

Spartacist League Flip-Flop on Rutskoi

In the aftermath of the October 1993 armed confrontation in Moscow, the Spartacist League (SL) correctly pointed out that: “Rutskoi/Khasbulatov and the fascist-infested ‘red-brown’ coalition that supported them are no less hostile to the working class than is Yeltsin” (*Workers Vanguard* [WV], 8 October 1993). The article continued:

“The long-running feud between the Kremlin and the White House is generally (and rightly) regarded as a squabble between corrupt and cynical factions. Insofar as Rutskoi et al. are identified with any political line, it is extreme Russian nationalism, which is linked to reactionary social policies.

“For all their red flags the Stalinist ‘patriots’ are tightly bound to the monarchist/fascist scum and act as lackeys for the corporatist wing of the fledgling bourgeoisie. They are hostile to the independent mobilization of the working class, opposing every strike, from the air controllers last year to the recent Ukrainian miners strike. Their crude mix of Russian chauvinism, virulent anti-Semitism and racism against minorities from the Caucasus and elsewhere has made them despised by all but the most backward, lumpenized elements of the working class.”

All very true. But a month later *Workers Vanguard* (5 November 1993) published “A Correction to Our View” which concluded that, “it was necessary to call on the working class to actively resist” Yeltsin, and characterized their earlier position as an “abstentionist blunting of our line.” In hindsight the SL leadership con-

cluded that, “the possibility of a military bloc with the Rutskoi/Khasbulatov forces” was posed because they:

“at that moment were viewed by Yeltsin and his imperialist sponsors as an obstacle to the consolidation of a strong counterrevolutionary regime.”

Why should class-conscious workers bloc with racist “lackeys for the corporatist wing of the fledgling bourgeoisie” in a “squabble between corrupt and cynical factions”? If parliament was “an *impediment* to the consolidation of power in Yeltsin’s hands” the presidency was surely no less an impediment to the consolidation of power in the hands of “Rutskoi/Khasbulatov and the fascist-infested ‘red-brown’ coalition that supported them.” In this fight between two gangs of counterrevolutionaries, neither side deserved support.

The SL leadership has been wrong on a series of major developments in the former Soviet bloc—from hailing Brezhnev’s Afghan foreign policy, to praising Yuri Andropov and adapting to the East German Stalinists under the guise of pursuing political revolution. In August 1991 when the decrepit Stalinist bureaucracy and the forces of capitalist restoration headed by Yeltsin and Rutskoi/Khasbulatov collided, the SL abstained. There has been no correction on that one. But, a month after the fact, the SL tops decided that they should have taken sides in the 1993 falling out between counterrevolutionaries. It makes no sense. ■