

Labour/TUC tops enforce capitalist jobs slaughter

Britain, 1993: the living proof that, to coin a phrase, "the West simply isn't working". The staggering jobs slaughter has brought the "official" (ie well and truly cooked) unemployment figures to three million. In the period of November-December alone, job losses included, among others: 8000 in banking and insurance; 2400 in oil and energy; 16,000 in the Post Office; 5000 in British Rail; 4000 in Ford UK. These figures do not include the government's attempted closure of 31 pits putting 30,000 miners and thousands of others out of work; London Underground's

attempt to slash 5000 jobs; British Petroleum's announcement to axe another 9000; local council and other public sector jobs facing the chop, thousands of NHS sackings in the face of the closure of several London teaching hospitals. The building industry alone had lost 120,000 jobs by the end of 1992. London's jobless rate is the highest since the 1930s, running third in

Britain after the north of England and Northern Ireland.

As ever growing thousands join the dole queue, young children are burned to death because the candles, used to light their homes which have no electricity, start fires in the dead of night, and the figures swell to half a million "officially" homeless (with another 30 per cent regularly judged "intention-

ally" homeless). Pensioners freeze and the sick are turned away from understaffed, overcrowded NHS hospitals. One in three manufacturers is imposing a pay freeze, five million government workers have had their real wages slashed, and further deep public spending cuts are projected.

When the pit closures were announced, hundreds of thousands of working people took to the streets. But these marches were organised as a diversion to the necessary class-struggle actions that would pose concretely the

continued on page 11

Stalinism – gravedigger of the revolution

How the Soviet workers state was strangled

November 7 marked the 75th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. But the workers state erected by the Bolshevik power, far and away the greatest conquest of the international proletariat and a momentous leap forward for humanity, did not survive its 75th year. The period of open counterrevolution ushered in by Boris Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter-coup in August 1991 has, in the absence of mass working-class resistance, culminated in the creation of a bourgeois state, however fragile and reversible. The task facing the Soviet proletariat today is socialist revolution to restore proletarian power and reforge the Soviet Union on the foundation of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik internationalism.

The ascendancy of Yeltsin and capitalist-restorationist forces backing him was a pivotal event in determining the fate of the Soviet Union, but it was not conclusive. In our August 1991 article, "Soviet workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush

continued on page 6



For socialist revolution to sweep away Yeltsin counterrevolution!

More vigilance on photos

21 December 1992

Dear Comrades,

The current threat of mass social struggle in this country has given the social-democratic fake-lefts yet another chance to fight for a Labour government. The lead article in *Workers Hammer*, (No. 132, November/December 1992) "For workers action committees to stop the pit closures and to run the country!" however stood in sharp contrast to the 'Major Out' (ie Smith In) campaign.

What separated us from our opponents was the way in which the 'pits crisis' was linked to struggles from Poland to Germany to Italy, a real internationalist perspective as opposed to the 'little England' parochialism of *Workers Power*, SWP, SO et al.

Which brings me to ask the question, why was the photo on page 1 used? The

most prominent sign reads "BURN OUR COAL" and is surrounded by "Sack Major not the Miners" placards. "Our coal" is outright chauvinism, and is used by both fascists and Labourites in their "buy British" campaigns and it is the task of internationalists to oppose this protectionist crap, which is what is done so well in our article.

I appreciate that in a demonstration photo you can't be responsible for all the signs portrayed, but this photo has no value whatsoever except to give a misleading impression of the content of the article. Therefore I urge more vigilance in the photos we use in the future.

Comradely

Paul Chapman

Workers Power on the Balkans, revisited

In our last issue, we exposed *Workers Power's* Austrian group's "united-front" action with Greater Serbian monarchists and Chetnik fascists. The Vienna scandal had been widely covered as well in the Austrian USec's *Die Linke* and the RKL's *Klassenkampf*—both of whose accounts we quoted at length (see "Vienna: Workers Power rallies with Serbian monarchists, Chetnik fascists", *Workers Hammer* no 132, November/December 1992).

Its grotesque "red/brown" bloc infamous throughout the left, *Workers Power's* journal for international consumption, *Trotskyist International* (September/December 1992) not merely defended but indeed boasted of its Vienna waltz with the monarchists and Chetniks. The pages of *Workers Power* in Britain remained mute on the question. Now, *Workers Power* has published an (undated) "LRCI Resolution: War in the Balkans" which calls for "the establishment of military control of all and any areas within Bosnia-Herzegovina by Muslim forces" and demands "unconditional military aid to the Bosnian Muslims" (*Workers Power*, December 1992)! In short, WP has now bought into the imperialist campaign over "poor little Bosnia-Herzegovina" and concomitantly echoes the sabre-rattling for full-scale military intervention in Yugoslavia. This follows not long after the declaration by *Trotskyist International* that: "Support for Croatia and the Bosnian Muslims is little more than support of the interests of the Austrian ruling class." Earlier, *Workers Power* pimped for the "rights" of Ustashi-loving Croat nationalists against the then-Yugoslav deformed workers state and the German *Arbeitermacht* grouping echoed its "own" imperialists, demanding the "immediate recognition of the Croatian and Slovenian declarations of independence!"

Thus, in the current nationalist civil war laying waste to the former Yugoslav deformed workers state—in which "ethnic cleansing" is being carried out on all sides and in which the working people have no side—*Workers Power* has taken every side. It has in turn capitulated to reactionary Croatian nationalism, Great Serbian chauvinism/Chetnik fascism and now the UN-backed Muslim forces. Despite the ritual sloganeering against "imperialist intervention" tacked on to the end of the (latest) LRCI resolution, *Workers Power's* calls for "aid without

strings" and "unconditional military aid" is simply a barely left cover for the bourgeoisie's hypocritical "humanitarian" concern for the plight of the Bosnian Muslims, which is being wielded to pressure for further imperialist intervention.

Nor is *Workers Power* alone in this: the centrist Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL), while headlining its article "Imperialist Hands off the Balkans!" similarly backs the Muslims while acknowledging these forces are on an increasingly "pro-imperialist trajectory": "in the current fighting where Bosnian militiamen have been de facto defending communities from 'ethnic cleansing' it is correct to have a military bloc with them" (*Revolutionary Internationalist* no 13, Autumn 1992).

With capitalist counterrevolution the Balkans have once again become, as before World War I, a battleground of peoples in which imperialist rivalries crystallise. Washington's recent threat to launch unilateral military strikes on Serbia, despite initial British and French queasiness, is couched in terms of stopping "further acts of aggression against the Muslim minority". Germany, godfather of Croatian "independence", has made no secret of its conviction that "Serbia must be brought to its knees". Meanwhile, with some 20,000 UN troops stationed in Croatia and Bosnia, a renewed UN-aided Muslim advance has sent 10,000 Serb peasants fleeing eastern Bosnia. For our part, we demand: *Down with the imperialist embargo of Serbia! NATO/UN—Out of the Balkans!* In the event of an actual imperialist military intervention, we stand militarily on the side of Serbia/Montenegro while giving no political support to Milosevic's chauvinist regime.

Workers Power's 360-degree gyrations don't take place in a vacuum. Where *Workers Power* branded Titoism as "the culture medium for nationalism", the Stalinophobes of *Revolutionary History* (Vol 4, No 3, Summer 1992), for instance, uncritically reviewed a book (Michael Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*) that tries to shift the blame for the genocidal massacres in Yugoslavia during WWII onto the Titoist Partisans. Elements of the Labourite "left" have wrung their hands about the need for "aid" to the Bosnian

James P Cannon and the Russian Revolution



TROTSKY

The destruction of the Soviet workers state was the end product of manifold betrayals by the Stalinist bureaucracy, not least its erosion of the profoundly internationalist consciousness of the proletariat which made the October Revolution of 1917. We print below excerpts of a speech given by James P Cannon in 1923 after a lengthy stay in Soviet Russia, which vividly



LENIN

describes the internationalist sentiment in Lenin and Trotsky's time. This speech is among the works contained in the Prometheus Research Library's new book, James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism (1992).

Capitalist journalists write a great deal about the intense national patriotism of the Red Army.... As a matter of fact, the main effort of Communist propaganda in the army is to overcome tendencies toward Russian national patriotism and to develop a patriotism to the international proletariat. Since the army quit singing *God Save the Tsar* it has had no national official hymn. The official air played in the Red Army is the *Internationale*....

On the fifth anniversary of the revolution the delegates of the Communist parties and red trade unions were the guests of the proletariat of Petrograd. A great throng of workers met us at the station. We symbolized to them the international labor movement and they gave us a warm and generous welcome. Red Army troops were drawn up before the station, the streets in all directions were packed with workers who had come to greet us, and from every building and post flew banners, proclaiming the fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution and hailing the international revolution....

Wherever there is a group of militant workers anywhere in the world, there is the Russian Revolution. The Russian Revolution is in the heart of every rebel worker the world over. The Russian Revolution is in this room.

Comrade Trotsky told us, just before we left Moscow, that the best way we can help Soviet Russia is to build a bigger trade union movement and a stronger party of our own. Recognition by other governments will be of some temporary value, but the real recognition Soviet Russia wants is the recognition of the working class. When she gets that she will not need the recognition of capitalist governments. Then she can refuse to recognize them!

For, after all, Soviet Russia is not a "country." Soviet Russia is a part of the world labor movement. Soviet Russia is a strike—the greatest strike in all history. When the working class of Europe and America join that strike it will be the end of capitalism.

—James P Cannon, "The Fifth Year of the Russian Revolution" (early 1923)

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The working class will not forget!

Hands off the memory of Blair Peach

On 23 April 1979 Blair Peach, an anti-fascist activist and socialist, was killed by police on Orchard Avenue in Southall. The rioting cops, over 3000-strong and including members of the infamous Special Patrol Group, were sent in to invade the predominantly Asian Southall community by the Labour government to ensure the fascist National Front would be able to stage its provocation in the heart of the area. Hundreds of anti-fascist militants were arrested, dozens were injured and Blair Peach died from a severe blow to the head resulting in a massive extradural haemorrhage. His death was mourned and his memory honoured by a march of 10,000 in Southall on 28 April 1979. More than 8000 paid their respects as his body lay in state at the Dominion Cinema.

Conservative-run Ealing Council has now announced that "schools named after Blair Peach, the teacher killed during anti-fascist demonstrations in Southall, west London, in 1979, are to be re-named" (*Guardian*, 15 December 1992). Chairman of the middle school governors and Labour councillor Madhav Patil said a majority of staff, pupils and parents wanted to keep the Blair Peach connection: "Blair Peach has by his sacrificing of his own life become part and parcel of our community. His name is associated with the struggle of the black community

in Southall."

Blair Peach, a 33-year-old school teacher, was a member of the Anti Nazi League and Socialist Workers Party at the time of his murder. Despite our many differences with these organisations, we recognise that Blair Peach's legacy belongs to the working class and oppressed. As we wrote in 1988: "Vengeance for his death will only come with victorious socialist revolution. Along the road to that revolution, the workers movement will honour its martyrs and its heroes. And Blair Peach was certainly both of these."

That Ealing Council wants to eradicate the many years long tradition of honour paid by the working people of Southall to Blair Peach is not simply another piece of Tory viciousness. This comes at a time where Britain is the scene of mounting racist attacks, where the vile Nazi apologist David Irving has been given a platform to spew his filth in the *Sunday Times* while the cops rampage against anti-Irving protesters. This following partial report was collated by the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight* (October 1992):

"In Hounslow the Kahins, a refugee family from the horrors of Somalia, were burnt out of their home. In another part of Hounslow, an 11-year-old Somali boy needed 23 stitches after four white adults

attacked him with knives and iron bars. A 21-year-old Somali refugee, who is disabled, was beaten unmercifully by three white adults as passers-by stood and watched.

"From the murder of Afghan refugee Ruhullah Aramesh by a gang of 15 racist youths in Norbury, south London, to the killing of 16-year-old Rohit Duggal in Eltham, south London, recently the scene of a Blood and Honour neo-Nazi skinhead concert, to Tower Hamlets, where Panchadcharam Sahitharan, a Tamil refugee, died after being beaten by white youths carrying baseball bats, to Harrow, where an Asian youth of 16 was shot in the back and eye by a racist with a high-powered air-rifle and is now fighting for his sight, to Manchester, where murders have taken place, to flashpoints in Sheffield, Rochdale, Birmingham and Newcastle, where 66-year-old Khoaz Miah was attacked by a racist gang as he left the Elswick Road mosque and left for dead with injuries including a fractured skull, the refugee and Asian community have been the victims of attacks that are reaching dramatic proportions."

And this grisly set of atrocities is but the tip of the iceberg; from Rolan Adams in Thamesmead to Ahmed Shek in Edinburgh, the list of victims of racist murder is long.

The provocation and calculated insult of removing Blair Peach's name from

Southall can and must be stopped! A militant, mass mobilisation of the organised working class and their allies could put a swift end to this outrage. And this requires a political fight against the Labour Party leaders who have the blood of Blair Peach on their hands, as well as against the treacherous trade union bureaucracy. A fitting memorial to the memory of Blair Peach would be the successful mobilisation of the workers movement organised in sharp class struggle against the fascist menace, on the road to the revolutionary overthrow of the rotting capitalist system which spawns them. Those reformist, class-collaborationist outfits such as the ANL, the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) or the squaddists of Anti-Fascist Action who eschew the mobilisation of the working class are *obstacles* to such necessary action. Calls on the state to "ban" the fascists, gab-fests and carnivals with Labour Party politicians, "enlightened" clergy, and celebrities—these are "strategies" which can only lead to defeat. Successful working-class-centred united front mobilisations initiated by the ICL from Washington, D.C. to Treptow in Berlin against the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi fascists have shown what can and must be done. For trade union/minority mobilisations to smash fascist terror! Hands off the memory of Blair Peach! ■

Muslims and an end to imperialist foot-dragging. "Ken Livingstone, who called for force to be used against Serbia when it attacked Croatia 18 months ago, believes that the Labour left has been hopelessly indulgent towards Serbia" wrote the *New Statesman & Society* (11 December 1992) in an article awash with angst over "the west's moral responsibility not to wash its hands" of Bosnia. Workers Power is very much attuned to such "opinion".

In the total absence of any Trotskyist programmatic compass or known principles, the unhinged right-centrists of Workers Power could end up almost anywhere. They certainly didn't flinch from calling on the British imperialists to aid the reactionary Baltic nationalists against the former Soviet workers state. Workers Power is "consistent" only in its third-campist Stalinophobia and embrace of (in this case, murderously

competing) reactionary nationalisms.

Workers Power's line(s) constitute the antithesis of a revolutionary internationalist programme for the Balkans. Fighting against both the Ustasha and Chetnik pogromists as well as the Nazi and Italian fascist invaders, Tito's victorious Communist Partisans emerged from the war with widespread authority as the sole unifying force among Yugoslavia's nationalities. But the national question could not be resolved within the borders of the Yugoslav deformed workers state and the "market reforms" of Tito's Stalinist regime paved the way for capitalist counterrevolution and renewed internecine slaughter. Today, a new generation of internationalist Yugoslav proletarian militants will have to be cohered on the basis of a genuinely communist programme to combat the counterrevolutionary drive and in the fight for soviet power. ■

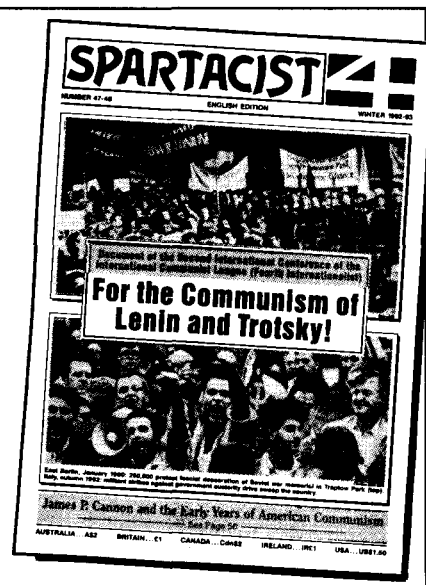
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On Sunday, 6 December, 200,000 Hindu fanatics had gathered in Ayodhya, the temple town in the state of Uttar Pradesh, at a disputed site where a disused Muslim mosque (the Babri Masjid) stands upon the alleged birthplace of the Hindu god, Lord Ram. Organised by the *Hindutva* (Hinduness) fundamentalist combine led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the fascist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and their communal and clerical fascistic allies, they were there to celebrate *kar seva*, the ceremonial beginning of temple construction.

Skinheads, some of them with "Lord Ram" etched out in the stubble of their shaven heads, began throwing stones at the police guarding the mosque. Then a well-organised and prepared grouping brushed past the tokenistic police lines and stormed the mosque. The police and paramilitaries, who had already been instructed not to use force against the *kar sevaks* by the BJP state government, melted away, many of them openly and enthusiastically displaying their sympathy with the communalist mob. Thousands of other frenzied devotees soon joined the first group and proceeded to demolish the mosque with picks, tridents and their bare hands, egged on by the marshals beating their drums and the speeches of platform speakers. Later the mob attacked Muslims and their properties in the area.

When the *kar sevaks* assembled to storm the site, 13,000 paramilitaries, including elite commandos, controlled by the central government sat by in nearby camps. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao wasn't going to take the rap for stopping the Hindu extremists, because he wants to harness the same social base and Hindu chauvinism as the BJP. The *kar sevaks'* actions, clearly taken with the complicity not only of the local government but the central government itself, signalled successful defiance of India's nominally secular constitution and sent a frightening signal of communalist terror to India's 110 million-strong Muslim minority. Over the next ten days, the official death toll in communalist violence climbed to over 1200, spreading beyond the northern Hindi belt to many parts of India, including areas that have seen no significant communal trouble since the Partition in 1947. The actual death total is undoubtedly two or three times that. In scenes reminiscent of the Partition, mobs pulled people off trains, beating them to death. Indeed the growth of anti-Muslim communalism, organised and led by the BJP/RSS, raises the spectre of the destruction of India and a slaughter to equal and even surpass the horrors of Partition, when more than 600,000 died.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, throughout his negotiations over Ayodhya in the last year, sought to conciliate the fanatics. His strategy was to wrest the mantle of being pro-temple and pro-Hindu from the BJP. "I can fight the BJP, but I cannot, and no one else for that matter, can fight Lord Ram" (*India Today*, 15 December 1992). Assailed with criticisms of ineptness and weakness by domestic critics, including within his own Congress(I) party, and imperialist concern about stability, Rao announced a series of measures to uphold "law and order", including curfews in major cities like Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta. The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh was dismissed and central rule imposed, and later the central Congress(I) government dismissed the three other BJP state governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. Rao promised to rebuild the mosque (along with a temple), but when central paramilitary troops took over the site of the mosque a few days later, they were very careful not to interfere with a new temporary Hindu temple. Hindus have been allowed to

Hindu pogromists destroy mosque

Communal terror grips India



Ayodhya, 6 December 1992: chilling signal for communalist blood-bath.

D Ravindra Reddy

worship at the site, while Muslims have been prevented. Moreover though leaders and thousands of activists of the BJP and associated organisations have been arrested, the measures taken reveal the government's own deep Hindu-chauvinist, anti-Muslim prejudice. Three Hindu extremist organisations have been banned, but at the same time, so have two Muslim fundamentalist organisations. The demonstrative parades of troops were mostly in Muslim neighbourhoods. And the overwhelming majority of the dead are Muslims killed in indiscriminate police shootings against Muslim protests.

Indian "secular democrats" and the imperialist bourgeois press have noted the deadly threat posed to India's "secular" character. An editorial in *India Today* (31 December 1992) noted:

"India has almost every ill in the world — hunger, poverty, disease, casteism, communalism. But it has always prided itself, quite justifiably, as the world's largest democracy and a secular one at that. Today that has been put in doubt. And that is the real shame."

But India is a capitalist prison house for its myriad oppressed layers, from the horribly exploited workers of its great industrial cities, to all the victims of the caste system, to the oppressed nations and minorities, and to those slaves of slaves, the women of India. There is no possibility of secular democracy under this capitalist regime which necessarily preserves the most horrific backwardness. For to do so, to get rid of the caste system, to get rid of the fundamentalist strongmen and communally organised religious fanaticism, would require a social revolution that would bring the whole edifice of Indian capitalism tumbling down, even if it started out as a purely democratic struggle. "Progressive" nationalists like Turkey's Ataturk outlawed the veil, for example, but this only suppressed vestiges of backwardness without eradicating the underlying conditions, so in time they have come back. What is required is the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, the seizure of power by the working class, rallying behind it the peasant masses, the

oppressed castes and national minorities, the subjugated and enslaved women. Only the working class, leading the agrarian masses and all the downtrodden, in workers revolution can save India from further communalist bloodbaths.

Ayodhya: flashpoint for communal/fascist mobilisations

The reverberations of the destruction of the Babri Masjid are not confined to India itself. India has the second largest Muslim population in the world (after Indonesia and larger than the entire Arab world put together). Its neighbours Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan are Muslim and India has already fought two wars with the latter since independence. Like the struggle for national self-determination of Muslim Kashmir, a communal blood-bath in India could be the trigger for renewed war between the two countries, both of whom already have nuclear capacity.

In Pakistan (where there are still one and a half million Hindus) mobs chanting "Crush India" and "Death to Hinduism" attacked Hindu temples, Air India and Indian embassy offices. Twelve Hindus, including six children, were burnt to death in a village near Quetta and in Baluchistan six Hindu women were burnt alive. In Bangladesh and Afghanistan there were similar mob attacks on Hindu temples and properties. And in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, where Muslims have become an increasingly distinct community, presently allied with the chauvinist Sinhala Buddhist government against the national struggle of the predominantly Hindu Tamil minority, Muslim communal organisations called demonstrations.

Further afield, there was a wave of arson attacks on Hindu temples, cultural centres and businesses across England in major cities like Bradford, Coventry and London where there are significant South Asian communities. In some cases, the attacks may have been the work of white racists and fascists seeking to find a cover for their own genocidal programme and to sow division among the communities from the sub-continent, who

have in the past tried to prevent the intercommunal violence spreading to Britain.

The Ayodhya dispute has long been a communal flash-point. The Hindu chauvinists allege that the mosque, built in 1528 by a lieutenant of the Moghul emperor Babur, was erected after a temple was destroyed at this exact place (among other places with identical claims) where Lord Ram was supposed to have been born 5000 years ago. Since the mid-eighties the demand that a temple replace the mosque has been the cutting edge of the BJP's mobilisations, which have seen it grow from two seats in the Delhi parliament in 1984 to 119 in 1991, the largest single opposition party. Born out of the paramilitary fascist RSS, an organisation which goes back to the days of independence and one of whose cadre assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, the BJP is riddled with RSS members and supporters from other fascistic organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP—World Council of Hindus) and the youth-based Bajrang Dal.

The BJP wants a Hindu state, the "Ram Rajya" (Kingdom of Ram) and alleges that Indian governments have betrayed Hindus by favouring the Muslims (referred to as "ungrateful guests") and other minorities. One journalist noted that "A freeze-frame of India today would show a nation wracked by the same changes that gave birth to fascism in the Europe of the 1930s" (*Independent*, 9 December 1992). The government's economic "liberalisation" policies in the eighties, and the more recent IMF/World Bank-dictated reforms, have created a large urban capitalistic-minded middle class, grasping to make ends meet, resentful of the entrenched and filthy rich Congress tops and their big business cronies, and fearful of those impoverished toiling masses below them.

The BJP is an upper-caste Hindu-led party, oriented to maintaining the traditional caste hierarchy in the context of capitalist urbanisation which undermines the old rural-centred system. It appeals to a layer of urban educated petty bourgeois who can find no jobs, and traders and

petty entrepreneurs who often see the Muslims in the same way as the European fascists viewed the Jews before World War II. In India anti-Muslim communalism is the reactionary rallying cry for the fascist mobilisation of the new middle classes in the context of general urban plebeian rage and economic desperation, a feature of modern capitalist India, not some feudal left-over. At the end of 1990 the BJP's attempted *kar seva* at Ayodhya resulted in more than 2000 communal killings and led to the fall of VP Singh's National Front government.

Secular democratic India: a lie

The mouthpieces for the imperialist bourgeoisies have been talking a lot about the fate of "secularism" in India. An editorial in the *New York Times* (8 December 1992) says the task is to maintain a secular state. The *Economist* (12 December 1992) asks "Can India survive as a secular democracy or will it degenerate into a theocratic Hindu state?" Elsewhere, the popular frontist editor of the *Lanka Guardian*, Mervyn De Silva advises: "Mr. Rao has to assert himself, restore law and order, but without compromising an inch on the Nehruvian ideal of a modern, secular, democratic India. And that, there's little doubt, is what is now at stake" (*Sunday Times* [Colombo], 13 December 1992).

In the struggle against colonial rule the idea of a united Indian people struggling for freedom, and that this unity should be secular, mobilised millions, and in particular against British attempts at divide-and-rule along religious, national and caste lines. From Nehru on, bourgeois nationalists have touted this secularism, but Indian nationalism always contained a strong element of Hindu and Hindi chauvinism. This reflected the late, uneven and arrested development of the Indian bourgeoisie in the context of multiple national, language and religious divisions. It is a lie that India was ever a secular democratic state. India and Pakistan were born out of the defeat of secular democratic aspirations in the anti-colonial struggle which were consumed in the flames of sectarian strife fuelled by the British colonialists.

The Congress(I) is still the only genuinely all-India party and still the main party of the fragmented bourgeoisie, maintaining a posture of representing all India's peoples. But despite its "secular", "democratic" and even formerly "socialist" pretensions, it has always been chauvinist. Mahatma Gandhi was the first advocate of the "Ram Rajya", and couched his appeals in reactionary, mythical Hindu terms. Congress presided over bloody Partition in 1947 and two wars with Pakistan. It has mercilessly sought to crush national struggles like those of the Sikhs in Punjab and the Kashmiris. After Sikh militants avenged themselves for the Operation Bluestar slaughter at the Golden Temple, Amritsar, by assassinating its architect, Mrs Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi condoned the butchering of thousands of Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere by Hindu communalist mobs, mobs often led by Congress politicians. And that playboy of the Western world with his Gucci shoes got his also, from the Eelam Tigers who had to face the murderous brutality of the expeditionary force he had sent to Sri Lanka. Like the other "secular" parties, Congress seeks to play to communal and caste blocs for electoral advantage. During the last elections Congress(I) caste thugs opened fire on Untouchables in Bihar trying to vote for a Communist Party candidate.

The imperialists' concern about "secularism" is just a mask for their real concern. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and consequently India's "non-aligned" stance (underpinned by Soviet

aid), the IMF and World Bank have a clear field. The economic "liberalisation" — meaning removing the obstacles to untrammelled imperialist and capitalist exploitation — which they demand, is heaping new burdens on the Indian masses whose condition already in many places begs description. The head of one of India's foremost companies, the Tata conglomerate, laments: "The world is going to look at India as an unstable country. Political stability is one of the main considerations governing foreign investment" (*Financial Times*, 9 December 1992). And the *Economist* (12 December 1992) worries that Rao "will find it more difficult to push ahead with his economic reforms".

Nor will the reformist Communist Parties represent any fundamental challenge to the plans of the bloodsucking IMF imperialists. Along with the BJP, the CPs backed VP Singh's National Front government. Now instead of mobilising the working class and the oppressed in independent action, the Communist Parties are playing around with a new popular front alliance with the Congress(I). And the inability of these reformists to solve the burning needs of the toiling masses breeds disillusionment. Some land reform in West Bengal has helped to build the Communist Party of India (Marxist)'s support in that state, but without a thorough-going agrarian revolution which expropriates the feudal landowners and the big capitalist farmers, the poor peasants have no land and can become fodder for the communalists. While corruption increases and his son gets rich, West Bengal premier Jyoti Basu tries to attract imperialist investors to the state, on the promise that the working masses can be held in check. Said Calcutta-based magnate, RP Goenka: "I don't go for 'isms', I don't go for parties, I follow the person. For my state, for West Bengal, I follow Jyoti Basu" (*New Statesman & Society*, 20 November 1992).

Workers Hammer recently ran a two-part article detailing the Stalinist betrayal of the "Quit India" movement against the British colonialists (see *WH* no 131, September/October and no 132, November/December 1992). Today, the CPs administer capitalist governments and defend the bourgeois order, which means dog eats dog, and in India that means on a communalist basis. There were also communal outbursts in Calcutta, capital of West Bengal, where the CPI(M) has ruled for 15 years. While both the CPI(M) and the CPI derive their mass support at least in part from an anti-communalist reputation, the CPs undercut any decent impulses of their own militants by making alliances with communal and casteist organisations as well as by denouncing the independence struggles of the Sikhs in Punjab and Muslim Kashmiris as "terrorism", backing the central government's ruthless repression of these legitimate struggles. In Kerala, where there was also a CPI(M) led Left Front government for some time, the BJP and Muslim fundamentalists have been now growing rapidly, at the expense of the discredited Left Front. The day before the mosque was destroyed militants of the Mao-oid Indian People's Front did fight pitched battles with *kar sevaks* at Charbagh railway station in Uttar Pradesh. But all these Stalinist organisations are wedded to class-collaborationist alliance-building.

In the absence of working-class centred struggle, one tragedy is that the oppressed may turn to the most obscurantist, reactionary extremists in their own communities. In the Punjab the Sikh struggle is dominated by Khalistani religious fundamentalists. In Kashmir the sway of Islamic fanatics who identify with Afghan CIA-cut-throat zealots like Hekmatyar has increased at the expense of

more secular-minded Kashmiri liberation groups. Nationalists and communalists take their cue from the "Death of Communism" reaction spawned by the counter-revolutionary victories in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In Shillong, capital of Meghalaya in the northeast, graffiti directed at Bengali and other migrants proclaims: "When the Germans & English are anti-alien, why not we?" (*Frontline*, 20 November 1992).

Working class must crush the communalist vermin

Muslims are the first target of the BJP/VHP/RSS communal thugs, but they are and will not be their only victims. Muslims are generally poorer, reflecting the fact that many derive historically from converts from among Harijans (Untouchables) and low caste people seeking to escape caste oppression. Though they constitute about 14 per cent of the population they make up only two per cent of those who pass senior civil servants' exams, for example. After the Muslims the Hindu fanatics will go after other religions — Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Jains. The 1990 mobilisation at Ayodhya was an obvious reaction to the National Front government's Mandal Commission proposals to reserve jobs for certain lower castes, which elicited violent protests from mainly upper caste students.

Dravidian leader Periyar understood something in the 1920s when he organised his followers in Madras to burn effigies of Lord Ram, as a symbol of Brahmin-dominated casteism, oppression of women and irrationality. While Hindu fundamentalists protested about alleged favouritism to the Muslims over the notorious Shah Bano case, where obscenely a divorced Muslim woman was denied alimony in the name of upholding Muslim personal law, there are plenty of similar atrocities on the other side of the communal divide. A recent horrendous example of what the BJP/RSS seek to uphold was when two young lovers and their friend were murdered in a village in Rajasthan, because they dared to defy the taboo on relationships between an upper caste person and an Untouchable. And the kerosene that was used to burn alive an old Muslim couple in Bombay this December may also be used for wife-burning. It is exactly among the urban social layers most attracted to the BJP that the barbarous dowry murders of women have grown most. Similarly it is these layers who avail themselves of modern medical science to selectively abort female foetuses.

Explosions of religious fanaticism and pogroms have to be ruthlessly suppressed. But the capitalist rulers will only institute a white (counter-revolutionary) terror, and one that will set one community against another. The strengthening of the central state power will in no way prevent communalist slaughter, but on the contrary will serve to bolster the Hindu chauvinists, to suppress working-class struggle and to fan the flames of future blood-baths.

The small, but strategically placed and combative working class has the power to crush the marauding communalists. And they have a special and immediate interest in crushing these vermin, since the workers are frequently drawn from local and migrant minorities. In the great industrial cities like Kanpur, Bangalore, Bhopal and Lucknow, the proletariat should defend the Muslim quarters from the communalists and chauvinist police rampage, just as the Bolshevik-led workers defended the Jews in tsarist Russia from the Black Hundreds. They should also put in their place any Islamic fundamentalists who simply want to reciprocate the crimes of the Hindu extremists.

An article in the *New York Times* a few days before the Ayodhya mosque was destroyed, waxed eloquent about Bombay as a "cosmopolitan" "city of opportunity": "It is where India is being reshaped and, if India is to claw its way from poverty and socialism, where it will happen first." But in December some of the worst communal killing was in Bombay, the metropolis at the heart of the Maharashtra industrial belt which stretches to Pune. More than half of Bombay's twelve million plus population are slum dwellers, many of them migrants from other areas of the country. The huge Dharavi slum near the airport has areas called "Little Punjab", "Little Bihar" and "New Gujarat". Most of the deaths in Bombay came when the local police fired indiscriminately on Muslim protesters. Muslims then attacked Hindus and vice versa, burning down large areas of shanties.

The Bombay police are heavily infiltrated by Shiv Sena, a local Maharashtra fascist group, named after a seventeenth century Hindu ruler, Shivaji, who fought the Muslim Moghul king Aurangzeb. Shiv Sena denounces "outsiders" and was formed in the sixties to combat the influence of the Communists and trade unionists in the burgeoning working class of the state. With the indifference or active connivance of the police Shiv Sena targeted Muslims. Muslims were forced to flee some areas, but in other parts of the slums Muslims and Hindus joined together to beat off the attackers, barricading the alleys to keep out Shiv Sena and the police. One fisherman from a mixed Hindu/Muslim shanty community told a reporter:

"They had come before — outsiders. Hindus and Muslims both," he explained. "We were able to persuade them to leave us in peace. But this time, I don't know what happened. I don't think they like seeing Muslims and Hindus living together peacefully" (*Independent*, 11 December 1992).

Today in India the bourgeois politicians scarcely bother to mask their corruption, nepotism, venality and outright criminality. Every election is accompanied by hundreds of deaths and hundreds of thousands of lower caste and Untouchables are denied a vote. The "Green revolution" utilised new grain types to largely eliminate grain imports, yet tens of millions still go hungry. A large industrial capacity and output has not transformed the lives of the great bulk of the Indian people, indeed they are ground down even further, with child labour endemic from textile shops to the great coalfields of Dhanbad. There are millions of VCRs, but far from bringing enlightenment, they are used to propagate religious fanaticism.

Writing in 1942 on the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat in India, the Trotskyists of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party (BLPI) stated:

"The realisation of the combined character of the Indian revolution is essential for the planning of the revolutionary strategy of the working class. Should the working class fail in its historic task of seizing the power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolution will inevitably recede, the bourgeois tasks themselves remain unperformed, and the power swing back in the end to the imperialists without whom the Indian bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself against the hostile masses. A backward country like India can accomplish its bourgeois-democratic revolution only through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Such is the perspective we in the ICL fight for today. Forward to the construction of Bolshevik parties in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Forward to the soviet socialist federation of South Asia! ■

Workers state strangled...

(Continued from page 1)

counterrevolution", which was immediately translated into Russian and distributed in over 100,000 copies throughout the Soviet Union, we wrote that workers mobilisations should have cleaned out the counterrevolutionary rabble on Yeltsin's barricades, thus opening the road to proletarian political revolution. As a result of Yeltsin's victory:

"The first workers state in history, sapped and undermined by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, lies in tatters. The state power has been fractured, the Communist Party—its bureaucratic core—shattered and banned from the KGB and armed forces, the multinational union is ripping apart as one republic after another proclaims secession.

"But while Yeltsin & Co now see a clear field to push through a forced-draft reintroduction of capitalism, the outcome is not yet definitively decided... Opposition from the factories against the ravages of capitalist assault could... prevent the rapid consolidation of counterrevolution."

— Workers Hammer no 125, September/October 1991

In the interim there was no decisive action to stop that consolidation. Politically atomised by nearly 70 years of Stalinist usurpation of political life, paralysed by the CIA-supported pro-Yeltsin "free trade unions" and the virulent chauvinist poison of numerous Stalinist remnants, the multinational Soviet working class has been overwhelmed by the counterrevolutionary tide. The Yeltsin regime seized the advantage to tear away at every vestige of the Soviet degenerated workers state and push through the piecemeal consolidation of the counterrevolution. Quantity has now turned into quality.

But the situation cannot long continue as it is. For Yeltsin and other restorationists to nail down a solid capitalist regime, sooner rather than later a bloody reckoning is likely, signalling to the masses that there is a new order. With explosions of struggle by workers driven to desperation, or even without them, the nascent bourgeois forces will move to impose heavy-handed order through a "strong state". The recent vicious crackdown, using Russian OMON riot police, on a strike by air traffic controllers foreshadows the would-be exploiters' determination to repress any working-class resistance. The rising racist hysteria against people from Central Asia and the Caucasus in major Russian cities creates the climate for pogroms. With ethnic conflicts brewing on a dozen fronts on the periphery of the Russian republic, from the Baltics to Abkhazia in Georgia and the Transdnister in Moldova, to the longstanding nationalist civil war between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the Caucasus, the possibility of a Yugoslav-style fratricidal blood-bath is all too real.

The Soviet workers state—which once served as a beacon for the exploited and oppressed of this globe, which destroyed Hitler's Holocaust machine, which for decades kept US imperialism from turning its nuclear arsenal on the world's semicolonial peoples—is dead. But the class struggle is not. The nascent bourgeois states in Russia, the Ukraine and elsewhere are fragile, isolated and internally splintered. They do not rest on the solid foundation of a cohered capitalist class. The new entrepreneurs consist of little more than petty speculators and mafia gangs, while sections of the old industrial hierarchy of factory managers are in the process of imposing their weight. The armed forces are bitter and demoralised.

The only thing which is certain in the ex-USSR today is increasing uncertainty

Spartacist



August 1991: Plotters of "perestroika coup" kept tanks idling in Red Square instead of sending them against counterrevolutionary HQ at Yeltsin's White House. ICL statement (right) declared: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

and instability. On the eve of the 1 December session of the Congress of People's Deputies, Moscow is awash with rumours of coups, countercoups and "creeping coups". Meanwhile, Yeltsin is engaged in furious negotiations with Arkady Volsky, head of the powerful industrialists' party, who is in league with the militarist Russian vice president Aleksandr Rutskoi. The volatility of the present situation is captured in the recent electoral victory of the ex-Stalinist Democratic Labor Party in Lithuania, ousting the rightist nationalist Sajudis movement from office. It did not take long for the realities of capitalist immiseration to drain away the nationalist euphoria which had intoxicated the Lithuanian people. However, the new Lithuanian leader Brazauskas reportedly has the same economic policies as Volsky-Rutskoi.

Meanwhile, the working class of the ex-USSR is faced with one assault after another. Society is disintegrating, mass unemployment looms. Industrial production has dropped 18 per cent since the beginning of 1992, while investment has plummeted by 50 per cent. To prevent a total collapse, the government has been pumping credits into industry: the state budget deficit is escalating to a trillion roubles, and debts of industrial enterprises are over two trillion. The result has been hyperinflation, variously estimated at an annual rate of 14,000 per cent (*Moscow Times*) or 20,000 per cent (*Commercant*). In the month of October alone, the rouble fell by half its value. Since January the price of bread has climbed on the order of a hundredfold. As the economy decomposes, the bulk of the population teeters on the brink of outright starvation. Any spark could set off the tinder-box on which Yeltsin and his cohorts sit.

We Trotskyists of the International Communist League, who have fought tooth and nail against ascendant counterrevolution, say: Stalinism is dead, but communism lives—in the class struggle of the world proletariat and in the programme of the revolutionary vanguard. The internationalist programme through which the Soviet Union was created has been carried forward under the banner of the Fourth International. It is the Trotskyists uniquely who warned that the continued stranglehold of the Stalinist bureaucracy over the Soviet workers state would lead to the destruction of October, who fought for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution, and called on the Soviet proletariat to sweep away the Stalinist excrescence through political revolution while there was still time.

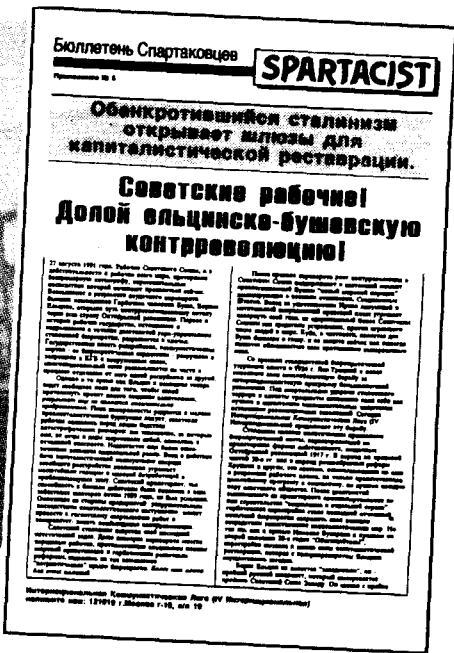
The "Russian question" has been the touchstone for revolutionaries and the defining political question of the 20th century. Leading up to the Second International Conference of the International

Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) earlier this autumn, discussion focused on an assessment of the developments in the former Soviet Union since August 1991. The main conference document described the piecemeal consolidation of a capitalist state:

"Recent developments continue to point in a dire direction. Stories abound in the press of 'primitive capitalist accumulation,' i.e., theft: Managers and former bureaucrats are scrambling, using all manner of shady practices to get their hands on socialized property—encouraged, abetted and advised by international imperialism. The recent strike by air traffic controllers in the Russian federation was decisively broken by the Yeltsin government using the OMON and elements of the MVD and KGB. An African student at Patrice Lumumba University was shot down by the Moscow militia amidst a hysterical racist press campaign. Tons of volumes of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin are being destroyed in a pure ideological anti-communist frenzy."

— "For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky"

The conference drew a balance sheet on these events and unanimously endorsed a 26 September document which said: "The August 1991 events ('coup' and 'countercoup') appear to have been decisive in the direction of development in the SU, but only those who are under the sway of capitalist ideology or its material perquisites would have been hasty to draw this conclusion at that time." It resolved "to note and draw conclusions from the position that the degenerated workers



state of Stalin and his heirs has been destroyed".

In the founding programme of the Fourth International, written on the eve of World War II, Leon Trotsky wrote: "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership." This crisis of proletarian leadership is no less acute today. To the beleaguered multinational proletariat in the ex-USSR and socialist-minded elements in the army and intelligentsia, we say: the key task facing you is to cohere a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, forged in struggle around the internationalist programme which led your forebears to victory in 1917.

Why didn't the workers rise up?

The working class of the ex-USSR and the world proletariat as a whole must digest the lessons of this bitter defeat. Since 1917, the social democracy has served its bourgeois masters by directly aiding and abetting imperialist revanchism in seeking to destroy the conquests of October. Since rising to power over the backs of the Soviet working class through a political counterrevolution in 1923-24, the Stalinist bureaucracy imposed a suffocating isolation on the first workers state, suppressing one international revolutionary opportunity after another. In the name of building "socialism in one country", the Stalinists—through terror and lies—methodically attacked and eroded every aspect of the revolutionary and internationalist consciousness which had



Bossu/Syigma

Der Spiegel photos

Faces of capitalist restoration: Boris Yeltsin (above) and sometime rivals Arkady Volsky (right), head of the industrialists' party, and Russian vice president Aleksandr Rutskoi (far right).



made the Soviet working class the vanguard detachment of the world proletariat.

The isolated workers state was subjected to the unremitting pressures of imperialism, not only military encirclement and an arms build-up aimed at bankrupting the Soviet economy, but also the pressure of the imperialist world market. As Trotsky wrote in *The Third International After Lenin*: "it is not so much military intervention as the intervention of cheaper capitalist commodities that constitutes perhaps the greatest immediate menace to Soviet economy." Although the planned economy proved its superiority over capitalist anarchy during its period of extensive growth, as the need for quality and intensive development came to the fore the bureaucratic stranglehold more and more undermined the economy. Finally, through his perestroika "market reforms" and acquiescence to capitalist restoration throughout Eastern Europe, Gorbachev opened wide the floodgates to a direct counterrevolutionary onslaught by Yeltsin & Co.

The bourgeoisie and the Stalinists alike have long sought to identify Lenin's October with Stalin's conservative bureaucratic rule. But nationalist Stalinism is the antithesis of Leninist internationalism. The Soviet degenerated workers state (and the deformed workers states which later arose on the Stalinist model) was a historic anomaly, resulting from the isolation of economically backward Russia and the failure of proletarian revolution to spread to the advanced imperialist countries. Stalinism represented a roadblock to progress towards socialism. As Trotsky wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" (November 1937):

"That which was a 'bureaucratic deformation' is at the present moment preparing to devour the workers' state, without leaving any remains, and on the ruins of nationalized property to spawn a new propertied class. Such a possibility has drawn extremely near."

While the Stalinist regime was able to prolong its existence as a result of the heroic victory of the Soviet masses over the Nazi invasion in World War II, Trotsky's Marxist analysis has ultimately, unfortunately, been vindicated in the negative.

Why did the Soviet working class not rally to defend its gains? How did the counterrevolution triumph and destroy the workers state without a civil war? In his seminal 1933 work laying out the perspective of proletarian political revolution, Trotsky polemicised against social democrats and proponents of various "new class" theories who claimed that under Stalin's rule, the Soviet Union had imperceptibly changed from a workers to a bourgeois state without any qualitative transformation of either the state apparatus or the property forms:

"The Marxist thesis relating to the catastrophic character of the transfer of power from the hands of one class into the hands of another applies not only to revolutionary periods, when history sweeps madly ahead, but also to the periods of counterrevolution, when society rolls backwards. He who asserts that the Soviet government has been *gradually* changed from proletarian to bourgeois is only, so to speak, running backwards the film of reformism."

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

There was certainly nothing gradual or imperceptible about the social counterrevolution in the ex-USSR, which has been extremely violent and convulsive throughout the former Soviet bloc. However, Trotsky also advanced the *prognosis* that a civil war would be required to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union and undo the deepgoing proletarian revolution.



Spartakist photos

**May 1991:
German and
Polish comrades
of the ICL
address 300
Soviet officers
and soldiers
commemorating
Red Army victory
over Nazi Third
Reich, at air base
in East Germany.**



In a wide-ranging discussion in the ICL two years ago on the counterrevolutionary overturns in Eastern Europe and the DDR (East Germany), it was noted that Trotsky had overdrawn the analogy between a social revolution in capitalist society and social counterrevolution in a deformed workers state (see Joseph Seymour, "On the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe," and Albert St. John, "For Marxist Clarity and a Forward Perspective," *Spartacist* no 45-46, Winter 1990-91). Where the capitalists exercise direct ownership over the means of production, and thus are compelled to violently resist the overthrow of their system in order to defend their own property, the preservation of proletarian power depends principally on *consciousness* and *organisation* of the working class.

Trotsky himself emphasised this point in his 1928 article "What Now?":

"The socialist character of our state industry...is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the role of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, the conscious discipline of the administrators, trade union functionaries, members of the shop nuclei, etc."

— *The Third International After Lenin*

And again, in "The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism" (February 1935), he stated: "*In contradistinction to capitalism, socialism is built not automatically but consciously.*"

When Trotsky wrote these articles, the memory of the October Revolution was still a part of the direct personal experience of the overwhelming mass of the Soviet proletariat, albeit already considerably warped by Stalinist falsification and revision. In the intervening decades, the nationalist bureaucracy did much to extirpate any real understanding of what came to be iconised as the "Great October Socialist Revolution". In Soviet mass consciousness, World War II, dubbed by the Stalinists the "Great Patriotic War" and suffused with the Russian-nationalist propaganda Stalin churned out during the war, came to supplant the October Revolution as the epochal event in Soviet history. In the end, Stalin and his heirs succeeded in imprinting their nationalist outlook on the Soviet peoples; proletarian internationalism came to be sneered at as an obscure "Trotskyite heresy" of "export of revolution" or, at best, emptied of any content while paid cynical lip service.

With Gorbachev's "new thinking" — ie, his cringing capitulation to each and

every imperialist ultimatum — even lip service to the ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution went by the boards. The Soviet soldiers who had been told, and believed, that they were fulfilling their "internationalist duty" in fighting against the reactionary Afghan mujahedin on the USSR's border, were then maligned for perpetrating "Russia's Vietnam" against Afghanistan. Gorbachev's ignominious pull-out from Afghanistan and his green light to the imperialist annexation of the DDR served only to further a sense of defeatism and demoralisation among the Soviet masses, while the so-called Stalinist "patriots" who denounced Gorbachev's concessions did so only to beat the drums for Great Russian imperial ambitions, explicitly harking back to the time of the tsars.

Even so, the spontaneous strikes which erupted in the Soviet coal fields in the summer of 1989 against the ravages of Gorbachev's "market socialism" dramatically demonstrated the potential for militant working-class struggle. As Russian social democrat Boris Kagarlitsky documents in his book *Farewell Perestroika* (1990), the strike committees in many areas became "the actual centre of popular power", organising food distribution, maintaining order, etc. As we pointed out at the time, the Kuzbass strikes "have quickly generated organizational forms of proletarian power, including strike committees and workers militias" ("Soviet Workers Flex Their Muscle", *Workers Vanguard* no 482, 21 July 1989).

These developments pointed to the possibility of authentic soviets, which — by drawing in collective farmers, women, pensioners, soldiers and officers — could have served as the basis for a new proletarian political power, ousting the bureaucracy through a political revolution. But when the Gorbachev regime reneged on its promises to the miners, pro-imperialist agitators trained by the "AFL-CIA" moved into the vacuum of leadership and set up the Independent Miners Union, organising an activist minority of the miners as a battering ram for Yeltsin.

However, a majority of the miners as well as the rest of the Soviet working class remained passive in the three-sided contest between the Yeltsin-led "democrats", Gorbachev and the more conservative wing of the Stalinists. The mass of workers were wary, if not outright hostile, to the pro-Western advocates of a "market economy". Unlike in Poland during the rise of Solidarność, the forces of

capitalist counterrevolution were *not* able to mobilise the Soviet masses in the name of anti-Communism.

At the same time, the bureaucratic elite (the so-called nomenklatura) was totally discredited by the flagrant corruption and cynicism of the Brezhnev era. Occasional appeals to defend "socialism" made by the more conservative elements of the Gorbachev regime, such as Yegor Ligachev, fell on deaf ears. The Stalinist "patriots", organised for example in the United Front of Toilers (OFT), were able to mobilise only a relatively small number of worker activists.

Atomised and bereft of any anti-capitalist leadership, lacking any coherent and consistent socialist class consciousness, sceptical about the possibility of class struggle in the capitalist countries, the Soviet working class did not rally in resistance against the encroaching capitalist counterrevolution. And, as Trotsky noted in *The Third International After Lenin*: "If an army capitulates to the enemy in a critical situation without a battle, then this capitulation completely takes the place of a 'decisive battle', in politics as in war."

The Army and the bureaucracy

What then happened to the armed forces, the core of the state in the Marxist understanding? In *The State and Revolution* (1917), written against the reformist view that the working class could simply appropriate the bourgeois state for its own purposes, Lenin emphasised: "Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the *old* state machine, but in this class *smashing* this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a *new* machine." Similarly, social counterrevolution requires the smashing of the proletarian state and the creation of a new state machine serving the bourgeoisie. This task was vastly facilitated by the Stalinist political counterrevolution, which effected a qualitative degeneration in the workers state issuing out of the October Revolution.

At the base, the Soviet military was affected by the same pressures and paralysis as the rest of society. The upper strata of the military command, on the other hand, were a component of the Soviet bureaucracy. Trotsky explained that the bureaucracy was a brittle, contradictory caste whose role was that of an intermediary between the workers state and hostile imperialist encirclement. This contradictory position generated within the bureaucracy a range of contradictory political impulses: "all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko)" (Transitional Programme). Reiss was a leading cadre of the Soviet intelligence service who declared for the Fourth International and was murdered by Stalin in 1937; Butenko was a Soviet diplomat who defected to Mussolini's fascist Italy.

The dual character of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the conflicting political appetites it harboured, remained even after the bloody purges of the 1930s exterminated any remnant of the Bolshevik "Old Guard". But while resting on and deriving its privileges from proletarian property forms, the Stalinist bureaucracy was not irrevocably committed to their defence. It could play no independent role in society. Under the impact of any sharp frontal assault, either from the revolutionary proletariat or the counterrevolution, the bureaucracy would shatter. As Trotsky wrote:

"When the proletariat springs into action, the Stalinist apparatus will remain suspended in midair. Should it still attempt to resist, it will then be necessary to apply

continued on page 8

Workers state strangled...

(Continued from page 7)

against it not the measures of civil war, but rather the measures of a police character....

"A real civil war could develop not between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the resurgent proletariat but between the proletariat and the active forces of the counterrevolution. In the event of an open clash between the two mass camps, there cannot even be talk of the bureaucracy playing an independent role. Its polar flanks would be flung to the different sides of the barricade."

— "The Class Nature of the Soviet State"

In the case of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the bulk of the bureaucratic stratum went over to the side of the insurgent pro-socialist proletariat. In contrast, more recently in the Soviet Union, the steady pressure of conciliation to imperialism and internal market forces pushed ever-greater sections of the bureaucracy into the camp of capitalist restoration, for whom Yeltsin early on became the chief spokesman.

The utter incapacity of the bureaucracy to play any independent role was forcefully demonstrated in the events of August 1991. Behind the seeming incompetence of the "Emergency Committee" (made up of Gorbachev's chief lieutenants)—its failure to arrest Yeltsin or even to cut off his direct line to Washington—lay the fact that these stodgy bureaucrats had no alternative to the programme of restoration and their refusal to in any way antagonise the imperialist powers. Had the workers sprung into action, mobilising to clear out the despised profit-gouging "cooperativists", speculators and rouble millionaires who manned Yeltsin's barricades, this would have indeed directly posed a civil war between the proletariat and the active forces of counterrevolution, and marked the beginning of a *proletarian political revolution*. Fearing proletarian mobilisation far more than counterrevolution, not a single element of the so-called "hardline" Stalinist "patriot" opposition to Gorbachev/Yeltsin tried to organise resistance to the Yeltsinite forces, hiding instead behind the impotent proclamations of the coup committee.

Having seized the reins of power, the Yeltsin regime immediately moved to reorganise the top echelons of the military, putting in a layer of younger officers who were marked either by subservience to Yeltsin (eg, Shaposhnikov) or by strident Russian nationalism, while seeking to buy off broader layers of the officer corps with salary increases. At the same time, there was a self-purge, as numbers of pro-socialist officers left the army in



M S Nappelbaum

Lenin at First Congress of the Communist International, March 1919.

disgust over the anti-Communist ban. In any case, as Trotsky remarked in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937): "a bourgeois restoration would probably have to clean out fewer people [from the state apparatus] than a revolutionary party."

The juridical dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 left the all-Union armed forces—nominally under the command of the stillborn "Commonwealth of Independent States"—suspended in mid-air, a "sixteenth republic", as some dubbed it. An officers conference in the Kremlin the following month registered overwhelming sentiment for maintaining the military as a multinational institution. But, as we warned at the time, "to preserve the multinational Soviet state and army requires salvaging the socialized property upon which it was created". Had the working class moved, sections of the military would undoubtedly have gone over to its side. Instead the centrifugal forces set into play by Yeltsin's counter-coup and formalised by the December 1991 decree moved to tear the military apart and eliminate what remained of the workers state. Nationalism, as in the chauvinist drum-beating over Moldova, has been a driving force in cohering an armed force loyal to the new capitalist order.

The use of Russian OMON forces to break up an anti-Yeltsin protest in February marked the emergence of a repressive apparatus loyal to the new regime. With the Ukraine and other republics creating separate armies and demanding loyalty oaths from Soviet troops stationed on their territory, in May Yeltsin decreed the formation of a distinct Russian Army, appointing the relatively young general Grachev, a strident Russian nationalist

who proclaimed his allegiance to Yeltsin during the coup, as the new Russian defence minister. An article in the CIA's "Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty" *RFE/RL Research Report* (21 August) observed:

"In many important respects, the appointment of General of the Army Pavel Grachev to the post of Russian defense minister on 18 May 1992 marked the beginning of the post-Soviet period in the security sphere, much as the creation of the CIS in December 1991 had marked the end of the Soviet period in the political sphere."

Navy Day, on 26 July, was marked by the hoisting of the old tsarist naval emblem, the St. Andrew's Cross, throughout the fleets, while Navy chief Admiral Chernavin proclaimed: "The Russian fleet must retrieve its flag, not because Soviet sailors were ashamed of the old flag but because it no longer corresponds to the spirit of the Russian navy" (*Independent* [London], 27 July). The flying of the tsarist banner over the Kronstadt naval garrison, a bastion of Bolshevism in the October Revolution, and atop the cruiser *Aurora*, whose fusillade against the Winter Palace signalled the victory of the Petrograd proletarian insurrection, aptly if grotesquely symbolised the dismantling of the Soviet workers state by the triumphant forces of counterrevolution.

Yeltsin and his counterparts in the other republics now have the beginnings of bourgeois armies. But the loyalty of these armed forces to capitalism has yet to be tested in blood. Noting that "the entire military could fragment along political or ethnic lines", one observer noted that "Russian leaders will be extremely wary of using the army to maintain domestic order" (Mark Kramer, "The Armies of the Post-Soviet States", *Current History*, October 1992).

Who is guilty for the catastrophe?

There was no lack of "Trotskyists" who took their stand on Yeltsin's barricades (in some cases, literally) and/or moved with shameless haste to declare the Soviet Union dead and buried. Thus they finally disencumbered themselves of the albatross of (ever more formal and empty) defence of the Soviet Union, which the bourgeoisie has hated and sought to destroy since the October Revolution.

In his 1933 article, Trotsky warned of the "tragic possibility" that the Soviet workers state "will fall under the joint blows of its internal and external enemies":

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

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

— "The Class Nature of the Soviet State"

And that is what the International Communist League has done. To the extent our limited forces permit, we have fought to provide a revolutionary pole to win the Soviet working class to a programme to reverse and defeat the counterrevolution. Our comrade Martha Phillips, murdered in Moscow last February, made the ultimate sacrifice in fighting for that cause.

Five years ago, when the first openly counterrevolutionary force—the anti-Semitic nativist fascists of Pamyat—reared its head in Moscow and Leningrad, we called for proletarian-centred mass mobilisations to crush these latter-day Black Hundreds in the egg. When, in August 1990, Gorbachev endorsed a plan for full-fledged capitalist restoration drawn up by Yeltsin, our first Russian-language leaflet raised the call "Soviet Workers: Smash Yeltsin/Gorbachev 500-Day Plan!" (*Workers Vanguard* no 510, 21 September 1990). That November, at the Revolution Day commemoration in Leningrad, the banner of the Fourth International was openly unfurled for the first time in the Soviet Union.

Despite our meagre resources and limited Russian-language capacity, we sought to intervene directly in the turbulent situation which opened up after Gorbachev took over. Following the dramatic coal miners strikes in the summer of 1989, we sought to get our Trotskyist propaganda into the hands of these combative workers, whose struggle had electrified the Soviet working class and shaken the Stalinist bureaucracy. ICL representatives intervened in a miners conference in Donetsk in October 1990, where they succeeded in temporarily spiking a CIA-orchestrated effort to enlist Soviet workers in a red-baiting witch hunt against British miners leader Arthur Scargill.

During the 1989-90 upheaval in the DDR, as part of the ICL's struggle to effect a *proletarian* political revolution in East Germany, we issued Russian-language propaganda addressed to and widely disseminated among Soviet troops stationed there, and later spoke to assemblies of Soviet officers and soldiers. In 1991, on the anniversary of the Red Army's victory over Nazi Germany, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany and the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski held a joint forum for several hundred Soviet military personnel at an air base outside Berlin (*Workers Vanguard* no 526, 10 May 1991). Then, a month before Yeltsin's counter-coup, ICL representative Martha Phillips addressed the Moscow Workers Conference, calling for the formation of genuine soviets to stop capitalist counterrevolution, for opposition to all forms of chauvinist reaction, and for international socialist revolution.

Our August 1991 call, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!", was the first statement widely distributed throughout the Soviet Union in opposition to Yeltsin's restorationist drive. We advanced a programme for independent working-class struggle against capitalist restoration and for genuine soviets as organs of a new proletarian political power:

"Independent workers committees must be formed in factories, mines, railroad yards and other enterprises to prevent layoffs and privatization by taking over the plants and controlling production.... Committees of soldiers and officers must be formed to oppose the purges and prevent the army from being used to attack the workers' interests.... *Workers militias* must be formed...to defend against and

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crush the lynch mobs and pogromists... In this hour of dire need more than ever, the key to successful defense of the Soviet proletariat is the forging of a new, authentically communist vanguard party of the working class. Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!"

We sharply opposed resurgent anti-Semitism and Great Russian chauvinism and warned that women have the most to lose under capitalist restoration.

Following Yeltsin's unleashing of the OMON and Moscow militia (police) against protesters in February 1992, we issued an urgent statement: "White Tsar Boris Wants a New Bloody Sunday." With the threat of widespread hunger posed by draconian price increases on food and other necessities, we raised a fighting programme:

"Through their own independent committees, composed of delegates elected by the enterprises, the working people must take control of food supplies and oversee distribution. What is needed once again is to form authentic soviets, not talk shops like the fake soviets and impotent parliaments of today, but organs for struggle composed of deputies elected by and recallable to the workplace and barracks. Formed into powerful soviets—internationalist, egalitarian, revolutionary—the working people will be able to sweep away the shaky regimes of the capitalist-restorationists with a flick of the finger. No new tsars—away with Yeltsin—for a republic of the working people!"

These demands retain their full force today, though the consolidation of a bourgeois state poses the struggle not for political revolution but for socialist revolution to sweep away the nascent capitalist class.

Who is guilty for the catastrophe? First and foremost it is the Stalinists who bear responsibility. Beginning with the political counterrevolution led by Stalin in 1923-24, the state apparatus was, as Trotsky wrote, "transformed from a weapon of the working class into a weapon of bureaucratic violence against the working class, and more and more a weapon for the sabotage of the country's economy" (Transitional Programme). By the later Brezhnev years, bureaucratic mismanagement of the planned, centralised economy had resulted in a sharp decline in Soviet economic growth, while rampant corruption fuelled the appetites of the pampered children of the bureaucracy to live like Western capitalists. Given its mortal dread of workers democracy which would abolish their privileged positions, the only option the bureaucracy saw for intensive economic growth was to experiment with a neo-Bukharinite programme of market-oriented "reforms"—Gorbachev's perestroika.

While the August 1991 "Emergency Committee" offered nothing but "perestroika without glasnost", today Stalinist leftovers like Viktor Anpilov's RKR, Kryuchkov's RPK, Prigarin's SK and Nina Andreyeva's VKPB et al, who today posture as an opposition to Yeltsin, offer nothing but a "red" cover for capitalist counterrevolution. They have made no attempt to mobilise class struggle, not only because their chauvinist politics make them incapable of appealing to the still multinational proletariat, but because they are opposed to any struggle which would disrupt capitalist class "peace". This was explicitly stated in the March 1992 "Declaration on the Founding of the United Opposition", signed by all the Stalinist leftovers as well as Medvedev and Denisov's SPT—formalising the repulsive "red-brown" coalition with Great Russian chauvinists, monarchists and outright fascists—which called for "salvation of the Fatherland...on the basis of civil peace and national trust". Thus all these groups opposed the recent air traffic controllers strike.

With their call for privatisation through



3 January: 250,000 strong anti-fascist mobilisation, Treptow Park, East Berlin. News not fit to print in *Socialist Worker*.

the "work collectives", the Stalinist has-beens seek to be the "left" flank of the counterrevolution's corporatist wing, whose most powerful representative is the Volsky-Rutskoi Civic Union bloc. Aligned with them is the former official trade-union bureaucracy, now calling itself the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR). Where Yeltsin's prime minister Gaidar grovels to the West for infusions of capital and promotes a fantastical scheme for privatisation through distribution of shareholding vouchers to the entire population, the Volsky/Rutskoi faction hopes to maintain a strong military-industrial sector by placing ownership directly in the hands of the former managers.

In the name of building the *derzhava*, the tsarist watchword for a Russian strong state, the RKR & Co have willingly submerged themselves in every reactionary lash-up, from the fascistic Russian National Sobor of the anti-Communist, anti-Semite Sterligov (who is now pushing restoration of the tsarist throne) to the newly founded "left-right" National Salvation Front. Indeed, every grouping which issued out of the former CPSU—from the RKR to the SPT—accepts the "inevitability" of the "market economy" (restoration of capitalism). They're simply squabbling over the terms—who gets to feed at the trough (see "Stalinist Has-Beens: Left Wing of Nationalist Counterrevolution", *Workers Vanguard* no 561, 16 October 1992). Meanwhile, the explicitly social-democratic Labor Party (PT) of Boris Kagarlitsky is in bed with a section of the FNPR bureaucracy, and participates in the All-Russian Toiling Assembly, which is heavily populated by Volsky's people and whose chairman Konstantinov is vice president of the Sobor.

Every one of the numerous Stalinist and social-democratic outfits has fallen into step behind the corporatist option,

appealing for privatisation through the "work collectives" (ie, factory managers). With their backs against the wall, many workers may look to their factory managers taking ownership of industry as a last-ditch defence against unemployment and immiseration.

Soviet workers should entertain no illusions that their livelihoods will be secure under a corporatist regime. Capitalism, whether under Volsky/Rutskoi or Yeltsin/Gaidar or some variant in between, necessarily means the whip of brutal exploitation and widespread unemployment.

"State Capitalism": anti-Communist myth

If the destruction of the Soviet Union has placed a final epitaph on the sordid history of Stalinism, it has also demolished the numerous false "theories" behind which various renegades from Trotskyism sought to mask their refusal to defend the gains of the October Revolution. The "theory" that the Soviet Union was a "state capitalist" society stands the Marxist analysis of capitalism on its head. It posits a truly bizarre form of "capitalism"—one in which capitalist competition and the law of value are external to the system, one marked not by cyclical crises of overproduction but by distortions and bottlenecks due to administrative fiat, one characterised not by chronic mass unemployment but by labour shortages. The purpose of the terminological sleight of hand, whether from the pen of Tony Cliff or his predecessors, was to deny any basis for defence of the Soviet Union.

While claiming to occupy a "third camp" ("neither Washington nor Moscow"), today the "state capitalists" join the imperialists in rejoicing over the "death of Communism". In August 1991, the Cliffites cheered that "Communism Has Collapsed" and hailed the Yeltsinite

ascendancy as "The Beginning, Not the End" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991). The identification with imperialist anti-Communism is evident, but the "state capitalist" logic is absurd. Here we have supposedly just witnessed the remarkable spectacle of an entire "capitalist class" which simply committed suicide rather than seeking to defend its property. And the millions upon millions of working people in Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR who are now being dragged down by immiseration, unemployment and fratricide aren't about to buy the notion that they are just going from one brand of capitalism to another, much less hail it.

"Third campists" of the second mobilisation, like the political bandits of David North's "International Committee" and others, argue that Stalinism is "counter-revolutionary through and through". This flatly denies Trotsky's understanding of the "dual position" of the bureaucracy. More to the point, like Cliff's theory, the purpose is to wash their hands of defence of the Soviet Union. North claimed that from the beginning Gorbachev was bent on "the political, economic and social liquidation of all that remains of the conquests of the October Revolution" (*Perestroika Versus Socialism* [1989]). North then rushed to proclaim that it is "impossible to define...any of the republics" of the ex-USSR "as workers states" the moment Yeltsin decreed its juridical dissolution ("The End of the USSR", *Bulletin*, 10 January 1992).

The various theories defining the Stalinist bureaucracy as a "new class" or "counterrevolutionary through and through" unite in appealing to knee-jerk moralism. In contrast, Trotsky's dialectical and materialist analysis of the Soviet degenerated workers state, elaborated in *The Revolution Betrayed* and other writings, has stood the test of time and provides a programme for action for the proletariat. Basing ourselves on this Marxist understanding, we pointed to the contradictory character of the initial Gorbachev reforms: "Gorbachev's perestroika not only goes against the immediate material interests of most workers but also affronts their deep reservoir of collective feeling. At the same time, the regime's call for *glasnost* permits a degree of organized dissent against official policies" (Spartacist League/U.S. conference document, "Toward Revolutionary Conjunction", June 1987).

For the first couple of years, Gorbachev's neo-Bukharinite reforms had some effect in reviving the Soviet economy. Harvard economist Marshall Goldman, in his book *What Went Wrong with Perestroika* (1991), notes of Gorbachev's 1985-86 programme of "intensification" and "acceleration" that "initially these reforms seemed to be working" and "industrial growth seemed to rebound". He even achieved the largest grain harvest in Soviet history (240 million tons in 1990). But the subsequent introduction of

continued on page 10

Our comrade Martha Phillips fought to defend the October Revolution. Protesting against closing of the Lenin Museum (right) and addressing delegates at July 1991 Moscow Workers Conference (far right).



Spartacist photos

Workers state strangled...

(Continued from page 9)

enterprise self-management on New Year's 1988 proved to be the decisive step finally leading to collapse. The abandonment of planning in a planned economy led to a breakdown in economic administration and widespread shortages and looting. The result, Goldman writes, was "the undermining of the planning system and the collapse of the economy". As perestroika reforms failed, in August 1990, Gorbachev openly declared his support to capitalist restoration by endorsing the "500-Day Plan", only to back away from it later in his constant zigzagging.

Gorbachev's evolution from "market socialism" reforms to a programme of outright capitalist restoration proved yet again the impossibility of "reforming" the Stalinist regime, a conception advanced by the likes of Ernest Mandel in his book *Beyond Perestroika* (1989). Whatever their quibbling differences, support for Yeltsin counterrevolution brought together all of these revisionists, from Cliff to North to Mandel—as well as the Militant group in Britain (formerly led by Ted Grant), associated with Sergei Beits' Rabochiya Demokratiya (Workers Democracy) in Russia. The bottom line for all of these outfits has been capitulation to social-democratic anti-Sovietism, just as a decade ago they were all united in their cheering for counterrevolutionary Solidarność in Poland and their denunciations of the Red Army intervention into Afghanistan.

In contrast, the Spartacist tendency proclaimed "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and declared "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" in Poland. In response to Gorbachev's 1989 pull-out from Afghanistan in order to appease Washington, we warned it is far better to fight imperialism there than within the borders of the Soviet Union. But the Gorbachev regime didn't want to fight imperialism anywhere. "The decision to leave Afghanistan was the first and most difficult step", remarked Gorbachev's foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze recently, "Everything else flowed from that." A year after the Afghanistan withdrawal, Gorbachev gave the green light to capitalist reunification of Germany.

The ICL was unique in its unambiguous and forthright opposition to imperialist annexation of the DDR: the power of the Trotskyist programme to show the way out of the collapse of Stalinism found a massive expression in the 250,000-strong anti-fascist, pro-Soviet demonstration on 3 January 1990 at Berlin's Trepow Park, which was initiated by the German Spartacists. The Stalinists, for their part, thought they could have counterrevolution in one country. But the sell-out of the DDR directly prepared the destruction of the Soviet Union.

Reforge the Fourth International!

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing sharpening of inter-imperialist rivalries have made the world a far more dangerous place. The "New World Disorder"—proclaimed during the US-led imperialist slaughter in the Persian Gulf, to which Gorbachev gave his approval—has the hallmarks of the old world order which led to the slaughterhouse of World War I, but this time posing the threat of a nuclear conflagration. Imperialist unity, maintained for decades by the "Communist menace", has broken down as the contending powers fall upon each other, and vie to carve up the former Soviet bloc into neocolonies.

At the same time, there is opening up a new period of intensified class struggle.



Red Army's International Iron Battalion honours German Spartacists Luxemburg and Liebknecht after their murder in January 1919. Proletarian internationalism was the cornerstone of the Soviet Union under Lenin and Trotsky.

The semicolonial peoples of the world, now that the imperialist powers do not feel constrained by a Soviet counterweight, are being subjected to outright starvation. In the imperialist West, growing trade war and exploitation have already led to major class battles in Germany, Italy and Greece. The multi-racial upheaval in Los Angeles following the verdict freeing the racist cops in the Rodney King beating testifies to the social instability in the United States. In Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR, the working class will soon recover from the numbing experience of counterrevolution and begin to fight against the ravages of capitalist exploitation. Poland already has been swept by one major strike after another over the past year.

The workers of Russia, the Ukraine and the other former Soviet republics still have time to regroup and strike back before anything approaching a viable system of capitalist exploitation is congealed. Hatred and bitterness toward Yeltsin and his ilk are seething. Unlike in the ex-DDR, where masses of working people bought the lie that D-mark Anschluss (annexation) would bring prosperity, in the former USSR there are few such positive illusions. There is, however, a widespread view that there is no alternative to the "market", for which the bankrupt Stalinists bear the main responsibility.

The road to recreating a full-fledged capitalism is not as smooth as the Nevsky Prospekt. To free itself of its would-be exploiters and oppressors, the working class must also assert itself as a "tribune of the people", opposing every manifesta-

tion of anti-Semitism and anti-woman and anti-homosexual bigotry, rising to the defence of all those—including African and Asian students, and the Central Asian peoples in Russia—who are increasingly exposed to violent racist terror. What is required above all is a revolutionary leadership capable of overcoming the divisions inspired by chauvinism and nationalism, clearing away the decades of false consciousness fostered by Stalinism, and linking the struggles in the ex-USSR to that of the world proletariat.

While social democrats squeal that "Soviet Communism" discredited socialism in the eyes of the masses, an even greater crime of Stalinism was the way it warped the consciousness of pro-socialist workers, filling their heads with anti-Marxist illusions such as "building socialism in one country", the "popular front" and the utopia of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. "Socialism in one country" meant not only the suppression of revolutionary struggle abroad, but the isolation of the Soviet working class from any connection with the international class struggle. For more than 60 years, Soviet workers were submerged in a cocoon walling them off from political developments around the world. In the course of fighting to reverse the counterrevolution which has plunged it into poverty and misery, the Soviet working class will necessarily have to reappropriate the revolutionary heritage which has been taken from it.

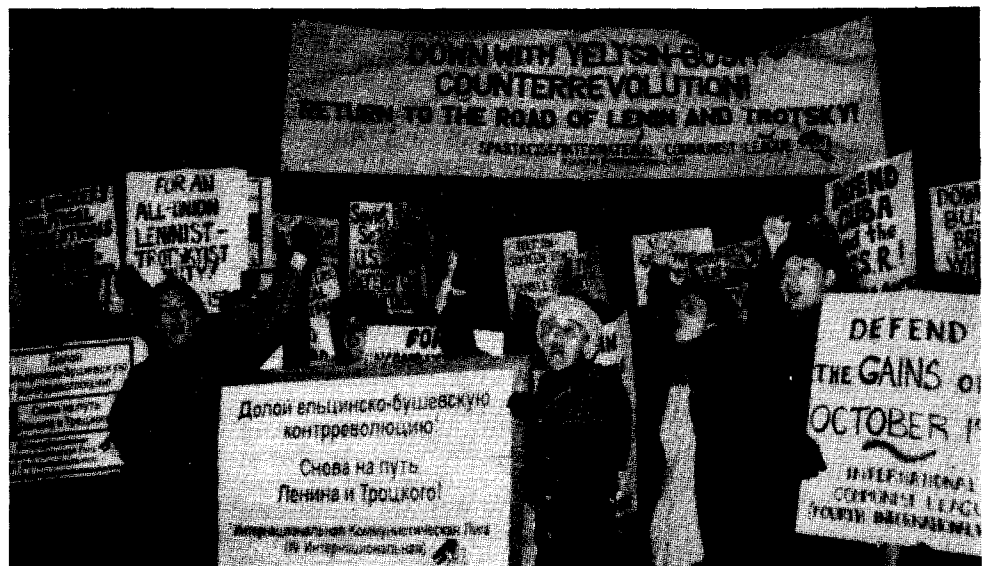
The proletariat which made the October Revolution learned from Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks that it was part of an international struggle. It understood that

its only prospect for survival lay in the extension of the revolution to more advanced industrial powers, chiefly Germany. The opportunities were manifold, but the revolutionary parties outside Soviet Russia were too weak and politically immature to pursue them. The German Spartacist uprising of 1918-19 and the 1919 Hungarian Commune went down to bloody defeat. The possibility of the Red Army marching to the aid of the German workers in 1920 by unleashing proletarian revolution in Pilsudski's Poland was foiled. Finally, with the defeat of the German October in 1923, the Soviet proletariat succumbed to the demoralising prospect of a lengthy period of isolation, which allowed the bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin to usurp political power. Thus was the revolution betrayed.

But this betrayal did not go unchallenged. The Left Opposition of Leon Trotsky continued the struggle for the authentic programme of Leninism. In its struggle to defend and extend Soviet power, the Left Opposition urged a policy of planned industrialisation to revive the enervated proletariat and enable the isolated workers state to hold out against imperialist encirclement. The Trotskyists fought uncompromisingly against the nascent bureaucracy's Great Russian chauvinism. They fought against the treacherous policies emanating from "socialism in one country", in the first instance the subversion of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 and the Anglo-Russian trade-union bloc which led to the knifing of the 1926 British General Strike. This led to the subordination of the German working class to Hitler's jackboot, to the outright suppression of the Spanish revolution in the late 1930s. By selling out revolutionary opportunities at the end of World War II, particularly in Italy, France and Greece, Stalinism enabled capitalism to survive, and thus prepared the way for its own ultimate demise.

With the utter liquidation of the Communist International as an instrument for world revolution, Trotsky organised the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. Today the International Communist League fights for the rebirth of the Fourth International, whose cadre were decimated by Stalinist and Hitlerite terror and which finally succumbed in the early 1950s to an internal revisionist challenge which denied the need for an independent revolutionary leadership. Only as part of the struggle to reforge an authentic world party of socialist revolution can the workers of the former Soviet Union cohere the leadership they need to sweep away the grotesque horrors they now confront.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 564, 27 November 1992.



ICL Leaflet, February 1992, calls for formation of workers and soldiers soviets to stop capitalist restoration. Spartacists protest in New York against Yeltsin visit with his Wall Street masters in January 1992.

Jobs slaughter...

(Continued from page 1)

possibility of a proletarian solution to the crisis of decrepit British capitalism. In contrast, we called on miners, rail, transport and power workers to strike together. We underscored the necessity for a "fighting programme to get what we need, not what the capitalists say they can afford: smash the privatisation schemes and cuts in social spending, no sackings, jobs for all through worksharing at full pay, for a big pay boost and full cost-of-living protection!" We pointed out that this entailed a fight to smash the capitalist system, and not parliamentary jockeying for the purpose of getting in a Labour or coalition government.

As we wrote at the time:

"Every effort is being made by Labour and its hangers-on to turn the popular outrage over the pit closures onto the road of parliamentary adjustments. It could not be more clear that the Labour traitors and their trade union misleaders are the main obstacle to the necessary struggle against not just a discredited and wretched government, but the *capitalist system* which has led inexorably to the deindustrialisation of these isles and the vindictive attack on the militant miners. This battle cannot be waged within the framework of Labourite parliamentarism, lobbies of the TUC, or any other sort of legalistic gimmicks. Decaying British capitalism cannot be reformed, lobbied, legislated into providing a decent living wage and life for the working people: it is necessary to smash the profit system root and branch!" ("For workers action committees to stop the pit closures and to run the country!" Spartacist League leaflet, 21 October; printed in *Workers Hammer* November/December 1992).

Scargill & Co refused to mobilise strike action, instead parading the likes of TUC head Norman Willis, Labour Party politicians, clergymen, Liberal Democrats, the head of the CBI and dissident Tories on the platforms of mass rallies. Now the High Court has ruled that Major's government and President Heseltine's Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) broke their own laws, "unlawfully and irrationally" ignoring the rights of the mineworkers to be "consulted". While Scargill hailed the ruling as a "complete victory", a lot of miners know better than to trust the union-busting government. "Difficult to get too excited... maybe it's just a government get-out", said one miner from Sharlston colliery in Yorkshire (*Guardian*, 22 December 1992).

A "government get-out": that's exactly what this sop to public opinion and attempt to put a "legal" stamp on the pit closures is all about. Meanwhile, as the trade union fakers chatter about "independent inquiries" into the coal industry, over 5000 miners have been driven into taking redundancy since the closure announcement on 13 October. At one of the threatened pits, Markham Main, a miner explained: "We didn't realise until too late that it wasn't compulsory"; all but 100 of the 700 miners have left; "one coal face has deteriorated, another has been sealed, with valuable coal-cutting machinery lost" (*Independent*, 22 December 1992).

Lobbying the TUC general council for industrial action in support of the NUM, one disgusted miner said: "All you get from marching is sore feet" (*Guardian*, 26 November 1992). But Willis and the TUC have not changed their spots since they strangled the heroic coal strike of 1984-85. The TUC's little noticed "day of action" on 9 December boiled down to a ludicrous appeal to workers to "seek the views of their employers" and to "press the government to change its mind". It was hardly surprising that even Scargill's

"moderation" could not convince Willis & Co to endorse a token "stayaway" proposed by the NUM for 19 January. Rejecting this as "inappropriate" given the High Court ruling, the TUC instead plans to call another "day of action" in February over "jobs and pay".

Soon after the pit closures were announced, London Underground workers—faced with the vicious "Company Plan" aimed at slashing a quarter of the workforce, instituting a union-busting regime of virtual slavery and massive intimidation—voted to strike. RMT head Jimmy Knapp buried the threat of all-out strike action in return for... nothing! Underground workers were sold out at exactly the time when millions of working people—outraged at the closures of pits, hospitals and massive unemployment—could have been galvanised in struggle.

While ASLEF bureaucrats on the Underground openly ordered their members to scab in the event of a strike, RMT union officials gave management a free hand to harass and intimidate workers. Knapp made it clear he would accept anything the bosses dished out, as long as they continued to funnel dues money to the union. The unions ought to collect their own dues—and you can bet that having to go down to the assembly line or the trains to get union subs would make the officials a lot more responsive to the membership.

Relying on the bosses and their government to collect dues means mortgaging the union to the class enemy. In a similar fashion, Willis preaches that the government can be pressured into providing decent jobs and living conditions for workers, while Scargill channels union energies into endless court suits against British Coal, proclaiming that "We do not want strike action." But the capitalist state is not neutral—it is an organ for the bourgeoisie to suppress the working class. This was proven a thousand times over during the miners strike—from the union-busting scab ballot supported by Thatcher and Kinnock alike, to the endless court sequestering of NUM funds, to the legions of strike-breaking cops launched at miners' picket lines. The indispensable condition for a desperately needed working-class fight-back is the class independence of the unions from the capitalist state. Key to this is a revolutionary internationalist leadership forged in struggle against the social-democratic labour bureaucracy.

The fake left tailor their demands to what is acceptable to the treacherous bureaucracy. Thus the "CPGB" (*Leninist*) launches diatribes against those who are for "instant strikes" and grotesquely submits its own "Plan For Miners" to Heseltine's DTI. The reformists and centrists outdo themselves competing with ever more absurd calls on proven scabherd Willis to call a general strike. And behind their cheap Tory-bashing and slogans such as "sack Tory scrooges" is the lie that getting Labour into government would be a step forward for workers.

Workers Power (December 1992) gets the Mrs Grundy award for Victorian moralism above and beyond the call of Labourite duty. Marxists locate the cyclical economic crises of capitalism within the system itself, which long ago became a fetter on the development of the productive forces of humankind. *Workers Power*, however, believes that the whole problem of decaying British capitalism comes down to Norman Lamont's Access card debts, his alleged penchant for rather cheap champagne and the fact that he "has so many houses he can afford to let one to a 'sex therapist'":

"All this happens so that the top bankers and industrialists can get through the economic crisis without having to cut

back on their champagne bills, their big cars and houses, their long foreign (!) holidays and their private school and hospital fees."

If the ruling class would just drink PG Tips like Tony Benn and take their holidays in Blackpool presumably all would be well! But Britain's economic slump is hardly the result of one or another set of bourgeois economic and monetary policies—let alone the personal spending habits of the ruling class. Dictated by the iron necessity to prop up increasingly uncompetitive British capitalism, successive governments—whether Tory or Labour—have sought, and will in the future seek, to shove capitalist austerity down the throats of workers.

Abolish the monarchy!

In a commentary entitled "A monarchy in glorious dissolution" the none-too-radical Edward Pearce applauds the growing disrepute in which the monarchy is held: "It fails because the social pyramid of reflexive deference, of 'knowing' that some people were better than us, the impulse to curtsy, the descending chain of cringe, is, gloriously and at last, in dissolution." Not so for Smith's Labour Party! Their servile condolences to Charles and Diana on the occasion of their separation recalled Leon Trotsky's observation that the gentlemen of Her Majesty's Royal Opposition were hardly likely to "assault bourgeois property if they dare not refuse pocket money to the Prince of Wales". Even Tony Benn's agenda for constitutional reform—with an elected second chamber, elected magistrates, a disestablished church and an elected head of state, would leave the royals living quietly at Buckingham Palace.

We Marxists have never trivialised the question of the monarchy; indeed our call for the abolition of the monarchy, House of Lords, established church and licensing laws, has long been scoffed at as some hopeless eccentricity by our fake-left opponents. Their pretence that this is an unimportant question for the working-class movement simply reflected the Labour Party's historic bowing and scraping to the throne. (Apparently one debate on the monarchy was held at a party conference in the 1920s.) Now that everything from the "Squidgy tapes" to the Windsor Castle fire has revealed a populace unamused by the monarchy, the fake left has decided to deal with the question.

However, a good deal of the anti-royals coverage by the fake left consists of moralistic denunciations of the broken marriages of the Windsors, or focusing on their conspicuous consumption. But the royals are not simply financial parasites—they represent a rallying point for social reaction in the event of a political crisis. The officer corps is explicitly loyal to "King and Country". For that reason the bourgeoisie has tenaciously held on to these feudal excrescences, and no bourgeois parliament—at least since Cromwell—has fundamentally infringed on royal privilege, Tony Benn's reformist pipe-dreams notwithstanding. The monarchy, House of Lords and established churches are integral props to the maintenance of capitalist class rule in Britain, and will be swept away by proletarian revolution.

For proletarian internationalism!

In an article in the *New Statesman & Society* (18 December 1992/1 January 1993), the radical journalist John Pilger spelled out the rotten role of the Labour Party more forthrightly than the fake left:

"At the end of two extraordinary months in politics, during which the Conservative government has shown itself vividly to be corrupt and run by liars—a government 'on the run' according to the *Financial*

Times, and more deeply unpopular than any since the second world war—Labour has distinguished itself as, an enfeebled component of a rotting system, further disenfranchising those millions of people who still look to it as the constituted opposition....

"From the 1926 general strike to the 1984-85 miners' strike the trend was an unerring one of surrender and collaboration. From the British occupation of Ireland to last year's slaughter in the Gulf, Labour's leaders have not been equivocal.... Thatcherism, it is fair to say, began under Labour."

Pilger continues by suggesting that if the money for military spending were diverted to peaceful uses, it would provide for decent schools, housing, transport, etc. But this is a utopian pipe-dream. Expenditure on its armed bodies of men and the capitalist state apparatus is not a dispensable luxury for the bourgeoisie but a necessary overhead. Far from ushering in a peaceful "new world order", the collapse of Stalinism and the end of the Cold War has only led to an intensification of inter-imperialist rivalries—from the US bourgeoisie's oil grab in the Persian Gulf, to military incursion into Somalia.

Now, the shattering of the European Monetary System intersecting the near-defeat of Maastricht in France signifies a sharpening of *inter-imperialist tensions within Europe*. We are beginning to see the unravelling of the EC, the economic glue which for three and a half decades held together competing West European capitalist states in the US-dominated NATO alliance against the Soviet Union. The crisis of the European Community points to growing instability in the centres of world capitalism. The workers of Eastern Europe face not only economic immiseration but also imperialist-manipulated wars such as those now raging in the Balkans. The workers of West Europe face attacks on their living standards as their imperialist rulers move to establish neocolonial regimes in the East. The immediate prospect is of a period of turmoil, giving rise to sharp class struggles—such as the explosion of workers rage in Italy's "hot autumn"—while at the same time the fascist terrorists seek to channel economic discontent into race war and revanchist nationalism.

Attempts to reconstruct the economy within a national framework necessarily play into the hands of the worst reactionaries. This is what lies behind Scargill's "plan for British coal", premised on pressuring the British bourgeoisie to exclude foreign imports. This is a protectionist call for trade war—and trade wars lead to shooting wars. Scargill claims that "Polish coal is only competitive because of subsidies". Tell that to Polish coal miners, who have been engaged now in hard strike action against the Walesa government's vicious imposition of capitalist austerity. The British miners should be striking alongside their Polish brothers. That's the kind of international workers solidarity in action that would give the bosses a taste of what must come.

At one time Scargill was at least capable of seeing that Walesa and his Solidarność—Maggie Thatcher's favourite "union"—was anti-socialist. Today Scargill claims we need the same kind of "people power" (in reality, *capitalist counter-revolution*) that has "transform[ed] a system of society in Eastern Europe" (*Coal not dole*, Bulletin of the National Miners' Support Network). In adopting the chauvinist anti-communism of his bloc partners in the TUC bureaucracy, Scargill does miners no favours. What's necessary here, in Poland and throughout Europe is a hard struggle for workers revolution, and the construction of a world order based on socialist economic planning. Forward to a Socialist United States of Europe! ■



Irish fake lefts Spring into coalition

DUBLIN—With a significant electoral swing to the wretched Irish Labour Party of Dick Spring on 25 November, the only question was: with which reactionary, corrupt capitalist party will Spring ally to form the next coalition government. As we go to press, the horse-trading and back corridor deals for cabinet posts are still being worked out, but the overwhelming likelihood is that Labour will join Fianna Fail in government. Fed up with the Fianna Fail government of Albert Reynolds which is synonymous with anti-woman atrocities, anti-working-class austerity and the worst sort of backward clericalism, many voted Labour in the false hope of a change. The “change” is that Spring et al will now be formally implementing these same policies within the government. As the *Irish Times* (30 December 1992) reported: “This week’s talks will concentrate on financial matters, and Labour is anxious to have the main elements of the Budget agreed and costed in advance. This is being done against a background of financial austerity, with both sides damping down expectations by stressing the economic difficulties that lie ahead.”

Today the Militant tendency, Socialist Workers Movement (SWM), and the Irish Workers Group (IWG) all squeal: “no coalition”. But this ostensible opposition to coalitionism is entirely phoney. The fake leftists knew that Spring was wedded to coalitionism, and supported him anyway. We in the Dublin Spartacist Group (DSG) opposed any electoral support to Spring’s Labour Party, de Rossa’s Democratic Left or the Workers Party as an expression of our principled opposition to any manifestation of class collaboration, whether in the form of governmental coalition or class-collaborationist “social contracts” like the PESP.

As virtually every other ostensible left group called for a vote to Labour et al, our communist position stood out. An article in Dublin’s *Sunday Business Post* (13 December 1992) noted:

“Most vocal of all was the minute Dublin Spartacist Group, which is affiliated to the International Communist League and is Trotskyist in orientation. ‘His (Spring’s) attempt at coalition is a pretty clear attempt to tie working class people to a bourgeois party, either Fine Gael or the PDs, ... ‘Mr de Rossa is no less eager to involve himself in a coalition government and, like the Labour party, the Democratic Left seek to suppress the working class struggle.’

“The opportunities for class struggle in Ireland are very apparent,’ [DSG spokesman] Carlyle added. ‘The vote is an indication of a very clear social swing to the left, and that’s why people like Mary Robinson, Dick Spring and Proinsias de Rossa are so dangerous. They seek to keep the growing opposition within the safe confines of parliamentary government.’”

The *Post* also spoke to the Militant Socialist outfit, co-thinkers of the Militant tendency in Britain: “It concluded that Labour should avoid a three- or four-way coalition with the PDs or Fianna Fail and work towards a majority government, espousing radical socialist policies, after the ‘next election or two.’” The reformists of Militant do not recognise that a Labour government—no matter how “left” and



Socialist Worker, Militant Socialist and Irish Workers Group's Class Struggle: their call for vote to Labour meant tying working class, women to capitalist popular front government in Ireland.

irrespective of the size of its parliamentary majority—would still be a capitalist government.

Militant also ran its own candidate, Joe Higgins, in Dublin West. Militant’s campaign not only was shamelessly reformist, failing even to raise the elementary call for free abortion on demand, but it was explicitly run on a “law and order” ticket:

“Dublin Corporation and County should be forced to evict people who are known drug pushers or using their homes for criminal activities. They should also be forced not to re-allocate these people housing in other working-class estates.... “More police on the beat, and concentrated on well-known trouble spots, would prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.”

With its scandalous appeals for a cop crack-down on the estates, Militant gives “sewer socialism” a bad name.

For its part, the SWM simply chose to ignore the whole question of coalitionism, despite the fact that the “Rainbow Coalition” with Fine Gael (Spring’s preferred option at the time) was splashed all over the front page of the *Irish Times* for weeks. “Kick out Fianna Fail/Vote Left But Build a Socialist Alternative” blared the SWM’s General Election Special. Following the election, the SWM suddenly “discovered” the question and ludicrously demanded “No Coalition with the Right!” The utterly reformist Communist Party felt no compunction over simply advocating a Labour/Fianna Fail coalition from the start.

The centrist Irish Workers Group also called for a vote to Labour and the Democratic Left, while declaring “the political independence of the working class is fundamental to its ability to defend itself!” The IWG was also among those groups who belatedly raised the call for free abortion on demand, but the fact that neither Labour nor the Workers Party even defend legalised abortion didn’t stand in the way of the IWG offering its services, such as they are, to the popular front.

In treacherously pimping for Spring &

Co the Irish fake left not only betrayed the struggle of workers and women, but also assiduously “ignored” the question of the North. Like Labour-supported Mary Robinson, Spring & Co clearly seek an accommodation with the Unionists and British imperialism in Northern Ireland. Spring is said to want the Foreign Affairs portfolio for himself so as to have greater say over policy on the North, undoubtedly the better to pursue this aim. Militant apes the Labourites in its refusal to call for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and its “even-handed” denunciation of both the occupying forces and the IRA. The SWM and IWG, on the other hand, vicariously cheer-lead the Green nationalists, making no distinction between legitimate acts of terror aimed at imperialist targets and indefensible acts of sectarian violence against Protestant (and British) civilians. It was left to the DSG to raise during the election the elementary call for British troops out of Northern Ireland, as well as demanding: “Not Orange against Green but class against class! No to forcible reunification! For an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation within the British Isles!”

The bourgeois nationalist Sinn Fein, which stood candidates in the election without much success, made some predictable noises about Labour’s line on the North. But in fact, Gerry Adams’ strategy is likewise to force the British to give Sinn Fein a seat at the bargaining table, as a component of the three-way talks. This was the aim of the IRA’s intensified “strategy” targeting civilians in recent bombings of pubs, tubes, department stores and shopping areas in Britain. In Manchester, some 60 people were hurt and fatalities could easily have resulted; from the horrific bombing of a Covent Garden pub in London to the injuries on Oxford Street, these criminal bombings have nothing to do with the fight against British imperialism. And no matter what the relative size of the explosion or that

there were warnings, these attacks are qualitatively of the same character as the slaughter of civilians in the Birmingham pub bombings or the Enniskillen atrocity. Meanwhile, Sinn Fein’s “Towards a Democratic Ireland” (*An Phoblacht*, 19 November 1992) managed to avoid so much as mentioning the word “abortion”, let alone advocate that it be legal, free and on demand!

The failure of the fake left to fundamentally challenge the bourgeois Catholic order is manifest in small ways as well as large. Thus, when the DSG called for a united-front demonstration in front of the Offices of the Board of Censorship of Publications on 27 November to oppose the banning of Madonna’s book *Sex*, the SWM, IWG and the anarchists of Workers Solidarity all refused to participate. While we demonstrated demanding “Let Madonna’s book be read! Abolish the Boards of Censorship!” the IWG simply dismissed the issue as insignificant. The banning of *Sex* is, in fact, a graphic illustration of the clericalist state’s ability to determine what will and will not be read and the reactionary religious moralism concerning sexuality that serves as an indispensable ideological prop of capitalist rule in this country. This is precisely why such a protest would “alienate” the likes of Dick Spring.

And behind the moralistic pontificating of the Catholic church hierarchy, there is the rising spectre of Youth Defence. Vicious attacks on leftist protesters, sinister goon squads protecting anti-abortion marches and recent revelations of Hitlerite salutes and adoration of Franco in the rad-lib publication *Hot Press* all confirm that this organisation is generating a fascist core which harkens back to the Blueshirts. While the SWM labels Youth Defence “bigots” as if they simply espoused reactionary ideas and leading supporters of Workers Solidarity advocate ignoring them, we say that the time to act is now to crush this outfit while it’s still in the egg. The organised working class and its allies must be mobilised to put an end to the attacks of these club-wielding thugs.

In the referenda on abortion, the overwhelming votes in favour of the right to travel and information on abortion point to the deeply felt desire for change in Ireland, not least on the question of women’s rights. Marxists advocated a “no” vote on the third referendum proposal, which would have outlawed abortion under virtually all circumstances. This proposition was defeated, with both pro- and hard-core anti-abortion forces opposing it. But fundamental social change will not come through the ballot box or parliamentary manoeuvring. Against the reformist and centrist left who preach that the “enlightened” wing of the bourgeoisie can somehow be pressured into reforming this reactionary clerical state, we in the DSG understand that the *workers must rule if women are to be free!* We in the DSG are committed to building the Leninist-Trotskyist party necessary to lead a victorious socialist revolution that will finally do away with the communal hatreds, oppression of women, and the grinding unemployment and poverty that is endemic to capitalist rule. ■