

No money - no steel!

One out, all out!



Cops vs pickets at Sheerness, February 20



Demonstration in Sheffield, February 18

'What do we want? Twenty per cent! How do we get it? General Strike!' shouted 2000 steel workers as they marched through the streets of Sheffield after a strike rally on March 4. Storming and occupying the local British Steel Corporation Raw Products headquarters, they showed what they thought about management's latest attempt to force an end to their strike on BSC's terms.

BSC has been distributing ballots to the strikers, hoping to force an official vote on its latest pitiful pay offer by going around the union leadership. The whole exercise has been a patent fraud: one *retired* steel worker reported receiving four ballots himself! And the strikers aren't having it. At the Sheffield strike rally one union official called for a 'ritual burning of the ballots', and at the BSC offices militants dumped thousands of ballot papers out of windows and from the roof, setting them ablaze in two bonfires below.

The steel strike has now lasted ten bitter weeks. After ten weeks of tireless mass picketing; after brutal police bashings; hundreds of arrests and murderous arson and midnight cop raids on strike headquarters; after ten weeks of vicious backstabbing by the people who call

themselves workers' leaders, the strikers are as determined as ever to see the struggle through to victory. From Sheffield, Scunthorpe, Rotherham and South Wales, the message is the same: a ballot from BSC isn't going to stop us, when the government, press, courts and cops have failed! 'Time's hardened a lot of people', said one strike militant outside ISTC headquarters in London. 'They didn't know what it was about -- thought it was about wages. Now we know it's not. If we lose this one the trade union movement's done.'

Defeat for the steel workers would mean 50,000 jobs immediately threatened, one-third of the total at BSC. And British Leyland's sacking of Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson is already an important step towards straitjacketing the shop stewards structure, the heart of the trade union movement.

Sunday outings like the one called by the TUC for March 9 will not stop these attacks -- or stop the criminal cuts in social services, or defend wages against the ravages of 20 per cent inflation. And Callaghan and Benn's speechifying at Westminster certainly won't kill the Prior Bill -- even if the Labour parliamentarians *wanted* to kill it.

But a general strike could! Militants in every sector must demand their unions black steel down the line. And they must go further, demanding that their unions join the steel workers out on strike. The unions must organise joint strike committees and send delegates from them to a national strike conference which can check bureaucratic sabotage and ensure the greatest degree of fighting unity. Demand that the TUC call an immediate, indefinite, national general strike, around the aims of reversing the redundancies, the attacks on the unions, social service cuts, and winning a sliding scale of wages and pensions, to protect against inflation, and work sharing on full pay!

All out! General Strike!

It is necessary to smash the Tory anti-union programme and the hated Thatcher government. A victorious general strike, even begun around necessarily limited defensive aims, could open up a pre-revolutionary perspective. Otherwise decaying British capitalism must bleed the working class, whose living standard is already among the lowest in Europe. At the same time,

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6000 on Rotherham strike demo

Bring out the miners - and don't stop there!

Somebody firebombed the Rotherham strike committee headquarters on the evening of February 23 -- and whoever it was, he was clearly out for blood! According to strike committee member Geoff Deeley, the arson job was a professional operation aimed at *killing* the 20 strikers who would normally have been in the offices at that hour. Fortunately the only striker who was actually present escaped with minor injuries.

While spewing vitriol about 'violence' by picketers, the bourgeois press predictably all but blacked out this murderous attack, as it did a protest march by 6000 outraged strikers

and their supporters in Rotherham the following Sunday. The march followed a rally in Scunthorpe of 5000 the day before: the first in the latest wave of mass rallies and demonstrations in the Yorkshire steel towns, where strikers demonstrated their militant repudiation of the back-to-work ballot initiated by BSC.

After marching through the town to a rally at the stadium, the Rotherham strikers were treated only to empty demagoguery by 'left' union bureaucrats and Labour politicians like Arthur Scargill. When TGWU assistant general secretary Alex Kitson rose to speak, he was greeted

by cries of 'Scab!' by strikers angry at the officially condoned scabbing by TGWU lorry drivers.

Twenty-five Spartacist League supporters marched with the strikers on the demonstration, and distributed nearly 3000 copies of a well-received leaflet (printed below) -- very few of which were later to be found among the litter of various other handouts, which were thrown away by the strikers. The sizeable Spartacist contingent contrasted sharply with the handfuls present from the timid reformists and centrists. But they have little to say

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Steel strike ...

(Continued from page 1)

the seemingly unstoppable decay of British society will spawn reactionary despair among the petty bourgeoisie.

Militancy has clearly not been the missing ingredient in this strike -- effective direction is. The strike is at a crossroads. It urgently cries out for a leadership not only prepared to fight, but one which breaks out of the narrow confines of simple trade unionism.

The successful mass picket which shut down Hadfields and the overwhelming 'no' vote against a separate settlement by BSC craft workers on February 14 created a powerful momentum to extend the strike, especially to Leyland, the mines and the water workers. A week later however, the momentum had been checked, in a series of bureaucratically-inflicted setbacks which sent the bourgeoisie screaming for joy. BL Longbridge workers overruled a strike call to defend Robinson; 2000 mass pickets failed to shut down the scab bastion at Sheerness; and Welsh miners voted by 46 pits to 8 against their leadership's strike recommendation. Since then private steel workers have been returning to work, with the blessing of Bill Sirs.

The reason is not some 'new sense of reality on the shop floor', as claimed by the bourgeois press, but old-fashioned bureaucratic *treachery*. When Robinson was sacked in November BL workers walked off their jobs in the thousands. They wanted to fight. But Terry Duffy -- with the criminal acquiescence of Robinson and his fellow Communist Party (CP) members got them back to await the outcome of a scab 'inquiry', allowing BL management two months to carry out a massive propaganda campaign against 'Red Robbo'. The Welsh miners' vote, in turn, came not long after the Welsh TUC had postponed its strike call. Moreover, they were voting to go out on strike

Only scabs debate cops

'No debate with the Labour Club raiders!' was one of the chants raised by twenty supporters of the Spartacist League at a protest picket outside the Birmingham University Student Union on Friday, February 29. What was going on inside was a 'debate' between Gordon Meredith, the chairman of the West Midlands Police Federation, and Tariq Ali, a leader of the International Marxist Group (IMG) on the question, 'Are the police unnecessarily brutal in enforcing the law?' -- Ali argued the affirmative. Meredith is a spokesman for, among others, the thirty cops who busted into the Birmingham Labour Club on February 19 in order to seize files and ransack the offices being used by the Birmingham steel strikers as a coordinating centre. He is also the spokesman for the thugs who dragged Kevin Casey, a picket outside BL Castle Bromwich, off the picket line and beat him unconscious.

The exchange of pleasantries over dinner before their 'debate' and the friendly handshake afterwards contrasted sharply with the usual method of 'debate' employed by the thugs in blue -- batons, boots and fists. And as Kevin Casey and numerous other steel strikers, and possibly even the two IMG supporters who refused to cross our picket to go in, could have told scab 'socialist' Ali -- who actually wants these professional strikebreakers to be in the trade unions -- he was not only on the wrong side of the class line, but even on the wrong side of the debate. The cops are *necessarily* brutal in enforcing the bosses' law. And those 'Marxists' prepared to debate them are beneath contempt.

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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Bill Sirs: praying for a sellout

Spartacist Britain

alone, since miners' leaders in the rest of the country -- from Arthur Scargill in Yorkshire to CPer Mick McGahey in Scotland -- were criminally *not* calling their men out as well. 'We were prepared to join a strike approved by the TUC', said one bitter Welsh miners' representative. 'But not to be pushed into going it alone. Our men are very angry' (*Times*, 22 February).

But the militancy of the strikers remains unabated, as shown by the 11,000 angry demonstrators at strike rallies in Scunthorpe and Rotherham on March 1 and 2, and by the 2000 strikers who burned their ballots in Sheffield. The will to fight is also evident in the widespread hatred for Bill Sirs -- 'Get stuffed Sirs, we want 20 per cent' reads the sign in one picket headquarters near Rotherham.

What is needed is not simply more militancy, however. The strike must be deepened and extended to other sectors of the working class. But it is precisely such a prospect which terrifies not only the reformist trade union leaders but their counterparts in the Labour Party as well. Callaghan 'leads' the workers by calling for the

Rotherham...

(Continued from page 1)

anyway to the militant strikers, like the TGWU member whose appetite for class struggle was captured by the comment, 'We'll lose the strike, or else we'll have a workers revolution.'

Steel workers: The strikebreaking cowards who burned down your strike headquarters have made it perfectly clear that they will stop at nothing short of murder to beat this strike. Thatcher and Villiers have made it clear -- with their cops, court injunctions, arrests, and midnight raid on the Birmingham Labour Club. They think that the steel strike can be beaten because of the Welsh miners' vote, the Longbridge vote, because they bought off some scabs at Sheerness.

You can prove them wrong. This strike is at a crossroads. This fight affects every worker in the country -- MAKE IT CLEAR TODAY THAT YOU WANT THEM ALL OUT. The Welsh miners said they were all set to go out if they got a lead from the TUC and the national NUM. Tell Arthur Scargill to call out the Yorkshire miners on indefinite strike and fight for the entire NUM to go out -- now! A joint strike now by the miners and steel workers is just what is needed to turn this whole struggle around and head it towards a general strike. Stand up as one and demand the TUC get off its arse and start doing something to win the strike instead of to lose it! Demand the TUC call a general strike without another second's delay!

You know Bill Sirs won't do it. He's tried to stab this strike in the back from the first day. The flying pickets got the private sector out -- Bill Sirs tried to send them back. First he knuckled under to Denning's injunction, then he made the deal with Hadfields, now his National Executive has voted to allow private sector union officials to scab if their members decide to scab. Stop him -- the only way possible. Three weeks ago the Rotherham Strike

arrest of strike pickets at Hadfields. He opposed the steel strike from the start and now campaigns for arbitration to end it. And while Tony Benn is posturing in support of the strike and is all for 'socialism' in the future, what he wants right now is wage and import controls. Indeed, not a *single* Labour MP has campaigned for a general strike.

And what is the Labour Party going to lead the workers to? The Treasury benches? Socialism can never come about that way! It needs a workers revolution to smash the capitalist state and eradicate the bourgeoisie's economic and political power.

Throw out the traitors!

A workers government must grow out of and be based on organs of working-class power (strike committees, factory committees, councils of action, soviets). And above all to win it requires the leadership of a communist vanguard party. The Labour Party can only govern in the framework of capitalist parliamentarism, which it will uphold against any threat of revolution. In the wake of years of Labourite wage-cutting in government, today large parts of its working class base are distinctly unenthusiastic about another Labour Cabinet. Thus militant strikers at the Rotherham rally shouted at their Labour MP on the platform that he was 'the best Tory MP we've ever had'. But with a bit of Tory-bashing rhetoric, and in the absence of a credible revolutionary alternative, the working class is already beginning to direct its expectations again to its historic party -- and especially to the 'lefts' like Benn.

These expectations and illusions must be shattered, or the workers will face only more treachery and defeat! Yet the main organisations which pretend to provide a left-wing alternative all demonstrated their complete inability to do this by calling for votes to five more years of Labour Social Con-trick in the last election. And all have failed to present any sort of viable perspective for victory during the current crucial class battle.

The Communist Party, with substantial support among miners and car workers, has not done a thing to pull out any sector on indefinite strike action alongside the miners. Its paper prints uncritically every remark by Benn and the other Labour 'lefts'. And the Socialist Workers Party, the largest 'far left' group, refuses to this day to call for a general strike -- much to the evident disgruntlement of many of its own

Committee ISTC members voted to sack Sirs. Do it now!

Every step forward in this strike has come at the initiative of the strike committees. Organise an immediate national conference of all the local strike committees to elect a new national strike leadership. This national strike leadership must organise the flying pickets effectively to get the private sector out again -- and this time to make sure they stay out. Shut down scab Sheerness! Extend the demands of the strike, as the Port Talbot strike committee has already demanded. The absolutely central demands must be:

- At least 20 per cent with no strings and no productivity deals!
- No redundancies -- not one job sold down the river!
- And fight for a general strike to take up aims which meet the interests of every steel worker, every miner, every Leyland worker, of the entire working class and oppressed:
- Bury the Prior Bill! Reverse all the victimisations -- Reinstate Derek Robinson!
- Reverse the cuts in social services -- demand free quality medical care!
- For work sharing on full pay! For a sliding scale of wages and pensions!

Thatcher must go! But the real alternative to the Tories is not another Labour government of Callaghans and Benns -- the people who were trying to break the strikes and slash workers' wages only last winter. A new leadership must be forged for the working class -- a revolutionary party to lead the struggle for a workers government -- if this country is going to stop sinking further into the mire of capitalist rot. The Spartacist League is fighting to build such a party.

Burn Scholey's ballots! Get the private sector back out!

Sack Sirs & Co -- For a national strike committee!

Bring out the miners -- For a general strike now! ■

members. And while centrist groups like the International Marxist Group and Workers Socialist League (WSL) have belatedly begun calling for a general strike, they are currently enthusing over the TUC's diversionary Sunday Day of Action as a step forward. WSL leader Alan Thornett had the opportunity to address nearly 2000 striking steel militants at the March 4 rally in Sheffield, but ignominiously failed to call for a fight for a general strike, or anything beyond a joint lobby of BL convenors by steel and car workers.

The Labour and union misleaders and fake-leftists instinctively draw back from the general strike because it quickly poses the question of questions: which class shall rule? But this is the issue in Britain today, and the issue in this strike. There is no perspective short of a revolutionary confrontation with capitalism for threatened steel workers, car workers and others facing tens of thousands of redundancies due to the morbid state of uncompetitive British capitalism. The bourgeoisie is trying to junk the decrepit industrial plant and throw hundreds of thousands of workers on the scrap heap -- while ominously the fascists are gathering in the shadows. Meanwhile Thatcher's Cabinet is talking with the monetarist starvation expert Milton Friedman, whose programme can't be implemented by anything less than a Chilean-style coup.

While union-hating Tories may long for such a 'final solution' they can't get it yet. Their real problem is an inability to confront other imperialist powers economically -- remember, Britain couldn't even win the 'cod war' with Iceland! And the capitalists' alternative to a strike victory is a faster fall into miserable poverty and imperialist war. Only a Trotskyist party, which poses the issues clearly and presents a transitional programme leading from today's struggles to a Socialist Federation of the British Isles can split the working-class base of Labour away from its pro-capitalist misleaders.

It is no accident that despite our modest resources and limited history as an organised tendency in this country, the Spartacist League's intervention has met a resonant response among militant strikers. Our leaflets calling on BL workers to join the steel workers in strike action were posted on notice boards inside Leyland. Our chants for a general strike were taken up by the strikers in Sheffield, as have been our calls to burn the BSC ballots. So acute is the vacuum of leadership in this strike that even a relatively small nucleus of communist militants in the strike committees could have a significant impact on the course of the struggle.

Whilst various pseudo-socialists call for another Labour victory, and tail after Len Murray's TUC, there is only one organisation that has a programme for the working class to put British capitalism out of its misery. That organisation is the Spartacist League, section of the international Spartacist tendency fighting for a reformed Fourth International and world socialist revolution. ■

Spartacist support campaign:

'The steel strikers must win!'

'I bring fraternal greetings from 15,000 South Yorkshire steel workers.... Our fight is your fight!' That was the message Rotherham strike committee member John Radcliffe brought to a Birmingham University support rally on February 7. And that same message -- that the militant steel workers' struggle must be taken up by the entire working class and its supporters -- has been the focus of the Spartacist League's strike support campaign from the first day of this bitterly fought strike.

In university strike support rallies like the one in Birmingham, in solidarity marches in Wales and Yorkshire, in leaflets directed at Leyland car workers, and in discussions with the strikers themselves on the picket lines, our supporters have argued the necessity of turning this militant challenge to the Tories' union-bashing policies into a victorious offensive by the entire workers movement. A special supplement of *Spartacist Britain* distributed to pickets, regional strike headquarters and strikers' rallies around the country declared: 'Get the Iron Lady! Turn the steel strike into a general strike!' Our forthright programme for victory has met with a resonant response among many strikers and other working-class militants. A leaflet distributed at BL factory gates was posted on noticeboards in the plants, and a number of workers requested bundles of leaflets to take inside for their workmates. 'Join the steel workers -- general strike now!' it said. At a 'Reinstate Robinson Conference' in Birmingham, a Spartacist supporter's call to link the struggle against Derek Robinson's victimisation with the steel strike through a general strike drew applause from hundreds of militants -- and stood in sharp contrast to the vague do-nothingism of the Communist Party.

Get the Iron Lady!

At the London School of Economics and Birmingham University, our student supporters have held public meetings on the steel strike, organised strike fund collections (totalling more than £150 to date) and initiated united-front support rallies each of which drew about 50 people and featured speakers from the Rotherham strike committee. 'The steel strike must win' argued the LSE rally flyer. 'Students must choose their side in this class battle -- with the strikers or with the Iron Lady and her capitalist cronies.'

This polarisation along class lines was graphically expressed by the response of right-wing students to our support activities. At Birmingham University Tory students attempted to disrupt the rally by drowning out the speakers with loud screeching feedback from the PA system in the student union offices overhead. These



Rally at LSE supports strike

junior Thatchers were soon put in their place by a team of SL supporters and several of the eleven steel workers present at the rally. A quick 'lesson in workers democracy' was the way one SL supporter was quoted as describing it in a front-page piece ('Steel Demo Hits Union') in the student newspaper (*Redbrick*, 14 February).

The same day at LSE, Tory students mobilised for a packed student union meeting in an attempt to defeat Spartacist-initiated motions for a £100 donation to the strike fund, and for an immediate shutdown of the university in solidarity with the steel workers and in favour of a general strike. Despite an obstructive Tory filibuster attempt, the first motion won an overwhelming majority, but barely failed to receive the necessary two-thirds support on a recount vote. After weeks of do-nothingism, other left-wing organisations on the university, including the Socialist Workers Party and Militant tendency, were finally forced to support our strike-support initiatives at LSE by speaking at the rally and supporting the £100 donation motion.

At Birmingham University however most of the fake lefts have continued to display grotesquely abstentionist sectarianism. Only the Workers Action tendency joined SL supporters and Rotherham strikers on the platform at the strike support rally. And despite the International Marxist Group's pretence to a 'determined campaign' by *Socialist Challenge* supporters in the colleges to 'fight alongside the organised labour movement' (*Socialist Challenge*, 14 February), the only campaign the IMG has waged at Birmingham University has been directed against our strike support efforts. The IMG not only boycotted the rally there, but has since refused to even sign an SL-initiated petition calling for a general student meeting on the strike!

Strike support work offers communists a concrete opportunity to win students to the politics of the workers' class struggle -- and can also be an important vehicle for preventing the recruitment of scabs from the socially-heterogeneous student population. Addressing the Birmingham rally, SL speaker Jo Woodward contrasted the ignominious strikebreaking by Birmingham students on the 1926 general strike to the exemplary support students there gave to the 1972 miners' strike. 'That is the tradition we seek to stand on and repeat', said Woodward, describing the accommodation and other support provided to the flying pickets which shut down the Saltley Coke Depot. Another SL supporter, an AUEW university worker, explained how he and his fellow workers had fought to black steel in the college's machine shop in the early days of the strike.

It is in this spirit of militant class solidarity -- advancing a clear revolutionary alternative to the sellout policies of the bureaucracy and the opportunism of the fake lefts -- that the Spartacist League will continue its campaign of strike support throughout this crucial class battle. Victory to the steel strike! General strike now! ■



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Leninist Faction holds public meeting: Out of the centrist swamp!

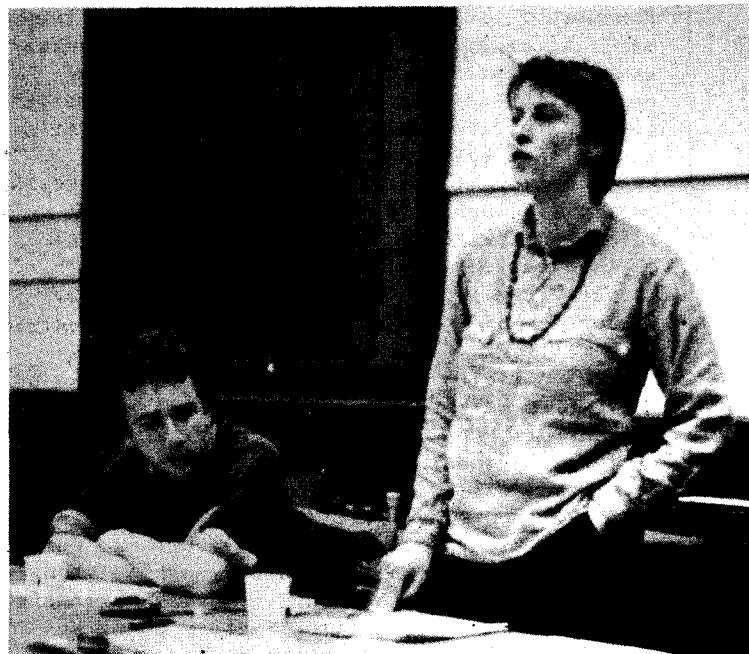
'What programme for revolutionary regroupment?' was the subject of a public meeting held on February 8 by the Leninist Faction (LF), the left-oppositional grouping bureaucratically expelled from the Workers Socialist League (WSL) in early January. Senior WSL leaders Alan Thornett and Tony Richardson, a sizeable number of supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) and others -- more than sixty in all -- were there as the LF comrades traced their course from WSL centrism towards the programme of Trotskyism.

In the course of their struggle against the deepening right centrism of the WSL, the LF came to solidarise with the nine-point basis for revolutionary regroupment advanced by the international Spartacist tendency several years ago (see 'WSL expels Trotskyists', *Spartacist Britain* no 18, February 1980, for details of their fight in the WSL). The comrades have since demonstrated their political seriousness not only by embarking on discussions to test the possibility of fusion with the SL, but by seeking to engage other ostensibly Trotskyist organisations in programmatic discussion as well. However, of the groups invited to take extended time for presentations at the LF's public meeting, only the study-circle-oriented Revolutionary Communist Tendency, the WSL and the SL appeared.

The apolitical antics and opportunist parochialism displayed by Thornett and Richardson during the discussion period stood in sharp contrast to the LF's serious programmatic approach to revolutionary regroupment. In his introductory remarks, LF spokesman Mark Hyde stated:

'One thing we are confident of, emerging from the WSL at this time, is that in the coming period the prospects will open up for many serious elements in the ostensibly revolutionary organisations that exist at this time to come to a revolutionary programme -- to break with their past of economism, parochialism, centrism, that characterise the British left through and through ... that from that swamp will come many of the cadres of the vanguard party in this country. I say that with certainty, because we've been in that swamp ourselves.'

The main presentation for the LF, by Comrade Di Parkin, explained how the WSL's opportunist adaptation to Islamic reaction in Iran was one of the key factors which led the LFers to break



Mark Hyde and Di Parkin: 'Programme is a here and now question.'



Alan 'the scab' Thornett

from centrism:

'Because Khomeini isn't progressive, because god is not good, and because the workers must rule Iran, we had to take seriously the positions of the Spartacists on these and other questions.'

As she went on to explain, these other questions included the WSL's capitulation to the Labour Party, popular frontism and petty-bourgeois nationalism, and its trade-union opportunism and social-democratic Stalinophobia.

'What was central to us was the understanding that the series of wrong positions weren't just wrong positions', explained Comrade Hyde. 'It wasn't simply that the WSL had failed to a degree, but that the logic of its positions meant scabbing.' Indeed, when the crunch came at Thornett's vaunted 'trade-union base', BL Cowley, this supposed Trotskyist leader literally did scab rather than stand up to a back-to-work movement during last year's national engineering strike. One speaker after another, LF and SL alike, hammered away at Thornett's betrayal -- but the only 'defence' to escape the WSL leader's lips was an appeal to his '21 years in the plant'. SL supporter and EETPU member Chris Taylor replied:

'The only place you had a base is Cowley, and there you pissed it away by selling out. I'll tell you something. I was down at Sheerness yesterday, on a picket line, and a shop steward came out and said, "I called a meeting yesterday, and only six workers voted in favour of coming out on strike and obeying the ISTC call. What shall I do?" And do you know what the workers said? "Resign! Come out on the picket line, you scabs!"

'And he did come out, and brought six workers. And they weren't revolutionaries, they were just ordinary working-class militants. But they understood that -- that beyond a point, when there are 800 scabs in a plant, and you can't win them, then you come out. And that's the difference, you see, and you don't understand that. You're a cynical coward, unfortunately, and you're a scab.'

In fact, the WSL's 'Cowley base' is largely a myth. As the bitter steel strike enters its third month, *Socialist Press* has yet to breathe a mention of any campaign for pulling Cowley out in solidarity, even though WSLers and their trade-union allies are supposed to be leading the Assembly Plant. On the contrary, at a WSL public meeting on the strike in Oxford, the invited guest speaker was a steel worker who proudly announced that he had crossed ISTC picket lines for two weeks! Scabs may find the WSL appealing, but not militant strikers. After Spartacist and LF speakers at a WSL meeting in Sheffield had denounced Thornett's scabbing, several steel workers in attendance, agreeing with our attack on Thornett, left the meeting early and went on to discuss with the SL.

Notwithstanding their three speakers and extended speaking time at the LF meeting (in sharp contrast to the WSL's refusal to allow even one LF speaker at an Oxford public meeting the following week), the WSL was incapable of presenting a single programmatic critique of

this faction which they had bureaucratically expelled on an explicitly political basis. Instead they made a concerted, but rather pathetic, effort to disrupt the meeting through barracking and even interrupting their own speakers. To cover for their flagrant capitulation to the Iranian mullahs and to social-democratic Stalinophobia over the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, they resorted to hackneyed slanders of SL 'racism' against backward peoples. They even trundled out an ex-LF member who could only read a prepared statement arguing the alleged virtue of remaining as a 'loyal opposition' inside the WSL.

Finally, after walking out part way through the discussion -- in the middle of a contribution by Phil Moore, ex-National Secretary of the WSL's Socialist Youth League -- they sought to dismiss the meeting in their press (*Socialist Press*, 13 February) with fantastic tales of an 'expensive failure' bankrolled by the Spartacists, involving 'heavies flown in from as far afield as San Francisco' -- presumably a reference to a Spartacist supporter present from New York, who contrasted his class-struggle record in the Militant-Solidarity Caucus of the American seamen's union with the pathetic scabbery of Thornett.

The WSL's increasingly sub-political attacks on the Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist tendency will not save it from the organisational disarray and political degeneration it is currently undergoing. The same holds true for the other centrists. Today, while Thornett & Co flounder about, the LF is demonstrating a healthy resolve to fight for the programme of Trotskyism as the only basis for a revolutionary vanguard party. As Comrade Parkin put it:

'The question of programme is not an abstract question; it's not a question of dull treatises in rooms. It's a question of the weapon capable of leading the working class to power.'

Backward peoples and the USSR

THE WSL...

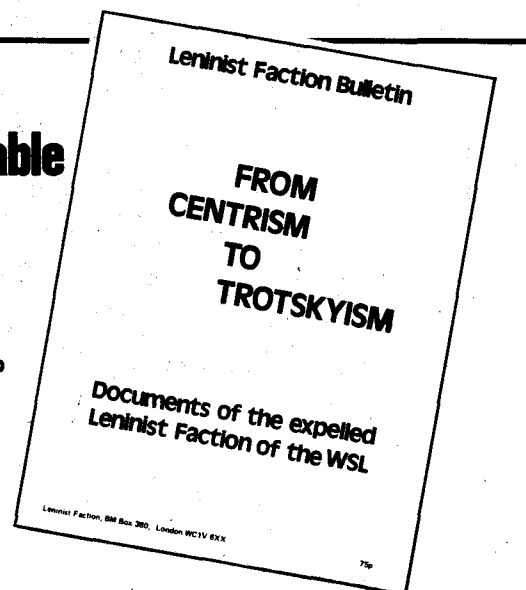
'The position of the International Spartacist Tendency differs from that of the [American] SWP only by showing a still stronger Stalinophile cretinism. The article in *Workers Vanguard* of 11 January can be summed up in one sentence: "Backward people of the East, the (Kremlin) bureaucracy brings you civilisation." ('Afghanistan and the Fourth International'; statement by the WSL, GBL of Italy, LOB of Chile, affiliates of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee; reprinted in *Socialist Press*, 13 February)

...VERSUS LEON TROTSKY

'It is true that in the sphere of national policy, as in the sphere of economy, the Soviet bureaucracy still continues to carry out a certain part of the progressive work, although with immoderate overhead expenses. This is especially true of the backward nationalities of the Union, which must of necessity pass through a more or less prolonged period of borrowing, imitation and assimilation of what exists. The bureaucracy is laying down a bridge for them to the elementary benefits of bourgeois, and in part even pre-bourgeois, culture.' (*The Revolution Betrayed*)

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Turmoil over Afghanistan as IMG lurches towards Cliff

The *Guardian* said it; *Socialist Challenge* confirmed it; and Tariq Ali is doing everything he can to make sure it happens. Crowning two years of pussy-footing around with its 're-groupment project' increasingly centred on Tony Cliff's state-capitalist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the International Marxist Group (IMG) decided, at its 16-19 February national conference, to take the plunge -- to 'launch a public campaign to unite the forces of the IMG with those of the SWP' (*Socialist Challenge*, 28 February).

The conference delegates had scarcely had a chance to pack their documents away when Ali hit the hustings on this new 'campaign', turning a February 21 IMG-sponsored public meeting in London into a joint meeting -- not a debate! -- with the SWP on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The choice of topic was ideally suited for making the point to the Third Camp SWP that, as the *Guardian* (13 February) put it in a feature article a week before (!) the conference: 'The substantial obstacle which now stands in the way of unity between the IMG and the SWP concerns organisation rather than ideology.'

For Ali & Co liquidation into the much larger SWP is just the medicine needed to cure the chronically crisis-ridden IMG's ills: declining morale, declining membership, declining sales (see 'IMG in Crisis', *Spartacist Britain* no 16, November 1979). As for 'ideology', the Pabloite IMG has never been one to hesitate in relegating programme to a back seat when a new opportunist fad or get-rich-quick scheme came along.

Not all IMGers have opted for this particular panacea. According to *Socialist Challenge* a bare 50 per cent of the vote went to Tendency 1, the advocates of an immediate campaign for fusion. The rest of the vote was divided among Tendency 2, which argued for a 'battle to fuse with the SWP' -- but not 'in the next few years'; Tendency 3, which wanted a 'party based on programmatic agreement' -- while maintaining 'fraternal relations with the SWP'; and a 'fourth grouping', known as Current 4, which idealises the reformist American SWP and was fixated on making an apolitical 'turn to industry' -- a turn to the bureaucracy.

Two, three, many lines on USSR/Afghanistan

Indeed all the squabbling among the confusing welter of tendencies and currents was focussed on precisely which scheme was likely to get them rich quickest! Meanwhile, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has embroiled the IMG in a sharp programmatic debate -- not, it seems, at the conference -- but in the *letters page* of *Socialist Challenge*.

Ever since *Socialist Challenge* (3 January), under Ali's tutelage, rushed into print with a blatantly Third Camp line -- 'Soviet Troops Out of Afghanistan!' -- which even beat the hardened anti-Soviet Cliffites to the post, its letters column has exploded with vitriolic polemics. Two weeks after the original article, the paper ran a series of outraged letters accusing the IMG of, among other things, 'dancing to the tune of the US State Department'. A discreet editorial, which avoided the question of Soviet defencism, confessed that 'in the present situation a call for the immediate withdrawal of troops would be tantamount to being in favour of the victory of the rightist forces'.

Week after week, Stalinophobic charges of seeking to 'organise welcoming committees for the Red Army' have been met with countercharges of being 'infected' by the 'hysteria in petty-bourgeois circles over the war in Afghanistan'. *Socialist Challenge* has been alternately denounced for 'beginning to sound like the KGB' and for its 'departure from Trotskyism' in denying the imperialist war threat against the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the IMG's youth paper, *Revolution* (February) came out substantially to the left of its parent, declaring that the Soviet military intervention -- though a 'grave error' -- transformed 'the situation into a global conflict between Imperialism and the USSR. In this situation we must defend the Soviet workers' state against imperialism.'

The turmoil over Afghanistan is not sur-

prising. It is only half a dozen years after all, since IMGers were roaming the streets adulating the Vietnamese Stalinists and chanting, 'Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh -- The NLF is going to win!' Despite the IMG's rightward motion since -- and its current hot pursuit of the Cold War 'socialists' of the SWP -- it must nevertheless be unsettling to face the prospect of liquidating lock, stock and barrel into an organisation whose open renegacy from Trotskyism was sealed more than thirty years ago when it deserted the Korean workers and peasants in the face of imperialist aggression.

For their part the Cliffites are less than enthusiastic about taking in a gaggle of diverse tendencies -- in Tony Cliff's outfit there is room for one 'tendency' and one only (though a growing number of individual ex-IMGers, following liquidationist logic to its conclusion by leaving the IMG for the SWP, continue to be welcomed). Thus the point of Ali's joint platform with the SWP was to put a 'best face' forward, to make it clear that at least some IMGers avidly desire to become loyal denizens of the Third Camp. Aside from a mumble or two about how he didn't agree that the Soviet Union was 'imperialist', Ali had not a single criticism of the SWP's politics. When a Spartacist speaker from the floor raised the Trotskyist call for Soviet defencism, the IMG chairman immediately interjected in an attempt to stop her from 'disrupting' this cosy unity.

Morenoites call for counterrevolution in USSR

Some would-be Trotskyists might think the Bolshevik Faction of Nahuel Moreno is a left-wing alternative to the United Secretariat because it sent a brigade to Nicaragua and parades around in guerrilla outfits. Then take a look at the Morenoites' position on the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Trying to outdo the crazed anti-Communism of Zbigniew Brzezinski, they actually call for counterrevolution in Russia based on their support to Khomeini-style Islamic reaction:

'The counterrevolutionary Kremlin bureaucracy is discrediting itself by a criminal action against the Afghan people, trampling its right to independence, intervening on its territory without any justification. Defence against external action was not the motive in telling the USSR to intervene, but, on the contrary, an obvious attempt to reinforce its own control, to maintain the status quo in the area shaken by revolutionary ferment. The possibility of extending the Iranian revolution within the borders of the USSR is what terrorises the Kremlin bureaucracy. The Soviet border populations, tied to those in Iran and Afghanistan by religious, cultural and racial ties, can be infected by the radicalisation of the area, can become protagonists in an anti-bureaucratic mobilisation within the workers state, laying the basis for a political revolution. This is what the bureaucracy is afraid of, this is why the USSR intervened.' (*Avanzata Proletaria*, 12 January 1980)

This is no isolated deviation (and what a deviation!) by the Morenoites' Italian group. The Parity Committee of the Morenoites and French OCI calls for the Soviet army to withdraw and leave its arms with the reactionary feudalistic Islamic guerrillas!

'The revolutionary wave born in Iran could only have destabilising effects in Afghanistan. If religion can be included as an element of national affirmation, the movement which allows a rebellion to develop against the central power is not, any more than in Iran, a "religious" movement. It takes part in the totality of the mobilisation of the masses in this region, and directs itself against a state which remains a semi-colonial bourgeois state....

Lest any IMGers look for solace from their purported 'International', the United Secretariat (Usec), they will as usual find nothing but a melange of publicly conflicting positions with no resemblance to Leninism. The French LCR, for example, barely (by a vote of 22-20 on its Central Committee -- see *Le Matin*, 12 February) beat down a minority position demanding a Soviet troop withdrawal, while the neighbouring German GIM joined the American SWP in coming out foursquare for the Soviet-allied Kabul government against the Islamic rebels (prompting one GIM letter writer to sarcastically ask *Rouge* whether he had to change his line when he crossed the border).

That the hardened social democrats and pro-Khomeini mullah-lovers of the American SWP can appear to stand on the left of the Usec spectrum on this question speaks volumes about the unprincipled character of this international rotten bloc -- and about the SWP's capacity to lie through its teeth for the sake of political 'consistency'. In order to square this position with its overall political posture, the SWP is forced to massively deny reality. Thus the *Militant* of 18 January indignantly dismissed the idea that the Afghan tribesmen are "Muslim rebels" opposed to an "atheist" regime as 'another of Washington's falsifications.' Sure, they're really Zionists, right? Why such an absurd position? Because if the mullah-led forces

continued on page 6

'If it were a question of aiding the struggle of the Afghan people to realise their national and social aspirations in opposition to imperialism, the rulers of the USSR would need only order their troops to leave their weapons in the hands of the Afghan mass revolutionary movement.' (*Informations Ouvrières*, 19-26 January 1980)

Where the International Marxist Group initially called for Soviet troops out, the Parity Committee goes Tariq Ali one better: it calls for military support to the Islamic rebels!

This shrill anti-Sovietism must please the notoriously Stalinophobic OCI with whom Moreno has blocked to split the United Secretariat. But any leftist who thinks that Moreno represents any kind of revolutionary Trotskyism had better think again. You might find yourself in the mountains of Afghanistan fighting in an 'Imam Khomeini Brigade' against the godless Communist menace.

adapted from *Spartacist* no 27-28, Winter 1979-80.



Afghani feudalist shoots Communist schoolteacher. According to one Afghani rebel, 'The Government said our women had to attend meetings and our children had to go to school. This threatens our religion. We had to fight'

Cold War ...

(Continued from page 8)

kind. And to live with even relative security they need to know that the US imperialists know they have that time. Military security is measured in minutes, even seconds. West Europe is trip wire two.

The US imperialists have a dangerous habit of assuming that every government is as cynically full of bluff and bluster as their own. We recall that when the Chinese felt threatened by the US forces in Korea, they warned that if the US troops came up to the Yalu River (the site of vital hydroelectric facilities), the Chinese would be forced to enter the war to push the US back. This warning was dismissed by General MacArthur and others as so much communist propaganda and oriental exoticism. But when the US forces reached the Yalu, the Chinese kept their promise.

US imperialism has not been very good at guessing the responses of governments and people under the gun of imperialism, nor at estimating consequences. The people of Hanoi were not demoralised by constant bombing, and the Russians will not turn against their bureaucratic leadership because Carter wants to deprive them of more meat in their diet through his grain boycott. The contrary is assured. It is aggressive, insulting stupidity which believes that the defenders of Leningrad will knuckle under to Carter's intimidation and threats.

At last Afghanistan is getting into proper perspective. All the squawking about national sovereignty for 'poor little Afghanistan' is designed to whip up a 'Hate Russia, Fear Russia' siege mentality. (Afghanistan, after all, is a state and not a nation. And just when did the sanctity of state boundaries begin?) Even important sections of bourgeois opinion internationally and in the US have become visibly worried about the danger of Carter's military provocations and his Afghanistan rationale for them.

George Kennan -- the architect of Harry Truman's Cold War doctrine of 'containment' -- in a significant article in the *New York Times* (1 February), worries openly about Carter's reaction to the Afghanistan invasion, 'revealing a disquieting lack of balance.... A war atmosphere has been created.' And over what? Over Afghanistan? Carter has said that the Afghanistan crisis is the most serious since World War II and is setting about to make this otherwise fake estimation a fact. Kennan takes the temperature of the war fever in Washington:

'Never since World War II has there been so far-reaching a militarization of thought and discourse in the capital. An unsuspecting stranger, plunged into its midst, could only conclude that the last hope of peaceful, nonmilitary solutions had been exhausted -- that from now on only weapons, however used, could count.'

Kennan is no 'unsuspecting stranger' to Washington Cold War policy. He unquestionably speaks for much of bourgeois opinion when he cautions against Carter's 'strident public warnings' to military action:

'We are now in the danger zone. I can think of no instance in modern history where such a breakdown of political communication and such a triumph of unrestrained military suspicions as now marks Soviet-American relations has not led, in the end, to armed conflict.'

Cold Wars I, II, and always

The echoes of the Truman Doctrine were deafening in Carter's January 23 speech, and were probably consciously intended. On 12 March 1947 Truman demanded that 'every nation must choose between alternative ways of life' and said that it was America's responsibility 'to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures'. Both Truman's and Carter's speeches are a bugle call to fight Communism with military 'counterforce'

No wonder there has been so much media comparison of Carter's line to that of the late forties and early fifties, and so much talk of 'Cold War II'. Indeed a whiff of the stench of McCarthyism does seem to be blowing out of Washington as the government whips up a new chauvinist hysteria -- cancelled passports, deportation of 'aliens', a growing demand in Congress and editorial boardrooms to get the post-Watergate restraints off the CIA/FBI. The postwar witch-hunt in the US was not merely a reflex action in accordance with international policy. The Cold War 'general staff' was worried not only about France and Italy but also Communist influence in the trade-union movement at home.

Like the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine

IMG ...

(Continued from page 5)

in Afghanistan are reactionary, then the equally Islamic Khomeinite forces next door in Iran might be considered reactionary too.

These reformist fake-Trotskyists go to the point of absurdity to duck the Russian question. In the same 18 January *Militant* article cited above the SWP state baldly 'the issue is not Soviet intervention....' Are Carter/Brzezinski going to launch a new Cold War drive simply because the radical-nationalist Kabul regime sought to implement some reforms -- and the presence of 80,000 or so Soviet troops is irrelevant?

But for the centrist IMG such 'consistency' has never been a virtue. Now even the sacred cow of the 'Iranian Revolution' is being challenged inside the organisation. In one of a pair of counterposed articles in the 7 February *Socialist Challenge*, Azar Tabari decries 'most of the far left' for finding anything 'revolutionary or progressive' about Khomeini and concludes:

'It does not bode well for the future of Iran that the majority of the international left has been unable to distinguish between a deepening process of permanent revolution and a rise in irrational fanaticism serving to consolidate the rule of a repressive and reactionary theocracy.'

It does not, indeed. But who was this 'majority of the international left'? Did it not include the IMG, who pretended that 'god is great' was an anti-imperialist slogan? And the now-split Iranian HKS? And for that matter, the entirety of the USec? In fact the *minority* of the inter-

was meant to mobilise public opinion by portraying the government's anti-Soviet strategy as an immediate crisis. For Truman the 'crisis' was Greece; for Carter, Afghanistan. Truman's global mission for US imperialism confronted a semi-isolationist public; he couldn't even get his peacetime conscription through Congress. Carter faced the 'Vietnam syndrome'. It was only the anger aroused by the seizure of embassy hostages in Tehran which allowed this syndrome of anti-government suspicion to be combatted and the reflexive jingoist backlash triggered by the Iranian mullahs redirected against the anti-mullah Russian intervention in Afghanistan.

'American Century' only twenty years long

When Truman announced his plan for a global assault on Communism, US imperialism had only just come out of World War II as the hegemonic economic and political power. British imperialism had collapsed in fundamental ways in the Mediterranean and the US was taking its place. The US was so dominant economically that it was able to set up and maintain a relatively stable capitalist economy, with the dollar pegged to gold as the reserve currency. The Truman Doctrine therefore had as one of its goals the suppression of Communism (and all leftism) in Europe, particularly France and Italy, while it engineered the re-emergence of Germany and Japan as part of an anti-Soviet alliance. In short, US imperialism was unchallenged among the imperialists, and it set about the business of establishing the 'American Century' -- an American-led capitalist world economy.

But the American Century lasted only some twenty years. In the period since the enunciation



Tariq Ali shoots his mouth off

national left on this question consisted of only one tendency -- the international Spartacist tendency!

It comes as no particular surprise to find people who one year ago cheered Islamic rebels screaming 'Death to Communists!' will today cheer Islamic rebels shooting down Red Army soldiers with CIA-supplied bullets in the name of 'Afghan self-determination'. Those IMGers who detest the prospect of becoming Maggie Thatcher's apologists in the Cold War would do well to recall that there is no Third Camp. There is the camp of the bourgeoisie, and its lieutenants in the workers movement. And there is the camp of the revolutionary proletariat, guided by the programme of Trotskyism upheld today by the international Spartacist tendency -- which takes as its starting point the defence of the gains of October. That's the choice. ■

ation of the Truman Doctrine, the US has slipped from a position of unchallenged authority to merely the most powerful of rival imperialists. This was signalled in 1971 when Nixon unhooked the dollar and let it float against other currencies. Today even schoolchildren understand that the price of gold reflects increasing centrifugal economic instability, posing the probability of increasing economic nationalism, trade wars, depression.

Carter's attempt to re-create US hegemony in 1980 runs smack up against the economic interests of other imperialist nations, thus heightening those very dangerous rivalries. For all of its arm-twisting, the US thus far has encountered stiff resistance from its European allies. Helmut Schmidt, for example, knows perfectly well that Russia is not about to start a war in Europe. And the Germans, Japanese and French have considerable trade with the Soviet bloc. Only Margaret Thatcher has gone along enthusiastically with Carter's demand to 'get Russia' because of Afghanistan. (Britain trades very little with Russia -- and at a deficit.) The attitude is summed up by a West German newspaper headline: 'Berlin is more important than Kabul.' Who can doubt it?

Imperialist defeat in Vietnam was the watershed in the decline of US power. The Nixon Doctrine of 1969, for instance, which focussed on the Far East, based its strategic policy on US imperialism's ability to fight Russia in one large-scale and one small-scale war simultaneously. But the Nixon Doctrine held that Russian influence could be contested effectively by regional butchers allied to and supplied by the US. The prime example was the Shah of Iran,

Australasian
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Victory to Red Army!
Muslim/Maoist knife attack:
Attempted murder of German Spartacist

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and when he fell, so did the Nixon Doctrine. The Carter Doctrine therefore proposes to replace this reliance on regional warlords with US power directly. This means that the US must be quicker to use nuclear weapons -- for instance where the US is 7000 miles away and the Russians are across the border. It is no surprise that a recently released Pentagon report (prepared before the Afghanistan invasion) calls for the use of 'tactical nuclear weapons' in the Persian Gulf.

In one sense there has been a Cold War since 1917. What is new and dangerous is the Carter/Brzezinski attempt to regain the unquestioned domination of the world by threatening nuclear war with Russia. After decades of ethical-existential baloney about the 'unthinkable' use of nuclear weapons, some will ask: Would the US rulers really drop nuclear bombs merely to gain perceived political advantage over the Russians? Isn't such a Cold War holocaust precisely the unthinkable? Unfortunately, it is not only eminently thinkable; it has already happened.

It has been known for some time that the decision to atom-bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not a matter of forcing the military defeat of Japan. The Japanese had already tried to surrender. The relevant memoirs of the central actors of the time confirm that the atomic bomb and its rush to completion were geared to 'impress' the Russians, who were poised to invade Manchuria and North China. On August 6 the US bombed Hiroshima. On August 8 the Russians invaded Manchuria. On August 10 Truman bombed Nagasaki.

Nuts in the White House...

This policy of macho gestures as a response to growing economic decay has the leadership it deserves. The question of political personality is obviously an important matter for men who do business with one another over the 'hotline'. But Marxists are also interested in political personality, centring for the reasons that Trotsky cites in his *History of the Russian Revolution* on 'those traits of character which ... throw a sharp light on the interrelation of personality and the objective factors of history'.

The increasing instability of the capitalist world finds expression in an increasingly unstable Jimmy Carter who wishes to impose a new Truman Doctrine on a world where the share of US manufactures is less than a half and the value of the dollar less than one-third what it was in 1948. On a qualitatively smaller scale he can be compared to all the rulers throughout history who, as Trotsky says, see rainbows as they drown. And they do see them. Carter's vision of a Soviet Union with a master plan to take over the world through the Khyber Pass may seem to saner men quite nutty, or only an election scheme. But the problem is worse than that.

From the US side the policies labelled 'detente' were based on a recognition of increased weakness, especially resulting from the long drawn-out defeat in Vietnam. For their own part the conservative bureaucrats in the Kremlin allowed the imperialist ruling class, through detente, time to attack and erode the 'Vietnam

syndrome', the widespread resistance to military adventurism under the banner of the anti-Communist crusade. If America's rulers once again swagger and act as if the future is theirs, the Stalinists acquiescently believe that capitalism will more and more become circumscribed and finally die more or less peacefully. This is part of the ideological rationale behind peaceful coexistence. It is the political role of Stalinism then to stabilise this decaying capitalist system. Since the division of the world after World War II it has been a policy of the Russians to respect 'spheres of influence'.

The Stalinists in the Kremlin bought their sphere of influence at the price of literally disarming and sabotaging the possibilities of proletarian revolutions in Europe after World War II. And their policies of class collaboration have not deviated from that disastrous course. Thus politically, both the Kremlin bureaucrats and those in Washington fear proletarian revolution. For the capitalists revolution would mean the end of their economic and social system of class rule. For the Stalinists it means being swept away in a political revolution. But despite the Stalinists' illusions and the fathomless appetites to conciliate imperialism, the capitalists still have a need to reconquer the deformed workers states for capitalism. For working-class revolutionaries, the Carter Doctrine poses the Russian question pointblank.

In particular it objectively poses the question of proletarian revolution in America or the mobilisation of a war against Russia. When Engels said that ultimately the choices for humanity would be between socialism or barbarism, he did not have in mind the dramatic possibilities of nuclear war. But contemporary history is presented with just such a choice. At its national convention in 1946 the then-revolutionary US Socialist Workers Party adopted a document written by its national chairman, James P Cannon, entitled 'Theses on the American Revolution'. The document was revolutionary in its thrust and spirit, although it misjudged the conjunctural ability of US capitalism (with the help of the Stalinists and social democrats) to emerge as the unchallenged force in 'an American century'. But we intend that its prediction on the Russian question and American revolution will prove to have been merely premature:

'In their mad drive to conquer and enslave the entire world, the American monopolists are today preparing war against the Soviet Union... A war will not solve the internal difficulties of American imperialism but will rather sharpen and complicate them. Such a war will meet with fierce resistance not only by the peoples of the USSR, but also by the European and colonial masses who do not want to be the slaves of Wall Street. At home the fiercest resistance will be generated. Wall Street's war drive, aggravating the social crisis, may under certain conditions actually precipitate it....

'The workers' struggle for power in the US is not a perspective of a distant and hazy future but the realistic program of our epoch.'

excerpted from *Workers Vanguard* no 249, 8 February 1980

Outrage over attempted murder of German Spartacist

German Trotskyist Fred Zierenberg has been released from the hospital after barely surviving an attempted murder attack. On January 25 he came within inches of death as a result of a knife-stabbing in the back during an attack on the Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD -- German section of the international Spartacist tendency) by Afghan reactionaries and assorted foreign Maoists at a Frankfurt University teaching on Afghanistan. This shocking premeditated assault also left several other comrades of the TLD less severely wounded (see *Spartacist Britain* no 18, February 1980).

A statement condemning the criminal attack 'despite differences we may have with the TLD' has been endorsed by several hundreds of signers, among them at least eleven public employees union officials, several teachers union officials and numerous individuals and groups.

The right-wing murder attempt was covered in half a dozen West German newspapers. The following week the TLD successfully held its own forum on Afghanistan despite further threats of violence. The forum, entitled 'Hail the Red Army! Down with Islamic Reaction!' was defended by a squad of over two dozen marshals, most of them active unionists. Among the statements of solidarity read out at the meeting was one from Oskar Hippe, who had been a member of the Spartacusbund of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg during the German revolution of 1919 and one of the founders of the Trotskyist opposition to the Stalinised Communist Party in the 1920s.

Meanwhile the frenzied Muslim clerical-reactionaries and their Maoist accomplices issued a leaflet defending their bloody assault. Labeling the TLD 'counterrevolutionary police agents', it claimed nobody was knocked unconscious or stabbed -- indeed, that nobody was seriously hurt at all! A special supplement (14 February) to the TLD's *Kommunistische Korrespondenz* replied to this new provocation: 'We have received from two foreign students a clear indication of how systematically the attack was planned. They both accidentally sat near our comrades and, about half an hour before the assault, each received a 'tip' to sit further away.'

Although the GIM (German section of the United Secretariat), under pressure from its ranks, formally endorsed the TLD protest statement at a national conference, a disgusting article in the GIM paper (*Was Tun?*, 2 February) equivocated: 'The TLD doesn't make it easy for anyone to defend them. Within the left it is known for disturbing meetings of other organisations through its provocative behaviour.' But categorical statements of solidarity with the TLD against reactionary terror were issued by the Berlin and Tübingen GIM branches, the Swedish USec section; the Bolshevik Faction expelled from the Swedish USec and the Spartacusbund. Even the semi-Maoist Kommunistischer Bund has been far less weaselly in defending the TLD than was the GIM leadership.

The TLD is pressing charges against the would-be assassins and continuing its aggress-

Rhodesia ...

(Continued from page 8)

by the crushing electoral defeat of their favourite black stooge, former prime minister Bishop Abel Muzorewa. Lord Carrington's carefully-laid plans could yet explode in his face.

In the early days after the settlement, most imperialist interests and white settlers wanted to stick with Muzorewa. But Muzorewa is now largely discredited among the black masses. So many white spokesmen have been clearly intimating that they could 'work with' Nkomo or even Mugabe as prime minister. And Nkomo and Mugabe have done their best to help the imperialists out. Both joined in the electoral charade, agreeing in advance to uphold white-supremacist privilege and to keep the 'new Zimbabwe' squarely under the thumb of imperialism. Indeed they were the ones who appealed for and welcomed Britain's return in the first place. Nkomo even won a formal seal of approval from Smith, while 'Marxist' Mugabe announced his desire for 'co-existence' with South Africa. He even asked Lord Soames to stay on after the elections, projecting 'a role similar to that of the late Lord Mountbatten after India became independent' (*Times*, 28 February)!

Now that Mugabe has won an overwhelming victory, he has been quick to reaffirm his commitment to capitalist exploitation: 'People think that everything is going to be nationalised, including their property ... I shall do no such thing' (*Evening News*, 4 March). He has offered an olive branch to former Prime Minister Ian Smith, the symbol of racist Rhodesia, and his Rhodesian Front Party. And as Peter Walls moved tanks and thousands of armed white soldiers into the capital, he joined him in urging the citizenry to remain calm.


Still, any number of events could set the fighting off again -- a post-election alliance between the whites, Muzorewa and minor black politicians aimed at knocking the guerrilla leaders out of power; armed intervention by South Africa; or a revolt by guerrillas no longer able to stomach the gross betrayals of their leaders. Britain could yet be drawn into another dirty colonial war.

Should open warfare resume, Marxists would call as before for military victory to the nationalist forces fighting against white supremacy and/or the colonial presence. But we place absolutely no faith in the thousand-time-proven betrayers Nkomo and Mugabe. Unlike them, we say: get the imperialist troops, cops and colonial administrators out now! Smash white-supremacist rule! Only a Trotskyist vanguard party, basing itself on the programme of permanent revolution and forging links with the strategic black proletariat of South Africa, can lead the toiling masses to final victory through socialist revolution throughout southern Africa. ■

ive campaign to publicly expose the practitioners of bloody terror in the service of reaction and imperialism. We call on all those committed to defence of democratic rights and the workers movement to send protest statements to: Postfach 1 67 47, 6000 Frankfurt/M 1, West Germany, and contributions marked 'Fred Z' to: Postcheckkonto, Frankfurt/M, 937 74-605 (Wolfgang Höhmann), West Germany.

adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 249, 8 February 1980

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Carter on Cold War rampage

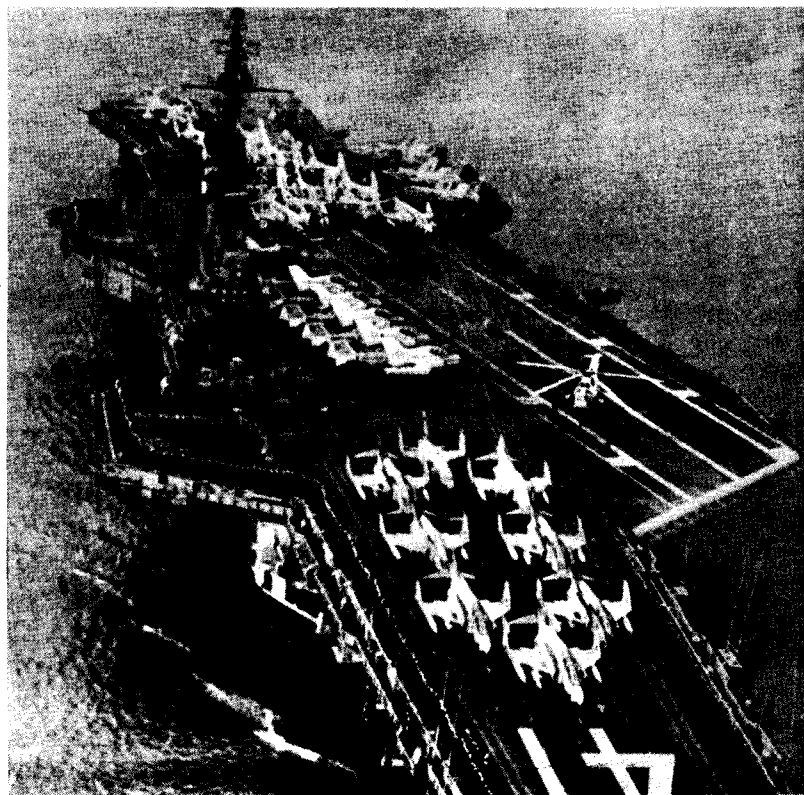
Defend the Soviet Union!

With his 'state of the union' address on January 23, Jimmy Carter openly threatened US military action against the Soviet Union in the Persian Gulf. Carter may enjoy this role of tough-talking Cold War militarist, goading the Soviets over Afghanistan and driving toward World War III. But the Russians are fed up. They have had enough.

The Russians are fed up with the direct military threats of the Carter Doctrine, the probing for military 'facilities' and bases all along their unstable border. Fed up with the nuclear loading of NATO, the 'modernising' of China's arsenal. And now Carter's diplomatic blitzkrieg: grain embargo, Olympic boycott campaign, export ban, cultural freeze. And the cascading rhetoric of war: plans for a rapid deployment force, registration for conscription, and sky-high budget for the Pentagon. The Russians are made fair game as detente deals, Aeroflot jets and promised grain are stranded by Carter's Cold War rampage.

Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, stands at the Khyber Pass rifle in hand on February 3, and thinks of Poland and Russia, of war and history. In the mountains between Pakistan and Afghanistan reactionary Afghan Islamic tribesmen hail Brzezinski, whose direct target is Russia. They know where their arms are coming from. As revolutionaries, we are on the other side in this war in Afghanistan. We say 'Hail Red Army!' (See *Spartacist Britain* no 18, February 1980), and we defend the Soviet Union against imperialism. For their part, the Russians have good cause to be fed up with the war drive at the White House. As the US pushes for a nuclear confrontation with the Russians their very existence is threatened. But this war course was set before the invasion of Afghanistan, and the players who matter in this possible end game understand this very well. Carter's Cold War could turn hydrogen-hot in a hurry.

Without Afghanistan political excuses, Olympic diplomatic stunts or peace bravado, Leonid Brezhnev has pointed to the trip wires for nuclear war: China and Western Europe. The *Daily Mail* released a report of a Moscow meeting between Brezhnev and the head of the French



National Assembly, Gaullist deputy Jacques Chaban-Delmas. Brezhnev pounded his desk again and again as he warned: 'Believe me, after the destruction of Chinese nuclear sites by our missiles, there won't be much time for the Americans to choose between the defense of their Chinese allies and peaceful co-existence with us' (*New York Times*, 30 January). We believe him. Old and sick, but not crazy, Brezhnev issues a reasonable ultimatum in his stormy desk pounding.

Russia 'would not tolerate' the nuclear arming of China by the US. How can they? As early as 1978 Brezhnev said that 'playing the China card' was a 'shortsighted and dangerous policy' that the US would regret. During the failed China invasion of Vietnam, it became obvious that not only was the US-China anti-Soviet al-

liance sealed in Vietnamese blood, but also that Russia might have to knock out the Chinese missiles. For the Russians playing the China card is no diplomatic game; it is a matter of life and death. China is trip wire one.

On the other side West Europe is now armed with new missiles, missiles that Brezhnev was given to believe might be aborted under SALT II. With all the deliberateness of a cornered man, Brezhnev explained the problem: 'There are now 30 minutes between the American missiles and our own. We cannot accept that this delay be reduced to 6 minutes by new American missiles in Germany.' Simple. The timing of assured retaliation is all. When the missiles go off in Germany aimed straight for all of the Soviets' major cities, the Russians need time to respond in

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Colonialist election in Rhodesia

Nearly three million people went to the polls in Rhodesia late last month to vote in elections in which the ZANU leader Robert Mugabe won 57 of the 80 parliamentary places allotted to blacks under the new imperialist-devised constitution. The whole exercise had its farcical side. Outside each polling station (including those deep in the bush) stood a fully-uniformed British policeman, specially flown in for the occasion. BBC television broadcasts showed these bobbies greeting the citizenry with smiles and banal questions like 'ello ducks, come to vote?'

Rhodesia became once more a Crown Colony, so Britain pulled out all the stops to make the elections seem free and fair. The Foreign Office sees them as perhaps the last chance for a relatively peaceful transition to a neo-colonial and pro-Western Zimbabwe which is safe for capitalist exploitation. For the black masses, however, any election under the auspices of imperialism and a constitution which maintains the privileged status of the four per cent white settler minority can only be a vile insult.

The election campaign itself was dominated by intimidation and 'dirty tricks', largely directed by the white Rhodesian armed forces against the rival nationalists led by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. The whole gambit of provocateur bombings and attempted murders -- to which colonial governor Lord Soames predictably turned a blind eye while endlessly denouncing guerrilla ceasefire violations -- almost blew apart completely when the Security Forces were found to be responsible for a church bombing campaign which had been widely blamed on Mugabe.

While giving the run of the country to the Security Forces and army under General Peter Walls, Soames has also given free rein to the British and Commonwealth troops assigned to 'monitor' the 20,000 guerrillas herded into concentration-camp-like enclaves under the orders of Mugabe and Nkomo. The contempt of these imperialist troops for their black 'wards' was graphically demonstrated when the Royal Regiment of Wales openly celebrated -- amid angry black guerrillas -- its crushing of South

Africa's Zulu people in 1879.

Peter Walls has now replaced Ian Smith as the 'great white hope' of Rhodesian settlers. Imperialist leaders in London and Washington have global strategic considerations to contend with, and want to angle for a pliable black puppet government because they know that ultimately white-settler Rhodesia is doomed. In contrast, many of the 200,000-odd white Rhodesians are prepared to defend their privileged lifestyle down to the last swimming pool. Walls has now become the supreme negotiator -- playing for time on their behalf and attempting to assure guerrilla 'integration' into the army of the 'new Zimbabwe' through secret parleys with Mugabe and Nkomo.

But the country remains a tinderbox. The competing black politicians each have their own private armies alongside that of the former white-settler regime. South of the Limpopo, South African generals are chafing at the bit for armed intervention, and no doubt incensed

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