



Imperialist "peace" fraud: licence for state terror

Down with Labour's internment laws!

The British and Irish parliaments were recalled from summer break, and simultaneous emergency sessions rammed through legislation that Blair and Ahern boasted was "draconian". The imperialist butchers in Westminster and their junior partners in Dublin have seized on the 15 August Omagh bombing atrocity by the Real IRA, which killed 29 and injured 200 civilians, as a pretext to impose more police-state measures in Ireland and Britain, to reinforce the powers of the RUC and British Army, and to criminalise membership of political organisations which the state designates as "terrorist". It is in the direct and absolute interest of the working class in Britain to mobilise against Labour's repression, against the imperialist "peace" fraud and for British troops out of Northern Ireland now.

The Labour government denounces "terrorism" in Omagh, while backing imperialist state terror around the world. When the US launched a barrage of cruise missiles on Afghanistan and Sudan, killing scores of people, Blair backed Clinton 100 per cent, as he did over Iraq last February. He has seized on public outrage over the Omagh bombing to revamp his grossly misnamed "peace process". Clinton's visit to Northern Ireland underscores US imperialism's role as broker of Labour's imperialist "peace"

British troops out of Northern Ireland now!



Andersonstown news

Labour's new law strengthens powers of viciously anti-Catholic RUC.

agreement. The "peace" deal is nothing but a cover for continued terror against the oppressed Catholic minority, by the armed fist of Orange supremacy — the RUC and the British Army.

Irish Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, boasted that Ireland's "anti-terrorism" laws — which include internment legislation — were the toughest in the world. He then moved to strengthen his arsenal of repression, backed by Stormont First Minister David Trimble. The Criminal Justice (Terrorism and Conspiracy) Act and the Irish government's amendment to the Offences Against the State Act are a sweeping attack on civil liberties. In all but name, the new laws amount to internment. Among the most contentious provisions, the word of a "senior police officer" will now constitute *evidence* that someone is a member of an "unlawful organisation". Remaining silent under interrogation will be treated as "corroborating" evidence. This power has been granted to the RUC, who are inherently anti-Catholic and work hand in glove with the Loyalist death squads. The new law raises the spectre of 1970s internment-style round-ups, in which detainees have no rights and, on conviction, can have their house or car or other property seized. The period of detention without being charged is

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Labour government backs US terror bombing

Imperialist butchers strike Afghanistan, Sudan

The following article is adapted from Workers Vanguard no 695, 28 August, paper of the Spartacist League/US.

The US missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan on 20 August were a calculated display of imperialist bloodthirstiness and barbarity. Some 75 cruise missiles slammed into a supposed "terrorist training camp" in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant on the outskirts of the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, killing dozens of people. The two countries singled out for attack are among the most impoverished in the world, both ravaged by years of civil war. Sudan, which is ludicrously charged by the US with having a "military-industrial complex", is beset by one of the worst

famines in recent history.

The administration claimed the attacks were aimed at taking out a shadowy "international terrorist network" led by Saudi Islamic fundamentalist Osama bin Laden, which supposedly organised the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania earlier in the month. In fact, US imperialism is the main force for reactionary terror throughout the world, from the Phoenix mass assassination programme during the Vietnam War to the murderous campaigns carried out by the CIA's Nicaraguan contras and Cuban *gusanos* to the repeated missile strikes against the Iraqi people. What is behind the US terror bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan, as we wrote at the time of another war build-up against Iraq earlier this year, is "the drive by U.S. imperialism to assert its



WV photo

New York City, 21 August: Spartacists at protest against Clinton's terror bombing.

'right' to ride roughshod over the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the world and to demonstrate to its

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Internment...

(Continued from page 1)

extended, allowing more time for cops to torture prisoners and extract false confessions. A schedule of unlawful organisations has been drawn up and includes the Real IRA, Continuity IRA and INLA (while also naming the Loyalist Volunteer Force, to feign impartiality). Conviction for "directing" an organisation on the schedule carries a possible life sentence.

Racist dragnet targets exile groups

An insidious feature of the British law is the section purporting to deal with "international terrorism". It will become a criminal offence to "conspire" in the UK to commit any "offence" outside the UK. "Conspiracy" charges are notorious as a means of securing conviction where no

evidence exists. These measures will incite national chauvinism and racist terror against Muslims under the guise of countering "Islamic terror". They provide the legal basis to ban a number of exile political organisations, such as Turkish leftist organisations, supporters of nationalist guerrilla groups like the Tamil Tigers, or the Kurdish PKK.

When the British and US imperialists were preparing to bomb Iraq in February we wrote: "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" ("Racist British/US imperialism: Bloody hands off Iraq!" *Workers Hammer* no 161, March/April 1998).

Labour ministers boast that the dragnet

will not be confined to political groups, but will include those the state labels "drug smugglers" or part of an "international paedophile ring". This could apply to anyone downloading porn off the Internet, or ordering magazines from abroad to circumvent Britain's strict censorship. As we wrote in "Labour's frenzy over 'paedophilia': pretext for state repression": "Labour's police-state moves are designed to intimidate and regiment the working class, to instill it with bourgeois ideology and 'Christian morality' to keep it docile, willing to be cannon fodder for imperialist aggression" (*WH* no 163, July/August 1998).

Blair feels he can get away with anything, and haughtily dismissed criticisms in the bourgeois press, which point out that the new measures are reminiscent of internment and of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1974). These were also brought in by a Labour government and led to the notorious frame-ups of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six. These gross injustices, like the racist frame-up of Winston Silcott, are not aberrations from British justice. Torture of prisoners and lying testimony by cops, is what racist capitalist "justice" is all about.

The reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supports the imperialist "peace process" but whines that the new legislation is excessive because "the security forces admit there are no more than 100 members of the real IRA. It is a small, isolated group. So why are such draconian measures needed?" (*Socialist Worker*, 5 September). This is a straight echo of bourgeois criticism of the new laws, that repression by the "security forces" should be more "surgical", using the existing mechanisms of repression.

Opposing the Stormont agreement we warned that it "will be taken by the governments in London, Dublin and Belfast as a mandate for intensified repression" (*WH* no 162, May/June 1998). This is exactly what is now taking place. Any opponent of British imperialism, the Orange statelet in the North and the clericalist state in the South is liable to be labelled an "enemy of peace" and potential terrorist, set up to be dragged off in the small hours, or blown away by the state as happened to Diarmuid O'Neill in London two years ago, or to Ronan McLoughlin, a supporter of the Real IRA shot dead by Irish cops in May.

The Blair government is whipping up chauvinism over Northern Ireland to launch a sweeping attack on the multi-racial working class and all of the oppressed. The Labour Party is a social-imperialist party which ties the working class to its capitalist masters. We refused to give one iota of support to Labour in the last election. The Labour government is a capitalist government: anti-working-class, racist to the core and totally committed to the monarchy and British imperialism. We base ourselves on irreconcilable opposition to the bourgeoisie, and therefore to Labourism. We seek to split Labour, which is what Lenin called a "bourgeois workers party", winning its working-class base to a revolutionary party and programme. The working class must defend itself and all of the oppressed against attacks by the capitalist state. Black, Asian, Turkish and Irish workers are an integral part of the proletariat in Britain. We fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, as a necessary part of the struggle to forge a multiracial revolutionary vanguard party.

Not Orange against Green but class against class!

The Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B) and Dublin Spartacist Group (DSG) are dedicated to building Leninist-Trotskyist parties to fight for the revolutionary over-

throw of all the capitalist powers on these islands — British imperialism, the Orange statelet in Northern Ireland and the Catholic clericalist state in the South. We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. This would not automatically ensure advance in a revolutionary direction but is a necessary starting point which must be linked to a revolutionary proletarian and internationalist perspective for both islands.

Northern Ireland is a situation of interpenetrated peoples sharing a common territory. The Catholics are an oppressed minority in the North and part of the Irish Catholic nation, who are an overwhelming majority in the South, whereas the Protestants are a distinct community. To call for self-determination for one group means denying this right to the other. We oppose the call for an "independent Ulster", which means supporting Orange supremacy. We also oppose the demand for "self-determination for the Irish people as a whole" (including when it is dressed up as a "socialist united Ireland"), which is a call for Irish Catholics to "self-determine" at the expense of the Protestants. This would reverse the terms of oppression against the Protestants, who would forcibly resist incorporation into an Ireland dominated by the Catholic church.

Any attempt at a bourgeois "solution" is a recipe for increased communalist terror and forced population transfers. We fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles. Under workers rule the Protestants may yet be incorporated into a common Irish nation, they may develop a more distinct identity, or they may find other democratic forms of accommodation with the Catholics in the context of a proletarian solution.

Historically the Protestants enjoyed privileges — although pretty marginal — over Catholics in terms of jobs and housing. With the decline of British capitalism Northern Ireland has some of the worst wages and unemployment in the British Isles. The vanguard party of the proletariat alone opposes all injustice, all oppression and all forms of discrimination. We champion equality for the oppressed Catholic minority. We fight for jobs for all, as part of a programme for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. We fight for integrated workers militias — incorporating both Protestants and Catholics, under a communist leadership — to defend both communities and to combat sectarian terror, both Orange and Green. This is necessarily linked to the forging of a Leninist vanguard party.

An integral part of our programme to break the hold of Loyalism on the Protestant workers in the North is opposition to Green nationalism and our fight for the revolutionary overthrow of the clericalist state in the South. Sinn Féin looks to the Irish Catholic bourgeoisie, of whom they wish to be part, and apes their social values. The Irish capitalist state is notorious for brutality towards Travellers and immigrants and repression of women. The reactionary state outlaws abortion, and vigilante mobs attack women's health clinics and Travellers halting sites.

In the Dáil, Socialist Party TD, Joe Higgins voted against the new legislation. He also called for a "day of protest" by workers in the North, and motivated the same call in the South by stating that: "working class people in the South should show to the people behind this bombing that using the South as a base from which to launch attacks on working people in the North will not be tolerated" (*Socialist Voice* Special bulletin, August 1998). This is a call for a reactionary mobilisation of workers behind bourgeois state repression against Republicans, in support of more powers for the RUC and the

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TROTSKY

Capitalist decay and the bankruptcy of reformism

The capitalist world today exhibits an ever wider chasm between the wealthy few and the impoverished many. Writing amid the ravages of the Great Depression of the 1930s, on the eve of World War II and the Nazi Holocaust, Leon Trotsky refuted the reformist cynics who dismissed the Marxist programme of the Fourth International, founded in 1938, as "sectarian dogma".

Against the liberals and social democrats

who argued that the problems of the boom-bust profit system could be rectified through piecemeal reform, Trotsky emphasised that the only road out of continued capitalist decay lay in the struggle for world socialist revolution under the leadership of an internationalist proletarian vanguard party.

In the good old days, when people referred to the crisis of Marxism they had in mind some specific proposition of Marx which had allegedly failed to withstand the test of facts: namely, the theory of the sharpening of the class struggle; the so-called "theory of impoverishment," and the so-called theory of "catastrophic collapse" of capitalism. These three principal points served as the target for bourgeois and reformist criticism. Today it is simply impossible to engage in a controversy over these issues. Who will undertake to prove that social contradictions are not sharpening but rather softening?... Those lines in *Capital* in which Marx speaks of the polarization of capitalist society, the accumulation of wealth at one pole and of poverty at the other — these lines, which have been indicted as "demagogic," now simply prove to be a picture of reality.

The old liberal democratic conception of a gradual and universal rise of prosperity, culture, peace, and liberty has suffered decisive and irreparable shipwreck. In its wake, there has been bankrupted the social reformist conception, which represented in essence only an adaptation of the ideas of liberalism to the existing working class conditions. All these theories and methods had their roots in the epoch of free trade and competition, that is to say, in the past beyond recall, a time when capitalism was still a relatively progressive system. Capitalism today is reactionary. It cannot be cured. It must be removed...

It will be recorded in the annals of history that capitalism, before sinking into the grave, made a tremendous effort at self-preservation over a protracted historical period. The bourgeoisie does not want to die. It has transformed all the energy inherited by it from the past into a violent convulsion of reaction. This is precisely the period in which we are living...

Yet the conditions which have prepared the present wave of reaction are extremely unstable, contradictory, and ephemeral, and they prepare the ground for a new offensive by the proletariat. The leadership of this offensive will justly belong to those whom the rationalists call dogmatists and sectarians. Because "dogmatists" and "sectarians" refuse to renounce the scientific method so long as nobody, absolutely nobody, has proposed anything superior in its place.

— Leon Trotsky, "Once Again on the 'Crisis of Marxism'" (March 1939)



LENIN

WORKERS HAMMER



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

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

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E-mail: WorkersHammer@compuserve.com

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

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

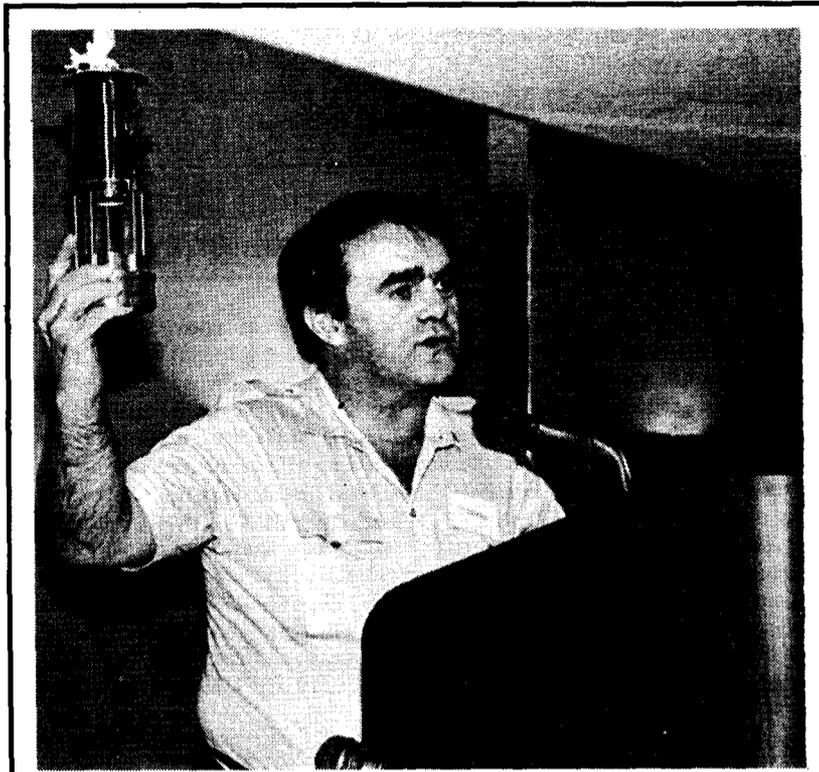
Don Hughes, 1933-1998

Don Hughes, a longtime friend of the Spartacist League/Britain and the International Communist League, died in his home in Cwmcarn, South Wales on 15 August. He was 65 years old.

Don was among a number of National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) militants who drew close to our party in the course of the yearlong 1984-85 British miners strike. Our comrades first met Don when he visited London during the summer of 1984, several months into the strike, to speak at support meetings and raise funds for the NUM. Because he was a powerful and effective orator, Don was always in demand as a speaker. But what set Don apart from the many other NUM militants who became eloquent exponents of the union's cause during the strike was his uncompromising hatred for capitalism and his refusal to kow-tow to the labour lieutenants of the bourgeoisie.

Don was one of a group of militants which was the core of the strike at Celynen South colliery and had brought the pit out in the face of initial opposition. It was these workers, and not the official leadership of the local NUM lodge, who were the real strike leadership. Though already over 50 years of age, Don took an active part in the flying pickets which were a hallmark of the strike. The summer we met him, he was badly battered by the cops while taking part in a mass picket at the Orgreave coking facility in Yorkshire, where tens of thousands of mounted cops had finally dispersed the picketers after a huge pitched battle.

Don had a powerful sense of the class line. A comrade who visited him in July 1984 recalled his impression at the time that "Don embodies some of the finer traditions of the South Wales mining proletariat." Don explained his hatred of scabs by pointing to a tradition that was passed down over many, many generations in the South Wales coalfields. At a November 1984 Spartacist League public meeting in London, he recalled the instance of someone from a nearby mining village who had scabbed on the 1926 miners strike: "That man died with no one at his funeral, and he was a



Don Hughes presented miner's lamp to our party in 1985.

WV photo

man of 84. We remember in South Wales over a very long period."

In the course of the strike, *Workers Hammer* attained a fairly sizeable readership in the coalfields because of our straightforward defence of the strike and our exposure of the scabherding of the Labour Party and trade-union misleaders. While many strikers detested the backstabbing Neil Kinnock, then the leader of the Labour Party, most of them thought the Labour Party could be reformed. Labourism was and is deeply ingrained in even the more militant sections of the British proletariat. But Don had long ago seen through these charlatans.

When Don was still a teenager, the postwar Attlee Labour government broke its promise that the National Health Service would provide free medical care and imposed fees. From that time on, Don said, he always recognised that the Labour and Conservative parties pursued the same fundamental end,

the maintenance of the capitalist system, based on exploitation of the working class. When Kinnock made a cameo appearance at Celynen South the day before the strike ended, having devoted his efforts to violence-baiting the miners for defending their picket lines, that was the one and only time Don ever turned down picket duty.

Don was a revolutionary syndicalist of the old school. In the period prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, his outlook was not at all uncommon in Europe among subjectively revolutionary workers, who were driven to syndicalism by disgust with the parliamentary reformism of the social-democratic parties. After the strike was over, we sought to persuade Don to run in an election against Kinnock, who represented Don's parliamentary constituency. But Don maintained a principle against participating in parliamentary elections, and he would not budge from this.

Nonetheless, when we published a supplement for the 1987 general elections which asserted "No vote to Judas Kinnock!" and called for the forging of a Bolshevik party, Don distributed 700 copies by going door to door in six mining villages.

Don would always insist that he was "only a trade unionist" and that he left "politics" to others. But although Don never accepted the idea of a Leninist vanguard party, he was anything but a narrow trade unionist. He enthusiastically accepted an invitation to attend a gathering of the SL/US in the summer of 1985, where he gave a powerful account of the strike and took part in a discussion of the history of British syndicalism and communism. He spoke at meetings organised by gay and lesbian rights organisations and had a passionate hatred of racism and fascism. Despite his meagre income, only a few months before he died Don proudly made a substantial contribution to the campaign to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. He was a self-educated proletarian militant who maintained an active interest in political and social issues, and could always be counted on to make a perceptive contribution in any discussion, whether on the imperialist war in Vietnam or any other international or historical question. Don loved to argue about politics, and never tired of a good "chin wag" with a bottle of whisky to share when comrades visited.

Following the defeat of the strike, Margaret Thatcher vindictively decimated the coalfields, completing the industrial devastation of South Wales, which had once been a centre of coal mining and steel-making. When Don's pit was shut down, it was the last time he worked. After 38 years in the mines, like many other coal miners, Don suffered from severe respiratory diseases, which plagued him until his death. We extend our condolences to Don's many family and friends. This socialist and militant fighter will be sorely missed.

A memorial meeting will be held at 4pm on Saturday 26 September at The Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

"Hands Off Russia" was the call

We reprint below extracts from remarks by Don at a 4 May 1985 Workers Hammer dayschool.

There is a story of struggle, of course, in the mining industry, and in the twenties, as comrade Charlie quite rightly pointed out, it was a strong part of workers' struggles in this country. Now my uncle was born in 1902 and he started work at the Prince of Wales colliery, Abercarn, in 1915 at the age of 13. Now he told me — he could just remember, young he was at the time — about the Hands Off Russia Campaign, and how the mineworkers of Great Britain all got together and demanded that we take troops out of the Soviet Union. "Hands Off Russia" was the call. That, incidentally, comrades, is still remembered to this day in the Soviet Union.

When they got it going then, it was only echoing the start made by the dockers who, he told me, refused to handle goods sent to the port of Murmansk for the British expeditionary force. They thought that they were armaments and they refused to load the goods onto the ships because they were to be used against the Russian people and their Red Army.

I remember him saying that around about 1919, word came through that the tsar and his family were brutally slaughtered by these mad Bolsheviks. I wonder, he said, when that bugger and the other one we've got will get the same thing. He was of course referring to King George V and Queen Mary. And I remember he said he went to the local cinema around 1920 and saw the silent flicks on the newsreels, and they were having some memorial service, I think

in some cathedral, maybe St Paul's in London. King George V and Queen Mary were there with heads bowed. Well, I suppose, as the saying goes, they all piss in the same pot....

During the First World War — as in the last war, the Second World War — when this nation needed all the coal they could get, they couldn't get enough coal, so they encouraged mineworkers by paying high wages. And he said his father, who was on contract on what was then very new hydraulic supports in the Prince of Wales, was paid a fantastic sum. He'd come home on a Friday and tip a bagful of gold sovereigns on the table. That was the case then. But in 1921, of course, when the coal was no longer wanted, then, comrades, the crunch came. They didn't want the miners; or they wanted the miners but they didn't want to pay them

the wages. And when the mineworkers objected they were simply locked out of the pits.

Of course, there was the bitter strike again in 1926. They were rough, they were hard, they were tough people. But, comrades, unlike our last strike they were men of principle and any scab in 1926 was dealt with more or less like the bloody tsar in Russia in 1919.

And you see, I begin to realise it now, that from 1926 until 1984 the working people in this country haven't learned such a lot. They're still following bent trade union leaders. They still can't realise that these people are obviously in the pay of whatever government is in power. Your point of view, comrade chairman, and your followers', and that man there's [points to Lenin's portrait] — how you're going to do it I wouldn't know, but you've got to do it. You've got to get about this country, you've got to get to everywhere and you've got to tell people in this country that they are being exploited the same as the Russian people were prior to 1917.

"Free Tibet": rallying cry for counterrevolution in China

In recent years, one of the most backward and inaccessible regions on the earth has come to the fore as a cause célèbre for Hollywood movie stars as well as imperialist politicians. The clamour for "freedom" for Tibet from Chinese rule has also managed to yoke a significant number of liberal and leftist youth behind one of US imperialism's longstanding anti-Communist crusades. This has been aided by a seemingly endless barrage of films extolling Tibet's "traditional" — and benighted — culture, its self-exiled god-king and star of Apple computer ads, the Dalai Lama. Among these is *Seven Years in Tibet*, idolising a German Nazi in the 1930s who became a convert to the Tibetan cause. Meanwhile, a range of rap and rock groups like the Beastie Boys and Red Hot Chili Peppers have donated their efforts for "freedom concerts" to raise funds for this anti-China campaign.

The "Free Tibet" cause originated with the machinations of the American CIA and other imperialist forces intent on fomenting capitalist counterrevolution in China. Until its overthrow following the 1949 Chinese Revolution, the Tibetan "Lamaocracy" ruled a society where slavery — sexual and otherwise — was rampant, medical care nonexistent and literacy the preserve of (some of) the ruling priest-caste. Although bureaucratically deformed from its inception, the 1949 Revolution overthrew capitalist/landlord rule and established a collectivised, planned economy, laying the basis for huge strides forward by the workers, peasants and minority peoples of China, including the Tibetans.

Today, the nationalist regime of the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is itself leading the charge towards capitalist restoration, re-establishing both imperialist and domestic capital investment, with its own cadre immersing themselves in money-grabbing entrepreneurship. The Beijing bureaucracy is rapidly oxidising the "iron rice bowl" — the guarantee of jobs and housing and other social benefits — including current moves to eliminate the housing subsidy for state workers, which threatens to create millions of homeless. The looming threat of "free market" misery has led to widespread resistance, including strikes, by the Chinese proletariat.

For now, the imperialists, especially in business circles, have adopted a "soft cop" strategy, correctly perceiving that the Beijing regime has pushed China to the brink of counterrevolution. But the US ruling class has, in the Korean and Vietnamese wars and earlier in World War II, demonstrated that it will readily perpetrate mass slaughter — up to and including nuclear incineration — to maintain world dominance and eradicate the "menace" of communism. And it would do so again in China should such be deemed warranted. Indeed, unlike the situation at the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution, when the imperialist powers were exhausted and ideologically bankrupted by World War I, today they have been reinvigorated by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, which was prepared by decades of Stalinist misrule.

Particularly in the face of the "free Tibet" frenzy against the Chinese deformed

For unconditional military defence of China against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution!

workers state, the Trotskyist International Communist League reasserts the need for unconditional military defence of China against imperialist attack and domestic counterrevolution. To stop the devastation threatened by the reintroduction of capitalist slavery, China's toiling masses must carry out a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucratic caste. This requires the forging of an authentically communist party rooted in the internationalism of Lenin's Bolsheviks and the early Communist International, whose revolutionary programme was carried

of "Shangri-La" notwithstanding, Tibet has the most minimal basis for human habitation, a reality which has facilitated its development as a distinct society, isolated, in the large, from the rest of the world as well as from such modern intrusions as literacy, medical care and civilisation in general. Formed through the merger of a feudal-like aristocracy and a vast clerical estate making up, at times, over 20 per cent of the male population, the Lamaocracy held sway over a society of peasants and herdsmen for hundreds of years until 1959. Only then, nine years



Reactionary Buddhist monks stage riot in Tibetan capital of Lhasa, 1987.

forward by Trotsky's Fourth International. Key to this is the understanding that the only path to a socialist society of abundance lies through the rapid spread of proletarian revolution throughout South and Southeast Asia and to South Korea and Japan.

The hell of Lamaist Tibet

Tibet is of little geopolitical importance for the imperialists. But it does pose a test of the resolve of the CCP Stalinists to defend their rule. Former Soviet leader Gorbachev's willingness to cede the Baltic states and, most importantly, the USSR's "influence" over East Germany intensified imperialist pressures against the Soviet Union and emboldened domestic counterrevolutionaries, finally leading to Yeltsin's pro-imperialist coup in August 1991.

When US imperialist chief Clinton visited Beijing in June, he unfurled the banner of "autonomy" for Tibet — which, not accidentally, is the current programme of the Dalai Lama — as part of his programme for a "democratic" China. Clinton's trip had all the trappings and hypocrisy of an Elmer Gantry revival, replete with tedious sermons on the virtues of democracy accompanied by confessions of human frailty. Autonomy under the Dalai Lama would have approximately the same relationship to democracy as Clinton's (unremarkable) sexual proclivities have to chastity.

The stunning, picture-postcard beauty

after the entry of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the territory, did the Beijing bureaucracy begin to implement fundamental reforms in Tibet.

The theocracy in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa so effectively and brutally dominated the society that there is no accessible history of the kind of episodic peasant uprisings which characterised precapitalist societies throughout the rest of the world. In fact, there is no record of any unrest at all. It is a measure of the intensity of oppression and exploitation in Lamaist Tibet that what was perhaps proportionally the largest and most idle ruling stratum in human history was economically supported by growers of barley and herders of yak. At base, this meant the labour of women, since both the monks and a not small portion of the male population, who emulated the monastic life after "sinning" by procreating, were employed in contemplation.

After the PLA's 1950 occupation of Tibet, American imperialism — with parallel efforts by the ruling classes of India, Taiwan and Japan — utilised Tibet's ruling stratum and its fear of the least reform to foment resistance against the newly formed Chinese deformed workers state. In 1959, a rebellion inspired, armed and financed by the CIA originated in Tibet's eastern reaches in China's Sichuan province and culminated in a monk/aristocrat-led uprising in Lhasa. This effort — preordained to fail — was cynically launched by the US simply to harass China. Against the imperialist hue

and cry over "poor little Tibet", the Trotskyists stood forthrightly for the defence of China (see "Trotskyist youth protest US moves against Mao's China", page 5).

The rebellion was smashed, the Dalai Lama fled to India and the CCP quickly abolished his administration — the "Tibet Local Government" — which had been formed in 1951. Only then did Mao move to abolish *ulag* (forced peasant labour), slavery and the myriad of mandatory taxes paid to the aristocracy and monasteries. Previously, the monasteries simply appropriated children to replenish the monk population while villages were forced to hand over children for state functions in Lhasa, with boys thus "donated" taken by the monks as consorts. The land, livestock and tools of the aristocrats who fled into exile were distributed to the peasants, as were the land and chattel of the monasteries which had participated in the uprising. As one frequent visitor to the area described post-revolutionary Tibet, "at least now you don't see emaciated serfs in rags carrying the litter of a noble dressed in warm clothing, turquoise rings and gold bracelets" (*Guardian*, 29 December 1973, quoted in A Tom Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* [1996]).

Even the modest reforms instituted under CCP rule were attenuated through sabotage by the remaining Tibetan aristocrats, as well as through the narrow policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which was shot through with "Great Han" Chinese chauvinism. Those aristocrats who stayed were reimbursed for their property, as were the "loyal" monasteries which were then subsidised by the Chinese state. Mao's "Great Leap Forward" of the late 1950s — a utopian campaign to catapult China to the status of an advanced industrial power on the basis of raw peasant labour — grievously undermined agrarian and social reform. Substituting utopian sloganeering for material reality, this leap *backward* brought industrial and agricultural production to a standstill, leading to a devastating famine throughout China.

Subsequently, Tibetans were subjected to fierce Great Han chauvinism during the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" beginning in the mid-1960s, in which Mao mobilised millions of student youth to buttress his position in an intra-bureaucratic factional feud. In this grossly misnamed campaign, which took aim at all things "foreign" and at such "capitalist" influence as accumulated scientific knowledge and classical music, Tibetan language and native dress (including the distinctive hairstyle) were proscribed. Much of what had been at the core of Tibetan "culture" — monasteries, religious artifacts and texts — was simply smashed up and destroyed, although with the appreciable side effect of driving monks into actual labour. By decree, nomadic herdsmen were "transformed" into farmers overnight and the peasantry organised into large agricultural communes which lacked not only the machines but the soil necessary for large-scale farming. Predictably, agricultural production was so disrupted that by 1981 one-fifth of the Tibetan population required subsidies from the central government merely to survive.

Deng Xiaoping's rise to power shortly after Mao's death was accompanied by the

lifting of Han-chauvinist strictures against Tibetan language, attire and hairstyles. The monasteries were rebuilt and refurbished, while the idle monks returned in droves and currently number some 40,000 to 50,000. At the same time, the "market reforms" initiated under Deng have increased Han privilege in the area, as well as the distaste of most Tibetans for their occupiers. The growing presence of the PLA, with its relatively well-paid officers and soldiers and their families and its prominent role in business ventures (geared in Tibet primarily to tourism), has also led to an infusion of ethnic Han entrepreneurs employing Han workers.

Thus, the real gains for the Tibetan masses from the export of the 1949 Chinese Revolution — from the introduction of modern health care to the establishment of a modicum of education, which lowered the level of illiteracy from 90 per cent to roughly 45 per cent — stand alongside continuing glaring inequalities. Tibetan farmers and herders earn an average of \$68 a year, while 79 per cent of Tibetan women of childbearing age are illiterate. Such inequalities are rapidly increasing with the introduction of capitalist market "reforms".

Hollywood stumps for counterrevolution

Keenly attuned to the opportunities provided by the policies of the CCP bureaucracy, which has engaged in off-and-on discussions concerning the status of Tibet, the Dalai Lama has "evolved" from his earlier calls for independence, which faded out after the anti-Soviet rapprochement between the US and Mao's China in the early 1970s. Now the god-king has expressed a willingness to dicker over some sort of "autonomy" arrangement, with occasional statements of approval of modernisation and,



Dalai Lama with Chinese PLA troops in 1956. Three years later he backed CIA-sponsored rebellion.

even, some sort of "socialism". At the same time, following the final undoing of the Russian October Revolution in 1991-92, the aristocrats and Lamas who maintain the Tibetan exile communities in the Indian subcontinent have increasingly sought to mobilise international pressure for Tibetan independence.

These developments have inspired a gaggle of entertainers to lend their efforts to the reactionary anti-Communist crusade against China. Prominent among them is Richard Gere, the actor and sometime pupil of the Dalai Lama, who has vowed to make Tibet "a household word in the United States, like Maalox or Lysol". However, Gere has apparently recently been supplanted in the Dalai Lama's inner circle. If Christopher Hitchens' report in the *Nation* (27 July) is to be believed, "Steven Seagal, the robotic and moronic 'actor' who gave us *Hard to Kill* and *Under Siege*, has been proclaimed a reincarnated lama." Hitchens observes, "Sug-

gestions that Seagal's fortune helped elevate him to the Himalayan status of fulku [sacred vessel] are not completely discounted even by some adepts and initiates."

These jet-setting "artistes", who invariably exceed their gurus in vacuity, wish to add to their collections of causes and extravagant toys a Tibet to be preserved "au naturel", a theme park where tranquil and simple humans live in "organic" relationships unspoiled by "civilisation". In reality, they uphold a society only decades ago so ravaged by sickness that an estimated 90 per cent of the population suffered from venereal disease; a society in which women were shared with their husbands' male relatives if poor or added to the stables of wives of the rich; a society where life was brutal, harsh and short and where the masses were offered not the least hope for amelioration or any kind of change. And that society, or one very much like it, would re-emerge if the

Lama/aristocrat exiles returned to power in an "independent" Tibet.

In stressing the need for the Chinese proletariat to combat the Han chauvinism of the Stalinist bureaucracy and champion the rights of Tibetans, the Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang and other national and ethnic minorities, we raised the call for "the right of independence for a Tibetan soviet republic" ("China on the Brink: Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?" *Spartacist* [English-language edition] no 53, Summer 1997). However, given the social conditions in Tibet, this call is mistaken. There is currently no basis for any sort of independent Tibet, where there exists neither a domestic capitalist class — not even a comprador capitalist layer — nor a working class of any significance. There is no way to even determine what the masses in Tibet might want. The toiling population — peasants and herders — remains unorganised, politically mute and isolated in myriad small villages and settlements.

In *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky wrote:

"Under the conditions of the imperialist epoch the national democratic revolution can be carried through to a victorious end only when the social and political relationships of the country are mature for putting the proletariat in power as the leader of the masses of the people. And if this is not yet the case? Then the struggle for national liberation will produce only very partial results, results directed entirely against the working masses."

As in the case of other horribly benighted and backward countries, like Afghanistan, even a modicum of modernisation can only come from without. This is why, at the time of the Soviet military intervention against CIA-backed feudalist reactionaries in Afghanistan in 1979, we raised the call: "Hail Red Army! Extend

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1959 statement on Tibet

Trotskyist youth protest US moves against Mao's China

The following leaflet, titled "The Tibetan Brigade: Crocodile Tears Stain the Monks' Cloths", is reprinted from *Young Socialist* (June 1959), newspaper of the then-Trotskyist Young Socialist Alliance (YSA). It was issued by the Eugene V Debs Club of Berkeley, California and the East Bay YSA. As we noted when we reprinted the leaflet in *Spartacist* no 27-28 (Winter 1979-1980), this occasioned some reaction in the local radical milieu as it was known to have been written by Jim Robertson, a former long-time unassimilated Shachtmanite and ardent communist, as his first statement of Trotskyist Soviet defencism.

A hue and cry has gone up throughout the "free" world and especially in the United States over the latest alleged atrocity of the Chinese (Communist) government. This "atrocity" is the attempt, assured of final success, to reestablish Chinese dominance in the face of revolt planned and led by the Tibetan priestly and landowning classes.

The situation is clear enough in broad outline. To their discredit, the Chinese government has attempted to conciliate with the Tibetan feudal classes for the past eight years. At the same time, as the prod-

uct of a revolutionary upheaval, the Chinese regime brings with it certain reforms. These reforms, such as rudimentary education, threatened the age-old system of oppression of the peasants by the native rulers. These latter worthies, headed by their "god-king," felt undermined, and while they still had at least a measure of popular support staged a coup which ran into Chinese military resistance.

As an aside to those in the West who profess to admire the quaint devotion of the more backward in Asia to their religious leaders, let it be noted that these condescending attitudes went out with the "humble, devout" French serf of before 1789 and the "carefree, contented" Negro slaves in America. Oppression and obscurantism that lead to blighted and shortened lives are vicious. The path of human betterment is through increasing men's understanding and control of their universe, not by use of rosaries and prayer wheels.

Several defenses have been put forward in favor of the Tibetan feudalists. (1) "Freedom and democracy"!! When in the last two thousand years have the Tibetan people voted or been asked about anything? The very revolt was in part against the eventual possibility of

that sort of thing.

(2) "Another Hungary." In Hungary the revolution fought to go forward, seeking to smash the Stalinist bureaucracy (the brothers of Mao and company) in favor of rule from below and for socialism, and against the old order of great landed estates, privately owned factories, clericalism, and political rule by Admiral Horthy's fascist gang.

(3) "Self-determination" might have been a serious basis for deciding in favor of Tibetan independence could someone figure out how the Tibetan people are to express their choice in a nation where the "god-king" gives all the answers as well as asks all the questions. But in reality this aspect is without meaning.

The real choice for Tibet if Chinese control were thrown off is not independent nationhood but abject dependence on American arms, money and advisors. One has but to look at the other reactionary and feudal regimes in Asia to see both the reality and meaning of American imperialist domination: the military dictatorships in Pakistan and Thailand, the corrupt "democracies" of Viet Nam and the Philippines, the personal tyrannies in South Korea and Formosa. Not a pretty picture.

The victory of the Chinese Communist government is clearly the progressive choice in the present contest. However, to recognize this is not to whitewash that regime. But even in its distorted way it is part of great and positive changes on the Asian mainland, changes that eventually will be the Maoists' own undoing. Through these very achievements the regime will be overthrown by the mass of people anxious to rule their own destinies without the intervention of a privileged elite. That is the future; the Tibetan monk-rulers are the past.

But what about the hue and cry in America? How easily fine words are twisted to meet the needs of American "world leadership"! How morally corrupt our public figures are, men whose political complexion runs the entire respectable spectrum. Nationally a pro-Tibetan committee has been set up ranging in composition from the Formosa lobby mouthpiece, Henry Luce of Life-Time-Fortune, to Norman Thomas, accurately described as "the State Department socialist." At California, the self-styled "Tibetan Brigade" has sprung up and in its publicity seeking fashion faithfully echoes the rhetoric of their elders.

All this noise in a country that backs dictators the world over and as in Guatemala forcibly puts puppets into power with plots staged by the Counter Intelligence Agency. And at a time when, to take a most outstanding example, in Algeria, a whole people have been waging a desperate, bloody war for years against fascist colonials and an imperialist army supplied with American arms.

Here is hypocrisy of world-historic proportions. We socialists say: no thank you!

Chaos in Russia, depression in East Asia

SEPTEMBER 6—The sharp plunge in stock prices last Monday, the steepest point decline since the record-setting fall of last October's "Black Monday", sent tremors coursing through the international financial circuit. The tabloid *New York Post* (1 September) blared, "Kiss Your Assets Goodbye!" The chief economist for the giant Wall Street firm of Morgan Stanley talked of "a sense of despair and desperation" in financial markets. The London *Economist* (5 September) pointed "to mounting concern that the turmoil in emerging markets will end in worldwide depression".

The immediate trigger for the collapse came when Russia's months-long financial disintegration turned into a total meltdown in mid-August. The bankruptcy of the regime of President Boris Yeltsin — in every respect — is manifest. As the rouble has dropped in value against the dollar by nearly two-thirds, banks have been besieged by angry crowds seeking to get out what money they can, while the already impoverished populace is frantically trying to buy any food and other necessities they can. Yesterday, the head of the country's central bank quit and the Russian parliament rejected for the second time Yeltsin's bid to reappoint Viktor Chernomyrdin as prime minister. Chernomyrdin fumed that the country was on the verge of going "up in flames".

Coming on top of the East Asian economic crash and the deepening recession in Japan, the Russian collapse sowed panic in stock markets around the globe, leading to plunges over the past two and a half weeks ranging from nine per cent in Tokyo to 14 per cent in Frankfurt and 32 per cent in Rio de Janeiro. But as a number of commentators have pointed out, Russia's real weight in the world economy cannot account for what has been happening to stock markets from East Asia to South America and Wall Street — except perhaps as an irrational overreaction. Russia's entire annual output, at present exchange rates, is smaller than the \$241 billion which Japanese stocks lost in the last week of August alone.

Russia was, so to speak, the straw that broke the back of the Wall Street boom. Beginning in the early '90s, the "baby boomer" generation increasingly invested their pension funds in the stock market as if it were an automatic money-making machine. This massive infusion of money drove up stock prices to astronomical levels having no relation to corporate profitability. For several months, US central bank head Alan Greenspan and the *Economist* — house organ of international financiers — have warned that the Wall Street bubble was going to burst.

Profits in the US have been declining, and the situation facing "multinational" corporations and banks in most of the rest of the capitalist world is far worse. Since last fall, financiers and bourgeois economists of all political persuasions have voiced concern that the Asian economic crisis could lead to a full-blown world depression on the scale of the 1930s. Financial markets are so volatile and nervous, political conditions in much of the world so unstable and conflict-ridden that any major shock — say, a popular upheaval in Mexico or a war between

India and Pakistan, or even an Iranian military incursion into Afghanistan — could have produced the kind of panic in stock markets around the globe that we are now seeing.

During his visit with fellow lame duck Boris Yeltsin in Moscow last week, US president Clinton implored Russians to follow "the fundamental imperatives of the

lurches from one crisis to the next. And parts of Latin America look shaky."

"Death of communism" myth goes splat

Post-Soviet Russia's role in the world, or even the world economy, cannot be measured simply in terms of industrial output, volume of foreign trade, debt



Shamil Zhumatov/Reuters

Russian miners in Red Square demand Yeltsin's resignation. Capitalist counterrevolution has led to impoverishment of working people.

global market". Those are hardly encouraging words these days. South Korea, despite an International Monetary Fund (IMF) "bailout" package of close to \$60 billion and sharpening attacks on the jobs and living standards of the working class, continues to sink deeper into depression. China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state whose Stalinist rulers have been driving the country headlong towards capitalist restoration, has also been affected by the Southeast Asian economic crisis, itself triggered in good part by the flood of cheap exports from China's growing "free market" sector.

Most importantly, Japan, industrial powerhouse of Asia and the world's second-largest economy, is in the throes of its worst economic and political crisis in decades (see "Japan Economic Crisis Shakes Imperialist Order", *WV* nos 693 and 694, 3 July and 31 July). Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto resigned following a humiliating showing for his Liberal Democratic Party in parliamentary elections in July, but his successor has been no less successful in putting together a package for "economic recovery". In the past year, Japan has experienced its first major bank failures in half a century, sharp cuts in investment in productive capacity and record levels of unemployment. Painting a picture of growing global economic chaos, a former vice chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Alan Blinder, wrote in a recent op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (25 August):

"Several Southeast Asian countries are in what can only be called a depression. China, it is said, may have to devalue its currency. Japan is sagging badly. Russia

exposure by Western and Japanese banks, etc. While Western, mainly German, banks stand to lose well over \$100 billion as a result of the Russian financial meltdown, the impact of the economic collapse there is primarily political and ideological. Russia may be economically bankrupt, but it still has a formidable nuclear arsenal, including thousands of warheads. As for the ideological impact, we noted in "Death of Communism' Myth Goes Splat" (*WV* no 677, 31 October 1997) following last October's stock market crash that the imperialist rulers seized on the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union to proclaim a "bright new world of unfettered capitalism". We continued:

"There was even talk of 'the end of history,' in the fatuous words of State Department ideologue Francis Fukuyama, with the contradictions generated by the anarchic capitalist mode of production suppressed or at least easily controllable. Corporate directors and the International Monetary Fund and World Bank envisioned a return to the 'golden age' before the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution — few or no restrictions on international movement of capital, stable foreign-exchange rates, 'investor-friendly' governments and, above all, a limitless growth of profits."

Today, even Fukuyama admits to having second thoughts about his rosy vision of the "end of history", writing: "There are two things on the horizon that I think are really quite scary: that the Asian crisis could broaden into a global depression, in which case all bets are off about everything; and essentially that Russia could fail in its attempt to Westernize and go backward seriously" (*New*

York Times, 30 August).

The burgeoning international economic crisis has also intensified the inter-imperialist rivalries which came into sharp relief following the destruction of the Soviet Union. Washington's demands that Tokyo put its economic house in order have grown increasingly bellicose in recent months. This comes after years of trade disputes, as the US has tried to blackmail Japan into slashing its export levels. And while the US is loathe to throw more money at Russia, Germany not only faces a default on some \$30 billion in loans but as well a potential military threat should Russia descend into chaos. A vice president of Germany's huge Commerzbank warned: "We cannot let Russia, a superpower so near to Germany, fall deeper and deeper into crisis" (*New York Times*, 25 August).

Today, the mood of bourgeois triumphalism has been replaced by panic in international financial markets and fear of a major world depression. At the same time, these conditions are impelling the working masses into struggle. In recent months, the Yeltsin regime has been confronted by a series of workers strikes — spearheaded by the miners who blockaded trains carrying vital supplies. In Indonesia, a popular upheaval last spring led to the ouster of right-wing military dictator Suharto by his own generals. In South Korea, the highly combative working class is resisting the savage austerity measures demanded by the IMF. The powerful Japanese proletariat, facing the elimination of "lifetime employment", is being shaken out of its political complacency and conservatism. And the US — the core country of world capitalism — was hit this summer by the longest and most effective auto strike in decades and by the powerful Teamster strike against UPS last summer.

Nonetheless, this increased combativity comes amid a historic retrogression in class consciousness, particularly in Western Europe where mass reformist Communist Parties commanded the allegiance of advanced sectors of the proletariat. With the victory of capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, workers were sold the lie that "socialism has failed". As a result, today even many formerly pro-Soviet workers in the West no longer identify their struggles with the goal of achieving a socialist society. The International Communist League seeks to instill in the proletariat the revolutionary-internationalist consciousness which animated the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

The continued existence of capitalist imperialism brings with it not only widespread immiseration for the world's working people but the danger of a new global depression and another cataclysmic world war. Socialist revolutions internationally — ushering in a classless, egalitarian society based on production for need, not for profit — is the only answer to the anarchy and brutality of the capitalist system. It is the task of the ICL to forge the proletarian leadership needed to lead humanity out of this abyss.

Yeltsin and Wall Street: from hero to goat

There is a measure of historical justice in the fact that the financial collapse of Yeltsin's Russia triggered the worst few weeks on Wall Street in over a decade. It was during a visit to the financial centre of world capitalism nine years ago that Yeltsin launched his career as the paramount leader of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. Yeltsin had earlier played a key role under Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, who took over the Kremlin in 1985 under the banner of market-oriented *perestroika* "reforms". Yeltsin soon broke with Gorbachev, denouncing his "half-way measures". Seek-

ing the backing of American imperialism, he toured the US, where he was feted by the likes of David Rockefeller. Speaking at Columbia University, the ex-Stalinist apparatchik declared: "I have seen that capitalism is flourishing."

The restoration of capitalism in Russia and the other former Soviet republics cannot, of course, be explained by the machinations of one blustering demagogue and his imperialist sponsors. The social base of the counterrevolution was a large layer of Soviet yuppies, typically the privileged children of Stalinist bureaucrats, who aspired to the more affluent lifestyle and social status of their counterparts in New York, Paris and West Berlin by looting the economy built up under the Soviet Union. They called themselves "democrats" and preached "free-market" economics as a cure-all for the USSR's economic stagnation and backwardness relative to the advanced capitalist countries. They also expected that by restoring capitalism they would be generously rewarded by the imperialists with investment funds, bountiful aid and "soft" loans.

As the Soviet bureaucracy rapidly disintegrated in 1989-91, especially along national lines, the pro-Western "democrats" shifted their support from Gorbachev to Yeltsin. The decisive moment came in August 1991 when elements of the beleaguered Gorbachev regime, calling themselves the "State Emergency Committee", moved to take over the Kremlin and restore order. Contrary to Western imperialist propaganda, the Emergency Committee was not aiming to restore the old Stalinist "command" system or revive the centrally planned and collectivised economy on which the Soviet degenerated workers state was based. Rather it aimed for a bureaucratically controlled restoration of capitalism within a Russian-dominated state encompassing all of the territory of the USSR.

US president George Bush openly orchestrated the successful manoeuvres of the Yeltsin camp against the Emergency Committee. Washington threatened to launch a new Cold War—including economic sanctions and support to nationalist forces in the non-Russian republics—if the Emergency Committee prevailed. At the same time, the US made it clear that a Yeltsin regime could expect substantial economic support. In December 1991, Yeltsin rudely booted Gorbachev out of the Kremlin and officially announced the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Yeltsin's August 1991 countercoup was a pivotal event in determining the fate of the Soviet Union, the world's first workers state. Trotskyists fought for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to sweep away the nationalist bureaucracy in the Kremlin. In the weeks following Yeltsin's August 1991 countercoup, the ICL distributed over 100,000 copies of a statement in Russian throughout the Soviet Union with the call, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" (*WV* no 533, 30 August 1991).

This stood in sharp contrast to virtually the entire spectrum of centrist and reformist groups around the world, who lined up behind Yeltsin and his imperialist patrons. The social-democratic organisation led by Tony Cliff in Britain, represented in the US by the International Socialist Organization, rejoiced that "Communism has collapsed" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991). The British centrists of Workers Power, who falsely claim to be Trotskyist, even boasted how one of its supporters had joined the speculators, racketeers and Russian Orthodox priests on Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary barricades! Thus, these supposedly "revolution-

ary" groups demonstrated their fundamental loyalty to the imperialist rulers.

In the absence of a concerted proletarian mobilisation, the Soviet Union succumbed to capitalist counterrevolution. As we wrote at the time:

"Atomized and bereft of any anti-capitalist leadership, lacking any coherent and consistent socialist class consciousness, skeptical about the possibility of class struggle in the capitalist countries, the Soviet working class did not rally in resistance against the encroaching capitalist counterrevolution."

—*How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled*, Spartacist pamphlet (August 1993)

However, it was no easy task for would-be Tsar Boris to cohere a strong regime amid the political and economic wreckage of the Soviet Union. Prodded by Washington, in September 1993 Yeltsin dissolved the Russian parliament—which was dominated by a "red-brown coalition" of ex-Stalinist "patriots" and openly reactionary Russian nationalists—and then ordered a military assault on the parliament building. Yeltsin then pushed



No credit

through a new constitution enshrining an all-powerful presidency and a very weak parliament.

The accelerating economic decline and immiseration along with the bloody colonial war against Chechnya in the Caucasus soon destroyed what remained of Yeltsin's popular authority. Six months before the 1996 presidential elections, Yeltsin's approval rating had sunk to a mere six per cent while the most popular candidate was Gennadi Zyuganov, head of the Communist Party-Russian Federation. Despite its name, this is a bourgeois-nationalist party with ties to elements of the new capitalist exploiters, who for the most part are drawn from the industrial managers of the former Soviet Union. Yeltsin bought the elections with the help of \$14 billion from his imperialist sponsors. As we wrote at the time, "Thanks to the deep pockets of the International Monetary Fund, Yeltsin was able to piece off those sectors of the new exploiters, who in the end united behind his candidacy" ("Washington Buys Russian Elections", *WV* no 649, 2 August 1996). But the pockets of the IMF were not deep enough to prevent Russia's total financial collapse two years later.

"Corporatist, criminal-style capitalism"

Russia has a huge, well-trained labour force and a large, first-rate technical intelligentsia. But to exploit this manpower efficiently would require a massive infusion of investment capital to reconstruct, retool and modernise the country's industrial plant. Instead, the industrial plants

inherited from the Soviet era have been driven into the ground. There is no more striking index of the primitive state of capitalism in Russia than that *three-quarters of all transactions are done by barter without money or credit*.

In 1992-93, the Yeltsin regime sold off the industrial enterprises, mines and oil fields developed under the Soviet planned economy to a handful of Kremlin insiders for a small fraction of their actual worth. Reputedly, seven tycoons—who were the core backers of Yeltsin's 1996 election campaign—control over half of the Russian economy. Grigory Yavlinsky, an early advocate of capitalist restoration who is now a leading liberal opponent of Yeltsin, pithily describes Russia's economy as "corporatist, criminal-style capitalism".

In certain respects, post-Soviet Russia has taken on the economic and political structure of a Third World country. Exports consist almost entirely of oil, natural gas and precious metals. The oil barons are therefore the only people who have large amounts of dollars and other hard currencies, which they use to buy govern-

The interplay between this corporatist capitalism, Western fears of Russia's imperialist ambitions and the repercussions of the Asian economic crash have now brought about total political and financial chaos. To begin with, Russia's new capitalists don't pay taxes. Since 1991, Yeltsin has cut social programmes to the bone and also substantially reduced military spending. The real wages of government employees have fallen 40 per cent, as have old-age pensions. Still, last year the Yeltsin regime ran a budget deficit amounting to six per cent of the country's total national output.

Asian crisis topples Russia's financial house of cards

The Asian economic crash caused international moneymen to turn a jaundiced eye at other so-called "emerging markets", especially Russia. In South Korea and Indonesia, "crony capitalism" at least oversaw a real expansion in productive capacity. But crony capitalism in Russia resulted in a wholesale destruction of productive capacity. And Tsar Boris

Yeltsin launches counter-revolutionary coup in August 1991 (left). In October 1993 Yeltsin ordered military assault on White House following disbanding of parliament.



Der Spiegel

ment officials from local city halls to the Kremlin. Typical in this regard is Kremlin power broker Boris Berezovsky, who runs the Sibneft oil company which finances his own bank. The premier political agent for Russia's oil barons is Viktor Chernomyrdin, who ran the Soviet natural gas industry, which he transformed into a giant monopoly corporation, Gazprom, pocketing a fortune for himself in the process.

The post-Soviet Russian economy is marked by the almost complete absence of foreign investment in productive activities, not only in manufacturing but also in the lucrative extractive sector. In this respect Russia contrasts sharply with the smaller East European countries of the former Soviet bloc. American and German capitalists readily buy up, retool and construct plants in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic—but not in Russia. Why not? Because they cannot exercise effective political control over Russia.

The new capitalist entrepreneurs and their political agents in Poland and Hungary are more than happy to be junior—very junior—partners of Frankfurt and Wall Street. They accept their lowly position in the "new world order". But Russia's tycoons, their political agents and their military men aspire to rule a great imperialist power, dominating at least the non-Russian regions of the former USSR, the so-called "near abroad". All of Yeltsin's major rivals—Communist Party head Zyuganov, ex-general Aleksandr Lebed, Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov—play up Russian national grievances and ambitions and strike a posture hostile to the West, especially the US.

looked very like a Slavic Suharto. In fact, the eruption of mass anti-Suharto protests in Indonesia in mid-May marked the beginning of the collapse of Russia's financial markets.

Moscow government bonds could be sold only at ever higher interest rates on ever shorter terms. The Russian treasury was redeeming up to \$8 billion a month at interest rates from 50 to 100-plus per cent. And the only reason anyone was buying them at all was a belief that in a crunch the US and Germany would pay off rather than see Yeltsin go down the tubes as strikes paralysed the country and angry mobs ran through the streets of Moscow and St Petersburg. Washington and Bonn, the moneymen reasoned, would not let Russia become an Indonesia with 10,000 nuclear warheads. But could the Western imperialist powers prevent it, and at what cost?

The massive bailouts of South Korea, Indonesia, etc have depleted the reserves of the IMF, World Bank and kindred international financial institutions. Japan is facing the daunting task of bailing out its own banks which are saddled with \$600 billion in "non-performing" loans. Moreover, the Yeltsin regime is manifestly corrupt and inefficient. For every dollar provided by the IMF, 50 cents ended up in offshore bank accounts of Yeltsin cronies and the other 50 cents was frittered away. Late last year, the IMF suspended a scheduled payment of \$600 million until the Yeltsin regime brought its tax-collection act up to par. Responding to this pressure, in March Yeltsin fired his entire cabinet and replaced them with a team of youthful "free marketeers".

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Russia...

(Continued from page 7)

The IMF continued to dole out money to Moscow, but only as if it were rationing food and water in a lifeboat adrift on the high seas. When Russia's financial markets started their sharp slide downward in late spring, IMF chief Michel Camdessus conspicuously turned his back on Moscow. "Contrary to what markets and commentators are imagining", Camdessus lectured like a professor addressing particularly obtuse students, "this is not a crisis. This is not a major development". Statements like this, as much as anything else, turned Russia's financial mess into a major development, indeed.

With no prospect of a large and immediate Western bailout, every holder of Russian stocks and government bonds — whether foreign or home-grown — dumped them forthwith and converted the rouble proceeds into dollars or other hard currencies. An eleventh-hour "rescue package" worked out with the IMF in late July was too little, too late and had too many strings attached. Every dollar flowing into Moscow from Washington instantaneously flowed back out again as the run on the rouble became a rout. Former World Bank economist Charles Blitzer exclaimed: "Robbery is going on, that's the only way to describe it.... It seems Russia's oligarchs are engaging in big-time capital flight" (*New York Times*, 26 August).

On 17 August, the Yeltsin government in effect declared bankruptcy, devaluing the rouble and suspending payments on foreign loans for at least three months. With everyone from Wall Street bankers to Siberian coal miners calling for his head, Yeltsin moved to re-cement his ties to Russia's new tycoons by reappointing Chernomyrdin, who had been dumped from the job only months ago, as acting prime minister. Chernomyrdin has tried

negotiating for a "power-sharing" deal with the Communist opposition in parliament and is ominously calling for an iron-fisted "economic dictatorship" to impose order on the country.

For the communism of Lenin and Trotsky!

The Yeltsin regime is internally shaken, universally despised and discredited. The recent strikes by miners and other workers are a welcome sign of reawakened combativity on the part of Russia's proletariat. But to overthrow the corporatist, criminal-style capitalism they face, a new vanguard of the multinational working class of Russia must be forged based on an understanding of the historic significance of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the subsequent Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state and the counterrevolution led by Yeltsin in 1991-92.

It was the October Revolution of 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party which, by expropriating the Russian capitalists and landowners and kicking out the imperialists, laid the basis for a planned, collectivised economy. But the Bolshevik Party which led the revolution was destroyed by Stalin through a political counterrevolution in 1923-24, in which a nationalist bureaucratic caste seized the reins of power. Yet despite the gross mismanagement and massive parasitism of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the economic and cultural development of the Soviet Union brought substantial benefits to its working people — not only Russians but also Ukrainians, Georgians, Uzbeks, Tajiks, etc.

Development towards a genuinely socialist society could take place only in the context of an internationally planned socialist economy brought into being through workers revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of North America, Western Europe and Japan. But the

nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, in the guise of building "socialism in one country", was viscerally opposed to this perspective. By the 1980s, decades of corrupt and stifling Stalinist misrule had produced political apathy and cynicism among the Soviet working class. As Trotsky predicted in the 1930s, the Stalinist bureaucracy — if not overthrown by a proletarian political revolution — would generate from within its ranks capitalist counter-revolutionaries tied to and supported by world imperialism.

Emboldened by the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union, the bourgeoisie internationally has escalated attacks on workers and minorities. The gains made by South Korean workers during the past few decades of industrialisation are being wiped out by the economic crash and dictates of the IMF. The Japanese ruling class is scrapping its traditional corporate paternalism (eg, "lifetime employment") as the country sinks ever deeper into recession. Western Europe is beset by mass unemployment, and the "welfare state" is being dismantled by both right-wing and social-democratic governments. And the US ruling class has been acting as if it can do *anything* to the workers, the poor, the elderly, the black and Hispanic communities.

The onset of a bear market on Wall Street is likely to intensify the conflict between labour and capital. With Social Security under the gun, millions of American workers have come to rely on pension funds — many of whose assets are tied to the stock market — to see them through their retirement years. Now those funds are dwindling daily. And the capitalists will try to recoup their losses by laying off workers and seeking to intensify the rate of exploitation.

Especially with the world economy lurching towards a major depression, the working class cannot defend itself against

the onslaught of capital solely through strikes and similar labour actions. For example, corporations losing money and intent on cutting back operations might well take on a long strike with the aim of defeating the workers through exhaustion and sheer economic hardship. Moreover, under conditions of increasing economic hardship, reactionary demagogues will seek to foment racial, national, ethnic and religious hatreds, trying to turn sectors of the exploited against one another: witness the fascist attacks on immigrant communities in Western Europe or the murderous anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia.

Revolutionary vanguard parties must be built to lead the proletariat in struggle against all forms of national, racial and social oppression. Struggles to defend jobs, wages and working conditions must be linked to a broader programme of struggle against the capitalist system as a whole. In advancing a series of demands to combat unemployment, growing immiseration and racist and fascist terror, Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky explained in the 1938 Transitional Program, founding document of the Fourth International:

"It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

The situation cries out for new October Revolutions to expropriate the bourgeoisie and lay the basis for an international, planned socialist economy. The ICL fights to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International to lead the proletariat to the conquest of power from South Korea to Russia, Japan and the US.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 696, 11 September 1998.

Tibet...

(Continued from page 5)

social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" In that context, we pointed to the extension of Bolshevik power to Central Asia in the 1920s, which laid the basis for an enormous leap forward for that region's toilers, particularly women who had been brutally oppressed under the Islamic hierarchy. The Kremlin's withdrawal from Afghanistan in the late 1980s set up women and leftists there for the horrendous rule of the Taliban cut-throats and led in short order to capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union itself.

In Tibet, it was only the entry of the army of the Chinese deformed workers state that enabled the masses to begin even the most minimal steps towards social progress. The fate of the Tibetan people is inextricably bound up with the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and socialist revolution in the Indian subcontinent and throughout Southeast and East Asia.

China: For proletarian political revolution!

To oust the bureaucratic caste that is rushing to liquidate the last remaining gains of the Chinese Revolution requires the leadership of a proletarian party which, as Lenin prescribed, must act as the tribune of the people, fighting on behalf of all the oppressed. This means, for example, struggling against the erosion of the gains made by women since 1949 and combatting every instance of Great Han chauvinism promoted by the nationalist bureaucracy. Proletarian political revolution

in China would immediately face the fury of imperialist-led reaction. The only defence against this is the international mobilisation of the working class, struggling to spread red revolution particularly to South Korea and Japan.

Key to the victory of the October Revolution was the Bolsheviks' intransigent internationalism, including their defence of the right of self-determination for the many oppressed nations in the tsarist prison-house of peoples. After seizing power, the Bolsheviks did indeed grant those nations the right to separate, while establishing measures of autonomy for various pre-national peoples. But particularly as the young Soviet republic was besieged by imperialist-led White counter-revolution, national self-determination, like all bourgeois-democratic questions, was subordinate to the defence of proletarian state power. The short-lived Ukrainian and Georgian "republics" of the time,

despite their pretensions of "neutrality" and a patina of "socialist", peasant radical and even anarchist rule, proved to be little more than highways for the military forces mobilised by the imperialists against Red Russia. Similarly, an "independent" Tibet today could only serve as a platform for imperialist provocations against the Chinese deformed workers state.

The preconditions for any meaningful Tibetan autonomy or, if desired, independence are the destruction of every remaining vestige of aristocratic and monastic power — and the end to all state support

to the monasteries — through the mobilisation of the Tibetan masses into soviets of toilers linked to proletarian soviet rule in China. Only then could the Tibetan people begin to overcome centuries of near slavery and hideous deprivation and embark on the road of progress, prosperity and human freedom that is the goal of socialist revolution. That advance today depends on a victorious working-class political revolution in China as part of the fight for a socialist Asia.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 695, 28 August 1998.

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(Class 4 of current series: For new October Revolutions!)

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Wednesday 21 October, 7.30 pm

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For more information contact: SYG, 0171 485 1396

Spartacus Youth Group Dublin class series

Introduction to Marxism

Classes held at 3.00 pm Saturdays — 7 November, 21 November and 5 December
Ha' Penny Bridge Inn, 42 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2
For more information contact SYGD, 855 8409

US bombing...

(continued from page 1)

imperialist rivals that the massive American arsenal of destruction continues to make it top dog" (*Workers Vanguard* no 685, 27 February).

Dumping the usual talk of "consultation" with its "allies", Washington went out of its way to stress that the bombings were a unilateral action. Indeed, while most Western capitals soon fell into line, initial international support for the US attacks was limited to Blair's Britain and Netanyahu's Israel. It was not lost on imperialist rivals like Germany and Japan that the same 75 American cruise missiles, aimed at nuclear power plants in those countries, would render large areas uninhabitable for centuries. Shortly after the bombings, Labour MP Tony Benn complained: "Once again we have seen the spectacle of London giving uncritical backing to whatever Washington decides to do — as happened over the Iraq crisis in February when the US and Britain were absolutely isolated in their desire to bomb Saddam" (*Guardian*, 24 August). This is the "Little England" nationalism Benn employed to oppose bombing Iraq. During the 1990-91 Gulf War he supported UN sanctions which over the past seven years have killed over a million Iraqis. In February Benn called for lifting sanctions, be-

murderous missile strikes. In fact, from Wall Street to the White House, this whole capitalist system of racism and war is based on lies.

In the aftermath of the US terror raids, American spokesmen have been whipping up a war scare against "Islamic terrorism" remarkable for its stridency. In the first instance, this is used to justify yet another augmentation of the repressive powers of the capitalist state. "Security" measures and police patrols were beefed up at airports and many public buildings, while a "bomb scare" even halted commuter trains into New York City. The US rulers' "anti-terrorist" hysteria is a particular threat to Arab Americans and Muslims in general, who have been the victims of arson attacks, death threats and FBI harassment particularly since the war against Iraq. At the same time, it serves to whip up a patriotic frenzy aimed at undercutting class struggle.

The government's cynical warning of an increase in indiscriminate terrorism against Americans is a self-fulfilling prophecy. In one of the demonstrations of outrage which erupted in Sudan, Pakistan and the Near East, a spokesman for the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas group in the Zionist-occupied Gaza Strip proclaimed: "America will reap the harvest of its aggression." In carrying out their own far more deadly state terror, the US imperialists are inciting attacks against Ameri-



Mary Evans Picture Library

Britain's Lord Kitchener, an earlier imperialist butcher of Sudanese people. Kitchener's troops carried out 1898 massacre at Omdurman.

When Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan in December 1979 to stem a CIA-backed *mujahedin* insurgency against a left-nationalist, pro-Soviet regime, US imperialism seized on this to kick off a renewed war drive against the USSR. Working with its theocratic client states in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, Washington poured *billions* into arming the reactionary Afghan *mujahedin* who threw acid in the faces of unveiled women and flayed teachers alive for the "crime" of teaching young girls to read. Uniquely in modern history, the rights of women were a central issue in the civil war that raged in Afghanistan from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. It was also a key battlefield in imperialism's unremitting drive to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state, which despite the rule of a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy rested on the planned, collectivised economy issuing out of the 1917 Russian Revolution, a historic gain for the world proletariat.

Driven by fierce anti-Communism, a whole slew of reformists — notably including Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP) — joined the imperialist rulers in calling for "Soviet troops out" and in embracing the *mujahedin* cut-throats as "freedom fighters". In contrast, we proclaimed: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" Trotskyists stood for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to sweep away the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy. When Soviet troops were pulled out of Afghanistan in 1988-89, we bitterly denounced this betrayal. In solidarity with embattled Afghan women and leftists, the Partisan Defense Committee proceeded to organise an international fund-raising campaign to assist civilian victims of the *mujahedin* siege

of Jalalabad.

For their part, the Cliffites gloated at the time, "We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan" (*Socialist Worker* [US], May 1988). The Kremlin pull-out paved the way for the victory of the Taliban reactionaries, who have imposed a benighted reign of terror and imprisoned women in the home and under the head-to-toe *burka* (see "Afghanistan: hell for women", *Workers Hammer* no 153, November/December 1996). It also paved the way for capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92. Again the Cliffites joined the imperialists in rejoicing that "Communism has collapsed" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991).

Occasional "anti-imperialist" rhetoric notwithstanding, reformists like the SWP provide an ideological cover for the imperialist mass murderers. Emboldened by the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union, the rulers of US imperialism have increasingly wielded their massive arsenal of terror to assert their dominant position in the world, not least in the horrendous slaughter of some 100,000 Iraqis in 1991 and in the continuing United Nations embargo which has killed over a million more, largely young children. From the nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 to the counterrevolutionary wars which killed millions of workers and peasants in Korea and Vietnam, America's imperialist rulers are the deadliest terrorists on the face of the planet. Down with the starvation blockade of Iraq! Defend Cuba, China, North Korea and Vietnam against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution!

The Spartacist League seeks to build a revolutionary workers party as part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International to lead the proletariat in sweeping away this rapacious, war-crazed capitalist class. ■



AP photo

US cruise missile attack on Sudanese pharmaceutical factory.

coming a front-runner for the social chauvinist and pro-UN "weapons inspections" war-mongering.

White House spokesmen talked of "irrefutable" evidence that the targeted sites were involved in the bombing of the US embassy and that the Khartoum plant was producing ingredients for a deadly nerve gas to be used in further attacks, claims which were subsequently also promoted by Republican Congressional leaders. None of this "evidence" has yet surfaced. On the contrary, a British engineer who worked at the Khartoum factory for several years said: "It just isn't equipped to cope with the demands of chemical weapon manufacturing" (*Reuters*, 22 August). We recall the bombing of a supposed "biological weapons facility" in Baghdad — which turned out to be a baby formula factory — during the US-led imperialist war against Iraq in 1991.

Cynically waving aside the whole question of facts, former CIA director John Deutsch haughtily declared: "A decision to retaliate does not require the same standard of proof as a conviction in an American court of law" (*New York Times*, 22 August). Clinton's lies in the matter of his private sexual affair with Monica Lewinsky have provoked howls of outrage. But there was not a peep of dissent from capitalist politicians or the media about the lying justification for Clinton's

can citizens abroad.

At protests in the US, the Spartacist League carried signs reading, "Down With U.S. Terror Bombing of Afghanistan, Sudan!" and "Afghan Islamic Reaction — Made in the U.S.A." In a protest outside the US embassy in London on 22 August, Spartacist League signs read, "Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan: Blair and Clinton — imperialist butchers", "Northern Ireland: imperialist 'peace' fraud — licence for state terror", "British troops out of Northern Ireland now!" and "Blair Labour government: racist, anti-immigrant, anti-worker: We need workers revolution!"

We don't know who carried out the embassy bombings which killed several hundred Kenyan and Tanzanian civilians. But what we do know is that the Islamic *mujahedin* (holy warriors) now hypocritically denounced by Washington as "terrorists" are creatures of US imperialism who only several years ago were hailed as anti-Communist "freedom fighters". Bin Laden's "network", for example, was armed, trained and financed by the CIA as part of Washington's proxy war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s. And the "terrorist training camps" in Afghanistan were built by the US and described by Soviet analysts at the time as "the last word in NATO engineering techniques" (*New York Times*, 24 August).

Spartacist League & Dublin Spartacist Group public meetings

London

Down with the new internment law!

Labour enforces capitalism's racist rule

Build a multiracial revolutionary party!

Saturday 10 October, 3pm
University of London Union
Room 2F, Malet St
Nearest tube:
Goodle St or Russell Square

Call for more info: 0171 485 1396

Dublin

Full citizenship rights for all immigrants — No deportations!

The fight against racism and anti-immigrant frenzy in Ireland

For trade union centred defence of Traveller halting sites!

Thursday 22 October, 7.30pm

ATGWU Hall,
55 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1

Call for more info: 01 855 8409

Internment...

(Continued from page 2)

Gardai. It is also an invitation for vigilante attacks against Republicans, which almost came to pass against Bernadette Sands-McKevitt, sister of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands who was murdered by the imperialist butchers. Although the Sands-McKevitts condemned the Omagh bombing, the Irish bourgeois press whipped up a mob who terrorised the family for their support to the "32-County Sovereignty Committee", linked to the Real IRA. Hands off the Sands-McKevitt family! Down with vigilante terror!

Imperialist hypocrisy and terrorism

The Real IRA's Omagh bombing, which killed and maimed both Protestant and Catholic civilians in an integrated shopping area, was a hideous crime from the standpoint of the working class and in no conceivable way a blow against imperialism. Our strategic perspective is to unite the working class, Protestant and Catholic, in a struggle for its own historic interest, which is the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Marxists oppose the tactic of individual terror because it is antithetical to the necessary task of mobilising the working class against the imperialist and capitalist oppressors. Nonetheless, when Irish nationalist groups strike a blow against the forces of British imperialism, the RUC or Loyalist fascistic killers, we defend the perpetrators of such acts against state retribution.

We have always taken a fundamentally different attitude towards indiscriminate terror directed against civilians. From a proletarian standpoint, bombings such as Omagh, the Shankill Road bombing in 1993, or the bombing of British shopping centres and pubs, are criminal acts which serve only to deepen hatred between Protestant and Catholic, English and Irish workers. In 1993, Protestant workers at Shorts aerospace factory had walked off the job and marched in protest against the murder of a Catholic worker by the UVF. A few weeks later this proletarian unity was wilfully destroyed by the IRA bombing of the Shankill Road which killed nine Protestant shoppers, and led to the same workers demonstrating against the IRA and all Catholics.

The brutal reality of the imperialist "peace" fraud

From 1993, when it was first mooted, we consistently opposed any imperialist "peace" deal, which we explained would necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholics and contrary to the interests of the working class, Protestant and Catholic. It was always premised on the British Army presence to reinforce repression by the RUC. This is evident during the Orange "marching season". Last year the Labour government sent an enormous force of army and RUC to force a path down the Catholic Garvaghy Road. This year the march was banned, and Loyalist pogromists assembled to *pressurise* the RUC to reverse the ban, as they had done in previous years. The Orange mob rampage led directly to the hideous murder of three children of the Quinn family, burned to death by Loyalist scum in their home in Ballymoney because, although they were Protestant, their mother is a Catholic. Catholics in Garvaghy Road were under siege for days and nights, surrounded by Orange mobs.

A few weeks after the Orange siege at Drumcree, the SWP complained that "The British government could have stood up to them long before this" (*Socialist Worker* 25 July). The SWP peddles the lie that the

Orange pogromists were "stood up to" by the British government. While much was made in the bourgeois press of the RUC and British Army battling it out with Loyalists at Drumcree, the truth of the matter is that the RUC and army treated the Loyalists with kid gloves, in marked contrast to how Catholics are routinely treated by the state. These mass mobilisations of Orangemen, fuelling attacks against Catholics all over the North, are and will remain a feature of the "peace process" and Stormont rule.

Since the "peace process" began, segregation has increased under threat of mur-

self". He insisted the working class in Britain must oppose imperialism in Ireland. The policy of the so-called socialist groups in Britain today, who welcomed the election of Labour and are shameless supporters of the imperialist "peace" fraud, is in flat contradiction to what Marx fought for.

For the SWP and the Socialist Party, the Good Friday agreement can provide a potential "breathing space" for the development of "class unity". This is utter nonsense. British imperialism today continues the bloody history of divide-and-rule which led to partition. The SWP's line in



British troops in 1970s. Internment means round-ups of Catholics, increased state brutality, and denial of basic democratic rights.

derous terror — "ethnic cleansing". The killing of the three Quinn children was only the most horrific of Loyalist outrages in a campaign of driving Catholics out of mixed areas in Ballymoney. Around 35 Catholic or mixed-marriage families have been forced out of the town. In Carrickfergus, Co Antrim, 22 families were forced out, mostly with firebombs. Several formerly integrated estates were completely cleared of Catholics. In 1968 there were 40,000 Catholics in East Antrim, today there are only about 2000.

The SWP tacitly accepts a myth of the "peace process", that the term "Loyalism" applies only to the likes of Ian Paisley who opposes the Stormont agreement, but not to David Trimble. This is preposterous. Trimble has not changed since the 1970s, when he was a member of a fascistic Loyalist paramilitary outfit known as "Vanguard". The split in Loyalism between Trimble and Paisley over the Stormont agreement is merely a tactical rift over how best to maintain Orange supremacy and grind down the Catholics. British imperialism regards Northern Ireland as an economic liability, but is totally committed to Orange rule. Contrary to Sinn Féin's preaching about "demilitarisation", and "reforming" the RUC, the only force to be "de-commissioned" in Northern Ireland is the IRA and other Republicans. We say the RUC must be smashed in the fight for working-class rule.

The fake left echoes Labour's social imperialism

Karl Marx insisted that the English working class must understand that the ruling class uses chauvinism over Ireland to maintain its rule in Ireland and in England. In 1870 he wrote that the "ordinary English worker", "feels himself a member of the *ruling nation* and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over him-*

1969 was equally pro-imperialist, arguing that the troops would provide a "breathing space". Despite illusions among the Catholic community that the British Army would be the lesser evil to Loyalist mobs, the outcome was Bloody Sunday in 1972 when British troops shot and killed 14 marchers in Derry.

The Socialist Party are notorious for their chauvinist opposition to demands for British troops out, and as publicity agents for *fascistic loyalist killer* Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), "political wing" of the UVF scum. Like an echo of David Trimble, the Socialist Party defends the pogromist Orangemen's "right" to march in Catholic areas, such as Bogside and Garvaghy Road. These social-imperialists solidarise with the RUC, with the grotesque statement that, in Omagh: "The RUC were a bunch of scared young men, thrown into a horror they couldn't cope with" (*Socialist Voice* Special bulletin, August 1998). They continue this theme when describing a prayer vigil in Omagh, which they actually took part in (along with David Trimble and Bertie Ahern): "Afterwards, filing away from High Street, it was interesting that many in the crowd went across to shake hands with the RUC men, just one indication of the deep sea change in attitudes brought about by this bomb" (*Socialist*, 28 August). This shows the treacherous nature of this reformist outfit, who like to posture as advocates of "working class unity", arm-in-arm with the enemies of the working class and oppressed.

Workers Power and CPGB renounce "armed struggle"

The British fake left either support British Labour or capitulate to Irish nationalism. Workers Power (WP) for years have done both. They have been vicarious supporters of the armed struggle of the IRA, which they described as "revolutionary". This is not true — nationalism can-

not be revolutionary. The "armed struggle" and the "ballot box" have always been twin parts of the same nationalist strategy to pressurise imperialism to grant a 32-county capitalist Irish republic. This programme, which Protestants would certainly resist, means forcible unification, and it is a perspective which would only compact the Protestants behind the Loyalist bigots. This is directly counterposed to the Leninist programme which seeks to cut across the communal divide and fight for working-class power.

Workers Power now says: "The indiscriminate and reactionary bombing of Catholic and Protestant workers in Omagh... must be condemned" and describes it as "a crime against the Irish working class". This is true, but so were IRA bombings such as Enniskillen in 1987, which WP in Britain justified, saying "We defend the right of the Provisionals to struggle by any means to end Britain's rule" (*Workers Power*, December 1987). Now they pontificate that "the attempt by the Real IRA to carry on the guerrilla struggle... in 1998 is utterly stupid and counter-productive" and admonish "all those Republicans who reject the pro-imperialist peace deal" to "FIND A BETTER WAY!" Workers Power's "way" was campaigning for Tony "I believe in the United Kingdom" Blair in the general election of 1997. Either way, Workers Power offers a programme for the maintenance of capitalism, in Britain and in Ireland.

Also joining this rather ignominious flight of former armchair "armed struggle" enthusiasts before Blair's "peace settlement" are the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). Having supported nationalist outfits such as the INLA for years, the CPGB immediately condemned the Omagh bombing as "objectively reactionary", but added that: "The deaths and injuries, horrific though they were, are not in themselves cause for condemnation." These vicarious nationalists still defend in principle communalist attacks on civilians, which is part and parcel of the nationalist strategy. Nationalists aim to assert themselves as leaders of "their" people, and in the context of interpenetrated peoples their "armed struggle" necessarily includes grotesque acts of communalism against the "other people". This inflames the religious divide within the working class, which a revolutionary leadership must transcend.

Following the destruction of the Soviet Union through counterrevolution, petty-bourgeois nationalists from the ANC to the PLO to the IRA quickly came to terms with the "New World Order" by placing their hopes in US imperialism. We have always opposed such illusions, which are deadly dangerous. The brutal reality of imperialism can be seen in Iraq, where over one million have been murdered through terror bombing and sanctions, and in Sudan and Afghanistan.

In Northern Ireland, within the framework of imperialism, the door is open to a Bosnia-type scenario. The Protestants, given their relative weight in the population, would be forced East of the river Bann to the area around Belfast. The Catholics would be compacted in the West, towards Derry. This would mean violent population transfers on a horrific scale. To do this militarily, and make it "presentable" around the world, would require an expensive operation which British imperialism cannot afford. But it is an example of an imperialist "solution". The bloody spiral of imperialist repression and communalist terror can be broken, by uniting the proletariat — Protestant and Catholic; English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish — across national and religious lines against the common class enemy. For workers revolution both sides of the border and both sides of the Irish Sea! ■

Labour...

(Continued from page 12)

Dover and London. Britain also locks up more asylum seekers for longer periods than any other country in Europe. Straw is now inviting "private finance" to build more "detention centres" in which to incarcerate asylum seekers. *No racist deportations! Close down Campsfield and all the refugee detention centres!*

The capitulation of the reformist left and trade union bureaucracy to the racist Labour government, and their refusal to mount any significant social struggle has created a vacuum for reactionary movements, including separatist movements among racial minorities. Last July the US-based Nation of Islam (NOI) led by Louis Farrakhan — the man who wanted Malcolm X dead — were prominent in the protests outside the Lawrence inquiry. They were attacked by cops with CS spray, and Straw seized the moment to reaffirm the ban on Farrakhan entering the country. We oppose the government's racist ban on Farrakhan. But we warn, the Farrakhanites are anti-Semitic, anti-women racists, apologists for black African slavery in Sudan, who accepted money from a US Klan leader in 1985 and acted as bodyguards for British fascist David Irving in the US in 1996. The NOI's poisonous racism was evident in a letter sent to Jack Straw by local NOI supporter Paul Twino protesting the government ban on Farrakhan, which spewed out anti-Semitic slurs against Jack Straw. The NOI are sworn enemies of integrated working class struggle which is essential to fighting the main racist force in this country, the capitalist state.

SWP: crawling to the enemy of workers and minorities

The Socialist Workers Party and its Anti Nazi League look to the capitalist state to stop the fascists, like on 23 May in London when they mobilised a diversionary "demonstration" against an NF march. The fascists could have been stopped that day, had the multiracial working class in London been mobilised for that purpose. But while the NF were elsewhere, the SWP/ANL crowded that the cops were "pushing the fascists into the Underground". This suicidal strategy, designed not to stop the fascists but to pressure the state to deal with them, emboldens the fascists.

The SWP have correctly stated that



Ford Dagenham workers on 1984 miners support march. Forging a Trotskyist party is key to mobilising the social power of multiracial working class.

"Racism is systematic inside the police and it always will be" (*Socialist Worker*, 11 July). But they showed their real line at the height of the anger over cop racism when they dedicated an entire page of *Socialist Worker* (27 June) to an article headlined "Black police officer speaks out" covering one "Detective Inspector David Michael" ("a serving police officer in the Met for nearly 26 years") speaking at an "anti-racist" conference. In fact the SWP maintains the line that cops (and prison guards) are part of the workers movement. *Socialist Worker* (26 June 1993) printed without comment a letter from Blundeston prison bragging about how "we had a number of prison officers who were in sympathy with our objectives and would read *Socialist Worker*!" When another reader wrote to protest that "police are not workers in uniform" the SWP defended their enthusiasm for the police organising in unions, arguing that the police "work for a wage" and that "most ordinary police are drawn from working class backgrounds and probably in some sense see themselves as working class. They are therefore subject to some of the same pressures and influences as the rest of the class..." and "part of the struggle to smash the state may involve supporting the rebellion of sections of the police..." (*Socialist Worker*, 28 August 1993). Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky demolished such claptrap about the cops when writing against the German Social Democrats who (suicidally) looked to the Prussian police to prevent Hitler coming to power, saying, "The fact that the police was originally recruited in large numbers

from among Social Democratic workers is absolutely meaningless.... The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state is a bourgeois cop, not a worker" (*What Next?*, January 1932).

The SWP's various campaigns, including the "Condon Must Go" campaign, aim to keep the anger and revulsion over the Lawrence murder and the role of the cops safely within the bounds of appeals to racist, pro-imperialist Labourism. Thus the SWP (and Workers Power) are building the second annual "lobby" of the Labour Party conference in Blackpool, a pathetic begging exercise asking the racist, anti-working class Labour government for a paltry "£4.61 minimum wage".

The Socialist Party (previously Militant Labour) are notorious for their chauvinist opposition to the call for British troops out of Northern Ireland, and for their glorification of the cops as "workers in uniform". Like the SWP they demand: "Sack the racist police" and add "Fight for a police force which is accountable to, and controlled democratically by, the community it is meant to serve" (*Socialist*, 31 July). But the "community" that the police force serves is the class "it is meant to serve" — the bourgeoisie!

For the right-centrists of Workers Power, the Lawrence inquiry "stirred up anger against the police and against racism. It has strengthened the cause of anti-racism..." (*Workers Power*, July/August). The meaning WP attaches to "strengthening" anti-racism becomes clear when you read, "We should demand the Labour government prosecutes all police officers

found guilty of racism or negligence in the Lawrence case." *Workers Power* is full of militant-sounding rhetoric about "organising community defence against the police, racist thugs and fascists, and laying the basis for a people's system of justice, based on working class communities, that can ensure that racist killers are never allowed to get away with their crimes". But what exactly is a "people's system of justice, based on working class communities"? In essence it is a more "radical" version of the SP's "community control", which leaves the capitalist state apparatus intact. WP share the reformist line that cops can be part of the workers movement, arguing that "police constables should have the right to organise against the upper ranks and the government" (WP's YRE conference bulletin, 4 December 1993).

The former Stalinists of the so-called Communist Party of Great Britain go so far as to claim, grotesquely, that the cops and the establishment are "anti-racist":

"Most left groups, however, believe that senior police officers, if not personally racist themselves, nevertheless represent the 'racist state'. It has become a matter of faith for these comrades that the capitalist state must always and in every circumstance be 'racist'. In fact Condon and [Assistant Commissioner Ian] Johnston form part of an establishment that now accepts an anti-racist consensus." — *Weekly Worker*, 25 June

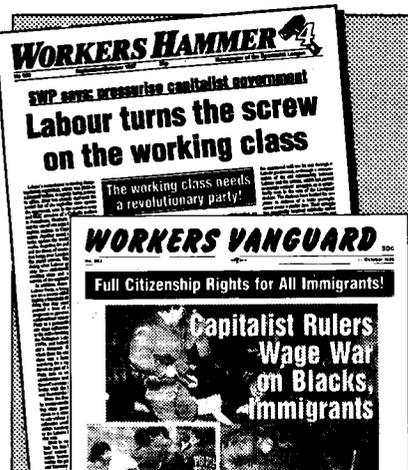
Try telling the Lawrences, the Reels, the Tachie-Mensons about this "anti-racist consensus"!

The central division between the programme of Trotskyism and the politics of the reformist and centrist "left" is the difference between reform and revolution. In *The State and Revolution*, VI Lenin explained that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes". The liberation of the working class cannot come about "without the destruction of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class..." The capitalist state—"the 'special repressive force' for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie" — must be replaced "by a 'special repressive force' for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat)". The solution to racist terror and state repression will come when capitalism has been overthrown by victorious workers revolution, creating a society free of exploitation and racism. ■

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Lawrence family will not get justice from capitalist state!

Labour enforces capitalism's racist rule

We told it straight: the Blair Labour government is pledged to maintaining the sickening reality of life under capitalism—waging war on workers, racial minorities and immigrants, women and youth. It was hard to miss the statement Blair was making when he posed for his election broadcast with the British bulldog, symbol of racist, chauvinist British imperialism. While phoney socialists like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Workers Power (WP) supported Blair's bid to administer capitalism, we said unequivocally "No vote to New Labour!"

Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw is committed to racist "law and order" and to strengthening the repressive powers of the cops. The Stephen Lawrence inquiry was meant to whitewash the role of the police, who protected Stephen Lawrence's killers, but despite its intentions it starkly illustrated a fact of life in Britain today: the cops are thoroughly racist, and they work in cahoots with fascist gangs and the capitalist courts. The fascist killers of Stephen Lawrence—whose names are known to everybody—were guaranteed to walk free from the inquiry. The Lawrences have fought to expose the cops' protection of these racist murderers, but the cops' role here is far from an aberration. The highest number of racist murders in this country are carried out by the cops themselves—the official figure of black deaths in police "custody" is 53 in the last year alone. As far as the capitalist state is concerned, if you are black or Asian you *deserve* to die. In October last year Lakhvinder "Ricky" Reel, a 20-year-old Asian, was found drowned in the Thames after a brutal racist attack. The cops dismissed Reel's death as his own fault for being "drunk". Like the Lawrences, the Reel family has had to battle a wall of racism to even bring the facts to light. The cops likewise covered up the fact that the death of black musician Michael Tachie-Menson was racist murder. He was set on fire by racists in January 1997 in north London and later died from the burns, but lived long enough to tell his family what happened. The cops dismissed the death as "suicide", and not even worthy of an "investigation".

The reformist SWP has been running a "Condon Must Go!" campaign, petitioning Jack Straw to sack Metropolitan Police chief Paul Condon. This is an effort to refurbish the image of the racist cops and the Labour government. Any schemes to "clean up" the cops, or make them "accountable" are based on a lie. As Lenin explained, the capitalist state consists of "special bodies of armed men, who have at their disposal prisons, etc". It is not neutral, its purpose is not to arbitrate and "inquire"; it exists to defend the rule of the



Paul Hackett

capitalist class, which means brutal exploitation and racist oppression.

The Lawrence family will not and can not get justice from this racist capitalist system, nor will the countless other victims of racist terror. We fight to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party to smash capitalism and establish workers rule. We fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, and insist that trade union/minority mobilisations can and must stop the fascists in their tracks. The working class is the only force which has the social power, and the direct need, to wage a battle against state repression and for the interests of all the oppressed and exploited. The working class in this country is multiracial; black Caribbean and Asian workers as well as Turkish and African immigrant workers are an integral part of the workforce in the major cities. The workers in London Underground are a strategically placed, integrated workforce facing privatisation and union-busting. Calling for solid strike action, in opposition to the union bureaucracy, we said: "Mobilising the social power of this multiracial workforce could also turn the tables against the racist Labour government, which oozes contempt for workers and minorities" (*Workers Hammer* no 162, May/June 1998). This requires a revolutionary leadership, committed to overthrowing the capitalist system. The union bureaucracy, which includes a heavy component of the Socialist Labour Party, are an obstacle to mobilising this workforce in such a battle, because they are tied to the capitalist framework. As an intrinsic part of the proletariat, minority workers will play a key role in the social-



Chris Harris

Home Secretary Jack Straw (on right). Racist Labour government strengthens repressive cop powers.

ist revolution which will overthrow this racist capitalist order, and in the Trotskyist party which will lead it to victory.

Break with racist Labourism, forge a Bolshevik party!

Mobilising the proletariat in their own class interests requires a political struggle against the Labourite trade union bureaucracy, who keep workers tied to the capitalist system. The 1984-85 miners strike, a crucial battle for the working class, was a powerful confirmation, albeit in the negative, of the need for such a political struggle, and of the need for a Leninist vanguard party. Blacks and Asians were among the best allies of the striking miners, as were working class women in the coalfields. Many miners underwent a change in consciousness, recognising that on the picket lines they battled against the same enemy that blacks and Asians in the inner cities faced every day—the capitalist rulers and their cops. The Thatcher government defeated that strike with the active connivance of the Labour and TUC leaders. Arthur Scargill took the strike to just about the limits of trade union militancy but it posed the question of power and Scargill's idea of "power" did not transcend the idea of a parliamentary Labour government which is also the perspective of his "Old Labour" Socialist Labour Party. A Leninist vanguard party, acting as the tribune of the people, was needed to mobilise the proletariat to shatter the capitalist state in the struggle for workers power.

The defeat of the miners strike paved

the way for devastating attacks on the working class through job slashing and union-busting. And since counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet Union, all the imperialist powers feel they can get away with grinding down the workers and oppressed even further. Blair is proud that Britain has the toughest anti-union laws in Europe, it also has one of the highest levels of poverty according to a UN report. Racial minorities were once used to provide a "reserve army" of unemployed, they often worked in the lowest paid and dirtiest jobs. Now that so few jobs exist they are regarded by the capitalist system as "surplus". Labour is introducing more draconian police-state measures, jails are being stuffed full of the unemployed and poor. For young black males the unemployment rate in some areas can be as high as 60 per cent; they are constantly subjected to police "stop and search" harassment, calculated to ram home the message that they have no rights whatsoever.

The Criminal Justice (Terrorism and Conspiracy) Act marks a dramatic escalation of the powers of state repression (see article front page). Muslims are singled out as targets of the government's "anti-terrorist" dragnet. Home Secretary Jack Straw's new White Paper plans to savagely increase the attacks on asylum seekers through instituting new "deterrence" measures and increasing the powers of immigration cops. Labour whipped up a racist furore against Roma refugees fleeing fascist terror in Eastern Europe last year, which the fascist BNP and NF used to stage provocative race-hate marches in

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