



A workers Poland, yes! The Pope's Poland, no!



Walesa looks to god and pope against Stalinist bureaucracy.

In the months since the signing of the much-heralded Gdansk settlement on 31 August, everyone senses Polish society has lost its moorings. The state of trade-union organisation has become utterly chaotic and confused. The regime is paralysed, with the top leaders frantically scapegoating one another. The leadership of the new "free unions" and the Catholic hierarchy consort more brazenly. Meanwhile, the Kremlin and its hard-line satellites, especially East Germany, speak incessantly of the growing threat of "anti-socialist forces" in Poland, increasingly drawing a direct parallel with the 1968 Prague Spring. And everyone in Poland, indeed throughout Europe, knows how that ended.

At the time of the Gdansk agreement both the Polish bureaucrats and the leaders of the new "free trade unions" proclaimed it as a genuine compromise, a step from confrontation toward collaboration. We said no, the settlement is only on paper: "The compromise creates an impossible situation economically and politically; it cannot last". No Stalinist bureaucratic caste, we pointed out, which must monopolise political power to preserve itself, can tolerate any genuinely independent working-class organisation. And the strike leadership around Lech Walesa, which strongly identifies with the powerful Catholic church opposition, would increasingly challenge the damaged and discredited regime.

Cold Dual Power

As the new union federation dubbed Solidarnosc ("Solidarity") grows more aggressive, the regime headed by Gierek's replacement Stanislaw Kania alternates between concessions

and threats in an attempt to ride it out. One settlement seems only to sow the seeds of the next crisis. Claiming government footdragging on agreed wage increases and other concessions, the Solidarity leadership called a successful nationwide one-hour work stoppage on 3 October. Kania charged Walesa & Co had reneged on a pledge to recognise the "leading role" of the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP); when the courts finally registered the union, they inserted the contentious clause in the Solidarity charter. Kania stonewalled for weeks before agreeing to put it in an "annex" to the charter instead, under pressure of a general strike deadline.

Despite Kania's claims that they can "work together", the Polish Stalinists instinctively must feel the "new, self-governing unions" as a grave threat to their power. At the time of the 31 August settlement, the strike committee published an apparently authentic document by a high party commission which maintained: "Such unions would fulfill the role of a political opposition party inspired by anti-Communist forces. They would create a division of power" (*New York Times*, 1 September). This unquestionably expresses social reality from the standpoint of the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy.

When the strike leaders initially conceded to recognise the PUWP's "leading role", it was not without sharp dispute and through clenched teeth. Of course, the PUWP is *not* a revolutionary (Leninist) vanguard; on the contrary, it is the instrument of a parasitic bureaucracy. In struggling for proletarian political revolution to free the deformed workers states of this internal obstacle, Trotskyists support independent trade unions

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Reagan's America—court licence for fascist murder KKK killers freed in Greensboro

They staged the massacre on TV. A Nazi/Ku Klux Klan motorcade of death drove up to the black housing project in Greensboro, North Carolina one sunny morning in November 1979. Millions of US workers watched in living colour as the fascists calmly opened the trunks of their cars, pulled out pistols and rifles and opened fire on the small gathering of left-wing and black demonstrators. Then they packed their weapons back into the trunks and drove off.

It was cold-blooded murder for all to see. But on 17 November last an all-white jury in Greensboro let the KKK killers go free — acquitted on five counts of first-degree murder, felonious rioting and all other charges. Now the courts can get down to their real aim — persecuting the fascists' victims in the Communist Workers Party (CWP). Some commented the verdict was a licence to kill. It was more — it was an invitation to racist murder.

It was all done under the stars and stripes. The Klan murderers claimed they were just doing their patriotic duty in the war against communism. The racist courts set them free in the name of "evenhanded" American (capitalist) "justice". Harold Covington, head of the National Socialist (Nazi) party crowed, "It's a victory for white America. We've

taken on the government now on their home ground, right in their own courtroom and we beat them." But the Nazis didn't have to beat the government. They were on the same side.

They were all there together in the motorcade. A "former" FBI informer rode in the first car, a Greensboro cop brought up the rear. Even the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms division of the "Justice" Department got into the act: their agent told the fascist killers how to legally transport the guns. At the trial everyone agreed it was the FBI testimony that clinched it for the defence.

From the outset, the American ruling class has maintained a remarkably disciplined line on the Greensboro massacre. For over a year they unanimously labelled the fascist murder a "shootout" between two "hate groups", equating the murderers and their victims. Now they greet the verdict with sighs of "who can ever know what really happened?" Not a peep of liberal protest but studied agnosticism, again serving to victimise the left and embolden the ultra-right terrorists. For the bourgeoisie understands that it is now necessary to stand with fascists against communists. communists.

Public reaction to the Greensboro

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Fascists routed in Evanston, Illinois, 19 October 1980. Protesters joined Spartacist chant "Sweep the Nazis off the streets!"

Hunger strikers demand political rights

Free Long Kesh IRA prisoners!

On 27 October seven Irish Republican prisoners in the notorious "H-Blocks" of Northern Ireland's Long Kesh prison launched a hunger strike against their British imperialist jailers. They are demanding no more than the status of political prisoners and the rights taken away from them by a Labour government in March 1976 under the slogan "Ulsterisation, Criminalisation, Normalisation". Since then the prisoners have refused to wear the uniforms issued by Her Majesty's jailers and have had only blankets to cover themselves.

In an attempt to break the blanket protest, the vicious administration which runs Long Kesh forbade going to the toilet except in uniform, and "Loyalist" prison guards refused to empty chamber pots or dumped them in the cells. The "blanket-men" are thus forced literally to live in their own shit. Female nationalist supporters are incarcerated in equally horrendous conditions at the women's prison in Armagh. Hamilton Fish, a conservative US Republican representative from New York who visited Long Kesh as part of an American Congressional delegation, said he found the H-Blocks to be worse than the Saigon "Tiger Cages" in which captured DRV/NLF fighters were barbarically confined.

The Irish nationalist prisoners at Long Kesh and Armagh are victims of draconian laws which have been condemned by such bourgeois institutions as Amnesty International and the European Court on Human Rights. Embodied in the Emergency Powers Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, these laws provide for the arrest and holding incommunicado for up to seven days of anyone suspected of membership in or "support" to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or any other groups "concerned with terrorism". During that time a suspect may not be permitted to contact lawyers, relatives or doctors. The only regular "visitors" are the Royal Ulster Constabulary's notorious Special Branch who extract "confessions" under torture that are often the sole basis for conviction by special, juryless courts. 97 percent of the cases that go before these courts result in conviction and 90 percent of these convictions are based on "confessions", often uncorroborated.

The "blanket-men" are an unwanted

international embarrassment for a Tory government which wants to march in step with the US anti-Soviet war drive. Iron Maiden Margaret Thatcher attempted to head off the hunger strike by having her secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Humphrey Atkins, make the cosmetic concession of agreeing to issue "civilian-style" uniforms. When rebuffed by the Long Kesh prisoners, Atkins' response was: "If they die, so be it".

The Thatcher government has also met with ruthless terror the substantial support the "blanket" protests have evoked outside the prison walls. In the past five months, four prominent leaders in the campaign on behalf of the H-Block prisoners have been assassinated either by Protestant extremists or the British counterinsurgency force, the SAS. But these attacks did not deter the thousands who took to the streets in Belfast, Dublin and the south Armagh border village of Crossmaglen in support of the hunger strikers' demands.

The international Spartacist tendency (iSt) calls for abolishing the Emergency Powers Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, terror measures aimed at intimidating the oppressed Catholic minority, and for freeing all their victims. In Sydney on 21 November, Spartacist League (SL) members raised the slogan "Free Long Kesh IRA Prisoners! Smash H-Block!" at a small rally in Martin Place called by the International Socialists-dominated "Stop Paisley Committee". In New York, SL/US comrades were among 800 protesters who chanted "Smash H-Block! Smash Long Kesh!" outside the British consulate on 22 November.

The organisers of both demonstrations had no other perspective, though, than tailing the Green nationalism of the IRA. The "Stop Paisley Committee" had been set up to deny Ian Paisley a platform when he visited Australia during November, on the grounds that he was a



SL contingent counterposes Trotskyist program for Ireland to IS' green nationalism at Sydney "Stop Paisley" rally.

ASp photo

fascist. But as we pointed out in our article "Protest reactionary bigot Paisley!" (*Australasian Spartacist* no 79, November 1980), Paisley "is no Adolf Hitler and the IS know it. They insist on the characterisation for a purpose: if Paisley is a fascist, then his followers are presumably fascists too. By extension they must be crushed." In short, the "Stop Paisley Committee" was a vehicle for mobilising support to petty-bourgeois nationalism, for a strategy which offers no road forward for the prisoners rotting in Long Kesh or for the Irish masses.

The iSt sheds no tears for British imperialists killed by the IRA, such as Lord Mountbatten. But we condemn indiscriminate

terror such as the murderous attack on the La Mon House hotel in 1978, in which twelve Protestant workers died, and call for programmatically based workers militias to combat sectarian and imperialist terror. The program raised by the iSt at the rallies in Sydney and New York alone indicates the way ahead: "British Troops out of Ireland now!", "Not Orange against Green, but class against class!", "For an Irish workers republic, part of a Socialist Federation of the British Isles!" To achieve these goals a Trotskyist party, section of a reformed Fourth International, is needed to lead the Irish workers — Protestant and Catholic — to power. ■

Letter

White Australian socialists hail Breaker Morant

Dear Comrades,

Patricia Peters' review "Breaker Morant — the Lt Calley of the Boer War" was excellent and particularly to the point in noting how the film's nationalist message struck a patriotic chord among its reviewers on the left. The only problem was you let one of the worst offenders get away — Bob Gould's Healyite/Laborite rag *Keep Left*. While most of the left press tried to play down the obvious chauvinism in favour of an imagined "antiwar message", *Keep Left* writers Linda Heslop and Gordon Pritchard positively glory in it:

"Breaker Morant" is not just an anti-war movie. It appeals, through expressing that appeal in a romantic and even slightly chauvinist way, to the whole history of repression of the convicts and early settlers that has become our [!] colonial heritage. "It appeals to the 'Ned Kelly' in all of us. "Most importantly, the film brings out the class nature of imperialist wars."

— *Keep Left*, August 1980

"The class nature of imperialist wars"!? One can search both the movie and their review in vain for anything about it; the reviewers don't even say which side of the Boer War they are on. What they do "bring out" loud and clear is the Gouldites' obscene toadying to Australian racist chauvinism in its traditional Laborite form.

What is the "colonial heritage" the re-

viewers love so dearly? Mainly the historic resentment of colonial-settler Australia that the British would not adequately defend them, in particular against the "yellow hordes" — and their reluctance to be drawn off into the defence of the rest of Her Majesty's mainly non-white empire. This heritage can be claimed only by those who identify with the jackal-imperialist aspirations of the Australian bourgeoisie itself. When Heslop and Pritchard raise the "class arrogance of the British ruling class" it is not the latter's brutal oppression and exploitation of the Indian, Chinese or black South African masses they have in mind but their snobbish put-downs of their country cousins, the "barbarous and difficult colonial Australians". They take issue not with the Empire's vicious imperialist war against the Boers (whom Marxists defended) but with its scapegoating of three war criminals and officers who happened to be Australian. When the film shows the three staunchly defending the British against a Boer attack, the *Keep Left* review actually cheers this as an "heroic action"!

This ties in with the Gouldites' embracing of the poisonous Labor reformist tradition of White Australia. Gould idolises Labor racist Jack Lang, who has the dubious distinction — rare even for labour traitors — of being quoted on the masthead of a fascist sheet (the National Alliance's *Audacity*). *Keep Left* is con-

stantly harping about "Australian" jobs disappearing to Southeast Asian "countries which have cheap labour, no union movement and which are mostly military dictatorships" (October 1980) — as if that justified racist, protectionist competition for jobs with Australian workers' Asian class brothers! Why shouldn't *Keep Left* also take up *Audacity's* racist slogan: "Jobs not refugees"?

With communist greetings,
PC

To our readers

The next issue of *Australasian Spartacist* will appear in February 1981.

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After Blackpool conference

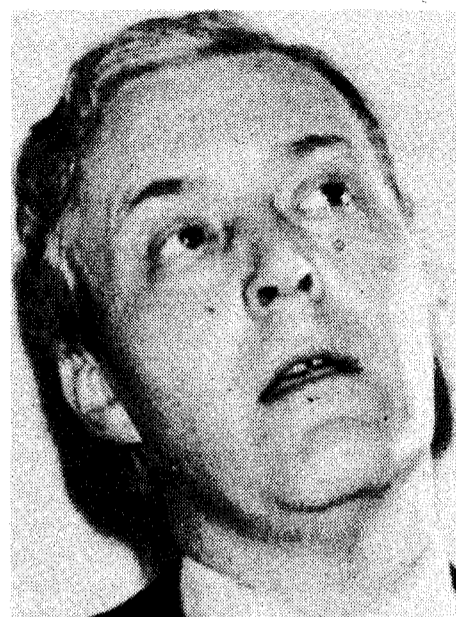
British Labour's phoney left face

From the bourgeois right to the 'far left', the British Labour Party conference held at Blackpool in October drew sensational responses. Shudders and even hysteria in the bosses' papers; raptures of ecstasy in much of the left press. Blackpool was a "watershed", "half a revolution", indeed a new "October Revolution" with Tony Benn its V I Lenin. The *Times* cringed: "as a portent it is terrifying". Margaret Thatcher held the spectre of a "downhill slide towards socialism" before her assembled bluebloods in Brighton two weeks later. And *Socialist Press*, paper of Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL), discerned a "germ of truth" in that.

Sorry, no. A storm is brewing in Britain, but Blackpool was a tempest in a teapot. A vote for withdrawal from the EEC — the key policy victory of the "lefts" — is only a return to Labour's policy when last in opposition. The constitutional triumphs, primarily broadening the leadership election franchise beyond MPs, are accepted norms in such staid reformist parties as the German SPD. And James Callaghan was not kicked out for his class treachery — he resigned, a lame duck in any case, to smooth the path of his successor amid "constitutional crisis". The new leader, former "left" Michael Foot, loyally served in all the anti-working-class Wilson and Callaghan cabinets of 1974 to 1979. Like all his rivals, Benn included, Foot stands for the same program as his predecessor: contemptuous disregard of the basic class interests of the workers in order to preserve putrid British capitalism.

The 5-2 Blackpool vote on the EEC, like an indicative vote against Cruise missiles in Britain, reflected not class opposition to the Common Market as the economic adjunct of the anti-Soviet NATO alliance, but narrow British parochialism. The anti-Cruise motion also demanded "urgent discussions for Soviet withdrawal of the SS-20", and a motion for withdrawal from NATO took a stinging 8-1 defeat. Labour "lefts" — and some right-wingers too — oppose the EEC only out of chauvinism and protectionism: shielding British capitalism from foreign competition through import controls and other trappings of national autarky.

The *Times* decried the narrow vote for



After Callaghan, Foot (left). After Foot, Benn (centre)? BLP picks "left" face for next "social contract".

an "electoral college" of MPs, constituency parties and trade-union bureaucrats to choose the party leader as "damaging to parliamentary government". Hardly. Of course the idea that Labour MPs should have a measure of accountability to their working-class electors and trade-union backers is distasteful to the capitalists. But the Blackpool decisions, the product of much backstairs dealing and horsetrading for trade-union block votes, don't even strike particularly hard at the cherished autonomy of Labour MPs. Revolutionaries favour the widest democracy in such workers organisations (eg doing away with anti-communist proscriptions) to facilitate the struggle to expose the pro-capitalist bureaucrats. But for the Labour politicians, "democracy" is a convenient cover for a power struggle on the basis of bourgeois politics.

What unites all of them, "left" and right, is their commitment to bourgeois parliamentary rule. Even Benn's call for the abolition of the House of Lords involved the creation of a thousand new Labour peers to pass the measure and get ... Royal assent. Benn's "suicide squad" could well, if implemented, go the way of a similar attempt by the NSW Labor government to abolish that state's undemocratic upper house in 1959. On

that occasion, many of the Labor stalwarts selected to destroy this bastion of bourgeois privilege from within instead discovered that a comfortable sinecure wasn't such a bad thing, crossing the floor to defeat the proposal!

Ralph Miliband commented in his book *Parliamentary Socialism*:

"Of political parties claiming socialism to be their aim the Labour Party has always been one of the most dogmatic — not about socialism but about the parliamentary system."

Nothing that happened at Blackpool was even a small step toward the revolution Britain needs. The road to socialist revolution lies through breaking the stranglehold of all wings of Labourism on the working class and winning it to a revolutionary program.

Facelift for betrayal

Blackpool illuminated the nature of Labour as a bourgeois workers party. In power it was a loyal tool of the bosses. Now in opposition, as always, it must "regenerate" internally through some "left" talk and a little bloodletting — necessary steps in rebuilding the workers' illusions in "their" party. Benn is nothing new either, coming from a line of "lefts" like Clement Attlee, Aneurin Bevan and Harold Wilson who, when faced with the exigencies of power,

demonstrated in practice their loyalty to the capitalist system.

Of course there are differences between the competing Labour factions and bourgeois consternation about the Bennites is not just Tory raving. The bourgeoisie needs the Labour Party as a "responsible" opposition to a firm, but flexible, Tory regime. But the Iron Lady is rather inflexible. And the bourgeoisie genuinely dislikes some of the notions peddled by the "lefts". It sees no future in "splendid isolation" from Europe. It knows it can have no foreign policy independent of the US. And though Benn's leadership prospects are slim it fears a situation in which militant workers' expectations are aroused and all hell breaks loose.

Attacking Benn from the right, ex-Labour cabinet minister Barbara Castle noted "that he never spells out that responsibility involves choice and the choices in this country are grim for everybody". True — and the Tory/Labour cycle is no choice at all. How many more strikebreaking Labour governments must the working class endure in the hope that their attempts to bandage crippled capitalism will be slightly more sufferable than Tory rule? Bankrupt British capitalism must go and thus the bankrupt Labour party must go. The deadly, palpable danger is that if the workers don't despatch Labour, the fascists will — and crush the whole workers movement.

Yet for the fake-revolutionary left, the idea of destroying the senile Labour Party is utterly absent, the idea of building it embraced. For the International Marxist Group (IMG) the ultimate crime at Blackpool was: "Labour right threatens party unity". Short of a deep split in the trade-union bureaucracy, Labour right-wingers have only the Tories, Liberals or a short-lived "centre party" to go to, but who cares? Revolutionaries want to see Labour Party unity *shattered*, with the working-class base broken from the pro-capitalist misleaders, "left" or right. "Party unity" is precisely the rationale Benn used to justify remaining in Callaghan's strikebreaking cabinet — "on the grounds that a Tory government which would succeed it if it was defeated, would be much worse".

This is the pervasive rationale for Labour-cretinism. Even the left-centrist Workers Power group, which makes no claims about the "gains" of Blackpool voted Labour in 1979 as it stood on an openly strikebreaking, wage-slashing program and was widely discredited among the workers. The sundry fake revolutionaries hope that cuddling up to the "left" betrayers will bring them closer to the workers. It only brings them closer to the workers' reformist illusions. Trotskyists don't underestimate the

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Victory to brewery workers!

7 December — It has been nearly a month since the bosses at Tooheys Auburn brewery in Sydney locked out 700 maintenance workers and Liquor Trades Union (LTU) members on 11 November. For ten years maintenance unions in the breweries have routinely demanded the 35-hour week (a long-standing ACTU position) in their annual log of claims. This year the bosses delivered an ultimatum: drop the 35-hour week claim or no negotiations whatsoever. The workers responded by working a nine-day fortnight. After taking Friday 7 November off as part of the campaign, workers were confronted by company executives at the plant gates demanding that they individually sign statements renouncing future industrial action. Without exception, they rejected this outrageous blackmail — and were sacked on the spot. Since this calculated provocation, production has been shut down by a round-the-clock picket line. Reinstate the sacked workers! Defeat Tooheys bosses' provocations!

But the initial solidarity of the workers is now threatened by the union bureaucrats' manipulation of craft divisions. At a 3 December meeting of LTU members

at Auburn, union federal secretary John Morris pushed through a treacherous motion lifting all LTU bans with the justification that they would then only be stood down, not sacked, and could thus get the dole. But with maintenance workers holding firm, the plant remains shut down tight.

In Victoria, LTU members at five Carlton and United breweries went on strike in late November to press claims for a \$20 wage rise and a 35-hour week. LTU state secretary Joe Goddard, a Communist Party of Australia supporter, said the delegates wouldn't recommend a return to work to the 3 December mass meeting "without some sort of offer" (*Age*, 2 December). But the Victorian LTU leaders, including Goddard, managed to "withdraw" the 35-hour week claim in favour of future talks between the ACTU and the breweries, effectively killing it. Now Carlton has made "some sort of offer" and Goddard is "optimistic" the 8 December meeting will vote to return.

The NSW brewery workers are facing a hard bosses' united front. With the provocative Tooheys lockout, the bosses

have started a fight over the flagging 35-hour week campaign which the spineless ACTU and metal trades bureaucrats thought they had finally buried in October. At nation-wide metal trades mass meetings the bureaucrats, against strong opposition from the ranks, got the national 35-hour week campaign in the metal industry suspended. In its place the ACTU tops promised to "coordinate" campaigns in "selected" areas — including breweries — sometime in 1981.

The long-standing paper position of the trade-union bureaucracy for a 35-hour week is woefully insufficient to deal with current levels of unemployment. But they even dumped their own pitiful campaign in the metal trades and have left the Tooheys workers in the lurch to slug it out for months in almost total isolation. With capitalism in deep recession, what is needed is a fight for a sliding scale of hours without loss of pay, and that means a struggle against the capitalist system itself — the very last thing the bureaucrats want! Victory to the brewery workers in NSW and Victoria! Fight for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay! Jobs for all! ■

Melbourne Discussion Group conference

Weekend of the living dead

Over the weekend of 22-23 November, about 25 supporters of the Melbourne Discussion Group (MDG) and its Sydney offside, the Trotskyist Study Group (TSG), gathered in Melbourne for a special conference. Episodically there appear on the left such centrist "anti-Spartacist Leagues", generally semi-clandestine discussion circles whose main criterion for membership is hatred of our Trotskyist politics. Clique-ridden and internally divided, with neither program nor perspective, these grouplets are among the smallest, most inconsequential and impotent of the "sects" they all claim to despise.

Where did the MDG/TSG come from? In late 1975 there was the "Melbourne Revolutionary Marxists" (MRM), led by self-styled "Marxist economist" Bob Dorning, a political grasshopper known as Ken Mansell and one John Ebel who likes to think of himself as a new Isaac Deutscher (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 27, 20 December 1975). MRM soon folded and died. Before the Mandeliste Communist League (CL) dissolved into the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), such anti-Spartacist gadflies occasionally found a home there. But the CL's liquidation has left them, and any other would-be centrists, without a home, frantically trying to discover a safe middle ground between the SL's Trotskyism and the reformism of the SWP.

In 1978 Dorning, Ebel and Mansell hooked up with elements around Paul White and Frans Timmerman to form the Melbourne Discussion Group (MDG). Timmerman had been a long-time honcho in the SWP, while White was an opportunist gadfly who had been successively a Maoist, a member of the Healyite Socialist Labour League, a CLer and then an SWPer until he was ignominiously spat out of that group in 1978. Like the MRM, the MDG was a rotten bloc of armchair socialists who wrote endless turgid documents about "practice", but none on the program the practice was to be based on.

Sure enough, the group eventually split along clique lines with Dorning, Ebel and Mansell exiting, leaving the MDG in the hands of White and Timmerman. The group's new gurus loudly (and rightly) denounced Dorning, Ebel and Mansell (referred to as "DEM") as an "obnoxious example of a fully-formed clique", but not before imbibing from them the mass of anti-Spartacist slander which "DEM" willingly peddled to anyone who could bear to listen. But the "new" outfit was just as cliquist as the old.

A self-evaluation called "Problems of the Melbourne DG", made in October 1980 by three members Paul [White], Duggi and Richard, gives some idea of the functioning of these circles. The occasion for the self-analysis was an MDG meeting on 20 September. The document describes what happened:

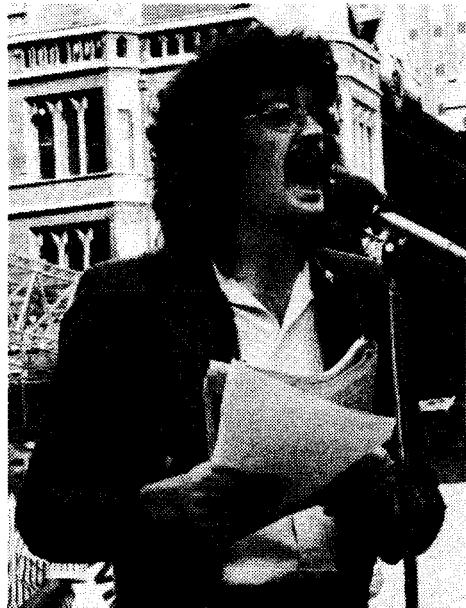
"... The men raised their voices, talked over people and ignored the chair.... Simon and Paul were mentioned specifically in this connection. Both also pulled faces when they disagreed with an idea being expressed. Simon should not have interrupted Duggi continually, or told Lesley to 'shut up'...."

"Speaking more generally, Lesley objected to some comrades who always want to say 'I'm right! I'm right!'"

After this introduction, the authors go on to draw some conclusions:

"Like other discussion circles formed in Melbourne (eg MRM) our DG [Discussion Group] was not established on the basis of clear politics. People were recruited on the basis of personal association and past collaboration. Furthermore, the DG has never been predominantly proletarian in composition.... Our point is that the situation we've described generates a certain internal dynamic which is suicidal to ignore."

"That internal dynamic is a tendency towards cliquism. (NB: We're not saying



Shooting his mouth off: Paul White calls for Soviets out of Afghanistan at Melbourne rally.



"Afghanistan: Hail Red Army!": Spartacist contingent at Melbourne "anti-war" rally, February 1980.

that the DG is divided up into warring, hardened cliques — simply that there's a tendency towards cliquism in the DG.)" Imagining the problem to be the group's petty-bourgeois composition, which White & Co equate with programmatic degeneration on the left, these petty-bourgeois workerists place their faith in "an overwhelming proletarian membership.... After all, its *their* movement. They're the ones with 'nothing to lose but their chains'" (emphasis in original). For Marxists the point is obvious: without a revolutionary program as its foundation, any group will inevitably degenerate into cliquist/personalist stews. That was, is and always will be the fate of the MDGs of this political world.

From nothing, through nothing, to nothing

The Soviet incursion into Afghanistan flushed the MDG into the open, however. In Melbourne, Paul White and Frans Timmerman tried unsuccessfully to set up a "Stop the Carter/Fraser War Drive" propaganda bloc which deliberately omitted the question of Soviet defencism. In Sydney, the Trotskyist Study Group (TSG), set up on the MDG pattern in September 1979 by ex-CLer Barbara Fleming and others, also made its public debut over Afghanistan. But whereas White called for Soviet troops to get out, TSGers like Janet Burstall and Tony Brown claimed to stand with the Red Army. But like White they sought to establish a rotten bloc for "anti-war" propaganda, the short-lived "Anti-Imperialist Caucus". At the time we noted that Burstall and Brown's refusal to forthrightly defend the Soviet incursion and the USSR was part of an attempt to secure "unity with those who stood on the other side of the class line" (*Australasian Spartacist* no 72, April 1980). Since then the two have gone over and adopted

for themselves the anti-Soviet line of opposition to the Red Army incursion.

Forced into brief public existence over Afghanistan, the MDG/TSG planned to set up a public organisation. Dubbed a "transitional organisation", the group was to have no program, just position papers on three (!) topics they had been discussing for two years — the ALP, industrial work and women's liberation. Despite the stated position of prominent individuals on the Russian Question, the group was to have no position on this key issue. The conference even refused to have a discussion on the topic!

The group also pretentiously declared that "our collective endeavours are based on the recognition of the inadequacy of the left sects", but could advance no analysis of what was wrong with these "left sects" or why. Instead they insisted that "practice" would solve all. But without a revolutionary program the practice of the group and its individual components could only be a continuation

practice. Instead it's back to the drawing boards, to another two years of "Sunday socialist" study groups, another two years of "excruciating introspection" as "Problems of the Melbourne DG" had put it. This time we suggest that top of the list be a study of the life of Saint Jude, patron saint of hopeless cases. If there was a "tendency to cliquism" before, it's clear that the MDG is "divided up into hardened, warring cliques" now.

From the centrist swamp to Trotskyism

At the conference, however, two comrades — Angelo Rosas of the Sydney TSG and Steven King of the MDG — fought against this mish-mash of opportunism and cliquism. The comrades jointly submitted a programmatic document "Against petty-bourgeois eclecticism! For Trotskyism!" which they counterposed to the "What We Stand For" draft. Their prior political experiences had brought them together on the basis of agreement with the Trotskyist program: for Rosas, the defeat of the Portuguese left in 1975 when he was a member of the SWP, and the subsequent betrayals of the fake left on Iran, Afghanistan and Poland; for King, Afghanistan and the centrality of the picket line question. They insisted that without a revolutionary program, the group could only blow apart. Their document quoted from Cannon's *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* to underline the point:

"Marxists always begin with the program. They rally supporters to the program and educate them in its meaning in the process of the struggle. The political victories of the Marxists are always in the first place victories for their program.... "Petty-bourgeois politics is always a hodge-podge. It never attains to a fully developed and consistent program.... It fights at best for partial aims, and slurs over contradictions within its ranks in order to preserve a formal unity. Petty-bourgeois groupings struggle, not in the name of great principles, but for organisational objectives."

The MDG/TSG clots conformed in every detail to Cannon's description of petty-bourgeois politics. When any attempt was made to discuss the decisive questions facing the international proletariat, the response of the group was inevitably purely organisational. For example, when the Melbourne Spartacist League challenged White to a public debate on Poland, this coward brought the matter up under... security! And even then he only felt confident enough to read out *selected* passages of our letter to his "comrades" present. (In contrast we published our challenge and White's reply in a bulletin which TSG/MDGers avidly bought and, of course, photocopied.) When Comrade Rosas began advancing his critique of the whole MDG/TSG enterprise, White moved a motion asking the TSG "2. To ask A.R. if he is a member or Sympathiser of the Spartacist League. 3. To give its' [sic] opinion as to whether comrade A.R. is a security risk." — (Minutes of Discussion Group, 9 November) Certainly the MDG was and is an excessively paranoid little

of what it's been to date — opportunistic, lowest common denominator politics in essence similar to that of the SWP they profess to oppose.

What was left of the group's membership was all geared up to go public. The group even had a name ("Socialist Action"); a plan for a similarly named monthly paper; blueprints for a Steering Committee and an Editorial Board; even the rules of order of the meetings it was planning to have every fortnight. A "What We Stand For" was drafted which began: "Socialist Action is a revolutionary organisation formed in November 1980". Because it was a "transitional organisation", the group was to be a "temporary, transient formation".

"Temporary and transient" proved to be much too generous — the group never made it into public existence at all! At the conference a last minute lash-up between White and Fleming's TSG suddenly announced that the group's labours had all been in vain. White's clique opponent Frans Timmerman was outraged. He had a point, but this was a case of two equally venal political pickpockets falling out. In the end it was White, not Timmerman, who had the numbers. So there is to be no "transitional organisation", no paper, no

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study circle whose members used even to deny that it existed. White's reply to our Poland challenge also claimed, "I do not run any grouplet". What this fetishisation of "security" amounts to is a suppression of any political discussion.

The conference itself was conducted in similar petty-bourgeois bureaucratic fashion. When Rosas and King moved a motion to discuss the Russian Question, White denounced this as an "outrageous organisational stunt"! Former AUS hack Lesley Podesta chaired a session in hectoring schoolmistress fashion and announced she would "name names" of people she thought were too noisy during the session — a chairing device taken straight from AUS and the Speaker in bourgeois parliaments. (Anyone named

three times would of course have to leave!)

Despite the organisational barriers, though, Comrades Rosas and King defended the Trotskyist program. Their document covered positions on Leninism and the Fourth International, the Russian Question, permanent revolution and the popular front, as well as the topics — the ALP, trade-union work and women — allowed on the agenda. Prior to that Comrade Rosas had written a separate document on the Fourth International and Comrade King one on Afghanistan and Poland. But above all they emphasised the centrality of the party question and the primacy of program.

On trade union work, for example, Comrade Rosas pointed out "the logic of

fighting on a non-programmatic basis" by reference to the "work" of MDG members in the Reform Group of the Australian Clerical Officers' Association (ACOA) and of TSGers in the Redfern Mail Exchange in Sydney. At Redfern, he said, "at a time... when the left bureaucrats in the APTU were unable or unwilling to defend their members against the union-busting Mail Network Plan, the rank and file groups had been unable to do anything but whimper." At the session on women, the comrades upheld the basic Marxist position that "the only way women will be liberated is through socialist revolution, not through a 'women's revolution' or 'feminist revolution'", in opposition to the rampant feminism of Timmerman and Podesta.

But it was the final session on organisational perspectives which graphically demonstrated the correctness of the comrades' program for building a Leninist party. Having been busy caucusing all weekend, White, Fleming and Burstall suddenly introduced an amendment "that the Sydney and Melbourne Groups remain Discussion Groups..." In their defence they then began parroting the very arguments earlier advanced by Rosas and King! Burstall announced, for example, that "this conference has proved that we really have no basis for agreement. All the documents were big messes..." White, sounding for all the world like a born again Christian who had just seen the light, chimed in that "it is ludicrous to go into practice without a

Continued on page seven

Ex MDG/TSGers join Spartacist League

From eclecticism to Trotskyism

In the statements below, comrades Angelo Rosas and Steven King explain why they joined the Spartacist League. Rosas was a participant in the Sydney Trotskyist Study Group at its inception in 1979, and King was a member of the Melbourne Discussion Group for more than a year. Following a weekend conference which resolved nothing, in which these two comrades alone fought for a consistent Trotskyist program (see "Weekend of the living dead", this issue), they have both been excluded from these groups on the basis of their support for the SL. Neither group has any political basis for these crude expulsions other than cowardly and sectarian refusal to confront the views of the SL, ie authentic Trotskyism.

Comrade Rosas' statement is excerpted from his verbal presentation to the Sydney SL, 30 November.

★ ★ ★ ★

... I am exhilarated to have finally found a place in the Trotskyist movement. I'd like to outline my political history briefly so that you can understand how I got from being an absolute enemy of the Spartacist League (SL) to being here. I joined the SYA (Socialist Youth Alliance) in 1974 and basically I radicalised around the issue of gay liberation and feminism. At that stage what I was looking for was an umbrella organisation for all the oppressed groups and a nice theory to coordinate it all and that nice theory was "Trotskyism", SWP-style, watered-down "Trotskyism".

Having been recruited at that level, it didn't take me long to develop oppositional stances on the SWP insofar as I wanted to be a consistent feminist and a consistent gay liberationist.... Plus it becomes really obvious empirically once you've been in the SYA or SWP that it is a bureaucratic organisation, that it's not a truly democratic-centralist organisation....

I became attracted to, being at Sydney University at this point, the Left Tendency of the Communist Party. I was particularly interested in their trade union work because at that stage the SWP was not interested in trade union work at all. Their basic orientation was to campuses, to "the movements". This was where it was at and these were the movements that we were to take the leadership of and lead into revolution....

This eventually consolidated itself towards the end of 1975 around the question of Portugal. I was not at all impressed with the perspective of the [SWP-led] Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) [in the United Secretariat], that basically what we were fighting for in Portugal was democratic rights, and that maybe it was a bourgeois revolution and that what we should do under the circumstances, given that there was no democracy, was support the Socialist Party. I couldn't really buy this and when the Mandel-Maitan-Frank document "In Defence of the Portuguese Revolution"

appeared in *Intercontinental Press*, I was overjoyed. This meant a fight....

I remember that I did read SL articles on Portugal, but at that stage I still had this concept that anyone outside "the Fourth International" (ie the USec) was irrelevant really. But I was sort of interested that the SL had similar positions to the IMT; it didn't in fact, but in my warped imagination it did sound like they were talking about soviets, so that the IMT couldn't have been all that bad because they were talking about soviets too.

I also got involved in the Australian Union of Students (AUS). I rejected, at a gut level, the orientation of the SYA, that students were workers and that we treat them the way we treat people in a factory. I did think that students were petty-bourgeois intellectuals and therefore I was attracted to the milieu in AUS that had a similar perspective. Although in fact they did have the same views as the SYA: they were building this big industrial, pseudo-industrial "union", AUS.... It was pretty eclectic. In retrospect it is interesting that the document that programmatically brought me openly into the SL is called

grating. So I helped set up a Socialist Lesbians/Male Homosexuals group, based on the Lavender and Red Union of the US. I hated the SWP by then because I hated their single issue, democratic rights perspective.... This group [I'd help set up] openly identified as socialists in the gay liberation milieu and I thought that was an advance. It combined people who were opposed to the CPA brand of reformism and the SWP brand of reformism. Or so I thought....

In retrospect, the SL interventions in that group had an effect on me. I can remember one particular instance when Comrade N intervened on this big debate on psychoanalysis where everyone was being a big Lacanian. And she said, "Oh well, you know Trotsky did have something to say on psychoanalysis and he did say it is interesting that Freud is delving into these things and it is something that we would investigate in a socialist society. But really it's not quite the point; like it is the party question and we want to make a revolution so we can abolish all this shit"....

About this time the [pro-Mandel] Communist League (CL) was disintegrating back into the SWP. My instinct was



Portugal 1975: SWP apologised for rightist mobs during sacking of CP offices.

"Against Petty-Bourgeois Eclecticism! For Trotskyism!"....

[After a period outside the group] I did get back into the SWP. But by that stage I was much more assimilated in the Left Tendency milieu of the CPA; I used to get all these talks from Craig Johnston, the ostensible Trotskyist, and Peter King, the other ostensible Trotskyist in the Left Tendency. And, yes, it was a good idea if I got involved in this, and then we could fight for our "Trotskyist" perspective against the "syndicalists" in the Left Tendency.

Anyway, as a result of that I eventually [quit] the SWP but I didn't get involved in trade unions because at that point the trade union [orientation] and the Left Tendency itself was slowly disinte-

grating. So I helped set up a Socialist Lesbians/Male Homosexuals group, based on the Lavender and Red Union of the US. I hated the SWP by then because I hated their single issue, democratic rights perspective.... This group [I'd help set up] openly identified as socialists in the gay liberation milieu and I thought that was an advance. It combined people who were opposed to the CPA brand of reformism and the SWP brand of reformism. Or so I thought....

[After that] I retreated into the petty-bourgeois milieu and at this stage went through every possible stage you could imagine. I became one of the many Pabloite bar queens running up and down

Oxford Street saying "This is where homosexuals are. We've got to get into our mass work; unless we understand why people go to bars we'll never build a socialist homosexual movement". And then there was the whole punk thing. I'm sure you'll all be pleased to know that I took a side with consistent semi-socialist Johnny Rotten against the petty-bourgeois hedonist Sid Vicious. I'm not raising this to be trivial because this was a point in the left at the time. Like, *Socialist Worker* in Britain, the paper of [Tony Cliff's] SWP was having entire spreads on punk and how this was a mass movement, this was a cultural movement of working class youth against capitalism....

What happened in the Gay Solidarity Group (GSG) was important in smashing all this. Here was the living example of what happens to people once they are consistent political bar queens. I was impressed by the work of the SL at this point in the GSG. They were coming to meetings [saying] how you could mobilise trade unions around the issue of defence of homosexuals....

I got elected as a delegate in my workplace, with five other people. We all got elected unopposed, on no program. I thought that this was a bit ratshit, but under the circumstances this was where I worked and this was the best I could do. In other words, revolution by stages. You get people to trade-union consciousness, then you get them to a consciousness of what's wrong with trade unions and then you get them to a higher consciousness and then, maybe, in 2000 years you get to pass them a copy of *Permanent Revolution* or something....

At this stage the Trotskyist Study Group came up. What happened was that Barbara Fleming came to visit Jenny and I and said, "There's this group in Melbourne starting up and we think it's a really good idea; regroupment, regroupment and we hate everybody else, and we're going to get all these ex-CL people in it and it'll be really wonderful". And I thought, oh well, if it's going to be a CL-type organisation, even though I had inklings that the CL was centrist, it was better than nothing. And the party question, I thought the perspective was towards building a new party. So we had meeting after meeting after meeting. And the note that I've got here is "boring, boring, boring". And that's exactly what it was like....

And here we are in the Spartacist League. I don't know what else I can say apart from that. Except that although this document ["Against Petty-Bourgeois Eclecticism! For Trotskyism!"] has three typographical errors that we could spot... it makes basically the points I've summarised as we presented them to the conference, given the limitations. And I don't know what else I can say except forward to the hard-drinking, hard-smoking Australian section of the reborn Fourth International.

— Angelo Rosas

Continued on page eleven

Continued from page one

based on a socialist program and would certainly never under any circumstances recognise the "leading role" of the Stalinists. But Lech Walesa objects to it not from the standpoint of revolutionary socialism or even of primitive trade-union syndicalism (as many anti-Soviet leftists in the West falsely claim). Rather, he is expressing his clerical-nationalist allegiances.

Another crisis erupted when Stalinist security police searched Solidarity offices, discovered a government document on "anti-socialist activities", and arrested two Solidarity activists responsible for leaking it. Solidarity leaders again threatened a general strike, demanding not only the release of these two but four other dissidents under arrest as well, including right-wing activist Leszek Moczulski. Amidst charges by Moscow that a Polish rail stoppage on Warsaw Pact supply routes to East Germany would pose a military danger, the government backed down once more at the last minute and released the two charged with revealing the "state secrets".

In the 1956 Hungarian Revolution the secret police, the most depraved and notorious section of the bureaucracy, were so hated they were on occasion cornered by furious crowds and beaten to death. Thus the indignation over the document, which to judge by the version published in the London Times (27 November) is a political police memo on how to suppress dissidents. Trotskyists would have stood unambiguously for the defence of those who leaked this document, and one essential task of workers political revolution would be to abolish the Stalinist security police whose principal function is to defend the privileges of the bureaucracy through terror against the working class. However we are just as unambiguous in opposing the defence of genuine pro-capitalist, anti-socialist elements such as Leszek Moczulski.

Even the Sydney Morning Herald (27 November) described Moczulski as a "Right-wing dissident". This man, who was a member of the Moczar faction of the PUWP at the time it ran the 1968 anti-semitic purges, is the leader of the KPN (the Confederation of Independent Poland), whose stated goal is to "end Soviet domination by liquidating the power of the Polish United Workers Party". KPN is a clerical-reactionary split-off from ROPCIO, the Movement for the Defence of Human Rights, itself the product of a rightward split from the KOR (Committee for Social Self-Defence) of the social-democratic dissident Jacek Kuron.

Today the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP) claims that the jailing of Cardinal Wyszynski until 1956 by the Stalinist regime "was a symbol for many Poles of

A workers Poland, yes! The Pope's Poland, no!



Poles greet Red Army soldiers in 1945. Stalinist Russia carried out a bureaucratically-deformed social revolution.

the sweeping violations of national and human rights" (*Militant*, 19 September). But at the time in the late 1940s when the Stalinists were jailing and staging show trials of Catholic prelates — Stepinac in Yugoslavia, Mindszenty in Hungary, Wyszynski in Poland — the Fourth International of the then-Trotskyist SWP answered the renegade Max Shachtman, who sided with these reactionaries against the Stalinists, in the revolutionary spirit of the Polish communist Felix Dzerzhinsky who led the Bolshevik Cheka:

"WE COUNTERPOSE TO THE POLICE TERROR AND PROVOCATIONS OF THE STALINISTS THE REVOLUTIONARY TERROR OF THE MASSES as a thousand times more effective method of fighting fascism. . . . Not for a moment, however, do we undertake the defense of our main enemy, the Polish bourgeoisie and all its political lackeys." (emphasis in original) — *Fourth International*, February 1947

Walesa's claims to a membership of up to 10 million (out of a workforce of 13 million) may be exaggerated, but Solidarity clearly has widespread support. Nonetheless many workers are doubtless paper members of both the new Solidarity unions and the old official ones (though the totally discredited Central Trade Union Council has now been

abolished). Probably no one in Poland knows what the workers are doing politically and organisationally in most areas. Some Western press reports have it that the Solidarity leaders aim to exclude PUWP members, or at least bar them from officership — what amounts to an "anti-red" clause. If true (and the bourgeois press might falsify this point), Solidarity would be constitutionally a clericalist, anti-Communist union. But while many things are confused and uncertain about the Solidarity unions, the strong influence of the Catholic church is one thing that is not.

The first time Walesa left Gdansk after the initial settlement, it was for a private audience with Wyszynski in Warsaw. On 20 October the cardinal met a whole delegation of 20 Solidarity leaders, told them "I am with you" and pronounced Solidarity's aims "good . . . for the Motherland". The head of the Warsaw unions welcomed this "enormous moral backing for us" (*Australian*, 21 October). Right after the deal on the "leading role" clause, Walesa was back to embrace the cardinal again, who had himself just returned from a visit to Pope Wojtyla in Rome. And politically, one of the first demands of the Gdansk strikers to be granted was a reactionary one — for privileged church access to the state-run

mass media, which they didn't even demand for themselves, and which flouts the elementary democratic demand of separation of church and state.

The clerical-apologist, "human rights" SWP and its Australian namesake vociferously defend this measure. At a forum in New York on 30 August, US SWP spokesman Fred Feldman not only termed it progressive, but declared he'd even like to see a "daily Wyszynski Hour on television"! This same Wyszynski organised at the height of the August strikes, a mass (actually a political demonstration) of 150,000 commemorating the defeat of the Bolshevik Red Army in 1920 at the hands of the right-wing Polish nationalist (and later fascist dictator) Pilsudski.

Appealing to "pure" classless democracy, the *Militant* preaches: "In Poland it is neither liberating nor realistic to deny the right of the Catholic majority to hear the views of the church". What if the Polish Catholic majority wants to replace the Stalinist regime with a clerical-nationalist government blessed by Pope Wojtyla? Does the SWP think it is "neither liberating nor realistic" to deny a Polish Catholic majority the "right" of capitalist counterrevolution? What about the dictatorship of the proletariat? In repudiating it, the SWP social democrats join hands with the "free world" imperialists like Zbigniew Brzezinski.

The PUWP tops have taken to denouncing Jacek Kuron and KOR in particular as the "anti-socialist elements" behind Solidarity. But Kania knows where the really serious and dangerous anti-socialist elements are — and is desperately trying to conciliate them. In a deal specifically approved by the pope in the Vatican, a prominent Catholic spokesman and member of the Catholic ZNAK parliamentary group, Jerzy Ozdowski, was appointed a Deputy Prime Minister — for family and social affairs (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 December)! What a slap in the face for Polish women, whom this church wants to see kept barefoot and pregnant with no abortions or contraception. Contrary to those on the left like the SWP and Bob Gould of the Socialist Leadership Group (SLG) who maintain ludicrously that the church in Poland has been rendered fundamentally pro-Stalinist, no amount of such scandalous conciliation will change the counterrevolutionary aims of the Polish pope and his priests, nor eliminate their social base in Poland's numerous landholding peasantry.

Both the SWP and Gould also see a kindred spirit in Kuron, whom they both try to make out as some sort of Trotskyist; Gould enthuses in the SLG's *Keep Left* (October 1980) that Kuron & Co's "re-emergence as major leaders [!] . . . bodes well for the necessary construction of an alternative socialist leadership in

Polish dissidents call for capitalist restoration

Virtually without exception the left internationally has hailed the leadership of Poland's Solidarity movement and its dissident advisers as bona fide socialist opponents of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In contrast, the international Spartacist tendency has insisted that "The present crop of Polish dissidents are overwhelmingly enemies of the cause of proletarian socialism" ("All the Pope's dissidents", *Australasian Spartacist* no 77, September 1980). Emboldened by Solidarity's recent successes, the dissidents are now more openly proclaiming their real program. We reprint below some recent comments by leading dissidents — some of whom call themselves "socialists" — to let our readers judge for themselves what they really stand for.

"I suppose people have different views but very few of us could be called socialists at all. We would even welcome multi-nationals and big combines. In theory we would not mind having capitalism back — not on the American pattern but like Sweden or Denmark.

"... Better to live in an open prison than in the Gulag."
— student organiser for Solidarity, quoted in the *Guardian Weekly*, 9 November

As for the Russians, the same "dissident intellectual" says:

"We hate them. No, we hate the Soviet Union. We like the Russian people and Russian culture. . . . But there is a sort of schizophrenia. We feel superior. More European. More Western. More Democratic."

"In general it seems to me that the Catholic Church over the past thirty years has displayed so much wisdom, common sense and realism, that we are fully entitled to trust it. I'm absolutely convinced that the Church will never do anything that might prove harmful to the interests of the nation."
— KOR leader Jan Litynski, interview in the *New York Review of Books*, 9 October

"Asked to list the intellectual advisers to Solidarity, Walesa cites first, people

around Cardinal Wyszynski and the Catholic establishment, second, those around Karol Malczuzynski, a leading liberal journalist who works on the official Communist paper *Trybuna Ludu* and, third, the Kuron group of dissident intellectuals. . . .

"Yet Walesa claims that he is not a politician. I am a union man and not a socialist. My religion helps now — it has helped all my life. A man without religion is a dangerous man and without my religion I would be a dangerous man. I go to church every day of my life and on specially difficult days I pray the 'Queen of Poland (the Virgin Mary) help us'.

"Talking about the form of society he wants, Walesa agrees with Solzhenitsyn's criticisms of the West as well as of Russia. . . ."

— *Guardian Weekly*, 16 November

"Parliamentary democracy and independence represent the aspirations of Poles. We cannot pose such demands today as immediate goals. However, we do pose them as long-range objectives toward which all our activities are directed. We

have set out on a road on which there is no turning back. . . ."

— KOR leader Jacek Kuron, article translated in *Intercontinental Press*, 17 November

WORKERS VANGUARD

Religion and Reaction

Pope Wojtyla "progressive"? Khomeini "revolutionary"? A two-part special feature in defence of the basic Marxist understanding that religion is reactionary. In *Workers Vanguard* nos 268 and 269

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Poland". What rubbish! Kuron's calls for "human rights", "parliamentary democracy" and "pluralism" make this Polish version of a Eurocommunist programatically committed to building *bourgeois* democracy in Poland — a program for capitalist restoration. Kuron and other KOR leaders have made it perfectly clear where they stand: in the camp of Wyszynski and "democratic" imperialism (see accompanying article). They are the enemies of the Polish proletariat and are certainly not capable of defending the socialist property forms — only of *misleading* the workers at a crucial juncture. But then the same applies both to the SWP and to Gould, who ends his article with a third-campist — ie inherently non-defencist — call for not political but "Socialists [sic] Revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy".

Church influence is so visible that



Gdansk shipyard workers rally: liberation of Polish workers lies in Leninism, not clerical-nationalist reaction. A Trotskyist party in Poland would raise demands to split the clerical-nationalist forces from among the workers, demands such as separation of church and state.

Walesa felt the need to deny he was organising a union for Catholics only; "I don't want to create church trade unions" (*Wall Street Journal*, 22 September). That he did so indicates that there are many Polish workers who want a union independent of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy, but one that is not the labour arm of the church hierarchy either. The Silesian miners, for example, traditionally a solid proletarian base for Polish Communism, are unlikely to want a union which kneels down before cardinal and pope.

But so long as clerical-nationalists like Walesa lead the new unions, they stand in imminent danger of subordination to the counterrevolutionary aims of the Catholic hierarchy and behind it Western imperialism. As we wrote at the time of the Gdansk settlement:

"A central task for a Trotskyist organization in Poland would be to raise in these unions a series of demands that will split the clerical-nationalist forces from among the workers and separate them out. These unions must defend the socialized means of production and proletarian state power against Western imperialism." (emphasis in original)

— "Polish workers move", *Australasian Spartacist* no 77, September 1980

The Polish Stalinist bureaucracy has run out of leaders whom the masses respect and believe to be sincere reformers. Unlike Gierek, Stanislaw Kania is an anonymous *apparatchik* if there ever was one, whose former job as head of internal security is unlikely to endear him to Poland's workers. Several waves of purges reflect the crisis gripping the party. "The apparat is frightened. The rank and file are under tremendous pressure. And the leadership is turning on itself in typical cannibalistic fashion", one "well-connected" Polish writer told a reporter from the *New York Times* (8 September).

An early victim of the attempt to clean up the party's image was one Maciej Szczepanski, a "socialist" media czar who enjoyed ten lavish residences, one off the coast of Greece, and a taste for wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy could go

porn and sex for which he has been crucified as an affront to the puritanism of Catholic Poland (Wojtyla even says it's a sin for a man to "lust" for his wife!). It is rather his financial affairs which concern us Marxists, including shares in Austrian companies and \$1 million in a London bank. Szczepanski is a live specimen of capitalist-restorationist tendencies within the demoralised Polish bureaucracy.

Amidst the growing frenzy of party/state shake-ups, one change has been especially ominous: the re-emergence and now elevation onto the 10-member Politburo of General Mieczyslaw Moczar, an extreme nationalist who ran the vicious anti-Semitic campaign in 1968 (and who declares Solidarity a "healthy movement" from which "adventurist elements will be removed"). Trotsky had types like Moczar in mind when he said a

over to fascism. Some elements in the bureaucracy may be hoping that this Stalinist would-be Pilsudski can effectively compete with Wyszynski/Walesa as a nationalist. If so, they are playing a dangerous game indeed.

With the factional/cliquest infighting paralysing the bureaucracy's effectiveness, the pressure of the present mass social struggles in Poland is also breaking down its repressive capacity. How will the Polish army respond if it is ordered to suppress mass workers' strikes? And even in the army the church has its agents, in the form of Catholic chaplains. The fact that their Warsaw counterparts appear to have lost control over Polish society is what makes Brezhnev, Honecker & Co panicky.

The Polish Stalinists try to cow their masses with the spectre of the Soviet army, while Western social democrats (especially the "state capitalist" fringe groups, including the International Socialists) rant about Soviet "imperialist exploitation" of East Europe. In reality, in the past decade the Kremlin has tried

to stabilise Poland by economically subsidising a country in which the standard of living is far higher than in their own. Brezhnev is for the time being willing to continue paying, as long as it bears fruit, to judge by the recent decision to extend \$957 million in aid to the Polish government. The alternative, for the Kremlin, is to resort to force.

The Kremlin is talking as if it might, indeed, intervene with tanks as they did in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Kremlin justified its crushing of the 1968 Prague Spring by claiming it was really the beginning of a fascistic, pro-imperialist counterrevolution. This lie was not just a diplomatic cover — it was directed above all at winning the Soviet people to this military intervention. When Soviet soldiers actually occupied Prague, many were visibly shaken by the protests of Communist workers and left-wing students. "We were told we were being sent to combat a counterrevolution, but when we came here we didn't see any", confessed a Soviet colonel (*New York Times*, 23 August 1968).

The Prague Spring was made under the banner of a liberalised Stalinism. But in Poland the discontent and rebelliousness of the working masses has been tapped by clerical-nationalist forces. The counterrevolution which did not exist in Czechoslovakia in 1968 could develop out of Poland 1980. But as revolutionaries we do not consign the Polish working class to the camp of clerical nationalist reaction. As we wrote in "Polish workers move", the present crisis, especially the existence of independent working-class organisations, also contains the potential for proletarian political revolution. It is this outcome which we as Trotskyists strive for.

As Afghanistan showed, the Kremlin bureaucrats are capable of sending in the Red Army on the side of the oppressed against their counterrevolutionary class enemies in a civil war. As Krushchev showed in Hungary in 1956, they are also mortal enemies of workers political revolution which strikes at the foundation of their own privileges and usurped power and which they are prepared to drown in blood. As we have said, Poland at this juncture stands somewhere between Afghanistan 1980 and Hungary 1956.

The Soviet people know full well the mortal danger represented by the US/NATO imperialist phalanx aimed at the gains of the October Revolution. In following clerical-nationalists like Walesa, Polish workers not only serve their class enemies in Poland but aid the Kremlin in rallying the Soviet people against them. Polish workers cannot hope to appeal to Soviet soldiers unless they assure them that they will defend that part of the world against imperialist attack. Only by addressing their Soviet class brothers in the name of revolutionary socialist internationalism can the Polish proletariat liberate itself from Stalinist oppression. A Trotskyist party as a section of a reborn Fourth International, forged in the struggle against the Polish workers' misleaders — that is what this urgent task requires above all. ■

Protest Age lies!

In the 26 November Melbourne *Age*, the regular "News Diary" feature edited by one Peter Weiniger produced a snide little piece of redbaiting. Purporting to give a rundown of the "dialectic contortions among our local communist parties" in the face of the Polish events, he cites an "informant" (who is he?) who allegedly attended a "recent seminar" of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). After a few condescending words for the CPA, Weiniger gets to his real target. We quote:

"Not all the ultra-left takes such a tolerant view of the right to strike. The tiny Spartacist faction in its news-sheet condemned the strikers as 'Hitler's heirs' and described their actions as 'fascist terror exploded in East Europe'."

Weiniger's lie is frankly breathtaking. As Marxists we expect the bourgeois press to twist and distort the truth of the class struggle and the program of

working-class revolutionaries. But for sheer unscrupulous viciousness this total fabrication takes some beating. It lifts from our last issue the front-page, main headline dealing with the recent wave of fascist bombings in Italy, France and Germany (ie *Western Europe*, Weiniger) — "Hitler's heirs: Fascist terror explodes in Europe"; but it adds the word "East", and "concludes" that we denounce the "right to strike" and the Polish workers! Weiniger made not the slightest attempt to check the facts; either he knew it was an outrageous slander, if indeed he didn't concoct it himself, or he simply couldn't care less. One thing is clear: the aim was to use a sordid amalgam to discredit Trotskyism. The "liberal" *Age* has refused even to print a letter refuting the lies. So much for the "objective" pretensions of the respectable Spencer Street liars and censors!

living dead...

Continued from page five

of fruitless discussion [showed] that it was [pointless] to form a transitional organisation". Dead right, White, but what about the two years you spent helping think up this caricature of Leninism?

In opposition to this cynical cliquist manoeuvring Comrade King took the floor to advance the program that none of the warring factions dared talk about — the program of Trotskyism. After reading the international Spartacist tendency's nine points for revolutionary regroupment (reprinted in the comrades' document), he summed up:

"We have a perspective for regroupment.

We're the only ones who have a perspective of building a revolutionary party. This is the only way you can do it [based] on a program."

But none of the opposing cliques could take up the challenge. Timmerman was still clinging to his anti-Leninist "transitional organisation" idea, whereas all that Burstall/Fleming/White proposed was a *retreat* to anti-Leninist study circle politics, there to mull over whether or not democratic-centralism is in fact correct. Then, as if to prove that there is nothing fundamental dividing any of these inveterate opportunists, they all joined hands to chummily elect a study group "steering committee" ... with Timmerman nominating White for a position on it and White ever-so-kindly returning the favour by nominating Frans. Truly, as thick as thieves. At the end MDGer Simon Marginson was left trying to put a brave face on it: "Well, you know, there's no need to be pessimistic. We've been through all this before. It's true we haven't got anywhere but we've learned how not to do it". Not so; if ever a group deserves to be pessimistic and despairing it is this one.

For serious leftists in the TSG/MDG there is a road forward, though, the road taken by Angelo Rosas and Steve King. Only by coming to terms with the revolutionary program, history and proven record of the Spartacist League — from Chile to Iran, Afghanistan and Poland — will they be able to contribute to the task of overthrowing capitalist class rule internationally. As Comrade Rosas put it in his intervention on the "Leninism" session at the conference:

"There has been one successful workers revolution in this world and that was the one led by Lenin and Trotsky in 1917. We place ourselves in that tradition and that is why we call ourselves Leninists. We don't think that the Leninist party is purely a nice conception; we see it as the only way that capitalism can be overthrown. Therefore we stand on the basis of a democratic-centralist Leninist party organised around a program...."

And today it is not the MDG or TSG but the Spartacist League which represents Leninism in Australia. ■

OUT SOON!

Revolutionary Communist Bulletin no 9

"From Eclecticism to Trotskyism"

Includes:

- The Russian question: Poland, Afghanistan and the left — an exchange with Paul White
- "Against petty-bourgeois eclecticism — for Trotskyism" and other documents by Angelo Rosas and Steve King from their struggle within the Melbourne Discussion Group and the Sydney Trotskyist Study Group

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A spectre is haunting the SPA...

Forty years after Stalin murdered Trotsky, the pro-Moscow Stalinists are still trying to exorcise the spectre of Trotskyism. In a piece entitled "Trotskyism: the right-wing of the left" (*Socialist*, 3 December), Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) leader Alan Miller tries to show that Trotskyism is really a "right-wing position [covered] with a left veneer". His real target, though, is the Trotskyist program of international socialist revolution, a program the Stalinists have long since rejected in favour of "peacefully coexisting" with imperialism and the class enemy.

The core of Miller's article is a polemic against an undifferentiated "Trotskyist" position on Afghanistan. When the Soviet troops intervened in Afghanistan last Christmas, the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) raised the slogan "Hail Red Army!" in recognition of the fact that, for once, the Kremlin had intervened on the right side in a civil war. We said:

"There can be no question that for revolutionaries our side in this conflict is with the Red Army. In fact, although it is surely uncalled for militarily, a natural response on the part of the world's young leftists would be an enthusiastic desire to join an international brigade to Afghanistan to fight the CIA-connected mullahs."

—*Workers Vanguard* no 247,
11 January 1980

Miller doesn't mention the iSt position by name, but his fire is in effect aimed

against it. According to him, the principled proletarian internationalist position of openly welcoming and defending the Red Army incursion benefits not the working class but... imperialism! You see, the Soviet intervention was carried out according to the norms of bourgeois diplomacy: it was merely "aid", provided for under treaty obligations, to the "Afghan revolution"; it conformed to the charter of that thieves' kitchen, the United Nations; apparently, it even assisted "peaceful co-existence".

What nonsense! Soviet intervention in Afghanistan came at a time when the PDPA regime was losing to the mullah-led reactionaries. Fearing the establishment of a hostile anti-Soviet state on its southern flank the Kremlin decided to move and overnight piled in "aid" at the rate of one plane load every two minutes. Was that sanctioned by a UN charter, Comrade Miller? As for "peaceful co-existence", any five year old could tell the SPA that detente is now deadlier than the dodo and what characterises world politics today is a fast-escalating anti-Soviet Cold War drive. The duty of proletarian internationalists is to say openly and unambiguously: Defend the Soviet Union! But that is something which the allegedly pro-Soviet SPA will not and cannot do, for fear of driving away those bourgeois liberals it is constantly trying to inveigle into its "peace movement".

Miller does mention one ostensible Trotskyist group by name in the article, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Anyone familiar with the SWP's craven electoralism, its support of the "right" of fascists to free speech, its nauseating apologies for the worst features of the butcher Khomeini's Iran, will be surprised to hear it described as "left", however. In truth, its social-democratic reformism has qualitatively more in common with the SPA's Stalinist reformism than it has with Trotskyism.

The SWP's initial line on Afghanistan was unexpectedly left-sounding, more so than any other party in the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat" (Usec). But like the SPA it justified its position by reference to the mythical "Afghan Revolution". The SWP's US mentors flatly declared that "the issue is not Soviet intervention..." (*Militant*, 18 January). The reason for this absurd denial of reality is simple: to avoid, at any cost, upholding the Trotskyist program of defending the USSR. Since then the SWP has pulled back from this initial "left" tilt. Given their social-democratic aspirations we wouldn't be too surprised if they ultimately decided that in retrospect they were really wrong about supporting, however lukewarmly, the Soviet intervention.

Miller's polemic makes a more general charge that Trotskyism stands for the "export of revolution". True enough; Trotskyists do believe in principle that it is possible and sometimes desirable to "export revolution". But then so did every Bolshevik leader during Lenin's lifetime; it wasn't until after Stalin announced his dogma of "Socialism in One Country" in late 1924 that he dis-

covered the particular perniciousness of this piece of Bolshevism. Before that the Bolshevik Central Committee actually *did* export revolution — successfully to Georgia and Outer Mongolia in 1921. In 1920 they failed in their attempt to conquer Warsaw; had they done so and thus forged a direct link between the German proletariat and Soviet Russia, the future of the world would have been very different. As is well known, Trotsky opposed the Polish invasion on tactical grounds. Ironically, he was later denounced for this in Pepov's notorious *Official History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* on the grounds that "his social-democratic prejudices made him averse to the idea of imposing 'revolution from without' on any country" (quoted in Erich Wollenberg, *The Red Army*)! So which is it to be, comrades?

All this scarcely matters to Miller who doesn't want revolution at home, let alone "exporting" it anywhere else. His article refers to Spain in the 1930s, France 1968 and Chile as illustrations of Trotskyist attempts to bring "the death of the revolution". What gall! It was the Stalinists who paved the way for Franco by smashing the Barcelona uprising of May 1937; it was the French CP which sold out the May-June strike wave by channeling it into the deadend of bourgeois parliamentary elections; it was Corvalan's CP which refused to arm the Chilean masses when Pinochet struck in September 1973. The Stalinists are the ones who tied the working class to the popular-front death march with the bourgeoisie. They have the workers' blood on their hands! It was the Trotskyists every time who warned against these Stalinist betrayals. We, not they (and not the Usec), were the ones who warned the Chilean proletariat *three years before* the military coup against a bloody repeat of the popular-front disaster: "Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism is ready" (*Spartacist* no 19, November-December 1970).

Miller also quotes Lenin on Trotsky to buttress his anti-Trotskyist attack: "[Trotsky] twists, swindles, poses as a Left, helps the Right, so long as he can..." He omits to mention that this was written *before* Trotsky was a Bolshevik; as Leninists, we naturally solidarise with Lenin's trenchant criticisms of Trotsky's pre-Bolshevik conciliationism. But we also solidarise with Lenin's evaluation of Trotsky after the latter organised and successfully led the October 1917 insurrection: "Trotsky long ago said that unification [with the Mensheviks] is impossible. Trotsky understood this, and from that time on there has been no better Bolshevik" (Minutes of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks, 14 November 1917; quoted in Trotsky, *The Stalin School of Falsification*).

Miller's selective use of Lenin is designed to prove that Trotskyism is "like political quicksilver. You try to pin it down to a clear and precise political program and it shifts its position". Like the rest of Miller's polemic, this too is a lie. Trotskyism today is the continuity of Bolshevism. As the *Transitional Program* of the Fourth International put it, "Our task — the abolition of capitalism. Our aim — socialism. Our method — proletarian revolution". Stalinism stands opposed to all this. Its task — the preservation of the world imperialist status quo; its aim — the safeguarding of the privileges of the bureaucracies of the deformed and degenerated workers states; its method — "peaceful co-existence" and the strangling of proletarian revolution. Between the Stalinism of an Alan Miller and the Trotskyism of the Spartacist League there can be no ground for political compromise. A re-forged Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, will be built only in opposition to this program of class treachery. ■

BLP...

Continued from page three

depth of such illusions, which require flexible tactics to be destroyed, including when appropriate critical support and entry. But first there has to be the revolutionary program and the will to destroy reformism.

In contrast the IMG has become a virtual press agency for Benn. Benn of course knows their measure, openly welcoming "those socialists who have got isolated in sectarian loneliness" back to Labour's bosom. To what end? Even the IMG admits "the last thing Benn wants is a revolution". Precisely: *the last thing Benn wants is a revolution*. He talks now of troop withdrawal from Ireland because "violence could spread to England" and thinks loss of British power to the EEC could light "the long fuse of revolution". His "little England" social-patriotic schemes and illusions are explicitly designed to stop that fuse being lit. But the IMG offers advice on how to sell himself to the workers: walk a few picket lines, which he will do when he needs to, just as on the Clyde in 1972. The social democrats' capacity to head off workers struggles is what makes them useful to the bourgeoisie.

For example in the 1930s the Spanish Socialist Party came out for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The French Socialist Party had a large left-centrist wing and Trotsky advised a short-term entry to win these leftward-moving workers to revolutionary politics, the "French turn". Today there is no substantial leftist programmatic content to the Bennite "left", reflecting the absence as yet of such a leftward movement in Labour's proletarian base. While the WSL found it "conspicuous that it was among the constituency delegations — most closely linked to the rank and file of the labour movement — that this new militant political current found most support" (*Socialist Press*, 15 October), this is actually the norm.

Constituency parties have long been a sandpit for fake-left oppositions to play in. And a significant component of the "left" today consists of petty-bourgeois radicals *moving right*, including a gaggle of self-styled Trotskyists who only mislead any radicalising workers they chance upon into footslogging and canvassing for left reformism.

Of course genuine Trotskyists would seek to work in the constituency parties, but the Labour Party's real strength lies in the unions. There the bureaucrats must be challenged by a class-struggle program, an essential part of a strategy to split Labour. But fake lefts like the WSL can only counterpose to the scabbing, Labourite policies of the bureaucracy... their own scabbing, Labourite policies.

Centrists and Bennery

History is littered with the forgotten initials of "revolutionary" groups who first adapted to social democracy, then joined it. The fate of the Militant and Chartist groups awaits those who hail Blackpool. The right-centrist WSL is en route, but the Workers Action tendency seems to have arrived. Nearly forgotten are the initials of its parent group, the International-Communist League (though Melbourne centrist elements such as Paul White struggle to keep their memory alive). Two years after spawning the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV) as a "short-term" electoral tactic, this tendency has relegated its own paper, *Workers Action*, to the status of a monthly "theoretical journal" in order to make the SCLV's reformist *Socialist Organiser* their fortnightly tool of "intervention". In turn, the SCLV is part of a larger pro-Benn bloc — the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy.

But more centrally Workers Action has now embraced explicitly reformist positions on the state. Leader John O'Mahoney claims in his analysis of Blackpool (*Socialist Organiser*, 11 October): "Direct channels are being opened for the control by the labour

movement over our representatives in Parliament and therefore, if Labour has a majority, control over Parliament." After a previous revisionist redefinition of a workers government (ie the dictatorship of the proletariat) as a Labour government possibly "resting on a parliamentary majority", this all adds up to the reformist "peaceful road to socialism". O'Mahoney called Blackpool "half a revolution: the opening half" (presumably like the Russian Revolution — sans soviets and Bolsheviks — since *Socialist Organiser's* headline "Five days that shook the Labour Party" alludes to the title of John Reed's account).

The Australian left's reaction to the decisions of the Blackpool conference was similar to the British, if more muted. *Keep Left*, paper of Bob Gould's Socialist Leadership Group (SLG) hailed the "resounding victory" of the Bennite left, contrasting this to the failure of the ALP to adopt "comprehensive socialist policies like the ones just adopted in Britain". The "full programme of socialist policies" which the Gouldites are labouring to convert the ALP to thus turns out to be no more than left-posturing social democracy. The SLG is both firmly embedded in the ALP's particular "White Australia" tradition and politically closely akin to the bizarre Healyite Socialist Labour League (which takes its cue from Libyan dictator Qaddafi). But it also exhibits all the parliamentary reformism and eternal Labour-loyalism endemic to the British fake-Trotskyists.

To such house "Trotskyists" of social democracy, it bears repeating: a workers government will be established only through a revolutionary onslaught *against* the bourgeois state, Westminster and all. The British Labour Party, like the ALP, has demonstrated for decades the bankruptcy of its claims to stand for the interests of the working class. What is needed is a revolutionary party to tighten the noose around its neck and break the workers once and for all from this obstacle to their emancipation.

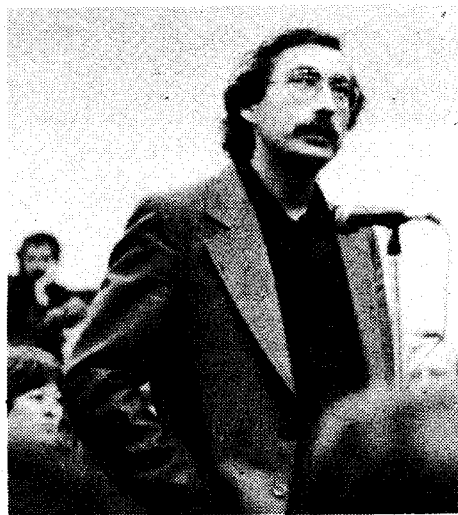
— adapted from *Spartacist Britain* no 27,
November 1980

Engels had his number Gould's Housing Crisis farce

In his 1872 polemic, *The Housing Question*, Friedrich Engels remarked that "... this housing shortage gets talked of only because it is not confined to the working class but has affected the petty bourgeoisie as well". 108 years later housing as a special question is still a hobby-horse of an odd collection of petty-bourgeois socialists, presently organised by Bob Gould's Socialist Leadership Group (SLG) in the ALP. The 6 November meeting on the "Housing Crisis", although heavily advertised by Gould's activists in posters throughout Sydney, was a thoroughly drab affair, drawing a dull assortment of petty-bourgeois squatters, greenies, Laborites of all factional hues, and various other inner-city exotica such as someone from a group of 30 collective vegetable gardeners.

From the platform, Sydney's new ALP Lord Mayor, Doug Sutherland, explained that "we have a role to play with the police force and the law enforcement agencies" (after all, who else will enforce evictions?). Speakers discussed the pros and cons of a miserable 2 percent levy on developers to finance public housing. And "left" ALP Leichhardt councillor Hall Greenland referred to the Communist Manifesto but called for a "freeze on development of any kind in the city", no doubt aspiring to transform his part of Sydney into a string of quaint little "self-managed" villages!

What brought this bunch together if not a desire to lobby the Labor city council and NSW state government to implement a few worthless sub-reformist schemes and reactionary crackpot panaceas? Gould's pandering to such low-



Asp photo

No housing problem in Libya, says SLL gauliteer Mulgrew at Gould Housing meeting.

level pressure politics and anti-Marxist "greenie" opposition to development *per se* certainly gives the lie to the SLG's pretension to stand in the *proletarian* socialist tradition. As Engels pointed out, "The housing shortage ... is one of the innumerable smaller, secondary evils which result from the present-day capitalist mode of production" and "only by the solution of the social question, that is, by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, is the solution of the housing question made possible".

There were not only Laborites wallowing in Gould's pigpen, however. As chairman, the first speaker from the floor that Gould recognised was Jim Mulgrew, boss of the sinister Socialist Labour League (SLL). The SLL is currently the official

Australian section of the International Committee (IC) of Gerry Healy and Mike Banda. Long notorious for their political banditry and shameless cynicism, the IC in recent years has functioned simply as apologists and press agents for the Islamic bonapartist dictator, Colonel Qaddafi, a role which has taken them outside the ranks of the workers movement.

Mulgrew's remarks were pitched a certain distance to the "left" of the platform, mildly criticising the speakers for not bothering to mention nationalisation of the land and housing under workers control, attacking Greenland's "twaddle about rent control". He recently was in Libya, which he claimed had virtually solved the housing question, building large numbers of houses and handing them over to the people. The normally garrulous Gould seemed to see nothing strange in this paean of praise for Qaddafi's Libya, for he saw no need to reply. Indeed there is nothing strange: Mulgrew simply believes in not biting the hand that feeds him.

But when a Spartacist spokesman pointed out that the SLG's politics "parallel those of the SLL — including up to the point of Bob Gould's refusing to defend 21 Iraqi Communist Party members when they were executed by that regime in 1978", he was howled down by SLGers. The reception was in marked contrast to the respectful silence which had greeted not only Mulgrew but also the various petty-bourgeois spokesmen who had shown up. On the housing question, the comrade noted that "the strategy ... was simply to pressure the state ALP ... a little more to the left",

yet this was the Wran government which just the week before having whitewashed "prison officers' brutality and sadism ... then sent his riot squad to break up the prisoners' peaceful protest". The speaker contrasted the preoccupation with "these penny-ante little, petty, liberal reforms and reformism" to the "key question today" for Marxists — "defence of the Soviet Union and the October Revolution".

One speaker on, Gould took the floor himself and said "I won't bother responding to our ... Spartacist friend, with all the slander and bullshit", then launched into a ten-minute tirade precisely and *only* to "answer" the SLG's revolutionary analysis. Conspicuously silent on Qaddafi's publicity agent Mulgrew, Gould waxed eloquent over the prospects for "forcing our Labor leaders and Labor aldermen that they start acting some way like socialists. The Spartacist man might say that's sub-reformist..." No kidding! Gould's "militant" answer to the 2-percent levy advocates merely confirms our point: "You ought to produce a little more than a lousy 2 percent... It ought to be something decent like 5 or 10 percent", "something verging on the impossible"!

Gould and the SLG would like the workers movement to believe that they are serious "scientific socialists" taking up the "real issues" before the working class. But this sideshow exploded that claim. The Spartacist speaker *alone* cut through the petty-bourgeois "socialism" of Gould's meeting with a Marxist, ie revolutionary Trotskyist, program. There remains though the SLG's evident political affinity for Mulgrew's SLL and the International Committee. The SLG may pose as *simply* a sub-reformist current within the ALP, but it must be held accountable not just for its loyalty to traitors like Wran but for its political agreement with the Healyite Qaddafi-lovers as well. ■

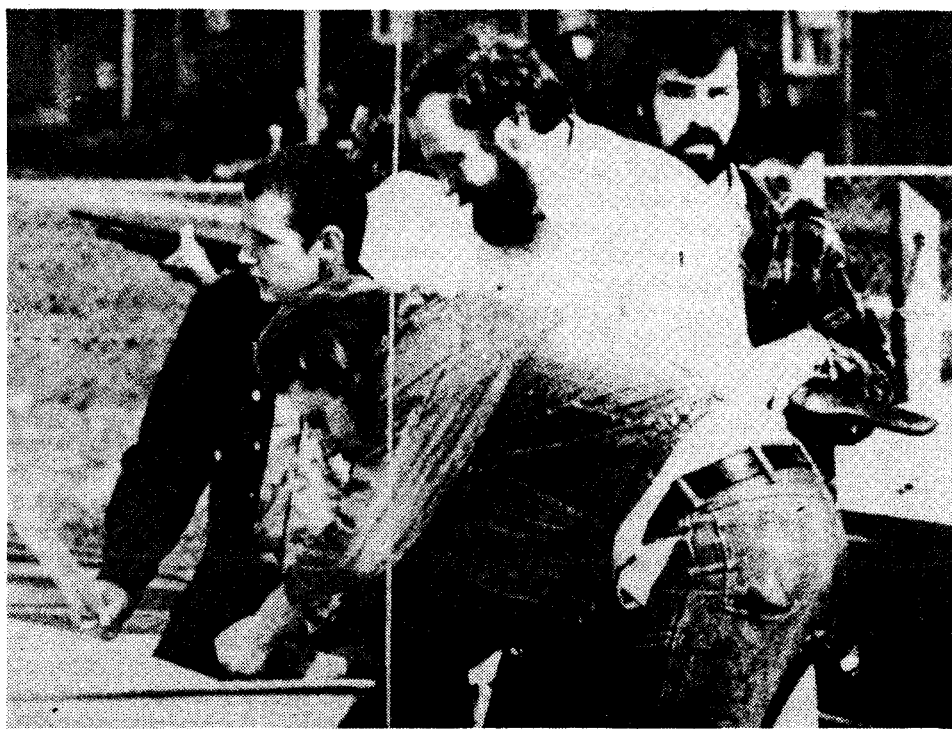
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Continued from page one

verdicts was varied. Liberal reporters expressed shock and dismay, but Southern blacks long accustomed to Jim Crow justice were not surprised. In various major cities across the US, on college campuses, even in a few union halls there were angry protests, though not the massive outcry that met other examples of racist injustice in the late 1960s or even as recently as Miami. The Spartacist League/US (SL) and its youth group, the Spartacus Youth League (SYL), took the lead in building these protests, which demanded "Jail the killer Klan/Nazis! Drop the Charges Against Greensboro Anti-Fascist Demonstrators! For Mass Labor/Black Action to Smash Klan/Nazi Terror! For the Right of Armed Self-Defense Against Racist Terror!"

On 20 November, 300-400 demonstrators turned out to the University of California at Berkeley's Sproul Plaza for a united-front mobilisation initiated by the SYL and endorsed by an impressive number of student groups, minority organisations and union activists. The day before, 150 attended a similar rally at San Francisco State to express their outrage. On 22 November more than 125 rallied in Detroit's Kennedy Square, site of last November's anti-Klan rally built by the SL/SYL and militant car workers in the immediate wake of the Greensboro massacre. United Auto Worker Local 600's largest unit, the Dearborn Assembly Plant, officially endorsed the rally at a unit meeting just prior to the demonstration. Two dozen River Rouge plant workers attended. Several carloads of students drove up from Ann Arbor to attend the rally. Earlier in the week 150 had rallied at a University of Michigan demonstration called by the SYL.

In addition, class-struggle militants in several unions, including the Communications Workers of America (CWA),



US TV shows Klansmen/Nazis getting their guns for massacre of leftists in Greensboro, November 1979.

National Maritime Union and United Auto Workers, called on their unions to mount protests against the racist verdict. In Chicago, a small rally by UAW Local 6 was held in the union hall; speakers warned of the Klan/Nazi threat and pointed to the local's experience in stopping racist terror with a union defence guard several years ago.

The biggest protest was in Greensboro itself where a rally of 1000, largely black North Carolina students, was held on 20 November. But outside the South, the SL/SYL-initiated protests were notably larger than those called by various opportunist left groups. In some cases, reformist groups which normally turn a cold shoulder to any form of cooperation with Trotskyists felt constrained to associate themselves with SYL protests. Thus at San Francisco State Communist Party leader Angela Davis endorsed; at Berkeley, the YSA (youth group of the US Socialist Workers

Party) endorsed, despite their scandalous line defending a "right to free speech" for fascists.

The Greensboro massacre and the judicial whitewash carry an ominous message: now that Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" campaign has prepared the way for Republican reactionary Reagan and a new Cold War, blacks, labour militants and communists will be targeted at home. With the cross-hairs of the Klan's M-16s trained on communists, standing behind the white-sheeted killers trained at the Bay of Pigs and in Vietnam are the black-robed judges and the powerful apparatus of the US government.

Today the fascist groups exist as little terror gangs on the very fringes of the far right racist milieu. But this milieu is fertile ground for Klan and Nazi recruiting. In a deep crisis of capitalism the fascists can make their bid to grow

into a mass movement to smash the organisations of the working class and oppressed minorities. In this process blacks are made the scapegoats for the failure of capitalism.

For blacks, leftists and unionists the question is starkly posed: *the KKK and the Nazis must be stopped*. Those who say it will be the cops and courts who will "ban the Klan", let them look to Greensboro. Those who say small bands of leftists must throw themselves before the KKK/Nazis when they are backed up by the armed might of the state, let them look to Greensboro. And for those most treacherous of fools who call for "free speech" for the fascist murderers — who, like the Socialist Workers Party, even debate the Klan — let them look to Greensboro. It must be clear that it will require the mass mobilisation of the power of labour and blacks to smash the fascists. Only through the final victory of the proletariat over the capitalist class, by achieving a revolutionary workers government, can the fascist threat be swept away at last.

— adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 269, 28 November 1980

Change of telephone number

The telephone number of the Melbourne Spartacist League has been changed. It is now (03) 662-3740.

Spartacist League

Melbourne (03) 662-3740
GPO Box 2339, Melbourne
VIC, 3001

Sydney (02) 264-8195
GPO Box 3473, Sydney,
NSW, 2001

7000 vote Spartacist in San Francisco elections

On 4 November, 7183 San Francisco voters cast their ballots for Diana Coleman, Spartacist candidate for the city's Board of Supervisors. Coleman's average was 2.7 percent citywide, but the bulk of her support was concentrated in the heavily black inner city areas, the young and integrated Haight/Ashbury, the heavily gay Castro district and the predominantly Latino Mission district. In her top 20 precincts Coleman received 8.47 percent of the vote.

At a time of a significant rightward shift in US politics, this is an impressive showing for a Bolshevik candidate. With Carter and Reagan trying to outbid each other in the arms race against "Red Russia", Coleman stood as a staunch defender of the USSR against imperialist war threats. While all the bourgeois politicians and trade union bureaucrats yearned for the Catholic church to restore capitalism in Poland, Coleman stood for strict separation of church and state and for workers political revolution in the Soviet bloc — to strengthen socialist property forms, not undermine them. Coleman attacked California's exotic brands of eco-freaks and "less is better" culture faddists, who, mimicking capitalist austerity policies, oppose smoking in public, pornography, guns and "growth". She demanded massive public works, the right to bear arms, and defended individual liberties against feminist anti-pornography censors and liberal moralists in league with "Moral Majority".

Unlike other left candidates for supervisor, Coleman did not duck the hard issues to get votes. "The capitalist state can't be reformed to serve the interests of workers and poor people", her election brochure proclaimed. "It must be replaced by a workers state and it will take a socialist revolution to get one."

Running against Carter/Reagan, Nazis and Klan

Growing out of last April's successful mass labour rally against the Nazis (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 73, May 1980), Coleman's socialist campaign drew wide recognition among blacks, unionists and the left in San Francisco. She hammered home the message of that victory: not electoralism, but mass labour/black mobilisations in the streets are necessary to stop the fascists. Recalling her background in the civil rights movement, she noted, "I've seen more Klan activity in California in the last year than I did in Mississippi in 1965." The right-wing policies of both the Democratic and Republican parties have fuelled the growth of fascist terror groups. Coleman stressed that this makes even more urgent her campaign's main demand, "ENOUGH! IT'S TIME FOR A WORKERS PARTY!"

Coleman's campaign took the socialist program directly to the working class, addressing union meetings, visiting work locations and reviving the socialist tradition of street-corner soap-boxing.

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Diana Coleman campaigning at San Francisco's Bethlehem shipyards. SF workers given a real choice.

The receptivity to an openly "red" candidate was evidence of the difficulties which labour officialdom and black misleaders had in stumping for Jimmy Carter's Democrats. She was the only supervisory candidate invited to address the San Francisco local of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) (of which she had been a member). Coleman also addressed the executive board of the transit drivers' union, who wanted to know her position on crossing picket lines: "Did you have any friends that worked behind the picket lines [in the 1976 city workers strike]?" "No", she replied, "people who cross picket lines aren't my friends". Coleman was the only candidate invited to meet the membership of one of the local postal unions — while Democratic candidates who showed up were pointedly barred.

The real worker backbone of the campaign staff were unionists from the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) and Communication Workers of America (CWA). Members of class-struggle caucuses in these unions supported by the Spartacist League/US (SL/US) mobilised fellow unionists to support and work for Coleman. It was in these industries that the campaign probably had its most direct impact on workers. On one hand, these militants used the election campaign to concretise their program for the formation of a workers party. And Coleman pointed to their fight to turn their unions to the path of class struggle as key to forging a fighting labour movement. The overlapping campaigns of both militant caucuses to elect members to their union executive boards underscored this point.

Coleman repeatedly visited the ILWU hiring hall and pay lines. A campaign worker noted, "The guys would be on their feet to shake hands and talk as soon as they saw us coming". Her frequent visits led one longshoreman to comment that he thought she was the union's official candidate. Responses from workers like, "My sister works for the phone company and our whole family voted for

Coleman" indicate what could have been achieved on a larger scale had even a couple of unions broken with the Democrats to run labour candidates on a class-struggle program.

The campaigning began to show results long before the polls opened. For example at one college two black women approached a Coleman supporter, one pulled out a "Stop the Nazis" brochure and declared "She's our candidate". The Spartacus Youth League (SYL) took the campaign onto the campuses. At City College, Coleman spoke to 25 mostly black students who had come to see a videotape of the April 19 anti-fascist rally; in the wake of this success the SYL set up a new chapter.

The votes of San Francisco's large gay population is openly courted by even the most respectable bourgeois politicians and normally corralled by the local Democratic Party machine. Coleman did very well, winning about 1200 votes, in gay incumbent Harry Britt's own supervisory district. When the Democrat Britt called a supervisor's hearing on the rise of anti-gay violence, Coleman denounced his call for more police patrols — to thunderous applause from the gay audience, most of whom had experienced the "even hand of justice". At nearly weekly rallies in the Castro district, Coleman and other Spartacists denounced Britt for his ties to the party of Klansman Tom Metzger, Jimmy Carter and the widely-detested Mayor Dianne Feinstein. Driven to a frenzy, Britt's flunkies repeatedly called the police to try to break up our rallies. These life-style Democrats' real sentiments were revealed when one snarled, "I'd vote for Tom Metzger before I'd vote for Coleman."

They also ran

Had San Francisco voters simply wished to record a protest vote there were plenty of choices: 65 candidates for 11 seats. Yet Coleman beat 24 of them. Most importantly, she ran on a Bolshevik program — against the Democratic party.

Her revolutionary policies were well publicised by the Spartacist campaign as well as through a hard-hitting statement in a Voter Information Pamphlet mailed to over 400,000 registered voters.

In contrast, Socialist Workers Party (SWP) candidate Louise Goodman, in her statement, did not identify herself as a socialist or mention the SWP, only proclaiming as her maximum program a labour party and "public ownership" of the energy industry. She got 6500 votes for this social-democratic program. Goodman was very much the non-candidate, curious behaviour for these consummate electoralists. Their silence, and the absence of Goodman literature early on, probably was due to evident disarray in the SWP over whether to endorse another candidate, Building Trades union leader Stan Smith.

But when the SL/US paper, *Workers Vanguard*, reported that Smith was a registered Democrat, a delegate to the 1980 Democratic convention and was running as a candidate who could "get along with big business", the SWP quickly backtracked. Their spokesmen first said they were rethinking their position of critical support to Smith, based on huge contributions he was getting from the construction industry and so on. Then Goodman said at a public meeting that the SWP had never discussed endorsing Smith. Finally the SWP's *Militant* (14 November) felt constrained to run an article opposing a vote to Smith (but didn't bother to say anything about the other 63 candidates).

Diana Coleman ran in this election to make effective communist propaganda and to bring the program of class struggle against capitalism to workers and minorities. She ran against electoralist illusions spread by the SWP and Communist Party, insisting that only a revolutionary workers party fighting on the picket lines, in the ghettos and barrios can create a workers government. We are proud of the 7000 votes for Spartacist supporter Coleman. But an equally important indicator of our success is the nearly 20 non-members of the SL/SYL who actively worked on the campaign, many moving closer to joining. We run in elections not to hold down a desk in City Hall, the state legislature or Congress but to use them as a platform, a vehicle for the Trotskyist program and for building the revolutionary party. By these standards, the Coleman campaign was a very satisfying success.

— adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 268, 14 November 1980

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I would like more information about the Spartacist League

My first contact with the Spartacist League (SL) was at the 1978 Melbourne conference of the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA). Near contact is more accurate, since everyone present was instructed to neither talk to SLers nor accept their literature. Shortly after, I joined the SYA and became a provisional member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

During 1978 there occurred the "Ramjan/Nicholls affair". These characters, student bureaucrats, worked in offices of the Sydney University SRC when a strike by secretaries was in progress. The SL was the only tendency on the left who stuck to the basic class/union principle that you don't work in a struck shop. This seemed an elementary principle to me. At an AUS regional meeting I seconded the SL motion which condemned the scabbing and called for the removal of the scabs from official positions. I was unable though to draw the appropriate conclusions as I had had it drummed into my head that no matter what the SL said or did it was chronic sectarianism, the purpose of which was merely to disrupt and destroy left groups. Thus, I later abstained on the motion I had seconded.

At this time witch hunts were occurring in the SWP; it had swallowed up the Communist League (CL) and was in the process of spitting out the indigestible elements. Some oppositional elements formed the Proletarian Democracy Tendency. I supported this tendency though I wasn't too happy with its thrust. Its "theoretical" guru, John Ebel, rewrote the history of Bolshevism to say that Leninism meant the liquidation of the vanguard into the class. This made the opposition easy meat for the SWP leadership. The chief argument against us was by Doug Lorimer (regional organiser in Victoria) which essentially plagiarised the SL's pamphlet *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*. No wonder the SYA/SWP leadership don't like members or supporters talking to Spartacists.

In early 1979 I left the SWP and joined a discussion group (the "DG") started by Paul White after he had been expelled from the SWP in 1978. The group's mode of operation was, and is, to cover over differences and avoid programmatic questions. A study agenda was approved to deal with sectional concerns where people had operations going — the ALP, "industrial work" and women's liberation (which many males favoured as a topic because it would ensure an influx of women) — then it would look at Leninism.

What really brought home the bankruptcy of the group was its reaction to the Red Army's intervention in the Afghan civil war. The SL said "Hail Red Army" and I agreed. The rest of the left capitulated to the bourgeois pressure — with varying degrees of openness. Many people in the DG were moving in the same direction and wandered around in the search for a "third camp". Several members, in particular Paul White and Frans Timmerman, got together a liberal pacifist demonstration to "End the Carter-Fraser War Drive". I decided to march with the SL contingent whose slogan was "Victory to the Red Army!"

After this it seemed to me that nearly all my previously held ideas should be open to discussion. Trade union work was one of the most important. I was in a "Reform Group" within the Australian Clerical Officers' Association (ACOA) along with several other DG members. In the document "Against Petty-Bourgeois Eclecticism! For Trotskyism!" which Angelo Rosas and I presented at the DG conference, we described the Reform Group as "a transmission belt into the bureaucracy":

"Its most infamous star, Anne Forward, who stood down in Wills [ALP preselection] for her friend Hawke, is famous for using and threatening to use the bourgeois state against unionists of varying stripes from the NCC to the IS. The 'left' still electorally supports her in the union!

Fraser's censorship bungle

The Fraser government set off a ruckus on 8 November when, in an act without peacetime precedent, it suppressed publication of "top secret" defence and foreign policy documents by the flagships of the Fairfax media empire, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH) and the *Melbourne Age*. Melodramatic early-hours High Court injunctions stopped the presses; all but the early editions came out with blank columns replacing extracts from the just-published book *Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy* put together by George Munster and Richard Walsh.

Canberra told the High Court that "national security" was endangered by the book's inclusion of the government's own unflattering references "to leading Indonesian political figures still very much on the scene". But the book had already been snapped up by the Indonesian embassy, and Fraser's threat to bring down the draconian Crimes Act did not deter suburban newspapers and FM radio stations from running the "banned" material in full. One supposedly super-sensitive East Timor document had been published by American New Leftist Noam Chomsky in his book *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*, on sale in Australian bookshops for years!

Faced with such evidence of breathtaking stupidity, no wonder High Court Justice Mason dismissed Canberra's "national security" case. The book remains "banned", however, on the ludicrous grounds of copyright violation. This farce took a sinister turn on 14 November when an unexplained fire ravaged the Sydney premises of the radical publishers Wild and Woolley and conveniently destroyed their stocks of Chomsky's book and another "spy book" (*A Suitable Piece of Real Estate — American Installations in Australia* by Desmond Hall). Coming only weeks after the highly suspicious fire on the premises of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) we reported last issue, it suggests an ominous pattern of right-wing arson.

It goes without saying that the SMH and the *Age* are fully committed to the "national security" of their class. Fairfax

may pose as a battler for "freedom of the press" and the "public's right to know"; but as the *Age* (3 December) stressed, all the bosses' media are "voluntary parties to the 'D' Notice system" of rigorous self-censorship, not to mention their complete class bias on all social questions. What disturbs them over Timor is "Australia's total inability to influence important neighbourhood developments" (*Age*, 4 December) — ie, Canberra's reluctance to "stand up" to Jakarta.

The "expose" reshapes what has been known for years: the Australian, British and American governments' active support to the 1975 Indonesian invasion and subsequent massacre of the petty-bourgeois nationalist Fretilin. The reformists of the Communist Party, the International Socialists and the SWP once again decry in unison "the Whitlam/Fraser sellout of East Timor". For these social patriots, the main enemy is never their own "democratic" ruling class — indeed, they are forever urging it to take up the Pacific equivalent of the "white man's burden", as they did in demanding Australian intervention in East Timor in 1975 and again with the New Hebrides earlier this year.

The "ANZUS papers" collected by Munster and Walsh expose how lick-spittle the Australian bourgeoisie — and their ALP lackeys — are to their US imperialist big brothers. Take the ANZUS treaty itself, the cornerstone (and most of the edifice) of Australian bourgeois military strategy and foreign policy since the Korean War. When Whitlam asked in Parliament in 1959 what Pacific islands its deliberately vague "mutual defence" commitment covered, the Liberal minister's reply — dictated literally comma for comma by the US State Department — refused to say!

But then, so what? What the treaty is really all about is the willing integration of capitalist Australia (under Labor and Liberals alike) into the Pentagon's global war machine. Australia itself is firmly in the imperialist camp by virtue of its position as an outpost of ("civilised" white European) advanced capitalism in the Asian Pacific. Its own jackal-imperialist appetites for colonial/neo-colonial ex-

ploitation (of some of those islands, for instance) are severely limited by the short reach of its relatively puny economic strength. The Australian ruling class knows it can be nothing other than the vassal-ally of the US imperialists — the power that fought World War II to make the Pacific an American lake and won. Yet it pricks Aussie national pride when the Pentagon won't even tell its allies what exactly is in "their" treaty, much less what its top-secret bases in Australia are up to.

We oppose bourgeois state censorship even when directed against ultra-respectable ruling-class organs and demand the abolition of all secrecy laws which are intended to be used to suppress the left and labour movement. As opposed to Fairfax' sanitised "leaks", we want to see all Canberra's "defence secrets", diplomatic skulduggery and imperialist conspiracies, together with those of its US allies, exposed on nationwide TV and radio!

The ALP continues to cover for the Pentagon. Hayden lied in 1979 that US bases like Pine Gap, Omega and Northwest Cape "are not part of any missile or weaponry control system" (*Challenge*, 2 December). The Fairfax Washington correspondent Brian Toohy describes in the magazine *Omega* (Jan/Feb 1981) the Pentagon Dr Strangeloves' plans to make them a key link in a global system for pinpointing Soviet nuclear subs and thus gain a crucial first-strike advantage against the Soviet degenerated workers state.

"Left" ALP social patriots like Peter Baldwin's *Challenge* and the Victorian Socialist Left are against the US bases mainly because they make Australia a "nuclear target". The Kremlin-loyal Socialist Party's *Socialist* rushed to join the necessarily anti-Soviet chauvinist chorus under the banner headline: "NATIONAL BETRAYAL". In contrast the Spartacist League stands for a fight to smash these bases, the ANZUS alliance and Australian jackal imperialism, as proletarian internationalists committed to the unconditional military defence of the deformed workers states against the imperialist menace.

The RG backed Paul Munro for President although he recommended voting for the Chipp Democrats.... When the thoroughly electoralist wing led by Forward managed to rescind an explicit pro-abortion stance from the policies of the RG, the left talked but didn't. The RG's history — from going to arbitration over CEER to its 'supporters' crossing their own picket lines — is one of craven capitulation."

People who enter these groups get trained in the school of capitulation to such an extent that they can't see any other way to operate; principled, programmatically based communist industrial work seems ultra-left, ludicrous or impossible.

After Afghanistan I began reading Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* where he polemicalises against tailism, and the SL's "Trade-Union Memorandum" (in *Marxist Bulletin* no 9 part iii). I saw that "rank and file groups" were a liquidation of program and without a revolutionary program there could be no revolutionary practice. When White argued that crossing picket lines was a tactical question, this merely reinforced the point.

Further study brought me closer to the SL and increasingly more critical of the DG, whose anti-political nature was shown by its treating the SL's challenge to debate White as a "security" matter, ie simply burying the politics. The culmination of this development was reached with my getting together with Trotskyist Study Group member Angelo Rosas on the basis of a struggle for the SL's nine programmatic points for revolutionary regroupment. At the conference we

fought against the group's anti-Leninist concept of a "Transitional Organisation"; we argued for the necessity of a discussion on the Russian Question, to which Paul White replied, "This is an organisational stunt"; when the group said they had nothing that they stood for, we said we have — argue against it politically. They neither would nor could, demonstrating again the group's bankruptcy. It was and is a centrist labyrinth; members in it who want to find clarity and a revolutionary program must look to the Spartacist League. There really isn't any other way.

— Steven King

Reagan...

Continued from page twelve

reformists who told us yesterday that every day, every way things are getting better and better have to continue lying to keep their story straight. So the US working class just goes from victory to victory — once a week in the *Militant*.

There is a rightward drift in the US, but it is neither deep nor irreversible. Unlike the 1950s, there is no general anti-Communist hysteria, nor an active wave of right-wing sentiment in the working class. But the last thing the working class needs is more of the same class-collaborationist lesser-evilism that brought us Jimmy Carter. During the election our comrades of the SL/US sought opportunities for advancing a class program to counter this

rightward drift. In San Francisco we endorsed Diana Coleman in elections for the city's Board of Supervisors (see article page 8). Given the Cold War anti-Soviet atmosphere, we asked: can Trotskyists call on American workers to cast ballots for the Communist Party (CPUSA) candidates, given a context in which the CPUSA is popularly identified with Russia and communism. Could critical electoral support to CPUSA candidates Gus Hall and Angela Davis be a vehicle for a class-against-class vote? The answer was no. The CP itself had made clear that a vote for its candidates was simply a "way of putting pressure on Carter and Reagan" (*Daily World* 21 October). Trotskyists have no interest in voting for illusions of lesser-evilism and "detente" with warmongering imperialism.

The slogan of the Diana Coleman campaign in San Francisco showed the way forward: "Enough! It's Time for a Workers Party!" Not the kind of parliamentary-reformist device that the SWP or CPUSA might propose, but one which provides revolutionary leadership in every arena of the class struggle — the mines, the mills, the ghetto streets and even in the bourgeois elections. The real "fight against the right" must be a fight against both parties of the ruling class. It must be a political fight to mobilise the workers as a class and the ghetto/minority poor behind their leadership, the fight for a workers government.

— adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 268, 14 November 1980



Carter paved the way Reagan reaction

Ronald Reagan is in the saddle. The Democrats have been stampeded. In the United States and around the world people are trying to figure out what it means. During the election campaign not even the US bourgeois media could get excited by what was probably the most negative campaign in US history, a contest between two undeniably "greater evils". Now they hail a "conservative tide" sweeping in the Reagan "era", the long- prophesied thunder on the right.

The Republican challenger ended the media "great debate" by urging voters, if they felt they were better off in the last four years, to vote for Jimmy Carter. Otherwise, he said they should vote for him. And that is more or less what happened. The vote was fundamentally *against* Carter and the liberal Democrats, against years of pounding inflation and massive layoffs. Millions didn't bother to vote at all, continuing a modern trend with the lowest turnout in 32 years. But the result cannot be dismissed merely as a protest vote against Carter. Unlike Nixon's 1972 landslide victory over Vietnam "dove" George McGovern, this time the Democrats were beaten as a party, losing control of the Senate for the first time in decades. Elections '80 reflected a rightward shift that has been building since the end of the Vietnam War.

But the rightward shift to Reagan was prepared by Democratic Party Cold War liberals and by Jimmy Carter himself. At the time of the Republican convention last July the Spartacist League/US (SL/US) noted:

"Carter's 'human rights' campaign, braintrustered by the sinister Brzezinski, sought to bury the 'Vietnam syndrome', push public opinion toward a new Cold War and mobilize militarily against the Soviet Union. In this way Carter/Brzezinski made right-wing Republicanism respectable and gave it its present battle cries."

— *Workers Vanguard* no 261,
25 July 1980

Just as the war consensus runs deep in both bourgeois parties there is bipartisan agreement on the austerity demanded by stagnating US capitalism. Once again the Democratic liberals led the austerity drive, targeting particularly blacks and the poor. Cuts in social services and an anti-labour offensive had been the order of the day for Carter. Similarly, the "Moral Majority" assault on women's rights and integration was pushed hard by "born again" Jimmy and his "ethnic purity" politics.

Most importantly, Reagan's vote included a large portion of working-class ballots. Many trade unionists voted for a certified symbol of anti-labour reaction, the preferred candidate of the KKK, a well-known ideological nuclear hip-shooter. But if the Republicans found some tolerance in the working class for their right-wing ideology, it is a passive tolerance. Many workers found unemployment and inflation so devastating that they cast about for *any* alternative to Carter. Some identified American "weakness" with their lower standard of living. Most are just fed up with the failure of liberalism. But when Reagan tries to act on his "macho mandate", he will find that even many workers that voted for him are by no means part of his conserva-



After Carter's "human rights" imperialist moral rearmament comes Ronald Reagan's Cold War II and a redoubled nuclear first-strike drive.

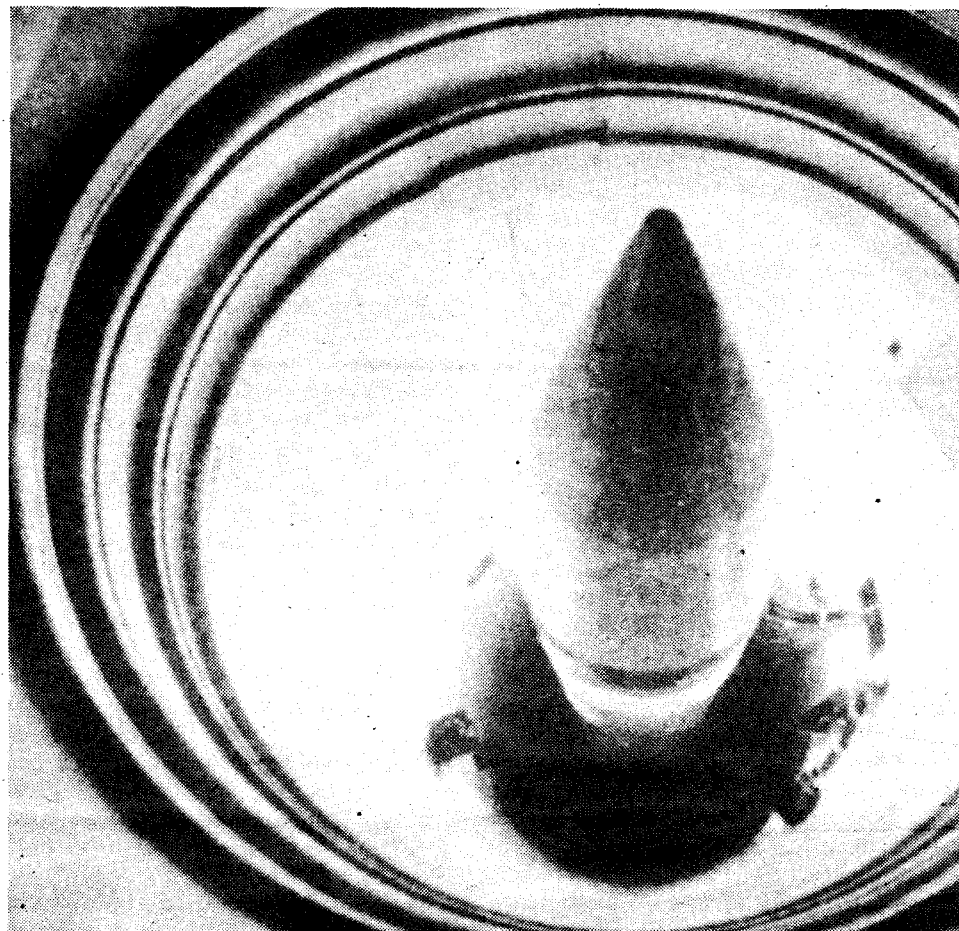
tive, anti-labour camp. Contrary to what US schoolchildren are carefully taught in civics classes, the essence of politics is not found at the polls but in the class struggle. When there is no effective opposition in the factories and in the streets, it is not surprising that the backlash against the liberals works to the benefit of the political right.

Life after Reagan

Will the Reagan government simply be a repeat of the abysmal Carter years? No. The crisis of the US economy will continue to deepen. Life under the dogmatic reactionary Reagan will be worse. More ideological. More Hobbesian. Closer to the natural state of capitalist decay — poorer, shorter, nastier and more brutish. Former NATO commander Alexander Haig gets to stroke the nuclear trigger again and some of the old Nixonomics boys are back, with a few fringy "supply side" economic cranks for window dressing.

All the Reagan talk about unleashing the great American capitalist productive machine is nonsense. When he says he's going to "put America back to work again", he means repeal the minimum wage. When he says he's going to get the housing industry "on its feet", he means repeal the 1937 Davis-Bacon Act guaranteeing union wages and work rules on federally financed construction sites. He talks, like George Wallace, about "getting off our backs". And what he means is cutting social services for the ghettos, cutting taxes for the corporations, getting union-won safety requirements off the backs of the bosses and getting the state on the backs of women who want abortions.

The ultimate "solution" to the bourgeoisie's economic ills is, of course, imperialist war. Which brings us to



Reagan's (and Carter's) other main target, the Soviet Union. It is axiomatic that US presidential candidates, whether liberal or conservative, move toward the political centre after being elected. But in banking on this conventional wisdom it appears that the Soviet leaders are pushing the astounding idea that Reagan's election was ... a victory for "detente"!

The Stalinist bureaucrats in the Kremlin suffer from chronic detente illusions — the utopian-pacifistic misconception that they can work out a live-and-let-live deal with imperialism, whose constant goal is to overthrow the revolutionary conquests of the degenerated/deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc. But the idea of Ronald Reagan as a "dove" takes the cake. This is Mr "Peace-Through-Strength", who in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* (3 June) asked rhetorically, "When did the Cold War ever end?" For such types it has been going on since 1917, and they are preparing to heat it up.

Evidently, the Russian leadership hopes that eventually Reagan will turn out to be a man they can deal with. After all, he did oppose Carter's grain embargo and his Olympic boycott. But the Republicans criticised Carter's measures as largely *symbolic* whereas they advocated the real thing — no SALT II and an unalloyed drive for military superiority. Carter's "symbolic" attacks on the Soviets reflected the transitional character of his regime, beginning on the theme of moral rearmament of US imperialism (the "Human Rights" crusade) and soon passing over to economic warfare and military rearmament exemplified by the nuclear first-strike Presidential Directives 58 and 59.

And now come the aggressive Cold War II politics of Reagan. One place where they will soon be felt is Central

America and the Caribbean. When Reagan says he opposes "human rights" campaigns against "our friends", military dictators throughout the region sharpen their bayonets: with the assured backing of the Yankee president, leftist blood will flow.

Most dangerous of all could be Reagan's policy towards Eastern Europe, particularly Poland. Remember, these are the same people who yelled "betrayal!" when after all Dulles' talk of "rolling back" Communism he refused to intervene in Hungary in 1956. And while Hungary '56 was actually a nascent workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy — not the social counterrevolution which the Reaganites would have wished — in Poland there may be more opportunities for their "destabilisation" schemes. Down that road lies World War III in a hurry.

Hardliners and the class line

The working class internationally faces some hardliners in the White House. Yet incredibly the reformist US Socialist Workers Party (SWP), in an article in its 14 November *Militant* (reprinted in the 26 November issue of the Australian SWP's *Direct Action*) dismisses the notion of a "conservative tide" as just "wrong". Anybody who thinks so is presumably the victim of a gigantic media hoax (just like the people who thought that the SWP-supported mullah "revolution" in Iran veiled women, stoned adulterers and repressed the left).

Readers of the *Militant* or *Direct Action* may with some justification surmise that the SWP's compulsive denial of reality is some sort of political pathology. But it is method not madness. The

Continued on page eleven