

Chinese workers revolt against "market reforms"

For unconditional military defence of China against imperialism, capitalist counterrevolution! For proletarian political revolution to oust Stalinist bureaucracy!

The following article first appeared in *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/US, issue no 735, 5 May 2000.

When reports of an uprising in late February by laid-off Chinese miners in the town of Yangjiazhangzi surfaced earlier this month, the capitalist media internationally expressed alarm over mounting labour struggles in China. An editorial in the *New York Times* (7 April), mouthpiece of the US bourgeoisie, cynically acknowledged that "the current phase of selling off state factories and mines is creating hardships for many longtime employees" and lectured Beijing that it "should heed the message from Yangjiazhangzi". The imperialist rulers rightly see the resistance of the Chinese proletariat to the ravages of "market reforms" as the chief obstacle to their schemes for the capitalist reconquest of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state.

The scale of that working-class resis-

tance was evident in the revolt by some 20,000 workers and their families in Yangjiazhangzi, located 250 miles north-east of Beijing. The upheaval began when workers at a huge state-owned molybdenum mine which had been shut down in November massed at the enterprise headquarters, demanding to speak to plant managers about their paltry severance pay — \$68 for every year of service in the mines. The managers failed to show up, and a speech by the town's mayor only infuriated the workers more. Miners and their families took to the streets, setting up barricades, burning cars, smashing the windows of government buildings and setting oil drums ablaze.

Authorities moved cautiously lest the workers decide to use the stock of dynamite in the mine to defend themselves. For two days, the workers battled the People's Armed Police, a force created in the mid-1980s specifically to put down growing social unrest. Finally, army units were



Wo-Lap Lam/Asiaweek

Workers in state industry are in forefront of struggle against ravages of "market reforms" which are undermining the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

brought in, firing live ammunition over protesters' heads and quelling the rebellion. Sixty-eight dollars can barely support a

family of three for a month even in this economically depressed region, yet
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Down with racist Labour government's imperialist invasion!



Reuters

British imperialists seek to assert control over diamond-producing former colony.

British and all UN troops out of Sierra Leone now!

We reprint below a Spartacist League leaflet issued on 16 May 2000.

Over a week ago the Labour government launched a military invasion of Sierra Leone, dispatching 1500 combat troops including 700 paratroopers, Royal Marine commandos, Gurkhas and SAS "special forces". The troops are supported by a heavily armed armada offshore made up of the aircraft carrier *Illustrious*, a helicopter carrier the *Ocean*, Harrier fighters and bombers, while other reinforcements are on their way. The invasion of this small West African country was supposedly to evacuate European civilians, but upon arrival in Freetown British troops immediately took over the airport and paratroopers began patrolling the streets.

Brigadier David Richards, commander of the British military force, effectively took command of the United Nations troops there as well as of the Sierra Leone national army which is to be merged with Kamajor, a murderous pro-government militia. Revolutionaries take no side in the sordid civil war between the forces loyal to the present government of President Kabbah and the "Revolutionary United Front" (RUF). Both sides perpetrate heinous violence against the impoverished population.

The British military are now preparing to "take the war to the rebels". Their intention is that Sierra Leone forces will do the frontline fighting while British and UN troops will provide back-up. Labour Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has threatened: "If our troops are attacked, they will

fight back, I don't want the rebels to be under any misunderstanding about that" (*Guardian*, 12 May). If ministers seem a little vague about what role the troops will play it is only because they would rather have black African troops bear the brunt of the casualties.

The same racist Labour government whose cops kill blacks in police custody with impunity and was forced to admit to "institutionalised racism" in the forces of capitalist "law and order" now dispatches troops to shoot down blacks in Africa. This capitalist government which rams through privatisations and plant closures, throwing thousands of workers in Britain on the scrap heap, now rushes troops to a former colony to secure control of the diamond wealth for the capitalist class.

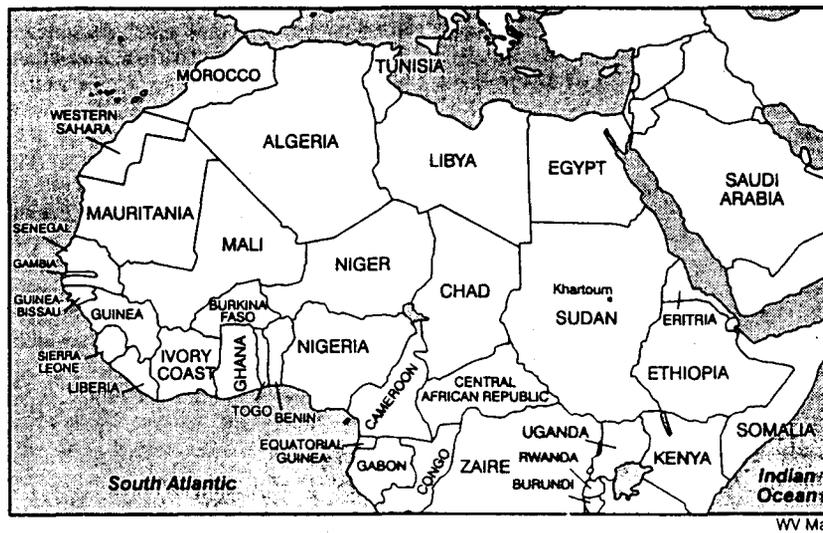
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Sierra Leone...

(Continued from page 1)

Working people and minorities in Britain have no interest in this invasion which has nothing to do with "human rights" and everything to do with capitalist greed and hypocrisy. The Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League, demands: All British troops out of Sierra Leone now! Down with Labour's neo-colonial invasion!

Nothing could be more cynical than the pretence by British imperialism, who plundered and enslaved Africa for centuries, that their military occupations are undertaken under the rubric of "human rights imperialism", which was the pretence for waging war to insert an imperialist military presence in the Balkans. Britain's relationship with Sierra Leone is called imperialism, which is not a policy but, as Lenin described it, the highest stage of capitalism, in which competing capitalist powers struggle to redivide the world among themselves. This necessarily involves keeping poor countries in poverty while a small number of giant companies based in the richer countries control the world market and make vast profits.



The invasion of Sierra Leone is a continuation of Labour's position in 1998 when they used mercenary dogs of war such as Sandline International to prop up the Kabbah government. This country, one of the world's poorest, has been devastated by a nine-year-long civil war which has killed upwards of 75,000 people and mutilated countless others. But Sierra Leone has tremendous diamond resources and the root of the conflict is over who

controls the vast profits. What bothers the British imperialists, and the UN who have 9000 troops on site, is not the "human rights" record of the rebel RUF but the fact they control the diamond-producing areas centred on Kono and Koidu from which they earn some \$200 million a year. In fact it was when UN troops attempted to move into the RUF-controlled diamond-mining areas that 500 troops were captured. Some were killed, most are still missing. In the past the government forces were supported by Nigerian troops while Liberia, a neighbouring country, has supported the RUF. The threat of renewed civil war in Congo could engulf several African countries and fighting has broken out again between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Colonialism artificially created borders in Africa dividing up ethnic groupings. The spilling over of ethnic conflicts to neigh-

States, and its allies. In Somalia in 1993 racist UN "peacekeeping" troops gunned down and massacred civilians including women, children and the elderly. The UN also presides over sanctions against Iraq which have killed over 1.5 million people. UN troops are imperialism's official mercenaries in blue helmets and whether the soldiers hail from the US, Canada, Ireland, Bangladesh or Nigeria their purpose is to guard the interests of the imperialists. We say: All UN troops out of Sierra Leone!

The only way to end imperialist plunder of the Third World is through workers revolution in the imperialist heartlands. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party, forged in the heat of class struggle, which is necessary to lead the working class and oppressed in the overthrow of British imperialism. We seek to mobilise the multiethnic proletariat in the fight for working-class rule. For this we must convince the working class of the need for irreconcilable opposition to Labour. Our strategic task is to split Labour and to win its working-class base to our revolutionary programme and party.

Labour has a long tradition of colonial butchery in the service of the Empire. Blair's spokesmen are ostentatious in showing just how aggressive they can be when fighting for British imperialism. Their arrogance stems from the belief that their attacks on the working class and minorities, as well as imperialist wars, will generate less opposition than when the same attacks are carried out by a Tory government. In the Balkans War last summer Blair howled loudest for blood as

Trotsky on class and caste



TROTSKY

Trotsky analysed the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union as a ruling bureaucratic caste resting upon the proletarian collectivised property forms. Contrary to the Socialist Workers Party who say that the Soviet Union was "state capitalist", Trotsky explained that the bureaucracy was not a class but a caste. This analysis holds true for the deformed workers states, China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. As Trotskyists we stand for



LENIN

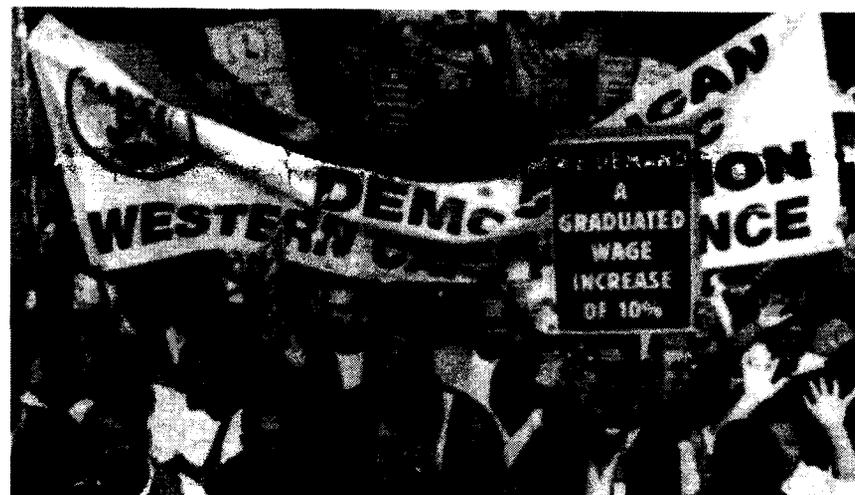
their unconditional military defence against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies and for new October Revolutions to sweep away the capitalist system across the world.

The class has an exceptionally important and, moreover, a scientifically restricted meaning to a Marxist. A class is defined not by its participation in the distribution of the national income alone, but by its independent role in the general structure of the economy and by its independent roots in the economic foundation of society. Each class (the feudal nobility, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, the capitalist bourgeoisie and the proletariat) works out its own special forms of property. The bureaucracy lacks all these social traits. It has no independent position in the process of production and distribution. It has no independent property roots. Its functions relate basically to the political technique of class rule....

It devours, wastes and embezzles a considerable portion of the national income. Its management costs the proletariat very dearly. In the Soviet society, it occupies an extremely privileged position not only in the sense of having political and administrative prerogatives but also in the sense of possessing enormous material advantages. Still, the biggest apartments, the juiciest steaks and even Rolls Royces are not enough to transform the bureaucracy into an independent ruling class....

[T]he privileges of the bureaucracy by themselves do not change the bases of the Soviet society, because the bureaucracy derives its privileges not from any special property relations peculiar to it as a "class," but from those property relations that have been created by the October Revolution and that are fundamentally adequate for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

— Leon Trotsky, "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (October 1933)



Reuters

South Africa: public sector workers' protest last year. Workers revolution in South Africa key to freeing sub-Saharan Africa from imperialist domination.

bouring countries has been a fairly common feature in recent years.

Internationally, rivalries among imperialist powers have heated up in the post-Soviet world where the dominant powers are no longer restricted by united opposition to the Soviet Union which was a degenerated workers state. Its destruction by counterrevolution in 1991-92 had disastrous impact, not least in Africa which became even more impoverished as aid from the Soviet Union dried up. Imperialist rivalries lead to wars, the outlines of which can be seen in the "scramble for Africa" now taking place over the continent's vast resources. US imperialism is sending Jesse Jackson as its black frontman while Richard Holbrooke, the US representative to the UN, is touring Africa to drum up support for more UN troops.

The British military presence in Sierra Leone partly reflects fears that the UN will lose credibility because its forces — mainly African and Asian troops — sent to enforce a British/US brokered "peace" deal last year were no match for the RUF. The UN is a den of imperialist thieves and their victims which represents the interests of the dominant world power, the United

the world's most powerful countries joined forces to bomb Serbia. In Zimbabwe Robin Cook evidently believes he is overlord of colonial "Rhodesia" as he upholds a condition imposed by Britain at the time of independence which protected land owned by white settlers from land reform.

Labour is also responsible for the fact that British planes have terror-bombed Iraq (together with US planes) almost daily since December 1998. They sent British troops to Northern Ireland in 1969 and, of course, under Blair's imperialist "peace" fraud they will stay there — indeed the paratroop regiment strutting through Freetown were the killers of 14 unarmed demonstrators on Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972. We say: British troops out of Northern Ireland now! British and all imperialist troops out of the Balkans! During the Balkans War we called for defeat of imperialism through workers revolution and for military defence of Serbia, without giving an iota of political support to the Milosevic regime. Above all we stressed the need to forge Leninist vanguard parties to lead the proletariat in overthrowing the imperialist rulers

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WORKERS HAMMER



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

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

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E-mail: WorkersHammer@compuserve.com
Subscriptions: £3 for 1 year, Europe outside Britain & Ireland £4, overseas airmail £7

Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
The closing date for news in this issue is 1 July.
Printed by Cherwell Valley Lithographic Ltd (TU). ISSN 0287-8721

Australia: For a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights!

The following article is reprinted from a supplement to Australasian Spartacist, dated 24 May 2000.

Fifteen-year-old Aboriginal youth Johnno Wurrumarrba was only telling the truth when he said he was being jailed "because I am black". A week later, on 9 February, Johnno, sentenced to 28 days in prison for allegedly stealing some pens and pencils, was dead in Darwin's Don Dale Juvenile Centre. The cops, as usual, claimed he had committed suicide. Founded on the historic genocide, uprooting and dispossession of the Aboriginal peoples, 200 years later "White Australia" capitalism still means racist brutality and death for Aborigines.

Australasian SPARTACIST

Johnno Wurrumarrba's death sparked justified outrage across the country over the racist mandatory sentencing laws that are openly aimed at Aborigines. Hundreds of Aboriginal people are behind bars for having a beer in a park or for "offensive" language. Stealing biscuits, a bit of change or a towel means prison. For many Aboriginal people, as the soaring number of deaths in custody demonstrates, a jail sentence means a death sentence.

Now those responsible for the racist state terror against Aborigines are pushing "reconciliation". The 28 May march in Sydney is sponsored by capitalist corporations and heavily backed by the NSW Labor government. Their idea of reconciliation is that Aborigines should forgive and forget, resigning themselves to an existence of all-sided racist oppression while the ruling class absolves itself of its crimes, past and present.

In desperation, some Aboriginal people hope the "reconciliation process" and government acceptance of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's document—ten years in the making, the creation of hand-picked Aboriginal "leaders" and government bureaucrats—might lead to some reforms. But "reconciliation" is precisely *not* about addressing the grim reality the Aboriginal peoples face daily. It was the brainchild of then Labor prime minister Paul Keating who wanted to cover up his knifing of land rights and a huge increase in black deaths in custody. At the same time, Keating sought to clean up Australian capitalism's "image" to facilitate its penetration into Asia where the vile treatment of Aborigines had become an embarrassment, an obstacle to the only thing the ruling class really cares about: profit.

The federal government preaches "reconciliation" while denying there ever was a "stolen generation". Howard & Co rewarded the Northern Territory [NT] government's empty promise to "investigate alternatives" to mandatory sentencing with \$5 million, while increasing the cops' power to detain youth without even charging them! No wonder that in Mandarin Chinese there is a new expression, "Howardism", which is a synonym for racist arrogance. Kim Beazley's ALP "opposition" hypocritically denounced the NT mandatory sentencing laws, but *not* those in his native Western Australia [WA] which were first introduced by Carmen Lawrence's state Labor government. Now in opposition in WA the ALP still loudly defends these racist laws. At

Break with Laborism—Build a revolutionary workers party, tribune of the people!



Canberra, 19 August 1996: parliament stormed by a militant, multiracial demonstration of Aborigines, trade unionists and youth.

the same time, the ALP-run state governments continue to kill Aborigines on the streets and in the jails.

The struggle for Aboriginal rights in this country powerfully illustrates the futility of looking to the capitalist state, whether run by the Coalition or the ALP, to in any way ameliorate the conditions of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. We Marxists understand that the capitalist state—the courts, cops and prisons—serves a profit system based on the exploitation of labour, built upon the dispossession and genocide of the indigenous population and the exclusion of Asians. Racist to the core, it cannot be reformed into serving the interests of the exploited and oppressed. It must be smashed by victorious workers revolution. With its numbers and organisation, its hands on the levers of production, it is only the multiracial working class that has the social power and historic interest to bring down the capitalist system and establish an egalitarian socialist society.

Racist oppression: bedrock of Australian capitalism

From the beginning the racist rulers of this country have sought to wipe out the Aboriginal population. The 19th and early 20th centuries were marked by hideous massacres of Aboriginal people from one side of the country to the other: the 1824 slaughter of the Wiradjuri people, the infamous 1838 Myall Creek Massacre and the month-long killing sprees around Coniston in 1928 to name but three. Justifying this barbaric destruction of a people, the Australian rulers declared the Aborigines were a doomed population that would die out. To ensure this outcome, a conscious policy of "forced assimilation" was applied to those of mixed race. Thousands of Aboriginal children were ripped from their families; the "Stolen Generation" is really many generations.

From North America to Africa and Asia the British colonialists carried out murder-

ous and genocidal wars against many indigenous peoples. But Australia was unique in its pretence that no one lived here (*terra nullius*) and thus those who most obviously did live here had no rights. Until the 1960s Aborigines, particularly those living on reserves, lacked basic citizenship rights. They could not vote, had no freedom of movement and were not even counted in the census—in the land



Spartacist League at protest against fascist National Action bunker in Fawkner, Melbourne, March 1997.

their ancestors had occupied for over 40,000 years.

Today some of the laws have changed but racist oppression and intense social degradation remain. Infant mortality rates for Aborigines are like those of desperately poor "Third World" countries. Life expectancy for adults is 20 years lower than that of the rest of the population. In many towns, unemployment is over 90 per cent. Aboriginal people are jailed at a rate 14.9 times that of the population as a whole. And the cops serve as judge, jury and executioner, carrying out racist killings of Aborigines on the streets and in the prisons. John Pat, Daniel Yock, Lloyd

Boney, David Gundy, Colleen Richman, Eddie Murray—the all too many victims of capitalist state terror must not be forgotten!

Handmaiden to the reconciliation fraud is the bourgeoisie's very real campaign to prevent Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders from getting back even a fraction of the lands which were stolen from them. The 1992 *Mabo* decision admitted that Aborigines had some, extremely restricted, right to claim title to land. But from the Keating government's *Native Title Act* to Howard's *Wik* amendments, this minimal recognition of land rights has been so whittled away in the interests of the mining magnates and agribusiness as to be all but meaningless. As we wrote in our programme, *For a Workers Republic of Australia, Part of a Socialist Asia!*:

"We support any attempts by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to claw back some of the land which has been stolen from them, and to get whatever financial compensation they can from the tight-fisted, racist ruling class. The possibility of independent development of Aboriginal nations was brutally foreclosed by the British colonisers. Yet in those locations where Aboriginal peoples have a land base we defend whatever measure of political autonomy they are able to wrest from governments, including the right to govern their land and control its resources."

Only a workers government can guarantee these conditions. Elementary justice, not only for Aboriginal peoples, but for all the oppressed and exploited in this society, demands the expropriation of industry and agribusiness through proletarian revolution. Only the destruction of capitalism as a system can lay the basis for a future free of deprivation, state violence and all-sided racist oppression for Aboriginal peoples. We Marxists of the Spar-

tacist League are struggling to build a Leninist vanguard party, a genuine tribune of the people, that fights to instil in the working class the understanding that without an unremitting proletarian fight for Aboriginal rights the workers will not and cannot destroy racist capitalism.

ALP: party of "White Australia"

With the Soviet Union destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution, imperialist rivalries have sharply increased, and the Howard government, like capitalist governments everywhere, has stepped up the slashing of living standards and escalated

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Australia...

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the war on unions, immigrants and minorities. Their crude anti-Aboriginal and anti-Asian racism, however, has some sections of the capitalists worried about their ability to rob and oppress peoples throughout the region. So the ALP "offers" words about racism while fully endorsing the Coalition's racist anti-immigrant campaign.

The ALP was founded a century ago as the party of "White Australia" racism. This is hardly ancient history. In the 13 years (1983-96) that the ALP ruled federally under the Hawke and Keating governments the rate of Aboriginal imprisonment rose by 51 per cent and the number of deaths in custody tripled. The 1996 federal election was, as we put it, a "Carnival of Racist Reaction" marked by an explosion of bi-partisan white racism targeting Asians, immigrants and Aborigines, along with an escalation in attacks against the organised working class and sharp cuts to social services.

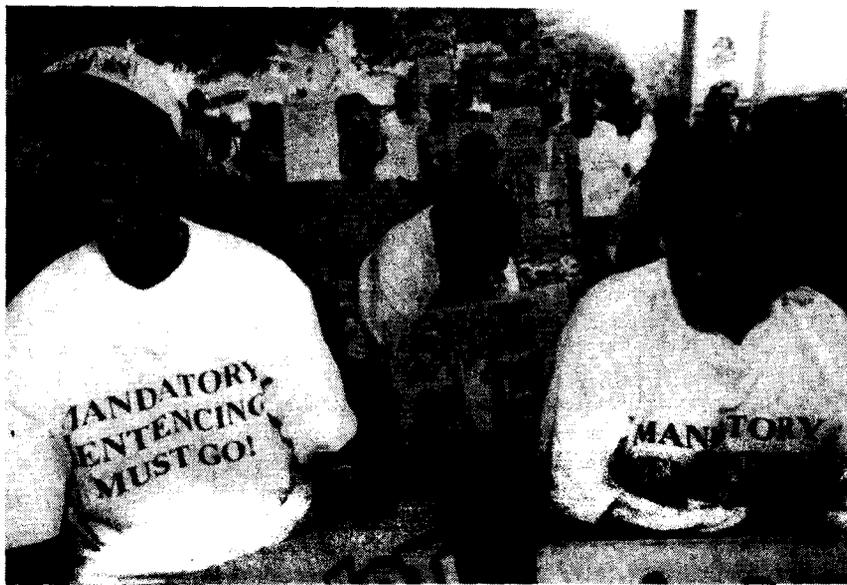
This directly fuelled the rise of Pauline Hanson's fascist One Nation Party and spurred on National Action, KKK and other fascist scum. From Broome to Cairns come reports of lynch mob terror against Aborigines while in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney the fascists have been increasingly active, especially targeting immigrants. Where the power of the multiracial working class can be brought to bear, we fight for union/minority mobilisations to stop the fascists' race-hate provocations. This is the programme that won a resounding victory in New York City on 23 October 1999 when more than 8000 unionists, black people, youth and socialists rallied to the call of the Partisan Defense Committee (legal and social defence arm of the Spartacist League/US) and drove the KKK off the streets. Key to this success was our principle that the working class must be mobilised independently of and against the capitalist state.

Out of power federally, the ALP runs state governments which continue the war on Aborigines, immigrants and the working class. In NSW, Carr's "tough on crime" drive has targeted Aboriginal people from Sydney's Redfern to the most remote communities. Aboriginal youth are 100 times more likely to be jailed than other people and constitute 32 per cent of the juvenile prison population. At the same time immigrants especially from Asia and the Near East are subjected to Gestapo-style attacks, round-ups and deportations. In Queensland, the Beattie ALP government's first act was to enshrine Howard's anti-land rights *Wik* legislation.

As the Howard government pursues its campaign to roll back and wipe out union rights, the Bracks' ALP government in Victoria broke the recent power workers strike there. Meanwhile Carr & Co are going after teachers and railway workers and the cops have been sent to attack picket lines from Davids warehouse workers to strikers at Joy Mining Machinery.

The vicious racist attacks on Aborigines as well as immigrants are aimed at dividing the working class in order to destroy trade-union rights and social welfare while ratcheting up the rate of exploitation. The Laborite trade-union misleaders aid and abet the capitalists' dirty work, preaching the poison of protectionism. Viewing the world through the eyes of the bosses, they peddle the lie that the enemy of the working class in Australia is the workers in other countries, not the capitalists here.

Attacks on the most vulnerable in this society have always been used as a wedge to attack the livelihood and well-being of the entire working class. In 1977 Aborigines were the first people forced into the slave-labour, union-busting "work-for-the-hole" schemes. *We say Aboriginal rights,*



Far Eastern Economic Review

Protest against mandatory sentencing laws, Darwin. Aboriginal deaths in custody tripled under Hawke/Keating Labor governments.

immigrant rights and union rights must go forward together or they will be thrown back separately.

Outraged by the pro-capitalist ALP and trade-union tops' fealty to the racist status quo, some militants, not least among Aborigines, despair that the working class can be mobilised in defence of indigenous people. But the spectacular storming of parliament in Canberra in August 1996 by militant Aborigines, unionists and youth showed otherwise. Some 35,000 had come out to an Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) protest against the newly elected Howard government's attacks on welfare and union rights. When the cops attacked an Aboriginal contingent at the head of a 6000-strong march of Aborigines and unionists, the organised workers defended the Aboriginal protesters, forcing the cops to retreat into Parliament House where they were besieged for two hours. In this exceptional action, the militant demonstrators acted in spite of the Laborite misleaders' racist refusal to lift a finger in defence of Aborigines. This gives a taste of the kind of social power that can be brought to bear under the leadership of a revolutionary party.

The sight of unionists defending Aborigines in Canberra sent the ruling class into a witch-hunting frenzy. In turn, the ACTU tops cut off the hand that reached out to Aborigines from the working class. They turned in the anti-racist militants to the state. In effect this was their pledge that they would prevent workers from ever again defending Aborigines against racist state terror. Thus do the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats act as a transmission belt for, and reinforcer of, backward consciousness in the proletariat—centrally the deep racism rooted in this country's violent history as a European settler colony in Asia.

Laborism is not some "lesser evil" but a political *obstacle* in the struggle for the interests of the workers and oppressed. The main mechanism for chaining the proletariat to the racist rulers, the ALP is, in the apt phrase of Russian revolutionary leader VI Lenin, a bourgeois workers party, thoroughly bourgeois in its leadership, outlook and programme while based on the organisations of the working class. A revolutionary workers party will be built by *splitting* the working-class base of the ALP from the pro-capitalist leadership, centrally through the fight to replace the social-democratic union misleaders with a class-struggle, revolutionary leadership of the unions.

Fake left: Laborite to the last

Last September the ALP and the union tops, who have demobilised and sold out every attempt to fight back against the bosses, found energy and purpose in screaming for racist Australian imperial-

ism to send troops into East Timor. Virtually the entire self-proclaimed left rallied behind them attending, endorsing and in some cases leading marches for "Peacekeepers In!" They wildly cheered the racist anti-Indonesian trade union bans which were *explicitly* designed to hurry Australian military intervention and were promptly called off as soon as the army went in. In the face of the rabid chauvinist campaign, only the Spartacist League from the beginning opposed this neo-colonial invasion, forthrightly proclaiming in word and deed: Australian/UN imperialist troops out of East Timor! Independence now! As we said in a December 1999 special *Australasian Spartacist* supplement:

"As to the Australian rulers' credentials as opponents of genocide, one need only look at the barbarity they have meted out for the last 200 years to the Aboriginal peoples, who were nearly exterminated, their lands and even children stolen from them."

This truth has been brutally driven home as Australian troops attack desperate job-seekers and terrorise Timorese women in their homes. In Darwin, the heavily Aboriginal city which is the staging ground for the imperialist occupation of East Timor, it's the same story. Young Aboriginal women have reported being harassed



Australasian Spartacist

May 1993: trade unionists, Aborigines and students mobilise to smash racist ban at Student Prince Hotel, celebrate anti-racist victory.

and sexually assaulted by the racist marauding Australian troops.

This doesn't give the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) even a moment's pause. They were first in the ranks of the pro-troops brigade. Today they demand "a people power movement on the streets, like the one which forced the Howard government to send in troops" in order to "abolish mandatory sentencing". The DSP deeply believes that the racist capitalist state can be pressured into serving the interests of the exploited and oppressed.

This is a deadly lie. The army, the cops, the courts exist for only one reason, to defend and preserve the rule of the tiny handful of capitalists. All experience of the workers movement has proven, as Lenin wrote, that the state is "an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another" (*State and Revolution*). It cannot be reformed—it must be smashed through workers revolution!

For groups such as the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and Workers Power (WP) the capitalist state administered by the ALP is something other than a capitalist state run by, for example, the Liberals. Back in 1993, the ISO greeted "reconciliation" ALP-style, crowing that "Paul Keating's speech in Redfern Park last December was a great start to the Year of Indigenous People." They were ecstatic too when Hawke established a Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, for which they had been pleading since the 1984 acquittal of the cops who murdered John Pat. They got what they wanted. The ALP-appointed commission endorsed the police and coroner verdicts in *all* 99 cases it reviewed. *All the killer cops walked!* As we uniquely warned in 1987:

"A Royal Commission would be at best a whitewash, and could be used to witch-hunt the victims. There is deep anger at 'black deaths in custody.' But the reformists and liberals are engaged in a treacherous and dangerous attempt to tie blacks and all the oppressed to the same state which is carrying out the terror!"

— "Hawke's Cold War Regime Kills Blacks", *Australasian Spartacist* no 120, May/June 1987

Indeed, Laborite to the bone, the ISO grotesquely supports cop and prison guard "unions". They're all for "strikes" by these armed thugs of the capitalist state who routinely terrorise and murder Aborigines! We Marxists say: Cops, prison guards out of the unions!

The Workers Power group announced its presence in Australia calling for a vote to the execrable Keating in 1996. They still carry the torch, demanding "Repeal the Wik amendment to the Native Title Bill" (*Workers Power*, May-June 2000). That is, they uphold Keating's *Native Title Act* which knifed Aboriginal people. Like the ISO, WP alibis the ALP, complaining

about its "lack of backbone" against mandatory sentencing, while disappearing the racist state terror carried out by state ALP governments against Aborigines.

WP calls for "defence of the right to self-determination of indigenous Australians". The ALP upholders of racist capitalism, from Whitlam in the 1970s to Beattie today are also for "self-determination" while the government-appointed Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's declaration states that "Aboriginal and

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Crisis hits “socialists” who cheered for counterrevolution

Following the demise of its founder-leader Tony Cliff, the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the largest self-styled “socialist” organisation in Britain is in deep crisis. A bitter factional struggle has erupted between the SWP and its American satellite, the International Socialist Organization (ISO). Internal opposition groups have sprung up within the SWP’s “International Socialist Tendency”. As revealed in the ISO’s March 2000 *Internal Discussion Bulletin* and elsewhere, the questions posed in the present fight include Tony Cliff’s “theory” of “state capitalism”; policy over the Balkans War; the SWP’s “turn” to electoralism; the approach to protests against “globalisation”, as well as the organisational liquidation of various Cliffite outfits internationally such as their South African group’s disappearance into the South African Communist Party.

For its part, the SWP leadership has responded to internal dissent by dissolving every branch in Britain and Ireland and reorganising them as “campaign units”. Oppositionists such as the “Sverdlov” grouping in the US have seized mainly on the lack of internal democracy—which is infamous. Indeed, the British left is full of former “oppositionists” tossed out of Cliff’s organisation. Just as the gangsterism of the SWP against its opponents on the left is the “method” by which it seeks to resolve the contradiction between the “socialism” it claims to stand for and the abject reformist content of its actual work, the lack of internal democracy is the internal reflection of this same contradiction.

At the heart of the current crisis in the Cliffites is the Russian Question. A 28 May Internet posting by Sverdlov reported: “There is not a single comrade inside the ISO—for example—that can defend the state-cap theories since the fall of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.” He added that there is very little insistence on such theories as a pre-condition for membership. The reason

for this is obvious: ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and close to a decade after the final undoing of the October Revolution of 1917 the resulting catastrophe for the proletariat and oppressed in those countries and around the world are there for all to see.

The origins of the SWP lie in Cliff’s refusal in 1950 to defend the North Korean

their own bourgeoisie, over the years the SWP generalised their capitulation to Labourite “democratic” imperialism. The Cliffites absurdly claim that capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former USSR represented merely a “step sideways”. As we explained in the recent issue of our international theoretical journal, *Spartacist*:

But it’s not by any means what a new generation impelled into opposition against the imperialist wars, racist terror, attacks on the rights of women, poverty, immiseration and the growth of the fascists that were the results of capitalist counterrevolution want! The SWP’s triumphalism over the “death of communism”, its perspective of cashing in on its



Cliffites joined imperialists in hailing Yeltsin counterrevolution which ushered in misery and hunger for working people. ICL fought to mobilise Soviet workers in defence of gains of October Revolution.

and Chinese deformed workers states against a counterrevolutionary war led by Washington, whose main imperialist ally was the British Labour government. Cliff’s bogus “theory” of “state capitalism” (promoted by earlier social democrats who had opposed the Russian October Revolution of 1917) was the rationalisation for this programmatic departure from revolutionary Trotskyism, the repudiation of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and those states where capitalism had been overthrown against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution.

Proclaiming themselves a “third camp”, which in fact placed them in the camp of

“Today Cliff’s U.S. followers unabashedly declare: ‘The revolutions in Eastern Europe were a step sideways—from one form of capitalism to another’ (*Socialist Worker* [US], 23 April 1999). Don’t try this line on any Russian worker today. The unprecedented economic and social implosion now occurring in the territory of the ex-USSR is the real measure of just how historically progressive the planned, collectivized economy really was. In the chaotic conditions of post-Soviet Russia, the laws of capitalism have resulted in total economic collapse: production has fallen at least 50 percent since 1991, capital investment by 90 percent. Today a third of the urban labor force in Russia is effectively unemployed; 75 percent of the population lives below or barely above subsistence level and 15 million are actually starving....

“While clinging to their threadbare theories, the Cliffites and their ilk are oddly modest about their real contribution. The restoration of capitalism in the USSR and East Europe was the implementation of their program. Like Shachtman, who supported Washington’s Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, Cliff & Co. did their utmost to seek to bring victory to U.S. imperialism in the Cold War, lusting for the bloodying of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, championing the ‘trade union’ credentials of Solidarność—instrument of the Vatican, Wall Street and Western social democracy for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland—and vicariously dancing with the black marketeers, monarchists and yuppies on Yeltsin’s barricades in 1991. *Socialist Worker* (31 August 1991) trumpeted Yeltsin’s victory: ‘Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing.’ Well, now the Cliffites have what they wanted.”

—“The Bankruptcy of ‘New Class’ Theories/Tony Cliff and Max Shachtman: Pro-Imperialist Accomplices of Counterrevolution”, *Spartacist* no 55 [English-language edition], Autumn 1999.

“anti-Stalinist” credentials in the wake of the destruction of the gains of the October Revolution, has in fact resulted in the present internal crisis.

We are the party of the Russian Revolution!

As revolutionary Trotskyists, we understand that the world’s first workers state succumbed to bureaucratic degeneration under conditions of hostile imperialist encirclement, the devastation of the proletariat through the Civil War against imperialist-backed counterrevolution and the failure of the revolution to spread internationally, particularly to the imperialist centres. Under these conditions, the nationalist bureaucratic apparatus headed by Stalin usurped political power from the proletariat in 1924, but did not destroy the socialised property relations. Stalin’s dogma of “socialism in one country” became the ideological justification for transforming the Communist parties internationally into bargaining chips in an illusory search for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. Trotsky and his followers fought to *unconditionally defend* the workers state issuing from the October Revolution *despite* the Stalinist caste, calling for a political revolution by the Soviet proletariat to overthrow that caste.

It was armed with this programme that the ICL mobilised our forces in a sustained intervention into the incipient proletarian political revolution in the DDR in 1989-90. We fought against capitalist reunification down the line, fighting for socialist revolution in the West, while fighting to lead the East German proletariat in defence of the East German workers

continued on page 6



Spartacist

Spartacists initiated 250,000-strong rally against fascist desecration of Treptow memorial to Red Army, East Berlin, January 1990. We fought against capitalist re-unification and for a Red Soviet Germany in a socialist Europe.

Cliffites...

(Continued from page 5)

state and in political revolution against the Stalinists who would hand the DDR over to the imperialists. Later in the Soviet Union we fought to mobilise the proletariat against the enveloping counterrevolution, distributing over 100,000 leaflets at factories and workplaces demanding: "Soviet workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution!". But in the absence of the revolutionary intervention by the working class, capitalist counterrevolution

Chinese "dictator" — the codeword for bourgeois anti-communist forces who seek the destruction of the gains of the 1949 revolution. Bennett went so far as to attack Labour minister Jack Straw for having allowed Jiang Zemin into Britain! How typical of slavish social democrats who embrace their "own" imperialist rulers' "democracy" against the hard-won conquests of the working class!

When British imperialism finally had to surrender Hong Kong to the Chinese deformed workers state in 1997, *Socialist Review* (June 1997) stated: "Socialists should neither mourn nor celebrate the

the Democrats too much by feeding "the right" — ie the Republicans. The ISO said as much: "If the labor movement plays into this campaign, it will simply give a 'progressive' cover to the labor-hating Buchanans and Helmses" (*Socialist Worker* [US], 7 January).

The idea that the world is governed by bodies like the WTO and IMF which trample on the "sovereignty" of the most powerful imperialist countries is both reactionary and absurd. The authority exercised by these bodies derives from the power of the rival imperialist states for which they function as agents. In presenting "globalisation" as a new development in which a handful of multinational corporations, the WTO, IMF and World Bank are responsible for the impoverishment of the masses of the "Global South", reformists today recycle the Social Democrat Karl Kautsky's myth of "ultra-imperialism" which Lenin debunked in his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Lenin wrote:

"Therefore, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English parsons, or of the German 'Marxist' Kautsky, 'inter-imperialist' or 'ultra-imperialist' alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing all the imperialist powers, are inevitably nothing more than a 'truce' in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars."

Promoting the "spirit of Seattle", the Cliffites peddle the illusions that the IMF, WTO and other institutions can be reformed and the imperialist powers — the biggest exploiters of labour on the planet — can somehow be pressured to abolish sweatshops and impose "fair labour standards" globally. Correspondingly, the issues of domestic poverty, racial oppression and sweatshop labour are buried. Also buried are the nearly daily bombings and starvation blockade of Iraq, the NATO bombardment of Serbia back to the stone age and imperialist troops in the Balkans. These political verities would blemish the cosmetic of "human rights" painted by reformists and union misleaders on the face of US and British imperialism. In contrast, the ICL fights to win workers and radical youth to the consciousness that the class interests of the workers and the oppressed are diametrically opposed to those of the capitalists and the eradication of poverty, racism and war can only be accomplished through a socialist revolution led by a revolutionary Trotskyist party.

Balkans War: flunking the test in Britain and the US

The Balkans War — the first major war in Europe since World War II — was a direct consequence of capitalist counterrevolution. The Yugoslavian deformed workers state was born out of World War II, when Tito's Communist partisans successfully battled the occupying Nazi German Wehrmacht as well as the Croatian fascist Ustasha and Serbian royalist Chetniks. The victory of the multinational Partisan forces demonstrated that, despite centuries of ethnic conflict, unity of the South Slav peoples within the borders of Yugoslavia was possible — *but only on the basis of proletarian state power*. But the socialist and democratic ideals to

which the Tito regime publicly appealed were undermined by the bureaucratic deformations and inherent limitations of Stalinism, with its programme of building socialism in one country. Resurgent nationalisms were fuelled when "market socialism" was introduced; they would later be whipped to white-hot heat by the imperialists as a battering ram for the restoration of capitalism. The bloody communalist slaughter that ensued, by the Cliffites' lights, was just another "step sideways".

The NATO war against Serbia was a war of domination aimed at realising long-standing US plans to insert a substantial US/NATO military presence in Serbia through subduing Milosevic. As Lenin stressed, in the case of an imperialist war against a small nation or semicolonial people, it is the duty of the working class not only to fight for the defeat of one's "own" government but to defend the victims of imperialist aggression. That is the position of the ICL. Our international declaration on the war (issued 21 April 1999) said unambiguously: *Defeat imperialism through workers revolution! Defend Serbia against US/NATO attack! Down with the United Nations economic sanctions! ALL US/UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans!* Long before the imperialists and their leftist apologists cynically took up the cause of the Kosovo Albanians as a shibboleth for imperialist bombardment of Serbia, we championed the right of the Albanian people of Kosovo and western Macedonia to self-determination. With the onset of the imperialist war against Serbia, we Marxists recognised that the right of the Kosovo Albanians to secede — a democratic question — was subordinated to the need to militarily defend Serbia against US/Britain/NATO attack.

Blair's Labour government were ag-



Workers Hammer

25 March 1999: Spartacist protest against Balkans War calls for defeat of British imperialism, defence of Serbia.

destroyed the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989-92.

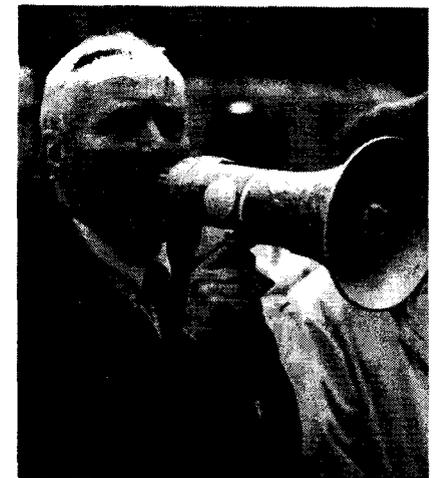
The "Russian Question" is posed point blank in China, where a class battle of immense importance is looming. The deepening of "free market" measures by the Stalinist bureaucracy is undermining the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which destroyed the rule of the landlords and the bourgeoisie and established collectivised property, a planned economy, and state monopoly of foreign trade. The Chinese proletariat, however, has witnessed the results of capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the USSR and has responded to the attacks on these gains with convulsive class battles and mass protests. *Defend the gains of the Chinese Revolution! For proletarian political revolution!*

The Cliffites, in keeping with their origins, have lined up with the imperialists' anti-communist crusade against China. Speaking at a demonstration in defence of asylum-seekers on 24 June leading SWPer Weyman Bennett attacked Chinese President Jiang Zemin as the

handover of Hong Kong. In the short term very little will change for the majority of the population — Hong Kong will be as undemocratic and exploitative a society as it has ever been." The British seized the island in 1841 during the first Opium War and ran it as a virtual police state — and a haven for crooks and warlords fleeing the Chinese Revolution — until forced to pull out. In contrast, we said at the time: "Trotskyists can only cheer as the rotted British Empire loses its last major colonial holding with the lowering of the bloody Union Jack and the raising of the five-starred red flag of the People's Republic on July 1" ("China on the Brink: Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?", *Spartacist* no 53, Summer 1997).

Last November's Seattle demonstrations against the World Trade Organisation, while drawing in everything from right-wing supporters of Pat Buchanan to anarchist youth and spokesmen for the Mexican Zapatista peasant-guerrilla movement, was dominated by the anti-communist, rabidly nationalist AFL-CIO trade union bureaucracy. The Seattle protests were marked by foam-flecked speeches denouncing Chinese "slave labour", by signs promoting the CIA's "Free Tibet" crusade and by the dumping of Chinese steel into Puget Sound. AFL-CIO head Sweeney railed against a "trade deal with a rogue nation" while trade union placards demanding "People First Not China First" mingled with banners such as one screaming "For the Basic Human Rights in Vietnam — Kill the Red Evil".

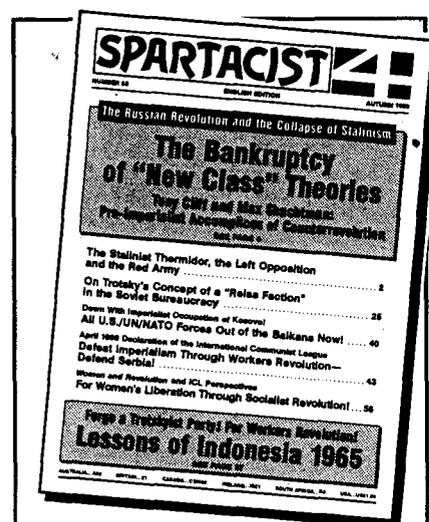
The SWP, noting the absence of a sea of ISO banners at the event, has denounced the ISO for flunking the "test of Seattle" and there has been much back-and-forth about how deeply to capitulate to the "movement" as it is. Meanwhile, the ISO has evidently felt pressure from other quarters, running articles like: "Why China-Bashing Hurts U.S. Labor" (*Socialist Worker* [US], 3 March). In part this reflects the fact that some youth are repelled by the vicious anti-communism of the trade union tops, but it is also a plea to the Sweeney bureaucracy not to damage



Workers Hammer

SWP tails Labourite Little Englander Tony Benn, who pushes UN figleaf for British imperialism's dirty wars.

gressively pro-NATO "Atlanticists" and much of the fake left lined up foursquare behind the war cry "poor little Kosovo". Thus you had the right-centrist Workers Power (WP) outfit supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and participating in a "Workers Aid for Kosova" demonstration on 10 April 1999 which was shot through with slogans like "NATO Good Luck" and "NATO Now or Never". Workers Power and other Labourite groups sponsored an 11 May meeting which featured two unvarnished pro-NATO speakers, one of whom, a rabid pro-Albanian nationalist, announced that anyone who didn't support NATO should stay home (see *Workers Hammer* no 169,



Spartacist

No 55, Autumn 1999

£1.00 (56 pages)

Make cheques payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041,
London NW5 3EU

Spartacist League/Britain

PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU. Tel: 020 7485 1396

Dublin Spartacist Group

PO Box 2944, Dublin 1. Tel: 01 855 8409

International Communist League

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July/August 1999). And when Serbia was bombed into submission, as NATO tanks rolled in and ground troops occupied Kosovo, Workers Power cheered: "the working class must welcome the ending of the attempted genocide against the Kosovo people and, if it fully materialises, the return of all the refugees to their homes" (*Workers Power*, June 1999). What has "fully materialised" under NATO occupation is a reversal of the terms of oppression and the insertion of a mammoth NATO military presence in Serbia!

The SWP's position was somewhat different. Accommodating to Tony Benn, whose preference was for Europe over US-dominated NATO, the SWP did not join the "poor little Kosovo" chorus. Instead, leading SWP member Alex Callinicos joined a host of others, including Alain Krivine of the French LCR, in signing a letter which called for a "policing operation" against Serbia to be run by the European imperialist-dominated Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Published in *Socialist Review* (June 1999) this read in part:

"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."

The SWP's stance was also convenient for the Greek Cliffites. The Greek bourgeoisie for its own reasons are not keen advocates of the Albanian national aspirations. Furthermore, as in Italy, class-struggle opposition to the war in Greece was often channelled by reformists into anti-Americanism, a cheap substitute for and an obstacle to proletarian internationalist opposition to imperialist war.

While the SWP capitulated to Bennite Labourism in Britain, the ISO in the US, where there is no Labour Party to capitulate to, bent to the prevailing pressure of "human rights imperialism", arguing for self-determination for Kosovo during the bombing. According to the SWP, the ISO "failed the test of war" not least because it made "a big deal of the UN", which "pissed off the soft pacifists, and so the movement stayed small and dominated by the wrong people". When the ISO protests they did not make a big issue of the UN — we can on this one occasion back up their story. It is the ICL which opposes the UN — under whose auspices the Korean and Persian Gulf Wars were carried out — on principle as an "imperialist den of thieves" and their victims.

None of the Cliffite sections called for the defeat of imperialism, nor do they call for imperialist troops out of the Balkans. They capitulated to different forces depending on their national terrain. As inter-imperialist rivalries increase in the post-Soviet period, rivalries earlier suppressed in the common pursuit of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, such national differences in opportunist appetites can only intensify.

With the Cliffites' squabble over the

Balkans War now public knowledge, Workers Power has made a pitch to dissident Cliffites from the right. By WP's lights, the ISO did not support the KLA enough; they write that their "support for self-determination was entirely platonic. They seem to have been scared off such a

Gorbachev was a betrayal which led to the victory of the barbaric Taliban. And it was the direct precursor to the Soviet bureaucracy's ultimate betrayal, handing over first the Eastern European deformed workers states and then the USSR to capitalist counterrevolution. For its part, despite its



Workers Hammer

SWP's Rebel placard at Rover demonstration, 1 April: "Turn Birmingham into Seattle". Cliffites were instrumental in building orgy of flag-waving chauvinism.

position by the SWP's argument that the KLA was in league with imperialism" (*Workers Power*, June 2000). The fact that they were in league with imperialism certainly doesn't "scare off" Workers Power! To the contrary, WP goes on to make an appeal specifically based on the Cliffites' support for the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cut-throats in Afghanistan against the Soviet Army:

"What about the SWP's enthusiastic support for the Afghan Mujahidin in the 1980s? Not only were they arch reactionary Islamists, based on the tribal-feudal landowners, funded by Saudi millionaire princes: they were supplied with stinger missiles and trained by the CIA, on a scale that makes the US support for KLA look grudging in the extreme."

Workers Power are so far to the right today that they disappear the fact that it was over Afghanistan that they broke — partially but to the left — from Cliff's "state capitalism" and recognised the USSR was a "degenerate" [sic] workers state. While WP joined the imperialists and their Labour lieutenants in opposing the Soviet military intervention against the CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, it also claimed it would be "tactically wrong... to demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops" (*Workers Power*, February 1980).

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan posed the Russian Question point blank. We said "Hail Red Army!" and "Extend the social gains of the Russian Revolution to the Afghan peoples!". We recognised that the class character of the USSR meant that the Red Army opened the possibility of social progress to this hideously backward country where the *mujahedin* waged a "holy war" to murder unveiled women and teachers for the "crime" of teaching girls to read.

The withdrawal of Soviet troops by

nominal adherence to some version of the Trotskyist position on the Russian Question, WP backpedalled from its earlier partial break with Cliffism. Thus it supported counterrevolution at every opportunity, from Polish Solidarność through to Yeltsin's barricades in 1991. In 1998 they brought their "theory" into line with their practice and decided that the *state* in the

DPA



Socialist Worker
Paper of the International Socialist Organization 25c
May 1988

Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs.

Cliffites supported CIA-aided *mujahedin* cut-throats in Afghanistan, cheered Soviet withdrawal which meant death for women, leftists.

USSR (but not the economy) had become capitalist in 1927, thus reverting back to their Cliffite origins. Of a piece with this is WP's nonsensical discovery of "moribund workers states". Simply put, WP is the horrible example of those who try to stake out a posture nominally to the left of the Cliffites, but fail to make a complete break on the key programmatic question: the Russian Question. (See "Death of communism" centrist", *Workers Hammer* no 161, March/April 1998).

Anti-Sovietism abroad means class betrayal at home

James P Cannon, in his "Speech on the Russian Question" given during the 1939-40 factional struggle against Shachtman/Burnham, said: "Defensism and defeatism are two principled, that is, irreconcilable positions.... Defensists at home were defeatists on Russia. Defensists on Russia were defeatists at home." And indeed, every tendency that has abdicated from the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defence of the degenerated and deformed workers states has ended up reconciling themselves with their own bourgeoisie.

This has been fairly dramatic in the case of the British SWP. Thus, during the 1984-85 miners strike, the most signifi-

cant battle waged by the British proletariat in decades, Cliff boasted that SWP members in steel plants were crossing miners picket lines. In response to a question by a Spartacist supporter, Cliff said:

"On the question of our steelworkers crossing picket lines. We have steelworkers in Redcar who cross picket lines. We have three steelworkers in Scunthorpe, they cross picket lines. We have a steelworker in Ravenscraig who crosses picket lines. We have a steelworker in Llanwern who crosses picket lines...."
— Tony Cliff, London public meeting of the SWP, 23 August 1984

Having abandoned the gains of the revolution in Russia, the SWP abandoned the goal of revolution anywhere. It has functioned — whether inside (as it was prior to 1967) or outside the Labour Party — as a pressure group on Labour. Take the SWP's latest "turn": its dive into the London Socialist Alliance (LSA). The SWP enthuse that the LSA is a genuine opposition to "New" Labour — which is widely and rightly hated by the working class and poor. "Socialist Alliances" are now to spring to life throughout Britain to put the Blairites on the run.

In fact, the LSA consists of almost every Labour-loyal organisation in Britain who helped elect Blair's Labour government — like the SWP, which described itself as nothing less than "over the moon" at the time Blair was elected. (See *Socialist Review*, June 1997.) Recently, the London Socialist Alliance pulled out all the stops for Ken Livingstone. It is the worst parliamentary cretinism to claim Livingstone's

mayoral campaign as constituting a genuine "opposition" to New Labour. As the SWP itself wrote: "The [Balkans] war split the left, with those like Ken Livingstone becoming some of the most enthusiastic warmongers" (*Socialist Review*, July/August 1999). Indeed, Livingstone boasted of his role as far back as 1991, saying: "When Milosevic first sent his armoured columns into Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 I was the first member of Parliament to call for air strikes to defeat his aggression" (*Independent*, 21 April 1999). Some "opposition" to New Labour!

The Spartacist League refused to give Livingstone any support whatsoever; we wrote: "Without a doubt, a vote for Livingstone in the May London mayoral elections is a vote for New Labour: he supported the government's imperialist bombing of Serbia, he is for the British Army in Northern Ireland, and he is emphatically for the racist police" (*Workers Hammer* no 172, Spring 2000). At the height of the racist frenzy against immigrants instigated by Labour and Tory leaders, Livingstone denounced Roma (Gypsies) and promised to employ more cops to clear beggars off the streets. For its part, the LSA pleads for "an end to the racism and corruption of the Metropolitan

continued on page 8

Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Group forum

Northern Ireland: Labour's "peace" is a lie

For immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops!

Saturday 22 July, 2.30pm

Room 2C, University of London Union, Malet St

Nearest Tube: Godege Street or Russell Square

For more information: 020 7485 1396

Cliffites...

(Continued from page 7)

police", a back-handed way of giving anti-racist credentials to the racist Labour government, implying that whitewash inquiries can end racism in the cops.

SWP's support to British troops in Ireland

Revolutionaries in Britain have a special responsibility to oppose British imperialism in Northern Ireland. We call for the unconditional, immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and fight for a proletarian internationalist perspective of workers revolution against British imperialism, the Orange Statelet in the North and the clericalist state in the South. From the time it was first mooted we have opposed all illusions in Labour's imperialist "peace" deal, which is a fraud and is premised on the British Army presence remaining in place.

Not so the SWP. Its press carries 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 1999). When the Labour government (including Tony Benn) sent the troops into Northern Ireland in 1969, the SWP supported it. For years they have denied this, lyingly claiming that it's all just a fabrication by the Spartacists. Tony Cliff's autobiography, however, brazenly admits it:

"The editorial in *Socialist Worker* of 11 September 1969 said: 'Defend The Barricades/No Peace Until Stormont Goes' '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 them-



DEFEND the BARRICADES No peace until Stormont goes

EDITORIAL

FOR A BREF moment the British ruling classes of Ireland, North and South, panicked themselves a sign of panic.



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.

and for its refusal to call for the withdrawal of the troops, it might not be expeditious, either.

Labour reformism, national chauvinism and parliamentary cretinism

The 1 April Rover demonstration in Birmingham, built by the trade union bureaucracy and supported by Tony Blair, was characterised by flag-waving social-patriotism. The bureaucrats' answer to the threatened job massacre was to call for "Save British manufacturing industry!" and "Save British Jobs!" thus lining up the workers with their "own" ruling class. As we said at the time: "Until such time as workers revolution rips it from their hands, British industry belongs to the bloodsucking capitalists. The working class has no country!" (*WH* no 172, Spring 2000). The SWP built and supported the demonstration. Thousands of their placards saying "Save our

that the Nazi National Front were turned away from joining the march by car workers stewarding the demonstration" (*Socialist Worker*, 8 April). Members of the SWP might ask themselves what they're doing building and supporting a demonstration that the NF wanted to join! (Twenty years ago, following the defeat of the steel strike, the fascist National Front marched through Corby on the slogan "British jobs for British workers".)

In contrast to the nationalist demagoguery pushed by the bureaucrats who have presided over the jobs massacre, we advocate a class-struggle fight for jobs and better working conditions across national boundaries, which will necessarily challenge the entire capitalist system. Marx and Engels observed over 150 years ago that capitalism created a world market and in so doing laid the basis for proletarian internationalism. German workers face attacks from Schröder's Social Democrats much as workers in Britain face from Blair. Throughout Europe, the strategic task for revolutionaries is to win workers to the understanding of the need for a complete break with the social democracy.

Trotsky aptly described social democracy as "the acceptance of a reformist opposition activity within the framework of bourgeois society and an adaptation to its legality — i.e., the actual training of the masses to become imbued with the inviolability of the bourgeois state" (*Lessons of October*, 1924). He could have been writing about the SWP and ISO today. While in Britain, the SWP's "all the way with the LSA" is of a piece, in the US, the ISO has assigned the vast majority of its people to work in its Campaign to End the Death Penalty. While you can read in the ISO's *International Socialist Review* (Spring 1999) that the ISO finds it "surprising that many opponents of the death penalty look to Democratic politicians as allies in the struggle to abolish capital punishment", in fact the ISO does just that! A 25 May posting by one "Armand" in the recent welter of Internet traffic provoked by the ISO's fracture with the SWP made clear just how much:

"People are so horrified that innocent people are being killed that they are ready to begin discussing abolition. But the ISO leadership instructed members NOT to argue for the abolitionist position in the interests of standing on 'common ground' with supporters of the death penalty on the question of the 'moratorium.' This took the form of a concrete slogan raised by the ISO: 'Moratorium Now, Abolition Next.'..."

"It is transforming our meager forces into the ground troops of Democratic Party hacks like Jesse Jackson and others, collecting signatures for their petition on moratorium."

Indeed, at a Chicago "town hall" meeting in May, Campaign spokesman Alice Kim sounded just like the Illinois Republican governor Ryan (who imposed a morato-

rium on executions) when she said: "There shouldn't be a death penalty if there's any chance that innocent people can be executed" (*Socialist Worker* [US], 26 May). Meanwhile, aping the "fight the right" line pursued by the Stalinist Communist Party for decades, the ISO's *Socialist Worker* runs screaming headlines like "The Bush Brothers' Killing Machine" (21 January) and "Bush's Killing Machine" (26 May) while consigning the occasional criticism of the Democrats to small print. In fact, *Socialist Worker* has devoted its efforts to enthusiastically touting Democratic Party politicians like Wisconsin Senator Russ Feingold. The 20 March *Internal Discussion Bulletin* boasts that "Jesse Jackson, Jr. is helping the Campaign" and that Feingold "contacted the Campaign in his effort to prepare legislation for a ban on the death penalty for federal crimes".

As we wrote in "Death Penalty: Barbarism U.S.A." (*Workers Vanguard* no 737, 2 June):

"We oppose the death penalty for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the state the right to decide who shall live and who shall die. We welcome the Illinois moratorium, however brief it may be, and any other measure curtailing state-sanctioned murder, just as we oppose all moves to expand and intensify the repressive powers of the capitalist state. Nothing short of a workers revolution will do away with the capitalist state, which is a machinery of organized violence to defend the rule of the capitalist exploiters against those whom they exploit and oppress."

In its work on the death penalty, as elsewhere, far from advancing the struggle for socialism, the ISO serves to reinforce the grip of bourgeois consciousness — and in particular of the capitalist Democratic Party as a "lesser evil" — on those it influences.

Organisational methods serve political purpose

The difference between the Cliffite organisations and the sections of the democratic-centralist International Communist League is, to put it plainly, the difference between reform and revolution. The lack of international democratic-centralism in the SWP's "international socialist tendency" has been the subject of recent internal discussion. As James P Cannon explained:

"Democratic-centralism has no special virtue per se. It is the specific principle of a combat party, united by a single program, which aims to lead a revolution. Social Democrats have no need of such a system of organization for the simple reason that they have no intention of organizing a revolution."

— "Leninist Organization Principles", *Speeches to the Party* (1973)

While the SWP and ISO seek to tinker with the existing machinery of the capitalist system, veering from this "alliance" to that "campaign", trotting after the Livingstones and Jesse Jacksons, we seek to build the Leninist vanguard party capable of leading the working class in smashing capitalism and establishing a workers government — the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We stand for unconditional military defence of China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea just as we fought to the bitter end from Berlin to Moscow in defence of the gains of October. In our fight for new Octobers, we are guided by Trotsky's injunction, made in the last major political battle of his life against those who would turn their back on defence of the USSR:

"It is the duty of revolutionists to defend every conquest of the working class even though it may be distorted by the pressure of hostile forces. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones."

— *In Defense of Marxism* (1940) ■



Independent

Labourite left promoted Ken Livingstone, who saluted Blair's terror-bombing of Serbia, praises racist cops, bows to the queen.

elves are inviting a pogrom."

"The moment the honeymoon between the troops and the Catholic population came to an end, early in 1970, we then raised the slogan 'Troops Out' as a central demand."

— *A World to Win*, Tony Cliff (2000) [emphasis ours]

Hardly a "central demand", as the SWP's pro-"peace hoax" propaganda proves, it is used by the Cliffites when expeditious. Thus, in the "where we stand" column of the *Irish Cliffite* newspaper there is a call for troops out. But where it is not so popular to take this position — and where it counts to take it — no such call appears in the *British* paper. Now that the SWP is cosying up to Tommy Sheridan's Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), a social-chauvinist outfit notorious for embracing Billy Hutchinson of the Ulster Volunteer Force

jobs/occupy, organise, fight for the right to work/Renationalise Rover now!" mixed freely with Union Jacks and other symbols of racist British imperialism, as well as placards giving vent to blatant anti-German chauvinism such as "We won two world wars — let's win the third". Indeed, while the demonstration reflected anger and bitterness against BMW and the government, its political perspective was so alien to the actual interests of the working class that it had the full support of the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, an anti-trade-union rag.

For the SWP, which did not mention the patriotic character of the demonstration, eulogising it rather as "The great jobs revolt": "There were many brilliant things about Saturday's march — like the fact

China...

(Continued from page 1)

workers also have to pay for their own pension benefits and health insurance out of that money. A man who worked in the mine for 35 years along with his wife estimates that their severance pay will last about ten months. "After that, what am I going to do? How are we going to eat?"

Last year, Chinese premier Zhu Rongji pointed to the mine as a prime example of a money-losing enterprise that would have to be shut down. But the mine is "unprofitable" only by the measure of a capitalist market. Molybdenum is a valuable metal used to toughen steel, and the mine's managers have been enriching themselves by taking over parts of the mine or piecing off other parts to their cronies. One worker bitterly recounted: "They have sold parts of the mine to their friends. They have sold all the mine's trucks. But we haven't seen this money.... They eat it and drink it away" (*Washington Post*, 5 April).

The deepening of "free market" measures is setting the stage for a monumental clash between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the proletarian and peasant masses. The Chinese Labour Ministry reports more than 120,000 labour disputes last year — 14 times more than 1992 — from petitions to strikes (*Japan Times*, 25 April). A senior police official in the central province of Anhui reports that it is now common to see "workers collectively besieging enterprise leaders, hurling abuse at them, and even detaining them under duress". In December, a thousand miners fought with police and blocked a railway line in northern China to protest not having been paid in months. Around the same time, 2000 retired steel workers in the southwestern city of Chongqing (Chungking) closed off the main road to the steel mill to protest cuts in pensions. In the vast rural hinterland, the immiseration of the poor peasantry, as a result of the decollectivisation of agriculture in the late 1970s, and the growing class divide with the creation of a class of rich farmers have led to rampant attacks on tax collectors and other officials.

In its article on the Yangjiazhangzi revolt, the *Washington Post* wrote that it was "severe for a disturbance in a Chinese city but was indicative of unrest bedeviling the Communist Party" and observed that "in the countryside, however, authorities appear more willing to order security services to smash protests and fire on demonstrators". This is a stark indication of the fragility of the bureaucratic caste in the face of an aroused proletariat, which has already shown its potential to win over entire sections of the conscript army of the deformed workers state in struggle against the Stalinist regime. When the working people entered into the student demonstrations centred on Tiananmen Square in May-June 1989, marking an incipient political revolution, both officers and ranks of numerous People's Liberation Army regiments refused orders to suppress the protests, forcing the regime to bring in other units to crush the workers' uprising.

The bureaucracy which is paving the way for capitalist counterrevolution is simultaneously preparing the ground for a new revolutionary proletarian explosion — not a social revolution which would overturn the economic foundations of society as in 1949 but a political revolution to oust the parasitic ruling oligarchy and to place political power in the hands of workers, soldiers and peasants councils (soviets). The urgent task facing the Chinese proletariat is to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party as part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International, to prepare and lead this political revolution, standing at the head of the masses and directing the



Beijing, Spring 1989: Masses in Tiananmen Square singing the *Internationale*. Entry of working class into student protests signalled incipient proletarian political revolution.

spontaneous and localised workers' struggles towards the seizure of political power.

Since the destruction of the Soviet Union, the international proletariat has been thrown back economically and politically by the bourgeois onslaught and triumphalism over the so-called "death of communism". Proletarian political revolution in China — premised on defence of the planned, collectivised economy which is the social foundation of the workers state — would have a tremendous impact in reversing this assault, reverberating among the proletariat from Indonesia and South Korea to Japan — the industrial powerhouse of Asia — and the US. It would revive the working people of Russia who have been ground down by nearly a decade of capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, a revolutionary China of workers and peasants councils would face virulently hostile imperialist reaction. The International Communist League fights to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, to lead the overthrow of capitalist class rule internationally, smashing the imperialist system and laying the material basis for the development of China in a socialist Asia.

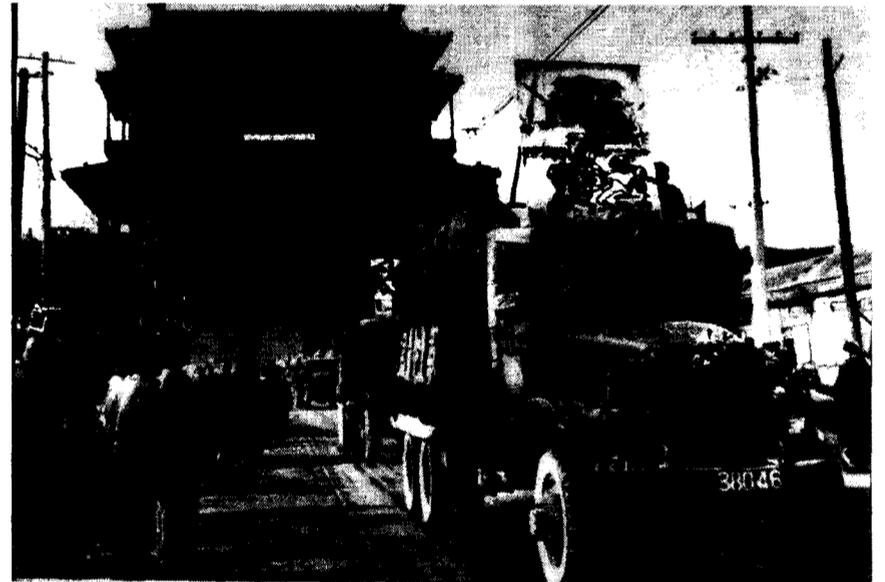
China on the brink

Some of the Yangjiazhangzi miners understand that their lay-offs and looming impoverishment stem from the "market reforms" imposed by the Beijing regime, which are undermining the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. That revolution liberated the country from capitalist exploitation and imperialist subjugation, ushering in a planned, collectivised economy which guaranteed workers lifetime employment and social benefits — the "iron rice bowl". State enterprises provide workers not only with a livelihood but with housing, medical care and schooling for their families. Thus the privatisation, closure or retrenchment of state-owned factories, mines and other enterprises threatens workers with utter destitution. "We miners have been working here for China, for the Communist Party, since the revolution", said one worker. "And now suddenly my part of the mine is private." These workers understand that such state property belongs to the working people. Who gave the managers the right to sell it off?

It is crucial to understand that the 1949 Revolution was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong's bureaucracy, patterned after the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR which usurped power in a political counterrevolution in 1924. Mao's regime excluded the proletariat from political power and based itself on Stalin's nationalist dogma of building "socialism in a single country". That meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the struggle for socialist revolution in other countries. This nationalist perspective is expressed today in the Stalinist regime's embrace of

the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie in the name of forging a "greater China".

The Stalinist bureaucracy is not a possessing class but a parasitic caste: resting on the proletarian property forms, the bureaucracy simultaneously acts as a transmission belt for the pressures of the capitalist world market on the deformed workers state. In response to those imperialist pressures, which have sharply increased following capitalist restoration in the former Soviet Union, the bureaucracy has expanded the "market reforms" initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s. Recently, the pace of privatisation and retrenchment of state-owned enterprises has accelerated in anticipation of entry into the World Trade Organisation



Victorious People's Liberation Army enters Beijing, 1949. The Chinese proletarian masses were bystanders as the Maoist-led revolution finally threw out Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang capitalist regime.

(WTO), a move which if implemented would open China to a greater degree of import competition from Western and Japanese multinationals and also to foreign investment in certain industries. We fight against imperialist penetration of the Chinese deformed workers state and defend the state monopoly of foreign trade.

Writing of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937), Leon Trotsky noted: "It continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat." Faced with boiling anger at the base, the Beijing bureaucracy has trod warily, imprisoning or even executing some officials for blatant corruption and occasionally reversing some of its own proposed "free market" measures. An article in the *New York Times* (16 April) on a joint venture between Volkswagen and the Shanghai municipal government complained:

"China continues to shelter many of its industries from true competition, in turn perpetuating too many factories and poor management. Though the government warns that China's state-owned companies must prepare for global competition, most sectors of the economy remain stuck in their socialist past."

The US and the other major capitalist powers are intent on a capitalist counter-revolution which would entail the suppression of the Chinese proletariat in blood and the smashing of the Communist Party-dominated state apparatus. To that end, while pursuing "constructive engagement" with the Beijing regime with the aim of furthering economic penetration, Washington brandishes its military might against China and sponsors a range of forces — from the CIA's "Free Tibet" crowd to pro-imperialist "dissidents" — aimed at fomenting counterrevolution from within. The US is proposing a "theatre missile defence" in East Asia which would target the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states in the first instance, and has maintained capitalist Taiwan over the past 50 years as a bulwark against China.

The Trotskyist ICL fights for the unconditional military defence of China and the other deformed workers states — North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba — against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. As stated in the ICL's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] no 54, Spring 1998):

"Our position flows from the proletarian class character of these states, embodied in the collectivized property relations — nationalized property, planned economy, monopoly of foreign trade and banking, etc. — established by social revolutions that destroyed capitalism. Despite the bureaucratic deformations of these states, our

defense of them against the class enemy is unconditional, i.e., it does not depend on the prior overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies, nor does it depend upon the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict."

Beware imperialism's labour front men!

A key role in US imperialism's counter-revolutionary drive is played by the AFL-CIO labour bureaucracy, whose anti-Communist operations against militant unions in Latin America, South Korea and elsewhere earned it the epithet "AFL-CIA" throughout the Third World. This goes hand in hand with the labour tops' class collaboration in the US, where they act as the capitalists' political police inside the unions.

In Eastern Europe and the former USSR, these "labour lieutenants" of American imperialism promoted and helped organise "free trade unions" as battering rams for capitalist restoration. In the early 1980s, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy acted as a conduit to fund Polish Solidarność, a phony "union" which

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China...

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spearheaded capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe. Later, in the Soviet Union, AFL-CIO operatives sought to channel working-class discontent over Mikhail Gorbachev's market-oriented *perestroika* "reforms" into support to anti-Communist demagogue Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin's pro-imperialist coup in August 1991 culminated over the following months, in the absence of mass working-class resistance, in capitalist counterrevolution.

Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe, prepared by decades of Stalinist misrule, has brought mass unemployment, falling life expectancy, increasing immiseration and social degradation. It has also emboldened the imperialist exploiters in attacking the working people and minorities in the US and other capitalist countries. It is in the direct class interest of the proletariat in the US and internationally to oppose the imperialists' drive to reconquer China for capitalist exploitation.

The American labour tops are trying to repeat in China the scenario played out in Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR. A key agency in this regard is the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS). According to one of its Washington paymasters, the National Endowment for Democracy, in China the ACILS has "helped labor groups and underground activists educate workers about their rights" — ie organising counterrevolutionary "free trade unions". Meanwhile, back home the AFL-CIO tops are in the vanguard of protectionist and anti-Communist opposition to China's entry into the WTO, joining with liberal Democrats, right-wing Republicans and incipient clerical-fascist Pat Buchanan.

It won't be easy for the "AFL-CIA" to sell American "free enterprise" to Chinese workers. Many workers in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union bought the lie peddled by the likes of Yeltsin and Solidarność leader Lech Walesa that "free market" capitalism would bring unparalleled prosperity and living standards comparable to Western Europe and North America. But many Chinese workers have already experienced the miseries of "free market" exploitation, slaving in large plants owned by Western and Japanese firms and offshore Chinese businessmen or in sweatshop operations often run by native-born exploiters, where conditions are generally far worse than those in state-owned enterprises.

A major concentration of privately owned factories producing textiles, clothing and other light manufactures is located in the Pearl River delta in Guangdong province opposite Hong Kong. Workers in the "Special Economic Zones" (SEZs), mainly young women from the countryside, slave in these factories twelve hours a day, seven days a week. Their salary is often withheld for the first six months and forfeited altogether if they leave before a year! China's laws stipulate that overtime is limited to 36 hours a week and must be paid at a rate 50 per cent higher than regular time. But the bosses in these factories openly flout the country's labour laws, bribing government officials for this privilege. Such conditions are only a small taste of what the Chinese masses would face under capitalist rule, which would qualitatively extend and deepen the exploitation and immiseration now being experienced by workers in the SEZs.

It is telling that even anti-Communist "dissidents" feel compelled to criticise "free market" capitalism in order to gain a sympathetic hearing from Chinese workers. A prime example is Han Dongfang, a



John Gittings
Impoverished peasants leave the countryside, lining up for railway tickets to Beijing, as pro-capitalist economic policies widen gulf between rich and poor.

Hong Kong-based "labour organiser" with a regular programme on the CIA-funded Radio Free Asia. Han denounces the Clinton administration *from the right* for "de-linking trade from human rights issues". Yet this bellicose anti-Communist hypocritically pays lip service to the intense hostility among Chinese workers to privatising the economy, writing that he does not believe "large-scale and rapid privatisation is the only way forward for the reform process" (*China Labour Bulletin*, September/October 1997).

Han and his ilk posture as defenders of the economic interests of the Chinese workers, condemning the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions for failing to defend the workers. Indeed, this adjunct of the Stalinist bureaucracy does not defend the interests of Chinese workers. But what Han stands for is the smashing of the Chinese deformed workers state and the introduction of brutal capitalist exploitation throughout the country.

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party!

A proletarian political revolution will begin under the banner of struggles against social inequality and political oppression, as in 1989. The struggle for freedom of the trade unions — based on the defence of socialised property — as well as for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold as part of the fight for soviet democracy, for the formation of workers councils opposing the bureaucratic parasites and suppressing counterrevolutionary elements. The central question is that of revolutionary leadership, which can only be resolved by forging a Leninist-Trotskyist party to bring revolutionary socialist consciousness to the working class. Such a party would combat Han chauvinism and imbue the proletariat with the understanding that it must fight for the interests of all the oppressed — from women to homosexuals to the poor peasantry and migrant workers.

Workers in the state sector, currently in the forefront of the labour struggles, constitute a majority of the Chinese proletariat. But two-thirds of the population still lives in the countryside as peasant smallholders or is otherwise engaged in the agricultural economy. The working class cannot wrest political power from the bureaucracy without the sympathy and support of the peasant masses, especially the rural youth who make up a majority of China's conscript army.

The drive towards capitalist restoration has led to increasing immiseration of both rural toilers and the urban industrial proletariat. Bankrupted peasants and youth who cannot find a livelihood in the rural areas have flooded into cities looking for work — a vast army of migrant labour estimated at up to 130 million people! Lacking official household registration (*hukou*), migrants are not entitled to the

housing, medical care and schooling for their children available to legal urban residents. Most migrants are men who leave their wives and children in the villages and try to eke out a living in the cities by taking the most menial jobs.

These developments have acted to create a major division within the working class as many urban workers are contemptuous of the rural migrants and also fearful that they will take their jobs because the migrants are desperate enough to work for next to nothing. Meanwhile, millions of migrants are rounded up and forcibly removed to their villages every year. The unity of the working class demands the defence of these migrant workers. The fight to win for these workers the same legal rights and benefits as long-time urban residents could serve as an initial step in the crucially necessary task of linking the urban-centred proletariat and the peasant masses in struggle against mounting depredations.

In the countryside, there has emerged a class of rich farmers — ie, petty capitalists who hire labour and lease additional land from their neighbours and have expanded into non-agricultural businesses—who are a bridge to the capitalist world market and a dangerous force for counterrevolution within Chinese society. The Beijing government itself calculates that up to ten million peasants will lose their livelihoods if China enters the WTO due to increased imports of grain and other produce, mainly from North America. The capitalists must be driven out of the SEZs and off the land. This poses the question of forming workers and peasants councils to oust the parasitic bureaucracy. Such councils would collectivise agriculture, providing cheap credit and farm equipment to peasants who form cooperatives, and reinforce the state monopoly of foreign trade, a vital means of defending industrial workers and rural toilers against the predations of world imperialism. Defend and extend the planned, collectivised economy! Expropriate without compensation the bloodsucker imperialist and offshore Chinese bourgeoisies!

Some Chinese opponents of "market reforms" uphold Mao's "socialism" as an

alternative to the present regime. But the Maoist perversion of socialism was national economic autarky and primitive egalitarianism, in which the masses were equal because all were equally poor. Writing in the mid-19th century, Karl Marx explained that in the absence of an international socialist society based on the highest level of technological and industrial development, "only want will be generalised, and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and all the old crap must revive". Flatly repudiating Marx, the Stalinists preached the idiocy that socialism could be built in a single country if only imperialist military intervention were thwarted. Refuting this in his 1928 work *The Third International After Lenin*, Trotsky wrote:

"The capitalist world shows us by its export and import figures that it has other instruments of persuasion than those of military intervention. To the extent that productivity of labor and the productivity of a social system as a whole are measured on the market by the correlation of prices, it is not so much military intervention as the intervention of cheaper capitalist commodities that constitutes perhaps the greatest immediate menace to Soviet economy. This alone shows that it is by no means merely a question of an isolated economic victory over 'one's own' bourgeoisie."

In practice, "socialism in one country" meant opposition to the perspective of workers revolution internationally. Thus, like Stalin, Mao sought alliances with various "anti-imperialist" Third World bourgeois-nationalist regimes and then with the imperialists themselves. This was exemplified by the criminal alliance of Mao's China with US imperialism against the Soviet degenerated workers state, forged as the US rained bombs on the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants in the early 1970s. In "China on the Brink" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] no 53, Summer 1997), we noted: "China's alliance with the U.S., initiated by Mao and Zhou Enlai, helped set the stage for Deng's 'open door' to imperialist exploitation in the next period. Today, Mao's heirs don't even give lip service to the goals of socialism, instead openly offering themselves as compradors (agents) of imperialism."

Opposing workers democracy and international extension of the revolution, both the Soviet and Chinese Stalinists increasingly opted for capitalist market measures to spur productivity. The road of the Stalinist bureaucracy would return the Chinese masses to the prerevolutionary days of impoverishment and imperialist subjugation. The modernisation of China — providing the basis for a decent life for all its inhabitants on the basis of access to the advanced technology and productive resources now concentrated in North America, Western Europe and Japan — requires proletarian socialist revolution in the imperialist centres, laying the basis for an *internationally planned, socialist economy*. That is the task of the ICL as it fights to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International. ■

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Australia...

(Continued from page 4)

Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to self-determination within the life of the nation."

For Marxist revolutionaries, upholding the democratic right of oppressed nations to form their own state is central to rooting out the nationalism, chauvinism and patriotism that ties the proletariat to the capitalist class, especially in the oppressor state. Lenin's Bolshevik Party, by intransigently defending the right of national self-determination, was able to forge unity between the working class of all nations within the Tsarist prisonhouse of peoples, key to the 1917 proletarian revolution. But the call for "self-determination" for Aboriginal peoples in Australia (or Native peoples in the US or Canada) can only be utopian or reactionary: utopian because the vibrant pre-colonial societies were smashed through bloody terror; reactionary because it is counterposed to a political struggle against the ALP and the Laborite union bureaucracy. Racist social democracy mouths words about "self-determination" because they want to *whitewash and uphold the existing segregation and marginalisation of Aborigines*.

The Spartacist League is for a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights. Against the craftism that is rooted in the exclusion of minorities and women, we fight for industrial unions, union hiring halls run on a first-come, first-served basis and for union programmes to recruit those, like Aborigines, who have been historically discriminated against. Such a struggle is the key to winning away the prole-

tarian base of the ALP to a revolutionary party that is the tribune of the people.

Build a revolutionary workers party!

In the face of belligerent racist hostility, some Aboriginal leaders appeal to outfits like the United Nations or even the English queen. Contrary to its own self-serving mythology, the UN is not a benevolent international body guarding the interests of the downtrodden. An agency for carrying out the diktats of the imperialist powers (while including their victims), the UN's starvation embargo has murdered *one million* Iraqis. In East Timor the Australia/UN occupiers are ensuring that children there can expect the same desperate future faced by Aborigines. As for her faded "Britannic Majesty", this is the monarch of the now shrunken empire which destroyed indigenous societies from Australia to Canada and the Pacific. In her name British troops today enforce their bloody writ in Northern Ireland. Appeals to such reactionary institutions are worse than a blind alley for Aboriginal people.

The real and only allies of the Aboriginal people are to be found in the multiracial working class. Aborigines who joined the Maritime Union picket lines two years ago knew that the thugs who dragged waterside workers off the docks are brothers to the cops and prison guards who kill Aboriginal people. As well, there have been important if too-rare instances of class struggle in which workers and their unions, in spite of their Laborite misleaders, actively came to the defence of Aborigines. In 1966 a stockmen's strike won the Aboriginal workers equal wages (although because it remained isolated the



David May

Palm Island, Queensland. White Australia racism means savage oppression of Aboriginal peoples.

racist bosses were able to sack the Aboriginal workers immediately after). In 1989 a large contingent of building workers downed tools in protest over the murder of David Gundy. In Townsville in 1993 when Aboriginal stockman Eddie Alley was sacked, the entire union at the site struck for three weeks, winning his reinstatement.

Against those who turn their back on the proletariat (either through cringing Laborite reformism or despair), our party seeks to actively intervene on the side of the oppressed with our communist pro-

gramme. The SL, with militant Aborigines in Wollongong and trade unionists, organised to build the first demonstration in the country protesting the acquittal of the cops who brutally murdered John Pat in 1983. In 1993 the SL mobilised trade unionists, students and Aborigines from the Redfern community to successfully break the racist colour bar at the Student Prince Hotel in Sydney.

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The defence of Aboriginal rights by the organised working class must be an integral part of the fight to overthrow capitalism, the common oppressor and exploiter of all. What is necessary is a multiracial revolutionary workers party—built in opposition to the Laborite misleaders—which opposes every manifestation of capitalist injustice and oppression, striving to transform the proletariat into a conscious instrument for socialist revolution. As we wrote in our statement of programme:

"The Spartacist League fights to mobilise the social power of the integrated, organised labour movement, independent of the capitalist state, to defend Aboriginal peoples against racist state terror, and to consistently champion their rights. We fight for complete legal equality; for jobs for all and equal wages; and for massive health and education programs to address the oppression of the Aboriginal people on the reserves, in the wretched 'fringes' and inner cities. Only the destruction of capitalism can hold out the possibility of voluntary integration, on the basis of full equality, for those Aboriginal people who desire it, and the fullest possible autonomy for those who do not, and make it possible to address the special needs created by more than two centuries of injustice and oppression."

— For a Workers Republic of Australia, Part of a Socialist Asia! ■

Iraq...

(Continued from page 12)

of actual war we are on the side of Iraq. We support, as revolutionary Marxists always have done, the victims of imperialism against their imperialist oppressors" (*Socialist Worker*, 15 September 1990). But the SWP abandoned any mention of taking sides with Iraq militarily in order to become a "participating organisation" in the Tony Benn/CND-led "Stop the War" committee which was pro-UN and pro-sanctions.

At bottom, these reformists believe the imperialist ruling class can be pressured to pursue more "humanitarian" ends. But imperialism is not a bad "policy" that can be changed through pressure, as our reformist opponents on the left pretend. It is a brutal system of oppression, economic

exploitation and military subjugation. As we declared in a statement of the Spartacist League Political Bureau in response to one of the many times the US has threatened or perpetrated mass destruction in Iraq (*Workers Vanguard* no 685, 27 February 1998): "Whether or not America's capitalist rulers decide *this time to yet again* rain death and destruction on Iraqi men, women and children does not change by one iota the rapacious and murderous character of this imperialist system." Against the reformist "socialists" who perpetuate illusions in "humanitarian imperialism", we asserted:

"As Lenin stressed in polemicizing against similar views advanced by German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, imperialism is the 'highest stage of capitalism,' marked by the concentration and domination of finance capital, the preeminence of the export of capital and competition among the ad-

vanced capitalist countries to control markets and spheres of exploitation. War is a necessary product of the capitalist system."

The US and British imperialists paint Saddam Hussein as "another Hitler". But all the imperialists' chatter about "weapons of mass destruction" in the Iraqi arsenal serves as a smokescreen to mask the enormous stockpile of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons amassed by the US imperialists, the biggest mass murderers on the planet. The nationalist butcher Saddam Hussein came to power with the backing of the US/British imperialists, who saw in him a weapon against the combative Iraqi proletariat. Washington and London provided Hussein with arms during his 1980-88 war with rival Iran. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein consolidated

his rule through anti-Communist massacres, anti-labour repression and bloody pogroms of the Kurds.

It is the task of the Iraqi proletariat, standing at the head of the oppressed — women, ethnic, national and religious minorities — to sweep away this capitalist regime through socialist revolution and establish a socialist federation of the Near East. Only international socialist revolution can bring an end to the profit-hungry imperialist system. The International Communist League is committed to re-forging Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution, which would link the struggle to emancipate the workers and oppressed of the Near East with the fight to smash capitalism in the advanced industrial countries. ■

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Sierra Leone...

(Continued from page 2)

through socialist revolution.

Acting like colonialist masters in Africa is the corollary of Labour's racist capitalist rule at home. Government spokesmen orchestrated a racist frenzy against refugees and immigrants — many of whom come from the Balkans, Africa and other areas ravaged by poverty and war — which led to a dramatic increase in racist violence. To workers facing job-slashing such as in car manufacturing, Labour and the trade union bureaucracy offer nothing but chauvinist demonstrations waving the bloody Union Jack, the emblem of racist exploitation. Social chauvinism and nationalism are integral to the programme of Labour and the union bureaucracy whose role is to tie the working class to the capitalist masters. We seek to mobilise workers in struggle against the Labour government and in particular to fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

The key to social and economic progress and development in sub-Saharan

Africa is the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution. In some areas an industrial proletariat exists only in marginal pockets, however oil workers in Nigeria, dock and rail workers in Kenya and miners in Zambia represent a strategic industrial workforce. It is the challenge of an international revolutionary party to transform this sector into a human link to the workers movements of the Near East and especially the industrial proletariat of South Africa who are key to a revolutionary perspective on the entire continent. Mobilised against their capitalist exploiters these vanguard layers can launch a struggle to emancipate the cruelly oppressed men and women throughout Africa through the seizure of power by the proletariat and the extension of socialist revolution to the imperialist centres. This requires the construction of Leninist vanguard parties, part of a reformed Fourth International. The purpose of the ICL is to build such parties to lead the struggle against imperialism and its neo-colonial regimes. The Spartacist League fights for proletarian revolution to bring down British imperialism. ■

Down with starvation blockade and bombing of Iraq!

The following article is adapted from Workers Vanguard, newspaper of the Spartacist League/US, issue no 735, 5 May 2000.

The US and their British junior partners have reduced Iraq to a wasteland. This ongoing act of imperialist savagery began with the massacre of tens of thousands of Iraqis in the one-sided US-led 1991 "Desert Slaughter". The 1991 Persian Gulf War was followed by a series of bombing campaigns over the years. Since December 1998, near-daily American and British terror bombing in the vast "no-fly" zones over Iraq has laid waste to hospitals, schools and residential areas, killing upwards of 300 and injuring 860 mostly civilian Iraqis. In addition, for almost a decade, a United Nations starvation blockade has claimed the lives of more than 1.5 million in a country whose total population was 22 million. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported last August that up to 200 children a day were dying due to the ravages of the embargo.

During the Gulf War, the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs called to "Defeat US/British Imperialism! Defend Iraq!" We opposed the starvation sanctions from the outset. Today, we say: *Down with the starvation blockade! US/Britain: Hands off Iraq! All US/UN troops out of the Persian Gulf!*

While the bourgeois media has downplayed the deadly impact of the imperialist blockade, a recent article by Australian journalist John Pilger in the *Guardian* (4 March) exposed its devastating effects. UNICEF's senior representative in Iraq told Pilger:

"In 1989, the literacy rate was 95%, and 93% of the population had free access to modern health facilities. Parents were fined for failing to send their children to school. The phenomenon of street children or children begging was unheard of. Iraq had reached a stage where the basic indicators we use to measure the overall well-being of human beings, including children, were some of the best in the world. Now it is among the bottom 20%. In 10 years, child mortality has gone from one of the lowest in the world, to the highest."

The starvation blockade and bombing are part of Washington's drive to assert its "right" to ride roughshod over the colonial and semicolonial peoples of the world and demonstrate to its imperialist rivals that the US remains top dog. In particular, the US imperialists seek to control the vast oil and natural gas resources in the Near East at the expense of their imperialist rivals, who heavily depend on these energy resources. For their parts, France, Russia and other European powers have increasingly pushed for an end to the sanctions because, as the *Wall Street Journal* (24 November 1999) explained, these countries are "salivating at the prospect of doing business in Iraq again".

At the same time, the recent resignations of a number of senior UN officials responsible for implementing the embargo have highlighted the barbarity of the imperialist

Smash US/British imperialists!

sanctions. Former Assistant Secretary-General Denis Halliday, who served as relief coordinator in Iraq until his 1998 resignation, declared, "I had been instructed to implement a policy that satisfies the definition of genocide: a deliberate policy that has effectively killed well over a million individuals, children and adults."

According to von Sponeck, "Our most recent stock analysis shows that 88.8% of all humanitarian supplies have been distributed."

Iraqi hospitals have literally become holding pens for the dying — the cancer ward at Saddam Children's Hospital in Baghdad has a 100 per cent death



Devastation in Baghdad from British/US terror bombing. Spartacist League demonstrate in London, December 1998: Trotskyists defend Iraq against imperialist attack, fight for revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism.



His successor as relief coordinator, Hans von Sponeck, resigned in February, followed two days later by the head of the World Food Programme in Iraq, because they could no longer tolerate the wrenching reality the embargo has wrought. Von Sponeck was in charge of the "oil for food" programme, which since 1996 has allowed Iraq to sell a limited amount of oil to pay ransom to the imperialists and to purchase food and medical supplies approved by the UN with the remaining funds.

As part of the demonisation of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, the imperialists cynically claim that it is the Iraqi government which is responsible for the starvation and suffering by preventing supplies from reaching the population. The British defence secretary declared last year, "Saddam Hussein has in warehouses \$275 million worth of medicines and medical supplies which he refuses to distribute." But the imperialists know this is a lie.

rate — because the UN has deliberately blocked entry of vital equipment, antibiotics, painkillers and chemotherapy drugs into the country. They do this under the incredible pretext that these medicines could be used to manufacture "weapons of mass destruction". The head of the World Health Organisation's cancer programme told Pilger that when he returned from Iraq last year he drew up a list of drugs needed for cancer treatment: "We informed the UN that there was no possibility of converting these drugs into chemical warfare agents. We heard nothing more."

Toxic pollution, malnutrition and lack of medical care, all attributable to the bombings and sanctions, have created a public health crisis. Hospitals have recorded a fivefold increase in cancer, including the appearance of new types of cancers. Among the suspected causes for this explosion in cancer cases is the highly

toxic and radioactive residue of depleted uranium (DU) ammunition that was fired by American and British troops during the 1991 Gulf War. Iraqi doctors estimate they could treat successfully fully one-half of the cancer cases if they only were given the basic medical supplies the embargo has withheld from them. "Oil for food" provides a pittance for medical expenditures of only \$11 per person for an entire year!

The embargo perpetuates the devastation of the Gulf War in countless other ways. Typhoid, cholera and dysentery are sweeping the country. These deadly infectious diseases were all but eliminated from Iraq a decade ago. But sewage systems have collapsed from damage sustained in the bombings and the absence of any spare parts for repairs. As a result, raw sewage collects in the streets and infects the waterways, triggering outbreaks of disease. Chlorine to treat the water would help contain the spread of disease, but the UN has banned its purchase.

Leftover mines dotting the landscape of southern Iraq, along the routes where the US slaughtered thousands of fleeing Iraqis in 1991, daily kill travellers. The infrastructure — the bridges, roads, canals, water filtration and power plants and communications centres — of the country is in ruins. The consequence is the complete implosion of the economy, now marked by widespread poverty, high unemployment and hyperinflation. Agriculture is failing on an unprecedented scale because the imperialists put "on hold" fertiliser and seed. The current price of staples, such as rice and lentils, is 1000 times higher than in 1990. If it were not for food rationed out by the regime at 1991 prices, the starvation would be even more widespread. Meanwhile, wealthy Iraqis among the ruling capitalist elite get all they desire through the black market and other means.

When US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was asked if she thought that the death of half a million Iraqi children was a price worth paying, she replied: "This is a very hard choice, but we think the price is worth it." The US ruling class views the Iraqi people with the same racist contempt with which it views blacks, Hispanics and other minorities in this country. America's rulers have written off the entire Iraqi people as "collateral damage" to its deadly designs.

In recent years, a growing number of liberals in the US have been pushing for an end to the embargo. But in 1991 the liberals were in the vanguard of those pushing for sanctions against Iraq as an "alternative" to war. And the International Socialist Organization (sister organisation of the Socialist Workers Party) dutifully tailed behind the liberals, endorsing a 26 January 1991 "Campaign for Peace" march in Washington which called for UN sanctions against Iraq. Before the 1990-91 Gulf War the SWP opposed sanctions, and said: "The prime concern of socialists must be the defeat of the US-UK imperialist intervention in the Gulf. Therefore in the case of the blockade and in the event

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