

No to Benn's UN 'peacekeepers'

Smash imperialist rule!

Frankie Hughes, Raymond McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara: after the death on 5 May of Bobby Sands, Irish Republican Army officer and elected Member of Parliament for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, three more H Block hunger strikers have joined the Irish martyrs roll. Each death has been met with the now-familiar beating of dustbin lids and building of barricades in the Catholic areas of Derry and West Belfast, followed by riots against the army of occupation and a full-scale Republican military funeral. One hundred thousand came out to honour Bobby Sands in Belfast, black flags unfurled, masked IRA volunteers firing the salute over the coffin. Tens of thousands more marched in silent processions in Derry and South Armagh for the others. Inside the H Blocks of Long Kesh prison, five young men have taken the place of their dead comrades on hunger strike for political status, and more are set to join them.

Despite a bitter, tense relative calm on the streets after the death of the fourth hunger striker, Northern Ireland is now polarising visibly by the day. Hundreds of new recruits from the beleaguered Catholic ghettos are flocking to the Republican banners. Sinn Fein claims, quite plausibly, a 40 per cent increase in its Belfast membership in a single week in May. A handful of candidates from Republican organisations standing in the recent local government elections swept longtime imperialist toadies like Gerry Fitt out of office. In turn, the Northern Protestant majority increasingly looks for leadership to the bigots of the Reverend Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, which rallies the Orange laager by warning of an impending British 'sellout' to the 'papist banana republic' to the South. And in the Republic, currently in the throes of a major economic depression, premier Charles Haughey and his Fianna Fail are being challenged in the coming elections by hunger strikers and other Long Kesh prisoners, who seek to bring the explosive H Block issue to political centre stage throughout the island.

As the 'troubles' grind remorselessly on, Westminster keeps up its show of imperialist intransigence. Its troops shoot down and kill more unarmed H Block protesters in the streets, including most recently two girls aged 14 and 11. In the face of international condemnation and the grim hostility of the entire Irish Catholic population, Margaret Thatcher remains adamant that there will be no concessions. Thatcher's flying visit to Belfast last month was designed to show the Protestant Loyalists that her government still sees the Six Counties as an inviolable part of the 'United Kingdom'. The trip was followed with similar visits by royal luminaries and junior imperialists like David Steel. And cheering on the Iron Lady and her butcher



Frankie Hughes' funeral—murdered by British imperialism.

troops are Labour Party leader Michael Foot, the contemptible Don Concannon and the rest of the Opposition Front Bench.

The Labour leadership's stance is a shame and a disgrace to the British workers movement. Thatcher's toadies Foot and Concannon are not fit to lick the boots of the likes of Bobby Sands. While Labour marches in lockstep with the Tory murderers, we say: Not one more hunger striker must die! The Republican fighters against imperialist oppression are not the criminals; the British army and its political masters are. The left and labour movement must demand: *Political status for the prisoners now!* *Free all victims of imperialist repression in*

Ireland! Troops out now!

Even as the Labour leadership disgracefully holds the line with Thatcher, the last few weeks have seen significant unravelling of the long-accepted bipartisan imperialist policy towards Ireland. Most dramatic has been the surge of 'troops out' demands within the Labour Party, beginning with Tony Benn's sudden conversion during a BBC radio interview on 12 May. Since then other Labour 'lefts' and even 'moderates' like Leo Abse have taken up the 'troops out' call. They are tapping an apparent groundswell of political sentiment: a recent MORI poll claimed that fully 59 per cent of the British

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population now favours troop withdrawal while only 29 per cent are for maintaining British rule in the Six Counties.

Benn calls for UN occupation

But let us be clear what this new spate of Labour 'troops out' calls mean. Tony Benn, like the overwhelming bulk of the new 'troops out' politicians has not been reborn as an anti-imperialist -- far from it! Benn's position in the BBC interview was clear:

'The time has come when we may have to ask the United Nations to set up an international commission, ask for a United Nations peace-keeping force in Northern Ireland, and when the UN peacekeeping force is established to withdraw British troops.'

This is hardly even a liberal imperialist policy. All Benn wants to do is remove 'our boys' from the seemingly intractable mess that is Northern Ireland before too many more of them get blown away by the 'terrorists' -- and even then only after a new gang of imperialist thugs has been sent in under UN auspices!

This is the same Tony Benn who over the last twelve years has supported Westminster's bipartisan terror policies for Northern Ireland every step of the way. Where was Benn only two-and-a-half months ago, when 44 other MPs voted against the renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act? Where was he throughout the long and agonising fasts to the death by Bobby Sands and his comrades? Despite constant pressure from Irish activists he refused to come off the pro-imperialist fence where he still sits, opposing the prisoners' demands for political status and searching for alternative ways to defeat the 'gunmen'. Yet Benn's pro-imperialist musings about UN troops have been seized on with something approaching ecstasy by Benn's camp followers in the pseudo-revolutionary left!

At one level Benn's new 'troops out' charlatany is an astute bit of internal Labour Party electioneering. But at another, deeper level it is symptomatic of a new wave of bourgeois-defeatist sentiment on Ireland among pro-imperialist politicians and analysts. As the coffins stream out of Long Kesh, as the protests and street battles continue, as more British soldiers are killed in a conflict that seems to many in Britain to be incomprehensible, a mood of despairing defeatism is slowly taking hold. Revolutionaries must seize opportunities provided by the current disarray among the ruling class and Labour misleaders in order to fight for a strategy of working-class mobilisation against all imperialist plans for Ireland.

Follow Benn's lead?

Instead the fake-Trotskyists of the International Marxist Group (IMG) have taken upon themselves to once again hail and tail Tony Benn, calling his BBC statements 'a massive step forward' and 'encouraging' him to go further. The IMG mumbles only a few words of polite criticism saying that 'UN troops are usually [!] used as no more than a cloak of respectability for Western intervention' (*Socialist Challenge*, 21 May). Nine years ago the IMG used to chant 'Victory to the IRA!' on demonstrations; now however an older and far more spineless organisation of the same name says 'End the War', champions Bennite imperialist schemes and pushes 'model resolutions' for Labour Party and trade union branches which call for support to the hunger strikers on 'humanitarian' grounds and fail to even call for troops out.

In contrast to these servile opportunists,

the Spartacist League says: UN troops are imperialist troops -- No to Benn's 'solution'! Workers: Fight for trade union blacking of military goods to Ireland! Demand that your organisations campaign for the unconditional, immediate withdrawal of the British troops! Oust the Labour/trade union misleaders, betrayers of class struggle at home, accomplices in butchery in Ireland!

British imperialism has reached a dead end in Northern Ireland. Thatcher's vicious 'no surrender' rhetoric and the black propaganda shown on television newscasts and emblazoned across the front of Fleet Street tabloids now have a strident, faintly hopeless quality. 'British rule in Ireland', admitted ultra-Tory columnist George Gale in the Daily Express last month, 'is in the lengthy and bloody business of winding itself up'. An important *Economist* leader (23 May) fretted about the current impasse and called for a new initiative to find a federal solution for Northern Ireland. Liberal imperialist weathervane Conor Cruise O'Brien published a major article in the *Observer* (31 May) arguing for repartition (perhaps along the River Bann) because:

'I am inclined now to believe that the present Northern Ireland can hardly be retained in the United Kingdom, and that the effort to retain it all is likely to lead to a growing "troops out" movement in Britain.' (emphasis in original)

A massive economic liability, subsidised to the tune of more than £1.2 billion a year, Northern Ireland is also increasingly a political liability for Britain. A constant cycle of death and destruction, a horrendous 'human rights' image throughout the world, an army locked into a peripheral theatre of war, and one whose morale is reportedly fast on the decline -- and for what? Certainly not to keep, or bring, peace to Ireland: no one looking at the situation over the past month can pretend to believe that any more. Viewed from one angle, Britain only continues to 'shoulder its responsibilities' in the Six Counties in order to retain the allegiance of an unappetising gang of flag-waving, sash-wearing Orange fanatics who rail against the 'terrorist' papacy with recitations from Old Testament scripture.

British imperialism would genuinely like to wash its hands of the North, let the whole thing go and centre its future dealings with the island on ties with Dublin inside the EEC and NATO. But they are stuck with the consequences of decades of divide-and-rule policies centred on shoring up Protestant ascendancy in the once (but no more) economically-strategic North. Over the past decade they have thought that perhaps they could achieve a next-best stability by bludgeoning and terrorising the Catholic community into submission, crushing the Republican paramilitaries and making the 'croppies lie down' once more. But, as Conor Cruise O'Brien put it:

'Up to the election of Bobby Sands it was possible to argue that the majority of this [Catholic] population was against the IRA. Now it has to be said that, if they are against the IRA, they have a funny way of showing it.' (*Observer*, *ibid*)

Polarisation in North

Not one of the various imperialist 'solutions' now being offered up has even a semblance of reality about it -- and for good reason. There is no solution to imperialist oppression and sectarian division in Ireland short of the mobilisation of the proletariat on both sides of the Irish Sea in a struggle for power. So while standing intransigently against the imperialist presence, no revolutionary can be lightminded about the current mounting sectarian tension in Northern Ireland. Andy Tyrrie, leader of the Protestant paramilitary Ulster Defence Association revealed in his own way the deep communal tension when he recently started pleading with Thatcher to grant the hunger strikers' demands in order to stem the growing support for the IRA.

The communal polarisation was also shown graphically in the 20 May Northern Ireland local government elections. The 'middle ground', epitomised by the liberal middle-class Alliance Party, collapsed, while in the Protestant camp the Paisleyites eclipsed the Official Unionists for the first time. Among the Catholics the milquetoast SDLP lost ground to the new Irish Independence Party, while four republican candidates who centred their campaigns on the H Block issue, two each from the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) and Peoples Democracy (PD), won surprise victories to the Belfast City Council.

What is urgently needed in Ireland today is a revolutionary vanguard with a programme which both stands foursquare against imperialism and

shows the way to cut through the Catholic/Protestant sectarian web. Among the key points of such a programme are complete opposition to all Loyalist privilege and discrimination, the fight for integrated workers militias to combat both imperialist rampage and Orange and Green sectarian terror, and opposition to the Green nationalist project of forcible reunification of a capitalist Ireland, a sure design for driving Protestant workers deeper into the arms of the Paisleyites.

What sort of a prospect does the 26-county Republic offer workers in the North? The run-up to the forthcoming elections there has put its outstanding features into focus: rampaging unemployment, galloping inflation and clerical reaction. Nine H Block/Armagh prisoners -- including the four hunger strikers -- are standing in those elections and the results will be keenly watched for indications of the depth of commitment to a fight for the North. While both major bourgeois parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, have done their level best to sweep the North under the carpet (and RTE television has banned the H Block candidates' campaigning) the ruling, 'more nationalist' Fianna Fail has had its gardai busy bashing pro-Republican protesters, and trying out their new British model riot shields. Two Republicans have just narrowly escaped judicial murder in Mountjoy Gaol; their sentences having been commuted to 40 years because, no doubt, it would be a bit embarrassing for Fianna Fail Prime Minister Charlie Haughey to execute Republicans three days before polling day.

The IRSP in particular have good reason to know that life must offer something better than Eire -- for they have been framed for armed robbery, tortured and beaten by that government too. Thus, from bitter experience, IRSP leader Gerry Roche, who gave the oration at the grave of hunger striker Patsy O'Hara, stressed that he saw 'little difference between the torturers of Bridewell and the torturers of Castlereagh'. But while Roche went from this to emphasise that Patsy O'Hara had died for James Connolly's goal of a 32-county socialist republic, the IRSP has not broken from the Republican/Catholic nationalist framework it shares with the IRA.

The Peoples Democracy grouping, which today proclaims its political solidarity with the and the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) is also thoroughly committed in the framework of Republicanism. Its election programme in Belfast did not even try to transcend the Catholic nationalist framework. PD fights for a united capitalist Ireland (and, like a lot of Republicans, 'socialism' some far-off day), and explicitly calls for a class-collaborationist bloc of the entire Catholic community. 'Pressure must be put onto the Nationalist Bourgeoisie', says *Socialist Republic* (undated, vol 4 no 2). 'Fianna Fail, SDLP, [Cardinal] O'Fiaich: Off the Fence!' appeals a front-page headline in the same issue.

Indeed PD's only apparent difference with the mainstream Republicans of the IRA and IRSP comes from the right, in its belly-crawling pleas for an end to 'militarism'. Genuine Trotskyists oppose the Republican physical force tradition, which both condemns the working masses to the stance of passive spectators and at times involves indefensible criminal terror against innocent Protestant people. But our criticisms of Republican militarism stem from our strategy of proletarian mobilisation against the bourgeoisie for state power, not cringing legalism. In contrast, according to *Socialist Republic*, 'People's Democracy clearly states that there can be no military solution to the prison struggle' and counterposes peaceful 'mass action' involving everyone from the IRSP and Sinn Fein to the SDLP, Fianna Fail and the Church! Such a critique of left-wing terrorism could have been authored by an Irish Karl Kautsky, but not a V I Lenin. Indeed PD's 'mass action' strategy is identical to the bankrupt popular-frontist line pushed for years by the reformist American USec affiliate, the Socialist Workers Party (US).

There is no peaceful way to end the imperialist domination of Ireland and the misery and oppression of the Catholic masses. This brutal ruling class, which has committed mass murder upon colonial peoples of all races for centuries must be swept away through the mobilisation of the only force capable of dealing it a death blow: the proletariat.

The task of revolutionaries in Britain is not to cajole the Labour traitors who prop up and apologise for the imperialist torture machine but to intransigently expose and oppose all their pro-imperialist schemes in order to build a campaign of proletarian solidarity with the Irish people. Not UN troops, no to 'phased withdrawal' -- get the imperialist butchers out of Ireland now! Avenge the Republican martyrs through workers revolution! ■

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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International protests denounce H Block murders

Don't mourn - organise!

The arrogant butchers of Westminster have been the target of demonstrations of protest and outrage around the world since Bobby Sands died last month in the H Blocks of Long Kesh. In every country where it has sections, the international Spartacist tendency has actively participated in and built the recent H Block protest demonstrations. In Paris and Frankfurt, in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, our comrades provided militant contingents at the protests. In North America, the Spartacist League/US (SL/US) and the Trotskyist League of Canada (TLC) also organised public meetings to highlight support for the hunger strikers. 'Butcher Thatcher has blood on her hands! Avenge the death of Hughes and Sands!' and 'Smash H-Block! British troops out!' were among the militant slogans of the Spartacist contingents.

In New York on 5 May, SL/US supporters were brought before television cameras by demonstrators who appreciated the militancy of the Spartacist participation (a subsequent protest on 7 May in New York is depicted in the photo on the left). In Toronto, a TLC contingent joined with several hundred protestors outside the British consulate on 9 May, and a TLC banner demanding 'Avenge Bobby Sands, Smash British Imperialism' appeared on national Canadian TV coverage of the demonstration. In the San Francisco Bay Area an impressive Spartacist contingent of 70 -- the only left organisation with more than a token presence -- joined a demonstration on the night of Sands' burial, 7 May. Youths in the crowd of 2000 picked up the Spartacist chant 'British troops out now!' as the gathering dispersed.

In Britain the Spartacist League has played a prominent and sharply anti-imperialist role in the all-too-infrequent and small protests organised by the national and local H Block com-

mittees. On the two pickets of Downing Street that occurred the day after Sands' death and on the day of his funeral, the chants of the SL's 30-strong contingents were taken up by almost the whole of the pickets: not simply the just demand for political status, but 'Troops Out Now!' and 'Avenge the death of Bobby Sands! Thatcher and Foot have blood on their hands!'

But it was in Humphrey Atkins' constituency of Staines on 10 May that the line between militant, revolutionary protest and the single-issue humanitarianism of the National H-Block Committee was most clearly drawn (see photo, right). The 500 demonstrators who assembled for this first national protest after Sands' death were instructed by the organisers to maintain a totally silent march, and at first an attempt was made to prevent the carrying of banners with slogans not directly relating to the hunger strike as such. Fortunately this latter gag-rule could not be enforced and SL, RCT and SWP banners calling for 'Troops Out Now!' were carried throughout the demonstration.

Taking our inspiration from the last words of Wobbly militant Joe Hill before his judicial murder in 1915 -- 'Don't Mourn -- Organise' -- the SL contingent sought to make what should have been an angry, militant march directed at one of the Chief Murderers of the Tory Cabinet into just that.

This action was revealingly described by an IRSP steward as a 'gross mark of disrespect' to the IRSP and Provisional Sinn Fein (who presumably think they reserve the right to tell anyone else what to say or do about Ireland). They attempted to drown out our chants with their megaphones, they attempted to intimidate and halt our contingent with their heavies. And much to their chagrin they failed utterly. In retaliation, some IRSPers participating in the National H-Block Committee, spearheaded an exclusion of the SL from a committee meeting on 29 May -- and attempted to cover their tracks with a string of self-evident lies about Spartacist 'violence' at Staines fabricated two weeks after



the fact! The indications are that not all IRSP activists agree with this gross attack of lies and exclusions directed at a socialist organisation fighting for solidarity with the Republican hunger strikers.

The SL's contingent, with its banner, placards and spirited chants was a pledge that the authentic Trotskyists will not let up on the struggle against the British imperialist oppressors. We call on every one of our readers who sees the need to oppose every imperialist 'solution' to the conflict in the North, whether it be Thatcher's British boys or the Benn talk of UN (read imperialist) troops, to march in the anti-imperialist contingent on 13 June. Look out for the banners of the Spartacist League and the Communist Faction in Finsbury Park. Contact our branches for details of transport. Fight for the internationalist voice of the British working class to be heard -- march with us! ■



13 June: March in the anti-imperialist contingent!

TROOPS OUT NOW!

- No imperialist 'solutions' - No UN troops in!
- Political status for the Republican prisoners now!
- Free all victims of imperialist repression!

Against the pro-imperialist treachery of the Labour politicians, against the schemes for 'phased withdrawal' and Benn's call for United Nations occupation, for a class-struggle fight against British imperialism. Smash Britain's torture camps!

FOR BUSES: Birmingham 459 9748
Sheffield 686472

ASSEMBLE: Finsbury Park
London N4 1pm



Revolutionary regroupment

Pledge of loyalty to Benn: Communist Faction expelled Purge in IMG!

On 16 May the International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of the Pabloist rotten-bloc 'United Secretariat' (USec), carried out the largest and most significant political purge in its history: the wholesale expulsion of sixteen members who constituted the left-oppositional Communist Faction (CF). Though nine members of the CF were expelled for political collaboration with the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), the CF as a whole was expelled for its refusal to submit to a unprecedented political loyalty oath affirming that the IMG was 'revolutionary Marxist' even as it presented scathing critiques of the IMG's blatant attacks on the Marxist programme.

This purge shatters the pretence of internal democracy which the traditionally faction-ridden IMG once boasted. More importantly, the political questions posed in this bureaucratically aborted factional struggle are the key issues confronting ostensible proletarian revolutionaries today -- the Russian question, the Labour Party, Ireland, Iran. They cannot be suppressed. On the contrary, having erupted dramatically to the surface as a result of this purge, these questions compel every IMG member to confront the choice which faced the members of the CF. Veteran IMG leader Bob Pennington posed it himself several years ago, when he said that ostensible Trotskyists would be forced to choose between the two 'mainstreams', the USec and the iSt -- by which he meant to suggest that the USec would be 'where the action is' while the iSt represented the 'sectarian wilderness'. But what was patently evident to those elements of the CF who have pursued the political logic of their programmatic struggle, as it was to the comrades in France and Germany whose break from the rightward-moving USec is documented elsewhere in this issue, the choice in reality is between increasing adaptation to Cold War anti-Sovietism and liquidation into the social democracy, or allegiance to the revolutionary banner of Trotskyism upheld by the Spartacist tendency.

Today the IMG is poised for liquidation into Labour's left wing headed by Tony Benn, and the question is posed more starkly than ever. Indeed it was on this question that the internal factional struggle came to a head. As a CF statement distributed to a *Socialist Challenge* rally in London the week after the expulsions put it:

'The expulsion of the Communist Faction (and any serious opposition to liquidation into the Labour Party) is the tribute offered for full membership in the Tony Benn supporters' club.'

The rally itself -- featuring a Soviet dissident who pronounced 'a plague on both your houses' on Brezhnev and Reagan, GLC Labour 'left' Ken Livingstone and a tame Ernest Mandel -- provided a graphic display of the anti-Trotskyist revisionism of the IMG which the CF had struggled against: an uncritical platform for anti-Sovietism and 'left' Labourism.

IMG in crisis

In recent years the IMG has staggered from crisis to crisis, plagued by disorientation. Sharpened Cold War tensions and an increasingly rightist climate internationally have exercised a powerful corrosive effect on the leftist impulses which first impelled the IMG's core cadre into revolutionary activity a decade ago, producing significant demoralisation and defections. One get-rich-quick scheme after another has failed, with increasing rapidity and increasing rightist concessions. Years of incessant factional warfare -- which at its peak mounted to six different tendencies (at the 1973 and 1976 conferences) -- never escaped a framework of centrist impressionism and served only to dull the political senses and demean political struggle.

In mid-1979, one longtime oppositional cadre, Stephen Harney, alarmed over the USec's capitulation to clerical reaction in Iran, made a decisive break with the centrist politics of the IMG. As Harney put it recently,

'Perhaps I didn't know a lot about Iran at that time, but one thing I knew was that there was no way a movement led by feudalistic Persian-chauvinist religious fanatics like Khomeini was going to "open up" the road to proletarian revolution! On the contrary, here we had a "mass movement" that would be used to crush the national minorities, the workers movement and women who wanted equal rights. Yet only the Spartacists recognised and acted on this simple obvious fact.'

A former member of the Political Committee and Central Committee and then member of the Control Commission, Harney initiated a struggle



within the IMG different to that he had waged as a leader of Tendency/Faction A -- one of the two major groupings inside the IMG in the mid-1970s -- this one was to be based on a coherent Trotskyist programme. In the wake of a series of failed 'unity offensives' directed against various small state-capitalist groupings, the IMG in late 1979 was moving towards its grand unity offensive -- aimed at unprincipled fusion with the state-capitalist SWP of Tony Cliff. The programmatic reflex in this appetite for fusion with a Soviet-defeatist tendency was rapidly demonstrated by the initial line in *Socialist Challenge*, authored by Tariq Ali, of Soviet troops out of Afghanistan -- unadulterated third campism. Harney submitted a document titled, 'So you thought defence of the Soviet Union was not a central issue?':

'The whole "regroupment project" of the last few years has been based on finding "common ground" with the ISA, Big Flame and, most important of all, the SWP. When the leaders of both major tendencies argued that defence of the USSR is not a burning issue today, they revealed how far they have already moved towards the SWP's position. Defence of the USSR against imperialism and internal counterrevolution is always a central question for Trotskyists.'

'The line on Afghanistan is simply the most shocking evidence to date that underlying the leadership's search for "common ground" with the SWP is an anti-Leninist practice -- adaptation to programmes other than the programme of revolutionary Marxism.'

And indeed Harney's position on Afghanistan received nearly twenty per cent of the delegate votes at the February 1980 National Conference, while a resolution submitted by Harney demanding recognition that defence of the Soviet Union was a principled question for revolutionaries (and thus implicitly counterposed to the majority project of fusion with the Cliffites) was passed with a larger majority than any other resolution put to the conference. One notable exception voting against it was soon-to-be IMG national secretary Steve Potter!

The fight for principled politics in the IMG had begun. And with it began the majority's campaign of bureaucratic suppression. All four tendencies combined against Harney's demand that a line discussion take place before the membership. The clear contrast between the unprincipled character of all the other tendencies and the programmatically-based grouping around Harney which was to become the Communist Tendency and later the Communist Faction was to be demonstrated by the fact that the CF picked up supporters from all four of the tendencies represented at the conference.

Already by the time of the conference, Harney was collaborating closely with another longtime member and with one of the IMG's leading youth cadre, Tony Vanzler. Vanzler took the fight for a Trotskyist position into the founding conference of Revolution Youth, which had responded to the Afghanistan events with an explicitly



Soviet-defencist line.

With the outbreak of the Iran/Iraq war, a document authored by Vanzler responded to the IMG's craven support for Khomeini's jihad against the 'infidel' Iraqis with a consistent revolutionary defeatist line, and explained:

'In practice, supporting the mass movement led by Khomeini amounted to reducing the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution to just a "good idea" for discussion, whilst operating on the basis of a two-stage conception of revolution: subordinating the question of what should replace the Shah to the achieving of maximum unity against him.' This was the only document to which the IMG leadership so much as attempted a political response, a pathetic rehash of slurs about opposition to Khomeini being 'pro-imperialist' and 'sectarian', and quite consciously aimed at branding the authors, Vanzler et al, as alien to the IMG.

With the Cliffites' rebuff of the IMG courtship, the Potter majority's perspectives were reduced to shambles -- and quickly replaced with a new, equally liquidationist dive into the nascent Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

Harney statement on expulsion to IMG Political Committee, 16 May:

Cde Harney smiled and then made a statement roughly as follows:

'Well, comrades, we knew it was going to be end-game, that you were going to throw us out one way or another this weekend. We were hardly going to declare the IMG revolutionary Marxist having produced five documents demonstrating that it was not. We appeal to comrades of the IMG to study those documents carefully, and we are sure there are even comrades in this room who know we are right. We are proud to be supporters of the iSt, and we think that everybody who wants to be a Trotskyist should be a supporter of the iSt. That's where the future lies—it certainly doesn't lie with the IMG which, with the CC document on the Labour Party, is set on a course towards political and even organisational liquidation into the Labour "left". We then picked up our stuff, and as we walked out, cde Khalid raised a clenched fist and called out 'Join the iSt!' and cde Harney shouted 'Forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International!'

A struggle against the turn to CND culminated in the submission of a document in December, entitled 'Warning! Disarmament slogans only disarm the working class!' Disorientation over the new turn to CND -- which the IMG had always opposed in the past -- was rife within the organisation, as members were effectively being directed to repudiate the Leninist position on imperialist war in order to build CND. The leadership's response to the challenge on the disarmament line was simple -- it was never allowed to see the light of day. To this day, six months after it was submitted, the IMG leadership has never released a document submitted by eight members of the organisation, five of them of ten years or more standing. The document pointed to the chauvinist conclusions inherent in this line:

'The target of the war-drive, the Soviet Union, receives only the minimum mention logically necessary. The initial excuse for the war-drive, Afghanistan, is kept carefully boxed off in separate articles. The issue of the war-drive itself is narrowed down to opposition to the siting of Cruise missiles in "our" country -- because it makes us a target for "Soviet retaliation".'

It was at this point that the oppositionists consolidated in the formation of a tendency. An 'Appeal for the formation of the Communist Tendency' dated 31 January 1981 advanced a rounded platform on the key programmatic questions of the day (reprinted elsewhere in this issue). It concluded: 'Build the IMG in the Bolshevik tradition! Fight for the Trotskyist programme!'

Taking a cue from the reformist American SWP the IMG leadership sought to assert as a 'norm' that formation of tendencies and factions be restricted to pre-conference periods, a denial of factional democracy. As the majority reacted to the growing rift inside the Labour Party by seeking to become the best boosters for 'left' reformist Tony Benn, it grew increasingly apprehensive of the possibility of growing support for the oppositionists. When the CT put resolutions in the branches demanding repudiation of a *Socialist Challenge* article offering explicit support to Benn's reformist programme 'as far as it goes' -- a programme which included the call for a 'non-nuclear defence strategy' -- and it passed unanimously in one branch, the IMG decided the time had come to crack down. Three CTers were brought up on frame-up charges for discussing internal matters with other members. The tendency declared itself a faction and submitted a document entitled 'Reverse the liqui-



dationist course on the Labour Party!' It warned:

'The fight for a clear policy of "No political support to 'left' reformism in the Labour Party", as advanced in the Communist Tendency platform, could not be more urgent that it is today. What is at stake is the complete political and organisational liquidation of the IMG into the Labour Party.'

On the basis of an informer inside the CF who had renounced all sense of political principle, the IMG Political Committee charged nine members of the CF with collaboration with the Spartacist League. The CF delegation to the Political Committee meeting proudly accepted responsibility for their principled behaviour in fighting for the Trotskyist programme inside the IMG (see inset).

For the rebirth of the Fourth International!

The question now facing IMGers is whether they too wish to accept the proud responsibility of fighting for the Trotskyist programme. In the wake of the purge, the IMG has reacted with a furious campaign designed to whip up an anti-Spartacist hysteria inside the organisation, thus far with limited success. In an attempt to poison IMGers against the politics of the CF and SL it has simply lied through its teeth, verging on Healy-style slanders that the SL is a 'weapon designed solely to smash up left-wing organisations' and that the SL sees the IMG as a 'counterrevolutionary organisation that had to be smashed'. At the same time the leadership has sought to cultivate a virtual reign of terror and paranoia about SL 'infiltration' inside the organisation. Anyone who so much as speaks to the SL or the CF or questions the bureaucratic purge is immediately suspect. One IMGer replied to a *Spartacist Britain* salesman recently: 'I could be expelled just for talking to you the

way things are going.'

There is more involved here than sour grapes over the loss of cadre to the iSt. The IMG in its current state, demoralised, politically diffuse, with a membership which still recalls the days of perennial multi-tendency 'democracy', would rapidly disintegrate under the pressures of a liquidationist entry. The CF was expelled in order to expedite that liquidation, and now the purge is being used to harden up the membership -- not politically, but organisationally.

At the same time, having expelled the only organised opposition to such a liquidation, the IMG evidently feels compelled to assuage doubts among the membership about the CF's telling political points. Thus the latest *Socialist Challenge* (4 June) carries a double-page spread ostentatiously explaining 'Our differences with Tony Benn'. Among the more conspicuous 'differences' is an attack on 'any idea of a "non-nuclear defence policy" if this means an alliance with imperialism'. But what else can it mean under a 'left reformist' -- ie capitalist -- government?

To IMG members who, like the comrades of the CF, are fed up with apologising for clerical reaction, anti-Soviet pacifism and Labourism, we say: the construction of an authentically Trotskyist vanguard is an urgent necessity. Examine the platform of the CF, currently engaged in discussions with the Spartacist League. Follow their principled lead. In its 'Dossier' the IMG PC agonises over the danger of Spartacist 'sleepers' and the prospect of a 'second wave' and serious losses from Revolution Youth. We can assure the PC there will be a second wave, if not a third, of comrades who awaken to the recognition that there is a consistent Trotskyist alternative to the USec's politics of capitulation -- perhaps sooner than they think. ■

Platform of the Communist Tendency

The undersigned comrades call for the formation of a tendency -- the Communist Tendency -- which will fight to reverse those positions of the IMG which on key questions of the class struggle, contradict the programme of Leninism-Trotskyism....

The IMG must reverse its present course. Our organisation is going backwards not forwards. It is time to firmly reassert the programmatic positions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International -- positions upon which the IMG is supposed to be based.

Unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution is a foundation stone of the Trotskyist programme. Yet for two weeks in January 1980 the line in our press 'Soviet troops out of Afghanistan' was indistinguishable from that of third campists and social democrats. Even in the subsequent line 'correction' this central question of defence of the Soviet Union was evaded and denied. The document 'So you thought defence of the Soviet Union was not a central issue' was an attempt to reassert this principle in the context of the Afghanistan crisis. But at our 1980 Conference all discussion on Afghanistan was thwarted with the collusion and/or acquiescence of the leaders of all four 'tendencies'. Nor did the incoming leadership seriously pursue any politically clarifying resolution of this question, either in the Central Committee or in the written discussion.

On the contrary their concern was to try to carry through their unprincipled perspective of fusion with (ie liquidation into) the openly Soviet-defeatist SWP. They justified this reckless course with reference to the lowest-common-denominator all-inclusive approach to regroupment and party-building in the 'Faction

and Party' series of *Red Weekly* articles four years ago -- indicating the urgent need to repudiate that approach and to turn instead to the tried and tested Leninist method of building a cadre organisation through hard programmatic struggle.

Today, the same policy of programmatic liquidationism on the question of Soviet defencism is being continued with the enthusiastic political support for the CND -- a regurgitation of failed petty-bourgeois utopian pacifist politics from the 50s and 60s. The call to build CND means liquidation into 'classless' (ie bourgeois) pacifism and social patriotism. It has nothing in common with the Leninist tactic of the united front -- encapsulated in the formula: march separately, strike together. And the call for unilateral nuclear disarmament has nothing in common with Trotskyism: 'Disarmament' says the Transitional Programme is a 'fraudulent abstraction' which 'the Fourth International rejects with abhorrence ...'

The same failure to defend the social gains of a workers state is seen in the case of the Polish events. Our leadership finds itself 'identifying' with the present Catholic anti-communist leadership of the new trades unions -- as if there were no conflict between the communist programme of workers democracy through political revolution and the implicit programme of capitalist restoration through social counterrevolution promoted by the Catholic hierarchy so revered by Lech Walesa and his ilk.

But it is not only on the Russian question that the departure from Leninism has expressed itself. In Nicaragua, the majority on the United Secretariat pursued a line of liquidation into the petty-bourgeois nationalist FSLN, and now

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Revolutionary regroupment

France, Germany:

Trotskyists break from USec

The material reprinted below documents the political struggles waged by three former militants of the United Secretariat (USec) against the deepening rightward motion of their respective sections, the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR) and the German Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (GIM). Rejecting the Pabloist counterfeit of Trotskyism, these comrades have recently resigned from the LCR and GIM (the resignation statement from the GIM by comrades Bernhard and Claudius is excerpted here) with a perspective of joining the Ligue Trotskyiste de France and the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands, sections of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt). Combined with the expulsion of the Communist Faction from the British IMG, this represents the greatest single accretion of USec cadre to the banner of authentic Trotskyism yet seen in Europe. Nor will it be the last.

The European USec groupings, centrist followers of guru Ernest Mandel, are today plagued by disarray and disorientation, poised for another liquidationist plunge into the mass reformist parties of the sort which marked the political destruction of the Fourth International nearly thirty years ago. The policy of entrism sui generis, authored by Michel Pablo, posed a period of long-term entry into the

social-democratic and Communist parties premised on pressuring the reformist bureaucracies; to the left in the hope that they could serve as 'blunted instruments' for proletarian revolution. The conclusions were explicitly revisionist: a denial of the struggle for the Trotskyist programme as the sole vehicle for socialist revolution. Pablo's liquidationist thesis was best captured in the discussions of the Austrian Commission of the Third World Congress of the Fourth International in 1951:

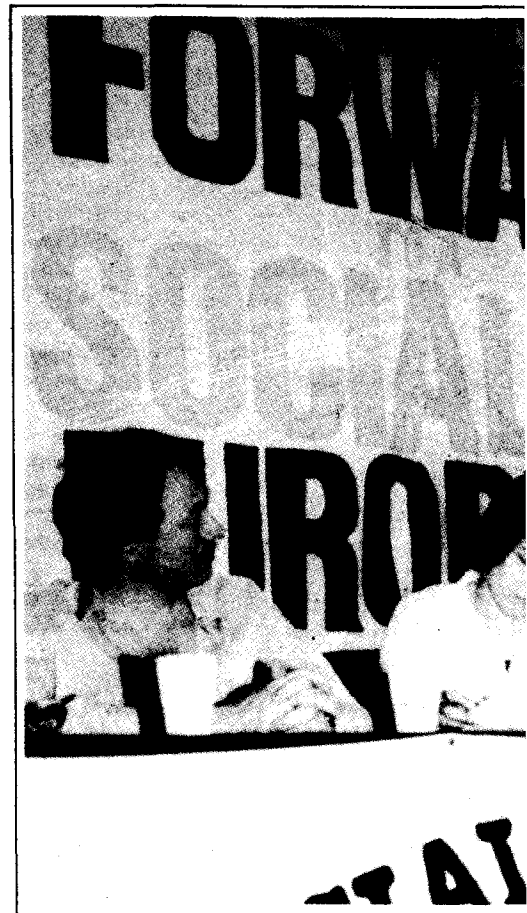
'The activity of our members in the SP will be governed by the following directives: A. Not to come forward as Trotskyists with our full program. B. Not to push forward programmatic and principled questions....'

A graphic demonstration of the counterrevolutionary consequences of Pabloist liquidationism came with the Belgian general strike of 1960-61. Acting as advisor to the 'left' bureaucrat Renard, Mandel provided Renard with a 'left' cover even as he was betraying the general strike, in particular apologising to the masses for Renard's decision to call off a mass march on Brussels which Mandel's *La Gauche* had advocated with the following cringing capitulation: 'We have been reproached for having launched the slogan of a march on Brussels.... Since we find that the demand has not been taken up

by the leaders, we submit; but we point out that at the moment our call appeared last week, no indications on this subject were yet known.' (*La Gauche*, 14 January 1961)

As mass meetings of workers demanded the government be brought down Mandel advanced a programme of 'structural reforms' for a new bourgeois coalition government!

The hallmark of Pabloism has always been a willingness to 'submit' to non-revolutionary, even non-proletarian forces, impressionistically seeking a substitute for a Trotskyist vanguard party. A decade ago, when a substantial number of the USec's current cadre were recruited, it reflected itself in a leftward shift, as the USec chased after a newly radicalised layer of petty-bourgeois youth in the anti-Vietnam war movement. It was in this period that the Pabloists produced their only significant critique of the Spartacist tendency, a document published by the Canadian Revolutionary Marxist Group on behalf of the US Internationalist Tendency which was compelled to commend our 'principled positions' on such questions as nationalism and feminism. But as the ephemeral 'new mass van-



GIM oppositionists: 'Enough! Build a Leninist party!'

'The greatest honor for a genuine revolutionist today is to remain a 'sectarian' in the eyes of philistines, whimperers and superficial thinkers.'

-- Leon Trotsky, *Writings*, 1929

After more than a year of programmatic opposition to the headlong rightward course of the GIM and United Secretariat we are convinced that there is only one perspective for comrades who want to struggle for the international proletarian revolution: to get out of this bankrupt organisation; for a serious discussion with the Trotskyist League of Germany.

Ronald Reagan's Cold War offensive, prepared by Carter, poses the question of the defence of the social gains of the October Revolution against imperialism (despite the Stalinist bureaucracy, which must be overthrown by the proletarian political revolution) as the div-

iding line for Trotskyists, just as it was in Trotsky's last political struggle -- against the petty-bourgeois opposition of Shachtman. But the GIM presents itself as the appendage of petty-bourgeois pacifism instead of struggling against imperialist war and the threat against the workers states. ('The main enemy is at home.') After an interlude of over ten years in various 'new mass vanguard' movements, after jumping on and off one bandwagon after another (guerrillism, feminism, anti-nuclear power etc) the GIM threw the switches again most recently after Strauss ran for election -- back to its home station, the social democracy. Trotskyist politics continue to go by the wayside or end up under the wheels. The slogan is 'united front orientation' vis-a-vis the SPD, and the GIM itself is degenerating progressively into an external (so far) faction of social democracy.

The crisis of humanity is the crisis of proletarian leadership: this sentence from the Transitional Programme is today more valid than ever before. But it gets clearer and clearer: the so-called 'Fourth International' will never be able to solve this crisis. We have seen how this 'Fourth International' became the apologist for the clerical reactionary Khomeini and how in Nicaragua, capitulating to the FSLN, the perspective for a Trotskyist party was sabotaged and its own comrades were denounced. We saw how the line of support to the bourgeois SPD/FDP coalition was rammed through and how now the pro-capitalist VGB and SPD trade-union bureaucracy are called upon to bring its influence to bear in Poland -- which means nothing other than paving the way for the social counter-revolution. We have seen this International put out to pasture did not even manage to draw the class line in Afghanistan and take sides with the Red Army against the reactionary mullahs and

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A consistent Trotskyist alternative

'The Spartacists have, in this ideological struggle with the Fourth International, notable advantages over many of the other pseudo-Trotskyist formations. Their cadre are usually articulate and well-educated in sectarian "Marxism;" they have consistently maintained principled positions on such issues as feminism and nationalism; they have established a generally commendable record of support for other left tendencies under attack from the bourgeois state and have refrained from the use of violence against other left groupings (itself not a minor achievement in light of the record of most other left formations in the U.S.). In a period in which other ostensibly Trotskyist tendencies have been characterized by bizarre deviations and hysterical excesses ... the Spartacist League has presented a sober, solid, down-to-earth tone that is refreshing.'

-- 'Spartacist League: Anatomy of a Sect', Canadian Revolutionary Marxist Group, June 1974

Spartacist intervention on the basis of the Trotskyist programme: in the anti-Vietnam war movement, the struggle for labour/black defence against fascist threats in Detroit, for military victory to Salvadoran leftists.





Thirty years of liquidationism

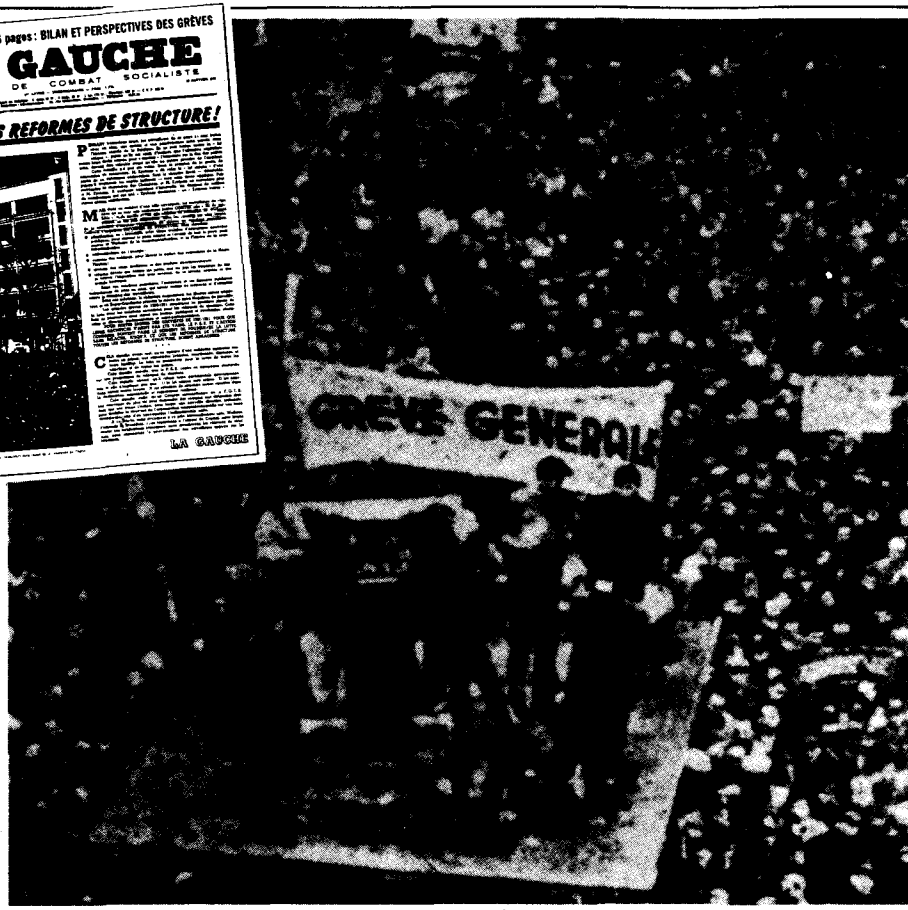
'In order to integrate ourselves into the real mass movement, to work and to remain in the masses' trade unions for example, "ruses" and "capitulations" are not only acceptable but necessary.'

—'The Coming War', Michel Pablo, 1951

'The activity of our members in the SP will be governed by the following directives: A. Not to come forward as Trotskyists with our full program. B. Not to push forward programmatic and principled questions....'

—Austrian Commission, Third World Congress, August-September 1951

Pablo's 'entrism sui generis' meant liquidation of the Trotskyist programme, dramatically illustrated by Mandel's support (as an advisor) to Renard. 'left' betrayer of the Belgian general strike of 1960-61, and Mandel's programme for 'structural reforms' at the time. Today Mandel hobnobs with Labour 'left' Ken Livingstone as IMG attempts to 'integrate' into Bennite left reformism.



guard' subsided, the congenital Pabloist impressionists began to look elsewhere -- to the popular-front 'Union of the Left' in France, to the mass movement of clerical reaction in Iran, and today ever more vigorously to various left reformists within the mass social-democratic parties. It was the conjuncture particularly of the USec's abject tailing after Khomeini and its increasingly gross adaptation to Cold War anti-Sovietism which impelled a number of longtime cadre into oppositional struggle.

In the past period the USec has persistently sought to deny that today there is a Cold War heating up which poses a direct military threat to the Soviet Union. But denying reality doesn't make it go away. As anti-Sovietism becomes more and more 'a la mode' the USec becomes the conscious pawn of social forces stronger and more coherent than it is. Thus this has been the year of its big play toward social democracy. At the insistence of the USec the GIM went all the way for Helmut Schmidt in the German elections as the LCR is presently doing with Mitterrand and the IMG with Tony Benn. As the rightward motion of the Mandelites has accelerated apace,

it has become increasingly difficult to discern the political cleavage between the European-based centrist sections and the reformist wing led by the American Socialist Workers Party which once threatened to rip the USec's rotten-bloc 'International' apart.

The USec has been a federation of rightward-moving centrist and deeply reformist sections for some time. It has nothing to do with a democratic-centralist Trotskyist international. The attempt to fuse or integrate large components of state capitalists (successful in France, largely abortive in Britain) is sufficient testimony to the non-Trotskyist character of this rotten bloc. In addition it has suffered numerous 'embarrassments', rightist excrescences which have often been even more than the mainstream USec leadership has been willing to stomach -- for now. A year and a half ago they were stunned by the successful split operation carried out by the social-democratic reformist Lambertiste OCI in the company of the adventurer Nahuel Moreno. Then Tariq Ali went public with his call for Soviet troops out of Afghanistan; recently the LCR CC felt it neces-

ary to censure (and that's all!) two CC members who signed a well-publicised reactionary petition endorsing the forces fighting the Soviet Army in Afghanistan.

All these 'excesses' are not simply individual aberrations but have the same relation to the USec's overall policy as fever blisters to a disease-racked body. The militants from the barricades of 1968 have grown tame enough with the passing of the years and the accumulation of betrayals to envision growing older in the company of social-democratic bureaucrats. The USec has always worshipped at the altar of the mythical 'dynamic', that codeword for the appetite to accommodate whatever happens to be popular or in motion at a particular time. Blind faith in the dynamic has brought the USec a long way since '68 -- in the wrong direction. How low will she go? The militants cited below didn't want to wait to find out. They chose sides and decided to fight for what they believe in: the international proletarian revolution and a Trotskyist party. And we are sure there will be more to follow the example set by them and the Communist Faction in the period ahead.

CGT militant quits LCR

The Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the United Secretariat is quite comfortable with Mitterrand's popular front in France, proclaiming itself the 'third' component [after the CP and SP] of the new majority while pretending that the 'fourth', bourgeois, component isn't part of this alliance. But it's Jobert [Gaullist Minister of Foreign Commerce] and Faure [left Radical Minister of Justice] who have the ministries and it's the MRG [left Radicals] and the 'left' Gaullists who will get the seats in parliament while the LCR only constitutes the fifth wheel on the cart. For LCR members who don't want to collapse into the social democracy, who refuse to be in the same majority as Jobert and Crepeau, who want to fight at the side of the other workers against the bourgeoisie and Mitterrand's popular front there is an alternative -- the revolutionary programme

upheld by the Ligue Trotskyiste de France.

Recently a worker at the Renault-Cleon car plant for ten years, and a member of the CGT who has been a member of the LCR for two years, resigned from the LCR in solidarity with this programme. Comrade Demos began his opposition to the class collaborationist politics of the LCR last October. In a document printed in the internal bulletin of the Rouen branch he criticised the LCR's political support to 'Union dans les luttes', a collection of Eurocommunists, dissident Communist Party members and social democrats who campaigned for an electoral accord between the CP and the Socialist Party:

'The call of the one hundred is a call to reconstruct the popular front Union of the Left "in struggles". Those who are nostalgic for the Union of the Left -- Eurocommunists, Socialist Party members, nonaffiliated militants -- have made an appeal to sign a petition. To amend this petition on struggles, the general strike, does not suffice to gen-

erate an anti-popular front content. This is only, as Trotsky said, an appeal for a "fighting popular front". To say today that such a campaign is in contradiction with the divisive policies of the bureaucratic apparatuses is true. But on what basis? The intention of the majority of initiators and signatories is nothing other than the reconstruction of the Union of the Left (disarmament of the working class). The question for us is not to propose a united front on the basis of "unity" in general. With such an intervention we appeal to the most backward elements of the working class. For the advanced workers it is a "vague and confusing" intervention as the call for unity of the apparatuses becomes the principal axis of our programme.'

Discussion in the Renault cell and with the city leadership did not convince Demos that the LCR line was correct. In a more recent document

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Revolutionary regroupment

Workers Power cadre joins SL

Comrade Charlie Shell, a founder and long-standing National Committee member of the centrist Workers Power (WP) group, was expelled from WP on 4 April five days after leading WPers ransacked his bedroom to find evidence of his political collaboration with the Spartacist League (see Spartacist Britain no 32, May 1981). At the Workers Power national conference on 23 May, he was given 15 minutes to appeal his expulsion. Comrade Shell transcended the petty organisational questions to pose the programmatic questions facing WP members and to confront WP with a comprehensive political critique of its Stalinophobia, accommodation to nationalism, and consequent cowardly evasion of confrontation with the Spartacist, ie Trotskyist, programme. WP could only reply with grim silence, and his expulsion was unanimously upheld. Spartacist Britain is pleased to reprint here comrade Shell's application for membership in the SL.

I wish to apply for membership of the Spartacist League (SL), British section of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt). Comrades will be aware that this is not a hastily taken decision. Over the last few years I have seen the SL in action, for the last few years I have actively fought against the SL. But the end result of all the discussions and polemical exchanges is that I have been won to the programme of the iSt. Now my subjective desire to help make a proletarian revolution is matched with a political programme capable of doing just that. My political break with Workers Power (WP), an organisation that has six years of my life invested in it, in which I used to be a member of the National and Political Committees, was not easy. But recently I learnt something new -- programme first. When programmatic convictions dictate it, old ties must be broken.

I first became involved in politics towards the end of 1974 when I joined the International Socialists (IS) -- now the Socialist Workers Party. Over the years IS's chronic tailing of trade union militancy produced a number of not qualitatively superior oppositional factions. In mid-1975 I joined one of these oppositions -- the Left Faction (LF). At the time the LF looked to me like the embodiment of Bolshevik intransigence. Looking back it is clear that the LF was little more than a left expression of IS's economism. In October 1975 the LF was expelled and WP was born. Almost immediately WP began looking for a political resting place to cover its programmatic nakedness. The fusion with Sean Matgamna's Workers Fight (WF) to form the ill-fated International-Communist League (I-CL) provided that resting place.

The I-CL fusion expressed very clearly the central features of WP's practice which I have come to reject. The fusion was unprincipled. The state capitalist Soviet-defeatist WP fused with the ostensibly Soviet-defeatist WF. WP agreed absolutely with Matgamna's dictum: 'the Russian question is a tenth rate question'. Nine months after the fusion the I-CL suffered an appropriate fate -- it fell apart. And WP emerged back into the world having clarified none of the

political issues at stake.

'No hind legs'

Under pressure to demarcate itself from the I-CL and in order to avoid an International Marxist Group 'unity' offensive WP was propelled into a leftward motion. At one level the leftward move was a cliquist response to pressure from opponent organisations. But the leftward direction had important consequences. It forced WP to begin to confront the politics of Trotskyism. Subjectively WP looked to most of its members like the only organisation trying to save Marxism from the clutches of the Pabloite renegades and the Healyite demons. But it faced a problem. To its left stood the iSt with a consistent revolutionary programme. And immediately there developed a tension between the leftist impulses of WP and the cliquist desire to maintain an organisation at all costs.

Over the years the SL has taken quite an interest in WP's development. But apart from an initial and never fulfilled impulse to take one the SL, WP have always shied away. Towards the end of 1977 one leading member of WP likened a political fight between the SL and WP to stags locking antlers. 'But', he cautioned, 'we may have antlers but we have no hind legs' -- the SL had a clear position on the Russian question and WP did not. This sort of cynical attitude has increasingly dictated WP's approach to the SL. Fend them off where necessary but avoid real debate wherever possible. But on the major programmatic issues the SL is right and WP, for all its Trotskyist pretences, is wrong. Eventually I faced up to that. WP is still avoiding it. WP's growing tendency to draw a hard organisational line between itself and the SL is a clear indication of the increasing dominance of the cliquist tendencies over the subjective desire to build a Trotskyist party.

I was won to the SL around a number of central programmatic points. On the Russian question only the SL has combined a clear Soviet-defeatist position with the programme of political revolution. In Poland the SL drew a clear class line between the interests of the proletariat and the influence of the Catholic Church. WP fudged the issues, calling abstractly for political revolution but practically eliminating the restorationist threat and the danger to the Soviet Union from its analysis. In Afghanistan the SL took a side in the war between the Red Army and the reactionary pro-imperialist mullahs. Again WP fudged the issue, condemning the invasion as reactionary and failing to call for victory to the Red Army. For me, inside WP, the Russian question was a source of confusion for some time. I wanted to take a Soviet-defeatist position but had no programmatic framework from which to properly evaluate the positions of WP. Generally WP was groping along looking for a 'unique' position -- and is now heading back towards a Stalinophobic state capitalist analysis.

Coming to grips with national question

In Iran WP put forward an 'anti-imperialist united front' with Khomeini as a supposed counter to the SL's 'sectarianism'. But even worse WP's 'anti-sectarianism' took it to the point of a disgraceful social-chauvinist position of siding with Khomeini in the war against Iraq. The comrades of WP had better draw the balance sheet of their smart tactics designed to allow them to be part of the mass movement. What have the Iranian masses gained by blocking with Khomeini to put him in power? What have they gained by fighting a protracted war against Iraq alongside the Pasdaran? Only the SL was and is intransigently opposed to Khomeini, only the SL put forward an independent class programme for the masses in Iran.

The Iran/Iraq position was a watershed for WP. The initial response of the whole leadership was to take a defeatist position. But turning in horror from the possible implications for its position on Iran the whole of the Political Committee flipped over into support for Khomeini. I opposed the position on the Iran/Iraq war but it was only through confrontation with the SL that I realised the full implications. I vividly

remember sitting in a WP public forum on the Iran/Iraq war completely unable to produce any honest replies to the SL intervention.

For WP the Irish question fits neatly into the 'anti-imperialist' framework. Consequently they feel quite comfortable blocking with Green nationalism to drive the Protestant working class into the sea. This goes under the guise of 'self-determination' for the Irish people as a whole. Unfortunately for WP, the different communities in Northern Ireland have totally counterposed ideas of what their 'self-determination' involves. This conflict can only be resolved in the framework of the proletarian revolution, which seeks to draw a class line to transcend the communal divisions. The ability of the SL to present a class programme for the Irish struggle has ramifications in Britain as well. At the present time it is the SL and not WP who are pushing the 'Troops out now' slogan to the fore. Why? Because for the SL it is necessary to develop a strategy which goes beyond simple solidarity, important though that is, with the IRA against the British army. And at all times the removal of British troops from Northern Ireland is in the interests of the proletariat, whether or not the nationalists view it as the central question. For a long time I failed to see the continuity of the SL's position on Ireland with other issues. For many years I had defended the traditional British left line on Ireland. But on Ireland as on everything else it is necessary to draw the class line first and then develop the tactics. From that standpoint, a Trotskyist standpoint, only the SL's position offers a way out of the seemingly interminable communal strife in Ireland.

My break from WP was basically a break from centrism. WP operates within the time-worn framework of taking the line of least resistance. So when WP adapts to petty-bourgeois nationalism and bows to Cold War pressure it is not surprising that it also exhibits the pressure of the Labour Party in its politics. Once again trying to avoid the dreaded disease of 'sectarianism' WP went beyond run-of-the-mill capitulation by calling for a loyalty oath within the Labour Party. This position was dropped into the newspaper with no warning to the membership. What came out of all this was a recognition that WP operates within the well-defined boundaries of the centrist left. Slow evolution was not enough. Sharp breaks were required. In the end I made those sharp breaks and came over to the SL.

The SL has set itself the task of regrouping a cadre from the international left which can lay the basis for a revolutionary vanguard party. But whilst the great issues are posed WP is hiding itself away, refusing political debate. That is not the attitude of revolutionaries but of petty-bourgeois dilletantes who deep down believe the world can go on in the same old way forever. In breaking from centrism and joining the SL I have made the best and most important decision of my political life. If the members of WP want to take part in building a Bolshevik international then they had better follow my example. ■

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Sri Lanka: Defend Tamil rights!

Smash the state of emergency!

Months of heightening repression by the reactionary United National Party (UNP) government of JR Jayawardene against the oppressed Tamil minority of Sri Lanka culminated on 2 June in the declaration of a state of emergency in the Tamil-populated Northern Province. The pretext offered by Jayawardene for the suspension of civil liberties was an alleged wave of 'terrorist' violence leading up to the 4 June local district development council elections.

Two days before the state of emergency was imposed, a cop was shot to death while policing an election meeting of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). The police responded by imposing a dawn-to-dusk curfew throughout the region and launching a brutal anti-Tamil pogrom. That same night some 150 armed police rampaged through the town of Jaffna, torching the house of a local MP, a Hindu temple, the TULF office, the public library and various shops and newspaper offices. The poorest section of Jaffna was wrecked by the police riot, a TULF spokesman told *Spartacist Britain*. He described how ten or twenty people armed with swords ('most likely hired thugs of UNP') boarded a train in the village of Kurunagala, and proceeded to terrorise and attack all the Tamils on the train. The bodies of four young Tamil men were later found dead in a nearby village. As the polling booths closed on 4 June the state of emergency was extended throughout the island, though the curfew was not extended beyond the Northern Province.

The tension in Jaffna has steadily mounted in recent months. Two months ago the so-called Young Tigers Liberation Movement carried out a daring bank robbery which resulted in the deaths of two policemen. The government seized the opportunity to impose virtual martial law upon Jaffna. Military trucks filled with soldiers are to be found standing ominously on many street corners. Tamil activists fear for their safety even if they are seen attending public political meetings. In the last two months alone, dozens of Tamils, including students from Jaffna University, have been 'disappeared', without any police explanation, in the style of Latin American *gorila* dictatorships.

This brutal campaign of terror by the Sinhalese-chauvinist Jayawardene regime demands an outcry of protest from the labour movement around the world. In London, a protest demonstration organised by the TULF was held outside the Ceylon Tea Centre on 6 June. Joining the more than 100 Tamil protestors was a militant contingent representing the Spartacist League (SL) and the Communist Faction (CF), recently expelled from the IMG -- the only two organisations of the British left present. SL-initiated chants of 'Get the army and the cops out of



Ceylon Tea Centre protest

Tamil areas!' and 'Stop Britain's military aid to Sri Lanka butchers!' were among the chants taken up by the demonstration, which also raised the cry, 'Ceylon tea -- Tamil blood!'

Ceylon tea does indeed mean Tamil blood! Since 1949 the Tamil tea plantation workers -- based on an influx of migrant labour from India -- have been denied all citizenship rights. Seven years later, all Tamils in Sri Lanka -- including those whose roots are centuries old -- were denied the right to speak Tamil as an official language. These legal attacks went hand in hand with brutal repression and pogrom terror.

The revolutionary defence of Tamil rights is an acid test for would-be proletarian revolutionaries on this island, a test which most of them have miserably failed -- most demonstratively by their participation in or backhanded support for the Sinhala-chauvinist SLFP popular-front coalition government. Today as hatred for the UNP provides the crucible for a new popular front in embryo, the Tamil-nationalist TULF finds itself drawn towards the bloody 'Mrs B', SLFP leader Bandaranaike. Thus a leading TULF spokesman at the London protest explained that TULF candidates in the district elections (which were boycotted by the SLFP and its former coalition partners, the 'Trotskyist' LSSP and the pro-Soviet and pro-Peking CPs) in the Tamil-

dominated districts in the North and East had 'the full support of socialists in the South', in which he included the SLFP. Illusions in the 'socialist' rhetoric of the communalist Bandaranaike are fatal for Tamil militants. As an SL chant at the London protest made clear: 'No more coalitions with Mrs B, class struggle will defeat the UNP!'

And class struggle, the struggle for a revolutionary workers and peasants government to smash bourgeois rule, means forging unity between Tamil and Sinhala workers free from any taint of Sinhala chauvinism. That is the revolutionary perspective being fought for by our comrades of the newly formed Spartacist League of Sri Lanka. The proletariat of Sri Lanka must be mobilised in a struggle to end all discrimination against the Tamil people, including the denial of Tamil as an official language equal in status to Sinhala; against the deportations of Tamil plantation workers and for the right to return for all those who have been deported; for full citizenship rights for the Tamil plantation workers; for the right of self-determination for the Tamils of Ceylon's North and East. *Smash the state of emergency -- cops and army out of Jaffna! For the right of self-determination of the Tamil people! For a workers and peasants government in Sri Lanka, part of a socialist federation of the Indian sub-continent!*

CT platform...

(Continued from page 5)

characterises the Sandinista government -- which proudly proclaims its class-collaborationism restrains wages and jails leftists -- as a 'workers and peasants government'. In the Iran/Iraq war it is revealed in the policy of supporting capitalist Iran against capitalist Iraq. This anti-Leninist position is the culmination of two years' political prostration before Khomeini's 'Islamic revolution' justified with the thesis that the reactionary clericalist movement would somehow open up the 'unfolding process' of permanent revolution. This thesis is diametrically opposed to the Trotskyist strategy of permanent revolution.

The same kind of programmatic capitulation is also to be seen in the IMG's work on Ireland. Alongside giving political support to the nationalism of the Provisionals our organisation is now engaging in unprincipled blocs with the liberals around their demands for 'phased withdrawal' etc. Focussing on the liberal-humanitarian 'Don't let Irish prisoners die' our paper failed to draw a sharp line against British imperialism through clear demands to free the prisoners and for troops out of Ireland now. And in the Labour Party, we find *Socialist Challenge* offering Tony Benn and the Labour 'lefts' advice and support, which only makes it easier for them to play their dangerous role of de-

ceiving the workers with their 'parliamentary road to socialism'.

The IMG must adopt the following positions:

1. For the defence of the workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. Victory to the Red Army in Afghanistan. Secure and extend the gains of the Afghan masses through sovietisation.
2. For political revolution to overthrow the ruling bureaucratic castes in all the degenerated and deformed workers states, led by Trotskyist revolutionary parties. For a fight to break the influence of Catholic nationalism on the Polish working class. Against any blocs with capitalist restoration forces.
3. Down with Khomeini -- no support to clerical reaction. For a Leninist policy in the Iran/Iraq war. Turn the war between the oppressors into civil wars against the oppressors. Unconditional support to the right of the Kurds to self-determination. For workers republics in Iran and Iraq.
4. Support the military struggle of petty-bourgeois nationalist movements (like the FSLN in Nicaragua, the FMLN in El Salvador) against the US-backed dictatorships in Latin America, but give them no political support. For independent Trotskyist parties to fight for genuine workers and peasants governments: the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.
5. Troops out of Ireland now. Defend republicans against British imperialism. For an uncompromising working class perspective in opposition not only to Loyalist sectarianism and all ex-

pressions of British imperialism including Liberalism, but also republican nationalism.

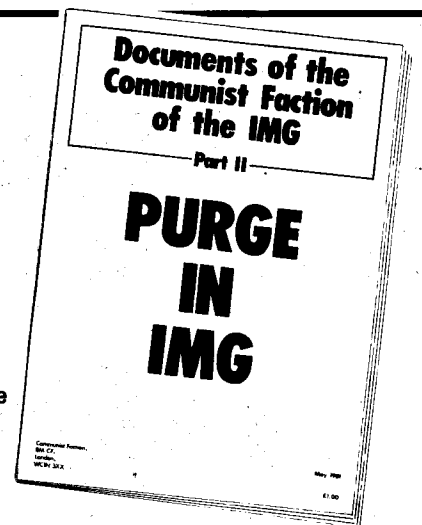
6. No political support to 'left' reformism in the Labour Party.
7. Down with disarmament slogans -- debilitating and narcotic illusions that only serve to dupe the masses. End all political support to CND. Disarming the bourgeoisie requires that the workers be armed.

We call on all comrades who agree with this platform to join with us in building the Communist Tendency of the IMG. Build the IMG in the Bolshevik tradition! Fight for the Trotskyist programme.

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GIM...

(Continued from page 6)

khans, whose social programme means only the enslavement of women, as well as the slaughtering and skinning alive of communist school-teachers. But for us the question is at all times and in all cases the class standpoint: we had a side in Stalingrad and we have one in Afghanistan! We've had enough! We want to build a Leninist party which will lead the working class to the revolutionary seizure of power before it is too late -- the GIM is nothing but an obstacle on the path to this goal.

Since the National Conference in February 1980 where a majority of the organisation was against electoral support for the SPD, there have been a few changes in the GIM. Then, for the first time since Portugal, there were the beginnings of a halfway political discussion. But since the Extraordinary NC in June 1980 the GIM has been 'homogenised' by the pro-SPD leadership on the SPD line. And no matter where our sustaining pledges may go, the publication of an internal bulletin with the aim of democratic inner-party discussion is certainly not included in the priorities of the new cynical right-wing leadership....

In contrast to the unprincipled 'middle swamp' of T5 we have tried to base our criticism of the GIM/USFI on the numerous recent examples of this organisation's capitulation: in Nicaragua, Iran, Afghanistan, Poland -- where it united with Heinz 'All power to the madonna' Brandt (*kritik* no 27) and applauded 'Rural Solidarity', an organisation of small-time rural employers, representing a strong potentially counterrevolutionary force. We have sought the causes of the growing social democratisation of the GIM, which is logically bound to lead to liquidation into the SPD/Jusos/Falken [Jusos are the SPD youth, Falken the students and schoolchildren]. (It must be said that it is a self-evident necessity to point out a revolutionary alternative for left social democrats who are searching for a socialist alternative. But the GIM is programmatically so degenerated that it does not point the way to Leninism to critical social democrats -- no, it tells them that communism is basically left social democracy, so that they might as well stay in the SPD.)

Above all, we concluded that the GIM has no correct, revolutionary policy in any crucial programmatic question and that our experience with the Gruppe Internationale Marxisten was nothing new. Anyone who investigates the history of the USec (or its predecessors) and the GIM -- which we urgently call upon the comrades to do -- must see that it is not a matter of individual errors which can be corrected, but since Pablo, a method of liquidationism and tailist politics. Pablo, Mandel and Frank paved the way in 1953 at the latest for liquidationist entrism into the Stalinist and social-democratic parties. Ben Bella's regime in Algeria was glorified by the international leadership as a 'workers and peasants government', Nasser's Egypt was 'centrist' and people like Tito, Mao or Castro were glorified as 'unconscious Trotskyists'; guerrillism was a way to power -- of course preferably in places where it is most 'successful', for example in Cuba; not,

however, for example in the 'German Autumn' where the GIM caved in in the face of the rabid West German bourgeoisie's anti-guerrilla witch-hunt and disgustingly printed the vicious headline in *was tun* no 175, 15 September 1977, 'Individual terror only benefits the right'.

For us it has become clearer and clearer that only the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) maintains and continues the tradition of Trotskyism. At the time, the Revolutionary Tendency (predecessor nucleus of the Spartacist League/US) struggled against the capitulation of the SWP to Castro's Stalinism.... Whereas the entire international left outdid itself enthusing over the Iranian 'Revolution' only the iSt pointed out the absolute irreconcilability of the interests of women, the national minorities and the workers with the reactionary Islamic movement and made the connection with the question of the proletarian seizure of power.

'To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives -- these are the rules of the Fourth International.'

Today these are the rules of the iSt and its German section, the TLD.

Comrades, Mandel said some time ago that one could only pray for the GIM. We can imagine something better. We want to struggle for the worldwide proletarian revolution and not be 'partners in dialogue' for Glotz, Voigt and von Oertsen [popular social democrats] or sell reformist/pacifist fairy tales such as 'Jobs not Armaments' (*was tun* no 310, 14 April 1981) until an imperialist war decides the question of socialism or barbarism' in favour of the latter (see our document 'For revolutionary anti-militarism' in *RB* no 4, 27 March 1981). Therefore, we are breaking with the GIM, which cannot be reformed, on a comprehensive programmatic basis. We are resigning from this rotten organisation in order to take up contact with the international Spartacist tendency, with the TLD. We call upon all comrades in the GIM who want to see the proletariat in power to contact us to discuss this perspective.

Break with Pabloite opportunism!

Forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International!

Long live the proletarian world revolution!

Bernhard, Freiburg
Claudius, West Berlin

LCR...

(Continued from page 7)

'No, Mitterrand's victory is not a "first victory" for the working class', Comrade Demos exposed Krivine and company's present capitulation to the popular front: 'Mitterrand's victory unmasked the LCR's real politics. To justify its support to Mitterrand it had explained that throwing out Giscard was the way to encourage workers' struggles. But now you can't find calls for strikes to win our demands anywhere in *Rouge* and even less mention of the

general strike.' For Krivine the task of the hour is ... to vote: 'Today our task is to reinforce and consolidate the united mobilisation. Together we must impose a parliamentary majority of the parties of the workers movement'.

The LCR leaders have been accumulating the proof that its 'dynamic' is one of parliamentarism: on May 4 at the Mutualite Krivine explained that 'we aren't going to go on a general strike to bring down Mitterrand because the alternative would be Chirac, the rightwing' while *Rouge* called for a sort of referendum on the 35-hour workweek (!) and an LCR spokesman exclaimed 'we aren't going to go for all or nothing' (*Liberation*, 19 May). Indeed! The explanation for this right turn is quite clear. As Trotsky said 'the use of the general strike is absolutely incompatible with the strategy of the popular front which means an alliance with the bourgeoisie, that is the submission of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie' ('The hour of decision approaches'). Support the workers or support the popular front -- you have to choose. Comrade Demos presented this choice to the militants of the LCR:

'Deceive, calm, demoralise and defeat the working class, that's the aim of the popular front. In these conditions to give it "credibility" or "efficiency" is helping the reformists to deceive, demoralise and defeat the working class. If tomorrow the workers begin to fight at Cleon and oppose Mitterrand they will turn to us and accuse us of having hid the truth, of having strengthened illusions in Mitterrand and of being responsible for putting a bourgeois government into power.... "Don't play into the hands of reaction." Now that's a new formulation in our newspaper. Comrade Krivine should leave this argument to the bureaucrats who seek to prevent or break a strike.'

Krivine continues a little later: 'Many workers ask us for guarantees that they won't be betrayed one more time. Well, the only guarantee is of course their own mobilisation. But it is also necessary to have a strong revolutionary organisation ... capable of simultaneously avoiding opportunist or extremist undertakings.' What is this 'mobilisation'? Marchais also talks about 'mobilisations' but it is to avoid calling concretely for a strike. What is this 'extremist undertakings'? I've heard that too often in the mouths of Renault bureaucrats to not prick up my ears at that. It is necessary to say clearly to the working class: it is the popular front which leads to reaction.'

Comrade Demos also had to fight the proposal of Jerome, a leader of the Matti faction at Rouen, to do an entry into the Socialist Party, the ultimate conclusion of the opportunist policies of support to the popular front. With the LCR's current positions such an entry could only be a liquidation in the service of social democracy. But this 'entrism' may soon be the official scheme of the United Secretariat. As shown by the expulsion of the Communist Faction of the IMG the leadership of the IMG understands that the future choice for the members of its organisation will be social democracy or Spartacism. We hope that other members of the IMG and LCR will also understand it and that they'll make the choice of Trotskyism and the international Spartacist tendency. ■

Communist Faction/Spartacist League Public Meetings

Where is the IMG going?

**Trotskyists
purged -
Down
enforced**

Speakers:

STEPHEN HARNEY

Spokesman for the Communist Faction, expelled from the IMG.

IMG member, 1971-1981
former member IMG Central Committee, IMG Control Commission.

MARK HYDE

Spartacist League Central Committee

Former member IMG, IMG Trotskyist Opposition.

Former member Workers Socialist League National Committee, WSL Leninist Faction.

BIRMINGHAM

Tuesday 9 June, 7.30pm
Carr's Lane Church Centre
Carr's Lane

LONDON

Thursday 11 June, 7.30pm
Islington South East Library
115 Essex Road N1

OXFORD

Tuesday 16 June, 7.30pm
East Oxford Community Centre
Princes Street (off Cowley Road)

SHEFFIELD

Wednesday 17 June, 7.30pm
Station Hotel
The Wicker

Popular Front...

(Continued from page 12)

like France. There is Jacques Delors, who only joined the PS after being an economic advisor to Chaban-Delmas (Pompidou's Prime Minister) from 1969 to 1972. Some credentials for a 'socialist' minister of the economy. Then there is Claude Cheysson, an ex-PDG [high-level executive] who managed to be Giscard's representative to the Common Market in Brussels. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, he has been making the rounds in Washington, reassuring the Reaganites of Mitterrand's genuine anti-Sovietism. And of course, there is the renegade 'leftist' Rocard and a host of ambitious young men who learned about the class struggle -- from the bosses' side -- at the ENA [Ecole Normale d'Administration -- top training institution for future state bureaucrats]. Pierre Mauroy, we have saved for last, since he is simply the mirror of the party -- the perfect bureaucrat.

That this team is dedicated to administering the capitalist crisis on the backs of the workers should come as no great surprise. To the extent that the PS' vision of 'socialism' is a super-efficient version of French capitalism, the presence of bourgeois ministers in the Mitterrand government also seems superfluous. Riding a wave of anti-Giscardism, Mitterrand really didn't make any promises to the working class; it is in fact remarkable how nebulous and minimal his promises of 'change' actually are.

It is really a measure of the French bourgeoisie's reactionary *idees fixes* that the stock market allowed itself to be panicked. Not only is the government doing all it can to reassure the stockholders of the firms considered for nationalisation, with lavish promises of compensation, but the nationalisations are being considered solely from the perspective of aiding French capitalism's struggle for a greater share of the world market.

But it was not really on domestic issues that Mitterrand needed to give assurances to the bourgeoisie. This popular front takes office in the context of a new Cold War campaign orchestrated by American imperialism! Mitterrand cemented his bloc with the Gaullists on the basis of virulent anti-Sovietism. He proclaimed his all-out support to pro-NATO 'Atlanticism'. Again and again he charged Giscard with being 'soft on the Russians' and selling out the Poles and Afghans -- Giscard who supported Reagan in El Salvador and launched an economic boycott of Cuba! Mitterrand's visit to China, even before his election, his support to the American Pershing missiles in Europe, his support to the Common Market, the economic annex of NATO; all of this demonstrated so clearly that Mitterrand was a perfect Cold War socialist. So well, in fact, that Giscardist spokesman Lecanuet, searching desperately for an 'issue' for the 'opposition' to use, had to admit, 'in the international sphere there is a convergence of views' (*Le Monde*, 27 May).

As a result Mitterrand is no less committed than Giscard was to building up the nuclear arsenal of French imperialism -- against the Soviet Union. He declared himself in favour of a 'modernisation of French strategic and tactical forces' (*Le Monde*, 17 April). Mitterrand's concern with the *force de frappe* has been reaffirmed by the appointment of General Saulnier (previously commander of strategic air forces) to the position of Chief of General Staff attached to the Elysee. Although he may have tactical disagreements with Reagan, Mitterrand is prepared to do his share for the 'Atlantic Alliance'. The popular front always means 'national unity', hands off of the bourgeois army, in fact often even a strengthening of that army in the name of 'national defence'. This time, social democratic anti-communism, Gaullist rhetoric and the international climate of Cold War combine to produce: a popular front under the flag of NATO!

How low will the PCF go?

In the aftermath of the disastrous first round vote totals for the PCF, Marchais jumped on the Mitterrand bandwagon. Since 10 May the PCF has been pleading for Communist ministers as a self-declared part of the 'new majority'. Communist ministers in this government of austerity and Cold War? What happened to all those criticisms of Mitterrand's 'right turn', to the criticism of the popular fronts of 1936, 1944 and 1972 ('three times is enough!')?

The PCF's anti-Mitterrand campaign blew up in its face on 26 April. Marchais had preached the virtues of popular frontist 'unity' for more than a decade. The PCF/CGT had cancelled demonstrations, broken strikes, betrayed every workers struggle -- all in the name of electoral success for the Union of the Left. Was it

any surprise that so many of the PCF ranks opted for the 'useful vote' seduced by Mitterrand's chances of success?

So the PCF leaders have swallowed their pride and are trying to get a piece of the action. Communist ministers, they tell us, are necessary to the 'stability' of the new government; they will 'anchor' the government 'on the left'. The presence of PCF ministers has never changed the bourgeois character of the popular front one iota. We know what the Communist ministers did in 1944-1947: they offered up the blood and sweat of the workers to De Gaulle. We remember Thorez' slogan, 'strikes are the weapon of the trusts' and the PCF's vote for war credits to Indochina. The PCF ministers suppressed the workers' struggles in the interests of reconstructing French capitalism, and all they received in return was to be kicked out in 1947 when the Cold War got underway. Crime doesn't pay!

This time, it's extremely doubtful they'll get in the government at all. In its Cold War mood the bourgeoisie and its social democratic lackeys have turned their back on the Stalinists' pleas. Jospin explained that an electoral pact for the legislatures would not be possible unless the PCF renounced all criticism of the PS in advance, and if there was agreement on Afghanistan, Poland and the Euromissiles! In short, a complete break with Moscow -- a cartoon in *Le Monde* summed it up, showing Jospin demanding that Marchais take out membership in the PS. As we have pointed out, the PS has insisted all along on the centrality of the Russian question -- posing a break by the PCF with Moscow as the precondition for reconstituting the Union of the Left.

Marchais and the PCF bureaucrats just keep grovelling. PCF leader Gaston Plissonnier explains that the 131 point programme of the PCF is for 'the future'; *L'Humanite* meekly accepted the announcement of the new government. The PCF is in the same situation as it was in 1954, when it supported the Mendes-France government in Parliament, or in 1956, when it voted Mollet the special powers he needed to prosecute the Algerian war; it is selling out and getting snubbed in return. But Marchais will keep trying, promising to stifle the workers' struggles as a pledge of their 'good faith', just as they responded to the anti-communist attacks on their pro-Moscow line by unleashing a disgusting racist onslaught against the immigrant workers in order to prove their loyalty and utility to the French bourgeoisie.

Seguy, a past master at covering up sellouts and inactivity with militant rhetoric is carrying out his part of the bargain. The CGT has repeatedly attacked the minimalism of the [social-democratic] CFDT's demands. It's true: the CFDT is asking for very little, and what's more it is relying solely on the government to get it. But what about the CGT? Krasucki, at Porte de Pantin on May 18, declared 'We have never said that we demand everything, right away.' The position is very simple: for negotiations, and that's all! Strikes could harm the popular front, which is an 'ally' of the workers, so the CGT not only refused to launch the struggles needed to wrest any real concessions from the bosses, but it hasn't even specified what programme it wants to negotiate!

For a revolutionary opposition to the popular front!

Here and there, there were small pockets of PCF militants who refused to follow Marchais in voting for the ferociously anti-Soviet social democrat Mitterrand. The sentiment in this milieu is probably expressed by the people influenced by the small left-Stalinist *Le Communiste* group. But loyalty to the Soviet Union, while highly honourable in face of the current Cold War campaign, does not suffice as a programme. Without a revolutionary programme and with a visceral hatred of the social democrats substituted for a genuine opposition to popular frontism, this group has set itself the utopian task of reforming the PCF.

But a Trotskyist alternative won't be found among the LCR, OCI or Lutte Ouvriere, whose feeble pretensions to stand for the interests of the proletariat were stripped bare by the election of Mitterrand. The fanatical anti-communist social democrats of the OCI backed Mitterrand on the first round, and hailed his nationalisation schemes as 'the first steps to socialism'(!) Like the nationalisation of Renault after the war? Now, the OCI could be more accurately characterised as Bernsteinists than Kautskyists. They are really the fifth wheel on the PS cart.

As for the centrists of the LCR [French section of the 'United Secretariat'], Alain Krivine declared at the Mutualite on 4 May that the LCR's previous general strike slogan should be withdrawn, at least until the legislatures. Thus this Marceau Pivert of the second mobilis-

ation also wants to lead the workers onto the parliamentary path. But it is not surprising that the LCR tells the proletariat to 'wait'. You can't defend the interests of the workers and support the popular front at the same time. Thus these right centrists take up the traditional argument of the reformists that opposition to class collaboration 'will aid the right'.

Finally, there are the populist demagogues of LO, who by contrast to the LCR have been more critical of Mitterrand (if not always from the left!). But their criticisms shouldn't be taken too seriously: their election slogan was 'Vote Mitterrand without illusions, but without reservations'. Without a programme and without a principled opposition to voting for popular fronts, LO can only utter complete nonsense. We are reminded of St Augustine's declaration: 'I believe because it's absurd.'

The workers need their own government, one which will expropriate the bourgeoisie and crush the resistance of the class enemy. But expropriation of the banks and major industry will not come about from parliamentary manoeuvres between the bureaucrats of the PC and the PS -- the call for a PC-PS government today is just window dressing for support to the popular front presently in power. It will take gigantic class struggles, which can split the masses from the trade union bureaucracy and the reformist parties, sweeping away the traitors and rallying the working class around a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership.

Strike against layoffs! For a reduction of the work week at no loss in pay, for the sliding scale of wages and hours! For a big salary increase to catch up with inflation! For democratically elected strike committees which can prepare a general strike! For workers defence guards against the cops and fascists! For the expropriation without compensation of all major industry and the financial sector! For workers control of industry!

No to protectionism! 'Produisons francais' is a slogan which divides the workers from their class brothers in other countries. No to chauvinism -- full citizenship rights for all foreign workers! Confronted with this Cold War popular front, revolutionaries must, more than ever, raise the demand not one man or one penny for the imperialist army! Down with the anti-Soviet NATO and Common Market! Defend the gains of the October Revolution -- unconditional military defence of the USSR, Cuba and the other deformed workers states! For political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies to establish workers democracy based on soviets!

This revolutionary programme must be embodied in a Trotskyist vanguard party, which can lead the workers' struggles to a victorious conclusion -- the proletarian revolution. For the rebirth of the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

Maurice Ludmer

Maurice Ludmer, founder and editor of *Searchlight* magazine, veteran and tireless anti-fascist activist, died of a heart attack on the night of 14-15 May at the age of 54. Readers who wish to honour his memory can do so by sending contributions -- which will help *Searchlight* to continue -- to Maurice Ludmer Memorial Fund, c/o Box 51, London SW10. Below is a telegram of condolence sent by the SL.

Maurice Ludmer's death a loss to all workers and oppressed. Salute the memory of a brave fighter against fascism and extend deepest condolences to family and friends.

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/BITAIN

Correction

In the article 'Protest Sands' Murder' (*Spartacist Britain* no 32, May 1981) we wrongly said with reference to a Sheffield demonstration after Sands' death that 'The WP contingent ... maintained a pathetic, conspicuous silence ... when the marchers chanted "Troops out now".' In fact Workers Power did chant this slogan, but attempted throughout the protest to steer the chants towards the minimal demand 'Political Status Now', in counterposition to the troops out demand.

CONTACT THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE:

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SPARTACIST

BRITAIN

France: Mitterrand president

No to NATO popular front!

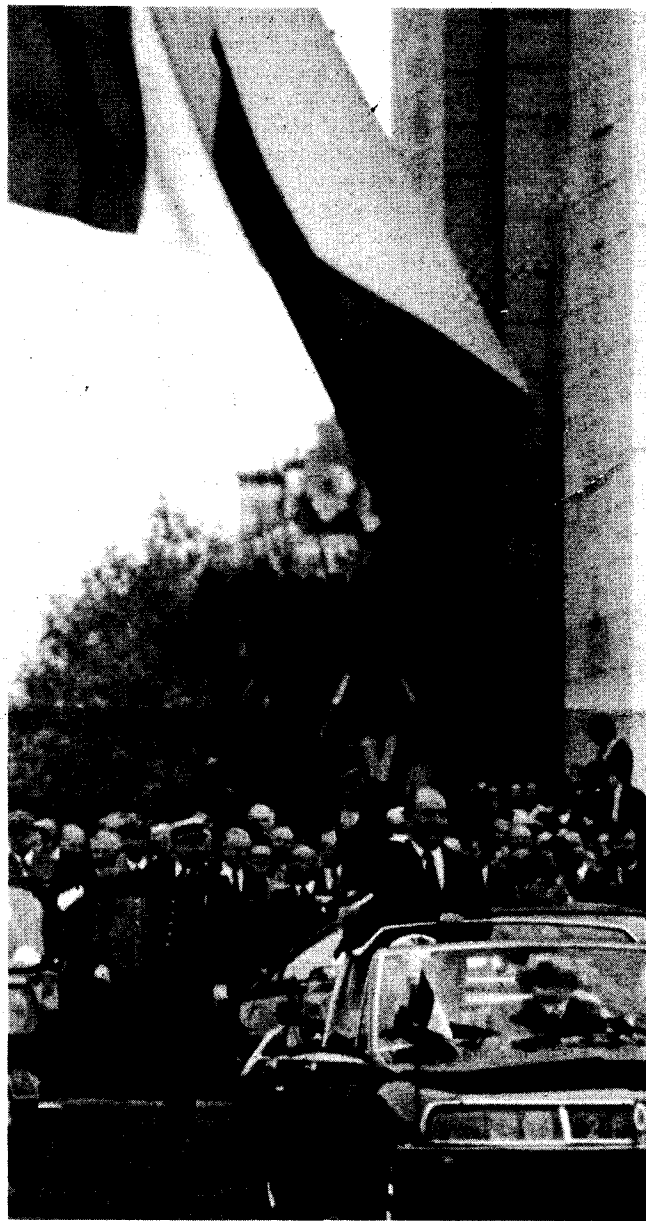
Francois Mitterrand's victory over Valery Giscard d'Estaing provoked massive celebration across the country on the night of 10 May -- tens of thousands at the Bastille chanting 'We have won!', singing of the *Internationale*, even red flags planted on factory gates. But the jubilation over the ousting of the hated Giscard tended to submerge the question of what exactly this victory of the 'Left' will bring for the working class. The answer was clear even before the announcement of the 'transitional government', and before the results of the June legislative elections: the Mitterrand government will be a government of Cold War and austerity; a popular front under the colours of Gaullism!

The Ligue Trotskyste de France was opposed to a vote to Mitterrand on either the first or second round because we said he was a candidate of the popular front -- the candidate of an alliance which ties the workers to their exploiters. The reactionaries pretended that Mitterrand would be the hostage of the PCF [French Communist Party]. Nonsense! Mitterrand is the hostage of his Gaullist and Radical partners. But Jobert and Faure [ministers from bourgeois parties] will not only serve as demonstrations to the bourgeoisie that Mitterrand intends to 'respect the fifth Republic'; they will also serve as an alibi to appease the anger of the workers: 'I cannot do more', Mitterrand will say, 'I must preserve my alliance with the centre'. Thus Jobert and the other bourgeois notables will have veto power over the government's social programme. The workers must demand that the PS [Socialist Party] break with its bourgeois allies so that Mitterrand will have to take full responsibility for his anti-working-class programme.

Twenty-three years of the Fifth Republic have dimmed the memory of the disastrous defeats suffered by the workers when the popular front was in power. In the thirties [Socialist prime minister] Blum didn't hesitate to send his cops against the workers (Clichy) and the ignominious collapse of his government ultimately opened the door to Petain [head of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime]. The post-war popular front broke the workers strikes and drowned the colonial revolts in blood. The 'centre-left' coalitions of the fifties began the dirty Algerian war, paving the way for De Gaulle's coup d'etat. From Spain in 1936 to Chile in 1973 the popular front demobilises the workers and disarms the fight against reaction in the name of empty promises of social reform.

If the working class doesn't intervene to stop it, it won't be any different this time. What does Mitterrand offer? An end to inflation? Prices will remain 'free'. The SMIC [legal minimum wage], we are told, might increase by 10 per cent, but Mitterrand's clique of technocrats warn that wage increases must not become the 'locomotive' of inflation. The 35-hour week? Negotiations, industry by industry and enterprise by enterprise, says Mitterrand -- in any case the main thing is more productivity ('we', ie the bourgeoisie, must 'catch up' to Japan). More jobs? Here the answer is 'revitalise investment', that is, fat subsidies to the capitalists. Nationalise the monopolies? With full compensation to the stockholders -- that comes to 60 billion francs! A foreign policy of 'peace'? The PS calls for building at least two more nuclear submarines and Mitterrand supports the American missiles in Europe. No wonder Reagan's not worried!

The leaders of the working class have demanded a sort of social truce for the new government until the legislatives, giving the excuse that Mitterrand will have need of a parliamentary majority. But Mitterrand has



Mitterrand's inauguration--loyal servant of the bourgeois Fifth Republic and Cold War anti-Sovietism.

already chosen his allies, and they are the same old bourgeois politicians that the working class has been fighting against for 25 years. What the misleaders of the working class -- from the new president to [PCF leader] Marchais and [leader of CGT -- Communist-dominated trade union federation] Seguy -- fear most of all is that the working class will upset the carefully orchestrated social 'peace', will break with the sedate scenario and take matters into their own hands, striking to impose their demands on the popular front government. While the parliamentarians wrangle with each other over shoddy deals at the Palais Bourbon, they don't want to have to worry about striking workers in the streets.

However, the fact is that whatever the workers have gained, they have taken through bitter struggles. It wasn't the popular front government of 1936 which offered the workers the 40-hour week and paid vacations; everything then seemed possible because of the general strike and the factory occupations. Today, the same could be true if the workers strike for their demands!

'But strikes will only aid the right!' scream the reformists and centrists, as they zealously attempt to chloroform the workers with promises of parliamentary 'change'. No, it is class collaboration that 'aids the right'! Each succeeding popular front, limited in advance to half-measures by its ties to the bourgeoisie, has proved incapable of overcoming the economic and social crises which confronted it. The impo-

tence of the popular front drives the desperate petty bourgeois masses into the arms of a Petain or a De Gaulle or worse. It is only when the working class is a contender for power in its own name, when it shows that it is able to appropriate the bourgeoisie, that it can rally to its side, the masses of the petty bourgeoisie.

No one should be fooled by the wave of social-democratic euphoria surrounding Mitterrand's election. France is not about to become a model of social-democratic moderation! Any upsurge in the class struggle will immediately call into question the unstable equilibrium of the Mitterrand government. The workers do not have to suffer the 'austerity of the left' with clenched teeth, blackmailed by the prospect of the right's return to power. The road forward is the mobilisation of the workers independent of, indeed against the popular front.

Illusions in Mitterrand's popular front stand in the way of even the most limited gains. If the workers break now with the notion of 'social peace', it could lay the basis for a working-class offensive, strengthening their self-confidence and self-organisation. Mitterrand should be thrown out -- not by the reactionaries -- but by a workers government!

Cold War popular front

If the majority of votes for Mitterrand expressed a rejection of the Fifth Republic, virtually all of the major political parties are singing the praises of the Gaullist constitution. However, the Mitterrand government means replaying the parliamentary manoeuvring of the Fourth Republic in the Gaullist framework!

Despite his latest attempts to appropriate a piece of the Gaullist heritage, Mitterrand himself remains a living reminder of the ill-fated 'centre-left' coalitions of the Fourth Republic. Of course in those days, he was an outright bourgeois politician, without the social democratic rhetoric. But if, in 1954, Mitterrand declared, 'L'Algerie, c'est la France, et des Flandres au Congo, il y a une seule nation', ['Algeria is France, and from Flanders to the Congo there is only one nation'], or if in 1957 he was responsible, as Minister of Justice, for the execution of the Communist militant Fernand Yveton, these were actions in defence of French imperialism in which French social democracy is equally complicit.

The personnel of the Mitterrand government, model 1981, speak volumes about its social programme. First of all, there is Gaston Defferre, long-time 'Socialist' mayor of Marseilles, a vicious anti-communist and hardened strike-breaker (ask the dustmen of Marseilles). No doubt his administration of this well-known crossroads of the underworld uniquely qualifies him for Minister of the Interior. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice goes to a bourgeois politician -- Maurice Faure. The 'star' of this government is, of course, Jobert, an unregenerate Gaullist, who was [former premier] Pompidou's cabinet director when De Gaulle was president before becoming Pompidou's Minister of Foreign Affairs. As Minister of Commerce he can not only hobnob with the oil sheiks, but insist on the necessary exploitation of the working class so that France can be 'internationally competitive'.

As for the rest, no matter which tendency of the PS they come from, they all seem the same -- a bunch of technocrats whose presence in an ostensibly working-class party might seem bizarre if it wasn't for the weakness of bourgeois liberalism in a class-polarised country

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