

Orange supremacy, anti-Catholic terror

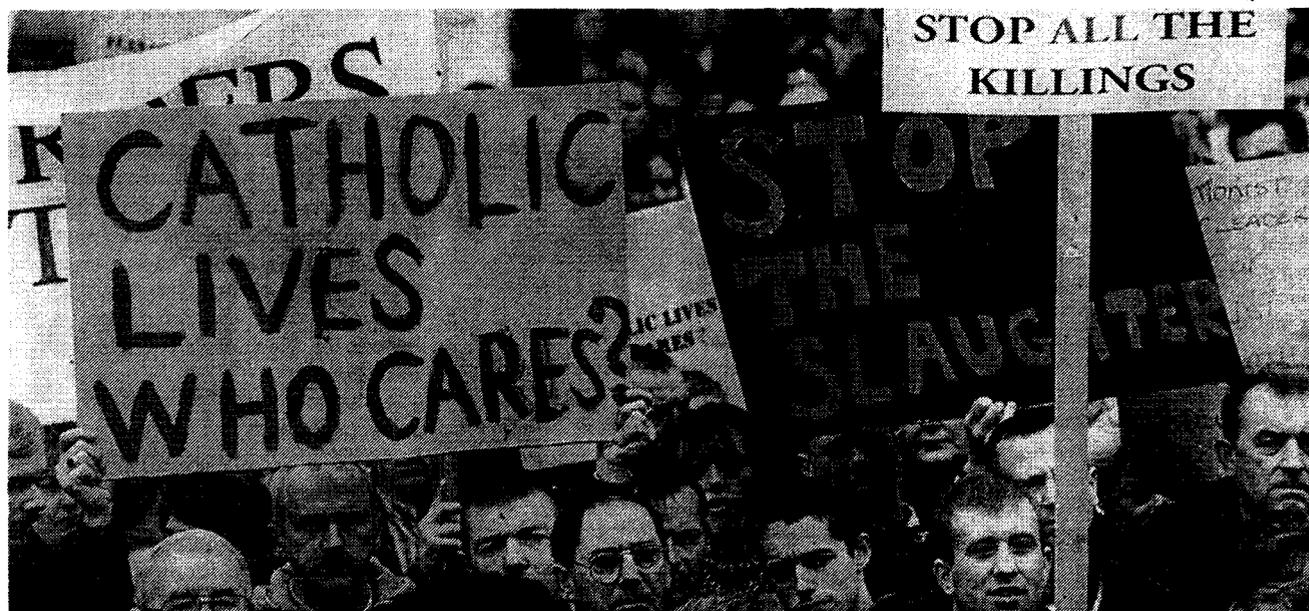
Northern Ireland: Labour aims to ram through new Stormont

For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!

As the imperialist British Labour government crows that it is "endgame" for what they called the "peace process", the new arrangement for Northern Ireland emerges predictably as a blueprint for enshrined Orange supremacy. Blair is bent on this plan being endorsed in referendums in the North and southern Ireland in May. The "deal" as laid out in the January "Heads of Agreement" document centres on the creation of a Northern Ireland assembly. This is nothing but a return to Unionist Stormont rule which lorded it over the Catholics prior to the imposition of direct rule from Westminster in 1972. The British Army will stay in place to enforce anti-Catholic terror. The meaning of this "deal" for the oppressed Catholics is apparent in the remark of Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble: "There is nothing in this paper which obstructs or constrains the sort of outcome toward which we have been working."

The "outcome" Trimble is working for is official, systematic Orange repression against Catholics, backed up by the forces of the British state. The imperialists, Unionists and southern Irish government all collaborate in hounding Sinn Féin and the IRA, who they see as the representatives of an unruly Catholic population which must be held in subjugation. Hence the expulsion of Sinn Féin from the "talks" in February, based on the unproven allegation that the IRA had murdered a UDA leader and a suspected drug dealer. Meanwhile Trimble et al carry on in their official duties, as their friends in the Loyalist paramilitary death squads gun down Catholics with impunity.

The recent rise in sectarian murders, mainly of Catholics, heightens the fear that grips both communities in Northern Ireland of an escalation to all-out communal bloodletting — rampant indiscriminate killings on both sides — when the "ceasefires" officially end. The British and Irish governments and the Unionists cynically seize on this widespread fear and despair in order to sell their imperialist "deal". We have opposed this "peace" fraud from the beginning: it will be premised on the British troops remaining in place and "will be bloody and brutal and will necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. And it would not do any good for working-class Protestants either" (*Workers Hammer* no 138, November/December 1993).



Belfast, 30 January: ICTU demonstration organisers attempted to exclude signs protesting Loyalist murders of Catholics.

It is the elementary duty for Marxists in Britain to oppose British imperialism, whether Labour or Tory administered. We call for the *immediate unconditional withdrawal* of British troops from Northern Ireland. This demand does not automatically ensure any advance in a revolutionary direction. It is a necessary starting point which must be linked to a revolutionary, proletarian perspective for both islands. Northern Ireland is a situation of interpenetrated peoples in which the Catholics are currently an oppressed minority. There can be no just solution to the national oppression short of workers revolution. We oppose the forcible unification of Ireland, which would only compact the Protestants behind the Loyalist bigots, precluding a polarisation along *class* lines and instead laying the basis for a communal bloodbath and a "Bosnia"-type scenario of forced population transfers. We fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles! This will only come about by the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, the Orange statelet and the clericalist state in the South.

The government is rushing to ram through its new Stormont before the Orange "marching season" in July during which the British Army and RUC provide massive forces, firepower and armoured vehicles, alongside the Loyalist mobs to terrorise the oppressed Catholic minority. David Trimble first gained leadership of the Ulster Unionists after presiding over the Portadown "Siege of Drumree" in the 1995 "marching season". At Drumree '96 he communed with Loyalist murderer "King Rat" Billy Wright while Orange mobs rampaged throughout Northern Ireland against Catholics in the name of

their "right" to march. As we wrote: "The RUC and British Army, in full riot gear, brutally cleared Catholic residents out of the way so that the thousands-strong Orange march could strut down the Garvaghy Road. Catholic residents protested this atrocity, but had their streets blockaded by Saracen armoured cars and were viciously attacked by the RUC with batons and plastic bullets" (*Workers Hammer* no 152, September/October 1996).

At Drumree '97 Mo Mowlam saw to it that the newly elected Labour government carried through its commitment to put "Orange feet on the Garvaghy Road", again sending in hundreds of soldiers and RUC to terrorise the Catholic protesters. The Spartacist League immediately issued a leaflet saying "Labour government has blood on its hands!"

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), whose programme is to pressure the Labour government, now complain that "New Labour has bowed to the Unionists and the Orangemen" and urge that the "government confronts the Orange thugs and dismantles the sectarian Northern state" (*Socialist Worker*, 7 February). No surprise here from a party that cheered the troops being sent in by Labour in 1969 in the name of providing a "breathing space"! The Labour Party, which has always been a party of Unionism and imperialism, applauded the 1916 execution of Irish socialist James Connolly and defended the Empire in two world wars.

The Socialist Party (SP) is a Loyalist cheering section, infamous for hosting UVF murderer and PUP leader Billy Hutchinson. The SP enthuse: "The PUP leadership has even talked of socialism and are perceived as a breath of fresh air compared to the loyalist politics of the past" (*Scottish*

Socialist Voice, 7 November 1997).

Workers Power (WP) share the SWP's Labour loyalism, and both groups' faith in British "democracy" and "fair play" leads them to "welcome" Labour's new "inquiry" into the 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre. Any new "inquiry" by the bloody imperialists would be a whitewash of the British Army who gunned down 14 Catholics in cold blood. Bogus "Trotskyists", WP also tails Green nationalism, calling all Catholics "nationalists", and criticising Sinn Féin for their "transition from revolutionary into constitutional nationalists". What WP means by "revolutionary nationalism" is the forcible unification of Ireland under capitalism. This is directly counterposed to the Leninist programme which seeks to cut across the communal divide and fight for working class power.

The Sinn Féin nationalists have bent over backwards to maintain their place in the "talks", including Gerry Adams' recent setting aside of the standard nationalist demand for a united Ireland. Both their strategies — whether "armed struggle" or begging to sit at the "talks" table with imperialist butchers and their Unionist henchmen — aim to pressure imperialism. Whatever concessions Sinn Féin are prepared to make, the imperialists and Unionists demand the subjugation of the Catholic minority. The anti-working class petty-bourgeois nationalists of Sinn Féin/IRA cannot advance the interests of the oppressed Catholic population of Northern Ireland. The nationalist programme of a capitalist united Ireland would put the population of the North, Catholic and Protestant, into the southern Irish anti-worker, anti-Catholic, clericalist state.

Marxists point out that the IRA's tactic

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For the immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops!

Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Iraq— Irish government supports imperialist butchers!

We publish below excerpts from a 24 February Dublin Spartacist Group statement which stated, "Defend Iraq against US/British imperialist attack!" and highlighted the role played by the Irish bourgeoisie in the plans for imperialist devastation.

The Irish government is already playing its own dirty part in the racist terror which is to be unleashed against Iraqis. Shannon Airport is being used as a refuelling stop for US troop-carrying planes bound for the Middle East, as happened in the Gulf War.

The Dublin Spartacist Group calls for military defence of Iraq in the event of imperialist assault. We also demand an immediate end to United Nations sanctions, which have killed over one million Iraqis in the past seven years. Irish army officers are acting as UN "weapons inspectors" in Iraq. Their inspections are nothing more than a pretext for military bombardment. The UN is and always has been a figleaf for imperialist war.

We call for workers' strikes at Shannon Airport to stop the refuelling of US troop

carriers. Labour spokesman Emmett Stagg whinges that allowing US planes to refuel there is a violation of Ireland's "neutrality", claiming "We are a militarily neutral country". This is hogwash. Although militarily weak, the capitalist state in Ireland has never been neutral towards the working class and oppressed at home or abroad. Irish troops have played a bloody role in racist imperialist rampage in the Congo as part of UN forces; today they form part of UN repression in Lebanon directed against the Palestinians. At home, the clericalist state viciously represses the working class and the oppressed. Over the past several weeks, Ryanair workers have staged a series of strikes for the right to have a union. Travellers suffer hideous oppression and pogromist attacks by cops and vigilante mobs. Women are denied the elementary right to abortion by the same state which protects the clerical fascists of Youth Defence. Workers must mobilise to defend Travellers. As part of the fight for free abortion on demand, we call for mass, militant defence actions, backed up by the social power of the working class, to disperse Youth Defence thugs which besiege the Marie Stopes women's clinic in Dublin.

Successive Irish governments, often including the wretched Labour Party, have backed British army repression against the oppressed Catholics in Northern Ireland.... We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. We fight for the defence of the oppressed Catholics, and for integrated workers militias to defeat sectarian terror. We oppose forcible unification of Ireland, which would reverse the terms of oppression against the Protestant minority, and fight for a workers republic in Ireland as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles.

We also demand that Irish troops get out of southern Lebanon. Irish troops as part of United Nations forces, together with Israeli troops are nothing other than imperialist butchers, in the service of the US imperialist-sponsored Middle East "peace" process. In Northern Ireland "Pax Britannica" has fuelled Loyalist terror against the Catholic minority, in the Middle East "Pax Americana" means Zionist terror against the oppressed Palestinians. The role of Irish troops in Lebanon is no less imperialist than that of the British army in Northern Ireland. Irish/UN/Israeli troops and Zionist "settlers" out of south-

ern Lebanon! Defend the Palestinians! We fight for a socialist federation of the Middle East. Down with the Oil Sheiks, Emirs, Kings, Colonels and the Zionist rulers — workers to power!...

The fake left, such as the Socialist Party (SP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Ireland take their cue from their "mother" groups in Britain, who in turn tail the pro-imperialist British Labour Party. To read the SP's press you would think the main enemy of the British workers is Saddam Hussein, frontloading: "Workers in Britain want to see a brutal dictator like Saddam Hussein removed" and complaining that "this attack will not bring forward by one day the overthrow of Saddam" (*The Socialist*, 13 February 1998). For the SP the enemy is certainly not the British imperialists, whose war machine is preparing to massacre Iraqis again, and who carry out bloody repression of Catholics in Northern Ireland. The SP rejects the call for immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland (and for British forces out of the Gulf) whom they consider "our boys"....

Nowhere do the Irish SWP and SP call for Irish troops to get the hell out of the Middle East. Opposition to your "own" bourgeoisie, especially the armed fist of its state, is a litmus test for revolutionaries, which these groups always fail. In opposition to the myth that capitalist Ireland is "neutral", we insist "not a penny, not a man" for the Irish capitalist army! Workers revolution on both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish Sea, will smash the clericalist state here, the sectarian Orange statelet in the North, and overthrow blood-drenched British imperialism.

We seek to mobilise the working class to fight for the interests of all the oppressed in society in a struggle leading to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. We fight for workers revolution in Ireland and internationally, as the only way to end war which requires building a revolutionary party. The Irish Labour Party is pro-capitalist to the core, and has consistently betrayed the Irish working class, supporting clericalist reaction in the South and British imperialist repression in the North. The DSG is a sympathising section of the International Communist League, which is committed to reforging Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution, fighting for the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism around the globe. ■



TROTSKY

To young fighters against imperialist war

Tony Blair's imperialist Labour government despatched aircraft carriers and Tornado jets to join the US armada in the Persian Gulf, vowing to "hit hard" and inflict "massive damage" on the Iraqi masses. The social-chauvinist Labour "left" MP Tony Benn pushes for "weapons inspections" by that latter-day imperialist "den of thieves", the United Nations. Revolutionaries take their stand



LENIN

in defence of Iraq against imperialist attack and for the defeat of British imperialism through workers revolution. Some young people, appalled by the brazen blood-thirstiness and consummate hypocrisy of the imperialists, are beginning to protest. In the mid-1930s, as Mussolini's Italy prepared to invade Ethiopia, the Russian internationalist revolutionary Leon Trotsky addressed a message to socialist youth warning against a "popular front" for peace that would tie working people to the imperialist parties of war.

For Marxists the struggle against war coincides with the struggle against imperialism. The means for this struggle is not "general disarmament" but the arming of the proletariat for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers' state. Our slogan is not the League of Nations, but the Soviet United States of Europe and of the entire world!

Today we see in France how the reformists and the so-called "Communists" (in reality only Stalinists) have allied themselves with the Radicals, ostensibly for the purpose of struggling against war and fascism. Who are the Radicals? A thoroughly imperialist party which stands for the Versailles treaty and for the French colonial empire. How can one lead a struggle against the imperialists' war together with an imperialist party?

Naturally, the Radicals readily speak for peace. Hitler also works in the sweat of his brow for peace. They are all for peace: priests, bankers, generals. But what does the pacifism of the bourgeois governments and parties mean? Vile hypocrisy. Every robber prefers, if possible, to take away his victim's purse "peacefully" without taking his life. Mussolini would naturally prefer to pocket Ethiopia "peacefully," that is, without the expenses and sacrifices of war. England and France would like to enjoy their plunder "in peace." But woe to whoever hinders them! That is the meaning of capitalist love for peace.

Petty-bourgeois pacifism is in general sincere, but so much the more blind and helpless, since in essence it is but the belief of peasants and petty merchants that it is possible to make the ruling classes better, to disarm the great capitalist robbers and induce them to live "peacefully" side by side. But with all its good intentions petty-bourgeois pacifism becomes a drug with the help of which the imperialists overcome the masses at the proper moment and make cannon fodder out of them. We accuse the leaders of the Second and Third Internationals of helping capitalism to prepare a new world slaughter through their nonsensical twaddle. In a new war the reformists and the Stalinists will in the majority of cases stand on the side of their governments, especially in France, Belgium, and Czechoslovakia. Whoever really wants to fight against war must speak to the people clearly, must gather the fighters under one revolutionary banner, under the banner of the Fourth International.

— "To Young Communists and Socialists", *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36)*

WORKERS HAMMER

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

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N Ireland...

(Continued from page 1)

of individual terror runs counter to the communist strategy of mobilising the working class to overthrow capitalism. However, when the IRA strikes a blow against Loyalist killers or the imperialist oppressor, we defend the perpetrators of such acts against capitalist retribution. We take a different attitude to indiscriminate terror by the IRA such as the Enniskillen, Tebane or Shankill bombings, which are criminal acts from the standpoint of the working class. However, the Loyalist paramilitaries who murder Catholics (as well as attacking Protestants who socialise with Catholics such as the 3 March pub murders of two friends in Poyntzpass) are simply fascistic gangs, some of whom have ties to hardcore British fascists like the Hitler-lovers of Combat 18.

We are for integrated, program-

matically-based and communist-led workers militias to combat sectarian terror, Orange and Green. The urgent necessity is for Trotskyist leadership, to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class, to alter the course of conflict towards a class determination and proletarian revolution throughout the British Isles. Powerful working-class integrated struggle has taken place in the past, as in the Belfast engineers strike in 1919, but has always been defeated by the imperialists, aided by the trade union bureaucrats, Orange bigots and Green nationalists, to maintain the poisonous sectarian divide. We fight to build revolutionary workers parties, appealing to the joint class interests of Catholic and Protestant workers against the British imperialists, the reactionary Orange bigots, the southern Irish clericalist bourgeoisie as well as the Green nationalists in the North. For workers revolution, both sides of the Irish border, both sides of the Irish sea! ■

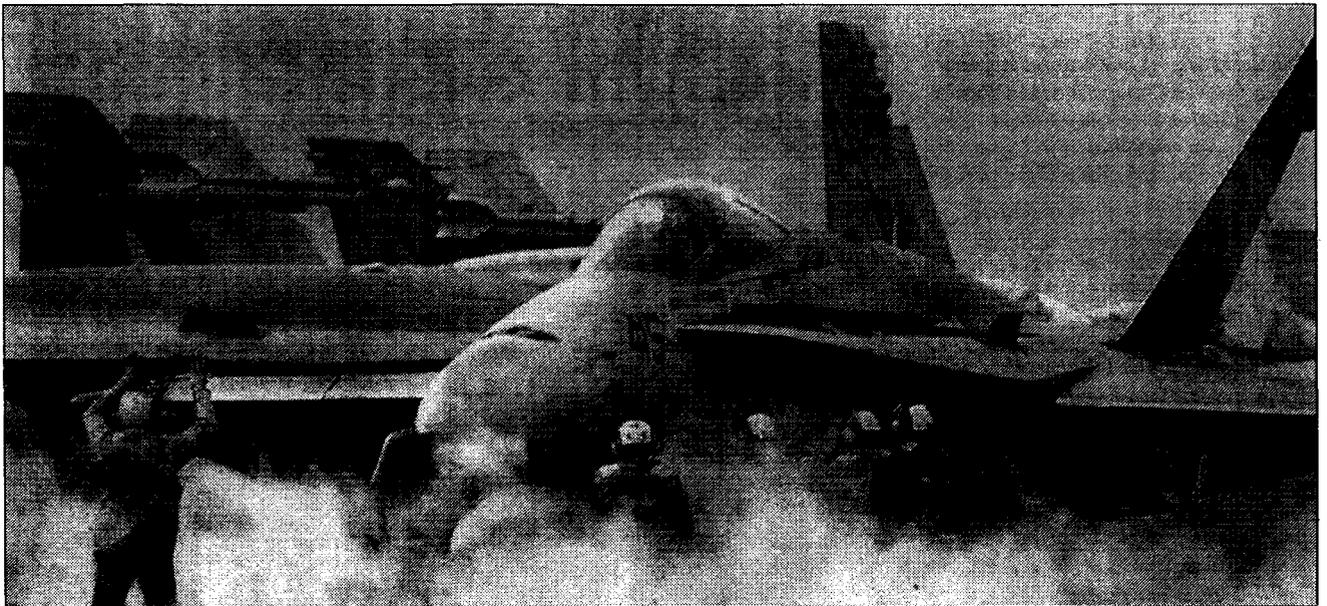
Down with US war moves in the Gulf! Defend Iraq against imperialist attack!

We reprint below a 24 February statement by the Political Bureau of the Spartacist League/US, first published in its newspaper *Workers Vanguard* no 685 (27 February 1998).

US president Clinton yesterday announced conditional acceptance of the deal worked out by United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan and Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi leader has reportedly offered to comply fully with imperialist dictates for "weapons inspection", eliminating the pretext for Washington's threat to carry out a renewed round of mass murder against the Iraqi people. But the threat of a massive military slaughter is far from over. Clinton immediately warned Iraq of "serious consequences" if Washington does not get what it deems to be full "compliance".

Washington emphasised that it is not about to withdraw the massive array of firepower it has assembled in the Persian Gulf—over 300 warplanes, 32 ships and 30,000 troops. Should bombing and missile strikes go ahead, the International Communist League proclaims forthrightly, as we have in protest statements and demonstrations around the US and internationally over the last two weeks: *Defend Iraq against imperialist attack! Down with the UN starvation blockade!*

The grudging American response to the latest deal exposes the utter cynicism of Clinton's pratings about desiring a "peaceful", "diplomatic" resolution to this



Brian Fleske

Massive military build-up in Persian Gulf is show of terror by US/British imperialism.

the massive American arsenal of destruction continues to make it top dog. In a military conflict pitting US imperialism against semicolonial Iraq, it is the duty of the proletariat internationally to stand militarily with the Iraqi people. The Spartacist League, US section of the ICL, fights to forge a revolutionary party of the multiracial proletariat to *defeat US imperialism through class struggle*. Workers revolution is the only road to peace!

Whether or not America's capitalist

imperialist den of thieves, whose purpose is to police the oppressed of the world on behalf of the capitalist masters.

War is the continuation of politics by other means, wrote the German military strategist Clausewitz in the 19th century. Imperialist war is the concentrated expression of the "normal" brutal workings of the capitalist system, which daily condemns countless numbers of people around the world to death by malnutrition, lack of medical care and industrial "accidents". The threat to bomb Iraq into the Stone Age is of a piece with the use of the US-dominated International Monetary Fund to impose misery and starvation on the workers of Southeast Asia, Mexico and elsewhere in order to keep interest payments flowing into the coffers of Chase Manhattan and Citibank.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat, sharply intensified interimperialist competition, leading to a renewed scramble among the three major powers—the US, Japan and Germany—to redivide markets and spheres of exploitation. In the drive to increase their profit margins, the capitalist rulers have also escalated attacks on workers, minorities and immigrants in their own countries, ratcheting up the rate of exploitation, slashing social programmes, stepping up racist repression. In statements issued by other national sections of the ICL denouncing the threatened bombing of Iraq, our comrades have stressed the need to mobilise the proletariat of each country in struggle against its enemy, its "own" national bourgeoisie.

The outlines of the world political situation are more and more coming to resemble those before the first inter-imperialist world war of 1914-18. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, whose final undoing is the work chiefly of the social-democratic and Stalinist misleaders, pointed the way out of this system of exploitation, racism and war. Amid the slaughter of World War I, as the social-democratic Second International wallowed in national chauvinism, Lenin's Bolsheviks persevered in forging a workers party

committed to the programme of world socialist revolution. In his 1915 pamphlet, *Socialism and War*, Lenin wrote:

"Without a series of revolutions, what is called a democratic peace is a philistine Utopia. The purpose of a real programme of action can be served only by a Marxist programme which gives the masses a full and clear explanation of what has taken place, explains what imperialism is and how it should be combated, declares openly that the collapse of the Second International was brought about by opportunism, and openly calls for a Marxist International to be built up without and against the opportunists."

The threat to blow away countless Iraqi civilians as a display of America's military might, like the enormous "desert slaughter" perpetrated seven years ago, is a harbinger of future, even bloodier conflicts—ultimately including the spectre of nuclear war—if capitalism is not swept away.

Big Lies for mass murder

The Ohio State "town hall" meeting which turned into a public relations fiasco when Clinton's spokesmen were barraged with chants, jeers and embarrassing questions manifested the absence of even a threadbare ideological fig-leaf for the threatened terror bombing of Iraq. Having proclaimed that "communism is dead", the US rulers no longer have that ideological standby to justify imperialist military adventures. Instead, the White House has thrown up a smoke-screen of cynical and contradictory lies. Claims that air strikes were needed to open up Iraq's "presidential palaces" to UN inspectors were a farce from the beginning. Even before Annan had gone to Baghdad, Saddam Hussein had opened up those areas to UN teams. US plans for a four-day, around-the-clock onslaught were drawn up months ago, complete with a "body count" target of 1500 Iraqi dead.

Moreover, American spokesmen conceded that an air assault would not be capable of eliminating Iraq's supposed chemical and biological warfare capacity. And since the technology for making such

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Le Nouvel Afrique-Asie

Iraqis protest US/British/UN starvation blockade which has killed over a million people, mostly children.

crisis manufactured by US imperialism. The bellicose threats and the deployment of a huge armada are not about inspections or an alleged Iraqi arsenal of biological and chemical weapons or even about Saddam Hussein, who was installed in power with the help of Washington and London. As we wrote last issue [*Workers Vanguard* no 684, 13 February], "Once again, the American ruling class is intent on butchering Iraqi men, women and children as a show of 'strength'—i.e., terror—to the rest of the world."

Behind the war build-up in the Gulf is the drive by US imperialism to assert its "right" to ride roughshod over the colonial and semicolonial peoples of the world and to demonstrate to its imperialist rivals that

rulers decide *this time* to yet again rain death and destruction on Iraqi men, women and children does not change by one iota the rapacious and murderous character of this imperialist system. The liberals, pacifists and reformist "socialists" who are again, as they did at the time of the 1990-91 Gulf slaughter, pleading "No blood for oil" and begging the imperialist rulers to "let Iraqis live" betray thereby their illusions in the possibility of a "peaceful" and "humane" capitalism. Even under conditions of "peace", over a million Iraqis, including more than 600,000 children, have died in the past eight years as a result of UN sanctions. The UN is, as Bolshevik leader VI Lenin called its League of Nations predecessor,

“Fortress Europe” bars Kurdish refugees

We reprint below a 12 January protest statement by the International Communist League denouncing the chauvinist campaign against Kurdish refugees by the Western European bourgeoisies. The statement was distributed in English, French, German, Italian and Turkish by sections of the ICL.

Since then, in anticipation of the imperialist terror bombing of Iraq, the Turkish government has deployed thousands of troops to stop Kurdish refugees fleeing for their lives. Meanwhile, as current head of the European Union, Blair counselled the German and Italian governments on the exclusion of Kurdish refugees from racist “Fortress Europe”. The Labour government does not need the “Schengen agreement” to lead its own attacks on refugees: it fulsomely backed the Tories’ 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act and led a racist furore against Gypsy/Roma refugees last autumn, giving the green light to the fascists. Down with racist “Fortress Europe!” Asylum for Kurds and all refugees from right-wing terror! Shut down Britain’s detention camps! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

The Turkish regime’s 13-year war against the Kurdish population has devastated Eastern Anatolia, totally destroying some 3,500 villages and forcing more than three million Kurds to flee their homes. Kurds in northern Iraq have also been repeatedly hit by military offensives — most recently last month — carried out by Turkey with the backing of its NATO allies, the U.S., Germany, Italy and France. This comes on top of the seven-year starvation blockade of Iraq following the massacres carried out by NATO/UN troops in the 1991 Gulf War. Yet, when 900 Kurds from Turkey and Iraq, along with other refugees fleeing right-wing terror, arrived last month off the Italian coast in two packed freighters, the European imperialist powers, with Germany in the lead, launched a hysterical, racist campaign against the “refugee flood.” The racist masters of capitalist Europe are determined

ICL protest statement



Action Press

Turkish government’s war of terror in Kurdistan has forced more than three million Kurds from their homes.

to keep out the victims of right-wing terror, racist persecution and desperate poverty generated by their drive for profit in the neocolonial Third World. The International Communist League demands: Down with the NATO/UN starvation blockade — Hands off Iraq! Turkish army out of Kurdistan! No deportations! Asylum for Kurds and all refugees from right-wing terror!

Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe has sharpened interimperialist conflicts over the redivision of world markets. This has led to the creation or consolidation of rival trade blocs, such as the European Union (EU), which are reactionary attempts by the imperialists to compete for markets abroad while savagely attacking the working masses at home. The cutting edge of

the capitalist offensive is racist terror against immigrants and refugees, who are scapegoated for the growing misery and unemployment created by the capitalist system itself. The ruling classes of Europe have deliberately fomented racist hysteria as the ideological preparation for new imperialist wars and to divide the workers and poison their class consciousness.

Throughout Europe, it is the social democrats and ex-Stalinists who, using their positions of leadership of the organized working class, are doing the racist dirty work for the imperialists. While reformists and centrists support them as a supposed “lesser evil,” these parties are, in the words of Lenin, “bourgeois workers parties” based on the organized working class but sworn to protect the capitalist order. The parliamentary governments

they form, whether in coalition with the bourgeois parties or alone, are *capitalist* governments, carrying out the anti-immigrant and anti-working-class policies demanded by their bourgeois masters.

In Italy, the coalition government of the ex-Stalinist Party of the Democratic Left (PDS) and various bourgeois politicians enforces one of the most vicious anti-refugee policies in Europe. With the support of Rifondazione Comunista (RC), the other by-product of the breakup of the reformist Italian Communist Party, this racist regime has passed laws that threaten up to 300,000 people with deportation. Last spring, the Italian navy sank a ship in the Adriatic packed with desperate refugees fleeing chaos and poverty in Albania, killing 89. With the blood of this massacre on its hands, Italian imperialism then sent troops to establish “order” in Albania. Meanwhile, thousands of Albanian refugees who made it to Italy were herded into concentration camps and quickly deported. Today, those same camps are used to imprison Kurdish refugees. Responding to German dictates that his government crack down on Kurdish refugees, a PDS minister — speaking on the eve of a meeting of police chiefs from Turkey and the EU — vowed to “fight with the most absolute firmness against illegal immigration.”

The policies of the French coalition government of Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin have been as anti-immigrant as its Italian counterparts and as racist as its conservative predecessors. Jospin’s popular front — a class-collaborationist coalition of the Socialists and the French Communist Party with bourgeois politicians — was elected on a wave of mass strikes and demonstrations against neo-Gaullist Alain Juppé’s racist, anti-working-class policies. Yet the popular front has continued the racist “Vigipirate” campaign in which the army is used to terrorize immigrant ghettos. The government’s “new” laws on immigration are in some ways even more restrictive than the reactionary laws of the previous regime! Meanwhile, the *sans-papiers* (undocu-



DPA



Piscitelli/Arcieri

Desperate Kurdish refugees from Turkey and Iraq have been thrown into concentration camps by popular-front government in Italy.

mented workers) are to get the boot: Jospin toured Morocco, Senegal and Mali last month to prepare the mass deportation of over 100,000 people. And as hysteria was whipped up over Kurdish refugees, massive contingents of French police were sent to seal off the Italian border against Kurds.

In Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) are also waging war against that country's two million immigrants and refugees of Turkish and Kurdish descent. Their children — including those born in Germany — were forced last year to apply for visas in order to remain in the country. Turkish leftist and Kurdish nationalist groups, including the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party), are banned. Even showing the Kurdish national colors is illegal, as it is in Turkey. Having used its economic muscle to dictate the terms for the dismemberment of the former Yugoslav deformed workers state, which resulted in millions of refugees, Bonn moved last year to expel some 300,000 Bosnian immigrants — the biggest mass deportation since Hitler's Third Reich. Now, German interior minister Manfred Kanther enjoins Italy to "secure its borders," declaring that Germany will not accept a "criminally organized migration movement because of world conflicts like Bosnia" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 7 January).

Meanwhile, the Social Democrats (SPD) are attacking Kohl from the right, denouncing the CDU government for not pressuring Rome earlier to stop Kurdish immigration and calling for restoring strict border control between EU countries. SPD-ruled Hamburg has been turned into



H Christoph

Aluminium factory in the Ruhr. Turkish and Kurdish workers are strategic component of industrial proletariat in Germany.

ban on the PKK and the Turkish leftist Devrimci Sol! Free all leftist and Kurdish nationalist political prisoners! Down with the racist "laws on foreigners"! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

The frantic rush by Italy's European neighbors to impose border controls against Kurdish immigration fly in the face of the 1995 Schengen agreement by which the main European countries agreed to do away with passport checks at their respective frontiers. This points up the real purpose of Schengen: to consolidate racist "Fortress Europe" against refugees and immigrants fleeing the exploitation and inhuman conditions in backward

— "Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution" (June 1940)

The racist policies being pushed by the capitalists and their social-democratic henchmen have greatly reinforced fascist bands throughout Europe, who feel they have a green light to carry out murderous attacks against immigrants and leftists. However, the ultimate aim of these racist shock troops of capitalist reaction is the eradication of the whole of the organized workers movement. Immigrant workers are a key component of the industrial proletariat, whether they be Kurds in Germany, North Africans in France or black Africans in Italy. French workers, in a series of mass demonstrations protesting the expulsion of *sans-papiers* over the past two years, have shown the potential for mobilizing the multiethnic proletariat against racist terror. In Germany, a number of protests and strikes have united ethnic German and foreign-born workers, as in last spring's powerful week-long miners strike. The crucial need is to break the workers from the reformist betrayers and the forging of revolutionary workers parties as part of a Leninist-Trotskyist international party.

The petty-bourgeois nationalist PKK calls on the UN and imperialist powers to broker a "political solution" to the Kurdish question in Turkey. The EU is as much an enemy of the Kurds as the Turkish government. A major reason for the recent rejection of Turkey's bid for EU membership was the fear by the German and other bourgeoisies of massive immigration by Kurds and Turks. Meanwhile, the Turkish bourgeois jockeys for support between U.S. and German imperialism, while forging a bloody alliance with

the anti-Palestinian Zionist rulers of Israel. And when PKK leader Kani Yilmaz visited London three years ago to push for a "political solution," he was arrested and imprisoned for two years before being extradited to Germany, where he is now on trial for leading a "terrorist association." Freedom for Kani Yilmaz!

While the Near Eastern bourgeoisies are the immediate oppressors of the Kurdish people, there can be no self-determination for the Kurds without opposing imperialism and its repeated interventions in the area. Following the 1991 Gulf War, Iraqi Kurdistan was declared to be a "safe haven" for Kurds, to be policed by the U.S. and other imperialists under a UN flag. Yet the Turkish regime, armed to the hilt by the U.S. and Germany, has repeatedly invaded this "safe haven" to round up and kill supporters of the PKK.

The national emancipation of Kurdistan requires the revolutionary overthrow of four capitalist regimes — Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria — among which the 25 million Kurds in the Near East are partitioned, and the throwing off of the yoke of imperialist domination. The allies and motor force for Kurdish emancipation are to be found in the proletariats of those countries, who have their own scores to settle with their exploiters. It is vital in those countries to forge revolutionary multinational workers parties committed to the national liberation of Kurdistan through socialist revolution. The Kurdish proletariat in diaspora — in the major industrial centers not only of the Near East but (together with Turks) of West Europe — represents the living bridge between the struggle for the emancipation of the Kurdish nation and proletarian revolution in imperialist West Europe.

This is the perspective of Trotsky's permanent revolution for countries whose capitalist development has been retarded by imperialism: the tasks of political democracy and national emancipation can only be achieved through the seizure of power by the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, linked to the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. This perspective requires the construction of Leninist vanguard parties that combat every form of social and national oppression as an integral part of the struggle for working-class political power. For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan in a Socialist Federation of the Near East! Down with imperialist "Fortress Europe"! For a Socialist United States of Europe! For the reforging of Trotsky's Fourth International to fight for new October Revolutions worldwide! This is the task to which the International Communist League is dedicated. ■



Spartaco

Italian Trotskyists initiated August 1993 protest in Milano to denounce racist cop terror, call for labour to champion full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

an anti-immigrant police state. The SPD election campaign there last fall was so obscenely racist that even the bourgeois press was forced to note that it was "one of the most xenophobic election campaigns conducted by the left in post-war Germany" (*London Independent*, 22 September 1997). In whipping up anti-immigrant racism, the SPD has also given a green light to Nazi thugs throughout Germany.

In Bremen, where the SPD governs together with the CDU, imprisoned Kurds facing deportation are waging a hunger strike against torture, overcrowding and other abusive conditions. Six of the protesters are said to be in imminent danger of dying. An SPD state justice ministry official was forced to resign, but his replacement contemptuously dismissed the hunger strike as taking place during the month of Ramadan "fasting time" (*Neues Deutschland*, 8 January). Meanwhile some 370 Kurdish prisoners are undertaking a hunger strike in a Turkish jail in the city of Erzurum. We say: Down with the

countries under the boot of imperialism. Like the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which envisioned a common European currency by the end of the century, Schengen was billed as a step toward melding the existing capitalist societies into a single supranational European state. But this is reactionary utopianism. The bourgeoisie, by its nature, is a nationally limited class, whose rise to power was closely associated with the consolidation of powerful nation-states, serving to protect the bourgeoisie's national market while competing internationally with rival capitalist states. As Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky wrote during World War II and on the eve of the Nazi Holocaust:

"The world of decaying capitalism is overcrowded. The question of admitting a hundred extra refugees causes a major problem for such a world power as the United States.... Amid the vast expanses of land and marvels of technology, which has also conquered the skies for man as well as earth, the bourgeoisie has managed to convert our planet into a foul prison."

WORKERS HAMMER

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"Death of communism" centrists

Following the December 1979 Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, the imperialists fired the opening shots of their Cold War II drive to destroy the Soviet Union. Marching in lockstep behind the anti-Soviet war drive, most left groups accelerated their headlong rush to the right. In contrast, the Workers Power (WP) organisation used the occasion to announce its repudiation of the anti-Soviet "third camp" position inherited from Tony Cliff's organisation, from which WP had split five years earlier. Rejecting Cliff's ignorant "theory" — derived from buying into the "democratic" credentials of British imperialism — that the Soviet Union was "totalitarian" and "state capitalist", WP declared that it had come over to Trotsky's understanding that the Soviet Union under Stalinism was a degenerated workers state.

Yet, in practice, WP never drew the programmatic conclusions of Trotsky's analysis: unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and the other deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. WP joined the imperialists and their Labour lieutenants in opposing the Soviet military intervention against CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, while claiming it would be "tactically wrong... to demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops" (*Workers Power*, February 1980). And when Polish Solidarność made its power bid in late 1981, WP acknowledged that it was an openly counterrevolutionary movement backed by the Pope, the CIA and Western bankers, but supported it anyway.

The 1982 WP pamphlet, *The Degenerated Revolution*, codifying their line "change", is a chemically pure expression of Trotsky's description of centrism as "crystallised confusion". Thus, while recognising that capitalism had been overthrown in the Eastern European countries under the post-World War II Soviet occupation, Workers Power called these "counterrevolutionary social overturns". As the winds of Cold War II blew increasingly hot, WP moved farther to the right. In 1990, Workers Power called on anti-communist Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher to give arms to the fascist-infested Lithuanian Sajudis. The same year, it played an active part in pushing the anti-communist witch hunt, orchestrated by the MI5 secret police, against National Union of Mineworkers head Arthur Scargill, who was hated by the British bourgeoisie not only for leading the heroic 1984-85 miners strike but for denouncing the anti-Soviet war drive and rightly calling Solidarność "anti-socialist" (see "Workers Power caught with Russian fascists, Thatcher's scabs" *Workers Hammer* [WH], no 116, September 1990). In August 1991, WP supporters literally stood on the barricades of counterrevolution in Moscow alongside Yeltsin's imperialist-backed forces.

Having joined Yeltsin in dancing on the grave of the great 1917 October Revolution, Workers Power and its international, the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI), have now brought their "theory" into line with their practice. In an article by Mark Abrams and Helen Watson titled "Stalinist bureaucracy — Marxist theory and the state" (*Trotskyist International* [TI],

January-June 1998), which is no less pompous than it is ignorant, WP argues that a bourgeois state was restored in the Soviet Union in 1927. The deformed workers states in Eastern Europe are said to have been created without the smashing of the bourgeois state apparatus. Trotsky is taken to task for not calling to smash the Soviet state under Stalin, and Trotsky's whole analysis of the class character of the Soviet Union is openly repudiated.

The anti-communist conclusion of WP

defining political question of the 20th century and the touchstone for revolutionaries. We Trotskyists stood at our posts and fought to preserve and extend the revolutionary gains of the working class embodied in the proletarian property forms of the former workers states. We understood that the fight for workers to seize political power from the anti-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy — as part of the struggle for world socialist revolution — was the only real defence of these gains.

Russian Revolution and with it the "spectre" of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Al Richardson, editor of the British journal *Revolutionary History*, now suggests the Russian Revolution was "premature", or a "false start". Expressing his own cynical attitude to revolutionary history, Richardson sneers at "the present debate between supporters of the workers' state theory and the proponents of state capitalism as a puerile exercise, unworthy of the attention of serious Marxists, as well as being a waste of time and effort" (*In Defence of the Russian Revolution: A Selection of Bolshevik Writings 1917-1923*, 1995).

The United Secretariat (USec), which falsely claimed for many years to be the continuators of Trotsky's Fourth International, is now ditching any such pretence. Thus a leading supporter of the USec in Italy asked: "Does it still make sense for militants, history apart, to bow down before the writings of the Russian revolutionary?... I don't believe that one can think of a socialist project for the 21st century that starts from the paradigms of Leninism and Trotskyism."

The LRCI's new "theory" is correspondingly the codification of their repudiation of the fight for proletarian revolution. They stridently call to "smash the Stalinist state" while on the home front operating as the most cringing, servile apologists for the maintenance of capitalist rule in its social-democratic face. In "Marxist theory and the state", Workers Power declares that what existed in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe was "the bourgeois form of the state machine and the proletarian content of the social relations of production defended by this machine". This ignorant gobbledygook makes a mockery of the most elementary Marxism in order to serve the purpose of Workers Power's prostration before Labourite social democracy. Its idea of a "new dawn" for the working class in Britain was the election of Tony Blair's virulently anti-working class Labour government.

As we wrote in our article "Workers Power's 'united front' with counterrevolution" (*WH* no 160, January-February 1998):

"Specifically against the German Social Democrat Kautsky, who opposed proletarian revolution, Lenin said that 'the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one' (*The State and Revolution*). By asserting that workers states could come into existence without smashing 'the bourgeois form of state apparatus', the latter-day Kautskyites of Workers Power reveal their true programme — pushing social-democratic parties like the Australian Labor Party or the British Labour Party into getting rid of capitalism."

The degeneration of the Russian Revolution

Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe represented an unparalleled defeat for the working masses in these countries and the entire world. It has led to an escalation in the oppression of the semicolonial peoples, fratricidal nationalist war in the now capitalist states of the former Yugoslavia and USSR, and a dramatic increase in racist terror through-



VI Lenin and Leon Trotsky (above), co-leaders of the October Revolution. Below: capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR has brought misery and poverty for working people and growth of vile Russian chauvinism and religious bigotry.

Der Spiegel photos



is explicit:

"In the Soviet Union the smashing of the Stalinist state machine had been a programmatic necessity ever since the counter-revolutionary political expropriation of the working class by the Stalinist caste. In Eastern Europe such a task was necessary from the moment of their creation as workers states."

This is a convenient alibi for the fact that the LRCI lined up behind the forces of counterrevolution which did indeed smash the Soviet degenerated workers state and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of Eastern Europe. But more than that it reflects how deeply Workers Power drinks from the "death of communism" well of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Burying the legacy of the Russian Revolution

The "Russian question" has been the

Hiding between the legs of their "own" imperialist rulers, virtually every other tendency on the left howled against the Soviet Union. Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP) rejoiced in Yeltsin's coming to power, declaring "Communism has collapsed" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991). The LRCI's Fourth Congress produced a manifesto headlined "A new dawn for humanity" (*Workers Power*, October 1997), which likewise celebrated the victory of the forces of counterrevolution: "These movements brought an end to decades of Stalinist dictatorship. All genuine revolutionaries rejoiced at the downfall of these bureaucratic, totalitarian monstrosities."

With their "new" theory on the class character of the Soviet state, Workers Power is part of a stampede of pseudo-Trotskyists who have joined the imperialists in trying to bury the legacy of the

Workers Power...

(Continued from page 7)

standing on Yeltsin's barricades among the rabble of "spivs and racketeers" in a "united front" for "democracy".

Workers Power v the dictatorship of the proletariat

As far back as 1918, in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin denounced German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky's support to capitalist "democracy" against the dictatorship of the proletariat: "It is natural for a liberal to speak of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: 'for what class?'" The LRCI's "new" analysis revises the Marxist definition of the state by divorcing it from the property forms it defends. For Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky the state was an organ of class rule. The bourgeois state consists of "special bodies of armed men" — committed to the defence of capitalist private property. Through socialist revolution, the working class must establish its own rule — the dictatorship of the proletariat — by smashing the existing capitalist state apparatus.

Lenin wrote in *The State and Revolution* that the state begins to "wither away" from the first day of the proletarian dictatorship. Workers Power points to the 1919 Russian Communist Party programme, which looked forward to the early replacement of the standing army by an armed people. Citing the fact that these norms were not realised in the Soviet Union, and that the state machine grew to monstrous proportions under Stalin, WP concludes that a capitalist state had re-emerged, describing this in language taken straight from the anti-communist ideologues for "democratic" imperialism: "Soviet power had been comprehensively smashed or 'blown up' and replaced by the absolutist rule of a totalitarian bourgeois bureaucratic-military state machine, but one which drew the source of its power

Trotsky insisted that the growth and consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus proved not that a capitalist state had been consolidated, but that building "socialism in a single country" — more-over a backward and isolated one — was a Stalinist *lie*. The material basis for socialism is the elimination of *scarcity*, which requires surpassing the highest level of development achieved by capitalist society. For this reason, socialism can only be achieved on an *international basis*.

The necessary prerequisite for the state to "wither away" is the abolition of class society, which cannot be achieved in the absence of proletarian revolution in at least several advanced capitalist countries. As Trotsky wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?":

"The USSR as a workers' state does not correspond to the 'traditional' norm. This does not signify that it is not a workers' state. Neither does this signify that the norm has been found false. The 'norm' counted upon the complete victory of the international proletarian revolution. The USSR is only a partial and mutilated expression of a backward and isolated workers' state."

At times, WP contends that the Soviet degenerated workers state was simultaneously the dictatorship of the proletariat *and* the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie: "the dictatorship of the proletariat had taken the paradoxical form of a political dictatorship of 'a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie' over the proletariat". It uses Trotsky's phrase "'bourgeois' state without the bourgeoisie" — deliberately omitting the inverted commas Trotsky placed around "bourgeois" — in his seminal analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936). Trotsky used this expression in the same sense that it was used by Marx and Lenin — to explain the general necessity under the dictatorship of the proletariat to maintain a public force to regulate distribution while scarcity remains.

Trotsky noted that even in an advanced industrial country like America, a workers state could not immediately provide for everyone's needs: "Insofar as the state



Newsweek

Polish workers at the Gdansk shipyard in 1980. WP supported counter-revolutionary Solidarność, backed by the Pope, CIA and Western bankers.

machine in the USSR is at best ambiguous. Nowhere did he clearly point to the fact that, conceived in abstraction from the property relations defended by the bureaucracy, this state machine was bourgeois". Indeed, no Marxist could or would conceive the class nature of the state independent of the property relations it defends! Only for vulgar petty-bourgeois democrats like Workers Power is the question of property relations an abstraction!

In his 1937 polemic against Burnham's position that the Soviet Union was "neither a workers nor a capitalist state", Trotsky argued that "only the intrusion of a revolutionary or a counterrevolutionary force in property relations can change the class nature of the state". Trotsky went on to acknowledge that there are *temporary* cases where the economy and the state stand in contradiction: "In the first months of Soviet rule the proletariat reigned on the basis of a bourgeois economy.... Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a *revolution* or a *counterrevolution*" ("Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?", 1937).

The victory of Yeltsinite counterrevolution in the USSR led to exactly such a situation. But Workers Power, arguing that some industry remains in the hands of the state, ludicrously characterised the former Soviet Union as a "moribund workers state". At bottom, WP's view of "workers rule" derives from British Labourism, which equates "socialism" with nationalisation of the "commanding heights of the economy" under a *capitalist* parliamentary democracy.

Workers Power v Trotsky on the Soviet army

Seeking to justify its "support" to the Bolshevik Revolution on the basis of purely democratic considerations, Workers Power makes much of the counterposition between a Red Army based on a militia system and a standing army. To do this, it presents tortuous and self-contradictory accounts of what happened in the October Revolution. One version quotes Trotsky: "The October revolution dissolved the tsar's army wholly and without leaving a trace. The Red Army was built anew from the first brick" (*The Revolution Betrayed*). This is followed by WP's claim that the Bolsheviks merely reformed the tsarist army:

"But almost immediately they were thrown into a civil war and the norm was compromised with the reality as they inherited it — the Tsar's army, with its ranks and general staff. Trotsky had to make use of this army. They did subject it to workers'

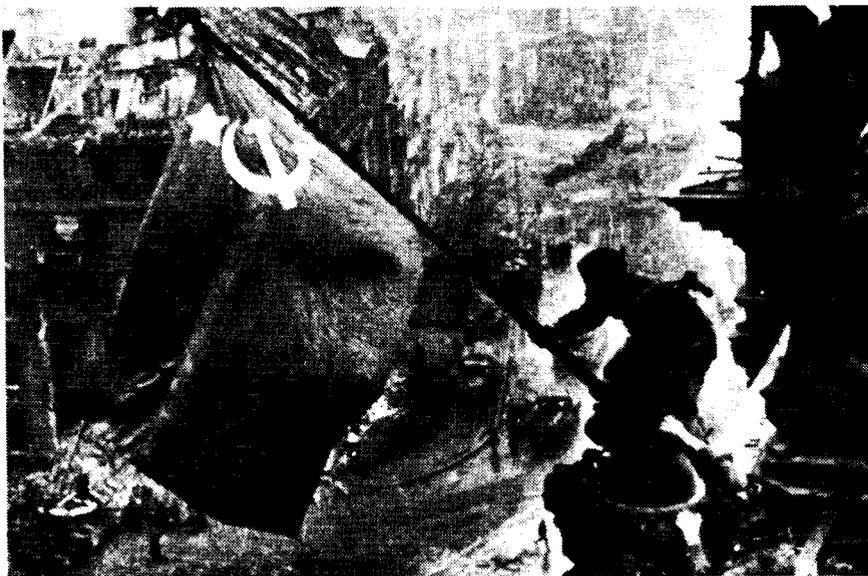
control — party commissars supervising generals etc — as the next best bet in the circumstances."

This is tantamount to denying that the capitalist state was smashed and replaced by a new state power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. WP falsely presents Trotsky, the organiser of the Red Army, as an advocate of a pure militia system. For the same reason the state could not "wither away" overnight, the Soviet republic could not replace the standing army by a militia system. In *The Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky pointed out that the militia (or territorial) system requires a "high economic basis" which could not be achieved within the confines of the Soviet Union. He wrote: "Granted the necessary material conditions, the territorial army would not only not stand second to the regular army, but far exceed it. The Soviet Union must pay dear for its defense, because it is not sufficiently rich for the cheaper militia system." But Trotsky never called for the abolition of the regular Soviet army, which would have been tantamount to calling for the disarming of the deformed workers state in the face of the imperialist powers.

While in *The Degenerated Revolution* WP at least recognised (in words) the need for a standing army to defend the Soviet workers state from attack, today it argues that "the formulation that the standing armies of the Stalinist caste have a dual character — 'instruments of bureaucratic tyranny as well as defence' surrenders too much to the Stalinists, above all in the light of events since 1989." In short, Workers Power can see no class difference between the Soviet army and the armed forces of imperialism. As for events since 1989, it was Workers Power who joined the West German imperialists in demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany. The withdrawal of these troops by Gorbachev was an integral part of the sellout of the former East German deformed workers state.

Trotsky described the restoration of the officer corps and the Cossacks as "one of the clearest expressions of the Thermidor". He was scathing in his denunciation of Stalin's disorganisation of the Soviet armed forces and his beheading of the military leadership on the eve of World War II. Nonetheless, writing in "The USSR in War", (1939) at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact, Trotsky stressed that when Hitler turned his armies against the Soviet Union, the obligation of Bolshevik-Leninists was clear:

"Under these conditions, partisans of the Fourth International, without changing in any way their attitude toward the Kremlin oligarchy, will advance to the forefront, as the most urgent task of the hour, the military resistance against Hitler. The workers will say: 'We cannot cede to Hitler the overthrowing of Stalin; that is *our own task*.' During the military struggle against



Yevgeni Khaldei

Red Army crushed the Nazi war machine. Soviet occupation forces in Eastern Europe expropriated domestic capitalists and created deformed workers states. WP now says that bourgeois state apparatus was not smashed.

and material privileges from nationalised property and planned economy" (*TT*). Trotsky was scathing in his response to such arguments:

"To these gentlemen the dictatorship of the proletariat is simply an imponderable concept, an ideal norm not to be realized upon our sinful planet. Small wonder that 'theoreticians' of this stripe, insofar as they do not denounce altogether the very word dictatorship, strive to smear over the irreconcilable contradiction between the latter and bourgeois democracy."

— "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (1933)

which assumes the task of socialist transformation is compelled to defend inequality — that is, the material privileges of a minority — by methods of compulsion, insofar does it also remain a 'bourgeois' state, even though without a bourgeoisie" (*The Revolution Betrayed*).

WP is forced to acknowledge that Trotsky's references to "bourgeois norms of distribution" in the Soviet Union did not mean that he considered the USSR a "bourgeois state". Castigating Trotsky for this, it writes: "the legacy of Trotsky on the issue of the class character of the state

Hitler, the revolutionary workers will strive to enter into the closest possible comradely relations with the rank-and-file fighters of the Red Army. While arms in hand they deal blows to Hitler, the Bolshevik-Leninists will at the same time conduct revolutionary propaganda against Stalin preparing his overthrow at the next and perhaps very near stage."

Trotsky was unambiguous about which class should overthrow the bureaucracy — the proletariat. As he wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?": "Stalin serves the bureaucracy and thus the world bourgeoisie; but he cannot serve the bureaucracy without defending that social foundation which the bureaucracy exploits in its own interests.... However, he carries through this defense with methods that prepare the general destruction of Soviet society. It is exactly because of this that the Stalinist clique must be overthrown. But it is the revolutionary proletariat who must overthrow it. The proletariat cannot subcontract this work to the imperialists." Subcontracting this work to the imperialists and other counterrevolutionary forces is exactly what Workers Power did.

Workers Power and the myth of the "Stalinist state"

WP's description of the overthrow of capitalism in Eastern Europe is profoundly revisionist: "After the Second World War the Stalinist bureaucracy, far from smashing the capitalist state, simply took hold of the old apparatus of political domination and, utilising bureaucratic, military, police measures transformed/purged its structures.... In the first period this state, controlled by the Stalinists, was used to defend and rebuild capitalism, and then later the same state machine was used as a lever for the economic expropriation of the bourgeoisie" (TI). As we have noted, the idea that the bourgeois state can be taken over and used for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is utterly reformist.

In the case of post-war Eastern Europe, the Soviet army — the army of a degenerated workers state — was the decisive military power, the "special bodies of armed men", which smashed the Nazi war machine. Faced with imperialist hostility and the onset of the Cold War — specifically in the form of the West European Marshall Plan — the Soviet occupation forces expropriated the domestic capitalists and created bureaucratically deformed workers states. Likewise, in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam and Cuba, under exceptional circumstances, petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces were able to establish deformed workers states, qualitatively the same as the degenerated Soviet workers state. But in each case the bourgeois state was smashed. (See *Cuba and Marxist Theory*, Marxist Bulletin no 8, published by the Spartacist League/US.)

WP's use of the term "Stalinist state



Hungary 1956: Workers celebrate on top of captured Soviet tank. Workers established soviet-type workers councils and militias, defending the planned nationalised economy. The majority of the army ranks and Communist Party cadres sided with the workers.

machine" is simply an obscurantist version of Tony Cliff's position that the Stalinist bureaucracy was a new ruling class. In contrast, Trotsky understood that the bureaucracy was a deeply contradictory caste which rested on the proletarian property forms while serving as the transmission belt for the pressures of world imperialism in undermining those gains.

Falsifying history to suit its ends, Workers Power says that the Hungarian political revolution of 1956 "showed that the ruling Communist Party, the army, the secret police and the state administration would act as agents of repression against any working class attempt to establish its own control over a state which claimed to be proletarian" (TI). In fact, Hungary 1956 showed that the bureaucracy was a brittle, contradictory caste, as the workers' revolt drew in its wake the majority of the army ranks and Communist Party cadres. Unlike Polish Solidarność in the early 1980s, the Hungarian workers explicitly defended the planned nationalised economy, establishing soviet-type workers councils and workers militias in every major industrial centre.

The Kremlin had to send in two waves of troops, who had been told that they were sent in to suppress Anglo-French imperialists or fascists. A first wave of Russian-speaking units had to be withdrawn after the Hungarian workers fraternised with them, winning many over to their cause. The essential element that was missing was a conscious proletarian vanguard party, which would have counterposed revolutionary internationalism to nationalist prejudices and illusions in the United Nations fostered by liberal Stalinists like Imre Nagy. Only such a party, based on the programme of unconditional military defence of the gains of all the degenerated and deformed workers states, could have successfully fought to win over the ranks of the Soviet army in the fight for political revolution in Hungary and across Eastern Europe and the USSR.

More than 30 years later, the contradictions inherent in Stalinism were played out in capitalist counterrevolution. Under the pressure of the imperialist world market the Stalinist bureaucracies introduced "market reforms", laying the basis for the full-fledged restoration of capitalism. Warning of this possibility in 1933, Trotsky wrote:

"In the event of this worst possible variant, a tremendous significance for the subsequent course of the revolutionary struggle

will be borne by the question: *where* are those guilty for the catastrophe? Not the slightest taint of guilt must fall upon the revolutionary internationalists. In the hour of mortal danger, they must remain on the last barricade."

— "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (1933)

In sharp contrast to WP and the rest of the fake left, in the hour of mortal danger, the ICL fought to the bitter end to defeat capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In 1989-90, we mobilised our forces internationally to provide leadership to the incipient political revolution in the DDR and to stop the juggernaut of counterrevolution, raising the call "For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist United States of Europe!" In late 1991, our supporters in the Soviet Union distributed tens of thousands of leaflets in Russian declaring: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" Today we fight to win the Chinese proletariat to the urgent perspective of proletarian political revolution to stop the galloping drive towards capitalist restoration there.

The demise of the degenerated and deformed workers states in the USSR and Eastern Europe is ultimately the responsibility of the Stalinist bureaucracies, which undermined those states and destroyed any semblance of revolutionary consciousness among the working class. (For a further analysis see *Spartacist* no 45-46, Winter 1990-91.) As Marxists we understand that the preservation of proletarian power depends for its survival on the political consciousness and organisation of the working class. In the Soviet Union the traditions of the October Revolution had been systematically expunged from the memory of the working class and replaced by the nationalist outlook of the Stalinists, who made the lie of "socialism in one country" a self-fulfilling prophecy by betraying and helping to suppress revolutionary opportunities in the West. To the extent that they had any influence, fake-left groupings like Workers Power, the British SWP or the United Secretariat bear their share of the responsibility for politically disorienting the proletariat.

WP has now drawn the requisite "theoretical" conclusions from its scabberding role, retrospectively writing off the Soviet degenerated workers state more than six decades before its destruction. Shortly after its emergence from the Cliff group, WP entered into a brief "fusion" with Sean Matgamna's fake-Trotskyist outfit, which

at the time was formally Soviet-defencist. To justify their merger, both sides dismissed the Russian question as a "tenth-rate question". As he liquidated ever more deeply into the Labour Party, Matgamna subsequently repudiated even lip-service to Trotsky's line on the Russian question, advising Workers Power that it should do likewise if it was not to follow the road of the dreaded "Sperts". Some two decades later, WP has completed the centrist circle and openly reverted to its "third camp" origins.

The utter repudiation by these groups of Bolshevism, the October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is a reflection of the enormous impact this world-historic defeat has had on the consciousness of the proletariat internationally. Within our own party as well, we have had to wage sharp struggles against the disintegrative effects of this period of post-Soviet reaction. The former editor of our American newspaper *Workers Vanguard*, Jan Norden, who later defected with a small coterie of other long time comrades to form the Internationalist Group (IG), pushed a "regroupment" orientation to the geriatric remnants of the former East German Stalinist bureaucracy. Norden argued that these Stalinist has-beens maintained "attachments" to the former East German deformed workers state — *which they had sold out!*

Since defecting from our organisation, the IG has graduated to apologising for



Leon Trotsky defended the USSR against threat of capitalist restoration while fighting for workers political revolution to oust the parasitic bureaucracy.

state intervention into unions in Brazil and promoting economist trade union struggles as a back door to pressuring social democrats in Western Europe and "left" bourgeois nationalists in Latin America. Behind the IG's pollyannish enthusing over trade union militancy lies the same denigration of the October Revolution as that of WP et al. By the IG's account, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union was of such little significance that it has supposedly had no impact on the consciousness of the proletariat.

As Trotsky once noted, "Those who are incapable of defending conquests already gained can never fight for new ones." We stand with American Trotskyist James P Cannon in proclaiming: "We are the party of the Russian Revolution." We fight to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties, which are essential to bringing revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat, to rearm it and lead it to its historic task — *the fight for new October Revolutions.* ■

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Iraq...

(Continued from page 3)

weapons is very rudimentary, similar to that needed to produce food supplies and other basic products, eliminating Iraq's ability to produce them would require levelling the country's entire economic infrastructure. Furthermore, the US and Britain have long supplied the Iraqi regime with such materials, as recently as 1992. During the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, Washington approved sales to Baghdad of the germs that cause anthrax, botulism, gas gangrene and other diseases. The US leads the world in manufacturing and stockpiling chemical and biological weapons, not to mention a nuclear arsenal capable of destroying humanity many times over. And only the US has used nuclear weapons, when it incinerated over 200,000 Japanese and Korean civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Republican Congressional leaders have tried to one-up the Democratic president by demanding that the aim of any military action be to topple Saddam Hussein. "Time To Off Saddam?" asked *Time* (16 February). It is a measure of the imperialist arrogance of America's capitalist rulers that they openly moot the assassination of foreign leaders. But the ground invasion likely needed to "off" Saddam Hussein would risk massive American casualties, something the US ruling class has feared ever since its humiliating defeat by the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants. Such a military operation could have explosive consequences throughout the Near East, as well as within the US military itself, which is overwhelmingly composed of black, Hispanic and other working-class youth with little ideological motivation for conquering and occupying Third World countries.

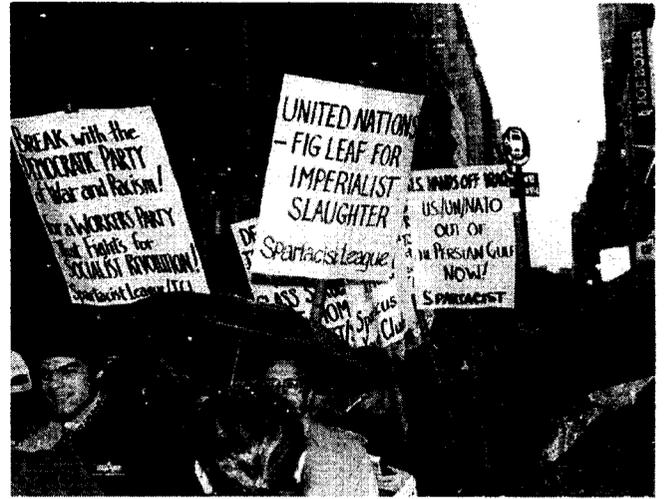
There is another reason why the US didn't "finish the job" in 1991 by getting rid of the Iraqi leader. As the British ITN World News (17 February) reported: "Policy makers fear that if they fatally weaken Saddam Hussein, the country could fragment" with the Kurdish north and Shi'ite south breaking away, destabilising the entire region. Washington has favoured a military coup to install a more amenable junta of colonels—just as Saddam Hussein himself came to power. But the CIA and British MI6 are hardly likely to enlist any Iraqi military officers in another such venture after their last bungled attempt almost two years ago ended in the execution of as many as 80 conspirators.

Near East cockpit

What is really behind the US military build-up in the Gulf is the growing competition among the imperialist bourgeoisies. This is particularly evident in the



New York City, February 17: Reformist left pleads to murderous US ruling class to be more "peaceful"; Spartacists fight for class struggle to defeat US imperialism.



WV Photos

Near East, where the US vies with other capitalist powers for control of oil fields and pipeline routes. The destruction of the USSR has not only heightened these tensions in general but particularly so in this region, as vast natural gas and oil reserves in the former Soviet Central Asian republics are opened to capitalist exploitation and Russia joins with France, Germany and other powers in seeking to expand oil operations to Iran and Iraq. It is no accident that the last US build-up in the Gulf, in November, began only days after the French oil giant, Total, joined with Russia's Gazprom and a Malaysian firm in signing a US\$2 billion contract with Iran to pump offshore natural gas.

In 1990-91, Washington not only managed to strong-arm other capitalist governments to join its war "coalition", but had them foot the bill for the onslaught. Today, among the major imperialist powers, only Britain (joined by Canada and Australia) has fulsomely backed Clinton's moves. Among the cynical calculations at work here is that Britain, after the US, is the world's largest arms exporter: the murder of its former colonial slaves in Iraq is seen as a way to showcase its goods and boost international sales.

The extent to which the imperialists are beginning to openly clash was seen in US threats last autumn to embargo Japanese cargo vessels in American ports in a trade dispute. Now the *New York Times* (22 February), under a headline denouncing Tokyo as the "New Villain in Asia Crisis", quotes leading US government spokesmen lecturing imperialist Japan as though it were an American semicolon and warning that it is fomenting "protectionist pressure"—ie, sharpened trade war. Germany reluctantly endorsed the latest plan to bomb Iraq only after the US threatened to pull its "peace-keeping" troops out of the Balkans. And following Annan's deal, a German (Social Democratic) spokesman said bluntly: "This deal must be accepted. The Americans would find themselves in dangerous isolation if, pointing to some trifling detail or another,

they insisted on a military strike."

At the same time, there are significant differences within the American ruling class itself over Near East policy. Many American corporations have chafed at the prospect of their international competitors closing deals with Iran and Iraq while US firms are constrained by economic sanctions. An editorial in *Business Week* (16 February) declared bluntly, "Bombs Can't Make Up for a Bankrupt Mideast Policy."

This also reflects widespread frustration, from the Clinton White House on down, with America's chief ally in the Near East, Zionist Israel. As usual, the Zionist rulers enthusiastically support US threats against an Arab regime. But the Netanyahu government's provocative flouting of the US-sponsored "peace process" with Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority threatens to derail Washington's designs in the region. Even normally pliant Arab client states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia have opposed the US over Iraq. Referring to the Pentagon's euphemism for civilian casualties, one Jordanian woman legislator remarked bitterly, "I feel insulted and baffled when I hear these American generals talk of 'collateral damages' as though it is a few pieces of furniture that will be damaged" (*New York Times*, 20 February). At the same time, the Arab bourgeois regimes fear the rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements, which have been fuelled by the growing impoverishment of the worker and peasant masses combined with the patent bankruptcy of "secular" Arab nationalism and Stalinist reformism. Tapping into "anti-Zionist" and "anti-American" sentiment, the fundamentalists promote vile anti-woman and anti-Semitic reaction.

At the time of the 1990-91 Gulf War, the US tried to whip up support by shedding tears for the multimillionaire oil sheikhs of "poor little Kuwait" and hypocritically proclaiming the rights of the Iraqi Kurdish minority brutally subjugated by Saddam Hussein. Even then, when the treacherous Kurdish nationalist misleaders took Washington at its word, not for the first time, and tried to stage an uprising in northern Iraq, the US effectively invited the Iraqi strongman to put it down. Today, White House spokesmen do not even talk about Iraq's Kurdish population. Meanwhile, US ally Turkey, which has slaughtered hundreds of thousands in a war of annihilation against Kurdish nationalists within its own borders, has subjected Iraqi Kurdistan to one bloody invasion after another in recent years. Yet now even Turkey has expressed opposition to a new US military assault, fearing that this could weaken Saddam Hussein's hold and encourage Kurdish separatism.

While calling for military defence of Iraq against an imperialist attack, we oppose any political support to Saddam Hussein's capitalist regime. He came to power through anti-Communist massacres with the blessing of the imperialist capitals, and he has stayed in power through savage anti-working-class repression and

brutal oppression of the Kurdish people (see "Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Road to Power", *WV* no 511, 5 October 1990; "Saddam Hussein's War on Kurds. Leftists", *WV* no 517, 4 January 1991). It is the task of the Iraqi proletariat, leading all the oppressed—women and ethnic, national and religious minorities—to oust Saddam Hussein's bloody regime. Ours is the perspective of permanent revolution, the understanding that social justice and national emancipation for the workers and the myriad national minorities of the region will only come about by sweeping away all the murderous colonels, sheikhs and Zionist rulers through proletarian revolution, linked to the struggle for workers power in the imperialist centres. Israel out of the Occupied Territories! Turkey out of Kurdistan! For a socialist republic of united Kurdistan in a socialist federation of the Near East!

Reformists beg Clinton for "peace"

At speakouts and protests across the country, we have fought for the Marxist understanding that the struggle to defeat US imperialism means fighting for socialist revolution against this capitalist system. Addressing 300 people at a 19 February protest meeting at New York University, a Spartacist League floor speaker declared:

"There is a banner of revolutionary struggle in the belly of the beast of US imperialism that says forthrightly, unequivocally that we defend Iraq against imperialist attack. We do not counsel the United Nations on how to better carry out its colonialist policies in the Third World. We do not call for different compositions of inspectors to violate the sovereignty of Iraq. We say: US, UN, NATO, all of them—Out of the Persian Gulf! Lenin had it right: the United Nations is a den of imperialist thieves and their victims. We say: Down with the UN starvation blockade of Iraq!

"We have to say: Defeat US imperialism through class struggle at home! That's why we say: Break with the Democratic Party of war and racism! For a workers party that fights for a socialist revolution! As internationalists, we side with the toilers of the Near East in saying: Down with the oil sheikhs, emirs, kings, colonels and Zionist rulers! Workers to power! Israel out of the occupied territories! For a socialist federation of the Near East! The US imperialists who waged the war in Vietnam, who waged one war after another for capitalist profits, must be brought down through workers revolution."

This revolutionary perspective stands in sharp contrast to reformist groups like the Workers World Party (WWP) and International Socialist Organization (ISO), which have engaged in liberal-pacifist hand-wringing, begging the US imperialists to "end the sanctions" and "don't bomb Iraq". For its part, while specialising in ultra-revolutionary rhetoric, the Progressive Labor Party rejects even the elementary duty of calling for the defence of semicolonial Iraq against US imperialist attack.

Spartacist League public meeting

From Northern Ireland to the Middle East, Labour government —imperialist butchers!

3pm Saturday 21 March

Room E312 Birkbeck College
Malet Street (next to University of London Union)
Nearest tube: Goodge Street or Russell Square

For more information: 0171-485 1396

And if war breaks out nonetheless we are for the defeat of America and the victory of Iraq" (*Socialist Worker*, 25 August 1990). But when the bombing started, they didn't defend Iraq. As revolutionaries, we are careful to be precise — the slogan of "Victory to Iraq" carries overtones of support for Saddam Hussein and Arab nationalism, but this was not why the SWP dropped it. They were water boys for the popular-front pro-sanctions committee with Tony Benn at its head, arguing that to "campaign and agitate under the slogan 'Victory to Iraq'... would also be a sectarian error erecting a barrier between ourselves and many of those who are genuinely opposed to the war drive". In fact, the "barrier" was between those who acted as the left face of British imperialism and those fighting for imperialism's defeat. The SWP took a side with the former. They have never called for revolutionary defeat of British imperialism in any war.

The SWP's main slogan was "no blood for oil", which they have revived today. An SYG speaker at campus protests posed the question: "The SWP shout 'no blood for oil'. Why today and not during the past seven years of the UN starvation blockade? Because for them, what's posed today is American and British blood being spilt. This is a social chauvinist line and what lies at the root of it is their loyalty to Labour. British troops are not 'our' troops. British troops are imperialist butchers." But for the SWP the British armed forces are "their" troops, at least when deployed by "their" Labour government. They welcomed the British troops to Northern Ireland in '69, claimed they would give a "breathing space" to the oppressed Catholics, and in Britain today they refuse to call for troops out now.

Incorrigible Labourites, the SWP have produced giant posters pleading: "Don't Bomb Iraq", "Tony Blair Stop This War" and "Welfare not Warfare"! Why not ask him to fight for socialism? Blair is inter-

ested in welfare — of British capitalism, the City fatcats and their bloated profits, and he is filled with class hatred for the working class. This doesn't prevent pro-Labour diehards like Workers Power from bleating "Force Labour to meet our needs!"

During the Gulf War, Workers Power sometimes raised the slogan "victory to Iraq", and once ran a headline "Defend Iraq! Defeat Imperialism!" But on joining the "Hands off the Middle East" committee, whose slogan was "Imperialist forces out of the Gulf" they effectively dropped the slogan "defeat imperialism". Two years ago, Workers Power clung to the pro-imperialist Labour camp, refusing to take a stand for military defence of the Bosnian Serbs under massive NATO bombing. This is an open repudiation of the Leninist principle of military defence of a small nation or semicolonial people against imperialist aggression.

Anticipating the imperialist terror bombing of Iraq, the Turkish army has deployed thousands of troops to *build a wall* to keep out all Kurdish refugees fleeing for their lives. On 16 February, nine leaders of the Peoples Democracy Party (HADEP) were detained in Turkey, charged with "membership of an illegal organisation". This is part of the Turkish government's war on the Kurds. We demand: Immediate release of the HADEP leaders! Turkish troops out of Kurdistan! For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan! Defend the Palestinians! Down with the Oil Sheiks, Emirs, Kings, Colonels and Zionist rulers — workers to power! For a socialist federation of the Middle East!

We fight for socialist revolution in Britain and internationally as the only way to end war. British troops out of former Yugoslavia and Cyprus! The Labour Party has supported Queen and Empire through two world wars. We say: break with Labour, party of racism, war and military repression in Northern Ireland. The International Communist League is committed to reforging Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution, fighting for the overthrow of imperialism and capitalism across the globe. ■

SP/SWP welcome anti-Catholic demonstration in Belfast

On 30 January, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions sponsored a demonstration in Belfast. Ostensibly calling for "peace", the demonstration was in fact a pro-Loyalist, pro-imperialist, anti-IRA and anti-Catholic mobilisation. The organisers attempted to exclude banners and placards carried by contingents from Catholic areas of Belfast protesting Loyalist murders of Catholics. Scandalously, the Socialist Party (SP) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supported and participated in this mobilisation.

The signs which the organisers of the demonstration sought to exclude merely expressed the basic truth that Catholics are the main victims of sectarian killings: "Catholic lives/Who cares?", "Catholic hostages to the Union", and "Sectarian murders — Sectarian state". These slogans were condemned as "sectarian" and divisive! The reactionary trade union bureaucrats refused to allow Sinn Féin to speak from the platform, but were quite prepared to welcome Mo Mowlam with open arms.

As Labour Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mowlam is responsible for the atrocities committed by the RUC and British Army against the oppressed Catholic minority, and complicit in Loyalist paramilitaries' attacks. In the Orange "marching season" in July, the RUC and British Army have mobilised massive force, besieging Catholic areas, to ensure that the Orange Order can terrorise the Catholic community. Last year, shortly after Blair's election, Catholic residents protesting this rampage in Portadown were shot with plastic bullets.

Also at the demonstration was Billy

Hutchinson, spokesman for the Progressive Unionist Party which is a front for the fascistic Ulster Volunteer Force paramilitaries. Hutchinson confronted Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams, obscenely accusing him of "dancing on the graves of innocent Catholics". Hutchinson is a UVF *murderer*, convicted of the killing of two Catholics, Michael Loughran and Edward Morgan. This murderer is touted by the trade union bureaucrats, North and South, as a legitimate representative of the Protestant working class.

The SWP headlined: "ICTU rallies in the North show the way..." (*Socialist Worker* [Ireland], 7-20 February). The SWP claim to be for "class not creed" but for them this means supporting pro-imperialist trade union bureaucrats in such pro-Loyalist, anti-Catholic demonstrations.

The Socialist Party, who have become outright apologists for Loyalist death squads and their frontmen, such as Hutchinson, went even further. The SP issued a special leaflet for the demonstration, calling for a "non-sectarian" response to the sectarian killings. What they mean by "non-sectarian" was made clear by the fact that they subsequently denounced the contingents of Catholics from North and West Belfast for "one-sided slogans and sectarian undertones". The SP's "anti-sectarianism" is in fact a cover for their support to Loyalism.

The SWP/SP's support for this reactionary demonstration, called in the name of "peace", exposes these outfits as upholders of the status quo, the RUC and British Army, who maintain the brutal oppression of Catholics.

WWP's abject liberalism and its belief that there can be a "peaceful" wing of US imperialism is captured by the fact that its chief public spokesman against the threatened bombing of Iraq is none other than Ramsey Clark. Clark was attorney general in the Democratic Party administration of Lyndon Johnson when it was raining napalm down on the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants. As head of the Justice Department, Clark was the boss of J Edgar Hoover's FBI as it was carrying out its murderous COINTELPRO operation against black radicals. Following the 1967 Detroit and Newark ghetto rebellions, Clark instructed Hoover to "use the [FBI's] maximum resources, investigative and intelligence" to look for "a scheme or conspiracy by any group of whatever size, effectiveness or affiliation to plan, promote or aggravate riot activity" (quoted in Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers* [1990]).

The ISO, which took its cues from the imperialists and their AFL-CIO labour lieutenants throughout the Cold War, promoted the vilest anti-Communism and hailed one counterrevolutionary movement after another aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Union. Likewise, they echo the imperialist masters over Iraq. At the time of the 1990-91 Gulf War, the ISO parroted George Bush's rantings that Saddam Hussein was "another Hitler". Today, in the face of the most ruthless imperialist power on the face of the earth mobilising for war against Iraq, an ISO flyer at San Francisco State University complains,



Turkish troops stand over slaughtered Kurdish guerrillas. Turkish regime has waged war of annihilation against Kurdish nationalists.

"With all of the ruthless leaders in the world, why is Clinton so focused on Saddam Hussein?"

Along with the rest of the left, the ISO today intones against the US/UN sanctions against Iraq. This comes pretty cheap at a time when even a goodly section of the capitalist class itself is opposed to sanctions. Back in 1991, the ISO dropped its paper "opposition" to the embargo when, along with Socialist Action, the Socialist Workers Party and others, it endorsed a "Campaign for Peace" march in Washington which explicitly called for UN sanctions — ie. starving the Iraqi people into submission — as an "alternative" to war.

While in the US the ISO appeals to liberal bourgeois sentiment, in Britain its parent organisation, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP), pleads with Clinton's chief ally, Labour prime minister Tony Blair, to "stop this war". This is not surprising, since the SWP enthusiastically supported Blair's election last year. Amnestying the British bourgeoisie, in an article titled "Killing for US Power and Oil", the SWP approvingly quotes Labour "left" Tony Benn saying: "This is an American war against the Iraqi people supported by a British government not elected to wage war" (*Socialist Worker*, 21 February). The centrist Workers Power

was equally ecstatic over Blair's election, calling on the Labour government to implement a "human rights oriented foreign policy".

To a man, these reformists and centrists promote the liberal lie that imperialism is just a policy which can be changed through pressuring the capitalist state. But as Lenin stressed in polemicising against similar views advanced by German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, imperialism is "the highest stage of capitalism", marked by the concentration and domination of finance capital, the pre-eminence of the export of capital and competition among the advanced capitalist countries to control markets and spheres of exploitation. War is a necessary product of the capitalist system.

The International Communist League adheres to Lenin's injunction that revolutionaries "will not deceive the people with admitting the idea that a peace without annexations, without oppression of nations, without plunder, and without the embryo of new wars among the present governments and ruling classes, is possible in the absence of a revolutionary movement" (*Socialism and War*, July-August 1915). We fight for socialist revolution in the US and internationally as the only way to put an end to war and imperialist oppression. This requires building revolutionary working-class parties like Lenin's Bolsheviks, in the US and around the world, and the reforging of Trotsky's Fourth International of world socialist revolution. ■

WORKERS HAMMER 4

Northern Ireland, Iraq — Labour government: imperialist butchers!

Racist British/US imperialism: Bloody hands off Iraq!

Defend Iraq against imperialist attack!

We publish below an edited Spartacist League/Britain statement of 20 February. While Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein has indicated compliance with imperialist dictates over “weapons inspections”, the threat of military attack is far from over. US and British imperialist spokesmen have indicated that the huge military arsenal will remain in place in the Gulf ready to rain destruction on Iraqi men, women and children. The International Communist League states forthrightly: *Down with the UN starvation blockade!* In the event of bombing and missile strikes, we say: *Defend Iraq against imperialist attack! Racist British/US imperialism — Bloody hands off Iraq!*

Our internationalist proletarian opposition to imperialist war moves places us in sharp political opposition to the Labour-loyal left groups, who tail Tony Benn. He is a front-runner for the social chauvinist and pro-UN “weapons inspections” war-mongering. While arrogant British imperialism was threatening destruction in Iraq, Tony Benn stood shoulder to shoulder with all manner of imperialist and Establishment figures at the funeral of racist demagogue, Enoch Powell. First a Tory and then Ulster Unionist MP, Powell was a bigoted Empire-loyalist whose 1968 “rivers of blood” speech was a landmark, giving official sanction to racist terror, inciting racist and fascist attacks on black and Asian communities. Benn, who once likened Powell’s racism to German fascism now says Powell was not himself racist, while making common cause with his anti-EU xenophobia. In opposition to Benn’s “Little England” nationalism, we stand for socialist revolution to bring down this racist capitalist system.

British imperialism, under the auspices of the Labour government of Tony Blair, is pledged to take part in a massive terror bombing of Iraq. Make no mistake, Her Majesty’s Labour lieutenants are baying for Iraqi blood. Robin Cook says the imperialists will “hit hard”; George Robertson promises to inflict “massive damage”, which means mass murder of Iraqi people. The Labour government has full backing from the Tories for military strikes, and for sending aircraft carriers to the Persian Gulf, to join US imperialism, the strongest military power in the world, in the biggest military build-up in the region since the Gulf War seven years ago, a one-sided

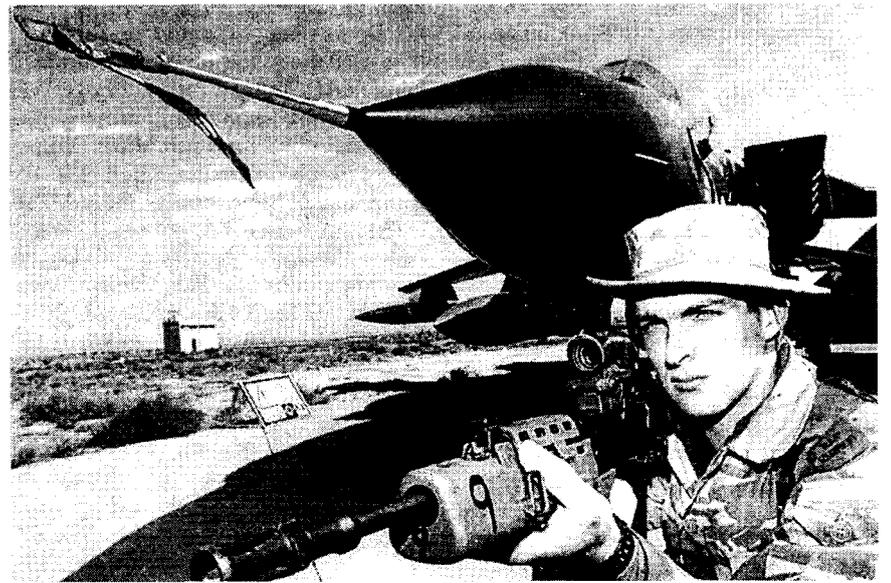
slaughter of tens of thousands of Iraqi people. This time the imperialists have not ruled out using nuclear weapons.

The Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League, calls for military defence of Iraq in the event of an imperialist assault. *The enemy of the British working class is at home: Defeat British imperialism through class struggle leading to workers revolution!*

The Spartacus Youth Group (SYG) has held speakouts at universities in London and participated in demonstrations at Downing Street calling for defence of Iraq against Labour’s imperialist war moves. SYG speaker Melanie Kelly pointed out at the School of Oriental and African Studies: “Capitalism always leads to war — to a redivision of the world markets to increase profit. Here in Britain today, Tony Blair’s capitalist Labour government serves British imperialism by waging war on the working class, on the poor, the young, immigrants and minorities. At the same time, abroad they use the blood-soaked British Army to terrorise Catholic neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland and send ships to the Gulf to rain missiles on the Iraqi people.”

Workers must oppose the imperialist war moves in the Gulf and defend Iraq, and fight to smash the starvation blockade and United Nations sanctions. SYG speakers pointed out that in the Gulf War: “Tony Benn, so-called Labour ‘left’, supported UN sanctions which over the past seven years have killed literally over a million Iraqis — mainly women, children, the sick and the elderly.” Today Benn calls for lifting sanctions, but supports UN “weapons inspections”. Our speakers said: “UN inspections are nothing more or less than a provocation for war.... What’s needed is to break workers and all those who want to fight racist capitalist oppression from the Labour Party and to build a *revolutionary workers party* to lead workers to power.” The task of British workers is to bring down British imperialism, and to fight for a socialist federation of the British Isles.

While calling for military defence of Iraq against imperialist attack, we give absolutely no political support to the capitalist regime there, which has secured its rule through anti-Communist massacres, anti-working class repression and subjugation of the Kurdish people. It is the task of the Iraqi and Kurdish proletariat, leading oppressed women and ethnic and religious



RAF Tornado sent to Gulf in military build-up for imperialist attack. John Cassidy/PA

minorities, to sweep away the bloody regime of Saddam Hussein through socialist revolution.

During the 1990-91 Gulf War, the Spartacist League in Britain and the US raised the call: “Defend Iraq! Defeat US/British imperialism!” We opposed sanctions, insisting that the United Nations is nothing but a figleaf for imperialist military bombardment. Then as now, the “socialist” left in Britain all took their cue from the pro-imperialist line of Tony Benn, who opposes bombing Iraq from the standpoint of “Little England” nationalism.

Benn peddles anti-Americanism, which lets British imperialism off the hook. *Socialist Worker*, which rails against “Killing for US power and oil” quotes Benn approvingly: “This is an American war against the Iraqi people supported by a British government not elected to wage war” (*Socialist Worker*, 21 February). A central motive behind the US military moves in the Gulf in 1990-91, as well as today, was to assert the interests of American capitalism. Counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union has sharpened the rivalries among imperialist powers, which fuel the drive to imperialist war and pose the threat of World War III. The US is competing for control of Middle Eastern oil fields and pipeline routes. British imperialism is acting in cahoots with the vastly more powerful US imperialism. Revolutionary internationalists fight for the overthrow of all imperialisms by the proletariat of each country. In opposition to Labourite social chauvinism we insist the main enemy of the British proletariat is in London, not Washington.

The Labour government has fuelled racist anti-immigrant hysteria — MI5 has already drawn up a list of Arabs for detention and deportation in the event of military strikes against Iraq. During the Gulf War

over 170 people mainly of Iraqi or Palestinian origin had been interned or deported by February 1991. Labour whipped up a frenzy against Roma refugees when they arrived here last autumn. This has emboldened the fascists. Refugees and asylum seekers are thrown into prison camps such as Campsfield; murderous racist terror is commonplace. We say: *Shut down Britain’s detention camps! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!* It was Tony Blair, as head of the European Union, who counselled the German and Italian governments on the exclusion of Kurdish refugees from racist “Fortress Europe”.

Labour in power is proof that Labourism is pro-imperialist and social chauvinist, as it always has been. Last July Blair’s government mobilised the largest British Army force seen in years to clear the Garvaghy Road in Portadown for a thousand Orangemen to flaunt the Union Jack in the face of the oppressed Catholics of Northern Ireland. Not a peep of protest was heard then from Tony Benn, who was part of the Labour government which sent the troops there in 1969. We call for *immediate, unconditional withdrawal of troops from Northern Ireland!*

We refused to give an ounce of support to Labour in the general election. Their dedication to the interests of bloody British imperialism, up to and including waging war, was plain for all to see. The Socialist Workers Party was “over the moon” at Labour’s victory; Workers Power was ecstatic, and called on Labour to implement its “human rights oriented foreign policy”. They wanted it, now they’ve got it in the Persian Gulf war moves.

Before the 1990-91 Gulf War the SWP claimed to oppose sanctions, and declared that: “We call for the withdrawal of Western forces from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

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