

International Communist League Pamphlet

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# **The International Bolshevik Tendency— What Is It?**

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# The International Bolshevik Tendency—What Is It?

For the last 13 years a grouping calling themselves successively the “External Tendency” (ET), “Bolshevik Tendency” (BT), and (currently) the “International Bolshevik Tendency” (IBT), has claimed to be the true repository of the principles and program on which the International Communist League (ICL, formerly the international Spartacist tendency) was founded. While the IBT currently includes the New Zealand-based Permanent Revolution Group, most of whose members have never had any contact with our organization, almost all of the founding members of the IBT individually resigned from our international tendency in the early 1980s. When they were members, they never acted as a political grouping and never fought—much less mentioned—what they subsequently claim was the irreversible “degeneration” of our party. Rather, they simply *quit*, one by one, in the period after Ronald Reagan’s election as president of the United States.

In contrast to the days of the Vietnam antiwar movement when most of these people joined in the late 1960s/early ’70s, the political climate had shifted dramatically to the right as U.S. imperialism, after a period of “détente,” again made aggressive anti-Sovietism the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. The American government armed Islamic fundamentalists to kill Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan, raised a hue and cry for the reactionary, priest-infested, pro-capitalist and anti-Semitic Polish Solidarność, spent billions for a high-tech military buildup and waged surrogate wars against the guerrilla forces considered to be proto-Soviet agents in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. All the NATO powers lined up behind the U.S.’ strident Cold War II anti-Sovietism. Internationally, our organization stood out for our Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and the forces of internal counterrevolution.

In the United States, the domestic corollary of Reagan’s anti-Soviet war drive was brutal union-busting and, incidentally, the attempt to identify Marxist political advocacy with “terrorism.” The Spartacist League/U.S. was compelled to initiate a series of lawsuits against the capitalist authorities who sought to brand us as a criminal, “violent” conspiracy. Beginning in Detroit in 1979, we had also won some prominence in the U.S. for initiating and leading a series of united-front anti-fascist mobilizations which succeeded, for a time, in keeping the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis from rallying in Northern U.S. cities.

Our labor/black mobilizations brought thousands of largely black workers and youth into the streets under communist leadership. We won real, if exemplary, victories, putting the SL squarely in the cross hairs of the racist, capitalist American state, which has always been haunted by the spectre of the confluence of black and red. As the stakes of being a communist got higher, a number of our members opted to quit. Many simply went away to pursue their own personal lives; others remained sympathizers of the organization. But those few who went on to form the ET/BT/IBT had their own peculiar pathology.

They coalesced in late 1982 from several interlinked clots of embittered ex-members in the U.S., Germany and Canada.

The fact that they had quit, one by one, was then alibied by claims that they had all been unjustly “purged” for their political opposition. The fallacy of these assertions is easily proven by the simple fact that they could produce not one oppositional document written by any of them when they were members, nor any motions expelling them for their ostensible political views. All they had were their own resignation letters (which to this day they seem curiously disinclined to print).

This is not to say that the BT wasn’t, and isn’t, animated by political appetites that were, and are, quite divergent from



1917

**Renegades unite—First conference of the “International Bolshevik Tendency.”**

those of our organization. Although they came together as a formation largely motivated by subjective malice, on a political level they were the crystallized reflection of the pressure of anti-communist public opinion. Insofar as the BT claims to present a version of Spartacist politics it is a counterfeit one: along with their anti-Sovietism goes an indifference—at best—to the necessary link between the struggle for black freedom and the struggle for working-class emancipation in the United States.

The ET screamed that the SL was abandoning trade-union work in favor of “community organizing” when we initiated labor/black struggle leagues linked to the party, attempting to build on the success of our anti-fascist actions (needless to say, the ET was to be found nowhere near most of these actions). As the SL noted in its 1983 conference document, the ET “sees the ‘working class’ as separate from and counterposed to the black plebeian masses. What the ETs really mean by the ‘working class’ is the labor bureaucracy pure and simple.”

The ET also occasionally postured to the left. When 240

U.S. Marines were blown to pieces by a car bomb—placed by persons and forces unknown—in Lebanon in October 1983, the SL/U.S. raised the slogan “Marines Out of Lebanon, Now, Alive!” This highly conjunctural call was meant to take advantage of a situation where 1) the U.S. had only a token military presence in Lebanon and all of the competing fratricidal factions were jockeying for U.S. support—*none were fighting a just war against the imperialists* and 2) there was widespread revulsion in the American population against the imperialist machinations of the U.S. rulers abroad. The ETs insisted that this slogan marked our descent into “social patriotism,” never mentioning the fact that it was raised in an article which also opposed the U.S. invasion of the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada and hailed those fighting against U.S. imperialist troops there. The same WV front page that carried the call “Marines Out of Lebanon, Now, Alive!” also carried the slogan “U.S. Out of Grenada, Dead or Alive!”

The BT’s bloodthirsty insistence that Marxists should always and everywhere hail the death of soldiers considered expendable by their rulers is more than obscene in a country where astronomical rates of minority unemployment mean that a high percentage of those joining the military are black and Latino. This is an Achilles’ heel of American imperialism. But the BT has always turned a blind eye to racial oppression in America.

Furthermore, their oh-so-radical “anti-imperialist” bloodthirstiness over Lebanon was simply a convenient posture against the Spartacist League, not a seriously held position. As we noted at the time, the bloodthirstiness was always proportional to their distance from where the blood was being shed. When the question came home during the Persian Gulf War, with red-white-and-blue “antiwar” coalitions calling to “Bring Our Boys Home,” the BT wasn’t shrieking, “U.S. Marines, Live Like Pigs, Die Like Pigs!” On the contrary, they were shrieking about the “sectarianism” of the Spartacist League for our political opposition to the social-patriotism of the popular-front left. In contrast, the BT was so eager to be at one with these yellow-ribbon “radicals” that in the Bay Area they even voted *against* adding the call to “end the blockade of Iraq” to the coalition’s list of demands.

### From a Whiff of Anti-communism...

There was more than a whiff of “God that failed” anti-communism in the tall tales of “nightmarish internal meetings,” forced confessions, high dues rates and other horrors spun by the early ET. But their polemics had a certain educational value for our membership, and we published three internal bulletins full of them in preparation for our 1983 conference. As the document noted, “We should hope the ETs go on for a while in their present fraudulent posture...they are a crystallization of everything that is backward and wrong in the SL.”

Figuring that sharp internal debate would do the party good, in December 1983 the Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee voted to make a public offer to readmit the ET with full membership rights, including of course the right to engage in internal struggle based on democratic-centralist democracy and discipline. No sooner had we made this decision than we discovered that the ET in San Francisco was circulating a petition claiming that one of their number, Bob Mandel, had been assaulted by our comrades during a demonstration in support of striking workers.

This was a blatant lie. Even the one eyewitness affidavit which the ET finally produced (a month later) alleged only that a heated argument had taken place. Mandel later admitted

that our comrades had never touched him. But the ETs launched an international campaign labeling us as “violent.” We were at the time engaged in a very serious legal fight against the FBI, which had targeted our organization as “violent.” And here we have a group of ex-members of our organization screaming that we are “violent.” Whose interests did this serve?

We obviously were not going to readmit to membership those who had engaged in a slander campaign which—animated by subjective malice and counterposed political appetites—was purely aimed at trying to destroy our organization. Nonetheless, we did keep the offer open for the Canadian ETs who had not signed this petition claiming that we had assaulted Mandel. Their response was to immediately sign it! In short, the ET/BT deliberately closed the door to its own readmission with full rights of membership—including factional rights—in the second year of its existence.

### ...To the Stench of Provocation

In the following years the number of lies and provocations against our party emanating from the BT was simply astonishing for an organization which claimed on paper to stand for our principles and program. In May 1985, the BT published a highly inventive piece of reptile journalism worthy of the anti-communist ravings of Ayn Rand or *Reader’s Digest*, titled “The Road to Jimstown,” smearing our party as an “obedience cult” and spinning lurid, slanderous tales of political intimidation, “sexual groupies” and internal corruption. Thus the BT sought to feed the anti-communist American political climate which targeted us.

At the same time, this article alleged no new major programmatic departures on our part. Instead the BT expressed shock at our use of mocking guerrilla theater tactics to fight a ban on our youth organization at San Francisco State University (no one ever accused the BT of having a sense of humor), and outrage at our attempts to get the San Francisco longshoremen’s union to take official responsibility for a solidarity boycott of a South African ship. The material basis for our supposed “degeneration” was alleged to be that we had acquired “valuable real estate,” i.e. a modest office building in New York to house our international headquarters!

In September 1986, the BT staged a physical confrontation at one of our Bay Area forums (the BT’s tales of our supposed bureaucratism have always been belied by the fact that they attend and speak at our public events). In November 1986, a second BT provocation in the Bay Area was narrowly avoided when we moved the venue of our meeting at the last minute (the BT declined to attend the event at the new location). In October 1987, the BT tried to rush the mike at a Spartacist-initiated united-front rally for jailed Black Panther Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt). The BT had done nothing to build the rally (indeed to this day they have never published an article on Geronimo), but they were allowed to speak after they endorsed the demonstration—the insulting \$1 donation they offered as token of their “support” was refused.

### What Makes the BT Tick? Anti-Sovietism...

From their inception, the BT claimed to hold many positions in common with us. For example, they too raised the slogan “Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution in Poland!” But when the question of stopping Solidarność was most urgently posed, they went crazy over our statement that if the Kremlin Stalinists intervened militarily, in their necessarily stupid and brutal way, that we would support this and take respon-

sibility in advance for whatever idiocies and atrocities they might commit. The Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the deformed and degenerated workers states meant exactly that, i.e. no conditions. For the BT, this was simply further evidence of our supposed "Stalinophilia."

In a similar vein, they howled at a statement printed in *Workers Vanguard* following the sudden death of the then-head of the USSR, Yuri Andropov, which read in toto: "He sought to curb the worst excesses of the bureaucracy. He sought to increase the productivity of the Soviet masses. He made no overt betrayals on behalf of imperialism. He was no friend of freedom." The BT condemned this rather balanced assessment as a Stalinophilic "eulogy." That the BT took such offense at this statement was simply another reflection of their own capitulation to Cold War anti-Sovietism. While they put forward positions that were a distorted mirror of our own on the Russian question, not only we but the whole anti-Soviet popular-front left knew that the BT wasn't serious (this was evidenced by the fact that the BT was welcome at rad-lib protests, meetings and rallies from which the Spartacist League was regularly excluded).

In an early polemic against the then-External Tendency, we noted: "If the ET were more honest, they would admit that they hated it when we hailed the Soviet Red Army's military intervention in Afghanistan" (see "The 'External Tendency': From Cream Puffs to Food Poisoning," *WV* No. 349, 2 March 1984). Four years later, they finally openly renounced and denounced our call, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" arguing that it was "not a Trotskyist slogan, because what it tells workers is to trust the Stalinists, put your faith in the Stalinists, hail the Stalinists."

On the contrary, our hailing of the Soviet Army intervention was based on the recognition that, whatever the intentions of the venal bureaucrats in the Kremlin, this military action offered the possibility of extending the gains of the October Revolution to Afghanistan. Many Soviet soldiers saw themselves as fulfilling their internationalist duty in fighting to defeat the imperialist-financed forces of Islamic reaction. But for such internationalism to have been fulfilled required, as we pointed out, a political revolution to oust the Kremlin Stalinists and a return to the proletarian internationalist program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

The 1989 Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan—ordered in the name of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism—was the opening step in the capitalist counterrevolution that would engulf the Soviet Union a few years later. Eager to get rid of the nagging "Russian question" and any nominal claim to being Soviet defensists, at the time of Yeltsin's August 1991 countercoup the BT rushed to proclaim that the Soviet degenerated workers state had been destroyed. They happily wrote off in advance (but only from afar and certainly not in Russian) any possibility that decisive working-class resistance could have swept away Yeltsin and his supporters and opened the road to a political revolution against the entire panoply of bureaucratic Stalinist fakers who were busy selling out the country wholesale to the capitalists.

While recognizing that the state power had been decisively fractured by the August events, the ICL looked to spark working-class action in defense of collectivized property. We distributed tens of thousands of copies of our leaflet "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution" throughout the Soviet Union. It was only when it was clear that the working class was not going to move against Yeltsin, who was rapidly consolidating a capitalist state apparatus, that we recognized that the Soviet workers state

had been definitively destroyed.

In adopting a fighting posture for the proletarian vanguard in the period following Yeltsin's coup, we were following the methodology of Trotsky's Fourth International in the early months of 1933, after Hitler had been appointed chancellor of Germany. Far from proclaiming, "All is lost," the FI geared up for a campaign of international support to the expected proletarian resistance to Hitler in power. Trotsky later explained the necessity for this fighting perspective:

"The complete absence of resistance on the part of the German workers has provoked certain troubles within our own ranks. We expected that the onward march of the fascist danger would surmount not only the perfidious policy of the reformists but also the ultimatum sabotage of the Stalinists. These hopes were not confirmed. Were our expectations false? This question cannot be put in such a formal manner. We were *obliged* to proceed from a course based upon resistance and to do all in our power for its realization. To acknowledge a priori the impossibility of resistance would have meant not to push the proletariat forward but to introduce a supplementary demoralizing element."

—Trotsky, "Germany and the USSR," 17 March 1933, in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*

The IBT attempts to dress up its defeatism in August 1991 by declaring military support for the Stalinist coup plotters—a ludicrous position since the coup plotters, who were just as committed to capitalist restoration as Yeltsin, were not about to undertake the kind of political and military mobilization required to mount a serious opposition. In any case, the BT's position that "it's all over," if propagated in the Soviet Union at the time, could only have had the effect of *demoralizing and paralyzing* any nascent proletarian opposition to Yeltsin's takeover.

At bottom, the IBT's position reflected complete defeatism over the capacity of the Soviet working class to struggle. They had an identical posture toward the nascent political revolution in the former East German deformed workers state following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, i.e. they declared that there was no possibility of a proletarian political revolution. Correspondingly, they denounced the ICL for mobilizing our resources heavily and internationally to intervene with a revolutionary Trotskyist program into the events in the former East German workers state in 1989-90. Their founding statement even claims that our intervention in the

### Spartacist Internal Discussion Bulletins "On the Logan Regime"

Bill Logan, now a leader of the International Bolshevik Tendency, was expelled in a unanimous vote by the delegates to our 1979 international conference for "crimes against communist morality and its substrate human decency." The following three internal discussion bulletins of the International Communist League (formerly international Spartacist tendency) contain documentation of the brutal and sadistic nature of Logan's regime:

**On the Logan Regime, Part I: "Run, run, run, run, run, run, run...chop." — January 1979, US\$3**

**On the Logan Regime, Part II: "What do you mean, overthrow?" — January 1979, US\$3**

**On the Logan Regime, Part III: The Dishonorable Schoolboy Sent Down — November 1983, US\$3**

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DDR “made it obvious that the ICL could not be considered a revolutionary organization, but rather an obstacle to revolution.”

That the restoration of capitalism in the DDR and the Soviet Union—and indeed throughout East Europe—was accomplished without a civil war was above all conditioned by the lack of an active, authoritative proletarian pole fighting to defend collectivized property. But the lack of such a pole was neither necessary nor inevitable. In both Germany and the USSR the ICL had forces active on the ground. We did not prejudge what would be the outcome of our efforts to forge the party and leadership required to defend the workers states and open the road to the political revolution necessary to replace the discredited Stalinist bureaucratic caste with genuine organs of working-class democracy.

But in both cases the BT did prejudge—proletarian political revolution was impossible—and so, in the aftermath, they are forced to deny reality. In the case of the DDR they deny that there was any chance that the profound social crisis which wracked the country from October 1989 through March 1990—accompanied in the beginning by mass demonstrations demanding both the defense of “socialism” and reform of the ruling Stalinist party—could have resulted in anything but capitalist counterrevolution. In the case of the USSR, they claim that the spineless Stalinist coup plotters actually led a credible fight against capitalist counterrevolution. What unites these two positions is a denial that the intervention of Trotskyists could have been a decisive factor in bringing about a different outcome. What a profound negation of the very basis for the Fourth International: “The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.”

### An Unnatural Obsession with the Spartacist League

One would have expected that an organization whose political appetites and aims were increasingly clearly divergent from our own would have simply gone off to “do its own thing.” But *to this day* the IBT has remained unnaturally and schizophrenically obsessed with the Spartacist tendency. Sometimes the IBT claims in their publications that the ICL is terminally “Stalinophilic.” At other times the IBT emphasizes the political positions they claim to hold in common with us and assert that the ICL has a formally “correct” paper program. Sometimes the IBT tries to reconcile the two positions, as in the formulation (contained in No. 14 of their journal *1917*, dated 1994) that the ICL is “a formerly revolutionary organization that was transformed by degrees into a highly bureaucratized and hyper-centralist obedience cult, marked by capacity for erratic programmatic deviations.” The only constant is the slander that we are some kind of violent, deranged organization, “Jimstown.”

In its political schizophrenia toward us—on the one hand we have major programmatic differences, on the other we have no differences—the IBT reveals everything about itself. For the IBT defies political definition, at least as understood by the traditions of the Marxist movement. If they have a counterposed political program to our own, then they should struggle to win our members to their organization based on that political counterposition. If they fundamentally share the same political program with the ICL then why do they exist? If their only *raison d'être* is their (lying) claim that they were wrongly expelled or otherwise driven out of our organization, then they would presumably seek to convince the ranks of the ICL that such was the case by demonstrating

that they fundamentally share our political program through participation in the major campaigns of our organization.

But such is not the case. On the contrary, since its inception the IBT has reviled virtually every major campaign of our organization internationally—a fact which hardly endears them to our membership. The whole profile of the BT is that of an organization defined by anti-Spartacism, whose mission in life is to dirty our good name and seek to sterilize our efforts.

### BT Provocations and the Campaign to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal

The BT's slanders have a nasty habit of insinuating themselves into places where they can do the most harm. The Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S., and its fraternal organizations internationally which are the legal and social defense organizations of the ICL, have been spearheading the international campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther Party member and eloquent fighter against racist injustice, who has been on death row in the United States for 13 years.

We have been fighting for Jamal's freedom for years, but after the death warrant was signed by Pennsylvania's governor on June 2 (deliberately on the eve of the filing of new legal papers demonstrating Jamal's innocence and demanding a new trial), the stakes were sharply raised. International protest has now forced a stay of execution. But Jamal still faces the death sentence and the campaign to save his life has entered a critical juncture.

The American ruling class and its servants—from the Philadelphia cops and prosecutors to the FBI and the pro-death penalty Clinton White House—are determined to undercut the growing domestic and international support for Jamal. So it is hardly a coincidence that the *Wall Street Journal* (16 June) suddenly saw a need to move against a particular small leftist group, the Spartacist League. In a front-page article, the *WSJ* sneers at “radical-left groups” in the U.S. who “have a new hero, Mumia Abu-Jamal.”

Trying to write Jamal off as a criminal and “convicted cop killer” supported by a pathetic and sinister movement of leftist crazies, the article goes out of its way to smear us as a cult—a particularly sinister accusation in today's American political climate, after the Waco massacre and MOVE bombing. And where does the *WSJ* get its “information”? From the BT, which is cited right there in the article (there is no other source for this big lie). So in whose interests are BT articles such as “Jimstown” written?

In a letter to *Workers Vanguard*, which was distributed as a leaflet to a recent Spartacist League forum in New York City, the BT whines that it is not their fault that their lies about us have been picked up by the bourgeois press. In any case, the fact that the *Wall Street Journal* is trying to spike support for Jamal through its nasty anti-communist smears is of no consequence to the BT. Rather, this leaflet and another letter we received from the IBT in Britain are dedicated to demonstrating that it is the “sectarianism” of the PDC that really stands in the way of a genuine fight to mobilize for Jamal's freedom.

The letter/leaflet by the New York BT alleges we think the ICL and PDC “are Mumia's only *real* defenders.” Quite the contrary; when we took up this case in 1987 we knew only too well that we would have to get much broader forces involved if there was going to be any chance of saving the life of this courageous and compassionate fighter, much less winning his freedom. Now, finally, this has started to happen

partly due to our efforts, but also others who got involved earlier on, and particularly as the result of the publication—again through the efforts of others—of Jamal's book, *Live from Death Row*.

The Philly cops framed Mumia not least because he was a supporter of the radical back-to-nature MOVE organization. Derived from the former radical black nationalist milieu, symbolized by the Black Panthers whom the ruling class greatly feared and sought to destroy, MOVE had long been in the cross hairs of the Philly cops. In May 1985, the Philadelphia police in collusion with the FBI dropped a bomb on the MOVE commune, murdering eleven black people (five of them children) and incinerating a whole neighborhood. The BT remained silent. The New York Spartacist League sponsored a memorial meeting for the bombing victims, inviting MOVE supporters to attend and speak. The very first issue of the BT's periodical *1917* (Winter 1986) contains an account of our New York meeting. The BT article attacks—not the government which murdered eleven people—but the MOVE speaker and the SL (for not making polemics against MOVE philosophy the focus of the event)!

In the eight years that we have been fighting to get Jamal's case publicized and otherwise taken up by others, it is notable that the BT's journal *1917* has featured not one substantial article on his case. Now they accuse us of somehow trying to hog the campaign for Jamal's freedom for our own organizational and sectarian advantage. This, the BT claims, is because the SL leadership is afraid of bringing "SL members into wider contact with other leftists." We don't know exactly what kind of contact the BT is speaking of here. At the united-front rallies and demonstrations initiated by the PDC in Jamal's defense, we have welcomed all those who have come together behind the slogans "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" to attend with their own propaganda, placards, chants and speakers—including the BT.

The letter from the IBT in Britain claims that we have undermined Mumia's defense by not setting up a "united-front committee." We don't know what world the BT lives in, but we have a lot more grasp of social reality and our own social weight than to believe that a "Free Mumia Committee" consisting of ourselves, the BT and a bunch of other small leftist organizations would be able to rally the social forces necessary to win Mumia's freedom.

In any case, to argue that the absence of such a committee kept other left organizations from really mobilizing for a PDC-initiated demonstration that was held in London on July 22 is laughable. These very same "leftists" were much more animated about mobilizing their forces for a pro-imperialist demonstration demanding, "Stop the Rape of Bosnia." This thousands-strong demo was called for the very same day, at the very same time as the Jamal protest (and the latter had been called some time in advance). Remarkably, but not at all surprisingly, the BT has not a word to say against those "Workers Aid for Bosnia" leftists whose own perceived sectarian advantage and capitulationist political priorities led them to counterpose this march to a demonstration in defense of Jamal.

Within our frame of reference when we took up the Jamal case—to make his case known domestically and internationally as a compelling example of what the racist death penalty is all about in the U.S. and to get other social forces to champion his cause—we have been successful. A myriad of other groups and individuals are now working for Mumia's freedom. And certainly nobody ever stood in the way of the

BT getting involved in its own right.

Their sudden recent interest in this case comes at a time when the PDC has been censored from speaking at events in defense of Jamal in Philadelphia and Vancouver. We have also been physically assaulted on more than one occasion by the International Socialist Organization in the U.S. and in Italy by Rifondazione Comunista when we attempted to bring the defense of Jamal before their members.

We are revolutionary communists and absent a broader tide of revolutionary social struggle, larger forces to our right will try to exclude us from any issue they choose to interest themselves in. Conveniently the BT now pops up, providing arguments in advance for the various leftists, anti-communist liberals and black nationalists who, now that the case has become popular internationally, would like to see us pushed aside. The BT says it's all our fault. But what does this say about them?

### The IBT "Principle" of Unity: Bill Logan

Seeking to make a case that the ICL "purges" oppositionists, the BT took up the cudgels for—and even took into membership—elements who had been expelled for genuine and grotesque malfeasance. Gerald Smith, whom we expelled for being a bullying thug and shakedown artist, was not only accepted into BT membership, but his abusive behavior was tolerated for years. There's also Fred Riker, whom we expelled for cheating on his sustaining pledge and browbeating treasurers (especially female ones) who tried to get him to

## BT "Truth Kit"

For more on the character and political positions of the Bolshevik Tendency get our "BT 'Truth Kit'" containing the following selection of articles from *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.:

"Marxism and Bloodthirstiness," *Workers Vanguard* No. 345, 6 January 1984

"An Exchange: Yuri Andropov and Soviet Defenseism," *Workers Vanguard* No. 348, 17 February 1984

"From Cream Puffs to Food Poisoning," *Workers Vanguard* No. 349, 2 March 1984

"ET Wants Union to Police Workers—Ed Meese Unionism," *Workers Vanguard* No. 402, 25 April 1986

"BT Provocation Fizzles," *Workers Vanguard* No. 417, 5 December 1986

"Garbage Doesn't Walk by Itself: What Makes BT Run?" *Workers Vanguard* No. 428, 15 May 1987

"BT Says Don't Hail Red Army in Afghanistan," *Workers Vanguard* No. 449, 25 March 1988

"Stalinophobes Go Stalinophilic?—No. BT Writes Off the Soviet Union," *Workers Vanguard* No. 535, 27 September 1991

"Cops Crime and the BT," *Workers Vanguard* No. 569, 12 February 1993

"From the Snake Pit of Anti-Spartacism," *Workers Vanguard* No. 582, 13 August 1993

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pay up. The BT made him treasurer of their Bay Area local! In 1992, Riker and Smith exited the IBT as the "Communist Workers Group," publishing a collection of internal IBT documents which are revealing of the "democratic" norms (more precisely lack thereof) in the "democratic centralist" International Bolshevik Tendency. The Spartacist League has made these available as No. 8 in our *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League* series.

Most recently, the IBT has embraced and exalted one Bill Logan. Logan was expelled at the ICL's first international conference in 1979 for gross crimes against communist morality and its substrate, elemental human decency, after a thorough investigation by an international Control Commission and trial body. The charges against Logan were brought by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ) and they detailed at least 18 specific cases where Logan, using his position as national chairman of the remote Australian section and taking advantage of comrades' devotion to our program and willingness to make sacrifices for the party, grossly interfered in the most intimate personal life decisions of comrades. Logan was found guilty on every count—and then some. He brutally separated couples by forcing the geographical transfer of comrades "for the good of the party." He manipulated and forced comrades into entering into—and breaking off—sexual relationships. Most grotesquely, he tried to force one woman comrade to have an abortion, and when that failed, to give the baby up for adoption.

So long as Logan was in Australia, distant from international scrutiny and with a mainly inexperienced membership whom he made fearful of talking to comrades overseas and even to each other, his abuse of comrades—especially women comrades—did not come to light. It was only after Logan and his wife Adaire transferred to England in 1977 that it became apparent to the ICL leadership that something was wrong. After a sharp fight in London, Logan was removed as national chairman of the British section. Even then we thought Logan's opposition to international collaboration and his bureaucratic mindset resulted perhaps from inexperience and insecurity. An attempt was made to integrate him into the international collective leadership in New York.

With Logan out of Australia and exposed in the less-remote British section as at least a highhanded bureaucrat, our Australian comrades came to realize that what they had been subjected to under his leadership was a violation of communist principles and proletarian morality. The testimony of Australian comrades to the trial body shocked and horrified all those in attendance at the conference, mandating Logan's expulsion. Even the veteran Ceylonese Trotskyist Edmund Samarakkody—who sat on the Logan trial body and then used the trial as a convenient pretext to reject fusion with our tendency—found Logan guilty as charged and called him a "monster." Samarakkody's hollow insistence that other SL/ANZ leaders were culpable along with Logan—though every single one had been a victim of Logan at one time or another—was roundly rejected by the conference delegates. The motion unanimously passed by the conference read:

*Motion:* "We find the charges of the Australian complainants to be true and correct. Bill Logan is a proven, massive liar and a sexual sociopath who manipulated the private lives of comrades for reasons of power politics and his own aberrant appetites and compulsions in the guise of Marxism. His crimes are against communist morality and its substrate elementary human decency.

"We make the following further charges:

1) Logan was responsible for systematic suppression of iSt and SL/ANZ documents.

2) The examination by the trial body of witnesses with first-hand evidence of Logan's sexual manipulations in London fully confirmed the picture of Logan as a willful liar which emerged from the Australian testimony.

"We further find that the charge regarding ex-comrade Vicky A. was understated by the Australian comrades, and that in this matter Logan is guilty of inhuman torture of a mother, rendered suicidal in his attempt to destroy and take away her baby.

"We find him guilty of the above as stated and therefore he cannot be and should never have been a member of a working-class organization and hereby recommend his expulsion from our tendency to the delegates of the international conference."

After the conference we took the unusual step of releasing our internal discussion bulletins documenting the Logan case to major libraries in Australia and New Zealand, so that information about the man and his crimes would be generally available to the workers movement.

From its inception, the North American BT took up the defense of Bill Logan. The very first statement of the then-ET ("Declaration of an External Tendency of the iSt," October 1982) claimed that, though "Logan was undoubtedly guilty of running a grossly abusive regime," it was the international leadership in New York (half a world away) that should take responsibility because they didn't stop him sooner! According to this scurrilous account, Logan was really "drummed out" of our party because he had "a substantial and independent base in the membership."

This latter assertion is incredible. The *only* member of the entire tendency who defended Logan in 1979 was his wife, Adaire Hannah—his chief accomplice and also, pathetically, his most twisted victim. But back then the ET was clearly not disputing that Logan had done horrible harm to those he claimed to lead in the name of socialism. They admitted that "Logan was undoubtedly guilty of running a grossly abusive regime." It's just that they didn't care. After all it was "only" people who were members of the Spartacist tendency who were his victims.

The story changed substantially in 1990, when the BT and the German Gruppe IV Internationale (GIVI)—which despite political differences had been collaborating with each other for years—fused with each other. This fusion occurred a few months after the North American BT came together with the "Permanent Revolution Group" of New Zealand, whose leader and guru was none other than...Bill Logan. So the BT, an organization whose sole reason for existence is the lying claim that the ICL is a "cult," fused with an organization led by a sociopath whom the ICL expelled precisely for his cult-like manipulation of comrades' personal lives. This isn't irony, it's farce!

Indeed, the whole underpinning for the foundation of the "International" Bolshevik Tendency centered on alibiing Bill Logan. According to the IBT founding statement, "We Go Forward!" published in 1917 No. 9 (First Quarter 1991), the main subject of dispute/disagreement between ostensible Trotskyists from three different continents was not a programmatic question. The issue of how to fight the counter-revolution which was then galloping across East Europe and threatening the Soviet degenerated workers state was not addressed nor were the local perspectives and orientation of each group. Virtually the entire article on this fusion is

devoted to the momentous historical question of...Bill Logan!

It is now an article of faith for the IBT, and presumably a criteria of membership, even for those who weren't at our 1979 conference and haven't heard the evidence, to assert that Logan is innocent: "The allegations made at the 1979 trial, that Logan was an evil genius who routinely interfered in the sexual lives of members to gratify his bizarre sadistic urges, were never anything more than a malicious invention on the part of Robertson and his acolytes." That's a pretty hard pill to swallow for anyone who heard the anguished testimony of Logan's victims at the 1979 conference, as did some IBTers who were then members of our organization. Some of them were even delegates to the conference and

voted for Logan's expulsion (the decision was unanimous). It is certainly not much of an advertisement for the revolutionary integrity of these IBTers that they sat through what they now claim was a vicious frame-up without raising even a question, much less a hint of protest.

The IBT statement attempts to explain: "The matter was complicated by the fact that charges against Logan contained certain distorted and exaggerated elements of truth." We are never told what, exactly, they consider to be true about the charges. The IBT admits that, under Logan's leadership, "a commandist leadership style, a punishing work schedule and lack of consideration for members' individual needs seriously marred the [SL/ANZ's] internal life." But Logan was not expelled for any of these things. *He was expelled for acts—*

## Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League

— a bulletin series of opponent material

As V.I. Lenin said, "He who takes somebody's word for it is a hopeless idiot who can be dispensed of with a simple gesture of the hand." In our "Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League" bulletins the International Communist League has sought to make available the best, the most left-wing or at least most representa-

tive polemics against our organization by leftist opponents.

For the BT, political argument takes a back seat to the self-serving claim that the ICL is a "cult." But the BT does have politics: their fraudulent "bloodthirstiness" covers for a fundamental capitulation to bourgeois anti-communism. Four bulletins in the "Hate Trotskyism" series reproduce BT material:

### Bulletin No. 4: 1917 No. 1

Winter 1986, US\$1 (32 pages)

1917, *Journal of the Bolshevik Tendency*, No. 1

First issue of the publication of the Bolshevik Tendency, formerly "External Tendency of the international Spartacist tendency," includes "I Liked Gerry Healy...: The Robertson School of Party Building" and "SL's Cop-Baiting Celebrity: 'Powerful Testimony' ...to the Police"

### Bulletin No. 5: "The Bolshevik Tendency"

July 1988, US\$2 (26 pages)

Includes:

ET Statement of 12 November 1983: "A Loss of Nerve and a Loss of Will"

— From *Bulletin of the External Tendency of the iSt* No. 2, January 1984

"Marxism and Bloodthirstiness"

— From *Workers Vanguard* No. 345, 6 January 1984

"On the Slogan 'Marines Out of Lebanon, Now, Alive': Reuben's Tangled Web"

— From *Bulletin of the External Tendency of the iSt* No. 2, January 1984

"WV Flinches on 007: A Textbook Example"

— From *Bulletin of the External Tendency of the iSt* No. 2, January 1984

### Bulletin No. 6: "From Malice to Provocation"

March 1991, US\$2 (16 pages)

Includes:

"Statement of the Gruppe Spartakus on the Bundestag Elections: No Vote to the SPD/No Vote to the PDS—Critical Support to the SpAD"

— Translated from a leaflet by the Gruppe Spartakus, German section of the International Bolshevik Tendency, 17 November 1990

### Bulletin No. 8: "The Bolshevik Tendency: From the Snake Pit of Anti-Spartacism"

July 1993, US\$4 (128 pages)

"Bureaucratic Centralism in the IBT and the Intervention of the Working Committee"

— Reprint of a bulletin by the Communist Workers Group, undated, published in May 1993

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*18 specific counts of harmful, hurtful, interference in the personal/sexual lives of comrades, forcing couples apart or making them stay together, and for forcing a comrade to give up her baby.*

Yet the IBT acts like none of this ever happened. Instead, they argue that Logan was framed by a maliciously bureaucratic leadership in New York whose totalitarian powers were so vast as to convince virtually the entire membership of our remote Australian section to fabricate stories against him. And all that without even Stalin's trappings of state power. One would think that such an organization could only be considered as completely counterposed to the liberating goals of international proletarian socialist revolution. Yet according to the BT at the time we expelled Logan our international tendency was still a revolutionary party!

Moreover, the new IBT "line" on Logan is at some variance with what Logan argued in his own defense in 1979. Then Logan claimed inexperience, ignorance and isolation as the basis for his actions: "My opportunities to assimilate the norms of the tendency have been very limited, and, for example, it seems clear to me now that I never developed a clear conception of what a couple was." (!)

But now the IBT claims that everything Logan and Hannah did was approved by New York and that they were "the star pupils and most able practitioners of the Robertson school of party building." This "Robertson made me do it" defense has a certain demented logic for the BT. It is, however, patently absurd on the face of it. Not even the IBT has ever asserted that the Spartacist leadership decrees which couples will be separated and which allowed to remain together, or pressures mothers into giving up their babies. But that's exactly what Logan did. And is it an accident that such

practices stopped in Australia as soon as he left the section?

A report from the Permanent Revolution Group (published as part of the Riker/Smith document collection reprinted in *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League* No. 8) gives evidence that Logan is up to his old tricks. This report positively describes a "communist criticism" session, in which "all comrades were expected to comment openly and frankly on the good and bad characteristics of other comrades." At the end of this torment—which lasted *three days*—the organizer, who had a young baby, resigned for not showing enough "vigour and consistency." Such "methods" were used for years to break critics and mold mindless hacks in Stalinist organizations, and they were also adopted by the moralists of the New Left. But they are antithetical to the training of critical Leninist cadres. And look who's calling us a "cult"!

That a person, particularly one who claims to be dedicated to fighting for a communist future for humanity, would find personal gratification in the overtly sadistic exercise of power over others is a concept that is foreign to most of us. Such characters are not unknown in both literature and history, and also can often be found in the administrative apparatus of oppressive class rule. But, needless to say, they have no place in the revolutionary Marxist movement.

For the ICL the trial and expulsion of Logan was simply a necessary measure of self-protection, for the organization and its individual members. No more, no less. But what can be said for the IBT which not only made the affirmation of Bill Logan's good character a central premise of its formation as an "international" tendency but for whom the monster Logan is now their guiding light? The IBT is a political animal of a truly bizarre and dubious sort. ■

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