

# Russia

*articles from*

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# The referendum does not end the crisis

*by Valery Osnovaniev.*

**Moscow** -- The referendum that took place in April 25th in the Russian Federation was a product of the global crisis caused by the bureaucrats and the new bourgeoisie, that are now in the government. There has been months of battles on the top and an acute struggle during 36 days in which president Boris Yeltsin, after trying out a "Fujimori" way, was near to be defeated by the parliamentary opposition. But then the bureaucratic ranks and imperialism came to an agreement for a way out. They dissolved their differences, channelling the social tensions, the struggles of the working class and the serious conflicts of the nationalities by the electoral road, diverting the masses behind the diversity of their bureaucratic pro capitalist plans.

Yeltsin imposed himself on the opposition. In the false option between the Executive and the "aparatchick", entrenched in the Supreme Soviet and the Congress, Yeltsin had the majority of votes, not only in the vote about the trust in the President (58.7%) but also in the support to his economic policy (53%). The opposition was punished with the 64% (43.1% of the inscribed people) that voted for bringing forward the deputies elections.

The **hate towards the old Stalinist regime**, overthrown by a democratic revolution, has very deep roots in the masses. And it was exactly that hate that impelled, not only the petit bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, but to also a great part of the working class -void of an own and revolutionary alternative- to vote for Yeltsin. Another element that helped was the **political confusion** that pushed many sectors to vote for the president, being afraid that the chaos or the civil war would be produced if he was dismissed.

Yeltsin's highest vote came from two extremes: from the remote villages and the less developed zones, as Yamalo-Nenets or Janti-Mansisk, where the percentages surpassed 80%, and from the biggest towns and industrial centres, as Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Niyegorodsky, Rostov, Perm or Sverdlov. (See Table 1.)

Anyhow, the vote from the working class was not uniform. Yeltsin lost in great industrial Russian towns, such as Briansk, Velgorod, Ulianov, Kursk or Voronezh. And in others, the first question won but the second one lost, as in Kemerovo, Volgograd, Stavropol, Orenburg, Novosibirsk, Krasnodar o Saratov. In many cases this voting was not capitalised by the apparatus of the opposing bureaucracy. A peculiar case is the one from Kemerovo, to

**Table 1**  
**Results for the 22 greatest towns in Russia**

<b>TOWN</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Krasnodar	3,527,328	62.4	53.8	49.3	39.6	40.7
Krasnojarsky	2,138,769	61.2	65.7	59.2	27.9	42.1
Primorsky	1,616,355	55.0	64.3	56.8	25.3	38.4
Stavropol	1,719,962	68.0	52.4	48.1	36.6	44.5
Javarovsky	1,131,139	58.0	70.3	62.4	26.3	40.8
Belgorodsky	1,050,106	77.6	39.6	36.1	48.6	45.1
Briansk	1,098,681	67.8	44.4	40.9	40.5	39.2
Volvograd	1,959,483	64.8	53.1	49.0	34.3	43.7
Voronezh	1,930,288	72.3	46.7	45.2	40.2	46.5
Kemerovo	2,204,885	57.2	52.7	47.7	30.3	38.0
Niyam Novgorod	2,859,693	62.4	63.6	56.6	29.9	43.7
Novosibirsk	2,013,618	62.5	54.6	48.4	32.6	42.9
Oremburg	1,551,095	65.0	50.7	45.8	36.1	41.1
Perm	2,022,258	60.2	76.5	68.6	24.4	44.5
Rostov	3,265,889	65.1	55.3	51.3	34.0	43.3
Samara	2,432,865	62.8	60.9	55.1	30.8	43.1
Sverdlov	3,455,674	66.6	84.4	76.3	22.1	52.7
Ulianov	1,053,109	68.2	47.5	43.7	39.9	43.7
Chiliabinsk	2,663,295	62.2	71.5	65.5	25.3	43.9
Saratov	2,018,075	68.0	51.8	47.6	37.4	43.4
Peterburg	3,795,106	62.1	72.8	65.6	23.0	48.9
Moscow	6,958,047	63.5	75.2	70.0	20.9	81.1

1. Persons entitled to vote.
2. Voters, % of entitled to vote.
3. Yes for Yeltsin ( % of voters) .
4. Yes for the economic policy (% of voters).
5. Yes for the bringing forward of the election to president (% of entitled to vote).
6. Yes for the bringing forward of the election for the parliament (% of entitled to vote).

which belongs the basin of Kuzbass. The latter is the Yeltsinist miners bastion, which threatened last December to send a workers' train to Moscow so as to defend Yeltsin against the parliament. Nevertheless, in the referendum, they had a low participation (57%, less than the general average of 64%) and Yeltsin was defeated in the second question. This reflects the

growing uneasiness toward the official policy and for the decline in real wages.

In towns, zones and republics where there exist national and secessionist problems, the president lost largely. And this confirms the fragility of the Russian Federation. Yeltsin could win in only eight of the 22 republics of the Federation. And even in two of those, the second question lost. In twelve republics, which are rich in natural resources, the popular and workers' vote gave a resonant "*niet*" to Yeltsin and to Moscow. In one of them, Bashkortosan, an oil basin in the south of the Urals, the authorities added a fifth question about the economic independence, which scored 75%.

In another republic, Tatarstan, the voting had to be annulled because only 20% of the voters went to vote. And in the Republic of Chechenia the referendum did not take place, by decision of the local authorities.

In several of these republics there is a tendency of solidarity with the local nationalist demands, although the majority of the population is Russian. For example, in Tatarstan only 30% are Tartars against 70% of Russians.

In general, in these republics, the popular and workers' vote against Yeltsin was channelled by the local apparatus, whose leaders unite the nationalist demands against Moscow's yoke, with their own plans of capitalist restoration and imperialist colonisation. The same happened with the massive abstention in Tatarstan: the local government simply limited itself to prevent the TV mentioning the referendum, and so nobody voted.

The global results show that Yeltsin's victory was very stingy. And even, his success in the first two questions is ambiguous, since the third one, about bringing forward the presidential elections, scored 50.5% for "Yes". That means more than five million people who support Yeltsin against the parliament, would also like elections for a new president. This victory marks also a regression in Yeltsin's prestige. Two years ago, he was elected against four other candidates with 67% of the votes and now he obtained only 58.7%, which means only 37.7% of the people entitled to vote.

In spite of the determination by which the different bureaucratic apparatus pulled the masses to vote and forced them into their pro capitalist alternatives, many people stayed at home. Nearly 40 million people (36% of the inscribed) didn't vote. This figure is five million more than in the president election and two million more than in the referendum organised by Gorbachov in may, 1991, when the continuity of the USSR was voted.

There are indications pointing towards a somewhat higher abstention in the working class. Besides the case of the miners in Kuzbass, there is the case of Perm: 60.2% went to vote in the whole province, about 50% in the town, and only 47% in the zones near the great military-industrial complex.

## **Yeltsin takes the initiative again**

Relatively strengthened with this triumph over his bureaucratic opponents and largely supported by the imperialists, Yeltsin has gained back the lost political initiative. Now he tries to negotiate a new Constitution with the leaders of the republics and the regions, even with those where he lost, in order to establish a presidential republic and a bicameral Congress. He also

threatens with a call for parliamentary elections before the end of the year. In this way he tries to consolidate a regime of democratic reaction, that should control the mass movement and let the bureaucracy emerge out of its actual state of crisis

A political and institutional consolidation is indispensable for the imperialism, the Mafia of the new millionaires and the other sectors represented by the Yeltsinism, in order to go on with their "reform", that means, the economic counterrevolution of capitalist restoration and

**Table 2**  
**Results in the 22 Republics of the Russian Federation**

REPUBLIC	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bashkiria	2,829,021	70.5	39.6	35.9	42.4	37.8
Buriata	676,264	62.9	51.8	46.2	36.5	38.3
Gomo-Altai	126,083	69.3	48.4	43.4	37.9	40.8
Daguestan	1,086,083	73.9	14.2	14.1	55.4	23.3
Ingushetia	149,685	75.5	2.4	2.8	70.8	4.9
Kabardino-Balkaria	500,864	57.9	35.8	33.1	33.6	31.2
Kalmiukia	287,505	72.2	25.9	24.6	50.1	31.5
Karelia	578,052	62.4	65.0	56.6	30.0	42.7
Komi	817,980	58.5	96.0	60.0	26.2	41.3
Mordovia	691,848	70.1	38.1	35.0	41.9	35.9
Yakutia	670,202	70.4	68.1	60.8	32.0	47.9
North Osetia	422,205	70.5	63.3	56.1	35.3	47.3
Tartastan	2,621,557	22.5	66.4	61.4	9.8	15.8
Karch.Cherkisk.	287,505	72.2	25.4	24.6	50.1	31.5
Tuvinia	172,024	68.3	56.1	50.5	35.0	40.9
Udmurtia	1,141,285	60.9	56.9	49.0	31.0	43.1
Jakassia	387,550	56.5	57.9	51.9	28.8	37.4
Chechenia	---	---	---	---	---	---
Chuvashia	943,300	71.0	39.6	33.5	43.1	38.0
Altai	1,931,222	64.6	47.7	42.9	32.9	39.0
Adviguaeia	324,240	63.7	43.9	40.9	37.8	37.5
Mari-el	542,502	65.9	48.1	42.2	34.8	40.4

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imperialist colonisation, that darted the shock of liberating prices and privatisation in January, 1992.

In the situation of economic crisis, industrial recession and inflation, the next steps in that process will be to try to double the spoliation of the masses' and workers' movement, with bigger attacks to real wages and to social salary.

## The crisis is not resolved

But the referendum and the resulting strengthening of Yeltsin does not put an end at the crisis. On the top, the struggles between the bureaucratic ranks continue. An example is the bloody First May in Moscow, where Yeltsin's police fought against the apparatus of the bureaucratic opposition (see note). During the celebration of the victory over nazism (May 9th), Yeltsin's people did not admit the opponents, vice-president Rustkoy and parliamentary spokesman Jasbulatov, to be present on the gallery. And a deputy for Moscow, member of Working Russia -a wing of the Workers Communist Party- has been thrashed by some bullies. Struggles will intensify about the constitutional question and the sharing of power, as well as about national problems. The agreement between Yeltsin and the leaders of the republics will not be easy. The latter are not only part of the Parliament, where they are part of the opposition. They also have their own channels of coalition and direct association with imperialism. If they agree with Yeltsin, they will pass him an expensive bill for that. They will require political and economic grants that, probably will aggravate the national disintegration.

Struggles of the workers' and mass movement will also probably go on. Strikes have quadrupled in 1992 but since last March they have gone down, due to a combination of causes. In many places, workers nominal salary rises (although less than the galloping inflation; the dollar climbed from 650 to 1.000 rubbles, between February and March.). Another cause is the influence of Yeltsin's promises made before the referendum. And there is also a fear for sackings, which have been managed selectively up to now, sacking especially women. And last but not least, workers have been sucked away from their struggle, due to the inter bureaucratic rivalries and the electoral mechanism of the referendum.

Nevertheless, struggles did not stop, as is shown with the strikes in sections of the great factories in Sverdlov or among the miners in Rostov, these last ones accompanied by violent actions.

Therefore, political and social unsteadiness will probably grow, in spite of Yeltsin's strengthening and plans. The president's lack of honouring his promises and the new rise of prices, will probably not take much time in exploding them.

For the workers' movement to be able to defend itself and to pass really to the offensive, defeating the bureaucratic-imperialist counterrevolution and completing the democratic revolution, **it needs to overcome completely the choice between the bad and the worst**, It needs to create the alternative of a revolutionary party that will lead the struggle toward the workers and popular government.

*Yeltsin's referendum and the parliament*

## A four questions maze

In the middle of their struggles, the bureaucratic fractions agreed in having the referendum with four questions, which would encourage the division of the masses by their false options. The questions were: **1) Do you trust President Yeltsin? 2) Do you support his economic reforms? 3) Do you want to have the president's elections brought forward? 4) Do you want to have the deputies' elections brought forward?** It was established that the two first questions would win with the **simple majority of the voting people** and the two last with the **majority of the people entitled in the electoral register**. In this way they were sure of their places, since over 107 million people were registered for voting, the unpopular Yeltsin and the ultra unpopular parliament could continue, even if more than 50 million voted to have the elections brought forward.

The pre-electoral propaganda had nothing to do with what it is happening in the West, though some posters were put up, some public meetings took place and Yeltsin largely used the TV which he controls. The apparatus moved himself inside the enterprises, syndicates and other institutions.

Hard attacks were made. Vice-president Rutskoy denounced the corruption in Yeltsin's government, and the president didn't let the opposition use the state TV.

Of course, Yeltsin called to vote "*da, da, niet, da*". That means: "yes" to the president; "yes" to his economic policy; "no" to the bringing forward of the elections for president; and "yes" to the bringing forward of the parliamentary elections.

The bureaucratic sectors of the opposition, the ultra nationalists and monarchical as well as the different recycled pieces of the old Communist Party, and the diffused band of factories managers, old syndicate bureaucrats and leaders of republics and regions, in general, called to vote "*niet, niet, da*" and in reference to the fourth question they were divided. They agreed about: "no" to Yeltsin; "no" to his policy; "yes" to bringing forward the elections for president. Related to the parliamentary elections, some called to vote for its bringing forward and others against.

The result screen of the voting people, though favourable to Yeltsin, displayed "*da, da, da, da, ,*" which is, different from all that the bureaucratic fractions asked. Yeltsin and the deputies escaped having to resign, only because they were covered by the 50% clause.



# Two hot years

*By Valery Osnovaniev*

**Moscou.-** In August 1991, the Stalinist apparatus of the Soviet Union, leaded by Gorbachov who could hardly hold up, sunk in the economical crisis and, having to face workers strikes and national struggles, tried a coup d'état. The answer was a democratic revolution, with which the regime of the government changed. The bureaucrats of the communist nomenklatura were sacked out of the central power. They stayed in the majority of the syndicates, in the management of the state enterprises, in the army, in the KGB, in the administration of the republics and Russian regions, in the parliament, in the Supreme Soviet and in the Congress of Popular Deputies, where two thirds of its members had been put by the organisations of the Communist Party.

The democratic revolution could not advance more deeply because its control had been taken over by Yeltsin, a former provincial general secretary of the Communist Party who climbed on a tank to oppose himself to the coup d'état.

Yeltsin came immediately to an agreement with the generals, the official syndicates, the enterprise managers and the parliament. And all together they started the application of what they called "a shock therapy", which was an economical counter-revolution. The purpose was to find out a quick way to introduce capitalism and imperialist colonisation, stamped by the IMF. That means free prices, privatisation which advanced in commerce and in a much less degree in the industry, and a new and greater deterioration in health and popular education. That stroke, known as Gaidar's Plan, started to be applied in January 1992. New calamities were added to the old crisis produced by the Stalinist bureaucracy that malformed and degenerated the workers' state, liquidating a great part of the masses conquests. The living standard dropped vertically; the production decreased by 19%; the liquidation of the economical bureaucratic planning, replaced by the "freedom of enterprises" finished by ruining factories and industrial branches and brought a new level of chaos.

The workers' and popular resistance started soon. In spite of the treason of the new Yeltsinist leaders, the strikes in 1992 multiplied by four those of the year before and extended themselves to the whole country, although without co-ordination. They were waves of strikes for salary and employment, against corruption and in opposition to the privatisation methods. During the struggles, base organisations appeared in the industrial workers movement, that started to raise political slogans against the government and Yeltsin. An expression of that was the Protest Day of October 24th, 1992, held in the whole Russian country.

Together with this, the different bureaucratic sectors in the factories, as well as the old official syndicates and those of the regions and republics, raised their demands. Most of them voted that their own laws had priority over those of the Federation.

The consequence was that after six months of the Gaidar's Plan, the political and social unsteadiness burst out, and it goes on. On account of the struggle for credits the central bank changed hands. Controlled by the parliament, it passed to loan and support according to the pulling of the bureaucratic sectors and not according to the priorities marked by the IMF. That is how inflation broke out, 2,000% per year, a world record.

Less than a year after starting the "shock", minister Gaidar tumbled and the division in the governing bureaucracy became more evident. The Mafia of the new millionaires and the 800 stock exchanges opened in Russia stayed with Yeltsin. In the heterogeneous opposition of the parliament, managers of industries and leaders of the republics and the regions joined in claiming "another kind" of pro capitalist reform.

## A bloody First May

This First May, more than a hundred persons have been wounded and a police died in Moscow. What happened?

Since many decades, Stalinism has degenerated the meaning of the Workers' Day. Under the disguising of the red flag, it had changed it into the world peace day, that is, in to the day of the agreement with imperialism, in which they obliged workers' and those who performed records in production and in sports to march, homage and give bouquets of flowers to the bureaucrats that lined up steadily as stones in the balcony of the Kremlin on the top of Lenin's mausoleum.

But this year it was the limit. A fraction of the old Stalinism, the one of president Yeltsin, besides proclaiming that the date had nothing to do with the workers but that it was the Spring Day, forbade that any public meeting could take place in the Red Square, covering the town with the biggest anti mutiny display of the last years.

Other fractions, also coming from the decomposition of the old Stalinism but opposite to Yeltsin, called to make meetings for the First May. One of them, that one of the more traditionalist syndicate bureaucrats, took place in the vicinity of the Red Square, at the Square of the Revolution. They marched in a gay atmosphere, with balloons and ice creams, saying that they supported Yeltsin's pro capitalist reforms but that they asked for more social justice and less sacks.

Another fraction, that one of the heaviest political opposition, composed by different communist Parties and by the National Salvation Front, that assembles the nationalists, concentrated father away, in the October Square. It was not very numerous either, but it was better organised and prepared. They shouted directly against Yeltsin, they asked for his resignation and that the Deputies' Congress assembled, so as to impede the government to try to change the Constitution.

When the organisers announced that they would march toward the Lenin's hills (that is the way opposite to the Red Square), the police and a barricade of trucks cut their way. The demonstrators forced and so it came there to the bloody struggle. The organisers denounced it had been an operative made up by the Minister of Inland Affairs.

The danger is that, due to the struggle between the different bureaucratic apparatus that control the political scene, the masses go on suffocating. None of them is an issue for the millions of workers that tumbled down the old regime. Neither is the false option between those who forbid the First May and those who transform it into a "world peace party" or who are now calling to trust in the corrupted parliament.

It is necessary to build an alternative. That need was expressed by the millions of Russians that refused to take part in the circus of the referendum, in spite of the fact that no great party, as a whole, raised this issue to the masses.

It was also expressed instinctively in another way by some of them who, although they went to vote for or against Yeltsin in the referendum, required general elections to change the government and the parliament.

All these millions, together with the groups of the workers' avant-garde, students and revolutionaries who resist the false polarisation and division of the workers behind the apparatus and who expressed themselves in different towns of the huge Russia, are the real possibility of attaining that alternative. Many of them, in august 1991, shared the same barricades and trusted in Yeltsin. Others, although at the time trapped in the trade unionism, organised themselves in independent Unions and resist the consequences of the "reform", as a reject to the false political polarisation. Others militated or militate in the factory structure, yet controlled by the official trade unions; and some even take part in the union's groups dominated by the RPKR (Workers Communist Party), although with much distrust and in the absence of clear alternatives.

With all them, the real resistance has to be organised, that one of the struggle against the privatisation, the unemployment and for the salaries, against the capitalist restoration and imperialist colonisation, and for the construction of a revolutionary party, that fights for socialism and the workers' democracy in Russia and over the world.

**Extracts of a pamphlet of the Political-Social  
Organisation Rabochi (The Worker), March 23th, 1993.**

## **Rights must be seized**

What shall we do? Wait till salaries go down and then wait till the privatisation puts workers on the street? Can everything be resolved with a referendum or the victory of somebody on the top? Why are prices high and salaries low? Why are there high taxes and bank interests, on one side, and enormous administrative expenses in the factories on the other?

Neither the old nor the new nomenklatura that is in power want to cut the taxes on the people. None of them wants to keep the administration, from which they take profit as parasites, out of the deal.

The old power liquidated the manager's election, breaking the KZOT, the legal code on work and salary . They then stroke the little CTK's (collective workers' committees) and created the "enterprises' committee" (so as to have the labour representation to stay in the hands of the factory managers). Yeltsin allowed the managers to sack workers, against the KZOT, and offered more privileges and profits. On the other hand, today the soviets of all levels hide the illegality of the managers who are constantly corrupted by Yeltsin: He paid 100 million rubbles to the manager's association in order to put the enterprises under the Russian government's jurisdiction. In return, the managers, assembled in Togliatti, signed a document supporting the Yeltsin-Gaidar's policy. They obtained more privileges, of course.

It is clear, then, that none of the politic forces wants to finish with the "bosses" illegality nor offers rights to workers and peasants.

Rights are not offered, they must be seized. That can only be done by the workers and peasants themselves, with the help of the same workers, and not with the help of the presidential decrees in papers nor with the tons of laws and constitutions of the Supreme Soviet. To seize our rights we have to organise workers trade unions and political organisations in the enterprises.

But the bureaucratic clans don't confront between themselves, they found an entertainment for the workers: they propose them to go and vote the referendum or to go and make noise at any meeting supporting these or those.

Comrades: we must boycott the referendum, we must not go to vote in this theatre. We must create unions and factory committees and call to regional meetings of workers activists.

## **We who called to abstention**

**Nucleus of activists, workers and students from different regions and towns of Russia, impelled an active boycott toward the referendum without any co-ordination between them. Among them, the Trotskists of the Foundation Group of the IWL-FI, we did it proposing the perspective of preparing the general strike against Yeltsin's regime and the parliament, for a workers and popular government.**

**In the following notes we show other expressions of that avant-garde. First we reproduce an article of comrade Boris Ijlov, a leader of the Workers Union of Perm and of the OPOR (Political-Social Organisation Rabochi [the Worker]). It is a pamphlet of that organisation. And in the next pages we will have the opinion of students that also repudiated the referendum.**

# **Some reflections after the voting**

*By Boris Ijlov*

Just before the referendum, the so called independent Unions signed a declaration supporting Yeltsin. The Independent Federation of Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR), that groups the ex-official unions, did not call to support Yeltsin and in the beginnings it even did not call to participate in the referendum, but finally it united to the chorus of the state apparatus that pressed to vote.

The Perm sectional of the United union (an organisation that groups the workers of small private enterprises) had an abstentions position, though other sectionals of the same union supported Yeltsin.

The Political-Social Organisation Rabochi (the Worker), whose abbreviation in Russian is OPOR, called to the boycott of the referendum, organising more than ten squads in front of the big factories in Perm, as motors Sverdlov (42,000 workers), Kalinin (10,000), Dgeryinsky (10,000), Electro-Instruments (5,000), Lenin (28,000). They all belong to the VPK (the military-industrial complex).

The pamphlets distributed by the squads might have had some influence in the attitude of the workers and also, though in a smaller measure, in the results of the referendum in the zones of these factories.

We saw that in these regions the percentage of participation of the electors, 47%, was smaller than the average of the town. This means that, in general, the service sectors, those of the commercial structures, voted for

Yeltsin, meanwhile many workers, specially those from the VPK, stayed passive and in retreat.

Workers showed a good receptivity towards our squads and quite a spirit against Yeltsin. They were strongly against the deputies of the Supreme Soviet.

In these same factories, some deputies of the Supreme Soviet, some of the Soviet of Moscow, and leaders of the Labour Party (LP) took part in campaigns against Yeltsin. This triggered a negative reaction among the workers. In the factory of motors they intended to distribute a pamphlet from the vice-president Rutskoy; the workers did not only tear it but they thrashed the functionaries and "representatives" of the Supreme Soviet that distributed it.

The political organisations of the city formed two blocks: one against and one in favour of Yeltsin. Against were the PT, The Workers Communist Party (RKRK), part of the deputies from the local soviet, the ecological social committee and other organisations. In favour were the electors club, the Workers' People Union, the Managers' Union, Democratic Russia, the Green Party and others. The OPOR did not make part of any of these blocks.

The referendum showed that from these blocks a division was promoted between the workers, but also that a part of the workers from the great industry started to mistrust and to untie itself from the superstructural control (electoral, in this case).

The referendum channelled the strike movement that was going on till march or till spring, traditionally hot. One sees better this phenomenon if one compares with the strikes that took place later, for example in Ukraine. From the top an electoral "heating" was promoted so as to deviate the hot wind that came from below.

So we can see that the Russian people is not accustomed to the forms that are used in Occident in order to stop and demoralise the workers, as for example the two-party-system, by which two similar groups put up a theatre in which they seem to be fighting so as to deviate the workers from their struggles and independent tasks.

*Student activists say:*

## **" As a protest we did not take part in that humbug"**

*Interview by Marina Ivanova*

**Among the students in Moscow there was a very important abstention current at the referendum. We had an interview in the Students' Information Centre with a group of comrades of the Humanities, of the Russian University,**

**-- Did you organise yourselves to boycott the referendum or did you act individually?**

With many of my relations we decided not to participate, as a way of protesting against this theatre.

**-- What do they think about those who decided not to participate for a political reason?**

I thought that if I went to vote... that would really change little. If the referendum happens, it is because somebody needs it; those results are already decided beforehand. Yeltsin knew how it was going to finish, if not, he wouldn't have convoked it.

Besides, the tricky questions did not have a unique answer. For example, the question "*Do you support the 'course' of the reforms?*". Many people don't support them, but with the promises they were confused about which was the 'course'. The question about if you support or not the president is very subjective. In what do I believe? That he is not going to steal any more or that he is not going to drink more vodka? That is why I did not vote.

On the other hand -interferes another comrade- I went to vote and I stayed a long time thinking. At the end I voted only one question, that one about to trust in Yeltsin. I voted NO, because he promised to triplicate the value of the stipend (student's wages) and he goes on paying us the same. He promised that, as a way of having the students support. When he met the students, Yeltsin didn't hide that intention.

**--Which were Yeltsin's promises to the students?**

He had two meetings, one with the students Unions, and the other, with nearly two thousand students. In this last one nothing was demanded and Yeltsin arrived with the trick of giving a rise, bigger than the demand of the

Unions. These had asked to rise the students' wage one and a half times, and he came with a decree that gave a rise to the double.

**-- Till now they haven't paid it, but do you think that they will accomplish it?**

It is difficult to say. The decree is signed, though not always Yeltsin's decrees are accomplished. The problem is that when we will receive it we shall only have its nominal value, due to the inflation. The point is that inflation is part of the decree. Yeltsin gave big rises to teachers, militaries, miners, journalists... and what happened?

**-- Have there been mobilisations and demands for the stipends?**

In Leningrad there have been some mobilisations. Here in Moscow we are much more quiet. The great problem in all Russia is that there exist associations, but nevertheless there is no students' movement. There are very little expressions of student activity, not centralised nor co-ordinated. That is why we occupy ourselves in informing and writing articles, journals and reviews. We lack force, we represent a small sector of the students.

**-- What about political tendencies between students? Which was the result of the voting in the University?**

There has been very little electoral activity. In the University of Moscow, the voters' percentage was 45% and of them nearly 60% voted to trust on the president. Nearly 30% voted to bring forward the president's elections and 40% to bring forward the deputies' elections.

About the political tendencies, the democrats from the Youth's Association, called to a meeting so as to support the president, but they were very few. During the last year, many have been undeceived with Yeltsin, but the majority is not in a polarised position, of supporting or being against Yeltsin. They merely don't mind.

There is a danger for Russia to become a fascist regime, because Yeltsin is taking the country to hunger and decadence, and Yirinovsky [a leader from the Liberal Nationalist Party, who admires Hitler and proposes an ultra chauvinist great-Russian program - M.I.] promises that he will give to eat to everybody. Today, many think that Yirinovsky is a clown, but they will probably put at his side a young man with blue eyes who, looking at your eyes and with the nazis' salutation, will say: *"we shall give everybody to eat"*.



# Associated so as to plunder Russia

The catastrophic economical situation in the Russian Federation and the other republics of the ex-Soviet Union its a wide spread information in the world press. Also amply commented are Yeltsin's humiliating peregrinations to the imperialists capitals, so as to implore "help". That was the purpose of his meeting with Bill Clinton, the president of the United States, in Canada, just before the referendum. There, in order to help Yeltsin in his electoral campaign, imperialism agitated again the "carrot" of 43 000 million dollars in front of the Russian people, under different kinds of credits, investments, donations, commutation of debts, etc.

Imperialism has been making similar promises already since Gorbachov's times. So, last year the G-7 had solemnly promised a packet of 25 000 millions. A year later, we know that very little of that money came to Russia, because the "help" was tied to the requirement of accomplishing the "adjustment plan" of the IMF. The ex-first minister Gaidar had started its application, but the plan crumbled as soon as it started. On the other hand, the private investments are yet more scarce.

But if not many dollars go into Russia, on the contrary, over several years *there is a rushing stream going out towards Occident*, a stream that has been growing according to the advances in the plans of capitalists restoration. The occidental press talks very little about that. But the truth is that Russia suffers an enormous drain of capitals: about 25,000 million dollars per year. Its a plunder, organised by the imperialist banks and enterprises, together with the bureaucracy and the Mafia. just as in Latin-America or Africa

If only a workers government could cut that draining, Russia, without having to beg to anybody, could count with a strong entrance of money to start with, in order to support the reconstruction of the productive apparatus that has been ruined by the bureaucratic system and by the onset of the capitalist restoration.

About this monumental drain of capitals, the English review *The Economist* (May, 5th, 1993) publishes an investigation under the title "*Persuading its own capitals*". We reproduce it here:

# Persuading its own capitals

"*They are plundering Russia by all means!*", claims Alexander Rutskoy, the vice-president of the Russian Federation. He estimates that nearly 17,000 million dollars have been drained from the country in 1992, toward bank accounts abroad.

On his side, Alexander Gurov, a high functionary of the Security Ministry (the successor of the KGB, an organism that knew plenty about how to smuggle money out of Russia), thinks that probably the amount reached 26,000 millions last year.

Probably these estimates are a bit on the high side, for political reasons. The vice-president Rutskoy has emerged as one of the leaders of the opposition to the reforms introduced by his chief, Boris Yeltsin.

The point of departure for other estimates is Russia's balance of payment for 1992. "Officially", this balance of payment estimates the drain of capitals - that don't include the service of the foreign debt- in the modest sum of 1,400 million dollars. Nevertheless, further on, the balance shows a black hole: in the file "*errors and omissions*", there appear nothing less than 6,700 millions of non registered capital exits. Adding both files gives 8,100 million dollars, which is a lower limit estimate of what Russia has lost last year.

By the way, a functionary of the Vnesheconombank, the state bank for foreign trade, claims the exact number to be 13,000 millions dollars, a little bit less than the 14,000 million dollars Russia should have received in loans, aids and investments last year.

Capitals drain from Russia in two different ways.

A great portion of exportations of raw materials, specially oil, is stolen by societies formed between the local bureaucrats and groups of the Mafia, and is sold abroad.

Another mechanism for the drain of capitals, the most common one, is the following: all export companies send there clients abroad two invoices, a formal one and an "informal" one. The payment for the formal invoice is entered to Russia, while the money for the "informal" invoice is deposited on an illegal account at a foreign bank.

What is really surprising is that the companies re-enter something officially. According to Russian law, they must convert half of their incomes in foreign money into rubbles. The interest rate in rubbles is largely negative and the money has fallen from 144 roubles per dollar twelve months ago to 812 now [...].

The only way to convince capitals to return to Russia is stabilising the economy. On this point the news are somewhat better than expected. Inflation in March was 21%, which is lower than the 25% reached in January and February. In April it would fall to 15%.

If the Finance Minister, Boris Fedorov could force the central bank to keep the credit inside the limits agreed upon last 9th of April, Russia could reach the objectives that condition the help packet offered in Tokyo. This, in turn, could mean that Russia would receive a foreign assistance equivalent to a fifth of the national income in the third and fourth trimesters of 1993. To

the extent that the government would go selling those dollars so as to buy rubbles, the Russian money could fortify itself in front of the dollar.

Nevertheless, the Russians with an account abroad will probably be the most reluctant in believing that the theories have turned into reality. Until they are not convinced of that, the drain of capitals from Russia will regretfully go on at the level it has reached.

*At its meeting on April 1993, the International Executive Committee of the IWL (FI) voted the document "The political situation in the ex-Soviet Union and our tasks".*

*We reproduce the final part of this text:*

# **Our programme for Russia and the ex-Soviet Union**

We believe that the essential terms of our programme must be the following:

**1) A new revolution is needed so as to wipe out the states and regimes of the ISC, the bureaucracy and the Mafia bourgeoisie, to impose a workers and peoples power, based on the workers democracy, to start a real transition to socialism, and to fight against the domination of capitalism and imperialism in the ex-Soviet Union and in the whole world.**

A new revolution it is imperiously needed in Russia, in order to complete the task of destroying the bureaucratic power. The first task the new revolution will have is to destroy the actual state apparatus and its oppressing regimes, instruments of the counterrevolution, and its plans of capitalist restoration and imperialist colonisation.

A new revolution it is needed in order to wipe out the bureaucracy and the new rising Mafia bourgeoisie. Both are closely related to the imperialist monopolies. And both are mortal enemies of the workers, the people and the country.

It is necessary to stop the privileges of the bureaucratic caste that lives as a parasite on the working class, and takes profit of its domination in the state administration so as to have incomes and a much higher standard of life as the workers have. The bureaucratic caste today uses that domination so as to plunder the states properties and accumulate real fortunes, and by that way transform themselves in the new bourgeoisie of Russia and the ISC, and in the inland agents of imperialist colonisation. It is also necessary to expropriate and get rid of the Mafia bourgeoisie, enriched with the black market and with not very clean affairs with imperialism. Their bands of gullies that fight shooting for the control over the market, must be liquidated.

It is necessary to sack the responsible of the actual crisis from power, to liquidate the institutions that support and maintain that power --the army, the presidency, the government, the parliament, the Constitutional Law Court, etc.--, to stop them from throwing criminal attacks against the workers and the people, as Yeltsin's attempt of auto coup d'état.

The new revolution must impose a workers' and peoples' power, a revolutionary workers' state, based on the organisation emerged from the struggles of the workers themselves and the people, with full workers democracy, so as to promote a real transition to socialism and to face the bureaucratic-imperialist counter revolution.

**2) Defeat and throw out of power Yeltsin's government and the bureaucracy's parliament, so as to impose a workers' and peoples' government. The dispersed workers' and popular resistance must join in a General Strike, encouraging democratic self-organisation of the workers, the peasants and popular sectors, as well as that of the soldiers, the warrant officers and the officers not compromised with the bureaucratic lobbies. Towards the centralisation of the base workers organisations in Russia and in the ISC, in order to organise the fight for these objectives**

In the crisis following the attempt of an auto coup d'état, the leaders of the official trade unions have tried to manipulate the workers, calling for measures against Yeltsin and in favour of the Parliament's bureaucratic lobbies. On their side, the Yeltsinist trade unions pretended to do the same thing, but supporting the government.

The fighting workers, the new leaderships emerged from the struggles that faced Gorbachov during the coup d'état in August 1991, and lately Yeltsin's government and plan, face the responsibility of giving **a workers way out**, a way out **independently of all the capitalist and bureaucratic forces**. That is why we state: For the overthrowing the government of Yeltsin-Chernomirdin-IMF, that wants to govern by decree to attack the workers and betray the country as a colony of imperialism! For the overthrowing of the bureaucracy's parliament! Neither Yeltsin, nor the Civic Union, nor the National Salvation Front! Those are all varieties of the Mafia, and the new and old nomenklaturists! Nothing good can be expected from any of these "rescuers"! We must prepare the independent workers' struggle so as to wipe out all the nomenklatura, the Mafia and the new capitalists, and destroy their state machine!

The task is to unite the resistance, to co-ordinate the struggles, in the perspective of performing the general strike where miners, teachers, health workers, medicine men, air controllers, all who have been the avant-garde of the mobilisation, converge under the direction of the workers' and people's movement as a whole.

We promote the call for a Congress of workers' committees, strike committees, independent trade unions and CTK's elected in a democratic way, in order to organise the struggle.

Concomitantly, the organisations emerged from the struggles, the new trade unions, factory committees, political and trade union currents and all the workers' and people's fighters must impel and organise the armed self-defence in enterprises and in people's and workers' suburbs, and co-ordinate them so as to prepare themselves to face and defeat any repressive action and all attempts of restoring a new dictatorship, from anywhere that it may come. With that objective, it is also necessary to call the soldiers, the warrant officers, and even the officers that are not engaged with the restorations lobbies, to deny in participating in any kind of coup d'état or to accomplish repressing orders against the people. And convoke them to integrate themselves with the workers in the organisation of the self defence committees or workers' squads.

The perspective of this independent mobilisation of workers can only be the struggle for a workers' and people's government, without bureaucrats, nor bourgeoisie nor imperialist agents.

The only final issue for the working class is that the workers mobilise themselves with a revolutionary General Strike so as to throw out the corrupt bureaucrats and the Mafia, and seize power with their own leaders and independent organisations and squads

**3) We must face and defeat the economic plans of capitalist restoration and imperialist colonisation, of hunger and misery for workers. We must fight to defend our salary, employment, housing, health and education. free of charge. Against the "voucherisation" or any other kind of privatising. Workers' control of production, distribution and accounting of enterprises must be imposed. Neither capitalist restoration, nor back to the bureaucratic "planning": the only solution to the economical catastrophe is that the working class seizes the political power, appropriates itself of the banks, factories, mines and transport ways, pulling them out of the hands of the bureaucratic apparatus and of the new bourgeois, and reorganising the economy according to the working peoples interests, starting this way a real transition to socialism.**

The disaster of the plans of capitalist restoration --formerly Gorbachov's *perestroika* and now Yeltsin's-- fixed on the bankruptcy of the bureaucracy's "centrally commanded" economy, are throwing the working masses slowly into a chasm of misery. Nevertheless, this is only the prologue of the hell of hunger and unemployment that waits for them, if they don't confront and defeat those plans in all its versions and up to the last consequences.

The working masses have developed a **growing resistance** toward the immediate consequences of the crumbling down of bureaucracy's economic mechanism and its plans of transition to capitalism: workers are fighting principally to defend **salary** and **employment**, and in some cases they face the **managers and bureaucrats corruption** too, occupied as they are in plundering so as to accumulate fortunes in views of the privatising process. But this resistance lacks yet of its consciousness, the program and the

organisation so as to reach **the only way** out for the workers: **the conquest of power by the working class.**

Our task is, exactly, to raise a **system of transitory demands** (economical, democratic, national, etc.), that should rise from the masses struggles and demands as well as from their actual consciousness, and that will lead to that conclusion: the **conquer of power**, that will help to mobilise them systematically in the direction of a new revolution that will completely liquidate the bureaucracy and the Mafia, that will drive out imperialism, and will put the roots of a transition to socialism.

\* **Salary** has been swallowed up by the Yeltsinist inflation and now workers are facing a still bigger danger: the **unemployment** of millions, especially if the privatising plans go on. Against that, the only possibility is to fight with the slogan of **movable scale for salaries (indexing)** readjusted every fifteen days; **not one sack in the states enterprises or those that will be privatised; for a movable scale of working hours.**

\* The different kinds of **social salary** are menaced or in ruins too, and the restoration plans pretend to liquidate them completely: the proletarians must head the defence of the state *kvarplata* of housing, education and health free of charge, and the struggles against the catastrophic degradation of hospitals, so as to unite under its leadership the people's masses, students, doctors, retired, etc.

\* Facing the irremediable catastrophe of the bureaucratic "planning" system, **all** the nomenklaturists, the new rich and imperialism agree in a way out: the capitalist restoration. The **privatising** is a fundamental tool, though not the only one, in the different restoration plans of the bureaucrats, the Mafia and imperialism. They only differ in the way and rhythm of proceeding, but principally, **they fight furiously for the portion that they will have in this huge plunder.** Let nobody be deceived about the privatisation! They will only benefit the nomenklaturists transformed in owners. To workers they will only bring more exploitation and misery: Its first consequences will be massive sacks.

Against every form of privatising! No to the swindle with the *vouchers*! No to the swindle of the divisible property and the society by shares! No to the farce of the "privatising co-operative", organised by the managers and bureaucrats that want to go on with their dictatorship and theft in the enterprises!

\* Though many bureaucrats colour themselves as "patriots", **all** the restoration plans implicate, to a higher or lower extent, the transformation of the republics of the ISC in **semi-colonies** of the USA, Germany and the other imperialist powers. No to the imperialist colonisation! For the rupture with the IMF! Away with Sachs and the "experts" in tracing hunger plans! No payment of the bureaucracy's foreign debt! Against the imperialist plunder of oil and minerals: no more grants! Stop the smuggle and drain of capitals!

\* Thousands and thousands of nomenklaturists and the Mafia make enormous fortunes from night to day, while workers sink in misery. The managers of the state enterprises in crack, unable even to pay the workers wages, nevertheless devote themselves to steal all what they can, so as to make a private accumulation of capital. While Yeltsin kneels down to beg

alms from the Yankee and German imperialists, the bureaucrats and the Mafia drain capitals abroad in thousands and thousands millions of dollars. Exploitation, plunder and fraud flower behind **the state or private bureaucratic curtain, that hides to the workers the performance of production, distribution and finances**, those of their own enterprise as well as those of the countries' economy. So it's an urgent and imperative task to establish **the workers' control over the production, distribution and finances**, starting from the factory, the bank or enterprise (state or private), going on with its industrial branch or commerce and ending up with the national economy.

The first task of the workers' control will be to determine in which proportion the nomenclaturists, the Mafia, the imperialist capital and all who exploits workers get hold of the gross national product, plunders the country, drains capitals, etc. and how they smash the economy. This must start at the own enterprise. Committees that represent the base of the enterprises must organise meetings so as to elect branch committees, and so on, up to the level of all the industry, transports, banks and the national economy. In this way, they can draw **a workers' and masses' economical plan**, opposite to that of the bureaucracy and imperialism. The workers' control will then be, -as it is stated in the *Transitional Program*- **a preparatory school**, so that when comes the time to seize power, the working class can **directly lead** --without bureaucrats and capitalists-- the industries and the whole economy.

\* **That seize of power by the working class through a new revolution** is the **only issue** to the economic, social, political and even ecological catastrophe that menaces the working people of Russia and the ISC. That is the **immediate task** required by this disaster.

While the state and the whole economy are still in hands of bureaucrats and capitalists, there will not be any magic formula nor favourable "economical" solution for workers, that doesn't start by the seizing of the political power. Therefore, it is necessary to winnow any utopia about the "workers' collective property".

The working class being in power, it will pull out of their hands the factories, the banks, the transports, the mines. Only this way can the titanic task of reorganising the economy be started, in its own benefit and that of the whole masses. The heritage that it will receive after decades of Stalinist "planning" and years of capitalist restoration, will have terrible problems: from ecological catastrophes till the void of good part of its productive infrastructure, including the enormous squandering that the bureaucracy has made of the energetic, mineral and natural reserves. One of the most serious problems, perhaps the worst of them, will be the monstrous disproportion between the sectors and branches of the economy with the hypertrophy of the Sector I and, specially of the military industry. This will demand a large and not at all easy change, as a central point of the economic plan. That does not mean to leave the new workers' state unguarded, but to adequate its productive apparatus to the masses' needs.

But, what any the difficulties are, the seize of power will be a new daybreak for the workers of Russia, of the ISC and of the whole world. The way to socialism will be opened; a way completely closed and destroyed by



the Stalinist counter-revolution. Then the construction of the "*flourishing democracy of producers and consumers*" will start, where property will really go changing into social property and where the work alienation and the system of working for a salary will go extinguishing; that means, the transition to world-wide socialism.

**4) Against the Great-Russian oppressing chauvinism! Full right to the self-determination of the nationalities, including their independence! For workers' republics that proclaim their national sovereignty and throw out the bureaucrats! For an absolute free and voluntary union or federation of peoples and nationalities, so as to construct socialism!**

The struggles of the nationalities against the Kremlin's oppression and for self-determination, started in the republics of Central Asia, Armenia and the Baltic countries. They marked the beginning of the end of the Stalinist regime and were the fundamental factor of the revolution that destroyed the state of the ex-Soviet Union. But, as we have already indicated, the national problems are far from being solved in Russia and in the ISC, and still exists the danger of a super-Yugoslavia breaking out. That can happen, principally because the Russian state continues exercising to a great extent, in the Russian Federation and in the ISC, the role that the central state exercised in the Soviet Union.

Today, as in 1917, the national tasks and slogans are a fundamental part of the program of the workers' revolution. It is inconceivable that the working class of Russia and of the ISC can seize power, if it doesn't raise itself as **the leader of peoples and nations that have been oppressed and exploited for centuries by Moscow**, formerly by the czar, then by Stalin and his successors. It must fight for a transitional program concerning the national questions that will raise an alternative, in front of the chauvinist great Russian bureaucrats as well as in front of the bureaucrats of the other nationalities, who profit of the justice of national liberating aspirations of its peoples, to continue in power and monopolise the plunder and the privatisation. This transitional programme has two faces: one is related to the oppressors nationality and the other to the oppressed nationality.

\* As far as concerns the Russian workers, it must be explained to them untiringly that **one of the greatest enemies that they have to face is the great-Russian chauvinism**; that the more they want to struggle against the imperialist plunder and the more they are, in name of their great Russian proud, opposed to be a colony of the USA, the more is it decisive **to recognise without conditions the right to the self-determination** of the nations that are not Russian. It must be explained that if they don't take that banner, their future might be as Yugoslavia and they will never get free of the bureaucratic clique or the great-Russian bourgeoisie! People that oppresses another people, cannot be free! This needs clear slogans:

\* Defence of the right to self-determination, and the immediate and unconditional recognisance of all republics that require their independence.

\* Against the expansionism of the Moscow bureaucracy, the retreat of the Russian Army from all the countries of the ISC must be required, specially from those where they are intervening as in Osetia, Caucasus and Central Asia.

\* From inside the oppressed nationalities, a call to its working classes is at order, to take in their hands the struggle for the national rights, so as to exercise them together with the class demands. For workers' and peasants' governments in all the nationalities! For **republics of workers** or **workers' republics**, that **proclaim the national sovereignty and sack the bureaucrats!** Starting from these points, they should discuss their economical and political bonds with the other republics, appealing on its workers to do the same!

\* Only with a transitional programme like this one, starting with the whole right to self-determination exerted and verified in practice and not in papers, shall the unity of the Russian working class with the no Russians be reached, and shall be true the slogan of **free and voluntary union or federation of all the peoples and nationalities of the ISC**

**5) For the defence and enlarging of the democratic and workers' liberties. For full authentic validity of the liberties of press, association, strike and trade unions and political activity. Stop the authoritarian governments that govern through decrees and the antidemocratic parliament that only represents the cliques of the nomenklatura and the Mafia! No to the Bonapartist plebiscite! No to the constitutions imposed from the top! For free and sovereign Constituent Assemblies!**

Yeltsin's unsuccessful auto-coup d'état showed still more clearly the antidemocratic and authoritarian nature of the regime in the Russian Federation, a bad substitute for the rests of the old totalitarian state. The situation is the same or even worse in the other "sovereign states" of the ISC. The portions of democratic liberties that exists unevenly in Russia and other republics, are a direct or indirect product of the masses' struggle. The bureaucracies that go on governing systematically try to limit these liberties or to drop them, as Yeltsin intended recently.

This purpose of the "democrats" of imposing a presidential dictatorship unmask the humbug that they are the "defenders of democracy and liberties". The only "liberties" that they really defend, are those that able them to plunder Russia and exploit the workers. We can expect less yet from its opponents in the parliament, part of which, the "red-brown" (nazi-Stalinists) of the National Salvation Front, openly claim the models of Stalin, Pinochet and the Chinese dictatorship.

It will be decisive for the designs of the revolution that the **working class leads the struggle**, not only facing the economic catastrophe and the national question, but also **for democracy and liberties**. Only the working class will be consequent in leading the people's masses in that struggle. And being successful, it is ought to gain them for the idea that the regime of **workers democracy** will be a thousand times more democratic than any

bourgeois democracy and its ridiculous theatre with Yeltsin and the parliament. That is why we state:

\* For real democratic and workers' liberties! Total liquidation of the repressive antidemocratic and anti workers legislation that yet exists! For the dissolution of the KGB (today called the Security Ministry), the OMON and the Security Council! For a real press, radio and television liberty! Before, the communication means were monopolised by the Communist Party, now they are by the different bureaucratic gangs and continue being forbidden to the working class and the people. For free access to the communication means by the workers' base organisations, strike committees, students' and popular organisations, etc.!

\* Stop with the repressive legislation of strikes and its prohibition in the defence industries and public services! Full guarantees for the political and trade unions activity! Stop the persecutions and sacks of working fighters! We must organise the workers self-defence against the gangs that attack fighters and active leaders!

\* Stop with the authoritarianism and Yeltsin' methods of governing by decree! We must finish with the parliament that only represents the Mafia and the nomenklatura! Stop with the antidemocratic plebiscites, where we can only choose between two false options! We must reject the dictate of constitutions from the top! We must fight for constituent Assemblies, free and sovereigns, so that it is the people who decides about the re-organisation of Russia and the other republics and nationalities!

**6) No neo-Stalinist "democrats"! We must build a workers party, revolutionary, socialist and internationalist, so as to fight for this program and lead the revolution.**

This huge working class, with an enormous body of tenths of millions of industrial, miners, oil men and railway men workers...together with tenths of millions of teachers, doctors, students, peasants..., that hardly resists the attack of a divided bureaucrat gang, could smash if it united like one fist. It has woken up from the Stalinist black night, it has stood up, but it has recuperated very little of its view, of its talk, of its feelings, of its consciousness yet. **And the highest form of class consciousness that the Russian proletarian giant needs, is a great revolutionary workers party.** That is what it needs so as to raise his fist and bump with all its force there where it has to punch.

In this moment the counter-revolution wants to put the workers avant-garde and the working masses in a hellish political alternative: or Yeltsin or the neo-Stalinists! Against that we call the avant-garde and the workers to reject them in equal terms. Today, after the experience made, Yeltsin has a loss of reputation between workers and activists, many of which had believed in him. But at the same time there is an advance of some neo-Stalinist currents. This is a very serious danger: we call workers **to combat in an inexorable way all kinds of neo-Stalinism!**

Workers resistance may go on growing more and more, great workers trade union struggles may develop and they can even obtain very important victories. But there will not be a workers way out and even those victories will transform in defeats, if the proletariat doesn't provides itself with a strong revolutionary and socialist party, with an own political alternative, absolutely independent of bureaucrats and bourgeoisie. The IWL-FI, through the construction of its section in the ex-Soviet Union, will fight for this objective and will support all the efforts and advances that the workers avant-garde will make in that sense. That is the centre of our activity and our reason of being in the Ex-Soviet Union.

*"Give me a revolutionary party and I will move Russia from its foundations!"* These words of Lenin are more actual than ever. It is the supreme need for the workers of Russia and the ISC. It is the task number one of the working avant-garde.