

Labour's 'alternative': Social Contract, protectionist poison

Smash Thatcher's war on workers, minorities!

We reprint below an edited transcript of a talk given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Cheryl Myall in Sheffield on 25 November as part of a national speaking tour.

Recently Eugene Rostow, Reagan's director of 'arms control', said that we're living in a pre-war not postwar world. That's true. It's very easy to get locked into what's happening in this little island and that's what affects a lot of the British left. But we're an internationalist party, and we start off from an understanding that's based on the international situation. Increasingly it looks more and more like the 1930s. There's international recession, mass unemployment even in the most advanced capitalist coun-

tries, financial bankruptcy of whole countries let alone individual capitalist firms -- and there's anti-Soviet war drive.

Unlike the Stalinist bureaucrats who believe in the possibility of 'peacefully coexisting' with imperialism, the imperialists since 1917 have never believed in the myth of detente and peaceful coexistence. They've always had as one of their central aims getting back those areas taken away from them by anti-capitalist revolutions, principally that first country -- the USSR -- which had a healthy workers revolution. Now the Russian intervention into Afghanistan brought forth a great deal of imperialist hysteria. But where the imperialists really saw their chance to 'roll back Communism' was in Poland, where the Stalinists had brought the econ-

omy to the brink of disaster and driven the working class into the arms of the CIA and the pope. What better way to roll back Communism than through a so-called trade union which embraced millions of workers? And of course in Europe you saw particularly the social democracies playing the anti-Communist role they've had since 1917, and right there with them most of our so-called Trotskyist opponents talking about a 'political revolution' led by the Vatican. But we said genuine political revolution had to be based on defence of the proletarian state, on stopping Solidarity's counterrevolution.

The various imperialist bourgeoisies agree that it's necessary to open up the workers states

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5000-strong labour/black mobilisation shakes Washington DC

We stopped the Klan!

More than 5000 protesters, overwhelmingly blacks and many unionists, chased the Ku Klux Klan out of Washington, DC on November 27. It was a historic victory for labor, blacks, for every decent American. The KKK fascists said they would rally at the Capitol and march in their white sheets to the White House to parade their racist filth. They intended to repeat the spectacle of 1925, when 40,000 Klansmen paraded down the same route. And the Reagan administration was determined to force this provocation down the throats of the black population of DC. But the call by the Labor/Black Mobilization to Stop the KKK struck a deep chord among black unionists and others who turned out in mass to stop the hooded race-terrorists in their tracks. You could feel the power of the working class mobilized for action. After a decade of rising race-terror and union-busting attacks, here was the way to win. Workers and blacks know it is desperately necessary to fight. And relying on our own strength, we stopped the Klan!

The Labor/Black Mobilization was initiated by the Spartacist League (SL) after initial discussions with area unionists showed a shared determination to militantly stop the cross-burners and lynchers from marching in the nation's capital. And on November 27 the Ku Kluxers did not rally, did not march, did not even put on their robes. Instead the thousands brought out by the Labor/Black Mobilization blocked off the Klan's starting point. Black youth, unionists and socialists -- that was who marched up Pennsylvania Avenue, finally occupying the KKK's proclaimed destination, Lafayette Square. On November 27, we took the streets, and the Klan hit the road!

The Klan boasted that 200 would parade Saturday. Only 28 of the racist swine turned out. They cowered like sewer rats, ready to crawl into the underground Senate garage, wett-

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Washington, 27 November: 5000-strong labour/black mobilisation routs Ku Klux Klan race terrorists.

Reagan's South Africa connection

Anti-Soviet axis flops in black Africa

US vice president George Bush was roving the capitals of black Africa looking for allies for the US drive for nuclear war on the Soviet Union when he was diverted to Moscow for the Brezhnev funeral. After delivering pro-forma condolences, the former CIA chief was back in Africa less than 36 hours later, attempting to forge a new anti-Soviet 'strategic consensus' there. But black African leaders are not buying.

The problem faced by the warmongers in the White House is that the foundation of that 'consensus' on the continent is the growing anti-Soviet axis between Washington and the brutally white supremacist Pretoria regime. That axis expresses itself in everything from secret meetings between South African military leaders and US ambassador to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick, to the Reagan administration's pressure on the International Monetary Fund to loan the apartheid butchers a cool \$1.1 billion. Particularly grotesque was the issuance of an export licence for 2500 high-voltage cattle prods for South African police to repress the black masses.

Bush's tour of black Africa was preceded in September by that of the current CIA head William Casey. Casey met with his spy agency counterparts in Nigeria, Zaire, Zambia and Mozambique as well as meeting with top ministers and military officers of the Pretoria apartheid regime. Casey and Bush tried to win support for their proposal to 'link' independence for the South African colony of Namibia (South West Africa) to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. But Cuban troops are the only force preventing South Africa from reimposing white colonial rule on

Angola, as it attempted to do in its 1975 invasion!

The Casey/Bush trip failed, but not because the capitalist regimes of black Africa fight against South Africa's savage racist policies or its continued domination of Namibia. These neo-colonial regimes brutally repress their own labour movements and ethnic and national minorities. Even 'Marxist' Mozambique continues to supply super-exploited labour for Oppenheimer's diamond and gold mines. But South Africa's regular invasions of Angola and its commando operations and support to guerrillas in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Angola force these regimes, no matter how exploitative and anti-communist, to view the presence of Soviet and East German-backed Cuban troops in Angola as protection against South African expansionism. As a regional imperialist power, South Africa threatens to turn all of southern Africa into outright colonies like Namibia or subservient economic colonies like Swaziland.

Even the American black establishment paper *Amsterdam News* (20 November) commented, 'For whatever else may be said about Leonid Brezhnev, he was a friend of Africa and of African people. He was an outspoken opponent of apartheid and racism.' Of course, while Soviet-backed Cuban troops serve the cause of national liberation in Angola against the US-backed Pretoria apartheid butchers, in Ethiopia the same troops serve the cause of national oppression and genocide of the bloody Mengistu regime against the Eritreans, Somalis and other minorities. This is because the Kremlin seeks not world revolution but dip-

lomatic alliances with various Third World 'anti-imperialist' despots.

Only when the Soviet workers throw Andropov and the rest of the bureaucrats out and restore Soviet democracy can the full resources of Russia's planned economy, the gains of the 1917 October Revolution, be mobilised for world revolution. And it is South Africa's militant black proletariat that will be the motor force for smashing apartheid and making a socialist revolution, laying the basis for the social emancipation of all of black Africa. ■

How Communists fight imperialist war drive

In December 1922 a 'peace conference' was called by the social-democratic Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals and their Amsterdam trade-union international in The Hague. The reformists were afraid to invite representatives of the Communist International and its Red International of Labour Unions, and instead there were delegates from bourgeois pacifist societies. The Executive Committee of the Comintern issued a manifesto on The Hague Peace Conference calling to 'rally the forces of the working class so that the proletariat should not again become the cannon fodder of capitalism', and denouncing the exclusion of three million members of the Communist parties which were 'formed of precisely those elements which during the [First World] War fought most boldly for peace'. An extract from this manifesto is published below.

At the same moment as they were preventing the formation of the proletarian united front against imperialism they concluded an alliance with the bourgeois pacifists. For the first time in the history of the modern workers' movement there was a joint congress of trade unions and political workers' organizations with the representatives of a part of the bourgeoisie, who were thus given the opportunity of helping to decide the most important question of the workers' movement. This was justified on the ground that all forces hostile to war must be rallied for the fight against war. But this argument is a sheer swindle. The Amsterdamers have rejected an alliance with the revolutionary workers who are the only real opponents of imperialist war. They ally themselves only with the bourgeois pacifists who during the war went over just like the Amsterdamers into the capitalist camp and helped imperialism to mangle the body of the proletariat.

In rejecting the proletarian united front and concluding an alliance with the bourgeois groups the three Internationals passed sentence on the Hague conference. People who reject joint action with the revolutionary proletariat and prefer a bourgeois alliance have no real desire to fight against war. Imperialist war serves the interests of the bourgeoisie and whoever allies himself with the bourgeoisie unnerves and debilitates the working class and makes it impossible for them to fight against the war danger....

Sour grapes and set-up slanders

Dear Comrades,

The November issue of *Spartacist Britain* reprinted my letter, which was widely distributed among Merseyside CND and at Liverpool University, explaining why I broke from the bourgeois pacifist CND and was recruited to the revolutionary Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist League. I was pleased to note that it provoked substantial interest among CND activists I had worked with. Then in the November issue of Merseyside CND Newsletter, the following anonymous blurb appeared:

'Some C.N.D. groups (most recently Liverpool University C.N.D.) have experienced attempted disruption from an apparently ultra-left organisation called the Spartacists. This American originated organisation specialises in the disruption of C.N.D. public meetings and is pro-violence. Although claiming to be left wing it has never apparently been involved in attacking the right directly, and therefore, should be viewed with some suspicion in its real motives. However this group now gives us perfect support when we in C.N.D. are accused of being pro-Soviet Union in our objectives since they claim to be pro-Soviet and for a workers' bomb! If you find this hard to follow, you will be utterly baffled if you ever have the misfortune to meet any of them. Merseyside C.N.D.'s position on the Spartacists is quite simple: They are a miniscule bunch of lunatics who are more likely to damage themselves than us when left alone. So just have a good laugh at their expense.'

Well, I could tell that they weren't laughing too hard at my recruitment to the SL. But I don't think their slimy lies are too funny either. This sort of CIA/cop-baiting should make any left-wing activist sick. It's in the tradition of Goebbels' Big Lie, later perfected by Stalin: self-evidently false, often repeated, it need not be widely believed so much as accepted as an excuse for a witchhunt. In short, it's a set up for state repression.

CND crawls before the imperialists proving

How CND 'fights the right': December 'Sanity' touts imperialist butcher Lord Carver.

they're just as patriotic and anti-Soviet as anybody. So of course they despise the presence of the SL with our militant defence of the Soviet Union, which threatens their plans to be at peace with the ruling class. Further, we Trotskyists neither slavishly support the cowardly detente policies of the Soviet bureaucracy, which fit right in with the CND, nor do we long for capitalist counterrevolution a la Solidarnosc or for smashing up the Warsaw Pact, like EP Thompson. What we seek is political revolution in the deformed and degenerated workers states to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats, and workers revolution in the capitalist West. I know this particularly drives the Communist Party, so active in building CND, crazy, as they try to blend in with the anti-Soviet Quakers and 'pacifists' in CND, gladly dumping any mention of the Soviet Union along the way, much less of its defence. That's why they're at one with the Big Liars -- out to get us, the Trotskyists.

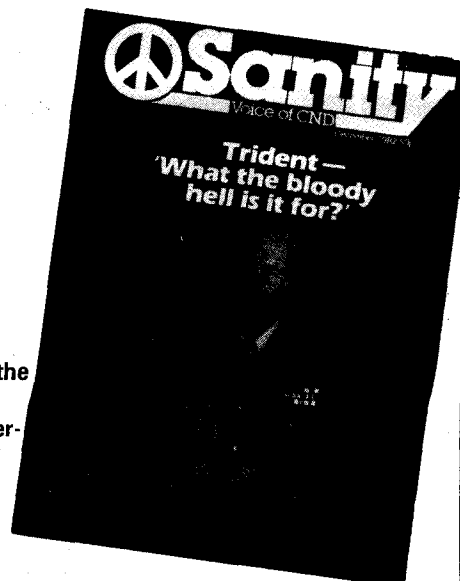
As for their vicious, stereotyped innuendos, they sound a lot like Stalin's tales about Trotsky being in the pay of the Mikado! And this from people who run, favourably, photos of British colonial butchers on their front covers.

Those people in CND who are repelled by this kind of embracing of capitalism and its lies, who really want to stop the imperialist war drive, should do what I did, break with CND and take a good look at the revolutionary politics of the Spartacist League.

Communist greetings,
Alison Pont

Former president, Liverpool University CND

letter

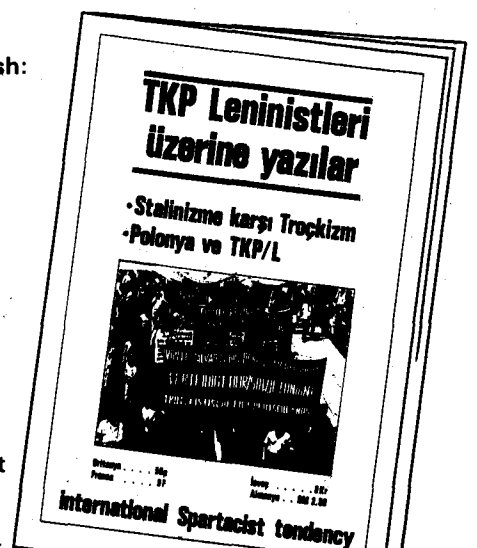


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SL/US in San Francisco elections A Bolshevik campaign

As the polls closed on election night November 2, supporters of Spartacist candidates Richard Bradley and Diana Coleman for San Francisco Board of Supervisors (local council) crowded into the Spartacist League/US office to celebrate the end of a hard-fought campaign. From the earliest returns, it soon became clear that our comrades had scored well -- over 10 per cent -- in several black and working-class districts where the campaign concentrated. The final results were 6326 votes for Bradley and 8692 for Coleman -- about 3.5 per cent city-wide, a solid showing for our black-centred, Soviet-defencist, class-struggle campaign.



Spartacist candidates Richard Bradley (left) and Diana Coleman (right) campaigning among black workers in San Francisco.

These were hard votes for our fighting programme against Reagan's bipartisan anti-Soviet war drive and domestic war on labour and the poor, especially in an election which saw an overall swing to the right in California. After two years of vicious cuts and rising unemployment, there is a broad anti-Reagan popular front -- ranging from AFL-CIO head Lane Kirkland and the other union bureaucrats through fake leftists of every stripe -- that is running hard to channel discontent into votes for the capitalist Democratic Party. Bradley and Coleman ran squarely counterposed to the lie that the Democrats are a 'lesser evil' and received thousands of votes as the only socialists on the ballot.

The Spartacist campaign exposed the Democrats' and liberals' favourite hobby-horses: we warned that the popular 'nuclear freeze' proposition was just an alternative programme for arms buildup against the Soviet Union and told the truth: 'Imperialist wars will end only when the proletariat seizes power from the bourgeoisie and establishes its own class rule.' The Spartacist candidates opposed all gun control measures as a mortal danger to blacks and workers in the face of rising Ku Klux Klan terror and killer cops.

In mapping out sites and neighbourhoods for concentration, Spartacist campaign organisers planned to follow up on the high *Workers*

Vanguard street sales and successful recent subscription drive among blacks and union members. The Spartacist candidates did best in black and Hispanic districts where historically election turnouts have been lower -- those who don't share the 'American dream' have fewer illusions in the bogus parliamentarism that covers the capitalist rule of racism and unemployment. Most important was the thoughtful and serious response to our politics which came from black workers, most of them trade unionists in their late twenties and thirties.

During the last few weeks of the campaign, SL/US supporters worked intensively, being dispatched in teams to distribute 18,000 election brochures, put up 2000 posters and pass out 10,000 very popular *Workers Vanguard* supplements about a 16 October demonstration that routed the KKK in Boston. The Spartacist candidates campaigned at numerous union locations around the city. At a phone workers union Local meeting, and at a meeting of some 100 laid-off shipyard workers, Bradley and Coleman were applauded for their calls for sitdowns and strike action against shutdowns. They also called for throwing out the do-nothing union bureaucrats who tie workers and blacks to the twin parties of capitalism.

The Communist Party were openly backing 'progressive' anti-Reagan bourgeois candidates in the election. Since the 1930s the popular front in the US has meant voting for the Democrats. Today this means support for the anti-Soviet war drive, massive cuts in social programmes, union 'givebacks' and passivity in the face of rising racist terror.

Bradley and Coleman ran in this election to spread the Spartacist communist programme, running against the electoral illusions of reforming capitalism by the ballot. They used the campaign as they would use public office -- to call workers out to demonstrate, to strike, to fight for their interests. Most important, this campaign was a vehicle for reaching new layers and mobilising new supporters from which must come the leadership, above all black leadership, of the Trotskyist party that can lead an American socialist revolution. By those standards this election was a Bolshevik success. ■

CP in Birmingham Northfield elections Labour's tail wags

After more than three years of Thatcherite misery, with Labour so demonstrably dishevelled and bankrupt that it can't even edge past the Iron Lady in the opinion polls, the Communist Party (CP) finally ventured out to the electorate. In Birmingham Northfield in October and Glasgow Queen's Park in November, the CP stood by-election candidates for the first time since the Tories took office. But even with Labour's candidate in Northfield an arch-right-winger like John Spellar, who introduced the witch-hunting resolution at Labour's Blackpool conference, his CP opponent Pete Sheppard could not scrape together 400 votes, less than 1 per cent of the total. The result in Queen's Park was equally miserable.

A look at this 'Communist alternative' explains why. With the Soviet Union threatened with imperialist thermonuclear annihilation and British workers and minorities ground down by social devastation and racist terror, the CP's alternative to Labour is ... Labour. Touting the left's pyrrhic 'policy victories' at Blackpool, the CP crowed: 'Labour can win the next election. But it will need to project left poli-

ties.' Given Spellar's hardline support for the CIA/NATO connection, the CP respectfully advised 'those Labour supporters who wish to vote for Labour conference policy that they cannot do so by voting for the Labour candidate' (*Morning Star*, 23 October). So the CP obliged. But why vote 'Communist' to elect Labour, especially with the CP solidly behind Michael Foot's drive for Labour unity -- at the expense of the left? Why, indeed!

Pete says, defend Britain, follow the pope

Did CP'er Pete Sheppard raise defence of the Soviet Union or opposition to British imperialism against Spellar's strident anti-Sovietism or the Bennites' utopian unilateralist 'non-nuclear' strategy to 'defend Britain'? A slanderous thought. 'To those who say Communists want Britain disarmed and defenceless, Pete says: "To defend Britain we need non-nuclear armed forces plus a new foreign policy which, as Pope John Paul II said, replaces war with negotiations"' (*Morning Star*, 23 October). After all, if it's good enough for the Falklands and Northern Ireland, why can't non-nuclear forces fend off the Russians? The CP is nothing if not ecumenical, praising also the Church of England's recent stand on unilateralism. As for the 'pope of peace', this prime mover behind CIA-backed counterrevolution in Poland is Reagan's right-hand man in the anti-Soviet crusade. But then the CP supported Solidarnosc too.

Did Sheppard call for industrial action to fight the jobs slaughter currently climbing towards the four million mark? Well, the Labour Party stands for chauvinist import controls, and 'Communists, says Pete, want import controls on foreign cars and "an expanded British motor industry based on the skills of our engineers using British parts from steel to wheels"' (*Morning Star*, 23 October). The Northfield constituency is the site of BL Longbridge, where CP supporters have been active for years and leading CP trade unionist Derek Robinson was convenor until his victimisation by management in

1979. Robinson's main defence at the time was that he 'had prevented more strikes than he had started'. And now, with 500 redundancies threatened at nearby Rover Solihull, *Morning Star* supporter and convenor Joe Harris argued against stewards who wanted to take action -- because it would endanger their bonuses.

But it is not only 'Pete's Communists' and the Labour lefts who push protectionist poison. The fascist National Front has sought to tap the demoralisation and despair partly induced by CP betrayals among BL workers, with racist mobilisations around 'British jobs for British workers'. In response to a fascist march around this slogan to boost the NF electoral candidate in Northfield, the only thing Sheppard told terrorised minority workers was that the racist cops shouldn't have allowed the NF to 'break the Race Relations Act'. With police cadets being graded on writing fascist 'essays' as part of their training to patrol the ghettos, and the cops demanding even more firepower against blacks and Asians, the CP tells the oppressed that 'signs of racist or hard-right political motivation must be rooted out' of the police force (*Morning Star*, 22 October). As for the CP's answer to Labour's noxious history of virginity tests and racist immigration controls, their main gripe about Labour's 'largely positive' new racist immigration policies was that the restrictions should have been extended to EEC nationals! Leninists understand that capitalist immigration laws and the capitalist cops, who exist to suppress workers and minorities, are necessarily racist. But the CP seeks to reform the racist British state based on colonial plunder, not to smash it through workers revolution.

The reason the CP can offer no alternative to the Labour Party is because its entire strategy is premised on electing a left Labour government as the first step on its parliamentary 'British Road to Socialism'. Since its Stalinist degeneration into reformism, the CP has lived under the shadow of the Labour Party, which is the hegemonic reformist party of the British working class. In the absence of a communist programme to counterpose to Labour reformism, it can have no independent perspective. Indeed, the Moscow-loyal *Straight Left* opposes even the standing of CP candidates against Labour, arguing instead for affiliation to the Labour Party as a pro-Soviet ginger group. Whether or not it stands its own candidates, the CP is nothing but an auxiliary to bankrupt Labourism. Those members of the CP who want to build a Leninist party must look to the Trotskyist programme of the Spartacist League. ■

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Thatcher's war...

(Continued from page 1)

for capitalism, but there are differences as to methods and tactics. And there are inter-imperialist rivalries. For the European bourgeoisies, especially the German, Reagan's insane provocations, his talk about limited nuclear war in Europe, are rather frightening. Millions of Europeans are afraid they're going to be fried. Hence the Europacifist movement throughout Europe, and CND in Britain. This movement is not only anti-American, it's also deeply anti-Soviet. It's a form of European nationalism.

And recently the Siberian pipeline affair has created a furore amongst the European bourgeoisies. The pipeline stands between financial solvency and bankruptcy for a number of European capitalist enterprises. Even Thatcher didn't want what Reagan had to say about the pipeline issue. That's not because she's not anti-Soviet; it's because she's got problems in Britain. Recently she went to the Berlin Wall and she was half in tears and said how awful it was, more horrible than she had ever imagined. This woman didn't get the title 'Iron Lady' from the Russians for nothing.

Contrary to what Tony Benn and the pacifists think, Britain cannot stop the world and get off. Despite winning the Falklands war, if capitalist Britain's going anywhere it's a junior partner of American imperialism. That was recognised by the 'gang of four' who fled from the Labour Party to set up the SDP and was one of the principal reasons for their departure. So not only is Britain a third-rate imperialist power, it's also terminally sick. So what Thatcher demands is the emasculation of the trade unions, which is why the Tebbit bill has gone through; the destruction of the 'welfare state', particularly the NHS; and the finances to pay for Britain's share of the war drive.

Minorities in the front line

This programme puts a lot of people on the front line -- millions of working people. But particularly it effects the minorities, blacks and Asians, in this country -- the former colonial slaves of the British Empire. And it affects the Irish as well. So how is it that this viciously anti-working-class government is still firmly in the saddle?

Recently over the Falklands war, it's come out quite concretely that the trade union leadership, the Labour Party leadership, have no alternative to offer working people and minorities in this country. You had the right wing of the Labour Party and trade union leadership openly supporting Thatcher's war. You had the Communist Party (CP), along with the left Labour Party and trade union leaders, looking for peaceful imperialist solutions -- to save the British fleet -- through the medium of the United Nations.

We found it fitting that two of Reagan's staunchest anti-Soviet allies were grinding each other up in the South Atlantic. A revolutionary leadership of the trade unions could have seized that period of crisis for the British capitalist class and utilised it to bring down this government. We said quite squarely that the main enemy is at home. We were revolutionary defeatist on both sides. The Labour Party and trade union leaders showed what side they were on -- the side of their own bourgeoisie.

So bringing down Thatcher cannot be left to them. Because at all critical points they will

always tell the workers that national unity comes first. Bringing down Thatcher means confronting this government's programme with another programme -- the proletarian programme -- and it means entering into political combat with the reformist misleaders of both the Labour Party and the trade unions.

For us the Labour Party is a bourgeois workers party. It's saddled with a pro-capitalist leadership and programme, yet its mass base is in the unions. The trade union bureaucrats are the ones who call the shots and control the finances. We want to split the Labour Party, to split its mass base away from that pro-capitalist leadership and win it to our programme. That means applying certain tactics like critical support which seek to exploit the contradictions inside the Labour Party.

For example, we gave critical support to Tony Benn against Denis Healey in the deputy leadership contest last year. Not because his programme is revolutionary -- we didn't become Bennites like the fake left. This guy calls for United Nations troops into Ireland, he's always refused to vote against the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and he condemned the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan.

But if Benn had won the deputy leadership

tween the left and right is completely healed over; it isn't. The TUC wanted to stop the left; they put the right in the saddle. But they also want to cool the factional tensions down. But in the meantime the Labour left a la Benn is all for unity in order to get Labour back in shape for a further round of betrayals if it can win the next general election.

And that's the point about the Labour Party and trade union leaderships. There are strictly defined limits of struggle for them. No industrial action to defeat the union-busting Tebbit bill, to bring down this government when it could have seized the opportunity presented by the Falklands war -- wait till the next general election to elect another Labour government to Parliament. That's what the recent 'days of action' have been about: let the working class let off steam. They've effectively been rallies for the next Labour government. The TUC doesn't want any kind of showdown with the Thatcher government, because it risks those struggles getting out of control. That's why ASLEF leader Ray Buckton, who's on the editorial board of the pro-Moscow paper *Straight Left*, it's pro-Labour but it's supported by the pro-Moscow wing of the CP, acquiesced in his own union's defeat.

A revolutionary party would have intervened

Spartacist Britain

in those situations seeking to trigger the sort of showdown the reformist misleaders feared. That's how we see splitting the Labour Party, through communist work in the unions, fighting for leadership against the reformists. But the CP and the rest want unity with the same kind of programme, the same reformists who led the general strike in 1926 to defeat. We're not for Labour unity. We don't think the Labour Party can be transformed into a party that can lead the working class to state power, any more than the Houses of Parliament can be transformed into a workers soviet.

Recently the union leaderships in the coal, steel and car industries

have all had at the core of their demands the question of import controls and protectionism. What is protectionism? It means what it says: it's the attempt to protect the competitiveness of British capitalism. Thatcher says 'Buy British' and the trade union leaders like Scargill and Sirs echo. Tony Benn's Alternative Economic Strategy is also an attempt to rebuild British industry through import controls. The CP's programme for the car industry is to use British as opposed to Spanish parts. They all want British jobs at the expense of Spanish and Japanese workers. And this is while the National Front have marches in places like Longbridge under the slogan of 'British jobs for British workers'.

Where does this stuff lead? It leads to trade war. And trade war, twice this century, has led to world war. War for markets. There's an advertisement on television -- it's this Japanese car company explaining how wonderful their cars are. And right at the beginning they say, 'From the



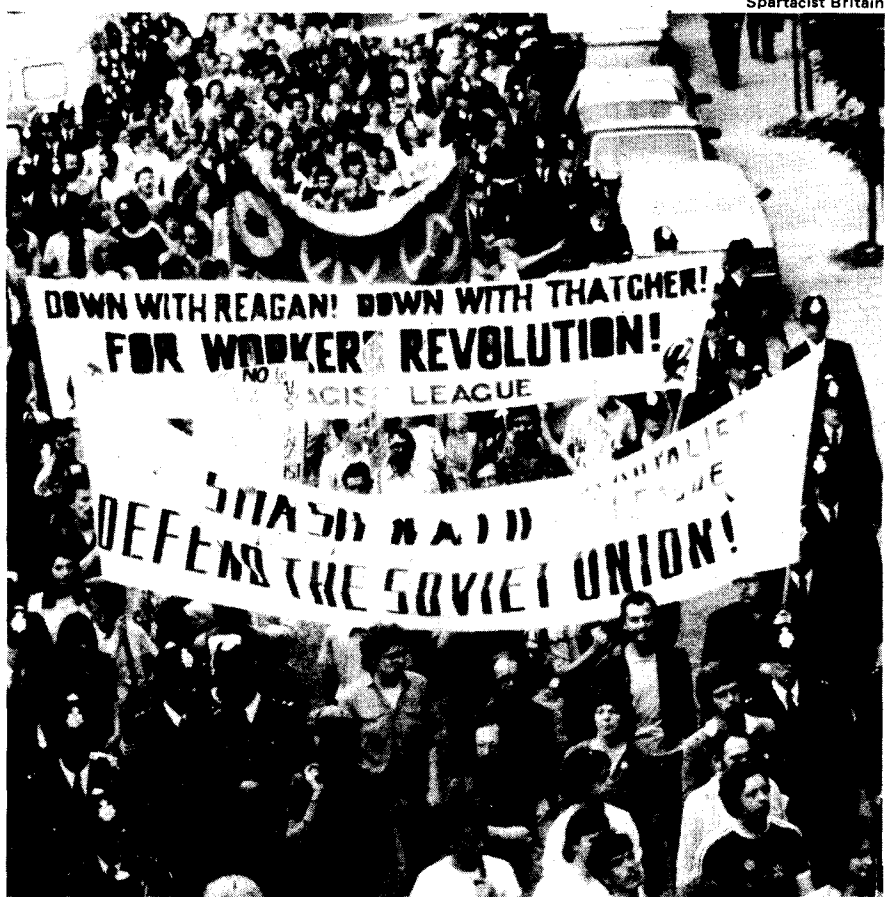
Birmingham: Spartacist League protests against threatened deportation of local resident Pino Khan. Full citizenship rights for all immigrant and minority workers!

contest, the Healey right wing would have made their exit pretty fast towards their bloc partners in the SDP. Denis Healey is an open enemy of the British working class; we know about his NATO/CIA connections. Tony Benn is a concealed enemy of the British working class, and it's much easier for him to conceal that as long as Denis Healey's around. That's why we say drive NATO/CIA-lover Healey out of the Labour Party. We want it to be clear to every worker that Labour doesn't need the CIA connection to betray.

The bourgeoisie think that a Labour Party headed up by Tony Benn, with his talk about unilateralism, would be out of step with the Cold War. The recent Blackpool conference proved that the Labour Party was determined to demonstrate its fitness to be a governing party for the British bourgeoisie. That's why it witchhunted the left. It was giving a pledge that it would continue to be a Cold War party that would push austerity down the throats of the British working class. That's not to say that the schism be-



Protectionist poison sets worker against worker: American car workers smash up Japanese import (left), British workers protest American import.



London, 7 June anti-Reagan protest: Trotskyist Spartacist League takes a clear stand against imperialist anti-Soviet war drive.

people who brought you Pearl Harbor.' Right now American car workers are being encouraged to smash up Japanese cars, and there's growing resentment in Europe and America over the importation of Japanese technology. It was economic warfare by British and American imperialism against the 'Japanese trade menace' in the 1930s that led direct to Pearl Harbor. So this advertisement isn't very funny.

Economic defence of British capitalism will one day translate itself into military defence. That's the role of social democracy historically. Ever since 1914 the social democrats have sent the workers off to war to fight for capitalism when it comes down to it.

Chauvinism and protectionism isn't only about increased nationalist hysteria against foreign workers outside this country. It also means increased racism against minorities who are actually in this country. The Tories are on a big 'law and order' campaign now. That's a codeword for: gun down blacks and Asians with impunity.

But the assault on minorities in this country didn't start with the recent Tory government. It was prepared by Labour. The Nationality Act is no exception. Labour prepared it, and now the Tories are enacting it. Immigration laws under capitalism will necessarily be racist. They even have a new word -- 'removals' -- that reminds you of South Africa, where blacks get removed from the white areas back to bantustans. In 1980 something like 910 people were 'removed' from Britain, more than ten times the number a decade ago.

So blacks and Asians are getting it in the neck and what are the Labour Party leaders doing? Nothing, of course. They're the ones who had the virginity tests for Asian women. The trade unions? Nothing. Recently there was this outrageous stuff about the National Union of Seamen (NUS). These NUS bureaucrats have been taking money from the shipowners for a number of years now, in order that the shipowners can employ Asian crews at an eighth of the wages paid to British workers, and something like 10 per cent of the NUS union funds comes from this source -- from the shipowners. Jim Slater, who heads up the NUS, is another supporter of *Straight Left*, and the NUS treasurer McCluskey is head of Labour's National Executive Committee. All they can say about this outrage is that 'the continuance of this practice is a disgrace to the British flag'. Well, it's certainly a disgrace to the British working class and the working class internationally. But it's entirely in keeping with the traditions and practice of the British Empire.

For union/minority defence guards to crush the fascists!

Now the immigration controls have been extended internally so that you have NHS and Department of Employment race checks going on. We want trade union action to smash the race checks. That means fighting inside the trade unions for a communist programme to link up the struggles of the specially oppressed with the working class. It means fighting on an internationalist revolutionary programme that cuts across the kind of nationalist, chauvinist divisions that are reinforced by the trade union leaders themselves. All the Labour Party can come up with is

the promise that their next round of immigration laws will be 'non-racist', which effectively boils down to the fact that all deportees will have the right to appeal.

Anti-Sovietism and increasing racist terror go hand in hand. The anti-Soviet climate allows the fascists to rally around the Union Jack as the true patriots and it gives them the chance to parade their genocidal nationalist programme. The fascists are the shock troops of capitalist reaction and it's a question of force against force: the force of workers and minorities against theirs. So we want to build trade union/minority defence guards. We don't want any debate with these creeps and we don't call on this racist capitalist state to protect workers and minorities from fascist attacks. That's what the ANL did -- it called for state bans -- the CP did that as well. They relied on the bourgeois state to deal with the fascists. But one day, especially with Britain going down the tubes the way it is,

it's going to be the bourgeoisie who will be relying on the fascists. So no debate with these creeps! No reliance on the British state! For independent class mobilisations!

For the past year or two most of our leftist opponents have been burying themselves inside the Labour Party. It's interesting to see the relationship between cuddling up with social democracy on the one hand and the abandonment of any kind of formal Leninist position on the state on the other hand. For example, after last year's riots in Liverpool, Brixton etc, both the International Marxist Group and Socialist Organiser came out with stuff which basically boiled down to community control of the cops. It's what the CP has been pushing for years; the CP has been publishing interviews with top cops for years. They think they can reform the police force.

The Militant tendency think that the cops are part of the workers movement; they want them to be organised. That's the last thing we want -- for them to be organised -- but it's what the cops want. Unlike our leftist opponents we don't think that you can have community control over the cops. They're part of the British state. We want to smash the British state.

The Revolutionary Communist Party has their Workers Against Racism (WAR), which is a single-issue anti-racist campaign. On a recent demonstration against racist deportations in Birmingham that the Spartacist League built a contingent for, neither the RCP nor WAR raised the question of down with bourgeois immigration controls. When we asked, why didn't you raise this rather elementary slogan, what they said was they're building a broad-based movement and people might not agree with it. Well that's precisely what ANL was about. The RCP think you can fight racism apart from the overall struggle against capitalism, and that small groups of leftists can declare themselves 'workers defence guards' and substitute for the organised working

class. But behind the fascists stand the cops, and not only is this sort of substitutionism a dangerous set-up for minority communities, but it's based on the same illusion that you can rely on the bourgeois state to be neutral. That's what the CP and ANL think too.

We seek to build a revolutionary alternative. We want to build a party which represents the interests of all the oppressed and unites them in common struggle on a revolutionary programme -- a party of workers, women, racial minorities, gays. But in order to smash capitalism and racial oppression you have to harness the power centrally located in the working class. In order to harness that power, you have to fight for the Trotskyist programme. That means telling the truth to the working class. And today especially it means saying which side of the Cold War you take. Particularly since the beginning of the anti-Soviet war drive, our leftist opponents who have refused to come out for unconditional military defence of the USSR against imperialism have been resorting to exclusions, physical violence and slander against us. It's been tried against Bolsheviks before -- it's called the 'Big Lie'. So CND calls us 'pro-Soviet' and 'pro-violence' -- setups for state repression -- because we're the only group that stands out clearly against their 'pacifist' anti-Sovietism and organise Soviet-defencist contingents and fight to win people away from dangerous illusions in disarmament. And it's not just the Russian question. For example, when the Republicans tried to restrict the hunger strike campaign last year to a liberal, 'humanitarian' programme, our left opponents capitulated of course. So effectively we were the only organisation that fought for the elementary demand for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. Of course, they tried to exclude us.

The Spartacist League is for the unconditional military defence of the USSR against imperialism because the social gains of the October 1917 Revolution still remain, but the Stalinist bureaucracy can't defend those gains with their policies of detente. That's our task: defend the gains which exist and build an internationalist party to extend those gains. Smash capitalism in the West and oust the Stalinist bureaucracies in the East through political revolution. Capitalism breeds fascism and war and we want to build a workers party to fight for workers revolution. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETINGS

THATCHERISM BREEDS RACISM/FASCISM/WAR!

Speaker: Cheryl Myall, SL Central Committee

PLUS

Eyewitness account of Washington DC labour/black anti-Klan demonstration

Speaker: Mary Jo McAllister, SL/US Central Committee

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Workers Power: Two, three many lines on Cuba

Russian question: Acid test for Trotskyists

We reprint below an abridged transcript of a talk by Eibhlin MacDonald of the Spartacist League Central Committee in response to Workers Power's recently published book 'The Degenerated Revolution'. Originally prepared for a proposed debate in Birmingham on 13 November, the presentation was made at our own meeting that day when WP precipitously cancelled the debate (see letters below).

It's unfortunate that in presenting this we don't have Workers Power to stand up there and defend this programme. Twenty years ago we, the Spartacist tendency, came up with this position on Cuba, and we're very proud of that. Because it was not just a question of Cuba or of Latin America. When you talk about the deformed workers states you're talking about the Russian question and Workers Power has taken this position in a period of Cold War, when the Russian question happens to be key.

In the El Salvador civil war, for example, a very clear attempt by Reagan to 'roll back Communism' beginning in Latin America, it was the Spartacist tendency who raised the slogan that 'Defence of Cuba and the USSR begins today in El Salvador!' Similarly on Afghanistan we stood with the Red Army against the Islamic reactionaries, against Solidarity's counterrevolution in Poland, because the point is programme has consequences.

But it's not what Workers Power understands by programme. They're known for supporting Solidarnosc counterrevolution, in Poland, admitting that it is counterrevolution, support for Khomeini in Iran, and 'strategically' they're for the Red Army to withdraw from Afghanistan (tactically they're for it to stay there, so they only have a tactical difference with the whole of imperialism, the whole of social democracy and the rest of the left). And despite repeated threatened naval blockades of Cuba and Nicaragua, never once on Workers Power's banner do you see the question raised 'Defence of Cuba', never. It's only for their bulletins, it's only for nice little discussions -- it doesn't have any consequences for them. And, it's important to understand, this comes in the period of Cold War. It is a minor statement to social democracy, which means it is a statement to the bourgeoisie: on the key class questions of the day we will come down on the side of the bourgeoisie, like on Poland for example. But there are contradictions within it as well.

What happened in Cuba?

Concretely in Cuba the question was posed in the following way. If a petty-bourgeois guerrilla army can overthrow capitalism and institute some kind of workers state -- and this was done in a situation not previously envisaged by Trotskyists -- without the independent mobilisation of the working class, then was there a role for Trotskyist parties? To put it another way, does this call into question some of the fundamental elements of Marxism that we were brought up to believe -- that it is necessary to smash the bourgeois state in order to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat; the programme for permanent revolution, the necessity in a backward country for the working class to stand in its own name for the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to achieve national independence, land reform and economic development; and the related necessity for the working class to be led by a Leninist vanguard party. We believe that in fact these elementary positions were vindicated by what happened in Cuba and not contradicted.

When you apply these things to Cuba you see that there is no independent role for the petty



Dictator Batista's prisoners liberated by Castro's July 26th Movement January 1959. Four years later, Castro as Stalinist bureaucrat in Moscow.

bourgeoisie as a class -- they cannot rule as a class for itself, they are forced to choose between either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. The circumstances in which this was brought about were pretty exceptional historical circumstances. These petty-bourgeois forces smashed the bourgeois state and they desperately tried to find a third way, just as in Nicaragua today they try to find a third way. But they were unable to do so.

The only thing they, the Castro forces, were able to create was a workers state which was qualitatively deformed, qualitatively different from a revolutionary workers state. That's very important because what that means for us is that for a workers state such as Cuba, led by Stalinists or brought about by petty-bourgeois forces, there is a blood line between that and a revolutionary workers state. It is the blood line between Trotskyism and Stalinism, the programme for political revolution.

Let me go through what actually happened in Cuba and our analysis of the situation. When Castro's rebel army occupied Havana in January 1959, it was a petty-bourgeois army and it was supported by nearly all sections of the population, the undifferentiated mass of the population. The bourgeois state of Batista was smashed and the decisive power rested with Castro's rebel army. In the process of the civil war they had become, at least temporarily, separated from the bourgeoisie in Cuba which was

where they had their political origins, in oppositional elements within the bourgeoisie.

Now one of the things at stake here is the Marxist analysis of the state. We believe with Lenin -- he quotes Engels in 'State and Revolution':

'Engels elucidates the concept of power which is called the state.... What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons etc at their command.' So that's the core of the state. But to establish the class character of the state the question is: These special bodies of armed men, what property forms will they defend? This was a problem for the July 26th Movement, the guerrilla army of Castro. Because it was not clear what property forms these people would defend. They had two options essentially after the military victory: one was to reestablish their old ties to the Cuban bourgeoisie and necessarily that would have meant to reestablish their old ties to imperialism. The other one was to economically expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class. At one point a right wing element in Cuba led by Matos attempted a coup. The guy could have won. You would not have had a workers state in Cuba if he had won. The situation was allowed to remain indeterminate. This government could exist without having decided which kind of property forms they were going to defend for a period of one and a half years mainly due to the absence of the proletariat as an organised force led by a Trotskyist party. That's very important in what we're saying.

So, what we say is that from January 1959 until August of 1960 when the decisive nationalisations took place no state in the Marxist sense could be said to have existed in Cuba. What we mean by the decisive nationalisations are those key sectors of industry in Cuba -- it was particularly oil and sugar, the banks had also been nationalised. What was decisive about those nationalisations was that they meant the expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class.

Now, before going on it's important to outline what exactly is the dictatorship of

the proletariat, because that's key in talking about the class character of the state. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, power is in the hands of an armed force which will necessarily expropriate the bourgeoisie. So it's not always a question of nationalisations; it's not always economic expropriation. In China we say that the dictatorship of the proletariat was established with the military victory of Mao's army in 1949. The reason for that is the relationship that Mao's (petty-bourgeois) army had to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie in China and internationally wanted nothing for the Chinese Communist Party but to wipe them out, decisively destroy them. They had made that quite clear in the process of the struggle that had taken place.

'The Russians are coming?'

There's another very important point to be made, about the role of the Soviet Union and of the Stalinist party in Cuba at the time. It's important to remember that the bourgeoisie internationally were in a total frenzy because they thought this was a Russian plot to subvert the whole of Latin America. That belief in Soviet expansionism was also reflected within the workers movement; it was expressed within the Trotskyist movement under a theory called 'structural assimilation'. What this fundamentally believed was that all these social over-

turns, all these revolutions that had taken place, were either carried out directly by the Stalinists, by the Soviet Army, or by their surrogates in another country.

There is great difficulty in applying this to Cuba. The existence of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state was vital in making sure that a deformed workers state was a viable outcome. But both the Soviet Union and the Stalinist party, the PSP, were marginal in the actual overturn. The Cuban Communist party actually opposed the July 26th Movement for quite a long period and said they were adventurist. Of course the Soviet Union did have an interest, once the Batista state was smashed, in using Cuba as a club in bargaining with the US on the table of peaceful coexistence.

Workers Power have borrowed from the theory of structural assimilation, this belief in Soviet expansionism, the fear that 'the Russians are coming, the Russians are coming'. When they talk about the post-war period in Eastern Europe they say that it was 'Stalin's hold on Eastern Europe' that 'called forth the Truman Doctrine'. So it was really Stalin's fault! Stalin took such a hard unconciliatory stand toward imperialism that Truman was forced to introduce the Cold War, right? That's clearly not what the Stalinists are about.

'Government' and 'state'

According to Workers Power Cuba became a deformed workers state in 1962. China became a workers state in 1953. In every situation that they look at, in all of the deformed workers states, the decisive thing for them is the introduction of planning in the economy. There's a joke -- if you take this to its absurd conclusion, the class character of Cambodia was decided by Pol Pot's plan which was 'eat your neighbour'. Now there's a point about this. To see the class character of the state purely in terms of the economy is fundamentally social democratic. It denies that the state power is armed bodies of men, which was Lenin's position. Throughout this turgid document the one question that Workers Power manages to avoid all the way is what is the class character of the state in this intervening period either from 1959 to 1962 in Cuba, '49 to '53 in China, or whatever?

In 'Cuba and Marxist Theory' we make it very clear on the question of Cuba: at no point was there a 'petty-bourgeois state', nor a 'transitional state'. There was a petty-bourgeois government, not a class-neutral one. Workers Power refers to our use of the term 'petty-



Stalinist NLF takes Saigon in 1975. For Workers Power, this was a 'counterrevolutionary social overturn' which retarded class consciousness. Who are they kidding?

bourgeois government' and their big polemic against us hinges on this: 'Does this mean we have a petty-bourgeois state, based on a petty-bourgeois mode of production?' -- when we have simply repeated in *Marxist Bulletin* no 8 that there was not. But this confusion between the state and the government is not something that Workers Power thought up; they're not very original in this because Lenin had written this polemic against Kautsky on that very question.

The question that we wanted to pose to them very sharply today: either you share Kautsky's stupidity or you share his conception of the state -- the conception that the state doesn't have to be smashed but can somehow be transformed; it can be a bourgeois state and suddenly someone thinks of an economic plan and by some kind of magic process you have a workers state. What they give us in place of an analysis of the class character of the state in this period is the following not very enlightening description. They said that in 1959 from January you had 'dual power' which ended in October/November when 'Castro was forced decisively to strike at the bourgeoisie outside and inside the July 26th

Movement effectively ending the latter as a popular front'. First you have 'dual power', then you have a 'bourgeois workers and peasants government' and then you have this real innovation, a 'bureaucratic anti-capitalist workers and peasants government', and the state peacefully evolved through these processes of government without them actually saying what the state form was in that period.

There's a point about this. A bonapartist regime in power is the very antithesis of dual power. Let me make a point about what dual power is. It's a certain precise point in a revolutionary situation where you have two hostile class forces. They're organised, they're armed and they're in battle. In order to resolve a dual power situation you have either a revolution or a counterrevolution, one or other class wins. I have a quote from Trotsky in *History of the Russian Revolution* on the question of dual power which he described as a 'twofold sovereignty'. He said: 'To overcome the anarchy of this twofold sovereignty becomes at every new step the task of the revolution or the counterrevolution.' According to Workers Power, you had this 'dual power' situation not just in Cuba but in Eastern Europe and in China and everywhere that a deformed workers state was created. You had 'dual power' but it was resolved by Castro. But the thing they don't tell us is, if this was dual power which class won?

You see the methodological problem here is that the polarisation in the government -- the kicking out of bourgeois ministers and so forth, took place not just in the government but in relation to the trade unions, within the July 26th Movement itself -- was a reflection of a class polarisation that was taking place. For Workers Power it wasn't a reflection of this, it was its motor force. Everything took place within the government. Now, there's a reason why they use the concept of dual power in this way. They extend the concept to a point where it's totally meaningless, and what that does is to allow them to give support to any radical political formation. Why? Because it represents 'dual power' vis a vis something else to the right of it.

Their justification for example for supporting Castro was that, 'The petty bourgeois leadership around Castro represent[ed] in however distorted a form the demands and pressure of the aroused worker and peasant masses.' What that says is that Castro in some kind of 'distorted form' was a blunted instrument for revolution. If you want to see that in practice

continued on page 8

'Absolutely prepared' to call cops

Workers Power aborts debate

15 November 1982

Spartacist Britain,
PO Box 185,
London WC1H 8JE.

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is the £33.00 paid by your organisation for the 33 tickets bought for the Workers Power 'Day of Debate' on the book 'The Degenerated Revolution'. We would like to state publicly [sic] why we excluded you from this debate for your disruptive behaviour and why in

the light of this we intend to close all our public meetings to members of the Spartacist League in the future.

We invited you to debate the question of Cuba -- a commitment [sic] made some time ago -- offering your organisation a 40 minute introduction and 10 minute summing up. We also guaranteed your participation in all sessions of the day-long meeting on the basis of 8 minute contributions. Rejecting this offer of a genuine discussion alongside other tendencies at the meeting -- the Workers Socialist League, Revolutionary Communist Party etc -- the Spartacist League preferred to launch what was clearly a carefully planned provocation.

A week before the meeting a representative of the SL asked for a bookstall at our meeting. We made it clear that this was not possible but we were placing no restrictions on comrades selling their literature inside the hall during the day. Before the meeting started about 15 of your comrades brought in a table and set up a literature stall in flagrant disregard of the rules of the meeting. Despite requests for you to remove it, you made clear that you were physically prepared to prevent its removal. As you ignored the stated time limit given the leader of your delegation to remove it, we asked everybody to leave the building, informing you we were only prepared to discuss your re-entry on the basis of guarantees to obey the

discipline of the meeting. Again you refused to comply with that request instead demanding 'negotiations'. By this time you had managed to delay the start of the meeting by 30 minutes. Having warned you in advance, we asked the caretaker of Digbeth Civic Hall to remove you. This he did.

In your laughable leaflet produced soon after you declare: 'Today Workers Power called the cops on the Spartacist League....' A lie. No police were called by us or anyone else. Indeed it was your actions which were designed to provoke a situation where the police would have intervened. If our stewards had set about physically removing you, certainly the police would have been called by the management and exposed both our organisations to arrests. That is why your actions were a provocation and a clearly planned one at that. The phone call the previous week; your carefully prepared in advance 'exclusion' placards that our comrades spotted even before the incident took place; your cameraman carefully brought along and placed next to your bookstall and your room booked across the road for your own meeting, all expose the hollowness of your spontaneous 'indignation' at being removed.

Clearly for your own reasons you wanted to avoid a debate on the Cuban question, planning instead the maximum disruption of our meeting. These actions only confirm the fact your organisation has degenerated to nothing more than a cult which has to increasingly seal itself off from external discussion to ensure the faithful hear only your own preachers. We are pleased to inform you that you failed to break up our meet-

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Birmingham, 13 November: SL protests Workers Power exclusion: '2, 3, many lines on Cuba--No wonder, no debate'.

Debate...

(Continued from page 7)

ing which went ahead in an orderly, disciplined and democratic fashion, with all the tendencies present being given ample time to argue their positions.

In the past we have publically [sic] defended your right to march on demonstrations, however provocative your slogans. We have also criticised other left groups for excluding the Spartacist League from their public forums. We did this on the basis of our own experience of your conduct at our meetings. We now realise that your previous willingness to obey the discipline of our meetings was only a tactical decision on your part. From now on no member of the Spartacist League will be allowed into any Workers Power meeting.

Workers Power Political committee.

5 December 1982

Dear comrades,

We received your letter justifying your political exclusion of the Spartacist League from the 13 November 'day of debate' on the 'Degenerated Revolution' in Birmingham. Let's set the record straight. You had refused any prior negotiations regarding the debate format. We mobilized more than 50 of our supporters and contacts to participate. You rapidly determined that you would abort the scheduled debate on Cuba and seek our exclusion, seizing as a pretext our establishment of a literature stall, unsanctioned by your petty proprietary rules. Your hysterical opposition to our literature table escalated into an edict that all our supporters leave the building. Stuart King of your political committee publicly announced he was 'absolutely prepared' to see the racist, bourgeois police called in to enforce the exclusion. Having concocted a Spartacist 'disruption', you now feign indignation and tell us we are to be excluded from all future Workers Power public meetings. All this because of a literature stall? Hardly.

What is really going on here, comrades? You aborted the debate for your own political reasons. For two years we sought this debate, for two years you evaded. Just who are you to prattle on about workers democracy? For years you refused to hold public meetings in London just to avoid us. Your Sheffield branch came up with an innovation -- 'invitation only' meetings to which our supporters were uniquely not invited. Just six months ago, a member of your organisation broke a beer glass over the head of an SL supporter when you couldn't answer us politically, a despicable act of thuggery you were forced to publicly repudiate. Now you fabricate a Spartacist 'disruption', claim this was 'designed to provoke a situation where the police would have intervened' and thus create a blanket excuse for repudiating workers democracy and inviting the bourgeois authorities into the workers movement. You state in your letter, 'In the past we have publically [sic] defended your right to march on demonstrations, however provocative your slogans.' It is clear that in your eyes our politics are a provocation.

Politics today are increasingly determined by the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive. The opportunist fake leftists, WP included, are falling all over each other trying to show they're the best fighters against Russian 'totalitarianism'. Support to counterrevolutionary Solidarosc is a ticket to respectability, most immediately with the social democracy, but in the final analysis with their own bourgeoisie. For our unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism in real life we are reviled and branded 'disrupters'.

The political committee of WP has now adopted the Big Lie technique so popular among fake leftists anxious to get rid of the Spartacist tendency. Just make the wildest claims, repeat them frequently, and perhaps others will pick

them up and accept them as truth. Your claim that we staged a carefully planned provocation to avoid a debate on the Cuba question is laughable. It's about as credible as the accusations of some of the American Big Liars who claim we build massive labour/black anti-fascist demonstrations only to attack them. Your comrades even 'spotted' non-existent 'pre-prepared' exclusion placards! Do you really believe we brought contacts and supporters from four cities for a stage show? Or perhaps as Menshevik centrists you really find it inconceivable for a revolu-

SL debate challenges

Workers Power, BCM Box 7750, London WC1V 6XX, 27 May 1980

Dear Comrades,

We are writing to propose a debate between our two organisations on the Trotskyist position on the Russian Question.

We are particularly interested in debating this key topic with you since your change in position, announced in the February 1980 issue of the *Workers Power*, certainly marks an important break for your tendency. However, the Spartacist tendency has long understood that the Trotskyist viewpoint on this question is of great importance.

5 October 1980

Political Committee Workers Power, BCM Box 7750, London WC1V 6XX

Dear Comrades,

Workers Power and the Spartacist League have had several exchanges on the revolutionary question to the main editorial board of the *Workers Power*. Your tendency made use of the opportunity to speak during comrade Mark Hyde's speech at the meeting on the 13th. We have made contributions following the meeting on behalf of the SL. We believe that the contributions made by our comrades Dave Hughes and myself were very valuable. We still believe that the Spartacist tendency is the only one which stands for the revolutionary line against Stalinism.

22 August 1980

Political Committee Workers Power, BCM Box 7750, London WC1V 6XX

Dear Comrades,

We have received your letter declining our proposal for a debate on the Russian question, in which you point out that you have not yet come to fully formed positions on other aspects of Stalinism. In particular we understand that in the post-war period and the implications of deformed workers states in the hands of the Red Army as the agency of the Moscow Stalinist bourgeoisie or by petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces, as opposed to a proletarian revolution under the leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard.

As we noted in the last issue of *Spartacist Britain*, the questions you are currently confronting occupied a central role in the theoretical discussion and subsequent destruction by Pabloite revisionism of the Fourth International. It was later central to the fracturing of the anti-revisionist International Committee, with the passage of the US Socialist Workers Party to the camp of the pro-revisionist Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP. We were forged in the struggle to defend the programme of the SWP against the SWP leadership's liquidationist appetites. The theoretical analysis of the Cuban Revolution elaborated in the course of that fight gave the key to a Marxist understanding of post-war Stalinism which underpins the principled programme we have unflinchingly maintained.

In order to facilitate your attempts to clarify your position on these questions, which must in its course deal with the programme and history of the Spartacist tendency, we would like to make the following proposal which you may find more appropriate to the current state of your discussions. We wish to make a substantial and synthetic presentation on our position and analysis of the deformed workers states to an appropriate body of your organisation. We would naturally be willing to give such a presentation alongside contributors from

tionary organisation to produce a leaflet, draw up a dozen placards and book a room in the space of an hour and a half.

Your organisation is caught on the horns of a political contradiction. Despite your revolutionary posturing you repeatedly come down on the side of the imperialists in the Cold War -- from Afghanistan to Poland. After two years you finally produced a book which you trumpeted as the most unique contribution to Trotskyism since Trotsky's death. Now, we're told by the speaker at your 22 November Sheffield 'public' meeting that it's just a draft discussion document! Outside the Birmingham meeting we got three different answers in as many minutes from three WP cadres in response to the simple question: 'What was the class character of the Cuban state from 1959 to 1962?' Your document borrows from Hansen, borrows from Wohlforth, borrows from us -- all in a hopelessly confused attempt to come up with something original to justify your existence as an organisation. No wonder, faced with supporters of the iSt politically prepared to fight for our politics, you ran for cover. The Spartacist tendency was born 20 years ago out of a struggle against the liquidation of Trotskyism in response to the Cuban revolution. Our programme has stood the test of time. Yours couldn't weather a single day's debate.

As we wrote in an open letter distributed to your Sheffield meeting, 'The iSt has a programme for proletarian power; WP has a programme to justify liquidation into whatever force happens to be around at the time: Khomeini's mullah-led movement in Iran, counterrevolutionary Solidarosc, the FSLN. And behind it all lies an appetite to liquidate into the left social democracy as the best "anti-Stalinists". Despite your formal disclaimer against "Stalinism is counter-revolutionary through and through", that is your real position, demonstrated in a willingness to bloc with the most reactionary forces -- from Keith Hassell's Afghan mullahs to the rabidly anti-communist, anti-Semitic Polish KPN -- against the "totalitarian", "counterrevolutionary" Stalinist bureaucracy'. Unable to defend such positions, and wracked by readily apparent internal differences you have in a frenzied fashion embarked on an escalating series of organisational confrontations aimed at sealing yourselves off from the genuine Trotskyism of

the international Spartacist tendency. It won't work! And, as we have made clear, we stand ready to debate you according to the norms of workers democracy -- any time, any place.

Len Michelson,
for the Spartacist League

Russian question...

(Continued from page 7)

you look at Nicaragua. They outline their programme for Nicaragua, and they say:

'Such a communist programme would be directed firstly to the workers and peasants, many of whom accept the leadership and strategy of the FSLN, but also to the "left" of the FSLN who claim to stand most directly for the demands of the masses. We would demand that the FSLN break with the bourgeoisie and implement the above measures -- only a government which carried through such a policy basing itself on the workers and peasants councils would really be a revolutionary workers and peasants government.'

[Workers Power, April 1982]

If the left wing of the FSLN can carry out a part of your programme then there's no need for Trotskyists in Nicaragua, just like [US SWP leader Joseph] Hansen said there was no need for Trotskyists in Cuba. You can go through a whole number of questions, for example, the popular front in Chile in 1973. Was that dual power? Under the last Labour government when they went into coalition with the Liberals was there dual power in Britain? The absurd logic of this is that there probably was.

Now, this government that was so all-powerful in Cuba, that could decide the class character of the state, here's what we are told about it: it started its life as a 'bourgeois workers and peasants government'. The 'bourgeoisie had lost all vestiges of control of its armed apparatus (the fundamental bastion of the bourgeois state had been smashed)' -- 'fundamental bastion' seems to be all important here. They say 'the bourgeoisie could only recover its rule by armed counter-revolution, ie by armed revolt from outside the state machine'. What state machine? We're not told. Proletarian state machine? Bourgeoisie's own state machine? If it was their own state machine how come they were prevented from control of their own armed apparatus? This was a very powerful government, I tell you.

Now this 'bourgeois workers and peasants government' changed its spots between August and October 1960. It carried out anti-capitalist measures, nationalisations and so forth, finally the plan. That was it. Magic, it was a workers state. How that took place we were not told. Furthermore the economic transformation could take place peacefully because the government 'had broken the political and military power of the bourgeoisie within the state'. What state? All the way through this stagist schema a state existed. What state we're not told. But you can only conclude from what they've said that it was a bourgeois state, because never at any point did they say that this was the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The other programmatic conclusion they draw is that 'this regime from its foundation could only be removed by political revolution'. What regime, the Castro regime? Political revolution in a bourgeois state? Are they organising for political revolution in Nicaragua today, when they think that the bourgeois state hasn't been smashed? They should be organising to smash the bourgeois state. Against the Sandinistas.

This whole stagist schema for the transfer of power from one class to another collapses like a house of cards if they dare to try to

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apply it to the Russian Revolution. Because you'd have to conclude at least that dual power still existed up through the period of the New Economic Policy and you would also have to conclude that the Bolsheviks presided over a 'bourgeois workers and peasants government'!

Stalinism: dual nature or counterrevolutionary through and through?

What is central to what stands between us and Workers Power -- it goes throughout this entire bulletin programmatically -- is their analysis of Stalinism and our analysis of Stalinism. They attack us for believing that 'Stalinism has a dual nature'. They say that we 'typify' this position. Well we're very proud to typify this position, if you take what Trotsky said about the dual nature of Stalinism. He said, 'Whoever fails to understand this dual role of Stalinism in the USSR has understood nothing.' That's a quote from the 'Class Nature of the Soviet State'.

But for Workers Power what this dual nature means is a dual programme, a programme which is both revolutionary and counterrevolutionary. That it has these two sides. That they attribute to us, but it is in fact their method. And here's why. In the fear that Stalinism does actually have a revolutionary side, they take as a programmatic starting point that Stalinism is counterrevolutionary through and through. Poland is the proof positive that this is their position, because they are willing to block with any force against Stalinism, even what they admit to be a counterrevolutionary force in Poland. They will block with it against Stalinism; because Stalinism is the worst possible evil. And they have in their organisation the famous Keith Hassell, who wanted to block with the Afghan mullahs against the Red Army.

Now also throughout this bulletin they have a belief, fundamentally a lie, that in every situation where a deformed workers state was created the working class was actually mobilised for power. They believe what the Stalinists did in those situations was to jump in when what was really posed was a proletarian revolution and create deformed workers states so that they could control it. Aside from the fact that it is not even true in these situations, if you look at an example of what happened when the proletariat is mobilised for power, that's not what the Stalinists do. A very good example is Vietnam in 1945 where the proletariat was mobilised for power. It had a Trotskyist leadership. What did the Stalinists do? They lined up with imperialism against the working class.

The other thing that is key is this belief that all of the so-called bureaucratic revolutions were 'counterrevolutionary' overturns. Now what kind of cretin would believe, as they say, that they 'retard[ed] the development of a revolutionary consciousness within the world proletariat'? There are a lot of people in Workers Power and there are probably a lot of people in this room who remember the fall of Saigon. What did it do for the consciousness of the proletariat? Retard it? So you didn't want them to win, maybe, because it would retard proletarian consciousness? When the army of the Soviet Union occupied a section of Poland before the Second World War Trotsky anticipated that they might carry out such an overturn. Far from saying that it was counterrevolutionary this is what he had to say:

'The Fourth International could not have boycotted this overturn on the ground that the initiative was taken by the reactionary bureaucracy. Our outright duty was to participate in the overturn on the side of the workers and peasants and to that extent on the side of the Red Army. At the same time it was indispensable to warn the masses tirelessly of the generally reactionary character of the Kremlin's policy [not their overturn, their policy] and of those dangers it bears for the occupied territories. To know how to combine these two tasks or more precisely two sides of one and the same task -- just this is Bolshevik politics.' [In Defence of Marxism, emphasis in original]

Now the key to knowing how to combine these two tasks is the programme for political revolution -- political revolution in order to defend, to extend the revolution and to go forward to socialism. We've seen Workers Power's vision of political revolution carried out in Poland by nationalist counterrevolutionary forces. They have this line in their paper where they have a vision of the Polish workers marching 'to their deaths clutching emblems of Pilsudski and pictures of the Pope'. But for Workers Power it is elementary that they must support this. That's what they call political revolution.

The important point about the analysis they have presented, the symposium they were having

today about the deformed workers states, is this. We have Cannon's position: 'Who touches the Russian question touches the question of a revolution.' What is central here is that what differentiates us from Workers Power is that we have a programme for power, to put the working class in power. They have a programme which is a justification to liquidate Trotskyism into whatever other force happens to be around at at the time.

Your programme is your basis for existence. So what basis is there for Workers Power's existence? There is none. In order to cobble together, to hold together, an organisation which embodies a whole spread of programmatic positions, they have come up with this deliberately confusing analysis of Cuba and the deformed workers states. But programme is key. ■

Irish women ...

(Continued from page 12)

tivist Countess Markiewicz captured the nationalist' view of women:

'Today women attached to national movements are there chiefly to collect funds for the men to spend. These Ladies' Auxiliaries demoralise women, set them into separate camps, and deprive them of all initiative and independence.' (Irish Citizen, 23 October 1915, quoted in Purdie and Morgan, Ireland: Divided Nation, Divided Class)

The Provisional IRA and its political wing Sinn Fein carry forward this inglorious tradition today. Their programme *Eire Nua* ('New Ireland') has in the past explicitly stated that 'we are totally opposed to abortion'; their more recent tract 'Women in Ireland' says nothing about abortion. A motion committing Sinn Fein to opposing the referendum campaign was defeated at its recent conference. And in 1977 they issued a leaflet in Belfast which cited the 70,000 'babies killed' following the 1967 British Abortion Act as evidence of 'Brit oppression'. If, as Marx paraphrasing Fourier remarked, 'social progress can be measured exactly' by the status of women, then so too can political programmes be measured. *Eire Nua*, no thank you!

Irish left bows to Catholic reaction

And no thanks to the Provisionals' fake-left cheerleaders either. Since Green nationalism's politically reactionary character is exposed clearly on the woman question, the bankruptcy of those pseudo-Marxists who tail this nationalism has also been thoroughly and disgracefully exposed during the present anti-abortion crusade. Virtually every ostensibly revolutionary group in the country is affiliated to the Anti-Amendment Campaign (AAC), the chief organisation campaigning against the referendum. Yet this campaign refuses to call for the repeal of abortion laws, let alone free abortion on demand! Instead it is a bloc between fake leftists, feminists, liberal and not-so-liberal petty-bourgeois and bourgeois forces (including many anti-abortionists!) around a programme which explicitly defends the maintenance of the present constitution.

The AAC argues that the referendum should be stopped 'because it is not needed, and it will help nobody... Abortion is already illegal in the Republic' (*Socialist Republic*, November 1982); moreover, 'it's a complete waste of money'. They even claim that 'This referendum has nothing to do with the pro or anti abortion question!' As the pseudo-lefts happily hold hands with the Protestant clergy, they enthusiastically endorse this nonsense. The Socialist Workers Movement (fraternal to the SWP) argues that 'the first priority is to keep the question open' (*Worker*, July/August 1982), while People's Democracy (co-thinkers of the IMG) chimes in that 'Many within the campaign feel that abortion is still an emotive issue' (*Socialist Republic*, August 1982). PD's solution? Don't mention abortion when you campaign against anti-abortionists!

The small centrist Irish Workers Group (IWG -- co-thinkers of the British Workers Power) is

not affiliated to the AAC, proclaiming the need to 'swim against the "historic traditions" of Orange pro-imperialism or Green nationalism' (*Class Struggle*, Winter 1982/83). But in practice the IWG offers up exactly the same capitulation as their fake-left opponents. While having a formal position for 'abortion on demand' in the pages of their journal, they explicitly refuse even to call for 'the provision of clinical abortion facilities' in their proposed anti-referendum campaign. Instead the crowning demand of their proposed 'united front' is 'for free legal safe contraception on demand'. This is a straight capitulation to 'liberal' Catholic backwardness, as is the IWG's assurance to squeamish clergymen that it too shares their distaste for 'the painful choice of abortion'.

The opportunists who today bow to clerical nationalism in Ireland are the same people who four years ago were cheering Khomeini's clerical mass movement towards power in Iran, hailing the barbaric Islamic veil as an 'anti-imperialist symbol'. So far removed are these pseudo-leftists from Marxism that, from Iran to Ireland, they are unable to fight for even such elementary demands of the bourgeois revolution as the separation of church and state.

Genuine communists would say to women, the working class and all the oppressed of Ireland: this anti-abortion crusade must be defeated because it will strengthen the chains of oppression on Irish women and reinforce the most backward clericalist reaction throughout society. Our goal must be the repeal of all abortion laws, free abortion on demand, along with free, readily-available contraception and quality socialised medical care, maternity/paternity leave on full pay and free 24-hour child care. We must stand for the elementary democratic demand of the separation of church and state and universal secular education. But such demands cannot be secured in any lasting way in backward capitalist Ireland. The key to a successful struggle is the mobilisation of the Irish proletariat, North and South, Catholic and Protestant, men and women against capitalist rule -- necessitating a sharp break with nationalism and accompanying clericalism.

It is only an apparent irony that the same fake revolutionaries who capitulate to Green nationalism in the North and thus write off the Protestant proletariat as an irredeemably reactionary mass now find themselves embracing the Protestant clergy in the South. In both cases it reflects a capitulation to backward consciousness. The intertwined social and national questions in Ireland can only be resolved through a proletarian mobilisation for state power on both sides of the border and both sides of the Irish Sea. The status of women in the North -- which does not even have the minimal divorce or abortion reforms extended to women in Britain -- differs scarcely from that in the South. And poverty and economic devastation ravage both the Six and Twenty-six Counties.

In 1917 the Russian Bolsheviks led the workers in revolution thus opening the road to the liberation of all the oppressed from wage-slavery and benighted reaction. The Bolsheviks were able to organise women, centrally working women but also women from other social classes won to a revolutionary outlook, not around the illusions of feminism but as disciplined fighters in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat. The road mapped out by the Russian Revolution is the road for Irish liberation today. Only a Trotskyist party committed to the programme of proletarian revolution can transcend the conflicting claims of the Irish Catholic and Protestant peoples, counterposing to both Orange and Green nationalism the perspective of united class struggle. Only this perspective can break the long-suffering Irish masses from the grip of imperialism and clerical reaction, whether of Paisley or the pope, and impel them on the road to social emancipation. Smash the reactionary crusade against Irish women! For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles! ■



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Eyewitness account: 'Shadow of reaction over Iranian women'

The following is an excerpted interview with two Iranian women who recently returned from visits to Iran. For an earlier interview with comrade A, see Spartacist Britain no 38, December 1981/1982.

Spartacist Britain: You've both been back to Iran several times now since Khomeini took power. What is the status of women today and how has it changed every time you've been back?
A: First of all, the left were saying the veil is an anti-imperialist symbol for Iranians. But really the veil is a symbol of oppression of women, it means that women should be confined at home. The first year you could go out without a scarf or in short sleeves and then the year after you had to wear the long sleeves. This year you have to wear a long scarf with which the hair should be completely covered and you should be wearing a loose coat which was a uniform, and then you have the thick stockings or trousers. And besides there are all sorts of anti-woman laws which are being implemented. When I was in the airplane an hour before it landed we passed the border and I saw all the women started to put their uniform on and wear a scarf and cover their hair. I didn't know what was happening, because I knew I have to wear a scarf but I didn't know I had to have a uniform.
F: I think that women felt the shadow of reaction coming closer and closer and at last dominating the whole society. Life isn't guaranteed in Iran, especially for women. When you go out of your place, people say you have to have your will written. You do not feel secure outside. At any time there might be an attack on you and they take you to a Komiteh for no special reason.

Spartacist Britain: What has been the effect of the clerical laws of the regime on the working class?

A: The standard of living has decreased a lot. Besides the war, they asked the workers to work longer hours and even sometimes they have to work on the weekends, and they are not paid for the extra hours. There have been strikes, sit-ins, protesting against that -- which were met with arrests and sacking the workers, or beating them, or putting them in jail. A lot of the Islamic Societies are really run by Hezbollahi in the factories; they used to call them shoras. They are there to be spies. All the left tried to get into the factories and get into those Islamic Societies, and they were either put in prison, or executed, or were sacked.

Spartacist Britain: In the war with Iraq, we called for defeatism on both sides, to fight for the revolutionary overthrow of both regimes. What has been the effect of the military victories Iran has had in the war?

A: It has consolidated the regime. Definitely the repression is increasing, not decreasing. Fedayeen Minority were saying we have to end the war, bring the peace and rebuild the area which was destroyed by the war, and if we want to do that we have first to get rid of Khomeini. But what is our alternative to Khomeini, they don't say. Peykar was the only organisation who opposed the war. They really didn't call for revolutionary defeatism. They just said the war is dirty, unjust. No grouping calls for revolutionary defeatism.

Spartacist Britain: How much discontent is there in the army?

A: First of all, the pasdaran are really the main military force in Iran. Relative to them the army hasn't got so much power. The other thing is, some of the army -- who are, let us say, middle class -- are repelled by Khomeini's mediaevalism, the way in which society is run and that's why they're opposing him. The army is not viewed as reliable by the regime at all. I heard, perhaps in August, there were about 71 army officers executed. Sometimes they just ask them to come back from the front and they execute them. I think they are really all the time

afraid of a coup.

F: I've heard that in the front they do not give ammunition straight to the army, they prefer to give it to pasdaran first. If they can eradicate the army in the very sensitive posts they do it and replace them with pasdaran. But at the moment they cannot.

Spartacist Britain: What's been the result of Khomeini's repression on the left?

F: I talked to one supporter of the Fedayeen Minority. He was once quite active, but he's completely passive and demoralised and he doesn't know exactly what is happening or what



he is going to do.

A: It's true, most of the left, even if they are not in any organisation -- because of their past, all those leftists who spent some time in shah's jails, they are now all on a blacklist.

Spartacist Britain: For opposing the shah?

A: Yes, because they know those are leftists and so they are the ones maybe who are now opposing Khomeini. So they are mainly arrested for that reason, or they are sacked from their jobs. None of them has got a job. You don't see any organised opposition to the regime because leftists are really confused, demoralised -- they don't know what happened because of their conception of the two-stage revolution. Finding a nicer bourgeoisie is very hard. They just say, Khomeini betrayed, Khomeini gave a lot of promises he didn't carry out. They don't see that the way out is to make a proletarian vanguard party to carry out the proletarian revolution.

Spartacist Britain: When the other left organisations supported Khomeini they said he was anti-imperialist. We said he was an anti-communist. To this day the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union still gives support to Khomeini, as does the Tudeh party. How does he repay them?

A: Khomeini is not anti-imperialist, he's anti-Westernisation. He has got all the ties with imperialism. He gets his arms from American imperialists -- not directly, but through Israel or Spain or Argentina or through international dealers. Also he has lots of economic deals with American imperialism and with Japanese imperialism. I don't see any anti-imperialism. It's just a slogan. Hezbollahi and audience after each speech give the slogans: 'God is great', 'Khomeini is the leader', 'Death to America', 'Death to the Soviet Union'. You see in Afghanistan which side Khomeini is on: he's helping the mujahedeen in Afghanistan, arming them and being on their side.

Even the Tudeh party -- they are Moscow-loyalists -- and yet Khomeini is on the side of the Afghan mujahedeen -- so which side are they on? On the one side supporting Khomeini, and Khomeini says he wants to bring the same Islamic revolution to Afghanistan, that the Afghan mullahs should rule the country. Also he wants to bring Islam to Soviet Central Asia. Every night you see the news, especially on TV, and they are reporting 100, 200, 300 Russians killed by mujahedeen, or Afghan army killed by mujahedeen. In a year you'd think, the Soviet army is dead.

The Tudeh party has got a long history; it's seen as the party of the proletariat; it's seen as the communist party of Iran by the proletariat, as the party to carry out a similar socialist revolution as happened in the Soviet Union. That's why the Tudeh party has a lot of support among the working class in different periods of history. But they never stood for the independence of the proletariat, so basically they supported all the time the bourgeoisie, which sometimes included the shah. So they are really discredited for their betrayals. At the moment the way they are giving support to Khomeini, I don't know even if they have any support among the workers, because what are they offering?

Spartacist Britain: Has there been any evidence of Tudeh leading strikes?

A: Oh no, surely not, not against the regime. They are with the regime. They are just asking the regime, please do this, please do that -- that's as much as they do.

Spartacist Britain: What are the Mujahedeen doing now?

A: They have terrorist activity against Khomeini and Khomeini's officials. They might have some support in the schools, but that's all. They don't have really mass support. They want a more democratic Islamic society -- and certainly they want capitalism. You shouldn't have illusions.

Spartacist Britain: The Mujahedeen are in an alliance with Bani Sadr. How is he viewed by people who don't like Khomeini?

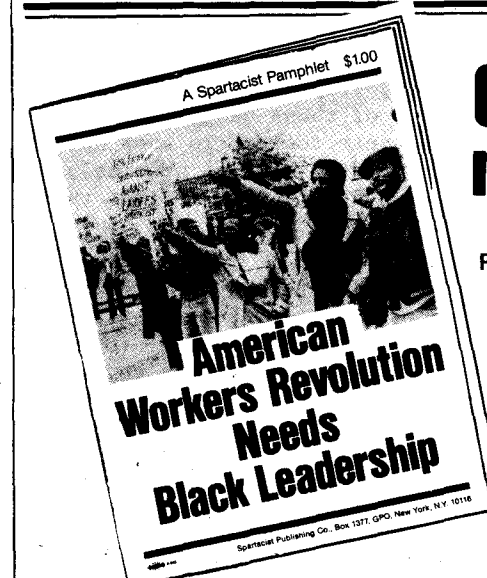
A: Once they were saying 'anything is better than shah'. And now they've got 'anything better than shah'. Now they say anything is better than Khomeini, no matter who it is.

F: They say, if anybody comes to Iran and turns those lights in the streets on, they will rule the country -- the street lamps are off all the time since the war.

A: They see Bani Sadr as the president of Khomeini, so they really don't have any trust in him. Actually, Mujahedeen lost some of the credibility by uniting with Bani Sadr.

Democratic rights of the oppressed masses cannot be resolved by Mujahedeen, or any capitalist takeover, or any national bourgeoisie. The bourgeois-democratic tasks can only be carried out in a workers' way -- for independence from imperialists, or the agrarian revolution, the end of the enslavement of women, the oppression of national minorities, the exploitation of the peasantry -- these can only be solved through the proletarian revolution with the support of the peasantry. There is no other way, no other alternative. ■

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Klan ...

(Continued from page 1)

ing their pants at the thought of the reception that awaited them. The KKK looked nervously down Capitol Hill where thousands of militant and defiant protesters were waiting to get at them. The police later said the Klan march was canceled because of the size and determination of this crowd. It was clear to all that the two dozen fascist creeps would never make it past First and Constitution Avenues. In the end the dejected Klansmen, their white sheets stuffed into brown paper bags, were herded by the police into a school bus and sneaked by a back route to Lafayette Park for a brief token appearance.

As the cops began retreating, demonstrators spontaneously poured into the streets. Trampling the flimsy slat fences, the crowd surged up Capitol Hill. Waving a sea of Labor/Black Mobilization 'Stop the KKK' signs, they jubilantly chanted, 'We Stopped the Klan! We Stopped the Klan!' At the top of the Hill they now spilled around the cops on the very site where the Klan would have stepped off on its march for genocide.

As rumors spread that the KKK was at Lafayette Park, the demonstrators wheeled around and marched up Pennsylvania Avenue, the very route the Klan was to have marched. The anti-KKK protesters had taken the streets of Washington, and the police simply looked on as they streamed past. As they marched past the White House hundreds of voices chanted, 'Down with Reagan, Build a Workers Party!' They streamed into Lafayette Park chanting, 'We Stopped the Klan', claiming for their own the site where the KKK had planned to stage their racist provocation.

The police, held on a tight leash all day, were looking to get back. Right in front of the White House, ringed by hundreds of cops, the racists in blue clubbed and tear-gassed demonstrators who were furious that the police had protected the Klan and escorted them safely out of town. With tear gas cannisters popping all around, we held a spirited rally in the square. Al Nelson, a spokesman for the Spartacist League declared, 'There are no white sheets here -- only the red banner of the working class.' At the end of the rally, the disciplined demonstrators dispersed without incident.

Ronald Reagan obviously thinks he's the emperor of all the Americas, while Mrs Reagan wants to combine the roles of the last tsarina and Marie Antoinette. As blacks in Washington suffer double-digit unemployment, the White House revels in opulence. The day before the announced Klan march, word leaked out of the administration's latest scheme to overcome the depressions: take away the minimum wage for

Urgent! Send money!

The Labor/Black Mobilization to Stop the KKK in Washington DC November 27 ran up some big expenses: printing costs for thousands of posters, buses, sound system, telephone, even lawyers' fees. Your money is needed to help cover them. Make cheques payable to: Labor/Black Mobilization, 210 7th St SE, Suite E12, Washington DC, 20003, USA.

child labor, and tax jobless benefits in order to make unemployment 'less attractive' to laid-off workers! Attorney General William French Smith gave the Klan march official government sanction. And on Saturday the White House announced a meeting with Botha, premier of racist apartheid South Africa! Reagan is waging a class and race war, and he wants to have the likes of the KKK in reserve. In the meantime, he seems determined to provoke a long hot summer in the dead of winter.

The November 27 Labor/Black Mobilization to Stop the KKK was just that. More than three-quarters black, the rally had been endorsed by over 50 union officials and a dozen union locals. It was lower level officials in the predominantly black locals of the traditionally conservative AFL unions in the area who gave firm support to the anti-Klan mobilization. ILA dockers' union locals supported and mobilized for the demonstration, as did postal workers, teachers and construction workers' officials and members.

Reagan's policy was that the Klan would have its way in DC on November 27. Late Friday afternoon, the day before the rally, the cops threatened to cordon off the demonstration and let no one in or out, turning our rally into a concentration camp. These arrogant police state tactics in the service of the Klan were met with an outpouring of protest from trade-union endorsers and liberal Congressmen. And no doubt memories of what happened in DC after the assassination of Martin Luther King helped to sober up the strutting cops. The next morning



the Mayor's Task Force came to say they never intended to seal off the demonstration!

Protesters streamed into the Labor/Black Mobilization for two hours. Some had come from all across the country. But the decisive element was the outpouring of thousands of angry blacks from Washington, DC, determined that their city would not be turned into a parade ground for the dreaded nightriders. Government, railroad and construction workers joined students from Howard University to stop the Klan. And they did. A monitors squad of Spartacist League forces and tough, responsible union guys worked to protect the safety of the disciplined, orderly, militant protest.

There were two key issues on the minds of protesters at the anti-Klan rally in Washington: how to stop Klan terror, and how to fight for jobs. A Spartacist League banner at the demonstration proclaimed: 'Sit-downs to fight mass layoffs! Break with the Republicans and Democrats -- Build a Workers Party!' Other banners at the Labor/Black Mobilization read, 'Stop Carter/Reagan Union-Busting -- Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross! Unchain Labor!' 'Labor/Black Defense of School Busing -- Extend it to the Suburbs -- Free Public Higher Education for All!' and 'Anti-Soviet War Drive Means Capitalist Slavery for Angolan, Afghani, Polish Masses!'

The crowd cheered Spartacist League speakers and class-struggle unionists who called for militant workers action to smash the KKK and bring down Reagan. SL spokesman Don Andrews pointed out that the Klan marches 'are the domestic reflection of Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive because the Klan, Reagan and the Democrats all say, "Let's roll back Communism from El Salvador to Poland to the Soviet Union."' Spartacus Youth League (SYL) spokesman Jackie Brooks got a roar of approval when she announced, 'The Klan can be stopped, and they will be stopped if they show up today.... Let them know that we're not just pacifist people that lay back and let them preach this race-hatred, this race-terror and continue killing.'

As the hour of the scheduled KKK march approached, the crowd moved out to line Constitution Avenue. Even the blocks-long snow fence and hundreds of police would have been unable to prevent the thousands of protesters from surging into the street and giving the KKK a well-deserved lesson. For more than an hour and a half the demonstrators chanted militantly and faced down the phalanx of cops as police officials hesitated. At 12.40pm, the Labor/Black Mobilization loudspeakers boomed out, 'We won, everybody! They're pulling out!... It's because thousands of people turned up here.'

Aside from the Labor/Black Mobilization, several much smaller demonstrations took place on November 27. The largest of these was the rally called by the All Peoples Congress (APC), a front for Sam Marcy's Workers World Party (WWP), which attracted perhaps 2000 at its peak. The APC event, miles away from the mobilization that stopped the Klan, was the usual reformist hoax, intended to exploit resentment against the KKK killers and drain it into votes for the Democrats.

Black youth, taken in by the call to 'Demonstrate Against the KKK', grew restless as the Democratic politicians droned on about 'rolling back Reaganism' and 'focusing on the larger issues'. When a rumor spread that the Klan had appeared in Lafayette Park, those who came to stop the Klan set off to do just that. The Marcyites first pleaded with people not to go, then linked arms to stop them. The APC promised anti-Klan action, delivered frustration. Many

youth set off on their own and got clubbed and tear-gassed by the cops.

In the aftermath of the demonstration the bourgeois press has focused sensationally on violence and looting. In fact there was an absolutely modest amount of disorder, provoked by the police. The word violence itself is a lie deliberately meant to conjure up racist images of marauding black youths murdering whites. What happened was the KKK was stopped. Elsewhere, police rioted against frustrated anti-Klan protesters; the 'looting' that occurred was a police provocation. Watching network TV news one could see the cops clubbing black youth and heaving them through plate glass store windows. Of course, the bicycles in the store later disappeared. Now the gutless Marcyites are squeaking 'it wasn't us'. We say: the KKK is in the business of terrorist murder! Drop the charges against anti-Klan protesters!

Washington is not simply a 75 percent black city, it's a Southern black city. Many black residents of Washington are from families that have had first-hand experience of the terror of these racist nightriders. Feelings ran so deep that some black cops began to make gestures of solidarity, accepting leaflets, shaking hands with anti-Klan demonstrators and giving the black power salute; it is even rumored that black clerks from the CIA organized to oppose the Klan. Ground up by unemployment and poverty, subjected to the racist abuse of the Klan's preferred candidate in the White House, black people have had enough. That's why they turned out and that's why our slogan, '1, 2, 3, 4, Time to Finish the Civil War -- 5, 6, 7, 8, Forward to a Workers State', was so popular. We Trotskyists of the Spartacist League are proud to have initiated the Labor/Black Mobilization which brought out thousands of unionists and youth and actually stopped the Klan from marching. Far from being 'Saturday's shame,' as a vicious 'violence'-baiting *Washington Post* editorial claimed, this was seen as black Washington's victory.

Build the vanguard party!

The fascists are growing. They can poll hundreds of thousands of votes now. In a depression economy, desperate sections of the white working class and unemployed can be whipped up against scapegoats. The Klan calls for throwing out immigrant workers. We say everybody who has managed to make it into this country has a right to be here. No deportations! Full citizenship and union rights for undocumented workers!

Had the Klan marched in Washington backed by the Reagan government and its enormous police power, it would have given the green light to this murderous outfit to step up their terror against blacks, Jews and foreign workers. It was the intervention of the Spartacist League which made it possible for thousands of blacks to wage a successful struggle against these killers. That is why you need a Marxist vanguard party, like the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky -- to act as the collective memory of the working class, preserving the lessons of past struggles; as a tribune of the people, fighting on behalf of all the oppressed, and to organize and bring together labor and its allies in struggle against the common enemy, the racist capitalist state.

While the liberals say 'ignore the Klan', various reformists call on the capitalist government -- on KKK-endorsed Reagan! -- to 'ban the Klan' and adventurist outfits promote a 'strategy' of small-group confrontations with the cops, the SL alone has fought for mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the racist terrorists. Washington, November 27, was powerful vindication of the Spartacist League strategy: massive labor/black mobilization stops the Klan.

After the successful Labor/Black Mobilization on Saturday, the SL held a victory party at the Bellevue Hotel which was attended by over 500 participants in the demonstration. Speaking earlier at the rally, SL spokesman Don Andrews posed the issue: 'The question of building a racially integrated party of working-class revolutionaries in this country is a matter of life and death. You can see that the Klan and Nazis are organizing for race war, trying to pit blacks and whites at each other's throats, trying to inflame racial antagonism in a situation where there are increasingly desperate white people, just like blacks, who have been thrown out on the streets. We're here to build the multi-racial workers party that can lead the working class and the oppressed in this country to take power. Labor must show the way -- Smash the Nazis and the KKK! Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!'

—abridged from *Workers Vanguard* supplement, 3 December 1982

SPARTACIST

BRITAIN

Smash referendum campaign!

Free abortion on demand!

Clerical crusade targets Irish women

Seventy years ago, James Connolly described women in Ireland as slaves of slaves. Over the past year and a half, the most sinister and reactionary forces in the Irish Republic have coalesced around a vicious anti-abortion campaign to bind their chains ever tighter. Under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, anyone obtaining or assisting another to obtain an abortion is *already* liable to life imprisonment. Now the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC) seeks a constitutional amendment to enshrine 'the guarantee of the right of life to the foetus from the moment of conception' and ensure that Ireland's anti-abortion laws can *never* be repealed or amended.

This pernicious (and well-financed) crusade is a direct creation of the Catholic Church hierarchy and has enlisted the support of every major Irish political party for a referendum to change the constitution. Mass demonstrations led by nuns denounce abortion as murder. Anti-referendum meetings are drowned out by 'hymns'. School children are assigned art and essay projects about unborn babies in the horrors of Limbo. Women who have admitted having abortions and the few politicians who have spoken against the amendment are subjected to systematic harassment, including pickets and mock funerals.

With the defining feature of world politics an imperialist global 'war on Communism', the social climate has been fostered which encourages such reactionary religious crusades. America has seen the rise of the book-burning, bible-thumping 'Moral Majority'. In Poland, the Catholic Church has been the motor force behind Solidarnosc' counterrevolutionary drive. In Italy and Spain, the church has also targetted abortion.

But in Ireland even more than Southern Europe, the church is able to garner strong support by playing on the theme of nationalism which runs deep throughout society. PLAC-organised protests denounce abortion as an 'English plot to murder Irish babies'. The Campaign itself got off the ground following the government's 1981 diplomatic manoeuvres with Margaret Thatcher in pursuit of a 'confederal' agreement over the North. Fine Gael leader and then prime minister Garrett FitzGerald talked of cosmeti-



cally secularising the constitution in order to attract Northern Protestants -- and the clerical-nationalists countered with their own amendment aimed at *reinforcing* the ties between church and state.

Fianna Fail, traditionally more nationalist, quickly came out in support, soon followed by both a backtracking Fine Gael and their Labour Party coalition partners. The major bourgeois parties, running neck and neck in the recent numerous general elections and with nothing to offer working people save Tweedledee/Tweedledum policies of wage slashing and continued social and economic misery, were afraid of alienating even the tiniest portion of their potential base. As *New Statesman* (12 November 1982) journalist Mary Holland put it, 'Abortion is the one issue on which no politician in the major parties dares be seen to be "soft".'

Underlying this campaign, like those against birth control and divorce, is the defence of 'the morality and fabric' of the family -- the fundamental social institution of women's oppression under capitalism. The Irish constitution already promotes the family as the 'true' place for women, who should not be 'forced' to work outside the home. The role of religion as a bulwark of social reaction could not be clearer than in the present attempt to further enshrine in this clericalist document the enslavement of women to church, children and the hearth. It is only through the destruction of capitalism, paving the way for the socialisation of household duties and the replacement of the nuclear family, that women can achieve their emancipation. And in Ireland the lasting achievement of even such basic democratic tasks as the separation of church and state awaits the morrow of the proletarian socialist revolution. Down with all restrictions on abortion rights -- for free abortion on demand! Smash the reactionary referendum campaign! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!

The oppression of women in the South is ex-

treme. In the newly-consolidating republic of the twenties the church instigated the elimination of the existing divorce laws; even today divorce remains completely illegal. Homosexuality too is illegal, while legal contraception only saw the light of day in 1979 -- and even then in a severely restricted form. There are only nine Family Planning Clinics in the entire country (only three outside Dublin), and a 'conscience clause' in the legislation allows doctors and pharmacists to refuse to prescribe or stock contraceptives.

The Republic has the highest rate of maternal mortality in Western Europe and is second only to Northern Ireland in infant mortality. Single mothers suffer both entrenched social stigma and extreme poverty: the combined social welfare and children's allowance is about £40 a month, while inflation and the cost of living are both higher than in Britain. Women seeking abortions, an estimated 10000 a year, must either scrape together over £200 to come to Britain or risk their lives in backstreet abortions. Of course this means that it is the poor and working woman who is saddled with the butchery of the backstreet.

In Ireland today a majority of the population are still practising Catholics. However even here the church fears the erosion of its authority -- rooted in ignorance and superstition -- in an increasingly secularised world. Numbers on the 'abortion run' to Britain are rising by 20 per cent a year; there have been growing calls for liberalisation of divorce and birth control laws; and the clergy's hold over young people (more than 50 per cent of the population is under 25) is visibly slipping. Thus the carefully orchestrated and sinister counteroffensive.

The Republican tradition--against women's rights

The backwardness of Irish society today is a legacy of the centuries of British imperialist stranglehold. Marxists have always stood forthrightly against this imperialist oppression; today we demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from the northern Six Counties, defending the downtrodden Catholic community from imperialist rampage and the entrenched sectarianism of the Orange statelet. But in the mouths of fake leftists, 'anti-imperialism' becomes a code word for capitulation to Green nationalism -- which far from being 'progressive' is a proven obstacle to the liberation of the oppressed. Throughout the twentieth century Irish nationalism has had a strong, integral clerical component which is thoroughly reactionary. And this is not limited to the ruling parties of the Irish bourgeoisie in the South. Clerical nationalism and reactionary attitudes on the woman question have equally been championed by the supposed left wing of the Republican movement, with partial and honourable exceptions like Connolly.

As long ago as 1915, Irish Citizens Army ac-

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Anti-abortion reactionaries appeal to Irish nationalism.