

From NF to Thatcher to Labour 'lefts':

Racist furore over immigration

In an effort to rally popular support for the next parliamentary elections, the opposition Conservative Party has sought to make exclusion of non-white immigrants its campaign hobby horse. Tory leader Margaret Thatcher launched the racist uproar over the Liberal-Labour coalition government's immigration policy in a nationwide television address on January 30. Thatcher demagogically claimed that if present immigration policies continued, by the end of the century Britain would be deluged by some four million Pakistani or 'New Commonwealth' immigrants: 'That is an awful lot, and I think it means that people are really rather afraid that this country might be swamped by people of a different culture.'

Carrying the campaign a step further, Thatcher's deputy William Whitelaw told a party conference in late March that a future Conservative government would impose across-the-board quotas on immigration to Britain.

This latest Tory campaign occurs in a context of increasing racial polarisation and violent clashes between the fascist National Front, which has repeatedly organised provocative race-hatred marches, and its leftist and immigrant opponents. By making the issue their own the Conservatives are seeking to undercut the increasingly active NF and right-wing demagogues like Enoch Powell. Despite a series of militant strikes last year, the ruling Lib-Lab coalition has managed to keep the lid on wage increases -- prompting the Tories to seek political advantage in the explosive area of race relations.

However the Labour Party tops are just as committed to harsh and racially discriminatory controls as are the Liberals and Tories. Labour's initial response to Thatcher's outburst was to point to its own restrictive measures and the fact that immigration dropped some 25 per cent in 1977 over the previous year as proof that the Labour Party isn't 'soft' on immigration. Labour Home Secretary Merlyn Rees defended his party's record proudly, saying: 'The exclusion figures speak for themselves.' Responding to the charge that 'What you really mean is that immigration control is a device to keep out coloured people', Rees stated: 'That is what it is.... I don't think we should hide from it and that's what people are concerned about' (*Weekend World*, 4 February).

Then on March 21, five Labour MPs joined five Conservative colleagues to endorse the Select Committee on Immigration and Race Relations report, which calls on the government to cut immigration drastically and introduce a quota system for British passport holders. Among other provisions, this thoroughly racist report calls for devoting more resources to the hunt for 'illegal' immigrants, criticises the government's 1973 temporary amnesty for 'illegals' and demands the institution of some

kind of 'internal control' pass-book system for immigrants.

Anti-immigration backlash

The current racial unrest in Britain has a long history. A shortage of unskilled labour in Britain in the late 1950s inspired Tory ministers like Enoch Powell to woo immigrants from Asia and the West Indies. In responding, citizens of these countries utilised their right of entry to the capital of the old Empire. But by the end of the decade the economy had begun to turn downward, resulting in a racist backlash, with anti-immigration riots in London (Notting Hill) and the Midlands (Dudley). In 1962, without any real opposition from the Labour Party, the Tories passed the first of a series of restrictive immigration acts.

Today, the overall non-white population is just under three per cent of the total population, and even differential birth rates combined with continued levels of immigration will not shift this dramatically by the turn of the century. Britain's continuing economic crisis has acted to 'naturally' discourage immigration. In fact, the total population of Britain has actually *dropped*, as more people are leaving this economically depressed country than are entering.

The real reasons for the rise in racial tensions and violence lie in the rotting fabric of social life in Britain. In the decaying inner cities, where 'New Commonwealth' immigrants are overwhelmingly concentrated, Labour's austerity policies -- particularly spending cuts -- are making life increasingly miserable for the population. With deteriorating health, education and housing conditions and rising unemployment, the situation is ripe for the exacerbation of racism.

Those leftists who continue to peddle illusions in the Labour Party or simply indulge in rhetorical 'fight back' verbiage cannot counter the increasingly shrill cries that the immigrants are somehow to blame. So long as the working class continues to accept the framework of capitalist irrationality and thus conceives of improving its own miserable condition at the expense of some other sector of the population, divisions within the working class are bound to grow.

Both the Labour Party leadership and reputed 'left' MPs have amply demonstrated their full collaboration in enforcing racist policies. The Labour Party has endorsed immigration controls since the early 1960s, and in 1968 James Callaghan, then Home Secretary, pushed the Kenyan Asian Act through the Commons in order to prevent persecuted non-white British citizens in Kenya from entering the country. This act was a blatant capitulation to anti-Asian British chauvinism.



Police seize demonstrator at Lewisham, 1977.



NF pushes racist filth at Lewisham.

Furthermore, Labourite 'moderates' were not the only ones to join the Tories in signing the racist Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration report. Syd Bidwell, long-time 'anti-racist' spokesman of the Labour 'left' and a founding sponsor of the Anti Nazi League, was a prominent Committee member and joined the clamour for draconian new anti-immigration legislation.

This is quite consistent with the Tribunes' other policies, in particular their call for protectionist import controls, which appeals to the same reactionary chauvinism. Only a revolutionary leadership, committed to a consistent struggle against all the myriad forms of oppression in capitalist society, has the capacity to mobilise the strength of Britain's powerful trade-union movement to smash this racism and national chauvinism which seek to set worker against worker.

WSL attacks Leninist immigration policy

Such a leadership will not, however, be built by the likes of Alan Thornett's right-centrist Workers Socialist League (WSL). During the recent faction fight in the organisation,

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The I-CL school of centrist confusion

Almost 90 people attended a 5 May debate between the International-Communist League (I-CL) and the Spartacist League (SL) on 'What programme for the socialist revolution?' The lively discussion of issues ranging from the critical support tactic to guerrilla warfare fully documented the SL's characterisation of the I-CL as 'nationally-centred left Pabloites shaped by the International Socialists'.

The I-CL current first emerged out of the Grant group in 1966 as a clique of self-styled Trotskyists around Sean Matgamna. The grouping took up the 'unity' call of the International Socialists (IS, now Socialist Workers Party) in 1968, spending three years in the Cliff organisation before being expelled in 1971. While still in the IS it adopted a stance of 'critical support' to the Pabloite revisionist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI), but with its characteristic elevation of organisational expediency above politics it refused to join the British USFI group after being expelled. Finding this stance 'organisationally embarrassing', in 1975 the Matgamnaites modified their formula of conciliation somewhat, dubbing the USFI the 'mainstream' of 'post-Trotsky Trotskyism' which however required 'ideological regeneration and organisational reconstruction'.

In 1975 these small-time manoeuvrists finally thought they had hit the jackpot. First came a fusion with a state-capitalist tendency expelled from the IS, and the Matgamnaites triumphantly adopted the pretentious name I-CL. But only the name had changed, as the 'fusion' speedily collapsed. Then the I-CL latched onto an equally unprincipled international bloc, the so-called 'Necessary International Initiative' with the critical Pabloites of the German Spartacusbund and an Italian group led by Roberto Massari. This bloc soon disintegrated as well.

The very fact that this debate took place is testimony to the growth of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) in Britain. Two years ago Matgamna told members of the London Spartacist Group, 'I'll take you seriously when you've got your first British recruit.' (Such parochialism recalls the Victorian newspaper headline: 'Fog in Channel, Continent isolated'. Obviously the hundreds of non-British supporters of the iSt were of no interest to Matgamna's 'International Communists'.)

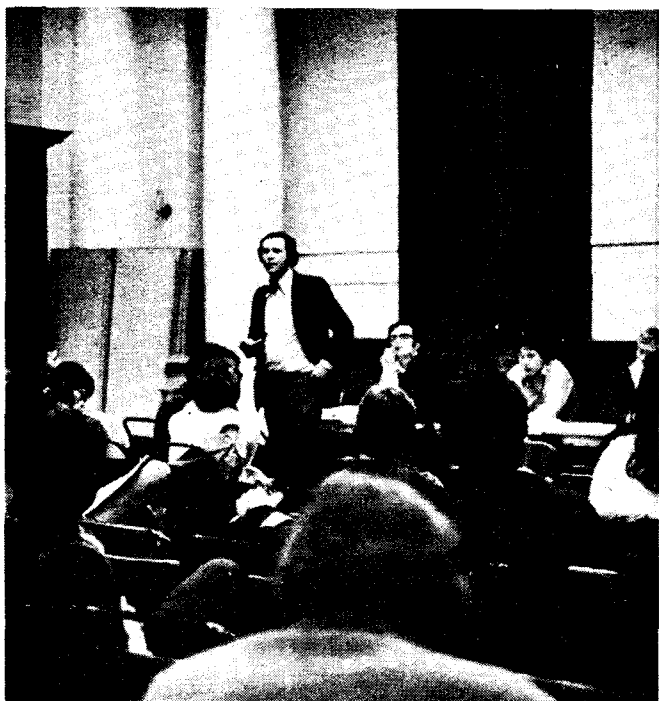
'Dogmatism'?

Martin Thomas, speaking for the I-CL, charged the SL with 'trying to find cut-and-dried formulas to guarantee against opportunism' rather than seeking to answer the 'key question: what is the next step forward?' To the SL's insistence on the fight for the revolutionary programme in the mass movements, the I-CL counterposes 'the logic of the class struggle'.

According to Thomas, the SL converts the revolutionary programme into a 'good idea' which it then counterposes to the real movements actually going on. Thus the SL supposedly says: 'Would it not be a good idea if the Arabs gave up their struggle against Israel and resorted instead to class struggle against their own bourgeoisie? Would it not be a good idea if the Catholics in the North [of Ireland] gave up their struggle against the Orange bourgeoisie and struggled instead against the Green bourgeoisie?'

It certainly would be a good idea if Thomas and his comrades actually read what the SL has written about these situations. It is a simple flat falsehood that the SL has ever advocated that the Palestinians or Irish Catholics 'give up' their struggle, as the slightest acquaintance with our press will make clear.

Rather the question is, what programme can



SL spokesman during discussion period at SL/I-CL debate. Spartacist Britain

lead to liberation for the oppressed? The I-CL simply despairs of any fundamental alteration of the situation in either area. It is the iSt which has tackled the task of analysing the complex situations in the Near East and Northern Ireland and elaborating a strategic orientation which can break the deadlock of nationalist confrontations.

As SL speakers brought out, these situations are not classical settler migrations (such as the United States, Australia or, going further back, most modern nations) in which the settlers simply overwhelm and submerge the indigenous population, initially through superior military technology and finally through sheer strength of numbers. Neither are they colonial dependencies of a metropolitan power, in which the foreign settlers form a thin possessing and administrative caste on top of a native society (such as Algeria was and Rhodesia is today), with the settlers depending on the exploitation of indigenous labour to achieve a standard of living orders of magnitude greater than that of the native masses.

The Hebrew-speaking population of Israel and the Protestant population of Northern Ireland constitute complete class-stratified peoples, from bourgeoisie to proletariat. So long as they are led by bourgeois or petty-bourgeois leaderships with a nationalist programme, the oppressed Palestinians and Irish Catholics find themselves automatically pitted against masses of currently advantaged workers who feel themselves threatened with the inversion of the existing oppression. They are thus unable to take advantage of any social divisions in the opposite camp.

In these cases, the Marxists seek to widen the existing class contradictions among the oppressor people, to polarise the oppressor society from within, to deprive the oppressor bourgeoisie of its most powerful weapon for maintaining domestic order, the spectre of national annihilation. Thus Trotskyists seek to build parties in regions such as the Near East, Ireland, and Cyprus which demonstratively reject the irredentist territorial claims of either side, precisely in order to effectively shatter the stranglehold of the oppressor bourgeoisie over its 'own' working class.

A central demand in such areas of interpenetrated peoples is for a Socialist Federation of the region, under which -- and only under which -- political independence for those peoples desiring it could be equitably granted. In no case do we lend the slightest support to the existing state founded on the oppression of another people. Thus we demand the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. Thus we give military support to any independent Palestinian forces which clash with the bourgeois Israeli state.

Only a class approach can bring justice to the oppressed nationality and to the working masses of both oppressor and oppressed peoples. But a class approach demands a struggle against the bourgeois nationalist illusions of the

oppressed, against their misleaders. This is what the I-CL shrinks from. For it would be unpopular among the middle-headed petty-bourgeois 'supporters' of 'the Third World struggle', who compensate for their irrelevance by forming a noisy cheering gallery for those who lead the oppressed into self-defeating communal slaughter.

Sitting a safe distance above the arena, these 'supporters' view the self-sacrificing ranks of the nationalist movements as gladiators, applauding their militancy as they fight for their 'own' bourgeoisie. In contrast, Trotskyists seek to build the world party of socialist revolution by rooting it in the working class, the only force which can lead the struggle for the equality of nations in the epoch of imperialism.

I-CL chameleons

At the debate, the I-CL chameleons jumped on the feminist bandwagon with a shamelessness which exposed the cynicism of its pretensions to the Trotskyist perspective of proletarian revolution. A female I-CL supporter argued that women must organise themselves separately from men 'because men have a short-term interest in women's oppression'. She added that she was 'not speaking of the men of the revolutionary left, although some of them leave a lot to be desired' -- revealing, perhaps, an aspect of political life inside the I-CL. 'The revolutionary vanguard is miniscule in relation to the large autonomous women's movement ... developed internationally despite the revolutionary left', she insisted.

To a Marxist, there can be no such thing as an 'autonomous' women's movement. The only 'autonomy' which is desirable is independence from the bourgeoisie and its ideology. That 'autonomy' is attainable only by a women's movement built around the communist programme and led by a communist leadership. As always, the I-CL tails after what is, opposing the fight for what is required.

But the cheerleaders of the 'Third World', the feminists and the rest of the petty-bourgeois radical swamp are not the only attraction for the professional capitulators of the I-CL. The real pressure to adapt comes from the reformist leaders of the organised working class. And so it is not surprising to see the I-CL, vocal supporters of the Provisional IRA and the feminists, carrying their adaptation into the pro-imperialist and male-chauvinist Labour Party, under the idiotic slogan, 'Watch, Pressurise and Fight'. Perhaps motivated by the desire to get a piece of the disintegrating Chartist group, the new I-CL-supported 'Labour Campaign for Socialism' consciously seeks a niche only quantitatively to the left of the ultra-minimalist Militant group.

But all the Matgamna group's previous efforts to work within the working class have ended with spectacular failure. With one or two exceptions in certain white-collar unions, the I-CL has proven itself incapable of holding on to its trade-union fractions; an astonishing number of now-defunct I-CL-supported trade-union papers ('Real Steel News', 'Machine Tool Worker', 'The Hook', 'Germ's Eye View', etc) are testimony to this group's inability to give its ranks staying power in situations where they face an extended period of unpopularity and isolation.

The only constant in the politics of the I-CL is its penchant for wilting under pressure. One of the SL's main speakers graphically exposed the I-CL's characteristic gutlessness by quoting a seemingly intransigent I-CL appraisal of the USFI in 1976 ('... we now accuse it of treason to the programme of Trotskyism') and comparing it to Matgamna's waffling when under pressure from the USFI's International Marxist Group during discussions between the two groups a few weeks later:

'... the problem is that since world war 2 Trotskyism has been trying to reconstruct itself. That self-reconstruction has not been accomplished, including not by the I-CL. The USFI has made pernicious adaptations, but they have been part of a real attempt to come to terms with new reality, mistakes rather

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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Chasing the children of '68

The mid-April conference of the International Marxist Group (IMG -- British section of the Pabloite United Secretariat [USec]) saw the central leadership of John Ross and Brian Grogan receive a bit of a buffeting. First, in a display of brazen hypocrisy, the 'fraternal' delegation from the USec international leadership rebuked its British acolytes for opportunism. Then seventy per cent of the delegates voted against the IMG leadership's attempt to hold onto a final shred of 'orthodoxy' on the party question, and proclaimed that henceforth 'women's caucuses' in the IMG will be strictly independent of any form of control by the organisation.

But the conference was certainly not a disaster for the charlatans and political chameleons who in little more than five years have led the IMG from the left wing of the USec to its current scarcely disguised right-centrist liquidationism. The IMG's major current project -- the attempt to build a party of the whole 'far left' swamp on a reformist twelve-point programme -- was endorsed by nearly three-quarters of the delegates. The key practical consequences of this are a deepening commitment to the electoral propaganda bloc 'Socialist Unity' and the reaffirmation of *Socialist Challenge's* role as a 'non-party paper' playing piper for the now-balding 'children of '68'.

To help this process along, the conference doors were opened to fraternal delegates from the IMG's current 'unity' targets. Delegations were present from the Mao-oid syndicalist Big Flame as well as the Workers League and 'International Socialist Alliance', two clubs of disgruntled reformists who split to the right from the International Socialists (IS -- now Socialist Workers Party [SWP]).

The diminution of the celebrated factional tensions which threatened to tear the IMG apart from 1972-76 also permitted the attendance of reporters from various other left-wing groups -- including the ostensible anti-Pabloites of the Workers Socialist League (WSL). However the conference organisers were careful not to extend this courtesy to representatives of the Spartacist League, hoping to avoid accurate coverage of the event.

Why the 'unity' offensive?

The IMG wandered onto its present course during its attempts to adapt the latest continental USec trend to British conditions. As we have pointed out previously (see 'USec: Toward the 2¹/₂ International', *Workers Vanguard* no 185, 9 December 1977), the European USec's emphasis in the last several years on politically amorphous 'far left' blocs is part of a centrist adaptation to the rise of popular frontism. Their aim is to gather enough forces to

get in on the action by avoiding a direct confrontation with class collaboration. Thus the USec's participation in the Portuguese Front for Revolutionary Unity (FUR), Spanish Front for Workers Unity (FUT), Italian Democrazia Proletaria and various French 'far left' blocs have all been part of an attempt to peddle its revisionist wares in the shadow of the popular front.

The IMG's political terrain -- and thus its day-to-day opportunist appetites -- are a little different. Its main problem remains the existence of a much larger (and generally more effective) opportunist Trotskyoid organisation, the SWP. As the IMG's new 'Tactics' resolution notes: 'Our goal in the next period must be to alter the qualitative relation of forces between ourselves and the SWP' (*Pre-Conference Bulletin* no 13, p 14). Unable as centrists to project splitting the SWP through hard programmatic struggle, the Pabloites see their only alternatives as political adaptation, 'outflanking', or both. And in the recent period they have been trying to 'outflank' the Cliffites to the right.

The IMG has discovered a market for its soiled goods among those made uncomfortable by the SWP's recent temporary and cynical 'hard' posture -- a posture designed to gain cheap publicity in a period of relative quiescence. Suitably enshrouded in 'non-sectarianism', Ross, Grogan & Co are parading before the survivors of the 1960s New Left as the Ghost of IS Past. Having recently taken to dubbing the SWP 'revolutionary', the Pabloites are now going even further, constantly referring in their press and documents to SWP 'sectarianism' and 'ultra-leftism'. Perhaps the most ludicrous example is John Ross's attempt to identify the SWP with the Dutch ultralefts of the early Communist International, when he writes of 'ultra-left economism of the Pannekoek/Gorter/Socialist Workers Party variety' (*Socialist Challenge*, 4 May). Such rubbish can only serve to prettify an organisation which capitulated decisively to imperialism more than twenty-five years ago when it refused to defend North Korea against the United States, and which has continued along its ragged social-democratic course ever since.

The IMG has been doing everything in its power to woo the ex-IS/SWPers: completely dropping defence of the deformed and degenerated workers states from its proposed programme for a 'new unified revolutionary organisation' (while railing against Stalinist bureaucratism), and burying the call for the Fourth International in favour of a vague and undefined demand for a 'revolutionary international'. But so far it has had little success in quenching its petty opportunist thirst for unprincipled unity. And even if they are dragged into the Pabloite swamp, the tired old reformists of the

Workers League, International Socialist Alliance et al are likely to produce little more than increased circulation for IMG journals and a mild inflation of the organisation's politically flabby membership.

USec leaders' hypocrisy

The USec international leadership has a long and sordid record of grovelling programmatic liquidation along exactly the same lines as the present-day IMG. Thus not two years ago Ernest Mandel was openly offering to repudiate the 'labels' Fourth International and Trotskyism in an effort to attract Michel Pablo and his followers in the French social-democratic Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU). ('What difference do labels make?' was Mandel's rhetorical query in an interview in *Politique Hebdo*, 10-16 June 1976.)

So imagine the IMG leaders' annoyance when the USec's official 'fraternal' delegate to their conference took the floor to attack them as 'opportunist' for refusing to call for the Fourth International and watering down their programme too much in 'Socialist Unity'. Following these (apparently totally unexpected) attacks, Ross tartly responded from the conference floor that the USec was being 'silly'. But then such double standards are endemic on the cynical USec terrain.

The new opposition

The famous tendency fights of the IMG's recent past have been submerged as the leadership's one-time infatuation with work in the Labour Party has burnt out, at least for now (although IMG leaders continue to squabble openly with one another in rather 'uncomradely' tones in the pages of *Socialist Challenge*). Most of the old tendencies have dissolved, leaving only one major opposition bloc at the conference.

John Strawson, the former leader of the 1976 Trotskyist Opposition (a tendency of workerist Pabloites sympathetic to the WSL) heads up this new oppositional amalgamation, which won 23 per cent of the votes for its 'Resolution on orientation and tactics'. Joining Strawson were, among others, the long despised members of the (now formally dissolved) USec minority faction, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF), sympathetic to the reformist American Socialist Workers Party (SWP [US]). The carefully-calculating SWP(US) supporters decided to swing their support to Strawson during the conference, after earlier presenting a counter-document under the name of one of their leaders, Alan Harris.

In addition to these reformists, the oppositionists are largely rightist workerists, attracted by calls for a 'proletarian orientation' and the cry that *Socialist Challenge* 'must make a turn towards becoming a genuine workers paper'. Their rightism shows clearly in their fulsome praise for the popular-frontist Anti Nazi League, their push for an orientation to a series of 'single-issue' campaigns and, especially, their favourite slogan, 'Vote Labour but fight for socialist policies'. This slogan explicitly avoids calling for an organisational counterposition to the Labour Party, and is thus even more brazenly adaptationist than the majority's 'Vote Labour but build a socialist alternative'.

If, however, an IMG'er is moved by a healthy revulsion for the leadership's extreme opportunism, he may well be attracted to Strawson's 'alternative' by statements like:

'We have to honestly explain to other organisation[s] in Socialist Unity, that we are standing and supporting candidates in order that we can build the revolutionary party -- and that at present that does mean recruiting people to the IMG.' (*Pre-Conference Bulletin* no 17, p 26)

In the IMG of today such a statement passes for intransigent Leninism.

Like the leadership, the oppositionists call for a 'class-struggle left wing' in the trade unions, by which both mean in the end an ill-

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WSL: Abstaining from Leninism

The centrist Workers Socialist League (WSL) of Alan Thornett has recently produced a major three-part polemic against the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) and the Trotskyist Faction (TF -- formerly of the WSL and now fused with the London Spartacist Group to form the Spartacist League). 'In defence of a revolutionary orientation, Against sectarian abstention' by *Socialist Press* editor John Lister fills six tabloid pages with a frequently incoherent, often apolitical and inept attempt to defend the WSL's opportunist work-erism against the iSt.

The polemic rambles its way through many subjects -- from Ireland to Cuba to the WSL's particular shibboleth, 'Make the lefts fight' -- repeating tired old excuses for liquidation learned in the Pabloite school, and droning on about the Spartacist tendency's alleged 'sectarianism', 'wooden dogmatism' etc. The WSL's skimpy arguments on these important questions have largely been answered in our press and documents, and we will have occasion to examine further such questions as the Lib-Lab coalition and the WSL's Kautskyan 'theory of structural assimilation' in future issues of *Spartacist Britain*.

There is, however, one consciously false accusation which binds the WSL's whole contorted critique together: that the programme of the iSt is an elaborately constructed rationale for abstention from struggle. This shop-worn charge is the centrepiece of the WSL's attempt to hide its programmatic vacillations, its minimalist practice and its *real* abstention from political struggle behind name-calling.

The WSL is justifiably afraid of political conflict: its decision to close its May Day public meeting in London this year without allowing any floor speakers (after an obvious but unacknowledged attack on the SL during the presentations) is a good example of that. It is therefore not surprising that the internal attitude of the WSL leadership to the TF -- the reliance on continual protestations of the majority's adherence to a 'proletarian perspective', to the vast detriment of programmatic discussion -- should be perpetuated in typical grubby workerist style by John Lister in *Socialist Press*.

'Qualitative developments'?

Lister asserts that the TF ('jaded individuals wary of politics') linked up with 'the most experienced and tested sectarians in the "Trotskyist" movement -- the international Spartacist tendency' to get out of political activity. For what he calls 'varying reasons' (the WSL leadership assuredly takes none of the blame itself) one fifth of the organisation's active membership 'failed to participate or learn from the major qualitative developments of the Workers Socialist League in 1977'.

Our friend itemises none of these developments. Since the Alan Thornett-led fraction at British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant is the WSL's main abiding political interest, perhaps he has in mind 'the return of trade unionism' (*Socialist Press*, 14 December 1977) to Cowley in December 1977, in the shape of the much-heralded 'Fryer-Thornett leadership'. This leadership proved so redoubtable that it split into pieces when the TGWU bureaucracy opened a victimisation campaign against it only a month or so later. Deputy convener Frank Corti went to court in a criminal bid to force the capitalist state to clean up the union, while convener Bob Fryer was knifing a strike on Thornett's section against the witchhunt (with the WSL leader's 'realistic' acquiescence).

In reality, there were no 'qualitative developments' for the WSL in 1977. Rather the comrades who formed the TF learned that the WSL was a stagnating, opportunist organisation with absolutely no perspectives for building a party to lead the working class to power. Far from embracing 'ultra-left abstentionism', they realised that building a revolutionary party requires a *real* fight for the revolutionary programme in all areas of political work -- not the eclectic, disorganised, minimalist mish-mash preferred by the WSL.

'The Brandlerites say that we are a "sect" while they are for a "mass movement". Generally speaking this is the classic accusation that the Mensheviks hurled against the Bolsheviks. In counterrevolutionary periods the Mensheviks adapted -- to a certain extent they simply followed closely all the turns of the workers' movement -- while the Bolsheviks selected and educated cadres. Today, in another situation, under other conditions, at another stage of development, precisely the same difference is the basis of the conflict between the left and the right....

'We are creating cadres. Whether we are a sect or not will be determined ... by the totality of the ideas, the program, the tactics, and organization our particular group can bring to the movement. That is why at the present stage the struggle of the Left Opposition is above all a struggle for program and strategic principles.... At a time when we are just beginning to educate and re-educate the cadres, the Brandlerites counterpose mass work to cadre education. That is why they will have neither one nor the other. Because they have no principled positions on basic questions and therefore are unable to really educate and temper their cadres, they spend their time carrying out a caricature of mass work.' ('Principled and practical' questions facing the Left Opposition', *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1930-31*, pp 251-3)

Lister seeks comfort, and 'support' for his distortions, in a barrage of quotations from Trotsky, commencing with the *Transitional Programme's* attacks on sectarians who 'turn their backs on the "old" trade unions'. No less than five times he cites 'Sectarianism, centrism and the Fourth International', Trotsky's 1935 attack on Vereecken for his so-called 'principled' opposition to factional work in the Belgian Labour Party.

The WSL knows perfectly well that the iSt agrees with Trotsky on both these questions. What the TF fought against was trade union *economism* and political *adaptation* to the Labour Party by the WSL. The quotations have nothing in particular to do with the WSL's real positions. Rather they are intended to provide a screen behind which Lister wants to hide such disastrous liquidationist episodes as the Fryer-Thornett Cowley campaign and the organisation's thorough Labour-loyalist practice. (Lister demands just 'one practical instance of

the WSL in any way capitulating to left reformism'. The *absolutely* uncritical support given to two Labour candidates in Newham North-East in the local elections, whose programme included the buying out of private property owners and the advocacy of state bans as a way of fighting fascism, should satisfy his curiosity.) Trotsky's many polemics against the centrist WSLs of his day are, of course, studiously ignored by the erudite Lister.

Liberal moralism

For the WSL a moralistic identification with the working class *as it is* replaces the revolutionary optimism of bolshevism. Unlike the WSL, we have confidence that by building a revolutionary party we can *change* the consciousness of workers, and weld the proletariat into a force conscious of its historic interests which can seize state power from the capitalist class.

South Africa provides a good example of how the WSL substitutes liberal moralist outrage for Marxism, while simultaneously concealing its own political failures. A strategy to smash apartheid is of no real interest to the core of its deeply parochial membership. Consequently, despite one abstract for-the-record motion to a TGWU conference on union rights in South Africa, the WSL has *never* fought for concrete acts of solidarity with the South African proletariat in its work in Leyland.

This *genuine* abstention is hidden by a claim that the iSt stands with the 'reactionary camp' on the question of South African boycotts. Why? Because we refuse to provide a left cover for the perpetual calls of guilty white liberals for unlimited economic, cultural and sporting boycotts of all things South African -- boycotts which would be a *diversion* from the real tasks of internationalist solidarity, and which without specific aims can isolate and demoralise the black South African proletariat.

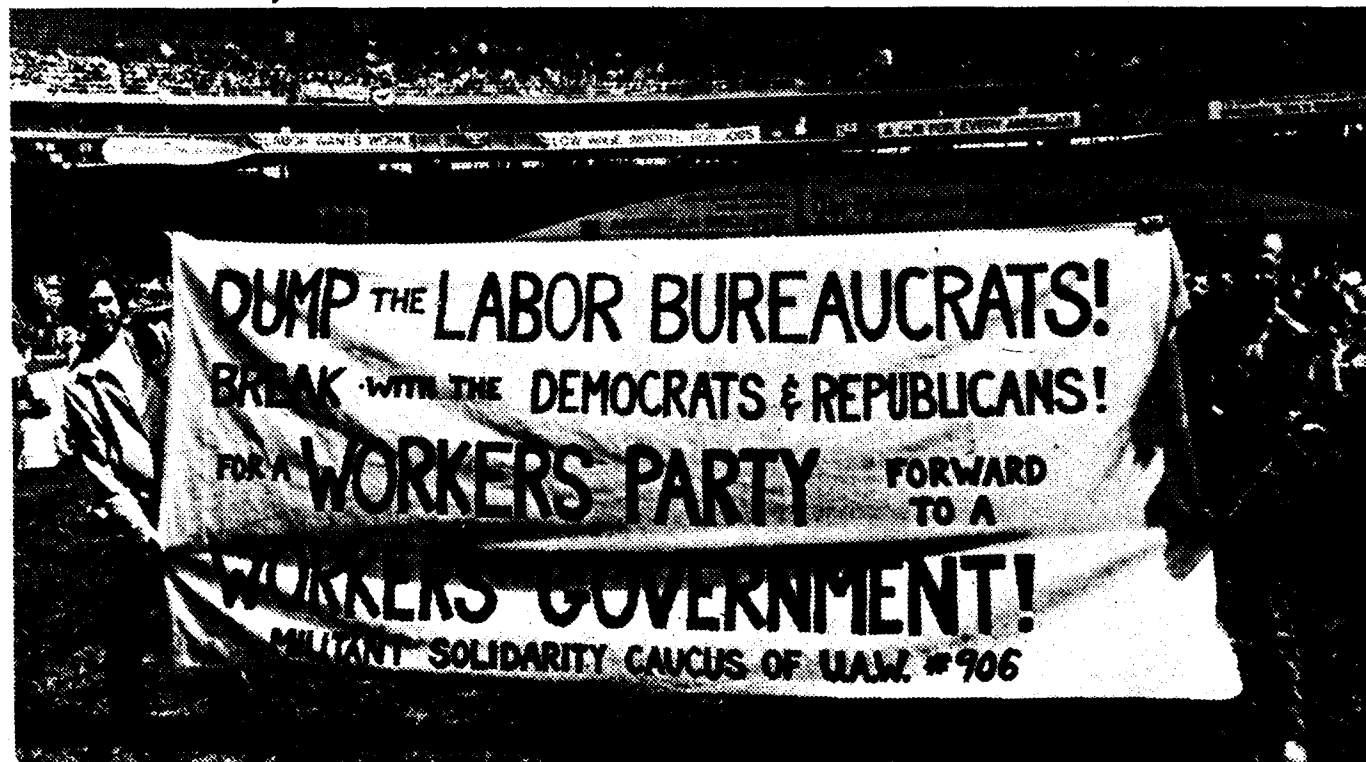
Instead our trade union supporters in Ford plants in America have consistently fought for concrete industrial action to force the recognition of black unions in South Africa. We have also fought for specific, time-limited labour boycotts of goods to South Africa, eg in the immediate aftermath of the Soweto uprising and the Biko murder, and a permanent blacking of all military goods to the Vorster regime. Such struggles *should* be first-rate internationalist responsibilities for all Marxists. But then Thornett & Co are far from being that.

The WSL's huffing and puffing about 'blocs with Margaret Thatcher' on the immigration question is equally hypocritical. Not only do these petty forgers wilfully distort our real position out of all possible recognition, but the WSL's woeful failure to undertake concrete activity in defence of immigrant workers is simply covered up. (See elsewhere in this issue for a fuller examination of the Leninist position on immigration.)

Trotskyism vs trade union economism

But what the WSL *does* manage to do in its trade union work is by no means Trotskyist. The minimalist economism of Thornett and his followers never fundamentally challenges the existing consciousness of the working class, and is organised so chaotically that no possibility exists of offering a systematic alternative to the Labour and Stalinist bureaucrats.

Lister gives off the greatest heat when he is discussing trade union work, for he knows



SL/US-supported Militant Solidarity Caucus of United Auto Workers calls for a break with the bosses' parties at Washington, DC unemployment rally, 26 April 1975.

that when the iSt attacks the WSL's union perspectives it is attacking his organisation's whole pragmatic and parochial 'conception' of building a revolutionary party.

The Spartacist tendency sees the construction of national sections of a reborn Fourth International being prepared by the accumulation and development of revolutionary cadres through political struggle for the Trotskyist programme. In the present early phase of winning and developing cadres this struggle is necessarily centred on attracting to the Trotskyist banner militants who are already members or supporters of ostensibly revolutionary organisations.

It is self-evidently true that a group with small forces *must* 'betray' a thousand struggles every day -- struggles which it supports and which *require* revolutionary leadership -- simply because it does not have the material resources to make a meaningful intervention. When a revolutionary organisation is small, it must *select* those areas of work in which it can carry out activities most effectively, and at the same time must be prepared to shift priorities and seize new opportunities as they arise.

In the tradition of the Comintern we see the building of party fractions, with a real leadership and organised presence, as the road to creating a communist leadership in the unions. Such fractions fight for and recruit to the programme of socialist revolution -- not a minimum programme of wage rises and the organisational gimmickry of the WSL's imaginary 'price committees'.

Lister however finds it a 'repulsive notion that Trotskyists should clinically assess the possible benefits to be gained for their movement before supporting workers in struggle'. Being an anti-bolshevik moralist in his conception of the party, he wants to 'help' the whole working class today; with his small (and ever-shrinking) band of followers he wants to intervene in *every* struggle. To do less, he claims, is to espouse 'the essence of the sec-

tarian policy of "selecting" exemplary areas of work [which] is the decision to *withdraw* from and *ignore* other areas of work'. Moreover, the livid Lister has sheer contempt for the 'petty-bourgeois daydream of smoothly run "planned" trade union groups, based on the full transitional programme'.

The picture could not be clearer: the WSL's policy (which is the quintessence of workerist idiocy) is to build unplanned, dispersed work in the unions, based on something other than the revolutionary programme. And its first principle is that a revolutionary organisation must throw its resources into any and all eruptions of the class struggle (the merciless WSL allows *no* exceptions), irrespective of the size of the organisation and the intrinsic importance of a particular struggle. No wonder the WSL's greatly diminished membership is becoming increasingly frustrated and demoralised, rushing about in a frenzied display of fake mass activism to provide picket-line fodder for one small strike after another. No concrete gains are made; no political lessons are drawn; and the organisation goes nowhere.

James P Cannon disposed in advance of this drivel. Speaking at a 1941 plenum of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, he declared:

'I am in favor of the idea expressed here of colonizing, if we can find out where we can get the colonizers. The fact is that we have got practically the whole party now in industry. Why, only in the last few months we took twenty-five more comrades and shoved them into the maritime industry in New York. And we took them from the most unusual places... We are a small party and we can't go colonizing all over the lot. We must colonize in those places which offer the best opportunity at the time, and when this opportunity which we seize at one occasion proves later on to be not so fruitful, we have got to shift our people....

'Our colonization must be strategic. We must take the occasion when it is opened up to us. We didn't, for example, acquire the great

influence and prestige of Trotskyism in the Minneapolis trade union movement because we sat down and made a survey, and decided that was the most important center, and the most important union. The reason was that the door was open there and we had comrades in the situation who were able to get through the door and we took advantage of the situation. The same number of comrades of their caliber colonized strategically in auto or in steel would have made an even bigger splash in the American trade union movement.' ('It is time for a bolder policy in the unions', *The Socialist Workers Party in World War II*, pp 194-5)

Perhaps Lister thinks the preference expressed here for strategically important industries, or the notion of 'sending people in' (which the WSL is opposed to almost on principle) are expressions of the 'sectarianism' of Cannon's SWP. Certainly the WSL's playmate in the 'world Trotskyist movement', the wretched American Socialist League (Democratic Centralist), would see this as a confirmation of its view that Trotsky's Fourth International, and particularly the SWP, were riddled with 'sectarian propagandism'.

The WSL does not want planned communist trade union work. It is prepared to see its members labour as inexperienced individuals in a multitude of unions up and down the country, organised in small branches where a genuine political life is impossible and mired in a state of perpetual disorganised amateurism. In other words the WSL does not take seriously its formal commitment to building a revolutionary leadership in the working class. It is prepared to have its programme carried into the labour movement, not as the property of a serious, professional organised opposition to the present and would-be misleaders, but as the luggage of a plethora of often sincere but *necessarily* ineffectual individuals. It is no accident that so many of the WSL's trade unionists have succumbed to the opportunist pressures of their milieu and simply left the organisation altogether.

WSL's Turkish cover-up

One of the few things *Socialist Press* editor John Lister does *not* try to do in his polemic against the Trotskyist Faction is provide a defence of the WSL's shameful misleadership of its supporters in Turkey. A document by two Turkish TF members ('For a Trotskyist perspective in Turkey', *Spartacist Britain* no 1, April 1978) made a number of serious charges against the WSL for its politically criminal activities in that country, and showed how these activities were only a logical consequence of the WSL's attempt to transfer its economist and liquidationist practices from Britain to the much more repressive and difficult Turkish terrain.

However Lister chooses to ignore all this, instead alleging that the TFers' positions would lead to abstaining from the struggle against the fascists in Turkey, because these comrades refused to endorse the WSL's call for an anti-fascist 'united front' of the existing mass workers organisations. The TF comrades pointed out that a 'united front' without a revolutionary pole offers no prospect either of developing a genuine struggle against fascism or of exposing the existing reformist leaders' betrayals. They argued that an integral part of Trotsky's call for an SPD-KPD united front in Germany in the early 1930s was the fact that the Trotskyists saw themselves as a *faction* of the Communist Party advocating a turn in its policy.

So Lister drags out a quotation from *Whither France?*, which is supposed to prove that Trotsky *did* call for a united front of the French social-democratic and Stalinist parties after the Left Opposition had declared the Comintern unreformable and embarked on the struggle for the Fourth International:

'In France there are more than one million organised workers. Generally speaking, this number is small. But it is entirely sufficient to make a beginning in the organisation of a workers' militia. If the parties and unions armed only a tenth of their numbers, that would already be a force of 100,000 men....'

But this quote proves nothing of the kind. Trotsky wrote *Whither France?* in November 1934; since August of that year the French Trotskyists had been doing entry work inside the social-democratic SFIO, and it was from that position that they proposed a united front of the reformist parties and trade unions to defend against the fascists' attacks. In other words, as in Germany, Trotsky was calling for a

united front *with* a revolutionary pole.

While *Enternasyonal* no 5 (the WSL's Turkish bulletin) argued that the Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders should form a 'Front [that] will approach the economic and political questions of the workers and labourers and be an alternative for power', the TFers advanced a revolutionary perspective for struggle against the fascists. One of their key demands was for the formation of a workers defence organisation based on the trade unions:

'While we have at present only very limited forces in Turkey, it is necessary for us to advance a correct political programme for crushing the fascists. Our group is not capable of creating an independent defence organisation. The task is to create such a body within the trade unions.'

By contrast the WSL group in Turkey tried to 'turn its back on the "old" trade unions' by launching a criminally adventurist and substitutionist 'defence' of election polls in a bourgeois suburb of Istanbul by a small group of inexperienced young militants -- quite independent of trade union mobilisations underway in the city at the same time. Lister gives no accounting of this little enterprise. And this oh-so-eloquent polemicist is struck equally dumb by the TF's other practical charges:

Did the WSL take responsibility for bringing workers out on strike without any basis for leading their struggle, and consequently achieve nothing but the loss of their jobs? No answer. Why do the WSL's supporters in Turkey refuse to raise the call for a labour party, a slogan with which the WSL in Britain claims to agree? No answer.

How does the WSL justify its nationalist, anti-Leninist policy of splitting up workers in the Turkish state into separate Turkish and Kurdish organisations? No answer. Why is Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution deemed inapplicable to the Kurds, whom the WSL supporters insist must achieve 'national unity first'? No answer. And how can the WSL accept its Turkish group's refusal to build an international democratic-centralist tendency, instead acquiescing to its nationalist demand for 'autonomy'? Again, no answer.

Is Lister's contempt for his own membership so well-founded that he can blithely pass over these betrayals? If there is left in the WSL any individual with a shred of principle he should demand that the books be opened on this squalid affair, and that a proper accounting be rendered to the membership. ■

The fight for the revolutionary programme

One consequence of the WSL's economist approach to politics is that those of its members who depend on the organisation for political training find it well-nigh impossible to argue politics with opponent groups. To inculcate its ranks against the politics of the iSt, the WSL leadership has particularly sought to paint a grotesquely falsified picture of the trade union work of our American section. Thus *Socialist Press* rants about our 'refusal to intervene in workers' struggles', while the WSL 'theoretical journal' *Trotskyism Today* (March 1978) reaches the ultimate in absurd falsification with its claim that the Spartacists 'state openly their refusal to recruit workers -- whom they describe as "politically backward militants"! Even when forced to inch slightly closer to reality, Thornett & Co seek to conveniently dismiss the trade union caucuses supported by the Spartacist League/US as a handful of newly-colonised students who are thoroughly isolated from the workers.

Students? The current presidential candidate of the Militant-Solidarity Caucus in the National Maritime Union (East Coast seamen's union) has been sailing NMU for fourteen years. The dockers elected to the executive board of Local 10 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (West Coast dockers' union) have worked on the docks since the mid-1950s -- ie since before many WSL members were born.

New? The Militant Action Caucus of the Communications Workers of America (telephone workers) has a record of eight years of struggle in the union. Spartacist-supported work in the car factories has been carried on for close on five years. The M-SC has been intervening in the NMU since the late 1960s.

Isolated? The dockers and warehousemen who repeatedly put Militant Caucus and *Longshore Militant* spokesmen onto the executive boards of ILWU locals [branches] despite the most vicious opposition (including physical violence) could tell the WSL otherwise. So could the telephone operators and installers who recently elected a Militant Action Caucus spokesman to the Communications Workers national convention. We have no wish to overstate our admittedly small presence in the American labour movement, but if the more than eight hundred miners who bought copies of *Workers Vanguard* each week during the recent coal strike are evidence of our 'isolation', we can only say: give us more of the same!

The WSL ranks are probably rather sceptical about *anyone's* claims about trade union work these days; after all, they have been cozened

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The Leninist policy toward immigration/emigration

What should be labor's policy toward immigration and emigration, a hotly-debated subject in the late nineteenth century and early decades of this one, is once again becoming a controversial issue. Thus the current Zionist campaign demanding that the Soviet Union permit the mass emigration of Jews to Israel, and the close connection between unlimited Jewish immigration and Zionist attempts to expel even more Palestinian Arabs from their homeland, were highlighted by the current round of hostilities in the Near East.

The subject of immigration has traditionally been a sharp dividing line between the national-exclusionists, reactionary or reform-

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ist, and internationalist revolutionaries in the labor movement. Thus it was not only the openly right-wing Gompers leadership of the American Federation of Labor that opposed immigration around the turn of the century, but also the reformist leadership of the Socialist Party under Victor Berger. For instance, in 1907 the SP leadership called on socialists to 'combat with all means at their command the willful importation of cheap foreign labor calculated to destroy labor organizations'. They were opposed at the 1908 SP convention by Debsian left wingers such as Berlyn from Illinois who protested all racially and nationally discriminatory immigration quotas, while pointing out that 'equality for all men regardless of race can only be accomplished by the Socialist Party'.

The same situation prevails today, as the German government of Social-Democratic Chancellor Brandt is 'sending home' hundreds of thousands of Turkish, Yugoslav and Italian workers as a result of the economic downturn. In France, Algerian, Spanish and Portuguese workers are likewise threatened with deportation. But when the proposed Fontanet circular, which would require deportation of foreign workers when laid off, was issued in late 1972 it was supported by the reformist Communist Party. And in the US thousands of Mexican workers in the Southwest have been subject to mass roundups and deportations by government officials. Instead of vigorously protesting this virulently anti-labor measure and calling for full citizenship rights for Mexican workers, the 'radical' Chavez leadership of the United Farm Workers called (until April of last year) for support to the Rodino Bill, which would fine employers who hire foreign workers! Such reformist policies, while supposedly 'protecting jobs' of native workers, actually divide the working class and give invaluable aid to the bourgeoisie.

Such situations underline the need for a precise understanding of the Leninist position on the questions of emigration and immigration. Communists must come forward as the most consistent foes of every manifestation of chauvinism and social injustice. The failure of ostensible socialists to fight for democratic rights enables bourgeois liberals, and even outright reactionaries, to attain a popular following by exploiting the just desires for individual liberties, national rights, etc.

Obviously, the right to transfer from one nation-state to another is such an individual democratic right. However, if exercised on a sufficiently large scale the right of immigration may impinge on the right of national self-determination, which is also a democratic right. While being the consistent supporters of democratic rights, an essential part of the socialist program, Leninists must avoid falling into the trap of advocating some utopian scheme of 'rational', 'egalitarian' capitalism. The competing claims of conflicting democratic rights cannot generally be resolved within the framework of capitalism, but only through a socialist revolution creating the material and social basis to protect and extend the democratic rights of all the oppressed. Until the achievement of socialism eliminates the age-old problem of scarcity, it will not be pos-

sible to abolish the state, and therefore borders and immigration laws.

The right of individual emigration

In contrast to immigration policy, the right to emigrate has less often been controversial in bourgeois society because most governments have not normally tried to deny it. Despotism regimes in backward nations (eg tsarist Russia) have generally encouraged emigration as a means of easing political discontent and surplus labor. The only states that have consistently attempted to prevent potentially large emigration are Stalinist Russia and Eastern Europe. And the Stalinists' anti-emigration policies have been heavily exploited by imperialist apologists, especially regarding the 'Berlin Wall' and currently, the Zionist/anti-communist campaign to 'Free Soviet Jewry'.

There are two major reasons for the anti-emigration policies of Stalin and his successors. Surrounded by hostile capitalist powers, the Stalinist bureaucracy believed that Russian emigrés, even if primarily motivated by personal economic interest, would tend to act as an anti-Soviet pressure group. And secondly, administering a planned economy the Stalinists have generally believed they could effectively use all available manpower, in sharp contrast to the capitalist countries. (This belief is not entirely justified, as the Soviet Union continues to suffer from significant disguised rural unemployment.) The massive destruction of World War II, in which some 20 million Soviet citizens died, further strengthened the bureaucracy's concern about labor shortages, particularly the depletion of the young male population, the most likely source of emigrants.

The Stalinists' systematic disregard for and denial of individual liberties is a complete perversion of the Marxist program for the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is, moreover, a perversion which enables the imperial-

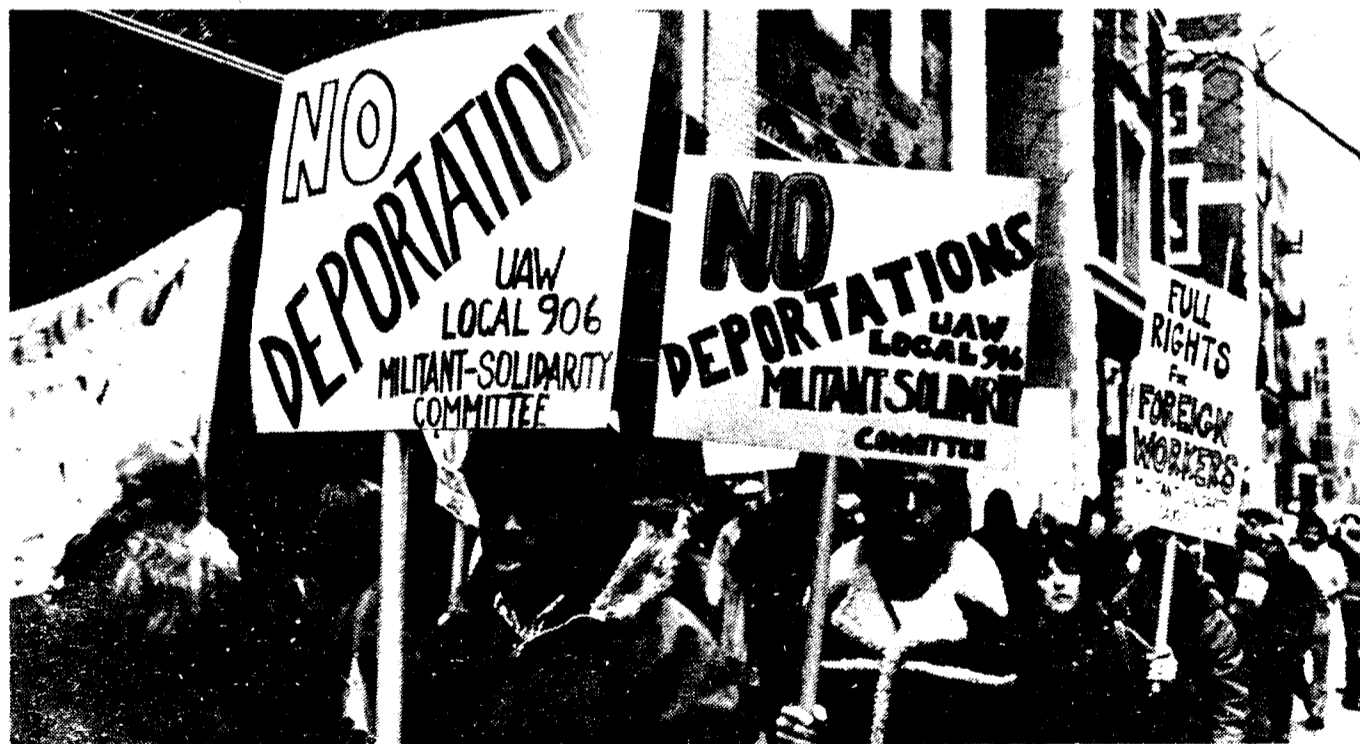
World War II, or Andrei Sakharov, father of the USSR's H-bomb, to emigrate. We unconditionally defend the USSR militarily against Western imperialism, despite its Stalinist leadership; and we do not know how much useful military intelligence the manifestly pro-Western Sakharov, for instance, might be able to give the Pentagon. But how can we accept the right of the criminally myopic and callous Stalinist bureaucracy, which jails not only socialist opponents for the slightest critical remark but even, on occasion, will jail simple tourists taking pictures on the street, to judge?

'Free Soviet Jewry'?

The bloc between Zionists and anti-Soviet American reactionaries maintains that the 'head tax' restriction on Russian-Jewish emigration to Israel is a manifestation of bureaucratic anti-Semitism pure and simple. Although the ethnic oppression of Jews in the USSR is real, the restriction on emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union is also a reflection -- distorted through the stranglehold of the bureaucracy -- of a legitimate concern: the need to preserve the resources expended on the education of potential emigrants and to prevent the drain of trained professionals and intellectuals.

This consideration is not unique to the deformed workers states. The considerable flow of doctors and other technically trained personnel from the backward to the advanced capitalist countries (the so-called 'brain drain') is one of the most subtly destructive effects of contemporary imperialism. The USSR certainly has the right to prevent the resources it has expended on the education of individuals from being dissipated via emigration.

What is equally important, however, is that restrictions on the emigration of educated personnel be democratic -- that they not involve bureaucratic favoritism or national/ethnic discrimination. Thus unskilled Russian Jews should be permitted to emigrate from the USSR



Trade union caucuses supported by SL/US demanded full rights for foreign workers as government launched round-ups of immigrant labour, early 1975.

ist bourgeoisie to rally popular support against 'Russian totalitarianism', and is therefore an important indirect blow against proletarian state power. Leninists support individual democratic rights, including that of emigration, for Soviet citizens, except where their exercise is a direct danger to the dictatorship of the proletariat. At present this means, for example, that emigration from the USSR should be prohibited only where there is a bonafide danger that military intelligence would be transmitted by the individual involved. (In other circumstances, such as sharp economic difficulties or military mobilization, even a total ban on emigration, or a ban for particular sectors such as trained personnel, may be necessary.) For example, questions could be raised about permitting Leopold Trepper, a Soviet intelligence chief in Europe during

on the same basis as anyone else, while *all* Soviet graduates of academic and technical schools should be required to work a certain number of years in the USSR before having the right to emigrate.

At the same time, the bureaucracy's fear that young, educated Soviet citizens would flock to the capitalist West if allowed to do so is a fitting testimony to the moral bankruptcy of the Stalinist regime. A revolutionary workers government, enjoying massive popular support and pursuing internationalist and socialist policies (as opposed to the shortsighted nationalism of the parasitic bureaucracy) should have little difficulty persuading its educated youth not to sell themselves, regardless of the price, to the stockholders and militarists of the capitalist states. The revolutionary enthusiasm which should motivate

these young people, however, can only be re-created in the Russian people in the course of a political revolution which shakes off the leaden hand of the bureaucracy and restores the proletarian democracy of Lenin's Bolshevik regime.

'Open the borders'?

Unlike the right to emigrate, which the American ruling class is now so piously proclaiming (while conveniently 'forgetting' that during the 1950s it was a major felony for a member, or former member, of the Communist Party to even apply for a passport!), the 'right' to immigrate has always been a conflict-ridden issue in bourgeois society. From the anti-Chinese riots in the US in the late 1800s to the anti-Algerian riots in Marseilles, France, in August 1973, the bourgeoisie has always used racial prejudice and national chauvinism to divide the working class. (While immigrants are usually unorganized and largely defenseless -- a principal reason why the bourgeoisie likes to use imported labor in the first place -- this is not always the case: witness the militant strikes by Turkish workers in the West German Ruhr area last September and the demonstration by 10,000 North African workers in Marseilles on December 17 [1973] protesting the bombing of the local Algerian consulate.)

Faced with the myriad of protectionist immigration restrictions thrown up by capitalist regimes and the use of national chauvinism as one of the most important means of fighting socialist influence in the working class, some left militants have gone beyond the demand of opposing all racially and nationally discriminatory immigration laws to raise the general call for unlimited immigration, with the slogan 'Open the Borders'. (This demand was briefly raised by the Los Angeles SL local during part of its generally exemplary campaign in support of the farm workers. It was also mentioned indirectly in an article on the UFW grape boycott in *WV* no 30, 12 October 1973). Viewed solely in terms of *individual* immigration, this is a proper demand.

However, on a sufficiently large scale, immigration flows could wipe out the national identity of the recipient countries. The impetus for massive population transfers exists due to the extreme poverty of many Asian, African and Latin American countries compared with the advanced capitalist countries. A Harlem welfare mother probably has ten times the income of a Haitian slum dweller. Fidel Castro caught the situation precisely when, in commenting on the mass exodus of the Cuban middle class to the United States, he asked how many poverty-stricken millions from, say, Brazil would take the same route if given free air passage and a hundred dollars a week when they got to Miami! If, for example, there were unlimited immigration into Northern Europe, the population influx from the Mediterranean basin would tend to dissolve the national identity of small countries like Holland and Belgium. More generally, unlimited immigration as a principle is incompatible with the right of national self-determination; to call for it is tantamount to advocating the abolition of national states under capitalism.

In reality, of course, long before immigration would actually affect national identity, a chauvinist reaction, penetrating even into a traditionally pro-socialist working class, would cut off further inflows. This is demonstrated by the experience of Britain in the late 1950s/early 1960s. One of the unexpected by-products of the dissolution of the British empire was that the Commonwealth populations continued to possess British citizenship. This formal right, when combined with the Tory policy of encouraging immigration, led to a significant population inflow from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent throughout the 1950s. Set against a background of economic stagnation, a widespread anti-immigrant reaction set in, highlighted by the Notting Hill (London) race riot of 1958 and the election of a racist Tory in the traditionally Labour Midlands district of Smethwick in 1964. Facing a widespread popular 'backlash', the Tories passed the racist-exclusionist Immigration Act of 1962, while the Labour Party equivocated.

While the national consequences of unlimited immigration usually focus on the advanced countries, such a policy would also be a threat to the national self-determination of certain backward states. Global 'open borders' would increase capital penetration by the propertied classes of the wealthy countries into backward nations. In the nineteenth century, population transfers were an important factor in the expansion of certain imperialist countries into adjacent backward areas -- the English into Ireland, the French into Algeria and the American Anglos into northern Mexico (now

Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California).

A reintroduction of unlimited immigration would again result in the geographical expansion of the major capitalist nations. For example, an 'open' US/Mexico border would not only induce impoverished Mexican laborers to flood the US labor market, becoming an unprotected pool for capitalist superexploitation, but would also lead to well-financed American 'colonists' buying up Mexican enterprises and real estate. (This already occurs to a certain extent, despite vigorous efforts by the Mexican government to prevent it. Ironically, probably the most vigorous opposition to open US/Mexican borders would come from Mexico, whose northern border strips are already functionally part of the Texas and California economies.)

Manipulated immigration and Zionist expansion

An illuminating example of how unlimited massive immigration can wipe out the national existence of the native population of even a backward country is the case of Israel. The pre-World War II Zionist campaign for the mass emigration of European Jews to Palestine was explicitly based on the calculation that, on a sufficiently mass scale, this emigration would lay the basis for the establishment of a 'Jewish homeland' in a territory that was already somebody else's homeland. (And today the infamous Israeli 'Law of Return' provides for unlimited immigration of Jews throughout the world -- a law which is closely tied to Zionist drives to push ever more Palestinian Arabs from their lands.)

It is true that what was required to bring this nationalist scheme to fruition was the Nazi holocaust and the contemptuous refusal of the Western powers to provide asylum to the Jewish refugees from Hitler. The migrating population consisted in its vast majority of desperate individuals with no other place to go, rather than ideological Zionists. From the individual Jew's point of view, the only real alternative at the time to unlimited Jewish immigration to Palestine was Nazi extermination or, later, European DP (displaced persons) camps. Nevertheless, in their totality these individuals constituted *de facto* aggression against the national rights of Arab Palestinians. To have called for 'open borders' in Palestine during the period from 1918 to 1948 meant to endorse the destruction of the Palestinian Arab nation by Zionism and to guarantee the local ascendancy of bourgeois nationalism over proletarian socialism in the Near East for several generations, as the more or less inevitable result of massive immigration.

What, then, was the solution for the Jews? Before Hitler's ascension to power the common answer of European socialists, even of the reformist Second International which included the Zionist 'socialists', was *assimilation*. This was also the dominant historical trend, as Zionism was an entirely marginal political movement limited largely to a section of emancipated, but not assimilated, East European Jewish intellectuals. (Even in the Slavic countries Zionism was not dominant in the Jewish ghettos. The nationalist-tinged reformist Jewish Socialist Bund in Russia and Poland was strongly anti-Zionist.)

A common pre-World War II definition of a Zionist was a Jew seeking to convince a wealthy Jew to finance sending a third Jew to Palestine. Moreover, the Zionists colluded actively with the imperialist powers (including Nazi Germany) to prevent the emigré Jews from entering and settling in the other countries of Western Europe and the US. During the 1930s and 1940s, the Trotskyists (as well as some liberals and reformist-socialists, most prominently the Jewish Bund) waged a campaign to open the US borders to European Jewish refugees. The Zionists, however, who are today weeping crocodile tears over the fate of Russian Jews, were among the chief opponents of this demand.

'Free Israeli Jewry'?

Having pulled in the homeless survivors of the concentration camps, who had nowhere else to go, the Israeli Zionists found that Western Jews (even the Zionists among them), while passively sympathetic to Israel, had no intention of going there. Moreover, the 1950 Law of Return had an unanticipated effect, bringing in large numbers of Near Eastern Jews, particularly from Morocco and Yemen, who took advantage of the law in the hopes of partaking of Israel's higher standard of living. (Predictably, these 'black' Jews provoked a racist reaction from the Israelis of European extraction.)

Still looking for more skilled immigrants and lacking sufficient population to realize its grandiose expansionist aspirations, the Zionist ruling class of Israel has zeroed in on the several million Jews in the Soviet Union

as the last major available pool of manpower for large-scale immigration. Moreover, this Zionist campaign to encourage Russian Jews to emigrate to Israel and to pressure the USSR's rulers to permit their exit has won a certain amount of support from the US bourgeoisie, particularly from right-liberals anxious that the 'détente' not be permitted to liquidate cold-war anti-communism. (It has also been somewhat successful with the Russian authorities who, avidly vying for Western trade credits, permitted more than 30,000 Jews to emigrate to Israel last year -- continuing right through the October war, although the USSR was supporting the Arabs!)

As communists we say to Jews of the Soviet Union: remain in the USSR and work for a political revolution to destroy the parasitic stranglehold of the Great Russian chauvinist, anti-Leninist bureaucracy! Before Stalin succeeded in wresting power from the soviets and the Bolshevik party, the Russian workers' republic under Lenin and Trotsky was the only place where Jews could use their capacities toward satisfying the needs and just aspirations of all the world's working people. Among the cadre of the Bolshevik party there were many of Jewish extraction, who along with the rest of the party built the first state which in practice, and not just on paper, fought racial and national discrimination, while granting national self-determination to all the oppressed peoples of the Russian Empire.

Israel, on the other hand, is a death trap for Jews. Its Zionist ruling class has nothing to offer Hebrew workers but the perspective of, at best, an endless cycle of national war and the eventual likelihood of defeat at the hands of the numerically far superior Arabs. To the anti-communist Zionist propagandists who are so eager to 'Free Soviet Jewry', we have a simple question: why, if you are so concerned about the welfare of Russian Jews, have you never called on the US government to admit Jewish refugees or emigrants?

The US, of course, has a higher standard of living than Israel, and it is clear Jews are safer in any real sense in this country than they are in Israel, where Russian immigrants are immediately sent to occupy Arab land on the West Bank and/or drafted into the army. The answer is simple: the Zionists are no more concerned with the fate of Russian Jews than they were with the millions who were led to the gas chambers by the cooperation of the Jewish Agency with the Nazis in order to get Hitler's permission to 'save' a few thousand well-connected Jews for secret emigration to Palestine. What they are really concerned with is providing cannon fodder and skilled manpower for the clerical-militarist-expansionist Zionist state.

Utopian socialism vs Leninism

As Leninists we understand that democratic rights, while an important part of the socialist program, are subordinated to proletarian class issues and in any case cannot be fully attained outside a socialist framework. In the epoch of imperialist decay working-class revolutionists become the only consistent fighters for democracy. But 'consistent democrats' are not thereby socialists -- any more than are 'consistent nationalists', such as the Zionists. Raising democratic demands to the level of principle *independent* of the class struggle leads at best to confusion and utopianism, and at worst can actually become counterposed to the struggle for socialist revolution.

When faced with the growth of separatist sentiment -- manipulated by native counterrevolutionaries and foreign fascists -- among the Ukrainian peasants in the late 1930s (reacting to Stalin's virulent Great Russian chauvinism and the brutal forced collectivization), Trotsky counterposed to the agitation of Ukrainian nationalists the slogan of an independent *Soviet* Ukraine. Recognizing that the right of self-determination remained valid under a workers state, he insisted that revolutionary socialists must *oppose* any movement for national liberation which did not stand on unconditional defense of the economic gains of the October revolution.

Some leftists, in addition to supporting unrestricted immigration as an absolute democratic right, view it as a positive solution to world poverty. For example, Paul Foot, a member of the British International Socialists, writing in the mid-1960s on the question of immigration projected the desirability of a multi-national, multi-racial Britain based on unlimited immigration. This is merely a variant of utopian egalitarianism -- the belief that a just society can be established by sharing out the currently available wealth. Leninists, in contrast, understand that unlimited immigra-

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Thornett: Healy's pupil

Public meetings heralding the formation of the Spartacist League (SL) were held in London, Birmingham and Oxford during April and May, attracting a total of about 150 people and stirring up far more political debate than is usually seen on the British left. In a rare excursion into politics, the Workers Socialist League (WSL) sent leading representatives to all three meetings. However the WSL's pretence at programmatic debate dwindled from meeting to meeting, culminating in Oxford in a disgraceful display of provocative disruption initiated by WSL leader Alan Thornett.

At the London meeting the WSL -- along with its ex-member and present freelancing attorney Adam Westoby, who requested and was given extra speaking time from the floor -- chose to attack the SL for its intransigent opposition to popular frontism. Westoby alleged that the Spartacist tendency has 'covered up' the history of the Trotskyist movement's attitude to popular fronts, and proceeded to give a defence of the WSL's liquidationist practice of calling for votes to workers parties in popular-frontist formations.

But the WSL's grandiose posturing on this question was shown to be a sham by its response to an SL challenge, repeated at four public meetings, for a public debate on the question of the Trotskyist position toward the popular front. A WSL leader frankly explained at the Birmingham meeting that his organisation would refuse such a debate because the SL has 'a stated position of smashing and destroying the Workers Socialist League.' It seems that these political poseurs are not so confident of their positions after all. For once we would agree with the comrades of the WSL -- an extended political confrontation between our two organisations could only hasten their (already far advanced) disintegration.

Debate or no, disintegration seems to be taking its toll on the WSL. At the Oxford forum, despite again being given extended speaking time to defend their positions, Alan Thornett and his WSL cohorts behaved in a near-hysterical manner. Evidently outraged by the SL's daring to hold a public meeting in the

WSL's precious 'home base' of Oxford, the WSLers engaged in deliberate disruption throughout the meeting, interrupting, shrieking and barracking in a way that had nothing in common with the occasional interjections which occur during lively labour movement meetings.

The chairman's announcement that speaking time during the discussion period would be divided equally between *all* those wishing to intervene (giving three minutes per speaker) was greeted by Thornett and his co-thinkers Pat Lally and Peter McIntyre with cries of 'disgraceful' and 'ridiculous'. This preface to the WSL's wrecking tactics was the sheerest hypocrisy, coming from an organisation which has closed public meetings early rather than allow Spartacist speakers to intervene, and whose National Committee once passed a motion to limit the Spartacist tendency to only one speaker per public meeting. Evidently though the WSL claims special treatment at *our* meetings.

Thornett really showed his mettle later on. Having already been allowed to speak for nearly ten minutes (more than *twice* the time of the other floor speakers), he engineered several disruptions, the longest lasting 8½ minutes. Despite his actions fifteen speakers, including all three WSL representatives, two supporters of Workers Power (WP) and a number of International Marxist Group (IMG) members, were able to participate in the discussion.

Thornett warmed up by trying to shout down an SL supporter (and former Oxford WSL member) who was demonstrating how the WSL's call for no immigration controls, in any country and at any time, is sheer reactionary utopianism. The WSL leader's persistent refusal to sit down and be quiet obliged the chairman of the meeting to warn that he would be ejected if he continued obstructing the debate. To this Pat Lally screamed 'Healy' and the sycophants of the IMG and WP gleefully pitched in with vocal encouragement.

A few minutes later Thornett was on his feet again, screaming in a fit of simulated indignation over an SLer's characterisation of his

position against the right to self-determination for presently oppressor nations as the view of an 'idiot'. Thornett's remonstrations for more cultured speech rang entirely hollow, coming from the leader of a group which during that same evening had described SL spokesmen as 'liars', 'provocateurs', 'pro-imperialists', 'chauvinists' and 'racists'.

Thornett's scandalous behaviour produced a major fracas, as the WSL flew from all pretence of programmatic discussion. Having set his own dogs yelping (Pat Lally in particular seemed genuinely demented), and with the puppies of the IMG and WP snapping at the rear, Thornett calmly rose and left the meeting while the other WSLers remained behind. The meeting then concluded in good order.

When Stalinists and Healyites accuse us of 'disruption', they are referring to the unpleasant (for them) *political content* of our interventions, not to any violation of workers democracy. These political bankrupts know that they are unable to engage in honest political combat with the Spartacist tendency, so they grab other means of 'struggle' from the arsenal of anti-Trotskyism: exclusionism, slander and violence.

The WSL too lacks the ability to deal with the SL politically -- the loss of more than twenty per cent of its membership to us this year is eloquent testimony to that. Thus in a desperate attempt to ward off Spartacist politics, Thornett & Co are starting to dip into the same poisonous well of slander, vilification and real disruption as their Healyite mentors. For our part, we will remain firm in our principled commitment to the full revolutionary programme of Trotskyism, including the defence of workers democracy. ■

WSL...

(Continued from page 5)

very frequently by their leadership's ever-optimistic reports of great successes and even greater opportunities just around the corner. Furthermore, they have only been grossly adaptationist and liquidationist work themselves, so the idea of 'real workers' fighting for and supporting the *Transitional Programme* may seem literally unimaginable.

But unlike Thornett and his cronies we are really undertaking the hard task of building a cadre which will be the core of the future mass revolutionary party. Because we build on *programmatic* foundations we will carry out far more and better mass work than the WSL will ever be capable of -- here in Britain, as in America and elsewhere throughout the world.

Immediately after the resignation of the Trotskyist Faction, *Socialist Press* carried an article with the truly astounding assessment that the split was a 'step forward' for the WSL. Lister takes up this theme in his polemic, growling that the Tfers' resignations 'happily relieved' the WSL of the task of purging them.

But if the WSL truly believes it has been travelling 'forward' since the split, we would respectfully suggest that the organisation use one of its perennial fund drives to procure the means to purchase a compass. Since the February national conference, the WSL has continued to haemorrhage, with resignations being submitted from all over the country. Most notably, the six remaining members -- including three National Committee members -- of the anti-TF, conciliationist 'centre' faction led by Steve Murray and Julia Kellett have left the organisation. This newest 'step forward' was preceded by the beginnings of a political re-orientation by some of these individuals, and an at least formal recognition that they were party to 'an unprincipled organisational bloc with [the] leadership' against the Trotskyist Faction (resignation statement submitted to the WSL NC by Tim Hume, Ian Kaye, Julia Kellett, P P, and Steve Piercy, 1 April). We hope that these comrades will be able to break from their cliquist pasts in order to find their way into the ranks of the only authentically Trotskyist tendency in the world, and join us in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International. As for the WSL, it is doomed to an existence of second-rate fakery in splendid national isolation -- if that existence lasts very long at all. ■

Immigration/emigration...

(Continued from page 7)

tion and the destruction of national frontiers will become a reality only under socialism, as a result of the abolition of material scarcity.

In reality, the economic resources do not now exist to satisfy the material aspirations of mankind, and a policy of worldwide leveling would only intensify conflicts between the working masses of various countries. Rather than utopian dreams of unlimited immigration as an immediate political demand, what is both needed and possible is a campaign for real international labor solidarity. This can begin with joint union action against US-owned corporations to raise the wages of foreign workers in the same industries to US scale and, in relevant industries, the formation of truly international unions. Likewise, instead of calling for the utopian demand of 'open borders', labor must demand full citizenship rights for *all* foreign workers -- a demand whose justice is independent of capitalism's ability to grant it, but which would be part of the fundamental laws of a workers republic.

What communists have to say to the impoverished masses of the backward countries is that the answer to their desperate social conditions does not lie in an individual ticket to the US or Western Europe, but rather in an international socialist revolution which is the necessary precondition to the economic reorganization of human society through freeing the productive forces from the fetter of private ownership.

Full rights for foreign workers!

That we do not advocate the principle of unlimited immigration as an immediate political demand certainly does *not* mean that we support the immigration policies of bourgeois states. The immigration policies of bourgeois governments do not simply defend legitimate national rights, but are *necessarily* chauvinist and oppressive. It would be impermissible, for example, for a communist parliamentary fraction to vote for any immigration quotas, even 'liberal' ones, in a bourgeois parliament. Instead, they would vote against all racially and nationally discriminatory immigration quotas,

pointing out that the real answer to concerns about 'protecting jobs' is united international working-class action and socialist revolution.

It is, moreover, obligatory for communists to fight for the rights of all immigrants and foreign workers, whether or not in the country legally. The labor and socialist movements must demand that *all* immigrants and foreign workers are entitled to immediate and full citizenship rights. Since the bourgeoisie is not about to permit equalization of the conditions of the working masses, we must also fight against every instance of discrimination against foreign workers -- against wage discrimination, for the right to strike and join unions, against deportations, etc.

Of particular urgency in the US today is a vigorous campaign on the part of the labor movement, not for such chauvinist measures as deporting foreign scabs, but for full citizenship and trade-union rights for Mexican farmworkers in the Southwest and other workers currently facing government harassment and deportations (such as the tens of thousands of Haitian and Dominican workers in the Northeast). In the case of the (predominantly Mexican-American) United Farm Workers, we call for an international UFW, organizing farmworkers in Mexico (a large percentage of whom produce for the US market in any case) to achieve wages equal to those of unionized agricultural labor in the US.

Finally, while large-scale immigration is inevitably affected by economic factors at the present level of development of productive forces, the question of specific groups of refugees, prisoners, etc, is purely political. Thus, for instance, we are (except for the fact that Castro doesn't want them either) militantly unenthusiastic about the former Batista prison guards, drug dealers and anti-communist emigrés whom the US government accepted with open arms. In contrast, the entire labor movement has a direct interest in vigorously demanding that the US extend the right of political asylum to the trade-union and socialist militants who are imprisoned and threatened with execution by the bloody junta in Chile! ■

Racist furore...

(Continued from page 1)

the WSL leadership 'discovered' the immigration question, an issue in which it had previously demonstrated little interest. With its narrow economist trade-union orientation, the WSL had characteristically argued that the deep divisions in the working class exacerbated by racist immigration policies were not a 'burning question' and had consistently failed to address this issue programmatically in the unions.

Like its formal position against import controls, the WSL's position on immigration has been confined to its press -- not carried forward as a part of its actual intervention in the working class. Despite the tangible chauvinism whipped up among trade unionists, particularly car workers, around the question of foreign imports, WSL leader Alan Thornett's 1977 campaign for general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union avoided the question entirely.

But with consummate hypocrisy born of desperation, the WSL central leadership decided to take up the question of immigration as a factional weapon in order to attack its left opposition, the Trotskyist Faction (TF), and the international Spartacist tendency (iSt). Following the split of the TF in mid-February and its subsequent fusion with the London Spartacist Group to form the Spartacist League, the WSL has taken its demagogic attacks on the iSt's Marxist analysis of the immigration question into the pages of *Socialist Press*:

'This combination of ultra-left posturing with abject opportunism and rejection of any form of serious agitation for the Trotskyist programme in any country in the world is the real essence of the international Spartacist tendency.'

'It is reflected in their attitude to immigration laws -- where "left" denunciation of restrictions on immigration are combined with grovelling capitulation to the worst kinds of nationalism, reminiscent of Tory leader Margaret Thatcher. "...on a sufficient scale immigration flows only exacerbate national antagonisms and in extreme cases could even wipe out the national identity of smaller countries". (*Workers Vanguard*, 17.3.78). ('In defence of a revolutionary orientation, Against sectarian abstention', *Socialist Press*, 29 March 1978)

The *WV* article quoted from was entitled 'Racist furor in Australia over "Boat People"' (from the March 1978 *Australasian Spartacist*). Readers of *Socialist Press* would not suspect that our article was an attack on the 'white Australia' policies of the labour bureaucracy, nor that the sentence which so scandalises the WSL is directed against the utopian demand for doing away with all immigration laws (and consequently borders) under capitalism. Our article went on:

'While aggressively opposing all forms of racially and nationally discriminatory quotas, communists do not advise capitalist governments on their necessarily chauvinist and exploitative immigration policy, which opens and closes its portals in line with economic and political expediency. We intransigently defend the rights of migrant workers -- "legal" or not -- against chauvinist persecution and deportation. We demand full citizenship rights for all migrants.'

Contrary to the lies and distortions of the WSL, this is hardly the position of a Margaret Thatcher! We stand clearly against any victimisations whatsoever of foreign workers in Britain. We are against all round-ups and deportations of immigrants, against all procedures which require foreigners to register with the Home Office and the police, and against all laws which allow the authorities to pick out foreigners, arbitrarily determine that they may no longer live where they have been living and force them to leave Britain.

Moreover, as we stated in 'The Leninist policy toward immigration/emigration' (*WV* no 36, 18 January 1974 and reprinted in this issue), the fact:

'that we do not advocate the principle of unlimited immigration as an immediate politi-

cal demand certainly does not mean that we support the immigration policies of bourgeois states.... It would be impermissible, for example, for a communist parliamentary fraction to vote for any immigration quotas, even "liberal" ones, in a bourgeois parliament.'

In an attempt to make some of its slanders stick, the WSL leadership has had to ignore the principled and consistent fight led by Spartacist-supported groupings in the trade unions against anti-immigration hysteria and other forms of national chauvinism. When in early 1975 US authorities whipped up hysteria against 'illegal aliens', threatening to step up mass deportations, not only did the Spartacist League/US actively participate in and initiate demonstrations against the racist frenzy, but caucuses politically supported by the SL, such as the Militant Solidarity Caucus of UAW (car workers) Local 906 (New Jersey), campaigned for full citizenship rights for foreign workers. And in early 1977, responding to US Immigration and Naturalization Service raids in San Francisco-area warehouses, the Militant Caucus of ILWU (dockers and warehouse union) Local 6 called for union 'flying squads' and strike action to stop the raids. Where has the WSL made the question of defence of immigrants a fighting issue in the unions?

Nor can the WSL leaders deal with the very real examples of the problems created by asserting the unconditional mass 'right to unlimited immigration' under capitalism, for example Jews in Palestine, Americans in northern Mexico, Turks in Cyprus. In each of these cases a massive influx of immigrants has or would come into direct conflict with the right to self-determination of another people. If pushed on this question an honest WSL loyalist might reply that there are problems raised by these examples, but that nations like Holland and Belgium -- cited in the *WV* article -- are different, as they are imperialist oppressors.

But this is not the Leninist position. Leninists uphold the right of all nations to self-determination, though this right is generally simply not in question for the imperialist and presently oppressing nations. Lenin was explicit on this: arguing against the ultraleft trend of 'imperialist economism' represented by Bukharin and Pyatakov in 1915, he wrote:

'You want a concrete "case": "How about Belgium"?

'See the Lenin and Zinoviev pamphlet: it says that we would be for the defence of Belgium (even by war) if this concrete war were different.'

'You do not agree with that?'

'Then say so!' ('The nascent trend of impe-

rialist economism', *Collected Works* vol 23, pp 19-20)

In 'The discussion on self-determination summed up', written in the same year, Lenin criticised Dutch left social democrat Herman Gorter for 'wallow[ing] in mistakes' by being 'against the self-determination of his own country but in favour of self-determination for the Dutch East Indies'. While attacking the false general programme flowing from this position, Lenin lauded Gorter's 'sincere internationalist' sentiment, and noted that 'the general and fundamental principles of Marxism ... do not require the independence specifically of Holland to be made a matter of paramount importance....'

But for the WSL today, whose 'internationalist' sentiment seldom extends outside the pages of *Socialist Press*, theoretical poverty on the national question has become a cover for opportunist practice. On a general programmatic level the denial of the right to self-determination to oppressor peoples flows from the Pabloite/New Left conception that there are 'good' and 'bad' peoples, and that the 'bad' peoples have forfeited their democratic rights.

Writing shortly before the outbreak of World War II, Trotsky noted that despite the shameful 'white Australia' immigration policy, Australians did not forfeit their right to self-determination:

'Naturally no Australian worker or farmer wishes to be conquered and subjected to Japan. For a revolutionary party it would be suicidal to say simply we are "indifferent" to this question. But we cannot give to a bourgeois and essentially imperialist government the task of defending the independence of Australia.' ('Letter to Australians', *Writings 1937-38*)

National oppression and race hatred will not be rooted out with utopian fantasies of dissolving national boundaries under capitalism. Such pipe-dreams appeal only to those who are unwilling to undertake the tasks of proletarian internationalism -- winning workers to the programme of international class solidarity, intransigent defence of all victims of racist oppression, and above all the unrelenting struggle to construct a truly international vanguard party.

It is no accident that those WSL members who actively sought answers to the central questions of international proletarian policy were drawn to the banner of the iSt. In sharp contrast to the petty parochial workerism of the WSL, the Spartacist League will be in the forefront of the battle against all immigration laws of the bourgeois state and all of the racist poison spewed by the Thatchers, Powells and Callaghans worshipping the corpse of their long-dead Empire.

adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 201, 14 April 1978

I-CL...

(Continued from page 2)

than treachery....' (minutes of IMG/I-CL meeting, 7 April 1976, our emphasis)

The iSt stands with the fight of the International Committee (IC), formed in 1953 to combat the Pabloite destruction of the Fourth International. The I-CL spent a good part of its debating time quoting from critical iSt assessments of the IC and seeking to contrast them to our defence of the IC against the Pabloites. But the Matgamnaites succeeded only in exposing their own anti-internationalism.

Despite Gerry Healy's attempts to bureaucratically exclude it, the SL/US sought to become a disciplined part of the IC, struggling within it against the deviations from Trotskyism which we saw, until the IC's decisive programmatic degeneration in 1966-67. The I-CL, in contrast, refused to subordinate itself to the international formation it 'critically supported' because this would have meant being a minority within the British section of that formation. The I-CL's main international position paper, 'The I-CL and the Fourth International', glibly explains that opposition to the USFI's British section made 'any affiliation and acceptance of USFI discipline unthinkable', since this would hinder its 'primary task ... to build a revolutionary communist organisation in the British working class'. The iSt's approach, which subordinates work in any particular country to the fight for the revolutionary international, is literally incomprehensible to the I-CL.

On the question of Stalinism, the I-CL must hide behind its agnosticism and spectacular unconcern for questions of principle if it is to chase both the USFI apologists for Stalinism and the Stalinophobes of the IS/SWP. On Cuba, tailing the USFI, the I-CL writes:

'Castroism was a genuine revolutionary movement right up to 1968 (at least)... [In Cuba]

there is populist-type democracy but no genuinely accountable workers' democracy. It is not foreseeable what will be the degree of the bureaucracy's resistance to workers' power.'

But reflecting their kinship with the social-democratic International Socialists, Matgamna & Co sneer at the argument that the Common Market would strengthen NATO against the USSR, proclaiming that: 'For revolutionaries defence of the USSR is today of tenth rate importance: the USSR is the second pillar of world counter-revolution.' Like all Stalinophobes, the I-CL makes no distinction between the USSR -- a degenerated workers state whose proletarian property forms represent a historic gain -- and its counterrevolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy.

The future for the I-CL is, to put it mildly, not bright. To most left-wing militants, the grouping probably appears as a kind of cross between the IS/SWP and the USFI, with possibly valid but nitpicking criticisms of both. Its timid critique of the USFI is sometimes correct, though overwhelmingly in the service of its IS-ish appetites, and its analysis of post-war Trotskyism is a tortured and often incomprehensible mélange of meaningless neologisms ('de-structuring', etc). These add up to programmatic agnosticism as a cover for simple indifference to political and theoretical questions, hand-in-hand with national self-centredness.

Unable to differentiate itself from its far larger competitors, the I-CL has been unable to grow despite seven years of existence in a highly politicised milieu. In the face of its own centrist stagnation, the rapid growth of the Trotskyist iSt, which began with comparable forces, must seem like a crime against nature to the I-CL. Nonetheless the I-CL may contain among its ranks some subjective revolutionaries, won to the I-CL in the absence of an authentic Trotskyist pole in Britain during the last decade. If such militants have a future as Trotskyists, it will be with the Spartacist League. ■

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Workers defence...

(Continued from page 12)

key to the growth of fascism. The fascists do not simply constitute another political party campaigning for their particular ideology among a passive electorate. Fascism is not a system of 'bad ideas' which can be defeated through ideological 'exposure' or argued away. It is a programme of terrorist action; and it has a social base in the mobilisation of the impoverished petty bourgeoisie, which has been squeezed out of its social position by the decay of capitalism and which sees no powerful revolutionary proletarian alternative to capitalist degradation and anarchy.

Contrary to the ANL's social-chauvinist rantings, fascism is not somehow inherently 'German'; it is certainly not anti-patriotic. Rather it is based on a *nationalist* chauvinism: the 'outsiders' and 'foreigners' (Jews, blacks, Asians) are scapegoated for all the problems of capitalist society.

Today the National Front does not constitute a mass movement which immediately threatens to smash the proletariat, although its ultimate goal is the destruction of all proletarian organisations and systematic terror and genocide against oppressed minorities. There is, however, a reason why the National Front has more social weight and significance in Britain today than similar far-right movements in other Western countries (eg the United States).

That reason is the severe decline of British imperialism -- which in its long-drawn-out death agony has brought social degradation, chaos and continuous attacks on the living standards and conditions of the broad masses. Disaffection with this has generated a *real* social base for fascism among the petty bourgeoisie and politically backward workers.

Fascism cannot be beaten by issuing classless propaganda against its 'ideology', still less by competing with it for the national banner. It can only be destroyed by mobilising the working class and its allies among the oppressed to *smash* the fascist gangs, and by building a revolutionary party to pose a proletarian class alternative to bourgeois rule and its attendant social decay. Beating the drums for 'anti-Nazi' British patriotism is directly counterposed to these tasks, even if the National Front suffers a short-term loss of electoral respectability as its leaders' Hitlerite proclivities are exposed.

Differences do appear among the capitalists on how to relate to the fascists, particularly in a period like today when they are not seen to be immediately necessary in order to crush a highly combative working class. But the capitalist class will always seek to unite to smash the proletariat and its organisations at a point of extreme social and political crisis. When necessary, they will give open support to fascist terror gangs. This is precisely what happened in Italy, Germany and Spain during the 1920s and 1930s.

Any attempt to entice one section of the bourgeoisie (the mythical 'progressive', 'democratic' capitalists) into a popular front of all forces opposed to fascism is *worse* than utopian. Such a strategy sows very dangerous illusions among the workers and can only lead

them to defeat -- just like in Spain.

It is quite principled for a revolutionary party to march alongside social democrats and other reformists in an anti-fascist demonstration (and even to march alongside any bourgeois elements who, for whatever reason, choose to stand with the interests of the proletariat on this issue for a time). In fact, a united front between revolutionists and reformists is often a *necessity* for defence against fascist terror, and it simultaneously serves the purpose of exposing the reformist leaders' hesitations and betrayals and thus winning workers to the revolutionary banner.



Waving the Union Jack at ANL Carnival.

Spartacist Britain

But it is quite another thing to adopt the reformists' bourgeois politics. To issue joint 'anti-fascist' propaganda with reformist misleaders (and even representatives of the bourgeoisie!) is to *betray* the interests of the proletariat. Yet this is precisely what the Socialist Workers Party has chosen to do in the ANL.

The fight against fascism in the thirties

In the 1930s the workers movement in western Europe was confronted by the rise of fascism on a scale which makes today's NF pale in comparison. The response of the Stalinist Communist International and its centrist satellites like the London Bureau was to organise coalitions against war and fascism under the leadership of prominent pacifists and other worthy 'gentlemen'. These coalitions were the precursors of the popular front.

The Trotskyist movement implacably *opposed* such class-collaborationist alliances, denouncing them for disarming the proletariat by tying it to the class enemy. At some 'anti-fascist' conferences the Trotskyists were refused a vote on their counterproposals (1932); at others they were excluded altogether (1933). Particularly instructive is the Trotskyists' resolution on boycotting the 'World Congress Against War, Fascism and Imperialism' organised by the London Bureau in 1936:

'The planned conference, on the very face of it, is thus a gross fraud, which can only paralyze the genuine proletarian struggle against war, fascism, and imperialism. Were this congress to be composed of mass organizations of the working class, then, regardless of its ostensible program or leadership it might prove profitable for the revolutionary organizations to attend it for the purpose of exposing the fraud before a working class tribunal and counterposing the program of revolutionary struggle to it.' (*Documents of the Fourth International*, p 100)

Time and again Trotsky noted that 'a merciless exposure of the theory and practice of the People's Front is therefore the first condition for a revolutionary struggle against fascism' (*Transitional Programme*). In January 1936 he wrote:

'We have to take strong measures against the abstract "antifascist" mode of thinking that finds entry even into our own ranks at times. "Antifascism" is nothing, an empty concept used to cover up Stalinist skulduggery. In the name of "antifascism" they instituted class collaboration with the Radicals. Many of our comrades wanted to give the "People's Front", ie class collaboration, positive sup-

port in the same way that we are ready to support the united front, ie the separation of the proletariat from the other classes.' ('Bourgeois democracy and the fight against fascism', *Writings 1935-36*, p 244)

Such popular-frontist 'anti-fascism' is *precisely* the purpose of the Anti Nazi League.

IMG chases 'respectability'

True to their tradition, organisations such as the Stalinist Communist Party and sundry Labour 'leftists' have leapt onto the ANL bandwagon. But the group which is vying with the SWP to become the ANL's 'best builder' is the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group (IMG). When the ANL was founded six months ago the IMG expressed hesitancy about the lack of a 'mass action' perspective for the organisation, while endorsing the project nonetheless. Now with the rapid growth (and increasing 'respectability') of the ANL the junior Martovs of the IMG have put aside all their little worries.

'Build the Anti Nazi League' screams the front page of *Socialist Challenge*. 'Hats off to the SWP' sings the IMG's editorial paean to the Carnival. And just to assure the assorted reformists, Liberals and lords of the ANL that it bears no 'Trotskyist' baggage of opposition to popular frontism, the IMG writes:

'It is now obvious that the ANL needs a conference of its active supporters. We can share some of the apprehensions of the SWP in relation to such a conference becoming a bear-garden and alienating League supporters because of sectarian bickering. A conference devoted to discussing whether or not the ANL is a "popular front" or similar rubbish would, in our opinion, be disastrous.' (*Socialist Challenge*, 4 May)

For the IMG, intransigent opposition to class collaboration and social patriotism has become 'sectarian bickering' and 'rubbish'! How far these disgraceful opportunists have sunk into the anti-Trotskyist mire!

Trying to strike a more critical posture toward the ANL are the eclectic left Pabloites of the International-Communist League (I-CL). In March the I-CL complained that the ANL had problems because 'it commits the revolutionaries of the SWP [!] to limit their propaganda to what is acceptable to the liberals' (*Workers Action*, 11-18 March). By the time of the Carnival, however, the I-CL had toned down its criticisms considerably. The ANL was still 'too confused', but:

'Today's carnival is the biggest anti-fascist event for years. And on the eve of May Day the Anti Nazi League have chosen a great way to celebrate the traditional workers' holiday....

'How are we going to do the job? Carnivals like today's can get the ball rolling -- showing us how many we are and helping us to get to know each other.' ('After the Carnival, What next?', *Workers Action* leaflet)

How chummy. The only problem is: the ANL has set the ball rolling in the wrong direction.

The I-CL's chief complaint about the ANL has been that it represents a turn by the SWP away from its past policy of engaging in street confrontations with the fascists. Indeed, until the end of last summer the SWP had been the chief proponent of a strategy of left-wing counter-demonstrations to fight the fascists in the streets, which it combined with calls on the capitalist government to ban NF marches.

Taking on the fascists in the streets certainly reflects a healthier impulse than signing 'democratic' manifestos with Lord Avebury -- though for the consummately cynical SWP leadership both have been little more than gimmicky recruitment schemes. However, the SWP tried to substitute 'far-left' physical confrontations with the fascists and their police protectors for the hard fight within the trade unions to build mass working-class action against the fascists.

This strategy predictably backfired, as last summer's round of street confrontations with the NF ended with the latter achieving its aim of massive police protection. And the Public Order Act -- invoked against opponents of Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts in 1937 -- was used to halt left-wing anti-NF demonstrations.

Build workers defence guards!

As we wrote last summer after the Lewisham events:

'It is not necessarily adventurist for a few thousand leftists to attempt to take on a few hundred fascists... The point is to successfully *break up* attempted fascist mobilisations, not to engage in a string of inconclusive brawls. However, given the demonstrated determination of the state to protect the National Front in all these recent skirmishes with the left, most such attempts will only result in head-on confrontations with the

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police. In the absence of a mass working-class base for their activities, the attempt of even several thousand leftists to "take on" the cops of the bourgeois state will inevitably result in the victimisation of those subjectively revolutionary militants who engage in such confrontations.' (*Workers Vanguard* no 170, 26 August 1977)

Demonstrations of a few thousand ill-organised leftists can usually be dispersed by a much smaller body of determined thugs and/or their police protectors. But physically-prepared *workers defence guards* built by the trade unions can protect workers' organisations and immigrant communities from attack and crush the fascists in the streets.

There is a good reason why the SWP & Co do not struggle within the unions to build such defence guards: their formation would directly challenge the bourgeois state's monopoly on armed terror. And Ernie Roberts and Neil Kinnock (to say nothing of the good peers of the realm) would not stand for that at all.

How can such defence guards be built? As Trotsky explained in the *Transitional Programme*:

'Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers' groups for self-defence*. It is necessary to write this slogan into the programme of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions. It is imperative wherever possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organise groups for self-defence, to drill and acquaint them with the use of arms. 'It is necessary to give organised expression to the valid hatred of the workers toward scabs and bands of gangsters and fascists. It is necessary to advance the slogan of a *workers' militia* as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organisations, meetings, and press.'

This is the strategy Trotskyists raise for fighting fascist attacks, against the sellout course of the labour bureaucrats and their 'left' hangers-on.

The Spartacist tendency and the fight against fascism

The struggle to arm the workers to crush the fascists cannot consist of empty resolutions in the trade unions. It is a well-known practice for union bureaucrats to pass radical-sounding resolutions, committing themselves to nothing in particular, as a cover for inaction. The 'left' talk of labour traitors at ANL rallies is a perfect example. Instead class-struggle oppositions must be built within the unions to ensure that the call for workers defence guards is made a reality. Such class-struggle groupings must link the fight against right-wing attacks to a programme which points the way to working-class power.

The international Spartacist tendency has a proud record of struggle against fascist and other racist attacks and provocations. In America we have particularly had to fight the treacherous call raised by the IMG's local 'co-thinkers', the Socialist Workers Party (US), for defence of platforms for fascists. Our supporters have also actively fought racist and fascist attacks within the trade unions: the caucus we support in a Chicago-area UAW (car workers) local [branch] was instrumental in organising a workers defence squad to defend a black worker's home from night-riding racist marauders. In Detroit, we fought to win the unions to smash a fascist 'bookshop' which recently opened near the giant River Rouge car factory. Our key has always been to unleash the powerful strength of the organised proletariat, not to substitute our own small forces for the necessary mobilisation of the class, and certainly not to bolster some fake 'anti-fascist' talker.

As we grow and sink roots into the working class in this country, our members and supporters will be leading similar struggles -- against the NF, its far-right satellites and the class whose interests they so violently serve. Each victory over the fascist hooligans will bring more forces to the revolutionary banner, thus bringing nearer the day of proletarian revolution.

And that is a struggle which requires neither magic nor God -- but the forging of a revolutionary vanguard party steered in the fight for working-class independence from the bourgeoisie. Only a party which can demonstrate to the working class its iron determination to do away with the capitalist system of anarchy, oppression and exploitation can break the stranglehold of racist division among working people, and lead the struggle for proletarian rule to final victory. ■

Children of '68...

(continued from page 3)

defined bloc of 'left' bureaucrats and misled rank and filers. Neither side presents much of a positive trade union perspective, but both are rather definite about what they don't want. As Strawson insists of his desired 'class-struggle left wing': 'It does not conform to a revolutionary tendency in that it does not have a fully revolutionary programme and strategy.' How nice -- in other words it has a *reformist* programme and strategy.

This Strawson character has gone from the IMG's National Committee to the WSL and back again in only two years. The WSL's *Socialist Press* (3 May) expressed unhappiness about the budding Strawson/SWP(US) alliance in its report on the conference, but maintained that 'It remains to be seen whether Strawson -- an all time political tourist -- will be completely absorbed into the alternative Pabloite politics of the SWP, or turn perhaps in a more healthy political direction.' Is the WSL -- desperately searching for new political opportunities to delay its decomposition -- actually offering to renew the visa of this 'all time political tourist'?

IMG women unite

The most heated debate at the conference took place on the question of women's caucuses inside the IMG. The Strawson lashup diplomatically declined to take a united position, with only the former LTFers taking a hard stand against caucuses of any sort within the organisation. Meanwhile the leadership argued for occasional non-autonomous male-exclusionist gatherings along the lines of the IMG's past practice, but against a blanket approval for women's caucuses. All the opponents of women's 'autonomy' were hard-pressed to explain why feminist organisational norms were unwelcome inside the IMG, when they were encouraged everywhere else.

Once, as the long-time feminists of the ex-LTF noted during the conference debate, the IMG refused to embrace feminism, albeit for typically confused centrist reasons. But now the IMG has turned to unstinting glorification of the existing women's liberation movement, with its anti-communist 'sisterhood' -- along the way declaring that Lenin and the Bolsheviks were all wrong on the woman question, and explicitly denying the need to split the women's movement along class lines to build a communist women's movement as a section of the vanguard party.

Spurning the revolutionary tradition of the Communist International (which declared its forthright opposition to feminism and the 'independent' women's movement), the IMG sent its female cadres into the women's movement to become its 'best builders' on its existing bourgeois programme. And now they are -- including *within* the IMG. The ultra-feminist document ('Women's caucuses and the IMG -- A fresh approach') summed up the results:

'The impact of women's liberation on the revolutionary left has laid the basis for feminism in the IMG. This is the major reason for the expression of the need for caucuses. The experience of consciousness raising, of non-hierarchical organisation and so on, have informed the daily lives and activity of many women within the IMG. It is not enough for comrade Savage to suggest that those who want consciousness raising or all-women meetings should participate in the WLM [women's liberation movement]. We want this inside the IMG as well....

'It has to be admitted that for many women, the WLM is a far more congenial milieu for their particular activity and personal development than the IMG. This means that several leading women comrades have in the past few years chosen to concentrate their political energies in the WLM rather than the IMG. A drift of feminists out of the IMG is inevitable while the organisation continues to ignore the impact of the WLM upon these women, and refuses to accept women's need to organise separately.' (*Pre-Conference Bulletin* no 8, p 5)

We couldn't have said it better ourselves: the seeds of liquidationism are taking root at home.

The children of '68'

Today's rapid spread of feminism represents more than simply an adaptation to a particular milieu on the part of the IMG, but is also part of an international phenomenon of aging 'children of '68', who are seeking to escape in alternate lifestyles and trendy fads as they despair of the possibility of proletarian revolution. The USec has chased these people -- the embodiment of its fabled 'new mass vanguard'

-- from their pro-guerrillaist, spontaneist proclivities of the late 1960s and early 1970s to their present infatuation with apolitical feminist and gay lifestyleism, ecology faddism and the like.

In an interview with *Socialist Review* (another new 'non-sectarian' magazine, this time produced by the British SWP) French USec leader Alain Krivine expresses this mood, and the USec's capitulation before it:

'First, there is a crisis which is a result of 1968 in the sense that, as I said, 1968 was a movement not only against exploitation but also against oppression. There developed movements which revolutionary Marxists were unable to understand. Now they understand, but too late.

'For example, the question of the oppression of women inside revolutionary organisations has caused a serious crisis throughout the far left in Europe. The violence of the women in our organisations is linked to the violence of the oppression they have suffered within our organisations -- leading to splits etc.

'But it's not only the question of women, of homosexuals, etc, it's even in a certain sense the crisis of *militantisme*, which raises the question of the kind of revolutionary organisation we need.' (*Socialist Review*, May 1978)

Krivine goes on to assure the interviewer that 'Of course, I'm not putting Leninism into question'... and then proceeds to do just that:

'I think we have to discuss the application of democratic centralism -- it's two words which contradict each other. So today we discuss the question of democracy within the revolutionary organisation, the role of the leadership, the beginning of bureaucratisation linked to the development of the organisation, and it's not an answer just to say "Lenin said, Lenin said". How do we understand the new forms of political activity that have emerged? I accept that we have to use the framework of Leninism, but we have to be careful not to give dogmatic answers to these questions. Many organisations have been thrown into total crisis, have been split, as a result of these problems.'

In other words, if they don't keep liquidating, they'll lose even *more* members.

But the frantic search for 'new forms of political activity' will only result in further crises for the United Secretariat. Krivine's own organisation, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) has seen the logical conclusion of capitulation to feminism: the splits to which he refers have included ex-Pabloist women who no longer see the LCR as a useful forum in which to fight for their feminist politics.

Pabloist liquidationism logically generates such centrifugal forces, which in the long term threaten to pull an organisation apart into 'sectors' representing various different constituencies. This is happening throughout the European USec sections today, and has led to often spectacular splits throughout the Pabloites' history.

In the early 1950s, Michel Pablo's lieutenants Mestre in France and Lawrence in Britain broke openly from Trotskyism and departed to the Stalinist parties. In the late 1960s it was the turn of the Italian USec's youth group, which embraced Maoism. In the early 1970s the former Argentine USec section passed openly over to urban terrorism. And in 1977 the LCR's most consistent 'self-management' devotees split in order to fuse with Pablo's wing of the PSU in something called the 'Communist Committees for Self-management'. But in response the congenial opportunists of the USec have only moved further rightward, presenting ever-more-openly revisionist claptrap as 'non-dogmatic' Leninism.

The answer to the IMG's failure to develop women cadres as revolutionaries, its preference for flashy presence over serious politics and its cliquish internal life is not to be found in the pursuit of every likely looking opportunity at the expense of programme. Only a political struggle for genuine Trotskyism -- the Trotskyism of the international Spartacist tendency -- will salvage whatever sincere and subjectively revolutionary members remain in the USec's British section.

FORWARD TO THE REBIRTH OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

Trotskyism against liberal guilt

The Leninist position on immigration and the national question

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Not popular-frontist Anti Nazi League but:

Workers defence guards to crush the fascists!

'Magic. They came in their thousands. They marched, they sang, they chanted. And more came... Eighty thousand thronged the park, celebrating the rise against the fascists. "We're black, we're white, we're dynamite," they sang. They stood in the sun together. Eighty thousand. No trouble. Magic.' (*Socialist Worker*, 6 May)

So the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) summed up the Anti Nazi League (ANL) Carnival of April 30. On that day, rallied by the slogan 'NF = no fun, no freedom, no future', tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered in Trafalgar Square and marched to a concert in Victoria Park. Undoubtedly the vast majority sincerely wanted to stop the rise of the fascist National Front, whose activities are a dangerous threat to every worker, leftist and immigrant. But the marchers only got empty 'anti-fascist' speeches from union bureaucrats, Tribunites and liberals, followed by a four-mile parade and a punk rock concert at the end.

Then the day after the Carnival -- May Day, international workers' day -- the NF held an unpublicised march through the streets of London, from Portland Place to Hoxton. The press estimated that there were 1,000 to 1,500 fascists on the demonstration. They marched under police protection, and were not opposed by any counterdemonstrators. This was the first time the NF has ever been able to march through central London without incident.

What did *Socialist Worker* have to say about this?

'The next day the National Front held a walk through London's East End. Nearly two hundred attended. It was secret. It rained all the way. Even God has joined the Anti Nazi League....'

Arithmetic and journalistic incompetence did not cause this distorted account of the march -- instead the SWP had something political to hide. For as ANL press officer Peter Hain admitted in the 11 May issue of *Socialist Challenge*, ANL and SWP leaders knew that the fascist provocation was to take place at least two days before it happened. But they did nothing to protest it, or even to inform the many thousands gathered for the Carnival. Rather, in order to conciliate its social-democratic and bourgeois allies inside the ANL, the SWP agreed to withhold the information about the impending NF march.

This incident graphically demonstrates the real nature and purpose of the Anti Nazi League. The ANL has been hailed by all and sundry -- from its initiators the SWP, to the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group, the Communist Party and the Labour 'lefts' -- as a major step forward in the fight against the NF. *This is a lie.* The Anti Nazi League is a popular-frontist, social-patriotic roadblock to mobilising the working class to smash the fascist threat. It does not show workers and the oppressed how to use their strength to drive the fascists off the streets. Instead it counsels 'unity' with labour misleaders and 'democratic' representatives of the class enemy around pacifist, nationalist 'anti-Nazi' propaganda.

Hailing 'democratic' imperialism

The ANL was launched last autumn with a founding statement signed by numerous 'respectable' luminaries: union bureaucrats, 'left'



Anti Nazi League Carnival, Trafalgar Square.

Spartacist Britain

Labour MPs, football players, actresses and even lords. It appealed for 'the widest possible support for our efforts to alert the people of this country to the growing menace of the New Nazis'. In a turn of phrase that would have done Stalin's popular front 'theoretician' Dimitrov proud, the ANL vowed to 'unite all those who oppose the growth of the Nazis in Britain, irrespective of other differences'.

A key component of this 'unity' is outright social patriotism. *Tribune* supporter Ernie Roberts, an ex-AUEW national officer and prospective Labour parliamentary candidate, summed up the line in his speech as chairman of the Carnival pre-march rally. According to Roberts, the ANL's fight against the National Front is the contemporary equivalent of Britain's fight against Germany in World War II.

Such flag-waving rubbish has been a constant theme of ANL propaganda, which regularly attacks the National Front for not being truly patriotic. ANL publications forever portray NFers as jackbooted aliens trying to smuggle authoritarian German ideas into the 'democratic' British body politic. One major ANL pamphlet, 'The National Front and the Jews', states:

'Given that Britain opposed Germany in the second World War, the Front leadership has to explain how they can be both patriotic and yet support the German Nazis.'

Speaking at a 20 April Anti Nazi League Central London rally, SWP and ANL leader Nigel Harris complained of the 'impudence' shown by the National Front in holding a demonstration on Remembrance Day: 'And they call themselves patriots! Who the hell's side were they on?' Apparently the ANL would have been on the side of the British and American imperialists! Ah,

if only that heroic patriot Winston Churchill were still with us -- then Nigel Harris could sign him up as an Anti Nazi League sponsor!

Labour 'left' politicians have been particularly eager to use the ANL to get themselves a cheap 'anti-fascist' cover, for they have been severely compromised by the government's anti-working-class policies and protection for fascist demonstrations. More than forty Labour MPs have endorsed the League to date. One, Neil Kinnock, explained at the ANL founding press conference that he was proud to sign up as an officer of the organisation -- after all, it was 'an alternative to streetfighting' (quoted in *Socialist Challenge*, 17 November 1977).

Labour's Liberal Party coalition partners also assured representation in the ANL, with Lord Avebury putting his name to the founding statement. More recently *Socialist Worker* (6 May) has regaled its readers with stories of the local Liberal Party in Stoke-on-Trent, which joined the SWP and Labour Party in mass 'anti-Nazi' leafletting for the local elections.

'Stopping the Nazis at the polls'

In fact, the whole unholy ANL alliance was explicitly set up to produce anti-NF propaganda in the period leading up to local Council and general elections. The ANL saw the May 4 Council elections as the first big test of its strategy. When the National Front's average vote dropped sharply compared with 1976, the ANL hailed this as a great victory. ('Nazi NF humiliated' was the *Socialist Worker* headline.)

But however disheartening the results may have been to the NF, votes are by no means the

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