



Labour chauvinists deliver mass sackings, plant closures

For an internationalist revolutionary workers party!

On 12 December, workers at the Vauxhall car plant in Luton learned that General Motors plan to close the factory early next year. Ford also plan to stop car assembly in London Dagenham. Nissan, which is allied to Renault, threatens to shift production of the new Micra from its British plant in Sunderland to France, claiming that it is "practically impossible" to make a profit outside the euro zone. Meanwhile, Sunderland management have proposed to cut costs by 30 per cent while increasing output from 330,000 to 500,000 cars. Obviously, "cutting costs" by 30 per cent while increasing production means further turning the screw on the car workers involved.

Coming in the wake of BMW's sale of Rover last year, the writing is on the wall for hundreds of thousands of jobs in the car industry, including those in related industries. It's not just car plants — the largest steel maker Corus is planning to close its Llanwern plant in South Wales. And it's not just in Britain. Ford closures will take place at the Polish plant in Plonsk and the Obchuk factory in Belarus; they also plan to sell the Aazambuja plant in Portugal.

These threatened plant closures and lay-offs represent the "normal" workings of capitalism, particularly in the face of the very real likelihood of recession. It confronts not only the proletariat but whole swathes of society — the families and communities dependent on these industrial jobs — with economic devastation. And what has been the response of the Labour Party and trade union misleadership? Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair and his industry minister Stephen Byers "offered" Luton workers "fast-track" benefit claims and "early access to training and employment programmes". In plain English, Blair's message is: let them eat unemployment! Trades Union Congress (TUC) leader John Monks, predicting job losses at a rate of 10,000 per month this year, whinged: "It appears that large scale manufacturing plants are fast becoming an endangered species in Britain."

Reacting against the assault on their jobs, hundreds of angry workers in Luton downed tools on 13 December and

marched on Vauxhall's headquarters. They drowned out company boss Nick Reilly with chants of "we want jobs!" and told him where to stick his "redundancy package". The next day Vauxhall workers in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire walked off the job in solidarity with Luton workers. Feeling the heat from the base, the trade union bureaucracy is now balloting Luton and Ellesmere Port for strike action. Simi-

"We need to hear from the government that they have a manufacturing strategy" (TUC press release, 19 December 2000). The Liverpool dockers whose struggle Morris & Co knifed can attest to the results of such a "strategy". Mick Longley, engineering union AEEU convener at Vauxhall has raised the call to "Stop the rape of British manufacturing." This echoes the orgy of chauvinism orchestrated by

ian nationalism.

Reformists in Europe increasingly use cheap anti-Americanism as a cover for supporting their "own" bourgeoisie. This is self-defeating. For any genuine internationalist it is a good thing that class struggle exists in the US. In fact, in 1998 the United Auto Workers (UAW) union in Flint, Michigan rocked GM with a 54-day strike — the longest and most effective



Luton News



Asian Times

December 13, Luton: Angry workers marched on Vauxhall HQ to protest threatened closure of their plant. Workers in Ellesmere Port walked out in solidarity.

larly, anger at the base has prodded the call for a "day of action" on 25 January when workers will walk off the job in all General Motors plants throughout Europe. Initiated by the European Works Council of GM in Germany, this action certainly points to the necessity to struggle across national borders. It will, however, be fraught with contradictions, as the respective trade union bureaucrats and reformists in Britain and throughout Europe are wedded to the maintenance of capitalist rule and nationalist, chauvinist calls on "their" governments to "save" jobs and industry.

A demonstration in Luton on 20 January, for example, will be addressed by transport union TGWU leader Bill Morris, fresh from saving Blair's hide over the fuel protests last autumn. Morris stated:

the trade union bureaucracy last April over Rover. At that time, a demonstration in Birmingham was centred on the call to "Save British manufacturing industry!", as union banners mixed with a sea of Union Jacks — bloody symbol of racism and the subjugation of Catholics in Northern Ireland — and filthy anti-German demagoguery was spouted by trade union bureaucrats from the platform.

Break with Labourism! For a workers Europe!

While British Labourites have draped themselves in the bloody Union Jack, purporting to "save British jobs", the president of the Canadian Auto Workers union Buzz Hargrove, in reaction to job cuts by DaimlerChrysler, argued that Canadian workers are cheaper: "You can hire three workers in Canada for the price of two in the United States. You can hire four workers for the price of two in Germany" (*Toronto Star*, 29 November 2000). In Italy the "left"-talking ex-"Communists" of Rifondazione Comunista reacted to the job-cutting which accompanied Fiat's alliance with GM by headlines screaming: "Turin, Province of Detroit" (*Liberazione*, 14 March 2000) and "FIAT with NATO numberplate" (*Liberazione*, 15 March 2000) — a capitulation to Ital-

against this company since 1970 (and one of the costliest in the history of American capitalism). Our comrades of the Spartacist League/US wrote:

"The evident combativity of union members poses a collision with the greedy, union-busting corporations. But it also poses a clash within the UAW and other unions with the double-dealing labor bureaucrats, who have worked hand in glove with the capitalists and the government in overseeing the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs and drastic cuts in workers' standard of living."

— *Workers Vanguard* no 696, 11 September 1998

We denounced the bureaucrats' "America First" protectionism as a capitulation to the American bourgeoisie.

Against the fake "socialists" who lent their enthusiastic support to the grotesque nationalism over Rover and elsewhere, we wrote (*Workers Hammer* no 172, Spring 2000):

"The trade union movement must wage a class-struggle fight for jobs and better working conditions across national boundaries, which will necessarily challenge the entire capitalist system. Capitalism created a world market and in so doing, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels observed over 150 years ago, it simultaneously laid the basis for proletarian internationalism.

continued on page 10

Workers Power's LRCI writes off gains of Chinese Revolution: New "theories", old renegacy

see page 6

Labour/black mobilisation to stop the KKK!

We print below an 11 January call issued by the Partisan Defense Committee in the US. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

The Ku Klux Klan says it's going to rally in Gary, Indiana on January 20. They say they are going to celebrate the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., who was gunned down by an assassin's bullet thirty-three years ago. The Klan's purpose is to recruit more racist killers to murder other black men, women and children; to terrorize and kill Jews, Hispanics, Asians, gays and anyone else who doesn't fit in with their demented, genocidal quest for a "racially pure" America where trade unions

don't exist.

This is a deadly provocation against the overwhelmingly black population of Gary and the tens of thousands of black and Hispanic working people who live in Chicago's South Side and suburbs just a stone's throw away. The "imperial wizard" of one of the KKK groups mobilizing for this provocation tried it in New York City on October 23, 1999. The Partisan Defense Committee said that the Klan was making a big mistake thinking that they could get away with it. And they didn't. An 8,000-strong labor/black mobilization initiated by the PDC rode the Klan off the streets of New York. This is what is needed in Gary on January 20: a militant, determined and disciplined mobilization of the power of labor standing at the head of all the targets of Klan terror to *stop the fascists*.

The Partisan Defense Committee calls

on the steel unions in Gary, on the powerful labor movement in Chicago, on the black population of Gary and the nearby Chicago suburbs, on Hispanics, Asians, Jews, Catholics, youth, campus organizations and all the opponents of racist terror to join us in a massive display of overwhelming strength and social power. All out to stop the KKK on January 20! Be there: noon, at the Lake County Courthouse in Gary, at the same time and the same place that the Klan says they are going to rally.

Beware those who argue that the KKK rally is an exercise of "free speech." As is only too painfully known by many blacks in Gary and Chicago, the Klan "speaks" with the lynch rope. The fascists' "words" are fired out of the barrel of a gun. Look no further than the killing spree of Benjamin Smith, a follower of the fascist "World Church of the Creator," which took the life of Ricky Byrdsong, a black man and former basketball coach at Northwestern University, and of Won Joon Yoon, a young South Korean student, and wounded nine others including several orthodox Jews in the summer of 1999. Beware those who say that the Klan should be ignored. The Klan, which sees Indiana as their turf for terror and murder, won't ignore you.

In December, the Klan rallied in the

heavily Jewish suburb of Skokie, where Ricky Byrdsong was murdered and where the fascists had not dared to show their face since 1978, when a gang of Nazis canceled a planned march in the face of a promised outpouring of thousands of survivors of Hitler's Holocaust. If the Klan gets away with their provocation against the impoverished black population of Gary, these killers will feel the wind in their sails to try to do the same in the heavily black, Hispanic and working-class South Side of Chicago. The Klan's purpose is to bring the "open shop" South to labor/black Chicago.

Appealing to the government, whose cops and other forces exist for war against labor and all the oppressed, to "ban the Klan" will only strengthen its hand against all of us. The government, its cops and courts protect the fascists because these paramilitary thugs are the last line of defense when the powers that be can no longer keep the oppressed masses in line by lulling them with the idea that a system based on the exploitation of the many by the few represents the "will of the people."

Going like lambs to the slaughter into police pen traps, which are routinely set up, will only leave you in the hands of the racist cops while giving the Klan a free ride. Engaging in small-group confrontations with the Klan and their police protectors will accomplish nothing other than getting some heads busted and people thrown in jail. What is needed is to mobilize the social power to stop these racist killers. This power lies in the hands of the

continued on page 3

The capitalist state and its ideological tools



TROTSKY

The capitalist class maintains its exploitation of the working class through systematic repression and ideological mystification. In advanced capitalist countries, religion, education and the media serve as adjuncts of the state, but their role is deliberately obscured through illusions in bourgeois "democracy". In Britain, the Labour Party is the fundamental instrument through which the



LENIN

proletariat is tied to its class enemy. In opposition to the cringing fake left, we fight to forge a Leninist vanguard party — based on the communism of Lenin and Trotsky — to break the working class from the grip of Labourism and instil in it the necessity of sweeping away the capitalist state through proletarian revolution.

Israeli capitalist State is not only the largest and most powerful among bourgeois organisations; it is at the same time the most complex of these organisations, for it has a very large number of subdivisions, and tentacles issue from these in every direction. The primary aim of all this is to protect, to consolidate, and to expand the exploitation of the working class. Against the working class, the State can employ measures of two different kinds, brute force and spiritual subjugation. These constitute the most important instruments of the capitalist State.

Among the organs of *brute force*, must first be enumerated the army and the police, the prisons and the law-courts. Next must be mentioned accessory organs, such as spies, provocative agents, organised strikebreakers, hired assassins, etc....

Among the means of *spiritual subjugation* at the disposal of the capitalist State, three deserve especial mention: the State school; the State church; and the State, or State-supported, press.

The bourgeoisie is well aware that it cannot control the working masses by the use of force alone. It is necessary that the workers' brains should be completely enmeshed as if in a spider's web. The bourgeois State looks upon the workers as working cattle; these beasts must labour, but they must not bite. Consequently, they must not merely be whipped or shot when they attempt to bite, but they must be trained and tamed, just as wild beasts in a menagerie are trained by beast-tamers. Similarly, the capitalist State maintains specialists to stupefy and subdue the proletariat; it maintains bourgeois teachers and professors, the clergy, bourgeois authors and journalists....

In this manner the capitalist system ensures its own development. The machine of exploitation does its work. Surplus value is continually extracted from the working class. The capitalist State stands on guard, and takes good care that there shall be no uprising of the wage slaves.

— N Bukharin and E Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (1922)

Free Satpal Ram!

Satpal Ram, the victim of a racist frame-up, is now into his fifteenth year in jail. From there he continues to courageously fight against his own case of racist persecution by the British capitalist state as well as consistently speaking out on behalf of other prisoners, including Winston Silcott, another victim of a racist frame-up who has been locked up for fifteen years. *Freedom now for Satpal Ram and Winston Silcott!*

Satpal was jailed for murder in 1987, when he was 21 years old, for defending himself against a brutal and potentially deadly attack. A gang of racists attacked him while he was eating in an Indian restaurant in Lozells, Birmingham. One of his attackers stabbed him in the face with a broken glass. Satpal defended himself with a penknife and his attacker later died after refusing treatment for his wounds.

Throughout his time in prison he has suffered horrific torture both physical and psychological from the prison authorities including regular beatings and years of segregation. He has now been moved 65 times from one prison hellhole to another in an attempt by the state to crush his defiant and outspoken opposition to their system of racist oppression as well as to isolate him from the ever growing number of supporters demanding his release.

The vendetta against Satpal Ram carries on apace under this Labour government as is clear from the fact that the ten-year tariff set by the courts in 1987 passed in the year that Labour was elected and yet three years on he still remains locked away. The outcome of his latest parole review, which started on 1 December 1999, has still not been announced. The Criminal Cases Review Commission has yet to rule on allowing Satpal Ram the right to have his appeal against his conviction heard. Satpal told a journalist last year: "Racism is endemic within the prison system. Life for me revolves around trying to get through every day without

becoming a statistic of another death in custody" (*Guardian*, 29 January 2000).

Satpal Ram's case starkly illuminates that there can be no justice for blacks and Asians and all working people under this



no credit

capitalist system. The capitalist state, which is inherently racist, is in fact a dictatorship of the handful of capitalists who own the means of production and amass fabulous profits out of the blood and sweat of the working people, the vast majority of the population. The police, the military, the courts and prisons form the core of this state, an institution of organised violence used against the oppressed and working class, with the fundamental aim of maintaining the power and property rights of the ruling class.

While Satpal Ram rots in jail, the murderers of Stephen Lawrence walk free. The Stephen Lawrence inquiry in 1998 was set up by the Labour government to defuse widespread anger over the fact that the cops had deliberately let off Stephen's murderers. A substantial section of the

continued on page 4

WORKERS HAMMER



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

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

EDITOR: Jo Watt

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Kate Kelsey

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mick Connor

Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU

E-mail: WorkersHammer@compuserve.com

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

Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
The closing date for news in this issue is 16 January.
Printed by Chenwell Valley Lithographic Ltd (TU). ISSN 0267-8721

Socialist Alliance got the Mayor they wanted, now...

Livingstone hires union-buster, CIA bigwig Kiley to run Tube

London Underground workers had better be prepared. Ken Livingstone has hired as Commissioner of Transport for London one Bob Kiley, a former CIA spymaster and notorious union-buster in the New York City transit system.

On 8 January London Underground unions organised a public rally, "Safety First — Save Our Tube", which was attended by around 1000 workers, featuring Bob Crow of the RMT, Mick Rix of ASLEF and Ken Livingstone all on the same platform. The call for the rally said: "we are delighted that the Mayor of London and the TUC General Secretary have agreed to add weight to our campaign". The union leaders were doing their damndest to sell Livingstone and Kiley's union-busting package to the workforce.

Our comrades had to fight tooth and nail against Livingstone and the Labourite left in this so-called "public" rally to get out the truth: Bob Kiley is a proven union-buster. Against repeated interruptions from the chairman of the meeting, our speaker argued that Kiley worsened conditions for workers in Boston and New York, and the Kiley/Livingstone plan is just an alternative privatisation plan which will only mean more attacks on the unions. She said what is needed is a solid strike *against* privatisation. She described it as a scandal that "the likes of Livingstone are here today" adding that "it is groups like the Socialist Alliance, who voted for Livingstone, who provide him with the left cover he needs to attack the unions". Mick Rix replied to us: "Livingstone is here to support us and that's good enough for me". Union members should consider what this loyalty to Livingstone will mean for their jobs and conditions when Livingstone's CIA man Kiley is at the helm of London transport.

Livingstone repeatedly denied that Kiley is a union-buster. He admitted that safety conditions might have worsened immediately after Kiley took over in New York but told the audience to look at the record of his entire tenure. Damned right! Workers need to know exactly who Kiley is — and why Ken Livingstone is prepared to pay him £2m over the next four years. After the meeting, as we sold our press, workers were keen to get the goods on Kiley.

Kiley began his career as president of the National Student Association (NSA), later revealed as a recipient of CIA funds. After his cover was blown as a CIA operative, Kiley was sent upstairs to become

manager of intelligence operations and then executive assistant to Richard Helms, director of Central Intelligence. As we wrote in 1983: "Kiley's got blood on his hands — from the Phoenix Program, a counterinsurgency assassination operation that killed 20,000 Vietnamese, to the massive secret carpetbombing of Cambodia in 1969. Not to mention the CIA's murderous 'destabilization' in Chile" (*Workers Vanguard* no 340, 21 October 1983). He worked for the Police Foundation in Washington, then with the Boston police. He was deputy mayor of Boston during the 1974 struggle over busing to integrate racially segregated schools.



New York, 1984: Union members surround office of subway boss chanting: "Bust the union-busters!"

Racist mobs stoned buses carrying black schoolchildren while Kiley was in charge of "public safety". As city transport boss in Boston in the 1970s he slashed the workforce by ten per cent.

Kiley was appointed chairman of New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority in 1983 by Democratic governor Mario Cuomo. In the first six months of 1984 Kiley's "speed-up" on the subway led to four transport workers' deaths. He employed spies who carried out night-time raids on work sites looking for alcohol. In April 1989, as Kiley's term was nearing its end, we published a leaflet which exposed Kiley's substitution of workers' blood for capital investment. Two workers had been killed the previous week, struck by a train. On Kiley and his sidekick David Gunn,

president of the Transit Authority (TA), the leaflet said: "Kiley and Gunn and their Democratic Party bosses Cuomo and Koch have made the New York City transit system a deathtrap for workers and riders... The TA slashes jobs so it can pour millions into debt service on the bonds it has floated" (*Workers Vanguard* no 475, 14 April 1989).

Now Kiley plans a similar assault on Tube workers. Labour would split up the Underground among different private companies; Livingstone/Kiley want to keep a single structure and to finance it by selling bonds, and raising fares. Either way investors will cream massive profits just as they have in the national rail companies and the unions will get screwed.

Resentment and anger in the workforce threatens to slip out of the bureaucrats' control and so they are balloting for a one-day strike. This is the first time since 1989 that RMT and ASLEF have called for strike action together. Collective strike action points the way forward but it requires political leadership prepared to take on the Labour government and Livingstone and their privatisation schemes.

Following the Paddington train crash in October 1999 in which 30 people including both drivers died, and while Livingstone was claiming to oppose privatisation, we said: "Blair and Livingstone plan to sell off Tube — Privatisation means capitalist murder" (*Workers Hammer* no 171, Winter 1999-2000). Crow and Rix worked overtime in order to prevent a strike, especially since that would have meant confronting the Labour government. The blood-sucking capitalists who have made millions from the privatised rail network didn't lose a single day's profit as a result of strike action. Privatisation of the rail network and of the buses has been accompanied by massive attacks on the unions, on working conditions, on jobs and safety.

We call for one industrial union for all transport workers — Underground, buses and rail — and we say workers must have the power to say what's safe and shut down work that isn't — lives depend on it. For free, safe public transport — rip out the ticket barriers!

The capitalist rulers don't give a damn about safety. At the time of the King's Cross fire in the Underground in 1987 in which more than 30 people died, we said:

"This was no accident — it was wanton murder through negligence. The government has deliberately run down the anti-



Ken Towner

Livingstone's new transport czar Bob Kiley.

quoted London underground, slashing its subsidies, 'privatising' maintenance and refusing to implement elementary fire detection and prevention measures....

"In the wake of the King's Cross massacre, strike action by London's rail and bus workers would elicit a powerful response. But the Labourite union tops have sat on their hands."

— *Workers Hammer* no 94, January 1988

A transport workers strike which put safety at the centre of its demands would be massively popular with the public which risks life and limb travelling to work every day. A massive obstacle to this kind of strike action is the illusions in Livingstone, peddled by rail union leaders and the fake left who campaigned for him and now cover for CIA warmonger and strikebreaker Kiley.

Class struggle against privatisation of the Tube would mean a strike not just against the government but *against union-buster Kiley and his boss Livingstone!* Make no mistake: Mr Livingstone would deploy the capitalist state — particularly the Metropolitan Police — to try and smash it. An effective strike of transport workers — Tube, rail and buses — would stop the City and paralyse the nerve centre of British capitalism. Livingstone runs London for the British capitalist class which workers must be politically armed to strike against. This lays bare Livingstone's lying pretensions to support the workers.

The Livingstone/Kiley union-busting plan is the clearest possible indictment of the politics of the Socialist Alliances, whose "success" to date has been getting Livingstone elected. We're proud to say that we never voted for the swine, pointing out at the time that a vote for Livingstone was "a vote for New Labour: he supported the government's imperialist bombing of Serbia, he is for the British Army in Northern Ireland, and he is emphatically for the racist police" (*Workers Hammer* no 172, Spring 2000). We defended the Mayday 2000 protesters against attacks by Livingstone and the cops. And today we say: workers must mobilise to smash Livingstone and Kiley's union-busting plans for the Tube! ■

Stop KKK...

(Continued from page 2)

multiracial working class — from the Gary and Inland steel mills to the powerful Chicago transit unions, Teamsters, postal and airport workers in a city which is the heart of labor/black power in the Midwest.

Celebrating the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., the Klan says it also wants to commemorate the birthday of Confederate general Robert E. Lee. The KKK doubtless also wants to celebrate the election of Republican president George W. Bush. John Ashcroft, Bush's nominee as attorney general, is a Klan dream come true. In a 1998 interview with *Southern Partisan*, Ashcroft praised this journal, which celebrates the Confederate slavoc-

racy, for "defending South patriots like Lee, Jackson and Davis." But black people who keenly feel that they were robbed of their right to vote in the recent elections should remember the forces that stood against them in their fight against Jim Crow segregation and disenfranchisement — the KKK and their Southern Democratic Party bosses.

The Republicans revel in their hatred for labor, black rights, abortion rights, immigrants, the poor and anybody else who is perceived as "costing" big business or violating their reactionary "moral" code. The Democrats, who have destroyed welfare, devised more laws to extend the arm of the state's executioners and flooded the ghettos and barrios with more cops, smile and do the same thing. To defend its own interests and the interests of all the

oppressed, labor must break the chains that bind it to the agencies and parties of the capitalist class enemy.

Demonstrating the social power of labor in action against the Klan, the most deadly enemies of labor, would be a powerful message to the Chicago transit bosses who daily up the ante in disciplining the workforce while keeping you on the job without a contract for over a year; to the steel bosses who devastated the plants and mills of the industrial Midwest; to the auto bosses who work you to death and then lay you off. A mass labor/black mobilization to stop the KKK in Gary could serve as a big step toward building the kind of party that the working people need — a workers party that fights to eradicate an entire system based on exploitation and racist reaction.

The PDC has initiated mobilizations that have brought out thousands of opponents of fascist terror from Chicago to Washington, D.C. to San Francisco and New York City. Let's make sure that we have such a determined demonstration of the might of the working people that built this country in Gary, Indiana on January 20. *All Out to Stop the KKK!*

It takes money to mobilise to stop the KKK! Leaflets, rally equipment, telephones and much more, will all have to be paid for. Send donations to the Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX, and mark "Stop the KKK" on the back of the cheque. For more information, phone 020 7281 5504.

The Spartacists and the great miners strike

Received 4 October 2000

Well what a strange sight, pickets outside oil refineries, nobody going through picket lines, no police in riot gear; certainly not the norm, these images (or lack of them) focused my thoughts back some 15 years. It seems an eternity since the heroic strike of the miners in 1984/85, but here are a few reminiscences of that period, and the sharp lessons it taught this ex-striking miner.

If we look initially at the period 1972 & 1974 when the miners were victorious, it seemed a different age, picket lines were in general observed, the media wasn't hostile, unity appeared to exist in the Trade Union Movement, with their policy of not really bothering with "Joe Soap", but electing left wing officials in key positions, appearing to have many merits. This was of course the policy of the left within the Labour Party and the Communist Party, but what happens when they change, or show their true colours? Roy Lynk springs to mind, when secretary of Sutton Colliery he used to have an order for the SWP's rank and file paper "The Collier". But I suppose he had a "downturn" and was a leading architect in the scab union the U.D.M.

The left wing areas of the NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] had traditionally been South Wales, Scotland, the small coalfield of Kent, and more recently Yorkshire, but even moderate areas like Notts had a Communist Party official in their leadership.

1972 & 1974 were relatively short strikes (although they didn't seem so at the time) and a cherished memory was seeing a huge mass of workers descending on Saltley Coke Depot, forcing the police to lock the gates. It appears in hindsight that Ted Heath, for reasons only known to himself, did not use the power of the state, but did he really need to? After all both strikes were purely economic in nature, and employees are always playing catch up, with the state having many means at its disposal, to nullify economic gains (through direct or indirect taxation) and turn victories into defeat.

After the 1972 & 1974 strikes the National Power Loading Agreement [NPLA] wanted by Joe Gormley [NUM president at the time] and the National



Workers Hammer
Spartacist League at miners lobby of 1984 TUC. SL struggles for Leninism against the Labourism of the British left.

Coal Board was eventually introduced by back door methods (allowing highly profitable, less militant areas to go it alone), until it was forced on all the areas of the Union, which significantly weakened the National Union. All this after the NPLA had been rejected by the democratic process. It seemed a very funny way to run a Union to me.

Cortonwood was the catalyst for the 1984 strike. I don't intend to look at the events in any chronological order (there are many publications that deal with that), but look at the left as they appeared to me, and the lessons I took from that period.

At the onset of the strike I was chairman of the Mansfield Woodhouse Labour Party (in reality a member of the IMG [International Marxist Group, then British section of the fake Trotskyist "United Secretariat"], in a period of entryism). Some individual Labour Party members were superb, but you don't judge an organisation by its foot soldiers, you judge it by its actions in the leadership. The leader of the party was Neil Kinnock, left wing, from South Wales, and yet an absolute disgrace. He did nothing, said nothing, except condemn two South Wales miners, in a desperate bid to appear respectable, and hopefully get elected. Shortly after the strike, having to

chair Labour Party meetings, attended by scabs, convinced me that the Labour Party, was, and will always be, a party of the bourgeoisie, and therefore I left.

Another larger entry group in our local Labour Party was the sectarian Militant Tendency, who had argued for some considerable time that it was right that the police force should affiliate to the TUC. Well, one particular morning whilst paying out petrol money to flying pickets from our strike headquarters I was physically attacked and beaten by the police. On another occasion I was arrested for picketing at Sherwood Colliery, and chucked in a police cell for 17 hours, so the idea of being a 'brother' with a police federation thug for some strange reason never really appealed.

Whilst speaking at a meeting in South Yorkshire for the IMG, I had the opportunity to speak to a member of the Spartacist League, for some strange reason my parting from the IMG quickly followed.

The next group I came into contact with was the Revolutionary Communist Party at a demonstration in Mansfield. I saw a paper seller being harassed by a couple of our lads, and went to his defence. I soon stopped when I saw the headlines in his paper calling for a ballot for the scabs

(we'd already been on strike 6 weeks). I changed my mind. We dumped his papers over a hedge, and told him where to shove his revolutionary politics.

We also had a branch of the SWP (I was a former member), and when I read in Workers Hammer that they had members crossing picket lines I quite frankly didn't believe it. So I asked a leading member, initially it was denied, and then I was later told it was a tactic, and I was an ultra left. Now call me old-fashioned if you like, but there is no circumstance whatsoever in my book, that you cross a picket line.

Another group I didn't come across, but would have liked to, was the WRP [Workers Revolutionary Party]. Again I could not believe that another so-called revolutionary group would act in such a despicable way. In July the WRP had written an open letter to Arthur Scargill demanding that he withdraw his attack on Polish Solidarność. Five days later he replied "I am opposed to Solidarity because I believe it is an anti-socialist organisation, who desire the overthrow of a socialist state". The WRP held on to this for 6 weeks before publishing it to coincide with the TUC conference, much to the delight of the "Cold War" right wingers. Thank you very much WRP, you certainly knew how to support striking miners.

I'm sorry if I've missed out any other groups/sects, but as far as my strike was concerned they played no part.

On reflection the heady days of the late 60s through to the 80s was a very exciting time for revolutionaries, particularly if you look at today, when class struggle seems such a long way off. As it seems from these short extracts that the vast majority of the revolutionary left got it so wrong, with disastrous results. For short cuts, red sheds, turns to industry, upturns, and downturns, lead only to missed opportunities.

In conclusion the strike showed quite clearly that a single Trade Union cannot take on the might of the state and hope to win, so there was a need to call for a general strike. But we already had a General Strike in 1926 that ended in failure, so what key ingredient was missing? I believe it to be the vanguard party, tried and tested on the political battlefield and ready for the opportunity when it will again arise. It is crystal clear to me that in the last century in the Soviet Union in 1917 the Bolsheviks led the Russian masses to the greatest victory of the working class ever seen. Thus it would seem logical that the missing ingredient in the General Strike was the vanguard party.

Having been around the revolutionary left for the last 30 years it is clear to me that only the Spartacist League have attempted to carry on, where the Bolsheviks left off.

Yours fraternally,
Dick Hall

Satpal...

(Continued from page 2)

population view the police as racist; Labour has therefore been seeking to refurbish the authority of the state. But despite its intentions the inquiry illustrated clearly the thoroughly racist nature of the cops, and the way they work in cahoots with fascist gangs and the capitalist courts. Labour's public inquiry into the police cover-up was a whitewash. It guaranteed in advance that the fascistic killers would remain free and exonerated the cops who systematically protected them.

Ken Livingstone, who is in charge of the Metropolitan Police, is now working overtime in the service of the Labour government and the bourgeoisie to boost

the image of the police, after the MacPherson Report on the Lawrence Inquiry declared them to be "institutionally racist". No inquiry report or legislation will alter the scores of black and Asian deaths in police custody and prison cells. And as Satpal said: "Even though we've had the Lawrence inquiry no one is looking at those victims of institutional racism who are in Britain's prisons because of racist police and courts" (*Socialist Worker*, 4 March 2000).

Satpal has spent most of his adult life in jail. *Freedom now for Satpal Ram! Send messages of support to: Satpal Ram, E94-164 HMP Blakenhurst, Hewell Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 6QS. E-mail messages will be forwarded from: SatpalRam@satpalram.connectfree.uk.com.* ■

Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Group Class Series

Revolutionary Marxism: the fight for a communist future

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 25 January | ABCs of communism |
| 8 February | The Russian Revolution: How the Bolsheviks led the working class to power |
| 22 February | Trotsky's fight against Stalinist betrayal of the Russian Revolution |
| 8 March | Smash British imperialism through workers revolution! |

Classes held at 7.00pm, Downstairs Room, Fitzroy Tavern, Charlotte Street, London WC1. Nearest tube: Goodge Street

For readings or more information contact the SYG on 020 7281 5504

SWP hails imperialist-made "revolution" in Serbia

It is safe to say that the Serbian elections were "bought" by the imperialists, having poured over \$60 million into various opposition groups and media. Kostunica, the new president, and his Democratic Party of Serbia, call for subordination of the country to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Even more rabidly chauvinist than Milosevic, Kostunica's record includes support to pogromist Serbian military gangs in Kosovo. None of this deters the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) from dubbing events in Serbia a "revolution".

On 30 November, last year, the SWP organised a meeting in London titled "Solidarity with the Serbian Revolution" as part of a tour to provide a platform for Otpor, the Serbian student opposition group. Otpor was a spearhead of the protests which toppled Milosevic at the time of the elections in Serbia last September. Speakers at the meeting cheered the "revolution", lauding the "Serbian working class in insurrectionary mood", even comparing workers strikes and barricades set up to fight potential police or army crack-downs to Petrograd in 1917. From the descriptions of the SWP leaders you'd never guess they were describing the imperialist-engineered overthrow of Milosevic—a continuation of the 1999 bombing campaign by other means!

Otpor was founded in October 1998, and campaigned for the "united opposition" to Milosevic in the elections. Their "Declaration about the future of Serbia" posted on their website includes the following: "We demand the abolition of the current system by rules and under control of OSCE. Opening-up to all international organizations (UN, OSCE, etc.) and states, especially to those in the Balkans region, coupled with complete compliance with all international rules and regulations, including full cooperation with The Hague Tribunal For War Crimes. Full protection of private ownership rights, preceded by compulsory and fair privatization, the establishment of a free market economy, and the opening of the economy to international financial organizations and international investment."

This is hardly surprising from a group heavily financed by imperialist conduits such as the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA front, and the US Agency

for International Development. An article in the *New York Times Magazine* of 26 November 2000 revealed financial aid and training being provided to Otpor by the Washington-based International Republican Institute after Madeleine Albright stated at a meeting with Otpor in June in Berlin that "We want to see Milosevic out of power, out of Serbia and in The Hague". The article concludes: "By this fall, Otpor was no ramshackle students' group; it was a well-oiled movement backed by several million dollars from the United States."

At the SWP meeting, the Otpor speaker said that Otpor was not a socialist or communist group, and while she didn't know the precise extent of their financing, she personally saw nothing wrong with accepting funds from the likes of Blair and Clinton as "reparations". Along comes an organisation whose members admit being bankrolled by imperialism, and the SWP swings into a solidarity campaign, providing a "left" working-class cover to this pro-IMF and World Bank "revolution". Both in the meeting and in print, Dragan Plavsic of the SWP declared: "the Serbian Revolution was neither an imperialist plot nor a pro-capitalist adventure, but the culmination of a genuine working class uprising from below in defence of freedom and democracy" (*Socialist Review*, November 2000).

This allows the SWP to make common cause with "their" Labour government, the most rabid imperialist force in the bombing of Serbia. The Balkans War wreaked more devastation on Serbia than Hitler's Nazis in World War II. The SWP supported the election of Blair and every other social-democratic government presently in power in Europe. They joined with their own capitalist rulers in fighting for the destruction of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European deformed workers states. Yugoslavia was ripped apart by capitalist counterrevolution which led to nationalist fratricidal wars.

Intervening from the floor, our comrade pointed out that Otpor is openly pro-imperialist, sponsored and funded by US and European imperialism: "And yet, the self-proclaimed socialists in the SWP are cheerleading and touring this outfit, which is a scandal." She noted that this was for the same reason that Alex Callinicos

called for OSCE [European imperialist] troops to intervene in the Balkans War last year, the same reason that the SWP refuse to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland today—because they and other groups in the Socialist Alliances are beholden to and in the tow of Labour and through them to British imperialism. The SWP jeered as she reminded them that Chris Harman has already stated in print their intention to vote once again for Bomber Blair & Co in the next election.

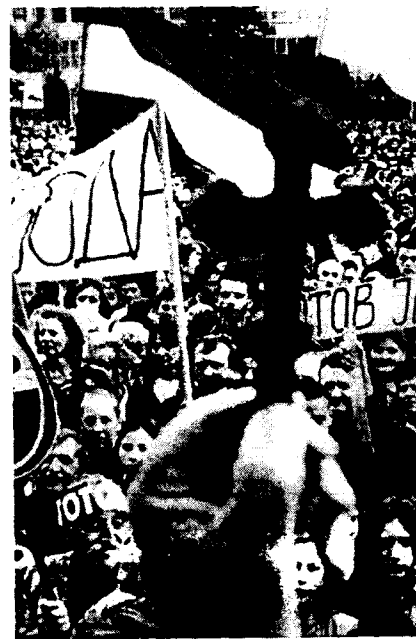
Otpor's position on Kosovo is explicitly premised on the presence of "interna-

aim—to make the country a pliant, docile client of imperialism. The war itself was hardly even mentioned, except to say how proud they were that they had opposed the imperialist bombing at the time, arguing instead that Milosevic could be got rid of "from below". Dragan Plavsic of the SWP asked of the imperialists "What is more humanitarian, your war or our revolution?" He went on to say that the success of the revolution contrasted with NATO's failure in that it killed no one and didn't cost "us" money that could have been spent on improving the welfare state in Britain. This is completely consistent with Labourite social-chauvinism.

As Marxists, we in the Spartacus Youth Group (SYG) and the International Communist League took no side in any of the nationalist civil wars in the former Yugoslavia. We oppose all forms of imperialist intervention in the Balkans, from economic sanctions to outright attack: British/UN/NATO forces out now! We called for military defence of the Serbs against NATO's bombing, this without giving an iota of political support to Milosevic. We raised the call: *Defeat British imperialism through workers revolution! Defend Serbia!* We fight for the class unity of the workers of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Kosovo in overthrowing all the bloody capitalist regimes of the region. *For a socialist federation of the Balkans!*

In defence of Otpor's programme, an SWP supporter from the floor said privatisation meant something different in Eastern Europe, it means workers can get a seat on the board of management, which would be "something like the social democracy of the 60s and 70s but pushed further". This is indeed a bleak perspective for the Serbian working class that the SWP is pushing—class collaboration followed by immiseration and unemployment.

Unlike the SWP, the SYG fights for a communist future, for international proletarian revolution. This begins with defending those gains already achieved by the working class around the world, the deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam, opposing one's "own" imperialist bourgeoisie and exposing all "socialists" who, through support to organisations like Otpor, tie the working class and youth to the ruling class. For new October Revolutions! ■



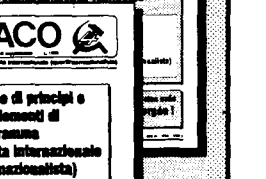
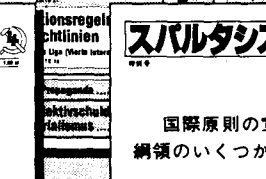
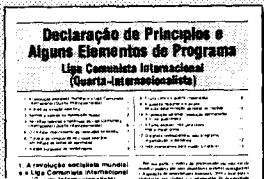
AP
Anti-Milosevic protest in Cacak. Serbian "revolution" is blessed by Church, paid for by imperialists.

tional civil and military forces that always respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of FR Yugoslavia" (Otpor website). No speaker from the SWP or any other Socialist Alliance group uttered one iota of criticism of these instruments of imperialism. Needless to say, there was no mention by the SWP of imperialist troops still occupying the Balkans, let alone any call for their withdrawal.

The SWP's support to Otpor merely confirms their position on the bombing of Serbia: a tactical difference with imperialist rulers like Tony Blair's Labour government on how to achieve a common

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

The ICL's Declaration of Principles, adopted at our Third International Conference in 1998, is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist international which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution.



Chinese.....£ 75	English (<i>Spartacist</i>).....£1 50	German (<i>Spartacist</i>).....£1 50	Greek.....£ 50	Indonesian.....£ 50
Italian.....£ 30	French (<i>Spartacist</i>).....£1 50	Spanish (<i>Spartacist</i>).....£1 50	Japanese.....£ 50	Russian.....£ 30
Portuguese.....£ 50	Polish.....£ 30	Turkish.....£ 50		

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

Workers Power's LRCI writes off gains of Chinese Revolution: New "theories", old renegacy

The League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) has come up with yet another new "theory" on the class nature of the state and the counterrevolutionary restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. An article titled "Capitalist restoration and the state" (*Workers Power*, November 2000) announces that "after a sharp debate" a clear majority of the delegates at the LRCI's Fifth Congress concluded that their characterisation of the states issuing from "the collapse of Stalinism in the period 1989-91" as "moribund workers' states" was "radically false and misleading".

Indeed that is something of a benign description of the LRCI's previous "theory" which posited, in their own words, "that despite capitalist restorationist governments the state apparatus has a proletarian class character in countries where capitalist property relations have not been successfully restored". Cutting through this gobbledegook of a capitalist government ruling a proletarian state, one finds an unadulterated echo of the "old" Labour position which equated "socialism" with the nationalisation of the "commanding heights of the economy" under a capitalist parliamentary democracy. But even while it peddled the myth that following capitalist counterrevolution the former USSR and Eastern European countries continued to be workers states, the LRCI did not call for their defence against imperialist attack.

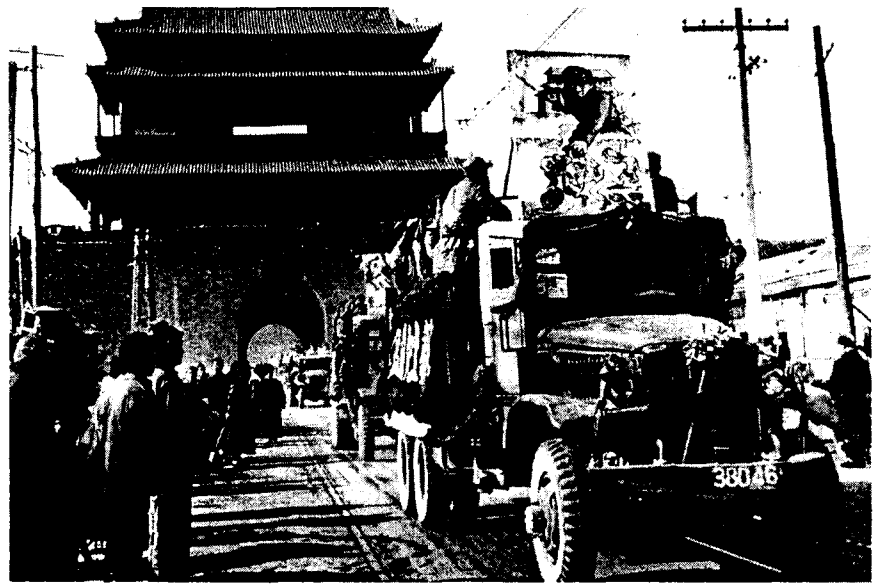
Now the LRCI opines, with heads seemingly held in shame:

"If we stick with the moribund workers' state theory, we are left with a workers' state — an institution of our class — that we do not defend against the class enemy. This means one of two things: either that we are cowards and class traitors, or, as we

The LRCI and Workers Power are "cowards and traitors" who made common cause with imperialism against the defence of the interests of the proletariat, championing the forces of capitalist counterrevolution from Poland to East Germany to the Soviet Union. In the aftermath they tried to cover their tracks with the theory that these states remained workers states, albeit "moribund" (whatever that is supposed to mean). One hardly has to be an Einstein to recognise that this ignorant "theory" flies in the face of all empirical indices of the devastation that has been wrought by the restoration of capitalism in these countries — mass unemployment, desperate poverty, the resurgence of curable diseases and plummeting life expectancy.

Certainly some of the new recruits that the LRCI has made in Eastern Europe would hardly believe that they continue to live in any kind of workers state, being daily confronted with the constant and brutal depredations of capitalist counterrevolution. During the protests against the IMF and World Bank in Prague last September, a group of LRCI youth in the Czech Republic were frankly stunned when our comrades informed them of the LRCI's support to the forces of capitalist restoration.

By its own admission the LRCI's latest theoretical foray, which comes up with the equally ignorant and anti-Marxist category of a "bourgeois restorationist state" (a capitalist state in the process of becoming?) is a response to internal turmoil and disagreement. Thus, *Workers Power* notes that a "large minority of delegates" to the previous LRCI Congress had some trouble swallowing "the idea that there can be any proletarian institution that should not



People's Liberation Army enters Beijing, 1949, heralding overthrow of capitalist class rule.

Such a position is indeed convenient and necessary if, as Workers Power does, you want to swim in the stream of the "anti-globalisation movement" While many youth are attracted to these protests out of opposition to the plunder of capitalist imperialism around the globe, the political shots are called by the social democrats and labour bureaucrats whose anti-Communist, protectionist tirades against the Chinese deformed workers state echo the interests of the imperialist rulers who have their sights set on reconquering China for capitalist exploitation. Workers Power calls on workers to implement such protectionist campaigns, demanding "Regimes which ban trade unions, or have fraudulent 'state unions' like China or repress workers in struggle should have

public opinion and the renunciation of a proletarian revolutionary perspective". This is precisely what motivates WP's "theoretical" contortions. Trotsky warned that "Every political tendency that waves its hand hopelessly at the Soviet Union, under the pretext of its 'nonproletarian' character, runs the risk of becoming the passive instrument of imperialism" ("The Class Nature of the Soviet State", October 1933). In Workers Power's case — as we have documented in our press, including our bulletin *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists* no 1, *Workers Power and the Irish Workers Group* (November 1990) and as we will show here — it hasn't been that passive.

Centrist confusion, conciliating imperialism

Workers Power began as a left split from Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party (SWP) whose cowardly renunciation of Soviet defensism during the Korean War came wrapped in the "theory" that the Soviet Union was "state capitalist". Following the December 1979 Red Army intervention into Afghanistan, WP made a step further to the left, dumping Cliff's state capitalism and, at least formally, declaring that they had adopted a Trotskyist understanding of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state. But, in practice, they never applied the key *programmatic conclusion* of this position: unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal attempts at capitalist restoration. On the contrary, Workers Power went through massive contortions to avoid this conclusion, in the process giving a whole new meaning to Trotsky's description of centrism as "crystallised confusion".

Thus, while arguing that it would be "tactically wrong" to call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan where they were fighting against CIA-funded and armed Islamic reaction, WP denounced the Red Army intervention as "counterrevolutionary". A decade later they would also denounce the withdrawal of



Soviet military intervention into Afghanistan in 1979 opened possibility of liberation from the veil and literacy for women. Victory of Taliban fundamentalists has plunged women back into hideous oppression.

should now openly admit, that we have introduced into the lexicon of Marxism a category that is devoid of meaning and without programmatic consequences."

To be sure the various "theories" that the LRCI and Workers Power (WP) have cooked up on the class nature of the state and capitalist restoration are more than crackpot. But they are hardly "devoid of meaning and without programmatic consequences". Quite the contrary.

be defended from the bourgeoisie". Indeed! The punch line to the LRCI's laconic statement that its new theory "can render this non-defencist position coherent" can be found by simply turning the page of that issue of *Workers Power* to an article headlined "Capitalist restoration triumphs in China". Workers Power's new "theory" is to the purpose of writing off the defence of the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

workers' sanctions applied against them" (*Workers Power*, September 2000).

Our article "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories" (*Spartacist* no 55, Autumn 1999) explained that the various "theories" that renegades from Trotskyism have concocted to justify turning their back on the defence of the deformed workers states against world imperialism are designed "to conceal their real program of capitulation to anti-communist bourgeois



Soviet troops as “counterrevolutionary”. In 1981 they acknowledged that Solidarność in Poland was an openly counterrevolutionary movement backed by the pope, the CIA and Western bankers. But they supported it anyway, arguing it was necessary to be “with” the workers who had been driven into the arms of counterrevolution by decades of Stalinist betrayal... against the proletarian gains embodied in the Polish deformed workers state.

The centrist arguments that Workers Power came up with to try to dodge the bullet of Soviet defensism found a new, and virtually unfathomable, expression in its 1982 pamphlet *The Degenerated Revolution*. Here, while attempting to explain how they had putatively come over to a Trotskyist understanding of the proletarian class character of the Stalinist-ruled workers states, WP argued that the destruction of capitalism in Eastern European countries under the post-World War II Soviet occupation was accomplished through “counterrevolutionary social overturns”. (Some fifteen years later they would declare that workers states had been established in Eastern Europe without smashing the capitalist state!)

As the winds of Cold War II blew hotter and the question of proletarian political revolution or capitalist counter-revolution was starkly posed, WP’s positions found more coherence as they moved increasingly to the right. This was given the clearest expression in their unmitigated support for Boris Yeltsin’s counter-revolutionary counter-coup in the Soviet Union in 1991. WP literally stood on the barricades in front of the Yeltsin White House — the rallying centre for the imperialist-backed counter-coup that ushered in the beginning of the end of the former Soviet degenerated workers state.

“Today the *Workers Power* article on the LRCI’s rejection of the theory of “moribund workers’ states” asks, disingenuously, “how could a united front with the restorationist regime of Yeltsin defend proletarian property relations?” But, at the time, that is *exactly* what the LRCI called for. In November 1991, an LRCI statement argued: “it was *necessary* to form a common front of resistance, a military and class struggle bloc with those forces *and with their leaders*. . . . A part of this united front call would have been to fight alongside the ‘democrats’ and the Yeltsinites to defend all the centres of resistance to the coup including the RSFSR parliament (the ‘White House’).”

This statement was written in response to the LRCI’s then-fraternal allies in the American Revolutionary Trotskyist Tendency (RTT) which, despite its own support for the forces of capitalist counter-revolution, was uncomfortable with just how far the LRCI was going. In that response the LRCI baldly asserted its elevation of bourgeois “democracy” (ie the dictatorship of the capitalist class) above the defence of the class rule of the proletariat, arguing

“the LRCI considers it abstract and sectarian to counterpose a non-existent workers’ democracy or soviets to existent democratic rights and to institutions created by their exercise”.

Only those who have forsaken any proletarian revolutionary perspective could argue that the independent mobilisation of the working class in defence of its own class interests was a sectarian abstraction in the Soviet Union in 1991. We of the International Communist League (ICL, of which the Spartacist League is the British section) intervened, distributing tens of thousands of copies of a statement in Russian titled “Soviet workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution!” which urged just such a programme of struggle against capitalist restoration. We called for independent workers committees in the factories to take control of production and fight privatisation; for committees of soldiers and officers to resist the use of the Soviet army as an instrument against the working class; for workers militias to crush anti-Semitic pogroms and anti-Communist lynch mobs and to ward off communalist butchery by revanchist nationalists.

In the absence of proletarian resistance, reflecting the atomisation and demoralisation of the Soviet working class by decades of Stalinist misrule, the imperialist-backed Yeltsin counter-coup ushered in the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state. The “institutions” created by the exercise of the counterrevolutionaries’ “democratic rights” so rabidly championed by Workers Power were those representing and defending the class rule of capital.

Workers Power has long echoed the views of the social-democratic handmaidens of world imperialism who attempted to provide an ideological cover for the destruction of the Soviet Union and deformed workers states. This view, typified by Cold War intellectual Hannah Arendt, holds that “Stalinist totalitarianism” guaranteed that the workers of these countries would never again wage any struggle in their interests. Thus WP appealed to the imperialist powers to intervene to enforce the “rights” and institutions of the “democratic” West.

In the aftermath of the destruction of the Soviet Union, WP has, if anything, come to even more closely embrace the imperialist rulers as the purveyors of “human rights” and “democracy”. At the time of the NATO bombing of Serbia, the first major war in Europe since World War II, Workers Power joined pro-imperialist rallies in London dominated by placards reading “NATO Good Luck” and “NATO Now or Never”. An LRCI statement distributed at the time in March 1999 claimed to defend the Serbs against NATO attack — “though not in Kosova which they have no right to occupy”! Meanwhile, in the next breath, WP urged the KLA — which had become a pawn of NATO imperialism — “to take full military advantage of the imperialist



Basil Blackwell Inc

Trotskyist Left Oppositionists in Siberian exile demonstrate on anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution, 1928. Banner on right (with pictures of Lenin and Trotsky) proclaims “Long live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”.

bombing to drive out the ‘Yugoslav’ forces”, adding: “If [Clinton and Blair’s] primary concern were for the Kosovars they would recognise their statehood, and give the KLA the weapons to drive out the Serbian troops.”

As we said at the time, this was an unvarnished appeal to the NATO imperialists. In contrast to the cringing Labour-loving LRCI, we in the ICL issued a 21

state” theory to argue that nothing had fundamentally changed in the class nature of the Soviet Union. This strident revisionism was further amplified at the LRCI’s Fourth Congress in 1997 where they argued that a capitalist state had been restored in the Soviet Union in 1927 and that the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe had been created without smashing the capitalist state. Alibing



Fabian Sigma

Pope of counter-revolution blessing Lech Wałęsa, leader of Polish Solidarność.

April 1999 Declaration in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish and Spanish which demanded: Defeat imperialism through workers revolution! Defend Serbia against U.S./NATO attack! Down with the United Nations economic sanctions! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans! And long before the imperialists and their leftist apologists cynically took up the cause of the Kosovo Albanians we had championed the national rights of the Albanian people of Kosovo — a democratic question necessarily subordinated to the need to militarily defend Serbia against NATO attack. For its part, WP was at least consistent. Thus, when imperialist ground troops landed in Kosovo, WP claimed that a revolutionary situation had been created; the “bought-in-the-USA” election of Vojislav Kostunica led *Workers Power* (November 2000) to declare that nothing less than a revolution had taken place “which road [sic] to power on the backs of the masses’ heroism”.

LRCI v Trotsky

As the consequences of Yeltsin’s victory became clearer, Workers Power tried to weasel out of their call for a “united front” with the forces of counter-revolution arguing this was only their position for the first “three days” ie when it counted! Then WP devised their “moribund workers’

their support for the forces of capitalist restoration they argued that the “smashing of the Stalinist state machine” was a “programmatic necessity” and took Trotsky to task for never raising this counterrevolutionary demand.

In fact, Trotsky fought tooth and nail against those who capitulated to the pressures of bourgeois anti-Sovietism and abandoned their revolutionary duty to unconditionally defend the first workers state in spite of its bureaucratic degeneration. Against those who falsely equated the parasitic *bureaucracy* with the Soviet *workers state* as a rationale for jettisoning Soviet defensism Trotsky insisted:

“The Mensheviks are the representatives of bourgeois restoration and we are for the defense of the workers’ state by every means possible. Anyone who had proposed that we not support the British miners’ strike of 1926 or the recent large-scale strikes in the United States with all available means on the ground that the leaders of the strikes were for the most part scoundrels, would have been a traitor to the British and American workers. Exactly the same thing applies to the USSR!”

— Trotsky, “No Compromise on the Russian Question”, 11 November 1934

The last major factional battle of Trotsky’s life was the 1939-40 fight against the petty-bourgeois opposition of Shachtman/Burnham in the US Socialist Workers Party in which Trotsky demolished the

continued on page 8



Glaser/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Seattle, 30 November 1999: AFL-CIO tops spearhead anti-Communist crusade against China with chauvinist signs reading, “People First Not China First”.

LRCI...

(Continued from page 7)

new-class "theories" which were nothing more than rationales for weak-kneed capitulation to imperialist machinations against the USSR and the accompanying hysteria which especially gripped petty-bourgeois circles.

Trotsky fought for the unconditional defence of the proletarian property forms and planned economy that were the product of the October Revolution *against* and *despite* the Stalinist bureaucratic caste which usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in 1923-24. He understood the bureaucracy as a parasitic ruling

ists in trying to bury the legacy of the Russian Revolution and with it the 'spectre' of the dictatorship of the proletariat.... They stridently call to 'smash the Stalinist state' while on the home front operating as the most cringing, servile apologists for the maintenance of capitalist rule in its social-democratic face."

If its "moribund workers' state" theory derived from the Labourite view of equating nationalisations with socialism, the LRCI's current theory reduces the class character of the state to a category which is purely determined by the subjective intent of those in power regardless of what property forms exist. Deriving from the social-democratic view that "socialism" can be achieved through the ballot box,

Trotsky's analysis and program only in the negative, it at least exposes as threadbare all notions of Stalinism as a stable system."

WP's own notions are derived as well from a profound pessimism in the revolutionary capacity of the working class. Just as Workers Power argued that any struggle to mobilise the Soviet proletariat against Yeltsin's counter-coup was "abstract" and "sectarian", its current declarations that capitalist restoration has "triumphed" in China mean writing off the Chinese proletariat as a contender in the battle against capitalist counter-revolution. While having something of a kaleidoscopic view of just exactly when capital-

the LRCI's declaration that capitalism has been restored in China emanates from the same source as its "theories" on the class nature of the ex-Soviet Union and the former deformed workers states in Eastern Europe: capitulation to the pressure of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois public opinion. Specifically it reflects WP's political prostration before the British Labour Party with the added mix of its current enthusiasm over the "anti-globalisation" movement.

On the home front, this translated recently into WP's refusal to support the protests against extortionate fuel prices in Britain last autumn which were aimed against Tony Blair's Labour government. Blair & Co responded to these massively popular protests by threatening the use of the army and unleashing the largest mobilisation of state repression since the Poll Tax upheavals in 1990. Fearful that the fuel protests could touch off another "winter of discontent" — a wave of strikes and protests, of extraparliamentary working-class struggle which could bring the country to a halt — the trade union bureaucracy came to the rescue of the widely despised Labour government. These protests were clearly aimed at the Blair government and indeed the central demand was supportable from a proletarian standpoint. We explained:

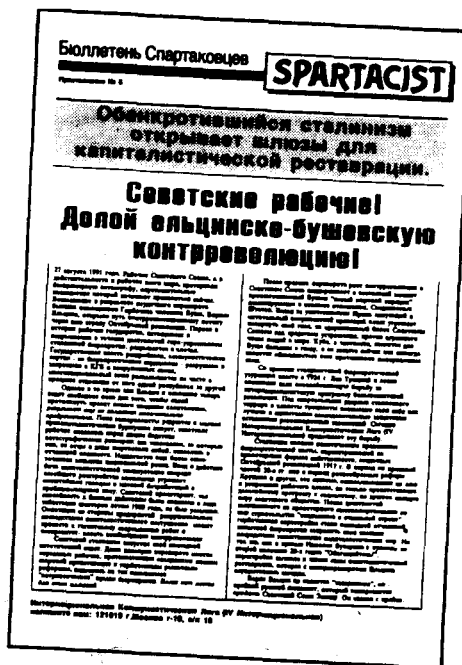
"A revolutionary leadership of the workers movement must seek to take the lead of protests such as this in order to direct them clearly against the real culprit: capitalism and the Labour government which administers it."

— "Fuel blockade rocks Blair's Britain", *Workers Hammer* no 174, Autumn 2000



Spartacist

Workers Power stood with yuppies, speculators, fascists and priests on Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary barricades, 1991. ICL statement distributed in Soviet Union called: "Soviet workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution!"



caste — not a possessing class but an excrescence upon the workers states and their institutions — whose dogma of "socialism in one country" undermined the most crucial defence of the Soviet Union, the extension of the gains of the October Revolution through international proletarian revolution. Trotsky knew that either a political revolution by the Soviet proletariat would overthrow the bureaucratic caste or the bureaucracy would eventually prepare the way for capitalist restoration as it sought to guarantee its privileges by converting itself into a new possessing class. But for Trotsky the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack or internal attempts at capitalist restoration was never contingent on the prior overthrow of the bureaucracy. Rather he understood the unconditional military defence of the gains of the October Revolution was the obligation of every class-conscious worker in order to defend and advance the interests of the proletariat internationally.

In response to the LRCI's previous declaration that a bourgeois state had existed in the Soviet Union since 1927 we wrote ("Death of Communism" Centrists" (*Workers Hammer* no 161, March-April 1998):

"With their 'new' theory on the class character of the Soviet state, Workers Power is part of a stampede of pseudo-Trotskyists who have joined the imperial-

this "theory" is a complete repudiation of the most elementary Marxist understanding of the bourgeois state as the machinery for the repression of one class, the proletariat, by another, the capitalist class. For the proletariat to come to power it must smash the bourgeois state and institute its own class rule, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Defend China against imperialism, capitalist restoration!

In its article "Capitalist restoration and the state", Workers Power allows that: "Some could argue that this position leads us to a dangerous idealism — that we are elevating a subjective change, maybe even a change of policy on the part of a regime, to a factor capable of altering the class character of the state." They then proceed to do exactly that, arguing that the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy has transformed itself wholesale into a capitalist ruling class. The notion that a capitalist state defended proletarian property forms served as the theoretical justification for lining up behind the forces that smashed the Soviet degenerated workers state. Now the equally absurd view that the class character of the state has no relation to property forms serves the same purpose for the LRCI in writing off any defence of the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

Counterposed to Trotsky's understanding of the contradictory nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which balances between a state based on collectivised proletarian property forms and world imperialism, Workers Power's arguments owe much to Cliff's "state capitalism" and Shachtman's "bureaucratic collectivism", investing the bureaucracy with a profound solidity and the power to single-handedly transform the class nature of the state. As we wrote in "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories": "If the final undoing of the October Revolution confirms

ism was restored in China — 1989? 1992? 1996? — Workers Power argues that the "crushing of working class political opposition in the aftermath of the 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square had removed the most important social obstacle to capitalism's return". Yet the LRCI Congress which concluded that capitalism had been restored in China took place only two months after Workers Power itself had run an article headlined "Workers resist the drive to capitalism" (*Workers Power*, May 2000) reporting on the massive strikes, demonstrations and other protests which took place in China in 1999!

What changed in the intervening two months to make the LRCI decide that the proletariat had been decisively crushed more than a decade earlier during the incipient political revolution in Tiananmen Square? The answer lies not in any quelling of the mounting resistance of the Chinese proletariat to further encroachments of capitalist imperialism. Rather,

Labour-loyal to the end, Workers Power brought up the rear as "left" apologists for the bureaucrats.

This did not go unnoticed by readers of Workers Power's press. A letter published in the November 2000 issue read: "The trade union bureaucracy joined the Blair government to defeat the anti-fuel tax movement. This was to be expected. What is more surprising is that Workers Power should have joined in." Another reader, noting WP's focus on work in the "anti-capitalist" milieu, asked: "Can it be mere coincidence that the Anti-capitalist movement... is also near unanimously opposed to the fuel tax protests throughout Europe?"

It is no more a coincidence than WP's sudden "discovery" of capitalist counter-revolution triumphant in China. Cosying up to the forces hostile to China within the "anti-globalisation" milieu, the *Workers Power* article announcing this discovery barely gives a nod to the 1949 Revolution. Insofar as it does make a mention, WP apes the language of propagandists for "Radio Free Europe", arguing that what

Spartacist League/Britain
PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU.
Tel: 020 7281 5504

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

International Communist League
Box 7429 GPO, New York,
New York 10116, USA

SPARTACIST

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

China on the Brink
Workers Political Revolution
or Capitalist Enslavement?

Permanent Revolution vs.
the "Anti-Imperialist United Front"
The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism

新斯巴达克思 **SPARTACIST**

中国托洛茨基主义的起源

不断革命与
“反帝统一战线”的对立

Spartacist no 53,
English Edition
Summer 1997
£1 (56 pages)

The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism:
Permanent Revolution vs. the "Anti-
Imperialist United Front"
£0.75 (24 pages)

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

happened in 1949 in China was the institution of "the Soviet model of bureaucratic command planning".

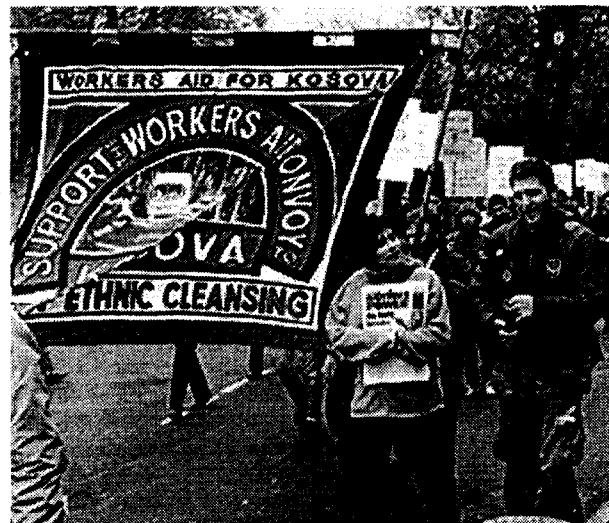
The 1949 Chinese Revolution liberated the country from capitalist exploitation and imperialist subjugation, ushering in a planned, collectivised economy which guaranteed workers lifetime employment and social benefits — what was called the "iron rice bowl". The Revolution expropriated the landlords, sent the capitalist class packing and opened up the possibility of women entering social and economic life for the first time, making huge inroads into improving their previous slave-like status. At the same time, the 1949 Revolution was carried out by Mao's largely peasant army and was bureaucratically deformed from its outset. Modelled after the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, the Chinese bureaucracy based itself on the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" and excluded the proletariat from political power.

As Trotsky wrote in the *Transitional Programme*, the founding document of the Fourth International, with the consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union the state apparatus was "transformed from a weapon of the working class into a weapon of bureaucratic violence against the working class, and more and more a weapon for the sabotage

actions of the bureaucracy, as WP does, relegates the working class to merely a passive object of either the bureaucracy or imperialism. In either case what is eliminated is a proletarian revolutionary perspective and the role of consciousness is the need for a Leninist vanguard party to lead the proletariat.

As Trotsky argued in *The Revolution Betrayed* the bureaucracy "continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat". What has stayed the hand of the Chinese bureaucracy is the massive wave of workers strikes and protests against the effects of capitalist "market reforms". As we wrote in an article on the uprising of laid-off Chinese miners last February (see "Chinese workers revolt against 'market reforms'", *Workers Hammer* no 173, Summer 2000):

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



Workers Hammer

Workers Power march for war aims of "human rights" imperialism at 10 April 1999 "Workers Aid for Kosova" demonstration in London.

ing gains of the October Revolution against imperialism and counterrevolution. Where Workers Power wrote off the proletariat of the deformed workers states, in the course of our intervention into the incipient political revolution in the DDR in 1989-90 we sparked a 250,000-strong mobilisation on 3 January 1990 against the fascist desecration of a memorial to the Red Army in Treptow Park, Berlin. Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, what was seen in the Treptow

of disorganization, of a big destabilization. This began on January 3 and [went] further almost every day."

We did not prevail in our fight to mobilise the proletariat against the capitalist *Anschluss* of the DDR. But for us it was not an "abstract" question, we fought to defend the gains of the working class and for proletarian political revolution to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracy which had brought the DDR to the brink of capitalist counterrevolution. We fought against Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution. Today we fight for the unconditional military defence of the remaining workers states: China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea. Our defence of these states derives from our irreconcilable opposition to world imperialism and our fight for new October Revolutions. The LRCI's repudiation of the Trotskyist programme of defensism derives from their accommodation to the bourgeois order.

The differences between the ICL and the LRCI can be reduced to one word: the *state*. All of our party's activity is directed to organising, training and steeling the international proletarian vanguard party necessary for the seizure of state power. In contrast, the politics of the reformists and centrists like Workers Power are defined by the subordination of the interests of the proletariat to the limits of capitalist society. As Trotsky wrote in *In Defense of Marxism*, a codification of his fight against Shachtman/Burnham: "It is the duty of revolutionists to defend every conquest of the working class even though it may be distorted by the pressure of hostile forces. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones." Behind all of the LRCI's crackpot "theories" on the class nature of the state lies nothing more than an alibi for ducking the elementary duty of authentic Trotskyists to oppose the designs of "our" imperialism to reconquer China for capitalist exploitation and a repudiation of the fight for proletarian state power. ■



3 January 1990: ICL spokesman Renate Dalhaus (at microphone) addresses demonstration of 250,000 protesting fascist desecration of Soviet war memorial in East Berlin.

of the country's economy". Like the Stalinist bureaucracies in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the Chinese bureaucracy has no other response to the hostile pressures of world imperialism than to introduce "market reforms" to replace central planning and management as the means to increase economic efficiency. Let us recall, as well, that the destruction of the former USSR — for which WP did its own small bit — has greatly encouraged those who would return China to the days of capitalist slavery and imperialist subjugation.

Many of the social gains of the Chinese Revolution are being obliterated as unemployment reaches massive proportions while state-owned industries are being closed or privatised. The Chinese bureaucracy is itself a major participant in joint ventures with foreign capitalists in the "Special Economic Zones" while it continues to invite overseas Chinese capital into the country, opening up entire areas to capitalist exploitation. But China does not have a capitalist economy; state-owned industry still dominates. Nor has there been a counterrevolution which smashed the existing state and replaced it with a new state committed to the defence of capitalist property forms.

Furthermore, to premise one's conclusions on the class character of the Chinese deformed workers state exclusively on the

Fourth International, to prepare and lead this political revolution, standing at the head of the masses and directing the spontaneous and localised workers' struggles towards the seizure of political power."

How convenient (and Shachtmanite!) for WP to simply declare capitalist restoration to be victorious in China. Real Trotskyists would be more than a little self-critical at having let this historic defeat occur without fighting against it — or even noticing it! Not so the left Labourites of Workers Power for whom the internationalist duty to defend the gains of the Chinese working masses is less than a trifle.

For new October Revolutions!

The ultimate responsibility for the victory of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe lies at the doorstep of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Preaching the lie of "socialism in one country" and "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism abroad, it politically disarmed the working class which was atomised through repression and whose consciousness was poisoned by Stalinist nationalism, destroying the only possible long-term basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat, a class-conscious working class fighting in its historic interests.

The ICL fought to the limit of its resources and ability to defend the remain-

ing mobilisation was a political struggle between the Trotskyist programme of political revolution and the Stalinist programme of capitulation and counterrevolution. Ten years later this was recognised by former Soviet leader Gorbachev in an interview where he stated: "We changed our point of view on the process of unification of Germany under the impact of events that unfolded in the DDR. And an especially critical situation came about in January [1990]. In essence, a breakdown of structures took place. A threat arose — a threat

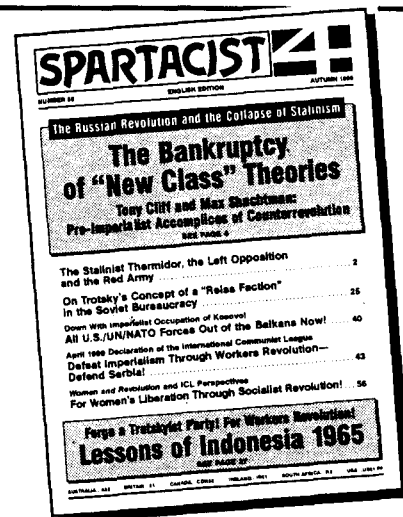
Spartacist no 55

English edition
Autumn 1999

includes
**"Down with Imperialist
Occupation of Kosovo!
All U.S./UN/NATO Forces
Out of the Balkans Now!"**

£1 (56 pages)

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



Vauxhall...

(Continued from page 1)

German workers face similar attacks from Gerhard Schröder's Social Democrats in government as workers here face from Blair and New Labour. Throughout Europe, the strategic task for revolutionaries is to win workers to the understanding of the need for a complete break with social democracy."

Blair's Labour government is rightly and widely hated for extortionate fuel prices and other regressive taxes on the working people, the nightmare of privatised railways, the horrendous condition of the National Health Service. The depth of the crisis triggered by the oil protests provoked the government into preparations for the use of troops and unleashing the largest counter-intelligence operation since the heroic miners strike of 1984-85. While most of the fake left lined up dutifully behind the Labour government and TUC tops against the fuel protests, we understood that in Britain and throughout Europe these actions were hugely popular expressions of opposition to the social-democratic administrations of Blair, Jospin and Schröder which, as capitalist

the fake Trotskyists of Workers Power. Scargill says: "If Thatcher could nationalise Rolls Royce, what the hell is stopping Blair from saving 2,000 jobs at Vauxhall?" (*Socialist News*, January/February 2001). WP tacks on a little "left" window-dressing to their call for "nationalisation" by adding "under workers control" (*Workers Power Global Week*, 15 December 2000).

Just as the fake left marched to the chauvinist beat of Labourite drums over Rover and many so-called socialist outfits denounced the fuel protests at Labour's behest, they now raise the call on Labour to "nationalise". This is nothing but a capitulation to national chauvinism and an attempt to give a "left" cover to Labour's programme of job-slashing and austerity.

As we wrote in "Chrysler and the Bankruptcy of Social Democracy" (*Workers Vanguard* no 247, 11 January 1980):

"The nationalization of the losers of capitalist competition has nothing in common with the socialist expropriation of the means of production. Government takeover and subsidization of bankrupt firms, supposedly to 'save jobs,' is a standard reformist practice. In that most decaying capitalist country, Britain, it has become almost institutionalized under successive



July 1998, UAW strikers outside Flint Metal Center, Michigan. 54-day strike shook General Motors.



Dave Evans (FLU)

1979, British Leyland protesters. Nationalised industry kept workers in poverty.

governments, seek to jack up the bosses' profits by devastating attacks on the livelihoods of the working people.

"Old" Labour in fake-left garb

Parochial as well as treacherous, the British fake left which did its best to put Blair in office now advise workers to turn to the vile Labour government and its TUC quislings, calling on the government to "save jobs" by nationalising Vauxhall. Thus, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) call on the TUC to "step up the pressure on the government" and demand the government "be pushed to save jobs — it should be nationalising GM plants" (*Socialist Worker*, 6 January). The same call has been raised by everyone from Arthur Scargill and his Socialist Labour Party (SLP) to

Labour governments. Nationalized industrial cripples, like the auto manufacturer Leyland, are then run in competition with more efficient private firms by resorting to massive subsidies financed by immiserating the working class as a whole."

Of course, Blair hasn't the slightest intention of "nationalising" anything. But the point of the fake left's demands on the government is to foster illusions in the "old" Labour practice of "nationalisations". These proved to be no more of a step towards socialism than traditional Tory "free enterprise". Rather they simply perpetuated an ossified industrial structure while impoverishing the population. Had there been a militant defence of the living standards of the working class at the time of the post-war nationalisations, it would have quickly exploded the entire social-democratic bail-out integral to the stabilisation of British capitalism. The result would have been a confrontation militarily posing the question of state power. However, the trade union bureaucracy working in cahoots with Labour Party leaders largely succeeded in stifling such struggle. It is a re-run of these days of "old" Labour nationalisations for which the fake left now pathetically yearns.

We seek to mobilise workers in a fight for their class interests — which requires a political struggle against all forms of Labourism. Plants threatened with clo-

sure, such as Luton and Dagenham, should be occupied, backed up by strikes which shut down the car industry nationally and internationally. As the miners strike showed, however, even the most hard-fought battle cannot succeed on the merits of trade union militancy alone. It was Scargill's refusal to break with the Labour Party and TUC tops which allowed the Labour traitors and union tops — especially the "lefts" — to isolate the heroic miners struggle and knife the attempts by workers in other strategic industries to carry out joint actions. The proletarian internationalism seen during the miners strike, when workers from France and other countries raised money for their British comrades and French miners sang the Internationale with British miners, is an example of the international class solidarity which is needed today.

The call on the Labour government to "save" British jobs is necessarily chauvinist and protectionist, as the example of Rover attests. Such national chauvinism is the bosses' game, fuelling racist divide-and-rule of the working class. Particularly in the car plants, there is a high proportion of minority workers — black, Asian and Irish. At Ford Dagenham in 1999, workers staged a wildcat strike against racism in the plant. It stunned Ford and caused a dramatic loss in profits. Just as the strike

began to bite it was nixed by Bill Morris through a deal with the Ford bosses. The bureaucracy's betrayal of this important strike paved the way for the planned closure of the plant. Our fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and for trade union/minority mobilisations against racist and fascist attacks is integral to our struggle against the social-democratic traitors in government and their lackeys in the trade union bureaucracy. The struggle to emancipate workers from capitalist exploitation can only go forward if the organised workers movement takes up the fight against all forms of oppression.

The reformist and centrist left's mantra to "pressure the Labour government to nationalise" is part and parcel of their electoral support to Blair & Co. We say no vote to Labour in the coming election and no vote to the cringing "Socialist Alliances" of bankrupt fake leftists who are determined to see Labour returned to office. With the Labour government so widely hated, the SWP, Workers Power and sundry other "socialist" groups are trying to pose a bit to the left, running candidates in the general election as "Socialist Alliances". How this will actually translate on the ground was made clear by SWP honcho Chris Harman: "The contradictory class character of the Labour Party means most socialists will be supporting socialist candidates where possible in the next general election, but will still be voting Labour when there is no socialist standing" (*Socialist Review*, September 2000). In other words, the "Socialist Alliances" are nothing more than phoney "left" vehicles whose goal is the return of a Labour government.

We in the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League (ICL) did not vote Labour in 1997, nor did any section of the ICL vote for the social-democratic parties now running capitalist Europe. Nor will we.

The ICL is dedicated to the task of reorganising the Fourth International, party of international socialist revolution, through intransigent opposition to the social-democratic parties and their fake-left hangers-on. As the 1938 Transitional Programme, the founding document of Trotsky's Fourth International stated:

"The economy, the state, the politics of the bourgeoisie and its international relations are completely blighted by a social crisis, characteristic of a pre-revolutionary state of society. The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership: its petty-bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony." ■



April 2000 Birmingham Rover demonstration: SWP joins orgy of British chauvinism with placards saying "Renationalise Rover now!"

Visit the ICL web site!

www.icl-fi.org

Near East...

(Continued from page 12)

in order to overthrow the hated Barak government, and for the overthrow of the corrupt capitalist system...

"This could be achieved because in Israel the capitalists and their servants in government continually attack Israeli workers and youth by means of privatization, unemployment and attacks on wages and work conditions, and the dismantling of the welfare state."

That this serves merely as a cover for flagrant capitulation to Zionist "labourism" is shown by the statement's despicable failure to raise even the simple unambiguous demand for defence of the Palestinian people against Zionist terror. Nowhere does it call for all Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories, demanding only "the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli army from Gaza, Hebron and Bethlehem". This is not surprising. The CWI's British mainstay, Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party, is notorious for its refusal to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland and its capitulation to anti-Catholic Loyalist reaction, even regularly providing a platform for a fascist Loyalist killer.

The Hebrew-speaking proletariat is indeed no less exploited by its "own" ruling class than are workers elsewhere. In recent years, there have been a series of militant strikes and protests against austerity and privatisation. Secular Israelis are suffocated by a semi-theocratic state in which even basic questions like marriage and divorce are determined by the whims of ultra-Orthodox rabbis. The Ashkenazi (European-derived) elite lords it over the Sephardic (Near Eastern) Jewish population, many of whom live in conditions of poverty not qualitatively better than those of Israeli Arabs.

But Arab/Hebrew class unity will not be forged on the basis of reformist economism, as the CWI believes. The Hebrew-speaking workers, not least the Sephardic Jews who form the base of the right-wing and religious parties, are saturated with anti-Palestinian chauvinism, which has only intensified in recent months. If they are to be won to revolutionary class struggle against the Israeli exploiters, the Hebrew-speaking workers must be broken from the stranglehold of Zionist chauvinism and won to internationalist defence of the Palestinian people. For their part, the militant Palestinian workers and youth who courageously defy the Zionist military juggernaut must be won from petty-bourgeois Palestinian nationalism and anti-Semitic Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas, who are deadly enemies of Arab women and workers.

While the CWI capitulates to the chauvinist backwardness of the Hebrew-speaking working class, most other reformist groups offer nothing more than a "leftist" gloss on the treacherous PLO policies which have brought the Palestinian masses to today's bloody impasse. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), for example, write in *Socialist Worker* (14 October 2000):

"Socialists argue for a democratic secular state in Palestine where Jews and Arabs have equal rights..."

"A longer term alternative in the Middle East is revolution across the region to overthrow the corrupt regimes which live in wealth while their populations live in grinding poverty."

In the mouths of Palestinian nationalists like Arafat, who for years called for a "democratic secular state", it meant denying the right to self-determination for the Hebrew-speaking nation, which was deemed to be simply a religious minority. In the mouths of the SWP, this is a version of the "two-stage revolution" dogma long pushed by the Stalinists — "dem-

ocracy" first and socialist revolution later. But from China in 1927 to Iran and Iraq in the 1950s and more, "two-stage revolution" has been a recipe for tying the workers and oppressed to anti-working-class bourgeois nationalists, leading to disastrous defeat. (See "Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism", *Workers Vanguard* nos 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September 2000). And in the case of Israel/Palestine, any talk of a "democratic" capitalist stage is a cruel hoax from the get-go.

There can be no democratic, secular, binational capitalist Palestine, as used to be called for by the PLO and is today raised by various reformist leftists. Capitalism is based on competition, pitting one people and nation-state against another. The right to self-determination is a democratic question. But in situations of interpenetrated peoples — as in Israel/Palestine, Cyprus and Northern Ireland — the conflicting national claims cannot be equitably resolved under capitalism. The capitalist nation-state is premised on the dominance of one nation and the suppression or expulsion of the other. Where two peoples lay claim to the same land, the national rights of both can only be secured through the overthrow of capitalism.

The scarce resources of the region — land, water, etc — can be equitably shared, but that requires international socialist co-operation and planning, ie *workers rule*. This was historically demonstrated in the Caucasus, likewise a patchwork of peoples, in the aftermath of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Even under Stalinism, the planned, collectivised economy meant that more backward areas were favoured for economic assistance over more advanced regions. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, national conflicts will be resolved through negotiation and referendum, not war and genocide. And in the case of the Palestinian people, this requires socialist revolutions in at least Israel, Jordan and Lebanon (which has a sizable Palestinian minority), as well as its patron Syria.

Smash imperialism through workers revolution!

While pushing their "democracy first, revolution later" schema for the Near East, the SWP's international co-thinkers foster the worst illusions in "democratic" imperialism. Thus the Socialisme par en Bas (SPEB — Socialism from Below) group in France signed a leaflet for a 28 October 2000 Paris demonstration demanding "that the UN constitute a neutral international commission" to protect Palestinian civilians and calling for "meaningful sanctions by the French and European governments against the state of Israel".

The SPEB appeals for intervention to the same French imperialists who joined with Britain in 1956 to launch a war in league with Zionist Israel against Nasser's Egypt with the aim of reversing the nationalisation of the Suez Canal. At the time, the French/British invasion was opposed by the US, which asserted its role as chief imperialist overlord of the Near East (and its huge oil reserves) against the former colonial masters. Today, with France chafing at Washington's pre-eminent role in the Near East, the Cliffites promote the ambitions of the EU imperialists against their American rival.

Also looking to the good graces of the imperialist powers is American left-liberal academic Noam Chomsky. In a 26 October 2000 piece on the Independent Media Center Web site outlining the background to the Israeli plan for "unilateral separation", Chomsky cites a British article comparing Zionist Israel to apartheid South Africa and comments:

"Such conclusions will come as no surprise to those whose vision has not been



AFP

1993 "peace" accord meant walled Palestinian ghettos policed by Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

constrained by the doctrinal blinders imposed for many years. It remains a major task to remove them in the most important country. That is a prerequisite to any constructive reaction to the mounting chaos and destruction."

As usual, behind Chomsky's seeming "anti-imperialist" rhetoric is an appeal for US imperialism to adopt a more "constructive", humane and rational foreign policy. During the Gulf War, Chomsky called for the imperialist embargo of Iraq (as did Tony Benn in this country) as a "peaceful" alternative to war (*Z Magazine*, February 1991).

US support for Israel is not the result of "doctrinal blinders" but of its own imperialist interests in the strategic, oil-rich Near East. While far from simply a puppet of Washington, Zionist Israel serves as a bastion for imperialist order and stability in this volatile region, for which it is lavishly rewarded to the tune of some \$5 billion in aid annually. We do not look to the American — or British, French or any other — imperialist rulers to chastise the Israeli rulers or otherwise intervene in the Near East. Charlatans like Chomsky, as well as reformist leftists like the SWP and SP, seek to obscure the fact that imperialism is not a doctrine or policy which can be reformed, but a system — the highest stage of capitalism. In this, they aim to deflect radical youth from the struggle against the capitalist system.

The International Communist League seeks to forge internationalist proletarian vanguard parties bringing together Arab,

Kurdish, Persian and Hebrew-speaking workers to overthrow all the Zionist butchers, sheiks, mullahs and military strongmen and create a socialist federation of the Near East. Relying on the good offices first of the Arab capitalist regimes and then of US imperialism, the petty-bourgeois nationalism of Arafat's PLO has been a dead end for the oppressed Palestinian masses, serving only to drive many into the arms of anti-Semitic, anti-woman Islamic fundamentalist groups like Hamas.

While spouting off against Zionism to divert the anger of the poverty-stricken masses they exploit, the Arab capitalist regimes are enemies of the Palestinian people and of indigenous religious, ethnic and national minorities in their own countries: Shi'ite Muslims, Coptic Christians in Egypt, Berbers in Algeria, the Kurdish nation in Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey. We fight for the revolutionary overthrow of all the murderous capitalist states in the Near East and for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan.

Here in Britain, the Spartacist League fights to build a revolutionary workers party, part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International, to sweep away imperialist rule through socialist revolution. That would be a huge step towards ending the genocidal terror and nationalist fratricide which is endemic to the capitalist system in its epoch of decay.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* nos 745 and 746, 3 and 17 November 2000.

WORKERS HAMMER

Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League

- 1-year subscription to *Workers Hammer* for £3.00 includes *Spartacist*, organ of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) (Overseas subscriptions: Airmail £7.00; Europe outside Britain & Ireland £4.00)
- 1-year subscription to *Workers Hammer PLUS* 22 issues of *Workers Vanguard*, Marxist fortnightly of the Spartacist League/US for £8.00. Subscription includes *Spartacist*, organ of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) and *Black History and the Class Struggle*

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____

Make cheques payable/post to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU ¹⁷⁵

Results of autumn 2000 subscription drive:

	Quota	Sold
Spartacist League	160	183
Dublin Spartacist Group	65	66

WORKERS HAMMER

All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories!

Defend the Palestinian people!



Thomas Coen/AFP

Israeli troops fire on Palestinian youth in Gaza Strip. Amid mass slaughter of Palestinians, Zionist regime moves to permanently seal off and strangle Arab areas in Occupied Territories.

JANUARY 16 — Over 300 Palestinians have been killed in the “Al Aksa Intifada” which began three months ago. The 1993 “peace accord”, brokered by the US in the wake of the last uprising, is exposed as a bitter and bloody hoax. Today, Israel’s rulers are dispensing even with the rhetoric of “peace” and “autonomy” as they unleash tanks and helicopter gunships against Palestinians and order troops to shoot at the heads of children.

As pogromist rampages by fascist “settlers” target Palestinian farmers to prevent the reaping of crops and drive them off the land, Israeli government spokesmen are mooted a plan for “unilateral separation”. Israel would formally annex a huge part of the West Bank and Gaza Strip where the settlers are concentrated, while permanently sealing off the Palestinian ghettos, even cutting off water and electricity. Arab day labourers whose wages account for one-fifth of all income in the Occupied Territories would be denied access to their jobs in Israel. *This is a plan for strangulation and starvation of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories.*

The potentially genocidal “final solution” Israel’s capitalist rulers have in store for the dispossessed Palestinian Arab people underscores the inherently chauvinist character of the Zionist state, which was founded upon the brutal suppression of Palestinian national rights. In the course of the 1948 “War of Independence”, 800,000 Arabs were driven out of Palestine — their land stolen, their homes demolished, their lives destroyed — to be warehoused in squalid refugee camps throughout the region, where their children and grandchildren were born and remain to this day. Only 150,000 remained in Israel, with the Palestinian population of cities like Jerusalem and Haifa reduced

from over 70,000 each to barely 3000.

These remnants of the Palestinian nation within the 1948 borders, today numbering a million, were nominally made “citizens”, but are denied a whole range of social benefits and excluded from a whole range of jobs. Some 80 per cent of remaining Arab-owned land has been expropriated by the regime. Today, heavily armed Israeli cops with attack dogs stage Gestapo-like night raids on Palestinian homes, breaking down doors and destroying furniture. Hundreds of Israeli Arab “citizens”, among them children, have been arrested and beaten — many held without bail — on suspicion of joining protests in defence of their besieged compatriots in Gaza and the West Bank.

Conditions in the Occupied Territories are far worse. Average annual income has plunged from nearly \$2500 in 1987 to barely \$1500 (compared to \$17,000 in Israel), while unemployment ranges up to 40 per cent. As a result of the “peace process”, wrote correspondent Amira Hass in the Israeli daily *Ha’aretz* (18 October 2000), Israel has been able to “double the number of settlers in 10 years, to enlarge the settlements, to continue its discriminatory policy of cutting back water quotas for three million Palestinians, to prevent Palestinian development in most of the area of the West Bank, and to seal an entire nation into restricted areas, imprisoned in a network of bypass roads meant for Jews only”. *Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops and settlers out of all the Occupied Territories!*

Arafat calls for UN intervention

As Palestinian youth with little more than rocks and slingshots confront the blood-drenched Israeli military juggernaut, desperate Palestinian protesters in

the Near East and in the diaspora overseas have appealed for “international intervention” to protect the population of the Occupied Territories from the Zionist killing machine. Now Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat is explicitly calling for the United Nations to send in a 2000-strong “peacekeeping” force, a demand raised at a Palestinian solidarity demonstration of tens of thousands in Rome on 11 November last year.

Israel and its American imperialist patron have no intention of allowing a UN intervention. But Palestinian militants must have no illusions in Arafat’s cynical appeal to this instrument of the imperialist robber barons and butchers. In 1982, faced with constant Israeli bombing raids over Beirut, Arafat likewise begged for imperialist intervention to protect Palestinian refugees and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters in Lebanon. US, French and Italian “peacekeeping” troops moved into Lebanon to *disarm* the PLO militants, overseeing the transfer of many to Tunisia.

With the PLO fighters gone, in September 1982 Israeli troops surrounded the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in West Beirut and Israeli defence minister Ariel Sharon let loose the fascist Lebanese Christian militias for a 36-hour orgy of killing, rape and torture. More than 2000, mainly women, children and the elderly, were slaughtered, shot at close range. For the next eleven years, Arafat took refuge in Tunis, returning to Gaza after signing the US-sponsored “peace” accord which turned the PLO into enforcers of the Israeli occupation.

It was the UN that presided over the 1948 partition of Palestine under British colonialism. The UN authorised the bombing of Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War. Today the UN lends its imprimatur to the

continuing starvation blockade which has killed some one and a half million Iraqis. Since December 1998, the ongoing terror bombing by the US and their junior partners, the British Labour government, have

**No UN imperialist intervention!
For workers revolution against Zionist, Arab capitalist regimes!**

reduced Iraq to a wasteland. *No UN imperialist “peacekeepers”! All US, British and other imperialist forces out of the Near East! Down with the bombing and blockade of Iraq!*

For a socialist federation of the Near East!

The forced population transfer of all Arabs from the Occupied Territories, and perhaps from within Israel itself, has long been a rallying cry of the Zionist right. But it originated with the Zionist “founding fathers”. The head of the Jewish Agency’s Colonization Department, Joseph Weitz, wrote in 1940:

“Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country.... And there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries; to transfer all of them, not one village, not one tribe should be left.”

— quoted in introduction to Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (1973)

Under capitalism there is no “room” for two peoples in this small country. To secure the national rights of the oppressed Palestinian people — without thereby denying the national existence of the Hebrew-speaking people — the Israeli Zionist garrison-state must be shattered from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East can the right of national self-determination of both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples and the many other minority peoples of the region be equitably realised.

This elementary truth, denied by much of the opportunist left, is formally acknowledged by the fake-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers International (CWI), represented by the Socialist Party in Britain, in an October 2000 Web site statement by its Israeli group, Maavak Sozialisti (Socialist Struggle), which argues regarding Israel that “it is impossible to genuinely solve the national question under capitalism”. The statement issues the following appeal:

“A class socialist leadership of Israeli Palestinians could make an appeal to Jewish workers to struggle together with them

continued on page 11