



East Timor

No imperialist intervention! Independence now!



Will Burgess



AFP

Labour dispatched Gurkhas, part of imperialist invasion under UN figleaf. Right: Indonesian police attack East Timorese on eve of massive vote for independence.

SEPTEMBER 13 — Yesterday, the Clinton administration announced that the US would join in an imperialist intervention force in East Timor. A British Gurkha battalion, the 2nd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles, will spearhead the UN force due to land in East Timor as part of an Australian brigade. As the number of East Timorese massacred by Indonesian army-sponsored "militias" grew to the hundreds

and with the capital of Dili virtually depopulated through forced expulsions in the past week, there has been a growing clamour internationally for imperialist "peacekeeping" troops. As the Spartacist League of Australia wrote in a 4 September article in *Australasian Spartacist* (Spring 1999) reprinted below, "Imperialist military intervention means continued neo-colonial oppression, death, destruc-

tion and terrible poverty."

Imperialist military intervention in East Timor has no more to do with defending the population there than did the US-led war against Serbia and occupation of Kosovo with "humanitarian" concern for the Kosovo Albanians. Only days before the US announcement, Clinton aide Samuel Berger cynically declaimed, "Because we bombed in Kosovo doesn't mean we

should bomb Dili." Indeed, the only reason the US laid waste to Kosovo and Serbia was to achieve its longstanding aim of inserting a sizable American military force there. In East Timor, Washington's principal concern is to maintain neocolonial "stability" in Indonesia through propping up the blood-drenched police-state regime buffeted by two years of political

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South African workers v ANC capitalist government

JOHANNESBURG, 28 August — The past month has seen the largest and most significant labour struggle in South Africa since the white-supremacist regime was replaced in 1994 by the black bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC). Hundreds of thousands of public-sector workers — mainly teachers, nurses and civil servants — have hit the picket lines and taken to the streets to fight against mass retrenchments (lay-offs), austerity and union-busting. On 24 August, a one-day nationwide strike, organised by twelve unions representing some 800,000 workers, was called to protest the government's arrogant refusal to even bargain with the unions, instead offering a "unilateral" wage increase of a paltry six per cent for the majority of workers.

While the ANC has mobilised the Congress of South African Students against the teachers, the strike has won support from students and parents in the black townships, especially in Soweto (near Johannesburg), a traditional centre of black militancy. Such support is all the more important since ANC spokesmen seek to blame "greedy", "overpaid" work-

ers for the lack of money for schools, hospitals and social services. Especially notable is that the current labour struggle has also cut across the country's hard racial divide. White teachers, nurses and civil servants, a relatively privileged stratum with their own separate unions, joined with their black colleagues in last week's protest strike. A white teacher from Pretoria explained: "There is a feeling of desperation among us. That is why we are marching."

The principal unions engaged in the current strikes are part of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), encompassing the main body of the organised black proletariat. The leadership of COSATU is dominated by the South African Communist Party (SACP), which has long been closely allied to the ANC and holds key posts in the capitalist gov-

ernment of newly elected president Thabo Mbeki. Indeed, the minister of public services is SACP member Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, who is today acting as the government's hard cop against the unions led by her party "comrades". Consequently, the COSATU tops, despite a broad base of support extending from black township dwellers to white teachers, have deliberately *limited the effectiveness* of the strikes. The government has not been shut down, which the unions clearly have the power to do, but has only been disrupted by selective strikes and other actions.

At the same time, the pro-capitalist COSATU bureaucracy is under enormous pressure from its ranks to resist the get-tough policies of the Mbeki government. COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi told the 24 August labour rally in

Pretoria, "If it takes months and months of confrontation, we are prepared." But "months and months of confrontation" means a series of partial and inconclusive actions, aimed solely at pressuring the government to "negotiate" while exhausting and dissipating the workers' militancy. To win, the unions must launch an all-out strike throughout the public sector.

It is not an accident that the biggest labour struggle confronting the ANC regime has taken place right after elections in which Nelson Mandela was replaced as head of state by Thabo Mbeki, his hand-picked successor. For five years, Mandela managed to keep a lid on seething discontent among the black masses, in large measure due to his great moral authority enhanced by almost three decades in South Africa's prisons, most of them on the notorious Robben Island. Mbeki, a generation younger, personifies the aspiring black bourgeoisie who have hopped on the "gravy train" since 1994 and now drive BMWs, wear Pierre Cardin suits and have moved into posh, formerly all-white suburbs.

In the name of "globalisation" and "efficiency", Mbeki has wasted no time in

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**For a black-centred
workers government!**

Mexico: Down with government repression against UNAM student strike!

AUGUST 29 — Facing rising threats of a government crackdown, the striking students at Mexico City's National Autonomous University (UNAM) are at a critical point in their struggle. Sparked by a government plan to impose tuition fees that would eliminate even the limited access poor and working-class students currently have to public higher education, the strike at the 270,000-student university has lasted over four months, the longest in UNAM's history. This attack is part of a

broader "austerity" plan favoured by all wings of the Mexican ruling class, and demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The widespread support the strikers have won among working people, who face a related assault on their livelihoods under the IMF plan to privatise state-owned industries, has been crucial. From the beginning, workers from the STUNAM campus workers union and the Union of Electrical Workers (SME) have

been key, joining students on the strike barricades. Yesterday, hundreds of thousands of trade unionists joined in a protest against privatisation in Mexico City, overflowing the mammoth Zócalo square.

through bloody state repression. Our comrades concluded with the demands: "Free, quality education for all! For open admissions and no tuition fees! Stop the union-busting privatisation schemes!"



TROTSKY

On the revolutionary press

We reprint below an excerpt from a November 1958 speech by American Trotskyist James P Cannon on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Militant, the paper of the then-revolutionary American Socialist Workers Party. Weakened by, among other things, its isolation during the Cold War, by the mid-1960s the SWP had degenerated into reformism. This departure from Trotskyism was fought by the Revolutionary Tendency, the precursor of

the Spartacist League/US, which was expelled from the SWP in 1963. We seek to be guided by the principles Cannon laid out for the revolutionary press. We welcome new readers to Workers Hammer during our subscription drive.

We did not pretend, when we started *The Militant*, that we were producing a great mass paper, simplifying everything to the lowest common denominator. On the contrary, our paper was devoted to the education and reeducation of the vanguard militants of the Communist movement. It was primarily a cadre paper, the educator and guide of the cadres. The people who hold the party together and keep it going in all kinds of weather. The people who never quit, who never float down the stream like dead fish, but swim against the current no matter how rough it may be. That is the meaning of "militant," and that was the meaning of the paper we started to represent such people.

We had learned a good deal by then, although we have learned a great deal more since, and were applying something from Lenin's program for *Iskra*. Many of you have read in his great pamphlet, *What Is To Be Done?*, what he considered to be the role of a national paper. As Lenin conceived it, the role of a revolutionary paper is to function not merely as an agitator dealing with protest issues, not merely as a propagandist concerned with educating people and dealing with questions of theory and politics, but as the best organizer of the party....

From its first issue *The Militant* was an internationalist paper. It has always been concerned with the great problems of the world, and has done all it could to help the world movement of revolutionary socialism. It was through *The Militant* — and in this we take special pride — that the message of the Russian Opposition was carried to all corners of the world and even penetrated the Soviet Union itself.

In Europe, Latin America and Africa, Ceylon, India, China, and many other parts of the world, the message of *The Militant* sparked and inspired the organization of the first cadres of the International Left Opposition, so that when Trotsky, six months later, was deported to Turkey, he found a forum all ready for him in *The Militant*, and groups and organizations springing up throughout the world very largely as the result of the preliminary message of *The Militant*.

— "Revolutionary Journalism", *Speeches for Socialism* (1969)



LENIN



Strike by UNAM students against government attack on public higher education is now into its fifth month.

**For workers' strike action to defeat
privatisation, defend education!**

Government attempts to break the student strike have escalated over the last month. On 24 August, hundreds of rightist students, among them many thugs in white bandannas armed with pipes, sticks and shrapnel bombs, attacked over a thousand striking students, who managed to repel them. President Ernesto Zedillo, who has railed against the student strike as "brutal aggression", announced that UNAM must open by 1 September. Appealing to right-wing students to break the strike, Zedillo effectively called for more police-sponsored thug attacks on students.

On 4 August, Mexico City mayor Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas unleashed riot cops in a vicious attack on students picketing in front of a strikebreaking registration centre. More than 100 student strikers were severely beaten and arrested. Defending this brutal repression, Cárdenas said, "The Mexico City police intervened and will do so as many times as necessary." A 13 August march of 50,000, including a contingent of hundreds of STUNAM workers, protested the repression.

Our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM) and the Juventud Espartaquista (JE) youth group responded to the cop attack with a leaflet the next day headlined "Cárdenas' Police Attack the UNAM Strike — Drop All Charges Against Student Strikers! For Strike Action by the Unions Against Privatisation and to Defend Public Education!" The leaflet warned against illusions in Cárdenas' "left" bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), a capitalist party no less committed than Zedillo's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the right-wing Party of National Action (PAN) to imposing the IMF's austerity plans, including

At the same time, the International Communist League elicited statements of solidarity from unions, student organisations and others as part of an international effort to defend the UNAM strikers and the workers supporting them. Particularly noteworthy were statements from the powerful Transport and General Workers' Union and National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in South Africa. The NUM statement headlined, "Education Is a Right and Not a Privilege!" Other statements have come from Australia and France, as well as from the Vancouver local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Pasadena, California branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers, which condemned the attack on the strikers as "state-sanctioned tyranny". The Merseyside Port Shop Stewards of Liverpool, themselves pitted for several years in a bitter struggle against union-busting, wrote: "We strongly condemn the Cárdenas Government in Mexico for the brutal oppression of the UNAM student strikers."

In a 7 August interview on KPFA radio in the San Francisco Bay Area, a representative of the Partisan Defense Committee called for messages of support from local unions to the striking students. On 19 August, the Spartacus Youth Clubs at the University of California in Los Angeles and Berkeley held campus speakouts in defence of the UNAM strikers. The SYC speaker at UCLA linked our support for the UNAM strikers with our opposition to the imperialist "free trade" rape of Mexico under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), declaring:

"As Marxists, we combat the economic nationalism which seeks to pit workers in the US against their class brothers and

WORKERS HAMMER



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

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sisters north and south of the border.... We fight for common class struggle by US and Mexican workers against the US imperialist beast — represented by both the Democrats and Republicans — and its PRI, PRD and PAN lackeys in Mexico.”

As it attacks and threatens the student protesters at UNAM, the Mexican government is massively escalating its bloody repression in Chiapas, which has been under military occupation since the New Year's 1994 Zapatista (EZLN) uprising launched at the time NAFTA was imposed. The indigenous inhabitants have lived in terror, subjected to beatings, “disappearances” and outright massacres. Now, under the pretext of the construction of a new freeway through the Montes Azules region, Zedillo has shipped in over 10,000 new troops. Many students are enraptured with the EZLN, and have organised marches and aid caravans in their support. While defending the Zapatistas from state repression, the GEM has argued against the petty-bourgeois EZLN's programme of pressuring the bourgeois state (via the PRD) for concessions through negotiations.

In its hysterical media campaign against the student strikers, the Mexican ruling class has denounced them as crazed leftist “ultras” who follow the orders of the Zapatistas' subcomandante Marcos.

defend the UNAM strike.

Throughout the strike, the GEM/JE has warned against illusions in the current misleadership of the student movement and of both the official trade unions tied to the ruling PRI and the “independent” unions, which are no less subordinated to bourgeois nationalism, if often via the more “leftist” coloration of the PRD. The GEM's Trotskyist politics drive some centrist groups crazy. In a shrill and demagogic article in their 3 August *El Internacionalista* supplement, the Internationalist Group (IG) declares that the GEM/JE's exposure of the role of bourgeois nationalism as the chief obstacle to Mexican workers' class consciousness “is nothing else but beautifying the mechanism of white terror with which the semi-bonapartist regime of the PRI-government has propped up its power for more than 70 years”!

The IG claims “it would be enough just to remember the destiny of the hundreds of rail workers, who as a consequence of their strike in 1958 against the union bureaucrats were jailed and after a decade in the prisons of the PRI, they were still there when the university students arrested in 1968 arrived there”. It is telling that the only examples of violent state repression they list in this article are those perpe-



Duilio Rodríguez

STUNAM campus workers have joined in defence of UNAM students. Union contingent on 24 August, when rightist students and other thugs launched violent assault on strikers.

means of its ‘popular front’, the IG tries to obscure the class nature of the bourgeois PRD, dressing it in red.” And with the PRD desperately seeking an alliance with the rightist PAN, the IG's camouflaging of this bourgeois-nationalist party as a “popular front” looks even more obviously fake.

In the course of this strike, the GEM/JE have become known as the Trotskyists who advance a revolutionary internation-

of the strike: cops are not “workers in uniform” but the attack dogs of the bourgeois state. The presence of cops in the university, affiliated to STUNAM, is an immediate danger for the union itself and for the student strike, as well as for any action the STUNAM may be involved in. “Auxilio UNAM” cops out of the university and STUNAM!

No illusions in the PRD, a bosses' party! The attack against the strike has been a calculated move by Cárdenas and the PRD, using the cops in the name of law students who were trying to break the strike by registering for the new semester. Breaking the students' heads is the way in which Cárdenas wants to show the Mexican bourgeoisie, its imperialist masters and the rightist PAN that it is the best candidate to represent the interests of the capitalist class in the coming presidential elections through an alliance between the PRD and the PAN. The current situation shows that to achieve even a basic democratic right such as access to education requires a revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

Pushing utopian plans for building a “university at the service of the people”, as the Partido Obrero Socialista and En Lucha do at the university, only serves to sow more illusions in the bourgeoisie. Spartacists say: No to the dialogue with the rectory! No to the servile proposal of the “emeritus”! It is necessary to continue the strike until victory is achieved, and that requires allying with the social power of labour. For joint strike actions by workers and students in defence of free education and against privatisations! Free, quality education for all, in the city and the countryside!

What is needed is the building of a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the working class to state power. The greatest obstacle to this is the ideology of bourgeois nationalism, which aims at portraying everyone as simply “Mexicans”. In counterposition, we Spartacists advance proletarian internationalism. As a sample, we bring today greetings to the university strike from powerful unions from South Africa to Canada and the US, especially the powerful unions of miners and transport workers of South Africa. The proletariat has no fatherland! Our nation is not the bourgeoisie's national anthem but the proletariat's *Internationale*!

As American Trotskyist James Cannon said: “Our party is a party of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian revolution is the only solution to the problem of the working class, and all our work must lead to that goal.” Such is the basis of Spartacist politics. Break with the bourgeoisie! No illusions in the bourgeois PRD! Forge an international Leninist-Trotskyist party! For new October Revolutions around the world! ■



FernandezReiduma

August 4: Student strikers face bloody attack by riot cops unleashed by Mexico City mayor and PRD leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (near right).

Clearly the intent is to set these student militants up for attack, jailing and worse. Many students who were arrested on 4 August fear there may be criminal charges still pending against them. As one student remarked, “In Mexico, you learn that you have a legal charge when the police knock at your door to take you away.”

Currently, the government, the media and UNAM rector Barnés are hailing a proposal by a group of eight “emeritus” professors as a way to end the strike and give power back to the administration. This strikebreaking proposal was narrowly voted down at a 14 August meeting of the General Council of the Strike. But this proposal continues to be promoted, including by the STUNAM and SME union misleaders. In this way, the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats show how their outlook is counterposed to that of the many workers who have mobilised to

trated by the PRI! Indeed, the very day after this article was published, Cárdenas unleashed his riot cops against the student strikers. This reveals the softness towards the PRD which is behind the IG's constant harping on the “Cardenista popular front”.

As the GEM noted about the IG in a 26 July leaflet (excerpted in *Workers Vanguard* no 717, 6 August), “At the core of their politics is a mythical ‘popular front’ around the bourgeois PRD. The popular front is a specific form of class collaboration, in which the reformist parties of the working class make an alliance with the bourgeoisie in order to impede workers' unrest and the potential for a socialist revolution. But there is no mass workers party in Mexico, and the Mexican proletariat has been tied historically to the bourgeoisie by means of bourgeois nationalism, pure and simple.... Thus, by



García y Gustavovmagdalena

alist programme to defend public education and defeat the bourgeoisie's attacks on the working class. A GEM spokesman addressed the rally in the Zócalo at the conclusion of the huge 13 August march. As he rose to speak, our comrade was greeted with cries of “Go, Espartaco, go!” We reprint his speech below in full.

* * *

The Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, greets the thousands of people who gathered today at this Zócalo in defence of free education.

This student strike has gone beyond the boundaries of the university and found sympathy and active support among key sections of the working class, such as SME, STUNAM, SITUAM [campus workers union at Metropolitan University] and others.

The strike is now at a crucial moment. The fight in defence of public education, which is part of a broader struggle against the privatising schemes directed against the working class, can only go forward if the unions also go on strike. By themselves, students lack any social power. What is needed is that labour flex its muscles through strike actions to stop production and services. That the student strike has lasted so long is due to the support received from university workers, reinforced by brigades of workers from other powerful unions. The rectory's plan to undermine the strike by carrying out “extramuro” classes must be stopped with workers strike picket lines in all the facilities. A strike means: “Everyone stops! Nobody works!”

This attack shows a fundamental point we Marxists have made from the first day

Spartacist League public meeting

China on the brink

**For unconditional defence of China against capitalist counterrevolution!
For workers political revolution!**

Thursday 14 October, 7.30pm

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For more information call: 0171 485 1396

South Africa...

(Continued from page 1)

spearheading a union-busting privatisation drive and labour "restructuring". Under the headline, "South African Labour Comes Face to Face with the Hard Reality of World Economy", the *Financial Times* (29 July) wrote:

"Mr Mbeki appears to be toughening his stance. He is committed to speeding up privatisation and restructuring inefficient state-owned businesses. He is also expected to start cutting South Africa's large civil service wage bill. Both policies will mean job losses, at least in the short run."

Here it should be emphasised that about 40 per cent of the black labour force is at present unemployed, and that figure is far higher in townships like Soweto. Consequently, much of the money earned by unionised black workers goes to feed and clothe numerous impoverished relatives in the townships and countryside.

As a capitalist party external to the workers movement, the ANC would not shrink from seeking to smash the trade unions if this were necessary to defend its class interests. Only a year after the ANC

measures and union-busting are a culmination of the party's basic programme of *class collaboration* as encapsulated in the slogan of "national democratic revolution" supposedly led by "progressive" bourgeois nationalists like Mandela and Mbeki. Indeed, for many years the SACP itself was part of the core leadership of the nationalist ANC when it was in opposition. And today the SACP encompasses everything from leading elements of the capitalist state apparatus and outright bourgeois nationalists to labour bureaucrats to militant workers at the base looking for a revolutionary perspective.

Class-conscious workers must fight to build a revolutionary workers party—a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party—which will break the black proletariat from bourgeois nationalism and split the working-class base away from the reformist SACP. Proletarian revolution is the only road to national and social liberation in South Africa. Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, fights for the establishment of a black-centred workers government, where there would be an important role and full democratic rights for coloureds (mixed-race), Indians and other Asians, and those whites who accept a government

laws, Group Areas Act) was dismantled. However, the economic basis of the old apartheid system—the superexploitation of black labour by the white capitalists—remained. The "new" South Africa can thus be defined as neo-apartheid.

What is the reality today five years after the proclaimed end of apartheid? Under rigid apartheid based upon the totalitarian suppression of the black proletariat, the capitalists ensured that there was virtually no social spending for the overwhelmingly black majority. It's no different now—hospitals without staff or emergency rooms, clinics with no medicine, schools without electricity or water. In the townships, like Soweto, Lamontville and Gugulethu, schools still have no libraries or laboratories. In the cities and especially in the rural areas, there is no adequate housing, health care, public transportation for the black masses. Black babies die moments after birth in state hospitals which are on the brink of total breakdown. More than a fifth of the South African black working class—including 23 per cent of all pregnant women—carry HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

In the rural areas, the black poor—especially women—are facing savage at-

tempting the largest arms purchases in the country's history, as this regional imperialist power prepares for a greater role as gendarme in the wars in Southern Africa, especially in Congo and Angola.

Left apologists for bourgeois-nationalist ANC

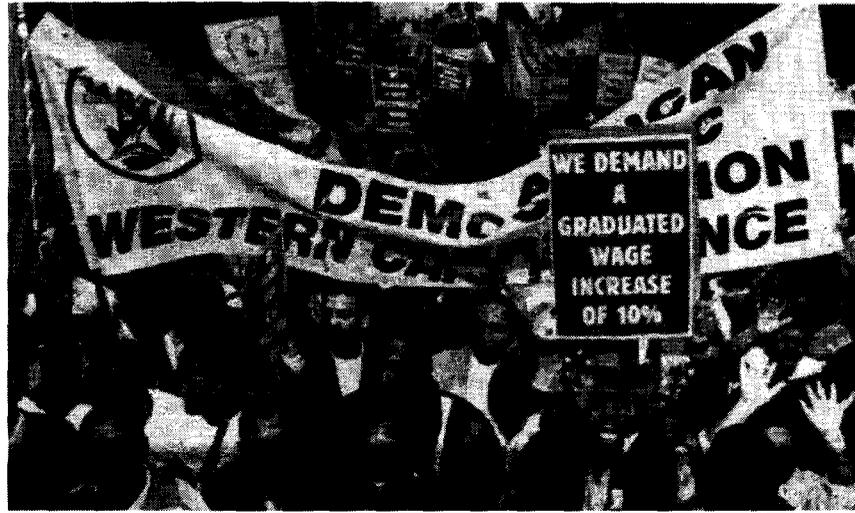
Given the continuing immiseration of the black masses, how does one explain the ANC's re-election a few months ago with an even larger majority than in 1994? First, the popular-front policy of the SACP ensured that there was no electoral alternative of a mass character opposing the capitalist ANC from the left. Furthermore, almost all of the small "far left" groups likewise supported the ANC while fatuously calling on it to carry out a socialist programme in the interests of the black working people.

Consequently, the main opposition to the ANC in the elections was from the right, from the predominantly white Democratic Party headed by capitalist magnate Tony Leon. ANC spokesmen were thus able to appeal, as in the past, to the deep-going racial/national solidarity of the oppressed black majority. They evoked memories of the hated apartheid police state with its dogs attacking peaceful demonstrators and black activists routinely tortured and killed. They presented the ANC as the only obstacle to the restoration of white-supremacist rule.

To the left of the ANC/SACP are a number of groups which falsely claim the "revolutionary Marxist" tradition. Most of these supported the ANC while denying or obfuscating that it is a *bourgeois* party. Instead, they maintain that the ANC can be pressured into carrying out the demands of the workers and oppressed. Typical in this regard is the Keep Left group (formerly Socialist Workers Organisation) affiliated with the British-centred left social-democratic tendency headed by Tony Cliff, which argued: "Only one thing stands in the way of Mbeki's ability to live up to the expectations which have been created—the minority who controls the economy for profit" (*Keep Left*, July 1999). Similarly, a leaflet distributed by the Socialist Forum group during the latest public-sector strike asserted:

"Our understanding was that the ANC was elected by working people and the rural poor to better our lives. That the rich and the bosses, those who benefited from apartheid cheap labour policies would be taxed to make sure that there was the money needed to uplift our services and those that provide them."

The ANC is not some kind of class-neutral party standing midway between the white capitalists and black toilers which can be pushed or pulled to one side or the other. Basically, it is the party of an aspiring black bourgeoisie, whose aspirations have increasingly been realised in the "new" South Africa. Large numbers of ANC and other black political activists have been recruited into the executive suites of Anglo American and the other big white-owned corporations or have set up their own businesses, usually with the financial backing of white capitalists. Cyril Ramaphosa, former head of the National Union of Mineworkers and subsequently ANC parliamentary leader, for example, is now deputy chairman of New Africa Investments. Mbeki & Co are just as committed to and materially interested in maximising the exploitation of black labour in South Africa as Tony Leon, the CEOs of Anglo American and the other Randlords. Insofar as there are differences between the ANC leadership and the white bourgeoisie—and there are differences—they involve the division of the profits (who gets how much) extracted from the workers who man the country's factories, mines and farms.



Reuters photos

In biggest labour struggle since bourgeois-nationalist ANC government came to power, public sector workers have taken to the streets in series of one-day strikes and mass protests, including on 24 August (left) and 23 July.

came to power, Mandela unleashed the cops against a 1995 municipal workers strike while his government demagogically denounced nurses for going on strike around the same time. While Mbeki has made no secret of his hostility to the fundamental needs and aspirations of the workers, the left face of the ANC regime is provided by the reformist SACP. To retain its posts in the Mbeki government, the SACP leadership is under increasing pressure to demonstrate its loyalty to the masters of the Jo'burg stock exchange and their senior partners in Wall Street and the City of London by supporting the government's assault on the organised working class. The ANC has threatened on more than one occasion to dump the SACP if it did not toe the line in pushing through capitalist austerity measures.

The inner contradictions of the SACP—a bourgeois workers party, as Lenin described such reformist parties based on the working class but committed to a thoroughly bourgeois programme—could not be clearer and more acute. A recent article in the SACP journal *Umsebenzi* (August/September 1999) acknowledged: "Leading Party comrades find themselves (in their capacity as ministers and trade union leaders) on both sides of the public sector wage negotiations. Rather than seeing this as a cause for embarrassment or hesitation, the SACP, along with its alliance partners, sees in this reality a challenge."

Worker militants who support the SACP must understand that their leaders are not just pursuing a mistaken policy which can be reversed in the interests of the black toilers. Fraser-Moleketi's auster-

centrally based on the black working people.

ANC's neo-apartheid regime

Ten years ago, few people in South Africa would have envisioned or even thought possible that Communist Party ministers would be breaking strikes by black unions. How has this situation come about?

During the 1980s, the explosion of mass black struggle, centred on the combative trade-union movement and extending to the township youth, shook the apartheid police state to its foundations. At the same time, the ANC was able to enhance its political authority as recognised leader of the national liberation struggle against white-supremacist rule. This was consolidated in the late '80s with the establishment of the "tripartite alliance" of the ANC, SACP and the newly formed COSATU union federation. We characterised this as a *nationalist popular front*. The SACP tied a new generation of young worker militants, many of whom saw themselves as revolutionaries, to the aspiring bourgeois nationalists of the ANC.

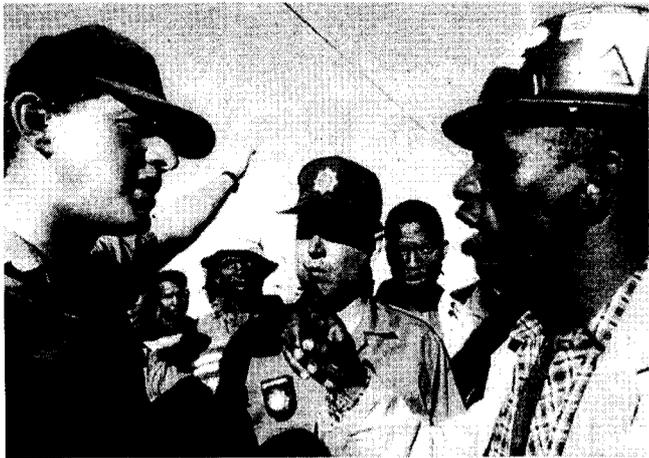
By the early 1990s, decisive sections of the white ruling class and their senior partners in Washington and London had moved to *co-opt* the leaders of the tripartite alliance in an attempt to restore social order and weaken the power of the black union movement. Thus in 1994, Mandela's ANC came to power in a "power sharing" agreement with the white-supremacist National Party, while the legal structure of apartheid (eg. the pass

tacks, and even greater misery and oppression. Rural black labourers are routinely murdered and assaulted, while the white racist perpetrators get off in the courts. A few months ago, a Mpumalanga farm worker's *entire body* was spray-painted with toxic paint by a white farmer who accused him of trespassing.

The situation of the strategic core of the black industrial proletariat is no better and in some ways worse than under the old apartheid system. The industrial murder last month of 18 miners in a methane gas explosion in a Carletonville mine shaft clearly reveals the utter cheapness of black life for the rapacious mine bosses. In fact, three more miners were killed the very day of the funeral for the Carletonville victims.

More than 82,000 miners face retrenchment in an industry where the labour force has already been slashed by 350,000 since 1987. Historic East Rand Proprietary Mine started the avalanche of retrenchments, liquidating in late August and leaving 7000 jobless, more than 55 per cent of whom hail from Mozambique and others from Lesotho. The Randlords like Anglo American can mine gold profitably only by paying slave wages. With the market price of gold dropping beneath US \$250 an ounce, well below the cost of extracting it from the mines, about a third of South Africa's 16 mines claim they cannot stay in business.

The Mbeki government's war on labour is matched by its ruthless drive to deprive the masses of the most minimal facilities, with thousands in the townships increasingly having basic services like electricity cut off for non-payment. At the same time, the South African government is currently



John Woodruff

Columbus steel strikers in Middelburg face down cops, who attacked picketers and arrested nearly 200 in July, while COSATU leadership welcomes POPCRU police "union" in 24 August labour protest. Cops have no place in labour movement!



Star

Reflecting growing pressure from the base, one SACP shop steward in the Metalworkers union reportedly distributed a statement recently promising workers that the first stage of the "national democratic revolution" would soon be over and then socialism would come. But the bankruptcy of the Menshevik/Stalinist "two-stage" scheme, which ties the proletariat to the oxcart of bourgeois nationalism, is underscored not least by the current position of the ANC as an integral part of the exploiting class. As Leon Trotsky first laid out in 1905 in elaborating his theory of permanent revolution for tsarist Russia, in the epoch of imperialist decay the bourgeoisies of the dependent countries are incapable of carrying out the historic tasks associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in 17th and 18th century Europe. National and social liberation for the toiling masses in South Africa can only be achieved through the proletarian seizure of state power.

Fissures in the tripartite alliance

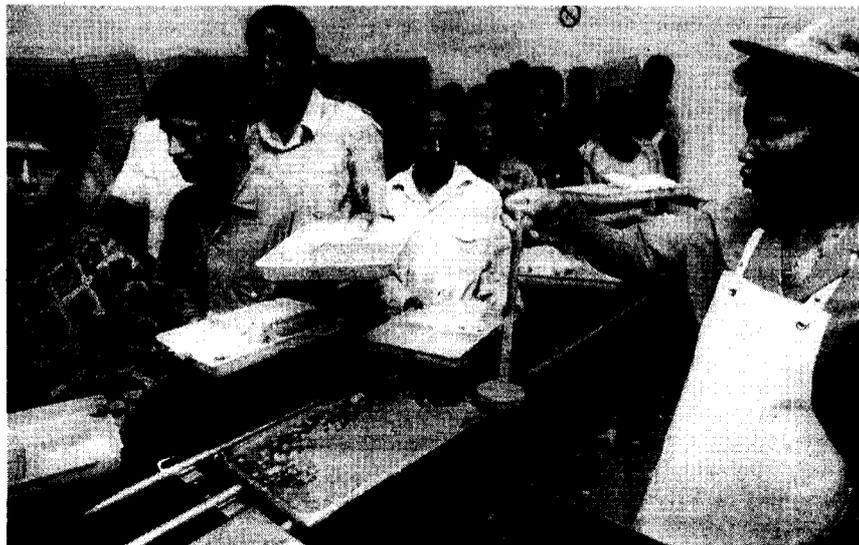
While at first the results of the recent elections appeared to strengthen the ANC's political authority, the actual effects have been just the opposite. Mbeki & Co quickly moved to implement the programme of economic austerity demanded by international finance capital. This was answered by a massive upsurge of labour struggle and a heightening of social and political instability. The *Independent* (25 August) pointed to the "deepening tensions within the decades-old alliance between the African National Congress (ANC), Cosatu and the South African Communist Party".

These tensions could clearly be seen at a special COSATU congress held in mid-August to appoint a replacement for former COSATU chief Sam Shilowa, who was elected premier of Gauteng province earlier this year. The congress was convened only as a result of pressure from the base. The government was represented at the congress by Defence Minister Patrick "Terror" Lekota, whose mission was to verbally terrorise the delegates. He lashed out at "highly placed comrades criticising or agitating against the movement", accusing them of placing "weapons in the hands of our opponents" and creating an "atmosphere for agent provocateurs". Some of the 2200 delegates booed his speech, especially when he went on to push privatisation, arguing that the government had to look for money somewhere and hinting that the alternative was to raise the Value Added Tax, which labour fought against in the early 1990s as a regressive tax. Lakota's line was strongly seconded by SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande, who endorsed the government's economic policies and directed his fire at "the ultra-left" for policies and actions which threatened to break up the governmental alliance.

While the COSATU leaders bent over backwards to be conciliatory in response to Lekota and Nzimande, the class conflict between the ANC government and the unions could not be completely suppressed. A Mineworkers delegate pointed to COSATU's aim of politicising the members in support of government policies and said, "COSATU cannot politicise members who have empty stomachs." In his concluding remarks, newly elected COSATU president Willie Madisha, formerly a leader of the embattled teachers union, stated, "We will not smooth over cracks in the alliance" and spoke of "genuine fears" that "the tendency by the government to flout agreements and disregard the concerns of labour might become a major obstacle in the way of social transformation."

Going beyond Madisha's mild criticisms, many militants are now calling for COSATU to pull out of the Mbeki government. Some argue for the launching of a mass workers party. COSATU *should* break its ties with the tripartite alliance. And to the extent that workers are feeling the necessity of breaking with the ANC and creating their own independent party, that is the beginning of wisdom. But only the beginning. These workers must understand the kind of party — its principles, programme and organisational character — needed to fight for the workers' interests against the powerful forces of the world capitalist system.

During the early 1990s, there was considerable talk in the labour movement and left about forming a workers party as an alternative to the tripartite alliance. At the time, we emphasised the difference between a reformist party, like the British Labour Party or Brazilian Workers Party, and a revolutionary workers party like the Bolshevik Party which Lenin built in tsarist Russia. The workers in South Africa and elsewhere can achieve a substan-



Oscar G

Detention camp for "illegal" immigrants. Neo-apartheid regime whips up chauvinist hysteria against immigrants as scapegoats for mass unemployment.

tial and permanent improvement in their living conditions only by overthrowing the capitalist order and replacing it with a planned, collectivised economy.

Especially in a country like South Africa, this, in turn, requires that the working class, led by its vanguard party, place itself at the head of all oppressed sections of society. What is needed in South Africa is a revolutionary workers party which does not simply defend the particular interests of the working class, especially its unionised sector, but fights to eradicate *all forms* of national and social oppression — the mass homelessness in the black townships, the hideous conditions of the millions of Africans still trapped on the "tribal homelands", the degradation of women and such practices as the selling of women through *lobola* (bride price), the plight of immigrants from neighbouring African states now facing expulsion.

The iron fist of the "new" South African state

Seizing on the vulnerability felt by large sections of the population in the face of rising crime, including astronomical levels of rape, Mbeki's regime is rapidly strengthening the police and army. Mbeki's real aim in this is to intimidate and crush workers and the oppressed. Just after the elections, the government launched a new national police agency called the "Scorpions", modelled on and trained by the American FBI.

For months, the ANC regime has carried out a military occupation of the coloured townships in the Western Cape. Titled "Operation Good Hope", this repressive action was launched after the "Planet Hollywood" bombing allegedly linked to People Against Gangsterism and Drugs — an "anti-drug" vigilante group — with the ostensible aim of combatting "urban terrorism". The intensification of police repression is seen in the fact

that this summer more than 30,000 people were arrested in one month alone in the Vaal Triangle region. Meanwhile, there has been a growing clamour for restoration of the death penalty.

The latest "anti-crime" push to institute gun control laws means that the cops and criminals will be the only ones with arms while, as in the days of apartheid, the black population is disarmed. We defend the democratic right to bear arms and oppose all gun control laws, which are designed to ensure the state's monopoly on the means of violence and keep the oppressed down.

Meanwhile, vigilante murders are on the increase. In the past month, a white vigilante group known as Die Vuis (The Fist), composed of "former" members of the military and police, has sprung up in Cape Town. Its emergence coincided with the arrival in Gauteng of the previously rural-based Mapogo a Mathamaga, a 35,000-strong vigilante army led by black businessmen with ties to hardline white racists. Their recent opening of offices in Pretoria and Alexandra is an ominous development. Their targets are the victims of neo-apartheid capitalism — the working class and all of the oppressed. Ethnically integrated workers defence guards are vital to defend against vigilante terror, by mobilising the urban and rural poor behind the power of labour to sweep away the vigilante scum.

Despite all of these developments, illusions in the "democratic" character of the "new" South African state is nearly universal on the left. This is expressed most clearly in the belief that the police, especially black police, are an integral part of the workers movement. Thus the Socialist Forum leaflet cited above called for "a united front of public sector workers that is built across union lines in the hospitals, schools and police stations and every government office." Recently, cops attacked picketing workers in the Columbus steel strike in Middelburg, seriously injuring two and jailing almost 200. Yet large contingents of cops organised by the Police and Prison Civil Rights Union are routinely allowed to participate in labour rallies. Cops, whether black or white, are the bosses' thugs. We say: Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions!

For proletarian internationalism!

Mandela's immense moral authority was able to hold in check the country's explosive national and social contradictions. However, if the ANC leaders, abetted by the SACP, cannot contain the workers movement through political demagoguery, they are prepared to use other weapons. The invasion and occupation of the small statelet of Lesotho by the South African army last year not only demonstrated the ANC government's role as regional gendarme for the Randlords. The army's mission to "restore order" in Lesotho was also a test run for a similar mission directed at the militant labour movement in South Africa itself.

The "new" South Africa is *not* a stable bourgeois democracy. The privileged white minority continues to enjoy "First World" living standards while the mass of black toilers remains hideously impoverished. The inequality of income and wealth is more extreme in South Africa than in any other country in the world, including the Third World. In 1995, we wrote in a polemical letter to the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action, led by Neville Alexander, which held that the ANC-led government was a stable bourgeois democracy:

"When the current, fragile neo-apartheid order breaks down — and it will break down — if the workers movement does not seize state power, various sectors of the desperate nonwhite population will com-

continued on page 9

UN/NATO forces out of the Balkans now!

Tony Blair's "socialists" and the Balkans

The US and British imperialists and their NATO allies — crucially assisted by the “soft cop” role played by Boris Yeltsin’s capitalist Russia — succeeded in bringing Serbia, a small dependent country, to its knees. Under the imperialist “peace” diktat, Kosovo has been turned into a NATO protectorate with 50,000 occupation troops for an indefinite period. This was NATO’s goal from the beginning, not its cynical talk of protecting the Kosovo Albanians. As proletarian internationalists who called forthrightly for the defeat of the NATO imperialist forces and for the military defence of Serbia, the International Communist League (ICL) denounces this predatory “peace” dictated by the world’s bloodiest mass murderers. As we said last issue:

“This imperialist conquest is a blow not only to the people of Serbia and throughout the Balkans but to working people and the oppressed the world over. It will place the Kosovars — Serbs, Gypsies and Albanians alike — under the direct thumb of the imperialists, exacerbating national hatreds in the region. It will fuel the rapacity of the imperialist powers at home and abroad. It will sharpen the conflicting appetites of the major capitalist powers, accelerating the drive to an even bloodier war in the future.”

As in the one-sided 1991 war against Iraq, the imperialists systematically went after the infrastructure necessary for the civilian population to survive: electrical generators and distribution grids, water purification plants, citywide central heating plants, factories, hospitals, apartment complexes. Indeed, the “democratic” NATO imperialists have wreaked more devastation in Serbia than did German imperialism under Hitler’s Nazis in World War II. For months, NATO had been readying plans for a ground invasion of Kosovo. The *Observer* (18 July) noted that “The dramatic surrender by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic last month came only three days after Britain and the US finalised plans for a massive ground invasion of Kosovo — code-named B-Minus — to be launched in the first week of September.”

Again giving the lie to the imperialist pretext that the war was a mission to defend “human rights”, from the moment NATO troops began rolling into Kosovo, the Serb and Gypsy (Roma) populations have been subjected to brutal “ethnic cleansing”, including the massacres of whole families. The terms of oppression have been reversed for the peoples inhabiting Kosovo: the Albanians were subjugated and victimised by the Serb-chauvinist Milosevic regime, yet today only a small fraction of the Serbian population remains, driven out of Kosovo through murderous terror. The imperialists — who are hostile to an independent Kosovo and any talk of a Greater Albania — have made it clear that they will be calling the shots.

NATO leaders celebrated the unity of the Western powers in the war against Serbia. But behind the façade of unity, the war accentuated tensions among the major capitalist powers which have been intensifying since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Germany and other West European states are intent on building up a military force independent of the US to match their increasing economic rivalry with American imperialism. The British ruling class is conflicted as to whether its best interests lie with US imperialism or with German imperialism,

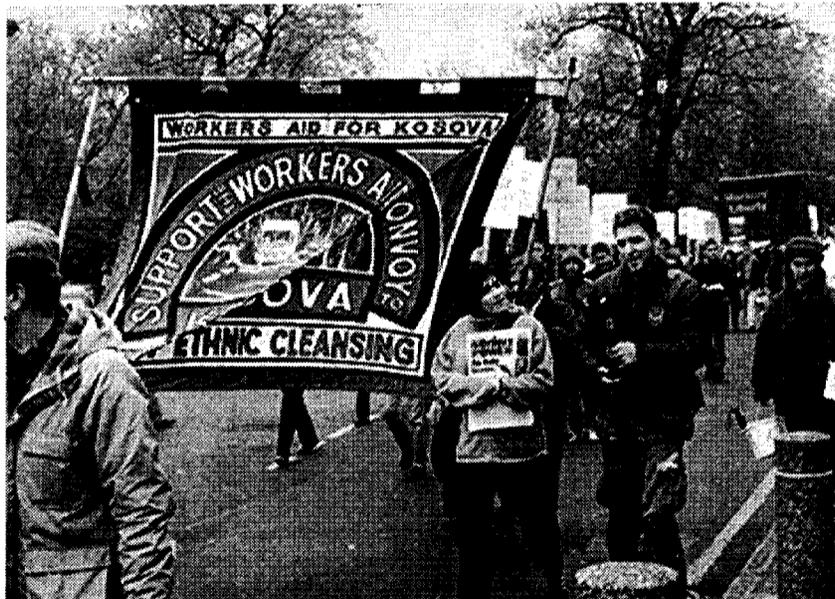
hence its deep divisions over the European Union. But the Labour government’s bloody enthusiasm for military alliance with the US in NATO was very clear in the Balkans War. It was rewarded by the appointment of George Robertson, Labour defence secretary, as secretary-general of NATO. The *Daily Telegraph* (5 August) summed up the overall attitude of the British ruling class: “Whatever the attractions of greater defence co-operation with other European countries — and they are

Socialist Alliance to form a slate for the elections to the London Assembly. According to *Weekly Worker* (19 August), the Socialist Party, the AWL, Socialist Outlook, the Independent Labour Network, Workers Power, the SWP and the CPGB passed “overwhelmingly” a motion which motivated that “the existing organised groups work together on areas where we can agree, to raise the banner of socialism in London”. This is the yellow “banner of socialism” — their claim to be



Workers Hammer photos

Fake lefts march behind “human rights” imperialism: Labourite Alliance for Workers Liberty and Workers Power (below) at 10 April “Workers Aid for Kosovo” rally in London.



real enough — the Atlantic link remains the bedrock of our security.”

The war was prosecuted in the US by Clinton’s Democrats, and significantly, in Europe by governments headed by social-democratic and ex-Stalinist parties. Tailing their own bourgeoisies, the reformist and centrist fake left assiduously lined up behind the imperialist warmongers’ cry of “poor little Kosovo”. Their opposition to NATO bombing was purely nominal. And in Britain, groups like Workers Power (WP), Socialist Outlook, and the CPGB acted as outright Labour lackeys of British imperialism, repeating Labour’s lies about defending Kosovo Albanians. The Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) refused to participate in demonstrations against the war; they mobilised for a demonstration in support of NATO bombing!

On 1 August, only weeks after the imperialists’ devastation of Serbia, this bunch (and more) met to relaunch the London

offering a “socialist alternative” to Labour is belied by their totally predictable refusal to oppose Labour’s crimes in Northern Ireland and the Balkans War.

Fake leftists like WP who clamoured for “independence for Kosovo” and supported the Kosovo Liberation Army did so as a thin cover for their support to the war aims of the imperialists. This was clear when WP joined in a “Workers Aid for Kosovo” demonstration on 10 April which was shot through with slogans like “NATO Good Luck” and “NATO Now or Never”. Subsequently Workers Power and a number of other Labourite groups sponsored an 11 May meeting which featured prominently two unvarnished pro-NATO speakers. One was a rabid pro-Albanian nationalist, who told the audience that anyone who didn’t support NATO should stay home! (See *Workers Hammer* no 169, “NATO socialist” confab: All the way with the KLA!”)

Long before the imperialists and their leftist apologists took up the cause of the Kosovo Albanians, we wrote: “Marxists should, of course, recognize the rights of the Albanian people of Kosovo and western Macedonia to fuse with Albania” (“The National Question in Yugoslavia”, *Workers Vanguard* no 110, 21 May 1976). We defended the deformed workers states against the imperialist-instigated counterrevolutions and the bloody nationalist break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. We called for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies in Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria and for the formation of a socialist federation of the Balkans. Today we fight for socialist revolution throughout this region. We continue to support the right of the Kosovo Albanians to secede. But with the NATO intervention against Serbia, the KLA became simply a pawn of the imperialists. During the period of this war, the right of self-determination of the Kosovo Albanians was *subordinated* to the need to defend Serbia militarily against NATO attack. We say: Down with the imperialist occupation of Kosovo! All imperialist forces out of the Balkans now!

Now that NATO has triumphed, WP proclaims: “Everyone should welcome the withdrawal of the genocidal forces that have driven nearly a million Kosovars from their homeland and made another half million refugees in the woods and mountains. But they cannot welcome the conversion of Kosovo into a nominally United Nations (but in reality a Nato) protectorate” (*Workers Power*, June 1999). It was the duty of all who want to see imperialism defeated, to defend Serbia against imperialist attack. Workers Power is here *welcoming* the defeat of the Serbian army by NATO imperialism and in reality spreading illusions in the UN. On 11 August, WP’s international body, the LRCI, issued a statement titled “The fight to overthrow Milosevic in Serbia”. They claim: “in the aftermath of NATO’s victory in Kosovo, a pre-revolutionary situation is maturing”. This is thinly veiled support to the opposition to Milosevic, which has been encouraged by NATO. But, then they say: “the revolutionary potential in today’s Serbia is seriously endangered by the weakness of class independence and the role of the bourgeois opposition”. No kidding! Serbia’s defeat at the hands of the NATO imperialists has only served to weaken, and in many places devastate, the proletariat, while encouraging the most reactionary forces in the country.

Our exposure of the revisionism of the fake left and our interventions with our revolutionary internationalist programme earned us the enmity of all the “leftist” little drummer boys for NATO. Lutte Ouvrière (LO), frenzied after we unmasked their pro-imperialist line at the forum on the Balkans War at the LO fête on 24 May, unleashed a 20-man goon squad against the ICL at the fête’s conclusion; our comrade Xavier Brunoy, editor of our French paper *Le Bolchévique*, had his arm deliberately broken in four places.

Blair’s little drummer boys

In April, while NATO was terror-bombing Serbia, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) convened a “commission”, supposedly to “investigate” but actually to alibi a physical attack by one Ian Donovan, an anti-communist nut and

now a CPGB supporter, on a Spartacist League spokesman, Eibhlin McDonald. The "commission" was convened under the auspices of the London Socialist Alliance, yet the facts of the attack were never in dispute, not even by Donovan. He had slammed his fist in McDonald's face during a demonstration in London in January commemorating the Bloody Sunday massacre of 14 Catholics in 1972 by British troops commanded by Michael Jackson (who today commands the NATO occupation force in Kosovo). Donovan went berserk when McDonald exposed his support to the pro-imperialist Socialist Party (SP), pointing to their support for the RUC. The SP is notorious for sponsoring fascist Loyalist leader Billy Hutchinson. The CPGB's "commission" was an expression of their loyalty to the Labour Party in power and the interests of British imperialism: a nasty little show trial to smear the Spartacist League because we uniquely fought against Blair and the Labourite swamp's bloody Balkans War. The CPGB sought so blatantly to whitewash the imperialist terror bombing, that we dubbed them "Jamie Shea socialists" in our last issue. The CPGB proclaimed: "It is obvious to all but the wilfully stupid that Nato has attempted to minimise civilian casualties" (*Weekly Worker*, 10 June). In fact, civilian casualties far exceeded military casualties during the NATO bombing!

The fake lefts' loyalty to their own bourgeoisie in the war against Serbia was a logical outgrowth of their earlier support to imperialist-sponsored counterrevolution

in the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states like Yugoslavia. During Cold War II, they supported reactionary Solidarność in Poland, the Sajudis in Lithuania and various other nationalist forces. The Russian question drew the class line.

Alex Callinicos, a leading spokesman for Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party, was a signatory to a statement in the 10 May *New Statesman* calling for OSCE intervention in Kosovo as an alternative to NATO. (See *Workers Hammer* no 169, July/August 1999, "SWP says NATO out... OSCE in!") The letter was reprinted in the June issue of the SWP's *Socialist Review*. It said:

"Nato is not the only or above all the best fulcrum for an agreement. One could find the elements of a multinational police force (embracing notably Serbs and Albanians) in the ranks of the OSCE to enforce a transitional agreement."

After the bombing ended and imperialist troops had occupied Kosovo, the SWP tried to bury this position. In *Socialist Worker* (31 July) they wrote: "Many commentators are calling for an international police force to bring order to Kosovo. But Bosnia has had such a force for four years. The result has been disastrous." Such talk is cheap — when NATO bombs were falling, they called for imperialist intervention.

While the SWP did not support the KLA, they embraced their own ruling class, calling for OSCE intervention, and they did not defend Serbia against the

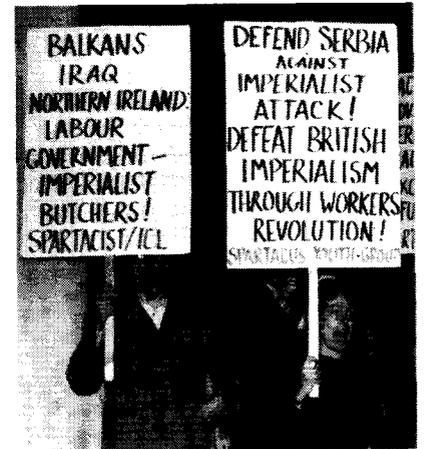
might of the imperialist powers. They tailed Tony Benn and pleaded with the Blair government to listen to their calls to "Stop this War". In their "Stop the War" pamphlet, they call Benn a "brave individual" who "has opposed the Falklands War, the Gulf War and this war". In fact, Benn's opposition to NATO's bombing of Serbia centred on the fact it was led by the Americans and it was not sanctioned by the United Nations. In solidarising with Benn they were solidarising with part of the Labourite leadership.

The SWP's programme of pressuring Labour to the left belies their occasional anti-Labour posture. Our perspective is to split the Labour Party, winning its working-class base to the programme for workers revolution, and away from the leadership, including the Bennites, and their pro-capitalist programme.

Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party correctly called Blair a murderer but went on to call on the UN and the Pope to intervene. In *Socialist News* (May/June 1999) they urged: "The anti-war movement here, and around the world, should support the Yugoslav people, including President Milosevic and the Serbs." In counterposition, our military defence of Serbia did not include any support to the Serbian chauvinist, capitalist regime of Milosevic, which must be overthrown through workers revolution.

The proletariat was much less enthusiastic about this war than the supposed leftists who cheered "human rights" imperialism. Even in the US, where there were no mass protests, workers' attitudes

to the war ranged from passivity to scepticism. On May Day, throughout Europe and as far away as Australia and Japan, the Balkans War was the hot issue, in spite of the labour bureaucrats' efforts to focus on economic concerns. Proletarian opposition to the war was particularly explosive in Italy and Greece. On 13 May in Italy, over a million workers joined in a one-day political strike initiated by the



Workers Hammer

SL protests imperialist bombing of Serbia, March 1999.

syndicalist COBAS around the slogan "not a life, not a lira for this war". The COBAS also initiated a fund drive for Yugoslav workers, launched after the Zastava auto plant in Kragujevac, Yugoslavia, was bombed and destroyed by NATO, which knew full well it was protected by a

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USec's Krivine: "Trotskyist, I don't like the word"

On 14 July comrades of the Spartacist League attended a London meeting sponsored by Socialist Outlook, the British affiliate of the so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec). The USec is a dyed-in-the-wool social-democratic formation which for decades has supported multiple reactionary movements, from Khomeini's barbaric Islamic "revolution" to the anti-Communist Polish Solidarność, while masquerading as "Trotskyist". At this meeting, French USec leader Alain Krivine defiantly spat on Trotskyism, dotting the i's and crossing the t's.

Entitled "LCR/LO — French Left Unity Election Victory — Fighting Back Across Europe", the meeting featured Krivine of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), recently elected to the European Parliament along with his electoral bloc partner Arlette Laguiller of Lutte Ouvrière (LO). Posters advertising the meeting billed Krivine as "leader of the Fourth International".

Our purpose in attending was to unmask the "Trotskyist" pretensions of the USec. This had been rendered rather straightforward by the USec's role during the imperialist war in the Balkans: Krivine's LCR openly promoted imperialist intervention by the European bourgeoisies in the name of "justice" for the Kosovo Albanians. What's more, according to a report in the newspaper of the American USec group *Socialist Action* (April 1999), the USec's leading body now proposes to drop even its formal adherence to Trotskyism. This move will only codify the reality of the USec's fulsome enlistment in the imperialists' "death of communism" crusade, which aims to bury the theory and programme of Marxism.

At the meeting, Krivine declared that the

LCR's "perspectives" are to support the "social movements" — feminism, the Euromarch, anti-racist marches, ecology — to "regroup anti-capitalist people". Amid an endless "analysis" of the results of the European elections in France, Krivine attacked the Communist Party (CP), which is in the government, for its pro-war stance during the imperialist bombing of Serbia. This was truly the pot calling the kettle black; the LCR acted as a mouthpiece for the interests of French imperialism, calling for European troops in place of the US-dominated NATO. In its 1 April issue, their paper *Rouge* declared:

"NATO was not the only, and above all not the best, linchpin for an accord. The conditions for a multinational police force (particularly composed of Serbs and Albanians) could be found under the auspices of the OSCE to enforce a transitional accord."

The following week a *Rouge* statement advocated an accord with Serbia that would be policed by "a multinational force under UN control". The UN — truly a den of thieves and their victims — has been an instrument for imperialist militarism from

the 1950-53 war against the North Korean deformed workers state to the slaughter of tens of thousands of Iraqis in the 1991 war in the Persian Gulf.

The discussion that ensued was full of gushing praise for the great "socialist MEP" Krivine from various "leftists" in the audience. There was also some "Trotskyist" posturing from the likes of Workers Power, calling for a "new" Transitional Programme and attacking Krivine for not building a revolutionary party. This was rich coming from an outfit which voted for Tony Blair and which likewise supported the imperialists' war aims in the Balkans — in the midst of the bombing marching in a pro-NATO demo dominated by a NATO flag and placards reading "NATO good luck"! A speaker from the "International Bolshevik Tendency" (IBT) also postured left, referring to "glaring deficiencies" in the LCR's position on the war. The IBT had called for defence of Serbia, he declared, but also for a military bloc with the KLA on the question of self-determination until "the KLA decisively became a pawn of the NATO powers". He "forgot" to mention that the IBT clung to

this "bloc" and the call for "Independence for Kosovo" four weeks into the imperialist bombing of Serbia.

The Spartacist spokesman took the floor to lay out the stark facts. He noted that a February meeting of the USec had moved to formally junk all remaining vestiges of its pretence to being Trotsky's Fourth International — renouncing the first four congresses of the Communist International, the lessons of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky's fight for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state against capitalist restorationist forces, and the Transitional Programme. He continued:

"Now, the USec was never the Fourth International. That heritage belongs to the International Communist League. Yours is the Second International: you're loyal to your 'own' bourgeoisie. You supported counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. You called for OSCE imperialist troops to go into the Balkans. We called for workers revolution to defeat imperialism, and for defence of Serbia. It's only if you have a revolutionary party that organises and intervenes in the class struggle, and tells the working class that the main enemy is at home, that's the only way you can fight against imperialist war... Socialist Outlook, the British affiliate of the 'Fourth International', along with Workers Power and the CPGB, had a meeting while the bombs were falling on Serbia, that hosted two speakers who were pro-NATO... The ABC for a revolutionary group to lead the working class to power is knowing that the main enemy is at home, that you must be against your 'own' bourgeoisie, that's the only way to lead the working class to any victories."

Our Marxist intervention goaded Krivine into an openly anti-Trotskyist tirade, saying Trotskyism was "a moment of history", but today, "to be Trotskyist it's not my problem, my problem is to be revolutionary and not to be Trotskyist, even I don't like the word, frankly speaking".

Today, it is the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) that uniquely fights for new October Revolutions throughout the capitalist world, proudly carrying forward the proletarian, internationalist and revolutionary tradition of comrades Lenin and Trotsky. ■

East Timor...

(Continued from page 1)

upheaval and economic crisis. Fearing further turmoil throughout Indonesia as the army and its militia gangs run amok, the US is promoting a military force spearheaded by its Australian imperialist ally, which has its own very real interests in the region. Britain is the main supplier of arms to Indonesia for use in military repression including repeated massacres in East Timor.

Even more flagrantly than over Kosovo, liberals and reformists have embraced "human rights" imperialism in East Timor. Liberal academic Noam Chomsky argued for economic sanctions against Indonesia and declared in a recent Internet statement, "There is also no reason to shy away from peacekeeping forces to replace the occupying terrorist army." In France, Alain Krivine's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, which pushed for a European-dominated military intervention in Kosovo, now embraces the call for "intervention by an international peace force" in East Timor (*Rouge*, 9 September).

In Australia, there has been a growing frenzy in favour of imperialist intervention, as more than 10,000 rallied in Sydney on 11 September. The day before, some 25,000 marched on the Indonesian consulate in Melbourne, burning Indonesian flags and chanting, "Indonesia out! UN in!" Marching in lockstep behind the Australian capitalist rulers in this orgy of "human rights" chauvinism has been an array of fake-left groups, notably including the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), affiliates of the British Socialist Workers Party. As the article below points out, the ISO has pushed for sanctions against Indonesia under the guise of trade-union bans by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), whose Labourite leadership has stood at the head of demands for troops into East Timor.

Now, the ISO has explicitly lined up behind military intervention, endorsing a Melbourne demonstration call with the slogan, "Indonesia Out — Peacekeepers In", confirming that their call for trade-union bans was no expression of proletarian solidarity with the East Timorese but purely a "labour" gloss for Australian imperialist economic sanctions. Thus the ISO aids the ACTU bureaucracy in chaining the Australian proletariat to its class enemy and to the enemy of the East Timorese and Indonesian masses. We say: No to imperialist sanctions!

While the fake left marches for imperialist intervention, the ICL uniquely and urgently fights for internationalist unity in struggle by the proletarians of the region against the capitalist rulers. We struggle to win Australian workers to the understanding that the capitalist class which busts their unions can bring nothing but more bloodshed to the East Timorese. Australia, Britain and the US are the very imperialist powers which helped orchestrate the 1965 slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Indonesian workers, peasants, leftists, women and ethnic Chinese which installed the Suharto dictatorship. Today, they are the chief patrons of Suharto's hand-picked successor Habibie.

Imperialist intervention is counterposed to mobilising the powerful Indonesian proletariat, which has waged bitter struggles against the austerity and mass unemployment dictated by the International Monetary Fund. Even under the guns of military terror, there have been regular protests in Jakarta — including running battles with baton-wielding police — over the Indonesian army massacres in East Timor. One student protester told a BBC reporter, "We feel for the people of East Timor. They deserve their freedom." Proletarian revolution is the only road to libera-



John Reid

tion for Indonesia's myriad oppressed peoples. As Marxist revolutionaries, our struggle is to build the internationalist vanguard party which can lead the proletariat to power throughout the world.

Australasian SPARTACIST

It has just been announced that an overwhelming 78.5 per cent of East Timorese have rejected a sham autonomy deal offered by Indonesia in a United Nations-sponsored "popular consultation", clearly opting for independence. In the months before the 30 August vote, pro-Indonesia death squad "militias" killed hundreds and forced tens of thousands from their homes. In the wake of the vote, dozens have been killed while parts of Dili, the capital, and the towns of Maliana and Liquica have been burned, in an orgy of spiralling violence.

These atrocities are being used as the pretext for imperialist intervention in East Timor. Already more than 300 Australian cops and military advisers are there, part of a 1000-strong UN force. Thousands of

army, including the Kopassus special forces killers. These are the imperialists who devastated tiny Serbia and are now occupying Kosovo, overseeing brutal ethnic cleansing and pogromist terror against Serbs and Gypsies there. These are the imperialist mass murderers who slaughtered millions in their losing effort to defeat the Vietnamese revolution.

Imperialist military intervention means continued neo-colonial oppression, death, destruction and terrible poverty. For the imperialist rulers, who make fabulous profits exploiting the masses of the Asian region, an overarching purpose of military intervention is to prop up capitalist rule and suppress social struggle, particularly in Indonesia with its militant working class. In the context of the drive for capitalist counterrevolution in China and imperialist sabre rattling over Taiwan, a move into East Timor raises the spectre of a military threat to China and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states in Asia, Vietnam and North Korea. For the racist Australian rulers, occupation of East Timor would not only forcibly assert their "interests" in the region, but would



Workers Hammer

Workers Power alongside Australian flag on 18 September London demonstration which called for imperialist intervention in East Timor.

Australian troops are on 30-minute standby in Darwin, the largest Australian military force mustered since the Vietnam War. Currently, 7000 US troops are taking part in "Exercise Crocodile 99" manoeuvres off North Queensland along with 15,000 Australians. A British warship in the South China Sea is reportedly ready to sail to East Timor. As proletarian revolutionaries and implacable foes of our "own" ruling class, we demand that the Australian imperialists, the US, the UN and all their lackeys and camp followers get out of East Timor and stay out!

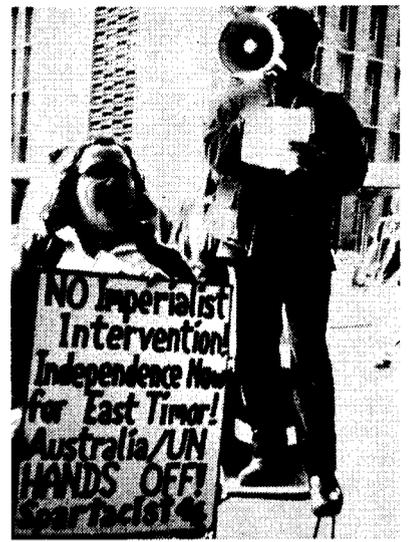
The idea that military intervention by Australian and US imperialism will bring independence and "freedom" to the East Timorese is a horrible lie. These same imperialists backed Indonesia's annexation of the former Portuguese colony in 1975, leading to the deaths of more than 200,000 East Timorese. For 30 years they supported and armed the bloody dictator Suharto while training the Indonesian

also provide a means of keeping out desperate refugees. Portugal wants its piece as well.

In laying the basis for what they want to ensure is stable neo-colonial rule, the imperialists are assisted by the East Timorese petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders who have been demanding armed imperialist intervention. Agreeing that East Timor should become a UN "protectorate" for the next five years, they are bidding to become frontmen in the exploitation of their "own" people.

We say that the real and only allies of the desperately poor people of East Timor are the international working class, from the multi-millioned proletariat of Indonesia to the workers of the imperialist countries in the region, Australia and Japan. This is the programme of proletarian internationalism. The Australian workers movement has a particular duty to oppose the intervention of its "own" rulers, racist overlords of oppressed neo-colonies from

Social-chauvinism v Trotskyism in Australia: DSP/Resistance at 11 September Sydney rally and leaflet for Melbourne demonstration demanding imperialist "peacekeepers" endorsed by Socialist Worker (ISO); right, 9 September Spartacist campus speakout.



Australasian Spartacist

Papua New Guinea to Fiji. We fight for union bans on Australian military goods as part of the struggle to defeat imperialism. The maritime workers refusing to handle war goods destined for the imperialists' attack on Vietnam stands as a proud example of internationalist solidarity.

In Indonesia, a prison house of peoples, the proletariat must struggle to transcend the dominant Javanese chauvinism fostered by the bourgeoisie. A Trotskyist party in Indonesia would fight to mobilise the working class in urgent protest and struggle to demand Indonesia get out of East Timor, while opposing imperialist intervention. Championing independence for East Timor, it would fight for the right of self-determination of all the oppressed peoples in the archipelago.

In Indonesia, a country of belated capitalist development, all wings of the bourgeoisie are so tied to imperialism and fearful of the proletariat, that they are incapable of fulfilling the tasks historically associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolution — national liberation, agrarian revolution, legal equality for women and political democracy. Achieving these tasks and putting an end to the brutal exploitation of the masses requires the proletarian seizure of power — the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution. To consolidate proletarian rule in the face of hostile imperialism and lay the foundation for socialist economic development in backward Indonesia requires a struggle for socialist revolution internationally, in imperialist Australia, Japan and the US, and throughout the Asian region.

Labourite left: "critical support" to imperialism

The Labor Party, notably its foreign affairs spokesman Laurie Brereton, has been the most hawkish in demanding the Australian military go into East Timor, while the ACTU union bureaucrats have called for 5000 troops to be sent and the Northern Territory Trades and Labor Council calls for economic sanctions against Indonesia. This is chauvinism and class treason, the effect of which is to call on the Australian rulers to wage war on neo-colonial Indonesia. In the wake of the ALP/ACTU come the Labourite left. These leftists do not oppose imperialism as a system, but instead seek to pressure the capitalists into adopting a "progressive" foreign policy. They are purveyors of the deadly fiction that there can be "humanitarian" imperialism.

The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) has long demanded that Australia "act" in defence of the East Timorese, and their paper *Green Left Weekly* has featured regular calls for UN intervention. Now, in the person of Jon Land, spokesman for their front group Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor (ASIET), the DSP openly calls for a UN military force:

"In the context of the unrelenting violence by the pro-integration militias, a UN peace-

South Africa...

(Continued from page 5)

pete with each other over available scarce resources. Thus the black working class and plebeian masses *cannot simply defend* the gains and positions of organizational strength achieved during the struggles of the 1980s.

"A revolutionary workers party must be built to lead the working class in the struggle for state power, drawing in the rest of the oppressed black African, 'coloured' (mixed-race) and Indian masses, along with anti-racist whites, with the program and perspective elaborated by Trotsky as the *permanent revolution*."

—reprinted in *The Fight for a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left* (April 1997)

The concept of permanent revolution holds that the national bourgeoisie in backward countries—even ones which are regional imperialist powers in their own right, like South Africa—is so weak and tied to world imperialism that it cannot play the progressive role that the bourgeoisies of Western Europe and North America did in the era of their ascendance. Social and economic modernisation and an end to national oppression in countries like South Africa can be achieved only under the leadership of the working class, through proletarian revolution and its extension to the imperialist centres of Western Europe, North America and Japan.

In South Africa, *class exploitation is integrally bound up with national oppression*. Despite a sizable coloured proletariat, especially in the Western Cape, and an urban Indian working class in Natal, the overwhelming majority of workers in the white-owned factories, mines and farms are black Africans. Black Africans make up 80 per cent of the country's overall population, more if one takes into account the recent wave of immigration from neighbouring African states.

Our recognition that proletarian revolution in South Africa is also the supreme act of *national liberation* in no way entails support to nationalism as an ideology or to the project of "nation-building". Quite the contrary! To break the chains of the ANC's neo-apartheid order and achieve genuine national and social liberation, the working class must transcend the ideology of nationalism, the false belief that the black African people—brutally oppressed by the white rulers of South Africa—all have a common interest which stands higher than class divisions.

While historically and centrally black African nationalism has been directed at the white ruling elite, developments since 1994 have added another element to the country's explosive national mix: a large influx of immigrants from Mozambique and other neighbouring black states. The ANC-led government has increasingly blamed "foreigners" for rising unemployment caused by the mine closures and layoffs. Speaking at Vista University in May, Mandela told students to "buck up" and improve their grades or else "foreigners from Zimbabwe, Malawi and other African countries will take the top jobs". Such anti-immigrant demagoguery has had bloody consequences. For example, in January a lynch mob "necklaced"—burned alive—four Mozambicans in Tembisa township near Johannesburg. The workers movement must combat such murderous anti-immigrant chauvinism. We say: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

The pro-ANC labour bureaucracy has joined in pushing chauvinist poison. The National Union of Mineworkers in Rustenburg called for a moratorium on hiring Mozambicans during wage negotiations. Meanwhile, the SACTWU clothing and textile workers union has organised rallies protesting Chinese imports. At the COSATU congress, the bureaucrats raised a furor because some of the caps made for congress delegates had been produced in

China. Such anti-Chinese diatribes are not only protectionist but anti-Communist, dovetailing with imperialist threats against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. It is the duty of South African workers and workers everywhere to stand for unconditional military defence of China against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. The Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy which is driving the country headlong towards capitalist restoration must be ousted by the Chinese proletariat through political revolution.

The present industrial wealth of South Africa has in good part been created over the decades through the superexploitation of black workers drawn from outside its borders, especially in the gold and diamond mines. The industrial and mineral wealth available to a black-centred workers government in South Africa will not be limited to south of the Limpopo River, but must be used to enable the impoverished masses of all Africa to escape famine and destitution.

Mandela, Mbeki & Co explain away their drive to hold down wages and privatise state-owned enterprises as well as the failure to carry out the promised reforms by pointing to the pressures of the world capitalist market, low-wage competition from East Asia, the harsh demands of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, etc. In defending the government's anti-labour austerity policies at the recent COSATU congress, SACP leader Blade Nzimande argued that "we do not make history under circumstances of our own choosing". By this Nzimande meant that the South African workers movement and oppressed nonwhite masses had to accept and operate within the framework set by the global domination of capitalist imperialism.

However, the South African working class can *change* the course of world history. We fully recognise that a socialist revolution in South Africa would confront

formidable enemies. Emboldened and strengthened by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the competing imperialist powers, chiefly the US, are determined to obliterate any obstacles to their domination. Yet a socialist revolution in South Africa, centred on the black proletariat, would immediately find strategically powerful allies. The post-Soviet "New World Order" is anything but stable. A militant young proletariat has emerged in countries such as South Korea and Indonesia, while the powerful working class of West European countries like Italy and France have engaged in sharp struggles which could threaten the control of the reformist labour bureaucrats and go towards a struggle for power.

Millions of union members, students and others around the world actively solidarised with the struggle against white supremacy in the apartheid state. Racial minorities and immigrants facing persecution identified strongly with the black South African masses. A South African workers revolution would have an immediate radicalising effect on the oppressed black masses of Brazil, for example, as well as on American black workers, who have historically tended to be a vanguard of militant class struggle and social activism in the US. Thus even within the strongest imperialist bastions, revolutionary South Africa will find a powerful echo.

Precisely because a nationally isolated proletarian revolution in South Africa could not survive, there can be no nationally limited revolutionary workers party in South Africa. The struggle for world socialist revolution, wherever the first breakthrough occurs, is inseparable from the struggle to build an international communist vanguard through reorganising a Trotskyist Fourth International.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 718, 3 September 1999.

keeping force for East Timor should be given critical support. An armed UN peacekeeping force would act as a deterrent to the destabilisation campaign by the militias and the Indonesian military."
— *Green Left Weekly*, 1 September

The DSP's support is "critical" because, they say, "Interventions by UN forces elsewhere have often had disastrous consequences." This is a revolting alibi for UN-sanctioned slaughter, starvation and political subjugation. Look at Iraq. In the name of the UN, this country was bombed to oblivion in 1991, and since then, the UN's embargo has killed well over a million people. Australian navy vessels to this day patrol the Persian Gulf enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq. From the Korean war to the Congo, Somalia and Cambodia, UN "peacekeeping" interventions are aimed at imposing the diktats of the imperialist powers.

The International Socialist Organisation (ISO) have said they are opposed to Australian troops to East Timor, but they *refuse* to call for the Australian cops and military advisers there now, much less the UN, to get out. Prettifying Australian imperialism, they write, "Instead of sending troops, the government should be sending unconditional aid" (*Socialist Worker*, 12 March) and they back the union tops' pro-imperialist calls to ban all trade with Indonesia.

Workers Power (WP) claims to oppose Australian imperialism, but they too, do not demand Australia get out. In fact they give tacit approval to the UN presence in East Timor, demanding the recent vote be overseen "by representatives of not just the UN, but of the world labour movement" (*Workers Power*, August-October)! WP seems to think that imperialist occupation is a pre-condition for workers



SL protests Suharto dictatorship outside Foreign Office, London, May 1998.

revolution. As in Kosovo, where WP's British co-thinkers conjure up the possibility of socialist revolution under NATO bayonets, in East Timor they call for a "popular militia", "councils of workers", peasants' and students' delegates", and "a Workers' and Peasants' Government", all under the eye of the UN!

The DSP have long been the local press agents for the People's Democratic Party (PRD) in Indonesia. Recent months have seen waves of worker protests and strikes in Indonesia, and in this volatile situation the PRD has grown. PRD militants have shown great courage in the face of heavy state repression, and workers must demand freedom for all PRD, trade-union and East Timorese militants from Jakarta's dungeons! However, the PRD's central strategy is to pressure Megawati Sukarnoputri's bourgeois Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle (PDI-P). PRD leader Dita Sari, recently released from prison stated: "We must and will

demand that the PDI-P meet its responsibilities to the people who voted for it. We will put forward our program for what any new government must achieve for the workers in its first 100 days!" (*Green Left Weekly*, 11 August).

Tailing Megawati, a vicious Javanese chauvinist who has long insisted that East Timor belongs to Indonesia, underscores that the PRD's programme of petty-bourgeois nationalism is counterposed to the perspective of mobilising the Indonesian proletariat against the army's butchery in East Timor and anywhere else. Pushing illusions in the good offices of the imperialists, as early as 1996 the PRD called for Indonesia "to hand [East Timor] over to multinational peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the UN, as we have seen in Bosnia, Ethiopia and Cambodia" ("Resolution on East Timor", 26 July 1996).

UN officials are suggesting that a "Kosovo-style intervention" into East

Timor of US, New Zealand and Australian troops would be quicker to mount than a UN operation. Just as the fake left, who spewed the imperialists' propaganda about Kosovo as a pretext for the war on Serbia, bear a share of responsibility for the imperialist destruction there, so too will they bear responsibility for what an imperialist occupation of East Timor will bring.

As the Australian section of the International Communist League, we understand that proletarian solidarity with the Indonesian and East Timorese masses means, *above all*, mobilising proletarian opposition to Australian and all imperialist intervention in the region, part of the struggle to overthrow this vicious, racist ruling class. Independence now for East Timor! For workers revolution in Indonesia! Down with Australian imperialism!

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 719, 17 September 1999.

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NOTICE

Workers Hammer is now a quarterly publication.

Our next issue will be dated Winter 1999-2000.

Ireland...

(Continued from page 12)

ism in Ireland, and must understand that the ruling class uses chauvinism over Ireland to maintain its rule in both islands. Since its origins at the beginning of this century, the Labour Party — which Lenin termed a bourgeois workers party, consisting of a bourgeois programme but a working class base — has been the key instrument for preventing workers in Britain from effectively opposing their own ruling class. The revolutionary party we seek to build in Britain will be built by splitting the working class away from Labourism and winning them to Leninism. We seek to politically destroy Labourism, which is a strategic roadblock to revolution.

1969: SWP hailed the British Army in Northern Ireland

With Labour in government, the fake left's embrace of imperialism is glaring and unashamed. The reformist SWP are a prime example. In an article entitled "30 years since the troops went into Northern Ireland - How the army took sides in 'the Troubles'", *Socialist Worker* (14 August) wrote: "Thirty years on, the British establishment is still trying to cover up the truth of its role in fuelling the violence in Northern Ireland." This is rich coming from the Socialist Workers Party, who thirty years on are still trying to cover up the truth of their support for imperialist troops going into Northern Ireland in 1969. They wrote at the time:

"The breathing space provided by the presence of British troops is short but vital. Those who call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom which will hit first and hardest at socialists."

— *Socialist Worker*, 11 September 1969

The demand for withdrawal of British troops made an exceedingly rare appearance in *Socialist Worker* in the same "30 years on..." article quoted above: "For a genuinely peaceful future there must be the complete withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland." But their pretence to be for troops out is flatly contradicted by their support to Blair's "peace" hoax. They run countless headlines such as

"Peace hopes now under threat in Northern Ireland" and whine, "The Tories, their press and the Unionist bigots must not be allowed to wreck the peace" (*Socialist Worker*, 4 September). For Marxists, the basic precondition for any proletarian solution is the *immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops!* The SWP's support for the "peace" agreement means they also support the armed bodies of men — the army and RUC — who are there to enforce it.

The SWP's lip service to "troops out" (at some unspecified point in the future)



AP

General Michael Jackson, now NATO commander in Kosovo, led British troops in Northern Ireland who perpetrated 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry.



Peress/Magnum

appeared after interventions by our comrades at the SWP's "Marxism '99" in July, which exposed their scandalous record regarding the British army in Northern Ireland. Our comrades were excluded from a meeting by Eamonn McCann entitled "Northern Ireland: 1969-1999", but a comrade managed to get called on in another meeting. He protested our political exclusion from the Ireland meeting and exposed the SWP's refusal to fight against British troops today and the SWP's support for British troops in 1969. In response to heckling, he asserted: "This is a point of public record. It is recorded in your press and we have copies." The SWP are a totally Menshevik organisation who can sound "left" as long as it is popular at a given time. They supported the British Army in 1969, when Catholics had

enormous illusions that the troops would put a stop to RUC terror. In Ireland, where the troops are unpopular, the demand for troops out is currently included in each issue of the SWP's Irish press (in the small print).

The Labour government is a capitalist government, implementing the rule of British imperialism. The fundamental question which divides revolutionaries from reformists or centrists is the question of the capitalist state. We agree with Lenin that the state, which consists of special bodies of armed men — the police,

with it many of the economic privileges which that state dispenses" (*Workers Power*, September 1999). This contradicts the Leninist understanding that the state is not "neutral". Under capitalism, the Northern Ireland cops will necessarily be the armed fist of Orange rule.

Workers Power give their advice to Blair on how to really enforce an imperialist deal, in the face of recalcitrant Orangemen, saying "Someone must force their grip from power". They add:

"Only a willingness to call the Unionists' bluff, to openly make the membership of the United Kingdom (with all its economic subsidies to the Orange statelet and the Protestant labour aristocracy) totally conditional on the acceptance of a settlement agreed by the British parliament and by the Irish population, North and South, will break the log jam of Orangeism."

— *Workers Power*, September 1999

This is quite a statement. Workers Power, self-professed "Trotskyists", advocate a "settlement" from Her Majesty's parliament, the talking shop of imperialist rulers, Labour and Tory, who rejoiced in the death of James Connolly in 1916 and of hunger striker Bobby Sands in 1981. And, says Workers Power, if the people of Northern Ireland don't appreciate Westminster's generosity, they should be kicked out of the "United Kingdom" and have their subsidies cut off!

Economically, Northern Ireland is no longer essential to British imperialism; indeed it is a net drain, not least because of the high cost of "security". British imperialism is the historic oppressor in Ireland; we stated the implications of this over 20 years ago in our "Theses on Ireland": "British imperialism has brought centuries of exploitation, oppression and bloodshed to the island. No good can come of the British presence; the existing tie between Northern Ireland and the British state can only be oppressive to the Irish Catholic population, an obstacle to a proletarian class mobilisation and solution" (*Spartacist* no 24, Autumn 1977).

While looking to the British bourgeois government for a solution, Workers Power counsels that the answer to mounting Loyalist attacks on Catholics is: "Nationalist communities need to organise their own defence, demanding that Sinn Fein and the Provisionals put their weapons

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and their know-how at the disposal of elected councils of action" (*Workers Power*, July/August 1999). This is counterposed to a proletarian solution and would abandon the working class to nationalism. Sinn Féin shares the reactionary social outlook of the Irish Catholic bourgeoisie, of which they wish to become part. They reject the fight for abortion rights, and their "punishment" shootings show they enforce bourgeois "law and order" and aspire to be part of the capitalist state. Sinn Féin and the IRA, with their "ballot box" and the "armed struggle", have always propounded the petty-bourgeois strategy of "pressuring" imperialism to grant a 32-county capitalist Irish Republic. This Green nationalist programme spells forcible reunification, which Protestants would certainly resist; thus it serves to compact them behind the Loyalist bigots and reinforces communalism. Nationalism is poison to class unity of the working class.

The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) have taken to calling for independence for the Ulster Protestants, advocating "a federal solution whereby the area containing a clear British-Irish majority has the right of self-determination up to and including secession". This exercise in "self-determination" means a new partition. The territory to which this would apply "includes county Antrim, north Tyrone, south Derry, north Armagh and north Down: ie, one county and four half-counties" (*Weekly Worker*, 26 August). The "federal Ireland" which they call for would be a capitalist Ireland; "self-determination" for the Protestants would necessarily be at the expense of the Catholics and would be accompanied by large-scale forced population transfers. The 1921 partition carved the six-county Orange statelet out of the nine counties of Ulster, which came in the wake of a massive wave of communal terror, itself the result of a defeat of a huge strike in Belfast of Catholic and Protestant workers. The CPGB's position amounts to a call for a new partition of Ireland. This, together with a series of other reactionary positions such as their assertion that the racist British state is "anti-racist", indicates that the CPGB will not long remain part of the workers movement.

Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party (SP — formerly Militant Labour) are outright lackeys of British imperialism and particularly for the fascist Loyalist paramilitaries. For decades this Labourite outfit has refused to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland. They endorsed the imperialist "peace process" to the point where they maintain Catholics are no longer op-

Belfast: Harland & Wolff shipyard, early 1900s. 1919 shipyard and engineering strike united Protestant and Catholic workers; in 1920 Catholics and socialists from both communities were driven out by Unionist-led violence, which prefigured partition.



pressed. Peter Hadden says: "the national question has moved on. In 1968-9 there was a Northern Catholic minority which was oppressed by the British and the Protestant state." But, Hadden maintains, "we have had the collapse of the Protestant state" (sic) and "It is now increasingly becoming a question of two minorities" (*Socialist Voice*, 23 July).

The SP have become persistent promoters of Billy Hutchinson, a Loyalist murderer of two Catholics and spokesman of the Progressive Unionist Party, the "political wing" of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). In the early 1990s the SP sponsored Hutchinson in meetings in Ireland; now they have printed a full-page friendly "interview" with this murderer in *Scottish Socialist Voice* (30 July). It is not merely obscene, it is downright dangerous for the workers movement to give a platform to a representative of the UVF fascist death squads. According to their logic, it would be perfectly legitimate to "debate" with or interview the killers of Stephen Lawrence. The UVF must be smashed by anti-sectarian workers militias!

The Alliance for Workers Liberty has also promoted Hutchinson. Today they paint David Trimble as a "left liberal Unionist", denouncing Tony Blair for

"turn[ing] himself into an auxiliary of Sinn Féin/IRA, twisting Unionist arms for them, publicly lying that he had got assurances from Sinn Féin/IRA that they would disarm, trying to persuade the Unionist leaders to do a deal with them — one which the Unionist leaders could not possibly have sold to their own supporters. It would probably have meant the end for the left liberal Unionist leader David Trimble, and

the collapse of the Good Friday Agreement for lack of enough Protestant support in the Assembly."

— *Workers Liberty*, September 1999

David Trimble was a member of a Loyalist paramilitary outfit known as "Vanguard" in the 1970s, and in 1996 he led howling Loyalist mobs at the "siege of Drumcree".

There is an enormous contradiction between the interests of the working class of the British Isles and what the wretched Labour Party and its "socialist" apologists have on offer. The workers movement in Britain and in Ireland has borne the brunt

of endless vicious attacks, from Tories and Labour. For centuries, the working class of Britain and the colonies created the vast wealth of British imperialism, now that it is in utter decline the workers are being fleeced to make it competitive. From Northern Ireland to the Balkans, the Labour government are imperialist butchers, and the trade union bureaucracy are their loyal servants. We say: Break with Labour! Forge a revolutionary party to overthrow British imperialism! British troops out of Northern Ireland now! For workers revolution on both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish sea! ■

Balkans...

(Continued from page 7)

"live shield" of workers. Despite our political differences with the COBAS, ICL sections participated actively in the Zastava fund drive, which provided a useful vehicle for working people to take a concrete stand against their own imperialist butchers. We were welcomed by the heavily black and Asian workforce at Ford Dagenham who were typical of those eager to express their opposition to the Labour government. As we said last issue:

"In Britain, the working class is shackled by its pro-capitalist trade union misleaders to the Labour Party. Labourism is a strategic obstacle to mobilising the working class and oppressed in *class struggle* against British imperialism. But there is plenty of seething discontent at society's base, for example against privatisation of hospitals and London Underground, and as shown in the protests against the war. While the trade union bureaucracy maintained a studied silence on Labour's devastation of Serbia, Blair's 'victory' in the Balkans did not translate into electoral support in the European Parliament elections: Labour's traditional working-class base did not vote for them and the lowest electoral turnout since 1918 saw Labour defeated with only 28 per cent of the vote. "The bloodstained British imperialists whose Labour government led the war against Serbia in tandem with the US are the same racist rulers who carry out a relentless war at home against workers and all the oppressed. Competing with its imperialist rivals in a ruthless drive for profits, the strikebreaking ruling class has driven down the living standards of mil-

lions of working people and deprived them of decent, affordable housing, education and health care."

— *Workers Hammer* no 169, July/August 1999

The Labour government was the most aggressive advocate of bombing and ground troops and the most hostile to refugees. Britain admitted fewer Kosovo Albanian refugees than any other country. And for the few who make it here, once in Dover they are set upon by violent racist gangs and fascist thugs. The Labour government incarcerates 9000 asylum seekers each year without charge in prison camps. We say: *Asylum for refugees! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

The struggle against imperialist war cannot be conducted separate and apart from the class struggle. Only socialist revolution can overthrow the system of capitalist imperialism which breeds war. British imperialism must be swept away through workers revolution. *Break with Labour!* The Spartacist League is committed to forging the revolutionary workers party that is needed to lead the proletariat to take state power in the oldest stronghold of imperialism. It was the October Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which took Russia out of World War I and created the world's first workers state, a beacon of revolutionary internationalism for the proletariat everywhere. Our struggle is to reforge the Fourth International as an instrument that can lead the working masses forward to new October Revolutions and a world socialist society. ■

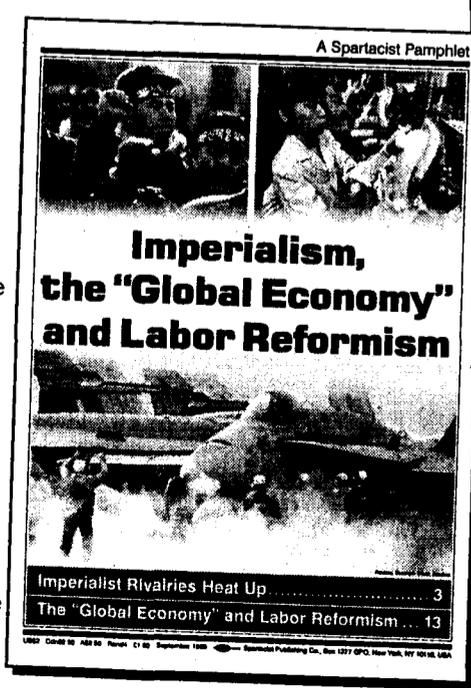
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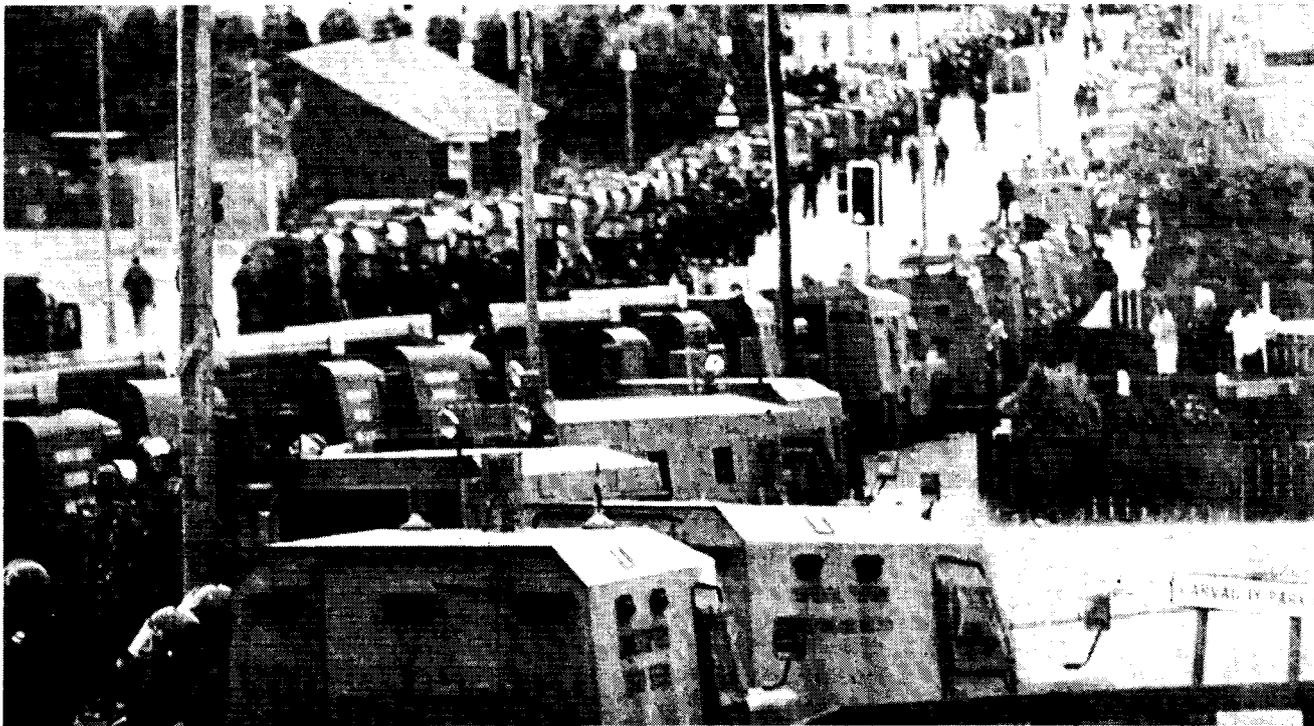
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Labourite "left" embrace British imperialism



Labour ordered British Army and RUC occupation of Catholic Garvaghy Road, to force a path for display of Loyalist supremacy, July 1997.

When the Good Friday Agreement was signed in Belfast in April 1998 the Northern Ireland "peace process" was trumpeted as Tony Blair's greatest success. It became a showpiece of New Labour's "project" which aims to revamp the image of bloody British imperialism, to present it as an instrument for "peace". Today's imperialist crimes are described as "humanitarian" exercises. Labour politicians, self-proclaimed "peacemakers" in Northern Ireland, are fresh from playing a leading role in NATO's Balkans War, a one-sided slaughter against Serbia, a small dependent country. The "peacekeeping" forces in Kosovo are under the command of General Sir Michael Jackson who is an imperialist butcher. He was captain and adjutant to the Paratroopers who shot dead 14 unarmed Catholic demonstrators in Derry on Bloody Sunday in 1972.

From the moment it was signed, the Good Friday Agreement was nothing but a "humanitarian" cover for repackaged Orange rule through naked state repression. At the time we said:

"The 'historic' agreement signed in Belfast's Stormont Castle on 11 April cannot and will not bring peace to Northern Ireland. This reactionary *imperialist* deal will reinforce the subjugation of the oppressed Catholic minority. It will be enforced by the 18,000-strong British Army and the viciously sectarian Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), who work hand in glove with the fascist Loyalist death squads in the murder of Catholics....

"The Spartacist League/Britain and the Dublin Spartacist Group (DSG), sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), categorically oppose the reactionary Stormont deal. We have warned from the beginning of the grossly misnamed 'peace' process: 'Any imperialist "deal" will be bloody and brutal and will necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. And it would not do any good for working class Protestants either'.... We demand: *British troops out of Northern Ireland now!*"
— "Northern Ireland: imperialist 'peace' fraud", *Workers Hammer* no 162, May/June 1998.

The Agreement was initially welcomed by the overwhelming majority of Irish Catholics North and South and by a significant majority of Protestants. In the 18 months since it was signed a dramatic escalation of "ethnic cleansing" as well as continuing murders by Loyalists has confirmed our analysis. Among Catholics the "peace process" is tarnished and Protestant opinion has hardened in opposition to it. In almost every town and city in Northern Ireland housing estates which were once mixed have been subjected to forcible segregation. Loyalist pipe bomb and firebomb attacks are commonplace, the attack which burned alive the three Quinn children last year being the most gruesome of such outrages. In north Belfast, where Catholic and Protestant residential areas are heavily intermingled, the process of forcible segregation has been

protracted and bloody. The father of one thirteen-year-old girl attacked by Loyalists in this area spoke for the majority of Catholics when he said "There is no peace process down here, and people are living in fear" (*Irish News*, 13 September). Although the Loyalist paramilitaries are supposedly on ceasefire alongside the IRA, there has been an escalation of mass Loyalist mobilisations such as the "siege of Drumcree" and anti-Catholic terror all across Northern Ireland.

Last year Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble welcomed the Agreement, which promised an Assembly in Stormont. To sugarcoat the return to Unionist-dominated Stormont rule, Catholics were promised a "review" of the RUC which has just been completed by prominent Tory, Chris Patten. Although the Blair government has bent over backwards to accommodate the Unionists, their opposition to "power sharing" with Sinn Féin runs so deep that Trimble effectively brought the process to a halt in July. Unionists were enraged by the Patten report on the RUC, which proposes to remove the Union Jack and the Queen's picture from police stations and to change their name to the "Northern Ireland Police Service". The RUC, the sectarian Orange statelet's armed fist, are despised and feared by the Catholic population. They are notorious for their collusion with Loyalist death squads and shoot-to-kill policy for Catholics. Rosemary Nelson, a lawyer and prominent defender of Repub-

licans, was murdered while she was investigating RUC collusion with Loyalist gangs in the murder of Catholics. The image of Robert Hamill being kicked to death by Loyalists while the RUC sat and watched will not easily be erased from the consciousness of Catholics.

Workers must rule, in Britain and in Ireland

The only way out of the cycle of communalist terror is a perspective of socialist revolution throughout these islands. It is in the direct and absolute interest of the working class in Britain to demand British troops out of Northern Ireland now. We fight for a proletarian axis to prevail: Not Orange against Green but class against class! To combat sectarian terror from all quarters — both Orange and Green — we call for anti-sectarian workers militias, consisting of both Protestant and Catholic workers and under the direction of a Trotskyist vanguard party.

The national question in Ireland cannot be resolved equitably within the framework of capitalism, nor within the island of Ireland itself. The partition of Ireland in 1921 was a quintessential act of divide-and-rule by British imperialism. The Irish Catholics, an overwhelming majority in the South, became an oppressed minority in the North. The Ulster Protestants are not part of the Irish Catholic nation and have historically defined themselves as distinct from it. Marxists oppose all forms of national chauvinism, privilege, and all discrimination such as that against Catholics in the North. However we also oppose calls for a "united Ireland" or "self-determination of the Irish people as a whole". Protestants and Catholics are interpenetrated peoples sharing a common territory and under capitalism, self-determination for the Catholics is guaranteed to reverse the terms of oppression against the Protestants, who would become an oppressed minority in a capitalist united Ireland. Likewise we oppose calls for an "Independent Ulster" which is simply support to Orange rule.

As proletarian revolutionary internationalists we fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles. This formulation is deliberately algebraic, it does not predetermine what the appropriate status for the Protestants will be under working-class rule on both islands. We fight for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, the Orange statelet in the North and the Catholic clericalist state in the South. Karl Marx insisted the British proletariat must oppose imperial-

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