

## Reformist left bows to Blair over Iraq

# Labour government: imperialist butchers



AFP



Morning Star

Baghdad neighbourhood devastated by December 1998 British/US terror bombing. Labour capitalist government enforces imperialist subjugation of Iraqi people.

For four days in December, US and British forces launched hundreds of deadly cruise missiles as part of their latest bloody assault on Iraq. As US imperialism's main ally, Britain was the only other country to commit military forces to the bombing. The imperialist butchers in Washington and London are not content with having killed more than a million Iraqi men, women and children over seven years of starvation sanctions. Since the bombing there have been regular reports of US/British forces opening fire on Iraqi "targets". British imperialism's Labour leader, Tony Blair, gloated that they "in-

flicted the kind of military damage we were seeking" and then ostentatiously visited an RAF base in Kuwait close to the Iraqi border to threaten further bombing.

At protests in London the Spartacist League (SL) called to "Defend Iraq! Defeat US/British imperialism through workers revolution!" We said: "Break with Labour — party of racism, war, military repression in Northern Ireland!", "A Bolshevik party is what we are fighting for!", "Down with all the sheiks, colonels, mullahs and Zionist butchers! For a socialist federation of the Near East!" Along with other sections of the International Commu-

nist League (ICL), who joined protests from Japan to Mexico and the US, we stood sharply against the reformist "socialists" like the SWP, whose calls for "welfare not warfare" perpetuate the liberal lie that the crimes of imperialism are just a "bad policy" which can be changed through mass pressure. To workers and youth outraged by the crimes of the US and British rulers, we sought to impart the understanding that imperialism is an organic outgrowth of the profit system — the highest stage of capitalism (as Russian Bolshevik leader VI Lenin described it). War is a necessary product of the capitalist system.

As we wrote in an emergency leaflet dated 17 December 1998 (reprinted below):

"The death and destruction being wreaked upon the people of Iraq right now show what imperialism is all about, a rapacious system based on the exploitation, subjugation and murder of the workers and semicolonial masses in order to expand the profits of a handful of filthy rich capitalists. "This system cannot be 'reformed', as liberals and reformist 'socialists' would have it. The Labour government is a capitalist government which acts as butchers for bloody British imperialism, it cannot be

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## Defend Iraq! Defeat US/British imperialism through workers revolution!

*The following leaflet was issued by the Spartacist League/Britain on 17 December 1998, the day after the US and Britain began the terror bombing of Iraq, and distributed at protest demonstrations in London.*

The massive bombing attack on Iraq launched by Clinton on Wednesday, with the eager support of Labour prime minister Tony Blair, is a display of naked imperialist terror. More than a million Iraqis, overwhelmingly young children, have already been killed by the United Nations starvation blockade imposed under US diktat since the 1991 imperialist "desert slaughter". Now American and British bombs are crashing into heavily populated areas of Baghdad,

slaughtering Iraqi men, women and children. The Spartacist League calls on working people around the world, especially in the heart of US and British imperialism, to stand in defence of Iraq: *Down with the imperialist terror bombing! Down with the starvation blockade! US/Britain: Get your bloody imperialist hands off Iraq!*

This is far more than just a grotesquely cynical exercise aimed at deflecting the Republicans' sinister and vindictive impeachment drive. How many Iraqi babies do America's rulers intend to kill in order to delay the sex-witchhunt proceedings going on in Washington?! The death and destruction being wreaked upon the people of Iraq right now show what imperialism is all about, a rap-

acious system based on the exploitation, subjugation and murder of the workers and semicolonial masses in order to expand the profits of a handful of filthy rich capitalists.

This system cannot be "reformed", as liberals and reformist "socialists" would have it. The Labour government is a capitalist government which acts as butchers for bloody British imperialism, it cannot be pressured into rendering imperialism more peaceful and humane. Ostensible leftists like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who rejoiced when Labour was elected, foster illusions in the possibility of reforming capitalism, begging Labour for "welfare not warfare" and have in the past given backhanded support to the sanctions

which are themselves *an act of war*. During the Gulf War slaughter in 1991 the SWP bent over backwards to participate in the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf, headed by Tony Benn, who at that time supported sanctions. Today, a gaggle of Labour MPs oppose the bombing and sanctions — including Tony Benn, George Galloway, and Tam Dalyell — while supporting UN "weapons inspections" which served as the pretext for terror bombing. The SWP tails after Tony Benn who peddles anti-Americanism as a cover for his "Little England" nationalism and social chauvinism. In February, as Blair and Clinton were threatening mass bombing of Iraq, Benn publicly honoured Enoch Powell,

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# Iraq...

(Continued from page 1)

an arch racist and bigoted Empire Loyalist. Workers Power, another pro-Labour outfit, also prettifies the social-chauvinist Labour MPs, calling in March for "Labour or Social Democratic MPs to speak openly against the war". We say: Break with Labour, party of racism, military repression in Northern Ireland and imperialist war! Imperialism is, as Russian Bolshevik VI Lenin said, the highest stage of capitalism. And as Lenin's Bolsheviks showed in leading the October Revolution of 1917, it can and must be defeated through workers revolution.

What's behind the murderous attack on the people of Iraq is Washington's aim of intimidating through sheer terror and blackmail all the semicolonial peoples over which it rides roughshod and maintaining its position as top dog against its imperialist rivals, especially Japan and Germany. This is the true face of the "New World Order" proclaimed by America's capitalist rulers over the corpse of the Soviet Union, destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution. In the face of growing competition from its imperialist rivals, the US bourgeoisie wields its arsenal of terror, including the most massive stockpiles of nuclear and biological and chemical weapons, to guard its position as the planet's pre-eminent power.

The blood of Iraqis is today being



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

spilled to cement US control over vast oil and natural gas resources which are vital to Germany and Japan. Meanwhile, Washington's regional allies carry out their own brutal repression under the umbrella of a bloody "Pax Americana". Zionist Israel continues to subject the long-suffering Palestinian people to starvation, terror and all-sided oppression, now including under the whip of its petty-bourgeois nationalist lackey, Yasir Arafat. Turkey wages a war of annihilation against the deeply oppressed Kurdish people, who are

carved up among four capitalist states. And while Washington hypocritically condemns Iraq's Saddam Hussein for his repression against the Kurds, the US — along with Germany and Britain — arms the Turkish bourgeoisie to the hilt. Saddam Hussein is an anti-Communist butcher of Iraqi workers and minorities, but it is the task of the Iraqi proletariat to sweep away his despotic regime. We say: Defend the Palestinians — Israel out of the Occupied Territories! Down with all the sheiks, colonels, mullahs and Zionist butchers! For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan! For permanent revolution — for a socialist federation of the Near East!

Blair and Clinton have brokered the imperialist "peace" fraud in Northern Ireland, through the blood-soaked British Army which enforces Orange supremacy

against the oppressed Catholics and bloody divide and rule of the working class, setting Protestant and Catholic workers against each other. We say: British troops out of Northern Ireland now! Not Orange against Green but class against class! For an Irish workers republic, part of a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!

Imperialism breeds war, but it also breeds revolution. It was out of the carnage of World War I that the Bolsheviks led the Russian workers to power. The bloody ruling class that unleashes terror on the semicolonial peoples also saps the lifeblood from working people in Britain. Under the auspices of Labour, it consigns millions of poor, racial minorities and women to starvation through the axing of welfare, while enforcing the anti-union laws to strangle effective struggle by the working class. The Labour government also fuels racist terror through anti-immigrant measures, while racist murders by the cops, the core of the capitalist state, have increased dramatically.

The power to destroy this system of racism, war and exploitation lies in the hands of the multiracial working class. Against the union bureaucracy who tie working people to their exploiters through the pro-capitalist Labour Party, the Spartacist League is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party like the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky — a party which champions the cause of all the oppressed, a party rooted in proletarian internationalism. Join us in building the party which will lead new October Revolutions and put an end once and for all to imperialist mass murder.

*Defend Iraq! Defeat US/British imperialism through workers revolution!*

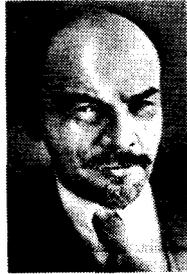
17 December 1998

## Lenin v Social Democracy



TROTSKY

Lenin understood that any struggle against imperialism necessitated a determined fight against the social chauvinists of social democracy, including the Labour Party. Lenin directed his main fire at left-talking social democrats like Karl Kautsky. Today, the SWP and Workers Power keep workers tied to the mass social-democratic parties, and through them the capitalist order, by acting as left "critical" tails on these parties. Following



LENIN

Lenin's strategy we fight to forge a communist vanguard party by splitting the working-class base from the pro-capitalist tops of the Labour Party.

The fact is that "bourgeois labour parties", as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in all the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless a determined and relentless struggle is waged all along the line against these parties — or groups, trends, etc., it is all the same — there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a socialist labour movement.... But the danger of Kautskyism lies in the fact that, utilising the ideology of the past, it endeavours to reconcile the proletariat with the "bourgeois labour party", to preserve the unity of the proletariat with that party and thereby enhance the latter's prestige....

By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to appreciate their true political interests, to fight for socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

The only Marxist line in the world labour movement is to explain to the masses the inevitability and necessity of breaking with opportunism, to educate them for revolution by waging a relentless struggle against opportunism, to utilise the experiences of the war to expose, not conceal, the utter vileness of national-liberal labour politics.

— VI Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism" (October 1916)

## Striking worker Frank Dean killed on picket line

Frank Dean, a bus driver at Stagecoach Ribble bus company in Lancashire, was killed on the picket line on 14 December 1998 during a one-day strike. He was crushed to death against the gates of Ribble's Blackburn depot by a bus crossing the picket line. Reportedly the scab driver, later questioned and released on bail without charge, was from the Midlands and was part of a group including managers and inspectors brought in to break the strike. *This was capitalist murder* in the service of unbridled profit, the bitter reality of life under a Labour government that boasts of the toughest anti-union laws in Europe. Frank Dean's death has deeply outraged his comrades, who have redoubled their resolve to fight. As a TGWU branch officer and fellow striker from nearby Burnley told *Workers Hammer*: "This colleague has given his life for us."

Stagecoach is owned by Brian Souter, who made millions by buying up privatised bus and rail companies for a song, viciously slashing wages and increasing hours. The series of one-day strikes at Stagecoach Ribble was called after drivers voted — in defiance of the union leadership — by 88 per cent to reject the company's wage offer of a paltry £5.03 hourly rate. The strikes are set to continue one day a week into February. Despite Stagecoach being one of the biggest transport companies in Britain, the strike has been kept locally isolated.

Trade union bureaucrats, like the TGWU's Bill Morris, police the unions for the Labour government in order to strangle class struggle. Isolated one-day

strikes are designed to let off steam and to act as a "pressure tactic" on the bosses. This is a recipe for defeats and victimisations. A union steward at Stagecoach's Preston depot who was overheard after Frank Dean's death saying that the company is guilty of conspiracy to murder was suspended: outrageously, the union tops agreed he must retract the remark before he could be reinstated!

The trade union bureaucracy has knifed strike after strike — from the Hillingdon hospital women to Liverpool dockers — and now the sacked workforce of LSG Sky Chefs at Heathrow are being left to fight in isolation. Scabs are escorted through the picket lines by cops. Against the ravages of privatisation, what is needed is a class-struggle fight which would rip up the anti-union laws, behind which the bureaucracy hides. This requires *solid picket lines that nothing and no one crosses*. Key to such a strategy is a political struggle against the Labourite bureaucracy, which ties the working class to capitalism. Marxists fight to oust this pro-capitalist bureaucracy and replace it with a revolutionary leadership, part of a Leninist vanguard party, fighting to mobilise the working class for power. A victorious workers revolution will honour the memory of Frank Dean, who died fighting for his class.

Donations and messages may be sent to: The Bereavement Fund for Brother Frank Dean, c/o Linda Hurst, Finance Department, TGWU, Transport House, 1 Merchants Quay, Salford Quays, Salford M5 2SG.

## WORKERS HAMMER



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

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# Young Spartacus

## Indonesia: SWP lawyers for Islamic reaction, anti-Chinese pogroms



Indonesian students in anti-Suharto protest, 1998. Anger over police/military terror, IMF austerity triggered plebeian upheaval against imperialist-backed dictatorship.

Indonesian dictator Suharto stepped down in May 1998 in favour of his creature, president Jusuf Habibie, a fanatically anti-Chinese racist with ties to German imperialism, amidst an explosion of plebeian anger triggered by the economic crisis racking Southeast Asia. The International Communist League (ICL) warned: "This 'reformed' Indonesian capitalist regime will be just as repressive and bloody as its predecessor and just as determined to force the country's toiling masses to pay for the capitalist crisis." We went on to say: "It is urgently necessary for the working class to emerge as an independent revolutionary factor. This requires the forging of an internationalist vanguard party committed to leading the proletariat to the seizure of state power" (*Workers Hammer* no 163, July/August 1998).

Habibie's "new" regime has continued to enforce International Monetary Fund (IMF)-dictated starvation policies — further slashing essential subsidies and jacking up prices by as much as 70 per cent. With thousands dying of famine and millions facing the prospect of starvation, riots over food shortages have been commonplace. Protests against the regime have continued and have met with fierce state repression. Students have played a predominant role in organising these protests, attracting a wide array of forces. Ominously, these include some who themselves participated in Suharto's 1965-66 anti-Communist slaughter of half a million leftists and ethnic Chinese. Popular illusions abound in the "democratic" credentials of bourgeois "opposition" figures such as Javanese-chauvinist Megawati Sukarnoputri and Muslim leader and anti-Chinese racist Amien Rais — who in turn look to the military butchers to "protect the interests of the nation". These illusions are spread by those — such as the left-nationalist People's Democratic Party (PRD) — who claim to speak for the proletariat and plebeian masses. But such illusions in fact constitute an obstacle to

the independent revolutionary mobilisation of the Indonesian proletariat. From Megawati to Rais to the leftists who promote them, they all seek to head off and channel the seething unrest in order to stabilise capitalist rule in Indonesia.

In the past year a storm of pogromist terror has been unleashed against Indonesia's ethnic Chinese population. This has included hideous mass rapes of Chinese women and gruesome mass murders, many of them orchestrated by the Habibie government itself. These pogroms are a deflection of justified outrage at the burning economic crisis. Although there have been a small number of strikes by workers, the entry of Indonesia's young and powerful proletariat as a significant player in the field of struggle has been desperately lacking. We Trotskyists fight for the programme of permanent revolution which states that only through workers revolution can even basic democratic tasks be achieved in countries of belated capitalist development such as Indonesia.

At a 28 November meeting in London

entitled "Indonesia: Revolution in the Modern World", part of the 1998 "Students Fighting for Socialism" weekend organised by the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), John Rees, editor of that party's theoretical journal *International Socialism*, was the main speaker. Rees dismissed the poisonous anti-Chinese terror sweeping Indonesia as "insignificant", arguing that "largely in the Indonesian revolution, they struck out at exactly the right people". This cheerleader for so-called "revolution" did not even mention Islamic fundamentalism as a political factor in Indonesia, where the capitalist rulers have long used Islamic prejudices and anti-Chinese racism in a way similar to that in which their white Christian counterparts in Europe stoke the fires of anti-Semitism. This is nothing but an apology for anti-Chinese racist reaction. *Down with anti-Chinese pogroms!*

Rees justified his revolting apologia by referring to the fact that anti-Semitic pogroms occurred in Russia in 1917. He claimed that such atrocities were an al-

most inevitable part of any revolution — neglecting to mention that the Bolsheviks mobilised the Russian proletariat to smash the pogromists. Furthermore, Rees described the Habibie government as the equivalent of the Provisional Government which existed in Russia between February and October 1917.

This is the same argument the fake left trotted out to justify support for Khomeini's Islamic reaction in Iran in 1979. But the Provisional Government existed in a situation of "dual power" in which the proletariat, represented in workers' soviets throughout Russia's cities, had already presented itself as a powerful and immediate contender for power. This manifestly has not happened in Indonesia. That government, like the government in Indonesia today, was a capitalist government. The Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky opposed it down the line and successfully fought to smash it through workers revolution.

Spartacus Youth Group (SYG) speaker Melanie Kelly intervened after Rees's presentation to expose the gulf between the SWP's reformism and the ICL's revolutionary Marxist programme for socialist revolutions in Asia and throughout the world. Nailing Rees's dismissal of the pogroms as an apology for racist terror, our comrade called for workers revolution in Indonesia and explained that this requires that the proletariat enter the political arena as an independent and conscious force under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party. She stressed that such a party would act as a tribune of the people, defending the Chinese and other non-Muslims against racist attacks and fighting against the oppression of women. This revolutionary vanguard would expose and combat Islamic fundamentalism, a poisonous and unambiguously reactionary force which can gather strength as an expression of despair in the absence of a communist alternative. A Trotskyist party in Indonesia would also demand inde-



Ethnic Chinese shopkeepers in Jakarta following pogromist attack in May 1998.

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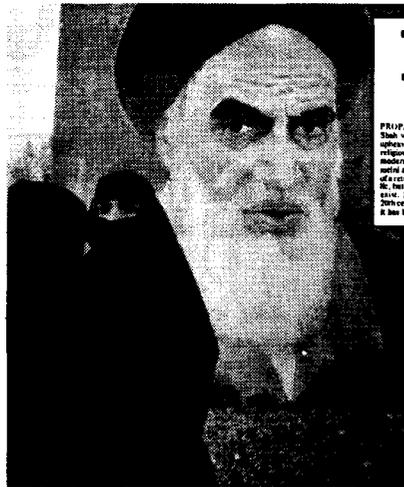
## Indonesia...

(Continued from page 3)

pendence for East Timor, a hideously subjugated ex-colony of Portugal occupied since 1975 by Indonesian troops. Comrade Kelly ended with a proletarian internationalist call for workers in Britain, the largest exporter of arms to Indonesia, to take class-struggle action to halt shipments of military hardware to Indonesia. Our Marxist intervention profoundly embarrassed the reformists of the SWP — and earned our SYG comrades their exclusion from the rest of the event.

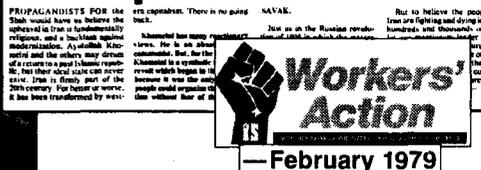
Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky referred to “crude historical analogies”, of which Rees’s equation of Habibie’s government with Kerensky’s Provisional Government is an example, as “the typical method of ‘educated’ philistines” (*Results and Prospects*). So why does Rees use this crude, not to mention false, analogy? There is an ulterior political motive for the SWP’s “methodology”. The viscerally Labourite SWP necessarily lacks both the perspective and the programme to build a party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, who fought to destroy illusions in the “democratic” credentials of the capitalist Provisional Government, including reformist “socialist” parties, to win workers, soldiers and peasants to the struggle for proletarian state power. Instead, the SWP seeks a short cut to “socialism” and attempts to convince us that there will be an “inevitable radicalisation” of events in Indonesia, whereby demands and slogans limited to the perspective of reforming the capitalist system will magically transform themselves into a revolutionary programme and bring the working class to power. Thus leading SWPer Chris Bambery, in a “Report from Indonesia”, writes, “Democracy and *reformasi* were held up as the solution to millions of people. But these slogans have taken on a life of their own for millions of workers, and urban and rural poor” (*International Socialism* no 80, Autumn 1998).

The theoretical basis for this opportunist gloss on Indonesia’s complex political situation is spelt out by the SWP’s founder-leader Tony Cliff in an article in the same issue of *International Socialism* entitled “Revolution and counter-revolution: lessons for Indonesia”. “Quoting” Lenin in less than honest fashion, as all revisionists must, Cliff claims: “In an article called ‘The Reorganisation of the Party’, written in November 1905, Lenin says bluntly, ‘The working class is instinctively, spontaneously revolutionary socialist’. To be blunt, Cliff’s lying statement is an ode to spontaneity, glorifying the existing backward consciousness of the working class. The sentence that Cliff has self-servingly



Abbas/Gamma-Liaison

### The form – religion The spirit – revolution



Canadian Cliffite paper hailed Khomeini’s 1979 “Islamic revolution” which imposed veil on women and carried out bloody repression against Kurdish minority (below).



Reza/Sipa

mutilated, referring to Russia’s pre-World War I Marxists, the revolutionary social democrats, reads thus in full: “The working class is instinctively, spontaneously Social-Democratic, and more than ten years of work put in by Social-Democracy has done a great deal to transform this spontaneity into consciousness.”

This is hardly Cliff’s hoped-for blank cheque to spontaneity, an abandonment of programmatic standards or revolutionary values. In 1905 and until his death, Lenin maintained that the revolutionary vanguard party was uniquely the conscious expression of the historic interests of the proletariat. It is not enough for the working class merely to enter the political stage. For a workers revolution to succeed, the proletariat must be led by a Leninist party acting as a tribune of the people and armed with a revolutionary political programme. And given the bourgeois nature of “spontaneous” consciousness in capitalist society, this revolutionary consciousness must necessarily be brought to the working class from “outside”.

Unable and unwilling to build such a party in Indonesia (or anywhere else), the SWP’s perspective consists of glorifying

the events in Indonesia as a classless “revolution” and pandering to the illusion that the installation of one bourgeois ruler in place of another represents a step forward for the Indonesian masses. Hence, when Habibie replaced Suharto, SWP posters in Britain proclaimed “Direct Action Works”. In his article, Cliff states: “The other most prominent leader of bourgeois nationalism in Indonesia at present is Amien Rais. . . . He has for years been engaged in the most disgusting racist agitation against the Chinese minority in Indonesia, which led to pogroms on a massive scale, the main victims of which were the very poor. Amien Rais was harsh on the Chinese, but quite accommodating to President Suharto.” Yet this hasn’t stopped the Australian Cliffites of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) from peddling deadly illusions that Rais could create “a rank and file revolutionary movement in the army, to split it from below” (*Socialist Worker* [Australia], 6 March 1998).

This line is particularly grotesque when one remembers that Suharto came to power in 1965 through an anti-Communist massacre carried out by the military and reactionary Islamic gangs. At the time, the

mass-based Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), with its “two-stage” conception of revolution in Indonesia, criminally tied workers to the capitalist system and the bourgeois-nationalist Sukarno, thus directly paving the way for Suharto. This Stalinist/Menshevik schema — urged on by the PKI’s mentors in Moscow and especially Beijing — held that the proletariat must limit itself to supporting a mythical “democratic” and “anti-imperialist” wing of the capitalist class in bringing about a “bourgeois democratic revolution”, after which it might be possible to start thinking about socialism. These days, the SWP claims to reject the “two-stage” conception of revolution in less developed countries in favour of “permanent revolution”, but its tailoring of Rais demonstrates that the SWP too yearns for an “anti-imperialist united front” whose bitter fruit would be another bloody defeat for the working class. This is exactly what happened in the 1925-27 Chinese revolution when, under orders from Stalin, the Chinese Communist Party subordinated itself to the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang of Chiang Kai-Shek — who turned on his “allies” and massacred tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers.

### SWP: the ayatollahs’ “socialists”

The same opportunist logic which today leads them to alibi pogroms, white-wash Islamic fundamentalism and wait for the “objective dynamic” of events to push things leftwards in Indonesia led them to support Ayatollah Khomeini’s reactionary Islamic “mass movement” which overthrew the bloody Shah in Iran in 1979. The Cliffites are on record as listing “The Iranian revolution of 1979” as an event which “contributed to the revival of anti-imperialist feeling, filtered through religion, of broad masses of North Africans”. As their Canadian group enthusiastically headlined at the time, “The form — religion, The spirit — revolution” (*Workers’ Action*, February 1979). In contrast, the ICL (then called the international Spartacist tendency [iSt]) unequivocally said: “Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!” In power, Khomeini proceeded to reimpose the veil for women, restore barbaric punishments such as flogging and amputation, and massacre leftists.

But after nearly 20 years of this brutal anti-woman, anti-worker regime, the SWP still lawyers for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Its co-thinkers in Canada, the International Socialists (IS), scandalously defended the presence of an Iranian government-sponsored stall at the 1998 Toronto International Women’s Day fair, vociferously opposing a militant united-front protest that drove them out. While



Ihiau



Chin/NY Times

Soviet military intervention into Afghanistan in 1979 opened possibility of liberation for Afghan women, many of whom took up arms (left) in the fight against reactionary CIA-backed *mujahedin*. Today, Islamic fundamentalist Taliban regime forces women to wear head-to-toe “veil”.

# From SWP reformism to Trotskyism

Dear comrades,

The following is my application for membership of the Spartacus Youth Group.

I understand and am in agreement with the principles and programme of the Spartacist League/Britain, British section of the International Communist League, and wish to become a member of its affiliated youth organisation. I agree to abide by the discipline of the Spartacus Youth Group.

The International Communist League today represents the only organisation which fights for the programme of revolutionary Marxism as exemplified by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. I became convinced of the correctness of this programme after reading Spartacist press whilst a member of the reformist Socialist Workers Party (Cliffites.)

Having been a member of the SWP for around 18 months whilst at Leeds Univer-

sity I became aware of the contradiction between their claim to be a Leninist party and their Labourite political programme. Demoralised by selling newspapers cravenly calling on the Labour leadership to be more left wing I was attracted to the slogans which I saw in *Workers Hammer* and *Workers Vanguard*. These slogans emphasised the need for workers state power in irreconcilable opposition to Labourite illusions in the reformability of capitalism.

I was troubled also by the SWP's State Capitalist position on the Russian question. It did not sit easily with the clearly disastrous effects of the counterrevolutionary restoration of capitalism in the Eastern bloc. Reading Trotsky's definitive statements on the Russian question after Stalinism's rise to power in combination with Spartacist literature pulled me strongly towards the orthodox Trotskyist position on the Russian question.

our comrades of the Trotskyist League protested with the Worker-Communist Party of Iran and other opponents of the Islamic regime in this successful action, the IS slandered the protesters as "racists". For this, the SWP's Canadian comrades have now won the well-deserved enmity and contempt of the Canadian left.

The Cliffites' record of capitulation to Islamic fundamentalism is perhaps most disgustingly exemplified by the fact that they cheered the victory of the Afghan *mujahedin*, Islamic butchers armed and equipped by the CIA, who fought against the "communist infidels" of the Red Army in a "holy war" to murder unveiled women and school teachers for the "crime" of teaching girls to read. As the horrors of Islamic rule took hold in Afghanistan in 1988, the SWP's American affiliates, the ISO, gloated: "Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan" (*Socialist Worker* [US], May 1988). In 1979, as an elementary act of revolutionary internationalism, the iSt supported the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan proclaiming "Hail Red Army!" and "Extend the gains of October to the Afghan peoples!" In Afghanistan the SWP's capitulation to Islam fitted snugly with their virulent anti-Sovietism. We Trotskyists fought for the unconditional military defence of the

Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attacks and internal counter-revolution. The SWP's refusal to defend the Soviet Union, which they dismissed as "state capitalist", was of a piece with their craven loyalty to the pro-capitalist and anti-Soviet Labour Party in Britain. As the international apologists and cheerleaders for the anti-Soviet crusade, the SWP bears some direct responsibility for today's Taliban hell for Afghan women.

The belief in the possibility of pressuring the Labour Party into ameliorating capitalism is a key reason why the SWP cannot put forward a socialist programme for Indonesia today. Last year, they petitioned Blair's racist, anti-worker, imperialist Labour government — which they campaigned to elect — to stop arms sales to Indonesia "in line with Labour's 'ethical' foreign policy". Today the SWP's new Action Programme calls for cuts in the arms bill and an increase in welfare spending. The SWP therefore gives its seal of approval to Britain's imperialist arms programme, merely pleading that a little less be spent. The ICL, upholding the Leninist internationalist programme, says "Not a penny, not a man" for the imperialist army! The wretched reformists of the SWP peddle the illusion that imperialism can be made more humane, especially when it is "their" Labour Party

A meeting with [SL/B comrades] in April 1997 allowed me to discuss these and other questions and convinced me that the SWP was no place for anyone seeking to fight for new October Revolutions. Over the next few months I read a great deal of Spartacist League literature and also some of the key texts by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. I also read the press of Ostensibly Revolutionary Organisations such as the Socialist Equality Party (Northites) who often appear orthodox as against the SWP. This confirmed to me that only the International Communist League represents the continuation of revolutionary Marxism today. The ICL is the only organisation which tells the truth, no matter how bitter, to the working class.

This leads me to the reason for my delay in applying to join the SYG. I have grown up in an era of reaction. I have seen many bitter defeats for the working class. These culminated in the 1989-92 counter-revolutions in eastern Europe. I have never seen or experienced a 'big win' for the working class. Whilst agreeing with Scientific Socialism on paper, deep down I suspected that to commit oneself to the struggle for workers revolution was to be doomed to a life of self sacrifice with little prospect of tangible reward. Having

moved back to London, where I grew up, and having worked with the Spartacist League/Britain, I have gained a taste of what life is like within a genuinely revolutionary organisation. This is very different to the mindless and fruitless activism of the SWP and others. I now realise that the disparity between the ICL's small size and enormous tasks is a measure, not of the hopelessness of the struggle for socialism, but of the desperate need for those in agreement with its programme to participate in its activities. Marxism teaches us "not to laugh, not to cry but to understand." I understand that the struggle for world socialist revolution; for the dictatorship of the proletariat, involves swimming against the stream of prevalent bourgeois ideology. Apathy and reluctance to give one's time and effort to revolutionary activity is merely one manifestation of this anti-Marxist ideology. Hence my decision to join the SYG is simultaneously a personal and political one. It is my final break with bourgeois politics. I hope this will be a bridge to my becoming a full member of the Spartacist League/Britain.

Forward to Communism!

DN  
27 November 1998

which is in power. Thus, in Britain, they still refuse to call for the British troops to get out of Northern Ireland now; they also work overtime to help the Labour government gloss over its racist protection of the killers of Stephen Lawrence by urging it to sack its own top cop, Paul Condon.

But Labour ("new" or "old") in power is a capitalist government which rules in the interests of bloody, racist British imperialism. In the 1997 general elections, when Blair came out with his openly right-wing, anti-working class platform, the Spartacist League/Britain said unequivocally "No vote to New Labour" and proclaimed the critical need to fight for a revolutionary workers party.

From tailing reactionary Islamic funda-

mentalism to perpetually supporting the Labour Party, what the SWP demonstrates time and time again is that its politics are not revolutionary but utterly reformist. Hence they hail "revolutions" where there are none and proclaimed themselves "over the moon" when Blair was elected. Those interested in fighting for socialist revolution in Indonesia, Britain and throughout the world must look to the ICL. In outright opposition to reformist "socialist" parties, we fight to build Bolshevik parties that will lead the proletariat to state power, sweeping away all racist and reactionary terror once and for all. For new October Revolutions! Reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

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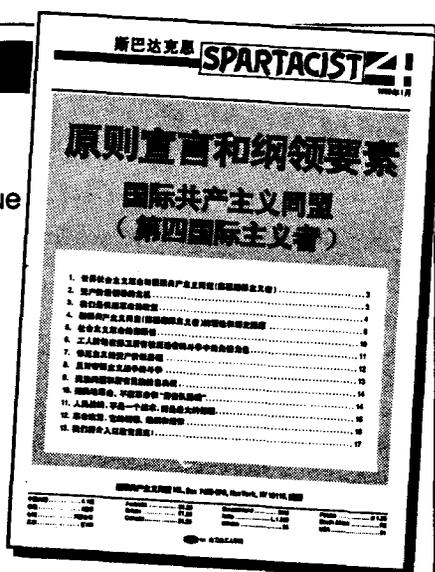
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# Women and Revolution and ICL perspectives

## For women's liberation through socialist revolution!

In a move undertaken to consolidate the party's political resources, the Spartacist League/US Central Committee voted last year to suspend publication of *Women and Revolution*, the journal of its Commission for Work Among Women, for the immediate future. As mandated by the delegates at last winter's Third International Conference of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), *Spartacist*, the theoretical journal of the ICL's International Executive Committee, will now regularly publish articles under the *Women and Revolution* masthead on the woman question and related issues of special oppression. The first such article, "Women and Permanent Revolution in South Africa", appeared in *Spartacist* no 54 (Spring 1998).

*Women and Revolution* was established in 1971 as a special journal seeking to intervene with a communist programme into the women's movement developing out of the break-up of the New Left in the United States. While that movement dissipated years ago, the SL maintained *W&R* as the only Marxist journal in the United States dedicated to the question of the liberation of women, a question which intersects social struggle in every country. Because the woman question is so deeply rooted in culture and society, *W&R* became a natural vehicle for our Marxist party to treat a wide range of subjects such as art, religion and anthropology.

We are proud to offer the first bound



Workers Vanguard

Spartacist/PDC contingent at 1989 Washington, D.C. abortion rights rally. ICL campaigned for aid to embattled city of Jalalabad following Soviet leader Gorbachev's treacherous withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

volume of this unique journal, containing *W&R* nos 1 through 20 (May/June 1971 to Spring 1980), with an index of the articles. Most notably, this volume includes our articles on the history of early communist work among women. We look to the tradition of the Russian Bolsheviks, to the authority of their paper *Rabotnitsa* (*The Woman Worker*) and to the Leninist principles of the early Communist International (CI), which established a women's section and an international women's

journal. The Bolsheviks rejected the demeaning notion that the liberation of women was "women's work" and saw it as a task of the party as a whole. Early issues of *Women and Revolution* printed "Methods of Work Among the Women of the Communist Party" from the CI's Third Congress in 1921, which advocated national and international women's sections of the party aimed at extending the influence of the party to layers of working-class and peasant women whose participation in the revolutionary movement was vital.

The active championing of the emancipation of women is crucial to the struggle to forge a vanguard party capable of overthrowing the capitalist order, the source of oppression and exploitation today. The oldest social division of labour was along sex lines. Later, when leaps in productivity generated social surplus, society became divided into classes, bringing with it the institution of the state as the executive committee of the ruling class. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Friedrich Engels explained that the monogamous patrilineal family arose "to make the man supreme in the family, and to propagate, as the future heirs to his wealth, children indisputably

his own". Under capitalism, the institution of the family remains the central source of the oppression of women and is crucial in ensuring that the bourgeoisie's property is transmitted from one generation to the next through "legitimate" heirs. For the proletariat, the institutionalised family means the burden of raising the next generation of workers, caring for the sick and aged, and instilling bourgeois codes of "morality" and obedience to authority.

While each country has its own particular social reality, the family and the oppression of women are central to class society everywhere. Proletarian women, subjected to double oppression, play a key economic role as part of the reserve army of the unemployed, drawn into wage labour at boom time and fired at the next downturn. Today in imperialist-dominated countries such as Indonesia and Mexico, women workers are a vital component of a young, vibrant proletariat. As we emphasised in the ICL "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" adopted at the Third International Conference (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] no 54, Spring 1998):

"In countries of belated capitalist development, the acute oppression and degradation of women is deeply rooted in pre-capitalist 'tradition' and religious obscurantism. In these countries the fight against women's oppression is therefore a motor force of revolutionary struggle. The condition of women in the most advanced capitalist countries, while far different, shows the limits of freedom and social progress under capitalism; revolutionists are the most consistent champions of women's elementary democratic rights such as free legal abortion and 'equal pay for equal work'."

In seeking to forge a Leninist party as a tribune of the people, championing the rights of all the oppressed, we fight for the workers movement to take up the struggle for women's rights as an integral part of its battle against the capitalist system. At the same time, we expose bourgeois feminism, whose aim is the promotion of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women into the old boys' club of power and privilege, as an enemy of proletarian women. In this we stand in the tradition of Clara Zetkin and the revolutionary wing of the German Social Democracy before World War I,



In the tradition of the women's section of the early Communist International, *Women and Revolution* applied Marxist worldview to a range of issues, from sex and culture to class battles internationally.

### Women and Revolution

#### Bound volume

We are proud to make available the first bound volume of *Women and Revolution*, journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League/US. Now incorporated into *Spartacist*, the theoretical and documentary repository of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), *Women and Revolution* reflects our commitment to the fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution.

The fully indexed clothbound volume contains issues no 1 (May/June 1971) through no 20 (Spring 1980).

**\$27 (includes postage)**

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Articles under *Women and Revolution* masthead in press of ICL sections in Italy, France, Poland, Germany, Japan and Mexico and in ICL theoretical journal, *Spartacist*.

whose struggle for women's emancipation and against bourgeois feminism so effectively polarised the women's movement along class lines that with the ascension of the Third Reich the bourgeois feminists flocked to support the Nazis.

Partly as a result of our intervention for a revolutionary programme linking the struggle against special oppression to the fight against the entire capitalist order, in 1977 the Spartacist League won over and fused with the Red Flag Union (RFU), a collective which developed out of the gay liberation/Maoist/New Left milieu. The last issue of *Red Flag* appeared as a special fusion supplement to *Workers Vanguard*; *W&R* (no 16, Winter 1977-78) reprinted the RFU document "Homosexual Oppression and the Communist Program".

As our organisation extended its international roots, *Women and Revolution* increasingly reflected this change. While

new attack. A vicious anti-sex witch hunt was part of the attempt to regiment the American population behind the global anti-Soviet war drive. As women's right to abortion came under increasing attack by the capitalist state and organised religion, bourgeois feminist groups like NOW attempted to channel protests into electoral support for the capitalist Democratic Party and appeals to the state to "protect" abortion clinics.

As our comrades joined in defence of the abortion clinics, *Women and Revolution* fought against feminist ideology and stressed that the struggle to defend and extend abortion rights necessarily meant a fight against state intervention in all areas of private life. Meanwhile, the feminists and their fake-left supporters entirely bought into the right-wing crusade to stamp out "deviant" sex. This has included hysteria over pornography, de-

destroy the Soviet Union launched by the imperialists when Soviet troops intervened in Afghanistan in late 1979. This was particularly clear in the case of the Afghan civil war, which pitted a Soviet-backed left-nationalist regime against CIA-armed, tribalist *mujahedin* cut-throats. We raised the call: "Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" However degenerated by Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, the USSR remained a workers state. The fight to defend women's rights was integrally linked to the Trotskyist programme of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution and of proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Kremlin's withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989, foreshadowing capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR itself, led

Beijing regime's introduction of capitalist market "reforms" has already brought back not only massive unemployment throughout the country and untrammelled exploitation in the so-called "special economic zones" but rampant prostitution and the buying and selling of women as "brides" (see "China: 'Free Market' Misery Targets Women", *W&R* no 45, Winter/Spring 1996). As the only road forward, the ICL calls for proletarian political revolution in China and the other remaining deformed workers states — Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam — to oust the bureaucracy and establish workers democracy as part of the global struggle for socialist revolution.

The downfall of the Soviet degenerated workers state was a world-historic defeat. As we wrote in our "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program":

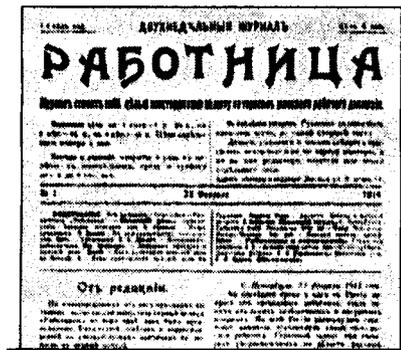
"History speaks its verdicts loudly. The ascendancy of counterrevolution in the former USSR is an unparalleled defeat for working people all over the world, decisively altering the political landscape on this planet....

"Trotsky's assertion in the 1938 Transitional Program that 'The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat' predates the present deep regression of proletarian consciousness. The reality of this post-Soviet period adds a new dimension to Trotsky's observation. The only way in which this regression can be overcome and the working class can become a class for itself, i.e., fighting for socialist revolution, is to reforge an international Leninist-Trotskyist party as the leadership of the working class. Marxism must once again win the allegiance of the proletariat."

The fight for the emancipation of women is a powerful lever in the struggle for proletarian revolution worldwide. Thus it is particularly appropriate for *Women and Revolution* pages to be incorporated into *Spartacist*. Articles on the woman question will still be published under the *W&R* masthead in sectional presses of the ICL, and *Workers Vanguard* will continue to expose every manifestation of the oppression and inequality of women which the entrenched power of organised religion and the whole system of capitalist rule engender in the US and abroad.

Only the overthrow of the capitalist system once and for all will secure our rights and lay the foundations for a new world in which the institution of the family will be replaced with collective childcare and housework. *Women and Revolution*, as part of *Spartacist*, is a valuable tool in the rebirth of an authentically communist Fourth International in the wake of the collapse of Stalinism. It remains one of the most effective vehicles for the International Communist League to champion the liberating goals of communism and the necessarily global struggle for a classless society.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 703, 25 December 1998.



**Rabotnitsa (The Working Woman)**, Bolshevik women's journal. Communist cadres of Zhenotdel, Soviet commission for work among women, teach literacy in Soviet Central Asia, 1924.



Central Museum of the Revolution, Moscow

it formally remained the journal of the SL/US, *W&R* came to serve as a journal of the ICL as a whole, soliciting contributions from all ICL sections. We expanded *W&R*'s editorial board and initiated the regular publication of *Women and Revolution* pages in the presses of our non-English-language sections. *W&R* earned a modest but enthusiastic readership, particularly among immigrant and minority women, from London to Toronto to Sydney, Australia. Our article "80 Million Women Maimed: The Crime of Female Genital Mutilation" (*W&R* no 41, Summer/Autumn 1992) was sold to many African women in Europe and was translated in the press of the ICL's French section. The same issue of *W&R* featured "Korean Women Expose 'Comfort Girl' Atrocities: Japanese Imperial Army Enslaved Women", which also appeared in *Spartacist Japan* no 13 (September 1992) and intersected events in Japan organised by Japanese of Korean descent.

Meanwhile, in the United States the tumultuous social struggles of the civil rights and Vietnam antiwar movements in the 1960s and early '70s had ebbed. Concessions wrung from the capitalist rulers when they feared social unrest came under

ranged fantasies of day-care "sexual abuse" leading to the victimisation or imprisonment of hundreds, the "date rape" frenzy (which conflated the real crime of rape with unpleasant sexual experiences) and, most recently, the "sex predator" witch hunt. The "date rape" and anti-pornography furor is a reversion to the old double standard in which women are stereotyped as passive victims. Most ominously, the anti-sex witch hunt has led to an enormous strengthening of the forces of bourgeois repression.

The relative lack of social struggle in the United States and the growing opportunities for our party around the world motivated the ICL's decision to put more of our too-scarce resources into international extension. As a result, the SL/US now finds itself, for the time being, without sufficient resources to continue the regular publication of *Women and Revolution* as a separate journal. This decision was taken reluctantly, especially as the struggle for women's rights has continued to be a major political issue worldwide, particularly with the rise of Khomeini's Islamic dictatorship in Iran in 1979.

The status of women emerged as a vital issue in the renewed Cold War drive to

ultimately to the victory of the Taliban Islamic reactionaries who have driven women back to social seclusion and murderous subjugation. And in Poland, the rise of imperialist-sponsored Solidarność in 1980 marked the beginning of an ultimately successful crusade — using Pope Wojtyła's Catholic church as a battering ram — for capitalist restoration, which has driven women out of the workplace and eliminated the right to abortion.

Women have been among the biggest losers in the capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed the Soviet Union and the Eastern European deformed workers states, as the profit system of capitalist "democracy" dismantled social gains like abortion rights, free education and plentiful day-care centres. While every other left tendency on the planet capitulated to the ideological pressure of imperialist anti-Communism, the ICL mobilised our entire international to intervene in the incipient proletarian political revolution in East Germany in 1989-90 as part of our fight to preserve and extend the revolutionary gains of the working class.

In China today, where the very existence of the remaining gains of the 1949 Revolution hang in the balance, the

# The IBT: social chauvinists looking for Labourite host

At the onset of Cold War II in the early 1980s, the imperialist bourgeoisies led an ideological crusade together with a massive military build-up against the Soviet Union. This anti-communist campaign propelled a dramatic shift to the right among groups claiming to adhere to the principles of Marxism. Self-styled Trotskyists supported all manner of counterrevolutionary forces, from Solidarność in Poland in 1981 to Yeltsin in Russia a decade later. Support to their own bourgeoisie was expressed as loyalty to social democratic Cold Warriors. Since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the bureaucratically deformed workers states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the imperialists have declared that "communism is dead". The pseudo-socialist left have embraced this bourgeois ideology and are rushing to repudiate any pretence of Leninism or Trotskyism to pursue "regroupment", by which they mean closer accommodation to social democrats, ex-Stalinists, and openly capitalist forces.

An organisation which today calls itself the "International Bolshevik Tendency" (IBT) was founded by embittered and hostile ex-members who individually quit our organisation in the US and Canada in the early 1980s in capitulation to the pressure of Cold War. When the Russian question was posed point-blank they couldn't stomach our forthright defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state and sought reconciliation with their own bourgeoisie. For some years, these defectors nonetheless claimed to be the true repository of the principles and programme of Spartacism, ie revolutionary Trotskyism. This posture was manifestly fraudulent and everyone knew it. Thus, the IBT (previously External Tendency and Bolshevik Tendency [BT]) was always welcome at meetings of Cold War leftists and social democrats, who were driven into a frenzy of exclusionism and thuggery by our hard-edged Soviet defencism.

At the time of Boris Yeltsin's 1991 imperialist-backed counter-coup in the Soviet Union, the BT saw the opportunity to finally get the nagging "Russian question" off the agenda. While we distributed tens of thousands of copies of our leaflet "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" — seeking to spark working-class action in defence of the remaining gains of the October Revolution — the BT rushed to proclaim that the Soviet Union had been definitively destroyed. Here was their ticket to swim more

openly in the stream of social democracy and various petty-bourgeois milieus.

In Canada, this was demonstrated in their Anglo-chauvinist call for a "no" vote in a 1995 referendum for Quebec independence. The same year in New York City, a prominent BTER joined many of his fellow co-workers at the liberal-chic *Village Voice* newspaper in crossing the picket lines of striking building workers. In Britain, the BT had barely established its presence when it began looking around for a social-democratic host organism. In early 1996 they liquidated into Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP), where they remained for two years.

## The IBT and the SLP

A split from the "New Labour" Party of Tony Blair, who is seeking to remould Labour into an openly bourgeois party, the politics of Scargill's SLP amount simply to "old Labour" reformism. Nonetheless, the formation of Scargill's party represented a challenge to Labour's decades-long political stranglehold on the British workers movement. Breaking this stranglehold is the key strategic task in forging a revolutionary workers party in Britain, which must be built in opposition to "old" Labourite reformism as well as "new".

We gave critical support to SLP candidates in three by-elections and in the general election where we widely distributed a statement titled: "Critical support to the SLP — No vote to New Labour! For a revolutionary workers party! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!" While noting that the SLP election programme spoke to the felt needs of working people — for re-nationalisation of the main privatised industries, repeal of the anti-union laws and rebuilding of public services — we counterposed a revolutionary programme and the need for a Leninist revolutionary party to the SLP's reformism.

As proposed by Bolshevik leader VI Lenin in 1920, the tactic of critical support is a means for a small communist vanguard to "get a hearing" from the masses. It is an application of the tactic of the united front: by proposing urgent united action around concrete issues in defence of the working class, the young Communist parties sought to win the mass of workers who retained allegiance to the reformist social-democratic parties. For us the formation of Scargill's SLP, and our call for critical support to its candidates, was a means to exacerbate the contradictions within the Labour Party, between its

working-class base and its pro-capitalist leaders, for the purpose of building a revolutionary workers party. For the IBT, the SLP's formation was a ticket for liquidating themselves, in the hopes of gaining influence through internecine manoeuvring for position within Scargill's party.

At the same time, it might be more accurate to accuse Scargill — who has stood to the left of the IBT on such crucial



Workers Hammer

Liverpool dockers upheld principle: never cross a picket line! BT scabbed on 1995 New York janitors strike.

questions as the picket line and Soviet defencism — of opportunism in letting them join his party. Thus, while Scargill had correctly denounced Polish Solidarność as "anti-socialist" (sparking a virulent anti-Soviet witch hunt by the Cold War bureaucrats of the TUC on the eve of the 1984-85 miners strike), the IBT had no sooner got in the door of the SLP than it was forming electoral slates with supporters of the counterrevolutionary Polish "union". Also numbered among their bloc partners was Chris Ford, an open apologist for Ukrainian fascism in World War II, sundry state capitalists and apologists for imperialist intervention in Bosnia. (See "Scargill and his 'left' critics", *Workers Hammer* no 151, July/August 1996).

## BT's rotten record on Northern Ireland, racism, national oppression

The BT's snivelling record inside the SLP shows they will capitulate to any and

every force which is alien to Trotskyism. They embraced the SLP's old Labour politics, and kept the door open to New Labour; they made common cause with virulently Stalinophobic fake Trotskyists while also sucking up to pro-Stalinist elements in the SLP leadership. Meanwhile *Marxist Bulletin*, which the BT published inside the SLP, refused to mention Trotsky or Trotskyism for almost two years. This was an attempt to curry favour with the SLP leadership, who are vehemently anti-Trotsky. Only when they were threatened with expulsion did they mention "Trotskyism".

Since they established a presence in Britain, the BT has been cosying up to the thoroughly Labourite Socialist Party (SP). In opposition to Scargill, the BT argued for the SLP to "support other non-SLP candidates", meaning the SP. In the 1997 general election, the BT said that the SP "certainly deserved the vote of Socialist Labour members" and called for the SLP to "enter into discussions and joint work with the Socialist Party" (*Marxist Bulletin*, May 1997). The SP ran candidates, but their campaign was totally subordinate to voting Labour (or anyone else) to "get the Tories out". By calling for a vote to the SP, the BT gave backhanded support to New Labour.

The BT's record in regard to Northern Ireland is grotesque. They are eminently suitable partners for the sewer "socialists" of the SP, who have supported the British Army in Northern Ireland for years, are gung-ho for the imperialist "peace" fraud, are notorious as publicity agents for Loyalist death squads "spokesman" Billy Hutchinson and have gushed with sympathy for the RUC (in keeping with the SP's lying claim that bourgeois cops are part of the workers movement).

Northern Ireland is a litmus test for revolutionaries in Britain. Karl Marx insisted that the working class in Britain must oppose imperialism in Ireland, and must understand that the ruling class uses chauvinism over Ireland to maintain its rule in Ireland and in England. In an 1870 letter 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 himself". We fight for immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops and we opposed the imperialist "peace" fraud from the outset. As proletarian internationalists we say: Not Orange against Green, but class against class. We fight for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, the Orange statelet in the North and the Catholic clericalist state in the South.

The BT scoffed at us for insisting that any imperialist deal would "necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. And it would not do any good for working-class Protestants either" (*Workers Hammer* no 138, November/December 1993). They opined that this "is not 'necessarily' true. It could be at the expense of the Protestants" (1917 no 16, 1995). This is a flat denial of reality. The so-called "peace process" is at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. It is premised on maintaining the bloody British Army presence, backing up the viciously anti-Catholic RUC. It has unleashed massive mobilisations of Orangemen and has deepened the communal division within



Guardian

BT opportunists liquidated into Scargill's SLP (above). SL general election statement (right) applied principled tactic of critical support, directed towards forging a revolutionary workers party.

**Spartacist League statement**

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

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**For a revolutionary  
workers party!**

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

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London W6E 2EU  
Tel 0171 400 1200
 

 Dutch Socialist Group PO Box 2944  
Gronk 1  
Tel 011 620 6230
 

 International Communist League PO Box 7270  
New York, New York 10116  
United States



Spartacist

Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary barricades, 1991: BT renegades rushed to dump Russian question, immediately declaring USSR dead. ICL statement distributed in the Soviet Union said: "Defeat Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution!"

the working class.

Racism is inherent in the capitalist system and the fight against racist oppression is necessarily part of the struggle for working-class emancipation. The BT's chauvinist attitude to racist oppression has been evident from their origins. In the 1980s when we organised several successful labour/black mobilisations against fascist provocations in the US, this outfit screamed that we were abandoning "trade-union work" in favour of "community organising". They view "the working class" as separate from and counterposed to racial minorities.

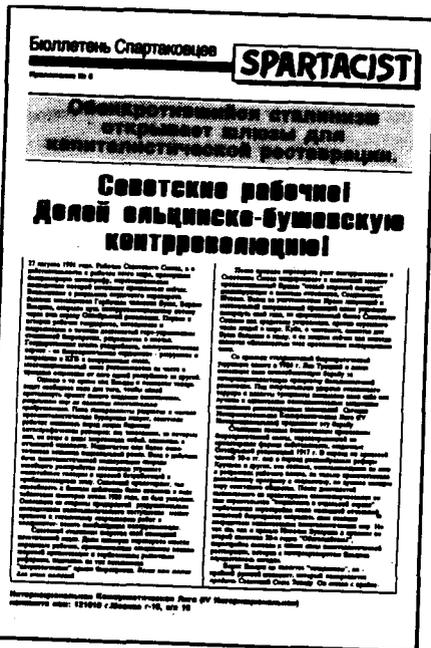
The BT's wilful indifference to racist terror is graphically confirmed by the fact that they have not seen fit to publish a single article on Stephen Lawrence, probably the most widely known victim of racist terror in Britain. They published an entire supplement of *Marxist Bulletin* (1 October 1998) on the struggles of rail and Tube workers in London against privatisation, which never mentions racism, nor the racially integrated character of this section of the proletariat.

The BT is currently courting the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), an organisation that howled against the Spartacist League for our insistence that the capitalist state, which has ostentatiously protected the racist killers of Stephen Lawrence, is necessarily racist, including when Labour is in office. The CPGB railed that the establishment's "institutionalised anti-racism" is the "greater danger" and asserted that: "Racism, like anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism, no longer serves the interests of the

state" (*Weekly Worker*, 22 October 1998). The BT is yearning for a lash-up with the CPGB. Thus *Weekly Worker* (10 December 1998) revealed that the BT demanded a moratorium for almost a year on publishing reports of their discussions. This is an appeal for a non-aggression pact with the CPGB, an outfit whose blatant denial of the racism of the capitalist state perfectly captures the BT's own chauvinist colour-blindness — they thoroughly deserve each other.

Insensitivity to the oppression of blacks, Asians and Irish parallels perfectly the piggery of the Labourite bureaucracy in Britain. Likewise in Canada, the BT's line on Quebec is an adaptation to the chauvinism of the English Canadian labour bureaucracy. The oppression of Quebec by English Canada has deeply divided the working class, and the call for independence for Quebec is vital for the advancement of revolutionary struggle by the proletariat. The BT wallows in Anglo-chauvinism, opposing independence for Quebec. Their call for a "no" vote in the October 1995 referendum on sovereignty for Quebec was rewarded with an official invite to participate in a Maple Leaf flag-waving "Canadian Unity" demonstration. In Britain they claim to stand for the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales, but never mention the dominant form of nationalism: English chauvinism.

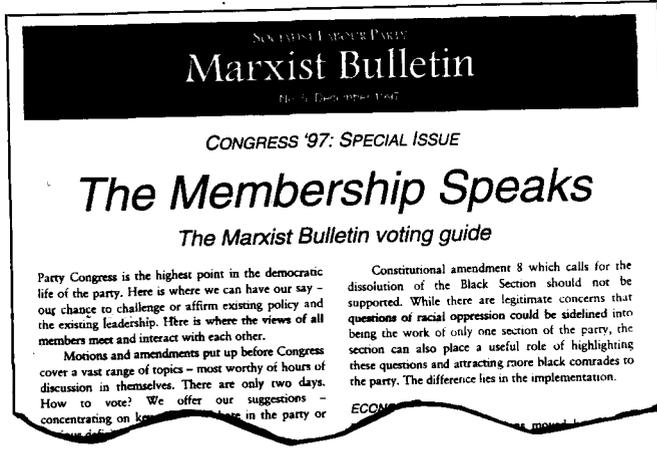
Not surprisingly, the BT is "indifferent" to the European Union (EU). The EU is an imperialist trade bloc dominated by German imperialism, competing against its main rivals, the US and Japan. It is an (inherently unstable) pact between the



bourgeoisies of Europe aimed at co-ordinating their attacks against the working class and their exclusion of immigrants from "Fortress Europe". While New Labour is pro-EU, the SLP opposes it from a British nationalist, chauvinist perspective. We oppose the EU (and all imperialist trade blocs) from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism. In May 1997, one month before the Amsterdam Treaty, the BT wrote: "Socialists should be fundamentally indifferent to the particular

Labour government's union-busting and job-slashing anti-working-class offensive. SLP supporters are a substantial component of the leadership in the rail unions, where they have worked to demobilise class struggle. Bob Crow, SLPer in the leadership of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT), was instrumental in knifing the struggle to defend Steve Hedley, a rail worker who was victimised on a picket line last July. This one case alone poses what is urgently needed: a class-struggle leadership of the unions, linked to a revolutionary workers party counterposed to Labourism, New and "old".

The BT's response was to produce their thoroughly economist four-page *Marxist Bulletin* special supplement entitled "Railworkers Fight Effects of Government and Bosses' Privatisation" (1 October 1998) whose maximum demand is that Labour MPs "who still claim to stand with the workers" should "break from Labour to sit as independent pro-worker MPs". This is a call for the likes of Tony Benn and Ken Livingstone — people who support the Blair capitalist Labour government — to become the standard-bearers for the British proletariat. They go on to list the "Campaign against Tube Privatisation" (CATP), the SLP's "Reclaim our Rights" campaign, and the Alliance for Workers Liberty's (AWL) "Free Trade Unions Campaign" and say these "have the potential to be important mobilisa-



**Marxist Bulletin: inside SLP, BT publication disappeared Trotsky to avoid getting expelled.**

alignments of British capitalism vis-à-vis its imperialist rivals/so-called 'partners' (*Marxist Bulletin*, May 1997).

When Labour terror bombed Iraq in December, these weasels barely showed up to the protest demonstrations. They posted a leaflet (dated 19 December) on the Internet, which merely said Tony Blair "volunteered British bombers for the murderous campaign" — but not one word against the Labour "lefts", social chauvinism, nor Labourism in general.

### Leninist vanguard party or "party of the whole class"

Strikes in the rail and Tube networks against the effects of privatisation have become a focal point of opposition to the

tions". The CATP and "Reclaim our Rights" are endorsed by the Scargillite union bureaucracy.

The "Free Trade Unions Campaign" is run by the virulently Stalinophobic AWL, who in 1990 sponsored a tour in Britain of Yuri Butchenko, who was linked to Russian fascists. Butchenko ran point for an MI5-sponsored witch hunt against Scargill. The AWL's unsavoury past also includes providing a platform in 1995 for Ken Maginnis, the "security" spokesman of the Ulster Unionist Party and paid "adviser" to the RUC, who was once a member of the murderous sectarian anti-Catholic B Specials. While the cravenly Labour-loyal AWL is today sucking up to the Scargillites in the unions, when the

*continued on page 11*

### Special ICL bulletins

#### On the Logan Regime

(Three parts)

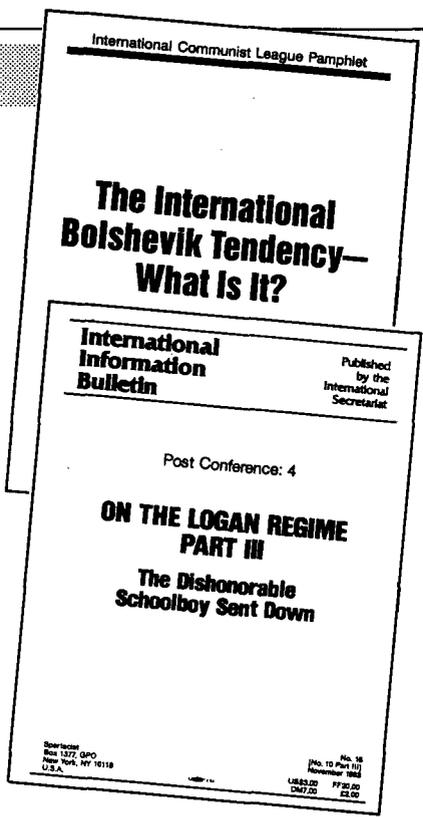
In 1979, Bill Logan was expelled from the international Spartacist tendency for crimes "against communist morality and its substrate human decency". Logan is now the leader of the "International Bolshevik Tendency". As a service to the workers movement we have made our international bulletins documenting Logan's crimes publicly available.

- Part I £1.50 (82 pages)
- Part II £1.50 (44 pages)
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### CORRECTION

In "*Weekly Worker* — spin doctors for racist capitalist state" (*WH* no 165, November/December 1998), we wrote that the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) went into a "grotesque tirade arguing that British imperialism no longer uses the poison of anti-racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism, and that the 'greater danger' is the supposed 'anti-racism' of the British establishment". The sentence should have read that the CPGB argued "British imperialism no longer uses the poison of racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism...."

# Labour...

(Continued from page 1)

pressed into rendering imperialism more peaceful and humane."

Blair won virtually unqualified support for the imperialist terror bombing of Iraq from the Tory opposition, and the great bulk of his own parliamentary party, along with much of the bosses' media who responded with a jingoistic tub-thumping for "our boys" in the Gulf. But in the days following the bombing, sections of the bourgeoisie began to question the "effectiveness" of the campaign. The *Observer* (20 December 1998) accused Blair of a "colossal misjudgment" complaining that "we have undermined the legitimacy of the United Nations". Its "alternative" was "pressure... to internationalise the sanctions on Saddam", ie, a continuation and intensification of the barbarous blockade which has devastated the Iraqi population.

In the "New World Order" of heightened inter-imperialist rivalries between the US and its rivals, chiefly Japan and Germany, the murder of Iraqis is carried out as part of Washington's drive to assert control over the vast oil and natural gas resources of the region. This is what lies behind the open opposition from France and Russia that greeted Clinton and Blair's latest bombing campaign. The British bourgeoisie is conflicted as to whether its best interests lie with US imperialism or with German imperialism — hence its deep divisions over the EU.

## Spartacists nail Tony Benn's pro-imperialism

Labour "left" MPs like Tony Benn opposed the bombing of Iraq and promote an "alternative" imperialist strategy based on "Little England" nationalism and vitriolic anti-Americanism. Today, Benn demands the removal of sanctions against Iraq and calls instead for an immediate reopening of negotiations through the UN. But in the lead up to the 1990-91 Gulf War he was vociferous in his support for the UN sanctions which were designed to starve the Iraqis. Benn has also supported UN "weapons inspections", which have been used as a provocation for war, and as a cover for imperialist spy monitoring of Iraq.

At a 19 December London protest Tony Benn progressed along the length of the demonstration, stopping at intervals to address demonstrators. A comrade's report of the demonstration noted:

"Benn said that there was real hope, when the UN was set up at the end of the war, that there would never again be a war of the kind we have today. He quoted from the UN declaration and announced that the war today is a breach of the UN charter. He urged everyone to write to their MPs, campaign for peace, get together and oppose the war.

"When Benn came close to us, we began a series of chants about the Labour government, the UN and the Labour 'left', including: 'From Northern Ireland to Iraq — Labour government: imperialist butchers' and 'Tony Benn, Labour "left" — fig-leaves for imperialist war!' This resulted in some sharp exchanges between us and a bunch of pro-Benn Labourites, 'peaceniks', Workers Power and the Socialist Party who joined in the rabid denunciations of us. They complained that we were drowning out Benn and 'alienating' people."

The reformist left, who fulsomely supported Blair, focused on attacking American imperialism and amnestied the crimes of their "own" bourgeoisie — especially today when the Labour Party is the ruling party of British imperialism. When Blair's New Labour came to power in 1997, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) declared that it was "over the moon". At the London demonstrations against the bombings, they complained that "Labour's position is a disgrace" and pleaded "Tony Blair, Stop this war" while calling for "welfare not warfare". Blair is interested in welfare

alright — the welfare of British capitalism. Moreover, the SWP's "Action Programme" for unions, designed specifically to pressure "their" Labour government, includes the call to "Slash the arms bill". Such reformist demands are an expression of support to the imperialist arms programme, under the proviso that less be spent on arms and more on "welfare", and fosters deadly illusions that the racist capitalist state can be made more humane. As revolutionary proletarian internationalists we stand in sharp counterposition, saying "Not a penny, not a man" for the imperialist army!

Before the 1990-91 Gulf War the SWP claimed to oppose sanctions and declared: "We call for the withdrawal of Western forces from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. And if war breaks out nonetheless we are



London, 19 December 1998: Labour "left" Tony Benn promotes "Little England" nationalism and supports UN. SL denounces Benn's social imperialism and fights for revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism.

for the defeat of America and the victory of Iraq" (*Socialist Worker*, 25 August 1990). But when the bombing started, they didn't defend Iraq. We were careful to explain that the slogan "Victory to Iraq" carries overtones of support for Saddam Hussein and Arab nationalism, but this was not why the SWP dropped it. They were water boys for the popular-front pro-sanctions committee with Tony Benn at its head. The SWP argued that to "campaign and agitate under the slogan 'Victory to Iraq'... would also be a sectarian error erecting a barrier between ourselves and many of those who are genuinely opposed to the war drive" (*Socialist Worker*, 15 September 1990).

The SWP are notorious for capitulating to Islamic fundamentalism as in their support to Khomeini's anti-woman, anti-minority "Islamic revolution", and to the reactionary CIA-backed *mujahedin* forces against the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan (see article page 3). But during the imperialist assault on Iraq, forced to choose, they preferred to bow to 10 Downing Street. Unlike these craven capitalists, the Trotskyists of the SL took to the streets in defence of Iraq and for the defeat of US/British imperialism through workers revolution. Saddam Hussein is an anti-Communist butcher of Iraqi workers and minorities, but it is the task of the Iraqi proletariat to sweep away his despotic regime. Down with all the sheiks, colonels, mullahs and Zionist butchers! We fight for a socialist federation of the Near East!

As for the reformists of the Socialist Party (SP — formerly Militant Labour), in 1990-91 they refused to take a position for the defeat of imperialism and the defence of Iraq. Instead, they campaigned for a general election to install a Labour government, when Labour was solidly for the war. The SP's leaflet at the recent protests said: "We support all movements of workers and the oppressed in Iraq and the Middle East to overthrow all the despots in the region including Saddam Hussein." Likewise, the reformists of the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) claim they want to see "an end to Saddam Hussein's

oppressive regime". There is never a word from either the SP or the AWL about the need to bring down British imperialism through workers revolution. This is of a piece with their refusal to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland.

## WP: "anti-imperialist" rhetoric and Labour loyalism

The intervention of the British centrist Workers Power group provided a stark example of how opportunists capitulate to the bourgeoisie on their own national terrain. In its leaflet handed out in Britain dated 17 December, when the bombs started raining down on Iraq, WP omitted any call to defend Iraq against US/British imperialism! Echoing the anti-Americanism so prevalent on the British "left", this leaflet criticised the Labour Party for

massive NATO bombardment. This was an open repudiation of the Leninist principle of military defence of small nations and semicolonial peoples against imperialist aggression.

The United Nations is the imperialist agency under whose auspices the 1990-91 Gulf War and the ongoing starvation of Iraq have been carried out. The Worker Communist Party of Iraq Abroad Organisation (WCPI) promotes deadly illusions in the "good offices" of the UN. The WCPI's 16 December leaflet complained that the US and Britain "do not care for the United Nations resolutions". In the past they have made explicit calls on the UN to intervene on the side of the oppressed, and demanded a UN-supervised plebiscite on Kurdish independence. The ICL stands for the right of self-determina-



Workers Hammer photos

being "ever keen to prove its loyalty to the US capitalist order". But Labour's loyalty is first and always to the *British* capitalist order, including its military occupation of Northern Ireland, which WP's leaflet did not mention. Two days later WP appeared at another demonstration with a different leaflet (also dated 17 December!). This time their leaflet did say "Defend Iraq against US and UK attack" — while maintaining the call to pressure the Labour government to "stop the bombings"!

For the Latin American "left", "anti-imperialist" rhetoric comes cheap. WP co-signed a leaflet (17 December) against the bombing with some Mexican and Argentine groups. This leaflet was titled "For the Military Victory of Iraq" and denounced "Blair's 'social imperialist' government". But the "joint statement" was not distributed at the London demonstrations during the bombing. In 1995, WP refused to stand for military defence of the Bosnian Serbs when they were under

tion for the Kurdish people. Enslaved by a number of capitalist regimes, the Kurdish people can only win national emancipation by joining with the workers of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria in socialist revolution. For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

The ICL stands in the tradition of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, who broke with the traitors of the Second International, which in 1914 definitively went over to the side of capitalism as its component parties supported their "own" bourgeois rulers in the inter-imperialist carnage of World War I. This break was the precondition for leading the Russian Revolution of October 1917. Like Lenin, we say the only way to smash imperialist terror and capitalist misery is through socialist revolution. We fight throughout the world to make the working class conscious of its historic task which is to sweep away the barbaric rule of capital and lead the struggle for new October Revolutions. ■

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# IBT...

(Continued from page 9)

SLP was launched their headline described it as "A stillborn Stalinist sect" (*Workers Liberty* no 27, January 1996).

Revolutionary Marxists stand for unions built on an industrial basis, seeking to maximise the *unity* of the working class in its struggle against the capitalist exploiters. This is linked to the fight for communist leadership of the unions on the basis of our programme, through a political struggle against the pro-capitalist and centrist elements, who reflect and transmit the bourgeoisie's divide-and-rule policies. The task of the communist vanguard party is to *sharpen the differences* between competing political tendencies in order to bring workers to communist consciousness, and to assemble the cadre, through splits and regroupments, in a Leninist party whose purpose is to lead the workers to proletarian state power.

The BT's supplement calls: "For a workers' party funded by the unions to fight for a workers' government!" This means bloc affiliation by the trade unions to what they call a "workers party", which underlines their fervent commitment to a social-chauvinist Labour-type party. Bloc affiliation by the trade unions *by definition* precludes a party from being a revolutionary party. It is the organisational structure of reformist parties such as the Labour Party and of Scargill's SLP, which necessarily submerge the most advanced layers of the class into the most backward ones. Such parties are inevitably chauvinist, based on the dominant ethnic grouping and tied to the defence of the interests of their "own" ruling class. The BT, like the rest of the Labourite left in Britain, adheres to the "party of the whole class" conception advocated by Karl Kautsky whose own party, German social democracy, went over to social chauvinism in 1914 at the outbreak of World War I. Lenin denounced the "labour lieutenants of capital" and definitively rejected the



BT sucks up to Socialist Party — supporters of British Army in Northern Ireland (left), cheerleaders for Loyalist scum Billy Hutchinson (above).

conception of a "party of the whole class" in favour of a vanguard party.

## Dancing on the grave of the Soviet Union

The IBT's presence is frequently solicited at "regroupment" events organised by pseudo-leftists, at which the unmistakable theme is *good riddance* to the Soviet Union and other deformed workers states, capitalism is superior. An example was a summer school in London last August, organised by the CPGB, whose own efforts to rid themselves of their Stalinist past led to the "new" line that "Stalin's USSR, Mao's China, Hoxha's Albania and Castro's Cuba" became "giant prison camps where workers are subjected to a modern state slavery" (*Weekly Worker*, 25 June 1998). The BT gave a presentation on the Russian question, in which Trotsky's name appeared once (he was exiled from the Soviet Union), and not a word was said against the CPGB's anti-communist crap

until we intervened. Disappearing the Trotskyist position on the Russian question has become commonplace for the IBT. At a South Africa "regroupment" conference in December 1997 the IBT leader Bill Logan endorsed a document which pointedly refused to draw any class distinction between the former Soviet Union and imperialism. At the time we noted: "The message was obvious: the IBT is willing to unite with anybody, no matter what their politics." (See "Death of Communism" Confab in South Africa", *Workers Vanguard* no 682, 16 January 1998.)

As the price of entry into milieus where Trotskyist principles are anathema, they peddle anti-communist lies that the ICL is internally corrupt and a "cult". The IBT's leading light Bill Logan, head of the New Zealand Permanent Revolution Group, is a sociopath and massive liar whom the ICL *expelled* precisely for cult-like manipulation of comrades' personal lives. This creep does not belong in the workers movement. We have made available the

internal bulletins documenting the Logan case so that information about this man and his crimes is available in the workers movement. A glimpse of the strange life in Logan's organisation is revealed by a former member who tells tales from "Sheep Station Zero". One snippet says: "So after a round or two of corporate team building exercises one Tuesday night old Bill hit upon the idea of Com Crit (Comrade Criticism), a good old fashioned three week self-criticism session that would bring a tear of fond remembrance to the eye of any ex-Stalinist bully boy or girl" (24 October 1995).

The IBT are on the market for "regroupment". Their "assets" include: the sociopath Bill Logan at the helm, deep social chauvinism, rejection of the fundamental elements of the Trotskyist programme and an obsessive hatred for the principles and programme of the ICL. This makes them a willing and suitable partner in any lash-up on the rotten terrain of Labourite social chauvinism. ■

# Jamal...

(Continued from page 12)

the racist death penalty would be a victory for all workers, for all the oppressed. Blair's New Labour is a fervent ally of Bill Clinton's Democratic Party, who are gung-ho for the racist death penalty and are the main war party of US imperialism. In taking up the international fight for Mumia's freedom, the working class here

will be greatly strengthened for its struggles against British imperialism which is predicated on the brutal exploitation of labour and rooted in racist oppression. We look to the internationalist traditions of the British working class, such as the textile workers in Lancashire who supported the Union side in the American Civil War. The Union victory in this war overthrew chattel slavery which began in English colonial times. The fight against racism is central to the emancipation of

the working class itself — those who labour must rule!

Trade unions, students, youth, all opponents of racist injustice, mobilise to come to the rally! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!

24 November 1998

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To get involved in the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, contact the Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX; Tel:0171-485 1396. *Organise protest!* Get your trade

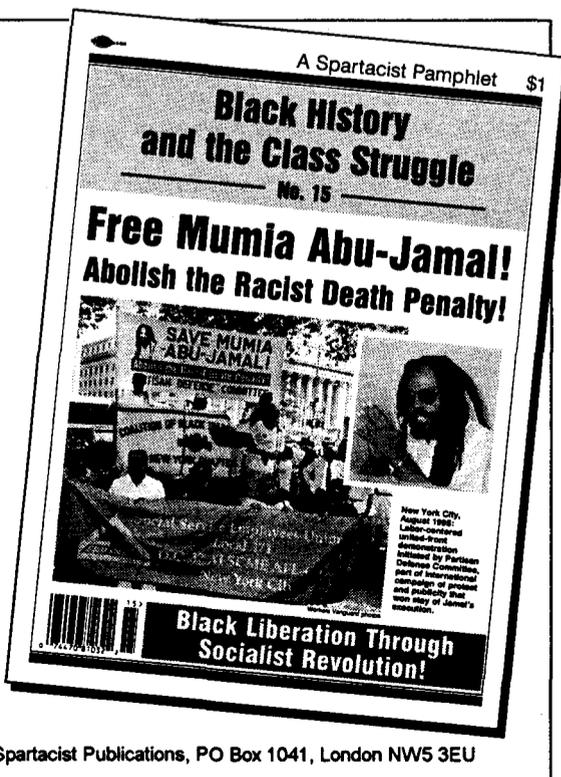
union or student organisation to make a contribution and join protests for Jamal. Publicise his case in your union or organisation newsletter. *Funds are urgently needed for legal defence!* In Britain and Ireland, send/make payable to Partisan Defence Committee and write "Jamal legal defence" on the back of the cheque. Contributions to the PDC for Jamal are forwarded in their entirety to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York. To write to Jamal, send letters to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg, PA 15370, USA. ■

## Contents include:

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## Roger Sylvester — victim of racist cop terror!

On 11 January Roger Sylvester, a 30-year-old black man, was taken from his home in North London by the cops. On the pretext that he was "causing a disturbance" by knocking loudly on a door, he was handcuffed, dragged away in a police van while naked and taken to hospital where he was left lying on the floor until he became unconscious. One week later he was dead.

There is mounting anger over racist cop terror. Following Roger Sylvester's death, protest demonstrations took place at Tottenham police station. The Police Complaints Authority have set up an "investigation", but this will inevitably amount to another whitewash of the role of the cops at whose hands Roger Sylvester died.

The cops are an integral part of the capitalist state, which is racist to the

core. This does not change when Labour is in government — Labour rules for racist British capitalism. Since they were elected the number of racist murders by the cops, which are described as "black deaths in police custody", has grown dramatically. Labour's inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence guaranteed freedom to the racist killers and whitewashed the cops who protected them.

The family of Roger Sylvester, like the Lawrence family and countless other victims of racist terror will not get justice from this capitalist system. The solution to racist terror and state repression will come when capitalism has been overthrown by victorious workers revolution. We fight to build the revolutionary workers party necessary to achieve this goal.

## Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!

We reprint below the call for the united-front protest rally initiated by the Partisan Defence Committee and held on Saturday 5 December in London calling to "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!"

Among the rally speakers were Steve Hedley, on behalf of the Harlesden Engineering Branch of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union (RMT), Glenroy Watson for the Finsbury Park RMT, a speaker on behalf of the Winston Silcott Defence Campaign and a representative of the Worker-Communist Party of Iraq (Britain). Jamal's campaign has been supported by trade unions internationally, from auto and transit workers unions in the US, to the CGT federation in France, to the Media Workers' Association of South Africa, and many more. In Britain, Jamal has received support from unions including the Fire Brigades Union, the

of the workers is advanced through class collaboration and elections to parliament. In France and Italy popular front alliances tie the working class to their class enemy. "Labour is a bourgeois workers party, a party of the trade union bureaucracy. When Labour is in government, it is a capitalist government. Capitalism is a social system of class rule. It is more than just a set of policies. Fundamental change in the interest of the working class will not come through Westminster parliament. The working class cannot simply take over the existing capitalist state apparatus; that state must be shattered and replaced by a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat."

An innocent man, an award-winning writer, a lifetime fighter for the oppressed is in danger of execution. Any day now, a death warrant for Mumia Abu-Jamal may be signed by Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania in the US. On 29 October,

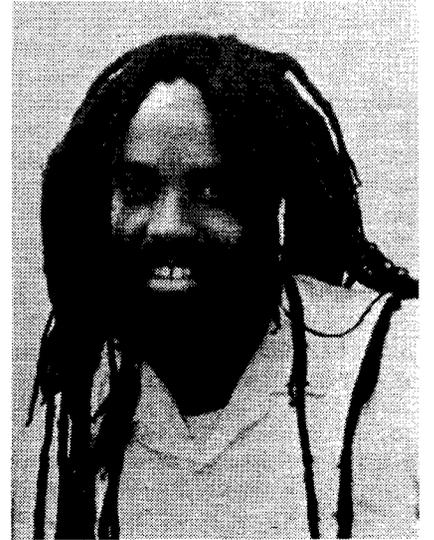
get away with the legal lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal, it will be a blow against all black people, all minorities, all working people. It is the duty of every opponent of racist terror, every opponent of the death penalty, every trade unionist and every socialist to join this international struggle for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolition of the racist death penalty.

There must be no illusions that Mumia can get a fair trial in the capitalist courts, despite massive evidence of his innocence in the December 1981 killing of a Philadelphia policeman. From the sham trial in 1982 to the rigged appeal hearings in 1995-96 to the latest ruling, Jamal's case itself has shown that the capitalist "justice" system, in the US as in Britain, is racist and anti-working class to the core.

British imperialism, including under the auspices of the Labour government, is the enemy of workers and the oppressed at home and abroad. The Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council sits as the final court of appeal in some former British colonies, mainly in the Caribbean. Two men were hanged in October by the government of the Bahamas after their appeals were rejected by the Privy Council, which is an appendage of the monarchy and includes prominent Labour figures such as Tony Benn.

In Britain, the death penalty for murder has been abolished, although it is still available for "treason". Nonetheless, state forces are the main perpetrators of racist murder. In the year to last March, 68 people died in police "custody". Racist murders like that of Ricky Reel, an Asian youth, and Michael Menson, a young black musician, are dismissed by the cops as not worth investigating. In addition to imposing British Army terror against the oppressed Catholics in Northern Ireland, the British state has a long record of summary executions of Irish nationalists, from the SAS murders of three unarmed IRA supporters in Gibraltar in 1988 to Diarmuid O'Neill, gunned down in London in 1996. Winston Silcott languishes in jail after 13 years on a racist frame-up, which was just upheld by the Criminal Cases Review Commission. Free Winston Silcott!

The imperialist Labour government is firmly committed to inflicting terror bombing and mass murder on the people of Iraq alongside US imperialism. Since the 1991 Gulf War, over a million children and hundreds of thousands of other Iraqis have died from malnutrition and disease resulting from the embargo. Anti-immigrant laws target asylum-seekers as part of racist "Fortress Europe". The system of racist repression is starkly laid bare by the racist murder of Stephen Law-



Jennifer Beach

rence — Labour's inquiry guaranteed that the racist murderers will not even be brought to trial and has made clear that the police are racist to the core and work in cahoots with fascist gangs and the capitalist courts.

The same forces, the cops and courts, who implement the capitalists' racist attacks on minorities also enforce the laws to tighten the chains around the trade unions. The working class in this country is multiracial; the bosses and their state hate and fear the racially integrated trade union movement because there lies the power to fight the poison of racism, which is used to divide and weaken the working class. For the social power of the proletariat to be unleashed the working class must be independent of the pro-capitalist Labour Party and the capitalist state. Illusions that the capitalist Labour government can be pressured to act in the interests of workers and minorities are a dead weight on the ability of the working class to fight. To go forward requires that we expose and defeat the lie that the capitalist state — including its racist cops — can be cleaned up and reformed, and that cops and prison guards can be on the side of the working class. It is necessary to mobilise the power of the multiracial trade union movement in defence of workers and all the oppressed. The heroic 1984-85 miners strike showed the potential for the working class in struggle to galvanise behind it the oppressed — racial minorities and women.

There must be no illusions that the capitalist state in the United States lacks either the power or the will to execute Mumia. The Partisan Defence Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the Marxist views of the Spartacist League. We seek to bring together the broadest possible forces internationally in working-class-centred united-front actions — where all participants are free to express their own particular views — to demand: free Mumia and abolish the death penalty! The interests of the working class and minorities must either go forward together or they will fall back separately.

Mumia's freedom and the abolition of  
*continued on page 11*



Workers Vanguard

PDC (US) trade-union centred demonstration in Chicago on 21 November 1998.

Transport and General Workers Union, and branches of the RMT and UNISON.

Our fight to mobilise the working class to battle for Mumia's freedom is centred on the understanding that the capitalist state, its cops and its courts, exist to defend the class rule and profits of a few, based on the exploitation of the many. Speaking for the Spartacist League at the rally, Andrew Gatsos said:

"The capitalist system offers only immiseration and war. So why does it continue to exist today and why has there not been working class revolution? Because there is a crisis of proletarian leadership, which in this country means that all social struggle is channelled into parliamentarism and the preservation of British capitalism.

"The Labour Party has always been based on the fundamental illusion that the cause

the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the racist frame-up conviction that rail-roaded Mumia to death row more than 16 years ago. This is a fight for more than the life and freedom of one courageous man. They want to kill Mumia because of what he represents: defiance of the racist system which saps the lifeblood from the many millions to ensure fabulous profits for a wealthy few.

A supporter of the black MOVE organisation and an eloquent journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless", Mumia has been in the cross hairs of the racist rulers from the time he was a 15-year-old spokesman for the Black Panther Party, which was targeted for destruction by the FBI's COINTELPRO terror operation against black revolutionaries. If they