

SPARTACIST



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BRITAIN

Spread the steel strike - Get the Iron Lady!

General strike now!

The national steel strike has turned into far and away the most crucial class battle this country has seen since the miners' strike of 1974. Ever since the first picket lines appeared outside British Steel plants on January 2 the strike has steadily escalated in scope and intensity -- to the point where steel union leaders and the TUC express open fears that it may have escaped their bureaucratic grip. 'A general strike cannot be far off', said a worried Sid Weighell, general secretary of the Railwaymen, in late January. 'It's a 1926 situation.'

Indeed it is. As the strike entered its fifth week, the militancy and determination of the strikers showed no signs of abating. Originally called on the single issue of pay, the strike is now threatening to become an all-out confrontation with the Thatcher government and the capitalist state. On January 28 Wales was shut down by a one-day general strike. A day earlier the private sector was finally called out, after weeks of bureaucratic procrastination and in the face of a court injunction solicited by the companies, which illegalised this extension of the strike along with all secondary picketing and blacking. The steel union bureaucrats quickly showed their readiness to knuckle under to the strikebreaking provocation: 'The Executive will abide by the law', Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) President Les Bramley told the press. However he quickly added, 'Whether our members in the public sector will is another matter.'

Bramley has good reason to doubt. There is

now virtual 'dual power' within the striking unions. While ISTC General Secretary Bill Sirs and his cronies in London try to stifle militancy and slow the strike down in the hope of a sellout 'compromise' based on productivity deals with BSC management, militant strike committees -- especially South Yorkshire -- keep defying instructions and escalating the picketing. Questioned about the anti-strike injunction a South Yorkshire strike committee spokesman assured *Spartacist Britain*, 'We're carrying on as normal... The majority of the private sector will not turn up for work in the morning.'

For years the steel workers have seen tens of thousands of their fobs sold down the river, while the pay packets of those workers remaining grew steadily slimmer. For years they have been asked to 'sacrifice' in order to 'save' nationalised bankrupt British Steel. Only a few months ago the union chiefs were sealing the fate of

steel workers at Corby and Shotton by agreeing to plant closures in the face of massive local opposition.

But steel workers are clearly fed up with futile sacrifices. For four weeks the strikers have bravely fought the bosses, the government, *continued on page 4*



Angry steel strikers demonstrate against Keith Joseph in Birmingham on January 11



Soviet soldiers patrol village outside Kabul

Afghanistan:

Hail Red Army!

Down with imperialist anti-Soviet sabre-rattling

The effective deployment of thousands of Soviet troops in Afghanistan is one more stinging humiliation for American imperialism in the Middle East. For months the Soviet high command had watched as Khomeini's Iran slipped into near-total chaos, as US aircraft carriers lined up in the Persian Gulf, as the Soviet-allied regime in Kabul was threatened by a reactionary *jihad* (holy war). Seeing Washington at an impasse with the ayatollah, the Kremlin bureaucrats seized the time to quell the uprising by the mullahs and khans (religious and tribal leaders).

US imperialism and its allies and sycophants

around the world -- from Whitehall to the Chinese Great Hall of the Peoples -- responded with an obscene hue and cry against 'Soviet expansionism' which had 'trampled on the national sovereignty and integrity of Afghanistan'. The imperialist media pulled out the stops to build sympathy for 'freedom fighters' battling sophisticated tanks and planes with sticks, stones and chants of 'allah akhbar' -- 'freedom fighters' whose exploits included last year's slaughter of 30 Russian tourists and the massacre of 25 Soviet military officers, some skinned alive, others castrated and dismembered. But in the military confrontation pitting the Soviet soldiers backing the nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) against feudal and pre-feudal forces aided by imperialism, Marxists side with the Russian tanks. Hail Red Army!

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Hail Red Army...

(Continued from page 1)

Since the almost bloodless PDPA-led 'revolution' of April 1978, which installed Nur Mohammad Tarakki, the nationalists had attempted to consolidate power with an army and officer corps that was built up by the former Daoud dictatorship and the monarchy. Equipped and trained by the Soviet Union, the army (relative to the rest of Afghan society) had undergone a certain radicalisation and was not without pro-Soviet leanings, as revealed by its backing for the 'April Revolution'. But as the left-nationalist PDPA regime in Kabul became bogged down fighting a prolonged tribal insurgency, the army began to disintegrate -- with significant forces going over to the Islamic insurgents and taking their Soviet weapons with them. As the situation worsened, Tarakki was murdered and replaced in a coup led by Hafizullah Amin, who met a similar fate when Babrak Karmal took over following the Soviet military intervention.

US president Jimmy Carter and his Dr Strange-love national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, exploited the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan to translate the Cold War rhetoric of their anti-Soviet 'human rights' crusade into action. On January 4 Carter got on nationwide television to announce an embargo on US grain shipments and sales of high technology products to the Soviet Union; four Coast Guard cutters were despatched to Alaska (to protect the fish from Russian aggression); scheduled openings of consular facilities were stopped, as were any new cultural and economic exchanges. Carter concluded with a pitch to none other than Khomeini, denouncing the attempt by 'a powerful atheistic government to subjugate an independent Islamic people' (*New York Times*, 5 January). Washington also obtained pledges by other wheat producers to hold the line on exports to the USSR. The message: Starve for human rights!

A week later US Secretary of Defense Harold Brown was despatched to Peking to deepen the anti-Soviet US/China alliance, already twice-tested militarily: over the South African invasion of Angola and the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. Now the Pentagon wants the People's Liberation Army to channel arms through their mutual military client, General Zia's Pakistan, to the reactionary Afghan rebels. With unprecedentedly forthright bellicosity, Brown's toast at a state banquet in early January called on Peking to join American imperialism 'with complementary actions in the field of defence as well as diplomacy'.

While Brown dined in Peking, 'Iron Lady' Margaret Thatcher sent her Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, winging through Oman, Pakistan and India, offering Britain's 'aid' to preserve the 'independence' of these former imperial colonies from 'Soviet aggression'. Britain has been in the forefront of the anti-Soviet entente in Europe, lobbying the Common Market for an extension of the grain embargo to all farm produce, leading the pack in the hysteria for a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics (even going so far as to offer to finance an alternative site out of what remains in the Treasury), ranting against 'Soviet aggression' in the United Nations even as the British army carries out cold-blooded murder against nationalists in Ireland and Rhodesia.

'Human rights': anti-Soviet militarism

Carter's vague references to a 'new Munich' notwithstanding, the US didn't wait for Soviet

troops to roll across the border or land at Kabul airport to begin fulminating about 'Moscow aggression'. Carter's 'human rights' crusade has been an anti-Soviet *jihad* right from the beginning, of late seizing on the flimsiest of excuses (eg Russian forces that had been in Cuba for the last fifteen years) to justify massive escalation of the American war machine. Blustering that the Soviet Union would be made to 'pay a heavy price for its aggression' in Afghanistan, Carter promised a 'strong, unsurpassed defence capability'. With this he introduced a defence package in Congress for the new fiscal year which would more than *double* Pentagon military expenditures at the height of the Vietnam war.

With the Soviet army operation in Afghanistan, all the claptrap about 'detente', SALT etc -- by which the imperialists seek to negotiate the disarmament of the Soviet degenerated



Reactionary Islamic insurgents -- imperialism's heroes

workers state -- has been put into mothballs. Of course, this counterrevolutionary diplomatic farce would never have gone as far as it did were it not for the class-collaborationist, pacifistic illusions of the Kremlin bureaucracy in 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism.

But even as hamhanded intransigence by employers sometimes forces even conservative union leaders to call a strike, so the septuagenarian Stalinist leaders in Moscow got fed up and did the obvious thing. Recognising that (as American analysts have long admitted) Afghanistan has no strategic importance for the US, the Soviets took the opportunity to shore up the secular left-nationalists in Kabul and in the process extended their defence perimeter by several hundred miles around the eastern flank of Iran.

Afghanistan and the Soviet Union

Commanded by a parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy which has usurped political power from the Soviet workers, the lives of Red Army soldiers have often been squandered for counterrevolutionary ends: from the Sino-Soviet border war to supporting the blood-drenched genocidal bonapartist Derg in Ethiopia, to the suppression of a working-class political revolution in Hungary and potentially revolutionary ferment in Czechoslovakia. But the Red Army in Afghanistan, the Soviet support to the heroic Vietnamese and the Soviet-backed Cuban defence of Angola against the US-instigated South African invasion in 1975-76 are three instances since the end of World War II where Soviet military action has clearly aided the liberation of the oppressed and the defence of the USSR against imperialism.

Afghanistan and the Soviet Union share a common border of over 1000 miles. Like most backward regions, Afghanistan is a mosaic of peoples none of which has been able to compact a modern nation and many of which extend into the Soviet Union or other neighbouring countries. Women are sold like chattel -- indeed what really drove the Afghan mullahs into opposition was the attempt by the Kabul regime to restrict (not even outlaw) bride price. Out of an estimated population of 17 million there are more than 250,000 of these mullahs -- a tremendous weight on the skimpy social surplus of this barren land. Some 70 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture, but two-fifths of them are landless. While 15 per cent of the people are urbanised, there are only two factories in the whole country.

Clearly within the framework of Afghanistan

alone there is no solution to national and social oppression. These questions are linked, historically as well as socially, to the fate of the Russian Revolution. The extension of the October Revolution to Afghanistan in 1921 was prevented only by the presence of British imperialism in India. And one need only look at the gains that women have made in the Soviet East to see what proletarian liberation of these pre-capitalist areas meant. Even though this work suffered with the Stalinist political counter-revolution, nevertheless women in the Muslim areas of the USSR have vastly more social gains and real equality than in *any* bourgeois Islamic country.

Although the Stalinist bureaucracy is imbued with Great Russian chauvinism, its conduct is conditioned by the fact that Russians are a minority people within the Soviet state -- albeit the predominant minority. In order to integrate the peoples of diverse national and ethnic backgrounds who make up the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy retained a democratic national heritage (certainly in comparison to the grossly Han-chauvinist Chinese bureaucracy).

The Soviet regime is particularly sensitive regarding its Muslim borderlands, where it has often made the greatest efforts to grant local and national autonomy in order to maintain the loyalty of peoples related to the rest of Central Asia. Notably many of the soldiers of the Soviet army units in Afghanistan are recruited from Uzbeks and Tajiks. And if 'fiercely independent Afghanistan' is about to suffer such horrendous national oppression at the hands of the Soviets, why indeed can Moscow use Muslim-derived troops without fear? Obviously because they know they're better off than they would be under the Afghan mullahs or Khomeini. Reportedly one reason why the Soviet army deployed substantial forces in Afghanistan was the feeling that the Kabul regime was being too high-handed and insensitive to the problems of carrying out reforms and consolidating a centralised governmental authority in backward areas with diverse peoples and was thereby fuelling the reactionary Islamic insurgency.

Defend the Soviet Union!

From a military point of view the Soviet intervention may or may not have been wise, though certainly it is deeply just to oppose the Islamic reactionary insurgents backed by imperialism. In fact, although it is surely uncalled for militarily, a natural response on the part of the world's young leftists would be an enthusiastic desire to join an international brigade to Afghanistan to fight the CIA-connected mullahs. Yet across-the-board, the kneejerk reaction from most of the fake lefts, including self-styled Trotskyists, was to capitulate abjectly to the imperialist anti-Soviet outcry, a capitulation reflected most shockingly in the International Marxist Group's banner headline calling for 'Soviet Troops Out of Afghanistan' (see article, page 3).

By giving unconditional military support to the Soviet army and PDPA Afghan forces we in no way place political confidence in the Kremlin bureaucracy or the left-nationalists in Kabul. While the Moscow Stalinists apparently presently intend to shore up the PDPA regime, and if anything limit the pace of democratic and modernising reforms, the prolonged presence in Afghanistan of the Soviet army opens up more far-reaching possibilities. Speaking on the national and colonial question at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, Lenin foresaw that '... with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system, and through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage'. *Extend social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!*

Today, such an outcome would be at worst a bureaucratically deformed workers state. Only a proletarian political revolution in the USSR can truly restore the Red Army and the Soviet state to its internationalist and revolutionary mission. And only Trotskyist parties armed with the programme of permanent revolution can lead the colonial masses to their complete emancipation. Only the overthrow of the imperialist powers by their working classes can lay the basis for the world socialist order which can lift the deeply oppressed and backward regions like Afghanistan out of their poverty, isolation and obscurantism, establishing the genuine social equality of all peoples. But the liberation of the Afghan masses has begun!

--adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 247, 11 January 1980

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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Cowards flinch, traitors sneer...

Trotskyists stand with USSR

In the wake of the events in Afghanistan, the illusory 'detente' so treasured by Stalinists and liberals lies buried beneath an avalanche of imperialist war-mongering unparalleled since John Kennedy brought the world to the edge of nuclear holocaust during the 'Cuban missile crisis' of 1962. The duty of the revolutionary proletariat in the face of the imperialist outcry remains what it has been since 1917: unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and the gains of October.

The international Spartacist tendency responded to Carter's war threats with the call: 'Hail Red Army!' In London the Spartacist League organised a picket of the US Embassy under the banner 'For Red Army -- Against Islamic reaction!' A similar demonstration was organised by the SL/US in San Francisco. We repeat today what we said during the US-backed Chinese invasion of Vietnam last year -- should the Soviet Union be pitted militarily against the imperialist powers:

'In this conflict the Trotskyists know where they stand: shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet workers against the counterrevolutionary attack. The Fourth International was founded on the principle of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union and we will not flinch in the decisive hour!' (*Workers Vanguard* no 226, 2 March 1979)

And in the decisive hours of the last month, the social-democratic misleaders of the workers movement knew where they stood: shoulder to shoulder with the imperialists. The Labour Party and TUC bureaucrats who defend the murderous role of *British* troops in Ireland and Rhodesia reapt to denounce 'Soviet aggression' in Afghanistan and join the cold war cries for 'Soviet troops out'. Howling like the rest for Soviet blood were the 'Eurocommunist' parties of Spain, Italy and Great Britain. In the case of the CPGB at least, falling in step behind the Iron Lady's raving anti-Sovietism has provoked apparently widespread internal dissatisfaction (reflected in part by the receptivity among CPGB members to the SL's propaganda on the question). The hard-line pro-Moscow parties, like the New Communist Party, continued to plead the Kremlin's case for SALT II and 'peaceful coexistence' with an imperialism clearly talking war, but at least they stood apart from the chauvinist pack.

Crawling before imperialism

Which is more than can be said of the *fake* Trotskyists. In a knee-jerk capitulation to imperialist war hysteria and social-democratic anti-communism they scrambled to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the Soviet state they formally claim to defend. The Labour loyalists of *Workers Action* (26 January) spent weeks building up to a hysterical ranting diatribe against 'the rulers of the USSR [who] will erect a tyrannical, bureaucratic regime over the Afghan masses, to oppress them and to suck their blood'. They feigned 'disdain to join the imperialist outcry for Russian troops to withdraw' but join the cry 'for the withdrawal of Russian troops' they did! The Workers Socialist League (WSL) signalled its capitulation by its front-page banner (*Socialist Press*, 9 January) 'For an Independent Soviet Afghanistan' -- in a country of two factories, 250,000 'independent' mullahs and a mosaic of tribal peoples overlapping the Soviet borders. Obligated to mutter a perfunctory defencist statement, these 'left' attorneys for the Afghan 'national rights' so dear to imperialism hid it under a mound of the most vitriolic Stalinophobia: denouncing a 'ruthless', 'gangster-style coup' and a 'redivision of the world' based on a 'counter-revolutionary pact between Stalinism and imperialism' -- a pact of which imperialism is clearly unaware.

But it was the International Marxist Group (IMG) which buckled the most dramatically, screaming in bold type, 'Soviet Troops out of

Afghanistan!' from the back page of *Socialist Challenge* (3 January). Thus did the IMG surpass even the current object of their attentions, the state-capitalist British Socialist Workers Party (SWP) -- who declared open season on 'red imperialism' thirty years ago -- in offering a lead to 'third camp' anti-Sovietism. A week later *Socialist Challenge* reaffirmed its anti-Soviet line in an unsigned article and through a centrespread display featuring a photo of bristling Soviet tanks menacingly occupying the page above a large headline which read: 'WHY SOVIET TANKS ARE ROLLING AGAIN'.

So blatant a capitulation was this that it was clearly too much even for the IMG. One letter to the 17 January issue expressed 'shock' to 'find *Socialist Challenge* dancing to the tune of the US State Department'. An editorial in the same issue announced a retreat (of sorts):

'We dissociate ourselves utterly from the bu-

reaucratic and reactionary motivation behind the Soviet invasion, but in the present situation a call for the immediate withdrawal of troops would be tantamount to being in favour of the victory of the rightist forces and the reversal of any gains by the Afghan workers and peasants in the last decades.'

Defence of the Soviet Union? Not a whisper! Imperialist reversal of the gains of the *Soviet* workers and peasants? No concern. Not once in the past month -- as Carter hurls one bellicose threat after another at the USSR, as the front pages of the bourgeois press daily and monotonously regurgitate some new anti-Soviet diatribe -- has the IMG *raised*, much less affirmed, the Trotskyist stance of Soviet defencism. (Indeed the 10 January *Socialist Challenge* even went so far as to deny the cold war of the fifties had been primarily targeted at the USSR

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Spartacists picket US Embassy

'Smash US war threats - defend the USSR!'



Spartacist Britain

'For the Red Army -- Against Islamic reaction!' read the Spartacist League banner at a January 12 protest picket in front of the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London. For nearly an hour, before closing with a brief rally and the singing of the Internationale, over forty supporters of the SL and others demonstrated their support for the Red Army presence in Afghanistan in the face of the imperialist cold-war hysteria. Placards reading 'For military defence of the Soviet Union', 'Smash Carter/Thatcher/NATO anti-Soviet war drive' and 'Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples' were complemented by spirited chants including 'Trotsky's Red Army will win again, for a world socialist party' and 'Smash Carter/Brzezinski, for a Soviet America'.

The protest was a sharp internationalist response to the wave of imperialist anti-Sovietism inundating the bourgeois press -- and echoed by much of the left. In the midst of a bitter nationwide steel strike, the pro-capitalist labour bureaucrats have been working overtime to line up the working class in the camp of Margaret Thatcher; even as British imperialist troops were shooting down nationalist guerrillas in Rhodesia, the class traitors in the Labour and trade union bureaucracies were exhorting 'Soviet aggression'. Predictably, none of the numerous ostensibly communist groups contacted by the SL to participate in

the picket sent any supporters. Indeed, so flagrant has been the capitulation of most of the British left that a headline in the *Times* (10 January) was able to crow gleefully, 'British left condemns intervention by Moscow'.

'This picket proves that that blanket statement is not true', declared SL spokesman Alastair Green in his speech to the rally. 'We have nothing in common with Thatcher and Carrington, Carter and Brzezinski -- the butchers of Vietnam, of Ireland, today of Rhodesia again. These are the bitter enemies of the world working class.' The protesters addressed this point with chants of 'Get the Iron Lady -- General strike now' and 'SWP, IMG, running dogs of the bourgeoisie'.

After denouncing the Stalinist policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism and raising the call for workers political revolution to oust the bureaucratic usurpers, Green directed his fire at those who cringe in the face of imperialist threats:

'It's direct appeasement of imperialism; it's the rotten politics of the social democracy, of capitalist poison within the workers movement. In the midst of the steel strike, in the midst of class war against the Tories -- they push the Iron Lady's foreign policy.... 'Comrades, the liberation of the Afghani masses has begun. Hail the Red Army!'

General strike...

(Continued from page 1)

the cops and the courts. They have thrown aside many of the bureaucratic shackles imposed by their defeatist, pro-capitalist misleaders. They have demanded that the strike demands officially include opposition to BSC's swingeing proposals for mass redundancies and plant closures in addition to the issue of pay. Every day platoons of flying pickets -- the 'Rotherham Red Army' -- have fanned out to stop steel transport and private production up and down the country. In conjunction with blacking by transport and other unions they have tied up millions of tons of steel on the docks and elsewhere.

Their militant action is biting hard. Layoffs are spreading throughout industry, and they will spread even more rapidly as steel stocks are further depleted. It is time for the strike to spread as well. It is time to stop this hated government and the ruling class it represents. The steel workers are courageously leading the way. They must not continue to fight alone against a capitalist class united in its determination to drive every sector of this society to ruin in an attempt to restore the profitability of decrepit British capitalism on the backs of the workers.

When Bill Sirs told a 2000-strong strikers' rally in Sheffield on January 21 that he was seeking a 'decent' compromise with management, militants there responded with a chorus of boos, while some called for a general strike. When 20,000 Welsh workers streamed through the streets of Cardiff on January 28 they demanded 'All Out!' Don't wait to be laid off: *All out -- now!*

The steel workers have set the stage for a united working-class counter-offensive against



Flying pickets outside private steel firm in Sheffield

the blistering assault on their living standards and trade union organisations. Now is the time to bury the Prior 'Employment Bill'; to reverse the wave of plant closures which are sending workers in their thousands onto the dole queues; to restore the social services ravaged by the government's austerity policies; to reinstate Derek Robinson and the other trade unionists victimised in the government's drive to emasculate the workers' organisations. Now is the time for a general strike to fight for all of these demands. The TUC must stop its do-nothing blustering and its sellout manoeuvres and call a *general strike now!* National and regional strike committees must be elected by the rank and file to make sure the strike stops at nothing short of victory; mass pickets and trade union defence guards must be organised to stop all attempts at scabbing. Join the steel strikers -- shut down Thatcher's Britain!

Bankrupt British capitalism

Workers in this country have had to put up with talk of the need for 'sacrifice' for far too long. Today steel workers are told that BSC is broke ... so jobs and pay must go down the drain. No way! BSC is a product of the dead-end social-democratic project of piecemeal nationalisations in a capitalist economy. A combination of more efficient competition from

countries like Germany and Japan, a major downturn in the capitalist market for steel, grossly incompetent management, and a huge and ever-growing debt repayment to the former private owners (due to the Wilson Labour government's lavish terms of compensation) have brought the company to the point where it is losing nearly £1 million a day. But the workers must not pay the price for capitalism's failure.

It's not even as if British steel plants are particularly antiquated and inefficient (like much of the country's industrial base); in fact BSC wants to shut down some of the most modern of its factories built in the post-war period. Under a rationally planned socialist economy these plants would be put to good and productive use. But capitalism can only squander the resources and productive forces of society, consistently declaring war on the jobs and livelihoods of working people in its drive for profits.

While in opposition, the Tories commissioned a secret internal report outlining a future government strategy for restoring profitability to bankrupt British capitalism. The key was taking on and defeating a few key sectors of the working class which were considered trade union weak spots. Thatcher & Co are now trying to implement this policy. All their talk about 'non-interference' in industrial disputes is a farce: everybody knows that the Tories stood behind Sir Michael Edwardes when he sacked Leyland Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson last November; just as everybody knows that Thatcher/Joseph stand one hundred per cent with Sir Charles Villiers and BSC management today.

The Tories thought the steel workers would be an easy target. The major union, the ISTC, has one of the most encrusted and conservative bureaucracies in the entire labour movement. It has virtually no tradition of militancy or

internal democracy. The Tories thought that a workforce demoralised by years of defeats and bureaucratic betrayal would be a push-over. But the fighting spirit and organisation of the strikers -- truly amazing for a group of workers with so little recent history of struggle -- have proved them dead wrong.

But this is no thanks to Bill Sirs and the TUC leaders. All they have tried to do from day one is sell short and sell out the fight, trying to make productivity deals with BSC management and the government which would only mean worsened working conditions and still more jobs lost. Their phoney 'answer' to redundancies is to call for protectionist import controls on steel and coking coal. In this way they serve to line up the work-

ers with -- not against -- 'their' bosses in the inter-imperialist rivalry which eventually means world war.

As for their political counterparts in the Labour Party, Callaghan & Co have throughout the strike acted as open strikebreakers, calling for *government intervention to stop the strike* and for 'equal sacrifice' for all workers through new Social Con-trick wage controls. And Labour 'left' Tony Benn, who has been making many a militant noise since his days in the strike-breaking Callaghan Cabinet, recently closed ranks once again with his former boss around the call for new wage controls.

Get Thatcher! The workers must rule!

The actions of militants in Yorkshire and elsewhere have ensured that the strike has bitten deep. But this strike needs a leadership that goes much further. While right and 'left' bureaucrats alike can talk of a '1926 situation' they all oppose flatly the idea of *calling for a general strike to smash the Tory/employer offensive*. For all his talk about supporting the strike Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill kept ordering his members to handle steel, and even sanctioned the movement of steel between mines, until four weeks into the strike. And the pseudo-revolutionaries like the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party and International

Marxist Group are so busy tailing 'lefts' like Scargill and Benn and so wedded to business-as-usual economism that *none* has campaigned for the patently obvious and necessary general strike call.

Simple economist trade union struggle -- however militant -- is not enough. In his book *In Place of Fear*, Aneurin Bevan related the following conversation between Liberal Prime Minister Lloyd George and leaders of the Triple Alliance of miners (including Robert Smillie), transport workers and railwaymen during the industrial upsurge of 1919:

"But if you do so [call a general strike]", went on Mr Lloyd George, "have you weighed the consequences? The strike will be in defiance of the Government of the country and by its very success will precipitate a constitutional crisis of the first importance. For, if a force arises in the State which is stronger than the State itself, then it must be ready to take on the functions of the State, or withdraw and accept the authority of the State."

"Gentlemen", asked the Prime Minister quietly, "have you considered, and if you have, are you ready?"

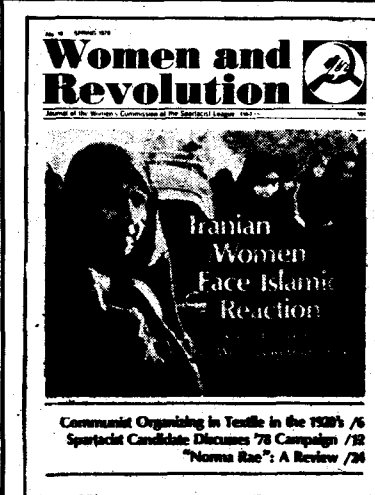
"From that moment on", said Robert Smillie, "we were beaten and we knew we were".

Reformists, no matter how left their rhetoric, are committed to defence of the capitalist system. They will never be ready to lead to victory a struggle which threatens the class rule of the bourgeoisie; they will always be beaten in the decisive moment by their fear of proletarian revolution. They will attempt to head off until the last minute a general strike because a general strike necessarily poses the question of power.

But that is precisely the question which must be posed in Britain today. The British bourgeoisie is not fit to run a pig sty. The countless youth who have given up all hope of finding work, the pensioners condemned to die of 'hypothermia', the middle classes facing incessant rates rises and price increases -- they will either be swept behind a working class committed to a victorious fight against capitalism or they will be ultimately driven into the waiting arms of the fascists. Only the working class has the organisation, the social power and the tradition of common struggle to fight for their needs and win.

A fight must be waged for work sharing on full pay to provide jobs for all, for massive across-the-board increases in wages and pensions coupled with a sliding scale of rises pegged to every increase in the cost of living, for an elevation of the living standards of British workers to something at least approximating the level of the advanced industrial society this is *supposed* to be. However in today's Britain it is increasingly impossible even to pay heating bills without confronting the need for a fundamental reorganisation of society. And for all its occasional rhetoric about the utopia of Clause Four 'socialism', the current leadership of the working class is incapable of leading a struggle through to that conclusion.

A general strike is necessary in order to carry the steel strikers who have fought so long and hard forward to a victory; it is necessary to reverse the outrageous attacks of the Tory government. Even under a non-revolutionary leadership it *could* achieve such aims. But in the course of such a struggle -- which could pave the way to a pre-revolutionary situation -- the most militant elements of the working class could be broken from the dead-end of reformism if presented with a revolutionary alternative. Above all, the working class desperately needs a mass revolutionary workers party, based firmly on the programme of Trotskyism, to lead the struggle for a workers government. ■



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Militant Sunday speeches but...

Robinson conference resolves to do nothing

The 'Reinstate Robinson Conference' held in Birmingham on January 13 was designed from the outset as a substitute for the militant industrial *action* needed to actually get the BL Longbridge convenor reinstated. When tens of thousands of car workers walked out on strike following his outrageous sacking last November, leading Communist Party trade unionist Derek Robinson and his reformist colleagues in the Leyland Combine Committee went so far as to talk about fighting for a general strike. But they rapidly knuckled under in the face of the AUEW bureaucracy's sellout scab 'inquiry'. The conference, convened more than six weeks later by the Austin Joint Shop Stewards Committee, was a sop to the angry militants who were ready for a fight to get the victimisation reversed.

With Jack Adams, CPer and secretary of the Combine Committee in the chair, one speaker after another got up to compete in empty moral outrage and tough-sounding Sunday speeches. Many lobbied for their chauvinist protectionist schemes for import controls to 'save' BL at the expense of foreign workers. Robinson himself had essentially nothing to say but to thank everyone for coming, while Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill gave his normal rousing 'less talk, more action' speech ... and as usual wanted someone else to initiate the action. Finally the conference organisers pushed through a resolution pledging 'full support for whatever [?!] action necessary' to secure Robinson's reinstatement. Naturally, not a single concrete action was proposed.

But many of the 1000 trade unionists who came to the conference obviously had more in mind than vacuous resolutions. AUEW district organiser Bill Jordan's speech in defence of Duffy's 'inquiry' was nearly drowned out by chants of 'scab' and 'out, out, out'. This contrasted sharply with the loud applause from hundreds of militants in the hall which greeted EETPU member and Spartacist League (SL) supporter Chris Taylor's call to dump the 'license for scabbing' and strike BL immediately. Taylor, the only

left-of-CP speaker at the conference, noted that the hall contained a cross-section of militants from the most important industries in the country, and pointed out that the union officials present -- including the effective core leadership of the West Midlands car unions -- had and *should be using* the power to organise strike action in defence of Robinson. Linking the struggle in BL to the steel strike and the fight against the Prior Bill, he went on to stress the need for a *general strike* to beat back the Tory/employer war on the unions, adding, 'The question is, who rules, brothers? We need a workers government and the expropriation of the capitalist class as a whole.'

The enthusiastic applause which interrupted this speech at several points provided striking evidence that many militants were looking for a fighting alternative to the all-talk-no-action course offered by both the CP and the right wing. The Stalinist New Communist Party was compelled to note the impact of this class-struggle alternative by singling it out for attack in its press as the sole stance against 'unity' -- ie the cosy unity of the reformists and the bosses!

The reception given Taylor's hard-hitting speech also irked Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL), which ludicrously attacked it in the January 16 issue of *Socialist Press* for being 'soft on the AUEW bureaucrats'

and raising 'abstract calls for a general strike' (this only one week before *Socialist Press* ran its own banner headline calling for a general strike!). There can only be one explanation for the WSL's feeble and stupid 'polemic' which ends with a ringing call for a lobby of the AUEW executive and 'preparations' for strike action. It must be difficult indeed for a cynical workerist like Thornett -- notorious for his scabbing on the national engineering strike at BL Cowley last summer -- to explain to the WSL membership why the supposedly 'irrelevant' revolutionary politics of the SL strike such a resonant chord among militant workers. Strike to reinstate Derek Robinson -- General strike now! ■



Spartacist supporter addressing Robinson defence conference, January 13, Birmingham

250,000 strike in Wales

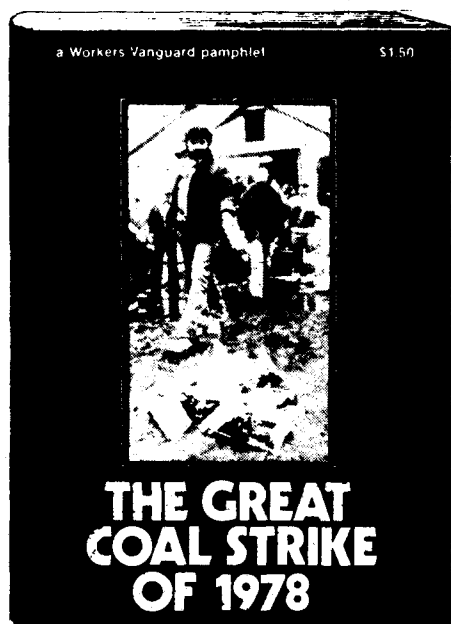
Cardiff, January 28 -- More than twenty thousand steel workers, miners and others marched through the city today as part of the one-day general strike called by the Welsh TUC against closures and redundancies. Their mood was bitter and determined; the streets resounded with the chant 'All out, all out!', interspersed with frequent calls for an indefinite general strike. An estimated 250,000 took part in the strike throughout Wales. They know that the BSC's 'rationalisation' scheme would not only axe two-thirds of the remaining jobs in Welsh steel but would also mean the loss of up to 40,000 jobs in related industry, including the majority of South Wales miners.

Under the gun from angry Welsh workers, the Welsh TUC was originally forced to call an indefinite, all-out general strike slated to begin on January 21. But the bureaucrats soon predictably knuckled under to pressure from the TUC and other national union leaders by 'postponing' the indefinite general strike until March and calling a one-day action for January 28 to allow militants an opportunity to blow off steam. Strikers' anger over this back-stabbing move was evident at the packed-out rally held in Sophia Gardens following the march. George Wright, general secretary of the Welsh TUC, was greeted with a chorus of 'scab, scab, scab' as he tried to begin his speech, while arch-traitor Michael Foot, Callaghan's left-

hand man in the last strikebreaking Labour government, was also repeatedly heckled.

However, ISTC General Secretary Bill Sirs received loud applause as he approached the microphone to speak. Faced with the threat of jail if the ISTC continues the private sector strike in defiance of Lord Denning's ruling, and under pressure from a packed-out hall of angry strikers, Sirs waxed much more 'militant' than is his usual wont. Warming up to the role of martyr, he nevertheless promised absolutely *nothing* concrete. Indeed, he boasted that: 'A general strike is the last thing people in a responsible position want; but we will do whatever we have to do.... God forbid we should ever have to take that step.'

The cowardly ISTC executive and TUC leaders have consistently refused to launch the all-out national general strike action necessary to smash the Tory government's offensive. For Welsh workers the stakes in the current dispute are particularly high. Unless the working class defeats the BSC 'rationalisation' scheme and the many other Thatcher/Joseph attacks, the entire industrial base of this area -- with its long and proud history of trade union organisation and militant working class struggle -- could be shattered. Stop the stalling and back-stabbing! For an all-out general strike -- not just one day and not just Wales -- but *throughout Britain and now!* ■



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Son of Mitterrand meets Son of Peron

Lambert-Moreno: the most rotten bloc

For the last three years the Argentine adventurer Nahuel Moreno has been charging around the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' (USec) looking for an issue to provoke a split in this chaotic gang of renegades from Trotskyism. After breaking with the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) over the latter's 'State Department socialist' line on Portugal in 1975, he flirted for about a year with the USec majority headed by Ernest Mandel, then decided to set up his own Bolshevik Faction (BF) in 1978. Decker out with an abstract leftist platform accusing Mandel of tailing Eurocommunism and the SWP of neo-Kautskyism, Moreno began swashbuckling through Latin America, capturing clots of militants in several countries with lightning raids and bureaucratic expulsions. He then headed for Europe, hoping to grab a piece of the perennially crisis-ridden USec sections on the Old Continent by presenting an efficient, well-financed machine always on the move with a new campaign to win the eye of the masses. And scouring the globe for hot spots, Moreno finally found his vehicle: the struggle against Nicaraguan tyrant Somoza led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

But it didn't turn out exactly as expected. Moreno first dreamed up the Simon Bolivar Brigade (BSB) as a publicity apparatus to make a name for the BF and as a pressure group to push the FSLN to the left. But soon after the US puppet dictator fled in late July, the Morenoite-led BSB got into hot water with the Sandinista tops. After little more than a week of organising unions and urging local militias to hold on to their arms, the Brigade got the axe from the new junta. On August 17 the BSB was rounded up and herded onto planes for Panama, where several of the brigaders were beaten by the National Guard. That might have been the end of the episode, except that SWP and Mandelite representatives in Managua publicly endorsed the deportations. Moreno may have lost his chance for a big-time operation in Nicaragua, but he got his pretext to split the USec. In a series of *diktats* the United Secretariat ordered the BF to cease operating and expelled leaders of the allied Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT); in turn the BF and LTT walked out with their troops -- not even bothering to show up at the '11th World Congress' to protest the expulsions.

Following the rupture of the United Secretariat in October there has now arisen a competing international conglomeration which claims the allegiance of 'a majority of the organisations, tendencies and militants who can legitimately claim to stand for the Fourth International'. Moreno has teamed up with Pierre Lambert's French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), the Lambertist LTT and the OCI's satellites in the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) to form the 'Parity Committee for the Reconstruction (Reconstruction) of the Fourth International'. The Parity Committee directs its fire at the USec's liquidationist policies on Nicaragua and in particular against the SWP's 'Castroite leadership'.

Increasingly under the ascendancy of the reformist American SWP, currently led by Jack Barnes, the USec committed crimes against the workers' cause in Nicaragua, including alleged fingering (which has not been denied) of the Simon Bolivar Brigade to the FSLN. For organisations that call themselves Trotskyist, the SWP/USec's string of betrayals is truly breathtaking: political support to a class-collabor-

ationist government, advocating popular-front alliances with capitalist forces, calling for imperialist 'aid' to the 'revolutionary' ruling junta, opposition to 'risky' nationalisations and 'irresponsible' union demands, praise for disarming the masses, approval of bourgeois repression against the left, and ordering the dissolution of both USec sympathising groups in the country.

But although on the single issue of policy toward the victorious FSLN in Nicaragua the Parity Committee stands to the left of the United Secretariat, the new Morenoite/Lambertist bloc offers no alternative for would-be Trotskyists. In fact, this marriage of convenience is even more incompatible than the perennially factionally-polarised USec itself: the OCI is a staid social-democratic organisation with a pronounced case of Stalinophobia, while Moreno is an adventurer setting out to build a personal international with a programme of infiltrating all manner of 'Third World' nationalist-bonapartist regimes. Here is the fake-Trotskyist rotten bloc of all time.

So much so that even the USec feels it can get away with accusing the Parity Committee of being an unprincipled combination! In response, OCI/OCRFI spokesman Stephane Just brags that 'We do not intend to mask the differences which exist among us.' Thus even after the advertised 'open conference', 'We will each keep "our own physiognomy and our own political positions"' (*Informations Ouvrières*, 10-17 November). Yet Just/Moreno both call on the components of the Parity Committee 'to fight for the construction of revolutionary parties' -- on whose positions?

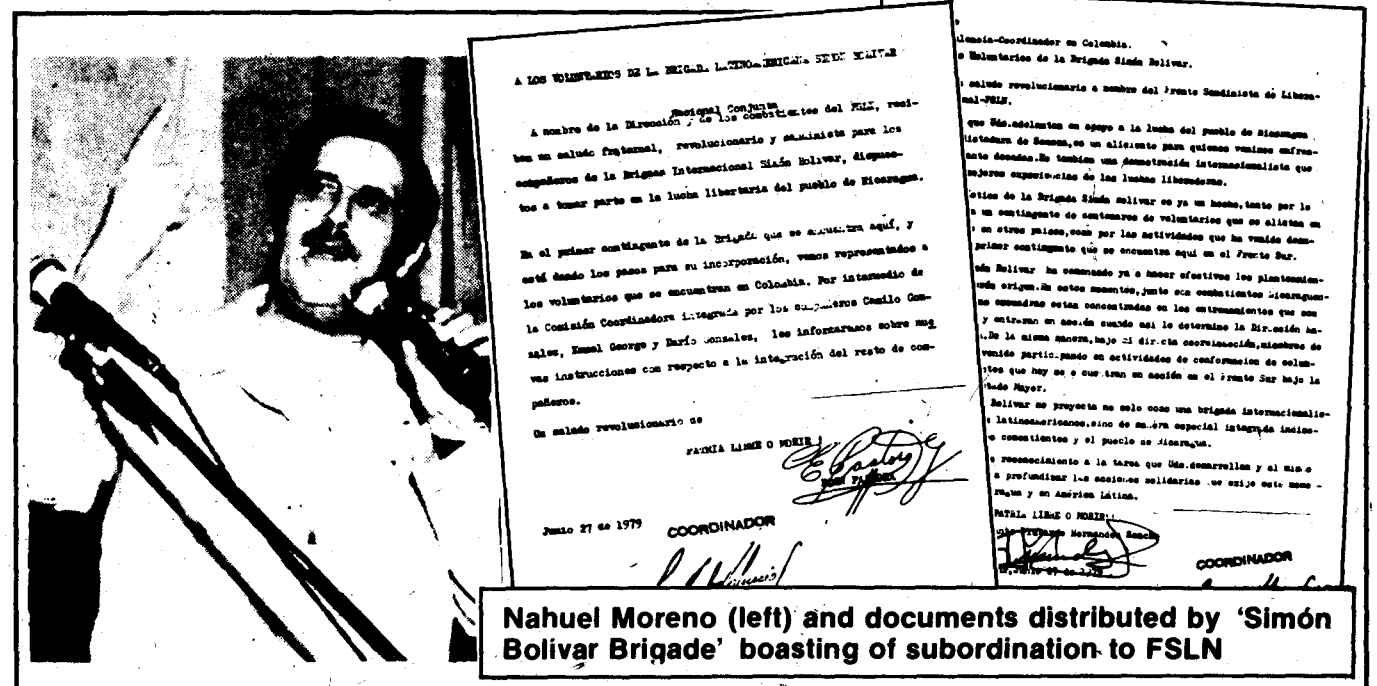
The bankruptcy of both sides in the USec split is revealed by the fact that what comes out of it is two blocs, each composed of a reformist and a centrist element. Moreno and Lambert are no more united politically than Mandel and Barnes. In fact, during 1976-77 it was Barnes/Lambert vs Mandel/Moreno, and before that it was Barnes/Moreno/Lambert against Mandel & Co in the perpetual game of fake-Trotskyist musical chairs.

In their statements since the USec split, the Parity Committee leaders have taken great pains

to portray themselves as consistent fighters against Pabloism. According to Nahuel Moreno, 'Even if the Nicaraguan revolution was the detonator for the current crisis', its origins go back to 'the terrible crisis in the Fourth International caused by the Pabloist deviation in 1951-53' of ordering deep entrism in the Kremlin-loyal CPs.

Entrism 'sui generis' in the pro-Moscow Stalinist parties, Pablo/Mandel's critical support to the bourgeois Bolivian government in 1952, Pablo's entry into the bourgeois-nationalist FLN government in Algeria in 1964 -- these are all Pabloist betrayals as is the SWP/USec line toward the FSLN. LTT leader C Nemo also cites Mandelite support for Latin American 'focoism' (Guevarist guerrillaism), subsequent chasing after 'new mass vanguards' in Europe and fostering illusions in Eurocommunism. But why these particular examples -- isn't something missing? What we have here is self-amnestying by means of a selective presentation of history. Moreno leaves an important gap in his supposed unrelenting struggle against Pabloism -- namely the 'reunification' of 1963 and subsequent years. And there's one example he doesn't cite -- the most relevant one, in fact -- Cuba.

The parallels between events in Nicaragua today and the early years of the Castro regime are inescapable. Cuba is a key issue for Trotskyists because there for the first time a radical petty-bourgeois leadership without previous connections with Stalinism (unlike in China, Vietnam or Yugoslavia) took power and expropriated essentially the entire bourgeoisie, instituting a collectivist economic system. This raised basic questions for the theory and programme of permanent revolution. The response of the US SWP, and the basis for forming the United Secretariat, was to throw the 'old Trotskyism' out the window: the peasantry could replace the working class as the leading force, and where previously a Leninist-Trotskyist party was deemed necessary now the 'blunted instrument' of a guerrilla band would do. (The fact that what resulted was a bonapartist regime counterposed to workers democracy, which in foreign policy necessarily followed the Stalinist-nationalist line of conciliating imperialism, was of no concern to the



Nahuel Moreno (left) and documents distributed by 'Simón Bolívar Brigade' boasting of subordination to FSLN

Pabloists.) Moreno also took this tack; if anything, prior to 1968 he was even more enthusiastically pro-Castro than his SWP mentors. Lambert, however, answering with a knee-jerk pseudo-orthodoxy, blindly denied that there had been a social revolution in Cuba. For two decades the OCI called Castro's regime a 'phantom capitalist state'.

So coming from opposite directions the Lambertists and Morenoites both found themselves saddled with positions on Cuba which made it difficult to do battle with the SWP/USec over Nicaragua. (Barnes/Mandel could at least claim consistency in their opportunism.) As a result, in the past few months both the OCI and Bolshevik Faction have come out with documents which for the first time characterise Cuba as something approximating a deformed workers state. Yet both make the shift furtively. The BF has a convenient lapse of memory -- ignoring Moreno's previous support to the USec position -- simply stating that Castro & Co are a 'leadership with a petty-bourgeois bureaucratic policy placed at the head of a workers state which never managed to degenerate because it was born deformed...' (Resolucion sobre America Latina', September 1979). The OCI, however, wants to hold onto its old position with one hand, labelling it one variant -- 'plausible at the time it was formulated' -- which was not realised. Instead, 'Another variant took shape: the constitution of a workers state resembling the workers states which were bureaucratic from the beginning' (*La Verite* no 588, September 1979). It took them only 19 years to figure it out!

The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency had been calling for a change in the USec position on Cuba for some time, and thus could not dismiss the importance of the question as lightly as the BF and OCI try to. But their claim that 'The New Leadership of the Socialist Workers Party Lines Up With Castro's Policy' (*Tribune Ouvriere* no 1, November 1979) is patently absurd: the SWP has supported Castroism since 1960.

Above all, the various components of the Parity Committee seek to avoid confronting both the programme and the struggle of the international Spartacist tendency. The iSt alone has put forward a coherent Trotskyist position on the Cuban question and from its origins as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) of the US SWP has consistently fought to politically destroy the Pabloist liquidators. The RT was unique in analysing, at the time, the origins of the Cuban deformed workers state and its meaning for the Trotskyist programme (see 'Cuba and Marxist Theory', *Marxist Bulletin* no 8). In opposition to the SWP leadership's resolution, 'For Early Reunification of the Trotskyist Movement', which became the founding document of the United Secretariat, the Revolutionary Tendency presented a counter-resolution to the June 1963 SWP convention, which states:

'13. The Cuban Revolution has exposed the vast inroads of revisionism upon our movement.... Thus Trotskyists are at once the most militant and unconditional defenders against imperialism of both the Cuban Revolution and of the deformed workers' state which has issued therefrom. But Trotskyists cannot give confidence and political support, however critical, to a governing regime hostile to the most elementary principles and practices of workers' democracy, even if our tactical approach is not as toward a *hardened* bureaucratic caste.

'14. What is true of the revisionists' approach toward the Castro regime is even more apparent in regard to the Ben Bella regime now governing Algeria on the program of a 'socialist' revolution in cooperation with French imperialism.... As revolutionaries our intervention in both revolutions, as in every existing state, must be in accordance with the position of Trotsky: "We are not a government party; we are the party of irreconcilable opposition" (*In Defense of Marxism*). This can cease to apply only in relation to a government genuinely based on workers' democracy.

'15. Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerrilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-

working-class bureaucratic regime. The creation of such regimes has come about under the conditions of decay of imperialism, the demoralisation and disorientation caused by Stalinist betrayals, and the absence of revolutionary Marxist leadership of the working class. Colonial revolution can have an unequivocally progressive significance only under such leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. For Trotskyists to incorporate into their strategy revisionism on the *proletarian* leadership in the revolution is a profound negation of Marxism-Leninism no matter what pious wish may be concurrently expressed for "building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries". ('Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International', *Spartacist* no 1, February-March 1964)

Here is a programme to fight Pabloism which provides real direction in arming communists for the test of Nicaragua. And it wasn't



Popular fronts for all seasons: Moreno's former hero Castro (top) hailed Allende's 'peaceful road' -- here reviewing troops with butcher Pinochet in 1971. OCI supported French SP leader Mitterand (above), flanked by former Union of the Left colleagues Fabre and Marchais

written yesterday.

Reforge the Fourth International!

Would-be Trotskyists in and around the United Secretariat now face hard choices. If they remain with the USec they must clearly be prepared to endure, endorse and carry out further betrayals on the order of Nicaragua or worse -- including turning in their own comrades. If they support Barnes they had better have strong stomachs -- strong enough to swallow the SWP's pro-imperialist 'neutrality' during the South African invasion of Angola. If they follow Mandel they may, like the British IMG, end up joining Jimmy Carter supporting Islamic reactionaries against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. And whether Mandelites or SWPers, they will find themselves chanting 'allah akhbar' and hailing the 'progressive' Khomeini in Iran while the ayatollah's executioners mow down Kurds, Arabs, oil workers and women (and of course put their own comrades on death row). These are the standard wages of Pabloism.

But what of those who turned their backs on the USec to follow the Parity Committee? Moreno, it's true, looks pretty left in Europe today -- hard against Eurocommunism, for a 'Trotskyist party' in Nicaragua, 'fight Pabloism' -- and no doubt his Bolshevik Faction has attracted genuine leftists disgusted with the USec's record of sellouts. But Moreno is above all a charlatan. A reformist in Argentina, he now appears

as a centrist. From Moreno the Peronist, the Castroite, the Maoist, the social democrat, we come to Moreno the heroic guerrilla and intrepid fighter against Pabloism! But offer him a cabinet post and he'll come full circle.

Moreno, who criticises Mandel for capitulating to the Eurocommunists, is now aligned with the OCI, politically somewhere to the right of Willy Brandt. Join up with Lambert and you better like being ideological front-men for the CIA! In France the Lambertists voted for the popular-front candidate, Socialist leader Francois Mitterand, for president. In Portugal they backed the SP of Mario Soares when he was receiving CIA money and in league with fascists burning down CP offices. In Germany they call for a 'national constituent assembly' and 'unconditional reunification' -- ie, for liquidation of the social/economic gains of East Germany through a *capitalist* reunification. So Stalinophobic is the OCI that for it 'Eurocommunism' was a plot hatched in Moscow; the class character of the Kremlin bureaucracy is defined simply as 'bourgeois', even though it rests on the property forms established by the October Revolution; and internationally the USSR is supposedly in an unbreakable 'Holy Alliance contracted by the bureaucracy with imperialism', established at Potsdam and Yalta and unaffected by such vicissitudes as even the Cold War.

The unprincipled character of the Parity Committee is indicated by its very name. Here is what Trotsky had to say about such diplomatic combinations:

'The idea of "parity of formations", that is, of tendencies, is inherently absurd and vicious. The tendencies are not equal in numbers; but what is more important is the different ideological and political value of the tendencies. There are right and wrong tendencies, progressive and reactionary ones. Adventurists, who hold nothing sacred, may well accommodate themselves with all the possible tendencies. But Marxists are obliged to mercilessly fight the unprincipled tendencies and not to make alliances with them on an equal basis. The parity of tendencies means the parity of Marxism, centrism, adventurism, etc.' (L D Trotsky, *The Crisis of the French Section*)

In the contemporary Lambert/Moreno version, the components of the bloc can't even agree on a name expressing a common goal. It's not immediately apparent what the differences are between 'reconstruction' (OCI), 'reorganisation' (BF) and 'reunification' (Ligue Communiste Internationaliste [LCI], French LTT) of the Fourth International. Clearly all three formulations are intended to leave the door open to manoeuvres with elements of the USec leadership. Just as clearly, they stand in sharp contrast to the perspective indicated by the iSt's slogan 'For the rebirth of the Fourth International'. As we wrote in our 'Letter to the OCI/OCRFI':

'Our slogan implies that a very fundamental process must be gone through; that it is not possible simply to fit together existing bits and pieces, perhaps with a little chipping here or there, in order to get the edifice back together again.' (*Spartacist* no 22, Winter 1973-74)

There is also the 'open conference' announced by the Parity Committee as a forum to debate the fundamental issues facing ostensible Trotskyists. A number of European left-of-the-USec centrist organisations will grab for this the way a drowning man grabs a lifesaver. Unable to elaborate a coherent programme among themselves on such basic issues as popular fronts, the class nature of Castro's Cuba, Pabloism and the Fourth International, some hope that the Argentine *caudillo* can in bonapartist fashion bring them together before they go under for the last time in the pseudo-Trotskyist swamp. In the meantime the conference has apparently become rather less open. By mid-November the OCI was restricting attendance to those 'who justly claim to stand for the continuity of the Fourth International'. This explicitly includes the USec. ('The United Secretariat of the Fourth International is invited to participate...') and we leave it to our readers to figure out just who might be excluded by the OCI 'justly'.

The Lambertists have already given a hint, with their usual means of expression. On November 13 an OCI goon squad outside a meeting hall in Paris physically attacked a sales team of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, sympathising section of the iSt. In 'justification' of their slander and gangsterism the Lambertists have lately been saying that the Spartacist tendency is outside the bounds of the workers movement. Who are their authorities for deciding,

continued on page 8

Britain out of Rhodesia!

The black masses who have supported the Patriotic Front guerrilla alliance now face a bitter reality in Rhodesia. For years the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders, Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, have pleaded with British imperialist politicians to intervene on their behalf against the bloody white supremacist regime of Ian Smith. And now Margaret Thatcher and Lord Carrington have obliged -- the Patriotic Front has successfully negotiated the restoration of Rhodesia as a British colony. The British governor, Lord Soames, and his 1200 supporting Commonwealth troops have within less than a month succeeded in gaining partial control of the countryside on the basis of extending the Smith regime's hated State of Emergency Law, under which 11,000 supporters of the Patriotic Front remain in political detention. They have also effectively disarmed over 21,000 guerrilla fighters who are now being held in what amounts to concentration camps until after the national elections.

The Rhodesian Security Forces and the Patriotic Front guerrilla fighters were deemed 'equals' in the original Lancaster House agreement. But not only was Lord Soames quick to call upon the white-mercenary-ridden Security Forces to help round up the guerrillas, he openly lauded South Africa's contribution to Rhodesian internal 'security'.

Nkomo and Mugabe have done little more than issue verbal 'protests' in response, having now become more consumed than ever in pursuing their careers as bourgeois politicians. Of the two, Nkomo seems the front-runner as the alternative

choice of the imperialists to rule a neo-colonial Zimbabwe. By his ability to draw twice the crowds of the now largely discredited prime minister Bishop Muzorewa, the 'discipline' under which his troops have surrendered, and his 'war is war, let bygones be bygones' attitude, Nkomo continues to demonstrate that Lord Carrington's stated confidence in him has not been misplaced. Nkomo even won the praise of Ian Smith, who described him as a 'wily old political bird' with whom he could establish a working relationship.

Mugabe has received much less acclamation than Nkomo from the bourgeois press internationally since the official ceasefire on December 28. His troops have been more reluctant to come out of the bush and turn over their weapons to the white racists they have been fighting so bitterly for the past seven years. They have undoubtedly been thinking over the implications of what the *Economist* (5-11 January) calls the 'accidental?' death of their general Josiah Tongogara, and the unprovoked murder of seven of Nkomo's followers by the Rhodesian Security Forces. The reply of their leaders to these atrocities could hardly have calmed the fears of the guerrilla fighters: Mugabe muttered 'I never knew the Conservative Government capable of this degree of dishonesty', while Nkomo called for 4000 more imperialist troops.

Mugabe has, however, drawn even larger crowds than Nkomo since his return to the country. Although the government has moved to ban some of his campaign literature, the imperialists have noted Mugabe's 'reassuring remarks', typified by his praise for the 'efficiency' of large-scale

private farming in a country where most of the good farm land is owned by whites.

The Rhodesian 'peace' remains extremely fragile. Fighting could easily be set off again by more atrocities against the Patriotic Front forces, by a post-election alliance between Muzorewa, Sithole and Co to keep Mugabe and/or Nkomo out of the government or by an armed intervention by South Africa. Britain could still find itself fighting yet another dirty colonial war.

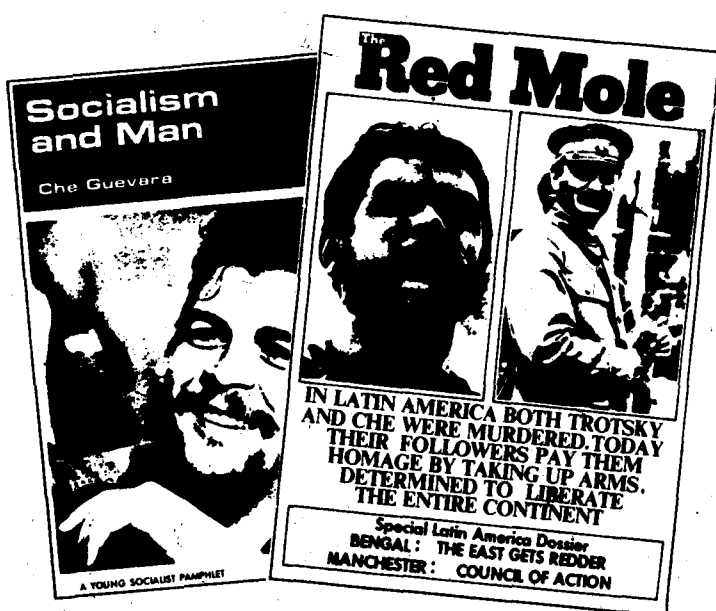
The lack of any protest over the despatch of troops to Rhodesia from the social-democratic misleaders of the labour movement in Britain only demonstrates once again the thoroughly pro-imperialist programme of these gentlemen. But virtually nothing, besides a few proforma paper protests, has been forthcoming from the groups to the left of the Labour Party either. This default is no doubt primarily due to their penchant for tailing petty-bourgeois nationalists like Nkomo and Mugabe -- precisely the people who welcomed the troops in the first place!

The Spartacist League demands the immediate withdrawal of the troops and colonial presence from Rhodesia. While standing intransigently for the smashing of white supremacy, we place absolutely no confidence in the proven neo-colonialist betrayers who lead the Patriotic Front. Our fight is for the programme of permanent revolution, embodied in a Leninist-Trotskyist party, which alone can lead the black masses of Zimbabwe to genuine liberation through proletarian socialist revolution throughout southern Africa. ■

Moreno/Lambert...

(Continued from page 7)

George Meany and Zbigniew Brzezinski? Those are the people who inspire the OCI line! But if the iSt is to be dismissed as 'provocateurs', whose agents are we supposed to be? The Kremlin's, say the Lambertists, pointing to our opposition to the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, support to Cuban troops in Angola against South Africa, and refusal to make common cause with Jimmy Carter on behalf of Soviet dissidents. US imperialism, says the SWP, because we refuse to back Khomeini in Iran and support the Somalis' right to self-determination against Soviet/Cuban-backed Ethiopia. Funny they can't agree. This kind of



As IMG's Red Mole and SWP pamphlet show, USec support to Castroism wasn't born yesterday

agent-baiting on the basis of political positions is a hallmark of Stalinism, but actually common to all reformists -- it is their favourite way of trying to dismiss revolutionaries.

The LCI claims that we proclaim ourselves the Fourth International. On the contrary, we have stated frankly that the iSt is a tendency fighting to reforge the world party of revolutionary socialism. And as an important component of our struggle to build fighting propaganda groups, we have used the tactic of revolutionary regroup-

ment through a process of splits and fusions with forces breaking from revisionism and seeking the road to authentic Trotskyism. In the aftermath of the revolutionary ferment in Portugal during 1974-76, the international Spartacist tendency put forward as a principled basis for such regroupments a draft declaration by Trotskyists expelled or driven out of the USec (see *Workers Vanguard* no 143, 4 February 1977). Centring on the struggle against popular frontism, for a Leninist party and for soviet power in Portugal, its nine points included:

- No political or electoral support to popular fronts; for conditional opposition to workers parties in open or implicit class-collaborationist coalitions;
- Uphold the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution; for proletarian leadership of the national/social struggle;
- For military support to petty-bourgeois nationalist forces fighting imperialism, but absolutely no political support to such forces; for Trotskyist parties in every country;
- For unconditional defence of all the deformed/degenerated workers states against imperialism; for political revolution against the bureaucracies; no political support to competing Stalinist cliques and factions;
- Against violence within the workers movement;
- For communist fractions in the unions, based on the Transitional Programme;
- For the communist tactic of the united front from above; for the tactic of regroupment to unite subjective revolutionists in the vanguard party; for intransigent exposure of centrism;
- Rejection of the claims of ostensibly Trotskyist internationals to speak for the Fourth International, destroyed by Pabloism in 1951-53;
- For the reforging of a democratic-centralist Fourth International which will stop at nothing short of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

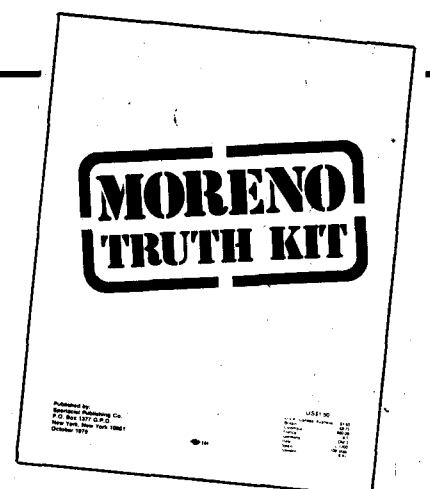
Today we must add that it was this programme which prepared the iSt to *uniquely* put forward a revolutionary perspective in Iran, demanding 'Down with the shah, Down with the mullahs' when virtually the entire left was praising Khomeini; and likewise led us to demand military victory to the FSLN-led insurgents in Nicaragua while calling not for a bonapartist Sandinista regime (as Moreno did and the SWP/USec now do) but for a workers and peasants government and a genuine-

ly independent Trotskyist party. Events such as the Chinese invasion of Vietnam have demonstrated the Marxist political capacity of the Spartacist tendency, which a decade ago predicted the present anti-Soviet imperialist alignment with the Maoist regime. Our modest but real industrial implantation has enabled us to carry out exemplary communist work in the unions as well as the recent demonstration of 500 black workers and Trotskyists in Detroit against fascist provocations. And internationally the iSt was able last year to hold its first delegated conference, which demonstrated the political solidity and combativity of our tendency.

Not rotten blocs of Pabloist betrayal, nor personalist 'internationals' of footloose adventurers. Finish the struggle announced by the then-revolutionary SWP's 1953 'Letter to Trotskyists Throughout the World': 'The lines of cleavage between Pablo's revisionism and orthodox Trotskyism are so deep that no compromise is possible either politically or organizationally'. For the rebirth of the Fourth International! --adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 247, 11 January 1980

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Leninist Faction statement:

'We will continue the fight for Trotskyist politics'

We reprint here a statement distributed by the Leninist Faction to the 'International Pre-Conference', a squalid little affair for homeless left-of-USec fake-Trotskyists hosted by the WSL in late December. All the WSL leadership could achieve from this weekend gathering, from which the LF was excluded, was the establishment of a 'Trotskyist International Liaison Committee' composed of itself, a couple of its tiny satellites in the US and Denmark, and the GBL of Italy. (The WSL's long-touted Greek co-thinkers, the CIL, failed to appear and have apparently broken with their former partners; the WSL simply avoids any mention of them in its reports of the conference.)

Socialist Press (23 January) quotes proudly a document by the GBL which just about sums up the centrist confusionism of this new mini-rotten-bloc: 'The Fourth International is not dead, nor has it been destroyed', they claim -- it is only 'organisationally scattered'. The LF's perspective of a programmatic fight to reforge the Fourth International through splits and fusions stands as a refreshing contrast to such centrist twaddle.

'The efforts of the centrists to reconcile the irreconcilable and to save, by means of patching the pieces, what is fated to be destroyed are foredoomed. The new epoch requires a new International. The primary condition for success on this road is the close consolidation nationally and internationally of the genuine proletarian revolutionaries, the disciples of Marx and Lenin, on a common programme, and under a common banner.' ('Open Letter for the Fourth International', 1935, Documents of the Fourth International, p72)

The WSL hosts this preconference towards the formation of an international tendency in disregard of this primary condition. Gathered here are disparate groups from different countries with no common programme or common banner. The split in the United Secretariat (USFI) -- following from its complete failure to uphold a revolutionary line in any recent events of the class struggle -- and the ferment among ostensible Trotskyists internationally have brought exceptional opportunities for revolutionary regroupment on a principled programme. But all the WSL can do is attempt to replicate in miniature the grander rotten blocs of Moreno/Lambert and Mandel/Barnes. And excluded from the conference and suspended from the WSL are the members and supporters of the Leninist Faction -- including three National Committee members (among them the National Secretary of the youth organisation) and members of area leaderships in London and Yorkshire. We are being bureaucratically witch-hunted because of our fight to turn the WSL away from the centrism of the majority leadership and onto the road of Trotskyism.

The Leninist Faction (formerly Left Tendency) was formed in May this year, taking as its starting point opposition to the WSL majority's international perspectives. We argued that, contrary to the assertions of the leadership, there is no 'world Trotskyist movement' encompassing everyone from the USFI to Moreno and Lambert

(and even Gerry Healy!), as well as the smaller groups gathered here this weekend. We said that the Fourth International could not simply be re-patched together but had to be rebuilt through a hard fight for the Trotskyist programme against the centrists and reformists internationally. Our critique of the leadership's document for this conference, 'The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle', centered on its utter failure to fight for such programmatic clarity, instead blurring over every question in a soggy mish-mash of abstract home-truths and blatant revisions of Trotskyism.

We raised and developed our differences on these and other questions -- notably Iran, the national question, the popular front and trade union work -- during the last seven months. And the response of the leadership was an apolitical wave of 'Spartacist'-baiting, culminating in a cowardly, bureaucratic suspension at the 1 December 'Special Conference' with a clear threat of expulsion if we refused to submit meekly and effectively renounce our political positions.

But we will not be silenced! We want to remain and fight within the WSL; however we will not tolerate or feel ourselves bound by this gross Healy-style suppression of our democratic rights. The Leninist Faction wishes to put its views before this conference, but since we have been denied the right to speak (or even attend) by the majority leadership, we have been forced to distribute this statement both to protest against our suppression and to put forward our positions. Anyone who is at all serious about fighting for the Trotskyist programme should demand that we be admitted to this conference, allowed to argue our positions, and reinstated with full democratic rights in the WSL.

The positions we have fought for

The basic thread running through the politics of the majority leadership is a failure to draw the class line, to understand the distinction between Menshevism and Bolshevism. Five months ago we wrote:

'The basis of Trotskyism as the revolutionary Marxism of today involves insistence on the distinct position of the working class as the only consistently revolutionary class. At no time can the dissolution of the proletariat -- either on the level of theory or practice -- into the "oppressed masses" in general be tolerated.' ('The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle -- A Critique', document of the Left Tendency)

The WSL majority fails to make such a distinction in its constant talk of the 'forward movement of the masses'. This is particularly clear on Iran. The leadership blinded itself to the fundamentally reactionary nature of the Islamic movement against the Shah, claiming instead that 'the Shah's regime ... has been swept aside by a mass movement at the head of which were the courageous strikes by workers in the oilfields, industry and government' ('The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle', p7). In fact, in the absence of a revolutionary leadership, the workers of Iran were tragically unable to provide a third road against both the dictatorial monarchy and Khomeini's would-be dictatorial theocracy. Contrary to the bankrupt assertions of the majority, the mullahs never played a 'progressive' role in Iran.

Similarly with the popular front. The WSL International Perspectives document of early 1978 argues against 'the treachery of the Popular Front -- which, by prostituting workers' independence to bourgeois political groupings can lead only to the consolidation of the power of the bourgeoisie, or in the worst instance, to a new Chile-style catastrophe' (reprinted in Socialist Press no 180). Nonetheless the leadership in practice pursues policies which help put popular fronts in power, using the mystification that voting for Allende in Chile, or for any workers party in a popular front, does not lead to such a consolidation and catastrophe! A line

must be drawn against popular frontism, including no votes to any of the components of such a bourgeois formation.

On the national question in Ireland and the Middle East the majority has similarly adapted politically to non-proletarian national movements like the IRA and PLO, again utterly failing to draw the class line. And the same holds true on the question where the majority claims to feel most confident -- trade union work.

The WSL sells its reputation internationally on the basis of its supposed serious fight in the working class and its 'worker base'. Yet the vast majority of this work is fake, mindless activism. And the 'worker base' really only exists at all in the Cowley British Leyland car plants, where the WSL and its allies hold the trade union leadership in the Assembly Plant. The woeful truth is that the organisation's record even here is light years removed from communist work in the trade unions.

This was most graphically demonstrated in September when the WSL committed an actual betrayal of principle. During the two-million-strong national engineers' strike there was a reactionary anti-strike revolt in Cowley. In the face of this Alan Thornett led the move (initially against others in the plant leadership) against setting up a picket line to stop the scabbing. Thus the WSL worked and led others to work during a national strike -- objectively scabbing on the strike. This is the sorry reality behind the organisation's 'mass work' facade.

The bureaucratic methods and centrist programme of the WSL leadership cannot draw any sort of principled line among the sundry groups attending this preconference. From our knowledge of most of these groups, it is apparent that they too have a centrist political record and methodology. For example, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency coexisted for many years in a rotten international bloc with the Lambertist OCI, and defends a conception of the 'anti-imperialist united front' which amounts to a political bloc with the 'national' bourgeoisie in Latin America. The Italian GBL has a rotten centrist position of voting for popular fronts which is very similar to that of the WSL majority. And as for the WSL's own long-standing international co-thinkers: the American SLDC is a grouping which openly supports the syndicalist positions of Albert Weisbord against Cannon and Trotsky by attempting 'mass trade union work' with about half-a-dozen people, while the Greek CIL upholds reactionary Healyite positions on the woman question and homosexuality and believes that the only forces which can contribute to rebuilding the Fourth International will derive from the International Committee tradition. Meanwhile British groups like the I-CL and Workers Power, which are every bit as close to (or far from) the WSL as the international invitees, have not been invited to participate in the proceedings for the sole reason that they compete with it on the British terrain.

continued on page 11

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Cowards flinch...

(Continued from page 3)

at all -- a cynical revision of post-war history.)

No, for the IMG what is at stake today is the reversal of 'any [...] gains by the Afghan workers and peasants'. What the IMG has done is borrowed from the revisionist arsenal of the American SWP, its reformist partner in the (partially) United Secretariat (USec), which over the years has honed to a fine edge its absurd head-in-the-sand proposition that the Soviet Union is not the primary military target of American imperialism in order to evade the Trotskyist responsibility for its defence. The SWP, too, denies that the belligerent American response to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan has anything to do with fears of Soviet influence but is directed instead against the gains of the 'Afghan revolution'. Though at least the more seasoned and talented revisionists of the SWP have the consistency to support the Soviet military intervention on this ludicrously narrow basis from the outset.

Thus the IMG's 'new' line is not a retreat from 'third campism' but a necessary refinement, adding a gloss of 'anti-imperialism'. The IMG's insidious allusion to the Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 ('Soviet tanks rolling *again*'), its carefully excerpted quote in the same issue of Trotsky explaining the harmful political consequences of



IMG joins Carter/Thatcher/Nato chorus

Stalin's invasions of Finland and Poland are designed to serve one purpose only: to *obliterate* the class line in military conflicts involving the Soviet Union. This is the stance of petty-bourgeois pacifism: all 'aggression' is bad, be it directed at the proletariat or the bourgeoisie.

The Soviet tanks rolling into Afghanistan were not on their way to crush an anti-bureaucratic workers' uprising or an incipiently pre-revolutionary situation but to quell a reactionary imperialist-backed insurgency on its borders. The former invasion Marxists oppose, the latter we hail! As for Finland and Poland, the IMG's use of Trotsky is disgusting rubbish! He fought *against* a petty-bourgeois opposition led by Shachtman/Burnham who -- like the IMG today -- refused to defend the Soviet troops. Trotsky would not have criticised -- much less opposed -- Stalin for invading Poland to wipe out a *rightist* threat. As Albert Goldman, spokesman for the proletarian majority in the then-Trotskyist American SWP explained:

'Had Stalin invaded Poland in order to struggle against Hitler, no class-conscious worker would have objected; it was criminal for him not only to invade Poland but to permit Hitler to seize the best section of Poland. The invasion, in and of itself, is not the crime. The circumstances under which it took place and the effects on the workers make it a crime.' (*Socialist Appeal*, 2 March 1940)

'Detente' -- a fool's paradise

Complementing the 'third camp' pacifism of the IMG/SWP is the class-collaborationist -- in-

herently reformist -- notion that imperialist war can be staved off through any means other than workers revolution -- eg 'peaceful coexistence' or 'classless' peace movements. Thus did the US SWP attempt to justify its popular-frontist antiwar movement in the sixties and its call for the Soviet Union to take the initiative in nuclear disarmament a decade later. Thus does the IMG today decry the 'Soviet Army's intervention into Afghanistan as a boost for that [imperialist] war drive' (*Socialist Challenge*, 24 January).

This is absurd. US imperialism's war drive needs no boost from the Soviet Army. The Soviet Union has been the strategic target of the Western imperialists for more than sixty years for the same reason that genuine revolutionists have unconditionally defended it: because the October Revolution ripped it free from capitalist exploitation. But for the might of the Soviet military/industrial powerhouse US imperialism might well *not* have hesitated in bombing Vietnam back into the stone age. Indeed:

'Any Kremlin regime which out of liberal illusions or bureaucratic mismanagement neglects the nuclear defense of the USSR and Eastern Europe is signing the death warrant of the Soviet state, which is historically progressive in relation to its capitalist imperialist enemies. Such a failure of Soviet military preparedness could open the way to a nuclear holocaust which would set mankind back many generations.' (*Workers Vanguard* no 169, 12 August 1977)

Against the stream

Trotskyists do not stand for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies simply out of contempt for their privileged parasitic status or out of abstract democratic sympathies, but first and foremost because they stand as an obstacle to the necessary defence and extension of the revolutions of which they leech. Unconditional military defence and workers political revolution are inextricably linked, part and parcel of the struggle for world proletarian revolution. To the Pabloist IMG, either one or both are expendable -- because Pabloism has no perspective or programme for world proletarian revolution.

As today the IMG rushes to 'dissociate' itself from the Soviet bureaucracy and in the process from the Soviet state as well, so five years ago did it rush to adulate the Stalinist misleaders of the Vietnamese revolution in the course of 'defending' that revolution. There is no contradiction here: Shachtmanism and Stalinism both identify the reactionary bureaucratic castes with the social forms upon which they rest. As Trotsky said of Shachtman/Burnham, 'by this they only demonstrate that their understanding of "defense" coincides essentially with the understanding of the opportunists; they do not think in terms of the independent politics of the proletariat' (*In Defense of Marxism*, p17).

And that is what the IMG's politics are all about -- a denial of the independent politics of the proletariat expressed in the Trotskyist programme. Because the essence of Pabloism is not, as often assumed in the British left, a capitulation to Stalinism, but a repudiation of the necessity for revolutionary leadership, of the primacy of the Trotskyist programme. Pabloism can as easily capitulate to Stalinophobia as to Stalinism, to dark Islamic reaction as to feminism. Rather than swim against the stream in defence of the historic interests of the proletariat, Pabloism liquidates into the cesspit of fleeting popularity.

Yesterday it was popular to hail the 'anti-imperialist' assassins of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, today to tail the anti-communist vultures intent on assassinating the revolution

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led by Lenin and Trotsky. And tomorrow? IMG members who are sick and tired of betrayals must draw the political lessons: a break with Pabloist liquidationism and a struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International based on the authentic Trotskyism of the international Spartacist tendency. ■

WSL expulsions...

(Continued from page 12)

creasingly brazen manoeuvres aimed at getting in with the 'big-time' fake-Trotskyists. First Thornett proposed a pact with Mandel's United Secretariat (USec) for the purpose of examining the 'objective possibility' of fusion. Then a few months later the National Committee made a headlong run to 'welcome' the rotten-bloc Parity Committee initiative of Moreno/Lambert. To date the end-product of all these opportunist gyrations has been nil. Instead the WSL is left stuck in a 'Liaison Committee' with its traditional miniscule sub-reformist partners in the US Socialist League (Democratic-Centralist), an even smaller Danish group, and the Italian GBL who have endeared themselves to Thornett by providing a more 'sophisticated' cover for capitulation to popular frontism than the WSL can manage by its own efforts.

Scabbing at Cowley

But the issue which caused the biggest uproar in the WSL in this period was WSL leader and BL Cowley deputy convenor Alan Thornett's decision to scab during last summer's one- and two-day-a-week national engineering strikes when faced with a reactionary anti-strike mobilisation by backward workers in his plant (see *Spartacist Britain* no 15, October 1979).

In fact, information given by the LF makes clear that Thornett's role was, if possible, even more despicable than it appeared at the time. For Thornett's usual allies in the plant leadership, including senior shop steward Bob Fryer, *wanted* a picket line to stop the scabs -- and Thornett had to fight *against* them in order to *turn them into scabs*. Fryer and others, who were at the time rightly more concerned about maintaining a national strike than heading off threats to their trade union positions were characterised by Thornett inside the WSL as 'syndicalists' who did not understand that it was all a 'question of leadership'!

Initially Thornett's scabbing met with widespread resistance in the WSL (including among other Cowley workers). But even though some Cowley WSLers had to face being denounced as scabs by long-time trade unionists (and even by elements in the bureaucracy who saw a good opportunity to blast away some of Thornett's richly undeserved kudos), most restless WSLers fell back into line. However for the LT Cowley showed definitively for Britain what the leadership's support for Khomeini's movement in Iran showed internationally -- that the WSL was quite capable of flipping right over the class line and *betraying* on an occasion when the need for principles clashed with its opportunist appetites.

WSL expels Leninist Faction

Thornett & Co also drew their conclusions. Recognising that the LT was now well on the way to a developed programmatic critique, they began an offensive. Using the pretext of a contribution by Mark Hyde at a November 10 National Committee meeting which characterised the Moreno/Lambert Parity Committee as a rotten bloc, the majority leadership presented an ultimatum: the LT was given three weeks to produce material stating their 'areas of agreement with the WSL and areas of disagreement with the iSt'. In response to this bureaucratic manoeuvre, designed to draw hard organisational lines and create the conditions for a witchhunt and expulsion, the LT transformed itself into the Leninist Faction, noting that what was now posed was an all-out factional struggle for the basic principles of Leninism-Trotskyism.

The LF's founding document 'Centrism or Bolshevism -- The Choice Facing the WSL' stated that the Faction was 'as yet in no position to make a finished assessment of the politics of the iSt' but solidarised with the basic thrust of Spartacist positions on Iran, Ireland, opposition to popular fronts, and the need for a

fighting propaganda perspective. For the first time the oppositionists presented a rounded programmatic critique of and alternative to the centrism of the WSL majority.

The leadership reacted by forcing through the LF's suspension, and for the next six weeks they were systematically excluded from all WSL internal activities (and even some ostensibly 'public' ones). Phillip Moore was 'temporarily removed' from his position as National Secretary of the (supposedly autonomous) Socialist Youth League -- even though the LF had never even been allowed to raise its positions inside the WSL's youth movement! Cut off from the internal life of the organisation, the LF was forced to hand its documents to members outside meetings -- even at the risk of expulsion -- in order to break through the witchhunting and isolation. Finally on January 12, after first excluding two members of the youth organisation who were sympathetic to the LF, and then denying the right to any discussion, the leadership summarily pushed through its purge at a Special Conference.

The WSL's descent into such political witch-hunts reflects well the frenzied state of a doomed current. According to the LF, the organisation recruits on an increasingly apolitical basis with the percentage of inactive paper 'members' on the climb. The leadership itself is increasingly unstable and frenzied (both Alan Clinton and Alan Thornett having dropped out of all disciplined political activity for several months at a time in the past year and a half). Anti-Spartacist paranoia runs rampant, as the leadership strives desperately to seal the organisation off from the influence of our Trotskyist programme.

Thus Thornett & Co's only attempt to 'reply' to the LF's political arguments is a shoddy few pages circulated at the expulsion conference, full of slander and even disgraceful cop-baiting against the iSt. Scraping the bottom of the Healyite barrel, the document states:

'The iSt now acts as provocateurs in the Trotskyist movement in order to justify its existence. It plays this role as usefully as any state agency would by trying to break up any organised resistance to the reformists and Stalinists.' (WSL Internal Discussion Bulletin, new series no 4, January 1980)

WSL members genuinely seeking the road to proletarian revolution will not be deterred by such disgusting rubbish -- or by the leadership's recent threats of organisational exclusionism and violence against SL members. Methods like these will not save Thornett's degenerate organisation. What remains of the National Committee after the LF's expulsion is an unstable melange of hardened reformists and centrists of every stripe, who no longer have opposition to the LF to hold them together. Two years after the TF split, another important layer of cadres has been lost to the WSL -- including several who originally joined through regroupments from the International Marxist Group and International Socialists in 1975. With the departure of these militants the WSL has now lost effectively everything that it once gained through regroupments in the days when it appeared as an attractive, ostensibly orthodox, alternative to the likes of the IMG and IS.

Alan Thornett's parochial-workerist WSL is certainly not finished with internal crisis and strife -- as the LF explicitly recognised in its final document:

'Should the threats of expulsion that have been made by leading members be carried out the WSL will not wait long before it faces another struggle (perhaps the Sverdlov Faction?), and another. The reason for this prognosis is straightforward -- unstable and degenerating centrism must find itself repeatedly assaulted by the Bolshevik politics which it finds itself unable to politically answer. This problem was implicitly recognised by Comrade Dettie Clinton at the 1/12/79 "Special Conference" when she asked "Why does this keep happening to us?"' ('The Fight for the Proletarian Programme', 11 January 1980)

Why? Because subjectively revolutionary members of the WSL are drawn to the recognition that 'little England' insularity, complete programmatic muddleheadedness, organisational fakery and chaos, and periodic flat betrayals of the interests of the proletariat are not mere 'problems' but are just what centrism is all about. The picture the LF paints is of an organisation in utter chaos and confusion. Many serious members beyond those expelled are riddled with doubts over what they see as the WSL's political 'weaknesses' and concerned about the permanent state of organisational disarray and financial crisis.



For WSL Khomeini's reactionary movement reflected forward movement of working class

The future for the WSL is bleak indeed. Seriously weakened in London and Yorkshire, having lost other important members in the turmoil of the faction fight, the final leadership document tried an old trick. In the tradition of describing the loss of one-fifth of the active membership in 1978 as a 'step forward', the leadership prattled about the oppositionists 'running away from the hard struggle in the workers movement', 'being demoralised' etc. Yet even Clinton and Lister had earlier characterised the LFers as 'hard-working and loyal members', and at the expulsion conference Lister was forced to speak of a 'tragic waste [sic] of ability and talent'.

The road taken by the Trotskyist Faction, and now being pursued by the LF, is the only one for members of the WSL who seek the road to proletarian revolution. The LF's struggle also has lessons for would-be revolutionists internationally. The final LF document solidarises with the iSt's nine points for international Trotskyist regroupment (reprinted on page 8). The LF has stated its intent to fight for these programmatic positions. Currently, while the faction has also stated its eagerness to discuss with other groupings in order to further test its positions and familiarise itself with other views, the LF and SL are preparing discussions on outstanding questions. Their struggle inside the WSL was indeed another 'step forward' for Trotskyism. ■

LF statement...

(Continued from page 9)

Any agreements reached between the leadership and these groupings will assuredly not be based on clear Trotskyist principle; nor will they lead to any real international democratic-centralism with a common political practice. Any formal international bloc which emerges from this weekend's proceedings will look nothing like Trotsky's Movement for the Fourth International, but more like a Fourth Division replay of the London Bureau.

Moreover the WSL leadership, like sundry of the other groups at this conference, has also been trying to curry favour with the larger fake-Trotskyist rotten blocs -- both with the USFI and, more recently, with Moreno/Lambert. Only last summer Alan Thornett was holding meetings with the leadership of the IMG and the organisation was ready to make thoroughly opportunist diplomatic pacts in an attempt to get into the USFI's 'Eleventh World Congress'. In August a National Aggregate passed a draft agreement with the USFI which stated:

'1) The USFI and WSL are both organisations which see themselves as standing on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. Despite the substantial differences that exist -- in particular the fact that the WSL does not recognise the USFI as "the" Fourth International, characterises it as Pabloite, and fights for the reconstruction of the FI -- there remains the objective possibility of the WSL fusing with the USFI. It is our duty to examine to what extent this is a concrete possibility through the opening of a discussion between our two organisations.' (Internal Information Bulletin, 18-19 August 1979; our emphasis)

This rotten pact, which involved an agreement to engage in public polemics 'of an organisational character' against the USFI only with the latter's express agreement, became a dead

letter solely because the USFI backed out. And since then the leadership's on-again, off-again flirtation with Moreno's Bolshevik Faction and the Lambertist OCI has been switched on once more, as the WSL has 'welcomed' the BF/OCI initiatives and formally applied to join the Parity Committee formed by these two organisations (themselves widely divergent politically). Again, Moreno/Lambert seem to have shut the door in the leadership's face (at least for now), and *Socialist Press* no 180 complains that 'it begins to look as if the [Moreno/Lambert-organised] conference may not be as "open" as it appeared and certainly will not take place for some time. Yet when Left Tendency comrades argued in early November that Moreno and Lambert were not Trotskyists and that the Parity Committee gambit was just a rotten manoeuvre, we were charged with 'Spartacism' and the gears were set in motion for our suspension from the organisation. (Of course it would be quite principled to go to an open conference -- if such were actually to be convened -- in order to fight for the Trotskyist programme, but to seek to bloc politically with the likes of Moreno and Lambert, by joining their Parity Committee, is pure and simple opportunism.)

The WSL majority's pretensions of Trotskyist orthodoxy are demonstrably founded on sand. As Trotsky wrote about the centrists of his time:

'We see here also the repetition of a rule that has been observed hundreds of times in the past on a much larger scale; centrists, even left centrists, always respect the opportunists and feel flattered and encouraged when they win their smiles. At the same time, the centrists are terribly outraged when the unbehaved "sectarians" (ie Marxists) spoil the pleasure they derive from the smiles of friends at their right by inappropriate criticism. When the centrist makes his big combinations, he always bows low to the right and hisses to the left: shut up!' ('To Comrade Sneevliet on the IAG Conference', *Writings 1934-35*, p191)

We will not be shut up -- we will continue the fight for Trotskyist politics despite and against all the manoeuvres of the majority leadership. We are for principled revolutionary regroupment based on agreement on the fundamental programmatic tests of our time, on a modern-day equivalent of Trotsky's delineation of eleven fundamental principles for the International Left Opposition in 1933.

The leadership has engaged in 'Spartacist' name-calling in a pathetic attempt to avoid honest political struggle. Nevertheless, as we have stated in our documents, we do believe that the international Spartacist tendency has made a much more serious attempt to wage such a programmatic struggle than the WSL majority -- around Iran, the popular front, the national question, communist work in the trade unions and more. And we are not about to sit back passively and be hounded out of the organisation solely for holding this, and our other political positions.

Rescind the suspensions! Demand that full democratic rights be restored to the comrades of the Leninist Faction!

Down with Healyite bureaucratism and Menshevik rotten blocs! For the rebuilding of the Fourth International through the fight for a genuinely Trotskyist programme!

Leninist Faction
28 December 1979

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Leninist Faction expelled

WSL purges Trotskyists

At a specially convened national conference on January 12 the right-centrist Workers Socialist League (WSL) carried out a bureaucratic purge of a left-wing opposition, the Leninist Faction (LF). This is the most important split from the WSL since early 1978, when the Trotskyist Faction (TF) left to fuse with the London Spartacist Group and form the Spartacist League/Britain (SL).

Of the five LFers expelled (one sympathiser of the faction resigned from the WSL in solidarity immediately after the expulsions), three were National Committee members, among them the National Secretary of the WSL youth group, the Socialist Youth League (SYL). Two LFers were members of the *Socialist Press* editorial board, while others were members or former members of area leaderships in London, Oxford and Yorkshire. Two years ago most of these cadres were active fighters against the Trotskyist Faction -- indeed one, Mark Hyde, co-authored the only attempt at a serious reply to the TF by the then WSL majority. Now these militants have themselves re-examined and rejected the bankrupt programme and record of the WSL.

The bureaucratic grounds for the expulsion were in fact that the LF no longer had 'significant agreement with the political line or orientation' of the organisation. On Iran, they counterposed proletarian opposition to both the shah and the mullahs to the majority's championing of the reactionary Islamic revolt as part of the 'forward movement of the working class'. They called for fighting around a revolutionary programme in the trade unions, attacking the majority's economism, minimalism and 'mass work' fakery. And they flatly opposed the leadership's opportunist courting of charlatans like Ernest Mandel and Nahuel Moreno, calling instead for a fight to reforge the Fourth International through programmatic struggle against the fake-Trotskyist misleaders.

The documents of the LF (one of which is reprinted on page 9) show a serious concern for the key programmatic questions facing the working class. On such questions as the popular front, the national question, the Labour Party, communist trade union work and the need to reforge the Fourth International through a fight for the Trotskyist programme they show a healthy revolutionary thrust and an evident programmatic

parallelism with the positions of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt). This clearly raises the possibility of a deep-going fusion between the SL and this group of serious cadres with substantial political experience.

Origins of the Leninist Faction

The LF had its origins in the Left Tendency (LT) which was formed by NC members Mark Hyde, Phillip Moore and Di Parkin in May 1979 -- initially around the question of the fight to reforge the Fourth Inter-

national. Utterly belying its pretence of 'fighting Pabloism',

the WSL believes there exists a 'world Trotskyist movement' including renegades like Mandel, Barnes, Lambert and Moreno. It yearns with a touching naivety to 'reconstruct' the Fourth International through diplomatic 'discussion' with such professional centrist and reformist betrayers. To this the LT counterposed 'a struggle to rebuild a genuine democratic-centralist FI against the fake-Internationals of the centrists':

'The winning of subjectively revolutionary militants from centrist misleaders (as well as the task of testing whole tendencies and potential allies, emerging from splits in the fake-Internationals) can only be conducted through the presentation of a clear revolutionary perspective and programme.' ('On Rebuilding the Fourth International', 1 May 1979)

The early documents of the LT are flawed in certain respects (notably in characterising such virulent social democrats as Lambert -- and even the professional provocateur for Qaddafi, Gerry Healy -- as 'centrist'). They are also partial,



National engineering strike support march -- WSL 'workers' leader Alan Thornett scabbed on strike

Spartacist Britain

recognising that the WSL fell short of having a 'clear revolutionary perspective and programme' but unable to offer a rounded programmatic alternative.

In late June two WSL Executive members, Alan Clinton and John Lister, produced a shoddy attempt at a reply to the oppositionists. Clinton and Lister attacked them for 'echoing' Spartacist positions and went on to explicitly repudiate the International Committee's fight against Pabloite liquidationism in the 1950s and early 1960s, with the claim that the 1953-54 split in the Fourth International featured 'centrists on all sides'. Nor did Clinton and Lister pose the WSL as an orthodox Trotskyist alternative to the Pabloites and other revisionists:

'... we regard our movement as a part of and not apart from the post war crisis of the International.' (emphasis in original)

Throughout the summer and autumn the WSL leadership pursued the logic of their embrace of the 'world Trotskyist movement', making in-

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Maoist/Muslim knife attack on German Spartacists

At a public meeting on Afghanistan sponsored by the student union at the University of Frankfurt, West Germany, on January 25, several dozen supporters of the reactionary General Union of Afghani Students Abroad (GUAFS), the American Maoist GI group 'Fight Back' and Turkish Maoists of the ATIF/ATOF group led a premeditated and vicious knife attack on members and supporters of the Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD), German section of the international Spartacist tendency.

As the TLD spokesman moved towards the podium to take the five minutes speaking time allotted to the organisation, thugs moved in behind TLD supporters while others blocked the podium. Fred Z, thirty year old radio and TV technician and a trade union member for over ten years, was stabbed in the back, suffering a severe lung injury. An emergency operation was necessary and he was in critical condition

throughout the night and is now in the intensive care unit of a Frankfurt hospital. Another TLD supporter was stabbed in the stomach; another was knocked unconscious, suffering a concussion.

To prepare the attack against the TLD the Afghani reactionaries and their Maoist friends inflamed the meeting with chants of 'Death to Trotskyism'. During the previous week GUAFS members had threatened TLD supporters at the university: 'You should get the same as the Russians got in Herat: dismemberment!' They also threatened to disrupt the public meeting on Afghanistan announced by the TLD for January 29. The murderous attack on our comrades was clearly inspired by Islamic and anti-Soviet hysteria, shared by an unholy alliance of Maoists, fascists and religious fanatics. Another recent product of this newly awakened Islamic fundamentalism was the murder of the

Turkish trade unionist Celalettin Kesin, who bled to death after being stabbed by Turkish Muslim fanatics in Berlin on 5 January 1980.

The Frankfurt University attack has received wide publicity in the German press. In response to the TLD's call for protests from working-class and left groups and all those who condemn the vicious and cowardly assault on our comrades, the critical Maoist Kommunistische Bund expressed their solidarity and pledged to co-operate in defence of the January 29 public meeting. Unfortunately the self-styled Trotskyists of the German United Secretariat group (the GIM) have to date responded with criminal sectarianism, refusing out of hand to co-ordinate the defence effort. This murderous gangsterism must be condemned -- religious reactionaries and their accomplices must not be allowed to impose the norms of an 'Islamic republic' on the German left.