



## Tories beat Labour traitors again

# Workers need a revolutionary leadership!

The British general election took place at a time of catastrophic and historic events internationally, from the imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary drive throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to the aftermath of the one-sided imperialist slaughter in the Gulf. Within the imperialist countries, economic recession has brought mounting unemployment — particularly in Britain and the US — and a ruling-class war against the trade unions.

On offer on 9 April was the “kinder, gentler” grey face of “Majorism”, its pale pink reflection in Kinnock’s Labour Party (and let’s not forget the Liberal Democrats’ military man in the woolly jumper). To say the campaign itself was narrow, parochial and mind-numbing in its dullness is an understatement. United on the fundamentals of international policy, the strategic need to further emasculate the trade unions at home as well as anti-immigrant racism, the Tories and Labour Party

squabbled it out all day, every day over the trivial points of how best to rule Britain for decaying capitalism.

There were some surreal aspects: John Major doing walkabout with his little soapbox and being decorated with the occasional egg while the Madwoman of Dulwich was wheeled out for one last push. Kinnock swanned about in his Daimler, receiving the prize of a *Financial Times* endorsement of the Labour Party, if not its leader, on election day.

Polls and *Financial Times* notwithstanding, the Labour Party suffered its fourth consecutive electoral defeat. The majority of Scotland, Wales and the north of England voted Labour again. Even given significant nationalist sentiment in Scotland the SNP’s Jim Sillars, for instance, lost Govan to Labour. In the Midlands and particularly the south-east, the Tories prevailed. According to the *New Statesman & Society* (17 April), Kinnock won the backing of only 44 per

cent of manual workers and their families, virtually the same as in 1983 (when Thatcher rode a wave of chauvinist flag-waving over the squalid Falklands/Malvinas war). Among the unemployed, Labour did worse than in 1987. It lost ground among council tenants, and pensioners “swung away from Labour, with the Conservatives enjoying a staggering 20-point lead (51 to 31) among women over 65”. Labour’s penny-ante programme was unable even to effectively tap the widespread fear that the Tories are surely and not slowly destroying the National Health Service, with the debate on this deeply-felt issue reduced to the media-fest around Jennifer’s ear.

In addition to the hundreds of thousands who dropped from the electoral register in order to avoid the poll tax, there were undoubtedly many who were so disgusted by the Kinnock Labour Party (which literally campaigned under the Union Jack) that they didn’t want to

dignify the electoral circus with their participation. An intelligent letter from novelist Ronan Bennett in the *Guardian* (2 April) stated: “Labour has been dragged so far to the right in Thatcher’s wake.... Labour now overlaps the Tories, and for a socialist to vote for the party would be an act of supreme cynicism.”

We wrote in the last issue of *Workers Hammer* (no 128, March/April 1992): “In the coming general election workers and oppressed minorities have no interest whatsoever in the victory of Kinnock’s Labour Party.” And whatever the result of the leadership contest in the Labour Party following the inevitable resignation of Neil “I knifed the miners” Kinnock, Her Majesty’s loyal opposition will not represent the interests of the working people. As for Kinnock, it really couldn’t have happened to a more

*continued on page 9*

## Restoring capitalism without capital?

# Eastern Europe: nationalism and counterrevolution

Capitalist counterrevolution is bringing untold misery to the working people of Eastern Europe, while in the Soviet Union the counterrevolutionary offensive is provoking utter economic collapse. From Poland to Yugoslavia, economic “shock treatments” dictated by Western bankers have produced massive unemployment and hyperinflation. Large factories have closed down while soup kitchens open up. Homelessness and criminal gangs now haunt the streets of Warsaw, Prague and Budapest. Economic output in Eastern Europe has fallen 25 per cent over the past three years, a decline comparable to that in the United States during the Great Depression of the 1930s. A ridiculously “optimistic” forecast by the Washington-based World Bank projects that not until 1996 will per capita income return to the level of 1989, the year that Mikhail Gorbachev abandoned Eastern Europe to the ravages of Wall Street and the Frankfurt banks.

For all their desperate efforts to restore capitalism after the Stalinist bureaucracies collapsed, the counterrevolutionary regimes in Eastern Europe have not yet succeeded in cohering a new capitalist class. The petty entrepreneurs — taxi drivers, shopkeepers, household repairmen — out to make a fast buck in Warsaw and Budapest hardly have the money to buy the nationalised

steel mills, textile factories and coal mines now up for sale. Harvard’s Jeffrey Sachs, the mastermind of Poland’s economic “shock treatment”, told the annual meeting of the American Economics Association that “privatization in Eastern Europe has been a debacle” (*New York Times*, 6 January).

And while Western businessmen hail the restoration of private property in

Eastern Europe, they aren’t putting their money where their mouth is. Apart from a few well-publicised deals like Volkswagen’s takeover of the Czech Skoda works (for one-tenth its real value) and GE’s purchase of the Hungarian light bulb manufacturer Tungsram, Western investment is conspicuous by its absence. The Solidarność government of Poland, which pioneered the privatisation drive

over two years ago, has managed to sell 20 out of 7500 state-owned enterprises. The business editor of the *Economist* observed caustically that at the present rate it will take 30 years for Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary to privatise half their nationalised industry!

Without the social base of a genuine bourgeoisie, such as existed in West

*continued on page 6*



Fratricidal slaughter between Croats and Serbs in Yugoslavia is harbinger of things to come.

# Workers Power: more from the Yuri Butchenko Brigade

The massive turnout by some 200,000 or more Moscow workers for the 17 March anti-Yeltsin protest, like the Revolution Day march on 7 November last year, demonstrated the depth of popular anger in the Soviet Union over the immiseration being introduced by Yeltsin's starvation policies. Yet a gaggle of Western fake leftists have tried to play down the size of the anti-Yeltsin demonstrations, which is not surprising, as they themselves hailed Yeltsin's countercoup last August. With Soviet workers being ravaged by "free market" misery, these "traitors, not Trotskyists", as we labelled them several months ago, have to lie about the size and composition of protest demonstrations in order to cover up their own criminal support for capitalist counterrevolution.

So the up to 90,000 who marched on Revolution Day became, in the eyes of Cliff Slaughter's Workers Revolutionary Party: "about 6,000". The *Workers Power* (December 1991) went even further, ludicrously deriding that mass protest with its red flags and portraits of Lenin as a "motley crew of ageing Stalinists led by Nina Andrejeva, Pamyat supporters... and a few monarchists." While we sold more than 4000 pieces of literature to Revolution Day marchers, WP and the Slaughterites were engaged in a tiny Third Camp stunt with a few hundred people off to the side. No doubt miffed that our opposition to Yeltsin counterrevolution was gaining a hearing among Soviet workers, Workers Power manufactured the outlandish claim that International Communist League supporters at

Revolution Day "proceeded to share a platform with the Stalinists and Pamyat".

To the WP small-time practitioners of the Big Lie, it hardly mattered that the fascist Pamyat did not even have an organised presence at the march, or that the Stalinist organisers shut down the podium rather than allow our comrades to speak. In *Workers Hammer* (no 127, January/February 1992) we remarked: "It takes a lot of chutzpah not to mention gross cynicism from Workers Power to try this on. After the infamous Yuri Butchenko scandal Workers Power has some real, documented expertise in the dirty business of dealing with outright fascist outfits." In the summer of 1990, WP sponsored a British tour of the Soviet "worker" Butchenko, in full knowledge that he was connected to the MI6/CIA-financed pro-Nazi NTS.

But then these inveterate opportunists evidently decided that the Stalinist-organised demos were the only show in town,

and changed tack. The January *Workers Power* congratulated itself for selling "over 100 copies" of its Russian-language journal at an "early January Moscow march against price rises". Unlike Revolution Day, the 12 January protest was marked by a pronounced and organised nationalist/fascist presence (see *Workers Vanguard* no 543, 24 January). Yet Workers Power said not a word about this—maybe they didn't "notice". The WP supporter there was at the very least obtusely obstructionist, getting in the way as our comrades sought to defend themselves from harassment by an aggressive clot of Pamyat fascists. And he certainly didn't solidarise with our sharp denunciations of anti-Semitism and Great Russian chauvinism.

Now the March issue of *Workers Power* announces it will intervene in these demonstrations "to offer those under the sway of the Stalino-fascist bloc an alternative answer". Meanwhile it denounces the

continued on page 9

## Leon Trotsky on the English Civil War



TROTSKY

The year 1992 marks the 350th anniversary of the beginning of the English Civil War. Trotsky observed in his seminal work on the political history of this island, *Where Is Britain Going?* that, "A study of the revolutionary era in Britain's development, which lasted approximately from the enforced summoning of parliament by Charles Stuart until the death of Oliver Cromwell, is



LENIN

necessary above all in order to understand the place of parliamentarism and of 'law' in general in a living and not an imaginary history." In the wake of the post-electoral despair currently being peddled by social-democratic commentators, the lessons for revolutionaries which Trotsky highlights serve as a healthy antidote to petty bourgeois parliamentarist defeatism. Cromwell's legacy and that of the Red Army are two traditions of revolutionary leadership from which the proletariat of these isles will draw in the struggle to build a communist party dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism.

In this way Cromwell built not merely an army but also a party—his army was to some extent an armed party and herein precisely lay its strength. In 1644 Cromwell's 'holy' squadrons won a brilliant victory over the King's horsemen and won the nickname of 'Ironsides'. It is always useful for a revolution to have iron sides! On this score British workers can learn much from Cromwell....

Any historical analogies demand the greatest caution especially when we are dealing with the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries; yet nonetheless one cannot help being struck by some distinct features that bring the regime and character of Cromwell's army and the character of the Red Army close together. Admittedly, then everything was founded upon faith in predestination and upon a strict religious morality; now with us militant atheism reigns supreme. But running beneath the religious form of puritanism there was the preaching of the historical mission of a new class, and the teaching on predestination was a religious approach to an historical pattern. Cromwell's fighters felt themselves to be in the first place puritans and only in the second place soldiers, just as our fighters acknowledge themselves to be above all revolutionaries and communists and only then soldiers. But the points of divergence are even greater than the points of similarity. The Red Army formed by the party of the proletariat remains its armed organ. Cromwell's army, which also embodied his party, became itself the decisive force.... Under the pressure of the Army, and particularly of its left and more resolute wing, Cromwell was compelled to execute Charles I. The axe of revolution was bizarrely intertwined with psalms. But the axe was more persuasive.... A fool, an ignoramus or a Fabian can see in Cromwell only a personal dictatorship. But in fact here, in the conditions of a deep social rupture, a personal dictatorship was the form taken on by the dictatorship of a class which was moreover the only one capable of liberating the kernel of the nation from the old shells and husks.

—Leon Trotsky, *Where Is Britain Going?* (1925)

## PDC/Spartacist protest!

### Murder in Moscow

We demand a serious investigation!

April 30 protests called in 12 cities worldwide

We reprint below a press release issued by the Spartacist League/Britain announcing worldwide demonstrations on 30 April 1992, including at the Russian Embassy in London.

Martha Phillips, an American Trotskyist of Jewish background, living, working and politically active in Moscow, was found brutally strangled and stabbed on the morning of 9 February, hours before a major anti-Yeltsin demonstration there. Ten weeks later, Moscow authorities have yet to show any progress in tracking down whoever is guilty of this vile crime. Martha Phillips' death and the investigation itself remain mysterious. And while normally, the murder of an American in Moscow would provoke substantial Soviet and international press coverage, in this case there has been a virtual blackout. Why?

"A heinous crime has been committed here. We demand action," said Alison Spencer, spokesman for the US Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee which called for worldwide protest on behalf of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), the ICL. For weeks, though with increasing impatience and concern, Phillips' comrades, friends and loved ones have cooperated in good faith with the militia (Moscow police) investigation. Our urgent inquiries have been met with stalling, smoke-screens and incompetence. We demand a serious investigation!

Demonstrations outside embassy and consular offices of Boris Yeltsin's Russian government around the world will be held on Thursday, 30 April, the eve of May Day, the international workers holiday. The demonstrations will also oppose the drive led by Yeltsin, backed by Bush (ably abetted by his junior partner John Major and applauded by the viciously anti-working-class Labour Party leadership) to impose capitalist immiseration and starvation on the Soviet peoples.

The ICL spokesman continued: "Whoever is responsible for this crime has

dealt a terrible blow to everybody who seeks to resist and defeat capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. That's why our protests are taking place in conjunction with May Day. It used to be that if a Trotskyist died under suspicious circumstances anywhere within the long reach of JV Stalin, the question of who was responsible was not really a question. That is no longer the case. The Soviet Union today is a rapidly decomposing society. We don't know who killed Martha Phillips, but it cannot be ruled out that the murder of our comrade was a political act."

Martha Phillips was the most prominent spokesman in the Soviet Union for the ICL, which is known there and elsewhere for its determined opposition to Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary course. A leading cadre of the US Spartacist League for 20 years and a passionate fighter against racism and women's oppression, she was a powerful and outspoken opponent of the growing expressions of anti-Semitism and Great Russian chauvinism which have been nurtured by this reactionary climate.

Phillips was struck down only hours before what was expected to be a large anti-Yeltsin protest in which the ICL had planned significant sales of its Russian-language revolutionary journal. Her murder came several days after Yeltsin's visit with Wall Street financiers at the Federal Reserve Bank in Manhattan was met by a vocal and visible protest organised by the Spartacist League.

"From the moment Martha was found dead, many questions were raised about the manner and cause of her death," said Spencer. When Phillips' body was discovered by her comrades in the apartment where she had been staying, an attempt had been made to make it look as though she had died in her sleep. Moscow militia and medical authorities were immediately called to the scene. Despite a visible chest wound which was brought to their attention, these professionally trained personnel initially and falsely declared that Phillips had died of

## WORKERS HAMMER



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For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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# Q: How does "Vote communist, don't vote Labour" = Vote Labour?

We print below a leaflet dated 20 March 1992 produced by the Spartacist League for distribution during the general election campaign.

## A: Ask the Leninist

The Labour Party has nothing to offer the working masses except the same pro-imperialist, anti-working-class policies established by Margaret Thatcher and John Major in over a decade of viciously union-busting and racist reign. In the coming general election on 9 April workers and oppressed minorities have no interest whatsoever in the victory of Kinnock's Labour Party. We do not call for a vote to the arch-scamherd Neil "I am a reactionary" Kinnock.

Unlike most of the British fake left who are stridently calling for a vote to Kinnock, the misnamed Leninist (which dubs itself the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain) claims it is not supporting Labour in the coming general election. It is running four candidates across Britain. But its anti-Labourism is phoney. To start with, Leninist offered to stand down and "work all out" for the victory of any of their Labourite "opponents" (eg, Ken Livingstone in Brent, Kinnockite Mike Watson in Glasgow) who adopted their minimal reformist electoral platform—consisting of, in the words of Leninist, "perfectly reasonable and democratic demands in a country like Britain".

Instead of a genuine communist campaign the Leninist has offered to pimp for every left-sounding Labourite MP or grouping, from Tony Benn to the virulently anti-Soviet Socialist Workers Party. Thus their Potemkin Village Unemployed Workers Charter (UWC) deliberately buried mention of the Leninist candidates in order to attract the endorsement of "left" Labourites like Benn and Jeremy Corbyn. The four-page handout for their 29 February "national march" features a front-page statement by former Labour MP Ernie Roberts, Honorary President of the UWC, who declares that "I along with many others am working for a Labour victory". Nowhere does Leninist criticise the social-democratic politics of Roberts or the other Labourites and trade union officials who grace the pages of the *Unemployed Organiser*. This is nothing less than the dissemination of propaganda calling for a vote to the

Labour Party. Small wonder that some Leninist supporters are grumbling over this blatant piece of political hucksterism.

When the SWP relaunched its pop-frontist Anti Nazi League in January, Leninist hailed ANL Mark II. Like its predecessor, ANL Mark II is an explicit *popular front*, tying the workers movement to liberal politicians and church dignitaries. The ANL was notorious for drawing thousands of anti-racist militants in the 1970s to rock concerts while fascists rampaged against Asian communities in the East End of London. To underscore its conscious opportunism, Leninist admits ANL's scabbing on anti-fascist struggles in the 1970s, but then proceeds to justify their jumping into the popular-frontist swamp: "Given its history, given the relative strength of the SWP as the initiating organisation, the ANL alone of all the organisations currently in the field of anti-fascist work has the possibility of serving as the basis for the type of militant, working class anti-fascist organisation that we need" (*Leninist* no 114, 25 January 1992). It says a lot about Leninist that today it boosts the "anti-fascist credentials" of the virulently anti-Soviet SWP, which supported the CIA-backed mujahedin in Afghanistan, Polish Solidarność and the capitalist restorationist forces in Eastern Europe that have brought in their wake an upsurge of murderous racist and fascist activity.

As we wrote recently:

"During the Gulf War [Leninist] refused to take a side for the defeat of US/British imperialism. This dovetailed with the line of the 'left' Labourites, who called for UN intervention and economic sanctions, thereby playing their role in whipping up social-patriotic sentiment against Iraq.

"In their Brent election leaflet you won't find the word 'internationalism'; indeed, with the exception of a passing, sneering reference to the collapse of 'Soviet socialism' there is no mention of anywhere outside the British Isles. Nor

did this grotesque parochialism and Leninist's conciliation with Labourite chauvinism fall from the skies. Although flirting at times with Trotskyist terminology, Leninist never broke fundamentally from socialism in one country which Trotsky characterised as follows: 'To approach the prospects of a social revolution within national boundaries is to fall victim to the same national narrowness which constitutes the substance of social-patriotism' (*Third International After Lenin*, p53)".

— *Workers Hammer* no 126, November/December 1991.

Of course nowhere in their electoral platform does the Leninist mention the imperialist atrocities against the Iraqi people during the recent Gulf War.

Emerging as "critical Stalinists", the Leninist organisation never could find the class line, instead tailing after a succession of *ersatz* forces ranging from would-be progressive Stalinist bureaucrats to radical petty-bourgeois nationalists such as the Irish republicans. In the deformed workers states, Leninist zig-zagged between support to "hard line" (and anti-Semitic) elements like the Katowice group of the Polish CP, and outright conciliation of classless "democracy". Thus, a few years ago it was pimping for the "democratic rights" of the Russian fascist Pamyat scum (first "legitimised" by then-Moscow party chief Boris Yeltsin).

Today counterrevolution is ascendant in the Soviet Union and it is urgently necessary to mobilise Soviet workers to sweep away the Yeltsin/Kravchuk counterrevolutionary regimes through political revolution. But equating the Stalinist bureaucracies with the deformed and degenerated workers states, the Leninist threw in the towel after the manifest failure of the coup last August. Twenty-four hours after its initial statement, the *Leninist* (1 September 1991) said farewell to the USSR and wrote: "genuine communists should briefly mourn before getting on with the job of organising on the basis of the lessons our defeat in the

USSR teaches". Ditto in East Germany, where they belittled our concentration of forces there at the time of the beginnings of political revolution, where the struggle against capitalist reunification was the front line for communists. And those who prematurely give up on the existing gains of the workers movement will *never* make a revolution anywhere.

The domestic reflection of Stalinism's lie of "building socialism in one country" was always the popular front and liquidation into Labourism. Now, having written off the USSR, it is hardly surprising that the Leninist has moved increasingly rightward, pandering to Kinnock's anti-Soviet Labour Party and virulent Stalinophobes like the SWP. Anti-Sovietism is the entry card to the Labourite swamp in Britain.

The International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the British section, has fought steadfastly against capitalist counterrevolution and for political revolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In January 1990 our German section, the Spartakist Workers Party, initiated a demonstration supported by the then ruling Stalinist SED which mobilised 250,000 people in response to the desecration by fascists of a monument to Soviet soldiers in Trepow Park in Berlin. On this day for the first time in decades in a deformed workers state the voice of genuine Trotskyism was heard from a speakers' platform. In Moscow in the autumn of this year we participated in a united front of defenders of the Lenin Museum, and at the same time counterposed proletarian internationalism to the capitulation of the Stalinists before Great Russian chauvinists like the monarchists and Pamyat filth. During the Gulf War, while Leninist was holding its pacifist candlelight vigils, we took a side for the defeat of imperialism and defence of Iraq, leading to the arrest of one of our members.

Leninist seeks to accommodate itself to parochial British social democracy. For *genuine* Leninists, the task is to forge an authentic Bolshevik party uncompromisingly based on proletarian internationalism, and it is precisely to such a perspective that we seek to win fighters who hate this racist capitalist system. ■

natural causes. Suspicious of this sudden death, her comrades demanded an autopsy. When the autopsy was finally conducted two days later, authorities confirmed that Martha Phillips had indeed been murdered. Only then did the militia even open an investigation into the cause of violent death.

It took another eight weeks, and numerous requests, before the authorities released even the most meagre report on the official autopsy. Elementary forensic tests and interviews with suspects were pursued in a dilatory or unprofessional fashion, if at all. The US Consulate has been passive and unhelpful in the investigation of the murder of this American citizen. Toronto attorney Yossi Schwartz, who went to Moscow to push the investigation on behalf of the victim and her family, stated: "I faced constant delaying tactics and buck-passing. For example, the procurator told me that the militia was responsible for the two-day delay in starting the investigation. But the autopsy

report states that the procurator's office knew from the beginning that it was a violent death. So who is lying?"

The ICL spokesman said: "All the authorities have been so vague, so obstructionist and at times even deliberately misleading that we have to ask whether there are bigger forces at play who do not want this murder solved."

There were many, from the nationalist remnants of the decomposing Stalinist bureaucracy to pro-Yeltsin "free trade unions" financed and advised by the CIA conduit National Endowment for Democracy and others as well, who had reason to want to silence the ICL. Attempts were made to get the so-called Independent Union of Miners (NPG) to endorse slanders that Arthur Scargill had pocketed contributions by Soviet miners to the British miners strike. The ICL's intervention into the founding conference of the NPG in the Donbass in 1990 put a spike in this disinformation campaign. Only three weeks before her murder Phillips

was violently assaulted by a Pamyat fascist and other Russian nationalists at a public demonstration near the Kremlin.

Demonstrations will be held in New York, Washington DC, San Francisco, Ottawa, Tokyo, Milan, Paris, Berlin, Hamburg, Rome, Sydney and London. There will also be press conferences in Moscow and at the Trotsky Museum in Mexico City, where Esteban Volkov, grandson of Leon Trotsky will speak. Comrade Spencer concluded her announcement: "Martha Phillips died at her post, fighting to forge a new Leninist-Trotskyist party in the land of the October Revolution of 1917. The task is posed: either the multinational Soviet proletariat will reconquer political power, usurped by the Stalinist bureaucracy, or there will be the bloody consolidation of social counterrevolution. Already national disintegration and massive poverty and hunger are being brought about by the drive toward capitalist restoration. In demanding a thorough investigation into

the murder of our fallen comrade, we continue the revolutionary struggle in whose service she died."

Slogans to be carried at the protests will include:

- No more stalling! Full investigation of the murder of Martha Phillips!
- The Freikorps murdered Rosa Luxemburg! The Stalinists assassinated Trotsky! Who killed Martha Phillips?
- All honour to Martha Phillips—fighter against capitalist counterrevolution and Pamyat anti-Semitism!
- US State Department: indifference and malice! Moscow Militia: incompetence, evasion and buck-passing!
- Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!
- Defeat Yeltsin/Bush counterrevolution!
- "Free market" means capitalist misery for Soviet peoples!
- For proletarian political revolution to sweep away Yeltsin's starvation regime!

24 April 1992

# Cliff's "Neither Washington nor Moscow" state capitalism:



Spartacist



Harrity/U.S. News of World Report

In Soviet Union and Poland, SWP sides with counterrevolution. Cliff cheered pro-Yeltsin August counter-coup (left) as well as others like pro-KPN clerical reactionary "Fighting Solidarity" who in 1989 greeted US chief Bush (right).

## Pimping for Yeltsin, Walesa, and mujahedin cut-throats

In 1950 Tony Cliff's organisation (today's Socialist Workers Party) was expelled from the Fourth International for refusing to defend North Korea against US and British imperialism. At the height of the Cold War the Labour government swung in behind the US, sending troops to fight the Koreans and later the Chinese also. *Three million* Koreans were slaughtered in that war, conducted under United Nations auspices. When the Cold War turned hot in Korea, Tony Cliff's theory that the USSR is "state capitalist" provided the rationale for straightforward capitulation to the British Empire.

Virulent hatred of the Soviet Union has been the hallmark of the SWP ever since. As Cliff himself said: "And I say no, no, we have nothing to do with bloody Russia, because it is not a source of strength" (*Leveller*, September 1979). Their ostensible "third campism" notwithstanding, this "neither Washington nor Moscow" crowd has unfailingly found itself in the camp of Washington and London whenever there has been a hard counterposition between imperialism and the degenerated and deformed workers states. Indeed the SWP prides itself on being the most virulent anti-Soviets around. Its hard-line support for the Yeltsinite forces of capitalist counter-revolution—joining "the struggle on the August barricades" in the USSR—is but the most recent example. In Afghanistan against the Red Army it supported the drug-peddling CIA cut-throats who enslave women and skin teachers alive for teaching little girls how to read and write. SWPer Paul Foot effectively accused Margaret Thatcher of being "soft" on Russia with his *Daily Mirror* "exposés" asking "Are we putting beef into Russia's invasion?"

Poland was an acid test for the left. Today of course the reactionary policies of Solidarność are more than evident, and the fake left goes around claiming that Walesa and Co "betrayed" its original ideals. But by the time of its founding conference in 1981, Solidarność had consolidated around a pro-capitalist pro-

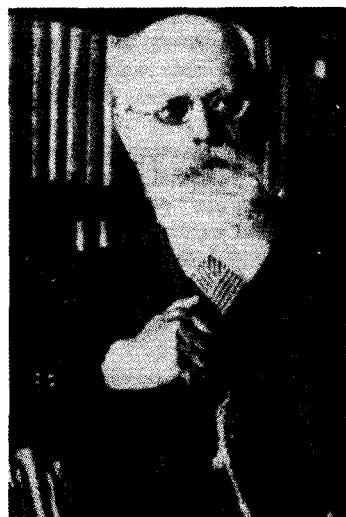
gramme, echoing the CIA call for "free trade unions" and free parliamentary elections, demanding that Poland join the IMF. Lane Kirkland and Irving Brown (the CIA's main "labour operative" in smashing Communist-led unions after World War II) were invited. Meanwhile Solidarność was getting millions through CIA conduits, including German social democracy, the "socialist" governments of

CIA's and Thatcher's favourite union. The SWP sought to deny the close ties between Solidarność and clerical reaction: "Both the Western press and Western Stalinists give the impression that the Catholic Church was the driving force behind the creation of Solidarity. The reality was very different" (*Socialist Review*, 23 January-19 February 1982). The SWP did "criticise" Solidarność—

*Vanguard* no 507, 27 July 1990).

So what do the Cliffites now say? Over the last couple of years, SWP honchos Alex Callinicos, in his *The Revenge of History*, and Chris Harman have sought to bring state capitalism "up to date". Harman writes "that the transition from state capitalism to multinational capitalism is neither a step forward nor a step backwards, but a step sideways. The change involves only a shift from one form of exploitation to another form..." (*International Socialism* no 46, Spring 1990). A step sideways? When in March 1990 in the DDR there was an overwhelming vote for the Christian Democrats, the SWP proclaimed: "Nevertheless, Kohl's election victory should not dismay socialists" (*Socialist Worker*, 24 March 1990). Tell that to the embittered working people of what was East Germany, where up to 40 per cent are facing unemployment, where fascist activity is on the rise, where women are being driven out of the workforce. Meanwhile, the capitalist reunification of Germany gives a major boost to the German Fourth Reich, posing the threat of imperialist war. Or how about Poland, where the counterrevolutionary Solidarność government, having drafted in the likes of Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs (moulded in the infamous Milton Friedman school of capitalist "shock treatment") to implement IMF guidelines, has overseen more than a 30 per cent decline in standards of living, sacking a million Polish workers in a year. Meanwhile the powerful Church hierarchy has set its sights on abolishing abortion rights. Indeed, the regimes emerging in Eastern Europe bear a strong resemblance to the oppressive, anti-Semitic regimes that existed there in the interwar period. That's called counterrevolution, and underscores the principled insistence of Trotskyists to defend the deformed and degenerated workers states and collectivised property forms against internal capitalist restorationism as well as against imperialist attack.

In the aftermath of the deliberately inept "perestroika coup" in the Soviet



Socialist Worker

Archiv



Renegade from Marxism, Karl Kautsky (left) is political godfather of SWP honcho Tony Cliff (right).

France and Sweden, and the AFL-CIO "International Department". Ronald Reagan and the Vatican "agreed to undertake a clandestine campaign to hasten the dissolution of the communist empire.... The operation was focused on Poland.... Both the Pope and President were convinced that Poland could be broken out of the Soviet orbit if the Vatican and the U.S. committed their resources to destabilizing the Polish government and keeping the outlawed Solidarity movement alive after the declaration of martial law in 1981" (*Time Magazine*, 24 February).

The SL called for "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" In contradistinction, the fake lefts cheered on the Vatican's,

for ostensibly not being "militant" enough in carrying out counterrevolution! Thus, in an article written at the time Chris Harman identified as the "left" the "various radical leaders with their strong regional bases—Giazda in Gdansk, Rulewski in Bydgoszcz, Jurzyk in Szczecin" (*Socialist Review*, 15 November-13 December 1981). Marian Jurczyk, today the leader of Solidarność '80, got about a quarter of the votes as a right-wing opponent of Walesa within Solidarność in 1981. At the time Jurczyk declared that three-quarters of the Stalinist leadership were really Jews who had changed their names and that "a couple of gallows would come in handy" to deal with these "traitors to Polish society" (*Workers*

Union last August, *Socialist Worker* (31 August 1991) proclaimed "Communism has collapsed... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing." In cheering for Yeltsin, the Cliffites predictably took their cues from Bush, Major, the imperialists and Labour traitor Neil Kinnock. (And in fact the SWP goes so far as to criticise the likes of Ken Livingstone *from the right* because he supports the wretched pro-market Party of Labour which for the SWP is not sufficiently anti-Communist. For Cliff et al "talk of [Yeltsin-inspired] fascism is scaremongering and only drives the PL [Party of Labour] further into the arms of the old style Communists" [*Socialist Workers Review*, February 1992].) But the Soviet working masses are hardly rejoicing over the ascendancy of Yeltsin's openly capitalist restorationist forces. The outcome is not yet decided: it is desperately necessary to construct a genuine Leninist/Trotskyist party to lead the fight to smash the counter-revolutionaries through proletarian political revolution. The alternative, the destruction of the first workers state by the bourgeoisie, would be an historic defeat not only for the Soviet masses but for the world proletariat, paving the way for new trade wars and a new world war as the big imperialist powers intensify their competition for hegemony.

### USSR in the 1920s: Cliff v Trotsky

Tony Cliff's *State Capitalism in Russia*, completed in 1948, was hardly the first attempt to devise a "new class" theory for the Soviet Union. Less than ten years earlier Trotsky and the leadership of the American SWP had waged a hard faction fight against Max Shachtman and James Burnham, who flinched from defending the USSR when this became unpopular with the petty bourgeois intelligentsia at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact. Shachtman termed the Soviet Union "bureaucratic collectivist". Despite the ostensible "theoretical differences", the Cliffites loosely collaborated with the remnants of Shachtman's organisation (the old American IS). What all of the state caps and bureaucratic collectivists have in common is the gut impulse to "hate Russia". The particular "theories" always have an artificial, jerry-built quality, because they are not based on concrete reality but rather are slapped together in order to provide a rationale for refusing to defend the workers states against imperialism

unemployed, periodic crises of over-production, etc. But Cliff's revision of elementary Marxism is downright shameful. As we pointed out in our pamphlet *Why the U.S.S.R. is Not Capitalist* some years ago, he "proves" that competition exists in the Soviet Union by redefining it to mean military competition with the capitalist states. Denying the elementary principle that under capitalism owners of factories seek to maximise profit, Cliff asserts instead that they seek to maximise economic growth, or accumulation, so-called "production for production's sake". (This is among the most idiotic of Cliffite assertions; if capitalist production were really capable of expanding indefinitely, there would be no reason for a planned economy.)

Hence, workers in the USSR are supposedly "exploited" because too many weapons and machines are produced relative to consumer goods. This piece of charlatanism is a rationalisation for the social-democratic politics of the SWP, with its rabid denunciations of "Soviet imperialism". Moreover, it is deeply insulting to the working class, which is in effect depicted as being incapable of transcending trade-unionist or economist consciousness. No workers state in the world could survive if it did not take appropriate measures to defend itself against the imperialists and increase the rate of industrialisation. This would necessarily cut into the resources available for immediate consumption. Certainly this was all the more the case for the young Soviet workers state, which emerged from tsarism with a largely peasant economy encircled by hostile imperialist powers. In fact, the working masses of Lenin and Trotsky's Russia were passionately internationalist and made countless material sacrifices to advance world revolution.

Visiting a Soviet factory towards the end of the Civil War, the American communist and journalist John Reed recalls being saluted by one youth: "For three years the Russian workers have been bleeding and dying for the Revolution, and not our own Revolution, but the World Revolution. Tell our American comrades that we listen day and night for the sound of their footsteps coming to our aid. But tell them, too, that no matter how long it may take them, we shall hold firm" ("*Soviet Russia Now*", July 1920). Nor was this at all uncommon. The Red Army was viewed not only as a means of defending the Soviet Union but as an

tern into an agency for the conciliation of alien class forces, like the British TUC and Chiang Kai-shek. Instead they preached to the working masses to "build socialism in one country"—Russia—"at a snail's pace". The kulaks, or wealthy peasants, were urged to "enrich yourselves", the power of the petty traders or NEP men grew, class differentiation increased in the villages. Bukharin became the main ideologue for this policy. It is no accident that the Gorbachevite intelligentsia, who in the main became

the moment of extreme peril, they would fight the class enemy as guerillas..." (Trotsky, *Challenge of the Left Opposition*, [1928-29]).

Writing about this period, Chris Harman asserts that there was a "civil war" in which the victory of the Stalin faction spelled the destruction of the Soviet workers state (*International Socialism* no 46, Spring 1990, p20). In fact, it never came to civil war but had there been one, the Trotskyists would have been on the opposite side of the barricades from the



Friends of Afghanistan Society

**Afghan women take up arms against arch-reactionary drug-peddling CIA cut-throats who skinned teachers alive for teaching little girls how to read and write.**

fervent proponents of capitalism and admirers of Western "democracy", began by idolising Bukharin.

Trotsky, on the contrary, called for the voluntary collectivisation of agriculture and the planned industrialisation of the economy. In particular, he pointed to the need to strengthen the social weight of the proletariat. For this he was denounced as a "superindustrialiser" by Stalin, Bukharin and Co, who falsely claimed that the Left Opposition's programme of proletarian internationalism and qualitative extension of economic planning was counterposed to raising the living standards of the Soviet working masses. In short, the Stalinist epigones demagogically utilised the kind of vulgar workerism espoused by Cliff in order to undermine the genuine Bolsheviks. The warnings of the Left Opposition were ignored, the kulaks began large grain strikes, the country was brought to the edge of a social explosion. Finally, the centre led by Stalin broke its bloc with the Bukharinite right, and made an about-face. Borrowing elements of the programme of the Left Opposition, Stalin moved against the kulaks and began to launch collectivisation and the five-year industrial plans.

Now certainly the Trotskyists did not endorse the brutal methods of Stalin. But they never considered making a programmatic bloc with the Bukharinites, let alone with outright bourgeois opponents of the regime. In fact their position was stronger than that. Fearing that the breakdown of the country might actually lead to civil war, Trotsky was prepared to make a military bloc with the Stalinist wing of the bureaucracy against the open capitalist restorationists. In a declaration to the Sixth Comintern Congress, Trotsky asserted: "...the Thermidorean, kulak, bourgeois, bureaucratic tail may try, at the peak of some future hill, at a time of even greater difficulties, to strike a really serious blow at the head; that is, try to move from the present semilegal forms of capitalist sabotage to direct civil war.... Oppositionists will fight for the party, for the dictatorship, for the October Revolution.... If the bureaucratic stupidity of the party apparatus should prevent the Oppositionists from occupying their places in the ranks of the regular army at

likes of Cliff and Harman! The bottom line of the Cliffites here is consistent with their virulent Stalinophobia: they repudiate the defence of the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to defend the "democratic rights" of the exploiters, in this case the nascent bourgeoisie, kulaks and NEP men.

The assertion that capitalism was restored with the institution of collectivisation and the five-year plans is particularly dim. Subsequently the Soviet economy grew rapidly, while the rest of the world was sunk in the Great Depression. The palpable superiority of the planned economy, even one distorted by Stalinist mismanagement, was a powerful weapon that attracted many workers to communist ideas. In his 1935 work *The Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism* Trotsky pointed out:

"In 1928, an open split took place in the bureaucracy. The Right was for further concessions to the kulak. The Centrists, arming themselves with the ideas of the Left Opposition whom they had smashed conjointly with the Rights, found their support among the workers, routed the Rights, and took to the road of industrialization and, subsequently, collectivization. The basic social conquests of the October revolution were saved in the end at the cost of countless unnecessary sacrifices. "The prognosis of the Bolshevik-Leninists (more correctly, the 'optimum variant' of their prognosis) was confirmed completely. Today there can be no controversy on this point. Development of the productive forces proceeded not by way of restoration of private property but on the basis of socialization, by way of planned management. The world-historical significance of this fact can remain hidden only to the politically blind."

### Cliff's predictions go awry

There are quite a number of stories about East Europeans and Soviets who, having obtained copies of Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, cannot believe that it was written half a century ago, so vividly does it capture the social reality of the deformed workers states. Quite the contrary is true for Cliff's *State Capitalism in Russia*, with its sterile and one-dimensional

*continued on page 10*



US Archives

**US troops retreat from Lake Changjin in Korea in late 1950. Tony Cliff broke with Trotskyism, refused to defend North Korea against imperialism.**

and counterrevolution. Appropriately enough, the first "state capitalist" was Karl Kautsky, whose 1918 polemic *Terrorism and Communism* characterised the Soviet state to that effect.

Of course, it required quite some doing for Cliff to "prove" that the USSR is "capitalist", given the absence of key features that characterise this mode of production—capitalist competition, the profit motive, the reserve army of the

auxiliary instrument of revolutionary war, where appropriate. Thus the war fought against Pilsudski's Poland was motivated by the desire to achieve a common border with the German proletariat.

The failure of the German revolution in October 1923 and a decimated, war-weary working class provided fertile soil for the conservative apparatchiks. They sneered at the possibility of revolution abroad, gradually converting the Comin-

# E. Europe...

(Continued from page 1)

Germany for the takeover of the DDR (East Germany), aggressive nationalism has been both the driving force for capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and a product of the counterrevolutionary drive. From Walesa's Poland to Milosevic's Serbia, nationalist demagoguery—usually linked to aggressive religious reaction—is being used to turn working-class anger over economic immiseration against neighbouring peoples and minority communities, to break up the old military cadre (as in Yugoslavia), to purge any remaining “reds” from government posts and economic administration, and to forge a new state apparatus unambiguously loyal to a bourgeois order.

From the Baltic to the Adriatic, Eastern Europe is threatened with wars of territorial aggrandisement, bloody border conflicts and intercommunal massacres among the region's heavily interpenetrated peoples. Anti-Semitism is on the rise, while Gypsies have been attacked by fascist skinheads in Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland. The grisly communal war between Azeris and Armenians over the Caucasian region of Nagorno-Karabakh and the territorial war between Serbia and Croatia are harbingers of things to come—unless counterrevolution is defeated by proletarian political revolution in the Soviet Union, and the shaky capitalist regimes now at the helm in Eastern Europe are overthrown by the working class under a genuinely communist (Leninist-Trotskyist) leadership.

## Nationalism fuels economic collapse

It has become fashionable for the Western bourgeois media—whether liberal or right-wing—to express contempt for the feuding nationalisms in post-Stalinist Eastern Europe. The establishment *New York Times* (13 October 1991) decries “Old Tribal Rivalries in Eastern Europe”, while the liberal *Guardian* (28 September 1991) moralises, “Irresponsible Leaders Exacerbate the Ethnic Tensions of Eastern Europe”. What gall! For decades these influential imperialist organs and their political masters in Washington and London fulsomely supported reactionary Eastern European nationalists in order to break up the Soviet bloc.

Now, however, the break-up of the Soviet bloc and the ascendancy of counterrevolutionary nationalist forces in the USSR—personified by Boris Yeltsin in Russia and his counterparts in the other republics—have contributed in no small measure to the economic catastrophe confronting Eastern Europe. The economic stability of the region was based on favourable trade relations with the USSR. The Soviet Union supplied the Warsaw Pact countries with oil and natural gas at far below the extortionate world market price. In return, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the others shipped to the USSR industrial products that were below world market standards.

The Kremlin was willing to pay this price to maintain Soviet political and military dominance in the region. But once Gorbachev turned over Eastern Europe to NATO imperialism, Moscow directed its oil exports to Western markets for dollars and deutschmarks. Since 1989 Soviet oil shipments to Eastern Europe have been cut in half! Anti-Communist East European nationalists, who for years railed against supposed Soviet “imperialism”, are now complaining bitterly that Moscow no longer has any economic interest in their countries.

At the same time, those East Euro-



Romanian Gypsies seeking refuge in Berlin. Driven from their homes by nationalist terror, they now face fascist attacks in Germany.

pean products which could be competitive in world markets—agriculture and some light manufactures like textiles—are subject to trade protectionism in the West. While French and German bourgeois parties stridently call for a “free market” in Eastern Europe, they are committed to preserving agricultural protectionism in their own national markets. Former Polish finance minister Leszek Balcerowicz complains that half of Poland's exports to the West European Common Market (EC) face high tariffs, quotas and other trade barriers: “And this at a time when we are urged to go in the direction of the market. We need the EC to lower barriers now, not in four or five years' time” (*Economist*, 21 September 1991). Balcerowicz is well aware that the consolidation of capitalism in the region is far from assured.

In most of Eastern Europe, the Stalinist regimes collapsed during 1989 and were replaced by parties committed to bourgeois “democratic” counterrevolution. In East Germany, an incipient political revolution was overwhelmed by the capitalist reunification drive as the deformed workers state was rapidly annexed into a powerful Fourth Reich of German imperialism. In Yugoslavia a nationalist civil war broke out last year between rival governments of former Stalinist bureaucrats. Elsewhere in the Balkans (Albania, Bulgaria, Romania) “reformed” Stalinist regimes have unsuccessfully sought to preside over a “transition” to a capitalist market. In contrast, in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Stalinists were ousted and in their wake fledgling capitalist states are now being erected.

However, as we noted following the failed August coup in Moscow and the successful pro-imperialist countercoup headed by Yeltsin: “The forces backing Yeltsin would like to be a capitalist class, but they are not yet one. Even in Poland, where the state is capitalist from top to bottom, a capitalist class has not yet congealed because they lack...capital” (*Workers Vanguard* no 533, 30 August 1991). Unlike capitalism growing organically out of the womb of feudal society, the restoration of capitalism requires the prior destruction of the workers state and establishment of a counterrevolutionary state apparatus. As Trotsky wrote in the 1930s:

“Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a revolution or a counterrevolution. The victory of one class over another signifies that it will reconstruct the economy in the interests of the victors.”

—“Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?” (November 1937)

Trotsky also insisted that counterrevolution could not succeed in a “bourgeois-democratic” (parliamentary) framework but would require harsh bonapartist regimes to break the resistance of the working class. On such a basis a new class of capitalist “robber barons” could take over the nationalised industry, which is already being run according to the dictates of the world market.

However, the proto-capitalist states in Eastern Europe are extremely weak and fragile. Poland is witnessing almost constant working-class protest and resistance while the popular authority of the Solidarność regime falls to ever-deeper lows. One recent poll showed Walesa's standing was below that of General Jaruzelski, the last Stalinist ruler, and a majority retrospectively supported the December 1981 crackdown against Solidarność. Meanwhile, in Czechoslovakia, with the fracturing of the “Civic Forum” into a number of rival parties, the Communist Party now has the largest parliamentary fraction. The Havel/Kraus regime lives in fear of a social explosion as it immiserates the traditionally socialist Czech proletariat. Prague's deputy finance minister Dusan Triska exclaimed, “They're going to hang us all”.

## Poland: Solidarność regime at bay

After Poland experienced the repeated failure of Stalinist “reform” regimes from Gomulka after 1956 through Gierek during the 1970s, for the past decade Solidarność has been in the forefront of the drive towards capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe. US president Reagan and Pope John Paul Wojtyla of Krakow secretly conspired to keep the clerical-nationalist “free trade union” afloat through tens of millions of dollars funnelled through the American labour bureaucracy. The recent *Time* magazine

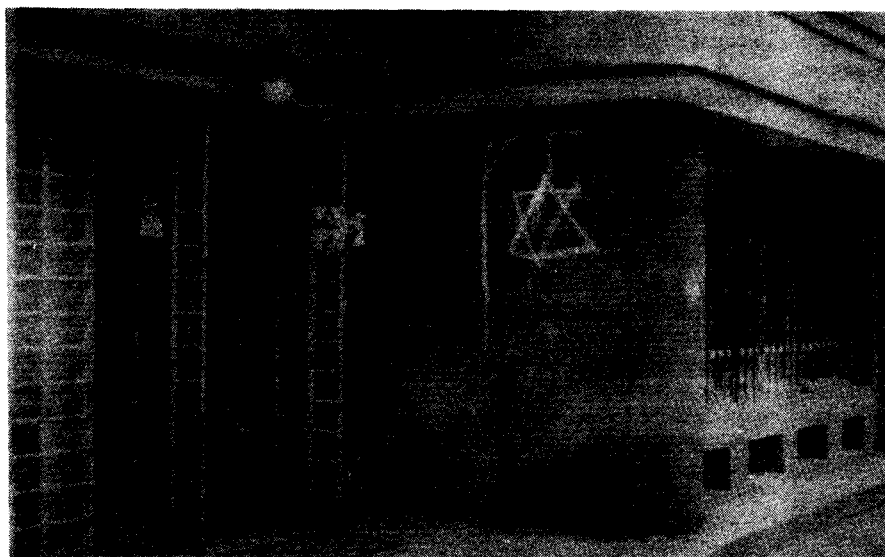
magazine “revelation” of this “Holy Alliance” only confirms what we wrote over a decade ago, while it covers up the fact that US support to Walesa & Co began well before General Jaruzelski spiked Solidarność' bid for power in 1981 (see “Solidarność Godfathers: Reagan and the Pope”, *Workers Vanguard* no 546, 6 March).

In 1989 the beleaguered Jaruzelski regime, pressed by Western bankers and abandoned by the Gorbachev Kremlin, entered a “power-sharing” deal with Walesa which produced the pro-capitalist Mazowiecki government. However, in the course of 1990 Solidarność took total political power as the Stalinist ministers were purged from the government. Moreover, the “special bodies of armed men” (the core of state power, in Engels' words) were reconstructed on the basis of loyalty to the nascent bourgeois order: most top army commanders were replaced, and the security police forces were dissolved. Topped off by the replacement of Jaruzelski by Walesa as president that December, this marked the transformation of Poland into a capitalist state.

However, it is an extremely weak and fragile capitalist state, and in a political sense is becoming more so. The economic “shock treatment” was from the outset met with widespread strikes and worker protests. This pressure from below split the Solidarność tops into bitterly contending factions, with Walesa bandying about anti-Semitic demagoguery and his former colleagues accusing him of harbouring dictatorial ambitions (!). The first dramatic sign of Solidarność' loss of popular authority came in the presidential election in the winter of 1990. While Walesa won 75 per cent of the vote on the second round (as half the electorate stayed home), an unknown émigré businessman, Stanislaw Tyminski, outpolled the prime minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

No sooner had President Walesa taken office than he was confronted with a wave of strikes—Silesian coal miners, transport workers, air traffic controllers. Warsaw dustmen walked off their jobs for a week, and the army was called in to pick up the rubbish. Walesa dropped his “democratic” façade, accusing strike organisers of “breaking the law” and threatening to “use all means and force to defend our ideals” (*Independent*, 14 June 1991). But under present conditions in Poland, this tough talk is just so much bluster. If the police or army were used to break up picket lines and arrest striking workers, this could ignite a social explosion that would blow Walesa right out of the Belvedere Palace.

Solidarność' loss of popular authority has been paralleled by that of its historic protector (and in a sense creator), the Polish Catholic hierarchy. With the Communists out and Walesa in, Pope Wojtyla and Cardinal Glemp believed that Poland was now theirs for the taking. Last spring



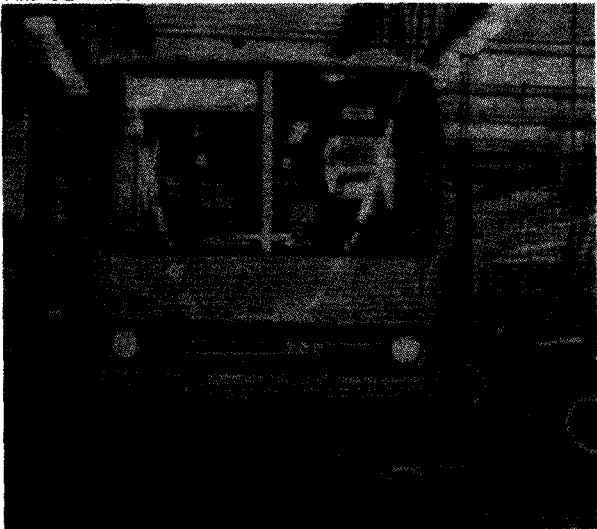
Warsaw: clerical-nationalist Solidarność in power fuels climate for anti-Semitic terror.

**Percent Change in Output**

	1988	1989	1990	Estimated 1991
Bulgaria	2.4	-0.4	-13.6	-20.0
Czechoslovakia	2.3	1.0	-1.1	-12.0
Hungary	0.0	-0.2	-5.0	-7.0
Poland	4.7	0.5	-12.0	-8.0
Romania	-2.0	-7.9	-10.5	-9.0

OECD Economic Outlook, December 1991

Financial Times



Counter-revolutionary regimes dismantle Eastern Europe's industry. Hungary's Icarus bus factory (left). Poland's Ursus tractor works have been decimated by huge layoffs.



Sokolowski/AP

the hierarchy launched an aggressive campaign to outlaw abortion and to abolish the existing constitutional separation of church and state. However, the prelates' power play provoked an anti-clerical backlash. Opinion polls show that 60 per cent of the population favours legalised abortion and believes the church has too much influence in public life, although 90 per cent still identify themselves as practising Catholics. One poll showed respect for the church as an institution has fallen below that for the army.

The elections to the Sejm (parliament) last autumn were another blow to the Solidarność regime. The government parties got just 16 per cent of the vote, while the parties deriving from the old Stalinist bureaucracy got 20 per cent. True, the erstwhile Stalinists made no pretence of standing for socialism but rather called for a social-democratic "mixed" (capitalist) economy. Nonetheless, the soon-to-be-axed second Solidarność prime minister, Jan Bielecki, was right when he called the result "a vote against the market economy". At the same time, the Solidarność parties lost ground to their right, to the fascist Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) and the clericalist Catholic Action.

The election debacle produced a two-month-long governmental crisis until the contentious Solidarność parties and their more right-wing allies patched together a new government, which was immediately greeted by nationwide protest strikes against the climbing unemployment and inflation. The *Chicago Tribune* (12 January) reported one young woman in Warsaw saying, "You often hear this sentence: 'It was better under the Communists'." In order to recapture its crumbling authority, the Walesa regime could well step up its nationalist demagoguery and fish in the troubled waters of the fractured Soviet Union.

**Poland and irredentism, East and West**

Last year Walesa exhorted a group of visiting Western businessmen: "Invest your money in Poland. We don't fight about dividing the country like they do in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia" (*Guard-*

*ian*, 19 April 1991). Poland owes its present vaunted "ethnic purity" to the actions of Adolf Hitler and then Joseph Stalin. The interwar Poland of fascist dictator Marshal Pilsudski contained three million Jews—ten per cent of the population—by far the largest proportion of any country in the world. At the same time, Warsaw ruled over large sections of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania.

The Nazi occupiers "purified" Poland of its Jewish population by genocide. And when the Soviet Red Army drove out the Wehrmacht, Stalin had the Polish state moved bodily westward. The western Ukraine, western Byelorussia and all of Lithuania were incorporated into the USSR. In return, Poland was given western Silesia, a region which had been under German rule since the days of Frederick the Great. In 1945-46, three million ethnic Germans were driven out of Poland, and those who remained were subjected to forced Polonisation. Now the collapse of the postwar Stalinist order in Eastern Europe has reopened all national and border questions amid a general climate of chauvinism and reaction.

There exists a sizable Polish minority in Lithuania concentrated in the region around the capital, Vilnius. Overwhelmingly workers and peasants, the Polish community has been viewed and treated with contempt by the dominant Lithuanians. A major aim of the nationalist Sajudis—the now ruling party of Lithuania—has been to eliminate the national rights of the Polish community. When Lithuania was still part of the USSR, the Sajudis government voted to make Lithuanian the sole official language. Poles, whose second language is Russian—the *lingua franca* of the Soviet Union—were thus effectively barred from government posts and higher education. One of the first acts of the Sajudis after Lithuania was recognised as independent last autumn was to abolish the local Polish councils, claiming they had supported the botched Kremlin coup.

As long as the Lithuanian nationalists were pitted against Gorbachev's Kremlin, the Solidarność regime in Warsaw fully supported them in the name of anti-Communist solidarity. But since

Lithuania became independent with Yeltsin's blessing, there has been growing friction between Warsaw and Vilnius. Last autumn the Polish foreign minister postponed a scheduled visit to Lithuania to protest the treatment of the Polish community there.

While the situation of the oppressed Polish minority in Lithuania can become a rallying point for right-wing Polish nationalists, the Silesian question can be used by the far more powerful, resurgent German imperialist state. For decades German émigrés from Silesia and East Prussia were a strong force on the West German right. Now with the breakdown of the Stalinist order, the German minority in Silesia is making its voice heard. And they naturally look to the powerful German state across the Oder-Neisse as their protector. When Bonn chancellor Helmut Kohl visited Polish Silesia in late 1989, he was greeted with banners saying, "Helmut, you are our Chancellor too."

For the present, Kohl has reluctantly affirmed the Oder-Neisse line as the German-Polish border. However, reunification has produced an orgy of German chauvinism, marked by murderous attacks on Poles and dark-skinned immigrant workers. Flexing its political muscles, the Kohl regime successfully defied its Common Market partners and Washington in the Yugoslav war by reasserting Germany's traditional protectorship of Croatia against Serbia. And Poland is a lot closer and more historically and strategically important for German imperialism than the Balkans.

**Czech "democracy" fuels fascistic nationalism**

Western liberals and social democrats can scarcely find the current crop of East European rulers appealing—clerical-nationalists like Walesa and Hungary's Josef Antall, ex-Stalinist apparatchiks turned nationalist demagogues like Romania's Iliescu and Serbia's Milosevic. A signal exception is Czechoslovak president Vaclav Havel—the witty, urbane, Bohemian (in both senses) writer and self-styled humanist.

Yet this model of a modern hip liberal is the front man for finance minister Vaclav Kraus, a fanatical devotee of

Margaret Thatcher and Milton Friedman, the one-time economic adviser to the Chilean butcher Pinochet. The "free market" shock treatment meted out by the Havel/Kraus regime has fuelled the growth of Slovak nationalism, with strong fascistic elements, just as in the 1930s the world-famous Czech "democrats" Masaryk and Benes, who were lionised by the Western left, fuelled the growth of pro-Nazi nationalism among the oppressed German (Sudeten) minority and clerical-fascism among the downtrodden Slovaks.

From the formation of Czechoslovakia by the Western imperialist victors after World War I, the country's political life has been shaped and at times dominated by the tensions between Czechs and Slovaks. While both are Western Slavic peoples speaking a similar language, they have a different history and political culture. The Czechs of Bohemia and Moravia were drawn into the economic and cultural orbit of late mediaeval Germany. In the 15th century the radical religious movement led by Jan Hus in Bohemia became the forerunner of the Protestant Reformation in Central Europe.

While the Hussite movement was bloodily suppressed, the authority of the Roman Catholic church has always remained weak in the Czech lands. In the late 19th century Bohemia and Moravia underwent substantial industrial development, generating a proletariat with a high level of class consciousness and an intelligentsia proud of its secular humanist culture. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Czech Social Democracy in its majority voted to join the Communist International.

During this period Slovakia remained a rural, traditionally Catholic region ruled by the decadent Hungarian nobility. Following the formation of a unitary state in 1919, the Czechs looked down on their poor Slovak cousins as priest-ridden country bumpkins. In turn, the Slovaks resented the dominance of smug, arrogant, wealthier Czechs. In the late 1930s Hitler exploited the national resentment of the Slovaks, as well as the German minority, to dismember the Czechoslovak state and establish the clerical-fascist "Republic of Slovakia" under Monsignor Josef Tiso. The Tiso regime killed 75,000 out of Slovakia's 90,000 Jews.

The horrors of the Nazi occupation produced a strengthening of the left, especially the Communists, among both Czechs and Slovaks. In 1944, a Communist-led Slovak uprising was defeated by the Nazis (with Stalin's connivance). In 1945 the Czechoslovak Communist Party won an absolute majority in an incontestably free parliamentary election. When the Stalinists took power in the 1948 "Prague coup", they did so on the basis of a solid general strike and the use of armed workers militias (which, needless to say, were kept under tight bureaucratic control).

Tensions between relatively backward Slovakia (with about a third of the country's population) and Bohemia/Moravia continued in the post-1948 Czechoslovak deformed workers state. Indeed, these tensions were a major factor in the fracturing of the Stalinist bureaucracy which led to the 1968 "Prague Spring". The leader of the "reform" faction, Alexander Dubcek—who promised "socialism with a human face"—was the First Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party. After Stalinist order was re-established with the military intervention of the Soviet-bloc forces, which sought to head off a slide into political revolution, a major effort was made to overcome the economic backwardness of Slovakia.

The pro-Moscow regime of Gustav Husak, himself a Slovak, undertook massive industrial investment in Slovakia, integrating this region with the Soviet economy. Huge petrochemical plants

*continued on page 8*

## E. Europe...

(Continued from page 7)

were built utilising cheap Siberian oil. Armaments factories supplying the Soviet military were constructed in small Slovak villages. By 1988 per capita income in Slovakia had risen to almost 90 per cent of that in the Czech lands, compared to 60 per cent four decades earlier when the old bourgeois order was overthrown. Today, on the other hand, the re-introduction of capitalism is bringing catastrophic consequences especially for Slovakia.

### "Velvet Revolution" spawns unemployment, Slovak separatism

Despite Czechoslovakia's relative economic prosperity, the heavily repressive Stalinist regime was universally despised. When in the fall of 1989 the East German Honecker government was toppled and Gorbachev conspicuously withdrew support from its counterpart in Prague, mass protests and a threatened general strike swept away the Stalinist regime within a few weeks. The hastily formed Civic Forum, with Havel as its most prominent leader, served as an umbrella organisation for the "democratic" opposition, and not only the opposition. The entire right wing of the bureaucracy, led by the Gorbachevite prime minister Marian Calfa, defected to the Forum.

The ultimate popular front, the Civic Forum ran the gamut from former liberal Stalinists like Dubcek and pseudo-Trotskyists like Peter Uhl to anti-Communist clericalists and "free market" fanatics like Kraus. The mood of national unity and euphoria lasted through the parliamentary elections in June 1990, which were easily won by the Civic Forum. (Significantly, the rump Communist Party did surprisingly well, emerging as the second largest party in both Czech lands and Slovakia.) The Slovak branch of the Civic Forum, called People Against Violence (VPN), strongly outpolled both the separatist Slovak National Party and the national-



Reuters

**As capitalist market spawns immiseration, nationalist Slovak demonstrators sport uniforms and symbols of the fascist Tiso regime.**

istic Christian Democrats. This would change rapidly and dramatically as the economic effects of the "bourgeois democratic" counterrevolution soon made themselves felt.

Following the 1990 elections, the extreme right wing of the Civic Forum around the finance minister Kraus gained the upper hand in the new ruling group. A key element in establishing a bourgeois state has been a purge of all former



Newsweek

**Polish miners in Warsaw protest Walesa's "shock treatment" dictated by Western bankers.**

officials of the Communist Party, the militia or the security police from public office. Under the watchword of "lustration" (from the Latin, meaning "purifying sacrifice"), a witch hunt has been gathering steam against hundreds of thousands of ex-CPers. The first "sacrifice", in January 1991, was the Czech environment minister Bodrich Moldan, a longtime dissident. Next there was a show trial of some liberal Civic Forum members of parliament who had signed the Charter 77 dissident manifesto. Now they're even going after Dubcek.

Along with the purge of reds, on New Year's 1991 the Prague government launched an economic "shock treatment" on the Polish model. The trauma was especially severe in Slovakia, whose economy was already reeling from the collapse of trade with the Soviet Union. Arms factories which dominated the economic life of small towns were closed down as "unprofitable". Unemployment, which had been effectively zero in 1989, skyrocketed to 10 per cent by late last year in Slovakia and 4 per cent in Bohemia/Moravia.

The rise of Slovak separatism ran apace with an immiseration of the masses. Last March, when Havel spoke in the Slovak capital of Bratislava, he was mobbed by psychotic right-wing nationalists who shouted, "Go home to Prague, you Jew!" (Havel, of course, is not Jewish.) Around the same time, the popular and "populist" VPN prime minister of Slovakia, Vladimir Meciar, split from Havel/Kraus and formed a new party to "build Slovak statehood" in order to defend its economy from the "free market" hatchetmen in Prague. In the wake of the VPN split, the Christian Democratic leader Jan Carnogursky became the new Slovak prime minister; one of his first acts was to send telegrams of congratulations to the secessionist regimes in Slovenia and Croatia on their declaration of independence from Yugoslavia.

A VPN spokesman explained the situation: "When countries experience an economic crisis, people become nationalistic" (*Washington Post*, 28 October 1991). However, Slovakia didn't "experience" an economic crisis as if it were a natural disaster. This is a man-made calamity, accompanying the restoration of capitalism. Yet the anger of Slovak working people over "free market" immiseration is being channelled into right-wing nationalism, symbolised by the public rehabilitation of Father Tiso, who was hanged as a war criminal in 1947. When a memorial plaque was placed at Tiso's birthplace in December, Slovak prime minister Carnogursky defended the clerical-fascist war criminal, arguing: "Tiso is broadly considered as having served as a brake against even greater Germanisation."

Unlike in 1939, the Slovak separatists do not now have the German imperialist army at hand to install them in power. The present mood among the Czech

masses appears to be, if the Slovaks want to go, good riddance. Nonetheless, it is by no means given that the national division of the Czechoslovak state would take place peacefully. Moreover, the Slovak nationalists might find that their most dangerous enemies are not the Czechs but their old masters, the Hungarians.

### Hungary at the centre of Central European irredentism

There are presently 700,000 Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, two million in Romania and 500,000 in Yugoslavia. One out of every four ethnic Magyars lives outside the borders of Hungary. The root cause of this state of affairs is that Hungary had the misfortune to be on the losing side of both world wars. After World War I, when the Habsburg Empire was broken up, Hungary lost more territory to Romania than remained in the rump Magyar state. Until 1918 the present Slovak capital of Bratislava was known by its Hungarian name of Pozsony and a majority of its inhabitants were Hungarian.

The traumatic effect of defeat in war, reinforced by national outrage over the country's treatment at the hands of the victorious Western "democratic" imperialists, gave rise to the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919. Its principal leader, Bela Kun, had been a prisoner of war in Russia when he was won to the Bolshevik cause. A bloody counter-revolution, spearheaded by the Romanian army, overthrew the Soviet Republic and installed in power the fascist dictatorship of Admiral Horthy. The Horthyite white terror ignited anti-Semitic pogroms in which thousands of Jews were killed. From the counterrevolution of 1919-20 to the counterrevolution of 1989, anti-Semitism and anti-Communism have been closely linked in Hungary, as in the rest of Eastern Europe.

In the 1930s the Horthy regime aligned itself with Nazi Germany, and the Hungarian Arrow Cross fought alongside the Waffen SS when Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union in 1941. Four years later the Red Army smashed the Nazi Wehrmacht and liberated Hungary from the nightmare of fascism. In 1947-48 the Stalinists, reacting to the pressures of US imperialism, carried out in Eastern Europe a *social revolution bureaucratically controlled from above*.

The deformations were especially severe in Hungary. The regime of arch-Stalinist Matyas Rakosi was exceptionally bloody, including toward fellow Communists, even by the standards of what was later euphemistically called "the era of the cult of the personality". The post-Stalin "thaw" in the Soviet Union cracked the totalitarian police-state apparatus which protected Rakosi and his cohorts. In October 1956 a popular uprising broke out against the hated regime, and workers councils took de facto power in

Budapest and other major cities. But this proletarian political revolution, which lacked a Bolshevik internationalist leadership, was crushed through the direct intervention of the Soviet Army, which was met by a months-long general strike.

Following the suppression of the revolution, the Kremlin installed in power the liberal Stalinist Janos Kadar, who had been imprisoned and tortured under Rakosi. In the early 1960s Kadar sought popular support, or at least acceptance, by improving consumption levels ("goulash Communism") and relaxing controls over intellectual and cultural life. In order to increase trade with Western Europe, in 1968 the Budapest Stalinists introduced widespread decentralisation and market mechanisms into the economy. Over the next two decades, this "market socialism" led to the fragmentation of the bureaucracy and the emergence of a relatively large class of petty capitalist entrepreneurs.

In 1989 the faction-ridden Hungarian bureaucracy totally disintegrated as a political force. Since there was no longer a Stalinist party to speak of and the working class remained politically passive, the forces of the counterrevolution in Hungary split into bitterly hostile factions — the Free Democrats and the Democratic Union — even before they came to power.

The Free Democrats were centrally based on the Western-oriented Budapest intelligentsia, a number of whom were of Jewish background. They stand for the rapid restoration of capitalist property and total political and economic integration of Hungary into Western Europe. In short, the Free Democratic leaders are aspiring Eurocrats who long to play big-time politics in the Common Market. In contrast, the Democratic Forum is strongly clerical-nationalist. Its leader Josef Antall calls for a return to "Christian" values and a "united Hungarian nation". The April 1990 elections were dominated by the Forum's anti-Semitic attacks against the Free Democrats.

The programme of the Democratic Forum, which won the election, states: "Hungary must accept responsibility for the situation of Hungarian minorities living beyond its borders and consistent concern for these minorities must be part of the overall national strategy" (*East European Reporter*, Spring/Summer 1990). A cabinet-level government office has now been set up in Budapest to pursue this "national strategy".

Spokesmen for the Hungarian community in Slovakia — about 12 per cent of the population — are demanding autonomy if the region secedes from Czechoslovakia. Since the Slovak nationalists are scarcely likely to permit such autonomy, a Slovak nationalist state would come into immediate conflict with Hungary.

Such a conflict already exists between Budapest and Bucharest over the Hungarians of Transylvania. The popular uprising in 1989 against the bloody and megalomaniacal despot Ceausescu witnessed the unity of Magyars and Romanians. Since then, however, the rising tide of Romanian nationalism has led to violent attacks on Hungarians and especially Gypsies. In March 1990 a Romanian mob, armed with axes and pitchforks, fell upon Hungarians demonstrating for language rights in the Transylvanian town of Tirgu Mures; six people were killed.

Some of the demands on Romania by the Budapest regime — such as the re-opening of Hungarian schools closed by Ceausescu and bilingualism in official documents — are in themselves legitimate democratic and national rights. But Antall & Co are also raising *anti-democratic* demands, such as barring Romanians from moving into predominantly Hungarian villages. The creation of Magyar



# Elections...

(Continued from page 1)

deserving swine.

The so-called Labour "lefts" kept their mouths well and truly shut throughout the election campaign and then piped up with a few criticisms after Kinnock's defeat. *Sun* columnist and MP Ken Livingstone, fresh from his revolting MI5-baiting of the *Leninist* who stood a candidate against him in Brent East, threw his hat into the ring for the leadership contest. (For more on *Leninist*, see article p.3.)

In Scotland, the day after the election, Labour MP George Galloway went on television making noises against Kinnock and calling for a "patriotic front" against the Tories. The next Sunday, 12 April, some 5000 turned out to demonstrate in Glasgow's George Square. As our comrades reported: "There were some SNP banners, even some CP banners, most of the crowd seemed to be made up of bitterly disappointed Labour voters." In addition to the Labour Party, Scottish TUC and the SNP nationalists, the Liberals and Church of Scotland were represented on the popular front podium. While fake lefts like the SWP literally hid their front page calling for a vote to Labour, our comrades reported that "*Workers Hammer* sold like hotcakes, with the anti-Labour front page and the back page article against nationalism". Clearly in Scotland a lot of people gritted their teeth and voted Labour, hoping to be rid of the Tories. Now the feeling of disenfranchisement will be deepened. In the aftermath of the elections, nationalism may make further inroads, but the power

of a revolutionary proletarian alternative to the Labour traitors and bourgeois nationalists can be brought to bear. North Sea oil workers especially have a powerful role to play in the fight for working-class revolution. On 14 March North Sea oil bosses' Murder, Inc. struck again, claiming the lives of ten oilworkers and the co-pilot of Bristow Super Puma helicopter which went down in a storm 100 miles off Shetland. Whether under a Tory, Labour or nationalist government this industrial murder for profit will continue as long as the blood-sucking capitalists remain in power.

Tommy Sheridan, the Scottish Militant Labour candidate who ran his campaign from jail as a poll tax prisoner, made a decent showing of 6287 behind the official Labour candidate's 14,170. (Standing as "real Labour" against imposed Kinnockite candidates, the Militant-supported MPs expelled from the Labour Party also polled well.) This indicates justified gut hatred of the Labour Party enforcers of the poll tax, pro-imperialist swine from Northern Ireland to the Gulf, friends of the City. But Sheridan's bunch slavishly called for a Kinnock victory, refuse to demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the troops sent into Northern Ireland by a Labour government, fingered those calling for the defeat of British/US imperialism and military defence of Iraq to the cops during the Gulf War and threatened to shop anti-poll tax protesters to the state after the police riot in Trafalgar Square in March 1990. Furthermore, as we reported in our last issue, Sheridan himself stooped to using the very language of race-hate fascist scum in keeping with Militant's

policy of debating and "exposing" the fascists. There was no basis to give even the most savagely critical support to Sheridan, Nellist or Fields.

In obeisance to the vile scabherder Kinnock, the trade union bureaucrats made sure that no outbreak of class struggle would "mar" the election. In London, Underground workers face the axing of at least 5000 jobs under a union-busting "Company Plan" which will also force workers to re-apply for their jobs under newly imposed "job descriptions" (at which point their seniority in their old jobs will be sacrificed), impose "flexible rostering" and require Underground workers to individually negotiate their rates of pay. RMT union leader Jimmy Knapp deliberately delayed any strike threat to avoid embarrassing Kinnock. But at a 14 April mass meeting at Congress House angry workers called for all-out strike action to shut down the Underground and opposed a repeat of the summer 1989 series of "unofficial" one-day strikes. Knapp, of course, pointedly refused to commit himself to all-out strike action.

Had Kinnock made it into No 10 Downing Street the bureaucrats would have pushed for a further "honeymoon" period of class peace. Now the incentive to shut up and eat it is rather diminished. An all-union strike of embattled Underground workers — including those in ASLEF and TSSA — should be joined by rail and bus workers who have every interest in *shutting the City down* and wiping the smile off the faces of its champagne-swilling fat cats. British Telecom workers are facing at least 24,000 redundancies this year — and the

overall plan is to reduce the work force from 250,000 to 150,000 over a five-year period. The union tops have done virtually nothing to date. BT workers also have the power to bring the City to a grinding halt through effective strike action and occupations of the exchanges and computer centres. Such a perspective of struggle by the trade union movement in alliance with the unemployed and the oppressed can only be carried through by a *break with Labourism*. It is necessary to construct a revolutionary leadership against the bureaucracy in the trade unions and a Bolshevik party to lead workers revolution. That was the lesson of the heroic miners strike and it is the lesson today.

Since the onset of Cold War II, capitulation to the imperialist drive to smash the Soviet workers state has driven the fake left deep into the camp of Kinnockite social democracy. Today, the bourgeois triumphalism over the "death of Communism" has pushed the social democracy and its left tails even further to the right. The myriad fake lefts who plumped for Kinnock in the election also took their side on the barricades with Yeltsin/Bush counter-revolution. "At home" they witnessed Labour's defeat with shock-horror and predictably started looking for a way to "save" the Labour Party. Especially pathetic was the *Socialist Worker* (18 April) whining: "Where do we go from here?" "The election result was a disaster for everyone who wants a better society". *Workers Power's* March 1992 election special screamed "VOTE LABOUR" so loudly that there was barely room for its masthead; it was filled with the worst sort

continued on page 11

# Ed note...

(Continued from page 2)

Spartacists for "bordering on criminal irresponsibility" because we "puff up the size" of the anti-Yeltsin protests (which even in WP's lying accounts have grown from "motley crews" of fascists and deadbeat Stalinists to not "more than 40,000").

The *Workers Power* article pictures a reproduction of a leaflet they distributed at the Soviet Army Day march on 23 February, which in WP's own words was "the most nationalist" so far. The article solemnly declares: "Revolutionaries bore an absolute responsibility to confront the anti-Semitic and chauvinist rhetoric...."

Revolutionaries did. But WP's supposed broadside against "anti-Semitic and chauvinist rhetoric" has not a mention of

internationalism, nor of defence of Jews or other national minorities. *In fact, it does not even contain the words "Jewish person", "anti-Semitism", "Pamyat" or "fascist".* It's no accident that the leaflet is reproduced in its British newspaper only in Russian. (WP is so parochial that they must think nobody in the English-speaking world is capable of reading its leaflet sans translation!) For it is perfectly tailored to accommodate the Stalinist "patriots" whom WP vituperates against from the safety of its London offices.

Titled "Down With the New Autocracy!" the leaflet was co-signed by the Slaughterite Socialist Workers Union and a handful of anarchists and Greens. Of course, it makes no mention of the fact that WP and its bloc partners were eager to support the "new autocracy" last August, when they rallied beneath the tsar's flag on Yeltsin's barricades.

To cobble together this bloc with viru-

lent Stalinophobes and anarchists, many of whom opposed the Bolshevik Revolution from the outset, the leaflet celebrates...the February 1917 Revolution (and no mention of October)! Under the heading "1917—February—1992", it proclaims: "75 years ago the working people overthrew the dictatorial regime which had violated its rights, oppressing and suppressing it." So the post-February Provisional Government of Prince Lvov and later Kerensky didn't oppress the working people?

While the ultra-opportunist Yeltsinite "socialists" are increasingly isolated, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is uniquely fighting to cohere a Trotskyist nucleus in the Soviet Union. We sell considerably more literature in the Soviet Union than all of them put together, and we do so on the basis of our established record as principled Leninist internationalists who do not brook any kind of national chauvinism or anti-Semitism.

Workers Power barely mentioned Pamyat twice in as many years, while we

have had numerous articles calling for Soviet workers to crush these Great Russian fascist scum ever since they emerged in the mid-'80s. And the third issue of the ICL's Russian-language Spartacist Bulletin, titled "Leninist Party—Tribune of the People", is devoted to the struggle against the oppression of Jews, women and homosexuals in the Soviet Union.

And Workers Power? At a 25 April talk in Dublin on his trip to the Soviet Union, WP speaker Paul Morris said that anti-Semitism was so pervasive there that all British and Americans were presumed to be Jews. So this intrepid "anti-racist" told Russians he was a *German-speaking Swiss!* We can only wonder why Morris stopped there, instead of going all the way and announcing himself 100 per cent Aryan.

On the barricades with Yeltsin counter-revolution and its NTS backers, capitulating to the anti-Semitism of the "patriot" milieu, manoeuvring with every anti-communist rat group in the Soviet Union masquerading as "Trotskyist"—such is the "struggle" of Workers Power. ■

ghettos in Transylvania could only perpetuate and inflame communalist enmity. Meanwhile, the situation along the Carpathian border is explosive.

The Hungary-Romania conflict has to date been conducted on a diplomatic plane. In Yugoslavia, where there is a large Hungarian minority in the northern region of Vojvodina, the Antall regime has gone a step further. Here the Hungarians (as in 1914 and 1939) have the big guns of German imperialism behind them. Thus Budapest supplied arms to the Croatian secessionist regime fighting the Serbs and the Yugoslav army, while Antall speculated that Vojvodina "could one day" return to Hungary. One day, that is, after a war with Serbia, if Hungary is victorious.

That Hungary could in the near future be involved in wars with three of its neighbours underscores the bloody-minded nationalism unleashed by and driving forward capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe. Such tendencies will inevitably be inflamed by the manoeuvres and interventions of the Western imperialist powers, who will

increasingly be hostile rivals squabbling over the spoils of fragmenting "post-Communist" East Europe. But even if such wars could somehow be avoided, the triumph of the "national principle" in the new "democratic" order would mean the dispossession and worse of millions of members of the minority communities which exist in every East European country (and virtually everywhere else in the modern world).

Revolutionary struggle against "free market" immiseration must be integrally linked to the struggle against all forms of nationalism, anti-Semitism, attacks on Gypsies and immigrant workers, and religious bigotry. Reforge genuinely communist parties in East Europe committed to the internationalist principles of Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg and Christian Rakovsky!

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 547, 20 March 1992.

Part II of this article deals with Stalinism, nationalism and counterrevolution in the Balkans and appears in *Workers Vanguard* no 548, 3 April 1992.

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sional stereotyping of an Orwellian society of slaves and slavemasters in which "the standard of living of the masses not only lagged far behind, but even declined absolutely compared with 1928" (p51). During the first five-year plan wages did fall drastically. But then they began to rise, dropped during the Second World War and were restored to the 1928 level by the time of Stalin's death in 1953. From 1955 to 1968 real wages increased by 56 per cent. Under Brezhnev, in fact, in the late '70s industrial investment was cut back while consumption levels were maintained. By Cliff's lights, the arch-Stalinist Brezhnev should be seen as a "liberator".

And what about the critical events occurring in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union today? Since he characterised these societies as state capitalist, of course Cliff denies that there could be such a thing as capitalist restoration. In fact, he is absolutely categorical that Western-style capitalism could not emerge there: "From a state-owned and planned economy there can be no retracing of steps to an anarchic, private-ownership economy" (p273). And again, in a polemic with Trotsky, Cliff subtitled one section "The internal forces are not able to restore individual capitalism in Russia: what conclusion as regards its class character?" Cliff says: "Before the experience of the World War II, it was an understandable if incorrect assumption that private capitalism could be restored in Russia without its occupation by an imperialist power. But the victory of the concentrated, stultified Russian economy over the German war machine silenced all talk of such a possibility" (p326).

According to Cliff, "This deduction of the probable programme of the anti-Stalinist opposition from the objective data of bureaucratic state capitalism is clearly supported by the actual programmes of two organised anti-Stalinist movements which appeared during the World War II—the Vlassov movement and the Ukrainian Resurgent Army (UPA)" (pp273-4). The fascistic UPA was founded in 1940 in the newly Soviet-occupied western Ukraine, in collaboration with the Wehrmacht, explicitly to fight against the Red Army. The UPA collaborated with the remnants of Petliura's Ukrainian government in exile, notorious for its anti-Semitic pogroms. The other group mentioned by Cliff is the movement of General Vlasov, the leader of the Russian fascist forces who fought on the side of Hitler against the Red Army. Vlasov must be about the purest example of a counterrevolutionary you could imagine. "Whether the Vlassov leaders were sincere or not is irrelevant," says Cliff. Ye gods! But from Cliff's virulently Stalinophobic standpoint, nothing could be worse than Stalinism, including Hitler's Nazis. With this methodology the SWP ends up indiscriminately supporting every opposition to Stalinism, no matter how reactionary, from CIA-backed Afghan cut-throats to Nazi-infested Baltic nationalists.

Cliff's work tells you precious little about the Soviet Union but a lot about the mindset of the author. Its fundamental appeal, with its overriding empha-

sis on workers' consumption, is to trade-union economism. As Cold War I began in earnest, the bourgeoisie and their social-democratic lackeys set up a hue and cry about the Red Army occupying Eastern Europe. Cliff's book reflects the prejudices of British social democracy with its virulent attacks on Soviet "expansionism", and the implicit message that Britain is better because at least it had "free" unions. One might add that Cliff's sneering at accumulation and rapid growth is entirely in character with the prevailing attitudes of left Labourism in the post-war period with its attempts to prop up a decaying capitalism based on fossilised industry.

### Modern-day state-capitalist charlatanism

Of course those like Callinicos or Harman who attempt to "update" Cliff's theory of state capitalism never acknowledge that he ruled out the restoration of private property in Eastern Europe. That

So Cliff's heirs simply junk his analysis and prognosis while claiming to base themselves on his theory. According to Harman, the trend since the First World War to the 1970s was state intervention in national economies, which came to its logical fruition in Eastern Europe. However, now, "The most successful enterprises in the West became those which began not merely to sell internationally, but also to organise production internationally. Multinational capitalism began to supplant state capitalism as the vanguard of the system" (*International Socialism* no 46, Spring 1990, p45). So capitalist concerns expanding internationally and corporate mergers across national lines is "new"? Lenin described exactly such phenomena in his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, where he shows that inter-imperialist trade and economic rivalries explode into military wars. Today with the collapse of Stalinism we are witnessing a sharpening of such inter-imperialist rivalries. Gorbachev's

of fear, lies and flattery" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, pp 275-6).

Thus, it is not the centralised economy but the absence of workers democracy which is a major reason for stagnation. But there is an inherent tendency for Stalinist regimes to abandon central planning in favour of introduction of "market methods", ie, at bottom the attempt to improve labour productivity through the whip of unemployment. Precisely this lay behind Gorbachev's perestroika, which unleashed forces which today threaten capitalist restoration as well as the virtual dismemberment of the USSR.

Arguing in part against the Cliffites of his time, as well as against the Stalinists who falsely claimed that socialism had been achieved in the USSR, Trotsky wrote: "To define the Soviet regime as transitional, or intermediate, means to abandon such finished social categories as capitalism (and therewith 'state capitalism') and also socialism. But besides being completely inadequate in itself, such a definition is capable of producing the mistaken idea that from the present Soviet regime only a transition to socialism is possible. In reality a backslide to capitalism is wholly possible" (p254).

Trotskyists view the Stalinist bureaucracy as a privileged caste, balancing between the collectivised property forms and world imperialism. As such—and in counterposition to what is said by state capitalists and other advocates of "new class" theories—it plays no independent role. This was evident during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956—a nascent political revolution—in which the ruling Stalinist party crumbled and 80 per cent of its members went over to the side of the insurgent, pro-socialist workers. Likewise in today's crisis in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the bureaucratic caste is fragmenting and disintegrating in a manner in which no historical class would.

Because of this contradictory character, the bureaucracy at times finds itself compelled to take measures to defend the planned economy against the imperialists or internal counterrevolutionaries. Thus even the conservative bureaucrat Brezhnev sent Soviet troops to fight the CIA-backed mujahedin, albeit in a half-hearted manner. In practice the dual character of the bureaucracy is denied not only by the open state capitalists like the SWP, but by numerous pseudo-Trotskyist organisations like Workers Power, the Militant and the WRP. Their *de facto* line that the bureaucracy is "counter-revolutionary through and through" lands them on the same side of the barricades as the Cliffites, whooping it up for Polish Solidarność and Boris Yeltsin. Capitulating to the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" blitz, Workers Power has virtually returned to its Cliffite origins. In a 50-page "critique" of Tony Cliff published in *Permanent Revolution* in the summer of 1991, Workers Power's Paul Morris cannot bring himself to call for the defence of the Soviet Union, nor does he mention a single one of the numerous Cliffite betrayals on Korea, Afghanistan, etc.

Third campists and their apologists not only assign an independent historical role to the bureaucracy, but treat it as a greater enemy than imperialism. This is why Trotsky noted that: "Every political tendency that waves its hands hopelessly at the Soviet Union, under the pretext of its 'non-proletarian' character, runs the risk of becoming the passive instrument of imperialism" (*The Class Nature of the Soviet State*). The crisis of Stalinism not only serves to underscore the vacuity of the theory of state capitalism, but shows anew that those who carry this virus will necessarily act as the running dogs of imperialism. ■



Society of Cultural Relations with the USSR

Kharkov, Ukraine, 1920: Red Army smashed White Guard reaction. Kautsky labelled Soviet Union "state capitalist".

the modern-day Cliffite pontificators have had to simply drop essential chunks of Cliff's theory and hope that nobody will remember what he said only underscores the fact that the whole edifice built up by Cliff is ridiculous impressionism built on sand and exploded by historic events. A couple of decades ago the Cliffites were explaining that the "capitalist super-powers"—the US and USSR—had staved off economic crisis through the arms race and military spending. But this theory of the "permanent arms economy" died a quiet death when it became impossible to deny that Germany and Japan, which were spending proportionately less on the military budget, had more dynamic economies than the US. Furthermore, the Cliffites postulated that state capitalism was the highest expression of capitalist imperialism, and that Western capitalist economies would more and more "resemble" that of the USSR. The statist economies of war-time Germany, America and Britain were supposed to be the harbingers of the future. But the Reagan years, along with Thatcher's dismantling of the welfare state, has made that a non-starter, too.

appeasement of imperialism gave the US ruling class the green light to try to corner the world oil stocks at the expense of its German and Japanese competitors. Some 100,000 Iraqis died in this bloody manifestation of the "new world order". Were the Soviet Union to be destroyed—which is what the Cliffites are cheering for—it would bring the world that much closer to nuclear war and annihilation.

In stark contrast to the banalities of Cliffite theory, Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed* presents a powerful and cogent development of the contradictory qualities of Soviet society. The enormous gains of the USSR—including the right to guaranteed employment, health care, and education—all gave concrete expression to the vastly superior potential of the planned economy over capitalism. But still the economy lagged significantly behind those of the most developed capitalist countries in productivity of labour. As Trotsky noted:

"The progressive role of the Soviet bureaucracy coincides with the period devoted to introducing into the Soviet Union the most important elements of capitalist technique.... It is possible to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made Western pattern by bureaucratic command—although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost. But the farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow.... Under a nationalized economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime

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# Elections...

(Continued from page 9)

of nonsense about making "Labour fight for workers' needs". Following the election, WP called on like minded fake leftists to "join us, subordinating the fight in the Labour Party to the unambiguous goal of a revolutionary party and working class power". But don't expect to wait even until the local elections for them to ignore these "fine words". No matter what, support to the Labour Party is an article of faith for SWP, SO, WP et al rather than a tactic to be used when appropriate. If the Labour Party runs in parliamentary elections independently of the bourgeois parties and is not decisively identified with openly anti-working-class or pro-imperialist policies, it may well be advantageous for revolutionaries to extend critical support. This is manifestly not the case today.

As for the present government, Major has sent several signals of note. For one, he wants to get the Asylum Bill, which seeks to further tighten immigration and make it easier still for the authorities to ignore the appeal of asylum seekers whose applications have been denied. (Labour's then Shadow Home Secretary Hattersley

had grotesquely offered a deal to the government prior to the election period in order to get the bill through earlier, to the disgust of even bourgeois liberals.) And both the Tories and the Liberal Democrats showed their overt racism when John Taylor, a black Conservative stood in Cheltenham. Taylor was imposed from Central Office against the local Tories, some of whom then threatened to deselect him. Playing directly to the racist opposition to Taylor, the Liberal Democrats stressed that their candidate was a "local man" (read: white).

Another very indicative act was John Major's dumping of Peter ("Clementine") Brooke as Northern Ireland secretary and the installation of Sir Patrick Mayhew along with Michael Mates. (This accompanied Major's proposal to bring MI5 directly into domestic "anti-terrorism" work.) Mayhew is well-remembered for refusing to prosecute RUC officers acting in concert with MI5 over the "shoot-to-kill" evidence revealed by the Stalker inquiry. Mates served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Queen's Dragoon Guards and was a military advisor at Stormont. *An Phoblacht* (16 April) writes that Mates is "the MP who most prominently champions the cause of the British army in Westminster".

Central to any revolutionary pro-

gramme on these islands is the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British troops from Northern Ireland as well as the fight for a proletarian solution against Green and Orange sectarianism. This is as well an important question for class-conscious elements in Scotland where the SNP promotes pernicious nationalism, likely to increase and grow nastier in the wake of the election. The SNP does not oppose the British army in Northern Ireland. But, at the same time Jim Sillars addressed a SPUC meeting as part of his election campaign, lining up with the Catholic hierarchy on an anti-abortion ticket to win Catholic votes away from the Labour Party. Because of the deep treachery of the British social democracy such issues as the national question involving semi-assimilated peoples in the British Isles — which would have been easily resolved within the context of proletarian revolution — have not diminished but become inflamed. A Leninist party must be a "tribune of the people", addressing all forms of oppression, thereby enabling the working masses to transcend national and other divisions in the interest of united class struggle.

While the Labour-loyal left cry into their pillows over Kinnock's electoral defeat, the working people of these islands desperately need an authentic revolution-

ary party capable of leading the inevitable class battles and social struggles to come. The electoral defeat of the Labour Party, after 13 years of economic devastation, certainly shows that social democracy with a Tory face *and* mask is neither convincing to the middle class nor inspiring to the working class. Adapting to bourgeois triumphalism over "the death of socialism", the Labour Party is sharing some of the lot of other West European social democracies in this period (most graphic in the rout of Mitterand's Socialist Party). A balloon of speculation has arisen in the press. Does Labour have a future? Will there be a bloc with the Liberals? Will the Labour Party cut its links with the unions? In fact, as the leadership contest shows, the trade union bureaucrats (whatever the constitutional niceties), as always, continue to call the shots. The Labour Party remains the hegemonic party of the British workers movement, and the chief strategic obstacle to socialist revolution. Its working-class base must be split from the pro-capitalist leadership in the course of class struggle. Its posture may in the future change (to the left as well as further variations on the right): its spots will not, and our fight to build a revolutionary workers party goes on. For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles! For a Socialist United States of Europe! ■

# Ireland...

(Continued from page 12)

Progress). The willingness to fight has been evident in last year's ESB strike, the recent strike by the bank workers, and the current resistance of An Post workers to wage-cuts and attacks on union organisation and conditions. And many of the women of Ireland who were told that Mary Robinson's presidency heralded a new age of "reform" have been bitterly disabused and have shown a readiness to mobilise in militant protest. Robinson has been conspicuously silent on the recent controversy. Of course, her "above politics" office has not prevented her from speaking out in favour of a visit by Elizabeth Windsor, in an obvious overture to the Orange bigots in the North. Ian Paisley said he would welcome Robinson to Belfast when the Queen was welcome in Dublin, so Robinson obliged.

The DSYG, in a leaflet distributed to the first protests against the High Court ruling in February, stated: "Workers must rule in Ireland if women are to be free!" The struggle for the democratic rights to contraception, abortion and divorce, against the proscription on homosexuality, for the separation of the church from the state, education and health provision — this means a fight against the whole reactionary clerical capitalist system. Only a socialist, planned economy within the context of a United Socialist States of Europe and a world socialist order can provide the material basis for women's full and equal participation in production, and for socialised provision for child-care and other domestic labour.

As Eibhlin McDonald, the speaker at a recent DSYG forum, explained: "The crucifixion of this teenager is being presented in some quarters as an aberration... that the Irish bourgeoisie is very humanitarian and takes cognisance of special cases. Well it's not an aberration for them, for Irish capitalism, it's pretty fundamental to them." The infamous cases of Ann Lovett and Joanne Hayes demonstrate the grim reality. Comrade McDonald relayed another example: "In one of Nell McCafferty's books she talks about a woman in a hospital in Drogheda. She had cancer, her pregnancy had to go to the full term because they wouldn't give her radium treatment for cancer because it would harm the foetus

and she died and the baby died. Her husband used to hear her screaming every night as he entered the hospital yard going to visit her. This is recent. We're not talking about the 19th century here.... The Ireland of Mary Robinson, the modernising face that looks to Europe includes all of this."

The recent case highlights the oppression of youth who, under reactionary age of consent laws and other legislation, are deprived access to information, contraception, abortion and even the legal right to have sex in the first place. The state, the church and the institution of the family combine in a vicious trinity to keep youth down and women the "slaves of the slaves". Lower the legal age of adulthood! Down with sex codes and discriminatory laws against relations based on the effective consent of those involved. We Marxists demand free quality health care for all, including free abortion and birth control on demand. In a socialist society, socialised childcare and housework will release women from domestic servitude, and a state stipend will be available to all young people, enabling economic independence from the family.

It is particularly revolting to observe the antics of the so-called left, consciously tailoring their demands to "constitutional" reform. The call to "Repeal the 8th Amendment!" has been taken up by the lot — the Socialist Workers Movement, Militant, Irish Workers Group, People's Democracy, Sinn Féin et al. The IWG is a quintessential reflection of the "constitutional" cretinism of the Robinson Fan Club, when it writes:

"The fight to decriminalise abortion does not answer the question of whether abortion would be legal here in all or only in exceptional circumstances. On this point there are honest disagreements among many genuine activists. What the campaign must urgently do, therefore, is unite the widest forces in real action to smash the legal obstacles to abortion rights, while debating what kind of positive abortion rights should be fought for."

In addition to the call for repeal of the 8th Amendment, the extra-parliamentary reformists are now raising the call for "A woman's right to choose!" in order to put themselves marginally to the left of the mainstream bourgeois proponents of cleaning up the constitution. Some, like the deeply anti-communist anarcho-social democrats of the Workers Solidarity

Movement, even occasionally mention "free abortion on demand" in meetings of twenty or in pamphlets sold by the ten. But for wider consumption this elementary demand is always dropped. Of course Marxists support the decriminalisation of abortion, but for the overwhelming majority of working-class and poor women the "right" to have an abortion without the means to pay still leaves them without much "choice"! And "A woman's right to choose" is a particularly weaselly slogan in Ireland today: a *deliberate, conscious opportunist evasion* of any mention of abortion. The only people who are fooled by this trickery are the authors of the slogan themselves.

By contrast, since the DSYG was founded and intervened in the earlier student-centred protests over dissemination of abortion information throughout Ireland, we have consistently called for free abortion on demand as part of a revolutionary programme. When DSYG comrades on a picket outside the GPO in February shouted the slogan "Free abortion on demand", we were accused by the SWM and Sinn Féin of being "SPUC agents" and they attempted to shove us out of the protest. The IWG and the anarchists remained silent all the while. By their deeds ye shall know them!

Among the reformist outfits is the USec group People's Democracy who argued openly at Trinity College in April that it was unrealistic to call for abortion rights of any sort, let alone for free abortion on demand. A similar argument was put forth by a Communist Party of Ireland sympathiser at the DSYG meeting. As one woman attending the meeting responded: "He said that Ireland is not yet ready for abortion. Well, one 14-year-old girl was ready a month ago. And 50,000 women have been ready and they are the ones who are willing to be counted and 15,000 have gone and are not willing to be counted and for everyone that goes there are probably three who help them get there. Ireland is ready for abortion, has been ready for abortion and always will be ready for it and it is nobody else's concern but that woman involved."

The Socialist Workers Movement (SWM) is perhaps the best example of how craven, how far behind even the prevailing consciousness of the recent mobilisations were the fake-left. Initially it raised the demand "Rape victims have the right to abortion". In an American

context we noted "The so-called 'left' is mostly a bunch of lying sellouts whose support for abortion and women's rights runs a distant second to their appetite to act as the front men for the semi-human face of the most rapacious imperialist power on earth" (*Women & Revolution* no 40, Winter 1991-92). This fits the anti-Soviet SWM and its ilk to a tee (see article on the Cliff group on p4).

As for the Sinn Féin nationalists, most delegates at their recent Ard Fheis abstained on a motion supporting the teenage girl's right to an abortion, obviously fearing a backlash among elements of their Catholic base. As the February DSYG statement said: "The 'new world order' onslaught on abortion rights extends far beyond the particular viciousness of the Irish clerical state. The same nightmare threatens and blights the lives of women in the countries of Eastern Europe which have fallen victim to capitalist counterrevolution such as Poland and East Germany. Attacks on the rights of women world-wide are the inevitable product of the capitalist system in decay." What workers and women in Ireland need is an internationalist party dedicated to the political independence of the working class from the popular front of Robinson et al. We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British troops from Northern Ireland while presenting a revolutionary, proletarian solution against the fascist Orange demagogues and the so-called anti-imperialists of Sinn Féin/IRA who want to bomb their way to an agreement with the British. No to forcible reunification! For an Irish Workers Republic, part of a socialist federation of the British Isles!

We do not seek to pressurise the rotten Labour Party but to split its working-class base away from the Springs and the Staggs in the struggle for workers rule. Likewise we counterpose to the openly pro-capitalist De Rossaites of the Democratic Left or the rump "Workers Party" whose revolutionary socialism consists of maintaining its "clear support for the police in their struggle against all terrorist groups" in the North (*Tomorrow's People*, March 1992)!

A revolutionary party must put the fight for the liberation of women and all the oppressed, not least the vilely abused Travellers, at the centre of its struggle. We in the DSYG are dedicated to forging such a Leninist party. ■

Ireland:

## No to "constitutional" hoaxes

# For a working class-centred fight for free abortion on demand!

DUBLIN, 25 April—The abortion crisis of capitalist-clerical Ireland storms on. The forthcoming June referendum on the Maastricht Treaty (to form a Single European Market) is destined to become a proxy fight between Catholic Church hardline anti-abortionists and those elements of the Irish bourgeoisie who (while determined to keep abortion out of Ireland) value Euro-subsidies more highly than 110 per cent adherence to Vatican doctrine. Meanwhile the women of Ireland and all those who favour abortion rights still face a bitter struggle for what is *needed*: free abortion and contraception on demand. It can rarely have been clearer that it will take working-class revolution to break the power of the church in society, and that the reformist parties of the Irish working class are utterly tied to the capitalist system of austerity, oppression and bigotry.

Massive outrage greeted the 17 February High Court ruling banning a 14-year-old alleged victim of rape from obtaining an abortion anywhere in the world. Opponents of the reactionary judgment took to the streets in record numbers, opinion polls showed 67 per cent in favour of some provision of abortion in the Republic, and Ireland hit the headlines the world over as a bastion of unabashed Catholic reaction (and was cited by Polish clerical anti-communists as their sordid inspiration). For a few weeks the Catholic church hierarchy and priesthood was beaten into near silence. The Supreme Court, at the end of February, lifted the injunction and a week later gave its ruling: that a woman could obtain an abortion if there was a "real and substantial risk" to her life (in this case she was suicidal), which "outweighed" the so-called "right to life" of the foetus. At the same time the court *upheld* the monstrous principle that in general women



Angry young women protest reactionary clericalist anti-abortion outrage. Working-class-centred struggle, not popular frontist/liberal pressure politics, is urgently necessary.

could be legally barred by injunctions from leaving the country to get an abortion!

This partial climb-down, which was optimistically seen as opening the way to abortion in Ireland itself for the first time, pretty effectively shut up the popular-front opposition in the Dáil, whose figurehead is President Mary Robinson, and which comprises the openly capitalist Fine Gael, the Labour Party and the Democratic Left (ex-Workers Party). From the beginning, these worthies had wrung their hands in horror at the "scandal", casting around for some way of damping down the fire of protest, in conformance with their obvious ambition to form the next coalition capitalist government. Now the girl could get an abortion, they felt the pressure was off. Prior

to the ruling, they had particularly favoured dropping the 1983 8th Amendment (which aimed to *entrench* the illegalisation of abortion in the constitution), leaving in place the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act inherited from British colonial statute law, which firmly prohibits abortion. The extra-parliamentary wing of the Robinson popular front, staffed by the sub-reformist Irish "left", had duly decided to channel the protests into a campaign to "Scrap the Amendment". As we in the Dublin Spartacist Youth Group pointed out, this could accurately be described as the "Keep Abortion Illegal Campaign", and we sharply counterposed the need for a *hard, working-class-centred fight for free abortion on demand!*

The tormented young victim of the church/state criminals has now been able to obtain her abortion in London. But the question of abortion has continued to rage on at the heart of Southern Irish politics. After the Supreme Court dropped the matter back in the laps of the government, Reynolds sought and obtained all-party agreement to a modification to the Maastricht Treaty, which already includes a protocol devised to safeguard Ireland's constitutional amendment banning abortion. Reynolds et al desperately want the treaty ratified (and the fabled £3 billion aid package that is supposed to accompany it). The government devised an amendment that pledged Ireland not to interfere with women travelling abroad, and to allow information on abortion to be published in the Republic. Such information has been rigorously suppressed by a string of court rulings in the past five years. The EC

refused to play ball, leaving Reynolds with no option but to announce a second referendum on travel and information. Hoping to kill off the abortion controversy for the time being, the government plans this referendum for November.

But Reynolds is caught between the desperate quest for German gold (which unites his faction of Fianna Fáil, his coalition partners in the Progressive Democrats and the stalwarts of the Robinson pop-front) and the stirring might of the Catholic hierarchy. As every day passes the Church and its various front groups like SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) are gearing up a great reactionary crusade against *any* concessions to godless liberalism: calling from the pulpits at Mass for the faithful to come out on the streets and in the polling stations against Maastricht, against the November travel/information propositions, and for a third and decisive referendum to once and for all copper-fasten constitutional prohibition of abortion.

The Irish state has sought to preserve its social backwardness against a perceived threat of "European liberalism" with a strident defence in the Euro courts of the laws against homosexuality, divorce and abortion. It enthusiastically joined the EEC in 1973 while maintaining its pretence of "neutrality" and has subsequently affirmed its alignment with the NATO imperialists via the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985. Now the D-mark dominated EC is moving towards a free-trade power bloc (to compete with the US and Japan in the "New World Order"), and weak, dependent Irish capitalism wants its cut.

Yet Reynolds & Co are now having a hard time convincing women to vote for a treaty that equates their life with that of a foetus. It is also by no means clear that the Church's desired third poll would reaffirm the 1983 ban (when its anti-women policy was successfully shoved down the throats of the populace). This Gordian knot of bourgeois "constitutional" and legal wrangling can only be cut in a progressive sense by a tough, principled, iron-hard fight: not for this reform or that wording but for what is *needed* by women and the working class. Armed with a programme for working-class social revolution, the fight for free abortion on demand must be taken up with the same sense of unbending determination that marks the SPUC reactionaries on the other side of the barricades.

The potential for social struggle is palpable as sections of the working class challenge the social contract austerity, union-busting, wage control of the PESP (Programme for Economic and Social

*continued on page 11*



Irish youth and women took to the streets in their thousands to defend teenager's right to abortion.