raised the call: Stop Solidarność counter-revolution! In 1989, we mobilised all the resources of our international organisation to intervene in the turbulent events in East Germany in opposition to capitalist reunification and for a "red Germany of workers councils", calling for political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West. And immediately after Yeltsin's power grab in Moscow in August 1991, the ICL distributed tens of thousands of leaflets in Russian calling on Soviet workers to "Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

If Chinese working people are not to suffer the devastation and bloodletting

experienced by the masses of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, they must be won to the authentic communism of Lenin and Trotsky. The Stalinists' rush to open the road to full-scale capitalist restoration makes ever more urgent the need to forge a Trotskyist party to lead the workers and peasants in struggle. As we wrote in *Spartacist*:

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

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

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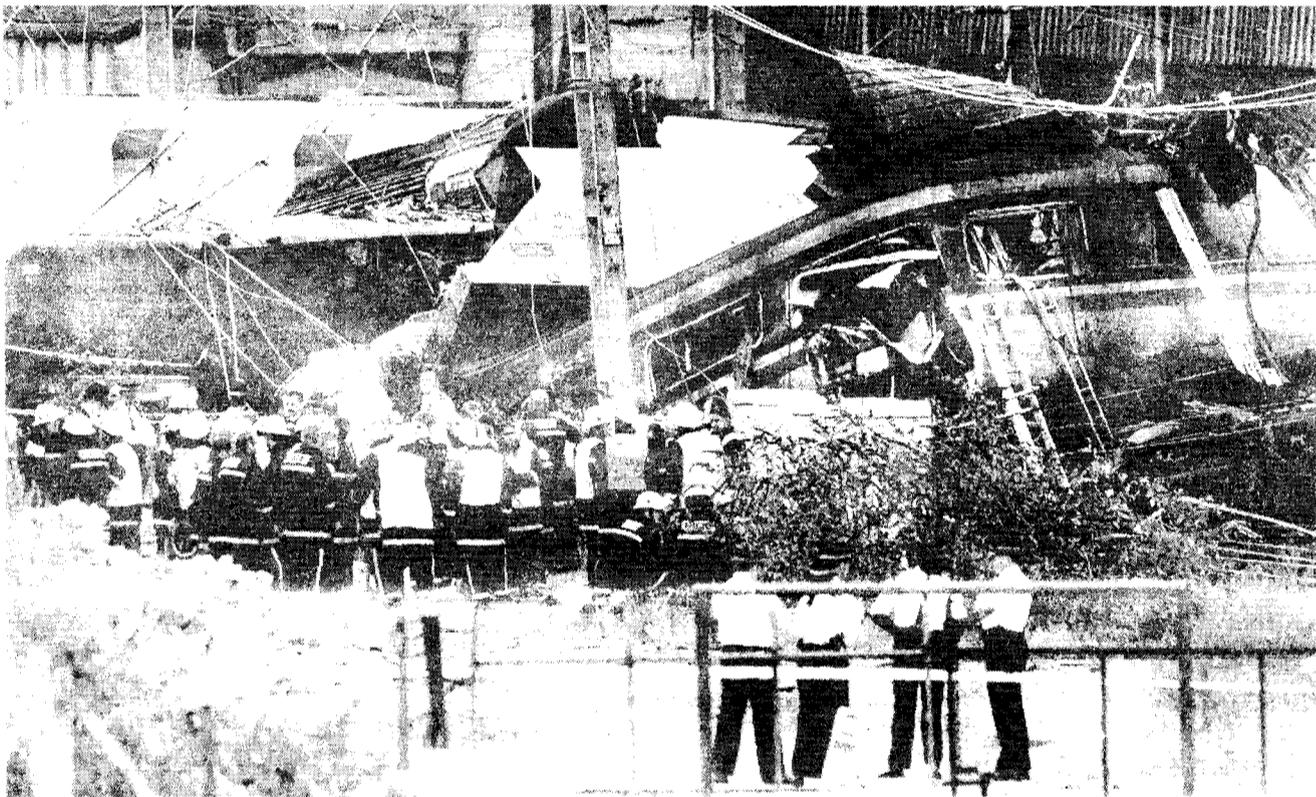
Southall rail crash – capitalist murder

Labour's union-busting privatisation moves

Seven people dead and 170 injured: the Southall train crash on 19 September was, quite simply, capitalist murder. A rail system run for profit always means safety is a secondary concern; with privatisation, it has meant the savaging of basic safety systems by the rail bosses in the greedy dash for greater profits. Scenes of death and destruction like at Southall are coolly considered part of the "overhead" of capitalist enterprise. And the bosses' state, whether run by the Tories or Labour, legitimises and seeks to maximise the plunder.

At 1.28pm the Swansea-to-London Paddington 125 Intercity, packed with passengers, some of them standing, ploughed into a twenty-wagon goods train at Southall East junction (west London). The driver braked but never stood a chance. The nightmare scene was described by one of the first people to volunteer help, Manjit Singh: "The driver was sitting shocked and stunned by the train.... The engine was on fire. From the second carriage there were cries of 'Help, help, help'" (*Independent*, 20 September). Larry Harrison was arrested and held for five hours by British Transport Police, who tried to put him in the frame for manslaughter. After he was released on bail, the capitalist media

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Frank Baron

Southall, 19 September: twisted wreckage of Intercity passenger train where seven people died.

Anti-abortion Youth Defence thugs repulsed

Ireland: for united-front defence against fascist terror!

We print below a leaflet, dated 8 October, produced and distributed by our comrades of the Dublin Spartacist Group in response to a dangerous attack on supporters of the Socialist Party and our own comrades by fascist anti-abortion thugs at University College Dublin. Since the leaflet was produced one of the attackers has been identified in the University Observer as a member and leading spokesman for the sinister Youth Defence organisation. As we go to press, the police are continuing to investigate the incident and both our comrades and supporters of the Socialist Party face the possibility of assault charges.

As the leaflet points out, the question

Free abortion on demand!

of abortion rights goes to the very heart of the Irish clericalist state. All five candidates in the recent presidential elections were explicitly anti-abortion — including the victor, Fianna Fáil's Mary McAleese and the Labour Party nominee Adi Roche. The Labour Party's record in popular-front governments with Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, was vicious anti-working class austerity and attacks against women, Travellers and Republicans. There was absolutely no basis for Marxists to support any of

these candidates. But that did not deter the Socialist Workers Party from supporting Roche, declaring: "A high vote for Adi Roche, the candidate of the Greens, Labour and Democratic Left would be an important signal that many will resist the right wing" (Socialist Worker [Ireland] 4-17 October).

Youth Defence, an organisation of extreme anti-abortion bigots, harbours a violent, clerical-fascist core. Two of these Blueshirt thugs launched a clearly

premeditated violent assault against left paper sellers at University College Dublin (UCD) Freshers' Fair on 30 September. This outrageous attack was repulsed, which was a modest victory for the intended targets of fascism — leftists, those fighting for women's rights, immigrants, Travellers and, ultimately, the organised workers movement. The fascists must be stopped in their tracks now when they are small!

Youth Defence are out for blood. Bearing grotesque posters of foetuses, the two thugs arrived on campus ready to attack anyone they deem to be "pro-abortion". After attempting to disrupt the Socialist Workers Students' stall, they

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