On 27 March, the US Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the conviction of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther. MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist known as the “voice of the voiceless”, who was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner and sent to death row solely for his political beliefs.

Upholding an earlier 2001 federal court ruling, the appeals court decision means that either a new sentencing hearing will take place, in which the death sentence could be reinstated, or Mumia will be condemned to life imprisonment. This is an outrage! There is a mountain of evidence that demonstrates that Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man who should never have spent one day in prison!

In anticipation of the court decision, last summer the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League/US— together with the fraternal defence organisations associated with other sections of the International Communist League (ICL), called for emergency protests immediately after the ruling came down. These protests, which took place on 28 and 29 March, were followed over the next four weeks by united-front demonstrations called by the PDC and the other ICL-aligned defence organisations, and heavily built by the Spartacist League (SL) and other ICL sections. On 19 April, over 100 protested at the US Embassy in London and a similar number demonstrated in Toronto, while 200 mobilised for the united-front protest in Oakland, California. United-front protests were also held in Sydney, Australia, on 23 April, on the campus of the National Autonomous University (UNAM) in Mexico City on 24 April, and in Chacao and Los Angeles on 26 April. And on 17 May 50 people attended a rally in Melbourne, Australia.

In addition to the united-front protests, the PDC and the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense mobilised a Class-Struggle Contingent of some 150 people for the 19 April demonstration in Philadelphia called by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFMAJ), which drew some 600 protestors. The same day, the Committee for Social Defence (CDDS), the PDC’s fraternal defence organisation in France, also built a contingent of over 60 people at a Paris protest that drew over 200 demonstrators, while our comrades of the Grupo Espartacaquina de Mexico, section of the ICL, participated in a protest of some 50 people in Mexico City. On 12 April, the Committee for Social Defence (KfV) in Germany had mobilised a Class-Struggle Contingent of 80 people in a demonstration called by the Berlin “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal” Coalition that drew about 300. These contingents marched under the slogans: “Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!” The PDC initiated the united-front protests to provide an internationalist platform for trade unionists and fighters for the oppressed throughout the world to express their solidarity with Mumia whose case has come to represent struggle against racist injustice worldwide.

Trade unions in many countries representing hundreds of thousands of workers around the world were among more than 500 individuals and groups who endorsed the protests. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) Western Cape issued a statement declaring: “COSATU endorses the campaign to free Comrade ABU JAMAL.... We will stand with the millions of people across the world that are calling for justice to be done and will join the protest against this travesty of justice.” The International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 in San Francisco endorsed the international protest campaign with the slogans: “Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!” The PDC initiated the united-front protests to provide an internationalist platform for trade unionists and fighters for the oppressed throughout the world to express their solidarity with Mumia whose case has come to represent struggle against racist injustice worldwide.

In anticipation of the court decision, last summer the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League/US— together with the fraternal defence organisations associated with other sections of the International Communist League (ICL), called for emergency protests immediately after the ruling came down. These protests, which took place on 28 and 29 March, were followed over the next four weeks by united-front demonstrations called by the PDC and the other ICL-aligned defence organisations, and heavily built by the Spartacist League (SL) and other ICL sections. On 19 April, over 100 protested at the US Embassy in London and a similar number demonstrated in Toronto, while 200 mobilised for the united-front protest in Oakland, California. United-front protests were also held in Sydney, Australia, on 23 April, on the campus of the National Autonomous University (UNAM) in Mexico City on 24 April, and in Chacao and Los Angeles on 26 April. And on 17 May 50 people attended a rally in Melbourne, Australia.

In addition to the united-front protests, the PDC and the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense mobilised a Class-Struggle Contingent of some 150 people for the 19 April demonstration in Philadelphia called by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFMAJ), which drew some 600 protestors. The same day, the Committee for Social Defence (CDDS), the PDC’s fraternal defence organisation in France, also built a contingent of over 60 people at a Paris protest that drew over 200 demonstrators, while our comrades of the Grupo Espartacaquina de Mexico, section of the ICL, participated in a protest of some 50 people in Mexico City. On 12 April, the Committee for Social Defence (KfV) in Germany had mobilised a Class-Struggle Contingent of 80 people in a demonstration called by the Berlin “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal” Coalition that drew about 300. These contingents marched under the slogans: “Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!” The PDC initiated the united-front protests to provide an internationalist platform for trade unionists and fighters for the oppressed throughout the world to express their solidarity with Mumia whose case has come to represent struggle against racist injustice worldwide.

Trade unions in many countries representing hundreds of thousands of workers around the world were among more than 500 individuals and groups who endorsed the protests. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) Western Cape issued a statement declaring: “COSATU endorses the campaign to free Comrade ABU JAMAL.... We will stand with the millions of people across the world that are calling for justice to be done and will join the protest against this travesty of justice.” The International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 in San Francisco endorsed the campaign with the slogans: “Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!” The PDC initiated the united-front protests to provide an internationalist platform for trade unionists and fighters for the oppressed throughout the world to express their solidarity with Mumia whose case has come to represent struggle against racist injustice worldwide.
Mumia...

(Continued from page 1)

Oakland rally. Union endorsers of the international campaign included the SUD (the Spartacist Unity Organization), the Federation of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Japanese Federation of Trade Unions, the Workers of the World Union, the Central Labor Union of Australia, the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, the National Agricultural Labor Union, the National Union of Indian Workers, the United Federation of Greek Workers, the Workers Union (CWU) Eastern Region also endorsed. The PDC also sought support for Mumia’s cause among students, antiracist and gay rights activists, minorities, immigrant communities, left organisations and other public figures. Mumia’s family, however, and the united front were received from former Black Panther Party leader Elaine Brown and David Hilliard, Demu Turkish and Kurdistan Community Centre in London, Jim Derry of the Greater New Lodge Community Forum in Belfast, the head of the VVN-Bda (Association of the Victims of the Nazi Regime—Coalition of Anti-Fascists in Berlin, Cynthia McKinney (US Green Party candidate for president), and writers including the poet Benjamin Zephaniah, Cornel West, Gilles Perrault, Robert Allen, Michael Eric Dyson and Manning Marable. From Cuba, we received endorsements from author Celia Hart and Che Guevara’s daughter, Aleida Guevara March. A statement of solidarity was sent by Leonard Petitger, the longtimer jailed American Indian Movement leader who remains unbowed in the face of a decades-long vendetta by the US government. The protests were also built and attended by black nationalist and Pan-Africanist groups in London, Chicago and Oakland, gay rights activists in Chicago and other locales. Speakers included trade unionists, family members of slain Black Panthers and antiwar activists. Speaker Mumia’s supporters called for frame-up charges today. And in every locale, from London to Sydney to Melbourne, protesters took to the streets to denounce not only the racist US imperialists but the race, national and class oppression that they and their “own” bourgeoisies. Where participants took up the PDC’s invitation to express their own views, a range of political viewpoints was aired and debated, which only made more powerful the shared commitment to the urgent fight for Mumia’s freedom.

Many speakers at the Los Angeles and Chicago protests on 26 April expressed outrage at the acquittal on 25 April of the New York cops who killed Sean Bell in a hail of bullets. Labor Front Against the Iraq War speaker Branca stated that “two of the cops who killed Sean Bell were black, and in general they have a better idea of truth they are just doing their jobs in the eyes of the racist rulers. We seek to mobilise labour against the government and confront the system. Explanations to the masses that things like racist cop terror can only be ended when the class that the cops protect is removed from power by the working class.” The PDC and others at the protests called for freedom for the eight MOVE prisoners in the US, who have endured 30 years in the hell of Pennsylvania’s prisons for the “crime” of shooting the two cops just outside their Philadelphia home in 1978. Outrageously, five of the MOVE prisoners have recently been denied parole, two others have parole decisions pending and one will become eligible for parole later this year. The MOVE prisoners are innocent and should not have spent a day in jail! We demand the immediate, unconditional release of the MOVE prisoners!

London: “Workers of the world unite for freedom for Mumia!”

Our strategy in the fight to free Mumia is that of class-struggle defence based on the understanding that capitalism is fundamentally divided between two hostile classes — the capitalist exploiters and the working class — and that the capitalist state and its courts are organs of repression against working people and the oppressed. While every legal avenue must be pursued, it is the power of mass international protest centered on the trade unions that can make the courts yield.

The London protest on 19 April brought outstanding support from the multiethnic trade unions — including from the RMT Finsbury Park branch and the CWU Eastern Region whose speakers had worked to build support for Mumia’s demands. Rally chair Eibhlin McDonald also welcomed speakers from several organisations representing a wide section of the black minority community, noting that they “have embraced the campaign for Mumia and the struggle against racist police terror and its frame-up charges today that is a daily fact of life for London’s black youth”. Mumia’s campaign for freedom dem­

The Transitional Programme

We seek to carry forward the international working-class perspectives of Marxism as developed by Lenin and Trotsky, as embodied in the decisions of the first four congresses of the Communist International and by the 1938 Transitional Programme and other key documents of the Fourth International. These materials are the indispensable documentary codification of the Leninist understanding of the vocation of the Fourth International and are fundamental to the revolutionary tasks of our organisation.

The tragic defeats suffered by the world proletariat over a long period of years doomed the official organisations to yet greater conservatism and simultaneously sent disillusioned petty-bourgeois “revolutionists” in pursuit of “new ways”. As always during the period of assimilation showed in embryo the forces of revisionism — of revising the whole course of revolutionary thought. Instead of learning from the past, they “reject” it. Some discover the inconsistency of Marxism, others announce the bankruptcy of its theory and its morals.

To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their name out of respect for the masses — the will of the masses. “The tragic defeats suffered by the world proletariat over a long period of years doomed the official organisations to yet greater conservatism and simultaneously sent disillusioned petty-bourgeois ‘revolutionists’ in pursuit of ‘new ways’. As always during the period of assimilation showed in embryo the forces of revisionism — of revising the whole course of revolutionary thought. Instead of learning from the past, they ‘reject’ it. Some discover the inconsistency of Marxism, others announce the bankruptcy of its theory and its morals.

To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their name out of respect for the masses — the will of the masses. “Workers of the world unite for freedom for Mumia!”

Our strategy in the fight to free Mumia is that of class-struggle defence based on the understanding that capitalism is fundamentally divided between two hostile classes — the capitalist exploiters and the working class — and that the capitalist state and its courts are organs of repression against working people and the oppressed. While every legal avenue must be pursued, it is the power of mass international protest centered on the trade unions that can make the courts yield.

The London protest on 19 April brought outstanding support from the multiethnic trade unions — including

Leon Trotsky, The Transitional Programme (1938)
As Spartacist League speaker Julia Emery said: "What is necessary is to mobilise the multi-ethnic working class for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism once and for all. For this the fundamental dividing line in society is class. This economic system offers no future for the Scots, for the Irish, for the Jews, for the workers of the world. The British ruling class has long had the potential power to shut down the City."

"We seek to build a party that fights against all kinds of disunity, to create unity, what Lenin called a tribe of the people: we fight against racism, against Islamophobia, against anti-Semitism, against homophobia, against anti-Semitism, for women's liberation, for gay rights and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! We fight for an international socialist planned economy and for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a Socialist Federation of Europe! We are intentionalist: our motto is workers of the world unite! And today we say workers of the world, defend for Mumia!"

Emery took up as well the riots in Tibet and the "free Tibet" protests occurring internationally. The anti-Olympic torch protests in London and elsewhere, saying these are counterrevolutionary provocations aimed at the Olympic workers state. Trotskyists unconditionally defend China and the other deformed workers states as a whole take up the fight against imperialist attack and capitalist restoration. We join the demands for prosecution of the Zantoxyl to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucrats. This is courtoined to the view voiced from the platform by Comrade Smerconish and "the free Tibet" protests occurring internationally. Comrade Smerconish and "the free Tibet" protests occurring internationally. }

"What Lenin called a tribe of the people: we fight against racism, against Islamophobia, against anti-Semitism, against homophobia, against anti-Semitism, for women's liberation, for gay rights and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! We fight for an international socialist planned economy and for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a Socialist Federation of Europe! We are intentionalist: our motto is workers of the world unite! And today we say workers of the world, defend for Mumia!

As Spartacist League speaker Julia Emery said: "What is necessary is to mobilise the multi-ethnic working class for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism once and for all. For this the fundamental dividing line in society is class. This economic system offers no future for the Scots, for the Irish, for the Jews, for the workers of the world. The British ruling class has long had the potential power to shut down the City."

"We seek to build a party that fights against all kinds of disunity, to create unity, what Lenin called a tribe of the people: we fight against racism, against Islamophobia, against anti-Semitism, against homophobia, against anti-Semitism, for women's liberation, for gay rights and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! We fight for an international socialist planned economy and for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a Socialist Federation of Europe! We are intentionalist: our motto is workers of the world unite! And today we say workers of the world, defend for Mumia!"

"What Lenin called a tribe of the people: we fight against racism, against Islamophobia, against anti-Semitism, against homophobia, against anti-Semitism, for women's liberation, for gay rights and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! We fight for an international socialist planned economy and for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a Socialist Federation of Europe! We are intentionalist: our motto is workers of the world unite! And today we say workers of the world, defend for Mumia!"

"What Lenin called a tribe of the people: we fight against racism, against Islamophobia, against anti-Semitism, against homophobia, against anti-Semitism, for women's liberation, for gay rights and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! We fight for an international socialist planned economy and for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a Socialist Federation of Europe! We are intentionalist: our motto is workers of the world unite! And today we say workers of the world, defend for Mumia!"

"What Lenin called a tribe of the people: we fight against racism, against Islamophobia, against anti-Semitism, against homophobia, against anti-Semitism, for women's liberation, for gay rights and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! We fight for an international socialist planned economy and for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a Socialist Federation of Europe! We are intentionalist: our motto is workers of the world unite! And today we say workers of the world, defend for Mumia!"
Mumia... (Continued from page 3)

Respect is not even nominally a working-class organisation but a cross-class coalition, which precludes Marxists extending it critical support in seeking to turn it into an agency for political radicalisation. Emery also took up the so-called International Bolshevik Tendency (BT), an organisation marked by utter contempt for the fight against racist oppression everywhere including in the US. The BT has distinguished itself in seeking to be the microphone that poisons the trade-union centred mass protest necessary to free Mumia. Insofar as they have become involved in Mumia’s case, it has been to conciliate the reformists’ calls for a “new trial” while attacking the PDC and SL as “sectarian” for our opposition to the reformists’ strategy of reliance on the capitalist state. Reformists in Britain such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Socialist Partyworkflow illegally our unrelenting protest discourse and responded with a deafening silence to the March protest in Dublin that featured a speaking tour of Geraldo Rivera for our organisation. “In the interests of fighting for Mumia’s freedom, we think it is obvious that there should be one demonstration.” The BT’s “mobilising” of course existed only in virtual reality and in the end they brought out some half-dozen—mainly themselves—to the protest initiated by the PDC. The BT also promoted a Potemkin-village protest in Dublin that featured a speaker from the anarchist workers Solidarity Movement who questioned Mumia’s innocence without a peep in response from the BT.

At the London protest, Emery pointed out the BT’s dubious history on the question of the struggle against black oppression: “In 1965 the Philly cops bombed the MOVE commune and incinerated an entire black neighbourhood killing eleven people including six children. The Spartanist League in the US was almost unique on the left, raising a huge outcry of protest. The BT, like most of the left, remained silent. That is until we organise a memorial meeting for the victims of the MOVE commune—the survivors. [The BT] attacked the Spartanist League for not making a polemic against MOVE philosophy the centre of a memorial meeting for those who survived the gov­ernment’s incineration of this black neighbourhood.”

“At the height of the mass protests inter­nationally that stayed Mumia’s execution in 1995, they provided ammunition to none other than the Wall Street Journal which restated the Bolshevik Tendency’s slanders of the Spartanist League as a ‘demented cult’ in order to smear the efforts of the PDC and others on Mumia’s behalf. This is the situation that is not to be taken at its word.”

When the SL launched a series of trade union-centred mobilisations to stop the Klan and Nazis in major US cities in the early to mid-1980s, the BT denounced us for abandoning trade-union work in favour of “community organising”. We can only guess why an organisation that cares nothing about peace would get involved in Mumia’s case. What we do know is that the BT—an organisation led by the twisted sociopath Bill Logan, who was expelled from our tendency in 1979 for crimes “against communist morality and its substrate ele­mentary humanity decency”—has always pursued an unnatural and hostile obsession with our organisation.

Reformists “mobilised a mass movement—rebuild the movement for Mumia!”

Our fight has been and continues to be to spark mass protest, centred on the support of the organised working class, demanding Mumia’s freedom. But that class-struggle perspective and understanding of the capitalist state’s strategy for class-war prisoners such as Mumia, there is no justice in the capital­ist courts—is dismissive of those who claim to be fighting for Mumia internationally. What was once a movement for Mumia’s freedom was demobilised by the reformist organisations behind the various community activists internationally active around Mumia’s case, who have pumped out illusions in the very courts which have kept Mumia caged on death row for 26 years. This ignores the power of the organised working class to stop production, transport and communica­tion. What is vital now is to turn the power of the organised working class, demanding Mumia’s release, to build a mass protest— the liberals and oppressed. Nobody ever called for a “new trial” for Angela Davis, Huey Newton or Nelson Mandela. Had the political coun­terposition between our call to “Free Mumia” and those advocating a “new trial” been openly debated over the past decade, the movement for Mumia would have been stronger and far more based on the need to mobilise to free this innocent man.”

The battle to free Mumia is at a criti­cal juncture. To rekindle mass interna­tional protest, which in 1995 stayed the hand of the executioner then poised to carry out the death sentence, requires politically taking on and defeating those preaching faith in the capitalist courts. The campaign for Mumia must make a leap from the hundreds mobilised in prison and at the hands of the death penalty on thousands in every corner of the globe demanding Mumia’s free­dom. What is needed is not just to reject the endorsements and statements of support for Mumia from the international trade union movement into workers actions... As PDC counsel Rachel Wolfkenstein underlined at the Mexico City united­front protest: “The power to make the court system free rests in the international, multira­cial, multitheletic working class that can stop production, transport and communica­tion... This power must be used to fight for Mumia, for all-class-war pris­ners, and for the human liberation struggles of the working people into political struggles leading to socialist revolutions around the globe.”

PDC film showing From Death Row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal

5 pm, Saturday 5 July 2008

London united-front speakers
Clockwise: Sista Internationals Liberation Day Organising Committee, Steve Volley and Dean O’Hanlon of RMT.
Northern Ireland:
Socialist Party champions former H-Block warden turned security guard!

Dublin
26 May 2008
Dear Workers Hammer,

Over the last few months a number of articles have appeared in the newspapers of both Irish and British reformist organisations about a hunger strike by "airport workers" in a legal battle against the leadership of UNITE, the trade union that organised them. The articles describe how these "workers" have been betrayed by the leadership of UNITE, who have instead to rally the workers against each other, in effect to portray it, but simply the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Cops and security guards are used against workers during class struggle, beating pickets and protecting scabs. Indeed, around the world airport security is at the very front-line of the imperialists' ongoing "war on terror" targeting, in particular, Muslims. As usual, the Socialist Party cares little for the plight of the besieged Asian communities in Britain or the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, seeking instead to rally the workers to the defence of the very cops, security and prison guards that are used to beat, torture and imprison them.

There are few places in the Western world where the precise nature of the state and its "special bodies of armed men" is clearer than in Northern Ireland. Since its inception in 1921 as an Orange statelet, the local capitalist class and their British imperialist masters in London maintained their rule through naked anti-Catholic terror. The heavily armed RUC and "B-special" auxiliaries tortured and murdered with impunity, in particular targeting Republicans or anybody that dared question Orange rule. When a mass civil rights movement, supported both by the majority of Catholics and many Protestants, erupted in 1968 demanding an end to the daily discrimination of the Catholic minority, the Orange state and their security guards out of the unions!


Derry, the infamous Bloody Sunday massacre in 1972. In contrast to the reformists, the ruling capitalist class makes no apologies for its state and the actions it takes to defend it. To this day, the British ruling class has refused to admit that the troops murdered innocent civilians on Bloody Sunday. The fact that the slaughter of the unarmed civilians is on film, and dozens of eye witnesses have testified, is irrelevant to the arrogant imperial masters. Their message to the population is quite clear: we rule! This is the same message sent out when cops executed Jean Charles de Menezes in July 2005 in London, and repeated in every denial of any wrong doing. And it was the gruesome message that Thatcher's government sent to the world when it provoked the Hunger Strikes in 1981. After years of protests against the brutal and demeaning regime under vicious Wardens, Republican prisoners led by Bobby Sands insisted on regaining the status of political prisoners, as indeed they plainly were, including the simple rights to wear their own civilian clothes and to organize educational pursuits. The British state saw an opportunity to provoke the threatened hunger strike. It not only refused to listen to the demands, calling Bobby Sands and the others "common criminals" but began renegotiating earlier agreements. Thatcher looked on gleefully as Bobby Sands, aged 27, and the others suffered slow, painful deaths.

At the height of the hunger strike, Sands was elected to the House of Commons and, fellow hunger striker, Kieran Doherty to the Dáil [Irish Parliament] as part of mass protests against the system slowly killing them. Both the British and Irish states quickly introduced new laws banning prisoners from running for elections—making it clear to all that bourgeois "democracy" is nothing more than a veneer. A veneer that the likes of the Socialist Party hold in the highest of regard.

Because reformists hold that the capitalist state can change its spots and that socialism can be achieved without any need for a workers revolution, ie the smashing of the capitalist state and the need to establish a workers state, they must deny the very class nature of this continued on page 11
In defence of the revolutionary programme

Declaration of the Trotskyist Faction

"On the most general level the Belgian events teach that the prime necessity is to build a revolutionary organisation which cannot be evaded by any consideration of immediate tactical success or to win approval from centrist of other tendencies. It cannot begin if major theoretical questions are not brought forward for discussion and if efforts are made to form combinations in which privileged questions are put to one side. It cannot begin by support for centrist 'personalities' or the establishment of retrenchment which involve concessions on principle.”

— The World Prospect for Socialism, resolution of Social Democratic Opposition

"We are told by the comrades that we did not take up the IMG adequately at the [second CDM] conference. The IMG should have made a clear statement on their role as a left cover for the Stalinists. Such a course of action would have been a disaster. It would have been certain to drive the IMG out of the CDM.... But we do not believe that [the development of the CDM] was the possibilities we have now in Scotland where there are three to four hundred people who would have supported the platform or the organising committee made such a statement. Soviets might have walked out with Grogan and Pennington convinced that we were sectarian.”

— Comrade Thomet's reply to "The WSL and the Internal Crisis", Internal Bulletin 21, p 7

For the International Committee's struggle against Pabloism

(1) The International Committee —
In the vanguard of capitalist decay the only hope for humanity is the ability of the international working class led by a Leninist party to make a successful revolution. This was the political basis of the International Committee's fight against the liquidatorist Pabloist tendency both in 1951 and at the time of "reunification" in 1965. Any revolutionary organisation today must base itself upon this political fight of the working-class revolution and for the programme of political revolution in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states.

The IC was flawed by the delayed and incomplete nature of the fight against Pabloism and by its failure to establish an international democratic-centralist structure. These inadequacies, coupled with isolation in international Trotskyism during the Cold War period, prepared the way for the defection of the initially dominant section, the Socialist Workers' Party, in 1969. Nevertheless the IC maintained an essentially correct stand against Pabloism during the fifties and early sixties. However, when the SLL's international resolution of 1961, The World Prospect for Socialism, which read as follows:

"... any retreat from the strategy of political independence of the working class and the workers' state will have the most important consequence for a world-historical blander on the part of the Trotsky movement.”

(2) Cuba — The correct programmatic stance of the IC lacked a firm theoretical underpinning — a consequence of the hasty and in some respects superficial fight carried out against Pablo in 1953. This weakness was graphically revealed in the IC's inability to correctly the Cuban revolution. The Pabloists, joined by the American deformed workers' state. Essentially similar conditions had produced the Chinese and Yugoslav deformed workers' states after the Second World War and were subsequently to result in the Indo-Chinese deformed workers' states. While insistent on a petit-bourgeois guerrilla forces can in certain situations successfully overturn capitalist property relations they are inherently incapable of establishing a revolutionary workers state that is a workers' state in which the class-conscious proletariat holds political power — precisely because the guerrilla strategy relegates the proletarian to an essentially passive role. The workers' states which came into being in these circumstances are necessarily defined from the inception by the rule of a bureaucratic caste, centrally centered on the guerrilla leaders. The active intervention of the working class, led by a Trotskyist party, is required to overthrow the bureaucracy and establish workers' democracy through political revolution, allowing the fight for socialism to be carried forward. (Some members of the WSL look to some revised variant of Mandel/Wohlfahrt)

In 1963, with the Chinese revolution in China, a new way of building the Stalinist parties or petit-bourgeois parties in every country, for the central role of the working class in the colonial revolution and for the programme of political revolution in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states. The IC was the vanguard of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples! We fought with all our might to defend the workers states, notably through our active intervention in the emerging political revolution in East Germany in 1989-90 and later fighting counter-revolution in Eastern Europe. We continue to stand against the unconditional military defence of the remaining deformed workers' states, China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam — against imperialism and internal counter-revolution, a Trojan horse within the Soviet Union, a workers' state. This means that the WSL position on the question of the date for social revolution in China is that the SLL's call for the Third International is uniformly and passively recognized by the SLL as a workers state, including China. This pretentious "theorization" has not only the disadvantage of falsely posing the whole question solely in terms of the military might of the Soviet Union but also the fundamentally reformist in methodology: the new guerrilla-initiated states are held to be originally deformed workers' states and/or transformed into deformed workers' states through a peaceful process of reforms.

(3) Pabloism undated — The incomplete, bankrupt character of the IC's opposition to Pablo and his followers is testified to by the subsequent upsurge of the SWP with the International Secretariat forces, the continued existence and growth of the United Secretariat, and the rapprochement between the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste and the United Secretariat. Only by deepening and making consistent the IC's assault on Pabloism will it be possible to destroy politically the United Secretariat and thus lay the basis for the restoration of a genuinely Bolshevik International. The degeneration of the IC and the development of the WSL

(4) Programmatic degeneration — Marxists must take the history of their own movement as a guide. In the case of the WSL this means above all a critical assessment of the history of the IC, its origins in the Spartacist International, its split with the Pabloists and its later developments. However, thus far the WSL leadership has dealt with the question of the date

For the international Committee's struggle against Pabloism

(1) The International Committee —
In the vanguard of capitalist decay the only hope for humanity is the ability of the international working class led by a Leninist party to make a successful revolution. This was the political basis of the International Committee's fight against the liquidatorist Pabloist tendency both in 1951 and at the time of "reunification" in 1965. Any revolutionary organisation today must base itself upon this political fight of the working-class revolution and for the programme of political revolution in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states.

The IC was flawed by the delayed and incomplete nature of the fight against Pabloism and by its failure to establish an international democratic-centralist structure. These inadequacies, coupled with isolation in international Trotskyism during the Cold War period, prepared the way for the defection of the initially dominant section, the Socialist Workers' Party, in 1969. Nevertheless the IC maintained an essentially correct stand against Pabloism during the fifties and early sixties. However, when the SLL's international resolution of 1961, The World Prospect for Socialism, which read as follows:

"... any retreat from the strategy of political independence of the working class and the workers' state will have the most important consequence for a world-historical blander on the part of the Trotsky movement.”

(2) Cuba — The correct programmatic stance of the IC lacked a firm theoretical underpinning — a consequence of the hasty and in some respects superficial fight carried out against Pablo in 1953. This weakness was graphically revealed in the IC's inability to correctly the Cuban revolution. The Pabloists, joined by the American deformed workers' state. Essentially similar conditions had produced the Chinese and Yugoslav deformed workers' states after the Second World War and were subsequently to result in the Indo-Chinese deformed workers' states. While insistent on a petit-bourgeois guerrilla forces can in certain situations successfully overturn capitalist property relations they are inherently incapable of establishing a revolutionary workers state that is a workers' state in which the class-conscious proletariat holds political power — precisely because the guerrilla strategy relegates the proletarian to an essentially passive role. The workers' states which came into being in these circumstances are necessarily defined from the inception by the rule of a bureaucratic caste, centrally centered on the guerrilla leaders. The active intervention of the working class, led by a Trotskyist party, is required to overthrow the bureaucracy and establish workers' democracy through political revolution, allowing the fight for socialism to be carried forward. (Some members of the WSL look to some revised variant of Mandel/Wohlfahrt)

In 1963, with the Chinese revolution in China, a new way of building the Stalinist parties or petit-bourgeois parties in every country, for the central role of the working class in the colonial revolution and for the programme of political revolution in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states. The IC was the vanguard of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples! We fought with all our might to defend the workers states, notably through our active intervention in the emerging political revolution in East Germany in 1989-90 and later fighting counter-revolution in Eastern Europe. We continue to stand against the unconditional military defence of the remaining deformed workers' states, China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam — against imperialism and internal counter-revolution, a Trojan horse within the Soviet Union, a workers' state. This means that the WSL position on the question of the date for social revolution in China is that the SLL's call for the Third International is uniformly and passively recognized by the SLL as a workers state, including China. This pretentious "theorization" has not only the disadvantage of falsely posing the whole question solely in terms of the military might of the Soviet Union but also the fundamentally reformist in methodology: the new guerrilla-initiated states are held to be originally deformed workers' states and/or transformed into deformed workers' states through a peaceful process of reforms.

(3) Pabloism undated — The incomplete, bankrupt character of the IC's opposition to Pablo and his followers is testified to by the subsequent upsurge of the SWP with the International Secretariat forces, the continued existence and growth of the United Secretariat, and the rapprochement between the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste and the United Secretariat. Only by deepening and making consistent the IC's assault on Pabloism will it be possible to destroy politically the United Secretariat and thus lay the basis for the restoration of a genuinely Bolshevik International. The degeneration of the IC and the development of the WSL

(4) Programmatic degeneration — Marxists must take the history of their own movement as a guide. In the case of the WSL this means above all a critical assessment of the history of the IC, its origins in the Spartacist International, its split with the Pabloists and its later developments. However, thus far the WSL leadership has dealt with the question of the date
and character of the SLL/WRP’s qualitative degeneration in the most haphazard and confused fashion. In the proposed submission to the XIII World Congress of the United Secretariat, “The Poisoned Well”, the leadership suggests that the SLL abandoned the Transitional Programme in 1971, but that in any case this programmatic question is subordinate to the question of the later loss of “precious worker cadres”. Similarly The Battle for Trotskyism suggests that the expulsion of the WSL comrades at the end of 1974 marked the point of qualitative degeneration in the SLL/WRP. Yet the WRP’s Workers’ Press collapsed in early 1976 it was called a “savage” “blow to Trotskyism” (Socialist Press 28) so perhaps there was no qualitative degeneration at all! To straighten out this mish-mash we must recognise that the question of programme is central to our characterisation of a political tendency.

The flaws in the IC’s formal defence of Trotskyism crystallised into a qualitative revision of programme in 1966-67. During this period the SLL, the dominant section of the IC, adopted an approach which was indistinguishable from Trotskyist revisionism. The IC had originally been formed to fight the Chinese NLF leadership and the Chinese Stalinism seen in the WRP’s “Cultural Revolution”, “The October revolution.... But the fight against Healy the group that went on to form the WSL broke partial­ly from the WRP’s conception of party­building as simply a matter of meeting recruitment targets and sought to develop its own independent analysis of the principal and secondary contradictions within Vietnam as well as between Viet­nam and imperialism and on that basis to extend those tasks of the working class rather than the existing state of the working class to develop such a programme, this initial apparent open­ness was to have little effect on the organisation’s subsequent development. What has been central to the WSL’s development though is the trade-union work at Cowley [Oxford car plant]. The rejection of Healy’s sectarian ultimatum, which first produced the fight within the WRP, represented a positive response to the WRP’s crisis-mongering and maximalism. More importantly, however, this rejection did not signify a willingness to take up a fight for the full Transitional Programme in the unions but in fact signalled a retreat from political confrontation with the existing conscious­ness of the working class in favour of radical trade unionism. The WSL’s break from Healyite maximal­ism was, in the final analysis, a break towards economism and minimalism. It was from the worst period of the SLL/WRP, the period following its capitulatory policy, which amounted to having no qualitative degeneration in 1966-67, that the WSL inherited and developed its whole­central to the WSL’s programme are in the recent Cowley election campaign and in the CDLM—narrowness of which must be characterised as anything other than left-reformism. The programmatic and political practice of the WSL (5) The Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement... The CDLM encapsulates the WSL’s parochial and opportunist practice. Although it has turned out to be a miserable failure, it was first founded as an ambitious organisational expression of the WSL’s aim to get closer to the working class and carry its politics into the trade unions. It therefore deserves the closest scrutiny. continued on page 8
Thirty years... (Continued from page 7)

(a) Programme — The programme of the CDLM is a programme of trade-union reformism which omits many points that the WSL wanted. It is an amalgam of ideas which address questions outside of the trade-union area: "For Women's Rights!" and the WSL's plan to build a women's movement produced only as a result of pressure from the Pabolites of the IMG and the ICL (International-Communist League, now Militant) on the WSL.

The CDLM programme ignores the vital internationalist obligations of the working class to the British working class. There is no reference to Ireland, to South Africa, or to NATO and the EEC (both of which are anti-Soviet, imperialist alliances which omit popular support for the military mobilisation's current working class in Britain: there is no reference to the liquidationist perspective of the Transitional Programme, culminating in the slogan of a workers' government. Membership in them should be conditional on agreement with this programme and willingness to fight for it under the discipline of the party. Naturally the programme of such groups must be amplified in accordance with the specific conditions in the unions concerned as well as the lot just as they did the last time he stood.

(c) Trade-union work at Cowley — The WSL's roots in the working class are deepest at Cowley, and it is as a result of the work carried out there that the organisation is best known. Victoria St. Cowley can point the way forward for the class, while mistakes represent real setbacks for at least a section of it. Bearing in mind the pressures towards opportunism and economism which inevitably operate on cadres in the union, the organisation must exert tight centralised control over all trade-union work. In particular the work at Cowley must be closely supervised by the National Committee and the day-to-day lessons of our most important area of work must be made accessible to the whole membership.

(b) The Labour Party — The inability to see politics except through the grimy spectacles of the Labour Party is a chronic affliction on the British left. Two main demarcationary deviations result from this. The economists of the WSP/SIS exemplify one pole; the dismissal of parliamentary and government events as irrelevant to workers.

By confining themselves to militant trade unionism and leaving the reformist leadership of the working class unchallenged, they in fact strengthen the Labour Party's hold on the working class. The Militant group represents the other extreme: the subordination of the proletariat's struggles to the pre-ordained necessity to elect a Labour Government (or to keep one in power) and the abandonment of any perspective of politically destroying the Labour Party or of attempting to build a revolutionary party. The strategy of the Militant amounts to pressuring the Labour bureaucracy towards "socialism". While it stands to the left of both organisations, the League veers between these twin courses of capitulation. The fundamental impasse is "radical" trade unionism, or "trade-union struggles" (for which the minimum programme of the CDLM is sufficient) from "politics" — a sphere worthy of comment in internal discussion or in the pages of Socialist Review, but which the leadership has decided to support in the second round of the forthcoming AUEW [engineering union] battle...
Leaves Fight". The slogan derives from an ill-formed conception that the Labour Party is a "bourgeois" party, rooted in the dominant class of the people it represents. "Leaves Fight" is a slogan used by the Workers' Socialist League (WSL) and the Spartacist Group. It was first used by the WSL in its newspaper, the "P.O. Box", in the late 1960s. The slogan was later adopted by the WSPU and its successor, the WSRP.

(9) The Lib/Lab coalition — The refusal to counterpose the programme of Marxism to the Labour Party and all currents at present in it (shown in the "Make the Lefts Fight" policy and by the opposition to the WRP standing candidates against Labour in the 1974 General Election) is confirmed by the leadership's policy on the Lib/Lab coalition. The coalition with the Liberals is equivalent to a Popular Front. Coalition with the Liberals is equivalent to a Popular Front. The coalition with the Liberals is equivalent to a Popular Front. The coalition with the Liberals is equivalent to a Popular Front. The coalition with the Liberals is equivalent to a Popular Front.

With some exceptions, the resurgence of bourgeois coalitionism in Western Europe in recent years has taken place in the absence of extra-parliamentary mobilisations on a scale which can produce sort-type bodies that can be counterposed directly to the class collaboration of the reformist bureaucracies. It is therefore vitally necessary to confront Popular Frontism in the context of parliamentary politics through principled electoral opposition to coalitionism, thereby drawing the class line between the proletariat and the bourgeois with the greatest clarity. Only an organisation which is capable of drawing this line can act as a firm pole of opposition in the workers' movement to the class collaboration of coalitions.

(10) The oppression of women — The crisis of proletarian leadership must be resolved through sharp political warfare against all tendencies which would betray the proletariat. WSL's abject failure to tackle this job in the Women's Liberation Movement (a failure which derives from the petty-bourgeoisie 's economist and male-chauvinist disdain for the struggle against the oppression of women), which are being politicised through their participation in the petty-bourgeoisie leadership, is either mean-spirited against revolutionaries who are part of the leadership reveals a similar mentality in the leadership as in so many other areas of the party, not least in the sphere of international work.

The recognition of the right to self-determination in no way implies support to nationalism, a thoroughly bourgeois ideology completely counterposed to the interests of the proletariat, unable to even accomplish the basic bourgeois democratic tasks which, in this epoch, can only be achieved through proletarian revolution. While we support any anti-imperialist actions of nationalist movements (unless they are merely acting as the instruments of a rival imperialist power) our main task with regard to the nationalist movements of the various oppressed peoples of the world is to separate the working masses from the petty-bourgeoisie leadership. By championing the right of self-determination, the revolutionary vanguard can counter the㊗businesses' attempts to hand over the oppressor people as a monolithic whole, thus undermining divisions in the working class along national lines and sharpening the fundamental international conflict in capitalist society — the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

(11) The national question — We uphold the Leninist position on the national question. Basing ourselves on the fundamental democratic principle of the equality of all nations and peoples, we recognise the right of all nations to self-determination. However, the recognition of this right by no means predetermines our attitude to every particular national question. In some cases the right of self-determination for nations must be subordinated to other, higher principles — such as the defence of a workers' state. We would not, for example, support the right of a bourgeois-led Ukrainian nationalist movement to separate from the Soviet Union, regardless of popular support. In other cases, for example Scotland, we are for the right of self-determination, but call on the Scottish people to exercise that right by choosing to stay in the same state as the other peoples of Britain.

The recognition of the right to self-determination in no way implies support to nationalism, a thoroughly bourgeois ideology completely counterposed to the interests of the proletariat, unable to even accomplish the basic bourgeois democratic tasks which, in this epoch, can only be achieved through proletarian revolution. While we support any anti-imperialist actions of nationalist movements (unless they are merely acting as the instruments of a rival imperialist power) our main task with regard to the nationalist movements of the various oppressed peoples of the world is to separate the working masses from the petty-bourgeoisie leadership.

The recognition of the right to self-determination, the revolutionary vanguard can counter thebourgeoisie attempts to hand over the oppressor people as a monolithic whole, thus undermining divisions in the working class along national lines and sharpening the fundamental international conflict in capitalist society — the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.
Thirty years...
(Continued from page 9)
operate as something other than an organ of capitalist class rule.

(14) Programme first — The WSL is in chaos. It has no clear idea of its tasks or goals. The organisation continues to maintain a weekly paper which is grossly out of proportion to the financial and human resources possessed. The numerical growth of the organisation, which is increasingly touted as the solution to all ills, shows no sign of materialising.

This has a political origin — to put it bluntly the movement as yet lacks any programmatic basis for existence as a distinct political tendency. Every political current from Trotskyism to reformism is represented on the NC and among the membership. For too long the leadership has tried to relegate the resolution of outstanding political questions to the background by promoting one scheme after another (the CDLM, the weekly press) each of which in turn was supposed to solve the political problems of the movement through spectacular breakthroughs in mass work. Today the leadership is still unable to answer the fundamental question of the movement with more than routine organisational measures — voluntaristic exhortations to the membership to work harder, to “follow through” interventions, sell more papers and recruit more raw contacts. All these are not enough; neither is it enough for the leadership to prate about “follow through” method by which it means getting close to the mass movement of the working class, adopting a programmatic and vague attitude of generalised hostility to the trade-union bureaucracy and showing more thoroughness in political work.

A disciplined combat party of professional revolutionaries can only be forged on the basis of agreement on programme. Conversely any political organisation which lacks a clear and coherent programme is inevitably taken on the characteristics of a swamp. The primary reason that the leadership has been unable to organise politics to hardened cadre nor even lay out a clear set of priorities for the organisation is that it is itself unclear and divided over key political questions. This is reflected in Socialist Press where virtually anything that is handed in gets printed and reads or frequently see counterposed political positions presented in different articles on the same question. Somehow, dealing with the political questions or elaborating programmatic positions is always shoved to the bottom of the list of priorities. Consequently it is impossible for the leadership to give importance to the training of members in the struggle. Instead members must be exhorted by the leadership to hide from the political problems by throwing themselves into frenetic “mass” work without any perspectives, and sales of a newspaper without any clear line. It is no wonder the movement is in bad shape.

At this point in its history the WSL is, at a crossroads. Only by a determined struggle for programme (and this means in the first place a determined struggle within the movement over political line) is it possible to make any progress at all in a revolutionary direction.

(15) The fetishisation of organisational forms — As a substitute for programme, and for the struggle for programme as the road to an international, there is a distinct tendency in the movement to pose as strategically crucial various specific organisational forms which are supposed to have some inherently revolutionary content, irrespective of the level of class struggle at which they are produced or the leadership programme which produces them. With neither a revolutionary programme nor the possibility of becoming real organisations of the working class, the “price committees”, “Councils of Action”, or whatever, which the WSL would agonise for today can be nothing better than a diversion in the course of the class struggle and can have nothing to do with the real organs of dual power that will be built in the coming turmoil of pre-revolutionary class struggle. Trotsky’s dissection of some IEP positions is appropriate. He starts by quoting their erroneous theses:

“...the workers’ councils will arise in their final form in the actual revolutionary crisis, but the party must consistently prepare for their organisation [Trotsky’s italics]. Keeping this in mind, let us compare the attitude of the IEP toward the future councils with their own attitude toward the future International...”

“...the form which the reconstructed International will take will depend upon historic events and the actual development of the working class struggle. On this ground the International is always necessary:...”

— Writings of Leon Trotsky [1935-36], 2nd edition, p 146-7

The re-creation of the Fourth International

(16) Party-building and the struggle against centrist... A revolutionary party capable of giving direct leadership to large numbers of workers is impossible without the existence of a firm cadre — a central core of professional revolutionaries at all levels of leadership in the party. Given the destruction of the Fourth International by Pabloism the concrete fact that we have been able to lead in struggle, the nucleus of a vanguard party — which must be trained through an all-round political conflict with hostile political tendencies, upholding the party’s reason for existence — the programme for power. The further development of the party and programme, indeed, comes out of this political struggle.

The approach of the WSL leadership directs the membership away from conflict with our immediate competitors of both on holidays and weekdays, during periods of offensive as well as in retreat, in peace as well as in war. The International is not at all a “form”, as flows from the utterly false formulation of the IEP. The International is first of all a program, and a system of strategic, tactical, and organisational methods that flow from it. By dint of historic circumstances the question of the British councils is deferred for an indeterminate period of time. With the question of the International, as well as the question of national parties, cannot be deferred for a single hour: we have here in essence two sides of one and the same question. Without a Marxist International, national organisations, even the most advanced, are doomed to narrowness, vacillation, and helplessness; the advanced workers are forced to feed upon surrogates for internationalism.

— Trotsky, 1935-36, 2nd edition, p 146-7

Berlin, January 1990: ICL initiated pro-Soviet mass demonstration in Treptow Park. We fought for political revolution in the East, social revolution in West Germany.

Workers Vanguard — Marxists of the International Communist League (Fourth International). All subscriptions to Workers Vanguard include Black History and the Class Struggle.

Name
Address
Postcode _______
Phone _______
E-mail

Make cheque payable/post to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 42886, London N19 5NY

Find out more ... www.workershatter.com
(17) Building an international tendency — Inevitably the planlessness and inconsistency of the WSL's work in Britain is accompanied by a parochial and light-minded attitude to the central task of Trotskyists today: the re-creation of the Fourth International.
Unable to build an anti-revisionist, democratic centralist international tendency devoted to successful and coher- ence. The struggle for a programme has been discounted in the WSL's very limited international work.
(a) The WSL's international relations - the SL(DC) 

The Loyalist UVF killer Billy 

Inevitably the planlessness and inconsistency of the WSL's work in Britain is accompanied by a parochial and light-minded attitude to the central task of Trotskyists today: the re-creation of the Fourth International.
Unable to build an anti-revisionist, democratic centralist international tendency devoted to successful and coher- ence. The struggle for a programme has been discounted in the WSL's very limited international work.
(a) The WSL's international relations - the SL(DC) 

The Loyalist UVF killer Billy 

Inevitably the planlessness and inconsistency of the WSL's work in Britain is accompanied by a parochial and light-minded attitude to the central task of Trotskyists today: the re-creation of the Fourth International.
Unable to build an anti-revisionist, democratic centralist international tendency devoted to successful and coher- ence. The struggle for a programme has been discounted in the WSL's very limited international work.
(a) The WSL's international relations - the SL(DC) 

The Loyalist UVF killer Billy 

Inevitably the planlessness and inconsistency of the WSL's work in Britain is accompanied by a parochial and light-minded attitude to the central task of Trotskyists today: the re-creation of the Fourth International.
Unable to build an anti-revisionist, democratic centralist international tendency devoted to successful and coher- ence. The struggle for a programme has been discounted in the WSL's very limited international work.
(a) The WSL's international relations - the SL(DC) 

The Loyalist UVF killer Billy 

Inevitably the planlessness and inconsistency of the WSL's work in Britain is accompanied by a parochial and light-minded attitude to the central task of Trotskyists today: the re-creation of the Fourth International.
Unable to build an anti-revisionist, democratic centralist international tendency devoted to successful and coher- ence. The struggle for a programme has been discounted in the WSL's very limited international work.
(a) The WSL's international relations - the SL(DC)
On 3 May at a Spartacist dayschool in London we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the founding of the British section of the international Spartacist tendency (St), the forerunner of the International Communist League. The Spartacist League/Britain was founded in 1978 as a fusion between the London Spartacist Group and the Trotskyist Fraction (TF), which split from Alan Thornett’s Workers Socialist League (WSL), one of many pseudo-Trotskyist groups in Britain at that time. The fusion was hailed in the first issue of our newspaper Spartacist Britain (April 1978) as the “rebirth of British Trotskyism”. To mark the anniversary, Workers Hammer (as the paper was renamed in September 1984) is reprinting below the document “In defence of the revolutionary programme” which appeared in that first issue as one of three programmatic statements issued by the TS in the process of being won to the authentic Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist tendency. As a document in the struggle to forge a revolutionary party on the basis of Marxist principle and programme, it retains its validity today notwithstanding the enormous political changes in the world since that time.

The London Spartacist Group had been established in 1975 by the St, with a perspective of revolutionary regroupment through polemically engaging with the vast array of pseudo-Trotskyist organisations in Britain. Central to this perspective was the fight against Pabloism, the revisionist current which had programmatically destroyed Trotsky’s Fourth International (FI) in 1951-53. Pabloism was the outcome of a renunciation of the need for revolutionary leadership of the working class, ie Trotskyist parties, and an adaptation to the existing social-democratic, Stalinist and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships. The Spartacist tendency’s struggle to reforge the Fourth International by drawing hard programmatic lines against the grain of the British fake-Trotskyist milieu which operated as pressure groups on the Labour Party, particularly by tailing the Labour “lefts”. As Leninists, our strategic perspective was to split Labour, a bourgeois workers party, winning its working-class base to revolutionary communism. Our comrades fought for political clarity as seen in the discussion in 1976 on the Irish question, dealing with the national question in cases involving geographically interpenetrated peoples, which is codified in “Theses on Ireland”, printed in Spartacist (English edition) no 24, Autumn 1977.

The founding of the Spartacist League/Britain represented a significant option to the St in our struggle to reforge the Fourth International, not least because of the existence in Britain of Gerry Healy’s Socialist Labour League (SLL), (later known as the Workers Revolutionary Party — WRP), which falsely laid claim to Trotskyist orthodoxy and was fighting against Pabloism. Politically confronting and defeating the Healyites was a key task of our organisation.

The St originated as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) that was expelled in December 1963 from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the United States. The RT was formed in opposition to the SWP’s abandonment of the fight for a Trotskyist party in Cuba, expressed by the majority’s uncritical embrace of the petty-bourgeois guerrillas led by Castro and Che Guevara. Against this the RT insisted that the Cuban regime is qualitative similar to the one that emerged in the Soviet Union after the Stalinist bureaucratic usurpation of power in a political counterrevolution that began in 1924 and was consolidated over the next several years. The RT and its successor, the Spartacist League, were unique in maintaining that Cuba was a bureaucratically deformed workers state and required a proletarian political revolution to sweep away the Castro bureaucracy, establishing organs of workers democracy and installing a revolutionary internationalist regime. The SWP’s line on the Cuban Revolution mirrored the wave of revisionism a decade earlier in the Fourth International. Founded under Trotsky’s leadership in 1938, the FI had been profoundly disoriented by the post-WWII upsurge of capitalism under Stalinist leadership. Mao Zedong’s peasant-based People’s Liberation Army seized power from the collapsing bourgeois Guomindang of Chiang Kai-shek in 1949, leading to the establishment of a deformed workers state. Similar peasant-based social upsurges led by Stalinist forces triumphed in Yugoslavia, North Korea and North Vietnam (extended to the South in 1975 after the defeat of US imperialism by the Vietnamese workers and peasants). Capitalism was overtaken in several states in Eastern and Central Europe under Soviet occupation following the Second World War. While different processes took place in each of these various countries, they all had in common was the absence of the working class contending for state power. The result was the creation of bureaucratically deformed workers states.

Michael Pablo, then head of the FI, responded to the postwar social upsurges by repudiating the central importance of a conscious revolutionary leadership. Pablo asserted that “The objective process is in the final analysis the sole determining factor” and relegated the role of Trotskyism to liquidating into or at best being pressure groups on various Stalinist or social-democratic parties. This revisionism led to the destruction of the Fourth International in 1951-53 (see “Genesis of Pabloism”, Spartacist (English edition) no 21, Fall 1977).

The Pabloite revisionists were fought by the SWP and its leader, James P Cannon, above all belatedly, partially, and essentially on the SWP’s national terrain. In 1953, the SWP and other anti-Pabloite forces internationally — centrally the SLL and the French Organisation Communiste Internationalestiques (OCI) — split from Pablo and shortly thereafter founded the International Committee (IC). But with the Cuban Revolution the SWP embraced Pablo’s revisionism and carried on the “return to marxism” with his supporters. The RT opposed this reunification with the International Secretariat of Pablo and Ernest Mandel that was to result in the United Secretariat (USec). The British section of the IC — Healy’s SLL — also opposed reunification.

The founding cadres of the Spartacist tendency were impressed from a distance by the SLL’s formal orthodoxy, represented for example by its powerful 1961 document, The World Prospect for Socialism and initially stood in political solidarity with the IC. Our comrades were unaware at that time of Healy’s methods and his grossly opportunist adaptation to the Labour Party “lefts” which belied his professed “anti-Pabloite” credentials. However when our comrades met in a 1966 London conference sponsored by Healy that “Up to now, we have not done very well, in our opinion, in smashing the Pabloites”, Healy expelled them over a trivial conference point.

This organisation long ago explicitly continued on page 6

SUMMER 2008