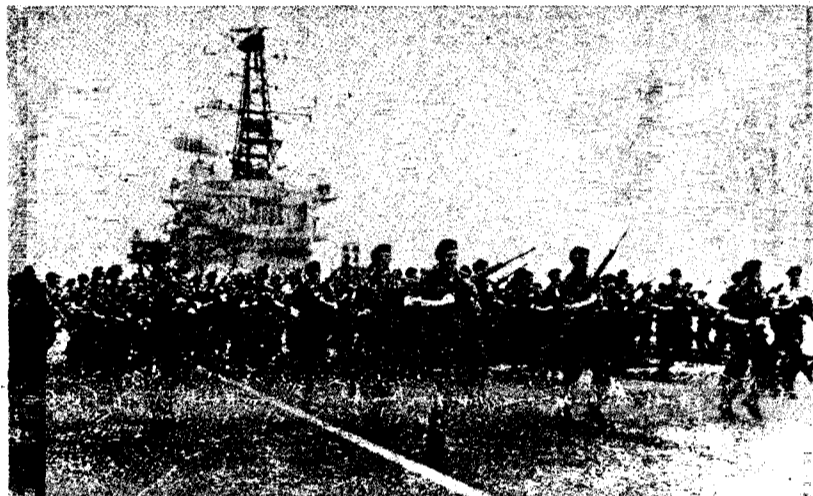


Falklands: Reagan's friends at war

The main enemy is at home!



Training for war: British troops head for South Atlantic.



Flag-waving jingoism, imperialist madness: Fleet sails from Portsmouth to wage war over Falkland Islands.

A once mighty imperial power now an imperialist pauper lines up its military might against its erstwhile 'warm friends' of the anti-communist Argentine military junta. The objective: the salvation of 'national pride'. The means: the conquest or reconquest of a tiny group of islands off Antarctica where sheep should be left to graze in peace. And by the end of the month it had led to aerial and naval clashes in the South Atlantic. The insane irrationality of capitalism in terminal decay underscored by the bizarre Falklands war is but another argument for the overthrow of capitalism.

But it is nonetheless deadly serious. The jingoist hysteria in Parliament and the media reaches epidemic proportions. The hitherto despised Tory government of Margaret Thatcher rides to an unprecedented peak in the opinion polls on a wave of chauvinist hysteria. Royal Navy recruiting posters are pinned on factory noticeboards and the gutter press screams for 'our boys' to get the 'Argies'. But what do British workers have to fight for against Argentina? A bit of military glory to be credited to Thatcher's viciously anti-working-class government? Three million unemployed at home? A country with whole regions so devastated by economic degeneration that they look as though they have been bombed? The 'freedom' which means deportation and rightist and police terror for blacks, Asians and other oppressed nationalities?

And Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition joins in the obscene spectacle. Labour leader Michael Foot leaps to congratulate the Iron Lady on her reconquest of South Georgia, while the Labour Party pleads for a settlement by that imperialist den of thieves, the United Nations. And Tony Benn shows himself to be only the most rational spokesman for an irrational British capitalism, warning that if the fleet is not withdrawn 'it will end in tragedy for this country'. So what? It would be a tragedy for the British bosses! *The only war worth fighting by the British workers is the class war against their own bourgeoisie. THE MAIN ENEMY IS AT HOME!*

When the crisis first broke out, US president Ronald Reagan stated pathetically, 'We're friends of both countries.' True enough:

continued on page 10

**Down with all imperialisms,
not just American!**

Protest anti-Soviet warmonger Reagan!

US president Ronald Reagan comes to London on 7 June as part of a European tour. CND has called a demonstration for 6 June and the 'Reagan Reception Committees' a picket of the US embassy the following day. Reagan should be sent packing -- with massive, militant protest actions designed to give him nightmares for years to come! To this end the Spartacist League is organising contingents for these actions.

But we will not, as does the fake left, be fuelling anti-American chauvinism with calls 'For a Reagan Free Europe', as though Reagan's class colleagues on this side of the Atlantic are any the less oppressors and exploiters of the working masses. We'd like to see a Europe freed from the likes of Mitterrand, Schmidt -- and first and foremost from the standpoint of the British workers -- Margaret Thatcher. It was Thatcher who gave Reagan some of the inspiration for his Friedmanite austerity programme -- the sort of policies it would take a Pinochet-style dictatorship to implement. And the Iron Lady got that name from the Russians because of her virulent hatred for the Soviet degenerated workers state.

British workers have reason to hate Reagan -- the same reasons as their American class brothers. Reagan's fanatical war drive against the Soviet Union goes hand-in-hand with a vicious war against workers and op-

pressed minorities in the US. Reagan's wholesale destruction of the air traffic controllers union is a small taste of what he would like to do to the workers states. His war on blacks and the poor extends from slashing school lunches and welfare benefits to dragnets of immigrant workers and stepped-up police murder in the ghettos. His crusade against 'godless Communism' means mass slaughter in El Salvador and attempts to provoke Soviet intervention in Poland against counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc in order to fuel his drive to war with the blood of Polish and Russian workers.

CND-style 'Europacifism' won't stop this nuclear trigger-happy imperialist politician. 'For labour action to bring down Reagan!' -- that's the slogan of our American comrades. And the bigger, the uglier the reception Ronald Reagan gets while in Europe, the easier that task will be for our American class brothers and sisters. It is in that spirit of militant proletarian internationalism that British workers should turn out to greet this anti-Soviet warmonger and anti-union strikebreaker. **SMASH NATO! DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION! FOR A SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE! DOWN WITH ALL IMPERIALISMS, NOT JUST AMERICAN! THE MAIN ENEMY IS AT HOME!** 'For labour action to bring down Reagan!' -- SL speaking tour, details p 11.

Stalinists dodge debates

What is West Midlands CP afraid of?

In his 1977 *Cogito* pamphlet 'Trotsky and World Revolution', Communist Party (CP) anti-Trotskyist 'expert' Monty Johnstone issued an open invitation to ostensibly Trotskyist groupings to debate him. Today, while Johnstone's opus has made a not-surprising comeback on CP bookstalls, his followers in the CP and Young Communist League (YCL) appear not to want to honour his challenge.

The Spartacist League's (SL) hard opposition to Solidarnosc counterrevolution in Poland and firm defence of the Soviet Union against the Reagan/Thatcher war drive have attracted considerable interest and sympathy amongst those layers in the CP/YCL seeking to differentiate themselves from their leadership's kowtowing to the imperialist Cold War. And the spectacular disillusionment with the Polish PUPP's inept mismanagement of the economy and betrayal of promise after promise of 'socialist renewal', which led the Polish masses into the arms of Catholic nationalism, have highlighted our call for proletarian political revolution to install soviet democracy as an absolute necessity if the gains of the October Revolution are to be defended and extended world wide. Thus at CP public meetings around the country our interventions have become a focus of attention, interest -- and worry for the party leadership.

Intrigued by a Trotskyist group that, following Trotsky, defends the Soviet Union, the Birmingham branch of the YCL and the Communist Society (ComSoc) of Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry agreed to debate the SL on which way forward for the Polish working class and the character of the Soviet Union today. However after interminable delays, both called off the respective debates within four days of each other last month. Clearly someone doesn't want CPers and YCLers to talk to Trotskyists.

When the Lanchester Poly ComSoc asked the local CP leadership-loyal full-timer Tony McNally for a speaker, he replied there was nobody in the district CP who could take on the SL. Then they tried Johnstone, who reportedly told them he was too busy writing a book. When they cancelled the debate, it was ostensibly because the SL had issued a leaflet characterising the CP's politics as Stalinist. This, they said, would upset a ComSoc member who was also in the Social Democratic Party (!). Leaflet in hand, ComSoc leader Dave Richardson pathetically marched off to the Poly administration to denounce the SL as 'outside agitators'.

The Birmingham YCL's excuses for cancelling were just as cowardly but did at least contain one element of truth: as a letter to the SL admitted, their branch was having 'internal problems over leadership'. Despite verbal and written commitments to debate from leading YCLers, the leadership unilaterally overruled a branch decision to debate the SL, ludicrously claiming they were too busy building a movement 'among the mass of youth who are not politicised'. This from an organisation that rarely gets attendance at its branch meetings into double figures! The real reason why the YCL ducked out is that the area CP leadership has proved incapable of defending CP politics in public -- so much so that they have twice

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threatened to call the cops on SL paper salesmen.

Indeed, the 'internal problems over leadership' are far from confined to the Birmingham YCL. In London and elsewhere, pro-Soviet 'tankies' have been quietly boycotting CP public meetings, rather than defend the despised party line on Poland. In the Midlands itself the Coventry branches are in a state of virtual open warfare against McNally. One pro-Kremlin hardliner publicly described his district committee as 'rats'; at a Lanchester Poly debate on 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?' in March, Brezhnevites openly heckled McNally as he outlined the CP's pro-Solidarnosc position; and on a 10 April CND demo McNally met with a similar response when he unsuccessfully ordered members of the Stoke (Coventry) branch to take down their banner.

Indeed the only thing McNally and his 'tankie' opponents seem to agree on is the need to keep the Trotskyists of the SL at arms length (or worse). Thus it was the Stoke oppositionists who bureaucratically excluded SL supporters from a CP local elections public meeting on 22 April. When our comrades attempted to enter the meeting, which attracted all of fifteen people, they were stopped by several burly CP stewards.

'Red Robbo' on May 1968: CP saved the workers ... from revolution

A 20 April Communist Party (CP) public meeting in Haringey, North London, featured victimised former BL Longbridge senior steward and CP executive member Derek Robinson speaking on the fight against the Tebbit bill. Robinson offered up the usual CP 'solutions' of import controls and the Alternative Economic Strategy. But when a Spartacist League supporter took the floor, the evening livened up. Attacking the CP's defeatist, wait-for-the-TUC response to Tebbit and its sabotage of Robinson's own defence in 1979 by accepting the scab AUEW 'inquiry', she linked the CP's conciliation of the bosses at home with the Stalinists' illusory search for 'peaceful coexistence' with the capitalists abroad.

After a few predictable mutters about 'Trots' and 'ultra-leftists', a rattled Robinson set out to 'prove' the dangerous road down which Trotskyists would lead the working class, so he pointed to ... France in May 1968. The 'ultra-leftists' thought there was a revolution going on, said Robinson, but really there were 'just students on the streets'. The French Communist Party (PCF), he crowed, 'saved the French working class from massacre'. Even a number of CPers in the audience were conspicuously uncomfortable, refusing to applaud.

In fact the PCF saved the French capitalists from revolution. 'Just students on the streets'? What began as militant student protests turned into what was perhaps the largest and most powerful general strike in history, with millions of workers on the streets, factories occupied with red banners waving, industry and commerce paralysed. It was within the grasp of the working class to seize state power and establish proletarian rule; what was needed was a revolutionary party to take the struggle forward from the general strike to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. But the French CP did everything in its power to derail the movement -- attempting to split the initial worker-student alliance by using 'provocateur' smears against the student protests; trying to steer the workers' demonstrations, strikes and factory occupations into narrow, purely economic demands. Along with the leadership of its trade union arm the CGT, the CP established back-to-work movements. They allowed De Gaulle to retrieve the initiative and restore 'order' in alliance with the military command.

Thanks to the PCF, France remains an imperialist power and, under Mitterrand, a bastion of anti-Sovietism in Western Europe -- and this

CPers and YCL members troubled by the sudden round of exclusions and reneged agreements to debate won't find an answer from the party leadership with its anti-Sovietism and its reformist pipedreams. But the more militant sounding 'tankie' faction likewise has no answers to the CP's crisis. Their 'defence of the Soviet Union' through uncritical support for the Kremlin and allied Stalinist bureaucracies actually undermines the workers states through compromises -- codeword: detente -- with imperialism abroad and, in Poland, with the Catholic church and aspiring kulaks.

Those YCLers and CPers who want to hear the arguments of real communism should read Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed*, study the record of the Left Opposition and its political continuators today in the international Spartacist tendency, and fight within the CP and YCL for the right to listen to and debate the Trotskyists of the Spartacist League. For our part, we are organising public meetings on 'Poland and the anti-Soviet war drive' in both Birmingham and Coventry at which we will offer any CP representatives equal presentation time to put forward their views, despite their leadership's attempt to squelch debate. We have nothing to be afraid of in open, honest political debate. ■



Just a bunch of students? Renault workers' mass meeting, May '68.

same PCF sits in his Cabinet. CP militants uncomfortable about what the parliamentarist 'British Road to Socialism' entails for this country should look across the channel at what the 'French road' meant in 1968. Helping to stab workers' struggles like at Longbridge in 1979 is bad enough -- but when the question of proletarian power was posed in France the CP was an open opponent of revolution.

At least Derek Robinson was attacking the right people; the Trotskyism of the Spartacist League represents the only consistent alternative to such betrayal. Selling outside the meeting, we overheard one CPer tell another, 'That's the Spartacists -- they have a good line on Poland.' Well, it's not just Poland.... ■

Spartacist League public meetings

Poland and the anti-Soviet war drive

Speaker: Lawrie Harney, SL Central Committee

Birmingham

7pm Wed 12 May
Rm 45, Doctor Johnson
House, Bull Street

Coventry

7.30pm Tues 11 May
Sir Colin Campbell
Gosford Street

Liverpool

7.30pm Thurs 13 May
Stanley House
Upper Parliament St
Liverpool 8

Trotskyist spectre haunts left Stalinists

Poland and the TKP Leninists

In the three years since it broke with the official pro-Moscow leadership of I Bilen, the 'Leninist wing' of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) has lurched increasingly though unevenly leftwards. Centred around the newspaper *Iscinin Sesi* (Workers Voice), the TKP Leninists have had considerable success in winning support from within the TKP and its periphery, including among exiles and migrant workers in Western Europe, and politically control the Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain which produces the English-language *Turkey Today*. As well they have influenced a grouping in and around the British Communist Party centred around the *Leninist*.

Impelled into opposition by the TKP's grossly capitulatory tailing of the bourgeois Republican People's Party of Bulent Ecevit and then spurned by the Kremlin tops who share the policies of the 'opportunist wing' of the TKP, the *Iscinin Sesi* grouping has since been forced to deepen and generalise its critical stance, not only with regard to the present Soviet leadership but also to the historical development of the Stalinist 'world communist movement'. The resurgent Cold War and imperialist war drive against the Soviet Union have accelerated this process.

The difficulties and contradictions of *Iscinin Sesi* have surfaced most sharply over the Polish events, which pose pointblank the Trotskyist analysis of the deformed and degenerated workers states of the Soviet bloc and the Trotskyist programme of proletarian political revolution based on defence of the collectivised property forms to oust the bureaucracy. Their critique of the bureaucratic character of Polish (and Soviet) society is far-reaching; yet their refusal thus far to see that this bureaucracy is a caste ruling in its own interests leads them to pursue a confused and utopian perspective of reform while leaving them theoretically disarmed before the neo-Kautskyan (and implicitly counterrevolutionary) calls for 'classless' democracy advanced by the Eurocommunists and suchlike.

Likewise, in continuing to cling to a perspective of reforming the 'world communist movement' through 'ideological struggle', they look to the most craven opportunists as ideological allies against revisionism and resist an examination of the non-revolutionary premises upon which their programme and strategy remain founded. Today the TKP Leninists have gone about as far as they can within their present methodological framework. Only by making a complete break with their Stalinist heritage and coming to terms with Trotskyism can *Iscinin Sesi* supporters uphold their avowed desire to be revolutionary, proletarian-internationalist Leninists.

A programme for Poland

The massive strike wave which gave birth to Solidarnosc represented the workers' reaction to years of bureaucratic mismanagement, privilege and abuse. The Polish workers were faced with a historic choice: with the bankruptcy of Stalinist rule dramatically demonstrated, it would either be the path of bloody counterrevolution in league with Western imperialism or the path of proletarian political revolution for soviet democracy. Given the clerical-nationalist influence in Solidarnosc and the emergence of a mass organisation of the landowning peasantry, Rural Solidarnosc, the counterrevolutionary threat grew. At the same time a process of political differentiation had begun, a situation in

which a genuine Leninist/Trotskyist opposition could have crystallised and quickly grown. Thus into the middle of 1981 it would have been the duty of genuine proletarian internationalists to protest any Russian military intervention while emphatically warning that any form of violent resistance against such an intervention would have been far worse, since that would simply have poisoned the situation for years.

However with its first national congress in September decisive elements of Solidarnosc were now pushing a programme of open counterrevolution. While pointing out that it was not our task to advise the Stalinist bureaucrats how to deal with a counterrevolutionary situation for which they bear ultimate responsibility, we said: 'Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution!', adding that 'If the Kremlin Stalinists, in their necessarily brutal, stupid way, intervene militarily to stop it, we will support this.' As it was, it was the Polish army which imposed martial law at the last possible moment, checking Solidarnosc's counterrevolutionary bid for power.

Martial law has not ended the crisis of Polish society, a situation which cries out for the creation of a proletarian and internationalist vanguard which can lead the Polish working masses out of this morass. From the beginning we raised a programme around which such a vanguard

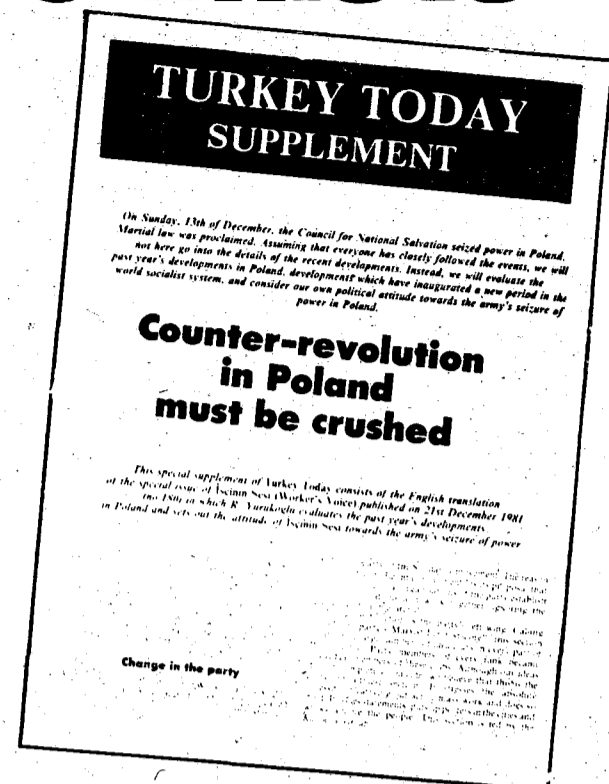


Poland: Masses mobilised behind clerical-nationalist counterrevolution.

must be built: For trade unions independent of bureaucratic control and based on a programme of defending socialised property! For the strict separation of church and state -- fight clerical nationalist reaction! Promote the collectivisation of agriculture! For workers control of production, prices, distribution and foreign trade! For proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy -- for a government based on democratically elected workers councils (soviets)! Break the imperialist economic stranglehold -- cancel the foreign debt! Towards international socialist economic planning! For military defence of the USSR against imperialism! For the revolutionary unity of the Polish and Soviet working classes! For a Polish Trotskyist party, section of a reborn Fourth International!

Confusion and contradiction

In its analysis of the Polish events *Iscinin Sesi* makes a number of telling and correct points. Significantly the major statement by R Yurukoglu (*Iscinin Sesi*, 21 December 1981 -- reprinted as a *Turkey Today* supplement) is entitled 'Counterrevolution in Poland must be crush-



ed'. Elsewhere as well the statement will have a familiar ring for readers of the publications of the international Spartacist tendency ('600,000 Soviet soldiers died in order to liberate Poland'). It says that the 'main responsibility' for the crisis must rest with the PUWP, denounces the 'antiquated bureaucratic structure, corruption and injustices' and condemns the leadership which 'frightens the people by saying the Russians are coming! This is nothing but nationalism.' The Solidarity membership 'is a confused mass enraged by years of injustices', while Rural Solidarity is 'fervently catholic, extremely reactionary and hostile to socialism' and 'a truly dangerous force'. And it concludes that 'the Solidarity trade union movement has today ceased to be a trade union. It is an anti-communist movement striving for political power.'

But in seeking a solution for the Polish crisis from the perspective of reforming the Stalinist regime, *Iscinin Sesi* becomes confused and contradictory. The same events that have produced 'an anti-communist movement striving for political power' are also described as 'the mass upsurge [which] is bringing forward a new, unsullied, and rank-and-file movement'. Uncomfortable with Jaruzelski's coup *Iscinin Sesi* counsels 'mass struggle':

'Our wish is that the tanks had never come. The party had advantages it could have used. If this is a class struggle, would that it had used these, called to action cadres loyal to communism, and waged a class struggle.' *Iscinin Sesi*'s appeal to the Polish Stalinists to launch a revolutionary mobilisation is particularly absurd in the context of present-day Poland. This was not 1956 when the masses could be mobilised behind illusions in Gomulka's reform Stalinism even to the extent that Khrushchev was dissuaded from intervening with Soviet troops to remove Gomulka. By 1980 the Polish working class had heard countless admissions of mistakes and promises of reform and 'socialist renewal'. The PUWP was utterly discredited in wide layers of the working class. Leaving aside the question of which politics it was meant to wage 'class struggle' for, the PUWP did not have other 'advantages it could have used' aside from the army. *Iscinin Sesi*'s claim that 'open discussion became an irreversible fact within the party' is more a reflection of the PUWP's paralysis in the face of a movement which looked to Pilsudski and the Vatican than a sign that a start was 'made on closing the profound gap which exists between the party leadership and the party rank-and-file'.

Iscinin Sesi characterises the central PUWP leadership as 'centrist', ascribing this to the fact that 'the world communist movement as a whole takes up a centrist position today'. Seeking an alternative within the PUWP, *Iscinin Sesi* looks to the 'left wing ... led by the Katowice Group'. No doubt healthy elements repelled by clerical nationalism and the vacillation of the central PUWP leadership may have been attracted to the Katowice group, but the central figures associated with this grouping came from those hardline officials most opposed to any conces-

continued on page 4



PUWP Politbureau meets after 1980 Gdansk upsurge. Time runs out for Stalinist 'socialist renewal'.

TKP Leninists...

(Continued from page 3)

sions to the rank and file, sullied or unsullied; those most eager for a crackdown and closest to the Kremlin hardliners; those most identified with the virulent nationalism (and anti-semitism) that certain PUWP organs resorted to.

Likewise, internationally Iscinin Sesi drags out CPUSA leader Gus Hall (whose critique on Poland it reprinted, as did the *British Leninist*) as some sort of alternative to 'centrism'. The *Leninist* (Winter 1981) compares Hall favourably to the Moscow-loyal New Communist Party, which is denounced for following 'faithfully every zig and every zag of the leadership of the PUWP'. They are sorely mistaken. Were they not so nationally-centred, they would surely know that Hall is the I Bilen of the CPUSA, one of the most slavishly sycophantic supporters of the Moscow leadership in the world today. The day after Jaruzelski's military coup Hall's *Daily World* (15 December 1981) ran the headline: 'Poland Heeds Unity Call -- Nation Goes Back to Work'. And back home Hall spends his time asking the US imperialist government to ban the fascists and licking the boots of the Democratic Party.

Democracy — for what class?

Iscinin Sesi's programme for Poland is vague. It demands that 'Counterrevolution in Poland must be crushed with mass struggle', calls for a 'balance between production and consumption', and argues: 'Only mass democracy can do away with the estrangement between working class, state and party.' But with everyone clamouring about 'democracy' in Poland it is doubly important to delineate the precise form and content of democracy.

The bourgeoisie means bourgeois democracy and bloody capitalist counterrevolution when it shrieks about democracy for Poland. Talk by the CPSU tops and other Stalinist bureaucrats of 'developing socialist democracy' is simply window-dressing on their continuing stranglehold on political power. And behind the Eurocommunists' (and such fake Trotskyists as Ernest Mandel's) prattle about 'socialist democracy', a latter-day incarnation of Kautsky's 'pure democracy', is their support for (bourgeois) 'pluralism', a promise that they can be trusted with ministerial portfolios and seats in the councils of NATO.

posed to workers democracy. Lenin emphasised that soviets were the democratic form through which the proletariat exercised its dictatorship -- towards the aim of creating the political, economic and cultural preconditions for communist society. The most fundamental of these is the maintenance of proletarian state power and collectivised property. Lenin stressed against Kautsky:

'The indispensable characteristic, the necessary condition of dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the exploiters as a class, and consequently, the infringement of "pure democracy", i.e., of equality and freedom in regard to that class.' (emphasis in original)

Soviet democracy, as a general rule, would allow only those political parties which stood on the defence of the dictatorship of the proletariat -- and not as the 'Leninists' suggest at one point in 'Socialism and Democracy' (*Iscinin Sesi*, 8 February 1982, our translation), those parties which 'do not oppose the democratic order of the proletarian state', since it is quite conceivable that capitalist restorationist forces would choose to work through the organs of workers democracy given the chance. Though the years of Soviet detente policies may have obscured this for Iscinin Sesi, Lenin clearly saw the dictatorship of the proletariat as a relatively brief historic period of violent conflict between the proletariat and bourgeoisie on an international scale. Arguing against Kautsky, Lenin emphasised:

'If the exploiters are defeated in one country only -- and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception -- they still remain stronger than the exploited, for the international connections of the exploiters is enormous.' (emphasis in original)

The Left Opposition v the bureaucratic caste

If the PUWP is responsible for the crisis, is isolated and has reached the 'height of bureaucratic deformation' then surely this raises some questions about the role of this bureaucratic layer in society. In a fuller historical discussion of the Soviet Union the 'Leninists' say:

'All the characteristics rooted in the specifics of the development of Soviet society boiled down to something which Lenin strove

'Shortcomings and distortions which I have touched upon briefly cannot be reduced to the attitudes of leading cadres or general secretaries.' (R Yurukoglu, 'Socialism will win')

Elsewhere Iscinin Sesi describes how bourgeois pacifism, nationalism and opportunism have been pervasive in the Communist Parties. And it condemns the suppression of the works of Bukharin, Zinoviev and Trotsky in the Soviet Union (see *Turkey Today*, January/February 1982). But Trotsky's writings in particular were suppressed precisely because they described and fought against the phenomena that Iscinin Sesi now critically notes.

By not recognising that Stalin developed a different programme in the face of the difficult conditions confronting the isolated, young workers state, Iscinin Sesi objectifies the historic process suggesting that what happened was inevitable. Was Lenin just being utopian when he fought bureaucracy? No! And nor would his policy towards the present situation in the Soviet Union have been one of 'critical acceptance' as Iscinin Sesi puts forward in its Poland statement. Stalinist ideology is designed to obscure the role of the bureaucracy and to justify its counterrevolutionary betrayals. And it is not surprising, with its background, that Iscinin Sesi carries in its theoretical baggage positions that are not Leninist but Stalinist.

Had the Soviet Union remained under a Leninist leadership it was not at all inevitable that it would have remained isolated and subject to such great pressures. Trotsky and the Left Opposition fought the degeneration of the Soviet Union from the very time that Iscinin Sesi says things started to go wrong, and put forward a revolutionary-internationalist programme to restore soviet democracy, to undertake the task of socialist construction and to extend the world revolution. The supporters of Iscinin Sesi must confront that alternative to Stalinism and the programmatic struggle waged by its adherents.

Trotsky developed the analysis that the 'widespread bureaucracy' against which Lenin had fought had by 1924, under the terrible conditions created by scarcity and civil war, been able to consolidate itself as a distinct caste with distinct material interests, no longer serving the proletariat but independent from it. The collectivised property forms remained intact, the class character of the Soviet state was unchanged, but the regime of soviet democracy and proletarian internationalism had been replaced by the regime of a conservative, nationalist bureaucracy.

Intent on preserving the status quo this bureaucratic caste, with Stalin as its main spokesman, sought to defend the collectivised economy from which its privileges derived by appeasing and conciliating imperialism rather than promoting international revolution; and it sought to ward off any proletarian challenge to its position by appropriating for itself a monopoly on political power. The failure of the revolution to spread internationally was theoretically rationalised -- through 'socialism in one country' -- into a perspective which denied the necessity for international revolution. Whether in an attempt to maintain its ties to the left TUC bureaucrats during the British General Strike or the needless sacrifice of the Chinese Communists to Chiang Kai-shek, the Stalinist bureaucracy betrayed revolutionary opportunities time and time again. 'Socialism in one country' was a self-fulfilling prophecy that the proletarian dictatorship would remain isolated in one country.

Socialism in one country?

Even until early 1924, Stalin presented what was for Marxist-Leninists an elementary axiom: '... can the final victory of socialism in one country be attained, without the joint efforts of the proletariat of several advanced countries? No, this is impossible.' ('Foundations of Leninism', first edition, *Lenin and Leninism*)

A few months later he was saying the opposite. Though Marx and Lenin used the term 'socialism' at times loosely or to describe their world view, in its precise scientific definition (as described by Lenin in *State and Revolution*) it meant for both of them the lower phase of communism. It is a society characterised by common property ownership, very high productivity of labour, the absence of class-based social antagonisms, the replacement of the standing army by a universal peoples militia, material incentives limited to equal pay for equal work, full emancipation of women, disappearance of the age-old distinction between town and country, etc. In short it is only the beginning of man's ascent from the 'kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom'. It is obvious that the socialism which Marx and Engels envisioned would be a world society, necessarily embracing the indus-



Trotskyist Left Oppositionists in Vorkuta prison camp, 1928. Victims of Stalinism, they defended Soviet Union, upheld Leninist proletarian internationalism.

Today as in 1917 such talk is really an attack on the dictatorship of the proletariat. Attacking Kautsky's ideas of 'pure' democracy, Lenin insisted that 'we can only speak of class democracy', adding: 'It is natural for a liberal to speak of "democracy" in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: "for what class?"' (*Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*).

When Iscinin Sesi talks of the 'majority of concrete demands' of Solidarnosc as 'essentially just' but 'abused for counter-revolution [sic] ends', why does it not specify which demands are just and which counterrevolutionary? Certainly many of the grievances which fuelled the Gdansk upsurge -- and even some of the demands, directed against bureaucratic privilege and political suppression -- were just, but those that became dominant had a counterrevolutionary content. It is not good enough to put pluses and minuses beside the various demands and not specify their actual class content and meaning in the Polish situation. What about 'free elections', for example, which if implemented would have led to a capitalist-restorationist parliamentary majority?

The demand for 'free elections' was counter-

to rectify all his life: the lagging behind of the democratic aspect of democratic centralism. One manifestation of these is the widespread bureaucracy which exists there and which Lenin constantly fought against. Another is the single party system which Lenin never regarded as a universal prerequisite. A further manifestation is the restrictions which were gradually imposed on discussion in society and in the party, especially after the 1930's. Another is the fact that the trade unions function as a state institution. None of these are characteristics derived from the theory of socialism. They are characteristics which socialism established in a particular country was compelled to exhibit for a long time, characteristics peculiar to that country, rooted in the fact that as Lenin pointed out, at the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B), "Russia was not sufficiently developed as a capitalist country". Moreover the fact that the period in which these were experienced was the most difficult seen in history made it hard to eradicate these shortcomings in the full sense of the term....

trialised countries of Europe, the United States and Japan. To declare, as Stalin did in the 1936 Constitution, that class struggle had ended in the Soviet Union and that socialism had been achieved flies in the face of the glaring non-socialist features in the Soviet Union. Similarly to talk of the existence of socialism in Poland and the Soviet Union today is a cover-up for the anti-socialist role of the bureaucracy.

In an attempt to be critical of the policies of the bureaucracy without coming to terms with their role per se, Iscinin Sesi, like Mao Tse-tung and other Stalinists before them, argues that class struggle exists under socialism. A careful reading of Lenin puts to rest this revision of Marxism-Leninism:

'Socialism means the abolition of classes. The dictatorship of the proletariat has done all it could to abolish classes. But classes cannot be abolished at one stroke. And classes still remain and will remain in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship will become unnecessary when



Lenin and Trotsky, leaders of the Russian Revolution.

classes disappear. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat they will not disappear. Classes have remained, but in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat every class has undergone a change, and the relations between the classes have also changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.' ('Economics and Politics in the era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', 1919, emphasis in original)

Between capitalism and communism (including its lower stage socialism) is a transitional period during which the proletariat enforces its dictatorship, and would of course begin to build even in one country 'such prerequisites for socialism' as it can. But the use made by Iscinin Sesi of 'socialism' and 'democracy' reflects its Stalinist methodological heritage, and in turn the bureaucratic caste's attempt to give itself the mantle of socialism. This bureaucracy will not reform itself but must be overthrown by proletarian political revolution.

Whether it is talking of 'harmonising socialism and democracy' in Poland or proclaiming that 'In the next immediate period, democratisation will be the fundamental question of the Soviet Union' (*Yasayan Sosyalizm* [Living Socialism], our translation) Iscinin Sesi is now treading on very dangerous ground. Its abstract call for 'democratisation' can pave the way for the renunciation of defence of the Soviet Union. And in *Living Socialism*, Yurukoglu toys precisely with this prospect:

'Let us think of a proletarian dictatorship where proletarian control over the functioning of the state is gradually diminished. As administering the state is still a specialised job, an administrative stratum which exists separate from the workers would separate from the workers still further. On paper this stratum does not have ownership of the means of production. Namely they don't have the right of ownership as a relationship governed by law, but control ['the right of use'] is actually in their hands. Under these conditions the administrative stratum can gradually transform itself into a capitalist class.' (our translation)

This is actually the line of argumentation -- premised on an identification of the bureaucratic regime with the workers state -- taken by Maoists, and others before them, in deciding that the Soviet Union had become capitalist. Theoretically this position contains a fundamental revision of Marxist theory: that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be reformed back to capitalism without there being a bloody counterrevolution. In terms of the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the state, it is rolling the film of reformism backwards.

Stagism -- a Menshevik strategy adopted by Stalin

And here the TKP Leninists come full circle, laying bare not only the problems of their pos-

ition in terms of a revolutionary defence of the deformed and degenerated workers states, but the question of their capacity to lead socialist revolution in Turkey. To understand the roots of the official TKP opportunism with which they have only partially broken, Iscinin Sesi must again turn to Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism. The pervasive opportunism within the Communist Parties is not a question of episodic errors or ideological weaknesses; today's 'world communist movement' is not a flawed, 'centrist' continuation of the world party of socialist revolution built by Lenin and Trotsky but a consistent obstacle to world revolution. In his critique of Stalin's draft programme for the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928), Trotsky warned against the counterrevolutionary implications of 'socialism in one country':

'The new doctrine proclaims that socialism can be built on the basis of a national state if only there is no intervention. From this there can and must follow (notwithstanding all pompous declarations in the draft programme) a collaborationist policy towards the foreign bourgeoisie with the object of averting intervention, as this will guarantee the construction of socialism, that is to say, will solve the main historical question. The task of the parties in the Comintern assumes, therefore, an auxiliary character; their mission is to protect the USSR from intervention and not to fight for the conquest of power.' (*Third International After Lenin*, emphasis in original)

To speak of the 'world communist movement' as being centrist today and reformable through ideological struggle is simply to ignore the world-historic betrayals, not just errors, carried out by the Communist Parties since then.

In short order, the abandonment of the perspective of world revolution in order to make capitalist 'friends' was to become a policy of opposition to proletarian revolution for the same aims. The coming to power of fascism in Germany without a significant challenge by the mass German Communist Party nor a significant response from within the Comintern after the fact, was the evidence that this course had taken the Communist International decisively over to a defence of the bourgeois order, graphically confirmed several years later by its open struggle against proletarian revolution in Spain. Opposition to the class struggle in Russia's imperialist allies during World War II, the disarming of the Italian and French workers after the war and countless other examples were in no sense errors or aberrations but consistent betrayals. And to justify these betrayals of the struggle against capitalism, the Stalinists revised Lenin's teachings across the board, in large measure borrowing from the Menshevik theories which Lenin had so assiduously combatted and discredited.

The TKP Leninists reject 'peaceful coexistence' and 'détente', but they have not shaken off the legacy of Stalinist revisionism that goes with such policies. For one Stalinism abandons the tenet that there must be a revolutionary smashing of the bourgeois state, positing a peaceful reformist transition from bourgeois democracy to socialism, as glaringly expounded in the 'British Road to Socialism' or Allende's 'Chilean Road'. It argues for 'two-stage' revolution, with first a struggle for democracy and later (ie never) socialism. And it allows a 'joint dictatorship' of more than one class, giving this third type of state names like 'peoples democracy' or, in Mao's case, 'New Democracy'. In reality such a third type of state has never existed since the armed bodies of men must in this epoch commit themselves to either proletarian or bourgeois class rule.

For Turkey (but not necessarily for other countries) the TKP Leninists reject the 'stagist' theory of Bilen and Co (first 'democratic transformations' and in the future socialist revolution). They demand the revolutionary overthrow of the regime in Turkey by an 'advanced democratic revolution' which will establish 'the democratic dictatorship of the people' whose 'aim is not to clear the way for capitalism, but to grow into socialism through an uninterrupted process' (R Yurukoglu, *The Third Programme and*

Our Tasks). Elsewhere Iscinin Sesi speaks of a 'democratic state'. But what class dictatorship is this 'democratic state'? If this is not the dictatorship of the proletariat, is it the mythical 'joint dictatorship', or are the TKP Leninists saying that the bourgeois state can be reformed to socialism?

At best Iscinin Sesi has reverted to Lenin's old slogan of the 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry', a slogan he abandoned in 1917 when he understood that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can solve the democratic tasks of the revolution simultaneously as it begins to undertake the socialist reconstruction of society. This understanding was at the core of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and laid the basis, together with Trotsky's acceptance that Lenin had been correct on the party question, for their revolutionary collaboration in leading the October Revolution. And at worst Iscinin Sesi's position is but an attempt to give a more leftist colouration to the classic two-stage theory Stalin borrowed from the Mensheviks.

The TKP Leninists stand at a critical juncture. If they do not go forward to an understanding of Trotskyism, they can only retreat. In a sense the official TKP captures something of the contradiction which today besets Iscinin Sesi when it accuses Yurukoglu of being 'left sectarian in his views before the revolution and Eurocommunist in his views after the revolution' (*Yasayan Sosyalizm*, our translation). Seeking answers in the tradition of Stalinism, seeking a 'Marxist-Leninist core' in the Stalinist movement, will only entrap Iscinin Sesi in one



Petrograd Soviet, 1917. Iscinin Sesi fails to recognise soviets as the organs of proletarian class democracy.

variant or another of reformism. The tradition of Leninism lies elsewhere, in the struggle of Trotsky and the Left Opposition to defend the banner of the Bolshevik Revolution against Stalinist treachery and repression. Only proletarian political revolution to sweep away the obstacle of Stalinist bureaucracy can open the path to genuine socialist construction. Only a complete and uncompromising break with the legacy of Stalinism in favour of the programme of Trotsky's Fourth International can arm the TKP Leninists with a strategy to smash bourgeois class rule in Turkey and internationally. ■

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An examination of the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and the Bevanite movement in the Labour Party in the 1950s were the main topics of discussion at a national educational weekend held by the Spartacist League (SL) in mid-April, aimed at furthering our critical understanding of key aspects of the last Cold War period in order to better arm ourselves for the tasks and opportunities which face us today. Among the roughly 80 in attendance at the semi-public conference were representatives from the American, French, German and Italian sections of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), as well as some half dozen members of the Communist Party (CP) and Young Communist League (YCL) -- ranging from black youth to longtime trade unionists.

The resurgence of Cold War has made a significant imprint on the political landscape. In the Labour Party, it has been manifested in the rise of the Bennite phenomenon accompanied by the renaissance of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the hard pro-NATO split of the Social Democratic Party. More broadly, there is an increasing divergence of interests between the European and American wings of the NATO alliance, following US imperialism's fall from the short-lived hegemony of the postwar 'American Century'. And within the ostensibly revolutionary left, our pseudo-Trotskyist opponents are driving hard towards social democracy while deep fissures are being created within the West European Communist parties. Noting that previously our primary political interaction had been with the fake Trotskyists, providing many of the cadre for our international extension, a representative of the International Executive Committee of the iSt observed:

'Our main opponents over the Cold War are now social democrats and the Communist Parties. Given our relative size that is really extraordinary.'

The growth of a mass counterrevolutionary movement in Poland and the Stalinist regime's attempt to suppress it through martial law has provided the focus for a crisis in the West European CPs unparalleled since the 1950s. Whole layers of CP militants, 'astonished and angry because their parties are openly breaking with the Kremlin over the suppression of counterrevolution' as one comrade put it, are today confronted with questions about the character of the Stalinist bureaucracies and their policies of 'peaceful coexistence' which only Trotskyists can answer. At the time of our last national conference in September 1981, we noted the symmetrical pressures and opportunities presented by this period (see 'Bolshevik parties are mean!', *Spartacist Britain* no 36, October 1981). The pressures have been felt in the loss of a number of half-hearted members; the opportunities are becoming particularly evident, as shown by the seven new members who joined during the weekend (see 'Joining the Spartacist League', p8).

Hungary v Poland

In opening his presentation on Hungary, comrade Len Michelson contrasted the revolution of 1956 and the counterrevolutionary mobilisation in Poland last year:

'If the popular leader of the Polish masses behind Solidarnosc was Lech Walesa, who was never to be seen without his lapel pin for the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, in the case of Hungary it was Colonel Pal Maleter who was never to be seen without his partisan red star. And that in some ways describes the difference between Poland and Hungary.'

Khrushchev's rehabilitation of Yugoslav leader Tito and the 'secret speech' attacking Stalin at the Twentieth Congress, continued the speaker,



Fighting the Cold War

catalysed an opposition within the Hungarian Communist Party which looked to liberal Stalinist Imre Nagy, a former prime minister. The revolutionary uprising began on 23 October, when several hundred thousand people joined a student-initiated demonstration demanding that Nagy be installed and ended up symbolically toppling the massive statue of Stalin. 'The Hungarian uprising was a living confirmation of the Trotskyist analysis of the bureaucracy' explained cde Michelson:

'The Communist Party effectively ceased to exist. It was a party of 900,000 members and overnight it became nothing. The overwhelming majority of the Communist Party went over to the side of the workers.'

And when the workers entered the stage of battle, through a general strike which continued for weeks after the second Soviet military intervention and through the creation of workers councils, the students and the liberal Stalinist opposition were left behind. The speaker quoted the paper of the then-Trotskyist US Socialist Workers Party which welcomed the Hungarian uprising (and the upsurge in Poland the same year) without ignoring their weaknesses:

'Pro-capitalist restoration elements have appeared on the scene in Poland and Hungary. But they are in a distinct minority. Far stronger forces impel the national liberation revolution in Poland and Hungary on the socialist road.'

'The overturns in Hungary and Poland mark the first stages of a political revolution. What these masses now lack is a revolutionary party of the kind the Russian workers had on November 7, 1917.' ([US] *Militant*, 10 November 1956)

Despite potentially dangerous liberal and neutralist illusions, the Hungarian workers proclaimed their allegiance to socialism at every opportunity, fraternised with and even won over some Soviet soldiers and actively suppressed reactionary bands. Indeed, remarked the speaker, 'the position of our ostensibly Trotskyist opponents on Poland over the past year would have placed them to the right of the mainstream spontaneous motion and struggle of the Hungarian workers'. In Poland 1981 the call for 'free elections' was a codeword for a capitalist-restorationist government. But in Hungary in the case of numerous workers councils, it was explicitly limited only to those parties defending the socialised economy. Had there been

'free elections', they:

'would have resulted in a situation where the power of the workers' councils would have been pitted against ... the power of a coalition government which would have attracted reactionary, restorationist elements to it.... That's simply an understanding of the Trotskyist conception of political revolution.... The Stalinist bureaucracy splits and what you really have is a confrontation between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution.'

In Poland, in contrast, the counterrevolutionaries led the masses.

Turning to the impact of the Hungarian events on the British CP, the speaker explained that it 'was already in crisis coming off the Khrushchev secret speech': 'If you go back and look at the *Daily Worker* in 1956, the letters page looks very similar to the way the letters page of the *Morning Star* has looked over the last six months.' The CPGB was traumatised, losing 7000 members (a quarter of the total) that year. Peter Fryer, sent to cover the Hungarian events as the *Daily Worker* correspondent, went into opposition when the leadership suppressed his despatches, returned to author a book entitled *Hungarian Tragedy* and was won to the Trotskyists led by Gerry Healy.

The Healyites leapt upon the opportunity opened up by the crisis in the CPGB and 'ran around contacting every CPer they could find'. A Healyite statement on Hungary counselled oppositionists: 'Stay in the CP and fight it out!' The speaker described how as a result the Healyites were able to win about 200 members, establishing *Labour Review* and the *Newsletter* and laying the basis for the formation of the Socialist Labour League in 1959. The wide-ranging discussion which followed the presentation was highlighted by the intervention of a veteran CP member who gave a personal account of the impact of Hungary 1956 and Poland today (see opposite).

Bevanism and the Cold War

In his presentation on Bevanism the following day speaker Charles Silver stressed that the cleavage in the Labour Party then, as with the Bennites today, was along Cold War lines: 'The real history of the Labour Party ... through the period of the 1950s is not about nationalisations, it's not about how many council houses were built by Nye Bevan.'



Hungary 1956: Against Stalinism, not against socialism.

A CP member's view of Poland and Hungary

It was basically a struggle by the right wing against intermittent, sporadic opposition from the left wing ... to consolidate the Labour Party as a solid bastion of pro-NATOism in Britain.'

A lively discussion centred on a historical appraisal of the Healyites' work at the time. The Healy group's deep entry into the Labour Party in the early and mid-1950s was 'adaptationist and opportunist' towards the Labour left, effectively becoming Bevanites, as one comrade put it. But the comrade warned against an 'ahistorical' assessment. The Healyites came down on the right side of the class line on the decisive questions of the period, notably in their split with the Cliffites over support to North Korea. Further consideration had to be taken of the Healy group's leftward development in the later fifties, particularly with the influx of CP recruitment in 1956-57 -- to the point that by 1961 it produced 'World Prospects for Socialism', an excellent programmatic statement of Trotskyism in the period.

Cold War -- Europe and America

The reporter on prospects for our American section began by providing some background to the current tensions between the European and American bourgeoisies, and their effects in the Labour Party and elsewhere. One ramification of the loss of American hegemony signalled by the fall of the dollar standard in 1971 is that:

'The European social democracy is being or has been largely taken back by its own bourgeoisie. The German Social Democracy was a sheer invention of the Americans after the Second World War. The last act that they did essentially on behalf of American imperialism was the financing of the Portuguese counter-revolutionary elements and the smashing of the Portuguese CP [in 1974-75].'

Likewise the significance of the split in the Labour Party is that it is now becoming 'an English Labour Party rather than a front for "NATO".'

While the grossly-eneffebled British bourgeoisie is compelled more or less to tag along behind US imperialism, the German bourgeoisie is not. Aware that West Germany is not 'going to be one of the main contenders of World War III,' remarked the speaker,

'they have drawn the opposite conclusion. They do not want to be a participant in World War III, especially they do not want to be the only participant, according to the mad NATO plans which are unrealisable but nonetheless are projected.'

The effect of the loss of American hegemony on a 'big section of the American bourgeoisie', however:

'is about the same, vis a vis the Russians, as Mrs Thatcher's crazed right-wing Tories over the Falklands: to become more strident, more belligerent, to say, "We're going to have a third World War which is going to kill all the Russians and anybody else that's in the way, but all white middle- and upper-class Americans will be safe."'

This kind of very dangerous fantasy-mongering in top ruling circles makes the US 'a very strange place' today. But it also means 'there ought to be a great deal of trouble in the United States in the next period'. Should the SL/US escape rightist/bourgeois repression engendered by 'anti-red' hysteria, in combination with thugery at the hands of reformists who despise us for standing in the way of their kowtowing to the Democratic Party (as for example over El Salvador), then:

'we will find through various other struggles on the domestic front -- exposing the trade union bureaucracy, the fight against the Nazis and the fight against the adventures of American imperialism which are all ultimately or directly focussed on the destruction of the Soviet Union -- we will grow very strongly.'

Whether in Europe or the US, the Cold War means class war for the proletariat. The responsibility resting upon our limited numbers is awesome -- to build an international mass vanguard party of socialist revolution, a re-forged Fourth International. The educational weekend was part of the political preparation necessary to seize upon the opportunities which face us. The spirit in which we proceeded was expressed by American Trotskyist leader James P Cannon in a speech on the Khrushchev revelations and the crisis of Stalinism:

'We are surer than ever that we are right. We have more reason than ever to fight without compromise for the full programme of Trotskyism and we have more reason than ever for confidence in victory.'

'Well, I thought I should make an intervention into this discussion because I am a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain -- have been a member for forty years....'

We read them [the Khrushchev revelations] in various newspapers and we heard little bits. And most of us were in a state of shock. In fact many of us couldn't believe it because like the previous speaker said about Harry Pollitt's adulation of Stalin, myself and many of us had the same adulation -- we were dyed-in-the-wool Stalinists. And we couldn't believe the Khrushchev revelations, and in fact many of us said that Khrushchev was a revisionist and in fact some went as far as to say he was probably counterrevolutionary. This is how we felt....'

The discussions [in the party branch] were mainly around the distortions that took place in Hungary. It was critical discussion but not critical in a deep political sense. It was critical in that they felt that there were mistakes made; there were deviations from the normal democratic processes, but that these were understandable under the circumstances. And although we didn't condone the mistakes mainly it was due to the cult of the personality and also the evil man Beria. This is the sort of general discussion and we felt that in the situation that developed in Hungary, many of the old fascists of the Horthy regime were out in the streets stirring up counterrevolution; there were many emigres, armed, coming from Austria. Also we felt that the imperialist powers were using these emigres, they were financing them; and the revanchists from West Germany and that were taking part in all this, sort of stirring it up, at the time. We felt that the CIA had a role in this, and also understood that the situation was getting so terribly out of hand that not only the secret police but very good Communist Party members were being strung up to lampposts.



And we read that even Tito was critical of the situation at the time and said that anybody that wore brown boots, because apparently the secret police used to wear brown boots, anybody that wore brown boots was strung up to the lampposts. We were told that Nagy was bringing into his government many reactionary elements and not only these reactionary elements he was bringing in but that he also was doing a deal with Cardinal Mindszenty to get Cardinal Mindszenty into the government. We felt a counterrevolutionary situation had developed and, therefore, there was every justification for the Soviet Union to march in.

Now in recent months, myself and other comrades have been looking at the situation in Eastern Europe and reading and studying a lot more than we have done in the past, especially over the current Polish situation because it's not just happened in 1956. It's happened four times in Poland there's been an uprising so there must be something more than just mistakes taking place. And obviously, we haven't had any real -- at least in my experience -- we've never had any real deep analysis of the East European states or indeed of the Soviet Union. Every distortion that took place is put down to mistakes due to the civil war, the wars of intervention, the second World War, the Western powers and the CIA....'

Of course there was obviously some opposition, I mean everybody didn't swallow everything in the Party; there was opposition to the party line. We read about this in some of the party journals; we never got everything because we do know from hindsight that a lot of the correspondence, a lot of the letters were suppressed at the time. But there was opposition, but we felt mainly, I say we -- I

can only speak for myself -- felt mainly that these people were only woolly intellectuals, you know, and so what, we lose some of them from the party. You know, well, just too bad -- we let them go....'

In 1978, my wife and I spent two weeks in Poland on holiday.... We were only there for two weeks and we were on holiday. We weren't there doing an analysis of the situation or even going to party discussions; we were just wandering around, sightseeing. But what we saw there, you know, the markets, the street markets, the fiddling that went on outside the markets, the currency deals -- every foreign person accosting you for money, for foreign currency, beggars in the street, the uneconomic strips of land we saw with people with just two cows and two sheep on a bit of land and, you know, hand ploughs and we could see that there was nothing like socialism in Poland and we were only there, as I say, for a fortnight on holiday.

And this started me to think, and in the last few months I've read quite a number of Spartacist publications on the situation in Poland and I think I've understood more now about the East European states, of what's happening and a deeper political understanding of what's happening than I've ever had in the past. It's far more than just a few mistakes, there's obviously something politically wrong; there's a wrong political sort of system that's operating there. And obviously -- it's understandable when the people revolt and try to change the system.

Now obviously we know that the situation in Poland is different from the situation in Hungary, in the sense that Solidarnosc is obviously based on the Catholic Church and on a lot of the emigres and dissident organisations within Poland. And, therefore, it's not, in my opinion, a popular uprising in the same way, when I read in hindsight of what the Hungarian situation was. It's definitely counterrevolutionary....'

I feel that probably if the Polish situation had simmered down, hadn't developed as it was, perhaps some of us would still be thinking in the same old way. But it has sort of spotlighted the problems within those countries, because this is the fourth time that this has happened in Poland. The fact that they had to clamp down and declare martial law in what has always been called a socialist state really makes you wonder what's going on.

In hindsight, reading your publications, reading other publications, reading Peter Fryer's book -- Peter Fryer was at that time a respectable member of the Communist Party. Remembering also at the time Derek Kartun wrote a book, *Tito's Plot Against Europe*, which analysed the fact that Tito was spreading out and forming cells within all the Communist countries to create counterrevolution. And Derek Kartun afterwards left the party because he found out afterwards that what he'd written was incorrect. Derek Kartun did it on the initiative of the party. He was asked to write the book. He was a journalist. He'd visited these countries and saw these trials take place. He believed what he was told by these people. And he came back and the party also asked him to write this book and when he learned the truth, the Twentieth Congress and things like that, he realised what was wrong. And obviously the man, I don't know where he is now, but at that time he was honest enough to say he was wrong and he left the party. But that was the situation we were in, very difficult....'

We believed in the party, we believed in Stalin. But now obviously, we believe we've got to question things. But we don't think we should go the whole hog as some that have said the party has done. The party now is beginning to question the Soviet Union. But it's questioning it on everything and everything the Soviet Union does is criticised. Not that you shouldn't criticise, but it condemns. It condemns the intervention in Afghanistan. It condemns the martial law in Poland. It supports Solidarnosc. Everything is going almost in the opposite direction -- from an adulation of Stalin to sort of, in a way, an anti-Soviet position. It worries me, you know....'

Joining the Spartacist League

'A Bolshevik party can make a revolution in Iran'

I became political while at school from observing the condition of the people in Iran. Various novels (by Gorki, Jack London, Hemingway, Jean Lafitte, etc) stimulated my political development. In Iran at the time most of these novels were banned. My eldest brother was a member of the youth section of the Tudeh Party before 1953. The 1953 coup ruthlessly crushed the Tudeh Party and by 1955 there was nothing but individuals left of this organisation. The Central Committee existed in exile. Some individuals did underground work on their own initiative. I was very young at this time.

I started university in 1961 and attended demonstrations from the first week. From 1960-63 the bourgeois National Front had limited freedom to hold meetings. Some of the left took the opportunity to hold meetings under the guise of the National Front while others were working within it. This gave them the opportunity to contact militant students. This was how I was first contacted by ex-Tudeh youth. During these years we student activists organised demonstrations and strikes in Tehran University and had many clashes with the shah's paratroopers.

I was contacted by a leftist, who had just been released from jail in 1963, later I had regular contact with him for about two years during which time we studied and copied articles about the Cuban revolution, articles about guerrilla warfare by Che Guevara and also articles by Castro. We thought the Soviet Union was a workers state, but we could not explain how a workers state can make deals with the shah (political or economic relations) and not only after Stalin was dead, also when Stalin was in power in the Soviet Union. The Red Army was withdrawn from Azerbaijan (in 1946) and as a result the newly formed democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was crushed and in return the Soviet Union got an oil concession in the north. At the same time the Tudeh Party broke the strike in Abadan in order to have a few members in the

cabinet. All these did not fit with a socialist state but we did not have any analysis of why a workers state acts like that.

I stopped working with this group in 1966 but by the end of 1967 most of the group was arrested including the four I knew, Bijan Jazani amongst them. Subsequently these people were murdered by the shah in 1975.

In 1971 the remainder of this group and another similar group fused and formed the Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas. I was working with another group in 1971 that also believed in armed struggle. I read the book by Ahmadzadeh on armed struggle. The group believed in this and also that because of the intensity of the state repression and the demoralisation of the people after the 1953 coup it was impossible to build a party but that heroic acts against the shah's regime would demonstrate to the people that action could be successful and thus awaken the people from their defeat. Small scale acts of heroism could lead to a full scale guerrilla war. For them, state repression was so intense that the mass of the proletariat were out of reach while contacting students and civil servants was possible. I had objections to guerrillaism however, I could see that it was substitutionist. I didn't think it would work in Iran. Still I thought that guerrillaism was better than doing nothing. The group thought of itself as Marxist although we really had no grasp of Marxism. We were morally outraged at the condition of the people but we did not have the patience of those who wanted to build a party with a social base in the working class. The membership were often very heroic but there was no belief in the capacity and power of the working class.

Before 1953 the Tudeh Party organised many strikes and demonstrations and in this time they held a real possibility of taking state power. The leadership of the Tudeh had a conciliationist and opportunist attitude to the bourgeoisie,

the Stalinist theory of two-stage revolution enabled them to rationalise that they should not or could not take power. For them the Iranian proletariat was incapable of carrying out a revolution. The Tudeh Party really had a mass following and so the defeat was even more demoralising because people saw that even with massive support it had been impossible to succeed using the Party...

In Britain I looked around the British left. One group which was very active was the Young Socialists (SLL) and I attended a few of their meetings. I also met the Militant group, I attended Militant readers meetings once a week. In Iran I had read *My Life* by Trotsky, so I knew something about him. Marxist books, even novels written by leftists were illegal in Iran, but we could buy Trotsky's books. The Stalinists used to say that since you could buy books by Trotsky it must be that American Imperialism approved of Trotsky. I was against Trotsky since I thought that he deserted the Russian Revolution and acted against the Soviet Union. It was about a year after contacting the Militant group that I was thoroughly convinced that I was wrong about Trotsky. I also understood that the Soviet Union is not a healthy workers state but that it is a degenerated workers state. By studying the Russian Revolution I learned that the Bolsheviks, in a country where a small section of the population were proletarian with the correct programme had successfully carried out the proletarian revolution. A Bolshevik Party defined by a revolutionary programme can successfully make a proletarian revolution in Iran and the extension of the revolution throughout the Middle East would ensure its survival.

In 1973 I joined the Militant group. I was not an active member. I only attended their meetings and conferences. I thought they had a good position on Chile and the Middle East although in England they were working in the Labour Party and they seemed to have concluded that they had to drop revolutionary politics and work with a reformist programme. They were always worried that they might get thrown out

'Reading about the Russian Revolution made things clearer'

When I moved to Sheffield I met the iSt. I was then contacted by them, but at first I still found everything confusing and could not get a picture in my mind. Then one day I sat down and read some books on the Russian Revolution. Many things became much clearer to me after this.

I went through a programme of reading and discussing the fundamental questions facing the working class internationally, Bolshevik Revolution, Poland, Labour Party, Ireland, Fascism and the Woman Question.

Although I have still to accumulate a lot more knowledge I agree with the positions of the iSt on these questions.... Comrade Gill.

'Revolted by the endless CP compromises'

I come from a CP background reinforced by three years service in the World Federation of Trade Unions, in the very heart of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Whether I would have stayed in the CP, as a rebellious 'tankist', if it were not for those crucial years in Prague, I cannot honestly answer. I very much doubt it. Even before I went to Prague I was already revolted by the endless CP compromises with the social-democratic agents of the bourgeoisie which went by the name of pragmatism. Prague was a traumatic experience, especially so as we, the representatives of the capitalist countries' CPs, were in the specially privileged sector of the bureaucracy. Accumulation of incident after incident where I witnessed how old Bolsheviks of the Israeli CP were sacrificed to appease the PLO, and militant CPers of the Egyptian party to appease Sadat, not to mention the stranglehold of the ruling bureaucracy over the people and working class of Czechoslovakia -- all these have turned me against the CP, but not against socialism in which I have never ceased to believe. On my return to the UK I left the British CP and started to look towards a Trotskyist solution. It is the Spartacists who I found to be the only representatives of not merely genuine Trotskyism but also with an ideological integrity which seemed to me totally lacking in other groups. And that is my reason for asking for membership....

S.

'IMG disappeared defence of the Soviet Union'

I came to political consciousness and activity quite late. I'd read substantially in the Marxist classics primarily out of academic interest but only joined the IMG in April 1979. The IMG appeared to me the sole organisation to join because it knew (at least formally) that the USSR was not capitalist, because it busied itself in building all the leftist campaigns then current (whatever their policy and character), and claimed to stand directly in the line of Trotsky's Fourth International as its British section. I did a lot of work in this party but found fairly quickly that I was in opposition, though inchoately, to the then leadership's crude, workerist misapplication of



Spartacist contingent on 27 March El Salvador demonstration.

the tactic of industrial implantation and, more importantly, to its downplay to the point of disappearance, at a time of growing Cold War fervour, of the unconditional defence of the Soviet Union and its uncritical heralding of the events in Iran.

I had just a hazy idea of the correct alternatives until, in informal discussion with the comrades who later formed the Communist Tendency, my education in revolutionary politics really took off. From January 1981 I fought for the politics of the CT inside the IMG -- for the defence of the Soviet Union as it was posed over Afghanistan, against tailing the feudalist Moslem fanatics manipulating (and later exterminating) workers in Iran, against the Catholic-inspired leadership of Solidarnosc which threatened to take Poland back to capitalism, and, while calling for military victory to the FSLN and for defence of the IRA against British imperialism, fighting against their petit-bourgeois nationalism. In Britain, the CT also stood against building instead of splitting the liberal, semi-pacifist CND and against the IMG's rush to adapt itself to the reformist policies of the Labour Party....

But the IMG's total misunderstanding of 'the party question' infected me too and I quit the Communist Faction immediately prior to our expulsion in May 1981 when the degree of political collaboration between some members of the CF and the Spartacist League came out in the wash.... In other words I was denying the essential primacy of politics over organisational procedures and of those over cliquist/personal ties. With other disorientated ex-CFers I participated in a cliquist bloc on the swamp-like basis of 'CF/Spart policies against Spart methods'! Thankfully, the SL moved fast and politically broke this up....

The revolutionary party is formed out of tough internal and external fights -- politically splitting the would-be revolutionaries from their rotten organisations is the necessary regroupment prelude to building the mass party. For the chums of the fake-left in Britain this is a big pill to swallow. These conclusions, together with studying the record of the iSt, drew me back to confront the SL again.... If this application is accepted I look forward to being a *bona fide* Spart -- I've wasted enough time. Comradely, Brissett.

of the LP. In 1975 I stopped going to their meetings because basically I couldn't see their politics leading anywhere.

In 1978, the time of the mass demonstrations in Iran, all the Iranian left thought that the principal contradiction was between the shah and 'anti-dictatorship' forces, no matter what their programme or their class character. Getting rid of the shah would lead to the granting of some democratic rights, they thought, so that political activity would be free. This all comes from the theory of two-stage revolution.

I have to go back to say how the Islamic opposition started. In 1963 the so-called white revolution took some of the land (moghofat) under the agrarian reform laws. Women were also given the right to vote. By doing this the shah was threatening the political and judicial power of the mullahs and was taking some of their property. And that initiated their opposition to the shah. The Shi'ite clergy did not oppose the jailing, torture and murder of the left which was carried out after the 1953 coup nor did they condemn the coup itself. Kashani and Brojerdy, the latter being the leader of the Shi'ites at the time, welcomed the coup. The Iranian left managed to see the Shi'ite clergy as progressive anti-imperialists however and subordinated themselves politically to the mullahs. I remember clearly reading the leaflets distributed by the mullahs in 1963 which opposed the agrarian 'reform' and women's suffrage. In 1963 I argued with my political friends against giving any support to the mullahs. To me the Shi'ite clergy were more reactionary than the shah. You did not have to be a Marxist to realise that.

I attended many meetings held by Iranians in 1978 and argued that nothing was progressive in the mullahs' programme. That was the time that I saw the slogan 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!' This was raised by the SL. Since the SL did not have a group in the town that I lived I had not known them initially. I asked other Iranians if they knew the SL. The Iranians slandered them, calling them CIA and SAVAK agents. I looked to find the SL and a few days after initially seeing their slogan they visited that town again and I met them and bought their paper. This group was the only organisation which had a clear Marxist analysis of what was happening in Iran and had the Marxist programme. They were pointing out that Iran under Khomeini would be as bloody and repressive as under the shah. The SL stood for the independence of the working class in Iran and they warned the left not to subordinate themselves to their future butchers. At the time the Iranian left were chanting 'long live Khomeini' and labelled the SL as CIA and SAVAK agents for their honesty. Khomeini had rewarded the left by putting them in jails and torturing and executing them. The Iranian left have not broken with the two-stage revolution and are now looking towards the Mujahedin/Bani-Sadr opposition to carry out the first stage, the bourgeois-democratic revolution in which the proletariat must play a subordinated role. This theory has led the working class to disaster in China in 1925-27, in Indonesia 1965, in Chile 1973 and in Iran recently.

The Tudeh Party, Fedayeen Majority and HKE are giving political support to Khomeini who is massacring Kurds, executing the left, denying rights for religious minorities and forcing women to be confined at home. This is not new for the Tudeh Party that has got a long history of treachery. These groups are labelling the mullahs 'anti-imperialist'. This anti-imperialism is simply anti-western, anti-American, against modernisation of the society that would break the control of the mosque on the oppressed.

Fedayeen Minority and Peykar are opposing Khomeini today. The first group is supporting Mujahedin for it to carry out the first stage revolution. Peykar does not support Bani-Sadr and from the start of the Iran-Iraq war called for revolutionary defeatism. But it is extremely anti-Soviet Union which leads them in Afghanistan to side with the reactionary feudal Muslims backed by the CIA, Khomeini and China against the progressive nationalist government of Afghanistan.

Iranian leftists argue that the number of the proletariat in Iran is very low and therefore we cannot expect a proletarian revolution. In 1978 strikes which were carried out in the oilfields dropped the output from 5.7m to 1.7m barrels a day. These strikes were extended throughout the private and government sectors. Large wage increases did not end the strikes. The strikes became political. These militant strikes brought the shah down. But the Iranian left subordinated these strikes to anti-proletariat Shi'ite clergy mobilisations and did not use these strikes to bring the working class to power. In 1944 the Tudeh Party as a working class party had 25,000 members. In 1946 the Central Council of the United Trade Unions of Iran with 400,000 members

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Workers Power: The shifting sands of opportunism

Life in Workers Power (WP) can't be easy! WP is too small to offer up for auction anything but its ideas, so when these shift around from day to day in pursuit of every will o' the wisp 'mass movement', it gains only an increasingly perplexed and cynical membership. It's something like crime: embezzlers have a chance of making it to Rio de Janeiro; pickpockets as often as not end up in prison.

For example, WP like much of the British left used to argue that the call for British troops out of Northern Ireland was the 'minimum basis' for Irish solidarity actions. But particularly during last year's hunger strikes, when the IRA sought to curry liberal favour by focussing exclusively on the prisoners' five demands, the British fake left seemed to all but forget that there were British troops in Northern Ireland. We didn't; and insisted on 'Troops out now!' as the central slogan not only in our contingents (along with political status and the unconditional release of all Republican victims of imperialist repression) but also in our united front initiatives. WP actively fought us on this! Now we read in the March issue of *Workers Power*:

'Troops Out Now and Self-Determination are the minimum positions around which consciously anti-imperialist action can be built.' (emphasis in original)

Leaving aside the absurd capitulation to Green nationalism reflected in the call for 'self-determination for the Irish people as a whole' when manifestly there is no Irish people 'as a whole', WP supporters might ask why WP fought against 'consciously anti-imperialist action' when the question was posed last year.

Iran/Iraq war disappeared?

WP's penchant for the 'anti-imperialist united front' is in large measure a programmatic reflection of its narrow British-centredness. At least the IRA is involved in anti-imperialist struggle. Three years ago, WP tailed behind the Iranian left in supporting Khomeini's seventh-century version of 'anti-imperialism', right through to the egregiously anti-Leninist position of lining up behind the mullahs' Iran in its squalid border war with the Baathist colonels' Iraq. Unlike WP, the Iranian masses have had to suffer first-hand the fruits of Khomeini's gloriously anti-imperialist victories. Thus the Fedayeen Minority, among other Iranian groups, has recently repudiated its erstwhile defencist position as 'Kautskyite', in favour of a position of defeatism on both sides.

So it was rather conspicuous when the March *Workers Power* carried a substantive polemical exchange with the Fedayeen -- whom WP has of late been pursuing -- which did not mention the Iran/Iraq war a single time. The Fedayeen has explained its line change with the claim that it had been ignorant of Lenin's position during World War I and, more plausibly, with its discovery that the masses 'were alienated from the war' (Kar no 127, our translation). We know for a fact that WP was not ignorant of Lenin's position, because it furiously argued its irrelevance to the Iran/Iraq war in polemicising against our 'abstentionist' revolutionary-defeatist line. Having discovered that the Iranian left is now becoming 'alienated from the war', is WP's current silence a prelude to adopting the position taken by the dreaded Sparts two years ago? We wonder.

But that's not all. The Fedayeen also opposes Polish Solidarnosc. When we said, 'Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution' last September, pointing out that proletarian political revolution in Poland could only be carried out through the suppression of this counterrevolutionary threat to the workers state, WP denounced us as 'cheerleaders for Stalinism' and worse. But in their oh-so-polite polemic with the genuinely (critical) Stalinist Fedayeen, again, not a word.

Intent on maintaining its leftist image, WP has been the most consistent among the fake-Trotskyist supporters of Solidarnosc in attempting to place some 'critical' distance between

itself and Catholic-nationalist counterrevolution -- and consistently ending up with its foot in its mouth. WP buys into the current squabble between the International Marxist Group and Socialist Organiser Alliance over how far to go with the thoroughly anti-communist Polish Solidarity Campaign by denouncing this 'popular-front-style campaign' which 'can only serve to draw British workers behind Thatcher and Reagan who "support" Solidarity only as a means to strengthen their Cold War campaign, the ultimate aim of which is restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe and the USSR' (*Workers Power*, April 1982). And WP's alternative?

'An independent labour movement campaign can have nothing to do with any economic boycott of Poland, Eastern Europe or the USSR by the British, or any imperialist, government. But it must argue for working class ACTION in support of Polish workers, and key here is the question of blacking of Polish imports.' WP wants nothing to do with imperialist economic sanctions against the degenerated/deformed workers states. Oh no! It tells the workers to take 'ACTION' to do the imperialists' dirty work.

War drive against who?

Two years ago WP swam against the stream of much of the rest of the fake-Trotskyist left by formally reversing its 'third camp' position on the Russian question in favour of defencism over Afghanistan. But it recoiled from generalising that line change in the direction of a consistent Trotskyist programme. WP lacks a necessary element in the revolutionary anatomy -- programmatic backbone -- and so it shifts with the winds. Its chemically pure expression of 'crystallised confusion' was recently captured in a two-part article on the Cold War whose first part placed the 'third world' at the centre of the new war drive:

'It is the desire of the White House to close down these openings and reestablish its control (in Latin America, Middle East, Africa) that gives stridency to the "new" Cold War of the 1980's.' (*Workers Power*, November 1981)

Three months later, the second part discovered that:

'The reconquest of the Soviet Union, the transformation of it and the other degenerate [sic] workers states into colonies of imperialism is the overriding desire of the Wall Street magnates.' (*Workers Power*, February 1982)

For those whose programme is designed not to advance the international proletariat to power but to suit petty organisational interests, the world can be a disorienting place, especially in the middle of an imperialist war drive. There are better things WP supporters can do with their lives than be the pickpockets of the opportunist marketplace -- like coming over to the Spartacist League's fight for a programmatic intransigent Trotskyist party. ■



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Main enemy...

(Continued from page 1)

Thatcher's Britain and Galtieri's Argentina are two of the US's staunchest allies in its drive to nuke the Soviet Union back to capitalism -- or worse. But the friend of one's enemy is scarcely one's friend. So whoever wins the Falklands war, US imperialism will lose. And that is all to the good. One unhappy Western diplomat summed it up when he said, 'The Russians are the only winners in this crisis. Everyone else winds up with egg on his face' (*Newsweek*, 26 April).

Hard as they try, anti-communist hysterics have been unable to pin the Falklands fiasco on the Kremlin. Displaying a peculiar respect for 'international law' the Soviet bureaucrats did not even veto Britain's emergency resolution in the UN Security Council. All they've shown so far is a diplomatic tilt towards Argentina, which is, after all, their main trading partner in the Western hemisphere.

There's an old saying: war is the mother of revolution. And even if it did not result in immediate revolutionary situations, the bloody Argentine junta wracked only a few weeks ago by massive labour protests, and the Thatcher government which has driven the British people into the poor house can be brought down as a result of defeat and humiliation in war.

For the honour of a moribund Empire

'Be pleased to inform Her Majesty that the White Ensign flies alongside the Union Jack in South Georgia. God save the Queen.' It could have been a message to Queen Victoria during the headier days of Empire. Britain had been trying to unload the Falklands for years, including handing over various administrative powers to Argentina. But once the Argentines had invaded, an enfeebled Britain saw a chance to reassert the obscene traditions of the Empire, and Thatcher was not about to let it pass. Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington was the Tory scapegoat for the self-evident fact that the bourgeoisie refuses to admit: Britain has declined to the point that Argentina is only one of a number of countries that can tweak Britain's nose today. The days when imperial gunboats could blast away the palace of a recalcitrant sultan are long gone.

All the blather about defending British sovereignty in the Falklands in order to defend the rights of 1800 Falkland kelpers is sheer imperialist cant. The *Economist* (10 April) came out more plainly:

'In the British, European and American mind there should be stronger causes now for confrontation than the little islands at stake; stronger causes -- be heartless about it -- than the 1,800 British lives on the islands....

'To shrink will be to shrink: to show that today democracies really are less able to defend their interests -- even the tiny ones, never mind the bigger ones that matter more -- than are authoritarian regimes.'

Thatcher proclaims 'aggression everywhere must be repelled' as if Britain were still the world's policeman. What presumptuousness! Bangladesh might as well declare its right to police global 'aggression'. Even a significant wing of the Tory party has been pointing out that a promise to defend British sovereignty over the Falklands would require a permanent garrison which 'would distort Britain's general defence effort [ie NATO]' (*Times*, 24 April). Britain has enough trouble maintaining imperialist troops in Northern Ireland!

Labour Party: social-chauvinists of many stripes

Labour's initial reaction was to try and out-jingo the Tories -- indeed, none of the Labourites 'right' or 'left' have been keen to highlight the fact that the last Labour government was the chief arms supplier to the Argentinian junta during the period of Carter's 'human

rights' boycott. But as the crisis has continued, the reaction within the party, despite the push by all wings for a UN solution, has crystallised along the lines of the main divisions in the party. Characteristically Denis Healey, leader of the NATO right wing, rose in Parliament to 'express the gratitude of the House to Mr Haig' for his mediation efforts, then shuffled off to New York himself. The Tribune 'soft left' attacked the 'subsistence of British policies to America' and seized on the incident to assert its unilateralist stance that 'nuclear capability' is counterposed to a 'flexible' defence policy (*Tribune*, 9 April).

But in all this it is Fleet Street bete noire Tony Benn whose policies are most in line with the real capacities and interests of British capitalism, recognising that Britain is in no position to get into a protracted war over a group of islands 8000 miles away, especially when there are also 'British interests' in Argentina. Both the anti-communist right and the fake-Trotskyist left portray Benn as a veritable red revolutionary. But contrast Benn with Lenin, who saw in the first World War a bloody, irrational conflict that was ripping up the normal functioning of the bourgeois order and creating historic revolutionary opportunities.

Reagan's dilemma: Galtieri or Thatcher?

Perhaps the most striking thing about this bizarre world crisis is that it highlights the weakness of the US as self-styled leader of the 'free world'. The night before Argentina seized the Falklands, the president of the US spoke for almost an hour on the phone with Argentine strongman Galtieri (the longest such call Reagan has had with any foreign leader) trying to convince him not to do it. But to no avail. And Haig's effort to emulate Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy' have made him an international laughing stock.

In 1956, at the height of the short-lived 'American Century', Eisenhower and Dulles simply called off the British/French/Israeli invasion of Egypt over the Suez canal (a humiliation which still rankles the Tory establishment and one which Thatcher would dearly love to redress through the current crisis). Britain's inability to win even the 'cod war' in the early seventies was to a large measure due to American insistence that she lay off tiny Iceland, so as not to endanger the NATO air base at Keflavik. But times have changed.

It is especially painful for US imperialism that Britain is attempting to recapture its imperial glory at the expense of the Argentine junta. Since taking office the Reagan administration has fervently wooed the anti-communist butcher in Buenos Aires. Last year the White House pressed Congress into removing the ban against arms shipments to Argentina, a leftover from Carter's 'human rights' hypocrisy. Last November at a state dinner in Washington, hosted by Pentagon super-hawk Caspar Weinberger, Galtieri declared that World War III had already begun in the Americas, a war between Soviet Communism and the 'free world' led by the US. The Argentine military had volunteered its elite troops to help overthrow the petty-bourgeois radical Sandinistas in Nicaragua and suppress leftist insurgency in El Salvador. No doubt Galtieri believed these services on the Central American front of imperialism's Cold War II entitled him to some compensation, namely the Malvinas. No doubt he also thought his good friend Reagan would smooth over the decrepit British lion's ruffled fur.

It was therefore anything but an accident that the very night of the Falkland Islands seizure Reagan's UN ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick was indulging her preference for 'authoritarian' regimes by attending a dinner at the Argentine embassy. Very possibly Kirkpatrick

thinks that Margaret Thatcher is all right as far as she goes, but she's ruling on the basis of something unstable known as bourgeois democracy, rather than a tested 'moderately authoritarian' regime like Argentina's. The British were not amused. Her Majesty's ambassador to Washington, Sir Nicholas Henderson, asked how the Americans would have felt if he had been wined and dined at the Iranian embassy the night of the Tehran hostage seizure.

With the British pushing their imperial pretensions to the hilt and the US simply unable to call Thatcher to order, the Reagan administration has been forced to make an excruciating choice between the anti-communist junta to the South and the anti-communist Tories across the Atlantic. In announcing US sanctions against Argentina and material aid for Britain, Haig beneath the hypocritically worded phrases about having made the peace initiative in order to protect 'the basic principle' of the 'peaceful settlement of disputes' underlined the real dilemma of the US: 'We also made this effort because the crisis raised vital issues of hemispheric solidarity at a time when Communist adversaries seek positions of influence on the mainland of the Americas.' But, as the *Economist* (17 April) warned, American 'irresolution' risked the danger of a loss in 'British popular support for America's nuclear policies and deployment, and for its European, its Nato and its Soviet policies' and the vindication of 'tendencies towards neutralism' in West Germany.

The 'anti-imperialist' military junta

Tucked in behind Tony Benn's campaign to avert a tragedy for British imperialism are the Communist Party who have made their main call in the crisis the Labour/Bennite call for a UN negotiated solution. Meanwhile the fake-Trotskyist reformists of the Militant tendency line up openly with Labourite chauvinism. They actually call for trade union blacking of all trade with Argentina as the only 'real' way to help the Falkland Islanders -- in 'solidarity' with the Argentine workers' struggle of course (*Militant*, 9 April). The best these shameless opportunists can do by way of attacking Thatcher is to condemn her 'insensitivity' to 'workers in uniform' noting that 500 sailors in the fleet have 'redundancy notices in their pockets' (*Militant*, 23 April).

As for the rest of the fake-Trotskyist left, they present at best a mirror image of Labour's social chauvinism, reflecting all its Little England narrowness. Across the board they point to the burden on the taxpayer and raise a pacifist hue and cry about the loss of lives and the horrors of war. After months and months of trying to duck the Cold War -- when not openly lining up behind Reagan and Thatcher over Afghanistan and Poland -- the Falkland crisis has provided them with a godsend. They bemoan the 'racist hypocrisy' of the Thatcher government for defending the white Falklanders while booting off the black inhabitants of Diego Garcia. But the difference between Diego Garcia and the Falklands has more to do with the Russian question than with racism -- the US wanted to build an anti-Soviet military installation there. Finally they can oppose the 'war drive' of their own bourgeoisie -- against Argentina.

Sean Matgamma's Socialist Organiser Alliance (SOA) has taken a neutral stance, emphasising the 'rights of the Falkland Islanders' (*Socialist Organiser*, 22 April). The desires of the dwindling population of the Falklands are a real factor, but marginal. In general the right of self-determination becomes attenuated when either the area or the population density becomes very small. Do the sparse inhabitants of the Gobi Desert have the right to self-determination? Some provision should certainly be made for those of the Falkland Islanders who wish to return to Britain, but 1800 sheepherders do not a people make.

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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Begin's annexation by terror

For a bi-national workers state: For a socialist federation of the Near East!

On 21 April Israeli fighter jets struck southern Lebanon for the first time since last year's cease-fire. Just as the Zionists annexed the Golan last December while everyone was watching Poland, now they hit Lebanon while the world was being entertained by the British blockade of the Falklands. But this was no phoney war. After two hours of brutally pounding Beirut and two other cities, at least 22 dead and more than 50 injured had been added to the toll of Palestinian Arabs gunned down by rampaging Zionist troops in the West Bank earlier that month.

The attack was ostensibly aimed at Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) bases in the south in retaliation for the death of an Israeli soldier in a land mine incident earlier that morning. It's what the British used to call 'collective reprisals' when they administered the Promised Land. Today the Zionists apply it to an entire people. The pretext was irrelevant. Israeli prime minister Menahem Begin had been talking of invasion all month: Passover leaves had been cancelled, reservists called up to replace regular soldiers on the Lebanese border, troop movements north. And even after the attack, Begin's 'hard line' defence minister Ariel Sharon would not rule out a full-scale assault involving air, naval and land forces.

The US was miffed; when Sharon reported the outcome of the Cabinet meeting which approved the air attack to visiting assistant secretary of state Walter Stoessel, he told him only that they had agreed to the final withdrawal from the Sinai scheduled for 25 April. Reagan must have felt mighty frustrated that all his squalid reactionary allies won't stop fighting one another and unite in a holy war against Russian Communism. Still the Near East picture is not all black for Washington. The Pentagon has quietly slipped its Rapid Deployment Force into the Sinai as part of the 'peacekeeping forces' to replace the Israeli army. US imperialism thus has its armed forces right where it wants them, across a narrow strait from the oil fields of Saudi Arabia.

Israeli protests against Zionist terror

It is not however external, but rather internal conditions that are driving Zionist Israel toward war. Like the Argentine junta, the Begin regime needs to restore the 'spirit of national unity'. For a good portion of the Israeli population is deeply disturbed watching night after night of video clips of Israeli soldiers gunning down unarmed Palestinian youth while fanatical Zionist vigilantes armed with automatic weapons rampage through Arab villages. Late last month Israeli authorities and so-called Jewish 'settlers', that is kill-crazy psychopaths in prayer shawls, went on a reign of terror, killing at least six Palestinian youths and wounding dozens of others.

Then on 11 April an Israeli soldier, Alan Goodman (like 'Eli the Wolf' an immigrant from the USA), shot his way into one of Jerusalem's holiest mosques, the Dome of the Rock, and



Hebrew-speaking people and Palestinians protest against Begin's terror on West Bank. 'Peace now' demonstration in Tel Aviv, 27 March, drew 50,000 people (top).

sprayed it with machine-gun fire, killing at least two and wounding as many as 40. Israeli police and riot troops then moved in and attacked the Arabs who were trying to capture the mass murderer Goodman.

The rising wave of Zionist terror -- of which the Dome of the Rock massacre is only the latest, most spectacular instance -- and the prospect of imminent annexation have provoked the most massive protests on the West Bank since 1968. Perhaps more importantly, these protests have spread to Israel itself, even among elements of the Hebrew-speaking population. Israeli Arabs called a one-day general strike in solidarity with the West Bank Palestinians, and the predominantly Jewish and traditionally pro-Zionist 'Peace Now' movement brought 50,000 into the streets of Tel Aviv on March 27.

This was the largest demonstration by Hebrew-speaking Israelis against Zionist militarism in over two decades. Although the 'Peace Now' demonstration was endorsed by a number of parliamentarians from the main Zionist party, the so-

called Labour Alignment, the slogans raised went beyond what passes for liberalism in today's Israel. Among them were 'No to Occupation', 'Begin Go Home' and even 'Golan is Syrian', the latter actually being *illegal* in Zionist Israel. Furthermore, at both demonstrations the PLO flag was unfurled, an act of unprecedented daring for Israeli Arabs.

The protests on the West Bank began in March when Israeli authorities dissolved the town council of El Bireh and replaced the elected Palestinian mayor, Ibrahim Tawil, with an Israeli army officer. The pretext was Tawil's refusal to meet with a newly established 'civilian administration' which had replaced the military one, clearly a prelude to extending direct Israeli rule over the West Bank. The dismissal notice was delivered by a squadron of Israeli army officers who charged into Tawil's office and marched him out at gunpoint. This provoked the traditional West Bank protest: Arab merchants shuttered their shops and students boycotted classes. The Israeli army responded by forcing merchants to reopen their shops and shooting into crowds of stone-throwing youths. Backing up and egging on the soldiery were armed Jewish fanatics from 'settlements' like Shiloh, north of Jerusalem.

Tawil, along with fellow Palestinian West Bank mayors Bassam Shakaa and Kharim Khalaf, is an outspoken supporter of the PLO. The three mayors were targets of Zionist bomb attacks last June. While Tawil escaped unharmed, Khalaf lost a foot and Shakaa both his legs. When Israeli soldiers barred Shakaa from the Nablus town hall they mocked the crippled mayor for being 'half a man'. He retorted, 'You have lost your head' (*Newsweek*, 5 April).

The West Bank mayors were elected to office when the occupation was run by the Labour Alignment, which despite its name was for many years the main bourgeois Zionist party. The denial of the Palestinian right of self-determination and the creation of Zionist settlements on the West Bank as 'accomplished facts' is very much a *bi-partisan* policy. Labour differs from Begin's supporters in proposing to ring the West Bank with settlements, avoiding for now the densely populated Palestinian areas. Begin and his super-hawk defence minister Ariel Sharon, on the other hand, are moving to implant groups of armed Zionist fanatics right next to the major West Bank cities and towns, ultimately to drive the Palestinian population out through terror.

For Arab-Hebrew workers revolution!

There is no questioning the just anger and courage of the Palestinian youth -- subjected to every humiliation and outrage by the Zionists -- who attacked armed Israeli convoys with nothing but rocks. And it certainly took courage for the Israeli Arabs and 'Peace Now' demonstrators to display PLO flags in the heart of Tel Aviv, an act of 'sedition' in Begin's Israel. Yet without a proletarian revolutionary perspective this kind of courage can produce only martyrs, not victories.

The limitations of the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the PLO were clearly seen in the two-week West Bank general strike, which was restricted to schools, shops and small businesses. The 80,000 West Bank Palestinians who commute daily to jobs in Israel and who are increasingly a strategic, if super-exploited, part of the Israeli labour force, continued to work throughout the strike. Even Palestinians who work for Israeli construction companies building settlements in the West Bank did not, by and large,

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