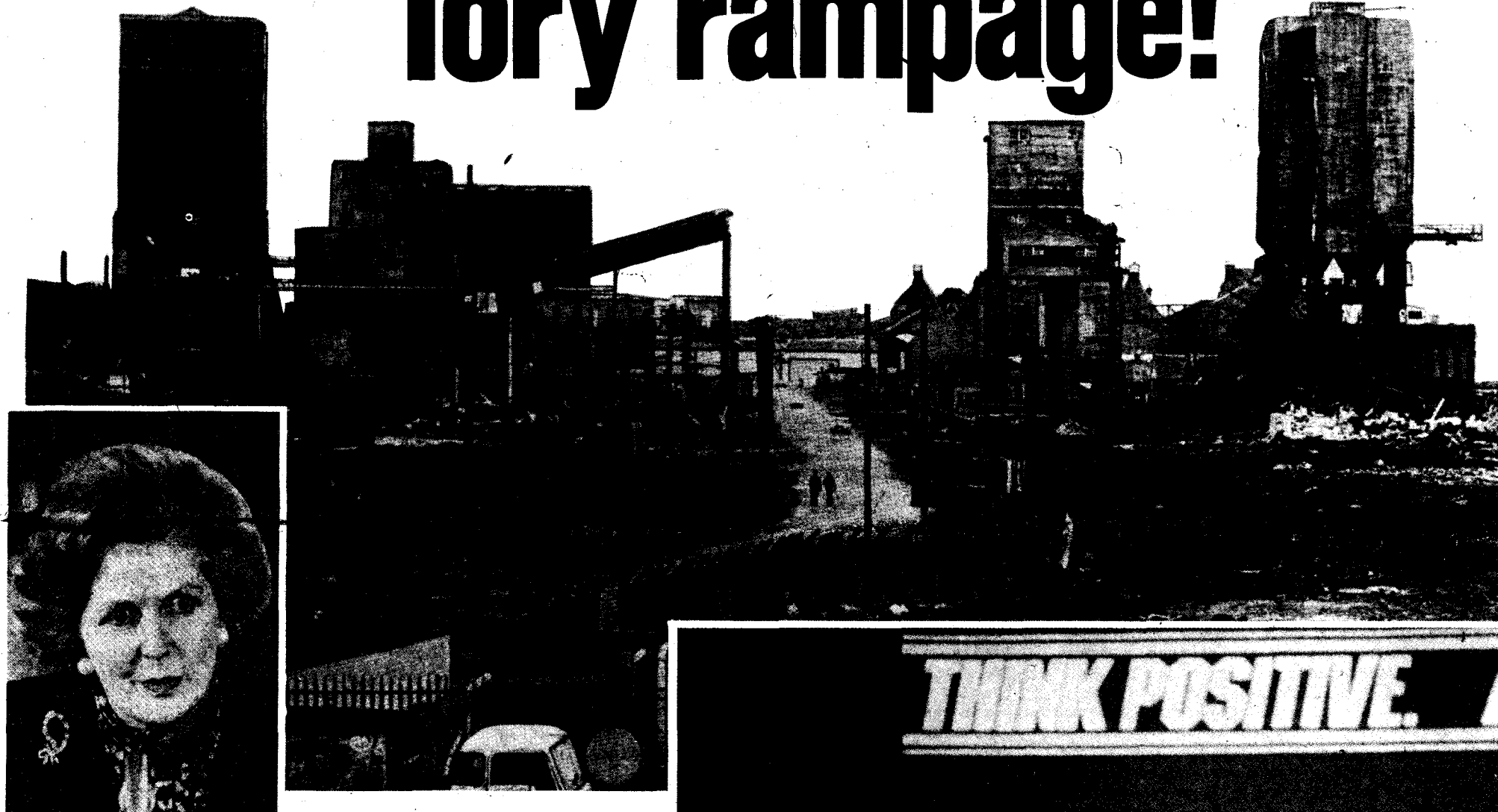


Healey spells it out - Cold War austerity Labour: No answer to Tory rampage!

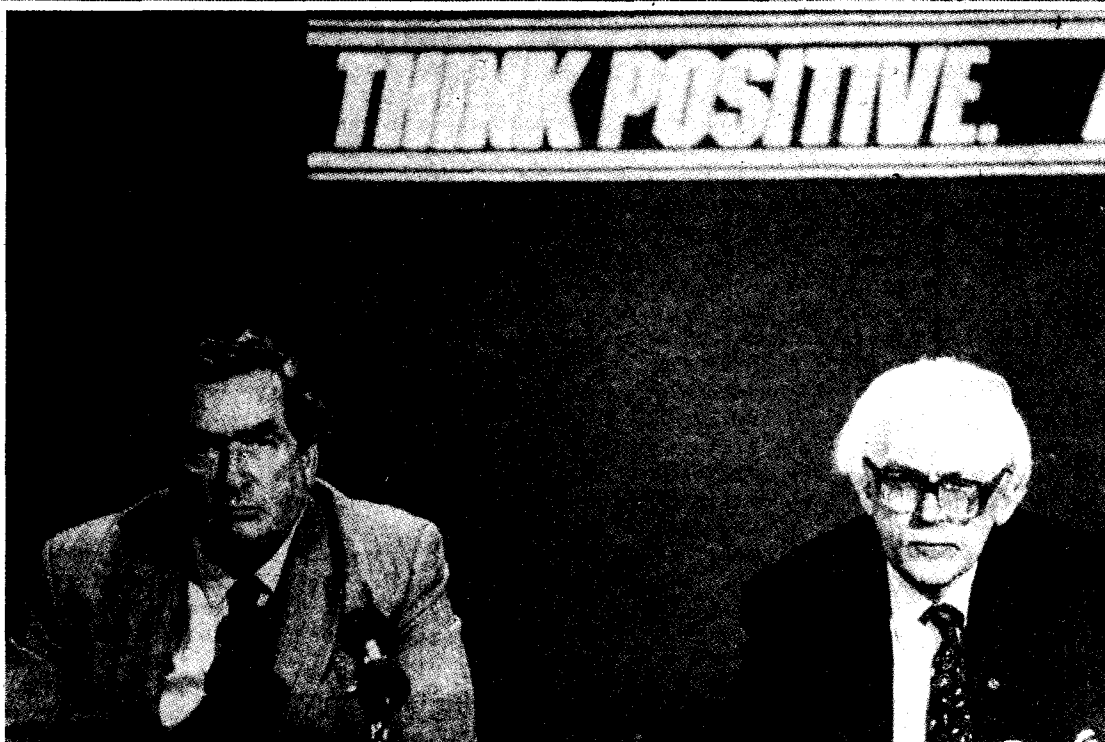


'We really do need an unusually large majority, unusually large authority for the health and strength of the NATO alliance and to give a clear lead internationally.'

Thus Mrs Thatcher spelled it out on the eve of her trip to the Williamsburg imperialist chiefs' conclave. The Tories want to use the June 9 elections as a platform for the imperialist war drive against the Soviet Union and for their vicious attacks on the working class. While the pollsters predict a big Tory victory, the Labour Party leaders are squirming in the face of their bourgeois masters' aggressive demands that they fully and unreservedly toe the line of Cold War austerity. Each day of the campaign reveals what many working class militants already know: that a Labour Party government will not solve any of the dire problems facing the working class today.

British capitalism is gripped by advanced economic decay, in a world being driven towards thermonuclear war by the NATO imperialists. The only way the capitalists know to solve the crisis is to destroy the living standards and conditions of the working masses and prepare to wage war on the Soviet Union, where the world's first workers revolution ripped the old Tsarist empire out of the hands of the capitalist system. Five more years of Tory rule will mean the certain installation of Cruise and Trident, bringing the threshold of nuclear holocaust ever closer. It will mean millions more added to the four million or so already on the dole. The NHS, inadequate as it is, faces devastation. Real wages will be driven down and speed-up rammed through. The new Nationality Act and increased police powers will especially hit the black and Asian minorities. And even harsher new legislation will be implemented aimed at further shackling the trade unions. No wonder the Tories have been recruiting former members of the fascist National Front as parliamentary candidates. And no wonder the City is buoyant at the prospect of a Tory victory.

The situation cries out for a revolutionary workers party which would tap the hatred of and anger against the Tories into an effective fight-back. Three months ago, at the time of Labour's Bermondsey by-election debacle we wrote:



'In order to stop them [the Tory government] it is desperately necessary to fight. Massive social struggle of the oppressed, centred on powerful strike action by the trade union movement, is needed to break the will of the capitalists. The seething mass of unemployed and workers who have been ground down by defeat and betrayal can only be galvanised to struggle by the promise of a better future: a fight to bring down this vicious government, overthrow the capitalist system it defends and begin the socialist reconstruction of society in a Soviet Britain.' (*Spartacist Britain* no 48, March 1983)

This is the last thing the leadership of Her Majesty's loyal Labour Party wants. Michael Foot even hopes to drum up a little bourgeois and middle class support with dire warnings of a 'social explosion' if the Tories continue to rule. We'll keep the lid on, he pleads. The bourgeoisie isn't buying it, but he keeps trying. We say: *Let's have the social explosion that Foot wants to prevent!* Fight for a sliding scale of hours and wages -- shorten the working week at no loss in pay to end

continued on page 2

Give Thatcher the 'social explosion' that Michael Foot dreads!

Labour...

(Continued from page 1)

unemployment! Defend and extend the NHS -- millions of pounds for hospitals, health care, education and social security! Down with the Nationality Act -- full citizenship rights for foreign workers and their families! For a massive programme of housing and public works to make this country a fit place to live! For the revolutionary expropriation of industry and finance under a workers government!

Particularly as the prospect of an election has loomed, Foot's cohorts in the trade union bureaucracy have moved heaven and earth to prevent, contain and stifle any industrial struggle that has broken out -- more often than not with pleas to wait for a Labour government. Strikes like the South Wales miners strike and Cowley washing-up time dispute, which have expressed the bitterness and discontent of the working class, have not been smashed by the cops and management armed with new powers under the Tebbit legislation; they have been defeated thanks to the bureaucrats' betrayals. The trade union tops organised no effective industrial opposition to the Tebbit anti-union legislation. At the Scottish TUC and the NUPE conference in May they worked overtime to choke any motions concerning free collective bargaining and opposing wage restraint which would get in the way of a new Social Contract sellout with a prospective Labour government. And when Labour Party chairman and seamen's union leader Sam McCluskie talks of the union movement having 'no other course but to defend itself in such a way that we have never seen since 1926', it's his version of Michael Foot's servile 'social explosion' warnings. McCluskie and the like have no intention of organising a general strike against a Tory (and certainly not a Labour) government. Indeed it was the likes of McCluskie who sold the 1926 General Strike into bitter defeat.

Labour's Cold War

Tens of millions of workers and their families despise Thatcher's Tories and want to be rid of them. Why can't Labour translate this into a massive wave of support? Why does it present such a miserable, hopeless picture? The disarray and divisions in the Labour Party are products of the international situation, above all the war drive of Reagan/Thatcher against the Soviet Union. Last year we wrote:

'The international economic crisis which fuels this anti-Soviet war drive intersects in Britain a deep, long-term structural decline. To retain their standing as any sort of imperialist power, the dominant sections of the British bourgeoisie see no course other than an emasculation of the trade unions at home coupled with slavish allegiance to the Atlantic alliance.

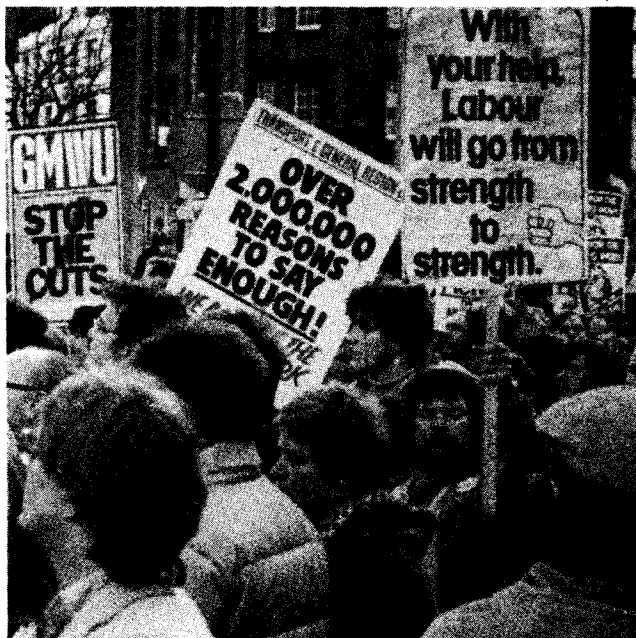
'In this context the contradictions of the Labour Party as a bourgeois workers party have been brought sharply to the fore. In its role as a defender of British capitalist interests, the central core of the post-war Labour bureaucracy has been a staunch advocate of the "American connection"....

'The politics of the Bennite left -- primarily a repudiation of the dismal record of the last Labour government and a utopian unilateralist attempt to pull Britain out of the Cold War vortex -- are a reformist dead-end from the point of view of the immediate and historic interest of the working class. But they threaten to make Labour an aberrant party in today's conditions, a party unfit, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, for "responsible" government.' (*Spartacist Britain* no 41,

April 1982)

It's not incidental, or electoral opportunism, that the Tories and the bourgeois press have been screaming bloody murder over Labour's supposed unilateralist position. From a proletarian standpoint Labour's 'defence' programme is bad enough, even without the Healey/Callaghan interpretation: continued support to NATO, upgrading conventional forces (all the better to fight Falklands-type wars) and 'British equipment for British forces'. But the NATO bosses (and their spokesmen like Denis Healey) have given Labour a hard message. If the party truly 'believes in a strong defence of Britain and Britain's allies' and is 'against moves that would disrupt our existing alliances' (Michael Foot's words), then it must act accordingly. While it can have its reservations about Cruise and Trident (so do sections of the bourgeoisie), it had better not tamper with Polaris, the existing nuclear arsenal which the last Labour government updated. Healey has won on this, leaving no room for 'unilateralist' illusions.

The Labour Party's problem is that it is credible neither to its bourgeois masters nor to a large section of its working class base. There is very little room for these reformists to manoeuvre in this time of acute capitalist



Labourites have no answer to capitalist crisis.

crisis and anti-Soviet war drive. To be acceptable as an alternative Westminster government Labour must embrace Cold War austerity. The likes of Healey, Peter Shore and James Callaghan are eager to oblige. But workers remember all too well the venomously anti-working-class record of the 1974-79 government -- and see that Labour only wants to repeat it. Shunted off to fight a marginal seat, Tony Benn joins with the rest of the Labour 'left' (and their fake-Trotskyist camp followers of *Socialist Action* and *Socialist Organiser*) to cling to the tattered fragments of 'conference decisions' and so-called 'socialist policies'. Meanwhile the right wing has consolidated its grip. While Benn and his acolytes plead for 'unity', Healey & Co have witchhunted Militant and other leftist elements. (At an election rally in Bradford, Foot pointedly refused even to shake the hand of Pat Wall, a Militant supporter and parliamentary candidate.) Instead of being condemned to the prospect of electoral oblivion with the rest of the SDP scum, Healey and his ilk are now calling the shots in the Labour Party, notably on the crucial issue of defence/disarmament and on the new Social Contract.

Two years ago, Healey was a hated and reviled figure. When he tried to address unemployment marches in Birmingham and Liverpool he was virtually booed off the platform. 'Go join the

SDP!', conference delegates taunted him as he squeaked past Benn in the 1981 deputy leadership election. We said: Drive NATO/CIA-lover Healey out of the labour movement!

The trade union bosses, fearing the wrath of their membership, once took their distance from this representative *par excellence* of Social Contract betrayal. If Benn had beaten Healey and the latter decamped to the SDP, like as not we would see a quite different Labour Party today -- still wretchedly reformist, pro-capitalist, but aberrant in the face of the Cold War and, doubtless, able to generate renewed illusions among the working class. Revolutionaries could well have given such a party critical support against Thatcher and the Alliance, in order that in office it could be exposed before the working class.

But now Healey has been rehabilitated, by the TUC and the Bennite 'left'. The latter, with its pathetic pleas for 'unity', has helped create the present situation. Today the preeminence of Healey, Shore at all precludes any pretence that a Labour government would be anything but a virulent anti-Soviet austerity regime of the likes of Francois Mitterrand in France and Bob Hawke in Australia. We are not going to advocate a vote for that. If there are Labour Party candidates willing to make some effective manifestation of opposition to Labour's Cold War austerity campaign, we would actively consider giving them critical support.

'National Economic Assessment' equals social contract

Unemployment is meant to be the issue around which Labour rallies support. But even with Thatcher's vicious attacks on jobs, the Labour Party has been unable to generate much enthusiasm. And no wonder. Labour doesn't even promise to end unemployment, just whining that it will get worse under the Tories and hoping to cut it if there is 'economic recovery'. It hopes to stimulate recovery by borrowing -- from the same IMF whose dictates for austerity the last Labour government obeyed.

And it promises a 'National Economic Assessment'. Under this arrangement there will be 'planned collective bargaining' (not free collective bargaining), 'a genuine trading of rights' (Michael Foot) and 'agonising choices' (Clive Jenkins). Healey is polite enough to the sensibilities of the trade union bureaucrats who will have to sell this betrayal to their members to talk of an 'assessment' not an incomes policy. But only a charlatan or a fool could deny that the 'National Economic Assessment' is a new Social Contract. Its proposal to establish a National Planning Council means not only an incomes policy but a dangerous shackling of the trade unions to the bourgeois state.

Remember Labour's betrayals

Before the Falklands war, polls for the bourgeois press made Thatcher the most unpopular prime minister since World War II. Labour's disgusting jingoism helped her 'resolute' ascent. But whatever these polls say now, deep hatred of Thatcher still exists in wide layers of the working class and the oppressed. To compensate for its lack of positive appeal Labour must try to tap this with its plea for 'unity against Thatcher'. Anything would be better than the 'fascist' Thatcher, vote for the lesser evil -- so the message goes. Labour may perhaps be lesser, but it will be evil all the same.

But this pitch is used to mask all manner of crimes. Tony Benn's talk of 'an absolute duty to beat Thatcher' and warnings against spending time 'niggling away at the difficulties' (*Socialist Action*, 22 April) are nothing other than justifications for capitulation to the right wing. They are his excuse for going along with any and every betrayal, just as he did during the 1974-

Public meetings

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7.30pm, Friday 24 June
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Red Lion Square
London WC1

Liverpool

7.30pm, Wednesday 22 June
Swan Hotel
London Road
Liverpool 3

HOLDING HANDS WON'T STOP WORLD WAR III Birmingham

7.30pm, Thursday 23 June
Australia Bar
Hurst Street
Birmingham B5

Spartacist League, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE, or ring the following numbers:
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Three part class series
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9 June, 23 June and 7 July in

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People's March diversion

'There is still an acceptance by many ordinary people of the myth that there is no alternative. The march will change all that.' So says Jack Dromey of the 'People's March for Jobs' circa 1983 in the Communist Party's *Morning Star* (7 May). There is indeed an alternative to the social misery and massive unemployment which is Tory Britain: a planned economy under the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the aim of the People's March, instigated and organised by the CP and blessed by the TUC, is to deflect attention away from a serious struggle for jobs that might challenge the stranglehold of the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracy. This march is just the sort of extra-parliamentary activity Michael Foot likes. Its predecessor, the 1981 People's March, came hard on the heels of the TUC's sellout of the steel strike, which could have opened the road to a generalised working-class offensive against the Tory/employer attacks and brought down the Thatcher government. Now, having done its bit to behead the possibility of a militant miners strike, not least through Mick McGahey's sellout of the Kinneil miners, the CP has organised another People's March aimed at channelling anger against the Tories into a less-than-worthless electoral victory for advocates of Social Contract.

The TUC's initial opposition to the march melted away around the time of McGahey's Kinneil betrayal and the CP's announcement of support for Labour's new Social Contract, dubbed the National Economic Assessment (NEA). Quid pro quo? Sheet Metal Workers' Union leader George Guy, one of two CP supporters on the TUC who voted for the NEA, justified their wretched support for shackling the workers as follows:

'Had we voted against, then there would have been two Communists in glorious isolation, which may have satisfied our personal egos and even the "Morning Star", but our broad left colleagues might well have seen us as people they no longer wished to support on other issues.' (*Morning Star*, 14 April)

A communist trade union leadership worthy of the name would not only have voted against this treachery but would have exposed the Labour/TUC pact to their membership and prepared them to struggle. The fight for jobs demands a break with the Labour/TUC bureaucrats, mobilising workers to fight for worksharing on full pay -- thirty hours work for forty hours pay -- and a

79 government. And they lay the basis for supporting a coalition government with the SDP/Liberals on the basis of dropping unilateralism, staying in the EEC and a Social Contract. The fact that notorious anti-Communist Frank Chapple was elected chairman of the TUC unanimously (including by Arthur Scargill) was bad enough. But the fact that he can call for a vote to his 'friend' SDP candidate John Grant and get away with it, shows the alacrity with which the Labour tops will join a coalition with bourgeois forces. And it is an utter indictment of the 'unity' mongering of the Labour 'left'.

But 'unity against the Tories' doesn't just come from the mainstream Labourites, right and 'left'. Fake-revolutionaries like *Socialist Action* and *Socialist Organiser* have caught election fever, screaming 'Vote Labour, June 9' in banner headlines and calling for an 'anti-Tory crusade'. Their stillborn 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' absurdly paints Labour's paper programme as 'socialist policies'. Under the impact of the Cold War and their refusal to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism, these 'Trotskyists' have sold their souls to Labour.

Slightly to the left, the centrists of Workers Power are busy peddling their excuses for unvarying 'critical' support to Labour. Year in, year out, like Prince Philip with the Queen, they are always there, at the statutory distance behind. Today WP says we must put Healey & Co into office, and then 'force a Labour government to honour its pledges' (*Workers Power*, June 1983). Meanwhile, 'We must fight to win the unions and the Labour Party to real anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist demands' (May 1983). So they want to keep the Labour Party intact, and not to split it, even last year calling for a 'loyalty oath' from Labour MPs to this social-imperialist party. Like the rest, WP ends up trying to pressure the Labour Party and a Labour government to the left, not fighting to build a revolutionary alternative.

What about those who claim to provide such an alternative, or who are standing candidates against Labour in the elections? Do they on any decisive question represent a break from Labour's reformism? No! The Communist Party presents what



Foot with marchers in Glasgow. Would you buy a used Social Contract from this man?

sliding scale of wages to meet inflation, not through cap-in-hand beggary and do-nothing lobbies but through militant factory occupations and strikes. But the CP's programme to solve unemployment is 'not much different from Labour's', as CP head Gordon McLennan proudly admits (*Guardian*, 20 May). In other words, it is a programme for chauvinist import controls, reflationary 'job creation' gimmicks etc -- without even a promise of providing jobs for all! In fact the CP's programme *in toto* is not much different from Labour's, a fact driven home by a Tory election advert comparing Labour and Communist election manifestos.

The People's March is a model of the CP's 'Broad Democratic Alliance' with well-meaning vicars for a popular-frontist parliamentary pressure group. Today it is given added concreteness by the CP's call for a 'broad' anti-Thatcher coalition with the SDP and even Tory 'wets' -- their answer for preventing the 'social explosions' Michael Foot warns of. Even chants of 'Tories out!' have been banned from

they proudly claim is a programme 'consonant with Labour'. Leading CP trade unionists voted for the National Economic Assessment on the TUC and some CP leaders unashamedly want a coalition with the SDP. The Revolutionary Communist Party, despite its anti-Labour posturing, has never presented a programme to break workers from reformism. Its refusal to defend the Soviet Union, its Little England parochialism, the sort of parliamentarist campaign which in the Bermondsey by-election even offered the grotesque spectacle of 'Revolutionary Communist' Fran Eden sharing a platform with fascists -- there is nothing to vote for in all this. The Workers Revolutionary Party is also standing candidates, and we note that these political bandits can still sound a lot more principled than most of the fake-Trotskyists. But workers should be warned of the WRP's support for the murder of leftists by Iraq's Saddam Hussein and its dubious connections with Libyan butcher Qaddafi, which have taken it outside the workers movement altogether.

Break TUC/Labour stranglehold

More so even than in most elections, it is obvious that the felt needs of workers and the oppressed will not be met through an electoral recomposition in Parliament or through reliance on the gang of class traitors who run the Labour Party. The Labourites harp on about 'unity', but the working class will only have true unity in its own interests when it is united and mobilised behind a revolutionary vanguard party in the struggle to overthrow capitalism. The coming class battles will provide manifest opportunities for the construction of a revolutionary leadership of the working class through shattering the grip of the pro-capitalist misleaders. That is the task to which the Spartacist League is dedicated, and key to that is the fight for a communist opposition within the trade unions counterposed to Labourite reformism down the line.

We say:

- Smash the imperialist war drive! Down with NATO -- Defend the Soviet Union! Not a penny, not a man for the imperialist war drive!

the march as 'ultra-leftish' and members of the WRP, SOA and SWP excluded for daring to raise them. But what do the CP's 'left' critics, like *Socialist Organiser*, offer? 'We want to turn the People's March into a "Workers March"', says *Socialist Organiser* (12 May), 'the only way to solve unemployment is through a socialist party in parliament ... to worry enough politicians to get something done'. And these people pretend to be Trotskyists!

Britain, once the 'workshop of the world', today epitomises what Trotsky described in the Transitional Programme:

'The economic prerequisite for the proletarian revolution

has already in general achieved the highest point of fruition that can be reached under capitalism. Mankind's productive forces stagnate.... Growing unemployment, in its turn, deepens the financial crisis of the state and undermines the unstable monetary systems. Democratic regimes, as well as fascist, stagger on from one bankruptcy to another.'

With 40 per cent of youth jobless, these 'extra-parliamentary' pressure tactics are not only diversionary and potentially demoralising and dangerous. If not mobilised behind the social power of the organised labour movement in struggle around a revolutionary programme of transitional demands, the youth and unemployed who face a future without hope will provide fodder for the fascist strikebreakers. Under a revolutionary leadership, the trade unions would organise the unemployed, not into limp pressure ploys like the People's March, but as militant auxiliaries in the class struggle. ■

- For the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland!
- Down with capitalist immigration laws! No deportations -- Full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers and their families! For mass trade union/minority mobilisations to smash the fascists!
- No to AES chauvinist protectionism! No to the new Social Contract! No to wage restraint! Jobs for all through work sharing on full pay!
- Defend the right to strike! Smash all anti-union legislation! For mass strike action to smash the bosses' attacks!
- For a revolutionary workers government to expropriate the capitalist class! For the Socialist United States of Europe!
- Forward to the building of a Leninist/Trotskyist vanguard party, section of a re-forged Fourth International!

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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Drop charges against Tottenham anti-NF protesters!

'Labour let the fascists here!'

Today Labour claims to defend the interests of blacks and other oppressed minorities. But you don't even have to recall the last Labour government with its racist immigration controls and 'virginity tests' for Asian women to see what a lie that is. Just look at Tottenham last month.

The scene was High Cross School near a heavily black housing estate. On the evening of May 3 about 1500 angry people, mainly local black residents, gathered on the street to try and stop a scheduled National Front election meeting. Hundreds upon hundreds of cops, including the riot-equipped Immediate Response Unit, were there too -- roaming the streets, corralling off demonstrators, provocatively picking fights with black youths and then gleefully moving in to make arrests. After nearly two hours of such skirmishes, 25-odd fascists finally arrived to chants of 'Fascists out!' and a fusillade of bricks and paving stones. They looked and acted scared; they didn't even unfurl their Union Jacks. Despite police phalanxes on all sides several of the NF scum entered the school with blood flowing down their faces. But their meeting went ahead -- and once the fascists were safely inside the cops again waded into the protesting crowd to make more arrests, accompanied by shouts of 'Murderers!', 'You murdered Colin Roach!' and 'Look at that pig smiling, he loves beating up black kids!' In the course of the evening, 35 anti-fascist demonstrators were arrested.

But if the black protesters were ready to teach the fascists a lesson they'd never forget and furious at the cops for preventing them, they were also angry as hell at the local Labour Party -- because it was Labour that allowed the fascists to stage their provocation in the first place! One week earlier, Labour-controlled Haringey Council had voted to let the NF book the school hall for their meeting. The Council Labour Group split on the issue, and the 'left' councillors who voted against decided to join forces with local black organisations for the protest demonstration. On May 3 however the vast majority of demonstrators had no time for them.

As the demonstrators awaited the NF one councillor tried to address them on a loud-hailer, only to be surrounded by angry, heckling black youths. When a black councillor was put

up, the youths started drowning him out with taunts of 'Judas'. One councillor tried to start a 'Tories 'out' chant which got only cat-calls. A black woman shouted, 'It was the fucking Labour Party that let them here!' After the cops started making their arrests the pathetic Labourites could only plead on their loudhailer that 'the Chief of Police should call this meeting off'. 'Things are getting out of control', one worried aloud.

Once the fascists had been escorted inside, the police let a few other people through their lines to attend the 'meeting'. These turned out to be journalists and ... Labour councillors (the 'right wing'), including the Mayor of Haringey. Demonstrators who had more than polite attendance in mind were blocked from going in. Meanwhile 'left' councillors on the outside kept pleading with the cops, 'Call this meeting off, it's a disgrace' -- and all this amid the debris of a fascist/cop-provoked mini-riot: bricks scattered about, iron railings flattened, bollards toppled, windows smashed.

During the hour-and-a-half wait while the fascists strutted inside, non-stop political debates raged among protesters on the street, largely between local black residents and the various Labourites. One black woman said flatly, 'What this means is that black people won't vote Labour this Thursday' (in the local council election). Then about half an hour before the cops escorted the fascists out, the Labour councillors who had been inside the school trooped out, smiling. (They claimed they'd heckled the meeting; according to later news reports, the cops had carefully separated the NFers from others inside the meeting, which proceeded without incident save some barracking and one Nfer falling off his chair.) Immediately these elected luminaries were set upon by a combination of black residents and 'left' Labourites trying to save face. One black woman shouted at them, 'You let the fascists into our school!' Another screamed, 'Go away, you don't care about the black people!' The Labourites tried to defend themselves; one, well-dressed, was in tears as she shouted back. Amid a melee she fell to the ground; no one offered to help her up.

Spartacist League supporters at the Tottenham protest drew the lessons of last November's 5000-strong labour/black mobilisation that



stopped the Ku Klux Klan's government-sanctioned march through Washington DC. As one comrade interjected in an argument on the street, 'What's all this about banning the NF? How about acquainting them with the pavement?' 'Right!' was the response from several black listeners. To preach reliance on the racist capitalist state to stop the fascists only disarms the fascists' victims, especially oppressed minorities. Calling on the government to ban the fascists isn't only ludicrous, it's suicidal: the bourgeois state has always used the Public Order Act and 'anti-extremist' laws to attack the left, minorities and workers. And who would enforce these bans? The cops? Tell that to the family of Colin Roach. And all the schemes for 'public accountability' and 'community control' of the cops -- so beloved to the Labour 'lefts' -- will not change their role one iota.

Tottenham exposed, again, how the Labour Party can't and won't defend the oppressed. What is needed is massive militant action in the streets by the labour movement and oppressed minorities, like in Washington, to stop the fascists wherever they appear to preach their race-hate, anti-working-class poison. And that requires breaking with all the Labourite parliamentarist pipedreams and building a party committed to revolutionary class struggle against capitalism. Drop the charges against the Tottenham anti-fascist protesters! For union/minority mobilisations to crush the fascists! ■

Big Lie Blunkett

We reprint below a letter from the Spartacist League to the Sheffield Star responding to an article of 7 April which reports and embellishes upon Sheffield Labour Council leader David Blunkett's vicious and defamatory lie that the SL is 'linked' to the CIA. This accusation has since been picked up by one Ken Curran Jr, chairman of Youth CND in Sheffield, in his 9 May letter to the Star in which he attempts to use Blunkett's lies to justify excluding the SL from CND public meetings. While both Labourites and CNDers squeal long and loud when the bourgeois slanders them, they are more than happy to use the same tools against their left opponents.

As for the Revolutionary Communist Party, another target of Blunkett's slanders, it has responded to them by ... echoing them. In late April the RCP (having previously approached comrades of the SL to solicit our defence) excluded our Sheffield comrades from a public meeting which they had 'challenged' Blunkett to attend. Their excuse? Spartacists are a 'security risk'. Thus the RCP welcomes witch-hunters while, just like the big time social democrats, it excludes and slanders the real communists.

9 May 1983

The Star
York Street
Sheffield S1 1PU

Dear Sir,

Your article entitled 'Reds plot to wreck party -- Blunkett' printed on the front page of your 7 April 1983 issue of *The Star*, contains material that is defamatory of the Spartacist League and its members and supporters.

Most serious is the following passage, re-

porting Sheffield Labour Council leader David Blunkett:

'And he claimed there was evidence to link the Spartacus (sic) League with the CIA. He added that at a public meeting in Sheffield some years ago, an ex-CIA agent who was giving a talk about American actions in Chile, said the CIA had been involved with the Spartacus League.'

This is an outrageous lie; the 'basis' of Blunkett's claim is a total fabrication. What 'ex-CIA agent' is Blunkett talking about? What 'talk' Blunkett doesn't say -- he can't. And nobody else in the Sheffield left and labour movement and the Chilean exile community remembers such a meeting as he describes.

As well Blunkett makes the outrageous assertion that the Spartacist League is 'bent on destroying' the labour movement in Sheffield. Both of these sinister lies are examples of what has historically come to be known as the Big Lie. They contain not a shred of truth; their sole purpose is to seal us off from working class militants interested in our politics and to serve as an excuse for exclusion and violence to be directed against us. The Spartacist League openly espouses its aim of winning working people to the cause of socialist revolution and away from support to Labour Party reformism, which is an obstacle to the defence of the interests of the working class today and to its emancipation from capitalist oppression. Plenty of Sheffield steelworkers who remember our unflinching support to their strike in 1980 can testify to the falsity of Blunkett's ravings about 'destroying' the labour movement.

As far as we know the first time Blunkett publicly peddled his lies was at a debate between himself and Martin Jacques, editor of the Communist Party's *Marxism Today* on 5 April. Un-

able to take up our political attacks on the anti-working-class record of the Labour Party leadership, Blunkett resorted to slander, saying that the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Spartacist League were controlled by 'outside forces' and that the Spartacist League received money from the CIA.

A few days later Blunkett embellished his fabrication for *The Star*. But your report adds

continued on page 11

The Star

Reds plot
to wreck
party --
Blunkett

Party branches are being warned about their disruptive actions, should they turn up at public meetings.

Mr. Blunkett said the implications were that the groups were being sponsored by "outside forces" to produce material against the Labour Party and heckle speakers at meetings.

'CIA link'

And he claimed there was evidence to link the Spartacus League with the CIA.

He added that at a public meeting in Sheffield some years ago, an ex-CIA agent who was giving a talk about American actions in Chile, said the CIA had been involved with the Spartacus League.

"These groups pretend to be on the side of the working people while at the same time they aim to smash the only major organisation in the city capable of carrying out radical policy," said Mr. Blunkett.

The Spartacus League, formed at least five years ago, is more peculiar. Members claim to be pure Trotskyites while taking a pro-Soviet line.

Sheffield Star (7 April) retails David Blunkett's vile slanders.

YCL youth won to Trotskyism

CP/YCL: No place for communists

In the May issue of Spartacist Britain, in an article entitled 'Spectre of Trotskyism haunts YCL conference', we referred to three Communist Party/Young Communist League youth from Merseyside who were excluded from the conference because 'they had taken the CP's occasional references to Lenin too seriously'. We reprint below their statement protesting this exclusion which demonstrates their commitment to fight for the politics of Leninism. The exclusion itself was tantamount to a political expulsion and since then these comrades have formally resigned and are now members of the Spartacist League.

But then you can't be a communist and be in the CP/YCL. Especially in the middle of a vicious anti-Soviet Cold War drive what the CP can't tolerate is genuine communists. Revolutionary politics is so alien to the CP that at a recent branch meeting, when one of these youth cited quotes from Lenin's pamphlet Socialism and War about Lenin's opposition to peaceful co-existence with imperialism, his fellow CPers looked bewildered. 'Where was that published?', they asked.

It is not surprising that at a recent Marxism Today public meeting in Manchester, one CP'er revolted by the CP speaker's craven reformism noted reluctantly that he could 'sympathise' with 'the spirit' of the Spartacist League's revolutionary politics. One need only look at Saatchi and Saatchi's election advertisement comparing the CP's manifesto to the Labour Party's. Yes the two are comparable; it shows just how deeply the CP is buried in reformist politics. And this is nothing new: the CP has promoted class treachery for over five decades! 'Sympathy' is not enough. If you can't stomach being in a second-rate Labour Party; if you see the CP's betrayals not as errors but as crimes against the working class, then do as these young comrades have done: look to the Bolshevik politics of the Spartacist League.

Comrades,

The three of us have been members of the Communist Party and Young Communist League in Liverpool for almost two years. We have been bureaucratically excluded from the YCL Congress today. Why? Everyone knows there are many differences in the CP and YCL. Some members are quite open in their anti-Soviet and anti-working class views; others claim to be pro-Soviet and pro-working-class and some even talk about working-class revolution and quote Lenin. Why has the leadership got together to keep us out? What the hell is going on?

In Liverpool we've been fighting for Lenin's positions inside the party and YCL. They're not just some interesting ideas from history; they're the only way to build a party that can make a socialist revolution. So, some comrades want to stop us -- and today's not the first time. One of us was nominated for the General Council, but now isn't even allowed into the Congress. Another wasn't allowed to renew his YCL membership but was told by the CP Area Secretary his dedication could take him a 'long way', even onto the party leadership, if he stopped being 'influenced'. Influenced by what? Lenin! They told us we had to keep Lenin to ourselves. What's the point in reading Lenin if you don't fight for his politics? Despite all these attempts to stop us we decided to come to the Congress to fight for our positions; the Congress is supposed to be the highest body of the YCL.

There is renewed Cold War today. Reagan and Thatcher want to smash the workers states. That's what their Tridents, cruise missiles, Pershings and MXs are for -- to blow up the Soviet Union. The first question is: which side are you on? The answer is: revolutionaries have to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism, not with detente or peaceful coexistence but with a revolutionary strategy. The peace resolution draft puts the YCL on the wrong side right there. It's against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan; it's for counterrevolution in Poland. Revolutionaries can't support counterrevol-

utionary forces like Solidarnosc in Poland even when it does have the support of workers.

The question posed in Poland was for or against counterrevolution, not the crap some comrades (like the Longsight branch in *Real Life*) push about whether peaceful coexistence and Yalta were threatened. But it's precisely because Solidarnosc was counterrevolutionary that other comrades had better ask themselves

ment is its evasion of all the concrete questions of revolution. Or do the advocates of disarmament stand for a perfectly new species of unarmed revolution?' ('The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution', 1916)

As soon as you read Lenin you can understand where the wretched British Road to Socialism and its unarmed non-revolutionary 'road' comes from -- that's what happens when you start out with peaceful coexistence. Of course there are people in the CP who sometimes quote Lenin and give speeches in front of his portrait, some even call themselves 'Leninist' -- but they don't go any further than names. Being a Leninist means applying what he said to the class struggle today. It's a programme for action, not for words. That's why those sorts of 'Leninists' can rub shoulders on the inside while we're kept on the outside. We saw during the Falklands war how the CP doesn't fight the bourgeoisie and we see it even more disgustingly in Ireland. How could any decent revolutionary live with a position that doesn't even call for troops to get out of Northern Ireland now? What sort of communism is that? Troops out now should not mean, as the so-called 'Leninist' and other comrades say, supporting the IRA's nationalism which pits



Morning Star v Spartacist Britain: so which one is really communist?

the same question we did: what sort of socialism pushes millions of workers into the arms of CIA-backed Catholic reaction after 35 years? The regime of narrow-minded nationalist bureaucrats has to be replaced by a regime of working-class rule through democratically-elected soviets committed to international revolution. That's what one of us argued for last year in a letter to *Morning Star* and *Comment* which wasn't printed. Read it now.

As it has been proven many times in history, as Reagan and Thatcher are proving today, there cannot be peace with capitalism or under capitalism. That's why 'peaceful coexistence' and 'detente' undermines the workers states and weakens their defence. For example in Central America today, peaceful coexistence means pushing 'peaceful' negotiated settlements with bloody US-backed tyrants -- and opposing the spread of social revolutions which would be a major blow against US imperialism and its anti-Soviet war drive. And here and everywhere, defending the gains of the Russian Revolution means fighting against our 'own' bourgeoisie, fighting to smash the capitalist state; not promoting the bourgeois-pacifist CND. We have fought against the party's prostration before CND and the answer we got from one leading comrade who is pro-Moscow was that anybody who is against disarmament is outside the workers movement. No wonder these people not only don't want to teach us what Lenin had to say, but can't stand it when they keep hearing his words: 'The main defect in the demand for disarma-

Catholic against Protestant. No -- what's needed is fighting for Protestant/Catholic revolutionary class unity against capitalism.

We've been fighting for Lenin's policies and here the leadership accuses us of being Spartacists and Trotskyists. When we joined we were told that Trotskyists were anti-Soviet and counterrevolutionary. Then when we fight for real defence of the Soviet Union and for the revolutionary smashing of capitalism they tell us that's Trotskyist. From reading Lenin, studying history and seeing what the Spartacist League says about the class struggle today, we can see why the leadership says our Leninism is Trotskyism. The place to start is what programme and policies can build a party to organise the working class in a struggle for power. We as young communists won't be stopped by bureaucratic measures. Other comrades of the YCL who want to fight for revolutionary policies as we do, demand that we be let in and heard. We are open and prepared to debate our positions. We want to win comrades. Forward for Bolshevism, for international workers revolution, for the road of Lenin and the October Revolution!

Matt Kavanagh, CP, Liverpool University (joined October 1981), YCL, Liverpool (January-December 1982)

Tony McKenna, CP, Bootle (joined March 1982), YCL, Bootle (joined November 1982)

Martin O'Connor, CP, Halton (joined November 1981), YCL, Liverpool (joined November 1982)

9th April 1983

Matgamna/Thornett: Ever deeper into Cold War Labourism WSL fractures, TILC fraud collapses

'We have lost members ... we have had repeatedly pathetic turnouts for national events. Our branches and meetings take on more and more the loose character of social democratic meetings. Our discipline is dire. Our finances are in a ruinous state. We are witnessing a de facto liquidation into the Labour left.'

Such is the state of today's Workers Socialist League, as described by a now-expelled internal opposition. The 'new' WSL, founded amid much hoopla less than two years ago as a fusion of Sean Matgamna's International-Communist League (I-CL) and the 'old' WSL of Alan Thornett, is in the throes of a deep organisational and political collapse. The past two years have seen a steady descent down the slide of Cold War Labourism -- from proud adoption of the 'Bennite' label, to unashamed social chauvinism over the Falklands war, to frothing anti-Sovietism from Afghanistan to Poland. The results have been a rapid loss of members (from a claimed 300 at the fusion to less than half that today) and profound internal crisis. Now, finally, there has been a split.

At a series of internal meetings in April, Matgamna and Thornett put aside their own squabbles in order to expel a left opposition, the Internationalist Faction (IF). The expulsion was accompanied by a split in the WSL-initiated micro-'international', the 'Trotskyist International Liaison Committee' (TILC). While the IF has linked up with the American Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) and Italian LOR, retaining the TILC letterhead, the WSL is left with only a handful of Australians (inside their local Labor Party, of course). Having ditched both its international bloc partners and its own left wing, the WSL is now set to sink even further into the social-democratic mire.

Pathetic municipal reformists

With British and international capitalism in deep crisis and NATO imperialism driving towards thermonuclear World War III against the Soviet Union, the WSL has set itself the task of 'renovating' and 'reorienting' British imperialism's decrepit Labour Party. Even lip service to the need for a Trotskyist vanguard party has been abandoned. Matgamna/Thornett number among their followers several Labour councillors who help manage local arms of the capitalist state, administering rate rises and social service cuts. One of them, Islington Council Chief Whip Alan Clinton, recently cast the decisive vote in a 10 to 9 Labour group decision to withhold an agreed pay award from local nursery workers. This execrable gentleman merely shows other WSL supporters their future.

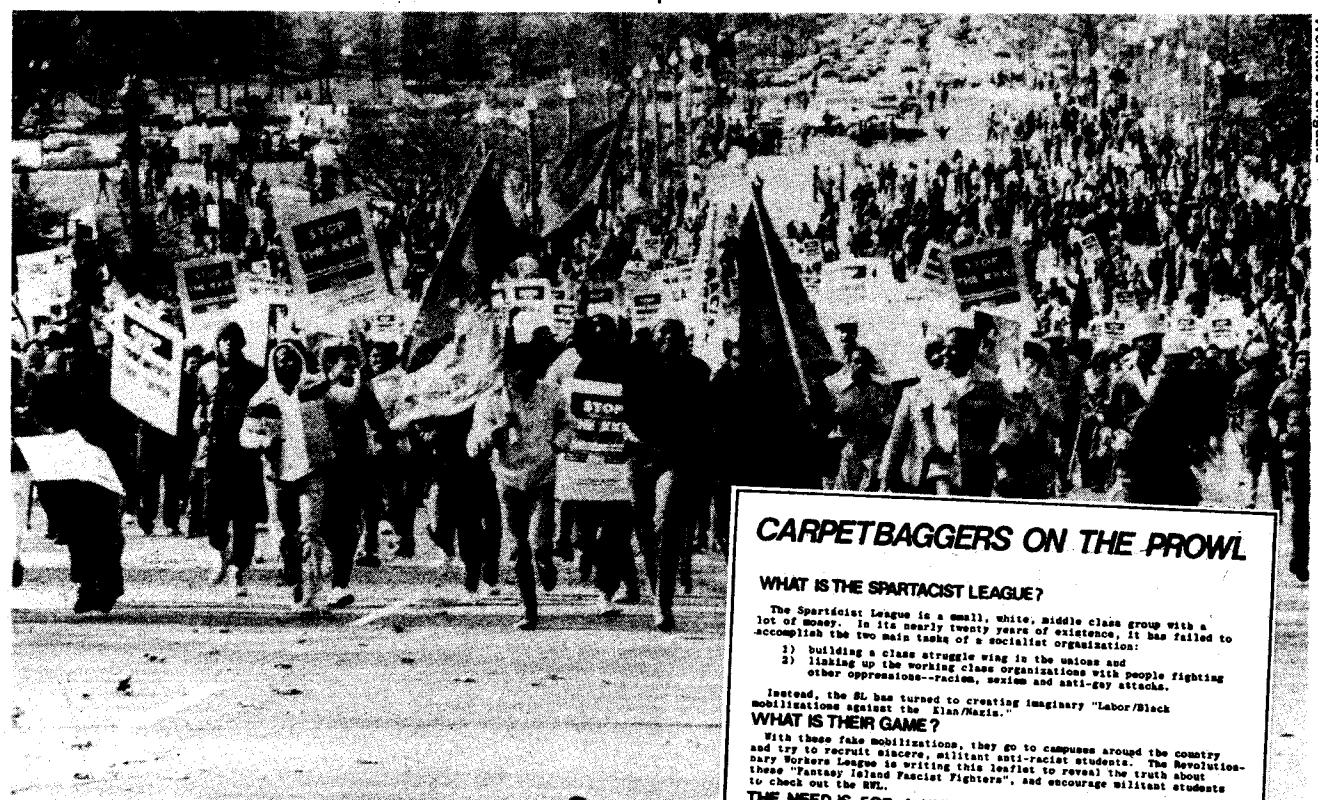
When it turns to broader issues the WSL is just as bankrupt. In the Falklands war it championed the 'right of self-determination' of the 1800 Empire-loyal kelpers, called for negotiations between the butchers Thatcher and Galtieri and systematically tailed the social-imperialist 'save our boys' opposition of the Bennites. The 6 May 1982 *Socialist Organiser* prominently featured a friendly and uncritical interview with Labour MP Reg Race, who called for imperialist economic warfare against Argentina instead of sending the fleet. Anyone reading this 'Trotskyist' paper would naturally assume that it too favoured the City and EEC strangling the Argentine economy! Similarly on Ireland, Matgamna's arguments that the 'fundamental solution' is 'an independent and united federal Ireland' are an attempt to give Labour's pro-imperialist 'federal Ireland' schemes a left cover.

But the WSL's scandalous capitulation to its 'own' bourgeoisie via their Labour lieutenants is most overt on the Russian question. Thornett, Matgamna & Co are as violently anti-Soviet as many social-democratic politicians in NATO Europe, and far more so than some. These 'Radio Free Europe socialists' actually criticised the

Thatcher government for defying Reagan's pipeline sanctions against the Soviet Union and declared, 'we are in favour of trade unions and other working class organisations taking boycott action [against the USSR] where possible' (*Socialist Organiser*, 30 September 1982). It's not easy to be to the right of Margaret Thatcher on any question, but the WSL has done it.

The WSL and the Russian question

What of the now-expelled WSL opposition? The 20 or so Internationalist Faction supporters, a mixture of ex-WSL cadre and left-leaning youth



American RWL'S Big Lie. RWL uses language of Southern racism to attack SL as 'carpetbaggers' over 5000 strong Washington anti-Klan protest.

centred in the East Midlands, appear to be disgusted by the extent of Matgamna's deep-going capitulation to the social-democratic lieutenants of British imperialism. But if the IF leadership were serious about wanting to fight its own bourgeoisie, how could it not denounce Matgamna's line on the pipeline sanctions? How could it not repudiate the SOA's enthusiastic participation in the Cold War Polish Solidarity Campaign, sharing a platform with open anti-Communists like Adam Westoby? Yet the 'Draft Platform for the Internationalist Tendency' (published in *Workers Power*, May 1983) says *absolutely nothing* about the Russian question. The war drive? Poland? Afghanistan? The WSL's openly anti-Trotskyist call for only 'conditional' defence of the USSR? Not one of these issues is even mentioned! Thus the IF implicitly accepts the utterly anti-Communist politics of Matgamna & Co, which line it up with NATO imperialism and its social-democratic henchmen in a period of anti-Soviet Cold War.

For Trotskyists, the Russian question is the question of revolution. It is not surprising, then, that on those questions where the IF does attempt to differentiate itself from the WSL's capitulation to social-imperialism, they substitute classically centrist capitulation to petty-bourgeois/bourgeois nationalism. The 'Draft Platform' attacks Matgamna for 'having de facto junked Lenin's theory of Imperialism and Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution during the Malvinas war'. The Spartacist League fought for Leninist revolutionary defeatism, seeking to mobilise workers in both Britain and Argentina around the slogan, 'The main enemy is at home!' And how does the IF defend 'Permanent Revolution'? By supporting the irredentist claims of

the Argentine bourgeoisie to the Malvinas, championing the junta's nationalist war which aimed at diverting mounting domestic discontent and threatened working-class explosion. When it comes to Ireland, the IF parrots the left-Republican line that 'only the struggle for a socialist united Ireland will resolve the national question in the North'. Forcible unification of Ireland is counterposed to an effective struggle to mobilise the proletariat across communal divisions in revolutionary struggle against British imperialism and against capitalism, both Green and Orange.

As a substitute for revolutionary clarity, the IF document feigns a hypocritical 'born yesterday' quality, persistently complaining about being duped by the wily Matgamna/Thornett into an 'unprincipled fusion':

'The organisation was founded on a programme marked by an adaptation and orientation to the Labour Party and the Labour lefts in particular. This was not immediately clear to us....'

But the Matgamna/Thornett fusion was from the outset quite openly based on such liquidationism, as we warned at the time:

'This right-centrist regroupment ... is a clear expression of the political forces acting upon ostensible revolutionaries in Britain today. It is a fusion fixed on the terrain of the Cold War and formalised at the altar of the social-democratic "broad church": anti-Soviet, pro-Labour.' (*Spartacist Britain* no 34, July 1981)

Towards the end, the document calls for 'a

CARPETBAGGERS ON THE PROWL

WHAT IS THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE?

The Spartacist League is a small, white, middle class group with a lot of money. In its nearly twenty years of existence, it has failed to accomplish the two main tasks of a socialist organization:

- 1) building a class struggle wing in the unions and
- 2) linking up the working class organizations with people fighting other oppressions--racism, sexism and anti-gay attacks.

Instead, the SL has turned to creating imaginary "Labor/Black mobilizations against the Klan/Mafia."

WHAT IS THEIR GAME?

With these fake mobilizations, they go to campuses around the country and try to recruit sincere, militant anti-racist students. The Revolutionary Party Workers League is writing this leaflet to reveal the truth about these "Fantasy Island Fascist Fighters", and encourage militant students to check out the RWL.

THE NEED IS FOR A UNITED FRONT

In the last four years, the SL has claimed five successes: Detroit '80, San Francisco '80, Ann Arbor '82, Chicago '82, and Washington D.C. '82. The first two were small and isolated, while the other three were organized by united fronts not including the SL. In no case did the Spartacists organize a "Labor/Black Mobilization."

programme commission to draw up a programme purged of the revisionism that has disfigured the politics of the WSL', as though programme is something drawn up in a backroom meeting and not what you fight for in the real world. In fact there is a history of struggle for the revolutionary programme within the WSL which the IF deliberately tries to ignore: the 1977-78 Trotskyist Faction, which removed one-fifth of the WSL's membership, and the 1979-80 Leninist Faction, which included three more National Committee members. Indeed some of the IF leaders were active participants in the January 1980 expulsion of the Leninist Faction, which fought for a Trotskyist alternative to Labour loyalism, opportunism and economism. Both factions went on to fuse with the Spartacist League.

Instead of openly confronting the Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist League, however, the IF seeks to inoculate its members against us by lifting wholesale the scurrilous lies and slanders to be found in the so-called 'Spartacist Truth Kit', a Stalin-style Big Lie document penned by John Lister, whose 'nationalist outlook' (as the IF document calls it) is a virulent strain of Little England anti-Americanism. Another, and not the least significant, use to which Lister's witchhunt manual has been put is in an attempt by the racist, anti-Communist bureaucracy of the American phone workers union to purge longstanding Spartacist-supported militants from the union.

The IF is no more principled when it comes to its choice of international bloc partners. The Italian LOR consistently calls for votes to the Eurocommunist CP of 'historic compromise' with Christian Democracy and the Vatican, and today seeks fusion with the local United Secretariat

continued on page 10

Russian question - the question of revolution

Workers Power: No alternative

We reprint below a leaflet first distributed at a Workers Power meeting in Sheffield, 12 May. As usual, this 'public' meeting was closed to all supporters of the Spartacist League. And little wonder, given WP's inability to defend its bankrupt politics. Like all revisionists, WP lays claim to 'creativity'. Last year WP 'creatively' appropriated a '2, 3, many lines' position on Cuba which provided theoretical cover for its Stalinophobia (see Spartacist Britain no 45, December 1982/January 1983). Its latest pamphlet, 'The Death Agony of the Fourth International', concludes by calling for a 'new' International. Good! WP's crystallised confusion never had anything to do with the fight to re-forge Trotsky's Fourth International. As they move right, now vowing to win the Labour Party to 'anti-capitalist demands', perhaps soon Workers Power will try a new number -- the Second?

Politics today are increasingly determined by the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive. Across the spectrum, the opportunist fake left reacts by retreating -- if not right into the lap, at least into the shadow of Cold War Labourism, vying with each other to prove who are the most consistent social pacifists and the best fighters against Russian 'totalitarianism'. When Workers Power announced a line change from defeatism to 'defencism' on the Russian question in 1980, we insisted it had to draw the hard, consistent programmatic conclusions. But WP tried to stop just there, halfway between opportunist appetites and revolutionary conclusions.

Today with the other fake Trotskyists virtually disappearing into the Labour Party, WP sees their big chance to resolve their political identity crisis. The WSL in particular is currently collapsing rightward into straight Labour liquidationism almost as fast as it's losing members. WP pretends to offer an alternative, exemplified by the 4-page supplement in its May

paper. What alternative? WP want to prove that they are more deserving of the British patent to the TILC letterhead than the old WSL. Stripped of its left rhetoric and crystallised confusion, WP's alternative amounts to: you can be just about as anti-Soviet, just about as fawning before the pro-imperialist Labour 'lefts', just about as opportunist in tailing every social-pacifist, social-chauvinist 'mass movement', just as economist in trade union practice as Matgamna/Thornett -- without going all the way with Matgamna & Co in open Labour liquidationism. WP goes to great pains to reassure WSLers of their opposition to 'sectarianism': we all know that means the revolutionary programme of the Spartacist League. WP's alternative

to 'sectarianism' is to 'reelaborate' Trotsky's Transitional Programme, by gutting it of its revolutionary content on central programmatic positions, such as unconditional defence of the Soviet Union, the strategy of proletarian revolution in backward countries and even the inviolability of the strike picket. Not for nothing did James Cannon say that who touches the Russian question touches the question of revolution; let's examine WP's political track record on this and just a few other key questions.

The Russian question/Poland. In 1975 Matgamna dismissed the Russian question as a 'tenth-rate question' as his excuse for fusion with the then

explicitly 'third campist' WP. Today the various articles, documents and statements in the WP supplement contain not a word in opposition to the WSL's positions on this question. Yet Matgamna & Co consistently (and literally!) stand beside pro-imperialist anti-Communists against the USSR: from 'troops out of Afghanistan' to rubbing shoulders with Pilsudskiites in the Polish Solidarity Campaign to assuring Michael Foot that they 'surely agree' about the need to overthrow the East European regimes. And WP? Let's pass by their 'strategic' support to Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan and their literary pyrotechnics aimed at proving that the NATO war drive is aimed at Central America, Iran or anywhere but the Soviet Union, and focus on one key issue in the Cold War: Poland.

Like the WSL, and like social democrats everywhere, WP supports Solidarnosc. Unlike most others, they don't simply mindlessly cheer for Walesa & Co. But their occasional (paper) warnings about reactionary dangers in Poland only render their pro-Solidarnosc line all the more explicitly bankrupt. WP admitted that all the dominant tendencies in Solidarnosc at its September 1981 congress were, in one way or another, capitalist restorationist. Solidarnosc programme, they wrote, 'was aimed at dismantling the planned economy, opening the road to the accumulation of private capital in Poland and, through the destruction of the monopoly of foreign trade, opening the floodgates to foreign capital' (WP, September 1982). And the main oppositions to the Walesa leadership 'shared broadly similar aims but wished to adopt more militant tactics'. WP's conclusion? Continue to support Solidarnosc because:

'Solidarnosc' mass working class base ensured that any left in the union would gain an increased hearing should the logic of Solidarnosc' political programme have ever been realised in practice with all that this would have implied for the jobs and living stan-



Soviet troops marching in Red Square. Workers Power wants the USSR out of Afghanistan and calls for dismantling the Warsaw Pact.

dards of Polish workers.' (ibid) In other words, if Solidarnosc had won and capitalism was restored, the workers would soon learn! After Hitler, us?? Revolutionary, counterrevolutionary, who cares? WP still cheers Solidarnosc. This sickening position is directly counterposed to everything Trotsky ever wrote about defence of the workers state against counterrevolution.

And when it came to the test of practice, all WP's academic qualifiers disappeared as they undertook 'Polish solidarity' activities essentially identical to Matgamna & Co. On the morrow of the military crackdown they marched on a London demonstration, dominated by reactionary



Anti-Trotskyist Workers Power admits Solidarnosc was capitalist restorationist -- and supports it!

Cold Warriors with banners like 'Communism = Poland's tragedy'. They joined the imperialists' clamour for trade sanctions ('workers' sanctions', to be sure) against Poland. And they remained in the PSC alongside Matgamna and the frothing Pilsudskiites until well after the military takeover.

'Disarmament'. WP claims to defend the Soviet Union and attacks the late-1950s Healyites for having 'dropped criticisms of the "disarmament" slogan in order to recruit' from CND (in their latest pamphlet). But what is WP's line on anti-Soviet CND and utopian pacifist 'disarmament' schemes:

'Labour Party and Trade Union branches must send resolutions to GMCs and the NEC, demanding that a clear call for unilateral nuclear disarmament appears in the Party's manifesto... Labour claims that it wants to mobilise millions around disarmament and the next election. Let it begin now in a determined fashion.' (WP, February 1983)

Unilateralism still means accepting a bourgeois military programme. Imagine Lenin demanding that the Second International carry out a 'disarmament' campaign ... in a determined fashion!

The Labour Party. When the Bennite 'lefts' began their inner-party offensive and the SDP split, WP came out for 'an oath of loyalty from all MPs and councillors' (WP, February 1981). An oath of loyalty to the Labour Party! What a revolting affirmation of WP's own allegiance to Labourism and parliamentarism. Aping Matgamna, they called for 'a workers and not a bosses' Labour Government'. If Labour took office, they explained, 'the task of revolutionaries would be to mobilise the working class to push such a government to break with the bosses over fundamentals' (ibid). 'Push such a government'? This is counterposed to everything Lenin ever wrote about the need to smash the bourgeois state apparatus and replace it with soviet rule.

Now, with Matgamna's SCLV Mark II wheeled out to fight for 'conference policies', WP counterposes a fight ... 'to embody conference decisions in the manifesto' (WP, March 1983). And what about building a revolutionary opposition in the trade unions, offering a class-struggle alternative. No! Why attack Thornett for scabbing at Cowley when WP itself blesses scabs in the NHS dispute (among others) if only they throw a bit of guilt money into the strike coffers? WP supporters in the ASTMS South Yorkshire health service branch voted in favour of a resolution calling on those who scabbed on the health service strike to give a day's pay to the national strike fund. The branch secretary, WP supporter Ron Giles, justified this scandalous defence of scabbing on the basis that 'it's impossible to stop them going in'. It is the logic of this political programme, which counterposes Labour-loyalism (eg WP's *unfailing* electoral support to Labour) to the Trotskyist perspective of splitting Labour through hard programmatic counterposition and massive social struggle, that led Matgamna into open liquidationism.

The Falklands/Malvinas war. WP's 'victory to Argentina' line was anti-Leninist and would have been criminally disarming for the Argentine workers (for a full debunking of this position, see Spartacist Britain no 43, July 1982). But what about their antiwar activities at home? WP attacks the WSL's social-pacifist tailing of the Benn/Race 'save our boys' peace movement -- but in practice these hypocrites tailed this move-

continued on page 11

Khomeini turns on Stalinist henchmen

Tudeh victims of Islamic reaction

Early in May, Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic 'republic' outlawed the pro-Moscow Tudeh party. Amid staged 'confessions' of Soviet plots, expulsions of Soviet officials and their families and mullah-led mob attacks on the Soviet embassy in Tehran as a 'nest of spies', the reactionary regime ordered all Tudeh members to report for registration to their local *pasdaran*, the so-called 'revolutionary guards', and rounded up more than 1000 in mass arrests. In announcing Tudeh's dissolution, the Iranian state prosecutor denounced it as 'pro-Soviet and treacherous'. Tudeh has indeed played a treacherous role -- but the treachery has been to the workers, women, national minorities and leftists whose victimisation by Khomeini it so scandalously defended.

The arrests came hard on the heels of a more generalised crackdown which significantly fell upon the regime's grovelling supporters on the left as well as its critics and opponents. During the five-week period beginning January 22, some 3800 opponents of Khomeini's Islamic theocracy were executed, according to *Iran Liberation*, newspaper of the radical-Muslim Mujahedin guerrillas -- bring the regime's grisly death count to at least 15,000. More were arrested, adding to the estimated 50,000 political prisoners crammed into Khomeini's jails. On February 5 in Tehran, squads of *pasdaran* picked up a number of leading Tudeh supporters, including first secretary Nureddin Kiyanuri, charged with 'forging documents' and 'spying' for the Soviet Union.

Kiyanuri's nationally televised 'confession' had all the earmarks of an Islamic version of Stalin's purge trials of the 1930s. Kiyanuri 'confessed' to having been in contact with 'Soviet agents' since 1945 and supplying them with military information, secretly stockpiling arms and plotting against the regime in league with the Soviets. Intoned Kiyanuri: 'The Americans are worse than the British, the British are worse than the Americans, and the Soviet Union is worse than both.'

A statement issued February 7 by the Tudeh party central committee complained that Kiyanuri has been 'one of the resolute defenders of the combatant clergy and Moslem followers of Imam Khomeini's line'. Indeed for four years Tudeh has slavishly offered its services to the clerical reactionaries, from supporting the 1979 referendum for an 'Islamic republic' to hailing Khomeini's 'egalitarian' programme for women (the veil) to backing brutal wars against the Kurds and other oppressed national minorities. When the sordid border war between Iran and Iraq erupted, Kiyanuri ordered Tudeh members to report to their mosques (!) for military duty under the *pasdaran*, and the party denounced strikes as 'sabotage' of the 'anti-imperialist' struggle. Tudeh cadre have reportedly taken up posts in the state apparatus, ostentatiously flaunting their new-found devotion to the word of the prophet. In particular Tudeh has defended every wave of repression ordered by the mullahs against 'ultraleftists'.

Tudeh served the mullahs as both a clamp on labour unrest and a pawn in Iran-Soviet relations. But as we pointed out almost four years ago, even bootlickers get kicked in the teeth:

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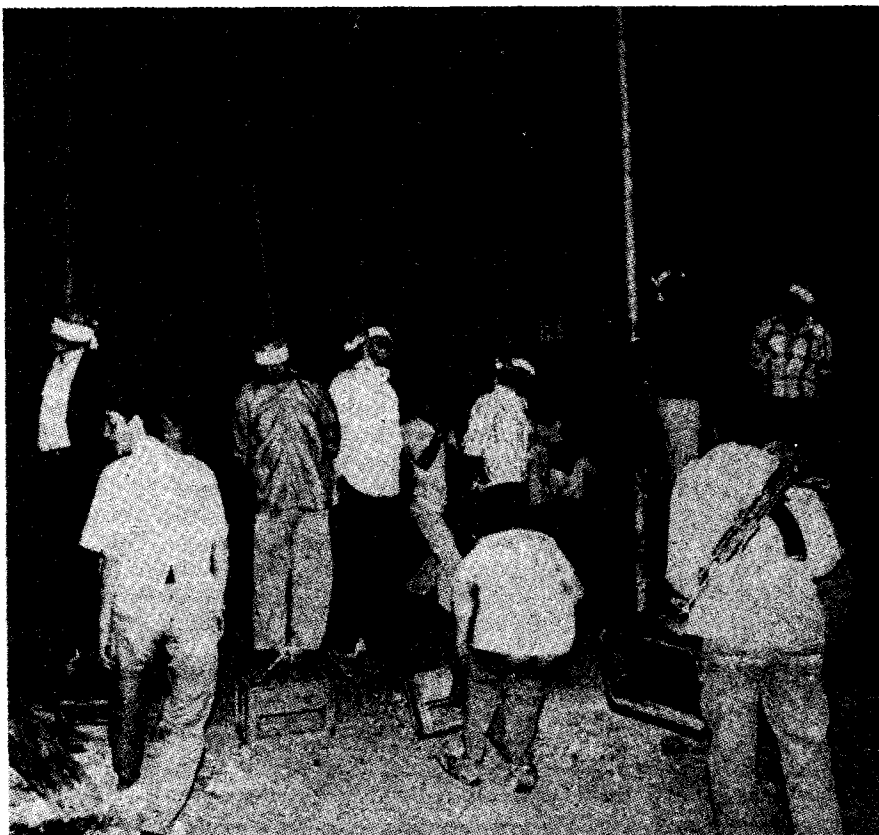
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'Detente between Teheran and Moscow will not be enough to save the Tudeh party from Islamic repression.... Can there be any doubt that once Khomeini has succeeded in consolidating his rule and repressing the far left he will also move to smash Tudeh?' ('Moscow Stalinists cheer Khomeini's witchhunt', *Workers Vanguard* no 231, 11 May 1979)

With the recent chill in relations between Iran and the USSR, Tudeh's usefulness to the 'Islamic republic' has come to an end.

Even after the dissolution, the Communist Party's *Morning Star* (5 May) here whimperingly protested the Stalinists' loyalty to the 'Iranian revolution': '... in arresting the Tudeh Party leaders and now dissolving the party, the Iranian authorities were undermining the gains of the 1979 revolution that overthrew the US-backed Shah'. Indeed at a CP meeting in Southampton on 24 March, a Tudeh spokesman continued to hail Khomeini's 'anti-imperialism' and refused even to call for public condemnation of the ar-



Khomeini's terror against the left was supported by Moscow-line Stalinists. Now they too face the executioner.

rest of his own party's leaders lest it antagonise the rabidly anti-Communist 'Islamic revolutionaries'. When a Spartacist League speaker from the floor attacked Tudeh's craven support to these 'anti-imperialists' who chant 'Death to the Soviet Union' and 'Death or the veil', the Tudeh spokesman could only mumble about the 'inconsistency' of the 'Islamic revolution'.

The arrests and executions of January and February came on the heels of Khomeini's 'eight-point message', in which he promised democratic rights for all except those who oppose Islam or 'devise subversive schemes'. This decree, which earned cautious praise in the bourgeois press in the West for its promise to ease up on the businessmen, landowners and the middle class, set the stage for intensified repression against the labour movement and what remains of the left. The persecution of Tudeh may signal an overture from Khomeini's Iran to the imperialists, including the 'Great Satan' in Washington, and their anti-Soviet war drive. As part of defence of the working class and oppressed against Khomeini's theocracy Tudeh must be defended against the Islamic reaction it so faithfully served.

Not surprisingly this task is completely alien to the Iranian HKE and its mentors, the American Socialist Workers Party. The HKE, one of several Iranian sections of the Pabloite United Secretariat, has sometimes tried to pass itself off as 'Trotskyist' as it competes with the Stalinist Tudeh in grovelling before Khomeini. To prove that they are even more devoted 'followers of the Imam's line' than Tudeh, the HKE and US SWP now attempt to alibi the arrest of Kiyanuri and his comrades by denouncing their inconsistent support for the war against Iraq. In *Intercontinental Press* (28 March) the US SWP's Ernest Harsch writes, 'Because of its political line, however, the Tudeh Party has left itself open to attack.' It 'has been calling more and more for "peace". Local branches have

even opposed entry of Iranian troops into Iraq (echoing Moscow's position on this question)!! Such an attack could easily come from the pen of any apologist for the *hezbollahi*.

And yet ... this past January 17 Babak Zahraie, former editor of the HKE's *Kargar* newspaper (which has been banned) was jailed in Evin Prison in Tehran. We defend even this social-chauvinist from Islamic reaction, with disgust.

Iran's class-conscious vanguard will ensure that the working class never forgets that Tudeh and the HKE helped to make Iran what it is today. Tudeh's support for Khomeini fit into its Stalinist strategy of blocking with the 'progressive' bourgeoisie or even the feudal clergy in the eternal 'first stage' of a two-stage revolution. The outcome is a country devastated by a war in which the working class of either side has no stake, with 150,000 dead and two million homeless. The left has been driven underground and the population cowers under the watchful eye of the *pasdaran* and armed fascistic

gangs. The mosques have become the centres of urban life, where one gets ration cards, jobs, entrance to schools and universities etc. The position of women is summarised by the increasingly visible wall slogan: 'Death to the unveiled!' What kind of 'revolution' starts off like this?

The Stalinist two-stage schema is responsible for countless defeats, from China in 1927 to Iran in 1953 to Indonesia in 1965. But unlike Chaing Kai-shek, Mossadeq or Sukarno, Khomeini never even pretended to be 'progressive'. He openly set his sights on driving Iran back to the sixth century. Yet not just the HKE and Tudeh but the entire left of Iran helped lift Khomeini and his mullahs to power. As we wrote in the aftermath of the 'Islamification' of the universities: 'But for the East the 1965 Indonesian coup demonstrated on a massive and catastrophic scale, for those even remotely connected to the left,

that opportunism saved nobody's skin including their own' (*Workers Vanguard* no 256, 16 May 1980). Today most of these groups are politically at sea, hating Khomeini but unable to come to terms with their support for him in 1979. While empirically recoiling from the historic treachery of the Tudeh Stalinists, none of the Iranian left has carried this through to a programmatic break with the stagist schema. Today they argue the same recipe for betrayal, many by supporting the 'progressive' Islamic NCR of Khomeini's ex-PM Bani Sadr and the Mujahedin. Moreover in many cases opposition to Tudeh has been a cover for both virulent Iranian nationalist anti-Sovietism and petty-bourgeois hostility to the proletariat, of which Tudeh has historically been the hegemonic party. Central to the forging of a proletarian-internationalist party in Iran is the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution.

At the time of the anti-shah mobilisations the international Spartacist tendency uniquely fought for the perspective of mobilising the huge workers' strike wave that struck the death blows to the Peacock Throne into a struggle for proletarian revolution against both the shah and the mullahs. 'Down with the shah, Down with the mullahs!', we proclaimed as the pseudo-socialists bowed to Khomeini. The proletariat of Iran desperately needs a revolutionary party armed with the perspective of Trotsky's permanent revolution. The democratic tasks -- including the separation of church and state, for a sovereign, secular constituent assembly, land to the peasants, the right of self-determination to the national minorities, full democratic rights for women -- must be incorporated in a struggle and programme for proletarian power. Only through the expropriation of the Iranian bourgeoisie under the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat can the barbaric relics of feudalism be swept aside, and the thousands who have perished under Khomeini's sword of Islam be avenged.■

Turkey: Prisonhouse for women, Kurds

As it follows its protagonists, a group of prisoners homebound on a week's leave from the half-open island prison of Imrali, Yilmaz Guney's *Yol* unfolds its central metaphor with shattering vividness: contemporary Turkey itself is a vast prison. Above and beyond the brutality and oppression of the right-wing military dictatorship which governs Turkey, there is the brutality and oppression of social backwardness and deep-going Islamic feudal relations which imprison the film's characters, particularly women and Kurds, far more securely than do iron bars and stone walls.

Yilmaz Guney is a Kurd and a fugitive from the junta regime. Illegally produced and smuggled out of Turkey (where even speaking Kurdish is illegal), Guney's latest film has been widely acclaimed by Western audiences, both for its artistry and as a symbol of liberal opposition to the junta. But in his attempt to faithfully capture the bitter reality of day-to-day life in Turkey, especially in the Kurdish region of Eastern Turkey, Guney has produced a film whose impact transcends his own political limitations. In his depiction of relationships of love and hate, Guney plumbs to the core of this society and offers a depiction of its combined and uneven development. Not only the camera's romantic portrayal of the stark beauty of Guney's native Kurdish region but also scenes of modern technological progress (the air conditioned bus in which they travel, the snowplough) contrast sharply with bleak and miserable social customs and relations, most strikingly expressed in the condition of women. A young woman, left by her husband and son to die in a snowbound mountain pass as punishment for adultery, screams into the freezing winds: 'Don't leave me to the wolves. Have pity on me.'

Güney's *Yol*: Film review

The degree of backwardness and feudalism still existing in a country as comparatively secular and 'modernised' as Turkey must prove horrifying to Western audiences. Sixty years after Ataturk separated mosque and state in Turkey at gunpoint and formally abolished traditional Muslim institutions such as *kalyim* (the bride price), these reactionary social institutions continue to flourish among the mainly rural population of Turkey. Women from 7 to 70 work in the fields to produce half of Turkey's agricultural output but still do not enjoy the legal reforms promulgated sixty years ago. Instead 80 per cent of peasant women remain illiterate.

The peasants bound to their landlords, the women literally bound in chains and treated worse than horses, the Kurds who are barred from speaking their native tongue -- all point to the inability of the bourgeoisie in backward countries in the epoch of imperialism to carry through the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The answer, again literally, lies outside Guney's film -- in the mobilisation of the working class as the only social force that can shatter the chains of backwardness. *Yol* offers a powerful argument for the Trotskyist theory and perspective of permanent revolution. In the story of Omer, one of the five pris-



Seyit Ali carries Zine to her death: the punishment for women who commit adultery.

oners, is expressed the national oppression of the Kurdish people, and the triple oppression of its women. Omer returns to his native Kurdistan to find the quiet of his village broken by the incessant exchanges of machine-gun fire between government troops and a band of fugitives, among them his brother. Romanticised landscapes of fat sheep grazing on fertile mountains contradict the reality of an economically devastated region. Omer's crippled father is real enough: much of the male population in the Kurdish town of Marrash on the Syrian border are cripples; for many, their only means of subsistence is smuggling. And smuggling means hazarding the minefields of the borderlands.

For the right of self-determination of the Kurds!

Omer is there among the terrified and sullen villagers as they are forced to parade before the cartload of dead fugitives. He cannot even claim the body of his brother Abuzer for fear of murderous reprisal by the army. 'Comrades', proclaims the military officer as the bodies are put on display, 'this earth is our home; we are all equal.' Great Turkish chauvinism does not even acknowledge the existence of the Kurds as a people -- nor has it ever. In a review of the film, the left-Stalinist TKP Leninists hail it as an exposure of 'fascism' in Turkey. In fact, the Kurdish people live in much the same conditions and were subjected to the same brutally repressive treatment under the so-called 'democratic' bourgeois regime of Bulent Ecevit. The national oppression of the Kurds has continued ever since the birth of 'modern' Turkey.

As Omer rides off into the hills on horseback, there is no hope that freedom for his people is any more than a beautiful dream, like the memories that flicker before him of past rides with his brother. And now he is even less free than before. His brother's wife, forced to stay in her room through all the frightening and desperate nights of shooting, is now forced by tradition into being the wife of her brother-in-law. And Omer, acquiescing to the conditions of this social imprisonment, is forced to give up his dreams of marrying a young local girl whom he has loved from afar.

From beginning to end, *Yol* presents a powerful indictment of the subjugation of women in backward societies. It is revealed all the more so when one of the prisoners, Mevlut, having lived outside his traditional family setting, challenges the old traditions to an extent in a scene of blackly comic social contradiction. When Mevlut and his fiancée Merval are chaperoned by two shadowy black-shrouded female relatives during their courtship, he exclaims in exasperation: 'What day and age are we living in?' Warned that Merval's father would disapprove if he writes her letters from prison, Mevlut sighs, 'How old-fashioned they are!' But here are his instructions on the conduct he expects from his future wife: 'If I say something is black, it is black.... Any conversation with other men is out from now on, apart from your family of course.' 'You're so good with words', she replies. 'Where did you learn that -- in jail?'

Another prisoner, Mehmet, returns home to retrieve his wife Emine from her family. His return confronts her with an impossible 'choice' between two masters: her family and her husband, who are locked in a death feud. Mehmet is marked for death as a coward for having left her brother to be captured and killed by the police when

continued on page 10

Smash Lankan repression!



Spartacist Britain

Following a series of demonstrations organised by the international Spartacist tendency in Washington, London and Paris against a tour by JR Jayewardene's premier Premadasa, the Spartacist League participated on 25 May in a protest outside the Sri Lankan High Commission. Some 40 people turned out to demonstrate against the state of emergency recently declared by JR's UNP government. Our comrades raised the chants: 'Down with anti-Tamil terror! Smash the state of emergency!'. Demonstrators purchased over fifty pieces of Spartacist literature, including 25 copies of the latest *Illangai Spartacist*, Tamil-language paper of the Spartacist League/Lanka. Unique among the Lankan left, the SL/L has emphasised the defence of the Tamil people against JR's

Sinhala-chauvinist terror, demanding the right of self-determination for the Tamils.

One of the organisers of the 25 May protest was the fake-Trotskyist NSSP (associated with Ted Grant's Militant). Having split from the stinking corpse of the LSSP after participating in all its popular-front betrayals, the NSSP has now formally entered a popular front itself, signing a no-contest pact for May's parliamentary by-elections with six other parties including the bourgeois SLFP of bloody Mrs Bandaranaike. In last October's presidential elections it also called for a vote to the SLFP candidate in the second round. In contrast, the Spartacist League/Lanka is committed to building a genuine Trotskyist party, forged in struggle against coalitionism and communalism!

(Continued from page 9)

their robbery attempt was foiled. In desperation she decided to join him with their children to escape on a train. When the long-separated couple are discovered making love in the train's toilet, an enraged mob of passangers, shouting 'Infidels!' comes within a hair's breadth of lynching them. Rescued from death once (by a railway official who is in turn exasperated when he discovers they have no secular marriage license -- their religious marriage is unrecognised by the Turkish state), they are shot down in cold blood before their children's eyes soon after, in a revenge killing by Emine's younger brother. The moral code of Islam and feudalism has been left untouched by the Republic.

The most striking exposure of social relations comes in the story of Seyit and Zine. Returning home, Seyit is informed by his abandoned mother (his father has chosen a younger wife) that his wife Zine fled from the unendurable misery of working for his family to enter a brothel. Captured by her own family, she has been imprisoned for eight months, chained by the feet, fed on bread and water and forbidden to wash, waiting for the retributive code of honour to be carried out by her husband.

Seyit, 'torn between pity and hatred', knows what is required of him but confesses that 'My mind is my enemy.' He finds a solution through Zine's brothers, who tell him of a woman who died of exposure while traversing the snows of Shepherds Rock Canyon. On his journey through the mountain pass to the remote cottage where Zine has been imprisoned, Seyit's horse falters in the snow. Compassionately, Seyit shoots the animal. No such compassion is allowed to the woman. Indeed Zine is doubly punished. Having resigned herself to death, Seyit revives her hopes by telling her, 'God will punish you, not I.' Zine is forced to embark on their journey back dressed in nothing more than sheer cotton drapes; their son, Mirza, is dressed in a thick wool coat covering him from head to foot. As they reach the carcass of the abandoned horse Zine, growing numb and exhausted, falls to the ground. Embracing the dead horse, she cries out to the disappearing figures, 'Seyit! Don't leave me to the wolves and the vultures. For the love of Mirza.' Finally, too late, Seyit turns around. His wife dies on his back.

The fate suffered by Zine is that meted out to countless other 'erring' women. This is what the myriad fake-leftists who cheered on Khomeini's 'Islamic revolution' were cheering for when they whitewashed the chants of 'Death to the veil!', and dismissed Khomeini's promises to stone adulteresses and homosexuals and inflict 'holy' punishment on 'rebellious' national minorities.

The women, Kurds and workers of Turkey or Iran do not have to look very far at all to find a tangible expression of their hopes of social emancipation. If they look to the other side of the Soviet border they will find, despite Stalinist degeneration and reaction, people speaking and being educated in Kurdish, women of Muslim background from many nationalities who are no longer enshrouded by the veil, who participate in society as human beings and not as animals. The social foundations for this leap through centuries was laid by the victorious Bolshevik revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Sixty years ago, Muslim women in Soviet Central Asia were no better off than Zine. Among the first tasks of the young Bolshevik government was to create Zhenotdel, an organisation for work amongst women.

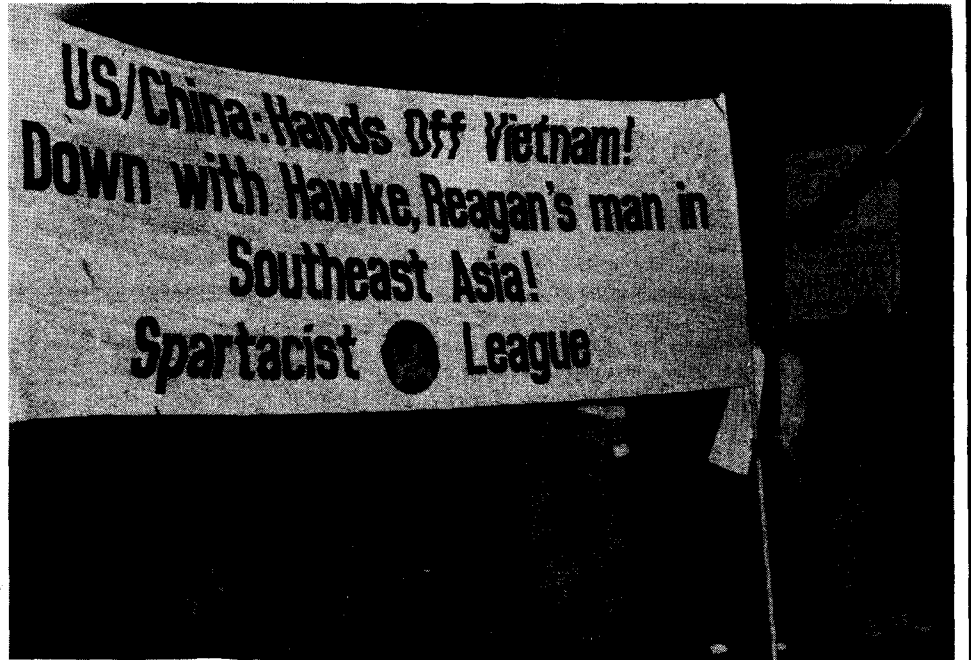
The Zhenotdel organisers risked death to venture into backward regions and explain the new Soviet laws and programmes to the women, laws and programmes which were to change their lives. Even in the early years of the embattled Soviet state, they offered instruction in hygiene and crafts and waged a successful campaign to obliterate illiteracy. Cautiously but systematically, they undermined the Muslim institutions while demonstrating the superiority of Soviet institutions (for a detailed description of the Bolsheviks' work amongst women of the East, see *Women and Revolution* no 12).

Sixty years later, despite the recrudescence glorification of the family fostered by Stalinism, the difference in life between women of the Soviet East, living in a collectivised society, and their cousins in Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey subjected to feudal enslavement is measured not in decades, but in centuries. Such is the scale of the social gains of the Russian Revolution which must be defended against the imperialist war drive. For those gains to be extended, it is necessary to build revolutionary proletarian parties like the Bolshevik party, which will recognise as a central task the need

Australian Spartacists protest Hands off Vietnam!

Australasian Spartacist

In Sydney, Australia on April 20, our comrades of the Spartacist League/ANZ demonstrated outside a state banquet for Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang to protest against the dangerous escalation of US imperialist-backed Chinese and Thai provocations against Vietnam. Robert Hawke's Cold War Labor Party government recently took office there and immediately reversed Labor's pledge of economic aid to Vietnam. The protesters demanded: Down with Hawke, Reagan's man in Southeast Asia! US bases out of Australia and the Indian Ocean! Defence of Vietnam/USSR begins in Alice Springs, Diego Garcia and Trincomalee!



Sydney, April 20: SL/ANZ denounces China's attacks on Vietnam during Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang's visit to Australia.

Eight years after the fall of Saigon, US imperialism remains irreconcilably committed to crushing the life out of Vietnam. As part of its anti-Soviet war drive, the US has welded together a sinister alliance of Thai militarists, Chinese Maoist/Stalinist bureaucrats and the Cambodian genocidal maniac Pol

Pot. Vietnam's northern border is being bombarded by Chinese artillery using US satellite intelligence, Thai warplanes are napalming Vietnamese troops in Cambodia and Washington is trying to starve the country with an economic and trade blockade. Again today, it is urgent that the working people of the world stand against the crazed revanchist provocations of US imperialism. *US/China: Hands off Vietnam!*

to construct transitional organisations to reach out to the downtrodden women and awaken their capacity for struggle. In addressing the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in 1924, Trotsky,

'... recalled my recent brief stay in Baku where for the first time I saw and heard a Turkic girl communist and where I could observe in the hall several tens and possibly hundreds of Turkic girl communists and saw and heard their enthusiasm, this passion of yesterdays' slave of slaves who has heard the new words of liberation and has awoken to a new life, and where for the first time I came to a quite clear conclusion and told myself that in the movement of the peoples of the East woman will play a greater role than in Europe and here [applause]. Why? Just precisely because Eastern woman is incomparably more fettered, crushed and befuddled by prejudices than is the Eastern man and because new economic relations and new historical currents will tear her out of the old motionless relations with even greater force and abruptness than they will man. Even today we can still observe in the East the rule of Islam, of the old prejudices, beliefs and customs but those will more and more turn to dust and ashes.... And this, moreover, means that the Eastern woman who is the most paralysed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will, at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress; she will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas, a new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker [applause]. And it is this, the answer to the bitter realities and brutal oppression so vividly depicted in Guney's film, which is entirely missing from Yol. The large and militant proletariat of Turkey including its Kurdish component is the social force which, mobilised under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party whose banner is emblazoned with the perspective of permanent revolution, can elevate the women and Kurds of Turkey from beneath their subjugation. Yet the working class does not even appear in Yol, as in most of Guney's films.

The only answer Guney can offer in the struggle against the oppression of the Kurds, not to mention the all-sided oppression of capitalism, is to pick up a gun and go to the

mountains. Communists as an elementary responsibility uphold the right to self-determination of the Kurdish people. But history has demonstrated time and again that Kurdish nationalism and isolated struggle is the road to defeat. Nationalism, Stalinism, the ayatollahs and the sheikhs -- all have betrayed or oppressed the Kurdish people. And what will Kurdish nationalism offer the women, except a continuation of the oppression they suffer today.

Any fighter for the liberation of women and the national rights of the Kurds who sees Yol should draw the conclusion that what is necessary is to repeat the example of the October Revolution of 1917. But the question is how. For that it is necessary to forge an instrument, a Trotskyist party grounded in the revolutionary programme, a party with a banner unblemished by support to bloody Islamic reaction in Iran and anti-Communist feudalism in Afghanistan. That is why we can recommend this film to our readers. It offers a glimpse at the barbarous reality, and our programme offers the only perspective for changing that reality. ■

WSL...

(Continued from page 6)

Pabloites. As for the US RWL of Peter Sollenberger, this petty-bourgeois outfit *par excellence* is notorious for crossing picket lines during a 1977 campus workers strike -- and then producing a 40-page 'justification' of scabbing as its first public document!

But the IF's looked-to American bloc partners are not only scabs. What can be said of a supposedly revolutionary organisation in the US, where the black question is key to revolutionary strategy, which not only opposes mass labor/black mobilisations to stop Ku Klux Klan terror but feels comfortable with the language of Southern racist lynch law? Yet that is the RWL! When the Spartacist League/US-initiated Labour/Black Mobilization brought out 5000 largely black workers to stop a threatened Klan racist provocation in Washington November 27, the RWL responded with a scurrilous anti-Spartacist tract, entitled 'Carpetbaggers on the prowl' (see 'RWL gone with the wind', *Workers Vanguard* no 322, 28 January 1983). This despicable piece denounces communists who fight Klan terror as 'carpetbaggers' (the common epithet of Southern racists for 'outside agitators' who took part in the radical-democratic Reconstruction after the Civil War) and black workers who join their demonstrations as dupes. And where was the RWL that day in Washington?

Two miles away from the Klan's planned starting point at a do-nothing talk-fest for Democratic Party politicians -- and part of a goon squad that *linked arms against its own demonstrators* in a futile attempt to keep black militants from breaking away to go and look for the Klan.

So what future for the Internationalist Faction? The thought of two dozen people, mainly youth, with confused and pretty unoriginal centrist politics, making a go of it as an independent organisation isn't very convincing. The Workers Power group, which shares some similar positions and also hearkens back to a mythical 'golden age' of the WSL, has been making its play to swallow the IF. But WP's one-step-to-the-left-of-Matgama centrism is hardly an alternative (see article, page 7). Once they got a sniff of something in the wind, these opportunists were even prepared to sell the WSL's youth paper *Class Fighter* as their own at an LPYS conference.

Unless the comrades of the Internationalist Faction undertake a radical break from their heritage and present politics, they too are destined to tread a path towards social-democratic liquidationism, the political graveyard for countless would-be revolutionists in Britain. For those who sincerely want to fight liquidationism; who want to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution; who want to oppose the British capitalist state down the line but without political capitulation to bourgeois nationalism; who want to mobilise to stop the fascists not build diversions for liberals and reformists; who want to forge a Leninist vanguard party in a reborn Fourth International in order to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat as the Bolsheviks did -- then you must look to the programme and practice of the international Spartacist tendency.

Finally, we can't resist a comment on Alan Thornett. Judging from the material made public to date, the oppositionists seek a return to the 'good old days' of Thornett's pre-fusion WSL. Thornett may once have been a decent militant, but the lack of a revolutionary programme has consequences. The WSL was from the outset a right split from Healy's WRP with a particular softness on the Labour Party question. The struggle of the Trotskyist Faction served to clarify its confused centrism and in the process pushed the Thornettites further to the right. With its shopfloor economism, its 'critical' support to popular frontism, its 'make the lefts fight', the old WSL was never a Trotskyist organisation and always contained the seeds of its current extreme Labourite degeneration. In recent years Thornett has gone from manoeuvring with Mandel, Moreno and just about every pseudo-Trotskyist charlatan in existence, to scabbing on the 1979 national engineering strike at Cowley, to his present pimping for Labour. Along the way his band of followers has steadily shrunk. Now with the departure of the IF, he can claim a mere 40 or so adherents inside the Matgama-run WSL. We predicted two years ago it would be 'Matgama's wedding, Thornett's funeral'. Clearly, Alan Thornett has lost again. ■

Blunkett...

(Continued from page 4)

some embellishments of its own. Quoting an anonymous student union official, it says (falsely) that many of our members at Sheffield University are American students. Having appealed in this manner to parochial English anti-Americanism, your article then says that the Spartacist League is 'peculiar' because 'Members claim to be pure Trotskyites while taking a pro-Soviet line.' It must certainly be 'peculiar' to your readers to find slanders of CIA connections indiscriminately mixed with innuendos of being surrogates of the Soviet regime. However there is nothing peculiar about 'pure Trotskyists' defending the Soviet Union. Beginning with Trotsky himself Trotskyists have always stood for the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucratic rulers.

So what stands behind Blunkett's wild charges, uncritically published by your paper? If David Blunkett were serious about CIA connections in the labour movement, he could do worse than to start with his party's deputy leader, Denis Healey, whose connections with organisations known to be CIA conduits are well-documented. In addition Blunkett may well recall that it was his Labour Party colleague Mick Elliot who hosted a meeting in Sheffield in October 1981 featuring a coterie of admirals and Vietnam War criminals from the Committee For East-West Accord. One of those invited to share the platform was Admiral Gene La Rocque, who had been

decorated for 'services rendered' by the bloody CIA-backed Pinochet regime in Chile. One wonders just who has been whispering in Blunkett's ear.

This is not the first time we have been the intended victims of the 'big lie'. In 1979 the Reaganite California Attorney General (now Governor) Deukmejian labelled the Spartacist League/US 'terrorist'. We won a written retraction. President Carter's Secret Service that year forcibly dragged a Spartacist supporter off the floor of her trade union conference where she was scheduled to speak as an elected delegate, because they wanted to stop her criticising Carter when he visited the convention. She won a written apology and compensation.

Today the anti-Soviet war drive of Reagan and Thatcher conditions and shapes every aspect of political life. The drive for a Cold War consensus has strong reverberations in the Labour Party. Egged on by Fleet Street, the Labour Party leadership has been witchhunting the Militant tendency. Recently 'Sir' Harold Wilson has been going on obsessively about the 'Trots', even remarking during his visit to the Soviet Union that he'd like to send them all there. Perhaps he hopes the Kremlin leaders might deal with them in the fashion of Stalin's purges. Having dutifully taken his cue from his higher-ups, David Blunkett too wants to show how 'respectable' and 'responsible' a 'socialist' he is to the ruling class. And the *Star* clearly wants to encourage these efforts. For all its tongue-in-cheek quality, the Vulcan column's 'Laugh by all means -- but for safety's sake, take a good look under the bed' (8 April 1983) must be meant to encourage such anti-red witchhunting.

The statements in your paper are defamatory and dangerous to our organisation. In addition to printing this letter, we expect and are compelled to demand that your newspaper print a full retraction of these lies claiming to connect the Spartacist League with the CIA and in general aiming to discredit us in the eyes of the working-class public.

Yours,
John Masters,
for the Spartacist League/Britain

Salvador...

(Continued from page 12)

books!

A negotiated sellout of the Salvadoran civil war would be a defeat for the workers and peasants of Central America, and a signal for a massive new bloodbath. If the US succeeds in crushing the rebels in the isthmus, its next target will be Cuba and the imperialists will be enormously emboldened in their programme for reconquering the Soviet Union for capitalism. It is in the urgent interests of the world working class for the USSR to send guns to the Salvadoran leftists and MIGs to Nicaragua. Reagan's claim that this is already happening is unfortunately a lie. The shameful appeasement of US imperialism by the Kremlin constitutes a grave danger to the Soviet Union itself.

A recent article by Latin American expert Richard Gott in the *Guardian* (27 April) gives a hair-raising account of the Kremlin's anti-revolutionary line in Latin America. When Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega visited Moscow, Andropov offered him nothing more than 'sincere solidarity'. Gott asks Viktor Volsky, director of the Latin American Institute in Moscow, 'So what happens when solidarity is not enough?' Replies Volsky, 'There have been many defeats before.... Did the defeat of the Chilean government of Salvador Allende hinder the victory of the Sandinistas? Of course not.' But the Chilean masses certainly suffered a tragic defeat as a result of the treacherous policies pushed not only by Allende but also by the Kremlin. Volsky concludes his interview with the *Guardian* complaining, incredibly, that Reagan's policy is contrary to American imperialist interests: 'What seems unintelligent on the part of the United States is that they push countries toward socialism.' Certainly that cannot be said of Soviet policy under Stalin and his heirs.

Never have the possibilities for revolutionary upheaval throughout Latin America been so favourable, and the dangers of betrayal by the nationalist and reformist popular frontists so great. The conditions for leftist military victory in El Salvador are ripe. But this victory clearly poses the need for an urban insurrection of the working class. The proletariat must place itself at the head of the insurgent masses if the smashing of the old regime is to open the road to socialist revolution. And this requires above all the building of revolutionary Trotskyist parties in El Salvador and throughout Latin America, in a reformed Fourth International. Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 330, 20 May

Workers Power...

(Continued from page 7)

ment too! Two clear examples: First, WP supporters at a 18 May 1982 Handsworth Labour Party meeting joined with IMG and WSL supporters to present a pacifist resolution simply calling for fleet withdrawal. Second, at a 15 May march called by Sheffield Trades Council to 'raise your voices for peace', WP cringingly offered to take down their banners and restrict their intervention to slogans acceptable to the (Labourite and Stalinist) march organisers. When the latter pulled out anyway, WP's only slogan on the march was a monotonously-repeated 'Labour movement must support troops and navy back to port'. In that demonstration, as throughout the Falklands war, only the Spartacist League fought for revolutionary defeatism, chanting 'The main enemy is at home' and 'Let the war be Thatcher's downfall'.

Ireland. WP's unconditional but critical support to Republican nationalism is flatly counterposed to the liberation of Ireland's workers and oppressed (see our 'Theses on Ireland', *Spartacist* no 24, Autumn 1977, for the revolutionary alternative). But, again, under pressure they are quite prepared to bend their programme to liberal sensitivities. Remember the 1980-81 hunger strike protests, when WP explicitly refused to mobilise around the elementary 'Troops out now' demand, preferring to accede to liberal imperialism and the broad 'humanitarian' liberalism favoured by the Republican leadership. And while (scandalously) excusing the random killing of Protestant civilians at Ballykelly in their newspaper, in more widely-distributed factory bulletins (like 'For BL Castle Bromwich and Longbridge', 6 January 1983), all we get is a mealy-mouthed imperialism-is-responsible-for-the-violence line. Here WP capitulates to liberal imperialism; in Ireland the Irish Workers Group capitulates directly and flagrantly to Republican nationalism, opposing the elementary call for 'free abortion on demand' as part of a campaigning platform against the anti-abortion referendum.

Iran. When the Spartacists fought for a proletarian-revolutionary alternative to both the butcher shah and the mullahs in 1978-79, WP wrote:

'The Spartacists make a series of charges against the Mullah-led opposition as a result of which they characterise the movement as one of "clerical reaction". A number of these charges amount to uncritical retailing of the chauvinist rubbish which filled the American press throughout the Autumn. The Mullahs they claim wish to restore Iran to the 7th century AD.... They wish to introduce savage Islamic law punishments: stoning, public hanging and whipping etc. They wish to enforce the wearing of the veil and the removal of the rights given to women by the Shah....' (WP, February 1979)

Indeed! Yet WP, not content with cheering on the Islamic mass movement that brought Khomeini to power, continued to propound 'defence of the Iranian revolution' long after Khomeini began executing workers, Kurds, women and homosexuals, and even supported Iran in its reactionary war against Iraq. Four years ago we published an extensive polemical attack on WP's position on Iran and its bankrupt theoretical underpinnings ('Why they supported Islamic reaction', *Spartacist Britain* no 11, May 1979). That WP has, to this day, been unable to reply speaks volumes about the bankruptcy of their politics.

WP cannot offer a consistent Trotskyist programme because it lacks a necessary element in the revolutionary anatomy -- programmatic backbone. And so it shifts with the prevailing winds -- today, in the direction of anti-Sovietism. And it is because of this that WP has attempted to deal with the revolutionary politics of the SL by looking for an organisational smokescreen -- from breaking beer glasses on SL members at SL meetings, to the threatened calling of the bourgeois racist cops to remove SL lit tables from its so-called 'debate' last November. Like the rest of the fake left, WP echoes the Big Lie: for our unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism we are reviled and branded as 'disrupters'. When the SL/US recently organised a massive labour/black demonstration of 5000 to stop the fascist Ku Klux Klan in Washington DC, the Big Lie campaign moved into full gear -- echoed and pushed not least by TILC's American grouplet, the RWL, whose own line on the fascists in practice is to 'ignore the Klan'. If you want to fight for Trotskyism, not for a warmed-over version of Labour liquidationism with a 'left' cover, then you'd better look to the Spartacist League. ■

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

No negotiated sellout!

Salvador leftists: On to victory!

A leftist guerrilla in central El Salvador recently declared, 'We are moving the war along as fast as possible now, so the people don't have to suffer so much. We are coming to the final stage. We now have the capacity to launch a definite insurrection' (*Washington Post*, 1 May). In recent weeks the insurgent forces of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) have kept the US-backed army reeling. The much-touted 'new' military strategy (nothing but Vietnam-era counterinsurgency) has got nowhere as each army sweep is met by fierce resistance and devastating counterattacks by the rebels. The FMLN forces have maintained and accelerated the military momentum which they seized last October, striking targets at will across the country. Six months ago, the opposition Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) declared that the rebels were entering 'a more offensive and defining phase of the revolutionary war' with the 'creation of conditions for the general insurrection of the masses' (FDR/FMLN, *Boletín El Salvador Libre*, October 1982). This has certainly been accomplished. What now?

In the United States, all sectors of the ruling class are worried about the 'fire in America's front yard', vividly recalling the Vietnam debacle. Reagan wants to escalate, the liberals want to negotiate. Now various reformists are joining with the Democrats to call an 'emergency' demonstration (on July 2!) for 'No Vietnam War in Central America'. The Spartacist League says: Vietnam was a victory -- Two, three, many defeats for US imperialism! And social democrats throughout Europe, from the Mitterrand government in France to all wings of the Labour Party here, plead for a negotiated 'political solution' in fear that a rebel victory could spread a revolutionary contagion throughout Central America. The bourgeoisie and its lackeys have good reason to be worried.

With Central America already aflame, there is now rumbling in the Southern Cone of South America. One thousand arrested for demonstrating against the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, general strikes against the generals in Argentina, workers confronting the austerity policies of the popular front in Bolivia. And to the north Mexico is in deep crisis. Now is the time to strike for victory on the battlefield in El Salvador. A leftist victory could open the door to workers revolution that could spread throughout the continent.

Yet as we have noted before, the more successful the guerrillas are against the army, the more insistent their leaders are in offering to sell out what has been won on the battlefield in exchange for some cabinet seats and promises of reform (the so-called 'political solution'). This pattern has again been dramatically confirmed. A week after Reagan's war on Communism in Central America speech to Congress, FDR leader Guillermo Ungo came to Washington to hold a press conference in which he announced: 'The United States has the right to stop the spread of communism. That's true. We agree on that' (*Baltimore Sun*, 3 May). Indeed, while the workers and peasants defy blood and fire in a struggle to rid themselves of a rapacious oligarchy and its kill-crazed death squads, Ungo and the rest of the phantom bourgeois politicians in the FDR ply the cocktail circuits hoping to rally liberal support and thus stave off social revolution. The SL says: No negotiated sellout! Military victory to leftist in-



surgeants! Take San Salvador!

And military victory is quite definitely on the agenda. While the sizable FMLN 'areas of control' are expanding, the government army is crumbling as a result of mass surrenders to the guerrillas. In the last two months, 250 government soldiers have been captured and on March 31 the FMLN claimed one of its biggest victories when guerrillas ambushed and destroyed two companies of the crack US-trained Ramon Belloso battalion. When FMLN troops attacked San Miguel, the country's third-largest city, 2000 government security force troops were ordered to stay in their barracks rather than risk defeat by the rebels.

The FDR/FMLN leaders claim that if 'our people achieve victory by the armed road' it will be with 'greater social costs' than if there is a 'negotiated solution' with the Yankee imperialists and their Salvadoran flunkies (Venceremos, March 1983). On the contrary, the guerrilla coalition and its popular-front allies are now *holding back* the armed struggle in order to have something left to negotiate. In the long run this will cost far *more* lives than an all-out drive to *win the war*, as the example of Vietnam shows, where it took 20 years and one million dead after the 'negotiated solution' of 1954 before the heroic workers and peasants finally drove out the imperialists and their puppets.

Two, three, many defeats for imperialism

With a battlefield victory for the rebels concretely, and urgently, posed, the social-democratic opponents of workers revolution and their fake-revolutionary flunkies are working overtime to try and prevent one. A 'Labour Movement Conference on El Salvador' at London County Hall, May 14, which was restricted to Labour Party and trade union delegates, de-

clared: 'We urge that the present and any future British government do all in its power to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict.' As a leaflet distributed by the Spartacist League charged: 'The organisers seek to restrict the conference to the social-democratic politics of Labourism, and in Central America as elsewhere the Labour Party stands for the *defence* of imperialism, not its *defeat*.'

And who were the organisers? The biggest builders of this conference for a negotiated sellout were the supporters of the fake-Trotskyist *Socialist Action*, formerly the International Marxist Group (IMG). A decade ago, the IMG built the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, which called for victory to the NLF, and enthused over guerrillaism with the chant, '2,3, many Vietnams'. Today they join with the Labourites and liberal imperialists in crying 'no more Vietnams' -- no more *losing* wars for imperialism. They hail the popular frontism of the FDR/FMLN as 'corresponding to the main ideas of permanent revolution' (*Socialist Action*, 29 April). They counterpose to the call for military victory to the Salvadoran insurgents a plea 'that the Thatcher government ends its political support for Reagan's war aims in the region' (*Socialist Action*, 15 April). One County Hall maintenance worker, after reading our leaflet and hearing of our brisk sales to conference participants, exclaimed, 'Good, your line is a lot better than those wimps inside.' And some of the 'wimps' inside, supporters of the fake-Trotskyist *Socialist Organiser*, seemed to be headed for outer space. While raising mealy-mouthed left-sounding criticisms of a negotiated solution, these fake Trotskyists who view the whole world from the vantage point of Little England Labourite trade unionism, actually raise as a central slogan for the leftist insurgents the call to 'open the

continued on page 11