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# **Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists**

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— a bulletin of opponent material

NUMBER 1

## **A Reply to the Workers International Vanguard League**

**Introduction**

**"LRP's South Africa Lash-Up"**

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 667, 2 May  
1997

**"Open Letter to the Spartacist League by the  
National Central Committee of the Workers  
International Vanguard League"**

Reprinted from an unpublished letter, 1 October 1997

**"A Reply to the Workers International  
Vanguard League"**

By Spartacist South Africa, 18 July 1998

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## Introduction

Since 1975, different sections of the International Communist League have published several bulletins, entitled *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League*, containing material critical of our organisation written by ostensibly Marxist opponent organisations.

This series has allowed us to make available, to our members and others interested in our organisation, representative arguments against our politics, particularly the more left-sounding centrist critics.

In this tradition, Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is printing an exchange with the Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL), a recent split from the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (WIRFI), whose largest component was Cliff Slaughter's Workers Revolutionary Party in Britain. The first item in this bulletin, "LRP's South Africa Lash-Up," (WV No. 667) was written when a WIVL spokesman toured the United States, sponsored by the American Shachtmanite League for the Revolutionary Party. The second item is an "open letter" from the WIVL, which to our knowledge has never before been published and circulated. We are publishing their letter in the format in which it was received. The ICL's response to this letter makes up the last item in this bulletin.

The WIVL is an off-shoot of Slaughter's decomposed "international," having split from the WIRFI after spending five years uncritically imbibing their politics. Virulent Stalinophobia is what the WIVL in South Africa, the LRP in the US and the Slaughterites in Britain have in common.

From denouncing the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan, where it was fighting the CIA-backed *mujahedin* to hailing counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc (Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan's favourite "union") to supporting Boris Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary coup in Russia in 1991, the WIRFI/WIVL have supported every imperialist inspired "movement" that was aimed at the remaining gains of the 1917 October Revolution. Thus the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union is seen by WIVL as a "favourable condition" for class struggle. Historically, abandonment of the Trotskyist programme on the Russian question is defined by capitulation to bourgeois pressure on a particular national terrain. This is precisely the case today, where WIVL has become cheerleaders for the People Against Gangsterism and Drugs, a reactionary anti-woman, anti-black, anti-immigrant vigilante organisation. This tailing of bourgeois nationalism and communalism is an adaptation to the provincial pressures of "Coloured nationalism" in the Western Cape.

This is the first such bulletin produced by the ICL's South African section. This publication complements a previous pamphlet, "The Fight For a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left," which includes a May 1995 letter to the WIRFI which was never directly answered. As well, "South Africa Powder Keg" (*Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12) published in 1995, analysed the neo-apartheid arrangement of Mandela/DeKlerk's "Government of National Unity" and put forward a proletarian revolutionary perspective.

— 18 July 1998

# LRP's South Africa Lash-Up

## U.S. "Separate But Equal" Socialists Tour South African Leftist

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### For Permanent Revolution Against Neo-Apartheid Capitalism!

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In a recent issue of its journal *Proletarian Revolution* (Spring 1997), the U.S. League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) heralds the founding of a "New Revolutionary Group in South Africa"--the Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL). The LRP is sponsoring a U.S. speaking tour in May by a WIVL spokesman. The WIVL is a recent split from the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (WIRFI), whose largest component was Cliff Slaughter's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain. Militants in South Africa who, out of ignorance, might be favorably inclined to the LRP had better think twice. The calling card of the tiny American LRP is militant opposition to struggles for basic democratic rights for the oppressed. These "separate but equal" socialists oppose even the call for integration of schools, an elementary demand to provide black children some measure of equal access to education.

What the South African WIVL and the American Shachtmanite LRP mainly have in common politically is their virulent Stalinophobia. For the LRP, their support to all known enemies of the Soviet degenerated workers state, no matter how reactionary, was at least consistent with their view that the USSR was "state capitalist." The WIVL and its predecessor, the Workers International group, formally adhered to Trotsky's position that the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers state, while in practice repudiating Trotsky's programmatic conclusions. Trotsky's program of proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy was premised on unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack.

The WIRFI's "Trotskyism" was strictly on paper. In practice, just like the LRP, it supported capitalist-restorationist forces across the board. Both organizations joined the NATO imperialists in demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet Red Army from Afghanistan, where it was fighting CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries, in the 1980s; hailed counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc (the only "union" in the world supported by imperialist politicians like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher); and supported Boris Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary coup in Russia in August 1991. In short, the LRP and WIRFI opposed Stalinism *from the right*, or in bloc with the right.

Trotskyist opposition to Stalinism, in contrast, flows

from the standpoint of *defending* the historic interests of the working class through the fight for international socialist revolution. Thus we have consistently condemned the South African Communist Party (SACP) for supporting and liquidating into the African National Congress (ANC), betraying the workers and oppressed black masses. With Nelson Mandela's election as South Africa's first black president in 1994, the bourgeois-nationalist ANC now administers the neo-apartheid capitalist state on behalf of the masters of the Jo'burg stock exchange and their partners in Wall Street and the City of London. As Marxists, we have a perspective of splitting the SACP, i.e., of winning its subjectively revolutionary elements to a genuinely communist program and party.

But the Slaughterite WIRFI treats this mass reformist workers party as if it were a purely bourgeois organization, drawing no distinction between the SACP and the ANC. Moreover, the WIRFI's track record was one of indiscriminately supporting all sorts of unsavory and reactionary forces, including pro-apartheid elements, as long as they hated the SACP and ANC. In opposing a vote to the WIRFI slate in the 1994 South African elections (*WV* No. 602, 10 June 1994), we noted:

"Their unrepudiated record of blocs with some of the most reactionary forces in the region, in the name of 'fighting Stalinism,' ruled out support for their candidates. In the November 1989 elections in Namibia, they participated in an electoral lash-up called the United Democratic Front (UDF), which included several bantustan parties who were collaborators of South Africa's puppet regime. The UDF received money from the apartheid government, which was anxious to undercut the vote for SWAPO. Today, the Slaughterites' virulently Stalinophobic election manifesto essentially accuses the ANC of bringing Stalinist gulags to the veld."

From the limited documentation that we have seen, the split between the Slaughterites and the WIVL appears largely cliquist, centering more on organizational squabbles rather than political principle. A document circulated by the WIVL declares: "From the moment of our first contact with the International, we opposed and criticized the opportunist alliance with the UDF in Namibia." But the elections in Namibia took place in 1989, *two years before* the leaders of what is now the WIVL affiliated to the WIRFI. This means that even though they knew beforehand that Slaughter's Namibian section was in an electoral bloc with forces financed by apartheid, they joined the WIRFI anyway. They then remained in the same international organization with Slaughter and his Namibian group for *five years*. Now they want to pass themselves off as principled Leninists!

The same WIVL document briefly touches on Bosnia.

For several years, every issue of Slaughter's *Workers Press* featured articles on their campaign for "Workers Aid to Bosnia." Running supplies to the bourgeois-nationalist Bosnian Muslim regime, with French and British imperialist troops in "UN" blue helmets riding shotgun, "Workers Aid" was simply a stalking horse for the imperialists, who were also shedding crocodile tears for "poor little Bosnia." The WIVL now complains that the WIRFI pursued a "politically inconsistent line" on Bosnia, at times becoming a "spokesperson for the nationalist and restorationist Izetbegovich government."

But the WIVL never challenges the WIRFI's line of military support to the reactionary Muslim Izetbegović regime in Sarajevo. Similarly, the LRP gave military support to the Bosnian Muslims and to the Croatian forces under the fascistic Tudjman government, at least up until the summer of 1995 when NATO initiated a bombing campaign against the Bosnian Serbs. In contrast, we in the International Communist League opposed all sides in the squalid nationalist slaughter in the former Yugoslavia. We opposed all imperialist intervention, calling for defense of the Bosnian Serbs against repeated NATO air strikes. The only perspective that offers a way out for the working class amid the devastation wrought by capitalist counterrevolution is to overthrow *all* the bourgeois-nationalist leaders in a struggle for a socialist federation of the Balkans.

## For a Black-Centered Workers Government in South Africa!

As Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution asserts, in countries of belated capitalist development the tasks historically associated with bourgeois-democratic revolutions cannot be achieved short of the establishment of proletarian rule. Our program for proletarian leadership in the struggle for national liberation is encapsulated in the slogan of a black-centered workers government, under which there would be an important role and full democratic rights for "coloureds" (mixed-race), Indians and those whites who accept a government centrally based on the black working people.

The bourgeois ANC regime manifestly cannot deliver on its promises to the South African masses. Yet if the frustration of the masses does not find expression along class lines, it will fuel and exacerbate every other kind of communal and ethnic division. The ANC has scapegoated immigrants from other African countries, as well as coloureds and in some instances Zulu-speaking black African migrant workers. At the same time, reactionary demagogues have sought to exploit popular discontent with the ANC. For example, a prominent local politician in Buthelezi's right-wing Inkatha Party recently organized protests in the coloured residential areas of Johannesburg against government attempts to force payment of back rates and rent. The protests combined generally supportable demands against the regime with a virulent anti-black thrust. In this increasingly polarized situation, some fake-left groups have alibied the ANC while others champion reactionary and communalist movements among sectors of the oppressed threatened by the ANC's brand of

nationalism.

In South Africa, WIVL cadre have argued with our comrades against our call for a black-centered workers government, claiming that our emphasis on the centrality of black African labor is "divisive," or somehow backhandedly pro-nationalist. On the contrary, it is the WIVL which tails a "coloured nationalism" which is prevalent in the Western Cape area where the WIVL is concentrated.

An example of this is the WIVL's support to People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), a reactionary vigilante organization centered in the coloured community of the Western Cape and dominated by Islamic fundamentalists. PAGAD appeals to hostility within the coloured community toward a government representing the black majority. It is this "anti-government" sentiment which leads the WIVL to capitulate to PAGAD in the guise of "township community activism," ignoring its virulently anti-black character. Last fall, before the WIVL split, the WIRFI issued an undated leaflet - "Hands Off PAGAD!! Build the Mass Movement!!" - which is virtually uncritical of PAGAD, complaining that the media "seeks to break up the support of PAGAD by calling it a vigilante group, or muslim organization, or extremist and so on." At an April 19 Spartacist League East Coast regional educational in New York City, an LRP supporter defended the WIRFI leaflet, claiming PAGAD has only recently come under the sway of Muslim reactionaries. Yet even last year, PAGAD was parading with banners proclaiming "We Fear No One But Allah 'God'" and its armed wing, Qibla, is led by elements who fought with the *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

The fact that the WIVL is blind to the reactionary character of such forces is not surprising, given that it embraced these elements in Afghanistan as a "lesser evil" to the Soviet intervention forces. The victory of the *mujahedin* has meant virtual enslavement for women in Afghanistan, as well as the institution of medieval tortures. The WIVL's support to PAGAD is a measure of its contempt for the necessary struggle for the social liberation of women.

While the WIVL lines up with anti-ANC communalists, the LRP simply ignores the burning democratic tasks that must be addressed as part of the struggle to carry out Trotsky's perspective of permanent revolution. The LRP calls for a South African workers party based on the unions, with a program that makes *no* mention of the need to champion the interests of *all the oppressed*: black farm laborers, women degraded by such practices as enforced polygamy and the bride price, the homeless and squatters, the millions of Africans still trapped by economic necessity in the "tribal homelands" (bantustans). The LRP explicitly advocates a labor party based on a minimum program, and even the "transitional demands" it does put forward, such as a sliding scale of hours and wages, are not meant to be taken seriously. "These demands cannot be used as slogans for immediate mass struggle in South Africa today," says the LRP (*Proletarian Revolution*, Summer 1996).

The LRP's advocacy of a labor party in South Africa

expresses not only an economist outlook but its ingrained social-democratic anti-Communism. The large majority of politically advanced workers in South Africa support the Communist Party, whose industrial cadre form the leadership at all levels - from shop stewards to union presidents - of the principal mass organization of the black proletariat, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). As a representative of the ICL stated in addressing a conference of the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action in 1995:

"While its leaders are on the government 'grave train,' the South African CP still contains leftist elements who take the party's one-time Leninist pretensions as good coin. Only a party openly standing for the principles of Bolshevism can attract those militants now in the Communist Party who are sympathetic to the perspective of proletarian revolution and internationalism."

- published in the ICL pamphlet, *The Fight for a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left* (April 1997)

## LRP: Left Apologists for White Racism

Formed in 1975, after the expulsion of its central leader, Sy Landy, from a larger Shachtmanite outfit, the LRP has over the years combined softness toward black nationalism with opposition to elementary defensive struggles in the interests of blacks and working people. In the U.S. blacks are an oppressed race-color caste, segregated at the bottom of capitalist society. We fight for **revolutionary integrationism** - understanding that full social and political equality for blacks can only be achieved through workers revolution and the creation of an egalitarian socialist society - while defending even such partial steps toward racial integration and equality for black people as are possible under capitalism. The LRP's opposition to integration was simply a capitulation to black nationalists who despaired of the possibility of integrated struggle uniting black and white workers.

The reactionary consequences of the LRP's line was shown by its opposition to school busing. When the courts ordered the schools in Boston to bus children from the racially segregated black ghettos to mainly white areas in the mid-1970s, racist mobs went into a frenzy. We supported busing and demanded its extension to the overwhelmingly white, middle-class suburbs, and called for the formation of workers defense guards to repel the racists. Sy Landy and his cothinkers opposed busing and claimed that integration "means the **subordination** of blacks to the dominant whites. It represents a strategy to **quell** the black struggle" (*Torch*, December 1974). Thus, in the guise of supporting a suicidal separatist strategy for blacks, Landy & Co. placed themselves in an objective bloc with outright racist scum, who claimed that separate schools for blacks were somehow "equal." Anyone who has experienced the horrors of apartheid knows this is a blatant lie. A couple of years later the LRP used the same false methodology to motivate opposition to the "Equal Rights Amendment" to the Constitution, which simply asserted formal equality for women!

In another flagrant example of the LRP's solidarizing with white racism, its paper *Socialist Voice* (Winter 1976-77) published a photo of the Alabama state capitol showing

the American flag flying above the Confederate flag of the old Southern slavocracy with a caption saying that this "symbolizes dominance of Northern capital in the South." With this line, the LRP should have opposed the Northern Union forces in the Civil War! And today, the Confederate flag is not only the prime symbol of hardline white racism in the U.S. but has become an international emblem of fascism, commonly flaunted, for example, by German Nazi skinheads.

Partly as the result of the defeat of busing and other struggles for black rights in the North, fascists like the Ku Klux Klan grew in strength and sought to gain a foothold in urban centers in America. The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee were successful in initiating powerful mobilizations of labor and blacks that prevented the Klan and Nazis from marching in such cities as Detroit, San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. These labor/black mobilizations were genuine united-front actions, endorsed and participated in by trade unions. The LRP opposed these actions. Denouncing the 5,000-strong anti-Klan mobilization in Washington, D.C. in November 1982, the LRP declared it wasn't a real labor rally because it was endorsed by reformist union bureaucrats. Since all American unions are run by reformists, this is tantamount to excluding the unions -- the only mass workers organizations in the U.S. -- from anti-fascist mobilizations, i.e. turning them into impotent protests by handfuls of leftists. The LRP's ingrained hostility to any real struggle in defense of blacks and other minorities is in good part responsible for its inability to attract more than a handful of members, after 20 years in existence.

Rejecting united fronts with the trade unions, the LRP looks to joint action with dangerous demagogues like Louis Farrakhan. Thus they write: "In the future, Farrakhan may be forced to raise militant demands and call meaningful actions, in order to hold leadership when mass struggles break out. In that case revolutionaries would join in common action, always warning against Farrakhan's treacherous pro-capitalist leadership" (*Proletarian Revolution*, Fall 1995). But Farrakhan is **hostile** to social struggle, including the fight against racism. He conducts joint meetings with KKK leaders, provides bodyguards for Hitler apologists like pseudo-historian David Irving and amnesties slavery in the Sudan and other African countries.

As the Spartacist League speaker at the April 19 Spartacist educational in New York City noted, groups like the LRP and WIVL repudiate Lenin's fight for "a party that must be a tribune of the people, that must take on the challenge of all questions of special oppression." Our speaker continued:

"Your tailing of black pseudo-nationalists like Farrakhan - who are in fact very much the enemy of integration, who pow-wow with the Ku Klux Klan, who were happy to see Malcolm X dead - goes hand in hand with opposition to a struggle for simple democratic rights. In South Africa you oppose the struggle for democratic rights of women and immigrants. You champion people who are effectively reactionary on the question of women and communalism with regard to other sections of the population. We're opposed to that. What a vanguard organization, a Bolshevik party, fights for is internationalism. It's against this provincial, parochial backwards crap! That's not communism."

10 August 1997

The Secretary  
Spartacist League

In the 2 May 1997 edition of your newspaper, "Workers Vanguard" (WV), in an article titled - "LRP's South Africa Lash-up" the Spartacist League has slandered our organisation as follows:

1. The article states, "The ... WIVL ... embraced these elements [reactionary forces-ed] in Afghanistan as a 'lesser evil' to the Soviet intervention forces."
2. The article states further that the WIVL has "contempt for the necessary struggle for the social liberation of women."

The above are sheer slanders. The 2 May article takes up a number of issues, most of which are distortions of the truth. We make a distinction between a political argument (no matter how incorrect) and slanders. Therefore we have replied politically to the 2 May article in our "Open Letter to the Spartacist League..."

Under no circumstances shall the WIVL make any concessions to the method of slander in the workers' movement. Many of our comrades are victims of this method at the hands of the Stalinists and the trade union bureaucracy. We suffered a similar method at the hands of the leadership of the WIRFI.


We realise that the method of slander has long ago entered the revolutionary movement through bourgeois and petty bourgeois representatives who acted as conveyor belts for the ruling class.

The method of slander is a serious problem in the revolutionary movement, and our organisation is fully committed to unmask and counter it wherever it may rear its ugly head.

We wish to express in the strongest terms our total rejection of the slanders raised by the Spartacist League against our organisation.

We demand the unconditional withdrawal of these slanders.

General Secretary



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On behalf of  
The National Central Committee

OPEN LETTER TO THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE  
BY THE NATIONAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF  
THE WORKERS INTERNATIONAL VANGUARD  
LEAGUE

1 October 1997

The 2 May 1997 edition of "Workers Vanguard" (WV), newspaper of the Spartacist League, carries an article titled: "LRP's South Africa Lash-up", which is a scurrilous attack on the WIVL, the LRP and the relationship the two organisations are currently building. The article is a mixture of political criticisms and slander, and even the political criticisms are presented in a hysterical and contemptuous tone.

This Open Letter aims to set the record straight on some of the most important issues pertaining to the WIVL and South Africa.

The Spartacists promote racial divisions in South Africa

The position of the Spartacist League on the 'national question' in South Africa, is tied together by the slogan: FOR A BLACK-CENTRED WORKERS' GOVERNMENT IN S.A, which it once again promotes in the 2 May article. On this question the SL makes numerous serious mistakes, which needs to be looked at. On this question the reader is also referred to the Spartacist League pamphlet, "Polemics on the South African left".

The Spartacist League excludes 'Coloureds' and Indians from its definition of black. The term black was forged in the South African struggle against Apartheid, and refers to all the people oppressed by Apartheid (known commonly as African, 'Coloured' and Indian). This conception of "black" helped to forge the unity of all the oppressed in the common struggle against Apartheid. The Apartheid regime, and its various reactionary lackeys amongst the oppressed groups, were the only ones to exclude 'Coloureds' and Indians from its definition of "black". It did this in order to facilitate divisions amongst the oppressed groups on an ethnic basis. The Spartacist League defines "black" in the same way as the Apartheid regime and its lackeys, and thereby plays into the hands of those who still seek to divide the formerly politically oppressed along ethnic lines.

What is meant by a Black-centred workers' government? In South African 'struggle terminology', the Spartacist League means an African-centred government. This means that a workers' government in South Africa should have a racial guarantee worked into its very constitution. Due to the overwhelming majority of Africans in South Africa, this does not appear to be very controversial. However, this is not all. In line with this slogan, the SL promotes full democratic rights for 'Coloureds', Indians and those whites who accept an African-centred workers' government. Now this is very serious. Here we have an open promotion of political rights in South Africa on an ethnic basis.

This position on ethnic-centred political rights, leads the Spartacist League to promote

the right of regional autonomy in a future workers' state in South Africa.

Why push for regional autonomy and special rights on an ethnic group basis? Matters such as political rights for specific groups, or regions, cannot be dealt with abstractly. In looking at such questions, we must analyse the concrete situation on the ground; we must look at the history of the struggle around these issues and we need to look at the concrete demands forwarded by different class forces in relation to these issues.

What is regional autonomy in South Africa? It is another name for ethnic division, because most regions in South Africa are ethnically weighted. Today in South Africa regional autonomy and political rights for ethnically based groups are promoted by Inkatha, the National Party and all sorts of reactionaries such as chiefs, white right-wing forces and 'Coloured' nationalists. The overwhelming majority of the working class, and middle class, reject any notion of autonomy or group rights. Even amongst whites the support for a special white homeland has plunged and keeps declining.

The ANC tries to meet these reactionaries half-way, because it is in its interest to divide the black working class as a means to weaken them in relation to the state and capital. The promotion of special group rights and regionalism suits the ANC for the additional reason that it allows it to share political power with reactionary forces such as Inkatha in an anti-working class alliance. Any support for group-based political rights or regional autonomy plays into the hands of the worst reactionaries in South Africa. For such support to be promoted in the name of Trotskyism is the more dangerous because it associates the only genuine programme for the South African socialist revolution with the most reactionary political camp in the country, thereby seriously compromising it.

In the very struggle against Apartheid, the black masses forged the principle of non-racialism, which expresses our resolute rejection of any attempt to divide our people on the basis of skin colour. On page 4 of the above-mentioned pamphlet, we find that the Spartacist League completely distorts the principle of non-racialism. They state that non-racialism is an ANC-promoted conception. This is factually, or historically, totally wrong. The ANC never supported non-racialism, but had the position of the four-nation thesis - which means that South Africa consists of the African, 'Coloured', Indian and White nations, all of which should have equal rights as nations.

Non-racialism was developed in the NEUM (Non-European Unity Movement), a nationalist organisation to the left of the ANC, some decades ago. Non-racialism was developed in response to the racism of the capitalist state as well as in response to the racism of the ANC. This factual misconception has led the Spartacist League astray on this question.

They state that non-racialism ignores the expression of divisions along colour, national and tribal lines, and that this is what the ANC is promoting with its rainbow nation conception. This is entirely untrue. The ANC is in fact exacerbating all sorts of differences within the black population, by playing groups off against each other. Its rainbow nation conception is aimed at deepening differences within the black population,



whilst preaching reconciliation with white capitalists and Apartheid cronies.

Non-racialism in turn, does not ignore differences, but propogates that differences in skin colour and culture must not divide us into seperate, distinct political groups. Non-racialism advances the thesis of only one race, the human race, and it is an important weapon in the fight against racialism and racial discrimination.

At the same time non-racialism rejects the four-nation thesis of the ANC/SACP from the same basis.

Whereas the NEUM's conception of nonracialism is opposed to the class struggle, the WIVL understands it as a vital approach to unite the working class on a class basis in their struggle against the class enemy.

In South Africa non-racialism has very strong roots amongst the black masses. Tribal consciousness still exist in South Africa, but is constantly declining. At the same time the sense of belonging to the South African nation, is much stronger than any tribal or group consciousness amongst the black masses. This is reflected in many ways:

1. All the major trade unions, including COSATU, adopted non-racialism as a principle. The workers so cherish this principle that they allowed the union movement to be split rather than give in on it. This refers to the split of the labour union movement into COSATU and what later became NACTU. The ultimate issue on which the split occurred was whether the new federation should ban the employment of white officials. In line with this principle, COSATU adopted a resolution before the 1994 elections insisting on a unitary state, to reflect the non-racial unity of the country. The ANC had given in to a semi-federal state structure, which is a sell-out of the workers' demand. The working class rejects every attempt to divide our country.

2. The Zulus is presented in the South African and imperialist media as extremely tribalistic and sectarian. As being opposed to the ANC on tribal grounds (Zulu against Xhosa). This is far from the truth. The so-called ethnic violence in KwaZulu/Natal is not of one tribe against another, but is happening within one tribe, the Zulus. The violence is a political struggle over control of the region and it is presented as tribal warfare in order to entrench tribal consciousness. It is also a fact that the ANC has more support amongst the Zulus in KwaZulu/Natal than Inkatha. This is why Inkatha could win the elections in the region in 1994 only on the basis of wholesale fraud. In 1996 (municipal elections), electoral fraud was more difficult to commit, and the ANC won all the urban towns (and the city) from Inkatha. Inkatha held onto the rural areas, which it had made no-go areas for other parties (ie ANC) and their supporters. Inkatha is scared that it will lose the 1999 elections in the region, and with good reason.

3. Even the ANC, in the days of the struggle, could not overtly promote its four-nation thesis. It could never challenge the principle of non-racialism head-on, as the Spartacist League is doing, because it would have isolated itself from the black masses. Instead it was forced to pay lip-service to non-racialism, whilst undermining it in practice. Today the ANC is briskly promoting its four-nation thesis, whilst still not being in a position to come out openly against non-racialism.

**The Apartheid government could not stop with dividing South Africans into four races,**

and sought to further entrench tribal divisions within the African population. This was done through the creation of separate homelands (bantustans) for every tribe, and through propping up of chiefs in the rural areas. Nothing was as hated as the homeland system, and all the oppressed fought against it. Today the ANC is strongly pursuing new avenues to entrench racial and tribal divisions. The Spartacist League's position on the national question in South Africa plays fully into its hands.

If we look at the struggle in South Africa concretely, we see that to promote ethnic group rights or autonomy in any form in South Africa, is to place yourself fully against the struggle of the black working class. And it falls fully in the camp of all those reactionaries in whose interest it is to divide the South African working class.

Revolutionaries cannot fashion their theories outside of the class struggle and then try to impose it on a concrete situation. Such is not the method of Marxism but of idealism.

The Spartacist approach to PAGAD is Sectarian, and their Criticisms of the WIVL position is distortionist

In the 2 May article the Spartacist League accuses us of supporting PAGAD, which is characterised in the article as a muslim fundamentalist organisation. The basis of the accusation is a leaflet brought out by the WIVL in August of last year. The article continues that the fundamentalist leadership of PAGAD fought on the side of the Mullahs in Afghanistan and that the WIVL "embraced" the reactionary Afghan fundamentalists. And because the mullahs are anti-woman we now have the charge against us that our "...support to PAGAD is a measure of (our) contempt for the social liberation of women." The mind boggles!

Let us first state very clearly that the WIVL never supported the mullahs in Afghanistan. This is plain slander, and we deal with it below. Hitherto we met members of the Spartacist League three or four times in South Africa, and not once did they raise our alleged support for the Afghan reactionaries. The fact that it is raised only now, and with absolutely no substantiation, shows that the Spartacist League is consciously sowing mischief. The fact that the Spartacist League can write such obvious lies reveals that it is not at all interested in debating questions of importance, but that it is merely engaged in a mud-slinging exercise with the hope that something will stick.

It is surprising that the Spartacist League can weave together so many mistakes, distortions and sheer falsifications in so short an article.

Let us untangle this quagmire of confusion-mongering.

The Spartacist League criticises the WIVL for calling in its leaflet for PAGAD to be defended against the police clamp-down. The WIVL made this call after the police arrested PAGAD leaders and jailed them under Apartheid laws. While this clampdown

was taking place, the police were escorting marches organised by gangs. We linked our call for the defense of PAGAD to the call for the defense of the community's right to bear arms. We also called for the dismantling of the Apartheid police.

By opposing the call to defend PAGAD against the capitalist state, the Spartacist League is clearly supporting the state in its attacks against PAGAD.

Knowing the reactionary nature of the capitalist state, it is very surprising that any group which calls itself Trotskyist, can in fact come out on the side of a capitalist state political clampdown and be proud of it. This is a completely reactionary position.

The Spartacist League justifies its rotten support for the capitalist state clampdown against PAGAD on the grounds that PAGAD is a muslim fundamentalist organisation, led by people who fought alongside the mullahs in Afghanistan. Even if this was the truth, the Spartacist League's position would still be reactionary. We shall come back to this later.

At time that our leaflet was produced, PAGAD had just burst forcefully onto the political scene. But it was not a new organisation. PAGAD was formed months before when a variety of community-based organisations, many with an anti-drug abuse theme, formed an umbrella body called People Against Gangsterism and Drugs, the acronym of which is PAGAD. Many of the organisations that constitute PAGAD are based in the Muslim community.

PAGAD arose out of a situation in which drug abuse and gangsterism were spiralling, while the police were openly working with the drug merchants and gang leaders. The prosecution of gangsters in the Western Cape in particular, is extremely unsuccessful, because the police generally 'lose' folders and purposefully botch-up cases.

PAGAD publicised a photograph of the chief of the Western Cape's police-anti-gang unit, having dinner at a restaurant with the most notorious leader of the biggest gang in the Western Cape.

PAGAD invited the minister of justice to a rally on this problem, and at the rally handed over to him a list of the names and addresses of all the known drug dealers in the Western Cape, with an ultimatum that if the government does not deal with them within sixty days, then PAGAD will take matters into its own hands. After this deadline passed with the government having done nothing about it, PAGAD started to mobilise. The movement embarked on a campaign of mass marches, that drew thousands of people, to the houses of dealers that were given ultimatums to stop their activities or be forced to stop. During the first mass march, one of the leaders of the biggest gang in Cape Town was killed. From then on PAGAD became a house-hold name throughout South Africa - and its political profile and prominence soared. It was soon after this incident that our leaflet, treated so contemptuously by the Spartacist League, appeared.

**What Was PAGAD at That Stage?**

PAGAD did not start out as a Muslim fundamentalist organisation. It was a mass movement of ordinary working class and middle class people based in the Coloured areas, led by Coloured middle class elements and white collar workers.

At that stage the (active) leadership of PAGAD included a number of moderate Muslim elements, a small but influential Muslim fundamentalist group, a Catholic priest, and a very few revolutionaries. The Muslim fundamentalists are members of an organisation called Qibla.

Since the death of the above-mentioned gang leader, the mass support for PAGAD soared. This led to the state and the ruling class becoming very worried.

PAGAD exposed the corruption of the police and the courts, and was extremely militant, calling on people to arm themselves. The government could not tolerate this, and was very averse to ordinary people taking the law into their own hands. With the help of the ruling class media, the state unleashed a hysterical and heavy-handed attack against the mass movement.

### The Attack Against PAGAD

The main line of the state and media attack against PAGAD, was to denounce it as a vigilante movement, and to depict it as a Muslim fundamentalist group. In so doing, they sought to break the back of the mass movement.

To hear the same criticisms raised by a group calling itself Trotskyist, is really a cause for concern.

Vigilantes are people who take the law into their own hands. The state and mass media were hysterical about people taking the law into their own hands. This makes the ruling class very nervous because the bourgeois state jealously upholds its monopoly of violence.

Our leaflet states, "Whose law? The law defended by them (ANC, NP, DP and government representatives) is the law of the capitalist class and protects corruption." And, "The arming of the people in the pursuit of justice is a noble cause, but then arms must be used with the strictest discipline and accountability." The position of the Spartacist League, in calling PAGAD a vigilante movement, is to defend bourgeois law and the role of the bourgeois police in upholding this law. A further justification given by it for supporting the police, is the unexplained statement that PAGAD is against a black (meaning African) majority government. This is a blatant distortion, and one wonders where the Spartacist League gets this type of nonsense from.

However, the state's approach is much more sophisticated than that of the Spartacist League.

During last year the cabinet approved an intelligence report on PAGAD. In this report the government acknowledges that Muslim fundamentalists were active in PAGAD, with their own agenda, but that the movement had broad community support and was far from being dominated by Muslim fundamentalism. The government noted that the

militancy of fundamentalists did a lot to draw broader community support, and it adopted a position to try to win the mass base of PAGAD over to its side. This would mean isolating the Muslim fundamentalists from the broader community and trying to split PAGAD. The ANC also sent people into PAGAD to try to hi-jack the movement. In prosecuting this policy, the government used the police against the militant leaders and demonised the whole movement as a Muslim fundamentalist movement in order to chase people away from it. The ruling class media took its key from the state.

The Spartacist League has clearly allowed itself to be sucked in by the ruling class propoganda.

### Fighting for the Heart and Soul of PAGAD

When PAGAD assumed political prominence, it had a clearly non-sectarian approach. But at the outset it was clear that Muslim-sectarians wanted to hi-jack the movement. The non-sectarian element in the movement lost out quickly as the Muslim fundamentalists and the moderate Muslim elements united against them. The state intervened on the side of the moderate elements, and the WIVL intervened against sectarianism and argued for the broadening of the movement to include all community organisations and the unions. Our leaflet continued, " Beware of attempts by conservative forces to hijack the struggle or make it the property of small groups", " A well co-ordinated mass campaign against the police crackdown and corruption is needed", and "... it is imperative to link the struggle against gangsterism and drugs with the broader struggle to overthrow the capitalist system, and to replace it with a just system, namely socialism ".

The influence of the Muslim fundamentalists grew rapidly in PAGAD as a result of their militancy, which led to a split when some of the moderate elements broke away. But this breakaway could not consolidate a mass base and soon whittled down to an insignificant minority. After the split the Muslim fundamentalists were in an even stronger position, but then did not yet dominate the movement. The WIVL brought out more literature to intervene in PAGAD and was interviewed about PAGAD on radio. We also tried to set up a meeting with the PAGAD leadership to discuss with them our attitude to the fight against gangsterism and drugs. But the meeting never took place as the leadership avoided us. At the same time PAGAD entered into a short-lived alliance with the Pan Africanist Congress, this alliance fell apart very quickly due mainly to developments inside PAGAD. The Muslim fundamentalists took over PAGAD completely only over the past few months. In the process PAGAD developed into a hardened Muslim sectarian movement, and is losing its broad-based support. Terroristic activities have also come to replace mass action as its main method of struggle. At the same time the leadership of PAGAD seems to be moving towards co-operation with the police.

Thus today, and this can only be said for the past few months, PAGAD has become a Muslim fundamentalist organisation. The state has greatly achieved its political

objective. Thus PAGAD is not the broad -based movement of last year anymore, and the attitude of revolutionaries towards it must now be different. No longer is there a basis to try to link the work of PAGAD to the the broader struggle for socialism. but PAGAD should be denounced as a divisive, sectarian and right-wing petty bourgeois movement. Even in so doing, we must not turn our backs on those workers who are misled by the petty bourgeois sectarians. We do not identify them with the leadership, and it remains our duty to try to break them from their current misleadership. It is very important that the lessons of the movement must be drawn for the working class and such lessons should begin with the direction given by the WIVL in its leaflet. For is this current state of affairs not what our leaflet has warned against?

The Spartacist League on the other hand, has no need to draw out lessons because it has written off the thousands of people who were genuinely drawn by PAGAD, and has nothing to teach them except sermons about Afghanistan and copious doses of contempt. The WIVL believes that it is the duty of revolutionaries to educate the working class politically, including the most backward sections.

### Problems of the Spartacist League

We have seen how the Spartacist League's position on PAGAD has led it to stand against a legitimate struggle of the broader community and to support the reactionary state clampdown on the movement.

Wherein lie the mistakes of the Spartacist League on PAGAD?

As pointed out above, the Spartacist League clearly allows itself to be influenced by ruling class propoganda. This shows that it is yet to cut itself from ruling class ideology.

A further problem is the completely undialectical method of the Spartacist League. One of the essential tenets of Marxist philosophy is that everything, including political and social movements, is constituted of a unity of opposites. This means that in one and the same thing, in one and the same phenomenon, there are contradictory forces contending with each other. At the same time everything changes over time as a result of the development of these contradictions. We can understand nothing properly, least of all something as complicated as a social or political movement, if we do not study it in its history, in its evolution, analysing the underlying contradictions and their outcome. Only then will we be in a position to work out properly what our tasks are. Not to do this will result in a dangerous one-sidedness, which can lead one along dangers as in the case of the Spartacist League on PAGAD.

The method of the Spartacist League, on the contrary, reflects the method of a Kodak camera. The lense captures only the surface appearance, and only one aspect thereof, one dimension, one angle of reality. A photo once taken, cannot show the subsequent development. This is the method of the Spartacist League in its criticism of the WIVL's leaflet on PAGAD. This is why they can take a leaflet produced nine months ago, and criticise on on the basis of today's conditions. It is no surprise that the mentioned article in "Workers Vanguard" that criticises our position on PAGAD, is dominated by a very

nasty looking Kodak moment! The philosophical method of the Spartacist League is best captured by the American expression - if it walks like a duck, and it talks like a duck, then it can be nothing else. This is clear from the statement in its article, "...an LRP supporter defended the WIRFI leaflet, claiming PAGAD has only recently come under the sway of Muslim reactionaries. Yet even last year, PAGAD was parading with banners proclaiming 'We Fear Only One But Allah "God" '..." This is typical of the Spartacist League's method. How many people does it take to make a banner and to carry it? This banner was made by the Muslim fundamentalist element who from the outset wanted to put its imprint on the movement. It was part of a struggle. Yet, this one single issue was enough for the Spartacist League to characterise the movement, as a whole.

It is this dangerous method that leads the Spartacist League to condemning the thousands upon thousands of workers and middle class elements who were seeking a solution to the crisis of gangsterism and drugs in their areas, and who through no fault of their own believed that PAGAD was the answer. The role of the Spartacist League on this issue is also to heap scorn on the revolutionary workers, organised in the WIVL, who are trying to give revolutionary direction to the masses mobilised behind PAGAD. Their method leads them to support the reactionary attacks of the capitalist state against a genuine mass movement.

This rejection of PAGAD because of how its leadership is perceived, is a classical example of sectarianism. Sectarianism means just that, rejection of mass organisations because of the nature of their leadership. Trotsky fought serious battles against sectarianism and even devoted space to it in the "Transitional Programme", the programme of the Fourth International. Around the world Muslim fundamentalists have succeeded in drawing strong support from sections of the working class by its demagogy, militancy and promises of charity for the poor in terms of the Muslim faith. In fact Muslim fundamentalism is presently on the upsurge world-wide. We must condemn and denounce Muslim fundamentalism in the same way that we condemn bourgeois nationalism, but it is our duty to struggle to win the masses away from these reactionary forces. We cannot reject mass movements on the grounds of their leaderships, we have to study every movement concretely, and work out tactics accordingly.

In our leaflet we condemned the capitalist state and supported the genuine aspirations of the masses who supported PAGAD. We warned the masses against sectarian misleaders and we exposed the direction PAGAD was going into as a dead-end. We explained the relationship between gangsterism, drugs, police corruption and capitalism, and we called for linking the struggle against these evils to the struggle for socialism. In this connection we raise the need for the building of a revolutionary working class party to direct all the struggles of the working class.

And the Spartacist League denounces the WIVL as fake Trotskyists!

## Coloured Nationalism in Perspective

The Spartacist League article accuses us of tailing 'coloured nationalism', and for this they give one example, which is our support for PAGAD, which is allegedly virulently anti-black (meaning anti-African).

This charge of 'coloured nationalism' is extremely absurd, and anyone familiar with South African politics would never lay this charge against any of the left groups in South Africa. Historically 'coloured nationalism' has been very weak. Before Apartheid was imposed on the country, Coloured people not only were not known as Coloureds, but lived freely in mixed areas. The term Coloured was coined by the Apartheid regime, which segregated society to such an extent that Coloureds, Africans, whites and Indians live in separate areas, go to separate schools and so on. This is still the case today. In creating the group of Coloureds, the National Party sought to promote a reactionary Coloured petty bourgeois layer which would collaborate with it in subduing the Coloured community. The regime was extremely unsuccessful in this, with 'coloured nationalists', even by the end of Apartheid rule constituting only a very thin, very weak, very insignificant layer of the Coloured petty bourgeoisie. This layer had been politically co-opted by the National Party in 1983, but the Coloured community boycotted the elections in which they participated. Voter turn-out for these traitors were generally as low as five percent. And this was the situation up to the 1994 elections. From this point of view it is easy to understand why in the progressive movement in South Africa nobody accuses anybody of 'coloured nationalism'.

The situation has been changing since 1994, with especially the ANC-government and the National Party playing the African and Coloured communities off against each other. The ANC-government is doing its best to promote a Coloured consciousness and to chase the Coloured community into the arms of the National Party. This has now created a sense of vulnerability within the Coloured community and has created scope for reactionaries such as the National Party and Inkatha to organise amongst the Coloureds. At the same time 'coloured nationalists' are crawling out of the closet as the ANC's approach is giving them a boost.

However, soon after the 1994 elections this rightward development within the Coloured community started to decline, as Coloured people are beginning to see through these charlatans who parade as their protectors. This is reflected in the decline in the Coloured support for the National Party in the Western Cape, and the weakness of overt 'coloured nationalist forces'. For instance, in the municipal elections in Cape Town in 1995 and 1996, the ANC won many Coloured towns from the National Party. A new 'coloured nationalist' Party, the Cape Peoples Congress stood in the municipal elections in Cape Town in 1996, and got even less votes than our organisation. Another new 'coloured nationalist movement' that was formed since in Cape Town, the December 1st Movement, has come and gone.

The WIVL strongly opposes 'coloured nationalism' and any other form of nationalism and continually exposes the attempts of the ANC, National Party and other



reactionaries to divide the black people in this manner.

The criticism that PAGAD is anti-African is completely unfounded. The only reason that PAGAD remained a Coloured-based movement, is due to the nature of segregation in the Western Cape. Gangsterism and drug abuse is a phenomenon in the Coloured townships and not at all in the African townships. In the eighties, a virulent form of gangsterism engulfed the African townships in Cape Town. The communities rose up, instituted armed patrols, and made short work of the gangsters. Within weeks they smashed the gangs. No-one even thought of accusing these communities of being anti-Coloured, because the same situation did not exist in the Coloured areas. Of course, if the Spartacist League is at all consistent it would have denounced these communities as vigilantism. PAGAD has never opposed the government on the grounds that it is an African-government, in fact, in the Western Cape, where PAGAD is based, the National Party is in control. The National Party government in the Western Cape is far from an African government. None of the opponents of PAGAD has ever raised this criticism against it because of its absurdity. There are certainly elements in PAGAD that support a Muslim-state in South Africa, but due to the tiny numbers of muslims in South Africa, they are not taken seriously by anyone. This is also not the position of PAGAD.

#### Downright Slanders

The WV article states, " Both organisations [WIRFI and LRP] joined the NATO imperialists in demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet Red Army from Afghanistan,...in the 1980's...." WIRFI is the Trotskyist international from which we South African comrades broke before forming the WIVL.

Neither the WIRFI nor the LRP called for the withdrawal of the Red Army in Afghanistan. The LRP brought out leaflets in which it exposes this slander for what it really is, and these are available to the interested reader. The WIRFI was only founded in 1990 - therefore it could not have taken this position in the 1980's, or any other position for that matter. In all the time we have been part of the WIRFI, we never came across this alleged demand, because it does not exist. The Spartacist League must admit it is lying, or it must furnish clear proof.

The article states further, " The fact that the WIVL is blind to the reactionary character of such forces [PAGAD] is not surprising, given that it embraced these elements in Afghanistan as a 'lesser evil' to the Soviet intervention forces."

This statement is really surprising! At first the Spartacist League accuses WIRFI of demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan, then it makes a double-leap. It leaps firstly from WIRFI to the WIVL, which was formed in December 1996. This jump is unexplained. The second leap is from demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army to embracing the reactionary Afghan forces, and a quotation is furnished

presenting these reactionaries as the lesser evil.

Considering that the WIVL never demanded withdrawal of the Red Army, nor expressed any form of support for the Afghan reactionaries, where did the Spartacist League get this quotation from? It is clear that the Spartacist League has a huge sack filled with the worst types of lies, slanders and political mud. This quotation hails from this sack. We challenge the Spartacist League (SL) to publish from any of the WIVL's documents the full lesser evil quotation.

When the SL turns into slander-mongering mode, it works itself into a real frenzy. First it creates the false premise that the WIRFI (and the LRP) demanded the withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan, then they erect on this premise the lie that the WIVL "embraced" these reactionaries as the "lesser evil". Now, on top of this house of straw, comes an even more despicable slander, namely that, "The WIVL's support for PAGAD is a measure of its contempt for the necessary struggle for the social liberation of women." Forsooth! IT NEVER RAINS BUT IT POURS!

This is how it works - the lie is spun that the WIVL embraces the Afghan reactionaries, and because the latter are extreme repressors of women, the WIVL has "contempt" for the "struggle for the social liberation of women.". This is sheer mental gymnastics. We reject this slander and this method of false fabrication with the contempt it deserves.

The SL judges, and contemptuously writes off, the WIVL's views and experience on and in the struggle against the oppression of women not on the basis of our record in the struggle, or of our published views, but on the basis of slanders created by itself. Why does the SL not look at our record? Because the concrete struggle does not matter to the SL. It lives in its own world where politics is conducted on paper, something the SL seems to have no shortage of. In this fantasy world the SL creates and recreates struggles, sets up political enemies only to destroy them with staccato bursts of slanders and vilification. The pen is mightier than the sword is taken beyond the realm of symbolism. The SL is the Don Quixote of the left.

Let us dwell a bit on the WIVL's concrete record in the struggle against women's oppression. WIVL comrades, have for years been active in the establishment of women's structures in the labour movement. Some of our comrades play important roles in the labour movement in the struggle against the oppression of women in the work place, in society and in the trade unions. In so doing they do their best to link the liberation of women in a concrete manner to the struggle for socialism. The seriousness with which the WIVL approaches the question of the oppression of women in capitalist society, is reflected for instance in our manifesto for the local government elections in 1996 (we were still part of WIRFI at the time).

We quote the relevant section,

## **" NO SOCIETY IS FREE WHILE ITS WOMEN ARE IN CHAINS**

The oppression of women is rooted in the conditions of the capitalist system. Women have a secondary social status, and are discriminated against in the economy, in many cultures and in politics. They are projected as sex objects, existing mainly for the pleasure of men. The important domestic work done by women, is a vital contribution to the functioning of society. But this work is regarded as of low significance, as work of no real value, and as unworthy of 'men'. Women have been forced into the role of domestic servants over many centuries, and this cannot be tolerated any further. We reject all discrimination against women.

But the liberation of women from domestic labour will not be done through sharing of house work alone, though this is very important. The long term answer lies in the socialisation of domestic work. This means that the state must provide adequate and properly subsidised child care facilities, laundries and community eating houses. These must be non profit-making and subsidised by the state. The standards and quality must also be of the highest. Our councillors will fight for the implementation of these basic rights, and will oppose all forms of women's oppression. Workers International says: **FREE THE WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC DRUDGERY SO THAT THEY CAN TAKE UP THEIR PROPER PLACE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM."**

The working class in South Africa and throughout the world will judge us on our concrete role in the working class movement, and not on the basis of slanders. For the working class lives in the real world of real struggle, and not in the fantasy paper-and-ink world of the Spartacist League.

Another slander directed at the WIVL and the LRP, is that we oppose the struggle for democratic rights for immigrants in South Africa.

Once again this is a sheer distortion. Not only has the WIVL (also while still in the WIRFI) condemned the ANC-government for scape-goating 'illegal' immigrants and for clamping down on them, we call for full citizen rights for all immigrants. We also expose the unwillingness of the trade union leaders to defend the immigrants against the bosses and the state. Our literature is clear on this subject.

Once again we find that the SL is doing its best to undermine the revolutionary work and record of what is today the WIVL. But the truth is concrete and will explode each and every slander.

At a public meeting in Chicago, where our general Secretary spoke on a platform hosted by the LRP, the SL outdid themselves. Not only did they repeat most of the slanders that spice their literature, they added a new one, namely that the forerunner of the WIVL (WIRFI) refused to sign a petition in support of Abu-Jamal. At the meeting this was exposed as a blatant (and new) slander. This was emphasised by reading the following from an article published by the SL, " Thank you for your warm March 10 statement of support for the campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal." ( from Letter to the Workers International...,31 May 1995, signed by Emily Turnbull for the

International Secretariat of the International Communist League/ Spartacist League).  
Do we need to say more?

The SL is so enmeshed in its own slanderous web-spinning that it clearly no longer knows whether it is coming or going. All honest workers and militants must reject this slanderous method as alien to the workers movement.

### Slander as a Political Method

We have exposed very clearly that the Spartacist League has made liberal use of the method of slander in their criticisms of the WIVL. The method of slander is not new to the Marxist movement. At first revolutionaries were slandered by ruling class representatives outside the Marxist movement. The most infamous of this brand of slanderers was Karl Vogt, a German petty bourgeois democrat who in Marx's day slandered Marx and other revolutionaries. Marx dealt with him in his pamphlet, Herr Vogt.

But when the ruling class and its agents could not smash Marxism from without, they tried to do it from within through their agents inside the Marxist movement. The most famous slanderers of this brand has been the Stalinists whose pet subject was the vilification through slander of not only all Trotskyists, but any revolutionary opposition. Trotsky exposed their method in his useful book, The "Stalinist School of Falsification". The Stalinist method of slander has unfortunately found its way inside the Trotskyist movement. The Spartacist League is not the only incorrigible slanderers calling itself Trotskyist, unfortunately. They are in serious competition with one other pseudo-Trotskyist group, namely the North-ites, for the title: Excellence in Slanderers.

The Spartacist League, and the North-ites have written the latest chapter in the history of the slander of revolutionaries, having taken lessons from both Herr Vogt and Herr Stalin.

The WIVL has adopted at its founding congress in December 1996 a platform document in which it denounces the method of slander inside the workers movement.

## STALINOPHOBIA! STALINOPHOBIA!

By far the most serious charge the SL thinks it can level against any revolutionary group is the charge of Stalinophobia. This charge is made against us in the 2 May article, and was already levelled against us by the SL years before. In a letter to us in 1995 (we were then the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International), the SL explained why it supported (critically) the WOSA-based Workers List Party in the 1994 elections in South Africa and why they rejected supporting the WIRFI in the election. They mention two reasons for not supporting us, for the moment we shall focus on the reason of our alleged Stalinophobia. The SL states, "Today, the Slaughterites' [that's now us - author] virulently Stalinophobic election manifesto essentially accuses the ANC of bringing Stalinist gulags to the veld." This quote comes from "Workers Vanguard" no. 602.

Firstly, we need to dismiss the reference that the essence of our manifesto is to accuse the ANC of bringing Stalinist gulags into the veld. This is a massive fabrication and distortion. In essence our manifesto criticises the role of the ANC (with the full complicity of the SACP) as having sold out the interests of the working class and all oppressed "in favour of unity with the capitalists and reactionaries." Our manifesto counterposed the ANC-SACP programme with a "revolutionary, internationalist socialist programme...". We therefore dismiss with the contempt it deserves, the SL's undermining and distortion of our manifesto. Copies of this manifesto is available on request.

What does the SL understand by Stalinophobia? They use the definition of James P. Cannon, which they quote in their letter, "The sentiment of hatred and fear of Stalinism, with its police state and its slave labor camps, its frame-ups and its murders of working class opponents, is healthy, natural, normal, and progressive. This sentiment goes wrong only when it leads to reconciliation with American imperialism, and to the assignment of the fight against Stalinism to the same imperialism. In the language of Trotskyism, that and nothing else is Stalinophobia."

This definition is quite clear, and shows that the SL believes that our manifesto "leads to reconciliation with American imperialism, and to the assignment of the fight against Stalinism to the same imperialism." Thus the Stalinophobics are pro-imperialists. To accuse our manifesto of such heinous views, is once again a gross distortion. We do not use the term Stalinophobia, because it gives a psychological connotation to a seriously flawed, i.e. opportunist, position. But to avoid confusion in this discussion, we shall use the term for the moment.

Our manifesto makes a powerful criticism of capitalism and imperialism and calls clearly for its overthrow and for the establishment of a socialist society. Not in our manifesto, nor anywhere else do we make any concessions to capitalism and imperialism. Nor do we criticise Stalinism from similar premises as does imperialism, but from opposite premises. To claim that our criticisms of Stalinism lead us to reconcile with American imperialism (or any other imperialism) is a plain insult. Our criticisms of Stalinism have nothing in common with imperialism. Our manifesto clearly explains the role of the Fourth International in the struggle against Stalinism, and emphasises our support for the rebuilding of the Fourth International. How then can a case be made that we assign

the fight against Stalinism to imperialism? To answer our own question - only by means of distortionist mental gymnastics!

The SL letter puts up a weak substantiation, " Nowhere in some fifteen manifesto paragraphs devoted to condemning Stalinism do you mention that there was anything for the international proletariat to defend in the collectivised and planned economies. Nowhere do you state that the restoration of capitalism in these countries represents a world historic defeat for the international working class. Thus your program was fundamentally a capitulation to bourgeois anti-Communism."

Firstly, it must be remembered that an election manifesto is not the party programme but draws on it. It is quite amazing that we did manage to devote such a lot of space in the manifesto to international questions. No, we could not bring in all issues we wanted to nor in the manner we wanted to. Yet, the above-quoted criticisms of the SL are again unfounded. The manifesto clearly rejects the restoration of capitalism and it criticises the Stalinists for taking a leading role in this restoration. Rejecting of capitalist restoration is clearly a defense of the nationalised property. Why do we reject it if it is not a defeat for the working class? It is well-known (also by the SL) that the international we then belonged to, the WIRFI, rejected capitalist restoration and defended the nationalised property. We supported this position. Why then does the SL present our position as supporting capitalist restoration and as not defending the nationalised property in the Stalinist or ex-Stalinist states? We by now know that the SL is not only a stranger to honesty and truth, but there is really no limit to its baselessness? Our manifesto opens with the following lines, " The apologists for imperialism and capitalism gleefully proclaim that communism and socialism are dead; that socialism has no place in the future of humanity because it has proven itself to be unworkable. The proof for these lies is supplied by the collapse of the regimes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. But it is not socialism or communism that collapsed, but counter-revolutionary Stalinism." Yet the SL accuses our manifesto of capitulating to bourgeois anti-communism. The bourgeoisie identifies communism with Stalinism, and does not reject Stalinism because of its anti-working class and anti-communist features. It is precisely because of these anti-communist features of Stalinism that world imperialism co-operated with it for decades! Our criticisms of Stalinism is a defense of communism!

It is quite clear from the above, that by comparing our election manifesto of 1994 with the SL's definition of Stalinophobia, our manifesto is in fact far from Stalinophobic, and that the SL's accusation does not stand up to its own definition.

The SL's accusation of Stalinophobia is fully justified in relation to the Namibian WRP's (section of the WIRFI) participation in a popular frontist electoral alliance in 1989. But the SL totally misrepresents our record on this matter. The SL letter states, " Your comrades [our comrades -author] told us in September that your Cape Town group had joined this international around the time of the Namibian elections. But your organisation has never, to our knowledge, condemned the Namibian WRP for acting as a tool for BOSS." Firstly, we did not join the international "around the time" of the Namibian elections, but more than a year thereafter. We never gave any support to the popular frontist alliance but criticised it on serious political grounds from our first contact with the international. Before joining the international we first met the Namibian WRP, and we

put our criticism on the alliance to them. Their reply was that their own organisation was busy reviewing the alliance and that it was divided on whether they had pursued a correct position or not. After meeting the Namibians, we met with South African members of the international, and we put our same criticisms to them. Amongst their members were three members of the international executive committee. None of them defended the alliance. In fact they criticised the alliance themselves and blamed it on incorrect information on the ground. We did not accept the justification and called for a public balance sheet of the alliance. This was also the position we took into the international when we joined it. Next we raised our criticism with Slaughter when he visited South Africa. He also did not defend the alliance - his position was that when the Namibians joined the then Preparatory Committee (forerunner of the WIRFI) they had already entered the alliance and presented the Preparatory Committee with a fait accompli. We rejected this excuse as lame. Throughout our four years in the international, we fought for a proper and public balance sheet on this alliance. For instance, when the international was busy debating a programmatic basis (called the twenty one points) for a Liaison Committee with the LIT, we had this to say, "... a balance sheet should be drawn up on the alliance of the WRP (Namibia) with the pro-imperialist petty bourgeois reactionary UDF during the independence elections, as well as similar alliances which the LIT got involved in during previous years, for instance, alliances with Peronists." In our final split document, we again deal with this question. Therefore, we are quite proud of our principled and consistent stand in relation to the Namibian popular frontist alliance.

If we did not see the Namibian alliance as an isolated incident (which it was at the time) and if the international's leadership defended the alliance, we would certainly not have joined the international. We certainly did not "condemn" the Namibian WRP because our organisation then did not exist. We would have denounced them in the strongest terms had our organisation been active at the time of the elections. Condemnation a year after the fact would have served no constructive political purpose. We saw them as misguided revolutionaries with whom we had to struggle over this issue in order to win them over to a consistent revolutionary position.

The SL letter accuses us of uncritically supporting the Namibian WRP in the 1994 Namibian elections. This was natural seeing that we were in the same international. However, the Namibian WRP in 1994 did not have any alliance or working relation with the Namibian UDF or any other petty bourgeois organisation. They ran on a clearly revolutionary ticket and our organisation is proud of the fact that we sent a number of comrades to Namibia for weeks to assist those comrades with their campaign. We would not hold the Namibian WRP responsible for all time for a past error. We do not believe in the conception of original sin! We still, of course, fought within the international for a proper balance sheet of the popular frontist alliance.

We have shown clearly that our organisation never held a line that could be called Stalinophobic and that we have in fact fought against the Stalinophobic line in the international on the Namibian popular frontist alliance. We have shown how the SL distorts our views, record and work endlessly. But the SL's criticisms of our views on Stalinism are far from innocent - there is another side to the SL's distortionist position. **By denouncing our correct criticisms of Stalinism, the SL ends up defending Stalinism**

from our criticisms. We now need to look closer at this so that we can see what lurks beneath the SL's criticisms and distortions.

The SL's position on Stalinism amounts to an extreme form of opportunism in relation to the Stalinists and sectarianism in relation to the working class. We shall illustrate this by using two examples. We start with the Soviet Union. In August 1991 an unsuccessful coup was attempted using Moscow as its head-quarters. The intention of the coup plotters was not to defend the gains of October, but to crush the working class which managed to win numerous political freedoms as a direct result of the crisis of Stalinism. The working class and middle class spontaneously took to the streets denouncing and defying the coup. The coup plotters had no mass support. When Yeltsin saw the depth of the opposition to the coup, he opportunistically went to the head of the protests and seized the leadership. We denounced the Stalinist coup, urged workers to resist it and at the same time we linked this resistance to a struggle for socialism and against restoration. We warned the working class against Yeltsin and his ilk. That was the only correct line. What was the position of the SL? We quote from their letter, "If the Stalinist coup committee had in fact mounted serious opposition to Yeltsin, the ICL [SL-author] would have blocked with it militarily. The ICL issued a statement ...which called to sweep away the counterrevolutionary rabble mobilized and organized by Yeltsin." This short statement is riddled with problems. The SL likes to present the opposition to the coup as organised by Yeltsin, which helps them to characterise the entire protest as counter-revolutionary. As shown above this is a fallacy. Yeltsin managed to assume leadership over the protests not because the protestors were counter-revolutionary, but due to the lack of revolutionary leadership, something to which the SL contributed with its opportunist and sectarian line. We see from the above quotation that the SL would have supported the coup plotters if they had imposed their coup by shooting down the protestors! The bloody-minded SL was willing to participate in such a slaughter of the working class (military bloc)! The SL was baying for the blood of the working class. The Russian section of the WIRFI was also active in the protests agitating along the lines explained above. Because Yeltsin opportunistically moved to assume leadership of the protests (which were protests and not an organisation) the SL accuses the WIRFI of fighting on Yeltsin's barricades. The SL cannot see the contradictory relationship between Yeltsin and the protestors (who came from different classes and who had different programmes), it cannot see the struggle for direction over the protests, and gives Yeltsin credit for the protests, which was precisely what the imperialist did, so that they could present him as the leader of the Russian people. Is this not a case of not being able to see the wood for the trees?

Our second and last example is Poland. The SL refused to support the struggle of Solidarity against the Stalinist regime, on the grounds that Walesa was an imperialist agent and that Solidarity was priest-infested. The millions of workers who joined Solidarity did so not because they supported imperialism. They did not call for capitalist restoration but their demands were for a return to socialism as opposed to Stalinism. When Jaruzelski cracked down on Solidarity with brutal force, the SL supported him fully! This opportunism in relation to the Stalinists and sectarianism in relation to the workers, have led to the SL having the blood of workers on its hands.

The accusation of Stalinophobia is nothing but a defense of this opportunism and sectarianism, which in our opinion is reactionary. We are therefore proud that the SL



did not support us (even critically) in the 1994 or subsequent election. We can fully understand why the SL gave the centrist WOSA-based Workers List Party (WLP), which stood in the 1994 election on a reformist programme, critical support. WOSA, which is influenced by the politics of USEC and the Lambertists, has a strong Pabloite tendency in relation to Stalinism. Incidentally, the WLP 1994 election manifesto does not mention a word about Stalinism, which was much more comfortable for the SL than our revolutionary criticisms of Stalinism. The SL opposes the WLP's conception of a reformist mass party and stands for a revolutionary mass party. Yet it gave support to the WLP which was founded on and which participated in the elections on the very basis of a reformist party. On the other hand our organisation rejected the WLP conception of a reformist party and stood clearly on the conception of a revolutionary party, yet the SL refused to support us and instead denounced us. We do not think that the SL is in this case merely not practising what it is preaching. The truth is that the SL's revolutionism and Trotskyism is barren and completely cock-eyed. Politically, the WOSA/WLP's Pabloism and reformism is much closer to the SL's reactionary opportunism and sectarianism than our revolutionary programme ever will be.

#### CONCLUSION:

The distortions and slanders meted out against our organisation by the SL, and the latter's reactionary views that we deal with above, will show every class conscious worker the true nature of this outfit. We find it ludicrous that an organisation with such a method and such views can regard itself as a Trotskyist organisation. We believe that it is our duty to forewarn the working class about petty bourgeois opportunistic charlatans such as the SL that parade under the banner of Trotskyism. As far as we are concerned, judging by the views of the SL and its role as an underminer of the political work of genuine revolutionaries, the SL is in essence not a Trotskyist organisation but an ex-patriate wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The 2 May article in "Workers Vanguard" gives us a welcome opportunity to expose the pretentiousness of this strange organisation:

The WIVL is a small organisation but with strong roots in the South African working class. Our conduct in the working class struggle is consistent, and our political record is spotless. In the struggle we are judged, and shall continue to be judged on the basis of our record in the real struggle of the working class, and not on the basis of distortions, slanders, and false political criticisms.

We call on all revolutionaries and revolutionary organisations to defend our organisation against the above slanders and distortions.

# A Reply to the Workers International Vanguard League

In the spring of 1997, the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) sponsored a US speaking tour for the Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL), a recent split from the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (WIRFI), whose largest component was Cliff Slaughter's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain. In an article published in *Workers Vanguard*, we noted that what the South African WIVL and the American Shachtmanite LRP have in common is their virulent Stalinophobia:

"The WIRFI's Trotskyism' was strictly on paper. In practice, just like the LRP, it supported capitalist-restorationist forces across the board. Both organizations joined the NATO imperialists in demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet Red Army from Afghanistan, where it was fighting CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries, in the 1980s; hailed counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc (the only "union" in the world supported by imperialist politicians like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher); and supported Boris Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary coup in Russia in August 1991. In short, the LRP and WIRFI opposed Stalinism *from the right*, or in bloc with the right."

—"LRP's South Africa Lash-Up," *WV* No. 667, 2 May 1997

We also pointed out that the WIRFI's track record in southern Africa was one of indiscriminately supporting all sorts of unsavoury and reactionary forces, including pro-apartheid elements, as long as they hated the South African Communist Party (SACP), the African National Congress (ANC) and their allies. In 1989, WIRFI's Namibian section participated in an electoral lash-up, which included several bantustan parties who openly collaborated with South Africa. This electoral lash-up called the United Democratic Front received money from the apartheid government, which was anxious to undercut the vote for the petty-bourgeois nationalist SWAPO. Yet the group that became WIVL joined WIRFI two years later, so little disturbed were they by this obscene political betrayal. They then remained in the same international organisation with Slaughter and his Namibian group for five years. And after having quit WIRFI, the WIVL has taken up the cudgels for People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), a reactionary anti-woman, anti-immigrant, anti-black vigilante organisation centred in the Coloured community of the Western Cape and dominated by Islamic fundamentalists.

In response to the article in *Workers Vanguard*, the WIVL penned a 19-page "open letter" to the Spartacist League. This letter is a pristine example of national parochialism. Thus, they whine pathetically that we are lying about their position on Afghanistan, because we do not cite documents written by the WIVL itself. Yet

WIVL's cadres spent five years as a section of Slaughter's WIRFI. The positions of WIRFI on the Russian Question are well-documented (see below), as are those of Gerry Healy's earlier WRP, from which Slaughter's organisation spun out in 1985. In a similar vein, the WIVL takes great umbrage because we asserted that they have "contempt for the necessary struggle for the social liberation of women." Apparently for WIVL, their line on Afghanistan, their support to Catholic clericalist Solidarnosc in Poland, not to mention their courting of PAGAD closer to home, has no bearing on their attitude to women's liberation.

Claiming that the Spartacist League "has made liberal use of the method of slander," WIVL asserts that "The Spartacist League, and the North-ites have written the latest chapter in the history of the slander of revolutionaries, having taken lessons from both Herr Vogt and Herr Stalin." Karl Vogt took money from the French government of Louis Bonaparte, spreading lies about Marx and Engels; i.e., Vogt was a police agent. Look who's calling us agents of the bourgeois state! WIVL's disgusting allegation that we are in the tradition of Stalin or Karl Vogt is really rich, coming from people whose international collaborators have taken money from all sorts of reactionary bourgeois regimes.

A Control Commission of Healy/Slaughter/North's "International Committee" reported that over a million pounds British sterling had been received from various oil-rich Middle East dictators in Libya, Kuwait, Iraq and elsewhere. In return for this funding, the Healyites rendered an assortment of "services" to their benefactors. In 1979, with Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath regime moving to behead the workers movement, Healy and Slaughter's WRP railed against "counterrevolutionary Stalinism" and applauded the execution of 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party. None of Healy's epigones, including Slaughter or US Workers League top dog David North, ever objected to the vicious betrayals perpetrated by their organisation to get the money when it was coming in. On the contrary, they later "moved in to depose Healy not *because* of the receipt of that money, but because that money *dried up*" (*Spartacist* No. 43-44, Summer 1989).

Although the monetary payoff may have been less, what the Namibian WRP did in Namibia, in accepting money from the blood-drenched apartheid regime, was in principle no different. Yet in their "open letter," WIVL continues to defend uniting with the Namibian Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP). They claim that they opposed what the Namibian WRP did in the elections, and claim that they raised the issue on several occasions. But in their pathetic apology, WIVL cynically argues that it was not worth making a principle of this, once the elections were over:

"We would have denounced them in the strongest terms had our organisation been active at the time of the elections. Condemnation a year after the fact would have served no constructive political purpose. We saw them as misguided revolutionaries with whom we had to struggle over this issue in order to win them over to a consistent revolutionary position."

Referring to people who take money from the apartheid state's secret police as "misguided revolutionaries" means spitting on the graves of the tens of thousands of militants murdered and tortured by this regime!

## The Russian Question

The majority of the groups in South Africa that claim the mantle of "Trotskyism" were strongly influenced by the British fake left. At bottom, the virulent anti-Sovietism of Gerry Healy and Cliff Slaughter, no less so than that of the open anti-Trotskyist renegade Tony Cliff, reflected the gravitational pull of the social democratic British Labour Party. Healy (and Slaughter) supported every movement that sought the demise of the Soviet Union, from Khomeini to the Afghan *mujahedin* to Polish Solidarnosc. Their political dalliance with the LRP underscores the WIVL's sham "Trotskyism." The LRP, a linear descendant of Max Shachtman's organisation in the US, openly denied that the Soviet Union was a workers state. Reflecting the pressures of the liberal pro-imperialist milieu in the US, Shachtman reneged on the obligation for unconditional military defence of the USSR at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact. Trotsky collaborated closely with James P. Cannon to wage an important faction fight in the American Socialist Workers Party in defence of Marxism against the Shachtmanites.

Unlike the pseudo-Trotskyists who pledged allegiance to their own imperialist bourgeoisies by supporting all manner of capitalist restorationists, we in the International Communist League (ICL, previously the international Spartacist tendency) stood for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy that undermined the October Revolution. That is our position today with respect to the remaining deformed workers states: Cuba, China, Vietnam and North Korea.

Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has meant an unparalleled disaster for the working masses in these countries and around the world. Capitalist restoration has meant wholesale immiseration, massive unemployment, and the explosion of communalist and fascist violence. The destruction of the USSR has led to an escalation of interimperialist rivalries, pushing the world closer to

imperialist war. There has been a dramatic retrogression in the political consciousness of the working class and leftist youth, who are bombarded by the bourgeois lie that "communism is dead." Numerous fake left outfits have joined the imperialists in trying to bury the legacy of the Russian Revolution, i.e., the struggle for proletarian state power, which requires the forging of an international Leninist vanguard party.

Trotsky himself had warned of the "tragic possibility" of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union:

"But in the event of this worst possible variant, a tremendous significance for the subsequent course of the revolutionary struggle will be borne by the question: *where* are those guilty for the catastrophe? Not the slightest taint of guilt must fall upon the revolutionary internationalists. In the hour of mortal danger, they must remain on the last barricade." ("The Class Nature of the Soviet State," October 1933)

The momentous events in the former USSR and Eastern Europe provided an *acid test* for all groups claiming to be revolutionary. In addition to the important points of application today of the historic Trotskyist position of Soviet defencism, everywhere the Russian question is the fight for socialist revolution and its international extension. Historically, abandonment of the Trotskyist programme on the Russian question is defined by capitulation to bourgeois pressure on a particular national terrain. This applies precisely to the WIVL and its predecessors, whose default on the obligation of unconditional military defence of the USSR is reflected in its embrace of bourgeois nationalism and anti-communism in South Africa.

## Once Again, on Afghanistan

Cold War II was ushered in by the imperialists' hysterical response to the Soviet Army's intervention in Afghanistan. In 1979, the Soviet Red Army intervened in a civil war between the left-nationalist, modernising People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime against Islamic reactionaries and to protect the USSR's crucial southern flank against imperialist incursion. This bloody civil war began when the *mujahedin* rose in armed rebellion after the left-nationalist government sought to implement some minimal reforms: land distribution, freeing women from the veil, lowering the bride price and offering education for girls. Such elementary democratic reforms can be explosive in a horribly backward country like Afghanistan. It was the first and only time in modern history that a civil war was ignited centrally by the issue of women's oppression.

US imperialism mobilised a massive CIA-backed operation against the Soviet-backed PDPA forces, funnelling US\$2 billion to arm the Afghan *mujahedin* cut-throats. Declaring war against attempts to alleviate the oppression of women, the Afghan mullahs summarily executed schoolteachers who taught young

girls how to read and write. Captured Red Army soldiers were later subjected to heinous tortures, including being skinned alive. The victory of the Islamic insurgents in Afghanistan has meant perpetuating and intensifying feudal and pre-feudal enslavement of women.

While the imperialists whipped up a furore over "poor little Afghanistan" we in the ICL said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend Social Gains of October to Afghan Peoples!" Although the Brezhnev bureaucracy certainly did not intervene from the perspective of proletarian internationalism, we pointed out that a prolonged Soviet military occupation would likely mean the integration of Afghanistan with the economy of the USSR, thereby posing social liberation of a society saturated with medieval backwardness.

Our fight for Red Army victory in Afghanistan was *counterpoised* to the half-hearted policies of the Soviet bureaucracy. We fought for a proletarian political revolution in the USSR, pointing out that the Kremlin gang was perfectly capable of selling out the Afghan peoples in order to placate the imperialists. When Gorbachev pulled the Soviet troops out, we offered to the Afghan government that we would organise an international brigade to fight against the CIA-backed *mujahedin*. Not least this would have served to awaken the revolutionary internationalist consciousness of Soviet workers and soldiers in the direction of proletarian political revolution. We sought to fight counterrevolution while there was still time: far better to defeat counterrevolution in Afghanistan than be defeated by it later in the Soviet Union.

While accusing us of making up lies about their positions on Afghanistan, WIVL in fact refuses to state anywhere in their 19-page diatribe where they stand on this issue. But it is not hard to document the positions of the international lash-up of which they were a part. Gerry Healy's "International Committee for the Fourth International" (ICFI) chimed in with the imperialists' denunciation of the Soviet Union, calling the actions of the Soviet Army "a brutal campaign of military and police repression against a semi-colonial people" whose "national rights were being criminally violated" and stated that "the movement of the Red Army into Afghanistan" was "aimed at sealing off the radical impulse of the [Khomeini-led] Iranian Revolution" (*Bulletin*, 8 July 1986). After the Healyite organisation imploded in 1985, the WRP run by Cliff Slaughter never repudiated the positions on the Russian Question taken by Healy, Slaughter & Co. Thus in 1986, Bob Archer of Slaughter's WRP wrote our British comrades that the WRP "defends the rights of Polish workers to have free trades unions, and we demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan" (letter dated April 28, 1986, cited in *Spartacist*, No. 38-39, Summer 1986). Two years later, the Slaughterites' theoretical journal polemicised against the Trotskyist understanding that Stalinism is a contradictory phenomena, arguing that

Stalinism is "counterrevolutionary through and through" and citing as proof "the invasion" of Afghanistan.

"Thus the counter-revolutionary military invasion of Afghanistan has today created that confused and contradictory situation where the USSR will be dangerously weakened, no less by the strengthening of the position of imperialism in the Middle East (in the case of withdrawal of Soviet troops) than by continuing to occupy the country against the will and the self-determination of the majority of the Afghan people and in face of disapproval of workers the world over." ("The Ten Point Call Expanded," *Journal of the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists*, vol. 2 No. 1, Autumn 1988)

The line of the "Preparatory Committee" (the organisational predecessor of WIRFI) shamefully echoes bourgeois reactionaries who raised a hue and cry over Afghanistan's "self-determination." In fact the right of self-determination manifestly did not apply to Afghanistan, which is not a nation at all but a pre-industrial society of different peoples and tribes with little or no indigenous proletariat. Moreover, what is fundamental here are the *class* considerations: this was a military conflict between a degenerated workers state and a gang of reactionary 'cut-throats armed by the imperialists. The right of self-determination, like all democratic rights, would be subordinate to the military defence of a workers state.

The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan was followed shortly afterward by counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc taking power in Poland, capitalist reunification of Germany, and Yeltsin's coup in Moscow in 1991. In their "open letter," WIVL says we "refused to support the struggle of Solidarity against the Stalinist regime, on the grounds that Walesa was an imperialist agent and that Solidarity was priest-infested." This is quoted as though it was an outrage, rather than a forthright statement of the truth. While the rest of the left joined hands with the bourgeoisie in singing "solidarity with Solidarity," the International Spartacist Tendency exposed Solidarnosc as a counterrevolutionary clerical nationalist organisation. When the Cold War burned red-hot in the 1980s, this was *the key question* that separated the Spartacists from every other tendency claiming to be Trotskyist internationally.

By the time of its founding conference in September 1981, Solidarnosc had consolidated around a counterrevolutionary programme of clerical reaction, support to anti-communist "free trade unions" and capitalist restoration through bourgeois parliamentarism and liquidation of the planned, collectivised economy. But even earlier, in August 1980, when Solidarnosc first emerged in a wave of strikes, they were mobilising significant sections of the working class against the bureaucracy in the name of the Polish eagle, the Vatican's cross and "free elections." We noted then the powerful influence of clericalism on Solidarnosc, and we said that many of the demands raised by

Solidarnosc's core Gdansk shipyard workers were *reactionary*. For example, one of their demands was for access to the mass media for the Roman Catholic church (See *Spartacist*, No. 30 "A Workers Poland Yes! The Pope's Poland No!" Autumn 1980). Not a few hard-core Solidarnosc supporters found a haven in **white supremacist** South Africa in the 1980s. In 1993 SACP leader Chris Hani was assassinated by one of these scum, Janusz Walus, an émigré Polish fascist who in South Africa linked up with the Conservative Party's right-wing conspiracy that included the Nazi paramilitary Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB).

In December 1981, we supported Jaruzelski's preventive coup, which spiked Solidarnosc's bid for power. In this situation it was in order for Marxists to enter into a united front "with the Thermidorean section of the bureaucracy against open attack by capitalist counterrevolution" (in the words of the Transitional Programme, the founding programme of the Fourth International). This position is premised on the fact that the bureaucracy was not a class but a brittle *caste*, resting on proletarian property forms, while serving as a transmission belt for the pressures of imperialism. Thus at times the bureaucracy was constrained to defend—in a bureaucratic fashion—the workers state in order to protect its own privileges. Simultaneously, in myriad other ways it was undermining the workers state. Hence, as Trotsky emphasised, "the Stalinist clique must be overthrown. But it is the revolutionary proletariat who must overthrow it. The proletariat cannot subcontract this work to the imperialists. In spite of Stalin, the proletariat defends the USSR from imperialist attack" ("Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" November 1937). WIRFI's false view that the bureaucracy was "counterrevolutionary through and through" simply boils down to the proposition that *anyone*, however reactionary, should be supported against the Stalinists, i.e., "subcontracting the work" of overthrowing Stalinism to counterrevolutionaries like Lech Walesa and Boris Yeltsin.

While supporting Jaruzelski's preventive coup, we pointed out that it was the Stalinist bureaucracy that had driven the Polish working class into the arms of the Vatican. We insisted that the Stalinist godfathers of Poland's crisis were incapable of politically defeating Solidarnosc and that it was necessary to forge a Trotskyist party that could lead a proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucracy. What is decisive is from which *class* standpoint the Stalinist bureaucracy is opposed. We called for a return to the authentic communism of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg to root out the sources of counterrevolution.

Naturally now that the Polish workers have gone through the brutal experience of Walesa's capitalist restorationist government, many ostensible Trotskyists no longer consider it fashionable to be openly cheerleading for Solidarnosc. So WIVL today argues that the millions of Polish workers who joined

Solidarnosc were subsequently "hi-jacked" by Walesa but that it would have been a sectarian error not to support this fake "union." WIVL assumes that a mass movement cannot possibly be reactionary. But as Trotsky wrote: "The masses are by no means identical: there are revolutionary masses, there are passive masses, there are reactionary masses. The very same masses are at different times inspired by different moods and objectives. It is for just this reason that a centralized organization of the vanguard is indispensable" ("The Moralists and Sycophants Against Marxism," 1939).

The consequences and political conclusions one draws from anti-communist positions such as WIVL's on Poland are hardly abstract. For example, Healy/Slaughter's WRP played a strikebreaking role in setting up British miners' leader Arthur Scargill. The WRP attacked Scargill for his unexceptional remark that Polish Solidarnosc was an "anti-socialist organisation". As the battle lines were being drawn for the 1984-5 British miners' strike, the WRP featured an article in their press screaming for Scargill's blood for his opposition to Walesa's company union. This "exposé" was timed for maximum coverage in the capitalist press so that it could be wielded by the Cold War British labour tops to isolate the militant miners union on the eve of their strike—a crucial class battle that polarised British society. On a modest scale, our tendency worked with our defence organisation, the Partisan Defence Committee, to raise funds for the British miners, in the face of hostility from the American AFL-CIO labour tops who considered Scargill a dangerous "red."

When the decisive hour came in the Soviet Union, WIRFI was on the barricades cheering for capitalist counterrevolution. In August 1991, in response to a pathetic coup staged by the "state emergency committee," Boris Yeltsin led a successful counter coup, which put the forces of counterrevolution in the ascendancy. The WIRFI supported Yeltsin—indeed, they had a banner on Yeltsin's barricades. WIVL says in its open letter:

"The intention of the coup plotters was not to defend the gains of October but to crush the working class which managed to win numerous political freedoms as a direct result of the crisis of Stalinism. The working class and middle class spontaneously took to the streets.... When Yeltsin saw the depth of the opposition to the coup he opportunistically went to the head of the protests and seized the leadership. We denounced the Stalinist coup [and] urged workers to resist it...."

Alexei Gusev, WIRFI's representative on Yeltsin's barricades, reported at the time that the people there "were surprised to see a red flag." That's because, far from this being a proletarian outpouring, the crowd at Yeltsin's "white house" was overwhelmingly composed of small businessmen, speculators, yuppies, and assorted Russian nationalists, including fascists and priests. The WIVL line that the main enemy was the Stalinist coup

plotters coincided exactly with the line of the imperialists. Of course, the pathetic coup plotters, supporters of perestroika, were not committed to maintaining collectivised property relations. But the cutting edge of counterrevolution was the Yeltsin gang, which was supported by every imperialist power in the world. WIVL's talk about defending democratic rights simply echoes Yeltsin's imperialist backers and their social democratic lackeys, who claimed Yeltsin was for "democracy"—freedom and democracy for the capitalist exploiters, to be sure! "To claim that our criticisms of Stalinism lead us to reconcile with American imperialism (or any other imperialism) is a plain insult," WIVL sneers at us. But that's exactly what their line on the Soviet Union—and Poland and Afghanistan—boils down to. In doing their small bit to promote Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary forces in the name of "anti-Stalinism," WIRFI/WIVL are accomplices in the catastrophe of capitalist restoration in the USSR.

The ICL stood on the other side of the class line. Spartacists distributed throughout the Soviet Union over 100,000 copies in Russian of our August 1991 article, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" There we wrote that workers mobilisations should have cleaned out the counterrevolutionary rabble on Yeltsin's barricades, thus opening the road to proletarian political revolution. We fought for the formation of independent workers committees to take over the plants, as the basis for genuine soviets drawing in collective farmers, oppressed minorities, working women, Red Army soldiers and officers, etc. We called for the formation of workers militias to defend workers, Communist Party members, Jews and other minorities against Yeltsinite reactionaries and racist pogromists. The absence of resistance by a working class that had been betrayed and atomised by decades of Stalinist misrule and fierce repression was the decisive factor in the destruction of the Soviet workers state in 1991-2.

It is perhaps not accidental that the WIVL does not mention our work in Germany in 1989-90. The ICL mobilised to the extent of our resources to intervene in what began as an incipient political revolution in the DDR. We were the only ones who opposed capitalist reunification; we called "For workers and soldiers soviets" and "For a Red Soviet Germany." In January 1990, we initiated a rally against the fascist desecration of a memorial to the Red Army soldiers who smashed Hitler's Nazis. Some 250,000 demonstrators heard a straightforward political counterposition between the speakers of the ICL versus those of the East German Stalinists, who sold out the East German deformed workers state. The ICL representatives told the truth: that only a political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats in the DDR and a socialist revolution to overthrow capitalism in West Germany could stop capitalist reunification.

## WIVL's Nationalism and Anti-Communism in South Africa

The ANC-led "tripartite alliance" is a *nationalist popular front*, in which the South African Communist Party and SACP-dominated leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) tie the black working class to the bourgeois nationalist ANC. The election of Nelson Mandela as the country's first black president in 1994 brought to power a neo-apartheid regime with black frontmen administering capitalism on behalf of the Randlords and their senior partners on Wall Street and in the city of London. The economic base of the old apartheid system—the superexploitation of black labour by the white capitalists—remains while the political superstructure has undergone a radical change. The capitalist ANC government has not and will not deliver on its promises to the oppressed masses. Thus, in order to maintain itself in power the ANC necessarily must pit sections of the non-white oppressed masses against each other.

Thus, in our press we have stressed that if the seething discontent of the masses does not find expression along *class lines*, it will fuel and embitter every other kind of division. In February 1997, one Basil Douglas, a prominent right-wing demagogue elected on the slate of Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party, organised protests against government attempts to force payments of back rates and rent. The mainly Coloured protest in Johannesburg's Eldorado Park, while posing legitimate grievances, was saturated with a virulent anti-black thrust. For its part, ANC spokesmen like Tokyo Sexwale asserted that the Coloureds deserved the police repression meted out to them because they had more "privileges" than blacks. Meanwhile, immigrants, mainly from elsewhere in Africa, are regularly subjected to persecution and deportation.

To say this is only to speak the bitter truth about the reality of neo-apartheid oppression. But according to the WIVL acknowledging the real and dramatic expressions of division along colour, national and tribal lines in Mandela's neo-apartheid society makes you a crypto-racist. Indeed, they assert that "The Spartacists promote racial divisions in South Africa." For the WIVL, divisions among the oppressed were an artificial concoction of the former apartheid regime; the masses are supposedly spontaneously opposed to any form of racialism. They write: "In South Africa non-racialism has very strong roots among the black masses. Tribal consciousness still exist[s] in South Africa, but is constantly declining. At the same time the sense of belonging to the South African nation, is much stronger than any tribal or group consciousness amongst the black masses."

Along similar lines, they write that "before apartheid was imposed on the country, Coloured people not only were not known as Coloureds, but lived freely in mixed areas." This is to really prettify pre-apartheid South Africa. In fact, the National Party government

that came to power in 1948 did not invent divide-and-rule; the racist British imperialists were past masters at this. Even in the ostensibly "liberal" Cape Province, where there was a formal Coloured franchise until apartheid, property qualifications and other restrictions were used to defranchise the vast majority of the proletarian and plebeian Coloured populace. African blacks lost the right to vote in the Cape Province in the 1930s. Elsewhere in South Africa, including in British-dominated Natal, only whites had the franchise from before the founding of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

Nor was there spontaneous "unity of the oppressed." The liberal Coloured rights group, the African Political (later People's) Organisation, which was founded in 1902 (ten years before the ANC), oscillated between supporting the broader struggles of the black majority and expressing outward contempt toward black Africans. The Indian politician Gandhi gained his first political spurs through his campaigns to defend the rights of Indians in South Africa; at the same time, he ostentatiously *refused* to defend the rights of black Africans. Indeed, Gandhi demonstrated his loyalty to the British Empire both during the Boer War and the 1906 Bambata Rebellion, when the British savagely quelled armed resistance by Zulus against imposition of a poll tax.

Although the apartheid regime sought to institutionalise a system of racial castes, as well as establishing separate "tribal homelands," it was palpably obvious to all sections of the non-white masses that they were denied rights. Thus, ironically, divisions among the oppressed were somewhat softened under apartheid. But contrary to what WIVL asserts, South Africa is not a nation, nor is there anything progressive about "nation building" in South Africa. (For a more detailed discussion of this, please see our article "Letter to the New Unity Movement," published in the ICL pamphlet, *The Fight for a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left*). WIVL buys into the big lie by the ANC and its supporters that "national liberation" and racial equality can be achieved within the framework of capitalism.

While proclaiming publicly that South Africa is a "rainbow nation" where everyone has opportunity, the ANC deliberately plays different sections of the oppressed against each other, as noted above. The fake left either tails after the ANC or it champions different particular oppressed sectors. Such is the case with WIVL. Predominantly situated in the Western Cape, where there is a large Coloured population, WIVL adapts to the particular provincial pressures of this area. Hence, its denial of the past and present reality of Coloured nationalism, and its attempts to trivialise the significance of the elections in the Western Cape in 1994, where DeKlerk's National Party rolled up a large vote by whipping up anti-black sentiments. The emergence of assorted separatist Coloured parties in the recent period further puts the lie to the rhetoric of a

"unitary South Africa."

A case in point is WIVL's courting of PAGAD, a reactionary vigilante "anti-drug" organisation centred in the coloured community of the Western Cape and dominated by Islamic fundamentalists. In the fall of 1996 (prior to WIVL's split) the WIRFI issued a leaflet virtually uncritical of PAGAD. Despite WIVL's attempt to claim that PAGAD only recently came under the sway of Muslim reactionaries, over two years ago it was parading with banners proclaiming "We Fear No One But Allah 'God'." In its most recent apology, WIVL "overlooks" the fact that Qibla, PAGAD's armed wing, is led by elements who fought alongside the *mujahedin* cut-throats in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

Today WIVL continues to soft-pedal the anti-black/communal character of PAGAD. Thus they seek to explain that PAGAD has no black African membership by asserting that today in the Western Cape, "Gangsterism and drug abuse is a phenomenon in the Coloured townships and not at all in the African townships." Talk about Coloured nationalism and blinkered parochialism! Finally after excoriating us for pages as "sectarians," they concede that "Thus today, and this can only be said for the past few months, PAGAD has become a Muslim fundamentalist organisation." So who was right? But even while acknowledging that PAGAD is a "divisive, sectarian and right-wing petty bourgeois movement," they argue that "we must not turn our backs on those workers who are misled by the petty bourgeois sectarians" and "it remains our duty to try to break them from their current misleadership." Hitler's fascist cadre also had plebeian and working class elements; yet it ought to be self-evident that communists would not orient to winning over Hitler's brown-shirted streetfighters. But for WIVL, apparently no "mass movement"—whether it be Solidarnosc or PAGAD—is too reactionary to tail!

Caught out, they try to cover their tracks by accusing us of siding with the bourgeois state. "By opposing the call to defend PAGAD against the capitalist state, the Spartacist League is clearly supporting the state in its attacks against PAGAD," WIVL sputters. As anyone reading our article can ascertain, we never called on the government to prosecute PAGAD, because we recognise that it is in the first place the capitalist class and its state that foments racial and communal divisions. But it takes real nerve for WIVL to accuse *us* of appealing to the state, when it is they who believe cops are part of the workers movement.

In its list of "spontaneous struggles [that] have occurred as workers stand up to claim what is theirs" (*Workers International News*, June 1994) we find "Cape Town traffic officers" and "prison warders." A later issue features an uncritical report where "all progressive forces in the SDUs, MK, APLA, AZANLA and POPCRU" are urged to "stand together. We must build links with the rest of the working class" (*WIN*,

November 1994-January 1995). POPCRU is the "union" representing cops, the enemies of the proletariat who routinely mobilise to break workers strikes. From the Stalinist SACP to the left nationalists, most of the left capitulate to the idea that with more blacks among the ranks of the South African Police Service, they have somehow become "our" cops. This view of the state stems from a capitulation to the bourgeoisie's lie that the ANC-led nationalist popular front is somehow "our" government. The capitalist state—with its cops, courts and prisons—exists to protect the wealth and power of a tiny minority who exploit and live off the labour of the overwhelming majority. "The state is an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another" (V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution*). Cops out of the labour movement!

Along the same lines is WIVL's inability to fight for trade union independence from the bourgeois state, as Trotsky insisted in his 1940 article, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay." The ICL has fought internationally to keep the bourgeoisie's courts out of the internal affairs of the labour movement and opposes court suits against trade unions as a point of principle. Such principles are anathema to centrists like WIVL. This is illustrated by the case of former Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) president Abraham Agulhas, a supporter of WIVL's politics. According to an appeal by Agulhas' supporters, circulated to us by the LRP, Agulhas was suspended as shop steward for a period of five years as a result of a witchhunt "against members and officials who rejected the ANC and SACP as parties who have sold out the working class and who support the idea of a new Socialist Workers Party." The appeal goes on to say that after "the union leadership decided to kick us out," "we applied for a declaratory order through the courts to declare us members." An article in the *Sunday Independent* (29 March 1998) notes that Agulhas has spearheaded the formation of a breakaway Oil, Chemical, General and Allied Workers Union (Ocgawu). The article quotes the CWIU's general secretary Muzi Buthelezi "... that the breakaway Ocgawu had launched a court case to prevent CWIU from expelling its sympathisers."

This case exposes WIVL's fraudulent pretensions toward seeking to break the unions from the bourgeois-nationalist politics of the ANC. The precondition for waging a struggle against the SACP's reformism and the ANC's bourgeois nationalism is *the class independence of the proletariat*, which means above all independence from the bourgeois state. It is absurd to presume that one can fight the COSATU bureaucracy's subordination of the unions to the state by appealing to the ... courts of the ANC government. Moreover, the practice of setting up breakaway unions in response to persecution by union bureaucrats undercuts the principle of industrial unionism, i.e., organising all workers in a given industry in one union. But these fake leftists have no qualms about strengthening the bourgeois state's ability to regulate the labour movement, as long as they get

their own little trade union fiefdom to control.

Our opposition to trade union opportunism underlay our decision to break off fraternal relations in June 1996 with the Brazilian Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB), formerly Luta Metalurgica (LM). The LQB sought to control a cop-infested union at the top while having no communist fraction at the base. When we pushed LM to fight against the presence of cops in the union, this forced a split within the unprincipled union leadership bloc brokered by LM/LQB. The LQB and its equally squalid competitors dragged the union through the capitalist courts.

## For the Trotskyist Programme of Permanent Revolution

We support Trotsky's programme of permanent revolution against various and intertwined currents of nationalism and reformism prevalent on the South African left. The theory of permanent revolution holds that the national bourgeoisie in countries of belated capitalist development is so weak, backward and imperialist-dependent that it cannot possibly play a progressive role. National liberation and social and economic modernisation in countries like South Africa can only be achieved under the leadership of the working class, through the establishment of workers rule, linked to proletarian revolution in the imperialist centres of West Europe, North America and Japan. The centrality of workers power encapsulated in Trotsky's programme is missing from the fake left's agenda.

Our programme for proletarian leadership in the struggle for national liberation is encapsulated in the slogan of a "black-centred workers government." Under a black-centred workers government there would be an important role and full democratic rights for Coloureds, Indians and other Asians, and those whites who accept a government centrally based on the black working people. WIVL writes that our position for a black-centred workers government means, "a workers government in South Africa should have a racial guarantee worked into its very constitution." Once again, WIVL's "colour-blindness" is a mask for its acquiescence to particular forms of nationalism and parochialism. In South Africa, class exploitation is integrally bound up with national oppression. Despite a sizeable Coloured proletariat, especially in the Western Cape, and an urban Indian working class in Natal, the overwhelming majority of workers are black Africans. WIVL's opposition to our call for a black-centred workers government is in fact a direct attack on Trotsky himself. In his only substantive writing on South Africa, Trotsky insisted that a successful proletarian revolution would necessarily be a struggle for black liberation:

"Under these conditions the South African republic will emerge first of all as a 'black' republic; this does not exclude of course, either full equality for the whites or brotherly



relations between the two races—depending mainly on the conduct of the whites....

"Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relation between the classes, but also between the races, and will assure to blacks that place in the state which corresponds to their numbers, insofar will the *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character." (emphasis in original)

—"On the South African Theses,"

*Writings [1934-35]*

As Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution predicted, neither the bourgeois nationalist ANC regime—nor any capitalist government—can resolve the myriad forms of national and racial inequalities in South Africa. For the perspective of permanent revolution in South Africa to become a reality requires the forging of a proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist vanguard party. Such a party must be a tribune of the people, fighting to mobilise the proletariat against all forms of special oppression, including the denial of citizenship rights to immigrant workers, and must seek to mobilise revolutionary proletarian struggle for the liberation of women.

WIVL waxes indignant that we portrayed them as having "contempt for the necessary struggle for the liberation of women." But the support of WIVL and their predecessors to PAGAD and to reactionary forces internationally speaks for itself. Capitalist restoration in Poland meant the virtual abolition of abortion rights. There and elsewhere in East Europe as well as in the former Soviet Union women have been the first to have been driven out of the labour force. In Afghanistan, the victory of Taliban forces has meant unspeakable horrors for women. At home, in a brief Women's Day "press statement," the WIVL called for "the rise of a new family" (*WIN*, September/October 1997). This is totally anti-Marxist; the family is the key institution for the oppression of women. We fight to replace the family in the context of a socialist planned economy in which women are integrated into the economy and where child raising and household duties are socialised. To be sure, this requires giant leaps forward in economic productivity, and could not be achieved within the confines of an isolated workers state in South Africa. WIVL's call for a "new family" testifies not only to imbibing backward social values but also its national parochial outlook, which in practice does not envision the achievement of international socialist revolution.

The WIVL's national parochialism is further underscored by its choice of bloc partners. While cynically accusing the ICL of promoting racial divisions

in South Africa, the WIVL makes a bloc with an organisation whose calling card is militant opposition to struggles for basic democratic rights for the oppressed. As we pointed out in the earlier *WV* article, the LRP even opposes the elementary demand for integration of schools; it ran a photo of the Confederate flag of slavery, the chosen emblem of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis, complaining only that the flag was flying underneath an American flag! Notably, the WIVL said not one word in defence of these positions of their American "comrades." The lash-up of the fake Trotskyist WIVL, who capitulate to Coloured nationalism in South Africa, with the "separate but equal" socialists of the American Shachtmanite LRP, is a classic rotten bloc. It bears out Trotsky's maxim that "In the choice of his international allies the centrist is even less discriminating than in his own country" ("Centrism and the Fourth International," February 1934).

For WIVL, the fact that their American co-thinkers simultaneously capitulate to black nationalism and are indifferent to social struggle against racism is "not their problem." The kind of lash-up they obviously envision is one where the various bloc partners agree to confine their opinions to their own "national turf," and in particular agree not to "interfere" with the work of the other parties. In contradistinction, the very need for an international vanguard party is premised on the understanding that such a party is necessary in order to counter particular national pressures, i.e., all opportunism is nationalist. But for bankrupt fake leftists like the WIVL and LRP, unprincipled manoeuvres and lash-ups replace the struggle to reforge genuine Leninist parties. The WIVL has already demonstrated its willingness to unite with anyone, as long as they sneer at the October Revolution and its legacy, whether it be Healy's political bandits, Slaughter's Labourites or the Shachtmanite LRP.

As Trotsky once noted, "Those who are incapable of defending conquests already gained, can never fight for new ones." The demonstrated abdication by WIVL/WIRFI of the obligation of Soviet defencism translates into accommodation to bourgeois forces at home. We stand with American Trotskyist James P. Cannon in proclaiming: "We are the party of the Russian Revolution." The International Communist League fights to complete the task begun by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party when they led the working class to victory in Russia in 1917—to pursue the class struggle to a victorious conclusion on an international scale.

— 18 July 1998

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