

ANC/De Klerk neo-apartheid regime: enemy of black freedom



Reuters



Reuters

Buthelezi, De Klerk and Mandela shake hands on elections. "Power-sharing" deal preserves neo-apartheid capitalism, as power of black proletariat is shackled through nationalist popular front with bourgeoisie.

MAY 10—Today Nelson Mandela, leader of the ANC, was sworn in as president of South Africa. It is only four years since he was released from prison after being locked up for 27 years by the racist regime. Yesterday, Mandela walked arm-in-arm into the newly elected multiracial parliament with his former jailer, apartheid ruler FW De Klerk. The inaugural ceremonies drew 46 present and former heads of state and government, at least nine kings, princes and sheiks and UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali. This "New World Order" gala was to celebrate a supposed "negotiated revolution". But in the desperately poor black shantytowns, revolution is yet to come.

Over the past decade and a half, the blows of revolt chipped away at the apart-

**For a Bolshevik workers party!
For a black-centred workers republic!**

heid edifice, legalising black unions, eliminating the segregation laws of "petty apartheid" (against interracial marriage, imposing separate beaches and public accommodations) and "grand apartheid" (the infamous pass laws, Group Areas Act and bantustan "homelands"). But the owners of South Africa's mines, factories and farms have by no means abandoned their superexploitation of the black toilers. Rather they are seeking to per-

petuate that exploitation by utilising as their agent the very organisation claiming leadership of the black liberation movement, Mandela's ANC. The *Financial Times* (9 May) highlighted the triumphalism of the gold and diamond mine owners: "Anglo American and De Beers Have Much to Celebrate—African Empire Open to the World". And due to the counterrevolution that swept East Europe and the Soviet Union, "this

means that Anglo is no longer such a natural target for an ANC-controlled government either to break-up...or nationalise".

The outcome of the election was in fact determined well before it took place. There would be a coalition "government of national unity" between the ANC and De Klerk's Afrikaner-based National Party. Now this has been amplified by a deal to include Mangosuthu Buthelezi, head of the Zulu tribalist Inkatha party, giving him control of Natal province. In KwaZulu/Natal there is evidence of massive voter fraud. However, Mandela refused to challenge this, raising speculations of a "deal within the deal", to let Buthelezi have enough votes to bring him

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Electing Labour has not, will not stop the fascists

Trade unions, minorities must crush the BNP!

The fake left is claiming that Labour's victory in Tower Hamlets and the unseating of BNP'er Derek Beackon strikes a real blow at fascism. This is a lie! The fascists will not be stopped by means of voting and by relying on the capitalist state, whether administered by Labour or Tory. The BNP do not believe in abiding by the results of the ballot box or other democratic niceties. They are an extra-parliamentary gang of race terrorists, kept in reserve by the capitalist class. The fascist scum must be broken and smashed on the streets, through militant workers'

mobilisations.

Electing a Labour council does not change the fundamental reality of the state, which is an organ of class rule by the bourgeoisie and is necessarily racist. The BNP will continue to carry out its race terror and, as they have done in the past, the cops and courts will seek to protect the fascist scum against the just outrage of their intended victims. In breeding illusions in the chauvinist Labourites who run the council, the fake left has in fact assisted in the demobilisation of anti-fascist struggle.

The East End of London has been a battleground between the racist scum of the BNP and militant anti-fascist youth who have sought to stop them. Life has become a living hell for black and Asian minorities—on the Isle of Dogs alone reported cases of racial attack have increased by 300 per cent since 1988. Muktar Ahmed and Quaddus Ali have been put in hospital by fascist-inspired terror gangs, beaten to within an inch of their lives. Capitalism in deep economic decline is the breeding ground for the fascist BNP with their murderous designs

on Jews, blacks, Asians, Gypsies, Irish Republicans, gays, leftists and trade unionists.

Last September, after the murderous assault on Quaddus Ali and a fascist rampage through Brick Lane, an action led by the Militant's Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE) and the SWP's Anti Nazi League (ANL) succeeded in leaving the BNP in a humiliated heap in Brick Lane. This action was welcomed by thousands of anti-fascists across Britain. The question was how to build upon this

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In memory of Blair Peach Anti-fascist martyr

On 23 April 1979 Blair Peach was murdered by the British state. Along with thousands of others, Blair Peach, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, had turned out for an anti-fascist rally in the predominantly Asian Southall area of London against the National Front (NF) fascist scum. That day saw hundreds of anti-fascist protesters arrested and dozens injured. The murderous cops of the Special Patrol Group killed Blair Peach, fracturing his skull through repeated blows to the head. Those responsible for Blair Peach's murder were never brought to justice.

Today there is a sinister rise of racist state and fascist BNP terror, which has seen the murders of Stephen Lawrence and Joy Gardner along with brutal attacks on Quaddus Ali and Muktar Ahmed. Fascist terror gangs are on the increase across Europe, spurred on by capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet

Union amidst imperialist "New World Order" crisis.

Blair Peach was murdered by cops administered by the capitalist Callaghan Labour government. And it was Harold Wilson's Labour government in 1974 that was responsible for the death of anti-fascist Kevin Gately in Red Lion Square. Appeals to the capitalist state, whether Tory or Labour, to stop the fascists are suicidal. Nor will the fascists be stopped by wretched pro-Labour electoralism. What is urgently needed is massive mobilisations of trade unions and minorities to crush the fascists!

The memory of Blair Peach should be seared in the minds of every class-struggle and anti-fascist fighter. It will take workers revolution to smash the rotten capitalist system, which breeds the fascist scum. Only then will the death of Blair Peach along with all the victims of this racist capitalist system be avenged. ■

Vindictive court judgment against anti-fascist fighter

It took them two trials, but on 15 April the state finally convicted Martin Milne, a supporter of Militant Labour. Milne participated in last September's action on Brick Lane in which several BNP scum had their heads "acquainted with the pavement". Anti-racists everywhere cheered at the news of this act of elementary sanitation, which gave the fascists a taste of the treatment they deserve. Far from a criminal, Milne is an anti-racist hero and should have his conviction expunged and be financially compensated for his trouble and expense.

But as Milne told the *Militant* (22 April): "the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) wanted to make an example of me". He was found guilty of "affray", bound over for two years and fined £500. In this racist capitalist society, anti-fascists are hounded by the cops and courts, while the murderers of Stephen Lawrence and the attackers of

Quaddus Ali and Muktar Ahmed are free to kill or maim their next victims.

Four months after the 16 October anti-fascist demonstration, the cops launched a renewed witch hunt, searching nationwide for protesters they could frame up for acts of violence in Welling. The Partisan Defence Committee held a protest outside Scotland Yard on 5 March denouncing the dragnet and demanding charges be dropped against all anti-fascist protesters. The PDC stressed the centrality of the organised working class in the fight against fascism: "We call for disciplined, trade union centred workers defence guards to make the fascists afraid to show their faces." We appeal to our readers to help defray the legal costs of Martin Milne convicted for a courageous act of anti-fascism.

Send donations to: YRE Defence Fund, PO Box 858, London E9 5HU. ■



TROTSKY

Support to the popular front is
class treachery!

After hearing the news of the February Revolution 1917 while still in Switzerland, Lenin wrote his "Letters from Afar". Lenin's first letter was originally censored by the Pravda editorial board (including Stalin) for being too critical of the Mensheviks and the Provisional Government. In it Lenin warns against any support to the bourgeois Provisional Government, a government of the "capitalist landlords and bourgeoisie which

has long been ruling our country economically". Lenin argues that the situation was transitional and the working class and its allies must fight for "bread, for peace, for real freedom", which can only be achieved through the rule of the workers soviets. In South Africa today, as in Russia 1917, it is impossible to satisfy the many unfulfilled revolutionary-democratic tasks short of the seizure of power by the proletariat. Real peace, bread and freedom can only be achieved by expropriating the assets of the mining and manufacturing houses, laying the basis for a planned economy under the rule of workers councils. Those who advocated support to the ANC/De Klerk neo-apartheid deal were betraying the interests of the working class just as much as those who Lenin labelled as traitors for supporting the bourgeois Provisional Government of February 1917.

He who says that the workers must support the new government in the interests of the struggle against tsarist reaction (and apparently this is being said by the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs, Chkhenkelis and also, all evasiveness notwithstanding, by Chkheidze) is a traitor to the workers, a traitor to the cause of the proletariat, to the cause of peace and freedom. For actually, precisely this new government is already bound hand and foot by imperialist capital, by the imperialist policy of war and plunder, has already begun to strike a bargain (without consulting the people!) with the dynasty....

No, if there is to be a real struggle against the tsarist monarchy, if freedom is to be guaranteed in fact and not merely in words, in the glib promises of Milyukov and Kerensky, the workers must not support the new government; the government must "support" the workers! For the only guarantee of freedom and of the complete destruction of tsarism lies in arming the proletariat, in strengthening, extending and developing the role, significance and power of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

—VI Lenin, *Letters from Afar* (March 1917)



LENIN

Timex strike supporter faces jail Drop the charges against Drew McEwan!

In late April, the Scottish courts postponed their frame-up trial of Timex strike supporter Drew McEwan. The adjournment came after McEwan showed up in court accompanied by 60 supporters, mainly trade unionists who demonstrated in his defence. Charged with breach of the peace, Drew McEwan is the only person facing prison out of many arrested during the seven-month-long Timex strike. The strike ended in the shafting of its over 300 mainly women workers, who had been sacked for refusing to swallow vicious cuts to their pay and conditions.

Throughout the struggle, the Timex strikers fought a bitter battle against cops, scabs, a vicious union-busting management and sell-out treachery from the trade union tops (see "Combative Timex strikers shafted", *Workers Hammer* September/October 1993). The struggle ended when the Timex Corporation closed its Dundee plant for good last August. Vindictive in victory, the state has gone so far as to change the charges against Drew McEwan in order to have his hearing moved to the sheriff's court and thus deny him the elementary right of a trial by jury. We demand: Drop the charges now!

Drew McEwan was initially seized along with a fellow supporter of the Timex strike committee at the latter's home by eight police officers. During the

raid on McEwan, police photographed posters and confiscated phone numbers. This was nothing less than a terror raid aimed at intimidating leftists and trade unionists. The raid followed the massive 17 May 1993 demonstration in Dundee in support of Timex workers, which attracted widespread working-class support from across Scotland, England and Wales, indicative of the deeply felt working-class anger at the years of government and bosses' attacks.

Last November the Partisan Defence Committee (PDC), the legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League, sent a letter of protest to the Procurator Fiscal, Dundee Sheriff Court. The PDC letter drew attention to the fact that the "show trial of a known leftist and supporter of the Socialist Workers Party is part of the climate of the reactionary 'New World Disorder'.... It comes in the wake of the defeat of the Timex strike, the most militant strike Scotland has witnessed in years. It is intended as a threat by the bosses to any worker or oppressed person who might contemplate standing up for their rights."

The left and trade union movement can and must defeat this blatant frame-up and rally as one to defend Drew McEwan: an injury to one is an injury to all. Drop the charges now! ■

WORKERS HAMMER



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

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

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

Subscriptions: £2 for 1 year, Europe outside Britain & Ireland £3, overseas airmail £6

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

Printed by Chiltern Offset (TU). ISSN 0267-8721

Spartacist League Public Meeting

South Africa:

Black freedom requires socialist revolution

Mandela/ANC front for racist capitalist rule

- For a Bolshevik workers party!
- For a black-centred workers republic!

Thursday, 26 May
7.30 pm

Room 2D, University of London Union (ULU)
Malet Street, London WC1 (Nearest tube: Goodge Street)

International demonstrations

Protest Germany's repression of Kurds and Turkish leftists!

On 14 April demonstrators picketed the German embassy in London. The protest was initiated by the Partisan Defence Committee to demand an end to the German government's ban of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and 35 other Kurdish organisations, as well as the Turkish left group Devrimci Sol, and to raise the alarm against the threat of mass expulsions of Kurds to near-certain torture and death in Turkey.

The *Asian Times* (3 May) notes that our German comrades of the "Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD) has repeatedly denounced the attacks on Kurdish organisations, participating in mass protests and calling upon the labour movement to take decisive action to halt the repression".

The London protest was one of five that day outside German embassies and consulates. The Toronto protest brought out a contingent of PKK supporters, as did one in Sydney, Australia, which was also attended by supporters of the Australian Kurdish Association and the Iranian Komala. In London the demonstration was joined by supporters of other British groups, including the Revolutionary Communist Group and the Workers International League, and a sizable contingent from Devrimci Sol. Such unity in action against the common class enemy represents a significant departure from the sectarianism and nationalism which permeates the Turkish and Kurdish left.

Signs in English and Turkish raised the call "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!" Demonstrators chanted "Defend Serbia against NATO attack—Look what the imperialists did to Iraq" and a Spartacist spokesman linked defence of Kurds to the struggle against the deportation of Sri Lankan Tamils, Africans and others from Britain.

We reprint below the PDC's demonstration call.

As the Turkish army steps up its genocidal war against the Kurdish people, the German government is now calling for mass deportation of hundreds of Kurds for the "crime" of engaging in protests against this mass murder. Turkish prime minister Tansu Ciller has now declared this year "the final solution of the Kurdish question". Anyone expelled from Germany faces the prospect of hideous torture and in many cases death at the hands of the Turkish regime.

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) and its fraternal class-struggle defence organisation KfsV have prominently and repeatedly denounced the Fourth Reich's attacks on Kurdish organisations, participating in mass protests and calling upon the labour movement to take decisive action to halt the repression. Now, in an international campaign of protest, the Partisan Defence Committee is calling for an emergency demonstration against Germany's anti-Kurdish repression.

The protesters are demanding: Down with Germany's Ban of the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) and All Kurdish Organisations! Down with the Ban on the Turkish Left Group Devrimci Sol! Stop the Deportations!

Drawing the parallel to Germany's



Workers Hammer

London, 14 April: Picket outside German embassy, part of an international campaign to protest German government's repression and expulsion of Kurds.

actions, demonstration organisers in London have also denounced the British government's barbaric imprisoning and deportation of asylum seekers from many countries, which has recently been illuminated by the hunger strikers at Campfield Detention Centre and other prisons. Demanding the immediate release of asylum seekers, the PDC wrote to the Home Office on 23 March: "This anti-immigrant programme, scapegoating the foreign-born for the ravaging effects of capitalist austerity, gives encouragement to the likes of the fascist British National Party and France's Jean-Marie Le Pen."

In London, the demonstration will take place from 5.00 to 6.30pm, Thursday, 14 April outside the German Embassy at 23 Belgrave Square, London SW1. Other protests have been called for New York, Paris, Toronto and Sydney, Australia.

Successive Turkish governments have waged total war against the Kurdish minority of 15 million people. More than 1.7 million Kurds have been forced into exile. For decades the chauvinist regime in Ankara has sought to extirpate any manifestation of the national existence of the Kurdish people, even banning Kurdish music and the Kurdish language; the very mention of the existence of Kurds as a distinct people was outlawed. While denouncing the outlawed PKK as "terrorists", the Turkish government is waging a war of terror against the entire Kurdish people.

Last year alone, Ankara reportedly spent \$7 billion on its murderous repression against Kurds in southeastern Turkey. Equipped with US Phantom jets and German tanks, the Turkish army destroyed 874 Kurdish villages, driving the population out and imprisoning them behind barbed wire. As local elections were held under martial law in March, the headquarters of the "legal" Kurdish Democracy Party (DEP) were bombed and its seven members of parliament jailed. A military force of 300,000 troops was mobilised to terrorize the Kurdish region.

Since the bloody US-led invasion of Iraq in 1991, the Turkish government has carried its anti-Kurdish terror into

the UN's starvation camps for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq. And since last year, Ankara's NATO patrons have taken this war to the large Kurdish immigrant populations of West Europe. Last November, the Balladur government of France seized over 100 Kurdish militants "suspected" of belonging to the PKK. A week later, Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic government in Germany, supported by the "opposition" Social Democrats (SPD), banned the PKK and 35 other Kurdish organisations, whose supporters number in the tens of thousands. This comes atop a ban imposed years ago against the Turkish leftist group Devrimci Sol.

A pogromist climate was unleashed against Kurds throughout West Europe. In early September, more than 1500 Kurds travelling from Paris to a PKK festival in Frankfurt were stopped at the German border and held for hours in their buses. In the notorious tradition of the Gestapo, during pre-dawn hours of 26 November German police raided and devastated 160 Kurdish institutions and clubs as well as a number of private apartments. In mid-December, the police again stopped buses going to a PKK event in Frankfurt; as hundreds of Kurds blocked the Autobahn at Kassel in protest, the KfsV raised a banner calling for "Down with the Ban on the PKK and All Kurdish Organisations!"

Last month, the Kurdish Newroz (New Year) festivities in many German cities were banned as "illegal political activity". Hundreds of Kurds stopped by police roadblocks were beaten and arrested. In utter desperation, three Kurds burned themselves to death in protest. Two were women whose families have been murdered in Kurdistan by the Turkish military and death squads. A funeral march for them in Mannheim on 27 March was also banned—just like in racist South Africa—with a massive deployment of the paramilitary *Bundesgrenzschutz* (border police). Nevertheless 10,000 marched through Mannheim, indicting the German Fourth Reich as continuator of the Nazi regime with the chant: "Yesterday the Jews, today the Kurds."

When Kurdish protesters dared to block the Autobahns (built by Hitler), newspapers like the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (24 March) hysterically railed that this was worse than mass terror. The government has charged 500 of the protesters—389 alone in the SPD-ruled state of Nordrhein-Westfalen—and threatened them with mass deportation. The SPD asks only for a "fair trial" as a prelude to deportation. A year ago, these "socialists" also voted for Kohl's gutting of Germany's constitutional right of asylum, instigating and rewarding fascist terror against "foreigners".

There are today more than 500,000 Kurdish immigrants in Germany, many having lived there for decades while denied citizenship rights. Kurdish and Turkish workers are a strategic and militant component of the German trade-union movement. But, driven to the wall by the genocidal attacks of the Turkish regime, Kurdish nationalists have desperately lashed out against anything Turkish, including vile indiscriminate terror against Turkish restaurants, cultural centres and travel agencies.

The attacks on Kurds take place in the climate of resurgent German nationalism unleashed by capitalist reunification, which has fuelled murderous Nazi terror from the 1992 Rostock pogrom to racist murder of Turkish families in Mölln and Solingen a few months later, and the firebombing of a synagogue in Lübeck in late March. This is all part of the bourgeoisie's anti-working-class offensive to divide the workers movement and make it pay the bill for *Anschluss* (annexation) of the former East German workers state.

The international workers movement must raise an urgent cry of outrage against the Fourth Reich's racist persecution of Kurds and its threat to deport them to the torture chambers and firing squads of its NATO ally in Ankara. Join the Partisan Defence Committee on 14 April in demanding: *Down with Germany's Ban of the PKK and All Kurdish Organisations! Down with the Ban on the Turkish Left Group Devrimci Sol! Stop the Deportations!* ■

Labour...

(Continued from page 1)

victory. We said that to deliver a decisive blow to the fascists required mobilising the trade unions, together with the minorities, in a massive display of power to sweep the racist vermin off the streets — that it was the *organised working class* that has the social power to crush the fascists and put an end to the capitalist system that breeds them. We repeat: what is necessary is a *political struggle against Labourism* inside the unions — that the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, seeking to ingratiate itself with the country's bankers and bosses in anticipation of getting into No 10, fear above all militant class struggle in the streets and factories.

We warned from the start that the SWP and Militant's wretched appeals to the Tory Bexley Council to close down the BNP HQ, as well as their support for trade union rights for the racist cops, generated suicidal illusions in the "neutrality" of the capitalist state. Although the 16 October march in Welling was in fact conceived as a way of pressuring the state, tens of thousands of militant anti-fascist youth responded to the call to shut down the BNP. The brutal police attack on the Welling demo confirmed that the capitalist state will stand by its fascist scum. We said, "The trade unions were not mobilised for a display of the massive social power of the integrated working class (black, white and Asian), which would have taught the BNP fascists a lesson and made the cops think twice before attacking the demonstrators" (*Workers Hammer* no 138, November/December 1993). In fact, that same day the TUC tops supported a diversionary "anti-racist" demonstration miles away. This treachery underlines the need for a sharp fight against the pro-capitalist bureaucrats who hold back and strangle the workers movement.

Initially the fake left had sought to talk out of both sides of their mouth, occasionally posturing about the need for militant anti-fascist actions, while preaching social-democratic illusions in the state. In reality, militant proletarian struggle against fascism and social-democratic Labourism are two *counterposed* perspectives. Having had their fingers burnt by the capitalist state at Welling, the SWP and Militant signed on eagerly as cheerleaders for the TUC's 19 March "Unite against Racism" rally, whose purpose was to channel anti-fascist sentiment into Labour's electoral bid.

Both prior to and during the election campaign, the fake left deliberately demobilised anti-fascist actions. Beakon

& Co were allowed to spread their racist poison with virtual impunity. Beakon received 2041 votes, a substantial increase of his vote from last year's election. In one ward of the inner London borough of Newham the BNP received 32 per cent of the vote and came within 65 votes of winning.

Last year's Millwall by-election revealed that the local Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats were shot through with racists pushing the sinister "rights for whites" campaign over housing. And this time around, despite a little window dressing, the Labour Council, that the fake left was so hot to elect, has made it crystal clear that *racism is respectable*. Their election manifesto is subdivided into sections like "More and better homes, New jobs for local people, Better education and training", etc, omitting the need to fight racism. Quaddus Ali, Mukhtar Ahmed — maybe a mention of them or any of the other numerous victims of BNP-inspired terror in Tower Hamlets? Not a chance! The one mention of "racially motivated crime" — a term that is deliberately ambiguous — comes in a section dealing with drug use and drug dealing!

For all intents and purposes, racism doesn't exist, according to this manifesto, and therefore it doesn't have to be fought. And you can be assured that it wasn't just the local Labourites in Tower Hamlets who braintrusted this electoral campaign. This campaign was a statement by the Labour Party brass that their "broad church" *welcomes the racist vote*. Interestingly, along those lines a statement printed in the *Guardian* (9 April) and signed by Labour "left" Tony Benn and other "left" Labourite luminaries, counselled a campaign to drive "a wedge between the 'hard' racism and fascism of the far right, and their 'soft' racist supporters".

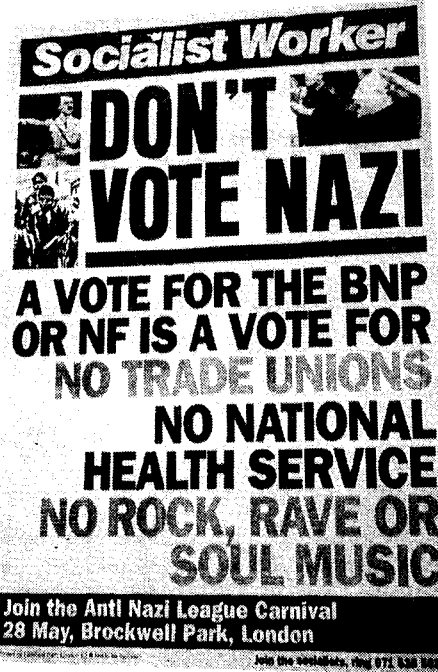
Fake left: doing it the Labour way

Taking its cue from its chauvinist Labourite masters, the SWP adopted as their election centrepiece a poster titled "Don't vote Nazi" because this would mean, "No trade unions", "No National Health Service" and "No rock, rave or soul music". Scandalously, this poster *deliberately* refuses to say that the BNP is racist, let alone mention its genocidal intentions! The SWP spits on the victims of race terror, and the courageous *anti-racist* youth who have fought back against the BNP. This scummy, chauvinist poster — a direct appeal to "soft" racists — is the horrible logic of prostituting yourself to the Labour Party!

Moreover by describing the fascist BNP singularly as "Nazis" (and consequently "foreign" to British "tradition and culture") the SWP's Anti Nazi League consciously appeals for "popular unity" with elements of the racist and conservative British establishment. But the BNP are as home grown as you can get — products of a decaying and thoroughly British capitalism.

Further down the syphilitic Labourite chain, the Workers Power (WP) group and Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL) were eager participants in Labour's electoral campaign, albeit complaining about how "tragic" it was that "the BNP has been allowed to campaign unhindered" (*Workers Power*, May 1994). Surprise, surprise! The price for campaigning for Labour meant no struggle against fascism!

The centrist RIL took particular exception to our headline, "Voting Labour will not stop the BNP rampage" (*Workers Hammer* no 140, March/April 1994). RIL described us as a "tiny crazed sect", claiming that: "they don't have the guts to stand a candidate themselves so what they are really doing is letting the BNP



Workers Hammer

"Anti-fascism" SWP-style: no mention of racism.

get elected (who else do they want workers to vote for?) because of their sectarian obsession with the Labour party" (*Revolutionary Fighter*, issue 2, April/May 1994).

RIL's attack on us retails the parliamentary cretinist line that if you don't vote Labour then you must be helping the fascists. In fact, had the workers movement been mobilised on the streets to give the fascists the drubbing they deserve, the BNP would not even be around to run 25 candidates in London. And RIL had its own contribution to winning the "soft" racists. In the event of a BNP election victory RIL proposed the setting up of an "alternative council" that would involve "many local fascist voters and racists" (*Revolutionary Fighter*, issue 2, April/May 1994). Workers defence guards based on the unions would split the communities the fascists are running in — we want *class* polarisation, not *race* polarisation. But to do that you have to fight politically against the Labourite stranglehold on the unions, and that RIL won't do.

Fascism: how to fight it, and how not to fight it

Hitting the hustings for Labour and building an ANL carnival on 28 May became the centrepieces of the ANL's "anti-fascism". The ANL at its last carnival in 1978 consciously scabbed by keeping tens of thousands of anti-racists ten miles away from where the fascist National Front were marching in the vicinity of Brick Lane — and for 15 years thereafter the fascists obscenely maintained a presence in this predominantly Asian area.

Throughout the last months the fake lefts have boasted in their newspapers of how they have "convinced" backward workers not to vote BNP. The end result of such a perspective is to "debate" the fascists. In 1992, for example, Scottish Militant leader Tommy Sheridan boasted that Militant had engaged fascist thugs in debate at a Militant meeting in Penilee. But just recently the fascist scum beat up ANLers campaigning in Penilee. This is an object lesson in how fascists carry out "debates".

The fascists do not recruit by debating ideas. They are an extra-parliamentary gang which recruit and grow through demonstrating in action their murderous intentions. The dangerous fascist thugs fear no scandal or exposure. Their audacity grows out of violence and thuggery and is spurred by working-class inaction. It is necessary to break their will, and in so doing to demoralise and discourage their would-be recruits. In sharp contrast

to the liberal anti-racist sermonising and impotent actions pushed by much of the fake left, the Russian Revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky explained how to give the fascist scum a good working-class "education":

"The tactical, or if you will, 'technical', task was quite simple — grab every fascist or every isolated group of fascists by their collars, acquaint them with the pavement a few times, strip them of their fascist insignia and documents, and without carrying things any further, leave them with their fright and a few good black and blue marks."

— "Ultraleft Tactics in Fighting the Fascists", March 1934

But the problem here is a political one. The Labour Party is in the business of enforcing capitalist austerity. Capitalism always seeks to divide the working masses against each other, and the logic of reformism is to quarrel over a shrinking pie. Somebody's got to be on the bottom, and that's where racism comes in. A Labour government, enforcing capitalist austerity, would necessarily be racist, and at the same time the economic misery it perpetuates provides the breeding ground for fascism. It's no accident that the National Front grew substantially under the last Labour government.

Labour vies with the Tories over who will administer this capitalist system of racist austerity. The Labour Party stabbed the heroic miners strike in the back. Throughout the Thatcher years and beyond, it has been Labour-led councils which have instituted job-slashing and wage cuts amongst council workforces and enforced the hated poll tax. And it is a Labour-run council in Sheffield which recently announced plans to slice £39 million from its budget by including a three per cent cut in wages for council workers. Moreover, Tony Blair — a front runner for John Smith's job — has been in the forefront of appealing to the racist cops as a defender of "law and order". It was a Labour government that sent troops to Northern Ireland in 1969. The Labour Party brought in the notorious system of "virginity tests" for Asian women entering the country, and a Labour government would continue the state's attacks on asylum and immigration rights. *Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and their families!*

Conciliating the most backward sections of the working class, the fake left has criminally turned its back on the most conscious elements who are looking for a communist alternative to the dead-end of rotten Labourite reformism. What is desperately needed is the forging of a revolutionary party built through splitting Labour's working-class base away from its bourgeois leadership, to fight for workers power and the establishment of a workers state. The sinister rise of fascism across Europe today is a product of capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Imperialist "New World Order" has brought increasing inter-imperialist rivalries in its wake. It will take international socialist revolution to end once and for all the capitalist system and all its debris. ■

PC Partisan Defence Committee
CLASS STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES
Number 20 \$1.00 Fall/Winter 1993-94

North America, Europe, Asia
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No 20, Fall/Winter 1993-94 75p

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Reactionary vendetta against Irish students continues

Not a penny to SPUC anti-abortion bigots!

We print below a leaflet produced by the Dublin Spartacist Group, dated 2 March 1994, in response to the threatened sequestering of student union funds by the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC). As we go to print, these anti-abortion reactionaries have managed to get their filthy paws on substantial sums belonging to the Trinity College Students Union and USI, without any opposition by student union leaders whatsoever.

Meanwhile all talk of a divorce referendum has been put on the back burner. And the Labour Party seems to have had no difficulties in ramming through the police state style Public Order Act (see "Fianna Fail/Labour government targets workers, women, Republicans", *Workers Hammer* no 137, September/October 1993). Already the Act has been used to target leftists and Republicans in Dublin and Cork, where the police have harassed paper sellers, intimidated the owners of meeting rooms used by the left, and brought charges over "offensive" posters. In Cork, a number of supporters of Campaign for Choice are facing imprisonment for merely fly-postering.

Attacks on Travellers have been escalating since the horrific assault on the Four Roads pub in Glenamaddy, Co. Galway, last November. This attack came after an orchestrated campaign by local businessmen and the police to halt the renewal of the pub's licence, on the grounds that it served Travellers. When the courts wouldn't oblige, a frenzied mob of local thugs attacked the bar and went after Travellers' caravans, terrorising their inhabitants. Many were injured, while the police watched from the sidelines allowing these murderous thugs free rein.

In Navan, local residents called a stay-away campaign from the community school to pressure the local council to evict 25 Traveller families living near-by. Then on 26 April Travellers' caravans were fire bombed. It is the elementary duty of all socialists to defend Travellers, and fight for their right to decent halting sites. The trade unions must be mobilised now to stop these vicious attacks.

The Youth Defence demonstration at the Four Courts (referred to in the leaflet below) went ahead, utterly unchallenged by the likes of the SWM and Militant. By allowing these reactionary scum free rein to spew their anti-woman hatred, the Irish fake left helps the clerical reactionaries in their campaign against women, gays, Travellers and all working people.

Down with SPUC/Youth Defence Reaction! For Free Abortion on Demand! For Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution!

The anti-abortion reactionaries are campaigning hard these days. On 21 February SPUC's solicitor was appointed as Receiver over the funds of TCD Students' Union and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), empowered to seize £30,000 in costs from the abortion information case. SPUC wants to quash any future defiance of the Irish clerical state—with the assistance of the courts.

David Alton, a notorious British anti-abortion bigot and MP, was invited to Trinity College this week. And on Saturday the sinister Youth Defence (which harbours a truly rotten fascist core hark-

ing back to the Blueshirts) is demonstrating at the Four Courts.

Not a penny to SPUC! Mobilise against Youth Defence!

The new court/SPUC attack, designed to intimidate any future struggle for abortion rights, should be met with determined, militant opposition. Not just students, but working people and especially women in Ireland, would respond to a clear fight against the SPUC reactionaries, just as they did over the abortion information campaign itself. Don't let SPUC take a penny off the student unions! Occupations, demonstrations, and other militant tactics should be used to build up a campaign of resistance and to gain broader support, especially from Trade Unionists, for the students.

Behind SPUC lurk other forces, like Opus Dei, the Knights of Columbanus, and the very active Youth Defence (YD). Youth Defence should be stopped in its tracks. YD prefers thug displays on the streets to legal vendettas grinding through the courts. Last year it attacked a Democratic Left meeting with billiard cues. An article in *Hot Press* revealed how key YD activists admire Franco, Mussolini and Hitler and pine for the heyday of the Blueshirt fascists.

YD is an organising centre for violent clerical reaction. It should get the kind of hot reception the Blueshirts met in the thirties from Republicans and socialists, in every town and village across the country. Criminally, groups like the SWM and Militant Labour minimise the threat of YD, ignoring the need to stop them while they are relatively small, and refuse to mobilise against them.

This Saturday, while YD are demonstrating outside the Four Courts, the SWM promise to press ahead with leafletting (!) against YD—a mile away in Great Earl St.—instead of mobilising for what is needed: a joint counter-demonstration of all socialists, women's groups and trade unionists, right where Youth Defence are going to be on the day.

Fianna Fail-Labour Party coalition: anti-abortion, anti-working class, pro-imperialist

A dangerous illusion is being put about by many self-styled socialists: that the current coalition government (blessed with the presence of Labour ministers, and watched over by President Robinson) is a vehicle for "liberalising" Irish society, which can and should be made to take the side of social progress.

This idea has come out in many responses to the SPUC Receiver, including from groups like the Socialist Workers Movement and the Irish Workers Group [sister organisation of the British Workers Power group]. It was summed up in a letter to the *Irish Times* (28 February) by former TCD SU President, Ivana Bacik:

"the Government should pay the union's costs in the public interest. Students, and student organisations, should not be left to fight for such a vital issue alone."

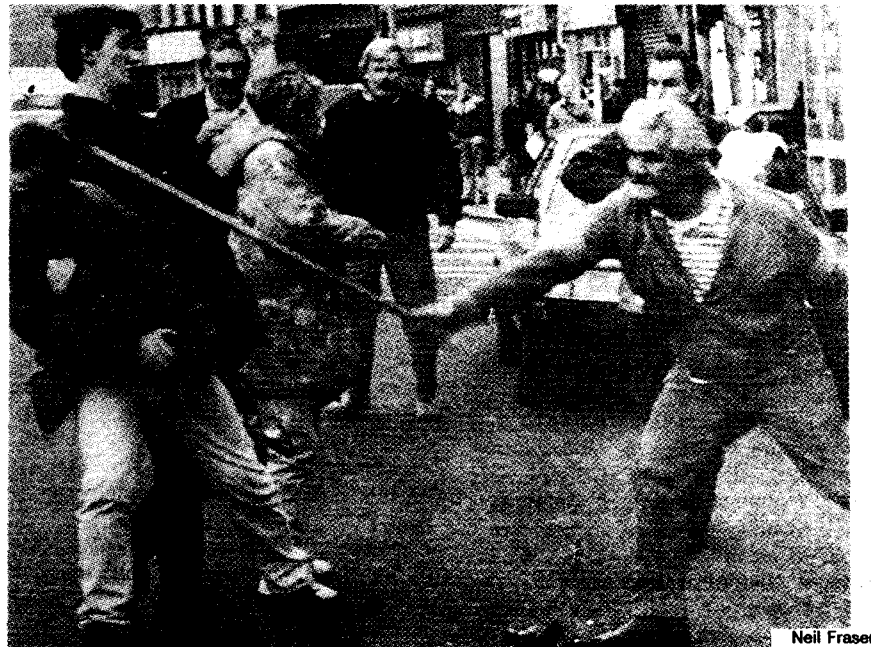
SPUC shouldn't get a penny. But as Marxists, we do not put our faith in the state, or the current FF [Fianna Fail]/Labour coalition which is administering the state. Reynolds, Spring and Mary Robinson stand in defence of the existing capitalist order, and are squarely against legalising abortion, let alone providing what Irish

women have a right to: *free abortion on demand, in this country!*

The line of those who voted Labour (helping to put the anti-working class coalition in power) is now to plead with the government. This can only have the effect of *defusing* and *demobilising* the very struggle that is called for today. This government has introduced the draconian Public Order Act. It was drafted largely in response to the mobilisations that hit the streets when the X case blew up two years ago. The Labour Party will join in quashing any serious fight for abortion

deal" which would leave British troops in Northern Ireland. The Labour Party didn't need to even be in government to give its support to the PNR [Programme for National Recovery] and PESP [Programme for Economic and Social Progress] austerity deals. Now it is of course backing the PCW [Programme for Competitiveness and Work], ie the same wage-cutting crap, Mark III.

The Labour Party is a bourgeois workers party; ie it is based on the working class but its leadership is reactionary, pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist.



Dublin, 23 October 1993: Reactionary SPUC/Youth Defence bigots attack leftist demonstrators.

rights, using such laws, because it is a party which bends the knee to the bosses' courts and the church.

Mary Robinson and the Labour Party: frontrunners for capitalism

Four years ago Labour backed Mary Robinson for President. Militant and the SWM added their voices (and votes) to the campaign. "Irish elections—a blow against establishment", burred the *British Socialist Worker*. This was the election that was supposed to change things, especially for *mna na Eireann* [Women of Ireland]! At the time we wrote:

"But the working class and women don't need a glossy image: they need a social revolution which will expropriate the bourgeoisie, destroy the stranglehold of the Catholic church on social policy and education, and provide the possibility of a just resolution of the national question in Northern Ireland. From this standpoint Mary Robinson's anti-Haughey coalition is an illusion-filled trap."

Two years later, Labour ran in the general election, promising a new bright future—hand in hand with Albert Reynolds, the Taoiseach of the day, and long-time cabinet minister under Haughey! Ignoring the pledge of allegiance to capitalism represented by Labour's openly coalitionist campaign, the fake-left groups once again called out the vote: for Labour, for class collaboration.

In both elections the Spartacist group told the truth, and refused to join the social-democratic bandwagon.

Labour's record

The Labour Party has played an ardent role in pushing for an imperialist "peace

Like all the social-democratic parties internationally, the Labour Party (and its hangers on in the Militant and the SWM), cheered on the destruction of the deformed and degenerated workers states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It's pretty nauseating to hear those who backed Solidarność (the only "union" with the Pope as chief shop steward), or hailed the victory of the Afghan *mujahedin*, or supported Boris Yeltsin in August 1991 talking about the rights of women today.

The social counter-revolution in the old Soviet bloc has devastated the lives of women especially. Child-care facilities have been destroyed in East Germany (where women today are getting sterilised in a desperate attempt to convince the capitalist boss to employ them). Abortion has been criminalised in Poland, where the most reactionary forces, drenched in anti-Semitism and male chauvinism, hold up Ireland as their model of a Catholic state! Unlike the Labour traitors, Marxist revolutionaries fought tooth-and-nail against capitalist restoration in these countries, while calling for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats, as part of the fight for *international socialist revolution*.

British troops out of Northern Ireland! No just solution without workers rule!

Dick Spring's biggest ambition seems to be brokering a deal with British imperialism and the Ulster Unionists. The outcome of any such deal will be bloody and brutal for the Catholic population in

continued on page 9

South Africa...

(Continued from page 1)

into the cabinet. The *Guardian* (7 May) bluntly asserted: "The Independent Electoral Commission and the African National Congress conspired to hand control of KwaZulu/Natal to Mangosuthu Buthelezi in the hope of buying peace in the blood-soaked province."

But the future of South Africa will not be determined by the outcome of these elections. Moves by the new regime to repress black struggles will rapidly discredit the ANC leadership in the face of unrest by militant sections of its base. On the other hand, attempts to conciliate the demands of the black masses may lead key sectors of the white ruling class, which retains fundamental control over the army and police, to scrap the "power sharing" deal altogether, raising the spectre of civil war. A resurgence of ethnic conflagration exacerbated by the intervention of the apartheid army could turn whole regions into bloody battlefields. Whatever happens in South Africa, one thing is certain: freedom and equality for the black African, coloured and Indian toilers demands the struggle for a black-centred workers republic under the leadership of a racially integrated revolutionary party.

APRIL 25—Yesterday a powerful car bomb exploded near the headquarters of the African National Congress (ANC) in Johannesburg, killing ten and injuring over 100; damage extended for five blocks. Today more than a dozen taxi ranks and polling stations were bombed in several areas of South Africa. These vile racist attacks are almost certainly the work of hardline white right wingers assisted or planned by recalcitrant elements within the army or the intelligence services.

The bombings, aimed at the ANC, the organisation supported by the overwhelming majority of the black population, come one year after the murder by state-connected fascists of South African Communist Party (SACP) leader Chris Hani, who was also head of the ANC's military arm, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). The bombings are an attack on the very idea that the black, "coloured" (mixed-race) and Indian peoples of South Africa should have any democratic rights at all.

The elections to the new, common National Assembly, which will be held over three days beginning tomorrow, are the first time that a vote of any kind has been given to the black African majority who make up *three-quarters* of the total population. The white ruling class has been forced into this concession by the long years of determined struggle by the oppressed South African masses, first

against the British colonial rulers and later, after 1948, against the Afrikaner-dominated system of apartheid.

The threat of white-supremacist revolt against the ANC-dominated government which Mandela will head after the elections is real and dangerous. But the enormously wealthy white mine owners, industrialists and financiers and their senior partners in Wall Street and the City of London—the real owners and rulers of South Africa—are staking their future on the National Peace Accord, their deal with the ANC leadership. They correctly calculate that the ANC (already installed in the corridors of power since last December through the Transitional Executive Council—TEC) will uphold and administer capitalist rule in government. Speaking last week at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Mandela declared: "The economy must be built on sound and market principles. If you look at our program, there is not a single sentence about nationalization."

The white capitalist rulers know that the ANC's vast political authority is the strongest tool at their disposal for suppressing and denying the hopes and demands of the black masses. And the expectations are enormous. The huge formerly disenfranchised non-white majority sees these elections as opening the road to "freedom" and a share of the wealth produced in South Africa. A comment by one grandmother in a squatter camp in the Western Cape indicated the limits of the "patience" of the downtrodden: "We will be patient once he [Mandela] is elected, and so maybe the first improvements won't be seen here for one or two months" (*New York Times*, 21 April)!

Although the elections are billed by the ANC as the "transition to democracy", in fact they are a far cry from "one person, one vote". *Whatever the outcome*, the main party of the white ruling class, the National Party, led by President De Klerk, is guaranteed a place in a "Government of National Unity" for a five-year period. This is included in the "sunset clause", agreed to by the ANC, which gives a cabinet seat to any party obtaining five per cent or more in the ballot, and then imposes the need for approval by two-thirds of the cabinet on "certain issues". The National Party and the other main white party, the Democratic Party, will thereby have effective veto power over all major decisions.

Mandela has bent over backwards to reassure and conciliate the capitalists, whose junior partner he has now become. All the radical talk of the years of struggle—the rhetoric of "socialism" by the SACP and the COSATU union federation—has evaporated, to be replaced by the language of "moderation" and compromise. The rights of capitalist property are incorporated into a "Bill of Rights",

South Africa's army of racist killers will be preserved under neo-apartheid regime.



The South African Police and the South African Defence Force (SADF)—the butchers of Sharpeville and Soweto and the former colonial occupation forces of Namibia and Angola—will be left under their existing command. Meanwhile the ANC's military wing, the MK, is dissolved and partially incorporated into the SADF or the impotent National Peacekeeping Force, charged with policing the black townships. And at one of his final campaign rallies Mandela "vowed that gun control would be firmly enforced by the new government that he expects to lead" (*New York Times*, 24 April). This means leaving blacks defenceless in the face of racist army, police and fascist paramilitary killers.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, whose Zulu Inkatha movement has allied with the Conservative Party and white reactionaries even further to the right, has for months been attempting to sabotage the elections. Inkatha forces have whipped up and perpetrated horrendous attacks on ANC supporters, seeking to exploit tribal divisions. But last week Mandela guaranteed Buthelezi's cousin, the Zulu king Goodwill Zwelethini, the status of a "constitutional monarch", complete with king-sized personal subsidies, in a successful effort to get Inkatha to end its boycott of the elections.

The capitalists are gambling on an ANC-led government as their best hope of obtaining stable conditions for continued extraction of southern Africa's natural resources and superexploitation of its black proletariat. The dominant white caste, making up 13 per cent of South Africa's population, owns 86 per cent of the land, 90 per cent of all productive wealth, and on average has an annual income ten times greater than that of the blacks. Three out of every five blacks live in rural areas where over 80 per cent have no electricity and over 90 per cent have no sewage. Fully *half* of the black labour force has no permanent regular employment.

Faced with these appalling conditions, the ANC is promising a five-year "Reconstruction and Development Programme" (RDP), including building one million new homes, supplying electricity to 2.5 million households, ten years of free schooling for all, and the creation of two million jobs through the public works programme. But the bourgeoisie has no intention of financing this scale of public works. The chief economist of the Johannesburg Nedbank pointed out:

"With limited resources and limited taxable capacity it can't be done. The problem facing the incoming government is whether the new electorate is going to accept the shortfall between what they expect and what is actually going to be delivered."

Genuine universal suffrage, universal schooling, equality of all the peoples of South Africa, full citizenship rights (including the right to vote) for the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers drawn from neighbouring countries and their families, equal pay for equal work, the right of the

rural black population (particularly in the barren bantustans) to land stolen over the centuries, first by Afrikaner colonial settlers and then by the British imperialists, equality for women—to realise all these elementary democratic demands requires that capitalist rule be overthrown by workers revolution.

South African capitalism's viability, its ability to compete in the world market, is based on the system of superexploitation symbolised by the lives of the mine workers. The core of the economy has been and remains gold mining. With the richest veins having run out, the "Randlords" like Anglo American are left with vast quantities of low-grade ore that they can mine profitably only by paying slave wages. Over the last 90 years, nearly 90,000 South African miners have died at work: apartheid capitalism is blacks' blood transmuted into gold. And for the apartheid bosses, that is not negotiable.

ANC/SACP: black front men for neo-apartheid capitalism

The understanding that in a country like South Africa it is impossible to satisfy the many unfulfilled revolutionary democratic tasks short of the seizure of power by the socialist proletariat is central to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. This was demonstrated by Lenin's Bolshevik Party as it led the successful struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in October 1917. Securing basic democratic rights, let alone the huge economic expansion and redistribution required to give a decent life to all the people of South Africa, can only come by breaking the economic and political power of the giant mining and manufacturing houses through expropriation of their assets, laying the basis for an economy planned under the rule of workers councils.

South Africa requires a *black-centred workers government*, not the installation of aspiring black exploiters in the antechambers of *verligte* [enlightened] apartheid power—which is what the ANC offers and desires. As we wrote in *Workers Vanguard* no 598 (15 April):

"A vote for the ANC—including its Communist Party members and affiliated trade-union leaders of COSATU—is a vote to perpetuate the racist oppression and superexploitation of the black, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian toilers in a different political form."

From being a petty-bourgeois nationalist movement in opposition, the ANC is in the process of integrating its leading elements into the South African ruling class as it becomes a bourgeois-nationalist ruling party. The *Wall Street Journal* (3 March) reports, "Blacks Enter South African Boardrooms." South African corporations, especially those looking for government contracts, are falling over each other to recruit ANC cadres as managers. They are also prepared to buy off sections of the black middle class and skilled workers by widening pay differentials in the black workforce.

Today the ANC leaders are no doubt



COSATU union federation met in 1991 under banner of "socialism". Today ANC wants black unions to prevent strikes on behalf of "government of national unity".

getting fitted for top hats and morning coats on London's Savile Row. Nelson Mandela will perhaps ride to his presidential inauguration in the red Mercedes-Benz armoured limo built for him by the combative Mercedes workers in East London before the ANC tops with the aid of the SACP sold out their militant 1990 strike. As the ANC tops become increasingly estranged from the township masses, the SACP and COSATU leaders are playing a vital role in defusing discontent. The SACP's Stalinist theory of "two-stage revolution" (democracy first, socialism in the sweet by-and-by) is a reformist rationale for subordinating the working class to the nationalist ANC.

The ANC sell-out to the South African ruling class is so blatant, including the open repudiation of its liberal-nationalist Freedom Charter, that most groups claiming to be Trotskyist have criticised the Mandela/De Klerk "power-sharing" deal. But, mesmerised by the popular support for the ANC and the SACP, several of these groups share the practical conclusion of the Stalinist reformists. The Marxist Workers Tendency (MWT), which sees itself as part of the ANC, calls for voting ANC. "Kick out the Nats!" they headline, proclaiming: "The elections give us the chance to crush the party of apartheid and dictatorship. Every vote must be used to close the door on the old South Africa" (*Congress Militant*, February-March 1994).

The MWT are the co-thinkers of the British Militant Labour group, which likes to posture as a thoroughly orthodox Trotskyist tendency. Yet one of Trotsky's crucial fights in the formation of the International Left Opposition against Stalin was over the latter's policy of entry into the Kuomintang (the bourgeois-nationalist party in pre-revolutionary China). The Stalinist policy led straight to disaster in the bloody Shanghai massacre of 1927 in which thousands of worker communists were slaughtered by KMT leader Chiang Kai-shek.

Organisational separation and political independence from the nationalists are the bedrock of a working-class revolutionary party. And those who today call for votes to the ANC are assuming the political responsibility for the inevitable massacres of South African workers by the ANC/De Klerk neo-apartheid regime.

Other smaller groups have also directly capitulated to the ANC/SACP in these elections. The International Socialists of South Africa (ISSA), acolytes of Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party, call for a vote to the ANC. ISSAer Terry Bell, in an article in *Work in Progress* (reprinted in *Socialist Organiser*, 21 April), argued:

"In this particular battle, the working class is lined up behind the ANC alliance against the NP [De Klerk's National Party].... Since revolutionary socialists stand for the self-emancipation of the working class, the Left should argue that we vote—without illusions in party or parliament—with the class on April 27."

So since many workers have illusions in the bourgeois nationalists, these consummate opportunists call... for feeding their illusions.

One small South African grouping, the Comrades for a Workers Government (CWG), who publish *Qina Msebenzi* and are affiliated with the British Workers International League, has in the past been identified with the demand for a "mass workers party". But as the elections approached they switched gears and came out for a "Vote ANC" line which echoes that of the MWT. Describing themselves as "supercritical" supporters of the ANC, the CWG points out: "The ANC will not be able to implement even the most minimal social demands of its RDP and the popular demands of the masses because the ANC leaders have bound themselves hand and foot to the capitalist class." From this premise they

draw the conclusion that the "ANC leaders must cut ties with the bosses!" and that "the bosses must be driven out of the ANC" (whoever and whatever that means).

The CWG's punch line is: "We must put demands to the ANC leaders and the in-coming ANC government—demands such as the scrapping of all power-sharing agreements; the expulsion of the open bourgeois elements in the ANC and in the ANC-led election front." In effect, they treat the bourgeois-nationalist ANC as if it were a reformist workers party which had entered a popular front, rather than a force outside the workers movement. The bottom line is that an ANC government—like other bourgeois-nationalist regimes in the Third World, such as Peronism in Argentina, the Mexican PRI, the Ba'athists in Iraq and Syria—could (and may be driven to) *smash* the unions, whereas for a reformist workers party, which bases itself on the labour movement, this would be suicidal.

Meanwhile, the militant nationalists of AZAPO (Azanian People's Organisation), derived from the "Black Consciousness" movement, are calling to boycott the elections. While the ANC/NP "power-sharing" deal, on which these elections are based, violates even the elementary principles of bourgeois democracy, nonetheless the black masses are determined to participate in their first-ever chance to vote in any way on the South African government. Proletarian revolutionaries seek to use the elections, as the Bolsheviks sometimes did with the votes for the tsarist Duma, as a platform for their communist programme. In particular, Marxists would counterpose the fight for a workers party to voting for the ANC, the co-rulers of a capitalist "new South Africa".

Critical support to the Workers List

One of the groups running is the Workers List Party (WLP), initiated by the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA). After examining the programme and statements of the WLP that are available to us, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) call for *critical support* to the Workers List Party in the April elections. The platform of the WLP can be summarised by its opening sentence:

"The WLP enters the elections in order to promote the formation of a 'Mass Workers Party' (MWP). We believe that only such a Workers' Party will be able to carry forward the struggle of the exploited and oppressed masses of South Africa. We do not believe that any of the white or black nationalist parties can solve the crisis of unemployment, homelessness, disease, illiteracy and poverty that afflict the urban and rural poor; those who live in the crime-ridden townships and squatter settlements of our cities, in the rural slums in the Bantustans and in the slave-like conditions on the white farms and in the dorps [small farming towns]. These parties cannot do so because they accept the capitalist system."

—"Manifesto of the Workers' List Party of South Africa", reprinted in *Socialist Organiser*, 17 March

The WLP calls for "nationalisation under workers control of the monopoly companies, banks, mines and land without compensation". The party's manifesto also "reject[s] the idea of a Government of National Unity that includes the racists". It says that a "genuine constituent assembly could be no more than a stepping stone to a Workers' Government". (We have in the past polemicised against WOSA for "constituent assembly fetishism" when it failed to connect this revolutionary-democratic demand to the fight for workers soviet rule.) The WLP claims to be standing some 80 candidates in all regions. With an electoral system based on national and regional party slates (rather than constituencies), a vote for the WLP will be counterposed to a vote

for the ANC.

The question of political organisation of the proletariat, independent from and in opposition to the nationalist ANC, is a key strategic question for South Africa today. In this regard, the WLP does draw a crude class line and a vote for it will be seen in South Africa as a vote for a workers party rather than the ANC.

At the same time, we emphasise that the platform of the WLP is left-reformist. *Never once* does it define itself in reference to the ANC, nor even mention it, which takes some doing in South Africa today. Nor does it raise the need for a *socialist revolution* against the neo-apar-



Nelson Mandela at Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

theid ANC/NP capitalist regime. While calling for "self-defence and a workers' militia", the WLP platform does not call for smashing and replacing the existing capitalist state machine which is the direct continuity of the apartheid state. Union-based workers militias, composed of all ethnic groups, are needed to overcome the Inkatha thugs, defend strikers and smash white racist terror.

While the WLP speaks of "a socialist democracy" and "democratic planning process", this is in the spirit of European social democracy rather than the kind of revolutionary regime based on workers councils (soviets) that would be needed in order to expropriate the wealth of the Randlords and crush the bitter-end resistance of the apartheid racists backed by international imperialism.

Yet in South Africa today, more directly and immediately than anywhere else on the planet, virtually every social and democratic struggle necessarily poses the question of workers revolution. WOSA/WLP has campaigned heavily on the right to a job, and reportedly plans a march for jobs on 6 May, at the opening of the National Assembly. But while their platform calls for "a 35 hour week without loss of pay, an end to retrenchments [redundancies], scab labour and lock-outs", it presents these demands in a pressure campaign directed towards the capitalist parliament rather than calling for sharp class struggle such as plant occupations, establishing genuine workers control (dual power in the workplace), and demanding a sliding scale of wages and hours to create jobs for all.

Although the WLP makes ritual reference to "internationalism", in reality this tendency has long stood for a certain species of South African "nation-building". WOSA's principal leader, Neville Alexander, has written: "The existing South African state forms the boundaries of the potential nation, not the particular existing cultures" (in Alex Callinicos, ed., *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists* [1992]). The WLP platform's call for "a united socialist nation" reflects an understandable reaction to the divide-and-rule policies of apartheid (most visible in the alliance of the Zulu-nationalist Inkatha with the most reactionary, fascist supporters of an Afrikaner *Boerestaat*).

The colonial-derived South African state consists of different national, racial and ethnic groups, with the whites on top, the black Africans on the bottom and the coloureds and Indians occupying an intermediate position. The goal of communists is not to forge "one nation" in the bor-

ders of the 1910 Union of South Africa but to achieve political and social equality for *all* of South Africa's diverse peoples. This requires a racially integrated Leninist party. We call for a socialist federation of Southern Africa, with regional autonomy, should they desire, for such peoples as the Ovimbundu in Namibia/Angola, the Ndebeles and Shonas in Zimbabwe and the Zulus in Natal.

In giving critical support to the WLP slate, we note that we are not able to judge the reality of its campaign on the ground in South Africa. We also point out that groups with centrist politics like WOSA (whose demand for a workers party is consciously confined within the framework of a social-democratic Labourite programme) are highly susceptible to calls to pressure the popular front, or to vote for the "workers parties of the popular front". One may ask: under a constituency-based electoral system, were WOSA and its allies unable to stand candidates everywhere, would the WLP have opposed the bourgeois-nationalist ANC, including its COSATU/SACP allies? This goes to the heart of the debate over a workers party in South Africa which has been raging in the black union movement over the last year.

In an article last autumn, we noted that in pushing this issue, WOSA consciously looks to the example of the Brazilian PT (Workers Party) of Luis Ignácio da Silva ("Lula"), as a Third World variant of the British Labour Party. We noted that many "workerists" within COSATU, the main political current towards which WOSA is now orienting, talked of forming a workers party *only after* the April elections, in order to *not* break with the ANC at this crucial juncture. "We emphasize that the workers party needed today is not a South African version of British Labourism", we wrote, "but a Bolshevik-Leninist party forged on the program of permanent revolution" (*Workers Vanguard* no 587, 5 November 1993).

A party of the Bolshevik type, built in the struggle to reforge a democratic-centralist Fourth International, is necessary for the South African masses, like the workers of all countries, to make a successful socialist revolution. A revolutionary workers party can come about only through the intervention of a Marxist nucleus, committed to sweeping away every vestige of apartheid capitalism and dedicated to the cause of international socialism. There can be no justice in South Africa until the non-white majority has power in a revolutionary workers state which would unite Xhosa and Zulu, coloured and Indian, with ample room and full democratic rights for those whites who would join in building a society based on genuine equality.

A proletarian revolution in the industrial powerhouse of South Africa would be a beacon to the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, helping to lift the continent out of imperialist-enforced starvation and poverty. It would be an inspiration to the hundreds of millions—black, Asian, Latin American—across the world who have suffered the violence and degradation of racial arrogance at the hands of the haughty white ruling classes of the Western powers—whether in the colonies or within the imperialist metropolises themselves. Black people in the US in particular see in apartheid slavery the mirror of their own oppression. Socialist revolution in South Africa is not just a matter for South African workers—no less than the Russian Revolution of 1917—it would be the cause of the workers and oppressed peoples of the world.

For a black-centred workers republic! For a socialist federation of Southern Africa! For a South African Trotskyist party as part of a reformed Fourth International! Those who labour must rule! ■

South Africa: fake lefts' phoney opposition to nationalist popular front

The recent South African election was an acid test for Marxists. Our opposition to a vote for the ANC was grounded in our principled opposition to this *nationalist popular front*. A popular front is a mechanism by which the proletariat is subordinated to the bourgeoisie by means of a political bloc between reformist workers organisations and a section of the capitalist class. The ANC itself is a "popular front in the form of a party"; that is, it encompasses bourgeois nationalists, as well as the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the leaders of the COSATU trade union federation.

As the American Trotskyists noted: "In the People's Front the proletariat renounces its *class* independence, gives up its *class* aims—the *only* aims, as Marxism teaches, which can serve its interests" (James Burnham, *The People's Front: The New Betrayal*, 1937). The central question in South Africa is breaking the nonwhite toilers from the nationalist ANC, which falsely claims to champion black emancipation. In calling for a vote to the ANC—petty-bourgeois nationalists who have evolved into black bourgeois aspirants for power in the course of becoming co-rulers of neo-apartheid capitalism—such organisations as the International Socialists of South Africa (connected to the British SWP), the Marxist Workers Tendency (Militant), and Comrades for a Workers Government (affiliated with the Workers International League) called for a vote for the new black front men for racist South African capitalism, who will call in the army to break strikes and put down township revolts. *Congress Militant* (September 1993) even ran an interview with "comrade Enoch Nelani", national deputy president of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcu), demanding that these enemies of workers and black struggle be admitted to COSATU.

In the South African elections, we gave critical support to the Workers List Party (WLP—see article this issue). While sharply criticising its left reformist programme, we noted that in advocating the building of a workers party and in standing in opposition to the nationalist ANC, its campaign drew a crude class line. There are, as well, other organisations on the left—including *Socialist Organiser* and Workers Power—who claimed to oppose a vote to the ANC on the basis of class principle and called for a vote to the WLP, and attacked the Militant and SWP for their prostration before the ANC.

At first sight, these considerations might appear similar to our own. However, it is necessary to examine the programme put forward by these organisations. As Leninists, we stand for building a *revolutionary* workers party in South Africa, as opposed to a reformist South African version of British Labourism. The mere advocacy of a workers party, organised distinctly from the ANC, does not equate *per se* to defending the class independence of the proletariat in opposition to the bourgeoisie. Thus, in the earlier Russian context, the Mensheviks were organised separately from the bourgeois liberals (Cadets) and the Socialist Revolutionaries (party of the peasantry). However, the Mensheviks adhered to a "stages conception" of revolution (similar to what the SACP advocates in South Africa). While claiming to stand for the "organisational independence" of the working class, the Mensheviks abdicated to the liberals the struggle for political power against the tsarist autocracy. Ultimately, these politics of tailing the bourgeoisie led the Mensheviks in 1917 to

enter Kerensky's popular-front Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks' intransigent opposition to this popular front was the necessary precondition to the successful proletarian insurrection in October 1917.

Far from sharing the Bolsheviks' principled hostility to popular frontism, both *SO* and WP in reality advocate a Menshevik party that would simply be a tail



Mandela and South African Communist Party leader Joe Slovo preside over nationalist popular-front betrayal.

on the nationalist ANC. In the case of *Socialist Organiser*, this can clearly be seen from their attitude to the state. It should be noted that the often harsh criticisms of petty-bourgeois nationalism by these arch British Labourites serve a different purpose from delineating a class line. Thus, their attacks on Green nationalism in Ireland are a cover for capitulation to British imperialism. *SO* refuses to call for unconditional withdrawal of the British troops from Northern Ireland, and gives back-handed support to Major's bogus "peace process", demanding that the IRA unilaterally disarm. In South Africa, they supported the mobilisation of the South African army in KwaZulu: "socialists should support the use of force—even by the SADF—to ensure that the elections take place in Natal KwaZulu..." (*Socialist Organiser*, 14 April). To preach illusions in the fascist-infested and racist SADF is the height of opportunist folly, for it is precisely these forces that will be unleashed by the ANC/De Klerk government against the black toiling masses!

Following the elections, *SO* ran a headline: "White minority rule ends—South Africa: half a revolution". This is patently false—while the elaborate edifice of apartheid laws has been dismantled, the white ruling class remains firmly entrenched. Black emancipation and the other burning democratic tasks cannot be achieved short of proletarian revolution, as Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution asserts. The effect of *SO*'s headline is to bathe the jagged brutality of South African society in a soft pink light, making it seem more amenable to their perspective of reformist parliamentary Labourism.

Workers Power seemingly grounds its opposition to the ANC on class considerations: "The workers do not need the experience of voting for a popular front or an embryonic bourgeois party. An ANC vote is only a vote for class collab-

oration, for the democratic counter-revolution."

Workers Power reluctantly gave critical support to the WLP, after initially refusing to do so ostensibly on the basis that the WLP is not a mass organisation (what changed?). More fundamentally, while not wanting to openly call for a vote to a bourgeois formation, WP yearns to give "critical support" to the popular front

through the back door. Thus, WP indicates that had the electoral mechanism permitted it, it would have called for votes to the working-class components (SACP and COSATU) of the popular front: "Had it been possible to vote separately for the workers' organisations and candidates within the ANC alliance then revolutionaries should have supported these candidates critically" (*Workers Power*, April 1994).

To argue that it is permissible to vote for the working-class organisations within a popular front is to make a mockery of class independence. Normally reformist workers parties embody a duality, claiming to represent the interests of their working-class base while in reality serving the capitalist class by means of its bourgeois programme. However, when such parties enter a popular front, this duality is suppressed formally and in practice, because the reformist parties then campaign and promise to govern on a common platform within the purely capitalist limits set by their overtly bourgeois allies. Thus, an elementary precondition for considering critical support to a workers organisation is that it run independently of the bourgeoisie.

In laying out communist tactics to the French Communist Party (CP) in 1922, at a time when the social democrats ("Reformist-Dissidents") were in a bloc with bourgeois elements, Trotsky emphasised:

"We say to the masses, 'The Dissidents, because they do not want the revolution, have split the mass of the workers. It would be insanity to count on their helping the proletarian revolution. But we are ready, inside and outside the parliament, to enter into certain practical agreements with them, provided they agree, in those cases where one must choose between the known interests of the bourgeoisie and the definite demands of the proletariat, to support the latter in action. The Dissidents can be capable of such actions only if they renounce their ties with the parties

of the bourgeoisie, that is, the "Left Bloc" and its bourgeois discipline."

Noting that in the given instance the Dissidents "will be compelled to reply that they prefer a bloc with the bourgeoisie", Trotsky stressed that "Such an answer will not pass with impunity among the proletarian reserves on whom they are counting."

In contrast, centrists like Workers Power say to the workers parties of the popular front: "Break with the bourgeoisie! If you do, we will support you—and if you don't we would support you anyway, if only South African election laws would let us play our little game of voting for the workers parties of the popular front! But since they don't, we're stuck." That's not a tactic, but a strategy of tailing the reformist class traitors. This led WP to call for votes to the Labour Party even at the time of the Lib-Lab pact under Callaghan. And in France, in the most recent parliamentary elections, it stood to the right of much of the left in advocating votes to Mitterrand's Socialist Party, which after a decade of being the core of a racist Cold War popular front that had administered capitalist austerity, was hated by the most militant sections of the working class. In reality, Workers Power wants to replicate the Labour Party everywhere so they can tail it.

To argue that calling for a vote to the reformist workers parties in a popular front does not constitute support to the popular front itself is necessarily wrong; particularly in the European experience, the reformist workers organisations are the very means by which the working class is lured into supporting a popular front. In most popular fronts historically, the overwhelming bulk of the votes has gone to the reformist working-class component. In Spain, Trotsky referred to the bourgeois component as the "shadow of the bourgeoisie". In other instances, bogus "workers parties" have even been invented in order to create a popular front. The American Trotskyists correctly refused to give critical support to the American Labor Party, which was set up by trade union bureaucrats and bourgeois democrats expressly in order to lure the workers into voting for liberal Franklin Roosevelt in 1936.

One should note that Workers Power's stated position in South Africa of refusing to vote for open bourgeois formations is at some variance with its practice elsewhere. If this is a "principle", how then do they justify regularly calling for votes to the petty-bourgeois nationalists of Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland? There are no fundamental *class differences* between the *aspiring* bourgeois nationalists of Sinn Féin and the ANC. It is simply that the ANC has the opportunity to achieve its bourgeois aspirations. In a similar fashion the Algerian FLN or Mugabe's ZANU/Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe, originating as petty-bourgeois nationalist formations, became bourgeois ruling parties. While one can under appropriate circumstances enter a military bloc with petty-bourgeois nationalists against imperialism, to give electoral support to such forces means crossing the class line.

The Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL) has a position to the *right* of Workers Power. The RIL asserts that the ANC is a popular front and claims to be for building a workers party. However, its bottom line is: "In general, going through this struggle with the most militant workers and youth means that we would also vote for the ANC list (there are no constituency elections) but Trotskyists can give no political support to the ANC, and in situations where sections of workers see a vote for an alternative list (like WOSA or the Azanian Peoples' Organisation [AZAPO] as a left-wing challenge to ANC treachery, we will join with them, despite our criticisms of these organisations" (*Revolutionary Fighter*,

Fascist threat fails to stop Spartacist day-school in Glasgow

GLASGOW—A successful Spartacist League public meeting was held on Saturday, 7 May at City Halls, despite repeated threats by the fascists to the original advertised venue at Sloan's Restaurant. Determined to go ahead with our meeting, we issued a public appeal to left and anti-racist groups and the trade unions, offering speaking time from the platform for participating organisations. We were determined that the fascist scum should not get away with their dangerous intimidation. This would only embolden them.

The meeting was well defended and exemplary. It included the participation of individual leftists, including Paul Cockshott of Anti-Fascist Action, who spoke from the platform. Lively discussion followed after an ANL supporter (attending in spite of her organisation's boycott), spoke from the floor. The meeting scored a modest but important victory for the left and working-class movement, underscoring the point made in our 6 May press release (below): socialists "will not be silenced by fascist threats".

Many supporters of left organisations welcomed our call for a strong united-

front defence against the fascist threats. In the last period BNP scum have been threatening and attacking Anti Nazi League, Socialist Workers Party and Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE) members with impunity. But the leaderships of these organisations chose to stay well away from the meeting. Militant councillor Tommy Sheridan, notorious for "debating" the BNP in a Militant meeting in Penilee a few years ago, received our appeal in the Council Chambers and promised to "refer it to the YRE". But the YRE did nothing. Militant and the SWP were, however, happy enough to campaign for Labour in the council elections. The Militant Labour candidates for Strathclyde Regional Council ran a sub-reformist campaign that did not mention a word about racism or the fascist threat (nor about revolution for that matter).

Socialists "will not be silenced by fascist threats"

Fascists have threatened to burn down Sloan's Restaurant and Bar in Glasgow city centre if a socialist meeting takes

place there on Saturday afternoon. Menacing phone calls have been received by the restaurant management, who have decided to cancel the booking as a result. But the Spartacist League, a Marxist socialist group, is going to press ahead. The public meeting will now be held at the City Halls, Candleriggs, at the planned time of 1.30pm. The meeting will discuss the fight against fascism, and the need for a socialist, black-centred workers republic in South Africa.

Spartacist spokesman Eibhlin McDonald said today: "We're not going to let this intimidation stop our democratic and open socialist meeting taking place. The meeting will be carefully stewarded, to prevent any violence or disruption."

She continued, "These threats are typical of violent fascist groups like the BNP and Combat 18. As last week's *Scotland on Sunday* reported, 60 Scottish anti-fascist and socialist activists have been placed on a published fascist hit-list. In the East End of London the BNP have orchestrated murderous attacks on Asian youths. Anti Nazi League members have been assaulted with broken bottles when

out leafletting in Penilee recently."

The phone calls claimed that the Spartacist League is a "pro-IRA group", in an attempt to frighten the Sloan's management. Ms McDonald pointed out, "we are pro-Irish freedom: we think the British troops should get out of Northern Ireland, we are for unity between Catholic and Protestant workers, and we're for a federation of workers republics in these islands. We don't support the nationalist politics or the strategy of the IRA. We are anti-racist: we stand up for the rights of blacks, Asians and Jewish people, we are pro-gay rights, and above all we're pro-working class, unlike the Labour Party leadership."

Eibhlin McDonald concluded: "The Spartacist League is calling on all socialist, trade union and anti-racist organisations to come along on Saturday. All attending will be welcome to speak from our platform. A threat like this is an attack on the whole labour movement, and we need a united front against the fascists. They are race-terrorists with a plan for genocide, and we will not be silenced by such scum." ■

SPUC...

(Continued from page 5)

the North. Militant and the SWM, who tail after Labour, also support the idea of an imperialist peace deal, and downplay or eliminate the call for British troops out. Once again they believe the Irish capitalist state can be pressured into acting progressively—and end up welcoming imperialist plots and plans. At the same time, much of the left has no independence from the nationalist ideology of Republicanism, and no answer to the situation of interpenetrated peoples in Northern Ireland. We are against forcible reunification of Ireland, which will only help weld Protestant workers to Unionist masters in a reactionary, Loyalist block. Not Orange against Green, but class against class! Only the working class, Catholic and Protestant, has an objective interest in unity, in a just and equitable arrangement within the framework of workers power, across these islands. We fight for an Irish Workers Republic,

within a federation of workers republics in the British Isles.

This country needs a workers revolution!

To this day you can't get a divorce in Ireland, let alone an abortion. Thousands of women must travel abroad, often in secret, for the abortions they can't get at home. You still can't disseminate all abortion information legally. The oppression of Irish women weighs so heavy that young women are still traumatised by unwanted pregnancies, still forced to go full-term as social outcasts, and still driven to abandon their babies in unspeakable torment and shame—the latest case coming ten years, almost to the day, after the horrifying Kerry babies case. The truth, that women's liberation will only come about through socialist revolution, is starkly shown in this country.

And what if you're gay? They've decriminalised homosexuality, but try to get a job as a teacher in a church-run "National" school if you've come out. If you develop HIV and are sent to places like the Mater Hospital's AIDS clinic you

can't even get decent information on safer sex because it doesn't conform to the "Catholic ethos" of the hospital administration.

For the separation of church and state! For universally available, free secular education at all levels! For a state-owned and run national health service, providing free, quality health care to all, including provision of contraception (irrespective of the age of those wishing it), and abortion, free on demand! Under a planned, socialist economy these needs could be filled, and the domestic drudgery heaped on the shoulders of women within the nuclear family could be replaced by high-quality social provision for child-care, laundry, care of the elderly, meals etc. This would lay the material basis for eliminating the special oppression of women, which derives from their role in the family.

If you're a traveller you still face the prospect of murderous pogroms like the obscene frenzy against the Four Roads pub in Glenamaddy last November. Still the Council will try to move you off by dumping cow shit around your caravan.

If you're a youth looking for work you

get told to go to England (where things aren't that much better) or to take a slave-labour SES [Social Employment Scheme] job for £75 a week—if you're lucky. If you're in work, don't hold your breath because the bosses are throwing workers on the scrap heap every week, while the trade union misleaders sip tea with their Labour and Democratic Left colleagues and negotiate over the PCW social con-trick. Ask the TEAM Aer Lingus workers, or workers on the Dublin buses, or from An Post, what they've had from Labour in power.

Oppression, misery, poverty, joblessness, obscurantism: these are still the hallmarks of Ireland today, under Albert Reynolds, Dick Spring and Mary Robinson.

The fight for abortion rights and for women's liberation is part of the fight for workers revolution. This requires a struggle to win workers and radicals away from the pro-capitalist Labour Party, Democratic Left and their "far left" acolytes, and the building of a revolutionary party of the Bolshevik type.

For abortion information phone 6794700 ■

April/May 1994). Leaving aside the fact that the militant nationalists of AZAPO called for a boycott of the elections, and notwithstanding the confused and evasive gobbledygook quality of this statement, this means willingness to give electoral support to the ANC. The RIL pointedly does not say anywhere in its article that it is unprincipled to vote for bourgeois formations.

Ernest Mandel's Disunited Secretariat seems to have a bad case of conflicting opportunist appetites. Prior to WOSA's February decision to put up the Workers List, *International Viewpoint* promoted "the idea of calling for a vote for the ANC while running an independent campaign of immediate democratic and social demands", ie putting up a phoney militant platform to cover the fact that they would vote for the bourgeois nationalist ANC. *Workers Power* (May 1994) reports that South African "supporters of the United Secretariat of the Fourth Interna-

tional... withdrew from WOSA, condemning the decision to stand against the ANC". But the 26 March issue of *Socialist Outlook* printed a WOSA statement above a financial appeal for WOSA. The same appeal appeared in the April edition of *International Viewpoint*, which sceptically commented: "It remains to be seen which approach is the most pedagogical and constructive towards the hundreds of political and trade union activist members of the ANC and SACP who will in their majority vote for the ANC ticket." The French LCR's paper *Rouge* (28 April and 5 May) takes no position on the vote, nor breathes a single word about the Workers List Party. Ditto for *Socialist Outlook* (14 May), which mentioned in passing that "some tiny left wing groups" ran a "propaganda campaign to warn people of the dangers of a future government of national unity". One thing is clear: for the USec there is no principled objection to the class be-

trayal of voting for the bourgeois popular front.

The Workers International in South Africa, linked to Cliff Slaughter's WRP in Britain, also ran candidates in two provinces. However, their unreputed record of blocs with reactionary forces in the region, in the name of "fighting Stalinism", makes it impossible to give them critical support. Thus in the November 1989 elections in Namibia, it participated in an electoral lash-up called the United Democratic Front (UDF), which included several bantustan parties and tribal "chiefs" who were collaborators of South Africa's Namibian puppet government. The UDF received money from the apartheid government. Charging that the central crime of ANC/SWAPO was that they wanted to bring Stalinist gulags to the veld, the Slaughterites published disinformation from the South African intelligence services to smear their opponents (which even the WRP admitted in

a lame editorial, "We fall victim to 'dirty tricks'", *Workers Press*, 25 November 1989). Their current election manifesto is no less virulently Stalinophobic.

The proletariat must jealously guard its political independence from the bourgeoisie, whether of the "progressive" variety such as Nelson Mandela or the more unsavoury types courted by the Slaughterites. As Trotsky stressed, "the People's Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch". Popular frontism has dire consequences for the working masses. Stalin and Bukharin's support to the Kuomintang led to a bloody massacre of Chinese communists; Allende's version in Chile paved the way for Pinochet's coup. A revolutionary perspective in South Africa—of sweeping away neo-apartheid capitalism through proletarian revolution—requires iron-clad refusal to give one iota of political support to the popular front, whether through the front door or the back door. ■

Ex-Yugoslavia: counterrevolution and nationalist fratricide

Fake left in the camp(s) of imperialism



Der Spiegel



Independent

Communist partisans led by Tito (left) defeated German/Italian occupation forces and reactionary nationalists to lay basis for pan-Yugoslav deformed workers state. "Defenceless" Bosnian forces pound Serbs (right) as capitalist counterrevolution fuels all-sided nationalist bloodletting.

Counterrevolution in the ex-Yugoslavian deformed workers state has unleashed an orgy of nationalist bloodletting that threatens to explode in a wider European conflagration. Despite the current veneer of imperialist consensus over the plight of Bosnian Muslims, war-torn ex-Yugoslavia is a cauldron for imperialist intrigue and conflict. Fake-left organisations in Britain and across Europe have joined the camps of their own bourgeoisies as protagonists of their side in the civil war. In Britain they take their cue from the Labour Party. The Labour Party tops have joined with the likes of Margaret "Butcher of the Belgrano" Thatcher demanding decisive UN/NATO military action and attacking the Tory government for appeasing Serbia and not doing enough to defend Bosnia.

Revolutionary Marxists take no side in the hideous nationalist/communist slaughter between the Serbs, Croats and Slavic Muslims. But in the case of imperialist attack it is the duty of the international working class to stand in defence of Serbia. We say: Down with the starvation blockade! All US/UN/NATO forces out of the Balkans!

Militant Labour and the Socialist Workers Party have rejected advocating support to any of the contending sides in the communal war. But they flinch from taking a side in defence of Serbia against imperialist attack. Instead their line is tailored to appeal to pacifist currents within the Labour Party and liberal bourgeoisie; if they can find any. This is a replay of the SWP's position during the Persian Gulf War in 1991 when they dropped any reference to the defeat of imperialism and the victory of Iraq in a headlong rush to join the Labour "left" and the CND. Militant's "anti-war" line at the time boiled down to a campaign to elect Labour.

During Cold War II so-called Trotskyists like Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec) and the British centrist Workers Power (WP) group, who claimed to defend the Soviet Union and the Eastern European deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution, made common anti-Soviet cause with open state capitalist organisations like Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party in Britain. The USec hailed Baltic fascists like the Estonian "Forest Brothers", who allied with Nazis against the Red Army, while cynically denying the

danger of capitalist restoration. In 1991 WP, along with the SWP, pimped for the "rights" of Ustashi-loving Croat nationalists demanding the immediate recognition of the Croatian and Slovenian declarations of independence.

Shared hostility to the Soviet Union muted inter-imperialist rivalries and the European social-democratic parties happily combined in anti-communist enthusiasm for each and every counterrevolutionary movement which sprung up in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Further down the syphilitic chain the fake revolutionaries followed suit. But now with mounting inter-imperialist rivalries and the social-democratic reformists bidding to serve their respective competing national bourgeoisies, new complications have been introduced. And what happens when the "national liberation" movements unleash fratricidal war on each other as in the case of Croats, Muslims and Serbs?

In reality the bloody fratricide which has engulfed ex-Yugoslavia is the direct result of capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe, something all the fake-Trotskyist and social-democratic anti-Soviets supported. The fake left attempt to veil their treacherous support for counterrevolution by elevating the "democratic right of self-determination" into a classless principle. All forms of capitalist-restorationist nationalist and fascist forces suddenly became "freedom fighters". But this is a fundamental distortion of everything that the Bolsheviks fought for. Lenin and Trotsky recognised the right to self-determination while asserting the predominance of the class question. As Trotsky noted in 1940, "the safeguarding of the socialist revolution comes before formal democratic principles" (*In Defence of Marxism*).

"Poor little Bosnia"

Last year with the barrage of imperialist war propaganda focusing on the suffering of the Bosnian Muslims, many British fake Trotskyists were quick to follow suit. The British USec *Socialist Outlook* group allied itself with the Slaughterite Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) to launch the "Workers Aid for Bosnia" convoy to deliver goods to Tuzla in Bosnia. Amongst the long list of endorsers were *Socialist Organiser* and Workers Power. The USec's *International*

Viewpoint (no 248, September 1993) even boasted of a *joint press conference with the Bosnian government* on 18 September!

The convoy soon found itself bogged down by numerous obstacles, and a bitter dispute led to a split at a conference in October last year. The key issue? According to one account, the WRP were upset that a breakaway convoy (manned by USec supporters) broke "unity" and capitulated to the UN by posing as humanitarian aid in order to reach Tuzla (*Workers Power*, no 173, December 1993). The WRP's version is that the dispute centred on whether or not to press ahead all the way to Tuzla. To achieve this the WRP demanded "UN assistance as part of creating a force in the working class that would be able to take advantage of any divisions amongst the enemies of the convoy" (*Workers Press*, no 381, 30 October 1993). As we said at the time: "The long and short of it is that 'Workers Aid for Bosnia', which retails the imperialist propaganda campaign for 'poor little Bosnia', is simply a stalking horse for NATO intervention" (*Workers Hammer*, no 137, September/October 1993).

Workers Power: support to Chetniks, Ustashi fascists and now...

Bemoaning the "tragedy" of the Workers Aid campaign, sabotaged "after only the first few steps", Workers Power decided to line up with the alternative International Workers Aid for Bosnia Campaign launched by USec leaders Catherine Samary and Dick Forsland. WP explained that at least in Britain this new campaign maintains a "formal commitment" to anti-imperialist demands (*Workers Power*, no 173, December 1993). One of the new campaign's first actions was a picket of the UN Headquarters in London on 11 December under the solitary "anti-imperialist" demand that the UN open Tuzla airport!

Workers Power have the dubious honour of, at one time or other, having supported every side! Initially they pimped for the rights of the Ustashi-loving Croat nationalists. Come July 1992 and the WP's Austrian affiliate, the ArbeiterInnen-standpunkt (ASt) were scandalously involved in a "united-front" action with Great Serbian monarchists and fascists. At the time WP's international journal, *Trotskyist International* (September/December 1992) declared

that "Support for Croatia and the Bosnian Muslims is little more than support of the interests of the Austrian ruling class."

More recently WP has lurched over to a position in defence of the Bosnian Muslims. They now declare that since Autumn 1992 the Bosnian Muslims "have been engaged in a just struggle against genocide" (*Workers Power*, no 178, May 1994). It was about the same time that the Western imperialist campaign for "poor little Bosnia" went into full swing. Now the inveterate centrists of WP counsel that in the event of air strikes, the workers movement should denounce the air strikes, "support the Bosnian Serbs right to resist" and "continue to give support to the Bosnian Muslim-led resistance" — all at the same time!

Despite the hue and cry over the Sarajevo regime's "self-determination" Bosnia was never more than simply an administrative subdivision of Yugoslavia. The outgunned Bosnian Muslims have long seen direct imperialist intervention as their main hope. In the past year they have built up an army of 200,000 launching a military offensive which has driven the Croats out of much of the area of central Bosnia. And while the Western media focuses almost exclusively on Serbian atrocities there are numerous examples of Muslim forces carrying out "ethnic cleansing" when they have the upper hand militarily.

WP and others like to point to the existence of integrated communities in cities like Tuzla and Sarajevo as justification for their support to the Bosnian Muslims. But one of the tragedies of the counterrevolutionary break-up of Yugoslavia, which WP did their best to abet, is the tearing apart of such heavily integrated communities and their subordination to nationalist and communalist forces.

The only way out of the murderous cockpit of former Yugoslavia is through socialist revolution throughout the region. Trotskyists fight to build proletarian-internationalist communist parties that will wage uncompromising struggle against all forms of nationalism. In such an area of *geographically interpenetrated peoples*, as with the Catholic and Protestant communities of Northern Ireland, the democratic issue of self-determination can only be resolved equitably within the framework of the proletariat in power. ■

Balkans...

(Continued from page 12)

Yugoslav state. When these plans were torpedoed by the Fourth Reich, the US had no coherent Balkan policy. However, the Serbs' defiance of Western imperialist diktats, their open contempt for UN resolutions and NATO threats, is an affront to the American would-be masters of the world. Some in the US ruling class have been itching to teach the Serbs a bloody lesson.

But the US has its own constraints... on the home front. The continuing potency of the "Vietnam syndrome" was revealed and reinforced recently in Somalia. The US troops supposedly sent on a UN "humanitarian" mission to help feed the starving people of this East African country were in fact a colonial expeditionary force which massacred hundreds of black Africans. But when Somali clan warriors managed to turn the tables and kill a few dozen US soldiers, the overwhelming response of the American public was: Pull US forces out, now!

While Clinton waffles on Bosnia from one week to the next, the Pentagon generals have been vocally "dovish" about getting stuck in a Balkan "quagmire". Anxious to avoid any American casualties in the Balkans, the policy of US ruling circles is to arm and incite the Muslims and Croats against the Serbs. This was expressed in a particularly open and cynical way by liberal Democratic Senator Joseph Biden:

"The Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats are perfectly capable of fighting for themselves. There's no need for a Vietnamization. There's not a need for a single American soldier. Let's supply them with weapons and let them go after the Serbs."
—New York Times, 18 April

In other words, US imperialism is willing to fight the Serbs to the last drop of Croat and Muslim blood!

Russia: soft cop for the NATO powers

Enter at this stage Russia, the historic patron of their Serbian "Slavic little brothers". Partly to divert popular discontent at home over the economic devastation resulting from the capitalist counterrevolution, the Yeltsin regime—fully backed by the nationalist opposition led by fascist demagogue Vladimir Zhirinovskiy—saw in the Balkan crisis a golden opportunity to posture as a "great power". Moscow's deputy foreign minister and chief envoy in the Balkans, Vitaly Churkin, proclaimed: "The West should learn a lesson from the current Bosnian

crisis. The lesson is that Russia should be treated as an equal partner" (*Economist*, 26 February).

But this is not counterposed to acting in concert with Western powers. We noted in "Bosnia: powder keg of Europe" (*Workers Hammer* no 140, March/April 1994) that the Russians intervened to help broker a German plan to establish a Greater Croatia overlapping a Greater Serbia. The Croat and Muslim regions in



Bosnian Serbs welcome Russian troops with reactionary three-finger Orthodox Christian salute and hail fascist pan-Slav demagogue Zhirinovskiy (bottom right). Boris Yeltsin and Helmut Kohl (top right) engineered Russian intervention to bring Serbs into line in imperialist carve-up of former Yugoslavia.

Bosnia would link up with Croatia. Krajina Serbs would dissolve their statelet and accept the sovereignty of the Croatian government. In turn, the Bosnian Serbs, with a diminished territory, would be allowed to link up with Serbia. Moscow's slated role in selling this deal was to solace the Serbs, for example, promising the Krajina Serbs that the Russians would protect them against the fascist Croatian regime of Franjo Tudjman.

When several hundred Russian soldiers, wearing the blue helmets of UN "peacekeepers", entered the environs of Sarajevo in mid-February, they were welcomed by the besieging Bosnian Serb forces, who saw them as protectors against the threatened NATO air attacks. We quoted in our earlier article a commentary by the *Wall Street Journal* (22 February) complaining that the interplay between Russia and the US over Bosnia

"looked more like confrontation" than "cooperation". Indeed, the Clinton White House was initially irked by Moscow's move. But the Russian intervention's purpose was to implement a UN ultimatum to the Serbs to pull back from Sarajevo, and Moscow supported a US shoot-down of four Serb planes in late February. As we wrote in *Workers Vanguard* no 598, 15 April: "The now-capitalist Russian army is acting as the skill and cat's

dealing with Russia, they are dealing with a great power and not a banana republic." Yeltsin himself declared: "The Bosnian Serb leadership must fulfill its promises given to Russia, stop the attacks and withdraw from Gorazde... enable the introduction of UN forces in the area and unblock the UN personnel in Bosnia and Herzegovina." Clinton praised Yeltsin's stance as "very helpful". Russian workers must oppose the pan-Slav demagoguery of



Der Spiegel

paw for Bonn's plan to impose an imperialist partition of ex-Yugoslavia by squeezing the Serbs."

Speaking to a conference of his Christian Democratic party, German chancellor Kohl bragged about his close cooperation with the Russian leader: "I want to say very clearly that I am happy that with Boris Yeltsin and the Russian government, a new power is now assuming its responsibility." Russian emissary Vitaly Churkin emphasised that they were working together to line up their respective clients: "Some of us have privileged contacts: the Americans with the Muslims, the Germans with the Croats and we with the Serbs. We are seeking to use them for the common good" (*Libération* [Paris], 23 February). Underlining the possibility of a budding alliance with Germany, Yeltsin has now invited German troops into the ex-USSR in an interview with *Der Spiegel* (25 April), calling for the deployment of "the German army with UN peacekeeping forces" there to carry out "an important and noble mission".

It did not take long for Serbian nationalists to see through the double game being played by their Slav "big brothers". A UN analysis of the situation in Bosnia in late March reported that the Serbs "see everyone winning except them, view the Russians as siding with the United States and against them, feel diplomatic and military pressure on the increase".

At the same time, the German-brokered deal between the Croats and Muslims, who had been fighting one another, freed up Muslim forces to launch an offensive against the Serbs. When the Muslims refused to halt their offensive against Serbian-held territory in central Bosnia in early April, the Serbs responded with stepped-up attacks on Gorazde, leading up to the latest showdown with the NATO powers.

The Serbs' belligerent response embarrassed Moscow. Churkin exclaimed: "The Bosnian Serbs must understand that by

Yeltsin and Zhirinovskiy and demand: Russian troops out of the Balkans now!

While defending Serbia against imperialist attack, we maintain a position of revolutionary defeatism towards all three sides in the nationalist civil war wracking the former Yugoslavia. However, decisive military intervention against the Serbs by one or more imperialist powers would change the character of the war, subordinating the Croat and Muslim nationalist forces and posing the need for revolutionary defencism towards Serbia. In any case, we call on the workers to join in overthrowing their capitalist rulers—in Milosevic's Serbia no less than Tudjman's Croatia and Izetbegovic's Bosnian statelet—in the struggle for a socialist federation of the Balkans.

Important sections of the American ruling class now look on the Bosnia crisis as a test of their ability to control the post-Cold War world amid the devastation and turmoil wrought by counterrevolution in the former Soviet bloc and increasing rivalry with German and Japanese imperialism. This view was clearly expressed in an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* (20 April): "The Balkan War is not an isolated aberration but a small-scale model of the large-scale security challenges to come. Taking it as that, the major powers can, if they choose, introduce themselves as well as the Serbs to a new world order."

The "New World Order"—proclaimed by Washington as it was terror-bombing Iraq in the Persian Gulf War—is a formula for intensified US imperialist domination and exploitation of working people around the globe. If NATO attacks on the Serbs in Bosnia are effective, it will embolden the US rulers to unleash the Pentagon war machine from South America to southern Africa, from Eastern Europe to East Asia. But heavy bombing against the Serbs could bring in its wake imperialist troops fighting on the ground, sucking NATO forces into an ever-widening Balkan war. US/UN/NATO out of the Balkans! ■

WORKERS HAMMER

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WORKERS HAMMER

All UN/NATO forces out of the Balkans now!

Defend Serbia against imperialist attack!

We reprint below an article from Workers Vanguard no 599, 29 April.

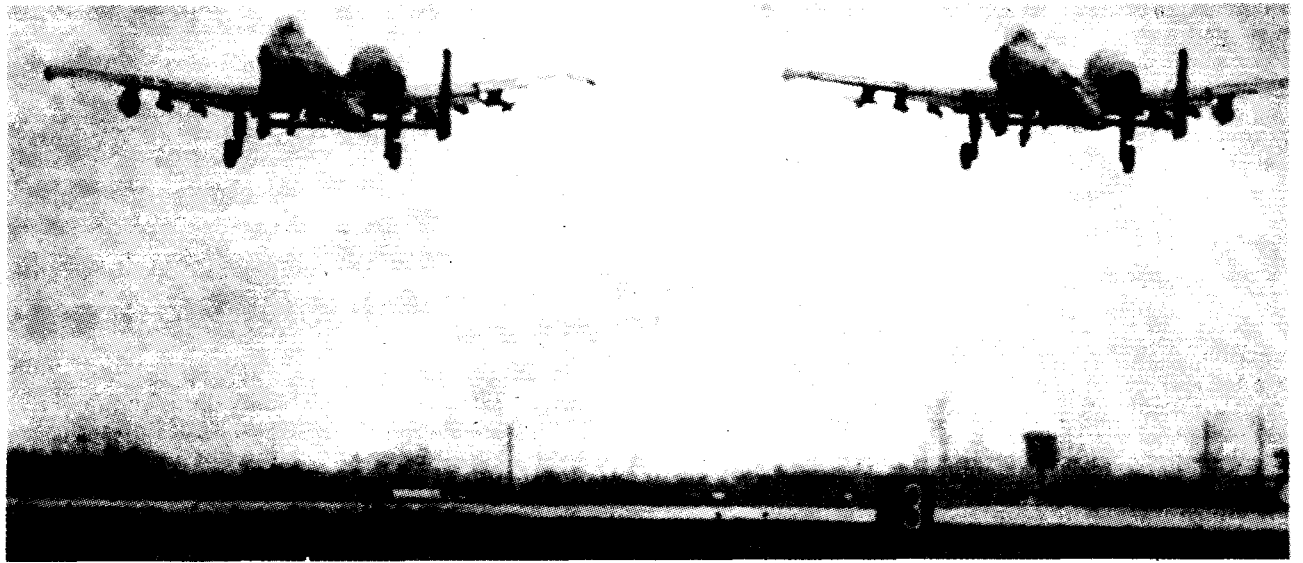
In an ominous move, the imperialist powers are threatening to become active combatants and sharply escalate the three-year-old war that is ravaging the former Yugoslavia. On 22 April, NATO issued an ultimatum to the Serbs demanding that they immediately pull back their forces besieging the Muslim enclave of Gorazde in eastern Bosnia—and refrain from attacking four other UN-declared “safe areas”—or face aerial bombing. NATO’s war threat has now been endorsed by Yeltsin’s Russia. While the Bosnian Serb forces have reportedly begun withdrawing artillery, the imperialists could launch military strikes at any moment.

The Western powers are increasingly frustrated at their inability to impose order in this tinderbox of Europe. The imperialist economic blockade of Serbia, while causing terrible suffering for the civilian population—especially old people, young children and the poor—had no effect on the war on the ground in Bosnia. The previous NATO attempt at using military force—the pin-prick raids against Serbian forces around Gorazde on 10-11 April—backfired. The Serbs blockaded 5000 UN “peacekeepers” throughout Bosnia, Serbian gunners shot down a British Sea Harrier fighter, and the offensive against Gorazde was stepped up.

The latest military moves by the Western imperialists reflect divergent appetites in the Balkans. Clinton’s White House keeps harping on NATO’s “credibility”—and its own—as the US seeks to act as top cop in a “New World Order”... without risking American casualties. Reunited German imperialism, which instigated the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, seeks to reestablish its historic overlordship in the western Balkans—Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia. Meanwhile, in the wake of the capitalist counter-revolution that destroyed the Soviet Union, Russia wants to reassert its “great power” status in the region, particularly towards its traditional client state Serbia.

But despite differing long-term interests and short-term concerns—the Americans want to go further and arm the Muslims, the French and British are worried about their troops on the ground, the Russians don’t want to see Serbia too humiliated—they are all united for the moment in forcing the Serbs into line and more generally imposing an imperialist carve-up of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

While opposing *all sides* in the fratricidal civil war between the Serbs, Croats and Slavic Muslims, we call upon the working people to defend Serbia against imperialist attack. The nationalist atrocities carried out by all sides in Bosnia pale in comparison to the crimes of the



Mellace/Reuters

Counterrevolutionary break-up of Yugoslavia unleashed all-sided nationalist blood-bath

Western imperialists. The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 were a prelude to the first imperialist world war, which slaughtered millions of working people. The US which spouts about “democracy” is responsible for the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the carpet-bombing of Vietnam and the terror bombing of Iraq. And the German Fourth Reich, which sanctimoniously denounces Serbian “ethnic cleansing”, is self-proclaimed successor state to the Nazi regime which murdered millions of Slavs, Jews and Gypsies.

Imperialist hands off Serbia—Down with the starvation blockade! All US/UN/NATO forces out of the Balkans, now!

Western imperialism behind Balkan bloodbath

Western propaganda blames the war on Serbian “aggression” and “age-old tribal feuding” in the Balkans. In reality, this orgy of murderous nationalism originates in the capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe, prepared by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic-nationalist misrule and engineered by the US, Germany and the other NATO powers. Since the imperialist powers had different policies, they did not intervene in Yugoslavia in a united and decisive way.

In the ethnic-nationalist wars set off by the secession of Croatia and Slovenia in the summer of 1991, tens of thousands have been killed and maimed, and hundreds of thousands driven from their homes. All sides have embraced the most reactionary “traditions”, with the Croats harking back to the pro-Nazi World

War II Ustasha regime, the Serbs glorifying monarchist Chetniks and the Muslims unfurling the green banner of Islamic fundamentalism. These were precisely the forces which Tito’s Communist Partisans overcame while defeating the German Wehrmacht to create a multinational Yugoslav workers state, albeit bureaucratically deformed.

But the nationalist jackals, all of them, picking at the corpse of Yugoslavia, are not the only forces responsible for the communalist bloodbath. Behind them stand imperialist powers who are increasingly pushing their own particular interests as economic rivalries emerge which were formerly muted by shared anti-Sovietism. Of these, Germany is most directly responsible for the destruction of Titoist Yugoslavia. After buying out East Germany in 1990 from the disintegrating Soviet Stalinist regime, German capital is pursuing important economic interests in the Balkan peninsula, which produces strategic minerals—chrome, zinc, lead, copper, bauxite, silver.

In late 1991 Germany steam-rolled the European Community into recognising the independence of Slovenia and Croatia over the objections of Britain and France, allies of Serbia during the interwar period. The establishment of a Croatian nationalist state provoked a revolt by the large Serb minority, backed by the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav federal army. The war for eastern Croatia ended—or, more accurately, was temporarily suspended—with the Serbs controlling 30 per cent of the territory of that former Yugoslav republic, a region now

renamed the Republic of Serb Krajina.

Then came the three-sided communalist slaughter in Bosnia between the Slavic Muslims, Serbs and Croats. The Serbs in Bosnia are predominantly peasants and owned 65 per cent of the republic’s land although making up only a third of its population. The Muslims, slightly less than half the population, are largely an urbanised people. Consequently, when the fighting began the Serb forces gained control of most of the country and besieged the cities where the Muslims were concentrated.

The *Wall Street Journal* (21 April) pointed to the fundamental dilemma facing Western imperialism, headlining “Serbs Bet That the West Won’t Risk the Thing They Fear: Ground Troops”. In Bonn, the Kohl government is pushing hard to overcome “constitutional” objections to sending in the German army as “peacekeepers”. But Germany has another problem. Such an action would provoke a violent response from those peoples who suffered as the Nazis laid waste to the South Slavic lands. It would certainly inflame anti-German sentiment in Greece, which has backed the Serbs. More generally, a German army in the Balkans would send shudders throughout Europe—East and West.

Unlike Germany, the US has no intrinsic interest in how Bosnia and the other former Yugoslav republics are divided between the contending Balkan nationalisms. Originally, Washington sought to bring about the restoration of capitalism in the region while preserving a federated

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