



## Benn/Scargill peddle myth of Labour's "socialist soul"

# Oppose Blair's attack on Clause IV

Each week Tony Blair and his entourage tour the dining rooms of merchant banks in the City of London, eager to praise and court a ruling class which is second to none in its cold cruelty and bloody exploitation. Across the globe, from the British colonialist rule in India, to the wars of intervention (1919-21) against Lenin and Trotsky's revolutionary Russia, through two world wars of truly awful bloodiness, Blair's masters have wrought much destruction on humanity.

Yet Blair promises them that under Labour capitalism will be safer than ever. He offers a single coat of liberal varnish that will protect and preserve every policy of Thatcherism that matters.

The trade unions, the arm of economic defence for the working class, will still be bound under the web of anti-union laws.

## For a class-struggle Marxist workers party!

One in eight workers will remain in the dole queues... until unemployment begins to rise in the next slump. British troops will remain in Northern Ireland, to maintain the oppression of the Catholic population. The police will continue to enforce Blair's precious "law and order" against strikers, blacks and Asians, youth protesters. Vast profits will be gouged from the vital utilities of water, gas, electricity and telecommunications, to line private shareholders' pockets.

Today's Labour Party under Tony

Blair is outdoing even the Kinnock leadership in its open loyalty to the racist, warlike capitalist system. It is the most right-wing leadership since Ramsay MacDonald openly betrayed the working class by breaking with Labour to head up a coalition "National Government" in 1932.

Miserable British capitalism, a sea of poverty and oppression. Miserable British Labourism, a puddle of cowardice and betrayal. It would be hard to dream up two better arguments for the perspective of building a revolutionary Marxist party,

committed to class struggle all the way up to smashing the capitalist state and establishing a planned socialist economy.

### Clause IV: a class divide

As a sign of loyalty to the capitalists, Tony Blair swore at the Labour Party annual conference in October to remove the famous Clause IV of Labour's constitution, which is printed on the back of every party membership card. The key section of the clause, part 4, states that the purpose of the party is:

"To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange,

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## Statement of the International Communist League

# Smash Yeltsin's invasion of Chechnya!

The following statement was issued by the International Communist League in Moscow on 10 January.

On 11 December, the government of Boris Yeltsin launched a full-scale military invasion of the republic of Chechnya, on the northern slopes of the Caucasian Mountains, which declared its independence from Russia when the Soviet Union broke apart in late 1991. The Chechen people are now being slaughtered as Russian warplanes bomb and strafe civilian targets. The capital city of Grozny — an industrial centre of 400,000 inhabitants — is being reduced to rubble. Yet despite overwhelming Russian military superiority, the determined Chechen forces have repelled the assault on Grozny, inflicting heavy casualties on the Russian Army and taking a number of prisoners of war.

The International Communist League stands for defeating the invading Russian forces, whose attempt to subjugate the Chechens can only bring mass terror to this Caucasian people. Furthermore, Chechen resistance is severely weakening would-be Tsar Boris' dictatorial regime, thereby creating a potentially favourable opportunity for the working people of Russia, of all nationalities, to defend themselves against the economic devastation wrought by the capitalist counterrevolution. But the present conditions of political chaos will sooner or later lead to a bonapartist outcome.

The working class is the only force that could by revolutionary mobilisation prevent the consolidation of a dictatorial capitalist regime presiding over mass immiseration. But the Soviet proletariat was politically atomised by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule, and under today's con-



La Repubblica

Yeltsin's savage bombardment of Grozny is reducing the capital of Chechnya to rubble.

ditions of economic collapse and disorder the working people deeply despair of taking any effective action. In order for the workers in the former USSR to be able to take power, they must first become conscious of themselves as a class which under the leadership of a Marxist vanguard is capable of fighting for its own revolutionary class programme.

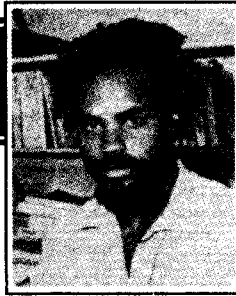
The unstable capitalist regime that arose in Russia as a result of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state remains isolated and crisis-ridden. Despite Yeltsin's bloody crackdown on the old parliament in October 1993, he has an extremely narrow — and narrowing — base of support among Russia's new ruling elite. The head of his bodyguard, Aleksandr Korzhakov, has reputedly now become the power behind the throne. A major aim of the Kremlin's Caucasian military adventure was to strengthen this weak bonapartist regime by appealing to Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Caucasian prejudices. In addition, the invasion of Chechnya aims to preserve control over the Caucasus, its oil and other resources, and to crush the determination of the Chechen and other Transcaucasian peoples to resist Russia's attempts to establish itself as overlord and gendarme in the region.

Since Chechnya, under strongman leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general, declared its independence when the Soviet Union came apart following Yeltsin's seizure of power in August 1991, Moscow has sought by all means at its disposal to rid itself of the troublesome Chechen leadership, and to replace it with one more subservient. Towards this aim,

*continued on page 8*

## From death row, This is Mumia Abu-Jamal

# Voting for your own repression



have authored an authoritative Act that is itself criminal.

It will not only not solve a crime: It is a crime.

19 September 1994  
© 1994 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

The passage of the 1994 Clinton Crime Bill recently marks the official dawn of the American police state.

This law, the most draconian in the nation's history, calls for spending over 30 billion bucks for more prisons, more cops, and more death penalties. More tools of state repression—more unfreedom. Those who voted for this "Death Bill" have done more to foster crime than anything else. For years it has been said the prisons are but universities of crime.

Under the new law, that is all prisoners will have an opportunity to learn—crime—because Pell Grants, which provided the possibility of a few thousand prisoners a year to gain higher education, have been cut to zero.

Thus, of the 1.3 million prisoners in America, whether serving 6 months or 66 years, not a single one will receive a single cent to learn a single, useful fact that enriches the society he or she will return to one day.

In essence, this system has legislated ignorance.

This Crime Bill is a Declaration of War on Black men.

The sections of the law on gangs and cocaine tell the tale.

For people designated as gang members under the new law, they can have 10 years tacked on to their original sentence... even if the offense is unrelated to gang membership!

The Crime Bill has criminalized affiliation.

Those persons convicted of crack

face severe penalties up to 100 times more punitive than those convicted of powder cocaine.

Is it mere coincidence that poor folk use crack and rich folk snort powder? I think not.

Researchers for the Washington, D.C.-based Sentencing Project as well as the Chicago-based Committee to End the Marion Lockdown have calculated the rate of Black incarceration at 1,534 per 100,000 as compared to a White imprisonment rate of 197.

The Crime Bill criminalizes Black life.

The weak-kneed political forces that supported this Referendum on Repression, from the so-called Congressional Black Caucus, to "new" Democrats, to "moderate" Republicans,

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia black journalist, is on death row at Pennsylvania's Greene County state prison. Framed up because of his political views, Jamal faces death for his defiance of the racist, capitalist order. His columns appear periodically in *Workers Vanguard* and other newspapers.

With the current rightward lurch in American politics, the racist and barbaric death penalty is being implemented with ever increasing speed and bloodthirstiness. Jamal's attorneys are preparing a new legal challenge in the Pennsylvania courts to expose his frame-up conviction and sentence of death. But urgently needed is the widening of international protest against the plans to execute this courageous black leader. To get involved in the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the US death penalty, contact the Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX. Tel: 0171-485 1396.



TROTSKY

### Trotsky on centrism

*In 1934 Trotsky warned of the danger posed to the working class by the misleadership of centrist currents, who vacillate between revolutionary Marxism on the one hand and reformism on the other, usually ending up in the camp of the latter. Written over 60 years ago, Trotsky's capsule description of centrism fits like a glove tendencies such as Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat or Workers Power's League for a Revolu-*

*tionary Communist International, who sometimes talk revolution but always flinch when it counts. Having sided with counterrevolutionary Solidarność in Poland in 1981, and with Boris Yeltsin in the USSR in August 1991, these groups today deny the reality of counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.*

(e) A centrist always remains in spiritual dependence on rightist groupings, is inclined to cringe before those who are more moderate, to remain silent on their opportunist sins and to color their actions before the workers.

(f) His shilly-shallying the centrist frequently covers up by reference to the danger of "sectarianism," by which he understands not abstract-propagandist passivity (of the Bordigist type) but an active concern for purity of principles, clarity of position, political consistency, organizational completeness.

(g) A centrist occupies a position between an opportunist and a Marxist somewhat analogous to that which a petty bourgeois occupies between a capitalist and a proletarian: he kowtows before the first and has contempt for the second.

(h) On the international arena the centrist distinguishes himself if not by blindness then by shortsightedness; he does not understand that in the present epoch a national revolutionary party can be built only as part of an international party; in the choice of his international allies the centrist is even less discriminating than in his own country....

(j) A centrist swears readily by the policy of the united front, emptying it of its revolutionary content and transforming it from a tactical method into a supreme principle.

—Leon Trotsky, "Centrism and the Fourth International" (23 February 1934)



LENIN

# Letter to Christopher Hill on the anniversary of the regicide

21 November 1994

Dear Comrade Hill,

We were very interested to learn of your talk on "The Execution of Charles I—Lessons for Today (345th anniversary of the regicide)"....

Though her own family's antics somewhat detracted from the "solemnity" of Elizabeth II's visit to Russia, it was intended as a celebration of the triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and accompanied by all sorts of lamentation for the wretched Czar Nicholas II and his family. As champions of the 1917 October Revolution and as revolutionary republicans we would solidarise with the Ekaterinburg workers who greeted the news of the execution with applause and passed a resolution that "The execution of Nicholas the Bloody serves as an answer and threatening warning to the bourgeois-monarchist counterrevolution, which attempts to drown in blood the workers and peasants revolution."

From Cromwell to Robespierre to the Bolsheviks it was the regicides who represented advancement for humanity. This remains particularly significant in the context of the imperialist "New World Order" and the "revisionist" attacks on the seventeenth century English Revolution, 1789 French Revolution and 1917 Russian Revolution. By attempting to exorcise the spectre of social revolutions past, they seek to justify and obscure social and racial oppression in the contemporary bourgeois world. We are for the abolition of the monarchy, House of Lords and the established churches. We fight for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles and for a Socialist United States of Europe!

We [are sure you will remember]... the campaign organised by our comrades of the Partisan Defence Committee to aid the victims of Jalalabad in 1989, when that city was holding out against the CIA-backed reactionary cut-throats after the Kremlin Stalinists had treacherously withdrawn the Red Army. The subsequent collapse of the Kabul government and the ongoing tribalist bloodbath, with all its continuing anti-woman savagery, serves to emphasise the consequences of Soviet withdrawal. And the devastating effects of capitalist counterrevolution in the ex-Soviet Union and Eastern Europe indicated that it would have been better to stand and fight in Afghanistan.

We are enclosing with this letter some of our own material addressing the question of the monarchy here and in Japan. Our article from *Workers Vanguard*, (no 164, 1 July 1977), "Down with the Monarchy and the Union Jack!", addresses the nauseating sycophancy and national-chauvinism around the question, as well as the potential rallying point it represents for all forms of reaction. It is an institution which should have been abolished centuries ago (and once was, with a headsman's axe). In their publication in Japan, our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan have emphasised that the postwar US occupation which claimed to be bringing "democracy" to Japan deliberately did not touch the institution of the emperor, recognising it as a powerful force for bourgeois stability and social conservatism.

Yours fraternally,

Ellen Rawlings  
(for the Spartacist League/Britain)

## WORKERS HAMMER



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

Newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

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Published by Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU

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

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

Printed by Trident Press (TU). ISSN 0287-8721

## What revolutionary Marxists stand for

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of the world unite!"

— *The Communist Manifesto*, K Marx & F Engels (1848)

- Oppose Blair's attack on Clause IV! We oppose the privatisation of the railways and the post office as union-busting profit-gouging attacks on the conditions and livelihoods of workers. All utilities should be renationalised without compensation to the capitalist class, to provide safe, healthy and cheap services. Defend and massively increase funding of the NHS! Kick out the Trust parasites. Free high-quality medical and dental treatment for all! Free abortion on demand! Restore and increase social and welfare benefits!
- Abolish the Child Support Agency. Free 24-hour child care! For women's liberation through socialist revolution. Defeat all attacks on minorities, gays, Roma (Gypsies) and all the oppressed. Abolish age-of-consent laws and all laws criminalising drugs. Stop the education cutbacks. Free, secular, quality education for all. Nationalise the public schools. Separate church and state: no religious worship in the school system! A

living grant for students: open up higher education to all.

- Jobs for all: divide the work among all workers and the unemployed with no loss in pay! For a mass unionisation drive — organise the unorganised! For automatic cost-of-living rises. Break the anti-union laws: the only illegal strike is a strike that loses! Picket lines mean don't cross! For a new, class-struggle leadership in the trade unions.
- Mobilise the unions and minorities to crush the fascists! Voting Labour won't stop the BNP/Combat 18. Down with the anti-union, racist Criminal Justice Act! No to the reformist trap of appealing for state bans against the fascists. For workers defence guards against racist attacks and police repression.
- Abolish the monarchy, House of Lords and the established churches. For the right of self-determination of Scotland and Wales! For the immediate unconditional withdrawal of the British Army from Northern Ireland! No to the imperialist "peace" fraud, deadly trap for the oppressed Catholics. No forcible reunification; not Orange against Green, but class against class! The Irish Labour Party's coalition governments are class-collaborationist popular-front betrayers of the working class. For an Irish workers republic, part of a socialist federation of the British Isles!
- Expropriate the capitalist class without compensation. Those who labour must rule! Westminster parliament is a talking shop instrument of bourgeois rule. The Labour Party leaders are the servants of the ruling class. Forward to a class-struggle Marxist workers party. For a workers government

based on workers councils.

- Imperialist trade blocs, nationalist protectionism and trade wars pave the way for shooting wars. Only a planned, international socialist economy can rebuild the industry wrecked and looted by the parasitic capitalist class. Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and their families. Down with the racist Immigration and Nationality Laws. No to the bosses' European Union — for a Socialist United States of Europe!
- We defended Iraq against the imperialist onslaught of the Gulf War. Britain, UN, NATO: get out of Bosnia! Defend Serbia against imperialist attack! Workers have no side in the fratricidal nationalist civil wars in former Yugoslavia. For a Balkan socialist federation!
- We defended the Soviet Union and Eastern European deformed workers states against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack while fighting for proletarian political revolution. We said "Hail Red Army!" in Afghanistan and "Stop Solidarność counterrevolution" in Poland. Today we call for socialist revolution to sweep away Yeltsin counterrevolution. Defend the remaining workers states, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and China, against capitalist restoration.
- We fight to build a party like the Bolshevik party led by Lenin and Trotsky, which organised the workers in the October 1917 Russian Revolution. We fight to reforge the Fourth International: "Its task — the abolition of capitalism's domination. Its aim — socialism. Its method — the proletarian revolution" (L. Trotsky, *The Transitional Programme* 1938).

## Clause IV...

(Continued from page 1)

and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

At best a statement of reformist parliamentary "socialism", Clause IV (4) was penned in 1918 by the Fabian socialist Sydney Webb. Its purpose was to head off the palpable possibility of workers rule spreading to Western Europe precipitated by the Russian Revolution. In order to deceive the workers, the leaders of the Labour Party felt it necessary to have a "pink" fig leaf. But the real essence of the Labour Party was parliamentary reformism.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the cringing labour lieutenants of capital want to abandon an allegiance, even in words, to the notion of "socialism". Tony Blair and his crypto-SDP advisers are attacking Clause IV from the right, from an openly anti-working-class standpoint.

The Labour Party is riven by the contradiction between its working-class base and its pro-capitalist leadership, present and aspirant. The fight over Clause IV, albeit in a distorted way, reflects a class divide in the British labour movement. The fact that the open opponents of the great miners strike of ten years ago are opponents of Clause IV speaks volumes.

Revolutionaries have a side in this fight, against Tony Blair. The defeat of Blair's plan would put a big spanner in the Labour right wing's works, and would widen and deepen the debate in the labour movement on the true nature of socialism, and the means necessary to achieve it. It would strengthen the prospects for working-class struggle to transcend the parliamentary dead-end of a future Labour government.

We maintain our Marxist criticism of, and political opposition to, those who believe, in Arthur Scargill's words, that Clause IV "is an unambiguous challenge to capitalism" that "represents the very soul of the Labour Party". The Labour Party has never had, and never will have, a "socialist soul". Notoriously, the reformist Militant group has a decades-long position that a Labour government with "emergency powers" will bring socialism.

We oppose 100 per cent Blair's attack on Clause IV. We urge all Labour Party members and trade unionists to vote against the leadership on this question, and to mandate their constituency parties and national unions to defend Clause IV against Blair's attack at the Special Con-

ference on 29 April.

### Bailing out capitalism à la Clause IV

Labour "lefts" like Tony Benn refer back to the postwar Labour government of Clement Attlee in glowing terms. This government enrolled Britain in the Cold War against the Soviet Union, entered NATO, sent troops to fight against the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states, and fought a dirty colonial war in Malaya. The Labour Party in the late 40s was established as the bulwark of anti-communist Cold War "socialism" in the West European labour movement. At home the Labour government in 1945 called out troops against dockers on unofficial strike, while the following year troops were mobilised against striking London transport workers. The postwar Labour government did establish the National Health Service, which for a brief period provided free medical care. The "welfare state" was set up as a direct response of the West European bourgeoisies, fearing social instability, to the victory of the Red Army in World War II.

British capitalism emerged from World War II with its empire in a state of disintegration and large chunks of the economy bankrupt. The postwar nationalisations amounted to a giant capitalist bailout, generally limited to failing industries that the bourgeoisie had given up on. With the exception of iron and steel, all the nationalisations undertaken by the 1945-51 government were broadly accepted by the capitalist class. The former private owners, having run industry and transport into the ground, received huge amounts of compensation.

To the extent that there was an attempt to implement Clause IV, it was under the 1945-51 Labour government. The issue posed directly in postwar Britain was the need to establish a genuine planned, collectivised economy, which requires the expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class, and can only be realised through workers revolution. However, the Labour government never went beyond a series of piecemeal nationalisations that amounted to a bailout of capitalism. The costs of the newly established nationalised industries, including the compensation paid to the former owners, were borne by the working class, in the form of low wages and high consumption taxes.

Moreover, the maintenance of the capitalist system of production for profit guaranteed that much of basic industry and transport was starved of investment. In the postwar period the City of London



no credit

The 1926 General Strike: betrayed by TUC/Labour "lefts".

financiers preferred to invest in the US and elsewhere, rather than in relatively unprofitable domestic industry. As a result, industry in Britain fell even further behind its competitors. Large subsidies, assisted by low wages in the nationalised industries, were required to keep these industries afloat. These subsidies amounted to a thinly disguised form of protectionism. Indeed, Labour "lefts" like Benn and Scargill openly called for limiting trade imports, as a way of preserving "British industry". Appeals to economic nationalism are utopian, because they seek to reverse Britain's substantial integration into a world market. Moreover, chauvinist appeals like "Buy British", a slogan used by fascists as well as Labour "lefts", are used to whip up hatred against the foreign-born and minorities. We stand for the socialist reindustrialisation of Britain on the basis of proletarian property forms, as part of an international socialist economy.

When Thatcher came to power, she resolved to break the strength of the unions by privatising large chunks of the economy and in the process filling the coffers of profit-gouging bosses. Although we Marxists do not politically advocate social-democratic nationalisation schemes, we strongly support defensive workers struggles against privatisation schemes (as in coal or rail), which in practice amount to nothing less than savage union-busting attacks on workers jobs and living standards, and widespread deindustrialisation. Tony Blair's determination to abolish Clause IV is meant in part as a guarantee to the bourgeoisie that he will not reverse the privatisations — and the accompanying attacks on the workers — carried out by the Tories. The union leaders "left" and right have refused to mobilise hard class struggle against this

devastation.

In some instances, it is appropriate to advocate the nationalisation of particular industries or firms. The demand for the expropriation of particular industries is an agitational demand to be raised conjuncturally when popular hostility is directed against a particularly exploitative industry or group of capitalists. In this context, we demand the renationalisation of the large utilities (gas, electricity and water), and rail. We do not limit our call for expropriation to bankrupt industries that private capitalists want to get rid of anyway. Thus, we have advanced the call for the expropriation without compensation of the profit-bloated North Sea oil industry, whose union-hating operators are responsible for the death and maiming of thousands of oil workers, through blatant disregard of safety conditions. In fact, neither the oil bosses nor any imaginable capitalist government would willingly agree to such expropriation, which could only be carried out through a powerful wave of class struggle that would shake capitalist Britain to its foundation. Such a struggle would be a bridge to workers power, not a social-democratic scheme for improving capitalism.

### What makes the Labour "lefts" run

Today, Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill, along with the "hard left" Campaign Group of Labour MPs, are leading the campaign to "Defend Clause 4". Unlike Blair & Co, Benn and Scargill have called for defiance of the vicious Criminal Justice Act (although neither Scargill nor any other trade union leader has mobilised his membership against the Act). Arthur Scargill's leadership of the miners'

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## Miners strike 1984-85

# Bitter class war and Labour Party betrayal

The revolutionary capacity of the proletariat, as well as the crucial need for revolutionary leadership, was powerfully demonstrated during the heroic miners strike ten years ago. We reprint below an abridged and edited version of a speech by comrade Jon Brule printed in Workers Hammer no 67, March 1985.

During the miners strike two miners have been murdered on picket lines, several other miners and members of their families have been killed, something like 10,000 strikers have been arrested, over 600 have been fired from their jobs. That strike has gone on now almost one full year, reflecting the grim determination of the miners to fight against great odds. The strike was precipitated by the government's announcement that they were going to close down 20,000 mining jobs, which was only the first drop in the bucket. What it poses is not only busting the union, but wiping out whole mining areas in Britain.

Among the miners there's a deep historic memory of past battles. One South Wales miner told me about what it was like after the defeat of the 1926 General Strike: about his father, who lost his leg in a mining accident and received £50 compensation. About his uncle, who was blacklisted after the General Strike and was never able to get work until World War II—for 14 years he was blacklisted from the mines.

Thatcher also has a particular hatred for the leader of the union, Arthur Scargill. Scargill was the only labour leader within the union movement in Britain to call Thatcher to order for her support for Reagan's anti-Soviet Cold War. He denounced the CIA union in Poland, Solidarność, as anti-socialist. That not only earned Scargill the hatred of Thatcher, but also of the pro-capitalist trade union and Labour Party bureaucrats, who led a red-baiting attack on Scargill at a conference of the TUC in September 1983. Not a single delegate rose to defend Scargill. It was at this point that Thatcher determined that Scargill was isolated and she could undertake an assault on the miners.

When the pit closures were announced, there was a walkout in the mining area of Yorkshire at a pit called Cortonwood. And from there they set up flying pickets that shut down most of the coalfields. At this point Thatcher, Labour Party head Neil Kinnock [and even fake leftists like Workers Power], set up a hue and cry about how there was no ballot taken by the miners. The bourgeoisie and their labour lieutenants were miffed. They wanted a ballot because they wanted to know where, when and how the strike was going to begin, so they could get their cops, their soldiers and everyone else there beforehand. Well, it didn't work. There were actually areas that voted to remain at work, and when they saw the pickets they came out on strike because they knew the union was deter-



Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

November 1984: Mass picket of miners and transport workers. TUC/Labour leadership spiked joint class struggle, leaving miners to fight alone against massive state repression.

mined. That's a fundamental lesson that we had better understand—the power of class solidarity and the power of the picket line to mould this strike. And the capitalists have taken dead aim at the picket line: they have made it clear that if they win, they will enforce laws requiring secret ballots before any strike, outlawing secondary picketing and crippling the unions.

One of the more obscene things that Labour Party head Neil Kinnock and the labour bureaucrats have ranted about throughout the strike is the "violence" of the pickets towards scabs and cops. According to them, picketing is all right... as long as it's "peaceful". But what a picket line means is the right to have a conflict. We are for picket lines that nobody crosses! I want to convey the attitude that these miners have toward those who have scabbed on their strike. One story I heard was about a guy who had scabbed in 1926. When he died at the age of 85, nobody had spoken to him for 60 years, and nobody went to his funeral.

It was abundantly clear that in order for Thatcher to be defeated, the key task was to mobilise other sections of the working class. From a trade union stand-

point, it would seem to be a relatively simple question. If the steel workers, rail workers, dockers and power workers refused to handle coal, the country would grind to a halt. The problem is that it is fundamentally a political question which is posed: once the country is shut down, who is going to start it up again? In short, which class is going to rule this country? Will it be the working class or will it be the capitalist class?

That fundamental question has been posed in any number of miners' strikes in Britain. In 1919 there was an alliance between the miners, rail workers and transport workers called the Triple Alliance. The bourgeoisie was sweating it out, so they called in the three top union leaders. The prime minister, Lloyd George, told them he was at their mercy—they had the power to shut down the country. But he asked them what they would do next: "If a force arises in the state which is stronger than the state itself, then it must be ready to take on the functions of the state or withdraw." They had no answer to that. One of the trade union leaders remarked that from that time on they knew they were beaten, because they were not prepared to exercise power. It's a highlight on a statement that Marx made in the *Communist Manifesto*, that every class struggle is a political struggle.

And despite the sabotage of the labour bureaucracy, the question of power was raised sharply by this strike. We knew there's no point in approaching the TUC. If you want to shut down the country, to call on these guys to do it is the kiss of death. The left groups who shared the TUC's anti-Sovietism felt perfectly at home appealing to their social-democratic brothers for action. They were miles to the right of the miners themselves. When the head of the TUC, Willis, was invited to speak at a miners' rally in South Wales, one of the strikers climbed a 50-foot pole and dropped a noose about two inches from this guy's head. So instead we singled out a number of strategic unions that claimed to back the miners—

the seamen's union, the Transport and General Workers, the rail unions—to break with the TUC scab policy and go out on strike together with the miners around a programme of demands that could unite the working class in struggle: no layoffs, a ten per cent wage hike with full cost-of-living protection, an end to Thatcher's policies of privatisation. We demanded no victimisation of anybody by the government and the bosses. It was a fighting programme that addressed itself to those sections of the class that were prepared to struggle, it put the "left" union leaders on the spot, and would effectively mean a general strike.

At least in the ranks of several strategic unions there was determination to bypass the established TUC to defend this strike. There's one area, Leicester, a heavily scab area where out of some 2000 miners, there are only 30 on strike—they're nicknamed the "Dirty 30". But in the rail depot adjoining that mining area, called Coalville, for ten months the rail workers have refused to carry coal and have been sent home every day without pay. The leadership refused to back them up with nationwide strike action. And twice the dockers went out, fed up with the government using scab labour to unload imported scab coal. It was only due to the cowardice of the leadership, which in both instances called off the strike, that the Thatcher government was not toppled.

Now, we are a fairly small organisation in Britain, but when we talked about class solidarity, unlike countless left groups crossing picket lines [like the SWP] or waiting on the TUC, we meant business. We had a supporter in a Rover car plant in Birmingham. Now, they had been sneaking in large quantities of scab coal. The union leadership, Communist Party members, were pretending to back the strike and giving money to the miners, but they were collaborating with this scab operation. So our supporter initiated a campaign against this scab coal. At one particular miners' support demonstration, he had a sign that said: "No Scab Coal in



Workers Hammer

April 1984: Spartacist League banner at NUM delegate conference. In direct opposition to Labour/TUC traitors, revolutionaries fought to bring out key sectors of the working class alongside miners.

British Leyland!" The miners there remarked on this sign—they were shocked and furious at the scabbing. Then afterwards, one of the TGWU leaders came up and said: "You know, I've been reading the Spartacist paper, and we're going to do something about this scab coal." And miners and lorry drivers actually organised a small picket line outside the plant. It wasn't enough—it didn't shut out the scab operation—but it polarised the local trade union movement.

In normal capitalist society there are numerous divisions promoted by the ruling class. There are racial divisions between the white population and the minority of blacks and Asians. And also national hatreds, particularly directed at the Irish. Here you have a union that's predominantly white miners, and not only that, they come from the backwaters. Yet, in the course of the strike, there was an amazing social radicalisation of the miners, while the oppressed layers of the population have rallied most strongly to the cause of the miners.

For example, at demonstrations in Belfast initiated by the Irish Republican movement, there were large contingents of striking British miners who marched with the Irish Catholics. Throughout these very poor Catholic ghettos, hanging over the streets were large banners that said: "Victory to the Miners!" It was similar in Dublin. And it is very unusual that the Irish populace supports any struggle of the British proletariat.

You will hear many miners basically say the following: that until this strike I never knew what it was like to be an Irishman in Northern Ireland, or a black or an Asian, mistreated by the police. In London the miners organised collections on the streets. And there's quite a bit of competition among the different lodges to get down to Brixton first and to get a good street corner. Brixton is far poorer than many other working-class areas of the city. But the miners go down there because proportionately the support they get from the blacks and the Asians is much greater.

Then there is the magnificent role

played by the miners' wives. While at the beginning their activities were centred around the food kitchens, it wasn't very long until they pushed their way onto the picket line and took their place beside their class brothers and husbands in fighting against Thatcher's police. I've heard many a story where you've had demoralised miners who were considering returning to work, and it's the wife who has put some backbone into these guys.

Those people in the British trade union movement who most hate this strike and instruct their members to cross picket lines are those that most hate the Soviet Union. The social-democratic labour traitors hate with a passion the example of the October Revolution and don't want to see it happen at home. On this question there's not only a division within the workers movement in Britain, but internationally. In particular, the bitterly anti-communist trade union bureaucracies in the United States and Germany have done nothing to assist the miners. And let's not forget Lech Walesa & Co. The head of this CIA company union issued statements saying that Thatcher is a wise and brave woman, and welcomed a delegation of scab miners from Britain.

At the same time, there are some sections of the proletariat internationally where defence of the Soviet Union and hatred of imperialism is a virtue. In France the miners dumped a series of truckloads of coal that were destined for Britain. And while the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy under Jaruzelski scabbed on the British miners, in Russia this time it was different. The Soviet trade unions collected £1 million for the British miners. It was well known among the Russian and Ukrainian miners that Scargill stuck his neck out to defend the Soviet Union against Reagan and Thatcher. And when the Soviets sent this aid, they said we remember that the British working class went out on strike and dockers refused to load munitions when the imperialists tried to invade our country during the civil war.

What is necessary is a revolutionary party of the working class. But what the British working class has got is the

Labour Party, which, in the words of comrade Lenin, is a "bourgeois workers party". On the road to the British socialist revolution the Labour Party must be split, its working-class base split from the pro-capitalist tops and regrouped in a revolutionary Trotskyist party. For almost the entire British left, however, the Labour Party can be reformed into an instrument to achieve socialism through nice, polite discussion and debate, while

unanimously re-elected as head of the Labour Party during the strike. Later Tony Benn explicitly justified this by claiming that "unity" is necessary and you can't criticise even Neil Kinnock at a time like this. Even those like Scargill, despite their militancy and gut desire to win, are chained to reformism and Labourism. By refusing to break openly and sharply with the Labour/TUC misleaders, particularly the "lefts", the NUM leaders have greatly



Workers Hammer

20,000 coalfield women and supporters march through London, 11 August 1984. Miners strike galvanised struggle of all the oppressed against Thatcher government.

maintaining it as a party that encompasses every element of the class. This Kautskyan conception of "the party of the whole class" has proven utterly bankrupt during this strike.

"Judas" Kinnock, as the miners call him, is widely reviled throughout the coalfields. Middle-aged strike leaders were resigning their long-time memberships because their local Labour Party branches were run by scabs. At a time when class struggle was threatening to blow the Labour Party apart, the Labour "lefts" and their apologists were closing ranks behind Kinnock. No one wanted to take up Kinnock's claim that if you want to change the government, you do it through the ballot box and Parliament and not by picketing and defying the law. Kinnock was

weakened the strike.

The Labour Party, with its millions of members, is impotent to defeat Thatcher because the trade union fakers and Kinnocks who run it don't want to fight capitalism. We seek to forge a different kind of party: a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to serve as the general staff of the working class. Such a party has no room for this fifth column of scabherders, pro-imperialists, racists and their left apologists. We seek to forge a party that would embrace the tens of thousands of militants who have been struggling with all their power to see the miners victorious—a party that consciously will lead the working masses to crush capitalism for good through the road of the class struggle. ■

## Seumas Milne on the Butchenko affair: How CIA/MI6, Russian fascists targeted the NUM

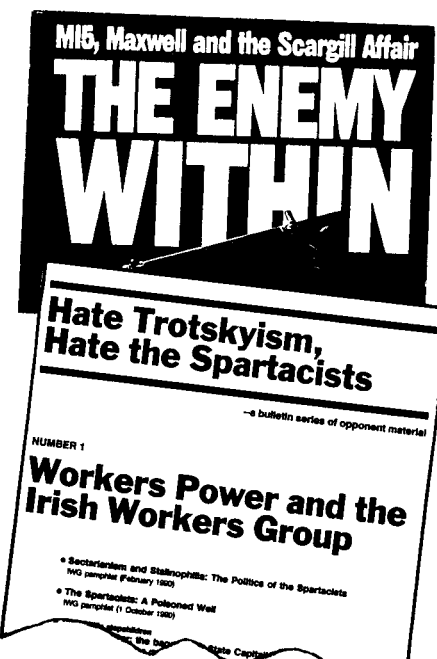
The heroic miners strike of 1984-85 was integrally connected with the Russian Question. We of the Spartacist League, who uniquely fought for unconditional defence of the Soviet degenerated and the Eastern European deformed workers states, pointed out that you couldn't defend the unions unless you defended the Soviet Union. Now a recently released book by *Guardian* journalist, Seumas Milne, *The Enemy Within—MI6, Maxwell and the Scargill Affair*, documents the sinister web of ruling-class intrigue mounted against the miners during the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive. This campaign, spearheaded by imperialism's secret service agencies, enlisted Russian fascists, the scab Union of Democratic Miners (UDM), the NUM's chief executive officer Roger Windsor (named as an undercover MI5 agent by Labour MP Tam Dalyell), and was ably assisted by Neil Kinnock's Labour Party. Fake-left outfits like Workers Power lent their services to this "get Scargill" witch hunt. Eagerly championing any opponent of the Soviet bureaucracy,

no matter how vile and reactionary, Workers Power organised a tour for one Yuri Butchenko, an "executive member of the Siberian-based Kuzbass Union of Workers", who was a key player in the lying attempts to claim that Scargill stole Russian trade union donations.

In 1990 the Thatcher government's burning enmity towards the miners erupted into a new witch hunt, set in motion by corrupt press baron Robert Maxwell and his pro-Labour rag *Daily Mirror*, working in collaboration with Central Television's *The Cook Report*. They outrageously claimed that Scargill had siphoned off Soviet aid and Libyan money to pay off his mortgage and further his personal ambitions. In July 1990, at a press conference in London, Yuri Butchenko appeared alongside UDM honcho Roy Lynk to lend his voice to outlandish claims that Scargill had salted away up to £10 million of donations made by Soviet miners. Butchenko had just spent nine days speaking at workers movement meetings in Britain, sponsored by the Campaign for Solidarity with

Workers in the Eastern Bloc (CSWEB), a bloc between Workers Power and the even more Stalinophobic *Socialist Organizer*. As we noted at the time, "This was just what union-hating prime minister Thatcher and her lieutenants in the Labour right wing needed: a Russian worker, legitimised by speaking before trade-union audiences, taking their side against the most militant union in Britain. Butchenko's claims were picked up and broadcast far and wide by the bosses' media." (See "Workers Power caught with Russian fascists, Thatcher's scabs", *Workers Hammer* no 116, September 1990.)

Workers Power quit CSWEB only after Butchenko's appearance on behalf of the anti-Scargill rat pack. Yet Butchenko's connections to *Russian fascists* were well-known to Workers Power before he ever set foot in this country. Thus, WP admitted that "in a telephone call with Butchenko he informed us that his official invite papers to this country had been signed by George Miller, British representative of the right wing Russian organ-



Seumas Milne's book (top). SL pamphlet in 1990 exposed Workers Power's role in Butchenko affair.

isation, the NTS" (*Workers Power*, October 1990).

In his account, Seumas Milne verifies what we wrote at the time on the role of Miller and Butchenko. He notes:

"Butchenko's visit, it soon transpired, was organized and paid for by an anti-Soviet Russian émigré newsletter, *Soviet Labour Review*. So was the timely press conference on the 'missing' Soviet money. Since

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# The struggle for world socialist revolution

## ICL debates Ernest Mandel

Some 400 people packed the auditorium of Public School 41 in New York City on 11 November for a rare and important debate on revolutionary strategy featuring the International Communist League, represented by Joseph Seymour of the Spartacist League/US Central Committee, and Ernest Mandel of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec). This was the largest gathering here in years of those claiming adherence to Trotskyism, which was the continuation of the revolutionary internationalism of Lenin's Bolsheviks in the face of the Stalinist degeneration of the Communist International.

Organised by the Spartacist League and co-chaired by representatives of the ICL and the USec, the meeting was organised in the best traditions of workers democracy. The main speakers had equal presentation and rebuttal time. Twenty speakers from the floor alternated between supporters of the USec, the ICL and other tendencies present, including the League for a Revolutionary Party, Bolshevik Tendency, Freedom Socialist Party and International Trotskyist Opposition.

From the ICL's inception as the Revolutionary Tendency, expelled from the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1963, we have insisted on the need for a political fight to the finish against the revisionist current authored by Michel Pablo and backed up by Mandel, which destroyed the Fourth International in the early 1950s. Reacting impressionistically to the creation of bureaucratically deformed workers states in Eastern Europe and China and the growth of Stalinist parties in Europe following World War II, Pablo and his followers decided to dump the Trotskyist programme. As international secretary of the Fourth International, Pablo directed Trotskyists to liquidate organisationally and programmatically into the mass Stalinist and social-democratic parties, with the aim of pressing them onto a "roughly revolutionary" course. This perspective denied the very basis for the Fourth International, founded in 1938 as a Leninist vanguard to provide revolutionary leadership to the international proletariat, whose Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders had betrayed workers' struggles on behalf of "democratic" capitalism.

In our struggle to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International, we welcomed this opportunity to politically confront Mandel, the foremost exponent of Pabloism today. The centrist Mandel, while making ritual genuflections towards Marxist phraseology, has in his practice moved far to the right. Speaking first in the debate, Mandel in his presentation wrote off any possibility of proletarian revolution in the coming period. "The crisis of mankind, of human civilisation", he remarked, "will last for a long time." For Mandel, this is only logical, as he long since abandoned the key tenet of Trotsky's Transitional Programme, which declared that "the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International."

Mandel objected to our statement that "The present period is marked above all by the impact of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the

deformed workers states of East Europe" (from "Workers Struggle Across Europe", *Workers Vanguard* no 592, 21 January 1994). "This is wrong", he said. "The principal feature of the world situation is the worldwide offensive of capital against labour", ignoring the connection between the anti-labour offensive and the collapse of the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states. In his typical objectivist fashion, Mandel claimed the key was "the current long depressive wave of capitalism". As always,

all the heirs to the murderers of Luxemburg, Liebknecht and Trotsky."

### Programme is key

For Trotskyists, the key to the debate topic, "The struggle for world socialist revolution today", is *what programme* can lead the working class to power. Yet one of the main themes of Mandel and his supporters was ridiculing the ICL's insistence on building a programmatically firm party. In listing an "inextricable knot of contradictions" supposedly besetting the

from the heirs of his Stalinist assassins, who were, moreover, at that very moment paving the way for Yeltsinite counter-revolution!

Comrade Seymour focused on key strategic issues for communists today: the popular front—a coalition tying the workers parties to the bourgeoisie—and the "Russian question", ie, the Marxist analysis and programme on the degenerated and deformed workers states. Trotsky fought for unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against capitalist resto-



United Secretariat spokesman Ernest Mandel (left) and Joseph Seymour of the International Communist League debate before 400 people in New York City, 11 November.



he writes off the role of the revolutionary party and its programme.

Having taken proletarian revolution off the agenda, Mandel lapsed into pure reformism: "The strategic goal should become the one of avoiding, at all costs, a nuclear war, and suppressing all nuclear power stations." This remark reveals more than the "greening" of Ernest Mandel. Here he echoes the revisionist "Marxist" Karl Kautsky, whose pacifist claim that imperialist war can be stopped short of the working class coming to power was powerfully refuted by Lenin.

In his presentation, comrade Seymour noted that Mandel's USec, formed in 1963 as a bloc between Pablo's tendency and the rightward-moving SWP, "has always been and only aspires to be a pressure group on various reformist, petty-bourgeois radical and bourgeois nationalist currents. In fact, over the decades Mandel has tried literally every thing *except* building a proletarian vanguard party." In the present period, the United Secretariat "has liquidated itself into and seeks to build up international Social Democracy, which now includes the many ex-Stalinist parties".

"They long to be comrades with the heirs to the murderers of Luxemburg and Liebknecht, who are now joined by the heirs to the murderers of Trotsky", Seymour continued. "Well, we of the International Communist League have taken a different road." He quoted from the Transitional Programme, founding document of the Fourth International: "The Fourth International declares uncompromising war on the bureaucracies of the Second, Third, Amsterdam and Anarchosindicalist Internationals, as on their centrist satellites." "We aim", he summarised, "to reforge a Fourth International that will politically destroy once and for

Spartacists, Mandel included our "obsession with correct formulas".

One of his jabs echoed the old canard: if you're so smart, why aren't you rich? "If after more than half a century of revolutions and counterrevolutions, real Trotskyism, which the Spartacists claim to be the only ones to represent, is reduced to a couple of hundred people in the whole world, with no real implantation in the working class of any country, this would prove the basic historical failure of Trotskyism as a political movement." This "argument" is drawn straight from the Stalinists' cynical arsenal against Trotskyism.

Mandel contrasted the ICL's supposed "irrelevance" to the USec's "influence". "We have two MPs elected in Europe", although, he admitted, "comrade Winnie Wolf" resigned from the USec once he was elected to the German Bundestag on the ticket of the PDS—the party that sold out the East German deformed workers state in 1990! "We have many MPs in Brazil... We have dozens of municipal and regional councillors." What they clearly have is an appetite for the "big time" of reformist parliamentary politics.

Mandel did finally touch on some of the programmatic issues in dispute. He portrayed our defence of the deformed workers states against capitalist counter-revolution as "pro-Stalinist", denouncing in particular our support to Polish general Jaruzelski's countercoup against Lech Walesa's Solidarność when it attempted to seize power in December 1981.

He closed by noting "a victory of truly historical dimensions": the "complete political rehabilitation" of Trotsky and his followers by the Soviet military and the newspaper *Izvestia* in 1990. The ICL argued at the time that Trotsky is in no need of a certificate of good conduct

ration and for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy.

On these and other questions, Seymour remarked, "Mandel has prostituted the moral authority of Trotskyism". The USec was founded on the basis of political support to Castro's Stalinist regime in Cuba and championing the petty-bourgeois strategy of guerrilla war exemplified by Che Guevara. The Spartacists fought the USec's abandonment of Trotsky's perspective of permanent revolution, which holds that only the proletariat, leading the peasantry, can carry out the democratic tasks in colonial countries through socialist revolution. We upheld the need for a Leninist vanguard party, while the USec looked to the petty-bourgeois nationalists as a substitute for the working class. While fighting for unconditional military defence of Cuba against Yankee imperialism, we called for workers political revolution from Moscow to Havana, and extension of the revolution to the imperialist centres as the only real defence of the revolution. While Mandel espoused armchair guerrillism, some of his comrades actually tried to put the USec's stated programme into practice, and perished in Bolivia and other countries.

Following this debacle, in 1970 the USec tailed Salvador Allende's Chilean Unidad Popular, a classic popular front. Seymour noted how the USec's star French section openly hailed Allende's election, while the Spartacist League, basing itself on Trotsky's lessons of the disastrous experience of the 1930s popular fronts in France and Spain, warned against any support to this bourgeois coalition, which politically disarmed the working class. Tragically, the Chilean popular front proved even more suicidal than Guevara's guerrillism, with tens of



thousands of militants killed after the 1973 Pinochet coup.

### The Russian question, front and centre

The ICL spokesman pointed to Mandel's support to pro-imperialist dissidents in the guise of supporting "democracy" in the Soviet bloc. This reached the point that in 1989 the USec's *International Viewpoint* uncritically published an article praising the Estonian "Forest Brothers", fascists who fought alongside Hitler's SS in World War II. Seymour noted, "During the period of Cold War II, Mandel and his co-thinkers never met a non-Russian, anti-Communist nationalist in East Europe they didn't like... of course, in the name of democracy, national independence and anti-Stalinism."

In the late 1970s, the USec jumped aboard US president Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" offensive, which conditioned the rise of pro-capitalist Solidarność in Poland. "Mandel and his co-thinkers supported Solidarność with a fervour equal to that of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher", Seymour noted. In his quest for "influence", Mandel was swimming with the stream, getting into bed with Cold War social democrats like France's Mitterrand and the German and Swedish union bureaucracies. Seymour recalled that Mandel dubbed Walesa & Co "the best socialists in the world" — doubtless because they openly rejected socialism". In contrast, we said: "Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" Seymour quoted from a 1981 *Workers Vanguard* article that portrayed the likely outcome of Solidarność' coming to power:

"Foreign capitalist investment would be invited in on a massive scale.... Wages would be kept low to compete on the world market. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of workers would be laid off.... Certainly the mass of deluded workers in Solidarity do not want this. But the restoration of capitalism in all its ruthlessness would follow, as the night follows the day, from Solidarity's program of 'Western-style democracy'."

— *Workers Vanguard* no 289, 25 September 1981

"What honest and objective person would today deny that what we predicted would happen in 1981... has in fact happened", he asked.

When the fate of the deformed and degenerated workers states hung in the balance in Germany in 1989-90, Seymour continued, the ICL mobilised all the forces at its disposal, intervening with a programme for the revolutionary reunification of Germany—a red Germany of workers councils. We stood unconditionally against the imperialist annexation of the East German deformed workers state, the DDR. And we initiated the call for the January 1990 united-front demonstration that brought out 250,000 against the

fascist defacing of the Treptow Soviet war memorial in East Berlin and in defence of the DDR.

In contrast, the United Secretariat was totally paralysed. An ICL speaker subsequently noted from the floor USec right-winger Matti's description of their two lines on German reunification: "One section wanted to drink champagne; the other section wanted to have Alka-Seltzer", she remarked. "But nobody wanted to have a revolutionary intervention into that nascent political revolution."

Having supported counterrevolutionary forces from Walesa to the capitalist-restorationist rabble on Yeltsin's barricades in front of the Moscow White House in August 1991, the USec now denies that capitalism has been restored in these countries. Their criteria is the social-democratic rationale that most industry is still nationalised. After noting that the USec refused to defend the Soviet Union over Afghanistan, and indeed even called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops fighting CIA-backed, woman-hating Islamic fundamentalists, an ICL speaker remarked in the discussion, "Strangely enough, the USec defends the Soviet Union when it doesn't exist as a workers state. Think about that."

Most recently, in the former Yugoslavia, the USec has lined up with "democratic" imperialism through the "International Workers Aid to Bosnia" campaign. Marxists regard this fratricidal civil war as reactionary on all sides, while calling for defence of the Serbs against imperialist attack. However, Seymour noted, the USec's *International Viewpoint* "boasts that its supporters have run convoys of trucks into Bosnia protected by the UN imperialist forces. One report even lauds 'the genuine efforts of many of the UN staff and soldiers who helped us'. So here you have not only direct support to a bourgeois-nationalist regime, but direct appeals for military action by its imperialist sponsors."

### Trotskyism v USec opportunism

Spartacist interventions from the floor fleshed out the USec's anti-Trotskyist record of capitulation and tailism. Yet none of Mandel's co-thinkers, some with many decades of political experience, even attempted to argue their positions, instead protesting that these were 20-year-old questions and lecturing us for being "rude". If Mandel adopted the scholastic style of European academia, his American supporters came off as US-centred parochialists, and pretty demoralised ones at that. As for their lessons in etiquette, many of the USec speakers learned their "method" in the SWP during the anti-Vietnam War movement, when the SWP led goon squads against Progressive Labor, the Spartacist



Workers Vanguard photo

During discussion, Spartacist speaker denounced USec's bowing to imperialism over Afghanistan.

League and others opposed to their popular-front coalitions with Democratic Party "doves".

Trotsky wrote, "The centrist frequently covers up his dawdling by referring to the danger of 'sectarianism,' by which he understands not abstract propagandist passivity (of the Bordigist type) but an active concern for purity of principles, clarity of position, political consistency and organizational completeness." Indeed, one USec supporter after another rose to denounce the ICL's "inflexibility" and "scary uniformity"—ie, a principled commitment to upholding a revolutionary programme. Steve Bloom of *BIDOM* and Solidarity said, "I would suggest that the Spartacists' main point of pride, their steadfastness and unwaveringness on the programme, is in fact the clearest indictment of their method." Next up for the Mandelites, Paul Le Blanc, who co-chaired the meeting, asked, "In terms of the kind of practical work to build a mass workers movement that can win, what are you doing?" Later, Dorothy Breitman accused the SL of "denouncing whatever activity was going on because it didn't promote a complete revolutionary programme", and asked the speakers to define the "distinction between the programme of the united front and that of the party".

A Freedom Socialist Party speaker echoed this theme. But she added concerning the USec, "I would have to agree with the Spartacist League speakers who have characterised the USec as becoming ever more accommodating, especially since the crack-up of the Soviet Union." Mandel's current strategy "is based on the idea that now we're going to have a century of neo-fascism". (In the 1950s, Pablo/Mandel's opponents characterised the Pabloite perspective as "centuries of deformed workers states".) Revealing her own tailist politics, she said, "We are calling on the Cubans also, and on Castro, to lend the authority of the Cuban workers state to the call for a new International." But reality is going the other way—the besieged Castro regime, which last year legalised the holding of dollars, has offered to drop "socialism" in exchange for imperialist assent to Cuban independence.

Responding to the charge of Spartacist "abstentionism", ICL speakers pointed to our record of organising united-front actions based on the power of the integrated labour movement against fascist terror, from Washington, DC in 1982 to Springfield, Illinois last January. Most recently in Berkeley, the Spartacus Youth Club initiated a protest that shut down a Nazi gathering featuring Hitlerite "historian" David Irving. A trade-union supporter of the Spartacist League asked pointedly, "Where and when has the United Secretariat ever tried to carry out

Trotsky's strategy of proletarian-centred struggle against fascism?"

In his presentation, Mandel made a great deal of accusing the Spartacist League of covering up a betrayal by the French Lambertistes, who supported the Algerian nationalist MNA during the independence struggle in the 1950s. MNA leader Messali Hadj ended up embracing de Gaulle and French imperialism. The putative basis for Mandel's attack was the fact that we solidarise with the International Committee formed in 1954 by the SWP, Lambert's group and the British Healy group to oppose Pabloite revisionism. Mandel's transparent purpose was to throw up a smokescreen to obscure the Pabloites' own ardent political support to the bourgeois-nationalist Algerian FLN regime.

In fact, the Spartacist tendency has a highly critical assessment of the Lambert group over Algeria. A June 1992 public educational of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the ICL, documented in detail how the Lambertistes fronted for Messali Hadj right up to the point where he openly landed in the colonialist camp. An LTF spokesman summed up, "Lambert became the lawyer, the spokesman for Messali Hadj's line, during this whole period."

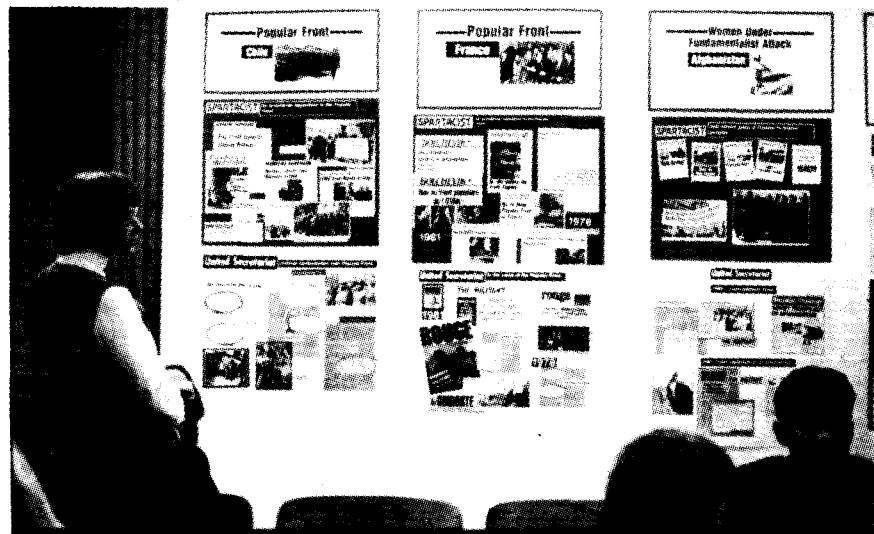
During the floor discussion at the debate, an ICL speaker answered Mandel:

"As he knows, we have nothing whatever to do with Lambert's support to Messali Hadj. We in fact militarily support the forces of liberation against French imperialism.... But what was the United Secretariat position? Your organisation politically backed a wing of the FLN, the bourgeois nationalists, from the mid-'50s on.... [The USec] criminally promoted the lie that the colonial national liberation movements could transform into socialist revolution, without the intervention of a revolutionary Marxist party, a working-class party leading the peasantry. And perhaps comrade Mandel fondly remembers Algeria as the case where Pablo himself got to implement the Pabloite line—as a dual member of both the Ben Bella government and the USec, running capitalist Algeria—oh, pardon me, building Algerian 'socialism', he called it. Now, that's 'influence' for you."

Our comrade noted that the USec readmitted Pablo into its ranks last year, and that the Algerian USec group alternates between supporting the bourgeois army regime and marching with the Islamic fundamentalist FIS.

Another ICL speaker exposed the USec's tailing of popular fronts in Mexico, where the PRT supported the bourgeois populist party of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, and Brazil. When a leftist tendency opposed the formation of a popular front by Lula's Brazilian Workers Party (PT) in 1989, a leader of the

continued on page 8



Workers Vanguard photo

At the debate, displays contrasted the Trotskyist programme of the International Communist League with the centrist politics of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec).

## Mandel...

(Continued from page 7)

USec's "Socialist Democracy" (!) current in the PT, João Machado, was sent in to purge them. Out of these militants came the Luta Metalúrgica group, which recently established fraternal relations with the International Communist League.

An interesting view into the USec was provided by a supporter of the International Trotskyist Opposition, who spoke as a neutral, even though the ITO describes itself as a tendency in the USec. For the most part she defended Mandel, who, she said, "has taken some correct positions" inside the USec, including "on the question of the popular front in Mexico around Cárdenas, on the question of the popular front in Brazil around Lula, on the question of anti-Stalinist adaptation to imperialism around Serbia, and also, he's opposed the liquidation of the USFI [USec] that's being advocated by the majority leadership into movements of Social Democracy." But, she added, "unfortunately Mandel has had a historic political problem of being able to wage those struggles consistently". You don't say.

Mandel has often polemicised against the more egregious right-wing tendencies in the USec—only to leave his own supporters hanging out on a limb to be chopped off. This is an "International" which frequently has several warring factions and even separate sections in one country, based on conflicting opportunist appetites. In the 1975 upheaval in Portugal, where the reformist Communist Party in a bloc with leftist military officers was pitted against the imperialist-supported Socialist Party, the USec split into two sections, lining up literally on opposite sides of real barricades. Elsewhere, in Iran, both USec groups, the HKE and HKS, supported Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution", even as the mullahs' regime arrested and shot their comrades.

Mandel has politically sacrificed several generations of would-be Trotskyist militants in his quest for illusory "influence". USec sections are created and destroyed over and over again as Mandel pursues a Kautskyan programme of "unity" with Maoists, Greens, social democrats, etc. And the more right-wing,

the "broader" the lash-up, the better—until the inevitable splits. Within the USec, leftists have had a hapless lot. In the mid-'70s, the Mandelite Internationalist Tendency was framed up and expelled from the SWP. Although Mandel had been in factional struggle against the SWP leadership, he acquiesced to the expulsion and demanded that the ITers try to individually crawl back into the SWP. That was the end of this leftist current.

### Mandel's provocation fails

By the end of the discussion, Mandel must have been sensing defeat, attacking "the great majority of the people here" as "completely irrelevant, completely meaningless". After repeatedly interrupting Seymour's rebuttal, causing several warnings from the chair to desist, Mandel blustered, "Nobody has kept me quiet since 60 years... The only thing you can do is use physical violence—go ahead, go ahead!" This blatant provocation alarmed even his own comrades, who tried to control his outbursts. Mandel capped his own rebuttal with a Kautskyite plea for disarmament.

We print below sections of Joseph Seymour's rebuttal to Mandel. We look forward to printing the full transcript of the debate in our journal *Spartacist*.

The speaker from the Freedom Socialist Party says that we never participate in united fronts—and I will define a united front for sister Breitman a little later—unless we initiate and control it... But we can indicate dozens of united fronts we participated in. For example, and this would certainly be close to your hearts, the defence of abortion clinics, which were organised by liberal feminists. Time and again, we have been there.

The speaker from the Bolshevik Tendency stated that we had a neutral position in August 1991, in the Kremlin coup and Yeltsin's counter-coup. That's not true. We had a position that the workers should have organised to smash the Yeltsin barricades, because Yeltsin was the main enemy, the main agent of the counterrevolution.

Now, Ernest Mandel, I publicly challenge you to substantiate, or as we say in our crude American way, put up or shut

up! Find anything where we endorsed the Lambertistes' support to the Messali Hadj group!... Find anything where we said that socialism can be built through or after a nuclear war [laughter]... But perhaps what you mean is something else: That, of course, we did defend nuclear weapons in the hands of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states. Because if they didn't have those nuclear weapons, they would be nuked. There would be no Vietnamese Revolution, there would be no Cuban Revolution, Korea would be irradiated rubble—and anybody who doesn't think that really has enormous illusions in American imperialism.

The united front is an *action*; it is not a programme, it is not a party, it is not a permanent organisation, it is not a political bloc—it's an action. 'Strike together and march separately'... What you guys have against us is *not* that we're not engaged in real struggle, *not* that we're not engaged in united fronts, *not* that we don't have anything to do with the labour movement. What you guys have against us is that we're *reds*, and whatever we do, we are known as reds!

Now, as I said before, I think that the heart of USec politics is much better expressed by Paul Le Blanc than the obfuscationist Mandel. And he said, "Well, we build a labour party." We all know that the Mensheviks and the Stalinists had a two-stage revolution for backward countries. But here we have a two-stage revolution for an advanced capitalist country. First, we build a reformist labour party, and then we move it to the left. No.

To begin with, there's not going to be any kind of labour party in this country unless there are tumultuous class struggles—strikes, protests, an enormous radicalisation. What do you think, that you can build a mass labour party in some kind of idiot linear fashion? The conditions which will allow a mass labour party will necessarily be the same conditions which will allow a revolutionary party. Where there's motion to a labour party, in a short time there will either be a revolutionary labour party or a reformist *counterrevolutionary* labour party....

Okay. "We have masses, influence, we have MPs in the Brazilian..." You've got nothing!... You know what you have in

Brazil? You have a bunch of apparatchiks for Lula! If tomorrow Lula said, "Repudiate the Fourth International, repudiate Trotskyism, repudiate the dictatorship of the proletariat, or you're expelled", you know what would happen? Half of you would be expelled, the other half would repudiate Trotskyism, the guys who were expelled... [Mandel at this point interrupts for a period of minutes before subsiding.] The ones who will repudiate formal Trotskyism will have accused the ones who are being expelled of being ultra-left sectarians, and the ones who are expelled will accuse the other ones of being opportunists....

In the mid-1930s, a significant figure in the French Trotskyist movement split temporarily to the right. He wrote a letter to Trotsky very critical of the Trotskyist movement, and Trotsky responded: "The weightiest argument in the letter, namely, 'Why have the Bolshevik-Leninists remained weak in Germany, in France?' is nothing but an echo of the centrist objections, 'Why were you beaten by the Stalinist bureaucracy, by the reactionary coalition in China?' For quite some time we have been explaining the reasons for these defeats, and we never promised any miracles. Our international work began only in 1929—and not on virgin territory, but on territory saturated with old and powerful organizations, and with new, confused, and often treacherous organizations that claimed adherence to our principles." Do you know who Trotsky was responding to? A man called Pierre Frank, who was an old comrade of Ernest Mandel.

Our tendency also did not begin, and has not operated, on virgin political territories. We face powerful Stalinist, social-democratic bureaucracies, petty-bourgeois and bourgeois-nationalist movements, and most of the "Trotskyists" and "revolutionary Marxists" are treacherous opportunists, of which Ernest Mandel's tendency is a good example. Now, I genuinely believe that the tendency led by Ernest Mandel can make a contribution to the building of a revolutionary movement: Stop pretending to be Trotskyists! Stop pretending to be revolutionary Marxists! And be honest, that you are left social democrats.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 611, 25 November 1994.

## Caucasus...

(Continued from page 1)

Moscow has financed bloody fratricidal slaughter, supplied arms to Chechen oppositionists, sent in mercenary units and sought to impose a puppet regime. When the plan to oust Dudayev "from within" collapsed, Moscow rulers went over to direct intervention.

This intervention represents a blow against all the peoples of the Caucasus. During their advance toward Chechnya, the Russian troops were met by groups of protesting residents of neighbouring Ingushetia. Among those killed was the Ingush minister of health. In Ingushetia, Ossetia, Dagestan and Abkhazia, solidarity has been voiced with the Chechen people. Ever since coming to power, the Yeltsin regime has sought to use for its own ends the national conflicts that have racked the Caucasus as a result of capitalist counter-revolution.

Last year, the Kremlin coldbloodedly monitored the bloody fratricidal slaughters in Ossetia and Ingushetia, and then declared a state of emergency in both republics (consolidating its military presence), after Ossetian nationalists had carried out mass slaughters of Ingushetians. At the same time, Dudayev's appeal to Islamic fundamentalism against the Russians can only fuel a resurgence of nationalist and communalist vio-

lence in the northern Caucasus, some of whose peoples (eg the Ossetians) are historically largely Christian.

The introduction of troops takes place against the backdrop of a state-orchestrated attempt to whip up racist anti-Caucasian hysteria, backed up by ominous police and army patrols in Moscow and other Russian cities. The mass of the Russian population, in the grip of impoverishment and unemployment, voices no support to the intervention in Chechnya. A columnist for the influential daily *Sevodaynya* writes that all the government's analyses predicting an easy victory and a groundswell of public support for the war "turned out to be 100 percent wrong" (*Moscow Times*, 20 December 1994).

The working people of Russia must understand that the invasion of Chechnya is being carried out by the same forces that repeatedly used the OMON paramilitary squads to disperse demonstrations protesting Yeltsin's capitalist impoverishment (Moscow, Army Day, February 1992), and used the army as strikebreakers (air controllers strike, August 1992). What is needed is for the workers to reacquire a consciousness of their internationalist class interests, in order to organise opposition to the war independent of those elements of Russia's new bourgeoisie who are appealing to widespread pacifistic opposition to Yeltsin's Caucasian adventure in order to boost their own political fortunes.

The invasion has evoked protest from many bourgeois politicians, particularly the "democrats", who up to now have consistently supported Yeltsin. Moreover, they have been joined by prominent anti-Western nationalists, exemplified by Lieutenant General Aleksandr Lebed, commander of the 14th Army in Moldova. In voting in the Duma (lower house of parliament), only the fascist party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and the faction of former finance minister Boris Fyodorov have supported the invasion. Yegor Gaidar, the darling of the IMF, and Grigori Yavlinsky, author of the infamous plan for the deindustrialisation of the former Soviet economy, appeared on television denouncing the introduction of troops and warning of police-state dictatorship. This is pure hypocrisy.

These people *require* a police state against the workers. They amply showed this in October 1993 during the mass murder of opponents of Yeltsin's bloody bonapartist coup in Moscow. They supported the establishment of police regimes in major Russian cities after the coup, including official pogroms against and deportations of peoples from the Caucasus and other national minorities. The bourgeois opposition to Yeltsin's Chechen adventure is concerned with neither the Chechen people nor "democratic principles". They are jockeying for position and worried that the Russian invasion will set the Caucasus aflame while the army is

unreliable. The "democrats" are no less dedicated to capitalist Russia's imperial interests in the "near abroad", but fear that the current military adventure will delay or cancel the foreign loans and investment so desperately needed if these aspiring capitalists are to solidify their ability to exploit and suck profits from the workers throughout the lands of the former Soviet Union.

The "opposition" of the various petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Stalinist organisations likewise has nothing in common with the defence of Chechnya. They seek to use this crisis of power to prove their usefulness—as anything from an electoral machine to potential storm-troopers—to the anti-Yeltsin wing of the new bourgeoisie which holds in reserve the option of using a potent mix of xenophobic frenzy and nostalgia for the Soviet Union to line up the despairing masses behind the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie.

During the 12 December Moscow demonstration in Pushkin Square, members of the RKR (Russian Communist Workers Party) and other Stalinist parties, standing shoulder to shoulder with Black Hundreds and monarchists, shouted anti-Semitic slogans at the "democrats". The statement of Zyuganov's KP-RF (Communist Party-Russian Federation) is in the same vein as General Lebed's ravings, in essence denouncing Yeltsin for indecisiveness in "establishing order" in Chechnya. Not one



# On slogans regarding the former Soviet Union

Following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92, we raised the slogan of "Reforge the Soviet Union on Leninist Principles!" The consolidation of a capitalist state in Russia with its own imperial ambitions to dominate the territories of the former USSR has led to discussion within the International Communist League over what slogans are appropriate under these changed—and changing—circumstances. The article "The Caucasus Cauldron" in Workers Vanguard no 613 (30 December 1994) raised the call "for a voluntary federation of socialist republics". A meeting of the International Secretariat of the ICL concluded that it was an error to use this as a slogan and passed a resolution stating:

To raise as an immediate slogan a call for a federation of socialist republics which do not now exist—ie without at the same time explaining that we do not know the course and pace of the future

necessary socialist revolutions in the different nascent capitalist countries in the territory of the former USSR—easily lends itself to an interpretation that we foresee a new revolutionary upsurge originating in the same areas as animated the 1917 October Revolution, that we envisage retaining the geographical borders of the ex-Soviet republics, etc. Given the past history of Great Russian domination, including in the Stalinised USSR, and the huge escalation of national chauvinism today as both a motor force and consequence of capitalist counterrevolution, with the associated appetites on the part of Russia's new rulers to play a role as a regional colonial and imperialist power, the question of a federation of unequal partners must be approached with great caution. Moreover, while the slogan's reference to "socialist republics" was intended to make explicit the need for socialist revolutions against capitalism—and to overcome the problem of our earlier slogan whose reference to "re-

forging the Soviet Union" would be understood in today's ex-USSR as congruent with the nationalist drive for a Great Russian *derzhava*—our Marxist use of the term "socialist" is far from unambiguous to an ex-Soviet audience given the decades-long Stalinist claim that the bureaucratically deformed USSR was a "socialist country". In this context, "socialist republics"—like "Soviet republics"—can sound like a call to return to the good old days of Stalin's Russia, including on the national question.

At the same time, the break-up of the Soviet Union has revealed a situation of considerable interpenetration of peoples and of economic production units which were inherited from and geared to a (bureaucratically) centralised planned economy. Thus in a number of regions (particularly eastern Ukraine, Crimea, northern Kazakhstan) a democratic resolution of the national question cannot be achieved except through a socialist federation or federa-

tions of workers states transcending national boundaries. It is necessary to emphasise the voluntary character of any such federations (as opposed, for example, to the Transcaucasian Federation that Stalin sought to bureaucratically impose), and to be particularly aware of the dangers inherent in any union of vastly unequal partners (eg Russia and the other republics of the former USSR). We cannot foresee today the contours of such federations, possibly embracing states that were not constituent parts of the former USSR. Increasingly as time progresses and now-capitalist Russia pursues its imperial appetites, socialist revolutions may well tend *not* to duplicate the structure of the workers state that grew out of the tsarist empire.

To be thrust back into a new period means that we have to put front and centre the struggle for proletarian revolution in the regions of the former Soviet Union.

of these parties can say anything about the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy in deporting whole peoples from their homelands. This includes the entire Chechen people, who by Stalin's 1944 order were punished with deportation to Central Asia. NKVD troops wiped out at least one whole village which refused to leave.

The Chechen adventure has exposed and deepened the sharp political divisions within the Russian officer corps, as leading military men like Lebed and deputy defence minister Boris Gromov publicly denounce Yeltsin's actions. The protracted difficulty in taking Grozny indicates that the soldiers are unwilling to fight, as well as being poorly supplied, poorly trained and poorly led. With Yeltsin's support in public opinion polls falling to 15 per cent, the Chechen war could well lead to his downfall, or alternatively to a desperate attempt at a presidential coup aimed at crushing his legion of opponents within the country's new capitalist ruling elite. The working people of Russia must oppose moves from any corner—whether Yeltsin or anti-Yeltsin elements—to place its neck in the yoke of bonapartist dictatorship.

Among "democrats" and pacifists, and many pseudo-socialists, it has become popular to compare the present invasion of Chechnya with the introduction of Soviet troops into Afghanistan in 1979. This comparison is entirely false. The Soviet Union was a workers state, albeit ruled by a parasitic bureaucracy, and the Soviet Army intervened in a *civil war* in support of a modernising left-nationalist government under attack by Islamic feudalist reactionaries. Soviet troops in Afghanistan fought on the side of social progress against the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats. Soviet intervention made possible democratic reforms in Afghan society, such as literacy and granting women elementary civil rights. At the same time, it was a measure of defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism, which sought to make Afghanistan into a base of operations on the USSR's southern flank.

We Trotskyists of the International Communist League declared, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and "Extend the Social Gains of October to the Afghan Peoples!" We criticised the Stalinist bureaucracy under Brezhnev and his successors as it sought to use Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as a bargaining chip with Western imperialism; further we condemned the Soviet-backed Afghan regime for not carrying through even basic democratic reforms in a futile attempt to conciliate Islam. When Gorbachev attempted to

"appease" the imperialists by pulling Soviet troops out in 1989, this was a betrayal of the interests of the Afghan and Soviet peoples, paving the way for the later victory of the counterrevolution and the destruction of the Soviet Union.

Russia's present regime, centred around Boris Yeltsin, arose out of that counterrevolution. Those who cry, "No more Afghanists" over Chechnya also cheered while the Soviet workers state was being strangled; today, their liberal pacifism seeks to dupe the oppressed and the workers into believing that the capitalist Russian *derzhava* (great power) can have a democratic face.

The Western imperialists, who massively supported the Afghan *mujahedin* against the Soviet Army, initially declared Moscow's Chechen adventure to be an "internal" Russian affair. This was in keeping with their general line of backing Yeltsin and opposing the national fragmentation of the now-capitalist Russian state. However, the NATO powers have become concerned that the military debacle in Grozny and the prospect of a long guerrilla war in the Caucasus is further destabilising the fragile counterrevolutionary order in Russia. At the same time, the leaders of the counterrevolution in Eastern Europe, such as Polish president Lech Walesa, see Moscow's invasion of the northern Caucasus as signalling a more aggressive, imperial-minded Russia which may soon threaten them. Hence Western capitals are now calling for a "negotiated solution" to the Chechen conflict. Thus Yeltsin's Caucasian adventure shows signs of developing into an international crisis enmeshed with inter-imperialist rivalries as in the Balkans.

The full-scale assault on Chechnya is another in the series of wars unleashed by capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the destruction of the Soviet Union. This includes the fratricidal slaughterhouse that is now Bosnia and the six-year Armenian-Azeri mutual slaughter over possession of the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. Both Western and Russian bourgeois commentators often try to blame the explosion of nationalist hatreds in Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR on the legacy of "Communism". On the contrary, it was the Bolshevik Revolution which liberated the oppressed nations of the tsarist "prison house of peoples" as Lenin called it. In 1914, Lenin wrote:

"The interests of the Great-Russian proletariat require that the masses be systematically educated to champion—most resolutely, consistently, boldly and in a revolutionary manner—complete equality and the right



Reuter

## Would-be Tsar Boris Yeltsin.

to self-determination for all the nations oppressed by the Great Russians."

— "On the National Pride of the Great Russians" (December 1914)

These internationalist principles were embodied in the Soviet federated workers state that arose out of the 1917 October Revolution, which also provided for various forms of regional autonomy and cultural and language rights for peoples who were still in a pre-national stage who lacked the basis for a separate political economy.

However, the defeat of proletarian revolution in the rest of Europe, centrally Germany, and the resulting imperialist encirclement of Soviet Russia led to the bureaucratic degeneration of the workers state under the bloody bonapartist rule of Joseph Stalin and his heirs. The resurgence of Great Russian chauvinism fostered by the Stalinist bureaucracy undermined the political foundations of the Soviet Union and triggered in response anti-Soviet nationalism among the non-Russian elites of the USSR. Thus the basis was laid for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which in turn has further obstructed and fragmented the organisation and consciousness of the working classes involved.

The principles of proletarian socialism are fundamentally antagonistic to bourgeois nationalism in all forms. Thus we oppose not only the imperial-minded Great Russian chauvinism of Yeltsin & Co but the Chechen nationalism of strongman Dudayev and the Islamic fundamentalism

that he seeks to promote, including employing troops trained by the Afghan *mujahedin*. We are for class opposition to Russian aggression in Chechnya, for organised working-class action against it. The defence of Chechnya's people is in the interest of the multinational working class of Russia! As proletarian internationalists we insist on the right of Chechnya to decide its own fate, including recognising that independence will inevitably intensify the drive to purge Chechens (and other Caucasian people) from Moscow and other Russian cities.

Today the peoples of the Caucasus—a patchwork of ethnic and linguistic groups—again face a Russia pursuing imperialist aspirations to control the region's wealth and borders, while the local national bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces attempt to get rich through deals with competing imperialist backers. An internationalist, revolutionary workers movement fighting for a democratically planned, egalitarian economy and true equality between the peoples of this region could rally the working masses of all the Caucasian peoples to overcome the raging fratricidal national conflicts. An authentically communist, Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party must be forged in sharp struggle against all variants of nationalism, and in particular against the chauvinism of the Great Russian oppressor.

*Hands off Chechnya! Defeat the Russian invasion!*

*Defend national minorities against oppression and discrimination! For the right of Chechnya to decide its own fate!*

*For united working-class action against Yeltsin's regime of capitalist immiseration and Great Russian chauvinism!*

*Fight for socialist revolution throughout the lands of the former USSR!*

— International Communist League  
(Fourth Internationalist)  
Moscow, 10 January 1995

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## For trade union/minority action to crush the fascists!

# Racist murder of Asian shopkeeper in Wales

On 6 December 1994, Mohan Singh Kullar died as a result of an extremely savage racist attack. He was beaten unconscious outside his shop at Cimla near Neath in South Wales in the early hours of 27 November. Mohan was lured out of his house when both he and his son-in-law went out to investigate a volley of stones against their window. He became separated from his son-in-law and was later found lying in a pool of blood.

This vile racist murder occurred in an area with once strong working-class traditions. But with the decimation of the coal mines and heavy industry of South Wales, the fascists seek to exploit widespread economic desperation to target minority communities with their deadly racist terror. Indeed, as the anti-fascist journal *Searchlight* (December 1994) notes, the Combat 18 scum have identified Wales as a focus for "action", utilising an organisation called "Celtic Warrior". A Welsh couple who are active trade unionists have seen their home subjected to seven attacks in the last year; they fear "they are at the top of a C18 hit list". In Yorkshire, fascists have targeted minorities, trade unionists and leftists. The secretary of the Leeds Trades Council had the windows of his house smashed. In one horrific racist attack, two young Asians were attacked by a gang of white

men. Eleven-year-old Chander Bachetta was badly burned with a blowtorch. On 26 November several thousand attended an anti-fascist protest in Leeds in which trade union branches were well represented.

The fascists direct genocidal terror at racial minorities while ultimately seeking to smash the organisations of the working class. To drive the fascists off the streets what we need are powerful mobilisations of the trade unions and minorities. The trade unions must champion the interests of all the oppressed.

But to unleash the power of the organised proletariat means a political struggle against the Labourite bureaucracy, which subordinates the unions to the capitalist state. The trade union leadership enforces the bosses' anti-union laws and seeks to discipline militants who defy anti-strike laws, as with the Sefton 2. Along with their fake-left apologists, they preach that the state can be "reformed". Thus, on the eve of a planned march on BNP headquarters in Welling in October 1993, rather than seeking to mobilise the trade unions in struggle, groups like the SWP and Militant preached reliance on the capitalist state. They suicidally appealed to the local council in Bexley to "ban the BNP" and claimed that the cops were potential "allies". The cops dis-

persed the march, attacking tens of thousands of anti-racist youth, and victimising many militants. Subsequently the Labourite left has consciously sought to channel anti-racist sentiment into the dead-end of electing a Labour government to administer capitalist austerity.

Increased fascist activity throughout Europe comes in the context of capitalist counterrevolution in the East and of ever more vicious anti-immigrant attacks in the West, as "Fortress Europe" policies are applied with a vengeance. In Britain the Refugee Council reports that the rate of asylum seekers being refused entry has skyrocketed in the past 15 months from 16 per cent to 75 per cent. Immigrants Joy Gardner and Joseph Nnalue have paid with their lives at the hands of the state. We demand: full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and their families!

Ominously, the new Criminal Justice Act, an attack on basic democratic rights from just about every angle, is geared to enhance cop and state powers to go after minorities, leftists and trade unionists. The cops have taken their enhanced "stop and search" powers as a green light for murder. Shortly before Christmas, Nigerian-born father of two, Oluwashiji Lapite was beaten to death during his arrest on a London street in an attack involving no less than eight police officers.

In response, *Socialist Worker* (7 January) demands "They should close down the [Stoke Newington] police station". This is similar to the demand raised last year by the centrist Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL) to shut down the Kentish Town (London) police station. The fake leftists want to make you think that it is a matter of weeding out the "bad" cops. But the racist, union-busting cops cannot be reformed.

Significantly, the Labour Party leadership does not oppose the CJA. Blair vies with the Tories to be the enforcer of capitalist "law and order". And indeed the Labour Party will use the cops and courts to try to smash workers struggles and anti-fascist protest. Moreover, a Labour government, which will enforce capitalist austerity, will only perpetuate the racism and economic devastation that is the breeding ground of fascism. To smash fascist and cop terror, to put an end to joblessness, poverty and war—what is necessary is socialist revolution, which through expropriating the bourgeoisie can lay the basis for a planned, collectivised economy that can meet the needs of all. Above all that requires the construction of a revolutionary party, forged through splitting the working-class base of the Labour Party from its pro-capitalist misleaders. ■

## Ireland...

(Continued from page 12)

fake-left extol DL as an alternative to Labour. In the Cork by-election last year the Militant called to "Vote left" against the government (*Militant* no 231, November/December 1994), while the IWG, during the 1992 elections announced a call for a vote to "Labour and Democratic Left" (*Workers Power* no 161, November 1992). But far from an alternative, DL's record shows how much they have in common with Labour: in 1982, they were in the pre-split Workers Party while it participated in efforts to keep the minority Fianna Fáil government in power; told striking ESB workers to get back to work in 1991; they support the PCW social contract and have established themselves as viciously pro-imperialist and anti-Republican.

We continue to warn that any imperialist "deal" will be bloody and brutal, and will necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholics, and not do any good for working-class Protestants either. The real "peace dividend" in Northern Ireland is already becoming evident. Several Catholics have been beaten almost to death by the RUC. In the wake of the attempted escapes at Whitmoor prison, Republican prisoners in British jails have faced brutal attacks, and have been denied contact with family or legal representation (*Morning Star*, 17 December 1994). In the South the state has used draconian repression to round up Republican Sinn Féin supporters, who dare to oppose the "peace" process.

This country urgently requires a party modelled on that of the Bolsheviks, which would be the tribune of all the oppressed, standing foursquare for the rights of Travellers, women, gays and lesbians. Such a party would be irreconcilably hostile to British imperialism in the

North and to the gombeen bourgeoisie and its social-democratic lackeys in the South, and would fight for workers revolution to sweep away the rotten, corrupt capitalist system. This is the kind of party the Dublin Spartacist Group, sympathising group of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is striving to build. ■

## Hands off Republican Sinn Féin!

We reprint below a *Partisan Defence Committee* statement sent on 31 October 1994 to the then Irish Minister for Justice, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn.

Over the weekend of 22 and 23 October, forces of the Garda Síochána under your direction carried out a series of raids on the homes of members and supporters of Republican Sinn Féin. Using the sinister Section 30 of the Irish Republic's draconian Offences Against the State Act, Gardai arrested and seized property belonging to at least six people including the Vice President of Republican Sinn Féin, Des Long.

These raids are a blatant attempt to intimidate and silence any who would dare to oppose the fraudulent pro-imperialist "peace" deal and as such are directed not just at dissident elements within the republican movement, but also at socialists and leftists and anyone who refuses to countenance another minute of British imperialist rampage in Northern Ireland.

Hands off Republican Sinn Féin! We demand that any charges arising out of these arrests be immediately dropped!

## Milne...

(Continued from page 5)

1983, the 'review' had been lavishly financed by the US government's National Endowment for Democracy (NED)."

Milne notes that the NED-funded NTS organisation collaborated enthusiastically with the Nazis during the Second World War and was a playground for Western intelligence organisations for more than half a century.

In October 1990, NTS leader Miller travelled to the mining centre of Donetsk in the Ukraine, along with scab UDM leaders and right-wing electricians union leader Eric Hammond, to attend the founding congress of the Independent Union of Miners (NPG). Their aim was to enlist Soviet miners in the international anti-communist witch hunt of Scargill and, in so doing, to politically corrupt elements of the most combative section of the Soviet proletariat. Milne notes that the US and German embassies were "well represented" at this congress: "Miller was given the floor on several occasions and raised the issue of the 1984-85 strike donation." In fact, representatives of the International Communist League (ICL) addressed conference presidium members, presenting them with a copy of *Workers Vanguard* no 508, 10 August 1990, with the article, "Sinister Frame-up of British Miners Leader—Scargill Witch-hunted". Our comrades were able to temporarily spike this anti-communist crusade against Scargill.

In one of the more interesting side-lights of the book, Milne points to the disputes that went on within the Soviet bureaucracy over how closely to be linked to the miners strike. In addition to the collections made by Soviet miners, the official Soviet trade union promised substantial hard currency donations. Howev-

er, the NUM never received any of this money before the strike ended. A key factor, according to Milne, was the fact that a substantial section of the Soviet bureaucracy, headed by perestroika advocate Mikhail Gorbachev—then no 2 to the ailing Chernenko—did not want to risk worsening relations with Britain: "Gorbachev was privately opposed to both the Soviet trade-union coal and fuel embargo and to providing cash support, particularly once he had made a private commitment to Thatcher at their Chequers meeting in December 1984. The Kremlin dispute over aid to the British miners was an early taste of the emerging divisions at the heart of the Soviet Communist Party."

Milne notes in passing that "Scargill had attracted widespread condemnation in 1983 for his description of the Polish Solidarność union as an 'anti-socialist organization'". Polish Solidarność received literally millions from such outfits as the NED, which also financed Miller/Butchenko's NTS.

The review of Milne's book in *Workers Power* (December 1994) ends with the reformist call for a "future Labour government" to abolish "MI5 and all secret state services". Yet, if there's one thing that comes through clearly in Milne's book, it's the close links between right-wing Labour leaders, their cronies like Robert Maxwell, and the secret service. The *Workers Power* review contains no mention of Butchenko, George Miller (later appointed an economic adviser to the Yeltsin government) or the NTS. Small wonder! Kowtowing to the imperialists and their Labour lackeys, WP supported Solidarność and later Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary coup in August 1991, while cavorting with scum like Butchenko. Their blind hatred for the Soviet Union drove them into the arms of the anti-Scargill witch hunters. ■

# Clause IV...

(Continued from page 3)

bitter struggle against the Thatcher government during the 1984-85 strike and the NUM leadership's courageous resistance to the MIS-inspired witch hunt against them are a source of inspiration to wide layers of workers and young people who are looking for a socialist alternative to the likes of Blair. But the alternative offered by the Labour "lefts" is fatally flawed, as demonstrated by their own history.

In the Cold War period, the Labour Party became internally destabilised. In early 1981 the right-wing "Gang of Four" headed by David Owen decamped, forming the overtly bourgeois Social Democratic Party. A sharp factional struggle ensued inside Labour. The deputy leadership contest in 1981 between Cold Warrior Denis Healey and Labour left Tony Benn posed a showdown on key issues tearing the Labour Party apart: for or against the CIA-loyal exponents of Cold War; for or against the architects of coalition and austerity. As we wrote:

"The situation dictated that a Trotskyist propaganda group which seeks to split Labour's working-class base from its pro-capitalist misleaders to a revolutionary programme should have extended critical support to Tony Benn—in order to exacerbate and follow through the split begun with the formation of the SDP, drive out the blatantly pro-imperialist CLA-connected right wing and place Benn in a position where his left-reformist politics could be more effectively exposed and combatted."

—Spartacist Britain no 41, April 1982.

Although a substantial force in the early 1980s, the Labour "lefts" demonstrated their political bankruptcy during the miners strike, when the future of the whole union movement was at stake. The draconian use of the state apparatus against the striking miners does not explain this defeat (see review of Seumas Milne's *The Enemy Within*, this issue). Even the most left-wing leaders of the Labour Party and the NUM never broke publicly with the Kinnock right wing. Scargill never placed concrete demands on the leaders of "left"-led unions like the T&G or railwaymen to strike alongside the miners and never mobilised his membership to pull out the ranks of those unions. At the Labour Party conference of 1984, after Neil Kinnock had viciously attacked "picket line violence" (not by the police, of course), he was unanimously re-elected to the leadership, without any opposition from either Scargill or Benn. And it should not be forgotten that in his capacity as energy minister in the previous Labour government, Benn had presided over the installation of the National Incentive Scheme—one of the mechanisms used to divide the NUM and lay the basis for the scabbery in Nottinghamshire in 1984-85.

The role of the Labour "lefts" was equally treacherous during the 1926 General Strike, which was called in solidarity

with the national strike of the Miners Federation. At the time the General Council of the TUC was dominated by "lefts". These fakers called off the general strike after nine days, in fear of the struggle developing towards a revolutionary showdown, forcing the miners to fight alone. It took the union movement decades to recover from this defeat.

On the eve of the 1926 strike, Leon Trotsky pointed out that when decisive class issues were posed, the Labour "lefts" would bend their knee to the right-wing Ramsay MacDonald leadership:

"Is it surprising then, if, after all these left resolutions, the General Council proved to be more to the right than the old one? It should be thoroughly understood that leftism of this kind remains left only so long as it has no practical obligations. But as soon as the question of action arises, the left wingers respectfully cede the leadership to the rights."

—"Problems of the British Labor Movement", 12 January 1926

During this critical period the Communist Party was politically subordinated to the treacherous "lefts". The CPGB line in 1925-27 was a British expression of the policy of the Communist International, by that time dominated by Stalin and Bukharin with their false ideology of building "socialism in one country". In May 1925 the Anglo-Russian Committee, composed of Russian trade unions and the British TUC, had been set up for the purpose of achieving trade union solidarity and averting the imperialist war danger. In part because Stalin & Co regarded a bloc with the British trade union leaders as essential for the "defence" of the USSR, they maintained their presence in the Anglo-Russian Committee even after the betrayal of the miners by the TUC, thereby giving a left cover to these class traitors.

The early CP's failure to expose the symbiotic link between the "left" and right in the "broad church of Labour" helps to explain why there has never been a mass Marxist party in Britain, in opposition to the treacherous Labour Party.

For the Labour left wing of Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill, "unity" of the Labour Party against the Tories, and a commitment to reformist parliamentarism takes precedence. Whatever their criticisms of Tony Blair, the Labour "lefts" are willing to "excuse everything" in the interests of kicking out the Tories. Once this target becomes the only goal, then the way is paved (at the logical extreme) for Blair's argument that whatever wins votes is justified. And for Tony Benn, no less than Tony Blair, a Labour government administering Parliament in a capitalist Britain is the ultimate prize.

We fight for a genuine workers government, based on elected workers councils like the original soviets in Lenin's Russia. This will take a socialist revolution. It will have nothing in common with the windbag chambers in Westminster, which is the vehicle for bourgeois rule.

A perfect example of this electoral lesser evilism took place in the elections in Tower Hamlets in London's East End last spring. In order to "defeat" the fascist BNP, the Labour Party ran a cam-



Laurie Sparham (IFL)

(Left) Arthur Scargill arrested at Orgreave picket during 1984-85 miners strike. (Above) Tony Benn.

paigned deliberately conciliating racist voters. This strategy was endorsed by Tony Benn, who counselled a campaign to drive "a wedge between the 'hard' racism and fascism of the far right, and their 'soft' racist supporters" (*Guardian*, 9 April 1994). Now there's a Labour council! One of its first acts was to side with the cops in persecuting local Asian youth (the Langdon Park 4) who defended themselves against fascists. You can't stop the fascists by voting for the chauvinist Labour Party!

## Labour "lefts" capitulate to imperialism

The key question for would-be leaders of the working class is their attitude to their own imperialist government. During the Gulf War the International Communist League forthrightly stood for the defeat of imperialism and the defence of Iraq while giving no political support to the nationalist Saddam Hussein. Tony Benn on the other hand called for economic sanctions against Iraq. Far from opposing imperialism, Benn maintained only tactical differences with George Bush and John Major on how to smash the Iraqi people. In fact, the economic blockade of Iraq became a launching pad for the military invasion of the country and starvation of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

During the dirty Falklands/Malvinas war in 1982, we fought for revolutionary defeatism on both sides and raised the call "Sink Thatcher!" Tony Benn warned that if the fleet was not withdrawn it would "end in tragedy for this country". So what? It would have been a tragedy for the British bosses.

As proletarian internationalists, we opposed NATO and the Common Market, which were creations of American imperialism for the purpose of fashioning an anti-Soviet alliance in Europe. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, interimperialist rivalries—centred around the three great capitalist powers, the US, Germany and Japan—are greatly intensifying, threatening a new world war. We oppose the European Union, which today is increas-

ingly an instrument for German imperialist mastery of Europe. The British bourgeoisie is deeply divided over Europe, with part of it looking towards Germany and part of it looking towards the US (just as they did at the time of World War II). These divisions are not only reflected within the Tory Party but also within Labour.

Heightened tensions among yesterday's allies, especially over the war raging in ex-Yugoslavia, are threatening to tear NATO apart. Organisations such as Cliff Slaughter's Workers Revolutionary Party, Socialist Outlook, Workers International League and Workers Power have lined up with the most hawkish wing of British imperialism in support of "poor little Bosnia". This is in line with Tribune's denunciation of Major for "appeasement" of "Serbian aggression" (*Tribune*, 6 January 1995). While opposing all sides in the fratricidal civil war in the former Yugoslavia, we demand the withdrawal of all UN/NATO forces from the Balkans and call on working people to defend Serbia against imperialist attack.

The fake Trotskyists may make occasional criticisms of the Labour "lefts" but when push comes to shove, that's who they take their political cues from. Thus both Workers Power and *Socialist Outlook* have run articles contradicting Scargill's assertion that Clause IV is the "socialist soul" of the Labour Party. Nonetheless, a front page headline of *Socialist Outlook* (22 October 1994) reads: "Defend Clause 4! Fight for socialism!" For its part, *Workers Power* (November 1994) calls for a "campaign against Blair", to "force Labour to act in the workers' interests". What this reformist illusion-mongering means is: put Blair in office, and then try to "pressure" him into "doing the right thing". What all these groups have in common is that they seek to channel working-class anger into the dead-end of electing a government headed by "Tory" Blair.

We fight for the forging of a class-struggle Marxist workers party—a party in which there will be no place for class traitors. The workers movement needs a revolutionary leadership which fights uncompromisingly to overthrow the foul system of capitalist exploitation. ■

## Spartacist League Forum

Benn/Scargill peddle myth of Labour's "socialist soul"

### Oppose Blair's attack on Clause IV

For a class-struggle Marxist workers party!

7:30pm, Wednesday 1 February 1995

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square WC1 (Holborn tube)

For further information:

Spartacist League, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU Tel: 0171-485 1396

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## Musical chairs in the Irish popular front

# Spring, Bruton, De Rossa: anti-working class, pro-imperialist!

The new Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left (DL) coalition government of the Irish capitalist clericalist state promises to take up exactly where the previous government left off—enforcing vicious anti-working-class austerity and repression against women, Republicans and Travellers. But while the parliamentary musical chairs game reflected a broad capitalist consensus on major political questions, there are deep and potentially explosive social tensions that lie at the very root of the Irish state's foundations.

The previous Fianna Fáil (FF)/Labour coalition came apart in the midst of revelations about government lies and deception and the controversy over Albert Reynolds' appointment of Harry Whelehan as President of the High Court. Whelehan gained notoriety as the Attorney General who slapped an injunction on a young woman alleged rape victim, preventing her from travelling to Britain for an abortion—the renowned “X case”. Spring was initially quite willing to go along with Whelehan's appointment. He shifted ground when public outrage escalated over revelations that Whelehan had for seven months held up a Northern Ireland RUC extradition application against Catholic priest Brendan Smyth for sexual offences against children. Among the most telling examples of this government's anti-woman policies came with the news that FF and Labour had agreed to put off legislation allowing even the extremely limited access to abortion granted by the “X case” Supreme Court ruling.

As more revelations of government wheeling and dealing came to light, Spring abandoned attempts to form a new coalition with the scandal-ridden Fianna Fáil. Instead a new government was formed with Fine Gael, Labour's traditional coalition partners, the party which in the 1930s included fascist Blueshirts as an organic part. Included in the new lash-up is De Rossa's Democratic Left. Their “oppositional” posture to the previous FF/Labour government has provided them with a small base of working-class support, which showed up in their recent by-election victories in Cork and Dublin. This earned them, in the eyes of the ruling class, the chance to prove their pro-capitalist credentials within the popular front.

### Bruton/Spring/De Rossa: “Liberal” mask of clericalism

The Irish ruling class and its Labour lackeys are currently juggling with three very volatile issues: they need massive redundancies in the semi-state sector and drastic cuts in welfare to meet the economic demands of the “New World Order”. They also need to uphold the myth that the Mary Robinson popular front is modernising Irish society—without fundamentally altering the power of the church—in order to defuse social struggle over women's rights. And they are

desperately seeking an imperialist-brokered deal in the North, acceptable to the Unionists, which is touted as the “peace process”.

Last year's defeat of TEAM airport workers by Labour in coalition has em-

boldened the bosses for an onslaught on all semi-state sector workers, including plans to chop one third of the workforce at ESB. Now Packard Electric plans to sack 1000. But amongst the working class there is a deep sense of anger and bitterness against Labour's anti-working-class treachery. Last summer this reached boiling point in a showdown between the FF/Labour government and TEAM workers. Our comrades of the Dublin Spartacist Group issued a leaflet at the time which sharply posed the question, “Labour Party: which side are you on?” demanding “Get out of the coalition! Down with Labour Party class collaboration!” (see *Workers Hammer* no 142, September/October 1994). The wretched trade union leadership in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) moved into overdrive to save Spring's hide and derail all and any working-class struggle. Now more than ever it is necessary to fight: class struggle is the only way to win! Smash the PCW austerity pact!



Irish president Mary Robinson (left) gladhands new Taoiseach John Bruton of anti-working-class Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left coalition government.

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Four years after the election of Mary Robinson, the church still extends its tentacles into all areas of Irish life, from its control of 85 per cent of schools and the bulk of hospitals, to its close ties with the judiciary and political structure, not least through sinister connections with clerical-reactionary agencies like Opus Dei.

The explosion of anger during the “X case” revealed a deep-seated hostility to

the clericalist state from women, youth and broad sections of the population. Over the last couple of decades the number of women entering the workforce has increased by 50 per cent; this is despite Catholic church opposition. Women now

make up a third of the working population—in 1961 the figure was only five per cent! It is this layer of the population, shaped by participation in the productive process and working-class struggles, that has swelled the opposition to the reactionary church hierarchy.

The “Smyth Affair” provoked massive anger directed at the Catholic church. It came amidst a series of revelations: the Bishop Casey affair; the priests in the gay sauna in Dublin and a wave of prosecutions of priests for alleged sexual offences, often involving young people. Although sexual activity involving the clergy is hardly new, in the past it has been carefully concealed by the church and the state. It is worth noting however, that the Vatican's insistence on celibacy among priests, which was not obligatory until the 13th century, was not motivated by concern for “morality” or godliness, but to prevent the clergy's offspring from inheriting church property.

The present clergy “scandals” have given the modernising wing of the Irish bourgeoisie the opportunity to deliver a slap on the wrist to the church, and help grease the skids for a deal with reactionary Unionists in the North (where the Brendan Smyth case surfaced). But no liberal façade is presented to Travellers, who face intensified discrimination and racist attacks. The recent spate of murderous pogroms against Travellers in Glenamaddy, New Ross, Navan and most

recently Drumgold in County Wicklow point to the urgent need for united-front mobilisations of workers and all decent people to physically defend the halting sites and to deal a crushing blow to the hired vigilantes and lynch mobs. And no amount of constitutional or liberal facelifts will break the power of the Catholic church. *What is necessary is the mobilisation of the social power of the working class to struggle for free abortion on demand, and champion the rights of Travellers and all the oppressed, as part of the revolutionary programme to smash the whole rotting edifice of capitalist rule in Ireland!*

The recent sex scandals in the church are being used in such a way as to unleash a dangerous hue and cry over “child abuse”. Rape and child abuse are terrible crimes and we certainly do not oppose the prosecution of the perpetrators of such assaults. However, in recent years the issue of “child abuse”, like the issue of “date rape”, has become politicised and seized upon by bourgeois governments to mount a reactionary moralistic campaign to bolster the family, the chief instrument of women's oppression under capitalism.

In an interview on RTE's popular Gay Byrne show, Mark Charleton, a “self-confessed paedophile”, detailed his history of consensual sex with young teenage boys. Forced into hiding, Charleton courageously spoke out, claiming that “If you have sex with a post-pubescent boy who is well capable of consummating a sexual relationship in a consenting way, where is the corruption in that” (*Sunday Tribune*, 27 November 1994). We say that the state should get out of the bedroom! And we insist that sex involving young people is not *a priori* a crime. We call for radically lowering the legal age of adulthood. We favour replacing the whole network of “age of consent” legislation with the principle of effective consent, applicable to people of all ages.

### Irish fake left: tailing the popular front

In the 1992 election, groups like the Socialist Workers Movement, Militant and the Irish Workers Group (IWG) supported Labour, fully expecting a coalition government of Labour and Fine Gael. Well, now they've got it—a viciously anti-working-class popular front. We communists told the truth: “the coming general election offers nothing to the working class, women or youth! No vote to the Labour Party, Workers Party or Democratic Left!” (*Workers Hammer* no 132, November/December 1992). The

*continued on page 10*

## For the separation of church and state