



Crush Reagan's invasion of Nicaragua! Central America aflame!

The Central American isthmus has today been thrust centre stage in the international class struggle -- and in the Western imperialist drive to 'roll back Communism' from Havana to East Berlin and Moscow. While leftist guerrillas continue to score dramatic battlefield victories over the blood-soaked US-backed junta in El Salvador, the left-nationalist Sandinista (FSLN) regime in nearby Nicaragua faces a brazen US-sponsored counterrevolutionary invasion. The international working-class movement must come to the defence of Nicaragua against this imperialist-engineered onslaught, aimed at overthrowing the government which came to power in 1979 after a bloody struggle to bring down the US-backed tyrant Somoza. The international Spartacist tendency (iSt) says: Kill the invaders! Drive the US out of Central America! Complete the Nicaraguan Revolution!

The American government does not even deny that it is providing support for the murderous counterrevolutionary mercenaries based in Honduras who have repeatedly invaded Nicaragua, killing hundreds of people. Early last month it was revealed that the CIA has spent 30 million dollars to arm and train an estimated 2000 of its *contras* (counterrevolutionaries) who presently operate in Nicaragua's northern provinces, and the US has twice staged provocative 'war games' along the country's northern border in conjunction with Honduras. Meanwhile followers of the former FSLN leader turned imperialist puppet Comandante Zero (Eden Pastora) have moved into Nicaragua from Costa Rica from the south.

In 1961 CIA-backed Cuban exiles invaded Cuba and were ignominiously defeated at the Bay of Pigs. This time round, each time the *contras* have seized a village they have been driven out by the Sandinista army, while suffering heavy casualties. Good! For every one of these mercenary killers the Sandinistas take out there will be that many fewer *gusanos* (Latin American counterrevolutionary exiles) roaming the streets of the US, pushing drugs, bombing leftist bookshops and attempting to assassinate diplomats. Remember, it was CIA-trained anti-Castro Cubans who murdered Allende's ex-foreign minister Orlando Letelier in 1976.

But there is a crucial difference between Cuba 1961 and Nicaragua today. By 1961 the Cuban capitalist class had fled to Miami after having been expropriated of its economic holdings. And although the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie's state power was smashed by the 1979 revolution, it still owns 60 per cent of the country's economy. These junior partners of imperialism constitute a potent internal base for counter-



Sandinista army border patrol targets the CIA-backed counterrevolutionaries.

revolution. It was to this fifth column that Polish pope Wojtyla -- godfather of Solidarnosc, the only 'trade union' that the likes of Reagan and Thatcher support -- appealed when he visited Nicaragua in early March. But Managua is not Warsaw, and the pope was nearly driven off the stage as scores of thousands chanted 'We want peace' and 'Popular power', overwhelming rightists shouting 'El Papa!' A few days later 500 wealthy Nicaraguans chanting 'Long live Catholic Nicaragua' marched through the streets, while the CIA's 'Nicaraguan Democratic Front' radio station announced 'With God and with patriotism, we are combatting Communism.'

Class collaboration spells defeat

Yet the Sandinistas continue to spread illusions with slogans such as 'between Christianity and the revolution there is no contradiction'. The invitation to the pope was in itself an expression of their attempt to follow the impossible 'middle road' of a 'mixed economy' and political 'pluralism'. But this is completely untenable: either the Sandinistas will act as the Loyalists of the Spanish Republic did in the 1930s, sacrificing the revolution on the altar of 'pluralism' and private property in an effort to placate the imperialists -- or they will take the 'Cuban road', expropriating the capitalists and bureaucratically carrying

out a social revolution from above. Even in the latter case political power would remain in the hands of a nationalist, petty-bourgeois caste which is hostile to the extension of the revolution. The Sandinistas' narrow nationalism is an obstacle to victory in what is becoming a Central America-wide civil war; they are unfortunately telling the truth when they deny supplying aid to the Salvadoran leftist rebels.

This is particularly criminal given Reagan's continuing threats to escalate US imperialism's intervention on behalf of the pathological killers of the Salvadoran regime. Over the past few months the guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) have virtually seized control over the economically vital eastern sector of the country. But with military victory increasingly in their sights, the FMLN and its coalition partners in the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) are busy trying to negotiate a 'political solution' with the butchers of San Salvador. Once again, a strategy of class collaboration -- popular frontism -- threatens to prove a deadly danger for the masses of Central America.

What we see in El Salvador is an attempt to combine a Cuban-style 'guerrilla road' with the popular front. But whether presented as a 'prolonged people's war' or 'popular armed insurrec-

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Another road to defeat for workers, Kurds, women - First Khomeini, now Bani Sadr?

On March 19 some 300 people attended a conference in London called by the 'Iran Solidarity Front' to protest against repression in Iran. Many of the faces were familiar from the anti-Shah committees and protests of five years ago. This time however their target of protest was Khomeini -- the ayatollah so many organisations and individuals present once claimed would lead the way to 'democracy' and 'freedom' in Iran.

A struggle against repression in Iran needs a proletarian perspective, not a rehash of the policies which paved the way for Khomeini. A gathering of exile Iranian leftists such as this conference should be a place where policies are fought out and clarity sought. Instead the organisers strove to keep it as tame an affair as possible. The conference was testimony to the disorientation and demoralisation in the Iranian left, but also to a genuine questioning of perspectives.

Supporters of various Iranian organisations were present -- from the virtually disintegrated Peykar, to the currently fragmenting Fedayeen Minority and its recent left split, the Revolutionary Socialist Tendency, and the 'third campist' Unity of Communist Militants (UCM) which has recently fused with the Kurdish Maoist group, Komaleh. Representatives of the Islamic populist Mojahedeen of Masoud Rajavi -- today united with exiled former prime minister Bani Sadr in the National Council of Resistance (NCR) -- set up a literature stall and lurked about the conference hall. Aside from the Spartacist League, the British left was conspicuous by its absence. The Revolutionary Communist Party and Workers Power showed up, but the former could only mumble about how 'the masses are demoralised' and 'we have to wait and see what happens', while the latter didn't even try to speak. Doubtless -- and correctly! -- they felt they had nothing to say, given their own scandalous role in cheering Khomeini to power (from the sidelines to be sure) in 1978/79.

Drawing the lessons of the 1978/79 defeat is the vital task facing subjectively revolutionary Iranian leftists. That means facing up to the role that the left played in supporting Khomeini's rise to power, not hiding behind talk about how 'the masses weren't ready' and the like. Many still speak of the supposed 'gains of the Iranian revolution', but the mullahs' 'revolution' has brought only war, further economic devastation for workers and peasants, the attempted extermination of the Kurds and other national minorities, and veiling, stoning and executions for women. The Iranian left has paid a heavy price for the criminal policies of its organisations.

Yet the Islamic regime is unstable. Khomeini is an old man, and sick. When he goes, if not before, odds are that Iran will face renewed turmoil with openings for the revolutionary mobilisation of workers, Kurds, women and all those who suffer under the Islamic tyranny. But for the coming struggles to bring victory, not another defeat, requires the forging of a party with a genuinely communist programme.

At the conference Spartacist supporters counterposed the perspective of *permanent revolution* to the prevailing populism, nationalism with 'communist' colouration and Stalinist strategies of 'revolution by stages'. The theory of permanent revolution is the simple acknowledgement that only the proletariat can solve the questions of the democratic revolution in backward countries by making a one-stage

socialist revolution to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. Iran in 1953 and in 1979 shows just what a bloody disaster all attempts at 'revolution by stages' are. And this is exactly what supporting the NCR means. Instead of socialist revolution it means fighting for a more 'democratic' and 'popular' Islamic regime. But whenever speakers, and particularly speakers from the SL, so much as mentioned the dangers of supporting this bloc, the conference organisers admonished that 'this is not the place to discuss differences'.

There is widespread unease with the idea of tailing the NCR. And no wonder! Khomeini's ex-PM Bani Sadr is the butcher of Kurds and leftists. This murderer symbolises the NCR's commitment to defend capitalism no matter what and graphically reveals the real meaning of the Stalinist 'stagist' schemas.



Summer 1979: Only months after the 'Islamic revolution', Khomeini's 'Revolutionary Guards' begin executing Kurdish partisans.

The UCM, which didn't exist at the time of Khomeini's rise to power, today seeks to be a pole for disoriented ex-Peykar, ex-Fedayeen Minority and others. At the conference it offered abstract 'left'-sounding denunciations of 'populism' and declamations on the need for a communist party and programme. But in fact it shares the bankrupt stagist conceptions, indeed in a remarkably pure form. The UCM too talks positively about the 'February uprising' and propounds 'defence of the revolution' while supporting Iran against Iraq in the war. In other words they think that Khomeini prepared the conditions for the proletariat to advance. Tell that to his victims! And their operative slogan is *not* for proletarian dictatorship, but to 'win the battle for democracy and political freedom' in a 'revolutionary democratic republic of workers and toilers' ('Unity of Communist Militants: What It Says', 15 February 1981). Only then, they claim, will the working class be ready 'to wage a most victorious struggle to set up its class dictatorship'. This is not even a 'two-stage' theory. It's three stage! First Khomeini, then something else, and then proletarian rule. Given the UCM's insistence that the property relations will still be capitalist, the something else could only mean a cross-class alliance with bourgeois 'democrats' such as the NCR, ie a popular front which subordinates the working class to its exploiters. And since the Stalinist strategy *never* gets beyond the something else, no amount of left phraseology can hide the fact that this is the road of betrayal and defeat.

When it comes to the Russian question, so decisive in Iran with its location on Soviet borders, the UCM is virulently anti-Soviet. Sundry UCM supporters walked around the conference hall with the Farsi translation of Tony Cliff's wretched book on 'state capitalism' tucked under their arms. Not only does the UCM exploit the historical betrayals of Stalinism in Iran (including the Tudeh party's despicable support to the regime today) but it reflects traditional anti-Russian Iranian nationalism and the prevalent Cold War climate -- ending up with a position on the Soviet Union which fits snugly with that of imperialism (and Khomeini).

Like Tsarist Russia Iran is a prison house of nations. The main enemy is at home, not Iraq or the Soviet Union. In the conference's Kurdish workshop no Iranian organisation could offer a programme to consistently defend and promote the liberation of the Kurdish and other national minorities. (Indeed until an SL spokesman raised the question no one even mentioned the non-Kurdish national minorities like the Azerbaijanis.) While the Fedayeen Minority goes no further than demanding 'stop the repression of the Kurds', the UCM/Komaleh bloc calls for 'autonomy' and 'withdrawal of the army to the borders' -- presumably the better to fight Iraq or threaten the Soviet Union (*Kurdistan News and Comment* no 3, undated). Revolutionary internationalism needs more than just eschewing support to the Iranian ayatollahs, especially since Komaleh promotes *Kurdish* religious leaders, saying of Sheikh Ezzedin Hosseini:

'We see him as a revolutionary bourgeois who is decisively standing up for his position and defending the rights of the Kurds. Since he defends these rights sincerely, the whole Kurdish nation, especially those who are in the trenches, are completely loyal to him.' (ibid)

With this kind of programme, the left fails to challenge the bourgeois nationalism of the Kurdistan Democratic Party which has always allied itself with the sheikhs and landlords and has now joined the butcher Bani Sadr in the NCR. In contrast our comrades argued for the unconditional right of the Kurds to self-determination while pointing out that only proletarian power throughout the region, the creation of a soviet socialist federation of the Middle East, can provide a basis of just and lasting freedom for the Kurdish people.

Finally, the conference saw the disarray and general bankruptcy of the left on the woman question. Former 'Trotskyist' (from the HKS) and presently freelance feminist academic Azar Tabari claimed in her speech from the podium that 'possibly everyone in this room, except for maybe a small minority, thought Khomeini was leading a revolution'. 'The left groups', she added, 'thought women were raising secondary issues'. Now, Tabari has a vapid academic 'critique'. We said from the outset that the treatment of women was a central issue, that Khomeini meant to drag women back into feudal enslavement, that the chador was not a 'symbol of liberation'.

Some Iranian leftists will now admit that we were right about Khomeini. But we were right because we have a revolutionary programme. A correct perspective towards the woman question, on the question of stagism and the popular front, on the Soviet Union, and on the Kurdish national question remain decisive if a revolutionary vanguard party is to be forged in Iran which will not repeat the disastrous betrayals of the past. We reprint opposite an article first published as a Farsi language supplement to *Le Bolchevik*, paper of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the international Spartacist tendency, which outlines the necessary revolutionary Trotskyist programme for Iran today. ■

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Iranian left in turmoil

For permanent revolution in Iran!

The disintegration of the majority of groups of the Iranian left bears witness to its profound political crisis. Some even talk about a 'crisis of Marxism'. In fact, the problem is the evident bankruptcy of all the theories of 'two-stage revolution', rationalisations for tailing Khomeini, Taleghani and Rajavi.

For, in reality, what was it that unleashed this crisis? Under the blows of repression the Iranian left, which had unanimously hailed Khomeini as the 'symbol of revolutionary democracy' (the phrase comes from Peykar) was finally forced to denounce the mullahs' bloody regime. But only to look towards Rajavi and the Mojahedeen. The call for a 'democratic dictatorship' based on a bloc with the petty bourgeoisie could have no other concrete meaning. But Rajavi made his bloc ... with the butcher Bani Sadr, unmasking the real nature of these 'petty-bourgeois democrats'!

More and more those militants who want to be communists are turning towards the perspective of socialist revolution. But their debate with the partisans of 'revolution by stages' goes in circles because, vainly attempting to distinguish the Lenin of 1917 from Trotsky and his theory of permanent revolution, they lack a coherent theory and a revolutionary programme. Only Trotskyism can offer this.

Lessons of 1978-79

In 1978, when the clerical reactionary opposition was growing in strength, the international Spartacist tendency became notorious for warning that the muslim clergy was just as reactionary as the shah. All the left called us apologists for the shah because of our slogan 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs!'. Our slogan was based on the perspective of workers revolution, on the power which the working class demonstrated in its strikes against the monarchy. Today there are many who recognise this power shown by the Iranian proletariat in 1978-79, but who refused to see it (or didn't dare to mention it) before.

We were neither disappointed nor surprised by the 'treason' of Rajavi, because we have drawn the lessons of the class struggle since 1917 (and even 1848). In 1917, the Bolsheviks refused any support to the Kerensky government (which was much more 'progressive' than Rajavi, not to speak of Khomeini!) because Lenin, joining with Trotsky, understood that the petty bourgeoisie was unable to realise a 'democratic revolution', and thus definitively abandoned his algebraic formula of yesteryear, 'the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'. The achievement of the democratic tasks of the Russian Revolution came through the *splitting* of the petty bourgeoisie and the seizure of power by the proletariat led by a Leninist vanguard party. Thereafter, each attempt to achieve a bloc with the entirety of the petty bourgeoisie on a strictly 'democratic' programme signified in reality the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie and a bloody defeat for the revolution (like the crushing of the first Chinese revolution in 1927!).

Those who dream of an evolution of the bourgeois revolution to a socialist revolution by a series of organic modifications (the 'democratic dictatorship') trample on the Leninist theory of the state. After the working class has conquered power, the democratic tasks of the proletarian regime will extend inevitably to socialist tasks. But bourgeois power does not transform itself into proletarian power -- unless one tears it away arms in hand! Today the struggle for the most elementary tasks of national independence and bourgeois democracy are *combined* with the socialist struggle against international imperialism.

Will the 'Revolutionary Socialist Tendency' content itself with becoming a discussion club which assembles all those who are vaguely 'for' the socialist revolution? A balance sheet of the defeats of the last five years can't stop with 'self-criticisms', no matter how sincere. What is needed is a regroupment on the basis of a revolutionary programme, since the call for socialist revolution without, for example, a defeatist line in the Iran-Iraq war or a clear line on the Russian question remains *hollow*.

The wretched opportunism of the Iranian fake-Trotskyists -- the HKS and HKE -- is the best

proof of this. Both of them, despite their formal adhesion to the permanent revolution, supported Khomeini, painted up the komitehs, run with an iron hand by the mullahs, as 'soviets'. Today the HKE of Babak Zahraie gives 100 per cent support to the 'anti-imperialist' butcher Khomeini. The HKS, linked to the United Sec-



Bani Sadr once loyal to Khomeini, still loyal to the 'Islamic revolution'. Today fake-lefts look to him to lead next 'stage' of Iranian revolution.

retariat of Ernest Mandel, now raises the *pacifist* call to 'Stop the war'. Before, they say, it was necessary to 'defend the Iranian Revolution' against Iraq, so-called agent of imperialism against this 'revolution'. But, they continue, after 1980, when Khomeini 'consolidated' his power (what was he doing by means of the war?) there no longer remained any 'revolutionary' gains to defend. So why did they hail the retaking of Khorramshahr as a victory for the toiling masses of the Middle East last year? The only consistent thing about their line is capitulation before Khomeini's popularity.

Genuine revolutionaries would attempt to transform the crisis provoked by the war into a revolutionary situation. They would understand that military defeat for 'their country' in the war is a lesser evil beside the seizure of power by the proletariat! They would never forget the power of the Iraqi proletariat, which only the treason of the Iraqi CP prevented from taking power in 1958. Not the neo-Kautskyism of 'peace now', but revolutionary defeatism on both sides!

Defend the Soviet Union

Those who are incapable of defending existing gains will never conquer new ones! Support to the Red Army which is fighting against the reactionary mullahs in Afghanistan should be an elementary reflex for a communist. The Afghanistan events only underline how those who refuse to defend the USSR against imperialism (while opposing the counterrevolutionary politics of the leading bureaucratic clique) are inexorably pushed into the arms of American imperialism ... and Khomeini!

The victory of the Islamic insurgents in Afghanistan would signify the perpetuation of feudal and pre-feudal slavery. In Afghanistan, like Iran, the woman question has a particularly significant character. Genuine revolutionaries must advance demands focussing on the special oppression of women. From the moment when they

are brought into struggle, working women will furnish many of the best fighters for communism, as they did for the Bolshevik Revolution in Soviet Central Asia. No to the Veil!

The USSR and the deformed workers states like China and Cuba are neither 'socialist' (even 'revisionist') nor 'state capitalist', nor another form of capitalism mysteriously restored by Khrushchev or Deng -- the theoretical alternatives discussed in the Iranian left. The only Marxist explanation of these transitional societies is the Trotskyist theory of degenerated and deformed workers states. Those who refuse to defend the gains of October -- the collectivisation of the means of production and the planned economy -- by equating these with the politics of the bureaucracy (as earlier they identified these leaders with the 'socialist' character of these states) are not simply incapable of identifying the root of the Stalinist betrayals of the past fifty years -- the theory of 'socialism in one country' as a cover for the international class collaboration of this privileged bureaucracy. They are also incapable of explaining the process of this so-called 'capitalist restoration' in a materialist, Marxist fashion. The question of defending the gains of October (and proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats in order to safeguard and extend these gains) is the question of understanding the reality of the proletarian revolution today. There is no 'third camp' -- those who refuse to defend the USSR will end up on the other side of the barricades, in Central America, in Afghanistan, in Poland, behind the imperialists!

What is needed is a programme, a programme for the seizure of power by the proletariat. The democratic tasks -- the separation of church and state; for a sovereign and secular constituent assembly; land to the peasants -- the liberation of the peasants from the grip of the usurers and expropriation of the large estates, including those of the clergy; self-determination for the nationalities -- up to the right of secession; military support to the struggles of oppressed nationalities against Great Persian oppression; full democratic rights for women, against the *hajib* -- must be incorporated in a programme for a workers and peasants government, the dictatorship of the proletariat. For independent trade unions and factory committees, elected by the workers! For workers control! For workers militias -- for self-defence against Islamic terror! For workers, peasants and soldiers' soviets! For the expropriation of large industry by the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry!

This is the strategy that offers a way out of the impasse of the Iranian left, a break with Stalinism and populism, on the basis of the creation of a genuine Iranian Trotskyist party. Reforge a democratic-centralist Fourth International! The spectacle of the United Secretariat allowing the existence in its ranks of two Iranian sections, of which one (the HKS) capitulates before the regime, while the other (the HKE) is simply traitorous, is enough to demonstrate that this rotten bloc is not the world party of socialist revolution.

Our revolutionary perspective permitted us to have a clear understanding of Khomeini in 1978. It has permitted us to wage a revolutionary struggle against the new Cold War launched by imperialism against the degenerated and deformed workers states. It is this programme and this alone which offers a real alternative! ■

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Spectre of Trotskyism haunts YCL conference

About a hundred youth turned out to the biennial congress of the Young Communist League (YCL) in London on the weekend of 9-10 April. With the parent Communist Party torn apart between an openly social-democratic anti-Soviet Eurocommunist wing and a Kremlin-loyal 'tankie' wing, the youth congress was predictably the scene of a proxy battle between the two as a prelude to the CP congress this autumn. 'A flexing of muscles', one delegate called it. At the end, the tankies claimed victory, reportedly securing a majority on the incoming General Council. But their 'victory' had nothing to do with defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism nor, needless to say, with defence of Lenin's revolutionary programme. The policies of the YCL remain as class-collaborationist and indeed as anti-Soviet as before. Both wings demonstrated their vast distance from a revolutionary programme. And as clear as the bankrupt bureaucratic manoeuvring inside the conference chamber was the fact that the only real fighters for defence and extension of the Russian Revolution were represented *outside* -- by the Spartacist League sales team fighting for our Trotskyist programme.

The challenge in our leaflet, 'What's communist about the YCL?' (reprinted below), hit the mark. One branch even submitted a resolution questioning the value of 'identifying as communists'. What 'building the YCL' means today was typified by one Eurocommunist youth who yelled at our salesmen, 'Go back to Russia!' Some said Lenin was 'outdated', others more crudely that he was 'shit' and the Soviet Union 'fascist'. One argued that the heroic leftist insurgents in El Salvador didn't need arms, while another said he was against the workers taking power anywhere because workers were all racist and sexist! Little wonder one pro-Soviet

youth from Glasgow expressed admiration at the enthusiasm of our comrades, wishing out loud that his were more like that. But what is there to be enthusiastic about in building an organisation whose politics attract such openly anti-communist and anti-working-class elements?

Revolution was ruled off the agenda at the congress -- literally, and by Euros and tankies alike. A vague and confused amendment to drop support for the wretchedly reformist Alternative Economic Strategy in favour of 'revolutionary Marxist-Leninist policies' was overwhelmingly crushed. Socialism wasn't on the agenda, announced one platform speaker on the CND point -- getting rid of nuclear weapons was more important. Indeed three CP/YCL youth from Merseyside were not even allowed into the conference, effectively because they had taken the CP's occasional references to Leninism too seriously and were now deemed heretic. In a statement they complained:

'We've been fighting for Lenin's policies and here the leadership accuses us of being Spartacists and Trotskyists. When we joined we were told that Trotskyists were anti-Soviet and counterrevolutionary. Then when we fight for defence of the Soviet Union and for the revolutionary smashing of capitalism they tell us that's Trotskyist.'

The spectre of Trotskyism cast a long shadow over the congress from beginning to end. Many youth had already seen our leaflet before they arrived. At a Glasgow CND rally the week before, some 70 among the historically more militant Scottish CP/YCLers bought our literature. At Greenham Common that same weekend, our leaflet was passed from hand to hand on a CP/YCL coach, accompanied by mutterings about its 'correct criticisms'.

At the congress itself, both sides tried to

evoke anti-Spartacist hysteria: the Euros in order to tar the tankies with the brush of the Soviet-defencist 'Sparts'; the tankies in order to deter youth from talking to us. When delegates arrived they were warned not to speak with us and made to feel that up to half of any delegation could be 'Spart spies'! Tankies baited Euros with the question, 'Do you think the Soviet Union is a *deformed* workers state?' Prior to the discussion on Afghanistan, the Euros put the word around surreptitiously that anybody who fought too hard for the Red Army being in Afghanistan might well be a dreaded 'Spart'.

One YCL delegate, sarcastically aping our sellers by holding up a bourgeois tabloid and shouting 'the only paper that defends the Soviet Union' as he was going through the door, was brusquely kicked out by a YCL steward who mistook him for a 'Spart'. And when corridor conversations inside the conference occasionally turned to the question of the Russian Revolution, listeners would stare coldly and unerringly gaze out the window at our sales team. There was no mistaking it: in this 'young communist' conference, defence of the Soviet Union and identification with the October Revolution were consistently and correctly identified with the Trotskyists of the Spartacist League.

And not surprising, when you look at the positions adopted inside. The 'opposition' to British imperialism in the Ireland resolution (adopted overwhelmingly while a pro-IRA motion was trounced) didn't even include the elementary call for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops. One delegate admitted that the position was a lot like that of Tony Benn. The tankies claimed a political victory in trashing a feminist motion by an 80 per cent vote in favour of a vague 'class position' on the woman question -- but for Stalinists to oppose feminism is hardly a new departure, given their glorification of the nuclear family, primary instrument of women's special oppression under capitalism, and their reactionary attitude towards gays.

For revolutionary defence of the Soviet Union

It was however the Russian question which most thoroughly exposed the political bankruptcy of both wings of the CP/YCL. A resolution oppos-

Spartacist leaflet

What's communist about the YCL?

Young people don't need long-winded explanations about what the chronic decay of British imperialism and Reagan/Thatcher's war drive against the Soviet Union mean: no jobs; police, racist and fascist terror especially directed at minority youth; and the prospect of becoming cannon fodder in an imperialist war. The only real alternative is proletarian socialist revolution to overthrow the rotting capitalist system.

That is the perspective a communist youth organisation ought to have. It ought to tap the enthusiasm and energy of youth, making them activists and cadre for communism. Lenin rightly hailed the Communist Youth International (founded in 1919) as 'the Communist International's most militant co-fighter in the present, and its reserve for the future'.

But what about the Young Communist League today? Many youth doubtless join the YCL because they want to be communist revolutionaries. After all, if you just want to be a parliamentary reformist you could join the LPYS. But the YCL, like its parent Communist Party, doesn't provide revolutionary internationalist answers -- neither the 'Euros', nor the 'tankie' wing, nor smaller tendencies like the 'Leninist' grouping.

Why? Have you ever wondered why the YCL doesn't educate and arm Young Communists in the teachings of Lenin, the leader of the Russian Revolution and the greatest communist leader this century? Lenin's not outdated. The CP/YCL leaderships just don't agree with his revolutionary perspective -- because they have stopped fighting for socialist revolution, seeking instead 'peaceful coexistence' with capitalism. They uphold the legacy of Stalin, who dissolved the Communist International and Communist Youth International in the hope that the imperialists would 'live and let live' if the Communist parties stopped working for revolution. This kind of policy is in the interests not of the international working class or of the Soviet Union and the other workers states, but of the narrow nationalist and anti-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucratic caste which usurped political

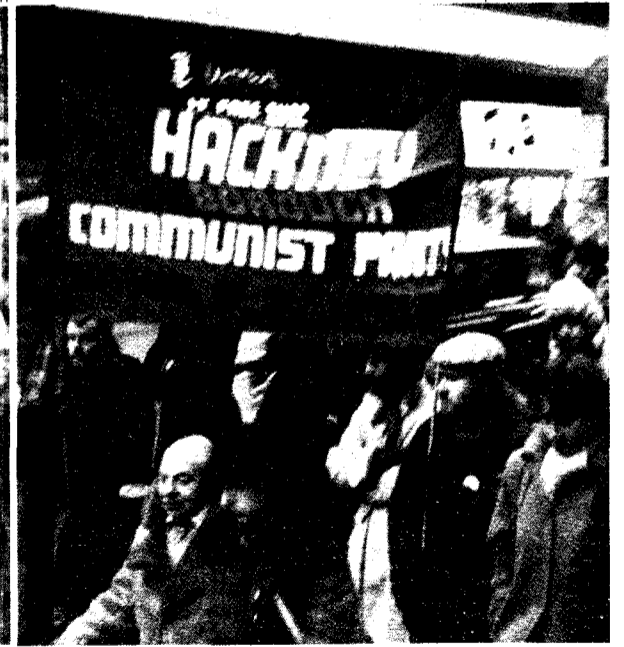


London, December 1981: CP marches behind the banner of Pilsudski-loving anti-communists.

power in the USSR after Lenin's death. Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army and Lenin's closest co-leader in the October Revolution led the struggle against the treacherous policies of 'socialism in one country', 'peaceful coexistence' and class collaboration, fighting instead for Lenin's road of international workers revolution. It is this programme that the Leninist/Trotskyist Spartacist League fights for today.

A workers' Poland, yes — the pope's Poland, no!

The imperialist bourgeoisie is driving to overthrow the gains of October 1917. It is the duty of every communist revolutionary to defend the Soviet Union and the other workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, like that posed by Polish Solidarity. Backed by the CIA and Vatican, Solidarity threatened to restore capitalism in Poland. The Spart-



acist League said, 'Stop Solidarity's counter-revolution!' Jaruzelski's military crackdown checked this counterrevolutionary power bid only at the last minute. But the YCL draft conference resolution condemns 'the banning of Solidarity', just as Reagan and Thatcher do.

Simply deleting the offending passage from the draft resolution will do nothing to point a way out of the mess the Polish workers state is in. The millions of Polish workers attracted to Solidarity were not just dupes of CIA money and Vatican plots. Poland was brought to the brink of counterrevolution because of years of bureaucratic mismanagement and abuse, of appeasing private landholders and the reactionary Catholic church, of mortgaging the economy to imperialist bankers. Now there is talk of 'socialist renewal' by those who oppose Solidarity. But the same Stalinist bureaucrats who created the mess are still in power, and still

ing the suppression of counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc in Poland and praising CIA/Vatican-style 'socialist renewal' was passed with 70 per cent of the vote. On Afghanistan, the tankies' amendment sought only to delete all reference to the subject from a resolution on peace (no 'Hail Red Army' here) -- and even this milk-and-water ploy was narrowly defeated, leaving the YCL calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The tankies did appear to scrape through deletion of support to the notoriously anti-Soviet European Nuclear Disarmament movement of E P Thompson in a pandemonium-filled card vote. But when you add it all up, what was their alternative to the pacifist claptrap of the Euros but ... more pacifist claptrap! Lenin consistently denounced pacifism and what he called 'the fraud of disarmament', but both wings of the CP/YCL actively champion them, giving wholehearted support to movements like CND and making their goal class-collaborationist 'peaceful coexistence' between imperialism and the Soviet Union. As we pointed out in our leaflet, seeking 'peaceful coexistence' with capitalism internationally inevitably involves seeking 'peaceful coexistence' with capitalism at home: which means things like the AES, the British Road to Socialism and acting like a barely-left tail on the Labour Party. These kinds of policies, like those of the Stalinist bureaucrats who today politically rule in the Soviet Union, are directly counterposed to both the defence and the international extension of the October Revolution.

The 'Leninist' grouping, which seeks to 'reform' the CP through 'ideological struggle' in order that its betrayals be covered with a patina of 'Leninist' rhetoric, claimed to have supporters inside the conference, though their presence seemed to go unnoticed by most participants. For all its talk of 'principled' struggle and verbal attacks on the bourgeois pacifism and chauvinism of the CP, the 'Leninist' leaflet distributed at the congress had virtually nothing to say about the Russian question, the key question tearing the party apart. No wonder they went unnoticed inside; and no wonder that when youth came outside to explore a Leninist alternative it was to discuss and argue with the Spartacist League.

making concessions to the Vatican and its petty capitalist rural base for counterrevolution. What's needed in Poland, as in Russia and the other bureaucratically-ruled workers states, is a government like in Lenin's Russia, based on soviet democracy and committed to world revolution. Real defence and extension of the gains of the Russian Revolution requires workers political revolution to oust the bureaucratic caste.

Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Down with Islamic reaction in Iran!

In the name of detente, the YCL draft resolution 'restates' its opposition to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. But the Red Army is fighting a CIA-backed Islamic feudalist insurgency which erupted because the mullahs and landlords think young women should be illiterate and sold into chattel slavery like animals. We say: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!

But the Kremlin bureaucrats didn't send the Red Army in out of proletarian internationalism. Just look next door at Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini's ultra-reactionary regime butchers Kurds, women, workers and leftists; it is one of the biggest backers of the Afghan Islamic reactionaries; it is no progressive alternative at all to the shah. Yet even with their leaders arrested and facing execution by the Khomeini regime, the pro-Moscow Tudeh party (and Andropov in the Kremlin) continue their criminal support to Khomeini's Islamic Republic.

Defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie!

Crawling before bourgeois (and feudal!) allies in the quest for detente with imperialism has nothing to do with Lenin or Leninism. One of the famous 21 conditions for admission to the Communist International of Lenin was:

'Every party that wishes to belong to the Communist International has the obligation to unmask not only open social-patriotism but also the insincerity and hypocrisy of social-pacifism, to show the workers systematically that, without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international court of arbitration, no agreement on the limitation of armaments, no "democratic" re-



Belfast (left), Kabul (right): CP/YCL oppose withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland yet condemn the Red Army in Afghanistan.

For the 'Leninist' loyally building the CP/YCL comes before all else, especially 'principled' political struggle. They seek to provide a left cover for the rotten politics of the CP in precisely the same manner that the Militant tendency gives a left cover to the Labour Party, especially among the youth. Their pathetic role at the YCL congress was to deflect youth fed up with the bankruptcy of Stalinism with assurances that the CP/YCL will change some day. Fat chance. Their congress report (published in *Leninist* no 4) rambles on about the need to 'encourage' the 'positive and healthy' development embodied in 'right-opportunists ... shifting to a form of right-centrism'. All this mumbo-jumbo is designed to obscure the fact that, in practice, the role of the CP/YCL is to divert youth from revolutionary struggle. In practice, the role of the 'Leninist' and such

types is to divert them from looking elsewhere for a revolutionary alternative.

For international proletarian revolution

One Scottish youth at the congress confessed that, before he joined the YCL, he too had believed in the need for revolution to overthrow the capitalist state -- but no longer. Well, for those youth who *do* want something more than building an anti-Soviet small-time version of the Labour Party, the alternatives were clearly posed at the YCL congress. A number of youth expressed particular interest in an interview we published last year with two comrades who broke from the YCL to join the Spartacist League (see 'YCLers won to Trotskyism', *Spartacist Britain* no 43, July 1982). They found the revolutionary answer; other YCLers will, too! ■

organisation of the League of Nations will be able to prevent new imperialist wars.' But rather than unmask these frauds, the CP/YCL actively champions them. They plead for detente, for capitalist Britain to disarm, for agreements on the limitation of armaments. The draft conference resolution even demands the dissolution of NATO and the *Warsaw Pact*, as if they were just rival imperialist alliances! And both 'Euros' and 'tankies' are busy trying to prove who is the best builder of bourgeois-pacifist CND and 'disarmament' schemes.

Capitalism will not disarm, it has to be overthrown. The peace movements built by the CP/YCL in the thirties didn't stop World War II. The problem with movements like CND isn't just that they won't work -- they actively mislead workers into thinking peace can be secured without socialist revolution. Indeed CND with its 'non-nuclear defence strategy' for British imperialism leads workers to support their 'own' capitalist state. Leave CND to the vicars, pacifists, middle-class trendies and 'non-nuclear' generals.

And as for the 'open social-patriotism' which Lenin denounced, just look at the 'Defend Britain -- Ban the bomb!' banner headline in the *Morning Star* on the day of the big October 1981 anti-missiles demonstration. The Spartacist League marched that day with Lenin's slogan, for 'arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie', and with the banner 'Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!'

The main enemy is at home — our 'own' ruling class!

Pleading with the imperialist warmongers for 'peaceful coexistence' can't defend the Soviet Union. 'Peaceful coexistence' means peacefully coexisting with your own ruling class. 'Defend Britain' means defend British imperialism. Look at Ireland. Ireland is an acid test for British revolutionaries, but it isn't even mentioned in the draft YCL resolution. In fact the CP/YCL oppose the elementary demand for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of the British army from Northern Ireland. They prefer to talk of reforming the imperialist state through a 'bill of rights'. The demand to get the troops out now must be part of a programme for socialist revolution in Ireland. Against the nationalist aim of a united capitalist Ireland, which only drives the Protestant workers into the arms of the likes

of Ian Paisley, revolutionaries must fight to unite the Catholic and Protestant workers in the struggle for an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles.

Lenin said it and the October Revolution proved it: the capitalist state has to be smashed. But everything the CP/YCL stands for is a denial of this. The British Road to Socialism says you can get rid of capitalism through Parliament. The YCL says you can control the racist cops through 'community control' and stop the fascists by calling on the capitalist state to ban them. No, what's needed is trade union/minority mobilisations like the 5000-strong labour/black mobilisation which our comrades in the United States organised in Washington last November to stop the Ku Klux Klan. Reliance on the bosses' parliament instead of fighting for workers revolution to smash the bosses' state means you can't even defend the interests of workers and minorities under capitalism.

Unemployment is something that desperately affects youth. But the CP's supporters in the trade unions aren't fighting to mobilise the strength of the working class against it: witness Mick McGahey's scab role in opposing a miners strike over Kinneil last Christmas. Instead they are busy calling for import controls, a chauvinist strategy to save British industry at the expense of workers elsewhere. Import controls go with trade wars which lead to imperialist shooting wars. And indeed during the Second World War the CP/YCL loyally served arch-imperialist Churchill, opposing strikes at home and the fight for Indian independence abroad. The YCL leadership at that time even fought to get apprentices to scab on strikes.

We need a Bolshevik party like Lenin's

It is desperately necessary to fight and to get rid of this rotten capitalist system. Lenin's Bolsheviks made a socialist revolution in 1917 and it can be -- must be -- done again today. But that requires a party like the Bolsheviks. The first condition for that is a revolutionary programme. Don't waste time with the YCL/CP's reformist road of parliamentary class collaboration. Don't waste time with pleas for detente and 'peaceful coexistence'. Follow Lenin's road, the shining example of the October Revolution, for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and international revolution. That's the perspective of the Spartacist League and international Spartacist tendency. Join us! ■

An exchange:

CPGB 'Leninists': left apologists

We reprint below a letter from the left-Stalinist grouping around the Communist Party which styles itself 'The Leninist' and a reply by the Spartacist League. Our reply focusses on the question of the so-called 'world communist movement' (broadly, the pro-Moscow Stalinist parties) which the 'Leninists' support and seek to reform. The other questions addressed briefly in their letter were dealt with extensively in our original letter to them (reprinted as '"Leninists" in limbo', Spartacist Britain no 45, November 1982). Since their comments on these issues are generally evasive and add little, we would simply refer our readers to this original letter.

Letter from 'The Leninist'

5/12/82

Dear comrades,

Please forgive the delay in our replying, other matters have consumed our time and energy.

Our comrades have studied your original letter (24/7/82) and the subsequent introduction to the letter in your November '82 edition of *Spartacist Britain*. We recognise that many issues you raise are important and confront the entire workers' movement. Some of them we have dealt with in the first three editions of *The Leninist*, others we are now working on, still others are to be for future consideration and study. Because of their importance, we feel it proper that we limit our reply to those positions the comrades around *The Leninist* have already arrived at collectively. This means that we shall not touch on questions such as the social and political nature of the socialist states in general (including the matter of China) and the USSR in particular, apart from a brief note on socialism. We are hoping that material on this question will be ready for publication in *The Leninist* no 5.

This said, we consider that a reply to your letter that deals with the areas we have developed positions around, can only be beneficial to us, to yourselves and any advanced workers who read *Spartacist Britain*. We very much hope, therefore, that you will publish our reply.

The Falklands

You imply that we were neutral on our party leadership's position on the Falklands war, that our 'statement quotes without comment the CPGB's call for the "maximum use of the UN"'. This is not the case, for we said:

'The position of the Party leadership is imbued with social-pacifism, in order to comply with the bourgeois-pacifism of the CND and the left social-democracy of Tony Benn. Pacifism does not recognise the connection between class society and war; it does link the struggle for peace with the revolutionary struggle to overthrow imperialism and class society; it does not recognise the necessity of supporting an oppressed people in a just war.' (*The Leninist* no 3, p25)

As to our call of self-determination for the Falklanders; this does not mean that we consider the Falkland Islands a nation or advocate the creation of a Falklands state, but is a position which if adopted by the Argentinian workers' movement, would break the grip chauvinism has on it.

'We believe the Falklanders should have this right (self-determination). This is not to say we welcome the creation of small states. Logically, the Falklanders should eventually integrate with Argentina, but it would be a grave injustice if this were done by forced annexation.' (Ibid)

Finally on the Falklands issue, the question of the fascist nature of the Argentine junta. Using your oft-used technique, that of implication, you make it appear that our characterisation of the junta is designed to 'justify class collaborationist popular fronts with the bourgeoisie'. This is nonsense, we do not seek a 'return to democracy' in Argentina but the revolutionary overthrow of the fascist junta. The question of fascism in general is something we are hoping to deal with in *The Leninist* no 4, but briefly, we define it as counter-revolution in the epoch of imperialism. Therefore the working class has no interest in returning to some other form of bourgeois dictatorship, on the



Petrograd 1920: Lenin and Trotsky together, surrounded by Red Army soldiers who helped put down the counterrevolutionary Kronstadt uprising.

contrary, it has every interest in establishing its own dictatorship.

The Labour Party

There is no need to extensively reply to the majority of your questions concerning *The Leninist* and the Labour Party; yes, we recognise its bourgeois nature, at the same time its mass working class base; yes, we see the need to employ the United Front tactic in the future to win this mass base. All this has been dealt with in the first three editions of our journal.

But on the matter of our call to vote Labour in the absence of communist candidates; this is not a 'guarantee to vote Labour under all circumstances' but is a position based on the concrete situation we find in the Communist Party and that in the working class movement. And we link this call to a perspective of winning the masses from the Labour Party to revolution. But for the present 'stand candidates in national and local elections on a propaganda basis: Fight for a principled communist platform: Support Labour candidates with critical communist propaganda' (*The Leninist* no 3, p23).

Such a position has nothing to do with 'inherited baggage from the decades of CPGB prostration before Labour' on the contrary, it is designed to break that tradition.

The Communist Party and the world communist movement

As you say, this is a central question.

In order to 'prove' your contention that the world communist movement is worthless; you list a series of defeats suffered by the working class dating from 1924, including the 1926 General Strike in Britain, the debacle in China in 1927, the struggle in World War Two and its aftermath, through to El Salvador today. However, we have no intention of examining these 'Stalinist betrayals' in this letter, firstly because of considerations of space but also because, for us, the central question is where the mass of the class conscious workers are organised today. For you can put inverted commas around the world communist movement as much as you like, but it refuses to go away.

You ridicule our perspective of changing the world communist movement, a perspective shared by your Trotsky until 1933; you dismiss our characterisation of the leadership of the world communist movement as centrist, a position also shared by your 'guru' (to use one of your favourite terms); but in truth it is the '4th International' which deserves inverted commas. For it has never played a leading role, let

alone a central one in the working class movement.

Quoting Lenin, after the collapse of the 2nd International about the necessity of a rupture with the social-chauvinists and centrists in order to justify your sectarian isolation, has nothing to do with the need for a concrete analysis of the objective situation appertaining today. In fact, your polemic tends towards sophistry.

Take one example you use, namely the CPGB's joining 'the Labour Party in openly supporting its bourgeoisie in war (World War Two -- JM)'. Indeed, you continue 'the CPs in every Allied power supported their bourgeoisie, no less vociferously than the social-chauvinists with whom Lenin split in 1914'. But what about the first part of that war, before Germany attacked the Soviet Union, did the CPs in every Allied power support their 'own' bourgeoisie? You know the answer, no. Surely this indicates that these parties had not, as you insist on claiming, 'definitively degenerated to reformism'. And furthermore, what about the opposition to their 'own' ruling classes by the CPs in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania etc, does this have no relevance?

Lenin never looked back to a date before August 1914 and claimed that a complete break with the social-chauvinists and centrists should have been organised on an international scale. For August 1914 represented a concrete qualitative change in the 2nd International, its leadership definitively passing into the camp of the bourgeoisie. To maintain that this has happened with the world communist movement is to completely fly in the face of reality, or do you think the likes of Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Amin and Brezhnev have played the role of agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement?

Your attitude towards the world communist movement has much in common with that of the Anarchists after they were expelled from the 2nd International, some of their criticisms were valid but they, like you, wanted to throw the revolutionary baby out with the opportunist bathwater -- a far greater crime than opportunism.

Socialism

This is something we hope to deal with extensively in the 5th edition of *The Leninist*. As to our use of the word socialist to describe the Soviet Union, Poland, Cuba etc; we do this firstly because it is commonly accepted practice. And secondly, to us it indicates the first stage of communism which begins with the proletariat capturing state power. However, because of the backward nature of the socialist states in the world today, we would use the term *formal* to describe their socialism to distinguish it from *full* or *genuine* socialism to which the socialist states must aspire.

Afghanistan

You say we 'characterise the Khalq wing of the PDPA as fully Leninist'. No: we characterise Khalq as revolutionary. The difference between Khalq and Parcham are not, and were not 'murky and entangled in ethnic and personal rivalries'. This is clap trap. The differences were between revolution and reform, this being clear to all who wish to see. To obscure this truth is to sink into the academic liberalism of your mentor on Afghanistan, Fred Halliday. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as the saying goes; Khalq and Amin led a revolution in April 1978.

For you, the Soviet intervention in December 1979 gave Afghanistan 'the possibility of a revolutionary transformation'. What then, had been going on since April 1978? For us, Soviet aid 'was vital for the revolution to survive and develop' (*The Leninist* no 2, p19). Nevertheless we opposed the killing of Amin and 97 other PDPA leaders as killing the dynamic of the revolution (which had occurred in April 1978), and in doing this, problems similar to those in Poland are stored up for the future.

Ireland

Here we can deal with the question of stages. For us the term Democratic Revolution is not used in an attempt to place a stage programmatically between a bourgeois democratic revolution led by the working class and the struggle for socialism. Our position rests on the Leninist concept of an uninterrupted revolution, where in

for Stalinist betrayal

the absence of a revolutionary bourgeoisie, the proletariat takes the lead in the democratic revolution, but in the event of victory proceeds to lay the basis for carrying out socialist tasks as well as democratic ones. This happens without the need for a second, specifically socialist, revolution. An example of this was that in Afghanistan in April 1978. Similarly we would apply such a perspective to countries such as Ireland.

There can be no doubt in our minds that the Provisional IRA is a revolutionary anti-imperialist movement. We consider the parallels you draw between it and the Loyalist paramilitaries an example of your left-sectarianism. Our recognition of the revolutionary nature of the PIRA does not, however, imply a tailist approach to it, nor petty-bourgeois revolutionaries in general. We stand by the dictum; march separately -- strike together. The working class in Ireland must develop their own independent revolutionary party, with an independent programme, containing the concept of uninterrupted revolution. With this, the possibility of winning the Protestant workers of the north to the banner of revolution becomes real. For we do not consign the Protestant workers permanently to the camp of reaction, we must struggle to win them to revolution. And this can be done only if the revolution holds out the genuine prospect of overthrowing capitalism and building socialism. This is something that the PIRA can never do.

We trust that this letter has cleared up some confusions and misconceptions that you have for one reason or another expressed. In other areas we will 'join battle' with you insofar as we publish *The Leninist*. A continued exchange of views and ideas is something we consider healthy, but a meeting between our two leaderships would be premature to say the least, considering your trenchant opposition to the world communist movement and your continued attachment to the ideology of Trotskyism and that abortion you call the '4th International'. You struggle to 'reforge' that monstrosity, we look to the tradition of Lenin's International, the Communist International, and it is this organisation which must be reformed.

Yours fraternally,

James Marshall (for *The Leninist*)

Spartacist League reply

8 April 1983

The Leninist

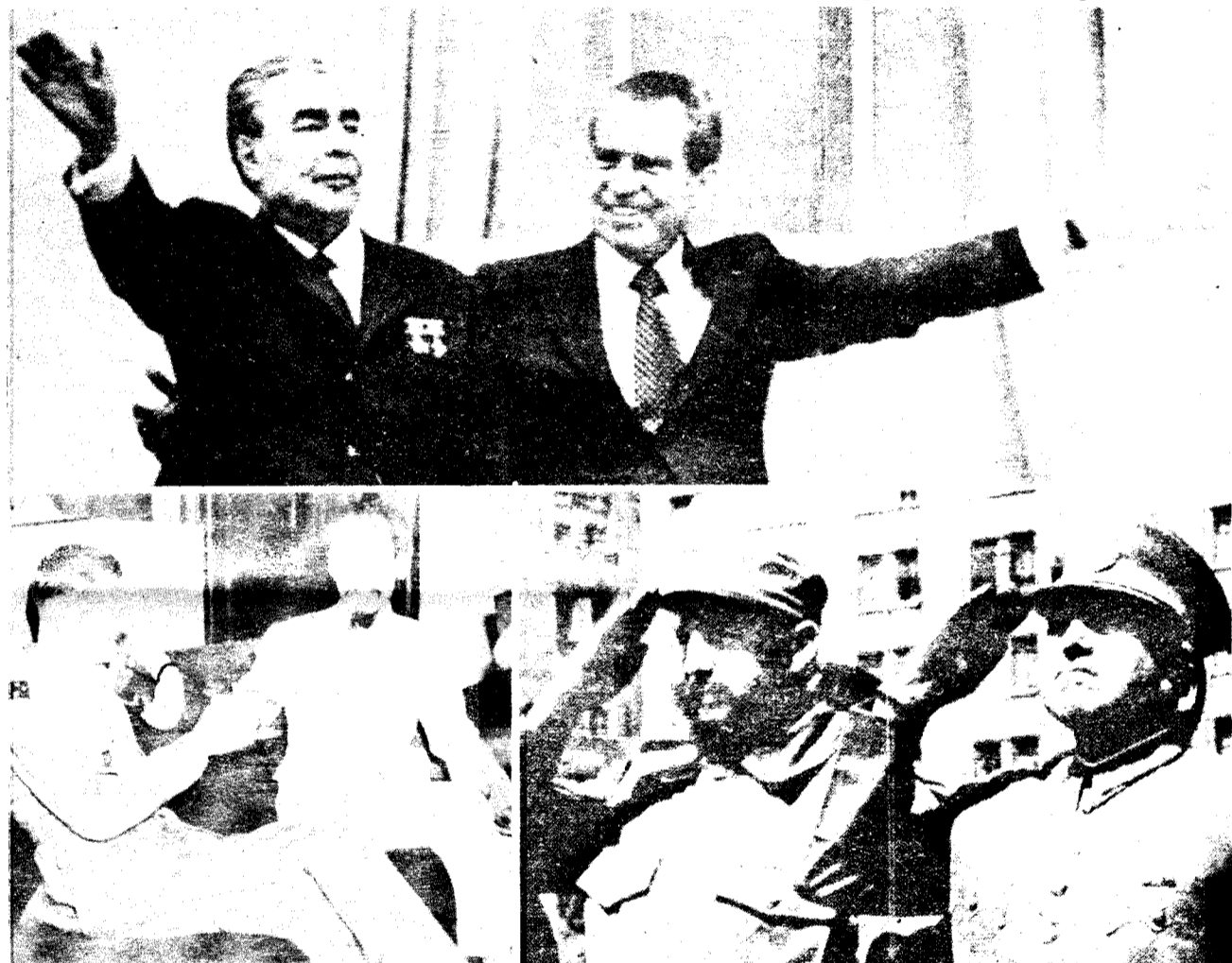
Dear Comrades,

We are both agreed that central among the differences between us is the question of the nature and role of the pro-Moscow Communist Parties, what you call the 'world communist movement'. In your reply (dated 5 December 1982) to our original letter you state that you 'look to the tradition of Lenin's International, the Communist International'. But if you examine the history of the Communist International from 1919 to 1943 you will find that there are two traditions. The first is that of Lenin, embodied in a revolutionary programme, codified in the decisions of the first four congresses. The second is that of Stalin, of the bureaucratic usurpation of political power in the Soviet Union, of the theory and practice of 'socialism in one country' which had its culmination in Stalin happily dissolving the International on 23 July 1943. It was the Left Opposition led by Trotsky that fought to uphold the tradition of Lenin against Stalinist degeneration. The 'world communist movement' of today is not some pristine pure virgin born yesterday but the product of years of Stalinist practice. Revolutionaries judge a party by how its deeds accord with the revolutionary needs of the international proletariat for socialist revolution.

The establishment of the Communist International in 1919 was the product of a struggle that Lenin took up in 1914. It was founded on the basis of a rigorous revolutionary programme. The 21 conditions for admission encapsulate the sharp demarcation that Lenin, Trotsky and the other leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution sought to draw. Included among the conditions was advocacy of the dictatorship of the proletariat (Point 1); the struggle 'to bring home to the

workers systematically that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism no international court of arbitration, no agreement to limit armaments, no "democratic" reorganisation of the League of Nations, will be able to prevent new imperialist wars' (Point 6); the demand for the expulsion of one's own imperialists from their colonies (Point 8); and the obligation to 'give unconditional support to any Soviet republic in its struggle against counterrevolutionary forces' (Point 14). The pro-Moscow Communist Parties of today long ago abandoned these Bolshevik principles. Point 21 calls for 'those Party members who fundamentally reject the conditions and theses laid down by the Communist International' to be 'expelled from the Party'. You, in contrast, support these parties, seeking only to reform them.

In Lenin's time the new International suf-



The 'Leninists' rhetorical cynicism: '... do you think the likes of Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Amin and Brezhnev have played the role of agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement?' Photos speak for themselves: (above) Brezhnev embraces Nixon while US imperialism firebombs Vietnam; (left) Ho Chi Minh and General Leclerc toast March 1946 accords introducing French troops into North Vietnam; (right) Castro salutes Pinochet in 1972 as he tells Chilean masses to have faith in 'democratic generals'.

fered its defeats and made mistakes, but these were subjected to analysis and debate in the spirit of revolutionary internationalism. After his death, however, the emergent bureaucratic caste headed by Stalin moved to stifle and adapt the International as an instrument for its own narrow bureaucratic interests, and to impose policies inimical to the revolutionary interest of the proletariat. Stalin sought to turn the Communist Parties into instruments for the conciliation of the imperialist bourgeoisies; the anti-Leninist theory of 'socialism in one country' is the quintessential expression of this anti-revolutionary outlook. And seventeen years before the dissolution of the Comintern and decades before the Eurocommunists arrived on the scene Trotsky pointed to its logic:

'If it is at all possible to realise socialism in one country, then one can believe in that theory not only after but also before the conquest of power. If socialism can be realised within the national boundaries of backward Russia, then there is all the more reason to believe that it can be realised in advanced Germany. Tomorrow the leaders of the Communist Party of Germany will undertake to propound this theory. The draft programme empowers them to do so. The day after tomorrow the French party will have its turn. It will be the beginning of the disintegration of the Comintern along the lines of social-patriotism. The communist party of any capitalist country, which will have become

imbued with the idea that its particular country possesses the "necessary and sufficient" prerequisites for independent construction of a "complete socialist society", will not differ in any substantial manner from the revolutionary social democracy which also did not begin with Noske but which stumbled decisively on August 4, 1914, over this very same question.' (*Third International After Lenin*, p55, New Park Publications)

In our first letter we laid down a challenge: 'Pick any year since 1924 and we will show you not just a must a mistake but a gross betrayal of the interests of the international working class by the "world communist movement"'. These are not arcane historical debating points. Where do you stand on Stalin's policy towards the Anglo-Russian Committee which helped seal the defeat of the 1926 General Strike? Was the Communist International right to impose political subordination to Chiang Kai-shek which led directly to the Shanghai massacre of the flower of the Chinese proletariat? From China, to Spain, to World War II and beyond, the policies of your 'world communist movement' have caused countless bloody defeats. They continue to do so today -- look at the criminal policies of the Tudeh Party in Iran. Are you prepared to take responsibility for these crimes against the working class? Your

claim that the leadership of the Comintern and the Communist Parties has nowhere decisively crossed the class line to become an enemy of international revolution flies in the face of historical fact and present practice, and is in stark contrast to Lenin's 1914 call for a break from the Second International by the (then temporarily isolated) revolutionary internationalists.

Your excuse not to examine the political record of the Stalinist-led Communist International and 'world communist movement' of today is that it is there that 'the mass of class conscious workers are organised'. This is a statement of political bankruptcy. It is precisely because so many militants belong or look to the pro-Moscow Communist Parties that it is so important to examine their programme and political record. What is decisive is programme, ie where and for what the masses are led. By denying this you pledge that, for all your criticisms and muttering about 'centrism', you will not break with the Stalinist misleadership and programme.

What did happen in 1933? Before 1933 Trotsky and the Left Opposition's perspective was nothing so nebulous as 'changing the world communist movement' but one of restoring the Communist International to its original Leninist foundations through sharp political struggle against the Stalinist bureaucratic usurpers. But in that year the most powerful proletariat in Europe was led to passive submission beneath the iron heel

continued on page 8

US SWP ...

(Continued from page 7)

and WSL over the past year have centred on organisational wrangles in the revanchist Polish Solidarity Campaign and more recently the Labour Committee on Palestine.

In the Bennism-inspired novel by Chris Mullin, *A Very British Coup*, a mythical IMG is sent to concentration camps in 1988 for 'terrorism'. The IMG didn't even make it to 1983. While the rightward-moving 'children of 68' seek to huddle together in a broad regroupment under the Cold War umbrella of Labourism, the Spartacist League/Britain has been forged in large part through a series of revolutionary regroupments with significant left splits from both the ex-IMG (Communist Faction) and its putative WSL bloc partners (Trotskyist Faction and Leninist Faction).

Yet again, that quintessential impressionist Tariq Ali proved to be a weathervane for the IMG: first the pro-Cliffite push, then the 'Soviet troops out of Afghanistan' line, now the deep plunge into the Labour Party. In the two years since the IMG bureaucratically purged the Communist Faction, which fought to counterpose the Trotskyist programme to the IMG's deepening capitulation to Bennism and anti-Sovietism, the main differences to surface within the perennially faction-ridden organisation have centred over whether to go the whole hog on the 'turn to industry', as the pro-SWP Groganites have demanded, or throw everybody into the CLPs. So now the IMG has embraced the 'label' of the 1945 (Attlee!) Labour government. Even the 'turn' is couched in the language of the Cold War: 'building reform currents within the unions to introduce the type of principles of workers democracy espoused by the militants of Solidarnosc' (*Socialist Challenge*, 7 January). Daily prayer meetings, anybody?

There has not been much visible evidence of lefism in the IMG of late, but now even the illusion of SWP 'orthodoxy' a la Joe Hansen which once appealed to opponents of Mandel's opportunism has been burst. Given the factional hostilities in the USec, we can expect some erudite reams from Mandel in defence of 'Trotskyism' against the SWP. In 1976 Mandel, envisioning a manoeuvre with the social-democratic PSU group in France, declared:

'What difference do labels make? If in the political arena we encountered political forces which agreed with our strategic and tactical orientation and which were repulsed only by the historical reference and the name we would get rid of it in 24 hours.'

What difference do labels make? Trotsky once replied simply to this question, 'In politics, the "name" is the banner' (*Writings*, 1935-36).

For those who have long since forsaken the Trotskyist programme, the 'label' is a meaningless vestige. The international Spartacist tendency, was born as the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP, expelled in 1963 for defending the authentic revolutionary programme of Trotskyism. This is our label, and we wear it proudly, confident of its future decisive victory through international proletarian revolution.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* nos 320 and 321, 31 December 1982 and 14 January 1983

Perspective ...

(Continued from page 5)

In general, our support for the right to self-determination is negative: intransigent opposition to every manifestation of national



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oppression as a means toward the unity of the working class, not as the fulfillment of the 'manifest destiny' or 'heritage' of a nation, nor as support for 'progressive' nations or nationalism. We support the right of self-determination and national liberation struggles in order to remove the national question from the historic agenda, not to create another such question. Within the framework of capitalism there can be no purely democratic solution (for example through universal suffrage) to the national question in cases of interpenetrated peoples.

The same general considerations apply not only to 'fully formed' nations, but also to nationalities and peoples which may still be something less than fully consolidated nations, for example the Eritreans in their struggle against Amharic domination or the Biafrans at the time of the Nigerian civil war. Indeed, not infrequently the historical formation of nations is tested and completed in the process of struggles for self-determination. Our opposition to the exercise of self-determination by an interpenetrated people would also apply where one or more of the groupings, though not a historically compacted nation, has sufficient relative size and cultural level that the exercise of self-determination could only mean a new form or reversal of the terms of oppression. 4. Concretely, in Ireland the question of Irish national self-determination was not fully resolved by the establishment of the Republic of Eire. But to demand 'Irish self-determination' today represents a denial of the Leninist position on revolutionists to face up to exactly what the call for 'self-determination of the Irish people as a whole' means.

Obviously the call is not one for the simultaneous self-determination of both communities, an impossibility for interpenetrated peoples under capitalism. In another sense the demand is about as meaningful as calling for 'self-determination for the Lebanese people as a whole' in the middle of last year's communal bloodletting. In the case of Ireland such a demand utterly fails to come to terms with the question of the Protestant community of Ulster, comprising 60 percent of the statelet's and 25 percent of the whole island's population. Such a demand is a call for the formation of a unitary state of the whole island, including the forcible unification of the whole island by the Irish bourgeois state irrespective of the wishes of the Protestant community. It is a call for the Irish Catholics to self-determine at the expense of the Protestants. It is a call for the simple reversal of the terms of oppression, an implicit call for inter-communal slaughter, forced population transfers and ultimately genocide as the way forward to the Irish revolution. 5. The present six-county enclave in Northern Ireland is a 'sectarian, Orange statelet', the product of an imperialist partition. Prior to the partition revolutionaries would have opposed partition, striving to cement revolutionary unity in the struggle for independence from British imperialism. However, with the partit-

ion, the accompanying communal violence and demographic shifts, and the establishment of a bourgeois republic in the south it was necessary to oppose the forcible reunification of the six counties with the rest of Ireland. At the same time the present statelet guarantees the Protestant and economic privileges of the Protestants. We oppose the Orange state and the demand for an independent Ulster as forms of determination for the Protestants which necessarily maintain the oppression of the Irish Catholic population of Ulster, an extension of the Irish Catholic nation. Since they are the local bodies of the British repressive state apparatus and the training ground for the present Protestant paramilitary groups and a future reactionary Protestant army, we demand: Smash the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)....

7. ... Though not yet a nation, the Protestants are certainly not a part of the Irish nation and are distinct from the Scottish and English nations. Presently their separate existence is defined in large part as against the Irish Catholic nation and at the ideological level is expressed in religious terms. With their own social and cultural fabric (epitomised in the Orange Order) and history of opposition to the Irish nationalist cause, they have therefore acted as the 'loyalist' allies of British imperialism. At the same time, in this century the allegiance has been more a means than an end, delegated, for example, by the willingness of Sir Edmund Carson to seek German aid if British imperialism would not fulfill the Ulster Protestants' demands and by the 1974 Ulster Workers Strike.

In all likelihood, a definite resolution of the exact character of the Ulster Protestant community will be reached with the withdrawal of the British army and will depend on the circumstances surrounding this. The particular conditions will pose point-blank their future and the 'solution' to the Irish question. The solution posed by A J P Taylor is but one possibility:

'The question is whether the Irish nationalist majority is strong enough to expel the Protestants. If they are, that is the best way out.' (quoted in the *Guardian*, 13 April 1976)

At the same time the social organisation, weaponry, military expertise and alliances of the Protestants, make a 'Zionist' solution entirely conceivable. On the other hand, if the withdrawal of the British army was in the context of massive class mobilisations, opportunities would undoubtedly arise for a class determination of the question....

11. We reject the argument that Protestant workers are so reactionary that only force will convince them and that the precondition for winning them is the destruction of the Orange statelet. The understanding that the current partition is inherently oppressive is perverted into a conception of a 'two-stage' revolution in which the socialist tasks can only follow the completion of Irish national unity on the whole island. Sometimes linked to this is the claim

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- 1.00pm, Thursday 24 February
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Enfield site,
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communism, long before the *Leninist* came into being. At the heart of this is the strategy of the popular front, the building of class collaborationist alliances. This is the vehicle of integration into bourgeois politics. The logical outcome is Eurocommunism and the abandonment of any pretence to defend the Soviet Union. If you remain trapped in this treacherous framework you too will ineluctably tread the same road of betrayal.

You ask: 'do you think the likes of Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Amin and Brezhnev have played the role of agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers movement?' The only correct revolutionary method of defending the workers states is to fight for international revolution. The Stalinist bureaucracy opposes this strategy. Stalin's policies of appeasing imperialism deeply undermined and jeopardised the defence of the Soviet Union, but this did not stop him, in his fashion, heading up the Soviet war effort. A German victory would have meant the destruction not only of the workers state but the Stalinist bureaucratic caste which rests atop its foundations. The policies of the reformist trade union bureaucracy lead to betrayal and the destruction of the unions. But does this mean they don't call strikes sometimes? A modicum of this dialectical approach would help you to understand the contradictions involved here and that, like trade union bureaucrats, these Stalinist leaders do play the role of agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers movement. What would you call Castro counselling the Chilean workers in 1972 to follow the 'peaceful road' and rely on 'constitution-loving' generals like Pinochet? Or the Cuban government's advice to the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and El Salvador rebels not to follow the 'Cuban road' of expropriating the capitalist class? What would you call Ho's role in beheading the popular insurrection in Saigon against the impending British/French colonial re-invasion in 1945? Or the way he welcomed imperialist troops back into Vietnam shortly thereafter, while his Vietnamese CP helped hunt down and murder Trotskyists and other militants who had led the insurgent Saigon and Hanoi proletariats? And the staid, conservative bureaucrat Brezhnev? What about his clinking of champagne glasses with Richard Nixon in 1972, celebrating 'detente' as American bombers strafed the workers and peasants of Indochina, to select only one example among many?

It is interesting that you do not mention Mao Tse-tung and Tito in your list. Like Castro and Ho they were successful in leading struggles which eventually led to the overthrow of capitalism, and were at one time much-touted figures in the Stalinist movement -- until they fell out with the Moscow bureaucracy because the needs of their own 'socialism in one country' clashed with

those of the Kremlin. The successes of the anti-capitalist revolutions in Cuba, China, Yugoslavia and Indochina were not because of but *in spite of* the Stalinist strategy of class-collaborationist alliances. Such revolutions have at best only created bureaucratically deformed workers states similar to the Soviet degenerated workers state, in which the bureaucracy stands as an obstacle to genuine soviet democracy at home and world revolution internationally. These bureaucracies must be overthrown through workers political revolution, which removes the Stalinist caste while upholding the socialised property forms.

This relates to your treatment of the question of socialism. For the purpose of scientific Marxist definition it will hardly suffice to refer to 'commonly accepted practice' to justify describing the Soviet Union as 'socialist'. It is also 'commonly accepted practice' to call the Labour Party socialist. More significantly, contrary to your claim, socialism, the first stage of communism, does not begin on the morrow of the proletarian seizure of power. That is the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is no mere terminological dispute. As Lenin wrote in 1918: 'We are far from having completed even the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. We have never cherished the hope that we could finish it without the aid of the international proletariat. We never had any illusions on that score.... The final victory of socialism in a single country is of course impossible.... The Russian began it -- the German, the Frenchman and the Englishman will finish it, and socialism will be victorious.' (*Collected Works* vol 26, pp465-72)

Lenin expresses clearly here the programme of international revolution as the only road to socialism, counterposed to the perspective of achieving 'socialism in one country' soon to be adopted by Stalin. And it is this counterposition, and all that stands behind it, that is



May 1937: CP militias sent, in the name of the popular front, to crush Barcelona workers uprising.

at the heart of our differences.

You feign disdain for Trotskyism and the Fourth International. Leninism teaches us that there is no short cut to the building of programmatically-steered revolutionary vanguard parties to lead the working class to power and avert capitalist barbarism and holocaust. The Stalinist tradition, which you uphold, has consistently proven itself a pernicious obstacle to the building of such parties. If you truly wish to reforge an International like that of *Lenin*, not that of *Stalin*, then you must undertake a thoroughgoing programmatic break with your present positions in favour of those of the Comintern's first four congresses. Such a break could only lead you to the perspective of Trotskyism, the continuation of Leninism, and thus to joining the fight of the international Spartacist tendency for the rebirth of the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

Our offer of discussions remains open. We intend to publish your letter together with this reply in *Spartacist Britain*. Will you publish the exchange in the *Leninist*?

Comradely,

David Strachan
for the Spartacist League/Britain

Central America...

(Continued from page 1)

tion', both strategies are used to tie the working masses to a sector of their exploiters in order to prevent them from going beyond the limits of capitalism. To this reformist and suicidal strategy, the iSt counterposes the demand: Military victory to the leftist insurgents! A leftist military victory would smash the butcher army of the junta and thus open the door

to a social transformation. And we say that the road to liberation lies not through reliance on petty-bourgeois guerrillaism but in tapping the social power of the proletariat. What is urgently needed is a Trotskyist party to mobilise the working class from Managua to San Salvador and beyond, especially north to the powerful and volatile Mexican proletariat, in a struggle for socialist revolution.

Fighting for the class line

Internationally, and especially in the US, El Salvador and Nicaragua protest demonstrations have regularly seen a sharp political showdown between the iSt's communist perspective for smashing imperialism, and the reformists and nationalists who seek to conciliate it. Thus at a March 25 demonstration outside the Honduran Mission to the UN in New York, called to protest against the CIA-directed invasion of Nicaragua, about 90 demonstrators organised by the Spartacist League/US chanted '*Contras, no, obreros, si, overthrow the bourgeoisie!*' and '*Smash Reagan's Bay of Pigs, Nicaragua needs MIGs!*' Around the corner, having split the demonstration rather than march alongside communists, a roughly equal number of reformists shouted lamely that 'the people united will never be defeated'. This is a lie: the workers 'united' with their exploiters will always be defeated, as in Chile in 1973. The refusal of the Chilean workers parties to mobilise the proletariat independently of the bourgeoisie and its army, their faith in 'democratic officers', set the stage for the CIA-backed coup which brought down the Allende government and drowned the working class in blood.

On other occasions the reformists have called on the bourgeois cops to seal off their demonstrations from our hundreds-strong 'Anti-Imperialist Contingents'. Just like their cousins in Britain, they seek to pressure the imperialists with appeals to bodies like the

UN. They want unity with anti-Soviet Democratic Party liberals, and so consider our call for military defence of Cuba and the USSR to be a 'provocation'. Here in Europe, they look to pro-imperialist social democrats like the Mitterrand government in France and the Labour Party leadership in Britain who propound a 'political solution' -- ie a negotiated sellout which leaves capitalist rule intact.

In contrast, we look to the power of the international working class to get imperialism out of Central America. We call for the labour movement to block all military goods to the El Salvador regime. And in the face of the major escalation going on today, we call for shutting down the US ports in a one-day protest strike. Class-struggle union militants, politically supported by the SL/US, in the American West Coast dockers union (ILWU) have fought for this demand, which has been officially endorsed by the ILWU Local 10 Executive Board, representing San Francisco-area dockers. Such political strike action would have a powerful effect on the American ruling class and send shock waves through the workers movement.

Defence of the Nicaraguan Revolution and the insurgent masses elsewhere in Central America requires hard class struggle internationally. That means a fight not only against the Reagan/Thatcherite reactionaries, but against pro-imperialist liberals and social democrats and their schemes for reformist sellout as well. Military victory in El Salvador and defence, completion and extension of the Nicaraguan Revolution would not just open the road to Central America-wide socialist revolution, but would be sharp blows against the NATO imperialist war drive which threatens humanity with nuclear irradiation. Defend, complete, extend the Nicaraguan Revolution! Smash the Nicaraguan Bay of Pigs! Set Central America aflame with workers revolution!

Adapted from Young Spartacus no 108, April 1983



Spartacists protest CIA-backed invasion of Nicaragua, New York, March 25.

Women's movement...

(Continued from page 12)

that the problem is not capitalism but that 'Margaret Thatcher is a man'.

They explicitly reject the industrial muscle of the working class in favour of individual 'moral' actions. This leads them to some flatly reactionary conclusions, such as telling workers involved in the arms industry to quit their jobs for the dole. ('I'd much rather see extra unemployment if you wish', is Helen John's immortal phrase.) No wonder the Easter demonstration included so few trade unionists and racial minorities -- mirroring the 'peace' movement in general. This movement quite simply provides no perspective for fighting the day-to-day problems (unemployment, low pay, police racism etc) that they face. And as for the claim of one Greenham woman that the police 'aren't quite so likely to hit you over the head if you're a woman' -- well, let her tell that to an Asian woman who's just had a 'virginity test' or a female steel worker facing cops on the picket line.

'Woman the peacemaker, man the warmonger'

This is however a very different feminism to that of the women's liberation movement of the early 1970s. Instead of rebelling against women's 'traditional' role in the nuclear family, the Greenham women accept and even glorify it. They accept and propound the sexist stereotype: man the warmonger, woman the peace- (and home-) maker. They decorate the fence around the base perimeter with nappies and other symbols of women's domestic servitude. They claim, in the words of Helen John, that 'feminists have to recognise that the majority of women will always be child bearers and carers' -- a sentiment which Thatcher and her latest creation 'Women for Defence' would happily endorse.

As part of their reactionary offensive, Thatcher and her ideologues want to reinforce the hold of the nuclear family, central social institution for the oppression of women under capitalism. And even behind some of the more outlandish and absurd trappings -- such as the shrine to the Mother Goddess in the camp and the claiming of snakes as female fertility symbols -- so do the Greenham women. As communists we understand that women's oppression is class-based and not 'natural' and therefore 'eternal'. We struggle to create a society where women will not be tied to home and hearth. Women can be mobilised under the banner of socialist revolution precisely because only communism can provide the material basis for women's full emancipation by allowing their unrestricted entry into social production and communalising childcare and housework.

Which leads straight back to the 'Russian question'. The Bolshevik Revolution began to lay the basis for the full emancipation of women for the first time in history. Today in Afghanistan the Soviet Red Army is helping to quell a revolt by feudalist muslim fanatics who want women to be kept illiterate and sold as chattel slaves. In Poland clerical-reactionary Solidarnosc threatened to restore capitalism and allow the Catholic Church to control the destiny of Polish women. (If you want to see what a Solidarnosc-run Catholic Poland would have looked like, look at the clericalist Irish Republic

and its stringent outlawing of abortion, divorce and homosexuality.) But where is the feminist outcry against the treatment of women by Solidarnosc or the Afghan rebels? Why don't the Greenham Common women identify with the Afghan women teachers butchered by the Islamic reactionaries, and hail the Red Army soldiers who seek to defend their rights? Because that would mean *taking sides* in the Cold War, championing a fight against capitalism and thus breaking with all the vicars, middle-class liberals, pro-capitalist Labourites and bourgeois elements who populate and politically dominate today's 'peace' movement.

And what about the so-called 'revolutionaries'? Do they provide a communist programme and perspective for those frustrated with the 'alternatives' offered by CND and the Greenham peace campers? Not in the slightest. Hail Red Army in Afghanistan, Stop Solidarity's counter-revolution in Poland, Defend the USSR? Never! The Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, Revolutionary Communist Party, Socialist League and the rest of their ilk unanimously support Solidarnosc, denounce the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and refuse to champion defence of the Soviet Union against the war drive. Virtually all of them actively support CND and peddle the poisonous slogans of pacifism and 'disarmament'. And inside the 'peace' movement they cheer nationalist anti-Americanism, thus serving to amnesty their 'own' bourgeoisie.

The CP adds some pathetic pleas for 'peaceful coexistence' with Reagan and Thatcher's imperialism, and runs newspaper headlines like 'Defend Britain, Ban the bomb!' The Socialist League just wants CND to have a few more mass demos, while tossing in some grotesque Labourite sycophancy for good measure. They are particularly upset that the Greenham women plan to run a few candidates against the Labour Party in the impending elections. How can you do this terrible thing at 'the most important election since the war?' wails leading Socialist League supporter Val Coultas in an interview with Helen John (*International*, January-April 1983). Pointing to the Healeys and Hattersleys atop today's Labour Party, John makes the telling response that, 'I see no advantage in returning a Labour government that doesn't have the will to bring into effect the policies that have been put before it.' Of course the Greenham women assure all and sundry that they won't stand against Labour (or Liberal, SDP or Tory) 'unilateralists'. But for the utterly craven Labour cretinists of the Socialist League, their crime is to contemplate any opposition to today's Cold War Labour Party.

The SWP and RCP feign a few more criticisms of CND and the Greenham women, while being no closer to a communist programme. The RCP attacks pacifism and even talks about wanting to emulate the Bolshevik approach to women's liberation. But whereas the Bolsheviks mobilised women around the full communist programme, the RCP thinks that making trade unions 'democratic' organisations (the maximum of their 'five demands' on the woman question!) is enough to make them fight for women's interests. Their much vaunted opposition to British imperialism translates into utterly uncritical support for petty-bourgeois nationalist forces like the Provisional IRA, whose programme for women can be seen realised in today's priest-ridden Irish Republic. And linking it all together is an especially virulent strain of anti-Sovietism.

As for the SWP, they boast how they 'have consistently tried to mobilise workers to take part in activities supporting the peace camp' (*Socialist Worker*, 2 April). But the problem with the peace camps isn't just that working-class men and women don't have the luxury of quitting their jobs and going off camping for eighteen months, nor that there aren't very many trade union banners on peace demonstrations. The SWP wants to 'proletarianise' the existing peace movement -- to ensure that what Trotsky called 'the fumes of pacifism' poison the working class too. In contrast, we communists warn that both CND and the women's peace camps are not simply a diversion but a dangerous obstacle on the only road that can prevent nuclear World War III, that of mobilising the proletariat at the head of all oppressed for socialist revolution.

The main enemy is at home

'Peace' movements, feminist or otherwise, existed prior to both past world wars. They didn't stop the imperialist slaughter, but rather dissolved into the defence of the 'nation' -- as did the feminists in Britain and Germany with the onset of World War I. Look at the way the suffragette leaders suspended their struggle to serve the patriotic cause, helping to condemn millions of young men to the carnage of the Western Front. And look at CND's contortions over the 'conventional' Falklands war. When war

comes, it is always the other side who broke the peace, and peace movements like CND without too much weeping and wailing dissolve themselves into the mobilisation to defend their 'own' bourgeoisie against the 'aggressor'. Lenin had exactly such movements in mind when he wrote:

'If the present war arouses among the reactionary Christian socialists, among the whimpering petty bourgeoisie, only horror and fright, only aversion to all use of arms, to bloodshed, death, etc, then we must say: Capitalist society is and always has been *horror without end*. And if this most reactionary of all wars is now preparing for that society an *end in horror*, we have no reason to fall into despair. But the "disarmament" demand or more correctly, the dream of disarmament, is, objectively, nothing but an expression of despair at a time when, as everyone can see, the bourgeoisie itself is paving the way for the only legitimate and revolutionary war -- civil war against the imperialist bourgeoisie.'

Today, the Soviet Union, the world's first workers state ushered in by Lenin's October Revolution, is in danger. Without the existence of this state and its nuclear weapons, not only Moscow but Havana, Hanoi and Peking would have by now been reduced to irradiated rubble. The Spartacist League says: For unconditional military defence of the USSR against imperialism and counterrevolution! For proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, whose search for 'peaceful coexistence' and 'detente' disarms the workers internationally and undermines Soviet defence! Extend the gains of October through international socialist revolution!

And we emphasise that there is no 'separatist', feminist strategy for ending women's oppression or saving the world from WWII. As the Greenham women show only too clearly, feminism is an inherently *pro-capitalist* ideology. The most prominent and most effective women opponents of World War I, women like Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollantai, Silvia Pankhurst and Rosa Luxemburg, were self-consciously not feminists but revolutionary socialists. They organised women, especially working women, in revolutionary opposition to the war. Their programme, in the words of *Rabotnitsa*, the Bolshevik journal for work among women, was to draw 'the working women into the struggle against every kind of civil peace and in favour of war against war, a war closely connected with civil war and socialist revolution'.

Today's revolutionary Trotskyist vanguard party will find among women many of its best soldiers. Like the Bolsheviks, it will develop special transitional organisations for work amongst women. But such organisations will have nothing in common with the Cold War women's movement of Greenham Common. Those women who truly want to put an end to war and to the system that breeds it must rally to the banner of proletarian power; for the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism, for the socialist united states of Europe, for women's liberation through socialist revolution, for (in Lenin's words) the 'arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie'.

Correction

Due to a production error in our last issue, in the article entitled 'Free class-war prisoners in Turkey!', we inadvertently placed Turkey on 'the Baltic flank of the USSR'. The sentence should read: 'the Balkan flank of the USSR'.

SPARTACIST LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETING

Cold War women's movement Holding hands won't stop WW III

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Spartacist-initiated demos confront Lankan PM

'Premadasa, you have blood on your hands!'



Washington, London: Spartacist-initiated pickets protest visit of Lankan Prime Minister.

From Washington to London to Paris, wherever Sri Lankan prime minister Premadasa went in his recent tour to pay homage to the Lankan bourgeoisie's imperialist overlords, militant protests initiated by the international Spartacist tendency were there to confront him with angry chants of 'Premadasa/Jayewardene -- you have blood on your hands!' Premadasa is a representative of JR Jayewardene's United National Party (UNP), which recently moved further towards naked dictatorship by ramming through a plebiscite to extend the life of the UNP-dominated parliament, which means six more years of his IMF-dictated austerity rule and anti-Tamil terror. JR has bowed to every dictate of the imperialist bankers, slashing state subsidies on foodstuffs, cutting health care and education, reducing workers and the poor to a life of misery, while joining the schemes of Reagan and his murderous advisors like Jeane Kirkpatrick (a frequent visitor to JR's Sri Lanka) to further US hegemony in the Indian Ocean.

At all of the demonstrations, protesters demanded an end to the vicious state repression of the Tamil minority in the North, where 75 to 100 people remain in custody, held incommunicado without charges and subject to torture under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act. Among the two dozen spirited demonstrators from the Spartacist League/US and the Eelam Tamils Association of America who confronted Premadasa with chants of 'Stop anti-Tamil terror!' in Washington on April 13 were a number of Tamils who had themselves been imprisoned, beaten and tortured by the Sri Lankan government. As Premadasa was hustled into the National Press Building to address a VIP luncheon, a spokesman for the Eelam Tamils Association of America charged the Jayewardene/Premadasa government with genocide against the Tamil people: 'We have been murdered, butchered, burned alive. Ceylon is an island with two countries. Tamil-Eelam is occupied by the Sinhalese Sri Lankan army of occupation ... they're killing our babies ... it's their final solution for the Tamils.' Other demands raised by the demonstrators included: Full citizenship rights for the Tamils! For the right of self-determination for the Tamils! Stop US/JR arms deal! US hands off Trincomalee and Diego Garcia!

A spokesman from the SL/US said: 'We're here to protest Premadasa's visit to the US. What does he have to say to the American ruling class? JR Jayewardene, you were such a good boy

at the non-aligned conference. You opposed the motion against the military base at Diego Garcia. You did everything the American government asked you to. What about the deals, shrouded in mystery, the deals about leasing oil tanks in Trincomalee? What about the IMF loans that the US is planning to cut back? Is that what you're here to talk about, Mr Premadasa? Reagan needs allies like JR to build his war drive against the Soviet Union. JR is willing to squeeze every drop of blood from the Sri Lankan workers and peasants if only Reagan will bankroll his bankrupt capitalist system. We are here to protest the sinister link between the US government and JR Jayewardene. We must struggle for socialist revolution on the Indian subcontinent and in Ceylon. Tamil workers in Lanka and India are key to the South Asian revolution!'

Eight days later in Paris, 200 demonstrators, including large contingents from the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), the Liberation Organisation of People -- Tamil Eelam and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Council, protested outside the Air Lanka office. While denouncing the anti-Tamil repression, the demonstrators directly attacked the role of Mitterrand and French imperialism in the Indian Ocean with chants of 'Down with the anti-Soviet war drive of Mitterrand and Reagan', 'France and US out of the Indian Ocean', 'Independence for Reunion' and 'France out of Mayotte'. There are now over 10,000 Tamils living in France, where the Mitterrand government is savagely targeting immigrant workers. One of the key demands of the demonstration was: For full citizenship rights for immigrant workers in France! Over 100 pieces of LTF literature were sold, and as the protest ended, the other demonstrators joined the LTF in singing the Internationale.

In London on April 18, despite a heavy downpour, nearly twenty Spartacist supporters picketed outside Downing Street as Premadasa arrived to take tea with Thatcher, representative of the former colonial oppressors of the Lankan people and loyal ally of Reagan in his anti-Soviet war drive. As Premadasa's limousine sped through the gate, chants rang out of 'Premadasa/UNP -- anti-Tamil butchers, pro-imperialist flunkies' and 'Sinhala, Tamil, men and women -- workers bring down UNP!' Two days earlier, a Spartacist contingent joined the Tamil Women's League in a protest outside the Ceylon Tea

Centre in London against the arrest of Tamil activists Nirmala Nithiananthan and her husband. Raising the chant, 'Free all victims of anti-Tamil repression!' the SL/B contingent also highlighted the struggle for equal rights for women workers in Sri Lanka. To encourage foreign capital inflow, the UNP government has set up virtual slave labour camps in the so-called Free Trade Zone, where young women live in barracks and unions are outlawed.

While the SL/B was organising militant protest action in defence of Tamil rights and against UNP representative Premadasa, the fake-Trotskyist Revolutionary Marxist Party (section of the United Secretariat), represented in London by Upali Cooray, was busily orchestrating a mini-popular-front-style 'International conference on the problems of plantation workers of Sri Lanka'. The SL/B intervened in this conference on 23-24 April with a hard revolutionary perspective, highlighting the record of the Spartacist League/Lanka. We pointed to the centrality of the 'stateless' Tamil plantation workers for socialist revolution on the island in counterposition to the futile nationalist strategy of Eelam separatism. In contrast, the RMP clung to the coattails of the liberal priests, Labourite parliamentarians and other Christian do-gooders who pontificated from the podium for two days.

Cooray and his RMP cronies said not a word throughout to distinguish themselves from their Christian allies and their calls for pressuring the multinationals and the imperialist governments to do right by the plantation workers. Indeed Cooray's only political act was to continually seek to suppress the SL's Trotskyist politics, even censoring a photo display of protests against anti-Tamil terror initiated internationally by the international Spartacist tendency, and finally ramming through our expulsion from the conference when we exposed the treacherous role of Cooray's former patron, trade union bureaucrat Bala Tampoe. He couldn't stand our struggle for united revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat against the coalitionism and communalism which are historic, strategic obstacles to socialist revolution in Lanka.

Smash anti-Tamil terror! Build the Spartacist League/Lanka -- nucleus of the Lankan Bolshevik vanguard! For a united Sinhala/Tamil workers and peasants government in Lanka! ■

BOUND VOLUMES

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SPARTACIST

BRITAIN

South African murder raids

At 1 am on December 9 a hundred South African commandos crossed the border into Maseru, the capital city of the black client statelet of Lesotho, and fanned out into five different sections of town. They blasted their way into at least a dozen homes, and when it was over 42 people were dead. General Constand Viljoen, chief of the South African 'Defence Force', openly took responsibility for the massacre as part of the campaign to destroy the African National Congress (ANC). And with a Goebbels-like flourish, Viljoen claimed that the seven women and children who were murdered had been caught in a 'crossfire'.

But South African black militants didn't just mourn: while 3500 people led by ANC president Oliver Tambo attended a seven-hour funeral for 27 of the victims in Maseru, four bombs blew up at timed intervals over 12 hours at South Africa's Koeberg nuclear power station, under construction near Cape Town. The ANC said the bombing was a salute to 'all our fallen heroes and imprisoned comrades', and the action certainly represented an impressive penetration of a high-security nuclear complex.

The Lesotho raid was part of Pretoria's attempt to reverse the rising line of mass upheaval of the past few months: bold ANC guerrilla actions coinciding with a massive strike wave led by black trade unions. The murder raid was the signal for an even more vicious repression, and the nominally 'independent' Swaziland police took their cue by arresting about 100 people in dawn raids one week after the Maseru massacre. The escalating violence by the apartheid regime shows the bloody reality behind Reagan's 'constructive engagement' policy toward South Africa, which has been ballyhooed as an attempt to quietly encourage Prime Minister Botha's so-called 'reforms', such as the proposal for token voting rights for the country's three million 'coloureds' and Asians (while continuing to exclude the country's 20 million blacks from parliament entirely). The 'anti-apartheid reforms' are in part a public-relations fig leaf for the racist, anti-Soviet Washington/Pretoria axis.

By diplomatic standards, Pretoria's raid on Lesotho was an act of war on an independent state. But the Lesotho government is hardly independent. In reality it is a glorified bantustan, completely landlocked by South African

territory. The tiny kingdom regularly sends as much as one quarter of its workforce across the border to work in the Orange Free State, a South African province. The Lesotho government protested lamely that all of the victims were refugees from South African oppression. And the *Sowetan*, the only black-oriented daily in South Africa, elaborated that most of those murdered were student militants from Soweto who had fled for their lives from apartheid repression. The details of the raid -- such as the selective bombing of a car owned by the wife of an ANC leader -- demonstrated that it was a consciously planned act of mass terror.

Indeed, if one is looking for an international terrorist conspiracy, the South African government's activities of late certainly fit the bill. In the past few months alone, South African agents tried to overthrow the government of the Seychelles islands, organised burglaries of anti-apartheid offices in London, and assassinated opponents in several countries. (Last August, for instance, the well-known journalist Ruth First, a leading ANCer and Communist, was murdered in Mozambique, an act which the government there attributed to the 'South African secret police'.) Meanwhile, the South African army openly and regularly invades Angolan territory, killing anybody it considers to be SWAPO sympathisers.

In South Africa itself, over 50 prisoners have officially died while under police custody -- in the case of Dr Neil Aggett, a white organiser for a black union, a magistrate recently once again exonerated the cops after a

whitewash official 'investigation'. And then there are the official executions -- South Africa executed about 100 people in 1982 alone, and six ANC fighters are now on death row. (The prisoners are Thelle Mogerane, Jerry Mosololi, Marcus Motaung, Anthony Tsotsobe, Johannes Shabangu and David Moise.)

In comparison, Lech Walesa's brief incarceration at a posh hunting lodge makes the Polish regime look absolutely humane. But Reagan of course continues to cry about the fate of the counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc 'union' while

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Top: ANC militants vow vengeance at funeral for comrades massacred at Maseru. Bottom: striking gold miners under police guard at Kloof mine.

Outrage against racist cop terror

The black community of Hackney in East London erupted in outrage last month following the supposed suicide of a young black worker in Stoke Newington police station. The suspicious death-by-shotgun of 21-year-old Colin Roach on 12 January triggered a wave of angry protest demonstrations demanding an independent inquiry. 'Police murder, cover-up -- we demand the truth', read the placards.

The cops deny they shot Roach, but they sure as hell act like they have something to hide. According to police spokesmen, Roach entered the foyer of the police station one night, pulled out a sawn-off shotgun and shot himself through the mouth. Even before they told the Roach family, Scotland Yard's press bureau put out a story that the youth had a history of mental illness. It was a lie; and Roach's father denied Colin had a shotgun. When the father was brought to the police station by a worried friend of the youth, he was subjected to interrogation for more than two hours before being told that his son was dead.

Then the cops refused to let him see Colin's body, later claiming that on 'humanitarian grounds' they didn't want that to be the father's last memory of his son.

Blacks and Asians in Hackney and elsewhere know what the 'humanitarianism' of the notoriously racist cops means: the baton, the boot and the backroom bashing. Within a week of Roach's death, police had arrested some fifty people for demonstrating their anger outside Stoke Newington police station, charging into the demonstrators and dragging them off after vicious assaults. We demand all the charges be dropped immediately! The rising outrage in the community was manifested in a march of 1000 people on 22 January, led by the Roach family. One black cop had placards and taunts of 'traitor' thrown at him by the angry protestors.

Roach's mysterious death and the cops' treatment of the Roach family were 'the straw that broke the camel's back', said a spokesman for the Hackney Black People's Associ-

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22 January: demonstration of outrage against racist police in Hackney.