

Down with protectionist poison!

Break Labour/TUC stranglehold

**Miners, steelworkers, NHS
all out to smash Tory attacks!**

The spectacle of Labour Party leader Michael Foot and TUC general secretary Len Murray ambling along like aging Sunday school teachers at the head of the 22 September 'Day of Action' demonstration speaks volumes about how these messenger boys for the bourgeoisie intend to 'resist' the Tory onslaught. Next month, Tebbit's bill becomes law, outlawing all solidarity action, aimed at smashing the closed shop, augmenting the already viciously anti-union Prior Act. The new Tory 'think tank' report promises an end to indexation in social security and pensions, an end to state-financed higher education, death to the already miserably inadequate National Health Service. And minority workers face everything from deprivation of social services, to deportation, to death by fascist killers. From the Labour/TUC leaders come ... speeches.

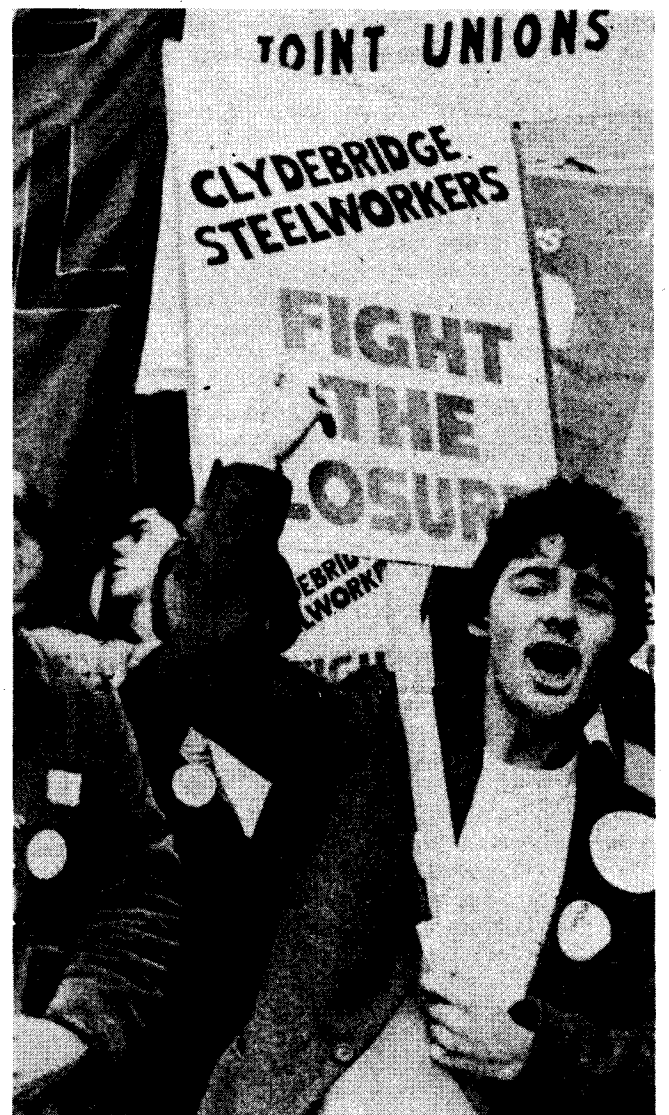
Hatred for this government runs deep. ASLEF strikers last summer were prepared to stay out even under threat of 'PATCO treatment' sackings from the Tories. Health workers have been waiting seven months for a barely minimal wage rise and have been told to drop dead. Steelworkers

facing yet another round of redundancies and closures, know that they must either save the jobs they have or never work again. The miners, who have seen sixteen pits close in the last two years and 22,000 jobs go out the window, are balloting over strike action for a 31 per cent wage rise and against a new NCB 'hit list'.

Their leaders give them only one answer: wait for a Labour government that will try harder to put Cold War depression British imperialism on its feet again. For the Labour/TUC bureaucracy, 22 September was organised not as a springboard for class struggle, but as a vehicle to cement the unity of the Labour traitors at Blackpool the following week. Whilst the Labour right wing went about its job of crippling its erstwhile left opponents, health workers were paraded around the Blackpool conference centre to rapturous applause. The siren call of the trade union bureaucracy echoed all the way down the 'Golden Mile' and beyond -- vote Labour for NATO-loyal Social Contract austerity!

Buoyed by the Falklands war, the decline of the Liberal-SDP Alliance and Labour's faction fight, Thatcher now looks forward to winning the next election even with, and over the backs of, more than three million unemployed. Her confidence says a lot about the state of Britain -- and about the state of the trade union leader-

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Blackpool's promise:

Cold War Social Contract



Len Murray, Michael Foot 'lead' 22 September Day of Action into Labourite diversion.

The trade union bureaucrats came to Blackpool, in the words of David Basnett, with 'grim determination' to see the return of a Labour government in the next election. After three years of the most turbulent factional warfare in the Labour Party for decades, this year's annual conference saw a complete and utter rout of the left -- with the TUC calling the shots. From the overwhelming vote for a witch-hunting register and purge of the Militant tendency on Monday to Tony Benn's pathetic oath of unconditional loyalty to Michael Foot on Thursday, a set-piece battle was played out whose outcome was never in doubt.

The right wing's reassertion of control was a message to the ruling class that Labour is putting its house

in order to be available for 'responsible' capitalist rule. With Militant constitutionally impaled, Benn politically prostrate and the National Executive and Shadow Cabinet solidly stacked with right wingers committed to austerity at home and a nuclear-armed NATO abroad, Labour's promise at Blackpool was a government of Cold War and Social Contract.

Defeat the witchhunt

To the dyed-in-the-wool social democrats of Militant, the witchhunt must have seemed like a supreme injustice. Their record of service to the party leadership is long and inglorious -- refusing to demand imperialist troops out of Ireland, falling into line behind Thatcher's Falklands war with their 'socialist policies' to defeat Argentina, inviting the racist cops into the union movement, dropping any defence of the thousands of youth arrested in the inner-city explosions of summer 1981 after a reprimand from the Labour leaders. Their stewardship of the LPYS has helped channel the disaffections of thousands of youth into the dead end of Labourite treachery. They achieved their modest success over the years faithfully playing by

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Pacifist patriots in a panic

Student CND leader won to

Trotskyism

When Alison Pont, founding president of Liverpool University CND, distributed a statement on the first day of Freshers Fair announcing her break from CND pacifism in favour of the Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist League (SL), it threw CND stalwarts into a frenzy of confusion and elicited considerable interest from many students. The first meeting of the university CND was 'not going to be the usual old CND meeting where we talk about how terrible nuclear weapons are', she said. Her statement argued that the first meeting of the CND society later that week debate out a resolution to 'reject any support to CND, which channels opposition to the war drive into support for the capitalist system' and to recognise rather that 'the Soviet Union must maintain the utmost nuclear vigilance against the NATO threat.... The road to peace lies through class war and the struggle for workers revolution....'

There followed three hours of heated arguments and bureaucratic manoeuvres which included attempts by CNDers on campus to get the student union first to suppress and then to censor the leaflet. This having failed, the small-time patriotic pacifists on campus contacted Merseyside CND, who in turn contacted national CND, who in turn empowered a Merseyside CND heavy to simply disaffiliate the university group if it got 'taken over'. Needless to say this blatantly anti-communist measure has never been necessary against the numerous fake-revolutionaries like the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party or International Marxist Group, whose aims are quite compatible with those of Msgr Bruce Kent and the other preachers, patriots and pacifists who run CND.

Shortly before the meeting began, a handful of campus CNDers planted themselves outside the room to distribute a statement calling on students to boycott the meeting, reiterating their commitment to dismantle nuclear weapons in 'all countries, East as well as West' and throwing out the standard CND slander that the Trotskyist SL is some sort of Kremlin surrogate, 'pro-Soviet'. This did not stop more than 35 people from attending the meeting (as compared to the 20-25 who attended the meeting called for those 'who share' CND's aims the following week). A Merseyside CND spokesman illustrated his self-avowed 'left wing' views by affirming that they would chase after even Young Conservatives in the cause of disarmament and explaining how a nuclear war could be triggered by 'a flock of seagulls'! We urge all students and youth who are mistakenly drawn to CND out of a desire to fight the anti-Soviet war drive to consider the arguments outlined by cde Pont in the letter reprinted below, explaining why she was won to the programme of proletarian revolution.

I joined CND when it was reborn as a result of the renewed Cold War following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. I supported the Soviet action simply on the grounds that it held more hope of a better life for the Afghan people, especially the women, and that the Red Army must be preferable to the religious fanatics opposing them who were reminiscent of the religious fanatics in Iran.

Like the majority of people who join CND, I was paralysed by terror of nuclear war. This became a block in my mind obliterating all other issues so that I felt that nothing could be solved until we had 'got rid of the Bomb'. That CND depends upon this fear for recruitment is evident in the continued use of the film *The War Game*, and its slogan 'Protest and survive', which emphasises that the campaign is primarily concerned with survival, that all you have to do is 'protest' in order to achieve this. I believed that nuclear war grew daily nearer because of 'increased international tension', a handy phrase for CND because it operates as a catch-all which evades the issue that there is a military confrontation between imperialism and the workers states, and that one must take a side defending those workers states -- despite degeneration under the political control of parasitic bureaucracies -- against imperialist attack. CND seemed like the perfect answer to me at the time; I had been involved in single-issue campaigns before -- pro-abortion, anti-nazis, fight the education cuts, boycott Barclays etc -- but this one seemed to override all others because it was about the survival of the planet.

In April 1981 I set up the University CND and by October had recruited over two hundred members. The trouble was that I had swallowed the CND argument that if only you could unite enough people then you could get rid of 'the Bomb'. This 'classless strategy' led to a broad church of people including out-and-out pacifists, anti-abortionists who believed that all life is sacred, feminists who argued that nuclear weapons were the result of a society dominated by 'male values' and that technological and scientific terms were part of 'man-made' language used to baffle them, ecologists opposed to all nuclear power, Christians, defenders of Britain who argued that conventional weapons were perfectly acceptable. In order for all these groups to work together, divergent views have to be suppressed; at a conference, for example, an argument which had developed between multi-lateralists and unilateralists about our being addressed by two supporters of the World Disarmament Campaign, who boasted that their campaign had the approval of Reagan and Thatcher, was stopped when a girl cried 'what are we bickering amongst ourselves for, what does it matter whether we're unilateralists or multi-lateralists, we're all Christians together'. And maybe she



SL contingent at anti-Cruise march: the communist alternative to CND pacifism.

had a point! It was suggested at the same conference that we should have a CND symbol visible for TV cameras to pick up during the pope's visit, as 'the pope is the biggest peacemaker in the world'.

'Classless' pacifism serves the bourgeoisie

In fact, CND is not classless, but a campaign which attempts to tie the working class into an alliance with the bourgeoisie, ie a popular front on a bourgeois programme. Unity is the watchword for CND but occasionally someone's politics would emerge and I would find myself horrified by the reactionary company in which I found myself. For example, it emerged in a discussion with a fellow member of the University CND that she was not only anti-abortion, but believed that the National Front had the right of free speech. On another occasion I heard some companions complain on a Hiroshima Day march that even the slogan 'Maggie out' (which is usually a safe bet on CND demos) was 'too political'. During my activities with CND I very rarely came across criticism from the left, although in the CND groups with which I was involved there were members of organisations such as the Communist Party (CP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). They too submerged their politics in order to maintain unity. On one occasion I proposed to a fellow CNDer that we have a public debate between uni- and multi-lateralists but was advised against this as it could split the campaign. I later learned that she was in the CP. Indeed CP members were only identifiable often by overheard conversations. I never heard any of the people that I later knew to be supporters of the CP talk about anything but peace and of course they avoided all reference to the Soviet Union and the question of its defence against imperialism. An SWP speaker talked about 'Jobs not bombs', suggesting that we should ask the bourgeoisie to spend their money differently, within the framework of capitalism, and all would be well. Questioned as to what means he would use to defend a revolution he agreed that a revolution would have to be defended, but that nuclear weapons were always unacceptable. This worried me at the time, for I could see that the guy was not facing up to the issue -- if he was serious about wanting to make a revolution then he should be serious about defending it.

For months I was able to get away with calling myself a socialist and devoting time and energy to organising CND, telling myself that nuclear war was the most immediate issue and that we could not have socialism until we had got rid of 'the Bomb'. None of the so-called



CND begs imperialist warmakers to 'ban the bomb'. Spartacist League fights for class war against imperialist war.

revolutionary groups within CND challenged this view. I can see now that it would have forced them to question their own role in a pacifist movement when they should have known that Lenin said 'only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not only one country, will wars become impossible'. I came to realise that there was nothing new in this attempt to unite 'all classes' against an 'overriding threat'. In the thirties we were told that socialism had to wait until we had defeated the fascists; today it is 'the Bomb'. In both cases the 'unity' is one which serves the interests of the bourgeoisie against the working class.

That CND is protecting the interests of the bourgeoisie became apparent to me only gradually. I felt uneasy with the debates in which CND tried to work out alternative defence strategies for Britain once we had got rid of nuclear weapons, thus trying to reassure those in power that CND posed no threat to the status quo. I at first solved my own unease with this, exemplified by CND's use of quotes from such sources as Lord Mountbatten, by retreating into complete pacifism. Here again I found myself in a contradiction. This left me nothing to say about the US-backed junta slaughtering workers and peasants in El Salvador, when my gut impulse was to support the guerrillas fighting the junta.

Defend the Soviet Union

In October last year I came into contact with Spartacist politics and began to examine the contradictions in my views again. I came to see that there was a consistency in my original gut

impulses over both Afghanistan and El Salvador, that the issues were those of class politics and that CND's talk of 'international tension' hid what was really going on. Although I now understood that the Soviet Union was not capitalist and should be defended against imperialist attack including by means of nuclear weapons, I could not for some time admit to myself that two years' time and energy had been wasted. I had the vague idea -- not clearly formulated -- that I was in some way helping Russia by working for Britain's unilateral disarmament. I did not see that 'better red than dead' only says that anything is better than being dead. It left me with nothing to say about Polish Solidarnosc which I came to realise was a counterrevolutionary threat to the deformed/degenerated workers states and which therefore had to be stopped. And moreover that the Polish bureaucracy, which was directly responsible for the growth of counterrevolution, would have to be ousted through proletarian political revolution -- a political revolution to reestablish the rule of the soviets, the workers councils, in defence of the socialised economy.

The Falklands war finally proved to me that CND had no answer to imperialist war. I could see no reason to support either side. I had an argument with some friends who as pacifists were CND supporters yet who now argued about the need to defend 'our' territory; thus I saw how in time of war pacifists line up with the bourgeoisie. CND came out with support to the cry to 'withdraw the fleet', lining up with little-Englander nationalism in recommending the best way to defend the long-term interests of the British bourgeoisie. CND hinted that

there were nuclear weapons on board the fleet in order to placate those 'pacifists' who wanted to go all the way with conventional war. Although I did not know the history of the position, when I heard that the Spartacist League called for defeat to both sides and 'the main enemy is at home' I knew that this was correct. I was now far from CND's position, I knew that I would have to stop working with them. For a time I considered other left groups, still unclear as to why all the left didn't join together. Then I read *Ten Days That Shook The World* by John Reed and understood what a revolutionary situation was like and that it would be crucial to build a revolutionary party based on a revolutionary programme. In reading *State and Revolution* by Lenin I finally understood the nature of the capitalist state and saw that building CND had not been harmless but that I had been constructing an obstacle to proletarian revolution.

I had joined CND because I was terrified that there was going to be a thermonuclear third world war. Now I can see that the only way to stop this happening is to work for proletarian revolution. Central to this is the defence of the gains already won for the international working class in the deformed/degenerated workers states. These gains will not be defended by the CP/Moscow-loyalists who work within CND to promote 'peaceful coexistence', but only through a strategy of socialist revolution in the west to disarm the bourgeoisie and political revolution in the deformed/degenerated workers states to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies. The only group which offers such a programme is the Leninist-Trotskyist Spartacist League. ■

'Red Robbo' runs, CP thugs move in

On the evening of 28 September, at a public meeting and film showing organised by the Communist Party branch at Sharrow in Sheffield, known CP members brutally assaulted two Spartacist League (SL) supporters outside the meeting. Did anyone see this attack? Of course not! When the dozen or so who had come to the meeting were already safely inside and there was no one to witness this thuggery, a number of CP goons came out of the room and struck out at our sellers. Having thrown one male comrade down a flight of stairs, these cowards then turned on the remaining comrade, a slightly built woman. Seizing her by the arm, CPer John Flatley kicked her, knocking her down the stairs and forcing her to require hospital treatment for a cracked rib.

This vicious attack was made known to the labour movement through an SL leaflet entitled 'Stalinist thuggery will not silence Trotskyism!' distributed to CP events, trade unions and workplaces in the Sheffield district. Among the trades unionists who signed their names to a protest statement were 11 militants from the Shepcote Lane steelworks and a member of the Yorkshire Area Executive Committee of the NUM from Hatfield Main. Union militants know from their own experiences that the trade union misleaders know no limits to the bureaucratic suppression they will employ to defend their betrayals. The CP are behaving in like manner. *Down with violence in the workers movement -- defend workers democracy!*

In fact it was the SL's effective political exposure of the CP's own catalogue of betrayals, in particular against CPer Derek Robinson, former convener at BL Longbridge, that was the immediate precursor of the attack. By the time 'Red Robbo' had reached Sheffield on 24 August as part of a speaking tour in the Yorkshire area to promote sales of the flagging *Morning Star*, so rattled were the CP by our interventions that they abandoned their own platform and shut down the meeting early rather than have to reply to our interventions! The following night at Doncaster Robinson in a frenzy tried to prevent SLers from distributing literature, telling us we would not be allowed to mention the Soviet Union in our interventions and threatening violence. In the meeting hall the CP tries to suppress our Trotskyist programme -- and outside it's vicious attacks on our supporters.

Speaking on the subject 'The Media and the Labour Movement', Robinson quickly set straight anyone who thought that the CP was going to argue for class struggle against the ruling class, complaining that with the hail of propaganda coming from Fleet Street 'anyone would think we were trying to overthrow the government with violence and force'. Of course the CP would never dream of that! Making Britain safe for capitalism is what their 'peaceful coexistence' reformism is all about. Derek Robinson himself knows all about class collaboration, like when he supported schemes for workers participation in

management at Leyland. When, despite his record of aiding management, Robinson was sacked by Michael Edwardes in November 1979, Robinson and the CP stood by Terry Duffy and ordered the thousands of men who had come out to defend him and their union to go back to work and await the outcome of a scab enquiry.

Despite his attempts to blame the working class for its defeats, Robinson, in response to a question from the floor at the Rotherham meeting, was forced to admit that struggles like the ASLEF strike had been betrayed, and maybe this had something to do with 'the quality of leadership they're given'. So who is it that has done the betraying, and just what is the 'quality of leadership' the CP gives? As the SL spokesman pointed out, it was the *Straight Left* supporter Ray Buckton who condemned the train drivers in ASLEF to isolation and thereby defeat by instructing his men to cross NUR picket lines one week before their strike began. It was the CP who, along with Bill Sirs, fought against bringing out the miners and dockers during the steel strike of 1980. It was the SL who fought to extend the strike, and turn the steel strike into a general strike to stop the ruling class attacks and put the working class on the offensive!

For all wings of the CP class struggle is something to be sacrificed in their pursuit of alliances with a non-existent 'progressive wing' of the ruling class. The CP champions 'unity' in the Labour Party behind witchhunter Michael Foot -- and even seeks 'unity' with the anti-Soviet warmongers of the SDP. Robinson told the Rotherham meeting that 'we need to appeal to the SDP because they are not a lasting influence'. So even NATO/CIA lovers like Owen and Jenkins can be persuaded into doing good things for the working class if only class struggle doesn't alienate them from the cause.

If the reminder of their betrayals in the trade unions got the CP going it was the Russian question that really gored their ox. It is precisely the impact of the anti-Soviet war drive

that is ripping the CP apart. And the last thing in the world either CP leadership-loyalists like Robbo or the pro-Moscow wing of the party wanted to talk about was the Russian question. Resisting abusive attempts to shut her up, a Spartacist speaker at the Sheffield meeting insisted on the need for the British working class to take a clear position in this war drive on the side of the Soviet Union. As she said, 'The *Morning Star* had Thatcher's line on Afghanistan, "Soviet troops out", and the *Morning Star* supported the only union Thatcher likes -- Solidarnosc in Poland.' While the SL fights to defend the Soviet Union, the CP builds the anti-Soviet CND.

Class traitor, 'drunk or sober'

And what did Robinson have to say on the Russian question? He made it perfectly clear at the Doncaster meeting: 'I would not defend the Soviet Union drunk or sober. That would be a weakness.' Little wonder that the Sheffield meeting was shut down! With the CP deeply divided between those like Robinson and the leadership who are prepared to side with Solidarnosc counterrevolution in Poland and those like *Straight Left* supporters in Sheffield who look uncritically to Moscow, neither side wants the Russian question raised in public right now. It is the Trotskyist politics of the SL -- for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism combined with political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies that provides the answer to imperialism's Cold War drive. And that is what has got the CP's thugs so upset.

The Stalinists of the CP have a history of violence in the workers movement, but even frame-up trials, bullets in the back of the head and the murder of Trotsky did not stop Trotskyists in the past. The thuggery of the CP will not stop us in our fight for authentic Bolshevism today. We will continue our struggle for this programme and we will defend workers democracy. ■

Spartacist League London Class Series

4 November

Defend the gains of the Russian Revolution!
Against Solidarnosc counterrevolution in Poland!

18 November

The fight against racial oppression
Smash the Nationality Act and NHS/DHSS race checks!
Build workers defence guards to smash the fascists!

2 December

For a proletarian perspective in Ireland
British troops out now! Not green against orange but class against class!

9 December

Crisis in the Labour Party
Drive out NATO/CIA-loving right wing! Break with Bennite reformism -- for a Leninist vanguard party!

All classes at Polytechnic of North London, Holloway Road site (nearest tube Holloway Road).
TV room, 6.30pm For more information, telephone (01) 278 2232



Lenin and Trotsky fought shoulder to shoulder for international proletarian revolution. Brezhnev rubs elbows with 'peaceful' imperialist butcher Richard Nixon.

Still looking to Brezhnev's 'world communist movement' 'Leninists' in limbo

We reprint below a letter, dated 24 July, to a grouping in and around the British Communist Party (CPGB) which publishes the journal *Leninist* and shares in key respects the views of the Turkish *Iscenin Sesi* (the 'Leninist' wing of the Turkish CP). Both of these left-Stalinist groups are sometimes sharply critical of the Kremlin bureaucracy and the CPs aligned with it, whilst remaining loyal to and seeking to reform the pro-Moscow 'world communist movement'. In the period since writing this letter a third issue of their journal has appeared which raises points, several addressing questions dealt with in our letter, requiring additional comment on our part.

We state in our letter that their 'brief statement on the Falklands war appears to parallel our position' of revolutionary defeatism on both sides. A longer piece in *Leninist* no 3 continues to argue for defeatism on both sides; however it also calls for the 'right of self-determination' for the 1800 Empire-loyal Falkland kelpers, who are by no means a nation in the Leninist sense of the term. Also the statement quotes without comment the CPGB's call for 'maximum use of the UN'. For genuine Leninists, opposition to the United Nations and its forerunner the League of Nations (termed by Lenin an 'imperialist den of thieves') has always been a matter of principle and was in fact part of the Twenty-one Conditions for admission into the early Communist International. Lastly, the statement attacks 'those who call the Argentinian regime "bonapartist" for "disguising the essence of fascism as counterrevolution in the epoch of imperialism" (their emphasis). In the Stalinist movement promiscuous characterisations of authoritarian regimes like the Argentine junta as fascist have historically been used to justify class-collaborationist popular fronts with the 'democratic' bourgeoisie. (See our polemic against *Iscenin Sesi*, 'Leninism v Stalinism', in *Spartacist Britain* no 29, February 1981.)

On the question of the Labour Party, the Leninist now takes the position that in the absence of a Communist candidate in elections 'there can be no other call but vote Labour'. As we elaborate in our letter, such a guarantee to vote Labour under all circumstances where a communist vanguard cannot counterpose electoral candidates offers the Labour traitors a strategic alliance, not a rope with which they can be hanged. With this position the Leninist shows that it still carries much inherited baggage from the decades of CPGB prostration before Labour. If the Labour Party is a prop of bourgeois class rule, the CPGB has, within its capacities, served as a prop for the Labour Party. The Moscow-loyal Straight Left's open Labour liquidationism is simply a continuation of the party's decades-long espousal of socialism through a left Labour government, whilst the Eurocommunists are social democrats of the second mobilisation.

Finally, and most central for a revolutionary critique of the Leninist's politics, an editorial statement in issue no 3 entitled 'A Call to all Communists' elaborates their perspective of reforming the pro-Moscow 'world communist movement'. They call for the unification, inside the CPGB, of a wide range of tendencies, which are characterised variously as 'centrist', 'inexorably drawn towards liquidationism', 'revolutionary sectarian': from the Kremlin sycophants of the New Communist Party (NCP), through the recent NCP split-off 'Proletarian' and the Labourite

cretins of Straight Left, to two formerly pseudo-Trotskyist groups, Royston Bull's minuscule Workers Party and the vicarious Third World cheerleaders of the Revolutionary Communist Group. They raise only the most abstract programmatic criteria for this unification (eg for soviets as against parliament) and justify it primarily on the basis that all these groupings to one extent or another defend the Moscow bureaucracy politically. (All other organisations, from 'third campists' to Maoists to the Leninist-Trotskyist Spartacist League, are consigned to the dustbin of the 'petty-bourgeois left' in the Leninist's schema.) The Leninist has programmatic differences with its various putative bloc partners on questions as fundamental as peaceful coexistence, anti-imperialism, Labour-loyalism, to name a few.

Their tortuous justifications for this call amount to: first that while the Labour Party clearly supports the bourgeoisie, the CPGB's opportunism 'has not become ripe' because 'British imperialism has yet to pass into a crisis of critical proportions'; and second, that there exists 'rich evidence' in the history of the



German CP leader Thaelmann, 1932: 'After Hitler, us.' With its refusal to stop Nazi rise to power, Comintern passed over to reformism.

communist movement on the need for organisational unity with opportunists. World War II was a 'crisis of critical proportions' and the CPGB joined the Labour Party in openly supporting its bourgeoisie in war. Indeed, the CPs in every Allied power supported their bourgeoisies, no less vociferously than the social chauvinists with whom Lenin had split in 1914, thus confirming again the definitive degeneration to reformism of Stalin's Comintern in 1933.

As for the idea that 'unity with opportunists' is a principle of Leninist party-building, after 1914 Lenin generalised the programmatic struggle he had carried through against the Mensheviks for more than a decade into an understanding that an organisational split was necessary

throughout the international workers movement between opportunists and revolutionaries:

'The old theory that opportunism is a "legitimate shade" in a single party that knows no "extremes" has now turned into a tremendous deception of the workers and a tremendous hindrance to the working-class movement.... Kautsky, the most outstanding spokesman of this theory, and also the leading authority in the Second International, has shown himself a consummate hypocrite and a past master in the art of prostituting Marxism.' ('The Collapse of the Second International', May-June 1915)

24 July 1982

Dear Comrades,

We have read carefully the first two issues of the *Leninist* and, following the suggestion of your supporter comrade Gavin, are writing to outline our comments on, and criticisms of, your political positions.

As you may know our international tendency has developed in large part through a regroupment of cadres from different political traditions who have come to a common programmatic understanding. Today the task of regrouping subjectively revolutionary cadre towards the forging of a principled Leninist vanguard both in this country and internationally is underscored in urgency with every new provocation from the warmongers in the White House and Downing Street.

The current anti-Soviet war drive and particularly the events in Poland have provoked a deep crisis within the Communist Parties hitherto broadly aligned with Moscow, what you call the 'world communist movement'. Doubtless you are aware that in this situation we have oriented a considerable part of our resources to winning CP supporters. From our standpoint your recognition of, and opposition to, the anti-Soviet war drive and the CPGB's capitulations in the face of this is important. Similarly your opposition to counterrevolutionary *Solidarnosc* in Poland. From the fragmentary material in the *Leninist*, you indicate a willingness to stand against the pervasive Labourite illusions and current Bennite influences in the British left. As well your brief statement on the Falklands war appears to parallel our position. We recognise that your positions are not fully formed and are in the process of elaboration, but such a process can never take place in hermetic conditions. Organised discussion between our two tendencies can only assist in clarifying questions of revolutionary strategy facing all ostensible revolutionary currents.

The record of Stalinism: betrayals, not mistakes

At the centre of any discussion between us must be the question of the 'world communist movement' and your perspective of reforming organisations which we believe have been long dead for the purpose of proletarian revolution. Verbally at least, your comrades have disavowed much of the tradition and practice of the 'world communist movement'. Some of your comrades have even gone so far as to renounce this tradition from 1924 onwards. The record of Stalin and his collaborators and his successors includes collusion in the TUC's betrayal of the 1926 General

Strike (about which you have an ambiguous reference in *Leninist* no 1); sending thousands of Chinese Communists to their deaths at the hands of Chiang Kai-shek in 1927; opening the way for the rise of Hitler and the slaughter of the flower of the European proletariat in Germany; sabotaging the Spanish revolution through pernicious policies of the popular front; strike-breaking and support for the Allied imperialist war effort in World War II; beheading the revolutionary upsurges in France, Italy and Greece at the end of World War II; through to the advocacy of a 'negotiated settlement' and the refusal to give any backing to a military victory of the leftists in El Salvador. Pick any year since 1924 and we will show you not just a mistake but a gross betrayal of the interests of the international working class by the 'world communist movement'.

Simply acknowledging these betrayals is not good enough, you must draw the necessary revolutionary conclusions. You need a materialist explanation and alternative programme. Your characterisation of the Communist Parties as 'centrist' and faith in the revolutionary credentials of the likes of Gus Hall, the Katowice Forum and Hafizullah Amin flies in the face of the repeated and decisive departures from the essentials of revolutionary Leninism. And despite your talk of 'ideological struggle' and denunciation of manoeuvres you end up with a perspective of seeking unprincipled blocks to reform the CPGB.

Proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucracy

In your article on Poland you point to the need 'to eliminate the country's thick bureaucratic strata'. Trotsky analysed the growth of this bureaucratic stratum in the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the civil war. Nurtured by the attendant economic devastation, the slaughter and dispersal of the leading elements of the working class in the civil war and the failure of the international revolution -- in particular the failure of the German revolution -- the bureaucracy hardened into a conservative opponent of the resurrection of soviet democracy and of international revolution. From 1923 onwards Trotsky and the Left Opposition carried out a struggle against this emergent bureaucratic caste. For a decade Trotsky's perspective was one of reforming the Communist Party and the Communist International. Even when Trotsky was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1928 and with many leading oppositionists already in Stalin's prison camps, the Left Opposition considered itself as just that -- an opposition in the Third International. But in 1933 Trotsky was compelled to re-examine his position. In that year the policies of the Third International left the way open for Hitler's victory and the mass destruction of the German labour movement. This historic betrayal met with no significant resistance inside the Comintern. The Comintern had proved itself in practice to be a passive instrument of the Stalinist bureaucracy for conciliating the imperialist bourgeoisies, not for overthrowing them. Trotsky concluded that it was henceforth necessary to build a new international -- against the Stalinists. Like Lenin in 1914 he took his stance on the basis of revolutionary policy and not according to his immediate base of support. And as well Trotsky developed and systematised his analysis of the rise of the bureaucracy, raising the call for a proletarian



World War II: British CP supported Churchill; American CP supported Roosevelt, tried to break militant 1943 miners strike.



political revolution to oust the bureaucracy while still upholding the proletarian property forms of the Soviet Union.

Trotsky drew the analogy with the course of the French revolution of 1789, where, feeding on the exhaustion of the masses a conservative Thermidorian reaction displaced the radical Jacobin wing of the revolution, though still ruling on the basis of the new progressive bourgeois property relations. In the Soviet Union the revolutionary leadership was displaced by Thermidorian elements which gained political power atop the new progressive proletarian property forms instituted by the October Revolution. Flourishing in the conditions of scarcity of the post-revolutionary situation the privileged bureaucracy developed material interests distinct from -- and counterposed to -- those of the proletariat. And in defence of its privileged position the bureaucracy developed an alternative programme -- counterposed to that of international socialist revolution. This programme was embodied in the anti-Leninist theory

of 'socialism in one country'. Against the Left Opposition's struggle for international revolution as the decisive defence of the gains of October the Stalinists counterposed first alliances with the treacherous social-democratic labour bureaucracy and then alliances with a mythical 'progressive' wing of the bourgeoisie. The aim of the Stalinists was two fold: first to fend off a war which would threaten the social foundations upon which the bureaucracy rested and thus their existence; and second, to prevent proletarian revolution which would have threatened to raise the Russian proletariat against bureaucratic abuse, hence stripping the parasitic caste of its power and privileges. Armed with this analysis it is clear that Leonid Brezhnev is no more a centrist because he wanted to be rid of Solidarnosc than is the wretched right-reformist Bill Sirs because he had to call a national steel strike a couple of years ago. Both Brezhnev and Sirs are animated by the same thing -- bureaucratic self-interest.

The Communist Parties internationally were subordinated to the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. Thus proletarian revolution was displaced by a consistent strategy of appealing to the bourgeoisie, manifested in class-collaborationist, cross-class blocs, in the utopian hope of staving off imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union. Today in the USA, the heartland of the anti-Soviet war drive, Gus Hall's CPUSA is faithfully translating Moscow's policy of 'peaceful coexistence' into practice by seeking (again) an alliance with the Democratic Party. In your journals you correctly point to Lenin's position that the true test of internationalism rests with fighting for revolution at home. But the CPUSA's programme is not even 'defending socialism' in 'the most deadening conservative manner'; it is actively undermining the foundations of the Soviet state by working against the American socialist revolution. This is a policy not of 'centrism' but one every bit as counterrevolutionary as that of the social democrats. The same is true of all the parties of the 'world communist movement'.

'Reforming' the politically bankrupt

Writing in the first number of the *Leninist* you describe the CPGB as 'a seething mass of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois tendencies -- feminism, pacifism, economism, liberalism, anti-Sovietism, nationalism...'. The CPGB long ago cut loose from its revolutionary moorings, having followed every twist and turn of Stalin's policies. The 'British Road to Socialism' through all its drafts is a thoroughly reformist parliamentarist programme, a codification of the CPGB's practice for years before. The first draft, sanctioned and promoted by Stalin, reflected the wishes of the Moscow bureaucracy for a neutral bourgeois Britain in the face of the first Cold War and the creation of NATO. The policy of capitulation to the British bourgeoisie produced the CPGB of today with its utopian pacifism, its class collaboration and the ever more social-democratic anti-Soviet reformism of the latest BRS draft. Your own effective attack on Sam Aaronovitch's presentation of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' provides ample evidence of the CPGB's reformist character.

While you advocate that the CPGB get rid of the worst of the opportunists and liquidationists, you propose a bloc with the left wing and 'all those who favour its continued independent existence' and who stand for the 'purging of the party of the liquidators' (*Leninist* no 1, p3). In similar vein you indict the Sid French split in 1977 for a 'failure to unite the left on a common platform for action' (*Leninist* no 2, p2). But if your concern is for 'ideological struggle' for political clarity and for the political independence of the working class and not just for the organisational existence of the CPGB, surely what you are proposing inside the 'world communist movement' will not achieve this. Your 'united offensive' would be a rotten bloc with some of the worst Moscow sycophants and hardline apologists for the Kremlin Stalinists and of the rotten betrayals of the CPGB beginning with the 1926 General Strike through the British Road to Socialism, at least up to the recent Eurocommunist excesses.

Undoubtedly there are good people to be won to revolutionary politics among these trends, but not by conciliation. Your approach towards such trends indeed has much in common with that adopted by elements of the party centre towards the most open Eurocommunists, about which you are sharply critical. What is this 'militant communist tradition inside the working class vanguard' you appeal to? Is it for or against supporting Churchill and British imperialism in

continued on page 6



Hungarian workers uprising confirmed Trotskyist programme of proletarian political revolution.

'Leninists'...

(Continued from page 5)

World War II, for example? A sharp programmatic struggle is needed not only against the 'liquidators' but also against the 'left'.

Internal oppositionists of course ought to put up as effective a political struggle as possible with the aim of splitting revisionist organisations. But how is this related to your call for 'all revolutionaries not in the CP to join it'? Your perspective of seeking to reform the politically bankrupt CP appears to be historically generalised in the way you interpret several historical references.

In your review of Martin Kitchen's *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* you argue that the Austrian CP's inability to split the SDP flowed from beginning the ideological struggle too late and splitting too early, 'for until at least a large minority of the vanguard is won, a split could only lead to impotence'. It was Stalin's criminal policies of the 'third period' which prevented the CPs playing an effective role in opposing the fascists and splitting the Social Democrats in the struggle for a workers united front and for socialist revolution. More generally, your characterisation seems to utterly ignore the historic significance of Lenin's break with the Second International and the formation of the Third International. Thus Lenin criticised Rosa Luxemburg's approach to the SPD (which had such tragic consequences for the German Revolution of 1918-19) not just for delaying the political struggle against the revisionist right and centre (indeed Luxemburg recognised Kautsky as a revisionist before Lenin), but for her hesitation in carrying this struggle through to an organisational split.

As well you cite Lenin's bloc with the pro-party Mensheviks in 1908. There are several points on this analogy. Firstly Lenin formed this bloc prior to the full development of his position on the vanguard party. Secondly Plekhanov's grouping acted under the political discipline of the Bolshevik centre -- do you believe for a moment that the 'left' of the CPGB will bloc with you on such a basis? Thirdly Lenin did split with the Mensheviks in 1912 (two years before the collapse of the Second International and Lenin's call for a new Third International). Surely you are also familiar with Lenin's scathing indictment of the August bloc, which Trotsky was involved in and which he later called the worst political mistake he ever made. And more apposite, what about Lenin's approach to the anti-war left during World War I where he was prepared to suffer isolation for the sake of political clarity. Lenin insisted that what came first was the clear defence of the revolutionary programme, even at the risk of immediate isolation. Far from leading to isolation and impotence, Lenin's split from Menshevism and the Zimmerwald centre and conciliators led to the strengthening of the cadre nucleus of the future mass Bolshevik Party. As you said in the *Leninist* no 1, 'Marxists are "stuck" with the model of the Russian revolution, because it is the richest living expression of how the proletariat seizes power and keeps it.'

'National democratic revolution' and stagism

On Afghanistan we would like to make two points. Firstly, in line with your attempt to identify revolutionary currents among the presently constituted tendencies within the 'world communist movement', you characterise the Khalq wing of the PDPA as fully Leninist. Secondly, and related, you advocate a 'National Democratic Revolution' at best blurring over the qualitative distinction between the Menshevik theory of stages (resurrected by Stalin in the late 1920s) and the Leninist/Trotskyist understanding that the vestiges of feudalism and imperialist exploitation can only be eradicated through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our position on Afghanistan was predicated on a two-fold understanding: 1) that the military defence of the Soviet Union was posed, particularly by the imperialist attempt to create a feudal/religious client state on the USSR's borders; and 2) that Afghanistan is qualitatively similar to those regions of Soviet Central Asia, where before the revolution there was no working class to speak of, and therefore the social gains associated with proletarian revolution can only be introduced from without. Thus we raised the slogans, 'Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the Social Gains of October to Afghanistan!' Under the current Soviet leadership, this would result in, at best, a deformed workers state still requiring political revolution to proceed on the path of full development towards socialism.

While the political differences between Khalq and Parcham are murky and entangled in ethnic

and personal rivalries (for a useful discussion see Fred Halliday, 'Revolution in Afghanistan', *New Left Review* no 112, November-December 1978), we consider both to be left-nationalist currents whose Leninist terminology is attributable to the key fact that Afghanistan has for years been a client state of the Soviet Union and thus the intelligentsia and military officers are overwhelmingly Soviet educated. Given your own appraisal of the CPSU leadership as centrist one telling piece of evidence against characterising Khalq as Leninist is that it solidified with the resolutions of the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the CPSU in 1969. Neither wing of the PDPA was proletarian, being composed rather of civil servants, military officers and teachers and other intellectuals. Thus the leading role you attribute to the proletariat in Khalq's strategy is meaningless in any but the most abstract literary sense. Neither does the Khalq have a proletarian strategy nor is there a significant proletariat! In fact what took place in the so-called 'Afghan Revolution' was a massive purge of the officer caste aimed at implementing a far-reaching programme of radical (for Afghanistan) democratic reforms. Its failure to do so without a massive Soviet military presence speaks primarily to the narrow social base for such reforms. Thus what makes the Soviet military intervention in this case progressive is not its aid to this impossible 'National Democratic Revolution' but the fact that it introduced the possibility of a revolutionary transformation of Afghan society. The 'Menshevik' Karmal, aided and abetted by the Moscow 'centrists', may slander and have murdered Amin. The Soviet military intervention, however, does not represent 'the extinguishing of the flame of revolution' but the introduction of a force that could guarantee lasting social transformation, albeit with gross bureaucratic overhead.

Your position shows that you still hold some version of Stalin's two-stage revolution strategy -- first the democratic and later the socialist revolution. Artificially dividing the democratic from the socialist tasks you find yourselves in programmatic agreement with the left-nationalist Amin. We are reminded that it was just such a division that allowed Stalin to admit Chiang Kai-shek to the Comintern. You may well understand this as an application of Lenin's 'Revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' but in the April Theses Lenin rejected this slogan as outmoded and his subsequent course throughout 1917 indicates that he came to understand that only proletarian socialist revolution could complete the unfulfilled bourgeois democratic tasks. This was universally confirmed, albeit negatively, through Stalin's disastrous strategy in the Chinese Revolution.

Socialism in one country

On Poland, apart from some minor differences (a more critical attitude to elements such as those around the Katowice Forum) your position appears to us to be in all essentials the same as that of the TKP Leninists. For our comments and disagreements on the question of Poland we therefore refer you to our article 'Poland and the TKP Leninists' (*Spartacist Britain* no 42, May 1982) which we believe you have already discussed internally. We would like to make four supplementary points here. In *Leninist* no 1, p23, you describe soviet power as 'one form of the dictatorship of the proletariat'. We would describe the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe, Cuba, China, Indochina and North Korea as another form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We would not use Lenin's term 'the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat' to describe these states. To achieve this form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in which the proletariat genuinely holds political power through democratic workers organs such as soviets, the only one which can ensure the advance to world communism, the bureaucratic caste must be overthrown through political revolution. This is important, because elsewhere (*Leninist* no 2, p16) you talk of the 'party reasserting its role as executive of the dictatorship of the proletariat'. But for Lenin the executive and the legislature for the dictatorship of the proletariat was meant to be the armed proletariat organised in soviet-type bodies, bodies in which the Leninist party would compete for leadership with other parties that stood for the defence of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Similarly you repeatedly refer to the Soviet Union and Poland as 'socialist'. We refer you again to the discussion of this question in 'Poland and the TKP Leninists'. As well we are enclosing two extracts from Trotsky's *Third International After Lenin* and the *Revolution Betrayed* which discuss this question.

Stalin's description of the Soviet Union as socialist was designed to hide the political monopoly, material privileges and counterrevolutionary role played by the bureaucratic caste. What it leads to is an identification of the bureaucratic regime with the workers state. We have pointed out how this can lead to the idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be reformed back to capitalism. In various verbal exchanges, some of your supporters have intimated that you are considering the position that China has reverted to capitalism. If we understand correctly, this position would place the restoration of capitalism in China with the so-called Cultural Revolution and provide an explanation for the Chinese regime's counterrevolutionary alliance with US imperialism directed against the Soviet Union. There is some irony in this dating because it was just at that period that the Chinese leadership began to describe the Soviet Union as 'state capitalist', a popular position with many of the leftists attracted to Maoism at the time by its greater verbal leftism and by their revulsion at the Soviet policies of peaceful coexistence/detente.

At the time we characterised the Cultural Revolution as an intra-bureaucratic struggle between two wings of the Chinese bureaucracy, in the face of economic difficulties at home and US imperialist hostility, and involving cynical manipulation of the masses on both sides. Much evidence has come to light since then to confirm that view. In particular both the Mao and Liu Shao-chi wings were qualitatively identical in their nationalist hostility towards relations with the Soviet Union, mirroring in fact the Soviet bureaucracy's nationalist attacks on the possibility of genuine communist unity with China. Did not the Soviet Union take a pro-India stance during the Sino-Indian border war? Indeed China's alliance with US imperialism is a quintessential example of the reactionary, inherently nationalistic policies common to all the ruling Stalinist bureaucracies determined in every instance by a defence of their own narrow, nationally centred interests. It was on the basis of this understanding and the strategic weight of the Soviet Union's military/industrial strength vis-a-vis imperialist revisionism that we were able to postulate such an alliance in 1969, during the heyday of US-Soviet 'detente' (see *Marxist Bulletin* no 9, 'Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League', p25).

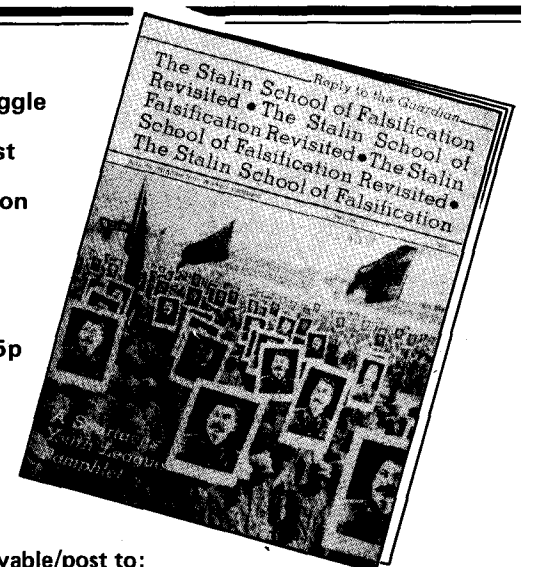
Any analysis which attempts to argue the restoration of capitalism in China is necessarily premised on a failure to distinguish between the political regime in existence and the social (ie class) foundations upon which it rests. Concretely, the Cultural Revolution in China did not destroy the proletarian property forms upon which the Chinese deformed workers state exists. In fact this sort of analysis is simply the obverse of seeking to find in the CPSU leadership at least a revolutionary kernel (or 'centrism') simply and purely because it happens to rest atop revolutionary social foundations. And obviously with this framework a more complete disillusionment with the Kremlin tops can easily turn into abandoning the defence of the Soviet Union.

The other possibility stemming from this identification of the bureaucracy with the workers state is that you will view with hostility all uprisings against the Stalinist regime, seeing all workers movements in the workers states as identical with Solidarnosc. It would be helpful if you would clarify what you mean by 'the tragedies of Hungary and Czechoslovakia'. We believe that the 'tragedy' of Hungary 1956 was not that the Hungarian workers rose up against the Stalinists but that they were crushed by Soviet tanks. Unlike Solidarnosc today, the Hungarian workers in 1956 sought to defend proletarian property through their factory councils against

The struggle of the Trotskyist Left Opposition against Stalinist betrayal

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the abuses of the bureaucracy. The popular leader of the insurgents was an army colonel named Pal Maletier who, in contrast to Lech Walesa's penchant for hauling crucifixes around with him, was never to be seen without his partisan red star. The Budapest workers council passed resolutions in defence of socialised property; Cardinal Mindszenty, the counterpart of Poland's Glemp, was forced to seek refuge in the American embassy, whilst the fascists of the pre-war Arrow and Cross organisation were physically suppressed by the workers councils. The Hungarian uprising opened the way to the removal of 'the thick bureaucratic strata' in favour of soviet-type democracy, which required the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist party to be carried through to its conclusion. Nevertheless, it was a living confirmation of the Trotskyist programme of political revolution. In Czechoslovakia, the reform movement was largely led by a liberal wing of the bureaucracy, and it was when the events threatened to escape from these bounds that the Soviet Union militarily intervened. We opposed this intervention, as stifling a developing situation which could have led in the direction of political revolution.

Communists on the Labour Party

Finally we would like to comment on those two issues which are of particular central importance to revolutionaries in Britain: the Labour Party and Ireland. To begin we agree with you that the CPGB's characterisation of the Labour Party as the 'federal party' of the working class contradicts Leninism, that the Labour Party 'carries out the interest of imperialism when in government, like the Tory party' and particularly that "The disillusion" of workers with the Labour Party is absolutely necessary'. With respect to this last point, and while noting the different traditions and social weights of the organisations and the need for particular appropriate tactical approaches, we would note that this is just what is needed with the CPGB as well.

We appreciate that you would feel the need to emphasise the bourgeois character of the Labour Party in arguing in the CPGB milieu and we note that in places you also use the terms 'the bourgeois party of the working class' and 'bourgeois labour party'. But there can also be dangers in a one-sided emphasis on the bourgeois nature of the Labour Party.

Focussing exclusively on the bourgeois nature of the Labour Party could either lead to a sterile sectarianism (refusing to ever call for a vote to it or contemplate united fronts or entry) which leaves the workers to the reformists. Or it could fit snugly with class-collaborationist opportunism which argues that it is permissible to support and vote for a bourgeois party. This latter approach has a long history with the Stalinists, being closely associated with popular-frontist class collaboration, and as we noted above, is just what Gus Hall is doing with the Democratic Party. As a further example, the TKP Leninists, while they rejected support to Ecevit's RPP, do not in general rule out electoral support to such a bourgeois party.

The Labour Party is a bourgeois workers party: bourgeois in its programme and leadership but resting on the mass support of the working class, centrally through its historically evolved links with the trade unions. There will be no British revolution unless the ranks of the Labour Party, principally those organised in the trade unions, are split away from reformism and rallied under a revolutionary leadership. It is this strategic perspective which informs our tactical orientation towards the Labour Party; and to impel such a split a correct tactical stance is vital. Our stance is drawn from the position adopted by Lenin's Comintern. Electoral critical support, an application of the united front, is a key tactic in this approach. But it is only that -- a tactic, to be used only when calling for a vote to Labour against the open parties of the bourgeoisie can be used to discredit the reformists. To apply it as a strategy as most ostensibly revolutionary groupings do, calling for a vote to Labour under all circumstances, vitiates its effectiveness and is in fact counterposed to a perspective of splitting Labour. We will illustrate our approach with two examples. In 1974 we extended critical support to Labour, when it meant a class vote against the union-bashing Tory government of Edward Heath. In 1979, when Labour stood on a record of Social Contract and the Lib-Lab pact, including vicious strikebreaking and austerity through five years in office, we opposed a vote to Labour. Instead we directed our propaganda to those workers disillusioned with these betrayals and the promises of another bout of social contract attacks. Under no circumstances do we call for a vote to Labour (or any bourgeois workers

party) standing in coalition with a bourgeois party.

For our analysis of the current left-right schism in the Labour Party we would refer you to *Spartacist Britain* no 41 (April 1982). To briefly summarise we would have advocated a vote to Tony Benn in the recent deputy leadership election. For our tendency this in no way implies the adaptation to Benn's reformist programme practised by organisations such as *Straight Left* or the myriad of fake-Trotskyists. The split in the Labour Party is a direct reflection of the renewed anti-Soviet war drive. Healey is a principal exponent and architect of Labour as a safe pro-NATO bulwark in the British labour movement. Indeed there is a mass of evidence directly connecting Healey with the CIA.



CPUSA head Gus Hall's 'Marxism-Leninism' means support to the Democratic Party of Bay of Pigs, Vietnam butchery.

Our vote to Benn, who calls for unilateral nuclear disarmament and, de facto, for a very different relation with NATO, is first and foremost a call to drive the CIA-connected right wing out of the labour movement. A split of this sort would enhance the political struggle against Benn's left reformism on the terrain most advantageous to revolutionaries, ie out in the open without the cover of a right wing to blame for his betrayals. This tactic was premised, of course, on our counterposition of a revolutionary programme (notably, unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and principled opposition to coalitionism) to that of Benn. Through a revolutionary intervention, a left-right split in the Labour Party would prepare the way for a deeper, more fundamental split towards revolutionary politics from all variants of reformism.

Likewise in the current witchhunt against the left, we counterpose to the pervasive unity-mongering and Labour-loyalism a defence located in the context of prosecuting an offensive to drive out the right wing.

Ireland: for class unity not nationalist unity

On the Irish question your articles demonstrate a break from the abject pro-imperialism of the CPGB, in particular over the elementary question of the demand for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of the British army. In the first article your position comes across as an adaptation to the republican movement, offering unconditional support, justifying its terrorist strategy and posing no independent proletarian perspective. In the book review in your second issue you focus on the need for the working class to take the lead in the struggle against imperialism and criticise Connolly for not breaking with the Catholic Church and not providing the working class a central role in his last struggles. But Ireland is a graphic example of what is wrong with the idea of a 'national democratic' revolution, even if the working class is allotted a 'central role'.

It is certainly fundamental for revolutionaries to stand foursquare against British imperialism and thus to demand the immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops and to militarily defend republican forces in actions directed against the imperialists (even in particularly futile acts of individual terror against representatives of the British state). However, as Lenin made clear in his 'Theses on the National and Colonial Question', it is not the task of communists to give a blank cheque to petty-bourgeois nationalist movements under any circumstances. In particular we do not defend acts of indiscriminate terror by republican forces against the Protestant population. The Leninist attitude to the national question is essentially negative, to oppose any manifestation of national oppression and privilege in order to enable the national question to be removed from the historical agenda and facilitate proletarian class unity. Genuine national liberation, in the sense of removing the stranglehold

of imperialism, can only be achieved through proletarian revolution.

In the case of Northern Ireland that is both underscored and exacerbated by the specific problem of interpenetrated peoples. Your disgust with the objectively pro-imperialist stance of the CPGB (echoing the Labour Party) appears to us to have been translated into a positive programme of support to the Green nationalist project of the IRA, a position common to many fake-Trotskyist organisations (and others like the RCG). The IRA is not fighting simply against the British imperialist state but for a Catholic-dominated unified Ireland -- one, therefore, necessarily oppressive to what would be a Protestant minority (indiscriminate terror is a sharp expression of this). For this reason, the call for a 'united republic' is in the case of Northern Ireland a profoundly anti-democratic slogan. The Protestants of the North are in no wise akin to a colonial caste (a la the Rhodesian whites), but nor are they in any sense part of a 'united' Irish people. To speak of a 'nationalist' people and a 'loyalist' people, as is traditional among supporters of the Republicans in the British left, is to obscure the existence of two distinct communities with different cultural and historical origins laying claim to the same territory and to imply that it is simply a difference of 'anti-imperialist' consciousness. The loyalism which permeates the Protestant population is a derivative expression of this self-identification separate and apart from the Irish Catholic people.

You yourselves note that 'When that partition became a fact, the division which already existed in the Irish working class movement was frozen and reinforced'.

Thus we believe that in Ireland (as with the intermingled Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian Arab peoples) there is no democratic solution possible within the confines of capitalism. Furthermore because we see nothing progressive in a simple reversal of the terms of oppression and in order to break the Protestant proletariat from its pro-imperialist ideological hold and concretely the Orange bourgeois ascendancy, it is necessary to oppose any scheme of forcible reunification, whether bourgeois or 'socialist', just as we opposed the unjust imperialist partition. While you are quite right to lambast those opportunists who would seek to blame the IRA's military tactics for the division in the Northern proletariat and advance economic 'unity', it is necessary nevertheless to address those divisions. Thus we raise a programme which, while opposing imperialism intransigently as well as any manifestation of Protestant privilege, seeks to cut through communal antagonisms and forge proletarian unity against the Orange and Green bourgeoisies. A central programmatic aspect of such a programme is the formation of united workers militias to combat both imperialist rampage and sectarian terror, whether Orange or Green (see our 'Theses on Ireland', enclosed). Any other perspective is a dead-end (however heroic it may be) which can only fuel inter-communal civil war and subordinate the class question to the national question. Also, particularly given that the historical evolution of the Protestants of the North is historically intertwined with Britain itself and not yet definitively resolved, the national question in Ireland cannot be democratically resolved in any framework other than a socialist federation of the British Isles. We demand an Irish Workers Republic as part of a Socialist Federation of the British Isles.

In a letter such as this it is not possible to take up all your positions in the detail that may be required, nor certain other issues of importance to a revolutionary strategy today. We are enclosing some material documenting our opposition to feminism and strategy for women's liberation, including on the work of the early Communist International. We expect that on the question of fascism we might have differences similar to those which we have argued with the TKP Leninists over the nature of the Turkish junta. We have only cursorily dealt with the question of revolution in backward countries and permanent revolution versus two-stage revolution.

We understand that you intend to reply to this letter in writing. We feel strongly that any exchanges between us would be greatly aided by a meeting between representatives of our two organisations, and would like to make arrangements to do this.

Comradely,

David Strachan

On Behalf of the Spartacist League Central Committee

If they set foot on American soil, they could be arrested and sentenced to as much as five years in prison. The malefactors: the top executives of West Europe's leading engineering firms. Their 'crime': selling equipment to the Soviet Union to construct a 3500-mile natural gas pipeline between Siberia and West Europe.

Venting his frustration at the failure of Solidarnosc counterrevolution in Poland, on 18 June Reagan struck back ... against his European capitalist allies. He ordered all foreign firms using technology acquired through American licenses to rip up their Siberian pipeline contracts or face the full rigor of US legal sanctions. In addition to possible criminal penalties, this could mean fines of up to five times the value of the components shipped and a ban on the future acquisition of products made in the USA.

The European reaction was swift and defiant. West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt, in one of the milder responses, told CBS News: 'The pipeline will be built, and the British, the French, the Germans and other Europeans will stick to the agreement which their firms have been making with the Soviets.' Every West European government involved has conspicuously ordered the firms to meet their contractual obligations. The French minister of industry, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, declared that Dresser France, a US subsidiary, was 'a French company subject to French law', threatening to 'requisition' its facilities if it did not deliver pipeline compressors as scheduled. The private reaction among West European ruling circles was commensurate. According to a top US trade negotiator: 'All they wanted to do was talk about the pipeline. You read a lot about European resentment of the pipeline decision, but you have to see it to appreciate it.' (*Wall Street Journal*, 15 July)

One does not have to see it in the flesh to appreciate the depth of the European bourgeois' resentment. The \$10 billion pipeline project -- Brezhnev calls it 'the deal of the century' -- is big business, and very welcome business amid the worst economic conditions since the Great Depression of the 1930s. When completed it will supply much of West Europe's gas at prices well below those charged by North African and Near Eastern producers. And whatever Reagan may think, European capitalists know that the Soviet Stalinist regime is a far more reliable supplier than the Bedouin chieftains, Shi'ite ayatollahs and Ba'athist colonels on whom they now depend for energy resources.

For many of the firms involved the multi-million-dollar pipeline contracts are a matter of financial survival. AEG-Kanis in West Germany, for example, is one of the few profit-making operations of the about-to-go-bankrupt AEG-Telefunken empire. The pipeline contract accounts for fully 70 per cent of the Italian Nuovo Pignone's backlog of orders.

Over and above these considerations of marks, francs and lire -- and they are not to be sneezed at -- Reagan has affronted the most sacred cow in the bourgeois ideological pantheon, that of national sovereignty. The European Common Market formally protested Reagan's 'attempts to exercise extraterritorial legal powers'. The influential *Frankfurter Rundschau* was less diplomatic: 'This is not what partnership among democratic countries should be. This is sheer imperialism' (*Washington Post*, 25 June). Since some of the firms involved, such as France's Alsthom-Atlantique and Italy's Nuovo Pignone, are nationalized, Reagan is in effect claiming sovereignty over European governments as well. For an American president to lay down the law to a nationalized French firm is one thing certain to unite all Frenchmen from the

most decadent royalist count to the most primitive Stalinist hack. Even Britain's Margaret Thatcher, for all her fervent anti-Sovietism, told Reagan he was way out of line on this one. The sanctity of contracts and all that, you know.

One can say of Reagan's pipeline sanctions what Theodore Draper said of John F Kennedy's Bay of Pigs adventure: it is that rare example of a perfect political failure. It has infuriated all his European allies, heartened the Russians -- and failed to delay the construction of the pipeline. The failure is so striking -- 'the Russians couldn't have planned it any better', commented one European diplomat -- that the Reagan administration is already backing off. In September treasury secretary Donald Regan announced that the original sanctions 'were a little too sweeping' and that violators will be barred only from US-made oil and gas equipment.

The Lone Ranger shoots himself in the foot

What caused Reagan to do something so stupid? Part of the answer is that he actually believes his own anti-Communist propaganda that the Soviet economy is on the verge of collapse a la Poland. When last June he called upon the British parliament to join him in a new 'crusade' to overthrow Communism, he assured them that:

'We are witnessing today a great revolutionary crisis -- a crisis where the demands of the economic order are colliding directly with those of the political order. But the crisis is happening not in the free, non-Marxist West, but in the home of Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet Union.'

Ten days later Reagan decided to give this imagined 'final crisis of Marxism-Leninism' a little push by trying to sabotage the Siberian pipeline, asserting that 'the Soviet Union is very hard-pressed financially and economically today. They have put their people literally on a starvation diet' (*New York Times*, 1 July). Every Western diplomat, journalist and even tourist in Moscow or Leningrad can see that the Russian people are not starving. In fact, the Soviet standard of living has visibly improved in the past decade or so despite the burdensome military expenditure necessary to counter the imperialist arms buildup. Reagan's wild statements about the Soviet Union are not just Cold War rhetoric but the more or less seriously held views of a man who can blow up the world at will.

If Reagan sees the Soviet Union about to collapse, he sees in his European NATO allies a fatal weakness of a different kind. The former Hollywood actor turned president is evidently playing Cold War II according to the scenario of the 1950s Gary Cooper film *High Noon*. The townsmen (West European allies) are too cowardly to fight the bad guys (Russian Communists) so the lone marshal (American commander in chief) has to do it himself. The Reaganites thought they could whip their supposedly weak-willed European allies into line by a show of forcefulness. Hence the pipeline sanctions.

In and around the Reagan regime there is a strong current of disdain for the West European bourgeois democracies, seen as semi-pacifistic and 'soft' on Communism, and a feeling that America's really tough, reliable allies are the likes of Begin's Israel, Botha's South Africa, Major Blowtorch d'Aubuisson's El Salvador, South Korea et al. Thus, Moral Majority senator Jesse Helms conspicuously voted not to support Britain in the Falklands/Malvinas war, while the UN's leading aficionada of 'authoritarian' regimes, Jeane Kirkpatrick, publicly tilted toward the Argentine junta.

It's noteworthy here that a week after the pipeline sanctions were announced the most pro-European member of the Reagan team, former NATO commander Alexander Haig, was forced out. Haig, who warned the sanctions would backfire, apparently tried to convince his boss that the West European allies were not a bunch of mushyheaded pinkos but a group of important capitalist states with their own national interests and national pride. He suffered the usual fate of counselors who inform their monarch of unpleasant realities.

California Gaullism at work

The pipeline dispute is not an incidental quarrel in a basically harmonious marriage. The financial press routinely writes of US/European economic relations in the language of armed conflict -- the interest rate war, the developing trade wars over



Behind Reagan's pipeline fiasco

steel and agricultural products. The highly nationalistic policies of the Reagan administration (dubbed 'California Gaullism' by the liberal French *Le Monde*) have been deeply injurious to its main capitalist rivals. Months before the pipeline sanctions a senior West German official complained to the *New York Times* (13 February): 'We have simply never before seen a United States Administration that displayed this degree of indifference to the effects of its action on its allies.'

And it is especially significant that Mitterrand's France has begun to shift away from its past role in Europe as a loyal and unquestioning supporter of United States policies. Until fairly recently Mitterrand had been the continent's main spokesman for Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive. Late last year *Time* magazine (9 November 1981) titled an article on the new French president, 'Hawk in Socialist Feathers: Mitterrand backs a strong military in tandem with US policy'. At the June economic summit in Versailles Mitterrand embraced Reagan as 'mon cher Ron' and made a show of Paris-Washington amity. Yet within a month French foreign minister Claude Cheysson was speaking of 'the progressive divorce' between the United States and Europe.

A recent article in *Business Week* (2 August) laments the unraveling of the Paris-Washington Cold War II axis:

'A year ago, French President Francois Mitterrand, despite his avowed socialism, looked like the firmest foreign-policy ally the Reagan Administration had on the Continent. Mitterrand had sent the Reagan Administration signals he would be tough with the Russians. But the disastrous economic summit in Versailles in June and the events that have followed have completely changed the picture, opening serious disagreements on East-West trade policy which the Reagan hardliners see



as a touchstone of alliance loyalty.' Among capitalist states, anti-Communist ideological unity is all well and good, but not at the sacrifice of vital national economic interests. (Even Begin's Israel is supplying some pumps for the Siberian pipeline!) This is, of course, no less true of Reagan than of his European imperialist counterparts. Reagan infuriated the European bourgeoisies when one month after ordering them to tear up their Siberian pipeline contracts, he announced the US was extending its multi-billion-dollar grain trade agreement with the Soviet Union. In his heart of hearts Reagan would like to cut off grain shipments to the USSR, indeed to starve the Russians if he could. But alas for Reagan, he operates within the framework of bourgeois parliamentarism, and the Republicans badly need the farm vote come November. Farmers too are suffering from this most unusual recession which combines record-high interest rates with slumping agricultural prices.

Reagan was elected president two years ago promising to restore military 'superiority' (first-strike nuclear capability) over the Soviet Union while cutting everyone's taxes by a third. This was to be the 'supply-side' economic miracle based on the crackpot theory of a clique of right-wing economists. Cut taxes enough, they prophesied, and this would stimulate such a vast outpouring of work effort and capital investment that national income would increase enough to restore the old total tax revenue, even more.

To restrain the inflationary impact of the huge federal budget deficits in the meantime, the supply of money and credit was squeezed hard. The predictable result was that real interest rates (subtracting the inflation rate) went through the ceiling. Historically in the US real interest rates have been in the 2-3 per cent range; under Reagan they've been running at 8-10 per cent. The effect has been a massive rechanneling of money capital from corporate investment and mortgage and auto loans into the Pentagon budget. Despite the arms boom, corporate investment is projected to fall 5 per cent this year. In July new orders for machine tools -- the core of any industrial construction program -- were almost 50 per cent below last year.

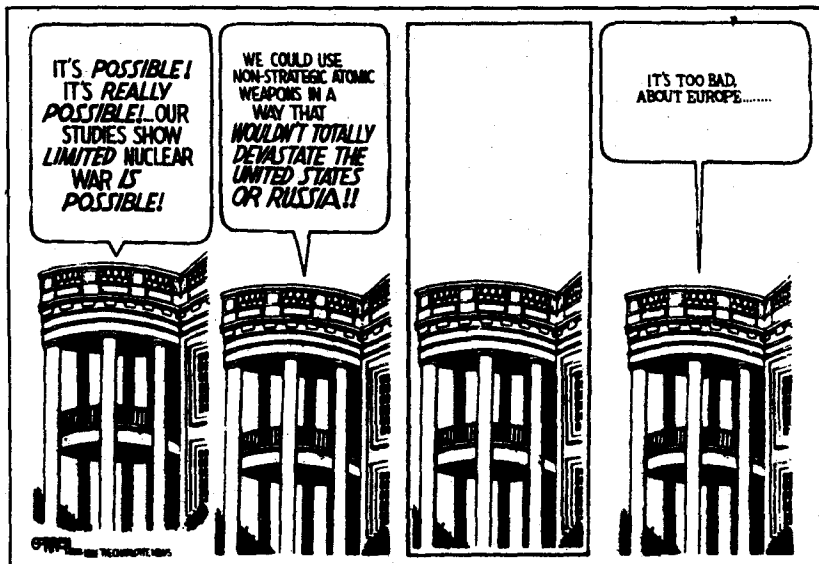
Reagan's unorthodox method of financing his preparations for World War III has not only crippled American industry but has sucked in footloose money capital from the world's financial markets. Why should the sheiks of OPEC keep their funds in London, Paris or Frankfurt if the return is so much higher in New York? Reaganomics thus has produced an excruciating dilemma for the West European governments. If they do not raise interest rates to more or less New York levels, they will suffer massive capital flight, enormous balance-of-payments deficits and a rapidly depreciating currency which will generate domestic inflation. If they do raise interest rates sufficiently, they will choke off any recovery in capital spending.

A few months after Reagan was elected president, Helmut Schmidt decried 'the highest interest rates in Germany since the birth of Christ, as far as real interest rates are concerned'. The one-side interest rate war quite dominated the July 1981 economic summit in Ottawa, Canada, where Reagan in effect told the European leaders to shut up and eat it. As West Europe slid deeper into depression, the complaints against the international effects of Reaganomics became shriller. Earlier this year French finance minister Jacques Delors denounced high US interest rates as 'the principal obstacle' to European economic recovery and asked rhetorically: 'How can we defend our alliance with the United States when critics say American policy is making us bankrupt?' (*New York Times*, 13 February).

While the US Treasury was sucking in money capital from Europe, US industrialists were moving to keep European exports out. Last January Pittsburgh once again declared war on the Ruhr, Lorraine and South Wales. US Steel and its lesser brethren filed a petition with the Commerce Department charging the European Common Market with subsidizing steel production and dumping it on the American market. After efforts at a negotiated solution failed, in June the Commerce Department announced stiff penalty duties -- up to 40 per cent -- on steel imports from the Common Market countries. On 12 June *New York Times* financial correspondent Clyde Farnsworth commented:

'The penalty would amount to the severest trade restriction that the United States has set in years. The Europeans said that much of their steel would be priced out of the American market and threatened retaliation against American exports.'

One week after dealing with this body blow to the depressed European steel industry, the Reagan administration struck again with the



pipeline sanctions. No wonder the European bourgeoisie has been howling in rage ever since.

The Francois and Mon Cher Ron Show folds

While the policies of the California Gaullists have hurt all of West Europe's economies, none is quite so vulnerable as Mitterrand's France. At a time when other capitalist governments were preaching the virtues of austerity, the French popular front came to office in the spring of 1981 promising prosperity, full employment and sweeping social reforms. At the same time Mitterrand aligned himself closely with Reagan's anti-Soviet bellicosity. The right-wing London *Economist* (12 December 1981) commended him for 'a more anti-Russian policy than any previous president of the Fifth Republic'.

Mitterrand's strident anti-Sovietism came from his social-democratic heart, but he probably also thought it entitled him to Washington's economic largesse. If Reagan showers dollars on the Salvadoran junta, he may have reasoned, why not on France, a far more important ally.

And Mitterrand needed Reagan's aid for his own economic gamble. Reagan won the US presidency promising a 'supply-side' economic miracle; Mitterrand won the French presidency promising a Keynesian/social-democratic economic miracle. If elected, he told the French working class, he would create 200,000 new public-sector jobs, reduce the workweek from 40 to 35 hours, increase state pensions and family allowances by 50 per cent, raise the minimum wage 25 per cent and institute an add-

itional fifth week of annual summer vacation. Add to this an ambitious nationalization program with generous compensation and a major rearmament drive.

Where, pray tell, would the billions of francs needed to pay for all this come from? From the printing press, said the smart money. The day after Mitterrand's unexpected victory in May 1981 both the Paris Bourse (stock market) and franc went into a tailspin. Within two weeks of the election France lost \$7 billion of its \$27 billion in foreign-exchange reserves. The run on the franc was halted for the moment only by jacking up interest rates to levels even higher than in Reagan's America. This definitely

put the kibosh on any prospect for a recovery of capital investment. In fact, since Mitterrand's election French capital has been on a slow-down strike. Outside the nationalized sector, industrial investment fell 10 per cent last year and worse is expected this year.

With the French rate of inflation more than twice that of its main trading partner, West Germany, the devaluation of the franc was inevitable. The inevitable came the first time in October 1981 as the franc was devalued 10 per cent against the Deutschmark. To curb inflationary pressures (fueled in part by the currency depreciation itself), the Mitterrand government reimposed wage/price controls which had been lifted by the conservative Giscard/Barre regime three years earlier. This provoked a strike wave, concentrated in the nationalized industries, which marked the beginning of working-class disillusionment with the new popular-front government (see 'Strikes End "Socialist" Honeymoon in France', *Workers Vanguard* no 293, 20 November 1981).

Despite these attempts at holding down wages, the Mitterrand regime was faced with the impossibility of what the snotty *Economist* termed 'Keynesianism in one country'. The French budget deficit for 1982 is expected to be the highest deficit in postwar French history. To finance this huge deficit the Mitterrand regime was running the printing presses at a time when inflation in the rest of the advanced capitalist world was being damped down by the impact of tight money, slashes in social programs and an ever-growing reserve army of the unemployed. With the franc still way overvalued, French

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Stalinist pipedream

Reagan's provocative and arrogant diktat to his NATO allies in the dispute over the construction of the Siberian-West European pipeline has infuriated large sections of the West European bourgeoisies, uniting Stalinists, social democrats and the most rabidly anti-Soviet Cold Warriors in opposition. Even the Labour Party's chief CIA-lover Denis Healey is opposed to Reagan's sanctions threats, and Little Englander Tony Benn applauded Thatcher's 'commendable resilience' over the pipeline issue. The pipeline dispute underlines the fact that the drive by imperialism to roll back the proletarian gains embodied in the collectivised economies of the deformed and degenerated workers states, combined with the deepening inter-imperialist conflicts engendered by severe economic depression bring ever nearer the threat of a third world war.

But the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Organizer Alliance (SOA) manages to out-do them all in Cold Warmongering. This group called for trade union blacking of Polish and Russian exports in support of counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc after last December's preventive counter-coup by the Jaruzelski regime, effectively lining up with Reagan's anti-Soviet sanctions. Now, after the perfunctory sniping about Reagan's 'hypocrisy' and talk of 'working class boycott action' in the cause of anti-communism, they end up explicitly solidarising with Reagan: 'Socialists in Britain, like Solidarity activists in Poland, do not rejoice at the sailing of the "Happy Worker" with its load of turbines from the Clydeside' (*Socialist Organiser*, 30 September).

Well, genuine socialists do -- as do the Scottish workers who owe their jobs to the Soviet pipeline deal. Indeed SOA's only worry in inciting the working class to anti-communism is the number of jobs that would be lost. So they suggest that Scottish workers should follow the example of the Massey-Ferguson employees who earlier in the year blacked components from Poland's Ursus tractor factory and begged management to find a different supplier. Maybe the militant workers of 'Red Clydeside' should have their bosses sound out the oh-so-progressive Saudi Arabian sheiks on some pipeline parts instead of helping the Soviet economy?

Trotskyists stand for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union, and oppose the anti-Soviet sanctions. For the Stalinists, however, with their dangerous day-dreams about 'peaceful coexistence', more pipeline deals are all that is needed to stop the imperialists from nuking the Soviet Union. Thus the Communist Party's *Morning Star* (31 August) says: 'The more the peoples of Europe work together, the more they co-operate on joint projects of benefit to them all, the less likely they are to see themselves as potential enemies in a future war... That is why it could be called a pipeline of peace.' And the paper widely supported by the pro-Moscow, supposedly Leninist, opposition in the Communist Party, *Straight Left* (October 1982) says just the same: 'The pipeline project, which joins socialist and capitalist states in a giant, mutually advantageous venture, shows that there is an alternative to the insane policies of the war-mongers. The policy of "detente" can and does work. Let us say no to war and yes to peace, co-operation and co-existence.' Since when have Thatcher and Mitterrand been advocates of detente?! While communists wholeheartedly support trade with the Soviet Union, the fact remains that the only road to peace and the removal of the threat of a nuclear World War III is not begging the imperialist bourgeoisies for more business but fighting for international workers revolution. ■

Blackpool...

(Continued from page 1)

Labour's reformist rules. But the Blackpool witchhunt was not about whether or not Militant is truly loyal to the Labour Party of war, racism and imperialism. For the TUC and party leadership, giving these house-trained 'Trotskyists' the chop was the most demonstrative way of proving Labour's willingness to wage Cold War in office.

In an attempt to prolong their crisis-ridden system, the imperialists are today driving towards thermonuclear war to roll back the gains of the Russian Revolution and make Lenin-grad look more like Liverpool (with dole queues and burnt-out slums). This stepped-up anti-Soviet war drive, the main factor in world politics today, has also been the key underlying issue in the post-1979 turmoil in the Labour Party. It gave a new and significant dimension to what otherwise might have been simply one more go-round in the cycle of Labour in opposition refurbishing some 'left' credentials following the betrayals of Labour in government.

The Bennite left scored its initial successes in the inner-party battle by channelling disgruntlement with the arrogant Callaghan/Healey leadership's domestic Social Contract/coalition betrayals into a series of constitutional reforms. But they soon became centrally identified with the utopian nationalist programme of pulling Little England out of the Cold War crossfire through unilateral nuclear disarmament. Their 'non-nuclear defence strategy' is explicitly posed as an alternate means of defending imperialist Britain -- particularly so since the jingoist furore over the Falklands and the renewed emphasis on strong conventional forces. But their unilateralist programme is out of step with the needs of the anti-Soviet war drive -- and the capitalist class soon made clear they were not about to countenance the idea of a Benn-riden (let alone Benn-led) Labour Party in office.

Thus was the SDP born, as many of Labour's chief right-wing Cold Warriors took their cue and began decamping from the party amid fanfares from Fleet Street. A year later Benn came within a hair's breadth of deposing Denis Healey, for decades one of Labour's chief CIA/NATO-lovers, in the deputy leadership election. Even with Benn's defeat, the haemorrhage continued as Labour limped along a poor third in the opinion polls amid seemingly incessant internal wrangling.

Finally the TUC, worried lest the Social Democrats succeed in displacing Labour as the alternative 'party of government' to the Tories (leaving Congress House right out in the cold), began to pull the warring factions back into line at Bishops Cleeve in January. They laid down the law: party unity, a witchhunt of Militant, and the adoption of 'realistic' policies to prove Labour's fitness for office. With Benn himself unwilling and unable to flout the TUC paymasters, the ignoble retreat began. A few 'fight like a tiger' speeches remained for captive audiences, but the road was already well paved to the Winter Gardens and the Labour left's September debacle.

And debacle it assuredly was. After the vote to establish the register, Militant's Ted Grant promised his charges would 'fight, fight and fight again', obscenely echoing Hugh Gaitskell's vow to defeat the unilateralists in 1960. Three weeks later even the rhetoric was gone as Militant whimperingly approached the NEC to apply for registration, promising (doubtless in vain) to change certain rules to achieve it. The only hint of a 'fight' was a remarkably provocative and thoroughly unprincipled mooted threat to take the entire party to the bourgeois courts if registration was refused! As for the mainstream Bennite left, at conference 22 anti-witchhunt MPs announced they were forming a new 'hard left' grouping separate from the (majority pro-witchhunt) Tribune group. This too came to nought -- most of the 22, sensing their isolation, were back in the Tribune fold at its next meeting, announcing they had dropped active opposition to the register in order to unite behind Labour's 'socialist policies'. This is only another way of calling for unity behind the present party leadership of Foot/Healey/Hattersley/Shore -- the same leadership (sans Callaghan) that brought the betrayals of 1974-79.

At Blackpool the normal symbiotic relationship between left and right in the Labour Party was restored, with the left again playing the role of providing a 'socialist' cover for the (future) betrayals of Labour in office. Under the impact of the Cold War, as we pointed out in 'Labour's Cold War' (*Spartacist Britain* no 41, April 1982), 'a distorted and uneven class line' had been cleaved in the Labour Party, rupturing that symbiosis, and manifested in the Benn-Healey contest:

'The elections became a major showdown on the key issues tearing the Labour Party apart, albeit expressed negatively: for or against the CIA-loyal exponents of Cold War; for or against the architects of coalition and austerity.'

It was on this basis that critical support to Benn was a necessary stand for Leninists seeking to split the Labour Party on a revolutionary programme.

Three decades of 'Labour unilateralism'

And what are the supposed 'socialist policies' adopted at conference? The overwhelming vote to maintain imperialist troops in Ireland? Protectionist import controls, centrepiece of the Alternative Economic Strategy, which far from saving jobs only promote nationalist poison and set worker against worker? The promise to repeal the Tory Nationality Act, a promise vague on everything except Labour's commitment to enact and enforce its own restrictive and racist anti-immigration legislation? As for the opposition to statutory incomes policy and the two-thirds vote for unilateralism, claimed as the main left victories of the conference, here too what is involved has nothing to do with socialism.

Conference has opposed statutory incomes policy since 1971 (now even the SDP opposes it!). Yet every postwar Labour government has engineered a sharp decline in real wages. With capitalist Britain 1982 in far worse shape than at any time since at least the 1930s, left and right alike know that a new Labour government must attack workers' wages and living standards. Thus the farcical 'debate' on economic policy was presented by Benn, darling of pseudo-revolutionaries, and summed up by Healey, spokesman for the IMF -- and differences were hard to find. Where Healey's message was that 'general elections do not change the laws of arithmetic', Benn spoke of respecting government 'cash limits'. Dotting the i's and crossing the t's, conference as a whole went on to enthusiastically endorse the TUC's 'national economic assessment' document which calls explicitly for agreements on wage and public spending limits between the TUC and a new Labour government -- ie wage control and social spending cuts under a Mark II Social Contract.

The much-vaunted unilateralism vote also repeats past conference policy -- and not just the celebrated case of Scarborough 1960. Labour entered election campaigns in both 1964 and 1974 formally opposed to the nuclear 'deterrent', won both times -- and of course did nothing. The capitalists do, of course, remain worried about Labour even toying with the idea of unilateralism. But not too worried; as the *Economist* (9 October) put it, 'Don't yet panic, quite.' For they have their most trusted agents securely in place to ensure that, once again, nothing happens which could unduly hurt the Atlantic Alliance.

When conference exploded in applause at the two-thirds majority, Denis Healey demonstratively and defiantly remained in his seat. Along with Roy Hattersley, he then predictably wasted no time getting the word around that the vote need never be reflected in the manifesto, let alone in the actions of a future government. And Healey is shadow foreign secretary, one of the key people responsible for Labour policy towards 'defence'! With 'inveterate peacemonger'-turned-witchhunter Foot adding his own mumbled comments about 'commitments to allies' and how one couldn't accomplish everything overnight, Labour's latest commitment to unilateralism is clearly worth rather less than the paper it's written on.

Moreover the formal policy adopted is far from being even utopian pacifism. To round off the 'defence' policy debate, conference voted 5-to-1 to uphold Britain's place in the anti-Soviet NATO alliance. And the unilateralist resolution itself includes a call to 'bring Britain's military expenditure as a percentage of the gross national product into line with the average of our major European allies'. In other words the Labour Party simply wants decrepit Britain to spend no more than say, West Germany, as its tithe to NATO!

Labour doesn't need the CIA connection to betray

Throughout the past three years of turmoil in the Labour Party, the Spartacist League has warned that to follow the road mapped out by Tony Benn and his left camp followers would mean disaster for the working class. We argued that it was necessary to critically support Benn in last year's crucial deputy leadership contest against Healey, not in order to bolster the credentials of this reformist muddlehead, but 'in order to exacerbate and follow through the split begun with the formation of the SDP, drive out the blatantly pro-imperialist CIA-connected right wing and place Benn in a position where

his left-reformist politics could be more effectively exposed and combatted' (*Spartacist Britain* no 41, April 1982, emphasis in original). We wanted, and still want, to show how Labour doesn't need the CIA connection to betray -- that it is equally capable of doing so as Little England's 'own' bourgeois workers party. From chauvinist import controls to anti-working-class wage controls and racist immigration controls -- the politics of all wings of the Labourite bureaucracy stand flatly counterposed to the interests of the working class.

In contrast, our pseudo-revolutionary opponents hailed the rise of the new Labour left as the route to resolving the crisis of working class leadership. The Communist Party (CP) long ago degenerated into little more than a reformist pressure group on the Labour Party, using its influence in the trade unions to mobilise the ranks to back the mainstream social democrats. *Marxism Today* and *Morning Star* have been devoted to regular, well-nigh uncritical coverage not only of Tony Benn but of Michael Foot; indeed the Stalinists' reaction to the witchhunt was far worse than Benn's. *Straight Left* (October 1982), the Labour-loyal paper sponsored by the CP's pro-Moscow minority put it most plainly: '... the right's purge and Militant's policies have one and the same effect -- to divide and demobilise our movement to the benefit of the enemy'. Thus the witchhunting right is equated with the witchhunted Militant -- and *Straight Left*'s only worry is that Foot/Healey's 'undemocratic cold-war rules ... strike at the very nature of the Labour Party as a mass, all-embracing political expression of the working class'.

This utterly false analysis of the Labour Party as an 'all-embracing political instrument', implicitly open to be won to any politics whatsoever, is basically shared by all the pseudo-Trotskyist cheerleaders for Benn, from Militant leftwards. *Socialist Organiser* long ago dubbed itself 'Bennite' and openly projects a left Labour government opening the road to socialism. *Socialist Challenge* even today writes fawning 'Dear Tony' letters, urging Benn to stick to a 'fight to defend socialist policies' in order to provide a 'genuine alternative' to a capitalist government. And the Workers Power group, while more critical of Benn & Co, chases the will-o-the-wisp of 'democratising' the structures of the party and the trade unions, in particular the bloc vote.

For Leninists, the strategic task of splitting the Labour Party, winning its proletarian base to a revolutionary alternative to parliamentarist betrayal, is part and parcel of the struggle for communist leadership in the trade unions. The struggle to defeat the reformist trade union bureaucracy hinges not on 'democratisation' but on the fight, in action, for a revolutionary programme. Today, having reasserted their control over the Labour Party, the TUC has embarked on a series of orchestrated manoeuvres -- 'days of action', strike threats, speechifying -- with the aim of providing an outlet for pent-up frustration at the base and channelling it into a crusade for reactionary protectionism and for a new Labour government. A revolutionary intervention must say: No to nationalist import controls -- Trade war leads to imperialist war! Not separate, sectional 'days of action' as Labourite election rallies, but all-out united strike action in the mines, steel, NHS to smash Thatcher's attacks! Such an intervention would point the way not only to defeating the Tories' reactionary schemes, but to polarising the labour movement against the social-democratic betrayers and forging the desperately necessary revolutionary alternative.

The history of the British left is littered with the political corpses of those individuals and organisations who wasted their lives attempting to transform the organically reformist Labour Party into some sort of instrument for socialist transformation. With the trade union and Labour bureaucrats now gearing up the workers for the next election, we warn: what these leaders have in store for you, far from being socialist, is a replay of the 1974-79 government of Social Contract betrayal. Even the prospect of another anti-working-class coalition, this time with the professional Cold Warriors of the SDP, is being mooted. And they project such a government under far worse conditions of mass economic devastation and the looming threat of thermonuclear war.

We say: Defeat the witchhunt! Kick out CIA/NATO-lover Healey! For a revolutionary alternative to Bennite reformism! No to another 1974-79 government of betrayal! And we struggle to build a revolutionary vanguard party not to put a few reformist parliamentarians on the benches of Westminster but to fight for socialist revolution and a workers state. That is the only real alternative to Thatcherism. ■

Militant goons for Solidarność at LPYS demo

Witchhunted witchhunt



On 14 October nearly 3500 youth gathered in Liverpool for a demonstration against youth unemployment called by the Militant-led LPYS. The Spartacist League (SL) intervened with a contingent and a leaflet that addressed Militant's intentions on the demonstration: 'Militant seek to use this demonstration of youth to prove their loyalty to the witchhunters inside the Labour Party, to convince them that Militant are needed to win impatient youth to waiting for another Labour government. It is a cruel lie to unemployed youth, and it won't even work for Militant.' And part of proving their loyalty to the CIA-loving witchhunters was to witchhunt the Trotskyists of the SL.

Our line of 'Drive the CIA-loving right wing out of the Labour Party', combined with counterposing the fight for workers state power to Labourite reformism and social-democratic racism gained us a large audience, with groups of interested LPYSers gathering around our comrades for discussions and arguments. This earned us

the attention of Militant bureaucrats -- and what outraged them completely were our banner and slogans opposing Solidarnosc counterrevolution in Poland. Militant's platform speaker announced that the Spartacists' banner had no place on the march (we were later informed by Militant that the demonstrators had 'voted' for our removal -- a 'vote' which has about as much legitimacy in workers democracy as the Moscow show trials); Militant thugs moved in and tried to isolate us but still groups of LPYSers gathered around our banner for discussions. Then as the march moved off, Militant stewards started scuffles with our comrades and formed a cordon that prevented us from marching on the demonstration. Our chant of: 'Thatcher hates the British workers, Thatcher hates the Russian workers -- Defend the workers' unions, defend the workers states!' led to Militant attempts to drown us out with chants of 'LP -- LPY -- LPYS -- OK!'. Pathetically unable to offer any serious alternative to us, they were reduced to attempt-

ing to tear down our banner (see photos above).

When the march arrived at Pier Head Militant thugs again tried to force us out as we set up our banners once more -- but to no avail. Just as Healey is proving Labour's loyalty to the bourgeoisie by witchhunting Militant, so Militant tries by witchhunting the SL to prove its loyalty to anti-Soviet Labourism and its determination to get Labour into Parliament (with or without 'socialist policies') above all else. But as we said in our leaflet:

'No matter how many Labour MPs get in there, no matter how many "socialist" speeches they make, Parliament will always belong to the imperialist butchers who have raped and pillaged the colonial world. Channelled into building a revolutionary workers party, a Trotskyist party, the anger of the youth and minorities will not be wasted burning down the ghettos but can help tear down this racist, capitalist system at its foundations.'

TUC/Labour ...

(Continued from page 1)

ship. They sang the 'Red Flag' at Blackpool, but they waved the Union Jack. The recent steelworkers' day of action had as its central theme the demand for import controls, as did the threatened strike action at Vauxhall. And protectionism is the centrepiece of Labour's Alternative Economic Strategy.

The reaffirmation of Labour's loyalty to NATO's anti-Soviet war drive, the pervasive jingoism over the Falklands war which the labour bureaucracy not only accepts but actively fuels, the outcry of poisonous protectionism are all sure symptoms that the reformist leaders are preparing the role they have played since at least 1914: leading the workers into inter-imperialist slaughter. A working-class offensive is desperately needed now not only to stop Thatcher, but to break the stranglehold of a reformist bureaucracy which is prepared to take the workers down with this dying system.

And the opportunity is there. Everyone who remembers 1974 knows what a miners strike would mean -- a political confrontation with the Thatcher government. And for that confrontation to be successful it must go beyond a sectional miners struggle. Centrally the miners must harness the power of the steelworkers to their own for a no-holds-barred counteroffensive against the Tory attacks and to drive the bourgeoisie into retreat. With the TGWU talking strike action at Vauxhall, with engineering workers, Ford, BL and local government workers having outstanding wage claims, a decisive push by the miners could break through the bureaucracy's protectionist dead-end and catalyse the sporadic sectional resistance into an all-out classwide attack on the Tory government. *All-out strike action now!*

Class war, not trade war

With Welsh mining regions already facing eco-

conomic devastation and Scotland on the brink, the only thing the reformists can offer -- from the right wing of the Labour Party to the left, through to the Communist Party (CP) -- is an Alternative Economic Strategy of deflation and nationalist autarky. Take a look at Mitterrand's France, where the economy is in better shape and the reflationary 'economic miracle' far more ambitious in scope. Unable to keep inflation in check and money capital from fleeing as US interest rates remain high, Mitterrand has increasingly resorted to the usual capitalist alternative -- austerity. Whether it is Healey's capitalist 'laws of arithmetic' or Benn's capitalist 'cash limits', that is what Cold War reformism will mean for Britain too -- anti-working class austerity.

And right now it means deflecting struggles against the bosses into cutthroat fights against 'foreign' workers -- and that inevitably means minority workers here as well. While Scargill campaigned for a strike vote in the NUM linking wages to jobs, he announced his willingness to drop the jobs demand if NCB head Norman Siddall gave 'assurance' (which he wouldn't) that there would be no closures. For Scargill, the way to fight for miners' jobs is ... to fight for Britain. Addressing a miners rally in Birmingham he responded to the NCB's 'put country above class' anti-strike propaganda by trying to out-jingo them:

'The Coal Board asks if we are looking to the future of Britain. We should be using British coal. Who are they to ask us if we are looking towards the future of Britain?'

The reformists are even more strident than the bourgeoisie in pushing import controls. When Parliament debated the EEC's agreement to 'voluntarily' limit steel exports to the US rather than face stiffer tariff barriers -- graphic proof that protectionism means profits before jobs -- Labour leader Michael Foot denounced Margaret 'Buy British' Thatcher as not patriotic enough, demanding controls on steel imports. Replied the Iron Lady cynically: 'Do you not see you have just been objecting to the US trying to

take steps against imports but you now want us to take steps against imports.'

As Thatcher continues to ride the wave of reactionary chauvinism excited by her dirty little war in the South Atlantic, the workers' misleaders seek to ride the same wave to bolster their pleas for reactionary protectionism. 'Has the government the will to fight for the people of Britain in the same way that it has fought for the rights of the people of the Falkland Islands?' (*Guardian*, 4 October) wails Bill Sirs. As much as Sirs might desire it, Thatcher is neither willing nor able to fight a war in defence of the collapsing British steel industry. War with Argentina, perhaps; but with the US, Germany or Japan? But Sirs could not have put it better: trade wars lead to shooting wars. And when the time comes for it, the social-chauvinists will as readily send the workers to the slaughter as they now lead the economic charge against workers in other countries.

The Labourite and CP misleaders are playing a deadly dangerous game for the working class. The

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Pipeline...

(Continued from page 9)

exporters could not sell profitably in world markets. Renault and Peugeot, for example, were forced to sell cars at cost in West Germany, otherwise they couldn't sell them at all. To bridge the widening balance-of-trade deficit, France was borrowing heavily in the international money markets. In the first seven months of this year alone France increased its foreign indebtedness by a third. Mitterrand's France was on its way to becoming the Poland or Mexico of West Europe.

To get out of these financial straits Mitterrand, who doesn't lack chutzpah, has tried to induce other governments, above all Reagan's America, to subsidize France in the name of a 'new international economic order'. As host of the June Versailles summit he proposed a series of grandiose schemes for restructuring world capitalism. All these schemes had one thing in common: they would channel other people's money, mainly denominated in dollars and deutschmarks, into the coffers of the Banque de France. In particular the French made a big push for international currency stabilization, a scheme to have the US Federal Reserve take over the hopeless task of propping up the faltering franc.

No way, said Wall Street, was it going to subsidize the French social democrats no matter how loudly they denounce the Soviet SS-20 missiles or whoop it up for the counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc. The *Wall Street Journal* (9 June) commented acridly:

'The French, it appears, have been intervening so merrily in the foreign-exchange markets they are about to run out of money. How nice it would be for them if Messrs. Reagan and Volcker could be induced to take over the job of spending good dollars to mop up excess francs.

'That would, in effect, amount to hitching the dollar to the spending schemes of France's Socialist government, and mercifully the Reagan team managed to slip out of Versailles without promising anything more than a study of the whole idea of currency intervention.'

A week after Reagan dumped cold water on them at Versailles, the French devalued the franc once again. More significantly, the Mitterrand government imposed a four-month wage freeze on all French workers. Not even the haughty bourgeois Giscard had dared to risk a total wage freeze as an 'anti-inflation' measure. The economics correspondent for the right-wing *Le Figaro*, Yves Guihannec, wrote in a we-told-you-so vein:

'The French government -- suddenly waking to the harshness of the real world after its second currency devaluation in nine months -- is totally reversing its economic policies. The fight against inflation becomes again, as it was under former conservative Prime Minister Raymond Barre, the No. 1 priority.' (*Wall Street Journal*, 30 June)

Since June the economic pronouncements of the Mitterrand regime are virtually indistinguishable from those of Reagan or Thatcher. The language of *solidarite* has been replaced with that of *rigueur*. Social security taxes on workers have been raised, for example, while benefits are cut. A Communist Party functionary exclaimed to a British journalist friend: 'It's got through my thick skull at last: we're landed with another government of the Right' (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 25 June). This 'revelation' has not prevented the Stalinist ministers from loyally serving in Mitterrand's 'another government of the Right'.

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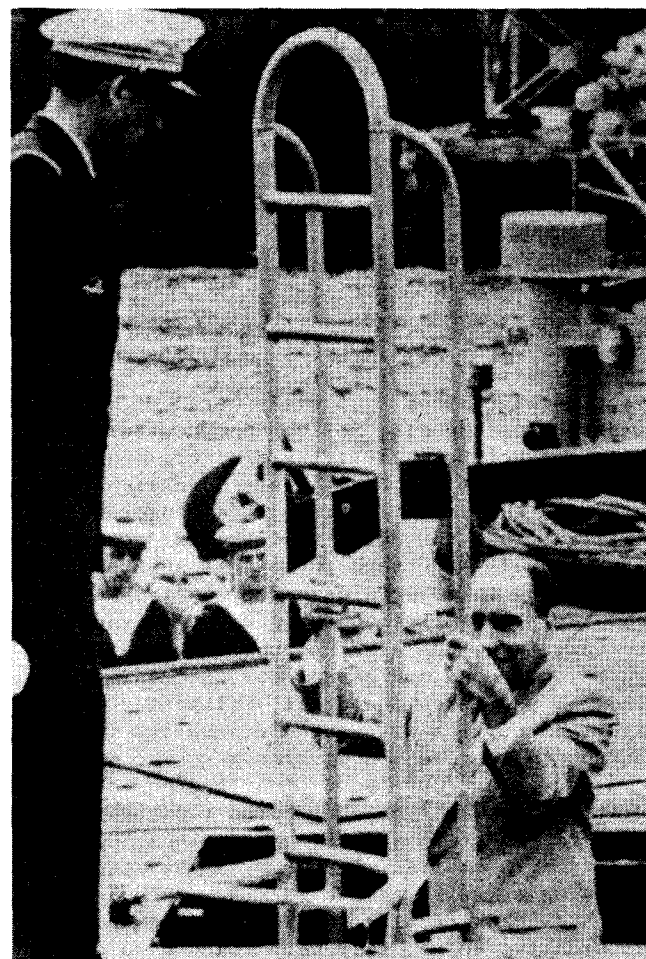
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From the outset the Mitterrand regime -- here enthusiastically backed by the Stalinists -- has been highly economically nationalistic. The main slogan used in pushing through the nationalizations was to 'reconquer the domestic market', in other words, trade protectionism. Now that the reformist pretensions of the popular-front government have been totally exploded and it is calling for austerity and nothing but austerity, the appeals to French chauvinism are likely to become more strident yet. That is all the reformists have to fall back on. The social-democrats and Stalinists will undoubtedly blame all of France's economic ills on the 'multinationals' and Wall Street and seek to channel the mounting proletarian anger against French imperialism's German, American and Japanese rivals.

Depression, trade war, imperialist war

The snide Tories of the London *Economist* remarked that the 'fiasco about a pipeline from Siberia ... must be amusing the ghosts of both Groucho and Karl Marx'. Certainly the pipeline



Hawk in 'socialist' feathers Mitterrand inspects French nuclear submarine. His massive anti-Soviet rearmament drive contributed to largest budget deficit in postwar French history.

brouhaha has all the elements of first-class political farce. And as communists we particularly appreciate that the world's number one imperialist warmonger, Ronald Reagan, comes out of it with much egg on his face.

But the pipeline dispute should not be treated simply as a subject for derisive laughter. At bottom it represents the intersection of the two main forces driving us toward World War III: the appetite of capitalist imperialism -- openly and loudly voiced by Reagan -- to overthrow the Soviet Union, which despite Stalinist degeneration still embodies the social gains of the Bolshevik Revolution, and the intensifying inter-imperialist economic conflicts.

Increasingly the capitalist world of the 1980s resembles that of the 1930s. It is not just the 30 million unemployed in West Europe and North America. It is not just that firms which have been household names for decades -- Chrysler, International Harvester, AEG-Telefunken -- are on the verge of bankruptcy or can be saved from bankruptcy only by government bail-outs. It is not just that every week sees another international financial crisis as Mexico, Argentina or some country cannot meet their billions of dollars in debt payments. It is that the bourgeois and reformist parties can offer no credible way out of the prolonged economic slump. They offer only more austerity. Each in its own way, the spectacular failures of Reagan's 'supply-side' economics and Mitterrand's neo-Keynesianism demonstrate the impotence of bourgeois governments before the anarchy of the world capitalist system.

Influential sections of the US bourgeoisie are fed up with Reagan's crackpot economic schemes and true-believer political gambits. But no section of the ruling class can find a way out of the underlying problem: the decline of capitalism and its long-term and increasing unproductiveness. The US Democratic Party's railing against 'Reaganomics' is intended to

help the gullible forget Carter's record of double-digit inflation and 'austerity' policies. It was under the Democrats that Cold War II was begun, paving the way for Reagan's more ideologically rarefied style. All wings of the bourgeoisie are committed to the anti-Soviet military buildup, necessarily a multi-billion-dollar drain on a contracting capitalist economy.

And the depressed economic conditions intensify all the destructive irrationality of the capitalist order. It is no accident that a fanatical warmonger like Reagan became US president at a time when the American ruling class keenly felt the loss of its former economic and military superiority. A true reactionary, Reagan dreams of restoring the short-lived 'American century' of the 1950s. This 'American century' was achieved by defeating in war America's two principal imperialist rivals -- Germany and Japan. Now once again we find American imperialism pitted against a German-dominated Europe and a resurgent and rearming Japan.

It is very timely to point out that Japan, in particular, was driven into the Second World War by a decade of trade protectionism and economic sanctions directed against it. With the onset of the Great Depression, tariff barriers were erected everywhere against the Japanese 'trade menace' as it was then called. Most damaging to Japan was trade protectionism in the Asian colonies of the other imperialist powers (eg, British India, French Indochina). Japan was thus pushed into creating its own Asian 'Co-Prosperity Sphere'.

To counter Japanese expansionism American and British imperialism resorted first to economic warfare. In July 1941 (five months before Pearl Harbor) the US, British and Dutch embargoed Japan's oil supplies without which it could not survive. The eminent British military historian B H Liddell Hart has written:

'Although Japan had stayed out of the war hitherto, the steps which Roosevelt and Churchill took in July to cut off her economic resources were bound to make her strike back in the only way possible for her -- by force of arms.' (*History of the Second World War* [1970])

As the capitalist world once again slides into depression, once again we hear the cries in West Europe and the US of the Japanese 'trade menace'. When a Japanese trade delegation visited the Common Market countries last October, they were shocked by the sudden upsurge in anti-Japanese sentiment. French trade minister Michel Jobert (a loud-mouthed old Gaullist) told them bluntly 'there's nothing we really need' to import from Japan.

However, anti-Japanese feeling in Europe is not nearly as strong as in the US. There is now a bill in Congress requiring that 90 per cent of the content of Japanese autos sold there be manufactured in America. And the shock troops in the anti-Japanese trade war are the same labor bureaucrats, centrally the Fraser gang in the Auto Workers, who are also leading the give-backs campaign and are staunch supporters of the anti-Soviet war drive as well. It is the liberal Democrats, the so-called 'friends of labor', who are most vocal in whipping up 'yellow peril' chauvinism. At a closed Congressional caucus Michigan Democrat John Dingell reportedly called the Japanese 'little yellow people'. Democratic Congressional leader Tip O'Neill is calling for a total ban on Japanese auto imports and speaking in Detroit last March boasted, 'If I were President ... I'd fix the Japanese like they've never been fixed.' Considering that his fellow Democrat Harry Truman dropped two A-bombs on the Japanese, that is one hell of a threat.

Small wonder that the head of Japan's ruling bourgeois Liberal Democratic Party, Susumu Nakaido, recently told a US trade negotiator: 'Opinions expressed about Japan in the United States are anti-Japanese. They give us the impression of the prewar days' (*Los Angeles Times*, 19 March). Perhaps Nakaido was justifying Japan's rearmament program. The conventional picture of Japan as an economic giant but a military midget is no longer accurate. The Japanese military budget is the sixth largest in the world and is growing faster than that of any West European country. Japan's rulers know better than most that world trade wars can easily escalate into world wars of a far more destructive kind.

The outbreak of the first imperialist world

Notice

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war in 1914 signaled that the forces of production had outgrown capitalist property relations and the nation-state system, and so required the international socialist reconstruction of society as the only alternative to destruction. As the warring European capitalist 'fatherlands' sent a generation of youth to the slaughter, the great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky raised the call for a Socialist United States of Europe. The continuing power of that program is proven, for example, in the demonstrated need for a Siberian gas pipeline, even in the face of capitalist irrationality and Stalinist mismanagement. Imagine the possibilities opened up by a planned, integrated economy fully and rationally utilizing the labor power, technical knowledge and natural resources from the Siberian tundra to the Iberian peninsula.

The Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was the first step toward a socialist world order. But the failure to extend the proletarian revolution, centrally to Europe, in the early 1920s led to the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union, the victory of fascism in Germany and the second imperialist world war. Now that the preparations for a nuclear World War III are well under way, the time is short to resolve the historic choice facing mankind: socialism or barbarism.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard*, no 313, 17 September 1982

TUC/Labour ...

(Continued from page 11)

same week that Foot demanded import controls in Parliament, in Birmingham steel unions picketed the Motor Show demanding the use of British steel in car construction, the more left-wing TGWU demanded a halt to Spanish car imports and a CP election supplement in Birmingham Northfield called for a British motor industry which used British parts from 'steel to wheels'. But near BL Longbridge, the appeal to frustrated car workers to mobilise in the streets under the slogan 'British jobs for British workers' was coming not from the reformists but from the fascist National Front! The fascists offer the ultimate nationalist programme: genocide of all 'non-British' -- Asians, blacks, Irish -- and the crushing of the workers' organisations. Racism goes hand-in-hand with nationalism, and with nationalism being fuelled by and for an anti-Soviet war drive, racist terror reaches epidemic proportions. Import controls, no less than immigration controls, fuel racist and fascist terror!

For a Socialist United States of Europe

Protectionism not only cannot stop, but in fact has contributed to the industrial rot of the British economy. Incapable of retooling its basic industries to a level comparable with its international competitors following World War II,



British industry was 'protected' and massively subsidised mainly through Labour's nationalisation schemes. But when the world recession started to bite, British industry began going under like a house of cards.

Steel sums up in microcosm the reality of British industry -- and how the TUC traitors try to 'save' it. Had the heroic 100-day steel strike two years ago burst through the confines of trade union economism and broken free from the stranglehold of outright Labourite treachery, the entire Tory offensive would have been thrown back. As it was, with the able assistance of Bill Sirs, BSC boss Ian McGregor has been able to raise productivity to new levels by throwing tens of thousands of steel workers onto the dole queues. But neither import controls nor the Protestant ethic will save British steel. With the

US struggling to keep a bare 40 per cent of its steel-producing capacity going, Reagan has made it clear that he is looking out for Number One. And with a glut on the international market, Britain is the loser yet again. Thus, Redcar on Teeside, marked for closure, is among the most modern steel plants in the world, but as the *Economist* explained, 'it was designed to produce 10,000 tonnes of steel a day ... but the trouble is that nobody needs 10,000 tonnes of steel a day'.

In the epoch of imperialism the nation-state has become a reactionary fetter on the productive forces. Twice this century competing bourgeoisies have embarked on inter-imperialist world wars in an attempt to reorder the world market to their benefit. Now we stand on the edge of a third world war potentially more destructive than all previous wars put together, with the central aim of retrieving for the capitalist market the Soviet degenerated workers state.

Despite the delusions of the Little England lefts in the Labour Party and their Stalinist compatriots, Britain is not an island unto itself. Capitalism is an international system, and capitalist Britain is part of it -- no matter how many Labour conferences pass resolutions in favour of withdrawal from the world, no matter how many English hamlets declare themselves 'nuclear-free zones'. And, wedded to the nation-state, reformists must ultimately and necessarily come to its defence. Since the first inter-imperialist war, Leninists have counterposed the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe to the social-chauvinists' defence of the fatherland. Rational planned economies as part of an international division of labour, not nationalist autarky, is the answer to capitalist irrationality. *Defend the Soviet Union! Down with NATO's EEC! For a Socialist United States of Europe!*

Miners can lead the way

Try as the reformists will to dress it up as the 'commonsense solution' to unemployment, protectionism does not save jobs. Just the opposite. Given the uncompetitive character of British capitalism, in an escalating trade war British workers will end up with the short end of the stick. The possibility now concretely posed for a joint coal/steel strike does offer a real road to fighting the jobs slaughter. One of the steel plants threatened with closure is Ravenscraig in devastated Scotland. And if it goes so do two other steel plants, Clydebridge and Glengarnock, as well as two local pits. With unemployment already running at 22 per cent in nearby Motherwell, one steelworker was not exaggerating when he said, 'if the "Craig" goes, this town dies'.

It doesn't have to. But that means breaking with the Labourite 'solution' of Parliament and protectionism and with any reliance not only on Sirs but on Scargill as well. Scargill's campaign for a 'yes' vote is designed primarily to save his own credibility and to gain a little more leverage at the bargaining table. It is a long time since today's NUM president led the miners at Saltley Gates. When asked following Blackpool if he was still in favour of industrial action to bring down the Tories, Scargill demurely backed off: 'This government is so horrendous that it should certainly be removed as quickly as possible -- in a general election.'

Clydebridge steelworkers lobbying an ISTC emergency conference in Sheffield last month made it clear to *Spartacist Britain* that they had no illusions in 'King Arthur' but still expected Scottish NUM leader and CP member Mick McGahey to offer a lead. McGahey has his own variant of class collaborationism to which he adds a tinge of Scottish nationalism, as in the *Scottish Miner's* appeal to 'churches, businessmen, professional people, political parties, progressive minded Scots' to back the Triple Alliance lobby of Downing Street. But as Scargill has toured the mining areas, there by his side has been McGahey -- sharing the platform, sharing the rhetoric and sharing the programme. McGahey personifies the contribution the CP has made to Labourite treachery over the decades -- channelling the support of industrial workers seeking a militant alternative to social demo-

cracy back into Labour's fold.

McGahey told a crowd of Welsh miners: 'The British miners can be a catalyst that can spark off the fight against the Tory government.' It is true and necessary. But to do it will take a conscious strategy which addresses the full array of capitalist attacks, not McGahey's rhetoric. It will mean a fight for worksharing on full pay across the board to fight redundancies, including occupations of threatened plants. It will mean calling the health workers out for joint action not only in defence of the NHS but around the demand for the sort of quality medical care today to be expected only from private hospitals. It will mean bringing life to Scargill's threats to bring out the miners against the Tebbit bill and calling on



Defeating Thatcher's war on workers and oppressed means united class struggle, not waiting for another Social Contract Labour government.

other unions with wage claims outstanding to join them in fighting around the same sort of wage demand the miners are raising, linked to a sliding scale of wages to match inflation. Scargill's oft-repeated talk about a Triple Alliance strike in defence of wages and jobs can be given reality with the following appeal to NUR members: Weighell's been thrown out -- now throw out his miserly 6 per cent deal as well!

A mobilisation of this character, across sectional lines, could rapidly develop in the direction of a general strike. For the reformist misleaders, this is something to fear above all else, posing as it does a direct challenge to the capitalist class as a whole and placing on the agenda the question of which class rules. It is then that even the most left-talking reformists openly reveal their fundamental class loyalty to the bourgeois state. Only with a revolutionary leadership can the proletariat resolve the question of class rule in its favour. But in the course of a general strike, the conditions could quickly ripen for ripping Labour's mass base away from its reformist misleaders and creating a party which will put the final blow to the death agony of British capitalism.

Ever since the Tories came to office, the trade union bureaucrats have counselled patience until the next elections. When the steelworkers strike nearly brought the country to the brink of a general strike, the trade union bureaucracy -- from Sirs to Scargill -- kept it isolated as long as possible until Sirs & Co stuck the knife in just as the strike was spreading. More recently, they gave Thatcher a free hand to use the 'Falklands factor' against ASLEF when fighting class unity was urgently and directly posed. Now the elections are approaching -- and they promise workers nothing better than a Labour government with the same policies and even the same personalities, in a far worse period, than the last. Enough is enough! Miners take the lead! For all-out strike action against the Tory attacks! Forward to a revolutionary workers government! ■

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Race checks...

(Continued from page 16)

the most vicious current cases being that of Afia Begum, a young Bangladeshi woman who now faces deportation with her one-year-old son following the death of her husband in a fire. His home in a Labour Council-owned condemned building in Tower Hamlets was a firetrap. First they set up minority families for death, then deport any survivors -- this is the reality of the racist offensive.

The introduction of race checks (or a system of internal passports for racial minorities) has been seriously posed in Britain for over a decade. The 1978 Select Committee on Immigration and Race Relations report to Parliament called on the government to drastically cut immigration and introduce a quota system for British passport holders. Among other provisions this obscene racist document called for devoting more resources to the hunt for 'illegal' immigrants and demanded the institution of some kind of 'internal control' passbook system for immigrants. The report was not acted upon by the then Labour government, but was endorsed by all five Labour MPs as well as the Conservatives on the Committee.

When the Tories came to power in 1979, they were determined to rebuild this rotting economy on the backs of the workers and oppressed. And in depression/Cold War Britain, everyone who isn't 'true blue British' has become a front line target. With fewer jobs, less housing and swingeing cuts in social services, minorities are always the most expendable. The days of 'Rule Britannia' are gone, but those upon whose ancestors' backs the empire was built, the former colonial slaves -- many of whom were wooed to this country in the late 1950s to do the dirty jobs the British wouldn't do -- are being turned into scapegoats for the social and economic misery engendered by capitalism in decline. The murderous policies of colonialism have come home with a vengeance.

The trade unions must take the lead in mobilising workers and minorities in effective defence. Racial minorities are in the front line but the Tories are out to destroy the social services and cripple the trade union movement as a whole. The fight must become the fight of the whole class and all the oppressed. Opposition to the race checks must be taken up as part of the NHS strike -- minority workers make up the backbone of the health service. Miners and steel workers, workers with industrial muscle, must come out alongside NHS and social service workers in all-out strike action to smash the Tory offensive. Trade union/minority defence guards must be formed to smash racist attacks and crush the fascists in the streets.

But what is the union leadership doing? NALGO has called on its members not to cooperate with the new race checks ... until health authorities provide training on how to make 'racial assessments' and review staffing levels. In the DoE the CPSA's Militant-tendency-run 'broad left' leadership has simply put out a circular asking the membership what to do.

Today just about everyone is pushing the Labour Party as the saviour for beleaguered racial minorities. The reformists and Labourites all have the same strategy: repeal the bad laws and replace them with 'good' laws, and elect 'good' people to enforce them, ie Labour. Just like the call to ban the fascists it all boils down to reliance on the racist bourgeois state to protect minorities. Dave Cook, prominent supporter of the Communist Party (CP) and secretary of the Campaign Against Racist Laws (CARL), says, 'The commitment to repeal the Nationality Act given at last week's Labour Party conference has en-



Racial minorities in the front line of capitalist attack

couraged anti-racists everywhere' (*Morning Star*, 4 October). But even the October CARL Newsletter admits: 'Many black people might still be rather sceptical about whether the next Labour government (whenever that is) is serious about its anti-racist commitment.'

Sceptical! Every black and Asian knows what Labour is. Labour in power meant deportations, racist attacks and virginity tests for Asian women. The pledge to repeal the Nationality Act is not worth the paper it's written on -- and even if this Act did go other racist legislation would replace it. Home Affairs spokesman Roy Hattersley has made clear that Labour retains its 'commitment' to immigration controls -- and all immigration controls under capitalism are racist.

Similarly the union, Labour and CP bureaucrats unanimously fail to lift a finger to mobilise against racist/fascist terror, counselling instead reliance on state bans and the police. Reliance on the police! Tell that to the thousands caught up in the racist dragnet following the inner-city explosions of summer 1981. But the alternative is not the macho posturing and small-group adventurism typified by the Revolutionary Communist Party and its pretentiously misnamed Workers Against Racism. Such a strategy at best achieves only isolated victories and more often sets anti-racist fighters up for defeat. Only mobilisations based on the mass organisations of the working class, centrally the trade unions, can truly show the way forward. *No reliance on the racist state! For trade union and minority mobilisations to crush the fascists!*

The aftermath of last summer's ghetto explosions has seen only increased repression, terror and frustration for racial minorities. The Labour Party and trade union leaders condemn the working class and minorities to a future of 'progressive' degradation. These reformist leaders' screams for import controls, in the context of the anti-Soviet war drive and trade war, serve only to fuel nationalism, racist terror and the growth of fascism -- for import controls at bottom mean the fascist slogan, 'British jobs for British workers'.

The struggle to mobilise the working class in defence of minorities must be linked to the struggle to build a communist leadership in the unions, and to win minority workers and youth to a revolutionary party that fights for the only antidote to capitalist decay -- a workers state and a socialist planned economy. No deportations! Smash the race checks! Full citizenship rights for all minority and immigrant workers! For union/minority defence squads to smash racist/fascist attacks! ■

Holocaust...

(Continued from page 16)

bullet for the Zionist butchers!

Just how many Palestinians were massacred at Shatila and Sabra will never be known. In any case, while the Zionist racists have routinely murdered ten or even 100 Arabs for every Israeli soldier killed by the PLO, this was certainly genocide: the bloodiest massacre yet in the bloody oppression of the Palestinians.

Begin and Sharon have tried to sell their genocidal invasion of Lebanon to Washington as the spearhead of Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive in the Near East by casting the PLO and Syria as Russian surrogates. This sales job was initially successful as Reagan gave the June invasion the green light. But the US opposed the Israelis' takeover of West Beirut because it undercut efforts to cement an anti-Soviet 'strategic consensus' with other Arab regimes in the region. When Israel seized West Beirut on 15 September they seized the Soviet Embassy, an incredible provocation against the USSR. The fanatical madmen who run Israel today are trying to overcome their rift with US imperialism by humiliating the Soviet Union, even if that means provoking a nuclear showdown between the anti-Soviet fan-

atics in the White House and the USSR.

It is a grim irony that only the language associated with Nazi barbarism can adequately describe the developing Zionist policy: 'Blitzkrieg', the 'final solution', a 'master race' and 'purification'. The Israeli population must have been stunned with the comparison to Nazi Germany when confronted with the government's claim that 'it didn't know' what happened at Shatila and Sabra.

The question of responsibility, however, as it is posed in Israel and the US is a whitewash of the war criminals. It is not a question of mere 'knowledge'. Begin and Sharon planned and executed the massacres at the Palestinian camps.

The early cover-up stories about how the Israeli military 'didn't know' and moved in to protect innocent civilians as soon as they found out have been thoroughly exploded by Israeli as well as Western journalists. The basic facts are now clear. The Israeli army invaded predominantly Muslim West Beirut, surrounded the Palestinian camps and trucked in their killer-militia from all over Lebanon to do the job. The Israelis ushered them into the camps, provided the staging areas, road signs, food rations and checkpoints, and also lit flares so the butchery could continue into the night. When the sadistic killers became tired they came out to the Israeli command post and lounged around with the Israelis listening to Simon and Garfunkel songs.

The butchers of Shatila and Sabra were not Christian militiamen who got out of hand and went berserk. They were composed of disciplined units directly controlled by the Israeli authorities: Saad Haddad's Lebanese Forces and the Damuri Brigade. As for their acting on their own, Haddad himself declared, 'Every move we make has to be coordinated with the IDF [Israel Defence Force]' (*Times*, 23 September). And so was this one. The Damuri Brigade (largely composed of survivors of a town where the Palestinians massacred Christians in the 1975-76 Lebanese communalist civil war) is not part of the traditional Phalange.

In Haddad's forces and the Damuri Brigade, Israel has created its own contingents of local Lebanese murderers for the most bloodthirsty jobs. Sharon and Begin pulled the trigger just as surely as Hitler did for the dreaded Lithuanian and Ukrainian SS Einsatzkommandos, or for the Croatian Ustashi. These East European fascists could be relied on to do jobs that even the German Nazi regulars might not have the stomach for. It was Ukrainian Einsatzkommandos who forced some 50,000 Jews out of their homes in Kiev and marched them to the mass grave at Babi Yar. The use of Haddad's forces and the Damuri Brigade in the West Beirut massacre is part and parcel of Zionist genocidal policy toward the Palestinian Arabs. Israel's 6 June invasion of Lebanon had as its purpose to 'purify' that country of its half a million Palestinians.

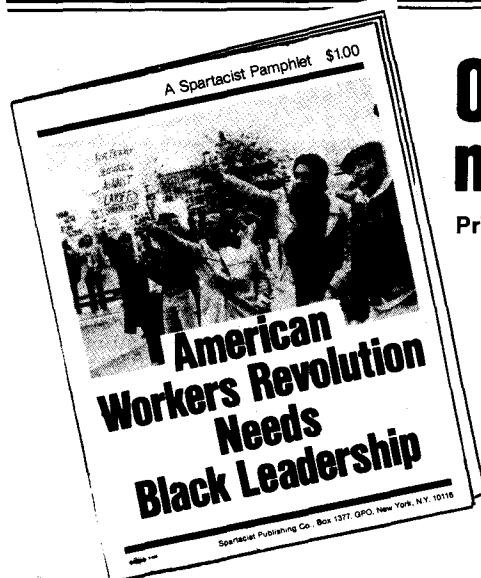
Israel's Labour Party and the US connection

The Shatila and Sabra massacres have thrown Israel into a full-blown political crisis. Demonstrations of outrage exploded day after day. The police moved in swinging their batons at Jews as well as Arab youth. A cabinet member resigned in protest. More importantly, the commander of the staff college quit over 'the events in West Beirut'. Whole sections of the officer corps have threatened to resign and an elite military unit refused to mobilise.

The supreme court chief justice refused Begin's directive to carry out an 'informal' investigation. And on 25 September the opposition Labour Party brought nearly 400,000 people -- over a tenth of Israel's total population -- into the streets of Tel Aviv demanding an investigation of those responsible; many signs called for the resignation of Begin and Sharon. Under the pressure of Zionist military expansionism, Israeli society is becoming unstuck. And the authority of the Begin regime has been deeply shaken.

The furore over Shatila and Sabra is not simply a spontaneous expression of moral outrage. It is also a response to the pressure of US imperialism exerted through Washington's now more-or-less open support to the 'moderate' Labour Party opposition. Complaining about US attempts to 'destabilise' his government, Begin declared, 'Our American friends must know that Israel is not Chile, and I am not Allende.' To be sure, the American imperialist rulers, the men of Hiroshima and My Lai, are not 'shocked' over Shatila and Sabra. But Reagan cannot easily court Arab sheiks and colonels for an anti-Soviet 'strategic consensus' while Sharon is ravaging Arab capitals with Pentagon-supplied weaponry.

US imperialism now poses as 'peacemaker' in the Near East and turns to the familiar faces of the Labour Party, which ruled Israel for three decades, as the instrument for its policies in



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As the horror of the genocidal massacre in West Beirut on 18 September became known, the international Spartacist tendency initiated and participated in protest demonstrations around the world, from Sydney to Paris and Toronto. Our comrades of the Spartacist League/US initiated protest pickets, mobilising hundreds in cities across the country including New York and San Francisco. Spartacist chants included: 'Reagan, Begin, blood on your hands!' and 'Stop Begin's final solution -- for Arab/Hebrew workers revolution!'

In Britain's main protest demonstration, which brought about 1000 people to Hyde Park on 9 October, the Spartacist League contingent pointed to the imperialists' complicity in the massacre and demanded 'Israel, US, France, Italy -- Troops out now!' While the bulk of Middle Eastern and British leftists on the march limited their intervention to denunciation of the Zionists and uncritical hailing of the PLO, our slogans showed how only joint Arab/Hebrew proletarian class struggle could lead to Palestinian national liberation. Our call to break with suicidal nationalism aroused the ire of some pro-PLO marchers who, apparently egged on by the Qaddafi-loving provocateurs of the Workers Revolutionary Party, attempted to silence our contingent through physical attacks and verbal abuse. But they were unsuccessful -- we continued to march, chanting 'Israel out of Lebanon! Defend the Palestinians!' and warning that bourgeois Arab nationalism is a dead end for the the Palestinian masses with our slogan, 'Remember Black September, Remember Tel Zaatar! Smash Zionism, break with PLO nationalism -- for Arab/Hebrew workers revolution!'

'For Arab/Hebrew workers revolution!' 'Stop Begin's final solution!'



Spartacist protests against Zionist holocaust (clockwise from top left): London, New York, San Francisco, Paris.

the region. Who is the Labour Party to weep for Shatila? It was the Labour-Zionists in alliance with Begin's Irgun who in 1948 drove the Palestinian Arabs out of Eretz Israel into the refugee camps. The 'Labour' Party is not a reformist workers party, but the party of the European-derived Israeli bourgeois elite which waged the 1967 and 1973 wars. Moshe Dayan, the strutting Zionist Prussian, was appointed commander by successive Labour governments; Sharon was the chief military adviser of the last Labour prime minister, Rabin. It was Labour which occupied the West Bank, Gaza and the Sinai, instituting a regime of police terror over the conquered Arab masses. It was Labour which began the Zionist settlements in the occupied territories.

In the Knesset (parliament) debate, Sharon challenged Labour Party leader Shimon Peres over his new-found moral superiority. Referring to the 1976 massacre of Palestinians at Tel Zaatar in Lebanon, Sharon baited the former defence minister: 'How come your conscience does not bother you? Thousands of people were slaughtered ... where were the officers of the IDF on that day?' Thus it now comes out that senior Israeli officers and Mossad (Israeli CIA) agents were in the command posts with the Phalangists when they took Tel Zaatar.

'Peacekeepers' make massacres

Even before the bodies had been unearthed at Shatila and Sabra, Arafat was claiming the United States had betrayed the agreement to protect the Palestinian camps made by Philip Habib at the time of the PLO withdrawal. Indeed, there was a betrayal with most bloody consequences. The imperialist 'peacekeepers' prepared the holocaust by disarming the defenders of the West Beirut camps. But who really expected the US to protect Palestinian refugees? The real betrayal was Arafat's and those who called for the troops which set up the massacre. Yet the PLO leaders have again called for and got an 'international peacekeeping force' led by the US. Those who look to the US as guarantor for a 'negotiated solution' in Central America should look at what is happening in Lebanon.

The role of US imperialism in the Near East is the central political question now posed. That the Pentagon would like a military presence

in Lebanon is also related to the fact that Syria is the leading Soviet client state in the region and that the Soviet border itself is but a few hundred miles away. Reagan's sending American forces to Lebanon is an attempt to use these forces as a tripwire for large-scale US military intervention in the region -- directly posing the danger of a nuclear World War III.

For a socialist federation of the Near East

The Shatila and Sabra massacre has exposed to millions the truly genocidal nature of Zionism. But it also exposes the utter bankruptcy of the PLO's petty-bourgeois nationalism. Competing nationalisms exacerbated and exploited by imperialism have left the Near East a bloody mess for generations. Today US imperialism is trying to set itself up as an arbiter between Zionism and Arab nationalism. Arafat's fondest hope is a new Balfour Declaration (in which in 1917 British imperialism promised a Jewish 'homeland' in Palestine) for the PLO. But Reagan's 'homeland' for the Palestinians under the thumb of Jordan's King Hussein would mean only more massacres and bantustan-type oppression for the Palestinian people.

The Arab military dictatorships and sheikdoms of the region, on the other hand, raised not a finger to aid the Palestinians in Lebanon when they were under the guns of the Israelis. Moreover, these regimes have perpetrated even greater massacres against their own peoples (the Syrians at Hama) and against the Palestinians (Jordan in its 1970 Black September massacre of more than 10,000 Palestinians; and Tel Zaatar in 1975, where the Syrian army played for the Phalangists the role Israel played for its Lebanese fascist forces in Shatila/Sabra).

Today the Palestinians face the Zionist holocaust. But there are only three million Jews in a sea of 150 million Arabs. Israel's military expansionism and mass terror against the Arabs ultimately lead to the self-destruction of the Hebrew-speaking people. Some day the IDF will be cracked, and then the Begins, Sharons and Peres will be tempted to launch their nuclear bomb at Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, even if this means provoking the ultimate holocaust. On the eve of World War II, Trotsky projected that the Zionist settlements in Palestine would become a death-

trap for the Jews. The bloody terror of the Israeli war machine only makes that fate more certain. If the Jewish people in the Near East are to be anything other than a catalyst for a nuclear World War III, the Zionist state must be smashed.

The Hebrew-speaking working people must be broken from Zionism and the deep-going racist chauvinism that pervades Israeli society, and unite in struggle with their Arab class brothers against the Begins and the Husseins. Palestinian militants must break from their reliance on imperialist and Arab League diplomacy, a dead end both for national justice for the Palestinians and for the liberation of the toilers of the Near East. The few million Jews in the Near East can be a valuable cultural and technical resource in the region, but only in unity with the Arab masses. That unity requires above all the construction of a proletarian internationalist vanguard party that fights for the right to self-determination for both the Palestinian and Hebrew nations through a socialist federation of the Near East.

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Imperialist, Israeli troops out of Lebanon!

Zionist holocaust

For a socialist federation of the Near East

In the final hours of the grisly massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, the remaining Palestinian men tried to make a last stand. They went searching for guns but found virtually none. The Palestinians had been disarmed by the imperialist 'peacekeepers' -- the US, French and Italian troops who had 'escorted' the PLO soldiers out of the country only a few days earlier. The imperialists' 'gun control' paved the way for the Israeli invasion of West Beirut and the Zionist-organised mass murder of the unarmed Palestinian refugees.

The horrors committed at Shatila and Sabra reminded the world of nothing so much as the Nazi holocaust. The victims, mainly women, children, the elderly, were shot at close range; many of the women were raped in 36 hours of torture and mass murder. The dead number in the thousands.

Now the bloody 'peacekeepers' have returned to complete the job of disarming and terrorising the Palestinians and Lebanon's Muslim majority. They are there to shore up the new Gemayel regime which is based on the same Phalange killers who carried out the Sabra and Shatila massacre. Not surprisingly, the 'multinational force' did not occupy the Phalangist stronghold of East Beirut. Instead the French Foreign Legion -- murderers of Algerian women and children and countless other colonial peoples -- occupied Muslim West Beirut; US Marines, who have not seen active duty since their Vietnam 'search and destroy' missions, set up a staging area at the airport; and the plumed Italian 'bersaglieri' commandos, who specialise in terrorising civilians during raids of Red Brigades hideouts, held the Burj al Brajneh Palestinian camp.

In recent days French marines and paratroopers actively participated with the Christian-dominated Lebanese army in house-to-house searches of West Beirut, detaining thousands of Palestinians. In the southern suburbs the US and Italian troops watched as Lebanese army bulldozers destroyed 'illegal' homes and shops belonging to Lebanese Muslims. And now Lebanese officials have asked that this murderous multinational force be expanded to include British troops -- the butchers who during Britain's col-



Zionist terrorist Begin ordered his Lebanese Einsatzkommandos to slaughter of West Beirut.

onial rule gutted the Palestinian working class in the suppression of the 1936 general strike.

Meanwhile, Begin's *Blitzkrieg* invasion and Nazi-like massacre of Palestinians in Lebanon has fuelled fascist, anti-Semitic terrorist attacks in West Europe, most recently the murderous attack on a synagogue in Rome where a two-year-old boy was killed and 34 Jewish worshippers were injured. These outrages echo the Zionist lie that anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism. The labour movement must mobilise to crush these fascist killers at the same time as taking vigorous class-struggle action to solidarise with the defence of the Palestinians from Zionist genocide. For an unlimited boycott of

military goods to Israel and to the imperialist troops in Beirut! Boycott all Israeli cargo and transport until Israel gets out of Lebanon!

The imperialist troops pave the way for more massacres, furthering the Israeli aim of terrorising Palestinians into fleeing Lebanon altogether. Elementary defence of the Palestinian people's right to exist, as well as the advance of proletarian revolution in the Near East, demand first of all: Marines, Foreign Legion, bersaglieri get out! No imperialist 'peacekeepers'! No British troops in Lebanon! Israel out of Lebanon and the occupied territories! West Beirut -- never again! Not another penny or

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Smash Nationality Act!

Race checks: hunger, death for minorities

The message is out: get the blacks, get the Asians and anyone not of 'true blue' British stock. And if they can't be kept or forced out of the country, then hound them with race checks, unleash the fascists or starve them to death.

The Tories' Nationality Act with its explicitly racist classes of British citizenship comes onto the statute books in January. Now it is being supplemented by apartheid-style race checks in the Department of Employment and National Health Service. Under the guise of 'spending controls' NHS patients and DoE claimants are to be vetted as to ethnic background

and those suspected of 'fiddling' their poverty-level entitlements can be turned over to government authorities for 'further investigation' -- ie possible deportation. With the country awash with chauvinism following the Falklands war, with the Labour Party and trade union misleaders feeding nationalist xenophobia with their 'Buy British' campaigns for import controls, the Thatcher government is seizing the time to enact more and more repressive racist legislation against minorities.

And while the parliamentarians prepare the laws racist terror stalks the streets. Thirteen

black youths burnt alive in the Deptford fire-bombing. Asian youths in Newham arrested by the guardians of racist law and order for attempting to defend themselves against fascist attack. Home Secretary William Whitelaw calls for reintroduction of the notorious sus laws. Metropolitan Police Commissioner Kenneth Newman pledges the use of the full riot police arsenal of water cannon and plastic bullets against 'rioters'.

The Tories' vile 'make Britain white' campaign has led to a spate of deportations, one of

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