

## Time runs out for Poland

# Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution!

The massive strike in the Baltic ports last August brought Polish workers before a historic choice: with the bankruptcy of Stalinist rule dramatically demonstrated, it would be either the path of bloody counterrevolution in league with imperialism, or the path of proletarian political revolution. The Gdansk Accords and the emergence of Solidarity (Solidarność), the

ISSUED out of last year's general strike, produced a situation of cold dual power. This precarious condition could not last long, as we wrote. And now time has run out.

With its first national congress in early September, decisive elements of Solidarity are now pushing a programme of open counterrevolution. The appeal for 'free trade unions' within the Soviet bloc, long a fighting slogan for Cold War anti-Communism, was a deliberate provocation of Moscow. Behind the call for 'free elections' to the Sejm (parliament) stands the programme of 'western-style democracy', that is, capitalist restoration under the guise of parliamentary government. And

now leading Polish 'dissident' Jacek Kuron, an influential adviser of Solidarity, and a member of the Second International, has issued a call for a counterrevolutionary regime to take power.

To underscore their ties to the 'free world', Solidarity's leaders have invited Lane Kirkland, the hard-line Cold Warrior who heads up the American AFL-CIO, to attend the second session of the congress scheduled for late September. This top labour lieutenant of US imperialism, a man deeply involved in Washington's anti-Soviet war drive, has announced he will be there to wave the 'free world' banner in Poland. Accompanying Kirkland is Irving Brown, the sinister AFL-CIO 'European representative' whose 'labour' cover is an invaluable part of his years-long role as top CIA provocateur against the European labour movement. In turn Solidarity has opened a US office in the premises of teachers' union leader Albert Shanker, a notorious right-wing social democrat whose party newspaper, *New America*, denounced George McGovern as little

short of a 'commie dupe' and even condemned Nixon as soft on Russia!

Over and above the formal actions of the Congress, the whole activity and spirit of Solidarity is that of an organisation making a bid for power. A few weeks before the Congress the top leader, Lech Walesa, told printers who were striking government newspapers:

'I believe that confrontation is unavoidable. The next confrontation will be a total confrontation....'

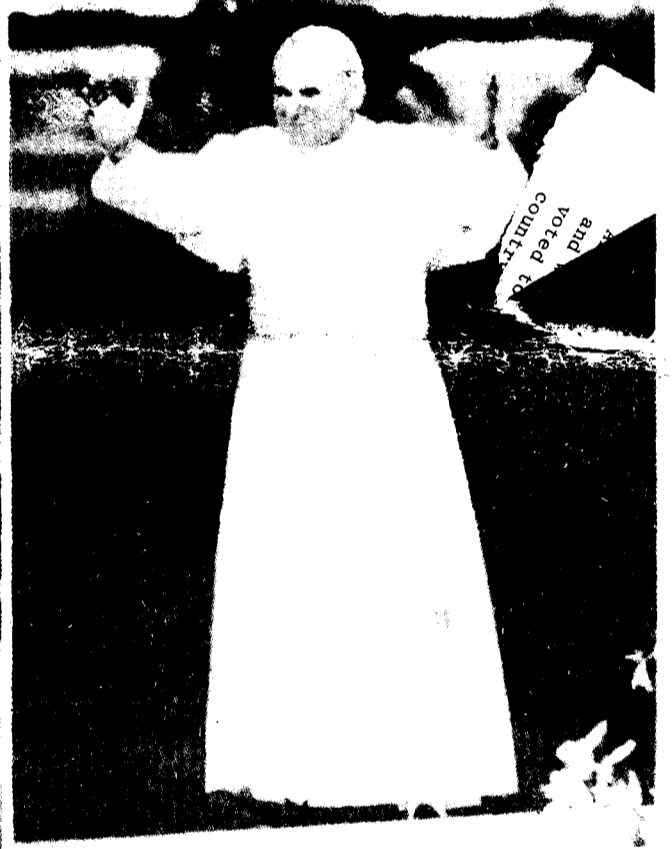
'We see more clearly that without political solutions nothing can be achieved. The whole war will be won by us'. (*Los Angeles Times*, 21 August)

When asked what would happen if the Sejm refused to act on Solidarity's programme for self-managed enterprises, Bogdan Lis, regarded as the organisation's number two, replied smartly, 'Maybe we'll dissolve it' (*New York Times*, 13 September). When the 900 delegates left the Congress, they understood that the organisation was

moving to take over the basic economic and political aspects of Polish life. Now, writing in Solidarity's newsletter, *Niezależność*, Poland's most prominent social democrat, Jacek Kuron, has called for a new government based on a 'council of national salvation' consisting of Solidarity, the Catholic Church and 'moderate' Communist officials. 'The moment the council is formed, it would suspend operation of all authorities, including the government', Kuron added (UPI dispatch, 16 September 1981).

The sophisticated representatives of western imperialism, such as the *New York Times*, and apparently the Kremlin Stalinists as well, understand that Solidarity has now crossed the Rubicon. Top American officials have been quoted in European papers saying that Poland today is the most exciting and important opportunity for the West since 1945. And this is from an administration that begins to salivate as soon as it hears the word 'roll-back'. Moscow has issued its

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Recent Solidarity congress (Lech Walesa, centre) votes for counterrevolution with Pope's blessing.

### 'Hands off Russia!'

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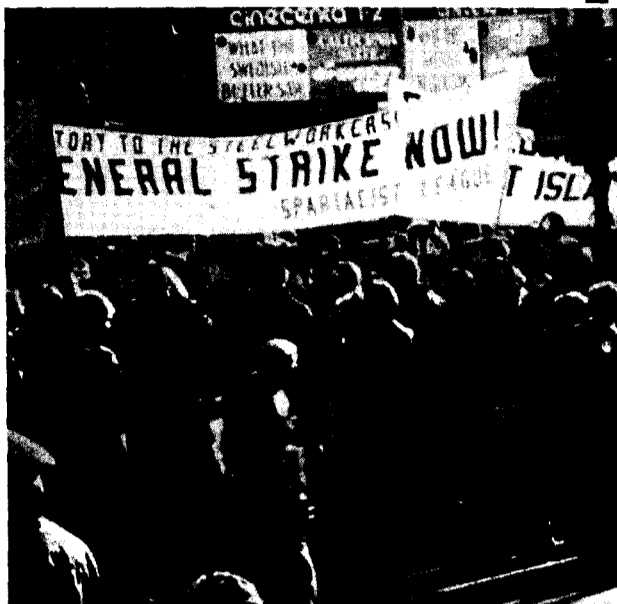
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# A question of leadership

With virtually the whole of the 'far left' following Tony Benn's every word as the 'socialist' hope for Thatcher's Britain, Ken Loach's documentary film on the great steel strike of 1980, which appeared on ATV 13 August, was a valuable reminder of a time not so long ago when Thatcher was under the gun of a class-struggle challenge ... and Benn said not a word. 'A Question of Leadership' brought together union officials, strike militants and one or two ostensible revolutionaries -- most notably Alan Thornett, Workers Socialist League (WSL) leader and deputy convenor at the BL Cowley Assembly plant in Oxford.

Militant steelmen described how they organised their strike, and the savagery they faced from 'Maggie Thatcher's boot boys' at the scab plants of Hadfields and Sheerness. And they expressed their bitter resentment at the betrayal and obstruction from national and local bureaucrats: 'Every time we scored a goal, you awarded two penalties to the other side.' Only the procrastination of the Wales TUC prevented a Welsh general strike; BL bureaucrats sat on a 2-1 strike vote until the steel strike was over; 8000 Sheffield engineers striking in solidarity were ordered back to work by the Confed 29 District Committee. And even as the dockers were voting for a national strike after the Liverpool men had walked out in solidarity with the steelmen, the ISTC bureaucracy under Bill Sirs was *simultaneously* and consciously voting up the sellout to be shoved down the throats of thousands of embittered, angry strikers. Liverpool dockers' leader Dennis Kelly captured some sense of the proportions of this act of class treason: 'There was a recall docks delegate conference which you knew about.... We were demanding a full stoppage of every port in the country. And we won it!... We came out of the meeting, and what do we get met with? You actually voted to go back in, when every port in the country was going to be stopped so there ~~could be no steel moved in or out....~~ When victory was in your grasp, after thirteen weeks, you turned round and swallowed it. Good Christ!'



Steel strike: Spartacist League pointed way forward.

In an article published immediately before this historic sellout, we wrote: 'A general strike is not pie-in-the-sky. It is the road to victory. And it is posed more sharply as a concrete opportunity today, even in the eleventh hour of Sirs' sellout attempts, than it has been at any point in the last thirteen weeks of class war. *Steel workers: Stay out and win!*' (Spartacist Britain no 20, April 1980) Nor was it simply a question of stopping the movement of steel, important as that was. What was necessary to win the steel strike was precisely to make it more than a steel strike, by broadening the programmatic basis of the strike. The Thatcher government had consciously prepared to face down the steel workers as a lesson to the whole working class. A general strike was in the air from day one. And from day one -- in all our propaganda, in leaflets distributed to thousands of steel workers, car workers, miners and dockers -- we emphasised that perspective, of a

general strike around demands that could unite the whole of the working class: to bury the anti-union laws and victimisations, to reverse the social service cuts, to fight the redundancies through work sharing on full pay and a sliding scale of wages -- and to get the hated Iron Lady! Such a general strike could have thrown the bourgeoisie on to the defensive, placed the proletariat in a far stronger position, and impelled the growth of a revolutionary vanguard and opened up the road to the struggle for a revolutionary workers government.

The receptivity to our propaganda from unaffiliated steel militants around the country, the spontaneous chants of general strike which broke out in any sizeable demonstration, were barometers of what a revolutionary organisation with even a modest base of authoritative communist militants within the trade unions could have done to turn that strike around. But across the board, the fake revolutionaries opposed this perspective in practice: some, like the Socialist Workers Party, explicitly and openly fighting against the general strike call; some, like the International Marxist Group and the WSL, raising a half-hearted and belated call premised on good faith in the TUC bureaucrats and linked to a perspective of returning Labour to the Treasury benches in the next elections. And all of them demonstrated a nauseating capacity to approve or apologise for scabbing and the crossing of steel workers' picket lines, which posed a concrete method of spreading the strike and forcing the TUC to call a general strike.

So it came as no surprise that Thornett, the 'great workers leader' and self-styled Trotskyist militant, with an opportunity to address millions of workers, could only drivel unintelligibly about economics and gripe about how the Oxford bureaucrats sat on the BL strike decision. When steel workers picketed Thornett's Cowley plant, did he mobilise his supposed ~~base of supporters?~~ ~~Did he so much as stand on their picket lines and lead his "authentic" supporters?~~ WSL supporters at Cowley slithered past the picket lines into work. Trotskyists are supposed

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## Remember: 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs!' US SWP still hails Khomeini butchery

Every day's news from Khomeini's Iran brings fresh evidence of the reality of Islamic reaction in power. Hundreds of leftists gunned down every week, 'adulteresses' and homosexuals shot, schools purged, and pogrom murder of minority religious sects such as the Baha'i, who now face fascistic/mediaeval laws systematically framed to deny them the right to live: they are to be barred from 'holding jobs, owning property, running businesses, getting medical treatment or travelling' (Sunday Times, 20 September 1981), their marriages declared invalid and couples executed for 'prostitution'. So if the blood-drenched theocrats are now getting a small taste of the terror they have been dealing out since they took power as the 'Islamic-Marxist' Mujahedeen's bombs blast them

to a well-deserved death -- even if it is only to promote former Islamic ruler Bani-Sadr -- we can hardly grieve.

There is one grouping on the left, however, which does shed tears for Khomeini's hangmen: the reformist American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and its repulsive Iranian social-feudalist sister organisations, the HKE and HVK. The latest piece of grovelling from these craven running dogs of Islamic reaction is an article in *Intercontinental Press* (14 September) by Fred Murphy entitled 'Masses repudiate terror bombings':

'The attempt to physically destroy the Iranian government is a reactionary attack on the revolution itself. Under the left cover provided by the Mujahedeen, the field has been opened for destabilization attempts by every

variety of counterrevolutionary -- the monarchists, the liberals, and the US imperialists themselves.'

The SWP stands with the Khomeinite executioners, criticising the genocidal slaughter only because it is not the best way to 'defend the revolution' and maintain 'unity against the Iraqi invasion!' Otherwise the pogrom of Baha'i and mass murder of leftists under the iron heel of clerical-fascistic reaction would presumably be just fine. Their constant guilty denial that they support the government is further exposed by their direct, unequivocal identification with the 'thousands of armed, revolutionary-minded youth that make up the ranks of the Pasdaran' -- the

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## SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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## RCP drivel

The absurdly misnamed Revolutionary Communist 'Party' (RCP -- formerly Revolutionary Communist Tendency) is known for its mindless cheerleading of Green nationalism in Ireland and 'anti-imperialist' ayatollahs in Iran, and for idiot 'mass party' posturing and stunt adventurism over fascism in Britain. But the next step (July/August 1981) recently felt the need to 'review' *Purge in IMG*, a collection of documents of the expelled Communist Faction (CF) of the International Marxist Group (IMG). Such is the level of the RCP's vaunted 'seriousness about theory' that the reviewer found his best shot in a belaboured scatological metaphor about 'purges', lavatories and bowel movements -- but we'll leave the explanation of that to psychoanalysts. About one of the central questions in the CF's fight -- defence of the USSR -- the RCP doesn't say a word. And sensibly. The RCP has the CIA's line on Afghanistan and Poland and

self-admittedly doesn't have a position on the class character of the USSR.

But they did manage to get in a couple of political points. We are told that the CF and Spartacist League (SL) have the same line as the IMG itself on the Labour Party and the question of revolutionary regroupment. What's more, a recent issue of *Spartacist Britain* had five pages on revolutionary regroupment and only two on the H Block hunger strike. (As for the political content of those two pages, they make no comment -- and this from the people who took a year to gather together enough quotes from the *Financial Times* to make a significant written statement on the overthrow of the shah!) Well, the CF's agreements with the IMG would be news to the IMG leadership, which went crazy when the CF initiated a fight against the IMG's crawling after Tony Benn, and then expelled the entire faction for refusing to swear a loyalty oath that the IMG was revolutionary. Even the RCP should be able to notice that political difference.

As for Ireland, who do they think they're

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# Healey squeaks through in Brighton farce

# What next for the Bennites?

At the end of its first session, the Labour Party conference in Brighton had already concluded the business that everybody had been waiting for. After months of intra-bureaucratic manoeuvres, backstabbing recriminations and god knows how many backroom deals, Denis Healey managed to squeak through to a narrow victory over rival Tony Benn for the deputy leadership contest. The unanimous observation is that the outcome resolves nothing for the Labour Party; the turmoil is bound to continue. The capacity to lead Labour of ex-left geriatric Michael Foot, selected by the trade union bureaucrats to play the role of caretaker bonaparte last November, was reflected in his abstaining on both ballots.

No matter how decisive the vote had been, it would have made no difference to Labour's working-class base in terms of ameliorating the misery of life in Thatcher's Britain or providing a programme for struggle. Indeed, when measured against the other news of the day -- like Iran and Poland -- the speechifying from the platform at Brighton came off even emptier than it first appeared. As is amplified in the leaflet reprinted below, which was distributed to delegates at Brighton, Benn is no less committed than Healey to the preservation of capitalist class rule in Britain, to the anti-Soviet alliance and continued imperialist oppression in Northern Ireland, to the channelling and defusing of workers struggles into illusions of reform in the chambers of Westminster.

The farcical character of the left's claimed crusade for 'democracy' and 'accountability' was exemplified in the machinations over the TGWU block vote. First rumoured by an ever-hopeful bourgeois press to be headed for Healey, they were announced for Benn following a meeting of the union executive, swung to Silkin at the last minute before the first ballot and handed to Benn in the second ballot with more abstentions than positive votes. But Benn got the lot -- and for all their talk about democracy, that's all his supporters really cared about.

This is far from the end of the road for Benn. But what about his ostensibly revolutionary backers, who furiously campaigned for a Benn victory under the rationale, idiotic at best, that Benn's campaign and his victory would open up the issues facing Labour's working-class base. If groups like the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the Socialist Organiser Alliance (SOA) are to continue their 'united front' with Benn now, it has to be over something broader than the deputy leadership contest. The extent to which they have already been intoxicated by the outlook of Labourism is captured in the concern over swinging the union delegate votes and in recriminations over which bureaucrat or 'left' MP blew Benn's chances.

The IMG responded to Benn's bid for the deputy leadership by turning *Socialist Challenge* into little more than a weekly publicity handout for Benn's campaign. Now it is reduced to debating whether it should liquidate all or simply most of its supporters into the Labour Party. It makes little difference -- the programmatic

liquidation is already visibly rampant. Indeed given that a number of the sizable chunk of IMG Central Committee members who were to be found hobnobbing in the corridors at Brighton were last seen enthusiastically following the proceedings of the reformist American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) conference in Oberlin, the prospect is that the IMG may move ever closer to the 'Watersuit'-style reformism of the SWP.

For evidence, one need only look at the IMG's policy statement for Brighton, 'Towards a Socialist Britain' (*Socialist Challenge*, 24 September), a tepid programme couched within the context of friendly 'disagreements with the NEC about the methods which should [sic] be used in fighting for their [!] policies'. Its 'independent foreign policy' barely manages to mention defence of the Soviet Union, while (unnecessarily) urging Labour to be in the 'forefront' of

against their class brothers in other countries. And the Labour Party of NATO and Cold War against the USSR.

How will the election of either Benn or Healey resolve the questions facing workers who want socialism? This country is coming apart at the seams; and the world is moving towards thermonuclear war -- anti-Soviet war. US president Ronald Reagan provocatively waves the nuclear big stick at the Soviet workers state and Margaret Thatcher provides all the support that decrepit British capitalism can muster. The CIA pours in aid to reactionary insurgents in Afghanistan. Popular revolt in El Salvador becomes a testing ground in the struggle to 'roll back Communism'. South Africa gets the green light for invading Angola because there are Russians and Cubans there. And in Poland the imperialists in alliance with the Catholic Church back the



Benn and supporter Scargill: 'left' Labourism means repression in Ireland.



the struggle for counterrevolutionary 'democratic socialism' in Poland. It warns against putting total faith in parliamentary methods, but 'respect[s] the vote of the British people as expressed in elections' and urges Labour to 'name the companies it intends to nationalise, as has Mitterrand in France'. As for the gradualism under which the Labour traitors cloak their undying commitment to capitalism, the IMG agrees that, 'The Labour left are quite right to point out that such alternative forms of popular power cannot be created overnight.'

Four months ago, the IMG expelled the Communist Faction (CF) from its ranks. In a document entitled 'Reverse the liquidationist course on the Labour Party!' submitted before its expulsion, the CF warned:

'... in the real world what is proposed is that in practice SC supporters will have gone over to Benn's programme. No matter what organisational precautions are taken (including the most wonderfully comprehensive internal programme of Marxist education), if there is no clear sharp programmatic divide between us and Benn visible in our practice inside the Labour Party, sooner or later there will be nothing left of the SC fraction.'

And it applies with equal force to the other fake Trotskyists who have been swept along on the Bennwagon. There is an alternative -- not better tactics, or better books, but a better programme -- the Trotskyist programme of the Spartacist League.

## Want socialism? Then why back Benn?

Benn or Healey, it will still be the Labour Party of imperialist butchery in Ireland and of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) at home. The Labour Party of wage control, of protectionist import controls which pit British workers

capitalist-restorationist leadership of Solidarity in an effort to foment social counterrevolution.

In Northern Ireland troops shoot down children on the streets. Brave Republican hunger strikers are left to rot and die in the H Blocks amid an intractable crisis that is the legacy of bloody British imperialism's rule. On the 'mainland' there are three million on the dole. While the inner cities crumble there is an ominous fascist growth, riots in the streets and cops with CS gas. Do either Benn or Healey offer a way out of any of this? No!

We Trotskyists of the Spartacist League believe that there is only one road out -- the road of proletarian revolution through the construction of a party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin. And that means unalterable hostility to the Labour Party which has time and again betrayed working people and sabotaged workers struggles. It means a struggle to win Labour's working-class base away from reactionary misleaders 'left' and right to the programme of international socialist revolution.

### Benn: a false option

Tony Benn is the darling of the left. He is also a firm partisan of NATO. He is at one with Reagan and the 'AFL-CIA' in hailing 'democratic' counterrevolution in Poland. And how could he be expected to defend the Soviet Union and the workers states? He is firmly part of the imperialist consensus much closer to home -- the consensus which condemns Irish hunger strikers to death. He adds only that he would like UN troops to continue the British army's bloody work in the Six Counties. As Benn cynically told the *Guardian's* (24 September) Jill Tweedie he 'spend[s] a lot of time wondering how to cope with the problems of the H-Block protesters' during his election campaign. If he spent that time working against the imperialist executioners of H Block, he might be worth something to the workers cause.

The much-vaunted 'Alternative Economic Strategy' is a formula for trade war abroad and more

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## 8000 Workers Vanguard sold at Washington demo

In the biggest labour demonstration by far in American history as many as half a million unionists marched through the streets of Washington on 19 September in a massive outpouring of working-class anger against the Reagan government. While the union bureaucracy was concerned with re forging the unions' traditional ties to the Democratic Party the sentiment for real action against Reagan came through in the air traffic controllers' chanting 'Strike, strike, strike, strike!' 'I wish I were a controller in Poland' read one PATCO placard.

The Spartacist League/US intervened with a banner proclaiming 'Fight for Workers Rights, Build a Workers Party, Smash Reagan!' The opportunity for a class-struggle intervention in the US right now was revealed by the fact that altogether 8,135 copies of *Workers Vanguard* with the headline 'Unchain Labor!' were sold in Washington that day.

## Spartacist League national conference

# 'Bolshevik parties are mean!'

'One question today dominates and conditions every other significant aspect of political life -- the "Russian question". This statement, from the 'Tasks and Perspectives' document unanimously adopted by the Seventh National Conference of the Spartacist League/Britain (SL) on 12-13 September, applies with equal force to the conference itself. This was the first delegated conference of the SL in Britain, a recognition that we are now too large to otherwise allow effective and truly democratic conference deliberations. And from the international discussion to the climax of the weekend -- the fusion with the Communist Faction (CF) formerly of the International Marxist Group (IMG), which originated in struggle against that organisation's 'third campist' capitulation to imperialist anti-Sovietism over Afghanistan -- the key theme stressed by conference delegates was the implications of renewed Cold War for forging a revolutionary vanguard.

Representatives of the Italian, French, German and American sections of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), as well as of the Spartacus Youth League, youth section of the SL/US, all discussed the impact of the 'Reagan years' on the class struggle in their respective national terrains. The German comrade described the growth of the pacifist, social-patriotic 'peace movements' and stressed the need to bring the Russian question home: 'For us, defence of the Soviet Union begins in Berlin.' The speaker from the 'Ligne Trotskyista' explained how new Socialist president Mitterrand 'has sort of self-appointed himself the head of the Cold War organisers in Europe', and how nonetheless the French 'far left' is utterly prostrating itself before him.

These presentations were supplemented by reports on developments in Australia, Sweden and Sri Lanka, the South Asian island where after years of effort the iSt has recently succeeded in establishing a section. With the oppressed Tamil minority threatened with a renewed wave of almost genocidal Sinhala chauvinism encouraged by the government of J R Jayawardene, we have recently made an international priority of building protest demonstrations in defence of Tamil rights. In a very short time our Lankan comrades have already earned a solid reputation (against the lot of fake Trotskyists tainted with Sinhala chauvinism) as defenders of the Tamils. 'It's striking evidence how the development of a revolutionary party is not a linear process', remarked the reporter. 'Our tiny group has been forced into prominence' simply by being principled.

### Under the shadow of the Cold War

The keynote report on the international situation by a representative of the International Executive Committee emphasised the differentiated impact of Reagan's war drive in Europe and America. Reagan's attacks on the rights and living standards of virtually every sector of the American population are laying the basis for potentially massive explosions of unified class struggle and the rapid growth of a revolutionary vanguard in the US. But alongside this comes the palpable threat of sharply intensified anti-communist, anti-black, anti-union repression already evidenced in the unprecedented attack on the air traffic controllers. While applying with particular force to Reagan's America, the threat of repression against revolutionaries in this period holds true for this country as well, all the deep-seated social-democratic illusions rampant within the British left to the contrary. The reporter added:

'If they don't do it successfully, you build a real mean Bolshevik party. Bolshevik parties that are capable of taking and exercising state power aren't built gently ... they're built through their own torture --

not so much that the party is broken and obliterated but enough so that it's pretty mean. That requires struggle of a kind that we do not want to experience, but we don't have to worry about whether we want to or not. Because if we make modest successes, they will bring that experience to us.'

The current rightist climate has led to sharp rightward motion and even disintegration for many US left groups, and to some quits by tired and wavering members of our own American organisation -- facing a possible return to McCarthy-style repression -- 'who don't like what goes on in the maximum security detention penitentiaries'. That is the case here as well; and we too have had our share of quits. The anti-Soviet climate has led to strong motion to the right by our fake-Trotskyist opponents. But a genuinely Bolshevik organisation, even as it fights against the stream, also cannot be immune from rightist pressures, with impulses to flinch and ultimately exits from revolutionary politics by those lacking the will to fight.

As the main conference document pointed out, the pressures operating on revolutionaries in this country are different from those in America: instead of the 'perceptible sharp shift

to the right in domestic politics' which brought Reagan to power, there is a 'perceptible polarisation'. The problem is that it is increasingly being channelled into Labourism; as one speaker observed, our rightward-moving opponents are reacting not simply to 'the pushing effect of the Cold War but to the pull of the Labour Party'. The IEC representative underlined the dialectical approach that British revolutionaries must take to the seemingly all-pervasive stranglehold of Labourism on the working class: 'We are naturally a part of the Labour movement -- but we have to be very clearly an antagonistic part.'

He further pointed out that the refraction of anti-Sovietism through social democracy in the British workers movement (and the rest of West Europe) has its most perceptible effect today on the question of Poland. Several delegates discussed the pressures, much stronger here than in America, of the anti-communist 'public opinion' which hails the Solidarity 'free trade union' in Poland. Another speaker underscored the point: 'The Russian question in Europe is Poland.'

Fleeing from the hardships of the present period for a more comfortable but empty 'biological existence' is an utterly false option. In

## Spartacist League/Communist Faction

# Declaration of fusion

1. The Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B), section of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), and the Communist Faction (CF), formerly of the International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' (USec), agree to fuse on the basis of the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and the founding Conference of the Fourth International, the nine points for revolutionary regroupment proposed by the iSt (*Workers Vanguard*, 4 April 1977), 'Genesis of Pabloism' (*Spartacist* no 21, Autumn 1972), 'Appeal for the Formation of the Communist Tendency' and the 'Declaration of the Communist Faction' (both reprinted in the CF bulletin 'Purge in IMG').

2. Under the hammer blows of the renewed Cold War offensive against the Soviet Union, pretenders to Trotskyism of all hues have scrambled for the protective bosom of the social democracy. Alone among ostensibly Trotskyist organisations, the iSt has refused to make any concessions to prevailing social-democratic anti-Sovietism. Within the IMG/USec, the Communist Faction developed in opposition to gross programmatic concessions of precisely that character and waged a fight to assert the fundamentals of the Trotskyist programme against the deepening right centrism of that organisation. Conceived in struggle against the IMG's capitulation to 'third campism' over Afghanistan, they were bureaucratically expelled in struggle against the IMG's surrender to 'left' Labourism.

The CF and the SL/B have come together through agreement on the decisive programmatic questions of this period, already tested in political struggle and common action:

a) For unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union -- Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan revealed within the USec a massive anti-Soviet bulge, reflected in the IMG's initial 'Soviet troops out' line, accompanied by support for social-patriotic, social-pacifist 'unilateral disarmament' schemes and immersion in the Campaign for

Nuclear Disarmament, and culminating in the recent line shift to support for phantom 'progressive' forces fighting the Red Army -- a line shift that is nothing less than a blood offering to the rabidly pro-NATO Second International. Within the whole of the USec the only voice raised from the start, loudly and clearly, for a Trotskyist position on Afghanistan, came from the comrades who formed the CF. No support to 'disarmament' illusions -- not a man, not a penny, to the imperialist army! Smash NATO! Against Vatican-inspired restorationist threats in Poland, for proletarian political revolution based on defence of collectivised property! b) For the perspective of permanent revolution in Iran. The USec's Pabloist liquidationism reached bizarre proportions with its tailing of Khomeinist clerical reaction in Iran, leading to a mad rush to defend the ayatollahs of Iran against the colonels of Iraq in their blood feud. Again, within the IMG, only the CF took a clear stand against any and all illusions in the 'Iranian Revolution'. The test of time has dramatically confirmed the iSt's slogan of two years ago, 'Down with the shah, down with the mullahs'. For revolutionary defeatism in the Iran/Iraq war -- Turn the guns around! For workers revolution to smash Islamic reaction! c) No support to 'left' reformism. Today the IMG campaigns for 'full support' for the candidacy of Tony Benn, which means support to little-England social chauvinism, the anti-Soviet NATO alliance and parliamentarist illusions. No support to 'left' reformist Benn. For a Trotskyist party counterposed to all wings of decrepit Labour reformism -- against 'deep entry' liquidation into the Labour Party! d) For immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland -- no imperialist 'solutions'. For a proletarian perspective in Ireland! The IMG's capitulation to Green nationalism and Labourite/Liberal popular-frontism led it to effectively counterpose liberal 'humanitarianism' to the elementary, even minimal, demand that the imperialists get out

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Britain today this is only too obvious. Add up the war drive, the economic/social collapse and the ominous growth of fascism and you get a situation where either there will be proletarian revolution or there won't be much time for any kind of existence. You've got to fight the bourgeoisie, or you're going to die anyway. Many more have been and will be attracted to our Bolshevik banner in this period, often just through recognition of this simple fact. Thus our American section has enjoyed a sharp spurt of growth around its campaigns for military victory for the left-wing insurgents in El Salvador. And speakers from all the European sections noted the opportunities for growth in their respective countries, particularly for regroupments of militants from the fake-Trotskyist 'United Secretariat' (USec) disgusted by their organisations' rush towards anti-Soviet social democracy, 'opportunities which haven't existed since 1972-73 and Portugal'.

#### Different experiences, a common programme

The Communist Faction, the single largest split to Trotskyism from the USec in Europe and the first from the IMG, was evidence of the possibilities. Cde Lawrie Harney, reporting for the CF on the fusion, pointed to 'a different experience of fighting for a common programme, notably on the Russian question'. The significance of the CF's struggle inside the IMG extended far beyond its numbers: 'For the first time in the IMG the ist is seen as somewhere an opposition can go.' The IMG leadership's openly-expressed fears of a 'second wave' to the SL are not misplaced.

Cde Harney, a ten-year veteran of the IMG and an erstwhile member of its Central and Political Committees (and before that a member of the Socialist Labour League when it still attracted serious subjectively revolutionary Trotskyist militants), briefly recounted the history of the IMG, noting that its 'leftest period' came in the early seventies, followed by a four-year period of 'intense factional warfare' which never broke out of the framework of Pabloist impressionism. The disorientation imposed upon many subjectively revolutionary IMG cadres by the endless quest for one after another 'new mass vanguard' as a substitute for the construction of a programmatically based Trotskyist vanguard has since laid many of them to waste. Likewise it left its mark on the comrades of the CF, even as they sought to fight for a complete break with Pabloism.

Recalled Harney, 'Factional warfare in the IMG was a game you played; it was not a serious fight to win and smash your opponents.' Yet 'by the logic of wanting to oppose your own bourgeoisie', these comrades were and the ones who will follow them from the IMG 'will be forced to



Spartacist Britain

draw the correct programmatic conclusions and come over to us'. A number of speakers emphasised a point made in the conference document: 'The political history of the CF fight within the IMG is our strongest political capital against the IMG in winning the next layer -- the political questions they fought for remain central.'

Living evidence of the effectiveness of our perspective of revolutionary regroupment was also provided by the presence at the conference of a substantial number of longtime cadres in the ostensibly Trotskyist British left, won to the ist from various political routes -- notably the IMG, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP)/International Socialists, Workers Socialist League (WSL) and Workers Power (WP) group. As well as the IMG, and not to the exclusion of other opportunities that may arise, the conference document affirmed the need for particular orientations towards two opponent organisations in the coming period.

The small centrist WP group will not pose a long-term obstacle to building a revolutionary party, however its 'leftism' could make it a way-station for some of the people we should get. Eighteen months ago WP adopted a formally Soviet-defencist position which, although sitting uneasily on a foundation of SWP-style workerism, made the SL an increasingly threatening competitor. Now after losing one leading member to our organisation they are attempting to rewind the film of their leftward development, succumbing more and more to powerful inherited Stalinophobia and moving back to the right. We still aim to win over a chunk of their cadre, despite the organisation's powerful cliquism, before it has gelled onto a solid rightist course.

The regroupment of the WSL and International-Communist League around the Socialist Organiser Alliance reflects a genuine right-wing convergence on anti-Sovietism and pro-Labourism. Nonetheless there are important tensions inside the new organisation, notably on the Afghanistan question, and we can expect post-fusion fallout. Given that this is the main section of the misnamed 'Trotskyist International Liaison Committee' rotten bloc, which seeks to be a vehicle for anti-Spartacist centrist regroupments in the US, Australia and Italy, we have a particular internationalist duty to polemicise against and discredit its feeble 'Trotskyist' pretensions.

#### Recruit more widely, more boldly!

The 'Tasks and Perspectives' document summed up some of our successes of the past year: '... in that period we established a new branch, our student work has taken root, our visibility and impact on the Russian question and Ireland have shot up, particularly through successful mobilisations for SL contingents at major demonstrations.'

The task confronting us now is to translate that political capital into numbers, both through regroupment and increased individual recruitment. 'Out of the micro league', was the slogan advanced by one delegate.

Doing this means making hard choices -- setting strict priorities and sticking to them. Our regroupment perspective remains central to all our work. Together with (and as part of) our regroupment activity, especially important for us today are a continued striving to upgrade and maintain *Spartacist Britain* as a high-quality propaganda organ; careful attention to our student work, a vital arena for the recruitment and training of young revolutionary cadres; and limited trade union implantation. It was emphasised that our trade union implantation aims towards building authoritative communist fractions in strategic industries, not in the light-minded fake-mass manner of our opponents, but in order

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# Fighting for communism in the Cold War Tasks and perspectives

We reprint below selected extracts from the 'Tasks and Perspectives' document adopted unanimously by the Spartacist League National Conference.

2. One question today dominates and conditions every other significant aspect of political life -- the 'Russian question'. The imperialist outcry over the just and supportable Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan presaged the official declaration of Cold War II and a new era of nuclear brinkmanship under the Reagan administration. There are differences between the US and its European allies, including though less so, Britain -- particularly as it affects traditional regional interests, for example, over the Middle East and Southern Africa. In Poland, German imperialism prefers a strategy of economic blackmail as against Reagan's overt sabre-rattling provocations. But with variations and differences in degree, every European imperialist power has fallen into line behind the anti-Soviet war drive.

4. Reagan's manifest willingness to fight a thermonuclear war on European soil has led to a widespread petty-bourgeois pacifist/chauvinist reaction, encapsulated in the call for a 'Nuclear-free zone from Portugal to Poland'. In Britain this has been manifested in the dramatic rena-

scence of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which has drawn thousands of youth into political activity. Labour's appeal to this pacifist 'Britain first' mood was one of the central aspects in the left-right schism out of which issued the staunchly 'Atlanticist' SDP. From centrist pseudo-Trotskyists to 'third camp' social democrats like the Cliffite SWP to Stalinists of all hues, all but the Bolsheviks have plunged headlong into the 'little England' parochialist morass under the pretence of opposing the imperialist war drive....

5. The Spartacist League's call for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union stands out sharply and prominently in this period. We must at all times seek a cutting edge in our Soviet-defencist propaganda against our own bourgeoisie -- The main enemy is at home! In particular we note that the social democracy lends itself well to the project of 'democratic' counterrevolution in Poland in league with the Vatican and the imperialist bankers. Our slogan, 'A workers Poland, yes! The pope's Poland, no!' is especially powerful against the fake Trotskyists who seek to prostitute the call for proletarian political revolution in the service of social democracy.

9. The Spartacist League's unique perspective at the time that the thirteen-week steel strike of 1980 posed a direct opportunity for a general-

ised classwide confrontation with the Tory government has been amply confirmed.... It is even clearer with hindsight that the steel strike was a watershed in the period since Thatcher took office. In the wake of its defeat the Labour Party moved to refurbish its jaded credentials and the axis of preoccupation of the [ostensible revolutionary organisations] shifted heavily towards the Labour Party.

Since the end of the steel strike there has been no major class confrontation. The miners were bought off over pit closures by the Tories, who have to acknowledge the potential political effect of a national miners strike -- a strike, which given even an effective reformist leadership, they would be unlikely to defeat. The level of strikes has plummeted, as the unemployment figures have soared. Fundamentally, however, the old balance of forces remains. We must maintain the perspective of intervening quickly and heavily around any significant major national trade union challenge to the government (eg a miners pay strike this winter), and be prepared to capitalise on the opportunities for recruitment it would pose.

10. The recent street riots are an expression of the deep frustration and malaise in society, where no one expects life to get better and no one in the established political parties offers

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## Tasks...

(Continued from page 5)

any credible solution. Against a backdrop of massive, chronic unemployment these street battles -- and the racist cop occupations which preceded or accompanied them -- illuminate in sharp relief the double oppression of the black West Indian and Asian population.

... Though not of strategic weight in the working class, concentrations of black workers in key integrated workforces may well become centres of militancy, in particular providing a concrete avenue for the realisation of mass union/black defence guards as the fascist threat grows more ominous.

13. The defeatist mood over Ireland is reflected in the extent to which it has become an issue inside the Labour Party. But the Labour traitors' unflinching allegiance to British imperialism is strikingly illustrated by the utterly shameful posture of all wings of the Labour Party on the Republican hunger strike, from the open bipartisanship of Foot/Concannon through to the 'democratic' social-chauvinism of Benn, who has always refused to support the elementary demand for political status.

The hunger strike posed a key test for ostensible revolutionaries in Britain: The pathetic response of the British fake left, conditioned by tailist appetites towards Green nationalism and/or Labourism/'humanitarian' popular frontism, underscored all the more sharply the Spartacist tendency's uniquely principled stand for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops as a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for a proletarian resolution to the national question and the oppression of the Catholic people in Northern Ireland; both in Britain and elsewhere our tendency was thrust into relative prominence in hunger strike support protests. The paralysis of the left, the capitulatory attitude of the IRA, the sharpening polarisation, all offer negative confirmation of our programme, which addresses conflicting communal interests, encapsulated in the slogans, 'Not Orange against Green, but class against class -- For an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles.'

14. Britain today can be aptly characterised as, 'A country coming apart at the seams in a world moving towards thermonuclear war ... without a revolutionary leadership.' The pressures operating upon ostensible revolutionaries are not identical to those in the US, where there is a perceptible sharp shift to the right in domestic politics in line with the anti-Soviet war fever. In Britain there is a perceptible polarisation: a tepid but growing Labour left, huge but impotent unemployment and disarmament marches, fascist growth and the absence of a class-

struggle response to the economic grinding down.

As we said in *Spartacist Britain*, the recent right-centrist regroupment of the WSL/I-CL is symptomatic as 'a clear expression of the political forces acting upon ostensible revolutionaries in Britain today. It is a fusion fixed on the terrain of the Cold War and formalised at the altar of the "broad church": anti-Soviet, pro-Labour.' Our organisation is not immune, as reflected in the recent wave of quits of long-standing members who basically despaired of the possibility of proletarian revolution and rejected the validity of the revolutionary programme in order to pursue a tangibly easier life. The rightward motion of our competitors may make us relatively more isolated in this period, but it will also make us stand out more clearly as the only alternative for those who wish to find the revolutionary programme. It is no accident that the Communist Faction of the IMG attracted comrades primarily on its forthright defence of the Soviet Union and its refusal to capitulate to Bennisism.

24. Like all reformist bureaucrats on the make and on the outs, Benn is wringing out the democracy issue in an attempt to build a base for his leadership challenge. It is no accident that Benn has repeatedly welcomed the far left to join the Labour Party -- he knows how valuable the relatively disciplined activism of an I-CL can be in helping with the donkey work for his campaigns. Of course Benn exploits the rank-and-file backlash against the architects of the Social Contract in the process, and presents a carefully tailored leftish image. But in all fundamental programmatic respects, Benn stands completely within the framework of British social democracy -- pro-NATO anti-Sovietism, social chauvinism in Ireland, autarkic deflation coupled with wage control, class-collaborationist 'participation', parliamentarism. He has never repudiated his career as the longest serving Labour cabinet member. We do not give support of any kind to Benn's campaign for deputy leadership. If and when Benn gains office we stand to gain greatly if we have made a reputation as his militant opponents, however much hostility this may engender in the present period of feverish hopes.

25. Given our size, and the sharp counterposition over this question between us and almost all of our opponents, it is most tactically advantageous for us at this point to maintain a ... sharp, aggressive counterposition to the Labour Party which will mark us out as a real alternative for elements on the left who choke on entrism/Benn-tailing, as well as a pole of attraction for youth coming into politics who are repulsed by Labour reformism.

26. *This does not mean ignoring the Labour Party....* We must keep abreast of events, to produce intelligent, forceful propaganda about



Spartacist League and Communist Faction initiated Anti-Imperialist Contingent on 13 June Ireland demonstration.

new developments in the Labour Party. Furthermore, we must be prepared to shift our tactics if the situation changes. The internal life of the Labour Party is far more lively and politically riven than it has been at any time since the Gaitskell/Bevan days. Whether or not Benn wins, the development of a centrist current is not to be ruled out....

46. As a declining imperial power Britain has a social climate which is a particularly fertile culture medium for national chauvinism. This is manifested for a revolutionary organisation particularly in pressures towards 'little-England' parochialism and narrowness, of the 'Fog in Channel -- continent isolated' variety, compounded by a social-democratic complacency and acceptance of low and falling incomes and low standards in general; and shot through with Le Carre-novel-style resentment of the 'upstart' powers, particularly the US. This has made anti-Americanism and more recently anti-Japanese sentiment such a characteristic weapon for Stalinist/social-democratic trade-union sellout artists. It is reflected as well in the periodic CIA-baiting of the fake left (many of whom ironically share the CIA's line on Afghanistan and Poland), who find it difficult to accept genuine international ties and a high level of financial commitment. In general these pressures underscore the crucial importance of international discipline in forging a Trotskyist vanguard in Britain.

48. Created at great expense (in money and cadre) by robbing virtually every existing section of cadre and nurtured thereafter by the international leadership, it finally began to take on a life of its own ... in the only way possible, through fights out of which an organic cadre began to emerge. We remain a young section, and political maturity will not come overnight. As the first international conference document noted, 'All of the sections outside of the U.S. face, to one degree or another, the problems of cohering a stable leadership collective. Such developments seldom take place by linear progression.' Leaderships emerge, are adjusted in composition or character, consolidated or overthrown in the course of struggling to build the organisation as a whole. They are not formed through consensus and mutual admiration but through conflict, divisions and concrete political fights which accompany adapting tasks to changing conditions. The SL/B has been no exception to this.

53. Increasing our recruitment, either of more experienced elements or of the raw youth coming into left political activity via CND or the left renaissance in the Labour Party, means going beyond the level of 'accidental' contacting. It means fitting recruitment into the political campaigns of the SL/B, so that an impressive demonstration mobilisation does not simply exercise pressure on our opponents, but is also a vehicle for drawing new people around us, on the axis of the same major political issues that we use to attack the OROs. This goes side by side with

## Letter of resignation

Reprinted below in slightly abridged form is a letter of resignation by Judith Hunter, formerly a leading spokesman for the SL/B and an alternate member of the Central Committee. The political dispute referred to centred around an incident in which Doug Hunter, who also subsequently resigned, defended discussing with an avowed fascist sympathiser while on assignment at a public demonstration involving a large number of foreign leftists, a violation of the elementary socialist principle of no platform for fascists.

17 July 1981

Dear comrades:

I wish to resign from the Spartacist League. The basic reason is neither original nor interesting: as I have occasionally said aloud this year, my heart just isn't in it. I have continued inertially, going from this article, that intervention, this sale, that meeting.... Eventually this becomes untenable. Right now I yearn for a biological existence.

I should have been more open about my state earlier. I believe it would be correct to stick it out even now and fight through this malaise, but I simply no longer want to. This is an expression of a programmatic difference at the most fundamental level and not just a visceral illness, no matter how it feels to me. Abstractly I have no basic programmatic differences. I have not a gram of interest in moving toward any opponent organisation. The 'Iranian Revolution' was their idea of February; I don't want to see their October. Given their response to the events of Afghanistan and Poland, what they will do when

the real pressure is on is clear. And they have standards of conduct to match their programmes. But this has become abstract, precisely, for me; it's a simple crisis of commitment. And continuing when it feels like this for some time renders all party work alienated labour. I can't really do a very good job at it. And I don't want to rationalise a programme to match my mood....

I believe it is appropriate, if not necessary, to reference the last dispute I was in, even if I regard it as overblown. So, for the record, I think that Doug's continuing to argue with a passing nebbish schoolboy who had opined 'I like the National Front myself' (not a fascist) was not a violation of principle, let alone an expellable offence. I found the whole branch discussion, therefore, more akin to moralism than marxism....

It has from time to time been observed by very senior comrades that I have always felt something of an outsider in the party -- and this has been worse and better but never been overcome. I have, however, to underscore that I have a deep respect for the cadres of the iSt -- and a very warm regard for the members of the SL/B -- so I feel genuinely bad at deserting. But I won't be labouring this any longer. Charlie B once quipped that 'confession is a lousy genre'. Well resignation letters aren't a great literary medium either. I will try to soften the effect of my jumping ship with respect to any outstanding commitments and financially....

Comradely,  
Judith Hunter

fighting for greater consistency and professionalism in our approach to contacting and vehicles for recruitment like class series. Contacting is not a matter of random, timeless political discussions; it is a process of systematic, directed political fights and activities aimed at bringing the contact to decisive agreement with our programme and the commitment to becoming a professional revolutionist.

59. Our tasks are ambitious, our opportunities are many, our resources are extremely limited. We must grow substantially. But we will achieve nothing if we do not bear firmly in mind that everything we do is done at the expense of not

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## Fusion ...

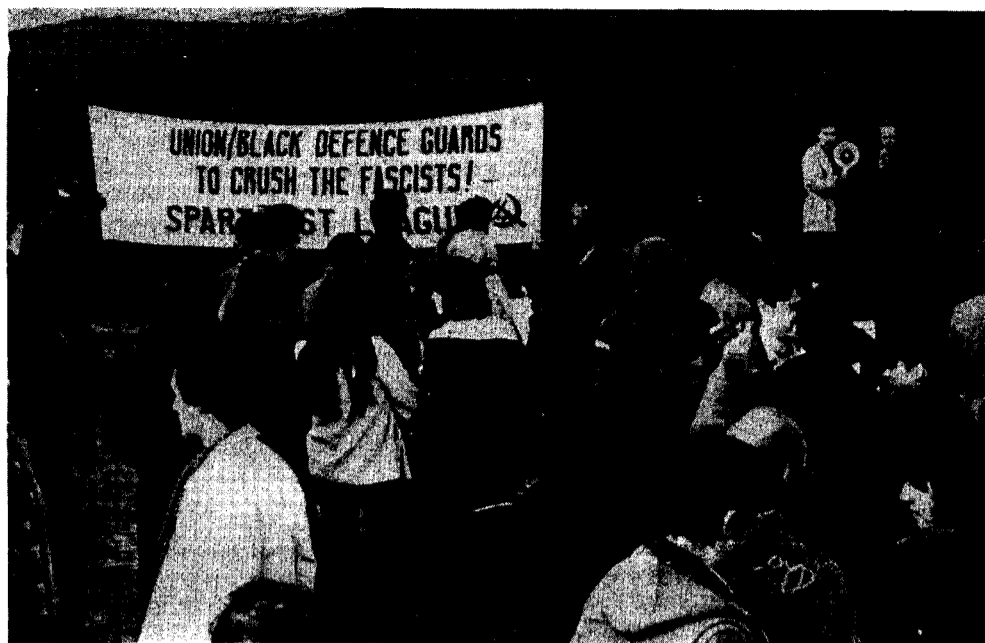
(Continued from page 4)

and that their Republican victims be freed. The successful joint mobilisation by the CF and SL/B for an anti-imperialist/Troops Out contingent on the 13 June hunger strike support protest -- a contingent considerably larger than any IMG mobilisation on the Irish question during the past year -- was a test of our agreement on this key question of the British revolution. Not Green against Orange, but class against class! For an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles!

3. The history of the IMG is the history of an interlude between two periods of liquidation into the Labour Party. In the context of the late 1960s radicalisation centred primarily on the Vietnam War but also the Prague Spring, May '68 in France and the new round of Irish 'troubles' beginning in 1969, the profoundly impressionistic methodology of Pabloism led the IMG to be on the far left of the USec spectrum of centrism. An ultra-left posture to the Labour Party, solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution (as well as its Stalinist misleaders), support to the IRA against British imperialism (even a defence of indiscriminate mass terror) all flowed from the endless opportunist quest for an empirically defined 'new mass vanguard'. Even so this empirical leftism attracted to the early IMG a large number of subjectively revolutionary cadre, many in explicit counterposition to the 'state caps' on the basis of Soviet-defencism.

But with the axis of world politics shifting back more overtly to the conflict between the Soviet degenerated workers state and US imperialism, the same impressionist methodology led the IMG to follow the drift to the right. The big miners strikes of 1972 and 1974 generated a series of confused debates and factional struggles in the IMG which were to persist from 1973-76. The 'hard' anti-Labourism of 1969-72 gave way before adaptation towards Labourism and liquidationist appetites towards Tony Benn -- frustrated only by Benn's clinging to his cabinet post through all the anti-working-class attacks of the last Labour government. When the factional struggles subsided in 1976, the IMG had settled down on the basis of politics significantly to the right of its former positions, preparing the Menshevik unity offensives -- 'Socialist Unity', the 'Common Ground' approach to pseudo-revolutionary regroupment, the fusion perspective towards the SWP (treating their Soviet-defeatism as just some minor difference of 'analysis'). The issue of Labour Party entry under the ensign of the Cold War poses for the IMG's cadre in a particularly sharp way the essentially liquidationist content of Pabloism. The present period could be a watershed, with the prospect of a reformist organisation on the other side of the hill. This fusion is evidence that the realisation of a revolutionary alternative demands a thorough break with Pabloism.

4. The bureaucratic purge which cut short the political struggle within the IMG likewise cut short the political consolidation of the CF as a fighting faction. Although marked by a clear formal programmatic break with Pabloism, the CF was severely scarred by the organisational methods and practices of Pabloism. It inherited from the IMG the classic Pabloist trait of reluctance to engage in sharp political fights (a characteristic generally of the social-democratic chumminess throughout the British 'far left'). The failure to carry through necessary clarifying fights within the CF allowed for softness towards and illusions in the reformability of the IMG's right-centrist majority leadership, and for the the possibility of coexistence within the CF of elements truly struggling for Trotskyist politics with others who were tired or disgruntled leftovers from the IMG's headier sectoralist days. Thus the expulsion was followed by a three-way split in the CF -- one wing recanting on the factional struggle to go back into the orbit of the IMG, and a



Sheffield University, 31 January: Spartacist League initiated united-front mobilisation to keep BM Nazis off campus.

second fleeing from any political choice into a no-man's land -- even as others in and around the IMG were attracted to the banner of the CF in the aftermath of the expulsion. Only then did the CF embark on genuine political consolidation, necessarily involving sharp fights against the IMG legacy of Menshevik functioning. Trotsky's remarks in 'At the fresh grave of Kote Tsintsadze' (7 January 1931) are particularly apt in confronting the difficulties to be encountered in the construction of a steeled communist vanguard in Britain, with a left weighed down by a decrepit, parliamentarist, suffocating social democracy, generally contemptuous of programme and saturated with empiricism:

'It took altogether extraordinary conditions like czarism, illegality, prison and deportation, many years of struggle against the Mensheviks, and especially the experience of three revolutions to produce fighters like Kote Tsintsadze....

'The Communist parties in the West have not yet brought up fighters of Tsintsadze's type. This is their besetting weakness, determined by historical reasons but nevertheless a weakness. The Left Opposition in the Western countries is not an exception in this respect and it must well take note of it.'

5. This fusion strikes a blow at the ever more tattered pretensions of the USec -- which is today only one of several competing rotten-bloc 'FIs' -- to represent the continuity of

Trotsky's Fourth International. Ever since the destruction of the Fourth International in 1951-53 through the revisionism of Michel Pablo, aided and abetted by present USec guru Ernest Mandel, the tearing of the mask of 'Trotskyism' from the face of the USec has been a key task in the struggle to reforge an authentic Trotskyist Fourth International. The collapse of the American SWP's opposition to Pabloism (sealed in the 'reunification' of 1963) and the decisive political degeneration of the rest of the anti-Pabloist International Committee (notably the organisations led by Healy and Lambert) during the 1960s, left this task in the hands of the small group of authentic Trotskyists in the Revolutionary Tendency expelled from the SWP, who went on to form the nucleus of the iSt. The CF now takes its place in the ranks of dozens of other former USec oppositionists around the world, and oppositionists from other ostensibly revolutionary organisations in Britain, among them a leading cadre of the only other significant split to the left from the IMG, the 1976 Trotskyist Opposition. Others, won to the struggle for Trotskyism, will follow them. The harsh realities of the class struggle impose hard choices: those who are repelled by social democracy, including a second wave from the IMG, will come to us. We are the only place for Trotskyists. Forward to a Trotskyist party in Britain, section of a reborn Fourth International! ■

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It is May 1920. Pilsudski's Polish army is on the advance deep into Soviet territory. On 7 May Kiev is captured; King George V sends a message of congratulations. Pilsudski's troops are being armed and equipped by the British and French governments. They will send their own armies to intervene directly if need be. The Russian Revolution is in danger!

In London's East India dock a ship is lying in wait. On the afternoon of 10 May the cargo arrives and the stevedores begin to load her. At around 1pm, after only 20 minutes work, a great commotion begins. Immediately work is stopped. Coalheavers, working nearby, come to find out what it's all about. They are shown the boxes with the label 'OHMS Munitions for Poland' and join the dockers by refusing to load the ship with coal. Delegations are sent to London dockers' leader Fred Thompson and to dockers union general secretary, Ernest Bevin. Both give their assurances that the Union will support the workers action. The SS *Jolly George* has been stopped! Harry Pollitt, then a militant workers leader in East London, describes the reaction to this event:

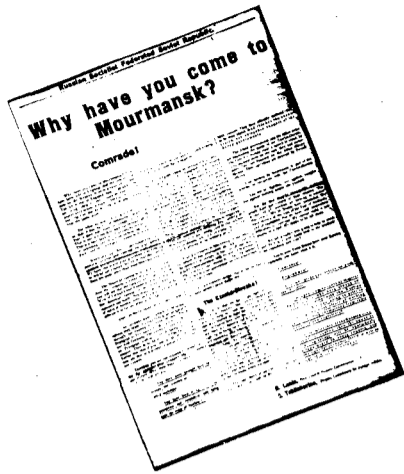
'Soon the news is all over Britain. Every worker is triumphant. Wherever the *Jolly George* or the London dockers are mentioned scenes of enthusiasm are witnessed....

'The offensive against Russia goes on, but the counter-offensive for Russia gathers momentum.

'The strike on the *Jolly George* has given a new inspiration to the whole working-class movement. On May 15th, the munitions are unloaded back on to the dockside, and on the side of one case is a very familiar sticky-back: "Hands Off Russia". It was only small, but that day it was big enough to be read all over the world.' (Harry Pollitt, *Serving My Time*)

Hands off Russia! Those words were indeed writ large in the consciousness of advanced workers around the world six decades ago. In the first few years of its existence the Soviet workers state was faced with one direct military threat after another from the imperialist powers, foremost among them Britain -- blockades, White Guard intrigues and the open wars of intervention. But the internationalist appeals for assistance from the Soviet regime under Lenin and Trotsky fell on sympathetic ears. The mass labour protests and strikes in defence of the first workers revolution played an instrumental role in staying the hands of the imperialists and defending the young workers state.

As it is today, defence of the Russian Revolution was a key line of divide within the workers movement. In Britain, for example, it was the crucial in which the nascent Communist Party (CPGB) was forged from a collection of warring Marxist groups. On the other hand, the social-democratic Second International, having definitively passed over to the camp of the bourgeoisie in World War I, reaffirmed its loyalty by its violent antagonism to the Soviet regime. But so widespread was the sympathy for the Russian Revolution, so deep-seated the hostility to military adventures against it, that even the treacherous social democrats were compelled to offer it occasional defence.



The intervening years of Stalinist treachery have made the Soviet regime of today more an abomination than a beacon to the workers, but the revolutionary gains upon which it rests remain. And the proletarian duty for their defence remains as well.

The Hands Off Russia (HOR) campaign, of which the strike of the *Jolly George* was a memorable highpoint, remains to this day one of the most creditable chapters in the history of the British labour movement. Today, with the offensive against Russia again in full swing, it stands as a source of inspiration for genuine communists everywhere, and points a finger of scorn at the cowardly self-styled communists who are again to be found in the camp of the bourgeoisie.

#### Defend Russia, defend the unions

From the onset of the Russian Revolution, the 'Liberal' British government of Lloyd George played the pre-eminent role among imperialist powers in attempting to crush the new-born workers state. It began even before the Bolsheviks seized power, with support to Kornilov's attempted coup in July 1917 -- when the British Military Mission in Petrograd printed and distributed a pamphlet entitled, 'Kornilov, the National Hero'.

As early as February and March 1918 British naval forces under Rear-Admiral Kemp were landed in the Murmansk region of Northern Russia -- ostensibly to prevent a German invasion linking up with the Finland railway, which happened to be separated from Murmansk by several hundred miles of marshland. Several months later, now augmented by French, Italian and American troops and attempting to organise a 'Loyal Russian Army', they began to move south. On 8 July, the town of Kem was occupied. Three members of the local soviet who resisted were shot. The first shots of the Wars of Intervention had been fired.

Around the same time the Germans occupied Georgia, with the collusion of the Menshevik government there, and when they evacuated after the signing of the Armistice that November, the British moved in. On 20 September, British military forces in Trans-Caucasia authorised -- and likely directed -- the massacre of 26 Soviet commissars from Baku. Locked in a battle for life on several fronts against the White Guard armies of Denikin, Kolchak, Yudenich and Wrangel

in alliance with the forces of fourteen different capitalist powers, the Bolsheviks were forced to tolerate such provocations as Menshevik Georgia well into 1921. Trotsky's Red Army had to be created in the very act of combatting the armies of internal reaction and imperialism, even as the regime was struggling to create a semblance of economic order amid the chaos, destruction and subversion which had been left over from the World War and now accompanied the Civil War.

But the Soviet forces were infused with a revolutionary fervour which more than compensated for the relative superiority in numbers, training and materiel of the Allied and White Guard armies of reaction. An account by one British soldier described how:

# 'Hands off British labour Wars of Intervention 1918'

'... the troops were assured that on reaching Murmansk and Archangel 50,000 Russians would be waiting their arrival ready to share in any campaign. They took on the transport uniforms and arms for these anticipated recruits, but none presented themselves.... When the Russians were conscripted the real troubles began.... They were all for the Bolsheviks, to whom they deserted wholesale. Bolshevik soldiers would also desert to the



White Guards massacre 26 Baku commissars, September 1918

British and return to their comrades as soon as they had thoroughly learned machine gun use.' (*Morning Post*, 16 September 1919)

In July 1919 the whole Onega front was handed over to the Bolsheviks by a mutinous White regiment. By year's end, Kolchak's forces were being put to rout by the Red Army. The defeats at the front exacerbated a burgeoning defeatist mood among the bourgeoisie in Britain. In an 8 November speech at the Guildhall, Lloyd George admitted: 'We cannot of course continue so costly an intervention in an interminable civil war.' The cost was not simply financial. Earlier that year the *Times* (26 January 1919) had warned:

'The plain brutal fact is that a war in Russia against the Bolsheviks would be exceedingly unpopular and would make no end of trouble at home.'

And no end of trouble at home there was. The extent of opposition to direct intervention compelled the imperialists to cloak it under a mask of public disavowal. Churchill as historian was to write years later:

'Were they [!] at war with Soviet Russia? Certainly not; but they shot Soviet Russians on sight. They stood as invaders on Russian soil. They armed the enemies of the Soviet Government. They blockaded its ports, and sunk its battleships. They earnestly desired and schemed its downfall. But war -- shocking! Interference -- shame! It was, they repeated, a matter of indifference to them how Russians settled their own internal affairs.' (*The World Crisis: The Aftermath*)

What reeking hypocrisy! 'They' prominently included Churchill, who as Minister of War in 1919 had privately assured a White Russian emissary, General Golovin, that 'I am myself carrying out Admiral Koltchak's orders' (*Daily News*, 3 July 1920).



Interrogation of Bolshevik prisoner by Lord Rawlinson, commander of British expeditionary forces in North Russia.



# Hands Off Russia!

## Labour and the Intervention

-21

After four years of senseless slaughter in the trenches, a sudden discovery that 'Boches' were preferable to Bolsheviks (a discovery that played no small part in encouraging a speedy armistice in an attempt to avert the growing revolutionary tide particularly in Germany) was not a reversal likely to win public support. 'Never Again' was the slogan expressing the mood of revulsion against the war of imperialist plunder. A secret War Office questionnaire was



sent to all commanding officers to ascertain troop loyalty in the event of a revolution in Britain. It was the absence of sufficient reliable military forces which led Churchill to call for a purely 'volunteer' army when he wanted to send reinforcements to Northern Russia in 1919. On 13 January 1919 sailors at Milford Haven hauled a red flag to the masthead of the *Milbride* and declared that 'half the navy are on strike and the other half soon will be' (T Winttingham, *Mutiny*). Ships at Murmansk and Archangel were forced to return to home port by mutinies in opposition to the action against Russia. A mutiny in the army at Rhyll left five dead and two officers and 21 soldiers wounded. At Epsom, soldiers rioting against being sent overseas burned down a police station, killing one policeman.

But the force that really caused the anti-Soviet warmongers of the time to hold back was expressed by Churchill in his interview with Golovin:

'The question of giving armed support was for him the most difficult one; the reason for this was the opposition of the British working class to armed intervention.'

Among the most advanced layers of the working class there was manifested a considerable active and conscious support for the socialist revolution, complementing a more general sympathy for the overthrow of the brutal tsarist despotism with whom 'democratic' monarchist Britain had been allied. In the 'Red Clydeside' of John Maclean, some 80,000 marched on May Day 1917 in solidarity with the soviets and the overthrow of tsarism, and hundreds of thousands more lined the streets to applaud. When Lloyd George was conferred the Freedom of the City the following month, 200 Russian sailors who had come to protest against the imprisonment of Maclean were



enthusiastically welcomed by 100,000 other demonstrators.

It was in such conditions that the then divided Marxist movement -- which included the British Socialist Party (BSP), Socialist Labour Party, South Wales Socialist Federation and Workers Socialist Federation -- joined together in a campaign to rally British labour to the defence of Soviet power in Russia. The BSP's weekly *Call* (29 November 1917) greeted the October Revolution as follows:

'Their position is difficult beyond words. Morally isolated in the world and silently boycotted at home, their only support is, or ought to be, the international working class. Will it support them? Will it realize that it is their own cause which is being fought over there by men who have staked their lives on it?'

'Hands off the Russian Socialist Republic!', it declared seven months later, warning:

'The news from Russia is exceedingly grave. It appears as though intervention has already begun, and a British armed detachment has landed in Murmansk.'

'Are the organised workers going to stand idly by while the Workers' and Peasants' Republic is being crushed?', demanded the next issue. 'Labour must not only speak but act! May it do so soon! May it do so before it is too late!'

The challenge did not go unanswered, as the call to defend the revolution gathered wide support over the next few months. On 9 January a national Hands Off Russia conference was convened in London's Memorial Hall on the initiative of the London Workers Committee for the purpose of mobilising direct working class action, a general strike, to stop the imperialist intervention. On 2 February, there was a mass meeting in Manchester. On 15 February, 10,000 packed into London's Albert Hall for a 'Great Socialist Working Class Demonstration' at which Maclean, Sylvia Pankhurst and Independent Labour Party leader George Lansbury spoke. Messages were read from, among others, Philip Snowden, Jerome K Jerome, Bernard Shaw, Robert Smillie and Bertrand Russell. Local Hands Off Russia committees soon sprang up all over the country, organising rallies and distributing propaganda for British withdrawal.

The Hands Off Russia campaign began to exert a powerful influence on the militant rank and file of the trade unions. Defence of Russia began to be identified with defence of the trade unions against Lloyd George. That such Fabian Labourites as Bernard Shaw came out for the defence of the Bolshevik Revolution reflected not upon their politics, but upon the sympathy which this cause found within the working class. The Second International was no less an agency of bourgeois anti-Sovietism than it is today. These same Labour leaders condoned the bloody suppression of the 1916 Easter Rebellion and cheered the imperialist anti-Soviet provocations through the aegis of the Menshevik regime in Georgia. In a scathing pamphlet entitled *Social Democracy and the Wars of Intervention, Russia 1918-1921*, Trotsky wrote of the Labour Party leaders:

'Thus, although having Tsarist Georgia, Ireland, Egypt and India on their consciences, they dare to demand from us their opponents, and not their allies, the evacuation of Soviet Georgia.'

Even such left trade union officials as Robert Smillie of the Miners Federation, who was an active supporter of the HOR campaign, tended to vacillate and capitulate to the TUC. In March 1919, under Smillie's prompting, the miners came out for British withdrawal from Russia and followed it a month later by successfully carrying a similar resolution at a joint conference of the Labour Party and TUC. Smillie's resolution, however, expressed a characteristic reformist

susceptibility to reliance on the capitalist state, calling on imperialist Britain 'to take such action as may be necessary to induce the Allied Governments to do likewise'. More importantly, the Labour Party/TUC, under Ernest Bevin's initiative, opposed taking any action to enforce the resolution.

When the leaders of the Triple Alliance (of miners, transport workers and railway unions) were won to a position of 'direct action' shortly thereafter, the TUC was spurred into 'action'. They sent a delegation to see Bonar Law, Leader of the House, who assured them that the troops would be withdrawn as soon as possible, but in the meantime ... the government would keep on supporting Kolchak. Quite satisfied, the Parliamentary Committee decided that no further action was necessary. But the Triple Alliance leaders, not being able to thus satisfy the militant wing of their membership, decided on 25 July to ballot for strike action. It was at this point that Churchill announced that troop withdrawal was already in progress (and had been 'decided at the beginning of the year!'). On 12 August a conference of the Triple Alliance decided that strike action was no longer necessary, confirming in the government's mind the value of issuing such 'assurances'. But even with the withdrawal of troops from Russia, imperialist intervention was not over, nor was the HOR campaign against it.

### Councils of Action

Bourgeois hopes for the crushing of the soviet state were rekindled with the taking of Kiev by Pilsudski's army, armed and advised by Britain and France. But not for long. By the end of June, the Poles were in full retreat from Kiev with Budienny's First Cavalry in hot pursuit. Instead of the hoped-for blow against the Soviets, here was the Red Army carrying all before them and Poland itself in danger of being sovietised! Towards the end of July orders were despatched to the British fleet in the Baltic. British troops were used to break a strike on the Danzig docks against the landing of munitions for the Poles. Lloyd George and Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon began to openly threaten war. On 5 August, the government announced that a call was to be made for 200,000 volunteers, and government posters concerning military and naval preparations appeared.

That day, the Labour Party called for local protest meetings against the war threat. The CPGB, formed only five days earlier, issued its first internal circular, calling into action its entire membership: 'On the shoulders of every individual member ... rests the fate of Russia at this critical moment.' The mobilisations which had and were about to take place over Poland came after months of tireless campaigning by HOR activists. In the East End of London, where the *Jolly George* was struck, there had been regular dock gate meetings; Lenin's *Appeal to the Toiling Masses*, which was banned as seditious material, was secretly distributed to the workers. Even Bevin was pressed into supporting the action of the *Jolly George* dockers.

The official leaders of the labour movement made it clear that for them opposition to the

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White Russian officers, British adviser.

# Solidarity...

(Continued from page 1)

strongest warning to date, demanding that the beleaguered Warsaw regime 'immediately take the determined and radical steps in order to cut short the malicious anti-Soviet propaganda and action hostile toward the Soviet Union'. In response the Polish government has announced it is preparing drastic action. Everyone thinks this means declaring a state of emergency and preventing the second part of Solidarity's Congress.

Solidarity's counterrevolutionary course has also produced a powerful response from the anti-Moscow centre, the Vatican. A week after the Congress Pope Karol Wojtyla of Krakow issued his long-awaited encyclical on 'the social question'. This reaffirmed the church's traditional defence of capitalist private property against socialism and war against Marxism, while favouring unions



Poland, 1944: Red Army advances

as long as they are 'a constructive factor of social order and solidarity'. The Polish Conference of Bishops got the message and has thrown its support behind Solidarity's long-standing demand for greater access to the mass media. Does anyone doubt that 'the new Poland' Solidarity's leaders say they are building conforms to the guidelines set down by the Catholic Church to which they all profess deep allegiance? The Pope's encyclical (written in Polish) could well become the manifesto of a counterrevolutionary mobilisation in Poland.

It is the most damning indictment of Stalinism that after three decades of so-called 'socialism' a majority of the Polish working class is so fed up with it as to embrace the slogans of the Cold War. It is the Stalinists with their crushing censorship and endless falsifications, their corruption and gross economic mismanagement, their suppression of democratic rights always accompanied by cynical promises of 'democratisation' who have driven the historically socialist Polish proletariat into the arms of the Vatican and 'AFL-CIA'.

It is also important to point out that a reported 15-20 per cent of the Polish workers have not participated in Solidarity's mobilisation, despite the enormous social pressure on them to do so. Most of these workers probably retain some loyalty to the communist cause and are hostile to the clerical-nationalism of Walesa & Co. But today such workers are clearly a minority and on the defensive as the Solidarity leadership has the support of the active majority of the Polish proletariat. Thus the threat of a counterrevolutionary thrust for power is now posed in Poland. That threat must be crushed at all costs and by any means necessary.

## Solidarity under the eagle and cross

It is sheer cynicism that Solidarity's leaders still claim to adhere to the 31 August 1980 Gdansk Agreement, which stated that the new union movement would recognise the 'leading role' of the Communist Party (Polish United Workers Party, PUWP), would respect Poland's international alliances (ie the Warsaw Pact) and would not engage in political activity. Of course Walesa and his colleagues were strongly opposed to all these conditions but regarded them as tactical concessions for the moment. The notion that the new union movement would not be political was an absurdity. As we stated when the Gdansk Agreement was signed, either the new union movement would become a vehicle for clerical-nationalist reaction or it would have to oppose it in the name of the socialist principle. There was and is no 'third way', much less a purely trade-unionist third way.

It was clear from the beginning that Walesa & Co saw themselves leading the entire Polish nation under the banner of eagle and cross in a crusade against 'Russian-imposed communism'. Solidarity is no longer a trade union, but has come to include large sections of the intelli-

gentsia, petty bureaucrats, priests, etc. Last winter/spring much of Solidarity's efforts were directed towards forcing the government to legally recognise the organisation of peasant smallholders, Rural Solidarity, a potent social force for capitalist restoration. In late March Solidarity even threatened a nationwide general strike primarily on behalf of the rural petty capitalists, despite the fact that they were driving up food prices for urban consumers.

Local Solidarity organisations have kept up a barrage of anti-Soviet propaganda of the most vile right-wing sort. For example, the Solidarity newspaper at the Katowice steel mill, the largest in the country, reprinted chapters from Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* and ran cartoons that could have come straight out of the Western yellow press. At the same time, Solidarity's leaders have nothing but good things to say about the imperialist West.

Small wonder Ronald Reagan could declare that the Polish crisis signals the beginning of the end of communism, the desperate dream of world imperialism ever since October 1917:

'... I think the things we're seeing not only in Poland but the reports that are beginning to come out of Russia itself ... are an indication that communism is an aberration -- it's not a normal way of living for human beings, and I think we're seeing the first beginning cracks, the beginning of the end.' (New York Times, 17 June)

These were no mere philosophical musings, US imperialism is deeply involved in fomenting anti-Communist reaction in Poland, especially through the AFL-CIO bureaucracy which has contributed \$300,000 and their first printing press to Solidarity.

While engaged in subverting Poland from within, the Reagan administration is also trying to provoke the Soviet Union into military intervention in part through inflammatory statements like the above. Reagan/Haig want to see Polish workers hurling Molotov cocktails at Russian tanks in order to fuel their anti-Soviet war drive to white heat.

While the motion in the year-long Polish crisis has been toward pro-imperialist counter-revolution, the condition of cold dual power also created an opening for the crystallisation of an authentically revolutionary workers party which could reverse this process from within. As Trotskyists, therefore, we orientated towards the potential for development of a left opposition from among those Solidarity and Communist party militants who wanted a genuine 'socialist renewal' by seeking to recover the internationalist traditions of Lenin and Luxemburg, perverted in the service of the Stalinist bureaucrats. A revolutionary vanguard in Poland would seek to split Solidarity, winning the mass of the workers away from the anti-Soviet nationalist leadership around Walesa. It would put forward a programme centring on strict separation of church and state, unconditional military defence of the Soviet bloc against capitalism-imperialism, and a political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy and establishment of a democratically elected workers government based on soviets to carry out socialist economic planning (including the collectivisation of agriculture). Yet we fully recognise that this programme goes very much against the stream in Poland today and that the dominant tendency was for Solidarity to consolidate around a counterrevolutionary course in the name of nation, church and 'the free world'.

For a year the Solidarity leadership stopped short of openly calling for the overthrow of the official 'Communist' system (a bureaucratically ruled workers state) and its replacement by (bourgeois) 'democracy' like in the West. Walesa in particular liked to posture as a simple trade unionist, as if Solidarity was the same as the AFL-CIO in the United States or the DGB in West Germany. But as the economy descended into chaos, everyone recognised that simple trade unionism was impossible. Industrial and agricultural production has collapsed, the stores are empty, people wait hours to buy food and other necessities. The head of Solidarity's Warsaw chapter likened the organisation to a union of seamen aboard a sinking ship. The obvious helplessness of the Polish Stalinists and evident reluctance of the Kremlin to intervene militarily further emboldens Solidarity's so-called 'militant' wing.

The organisation made its first bid for power on the economic front. Last April Solidarity came out with a programme for the abolition of centralised economic planning, the election of enterprise managers by the workers and enterprise autonomy on the basis of market competition. In the anarchic conditions of Poland such self-managed enterprises would quickly free themselves from all but nominal state control. If carried out, Solidarity's economic programme would lead to immediate mass unemployment, fac-

ilitate imperialist economic penetration and greatly strengthen the forces pushing toward capitalist restoration. (For a fuller discussion of this, see 'Market Socialism' is anti-socialist', *Workers Vanguard* no 287, 14 August). If the government does not agree to this programme, Solidarity is threatening to conduct its own national referendum as the first step to taking over effective control of the economy.

## Solidarity calls for 'bourgeois-democratic' counterrevolution

But the actions of Solidarity's first congress go much further even than this. Its open appeal for 'free trade unions' in the Soviet bloc is both an arrogant provocation of Moscow and a declaration of ideological solidarity with Western imperialism. While the demand for trade unions independent of bureaucratic control is integral to the Trotskyist programme for proletarian political revolution in the Stalinist-ruled Soviet bloc, the slogan of 'free trade unions' has long since been associated with NATO imperialism. At the start of the Cold War the fanatically anti-Communist Meanyite bureaucracy set up the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in closest collaboration with the Central Intelligence Agency. It is therefore quite fitting that accompanying Lane Kirkland to the Solidarity congress is none other than Irving Brown, 'Mr AFL-CIA', whose disruption of the labour movement on behalf of US imperialism spans three and a half decades. The Solidarity leadership is well aware of the anti-Communist meaning of the slogan, 'free trade unions', as they have been dealing with the AFL-CIO tops for months.

Even more important than 'free trade unions' in the ideological arsenal of imperialist anti-Sovietism is 'democracy' -- not workers democracy based on soviets as in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 but bourgeois parliamentary 'democracy'. Here also the Solidarity congress fully adhered to the 'bourgeois-democratic' counterrevolution. The important Warsaw chapter put forward a motion calling for 'free elections' to the Sejm, further stating that 'the road to the nation's sovereignty is through democratic elections through representative bodies' (*New York Times*, 10 September). In the world of Solidarity everything, including democracy, is subordinate to Polish national sovereignty. (For theoretical discussion of 'bourgeois-democratic' counter-revolution in bureaucratically ruled workers states, see Shane Mage, 'Pure Democracy' or political revolution in East Europe', *Spartacist* no 30, August 1980).

Assuming the Warsaw regime was powerless to prevent it (as is probably the case) and that the Soviet army didn't intervene, what kind of government would emerge from free elections to a sovereign parliament in Poland today? A quarter to a third of the voters would be peasant smallholders, who will do what their local priest tells them to do. Their social attitude was



Kronstadt: March 1921

summed up by British journalist Tim Garton Ash: 'It is the conservative Catholic peasants of South-Eastern Poland who would overthrow communism at the drop of a Cardinal's hat' (*Spectator*, 14 February). Historically, Marxian socialism has been a powerful and at times dominant current within the Polish industrial proletariat. But 35 years of Stalinist bureaucratism has made much of the Polish working class sympathetic at this time to clerical-nationalism and pro-Western social democracy, while demoralising the rest. The likely result of parliamentary democracy would be the victory of anti-Communist nationalist forces seeking an alliance with NATO imperialism against the Soviet Union.

Such a government would mean the counterrevolution in power. In 1935 Trotsky observed that 'the restoration to power of a Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary bloc would suffice to obliterate the socialist construction' ('The

Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism', *Writings 1934-35*) and the parties that would win 'free elections' in the Poland of Wojtyla and Walesa are far to the right of the Russian Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. They would be closer to Pilsudskiite nationalism, hankering after the great Poland of the fascistic dictator of the inter-war years.

And what would happen to any left opposition to such 'bourgeois-democratic' counterrevolution? In his report to the Solidarity congress the organisation's secretary, Andrzej Celinski declared that his communist opponents 'do not hesitate to enter the road of national treason' (UPI dispatch, 6 September). Given the mood of the delegates, the accusation of 'national treason' is the most inflammatory political denunciation imaginable. As Solidarity moves to reassert national sovereignty, loyal members and supporters of the PUPW will become the victims of a white terror.

Fake-Trotskyists like Ernest Mandel of the European-centred United Secretariat and Jack Barnes of the American Socialist Worker's Party, tailing anti-Soviet social democracy, argue that Solidarity's leaders have not explicitly called for the restoration of capitalism. But they clearly have called for the overthrow of the existing state and its replacement by a clerical-nationalist regime with close ties to NATO imperialism. And this would not be a peaceful process but a bloody counterrevolution. Trotsky debunked the notion of a peaceful, gradual transformation from proletarian to bourgeois state power as running the film of reformism in reverse.

As for the resulting economic transformation, Trotsky also pointed out that 'Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalised economy' ('Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?', *Writings 1937-38*). State industry would be starved for new investment or even repairs, since this would divert resources from the rapidly growing private sector. At the same time, foreign capitalist investment would be invited in on a massive scale. Walesa openly calls for joint enterprises with western capitalists as the salvation of the Polish economy. Wages would be kept low to compete on the world market. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of workers would be laid off as a 'necessary' rationalisation measure. Certainly the mass of deluded workers in Solidarity do not want this. But the restoration of capitalism in all its ruthlessness would follow, as the night follows the day, from Solidarity's programme of 'western-style democracy'.

While proclaiming the need for 'free trade unions' in the Soviet bloc, Solidarity was conspicuously not solidarised with workers' struggles in capitalist countries. When Ronald Reagan fired 12,000 striking air controllers, the entire national union membership, practically every trade-union federation in the western world protested. But not the Polish Solidarity! Solidarity spokesman Zygmunt Przepakiewicz attended the New York City Labor Day demonstration in the company of Albert Shanker. At a time when even the most right-wing AFL-CIO bureaucrats were denouncing Reagan's massive union busting and savage cuts in social welfare programmes, the Solidarity spokesman maintained a careful neutrality in the conflict between the American working class and the most reactionary government in half a century. When asked what he thought of Reagan's policies, Przepakiewicz replied, 'I would not like to be involved in this kind of thing' (*New York Times*, 8 September).

#### Tell me who your friends are...

At the Labor Day demonstration Przepakiewicz announced Solidarity was opening its first foreign office in the New York headquarters of Shanker's United Federation of Teachers (UFT). The UFT is hardly a typical American business union. It is the main organisational base for the Social Democrats, U.S.A., otherwise known as 'State Department socialists'. Shanker's Socialist Party (which in 1972 changed its name to avoid the stigma of socialism!) were hawks in the Vietnam war till the bitter end, even after Nixon/Kissinger had given it up as a lost cause.

The Social Democrats are despised by mainstream liberals as crazed anti-communist war mongers. In the film *Sleeper* by left-liberal humourist Woody Allen, the typical New York hero (or anti-hero) reawakens a few centuries in the future and learns that his civilisation was wiped out in a nuclear war. He asks, how did this war begin? He's told: we really don't know, but we think a man by the name of Albert Shanker acquired the atomic bomb.

In the past decade the Social Democrats have developed the closest ties to the Meanyite machine which runs the national AFL/CIO. Kirkland/

Shanker have done more than anyone else in the American labour movement to prepare the way for Reagan's massive arms build-up and anti-Soviet war drive. These two criminals are actively working for a nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union. Kirkland is a member of the Committee on the Present Danger, a right-wing militarist pressure group which attacked Carter for 'selling out' to the Russians in the SALT negotiations. The first point in a recent resolution on global politics by the Social Democrats, U.S.A., states:

'The major priorities for the [Reagan] administration in the area of foreign affairs policy should be: "1) *rebuilding American nuclear and conventional strength*: the correction of the imbalance, along the lines suggested by such responsible defense analysts as those associated with the Committee on the Present Danger, must be undertaken as



Red Army liberates Warsaw, 1944

rapidly as possible.'" [italics in original] ('The Global Vision of Social Democracy', *New America*, January/February 1981) There's a saying: tell me who your friends are and I'll tell you who you are. Well, these are Solidarity's American friends.

#### Soviet Russia and the counterrevolutionary danger in Poland

Faced with the counterrevolutionary danger in Poland the Kremlin Stalinists have gone beyond denunciations in *Pravda* to mobilising the Soviet workers against Solidarity. Mass meetings in the giant Zil auto and truck factory in Moscow and similar plants in Leningrad and elsewhere were held to approve a public answer to Solidarity's appeal to Soviet workers:

'They ask us to renounce ourselves, the results of our work, of our struggle, to betray millions of people who fell in battle: against imperialism, to betray our communist future.' (*New York Times*, 12 September)

These words and these meetings are not simply bureaucratic displays from above without support at the base. Doubtless the Kremlin Stalinists try to whip up Great Russian anti-Polish chauvinism. Furthermore, Soviet workers and collective farmers resent the fact that for years Moscow has subsidised the Polish economy, although the standard of living in Warsaw and Gdansk is far higher than in Moscow or Kiev. Even western bourgeois journalists report that the Russian man-in-the-street has no sympathy for Solidarity and what it stands for. Why? It is not primarily chauvinism or economic resentment.

The fundamental reason is that the Soviet working masses want to defend the collectivised social system born in the October Revolution, despite its subsequent Stalinist degeneration, against world imperialism. Unlike in Poland, where a deformed workers state was imposed from above by the Red Army, the Russian working class in 1917 took history into its own hands and will not lightly relinquish the social conquests of October. Moreover, Soviet working people keenly remember the 20 million lost fighting Hitler's Germany. 600,000 of these fell liberating Poland from the horror of the Nazi occupation. The Soviet working people know that the terrible nuclear arsenal of American imperialism, with the anti-Communist fanatics Reagan/Haig on the trigger finger, is aimed at them.

They fear the transformation of East Europe into imperialist-allied states extending NATO to their own border. The Kremlin bureaucrats cynically exploit this consciousness to rally sup-

port for their crushing of popular unrest and democratic aspirations in East Europe, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the Poland of Wojtyla and Walesa is not the Czechoslovakia of Dubcek's 'socialism with a human face'. Now the counterrevolutionary danger is all too real. Any day Poland could explode into a 1921 Kronstadt-style counterrevolutionary rebellion on a massive scale.

But if Poland could become a giant Kronstadt, the bureaucratic regime of Brezhnev is separated by a political counterrevolution from the communist government of Lenin and Trotsky. As proletarian revolutionaries it is not our task to advise the Kremlin Stalinists on how to deal with the counterrevolutionary situation in Poland for which they bear ultimate responsibility. They are not our saviours. We have no confidence that the Russian Stalinists can or will



defend the social gains of the October Revolution bureaucratically extended to Poland. In principle the Kremlin Stalinists are perfectly capable of selling Poland to the German bankers if they think they can preserve their own domestic power base. Remember the Stalin-Hitler pact. Ever since the Red Army drove out Hitler's forces at the end of World War II, the western imperialist bourgeoisies have dreamed of 'rolling back' the Soviets to the borders of the USSR (and beyond). However, given the implacable, insane hostility of the Reagan administration and the relative weight of American as against German imperialism, giving up Poland is not a very viable option for the Soviet bureaucracy today. This is especially the case as Poland lies across the main supply and communications routes between the Soviet Union and East Germany, the main state confronting western imperialism.

Every class-conscious worker in the world, especially in the Soviet Union, Poland and the other East European countries, must understand that Solidarity is pursuing a straight-line policy threatening the gains of the October Revolution, the greatest victory for the working class in history. Solidarity's counterrevolutionary course must be stopped! *If the Kremlin Stalinists, in their necessarily brutal, stupid way, intervene militarily to stop it, we will support this.* And we take responsibility in advance for this; whatever the idiocies and atrocities they will commit, we do not flinch from defending the crushing of Solidarity's counterrevolution.

What do revolutionaries do when the Marxist programme stands counterposed to the overwhelming bulk of the working class, a situation we of course urgently seek to avoid? There can be no doubt. The task of communists must be to defend at all costs the programme and gains of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Today Trotskyists find themselves in such a position over Poland, and it is necessary to swim against a powerful current of counterrevolution.

But Soviet military intervention against Solidarity will have an entirely different character than its intervention against the Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan, which opened the possibility of liberating the Afghan peoples from the wretched conditions of feudal and pre-feudal backwardness. There we said, 'Hail Red Army!' In Poland it is the Stalinists themselves, through decades of capitulation to capitalist forces, who have produced a counterrevolutionary crisis.

If a Trotskyist leadership had to intervene against counterrevolution in Poland today the conflict might be no less violent. But it would

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# Solidarity ...

(Continued from page 11)

seek to mobilise those sections of the Polish working class which stand on the historic social gains of liberation of Poland from Nazi enslavement and capitalist exploitation, who hate the bureaucracy for undermining those gains, and who would fight together with the Soviet Army to defend the material foundations of a socialist future. The crimes of Stalinism, not in the least the present counterrevolutionary situation in Poland, mandate proletarian political revolution in the Soviet bloc, and these workers could well be its conscious vanguard in Poland, tempered in part through a revolutionary mobilisation to crush the reactionary forces of Solidarity.

The European bourgeoisies, no less than Reagan and Haig, are trying to convince the working masses to focus their fears on a supposed menace of 'Red imperialism'. But this is starkly contrary to the facts. In Afghanistan the CIA is arming feudalist tribesmen in an attempt to strike a blow at the southern border of the USSR, while Soviet troops act as social liberators. Vietnam is under constant menace of renewed attack from China, now overtly militarily allied with US imperialism. And the racist apartheid South African regime is increasingly becoming a central part of the 'free world', acting as an American surrogate in attacking Angola with Israeli-supplied weapons. Or that other showplace of the 'free world', El Salvador, where American war material and Green Berets are supplying and maintaining a kill-crazed junta busy exterminating large sections of its own population.

Fake-Trotskyists and fatuous opportunists like Jack Barnes and Ernest Mandel (who hailed Khomeini's 'Islamic Revolution' as progressive even as the mullahs were slaughtering their followers) now claim a proletarian political revolution is going on in Poland and Solidarity is its instrument! On the contrary, Solidarity is the translucent Trojan Horse for Reagan/Haig's fanatical anti-Soviet war drive and what is going on in Poland is a pro-imperialist counterrevolutionary polarisation. It is no accident that Solidarity has flourished under the gun of mounting anti-Soviet imperialist militarism of first Carter/Brzezinski and now Reagan/Haig, with their virulently anti-communist Polish pope in the Vatican. It is no accident that in this period when defence of the Soviet Union is urgent, fake-Trotskyists led by Barnes/Mandel abandon all pretence of defence of the Soviet Union and embrace Solidarity.

The choices facing revolutionaries over Poland in the absence of a mass Trotskyist vanguard are not attractive even if they are clear. Abstentionism is not a choice; it is backhanded support to counterrevolution. No less a danger is abandoning the perspective of struggle for the conscious factor in history, for the *international proletarian vanguard*, which leads either to a social-democratic accommodation with the bourgeoisie or accommodation with the Stalinist bureaucracy (a la Marcy who defended Stalinist intervention against a nascent workers political revolution in Hungary). Of course the present Polish situation could only have come to fruition in a political vacuum reflecting the destruction of the important tradition of international communism in Poland through savage persecution, both capitalist and Stalinist. That tradition will only be reformed in a reborn Fourth International by revolutionaries who defended the gains of October when the danger was near, the situation complex and the need for programmatic clarity and backbone urgent.



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We warn the Soviet workers and the world proletariat that under the banner of nation, church and 'the free world', the Solidarity leadership is organising a bloody capitalist counterrevolution. The creation of a 'democratic' Poland subservient to Reagan/Haig on the western border of the USSR would bring much closer the dreadful prospect of anti-Soviet nuclear holocaust. Solidarity's counterrevolution must be stopped before it is too late! ■

# Provocations ...

(Continued from page 16)

has passed across the Pentagon drafting boards in a decade. The ghettos are told to rot, school-children are told to starve, old-age pensioners are told to die -- there's no money left for them. But Reagan promises every white middle- and upper-class American that they will not a left/right schism but differences in how the national interests of their respective imperialist bourgeoisies are best served. Skepticism and outright hostility. Reagan's erstwhile backers on Wall Street know that no matter how much he invokes 'Reaganomics' mumbo-

permeate the German peace movement, as well as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in this country, is primarily an expression not of militant opposition to imperialist war aims, but (at best) of 'classless' pacifist reaction to the nuclear war threat which merges with outright reactionary anti-communist chauvinism. The anti-Haig protesters burned an American flag; but they also burned a Soviet flag. CND-style pipedreams of 'disarmament' under capitalism and reactionary schemes for 'independence' for their 'own' imperialisms dovetail neatly with the outlooks of the more nationalistic wings of the European bourgeoisies, eg Giscard d'Estaing.

Furthermore, it is precisely the sort of posture of maintaining distance from both US imperialism and the Soviet Union which makes the social democracy so effective a fifth column for the anti-Soviet war drive within the workers movement, a transmission belt for social-patriotic, anti-communist poison. That the British Labour Party chatters about nuclear disarmament while the French Socialist Party of Francois Mitterrand actually welcomes Reagan's schemes for the neutron bomb, and Schmidt's SPD continues to practice *Ostpolitik* and preach economic subversion in the Eastern bloc reflects



Cold War hawk Haig greeted by protest in Berlin, 13 September.

jumbo, welfare cuts alone won't finance the most extravagant military build-up in history -- and they've put him on notice to put his economic house in order before something blows. And the 12,000 striking air traffic controllers whom Reagan sacked to make the point -- to the Russian leaders, to his European allies and, not least, to the American labour movement -- that here is a man who means business, are not going to be won very easily to a war to defend 'free trade unions' in Poland. Reagan's war drive has its problems at home.

And abroad as well. A lot of Europeans, particularly Germans, don't like Reagan's fantasies at all -- especially the one about fighting out World War III entirely within the borders of Germany. So when that sinister White House secretary of state, General Alexander Haig, visited West Berlin on 13 September, the reception he got was somewhat different than that accorded Bay of Pigs butcher John Kennedy twenty years earlier. Haig was greeted by more than 50,000 primarily young demonstrators who engaged in pitched battles with police, providing him a graphic picture of opposition to US war plans to take home with him. General Koessen, commander of US forces in Europe, got more than a picture when he narrowly escaped a carefully prepared assassination attempt employing rocket launchers in Heidelberg the next day. The *Times* (16 September) agonised:

'Such events inevitably strengthen an impression, already quite widespread in the United States that Germany, and even Europe in general, is ceasing to be a reliable ally -- indeed, becoming positively anti-American.' German financial circles and the SPD coalition government are trying to rein back the nuclear cowboy of the White House, but the German bourgeoisie has hardly ceased to be a reliable ally, much less become 'positively anti-American'. Schmidt's police were bashing the anti-Haig protesters, not encouraging them. Nor is Schmidt about to send the half-million US troops in West Germany packing back to Kansas.

And the evident anti-Americanism which does

a difference not in political ideology but in the national interests of their respective imperialist bourgeoisies.

Tony Benn's yearning to keep Britain out of the nuclear crossfire (though not out of the anti-Soviet NATO nuclear alliance) reflects a certain perverse reality about this third-rate imperialist power: were it not that Britain had turned itself into a permanent nearby launching site for missiles directed against the Soviet workers state, Kremlin military planners might well decide not to spare even one of their warheads on Britain. And then the 'sceptred isle' would be left to face the prospect only of radioactive clouds. But this is beside the point. Labour's staunch commitment to NATO means that even were Benn to get into Downing Street, the missiles would remain.

## Social democrats for anti-Communism

The Second International has been a card-carrying member of the imperialists' anti-Soviet club since its formation in October 1917. Its value to the bourgeoisie as a weapon against the Russian Revolution is precisely in that it opposes 'Communist totalitarianism' -- whether under Lenin or Stalin -- under the guise of 'democratic socialism' and not open hoary reaction. There is a difference of course between the revolutionary internationalist regime of Lenin and Trotsky and the nationalistic bureaucracy of Stalin and Brezhnev which preaches dangerous illusions in 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism -- a gulf separated by the need for workers political revolution. But the social democracy's opposition to Stalinism is simply a cover for enmity to the proletarian dictatorship. Thus the role of the social democracy is particularly key to imperialist intrigues in Poland today. From Frank Chapple to Tony Benn, from the 'AFL-CIA' to the SPD -- they stand as one in hailing, alongside the Vatican, Solidarity's 'democratic' crusade, a crusade now directly posing capitalist restoration, and serve as a valuable conduit for imperialist

funding.

Francois Mitterrand, who has appointed himself European organiser for the Cold War, explained how he sees his role in a recent *Times* (10 September) interview:

'To fight communism is not necessarily the same as to deny that the poverty of the least privileged social categories in the nation turn to it if they find no other outlet. That is why I pursue a left-wing policy in the name of socialism -- which is not communism.' So Mitterrand calls for a 'political solution' in El Salvador and opposes apartheid South Africa's blatant aggression in Angola -- all the better to fight Soviet 'subversion'. But where it counts, on the direct front line against the Soviet Union, he is indistinguishable from Reagan or Thatcher -- 'monetarist' open reactionaries though they are. Indeed, in following Mitterrand's speech at the meeting of Western heads of state in Ottawa several months ago, Reagan admitted he had nothing to say that Mitterrand hadn't said better.

Yet this is the same Francois Mitterrand who is currently being hailed, tailed and feted by the rapidly rightward-moving fake Trotskyists of the United Secretariat (USec). For the USec, this is part and parcel of its embrace of social-democratic anti-Sovietism on key questions like Afghanistan and Poland. That the USec can simultaneously enthuse over Benn and Mitterrand, who stand opposed on the question of disarmament, reflects not only its consummate cynicism but the axiom that opportunism is necessarily nationalistic. Thus, the British International Marxist Group denied a war drive existed until the burgeoning CND beckoned last year -- and it still denies it is aimed at the Soviet Union. The French LCR finally realised it last month -- after all, there is no 'peace movement' to tail in France and cosying up to Mitterrand (of whose government the LCR declares itself the 'third component') is hardly facilitated by railing against neutron bombs and Cruise missiles. 'Force de frappe', LCR?

Trotskyists understand that the only way, ultimately, that the Soviet Union can be defended is through proletarian revolution against the imperialist bourgeoisies. And particularly in this period of intensified anti-Soviet Cold War, the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class, breaking it from its social-democratic and Stalinist misleaders, demands and foremost an intransigent opposition to imperialism, anti-Sovietism and raising high the banner of unconditional defence of the deformed/degenerated workers states.

The British proletariat has reason enough to hate Thatcher and the class she represents: many a Leyland worker, not to mention an unemployed youth in Toxteth, would doubtless consider it a step forward to be guaranteed the 'miserly', 'starvation-level' reduced Polish meat quotas. But it is saddled with a Labourite leadership which far from recognising any internationalist responsibility to defend the world's first workers revolution attacks the workers states on behalf of its own bourgeoisie. Of course it is too cowardly and capitulationist even to offer a semblance of defence of the workers immediate interests. This is what Trotsky called the crisis of proletarian leadership. And upon its resolution today hinges the fate not only of the advance to a higher order of human existence, but of human existence itself. Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union! Forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International, World Party of Socialist Revolution! ■

## Benn...

(Continued from page 3)

austerity at home. Benn verbally distances himself from the record of the last Labour government -- which he served so well -- in order to channel the support of many militant workers who are sick of the overt treachery of Healey et al.

It may be understandable for honest left-reformist members of the Labour Party to support Benn -- though it won't bring them one step closer to socialism. But for self-styled Marxists to support this diehard advocate of bourgeois parliamentarism requires prettifying his political stance beyond all recognition. Even then the main (and often only) thing they can come up with is that Benn wants Labour Party 'democracy' and 'accountability'. 'Democracy' doesn't put food on the table, and 'accountability' won't stop imperialist war. Neither will they change the Labour Party from what it has always been -- a main support of capitalism. Neither are they serious. *Socialist Organiser*, *Socialist Challenge*, not to mention the stodgy left-reformist Militant tendency, are up to their necks in Benn's efforts to garner the union bloc vote through manoeuvres with

middle-level trade union bureaucrats. And even if this 'democracy' were anything other than the sham it is, it would still avoid the real question: *democracy for what programme?*

### Into the broad church

The real reason they back Benn is -- he's popular. And these opportunists want a piece of the action. Benn's support is manifestly not the product of a wave of working-class upsurge. He carries his not insubstantial responsibility for the defeats and betrayals -- particularly the heroic steel strike -- that have laid the basis for his current prominence. And he plays on them. Fake-revolutionaries may make a few recruits here and there by posing as the 'best builders' of Benn's campaign. But who's recruiting whom to what? People who joined organisations like the International Marxist Group, the International Communist League or the Workers Socialist League because they wanted to make a proletarian revolution, now find their political perspectives become circumscribed by the Labour Party's intra-bureaucratic conflicts. That's why they rushed to drop 'Troops out of Ireland Now!' as a campaigning slogan during the hunger strike protests in Britain. That's why the 'Trotskyists' now in the Labour Party are more ready than ever to join in the wave of anti-Sovietism over Afghanistan, and particularly Poland.

*Socialist Organiser* now chatters about 'renovating' and 'transforming' the Labour Party into an instrument for socialism. It cravenly transforms mass anti-Tory sentiment into the call for another Labour government on the Westminster benches. *Socialist Challenge* now defines 'socialist policies' as including such gems as a fight 'to end the British army's foreign role!' Demonstrating how far it has gone in adapting to the reformist methodology and programme of Benn, *Socialist Challenge* (24 September) complained that: 'The last [Labour] government's great failing was its attempt to rely on a bureaucratic civil service that remained totally hostile to its intentions'.

The problem with Labour is certainly not that its intentions are 'frustrated' in office, but that these 'intentions' are thoroughly pro-capitalist, chauvinist and reactionary. And a Marxist perspective -- inside or outside the Labour Party -- is not to cosy up to the Labourite traitors and console them about their imaginary 'frustrations' but to win the proletariat to a revolutionary programme and a perspective independent of the Labour bureaucracy that is tied to capitalism. *Socialist Challenge* and the rest don't have one.

● To the sham of 'unilateral nuclear disarmament' we counterpose the call, 'Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!' 'Cutting' the arms budget means supporting an arms budget -- Not a penny, not a man for the imperialist army! Against the social democrats' much-vaunted Solidarity counterrevolution in Poland we stand foursquare for defence of socialised property in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states by any means necessary -- even as we staunchly oppose the Stalinist bureaucrats politically and fight for workers political revolution.

● Against Benn's historical support to the PTA, his refusal to defend the Republican victims of imperialist repression in Northern Ireland, his pro-imperialist call for UN troops, we say: No 'democratic' imperialist schemes -- Troops out of Ireland now! Free the Republican prisoners! Smash the PTA! For British trade union action against the occupation of Northern Ireland -- black all military transport to Ireland! For the formation of anti-sectarian workers militias against imperialist rampage and indiscriminate terror, Orange and Green! Unambiguous defence of the IRA and INLA against the British army but not an ounce of political support to Green nationalism! For an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles!

● Benn supports import controls and bourgeois immigration controls -- chauvinist/racist poison which divides the workers. No to import controls -- protectionist trade war paves the way to nuclear war! Full citizenship rights for Britain's blacks and all foreign workers! Smash racial discrimination in hiring, housing and education! The only way to defeat fascism, to crush outbreaks of racist attacks, to defend against cop rampage is through the fight for union/black defence guards.

● Benn wants the workers to wait for 1984, for a 'new' Labour government to dole out the reactionary schemes of autarkic reflation of the AES. Now is the time to roll back the Tory attacks and the legacy of Labour with a unified classwide counter-offensive which mobilises the combined social power of the miners, the dockers, steel workers and railwaymen against the jobs slaughter and haemorrhaging social services, for work sharing on no loss of pay, for a sliding scale of wages to match inflation, for the restoration and improvement of social services.

Against the endless subsidisation of failed industries with the workers' tax money, we offer a realistic programme: five-year plans on the basis of a reorganisation of the economy through the expropriation of the industrialists and the bankers, as part of an international socialist division of labour through a worldwide struggle for proletarian rule. ■

## Tasks...

(Continued from page 7)

doing something else. Lest our appetites exceed our capacities, we should consider it a victory when we decide not to do something. Many of the fights in the recent period centred precisely around the necessity of making those hard choices. Not making them breeds inefficiency and lack of necessary political and organisational preparation. Our immediate tasks are:

- strengthening the centre, especially the editorial collective;
- aggressive pursuit of the IMG in particular, and WP and SOA;
- careful attention to our student work and recruitment;
- seeking to build one or two more trade-union fractions.

60. Most importantly, we have to sustain and maintain our cadre... Regular, critical discussion of the press in the branches is a necessary aspect of internal education and maintaining a high-quality press. This is not a substitute for but a corollary to a programme of systematic internal education and adequate political preparation for concrete tasks and interventions. Beyond this, without an appreciation of history and Marxist classics, our cadre will find themselves disoriented in facing changing times.

61. An effective high-quality propaganda organ is key to all our perspectives. The newspaper of a propaganda group is its most important weapon. It does not simply report or reflect the work of disparate party units: it is the recruiting tool and political armoury of the organisation. Our regroupment work, individual recruitment and internal training demand a high level of polemics and analysis.... ■

## 'Hands off Russia'...

(Continued from page 9)

government's war plans was purely a question of 'national, not class interest'. The Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, the Labour Party executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party sanctioned the setting up of local Councils of Action and threatened a nationwide 'down tools' against the war. Within days, 350 councils had been formed. Fearful that the councils would actually proceed to act, the right wing in many areas excluded the Communists from them. But the scope and swiftness of the response within the working class was enough to force Lloyd George to back down. By this time, Pilsudski's forces had also succeeded in stalling the Red Army offensive. Announcing that he had no intention to intervene in the war, Lloyd George met with the Councils of Action on 10 August to assure them that his only interest was to secure Poland's independence.

The threat of imperialist war against the Soviet republics soon subsided. By the following year, the Red Army entered Georgia and suppressed the counterrevolutionary Menshevik regime. In the six decades since then, the imperialist aim of restoring capitalism in the land of the October Revolution has been sometimes more, sometimes less, openly expressed, but it has never receded. Had Trotsky's Red Army actually crossed the Vistula in 1921, triggering a revolutionary upsurge, that threat might well have been resolved through the creation of a Red Poland on the borders of Germany and the international extension of the Russian Revolution. What happened instead was the Stalinist degeneration.

Today the war danger against the Soviet Union is again at a peak, posing the annihilation not only of the workers state but of all humanity. It is inconceivable for the nationalistic Stalinist bureaucracy to make the sort of internationalist appeals for revolutionary class action that the Bolshevik regime and the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky did. This in no way lessens -- and indeed increases -- the responsibility of the proletariat in the capitalist world to come to the defence of the Soviet Union. The fake Trotskyists who today scurry from that responsibility are worthy of the attacks Trotsky levelled against the social-democratic guardians of Menshevik Georgia. We are proud to uphold the memory of the Hands Off Russia campaign and the *Jolly George*. It is a tradition which the revolutionary proletariat of Britain will enshrine. ■



# British Movement threat at NLP

## No platform for fascists!

In a letter to the North London Polytechnic (NLP) student union paper *Fuse* (16 June) the former chairman of the NLP Federation of Conservative Students (FCS), Nicholas O'Connor, declared his aim of establishing a branch of the overtly Hitlerite British Movement (BM) on campus. He repeated his threat to a meeting with 200 students present. O'Connor's letter was an outrage against every black and foreign student, women's liberationist, gay activist, leftist and trade unionist at NLP. A failure to respond to it, particularly given the national publicity it received in the *New Statesman* (26 June) and elsewhere, would have been to tell the fascists that they could proceed unhindered with their efforts to build gangs of would-be student stormtroopers. It was clear that what was needed was a powerful demonstration of trade unionists and students capable of teaching the fascists a lesson they would never forget should they dare to raise their heads. The NLP Spartacist Society took the initiative in forming a Stop the Fascists in NLP united-front committee to organise such a mobilisation.

Amid the manifest decay of British capitalism and international anti-Soviet Cold War, the threat of organised fascism taking root in the colleges seems much more real than a few years ago. Groups like the BM and the National Front (NF) are known to have made gains from the ultra-right Tory Monday Club at Oxford and from the FCS at universities and polytechnics elsewhere. At the FCS national conference held at Sheffield University earlier this year there were reports of delegates openly wearing fascist regalia and singing the 'Hitler Youth Anthem'.

Last term fascist thugs came into NLP to attack black students. The nearby Islington area has witnessed several fascist atrocities, including the firebombing of the *Islington Gutter Press* offices and the murderous attack on the *Other Bookshop* which left Sheila Malone with a fractured skull. But despite the scale of the threat nationally and locally, and despite the fact that the call for a united-front mobilisation received wide backing, including endorsements from GLC leader Ken Livingstone, Kent miners leader Jack Collins, trade unionists, Labour councillors and minority activists, most fake-revolutionary organisations displayed a criminal sectarianism which amounted to sabotage of the fight against fascism.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) refused to endorse the call for a demonstration. The International Marxist Group declared its refusal to participate in a united front action with the Spartacists. The Socialist Organiser Alliance covered the same cowardly policy with the wretched excuse that it didn't have any supporters at NLP. And the Revolutionary Communist 'Party' (RCP) did next to nothing to build a serious united-front action other than trying to turn it into an adventurist stunt along the lines of its 'Workers Against Racism' front

groups. When the first meeting of the committee rejected a vicarious adventurist strategy of 'student/worker defence' in favour of a hard fight to mobilise trade union and student support for a powerful show of strength RCP supporters found other 'priorities'.

The story of sabotage and sectarianism was completed at NLP itself by the student union president Abidin Tusder, and his student union executive which includes supporters of the SWP's Socialist Worker Student Organisation. An 18 September meeting of the executive threw out a motion supporting a militant demo prepared to drive fascists off campus at the 25 September Freshers Fair. Instead it counterposed a 'strategy' of public meetings, literature stalls, films and 'multi-cultural' activities to a serious anti-fascist mobilisation. Not only did the executive not support demonstrations -- it banned them for the day! This treachery was a desperate act which culminated in a consistent record of criminal do-nothingism. Indeed, Tusder was present at the meeting at which O'Connor was allowed to speak -- in direct contravention of the students union's formal position of 'No Platform for Fascists'.

But if Tusder & Co don't care about the fascist threat, many students at NLP do. And bureaucratic sabotage will not stop those who want to fight fascism and have a programme to do it. Spartacist Society and Spartacist League members handed out leaflets at the packed Freshers Fair which pointed out:

'The only serious strategy for fighting the fascists is the strategy that is being sabot-

aged at NLP. Allowing that sabotage to continue is a signal to the fascists that they can carry out their work at NLP.'

An aggressive campaign demanding an emergency general meeting of the students union to hear a motion to reverse the executive decision and organise a militant demonstration at NLP's Holloway Road site at 1pm on Friday 2 October won a massive response from students. Union rules demand that 100 students should petition before the executive is even obliged to consider holding a meeting. But over 500 signed at the Freshers Fair alone. On Monday 28 September the student executive was forced to back down from its adamant refusal and call an emergency general meeting.

Students alone do not have the power to stop fascism -- and the Spartacist League has advanced a perspective of mobilising the trade unions inside and outside NLP. At Sheffield University in January the Spartacist Society initiated a successful mobilisation against BM thugs endorsed by the Sheffield Trades Council and militant steel workers -- the fascists he didn't come back. It is the working class that has the power to smash fascism through organised mass action and the building of labour/black defence guards. And it is the working class which must be won to a revolutionary programme for the overthrow of the capitalist system of whose decay fascism is a by-product. The fight at NLP must be a successful part of that struggle. No platform for fascists! Drive O'Connor off campus! No British Movement/National Front at NLP! ■

## Conference...

(Continued from page 7)

to conduct exemplary work as the nucleus of an alternative revolutionary leadership in the unions. And the necessary complement to all the above tasks is improving the level and quality of our internal Marxist education.

The reporter on national perspectives noted that six years after the first implantation of Spartacist cadres in Britain, and after several successful regroupments, we have become much more organic to this country, and thus necessarily more susceptible to the traditional pressures which act on the British left: social-democratic softness, workerism, insularity, a preoccupation with fancy tactics towards the Labour Party as a substitute for posing the hard programmatic questions. All of these have appeared in our organisation at various times already, and the struggle to transcend such influences must be an ongoing one. Unlike the rest of the left, so susceptible to 'Fog over the channel' parochialism, we do not intend to veer from our internationalist programme and outlook. In this context one of our particular responsibilities is to take advantage of the many opportuni-

ties for work among the foreign and emigre milieus largely abandoned by our opponents in their present rush into the Labour Party -- work which, as the conference document noted, 'is a concrete manifestation of our commitment to the reforging of the Fourth International'. ~~approach to labour, while maintaining~~ tactically flexible to respond to changing developments, must remain fixed within the perspective of splitting it on the basis of the revolutionary programme, not sinking into the morass of the 'broad church'.

## Forward to the British October!

The culmination of the conference came in the selection of a leadership to carry out the tasks decided upon. In the context of a frank, rigorous and critical evaluation of our past work which addressed, among other things, the need to overcome problems of sluggishness and routinism that have cropped up at times in the central leadership, delegates elected the new Central Committee. Having made a number of adjustments, the organisation looked forward to the forging of a leadership collective which had to some extent already been tested in collaborative practice.

With a view to successfully exploiting the opportunities which face us, through regroupment/recruitment, the conference document projected a series of goals which would take the organisation to a new plateau: the move to a fortnightly press, expansion to another major city, the formation of a youth section and extended trade union implantation. To get there, we must go out and recruit more widely and more boldly! Recognising that the current period poses pressures on our organisation is a necessary corollary to taking advantage of the real opportunities for growth and development which are also posed. Our past political successes and aggressive profile, particularly on four key issues -- the Russian question, Ireland, the Labour Party and the fight against fascism -- point to the possibility of significant gains in the coming period if we carry out our work effectively. And that means maintaining programmatic intransigence, steeling our cadre for the years ahead, understanding that we are not out for cheap, transitory influence or the small change of the reformists. Our fight is a fight for power. One of the international reporters pointed to the possibilities facing us:

'Let's struggle to take advantage of a desperate situation to experience and participate in the development of a political/economic movement of the working class in order to lay the foundations for soviet power.' ■

## Spartacist League/Communist Party (CP) speaking on

Afghanistan, Poland, Angola

# The Cold War connection

Speaker: Lawrie Harney

Formerly Communist Party, International Marxist Group

As the Cold War gets hotter the role of social democracy and the Labour Party in the struggle against the USSR becomes ever clearer. Does the Labour Party still have any role to play in the struggle against the USSR? Is it possible to build a united front with the Labour Party? Is it possible to build a united front with the Labour Party? Is it possible to build a united front with the Labour Party?

Birmingham

Sheffield

London

Coventry

Thursday 15 October

Tuesday 20 October

8.00pm

7.30pm

100p

100p

100p

100p



# Leadership...

(Continued from page 2)

workers, not capitulation to the bureaucracy. But Thornett et al aren't Trotskyists.

And that is why today they all chase after Benn, whose recent rise to stardom on the basis of a poisonous mixture of wage control, import controls, anti-Sovietism and parliamentarism was in a real sense prepared by the defeat of the steel strike -- which Benn did nothing to prevent. We're after something different: state power for the working class. It is a question of leadership, and there will be more class explosions to come, explosions which will shake and shatter Labour's grip over the workers. Our task is to intersect them with a programme for victory. ■

# RCP...

(Continued from page 2)

kidding? The RCP boasts it is fighting economism in the working class with its recipe of minimalist multi-vanguardism. It considers it a point of pride to make the bizarre boast that it organises independently from the 'official labour movement', and follows through by counterposing petty-bourgeois Republican nationalism to Labourite class treachery, demanding 'TUC: Hands off Ireland'. And for all the spleen against the Labour Party/TUC's wretched pro-imperialist stand on Ireland, the RCP ran their ELWAR (East London Workers Against Racism) stunt group in the GLC elections on a platform that devoted to the Irish question all of a mention that unemployed British lads who join the army may end up keeping down 'their fellow workers' there. Support to the hunger strikers? Defence of the IRA? Troops out of Ireland? All well and good, says the RCP, but not -- despite endless lectures about Ireland being a decisive question -- when you're standing for election in East London.

Revolutionary regroupment is a vital tactic in the accretion of a cadre towards the construction of a genuine revolutionary communist party. The RCP eschews it in favour of sterile propagandism and 'mass work' fakery because it has no revolutionary programme around which to regroup. We don't play the numbers game, yet we ~~but notice that on the most significant national~~ strike in London on 13 June, the SL and CP jointly mobilised an impressive and spirited contingent on a principled anti-imperialist basis counterposed to the capitulation to Green nationalism which the RCP shares with most of the British left ... which just happened to be substantially larger than that of the Revolutionary Communist Party. ■

# Khomeini...

(Continued from page 2)

regime's clerical-fascist stormtroopers, hated butchers of Kurds, Arabs and the left.

The SWP accompanies Murphy's article with a box which reports the release from prison of two HKE members, who had been falsely (it pleads) charged with starting a strike and later of belonging to Peykar, a Maoist group which opposes the war with Iraq. 'Many members of Peykar have been executed in recent weeks, and the lives of Zahraie and Shir Ali were also in danger.' But they managed to clear themselves of both these capital offences, and stepped out into the sunlight, leaving real strikers and real Peykar members to rot or be shot behind them: 'an important victory for the right of socialists to express their views in Iran'.

The SWP, HKE and HVK are all affiliates of the 'United Secretariat' (USec), represented in this country by the International Marxist Group (IMG). Those IMGers whose stomachs turn at their comrades' blood pact with clerical-fascism against the left had better remember that the SWP/HKE/HVK are only continuing to its gruesome conclusion what was once the line of the whole USec. They had better remember how *Socialist Challenge* covered up Khomeini's clearly stated intention to do every one of the bloody deeds described above, and that the IMG still calls on the Iranian workers to die for their oppressors in the sordid border war with Iraq, and still pushes the treacherous line that there are 'gains of the Iranian Revolution' to defend. And especially they had better remember who on the international left hated Khomeini when he was still popular. When everybody else on the left was hailing the 'democratic', 'anti-imperialist' credentials of this mob of benighted, murderous mullahs, the international Spartacist tendency alone refused to renege on the democratic and socialist aspirations of Iran's oppressed toilers: 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs!' Remember? ■

# Who defends the Tamils?

letter

To the editor:

In your articles on Sri Lanka you never mentioned the role of the Nava Sama Samaja Party. Why? Does it not fit in with the Sri Lankan SL being the only defender of Tamil rights in the labour movement?

Yours fraternally,  
Alan M

*Spartacist Britain replies:* The above note from cde Alan M was received with a renewal form for a subscription to *Spartacist Britain*. The comrade insinuates that we have deliberately ignored defence of Tamil rights by the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP), which is associated with Ted Grant's Labourite Militant tendency in Britain, so as to falsely glorify our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka. We can only wonder why *Militant*, which certainly has no interest in glorifying the record of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), has also failed to mention any active role by the NSSP in defence of Tamil rights in the last five months of increased repression.

The contemporary history of the ostensibly Trotskyist left -- as of the left in general -- in Sri Lanka is one of wretched capitulation to prevailing Sinhala chauvinism, linked in practice with popular-frontist subservience and capitulation to the SLFP of Mrs Bandaranaike, the brutally Sinhala-chauvinist 'progressive' party of the Lankan bourgeoisie. Defence of Tamil rights -- in particular the right of self-determination and full citizenship rights for the Indian Tamil plantation workers -- is integral to a revolutionary perspective on that island. As we noted in the declaration of fusion between the former Bolshevik Faction of the Revolutionary Workers Party and the iSt which resulted in the creation of the SL/Lanka: 'The Tamil question is the question of internationalism in Sri Lanka, the acid test for revolutionaries in the struggle against Sinhala chauvinism.' (*Spartacist* no 31-32, Summer 1981)

How does the reformist NSSP compare in this test? Miserably! The NSSP originates from a slightly left split from the LSSP, which besmirched the banner of Trotskyism in Ceylon when it entered the Sinhala-chauvinist coalition government in 1964. Again as we noted in the fusion declaration,

'The NSSP, which stands in all essentials on the record of the LSSP before 1975, is nothing more than an attempt to revive the LSSP. Its sometimes left-sounding talk and verbal opposition to coalitionism is nothing more than an expedient and temporary acknowledgment of the disgust among the working masses at the popular-front betrayals of the LSSP.'

How flimsy are the NSSP's pretensions to oppose coalitionism is revealed by the fact that they still denounce as 'ultra-left' the split of a principled opposition to the LSSP's entry into the bourgeois government in 1964, thus sanctioning participation in a popular front. Likewise today they consistently call for a united front of 'all anti-government political parties',



Spartacist tendency's role in international Tamil protests featured in Lankan papers.

explicitly including the SLFP of bloody Mrs B. The cadre who went on to form the NSSP stayed in right through the LSSP's despicable participation in the brutal suppression of the 1971 JVP youth uprising. The NSSP has never repudiated this. Among them were members who actually helped organise the so-called 'Hansa Regiment', which guarded police stations while the police were butchering JVP militants. The NSSP has never repudiated this either. And when the NSSP finally completed its break from the party of popular-front treachery it immediately extended critical support to a smaller version of the same Sinhala chauvinist popular front.

With this history, one can be justifiably dubious about the NSSP's record on the defence of Tamil rights. However, in an article written by an NSSP Central Committee member, a recent *Militant* (11 September) boasts that the NSSP is 'the only Sri Lankan Left-wing party which adheres consistently to this principled position' on the Tamil right to self-determination. We seek to be scrupulous in not making statements without sufficient foundation -- unlike the NSSP, which ludicrously boasts that it 'spear-headed' the boycott of the recent District Development Council elections by the other left parties and the SLFP. However we will note that this uniquely principled position which it proclaims so proudly in a paper in *Britain* is nowhere accompanied by any indication of action initiated by the NSSP -- which is many times larger than our tiny group -- around this question in Lanka.

We do know however that in the instances when we have participated in or initiated actions around this question in Britain, we have received curt no's to our united-front approaches from the NSSP's British comrades, whose resources are qualitatively vaster than our own. We know indeed that no other group on the British left has taken the slightest interest in militant protests against the pogromist repression of Tamils taking place now.

If we have highlighted the activities of our tendency internationally around defence of Tamil rights, it is to the shame of the rest of the left -- they have refused to do anything. We are proud that our Lankan comrades, even before the fusion, had already established a proud record on this question, through such actions as organising Sinhalese students to fight for the right of Tamils to gain admission to Colombo University. Our American comrades recently initiated a protest in New York which was prominently featured in the Lankan press. Likewise our German comrades initiated a highly successful protest of more than 350 in Berlin against the anti-Tamil terror in Lanka and the West German government's deportation of Tamils back into the hands of Jayawardene's butchers. So, comrade, what is the role of the NSSP? You tell us. ■

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# SPARTACIST

## BRITAIN

**Social democracy fronting for Reagan/  
Thatcher Cold War drive**

# Dangerous anti-Soviet provocations

The past two months have seen a series of calculated, escalating provocations orchestrated by the war-hungry administration of Ronald Reagan. The target in each and every instance is clear and explicit: Moscow. Virtually every week brings a new international hot spot in the no-longer-so-Cold War. The US commander-in-chief is on a straight march towards thermonuclear World War III with Russia. His adjutant is a French 'Socialist'; his standard-bearer is a fanatical Polish pope; his brigade-major is an Iron Lady in Downing Street. This is the most dangerous and unholy of popular fronts ever: a nuclear-armed Crusade Against Communism.

It started with Afghanistan. Then came El Salvador/Nicaragua and threats to blockade Castro's Cuba. Now there is the formalisation of the military alliance with China and threats to teach Vietnam 'another bloody lesson'. Reagan and his (if anything more rabidly anti-Soviet) allies in the Peking bureaucracy boast that they monitor Soviet missile tests and intend to station strategic weapons on the Russian border. The constant baiting of the Russian bear over Poland, accompanied by shrill appeals from the Vatican and the reactionary assistance of 'democratic socialism' internationally today threatens to culminate in an open counterrevolutionary challenge to the socialised property forms. The potential exists for a cataclysmic explosion.

When two South African armoured columns swept into southern Angola in early August with US blessing, it was the anti-Soviet angle that the South African government (and British and American media) played to the hilt. 'WE KILLED RUSSIANS IN ANGOLA!' was the South African war minister's comment, transformed into a bold-face headline by the *New York Post*. They paraded a captured Soviet sergeant-major as a living example of the red ogre in Africa and crowed about the murder of four Russians, including two



Reagan, Thatcher anti-Soviet war axis: South African troops in action in Angola.

civilian wives.

The Americans staged military exercises off Libya's shores for the express purpose of goading Soviet-allied megalomaniac Qaddafi into a response. When they succeeded in luring two Libyan fighter planes into a dogfight and blasting them out of the sky, they proclaimed it to be an object lesson to the 'international terrorist conspiracy' supposedly run by the Kremlin.

For the 'European theatre', Washington announced that the neutron bomb would, after all, be built and deployed. When Carter first mooted the project four years ago, his European partners strongly advised him to change his mind. Reagan didn't ask for their advice, and he

didn't get many arguments.

And accompanying it all is a propaganda barrage to prepare a 'hate the Reds' climate. Crude red scare stories straight out of 1950s McCarthyism are presented as hard news by even the 'serious' bourgeois press. And not just in Reagan's America. 'Sophisticated' British papers like the *Times* plastered the front pages for days with accounts of a bizarre plot masterminded by the KGB in collusion with Turkish fascists to assassinate the pope.

In his determination to 'roll back Communism' Reagan has committed the American bourgeoisie to bankrolling every sci-fi military project that

*continued on page 12*

**March with the Soviet-defencist contingents**

# Smash NATO!

# Defend the Soviet Union!

**Stop CIA-backed Solidarity counterrevolution! A workers Poland, yes-The Pope's Poland, no!**

**No Cruise, no Trident! Not a penny, not a man for the imperialist army!**

**The main enemy is at home-get the Iron Lady!**

**Spartacist League**

CND national demonstration  
Embankment London  
24 October