

# Australasian SPARTACIST



Number 90

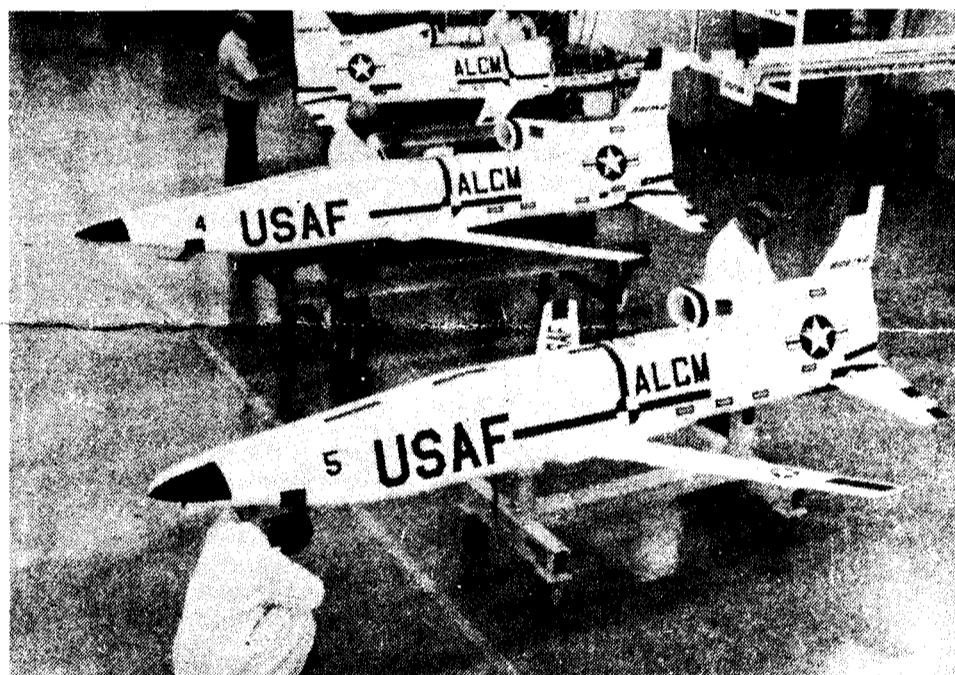
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## Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union! Reagan Threatens Nuclear War in Europe



European peace marches — popular fronts for imperialist detente.



US air launched cruise missiles, aimed at the Soviet Union.

### Million March in Europe, Reformists Push Pacifism, Patriotism

Ronald Reagan would like to persuade himself and the US populace that it's possible to annihilate the Soviet Union in a nuclear war fought entirely in Europe. Asked by reporters if there could be a "limited exchange of nuclear weapons" between the United States and the USSR, he replied: "I could see where you could have the exchange of tactical weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the button" (*New York Times*, 21 October).

The aim of Reagan's massive arms build-up is to achieve first-strike capacity against the Soviet Union. At the same time, in a showdown with Russia he is quite prepared to sacrifice his European imperialist allies to preserve Fortress America.

With Reagan provoking the Soviets all over the globe at every chance he gets, his talk of nuclear war "limited" to their homelands naturally scared the hell out of many Europeans. The next weekend up to a million peace marchers, mainly youth, took to the streets of London, Paris, Brussels and Rome. The week before 300,000 marched in Bonn. "No annihilation without representation", said the British. "Ohne uns" (Leave us out of it), said the Germans. But West Europe will be in the middle of it until the

imperialists are swept away by proletarian revolution, or they destroy the world in a wave of mushroom clouds.

Even more than pacifism, the dominant theme of the protests was European-centered nationalism. The speeches were almost as aggressively anti-Soviet as anti-American. With retired NATO officers and bourgeois politicians on active duty in the speaker stands, the Euro-"peace" marches were popular fronts for imperialist detente. But while NATO social democrats and domesticated Stalinists appease their "own" bourgeoisies with their anti-"superpowers" posture, the Trotskyists of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) drew a class line. "Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union! Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" read iSt banners and signs from London to Rome.

#### London, Paris, Rome

**London:** Speaking in Hyde Park on 25 October, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) spokesman E P Thompson emphasized his "even-handed" opposition to NATO and the Warsaw Pact, demanding an unconditional halt to deployment of Soviet SS-20 missiles. But Tony Benn best captured the atmosphere of Labourite "little England" chauvinism, demanding "no

annihilation without representation" and equating the imperialist US with the Soviet degenerated workers state: "The Poles have had the courage to stand up to the Kremlin. The British people must now have the courage to stand up to the Pentagon and close all nuclear bases here." The pseudo-Trotskyists went along with this nationalist pacifism and pro-NATO "neutrality", but the Spartacist League/Britain chanted: "Thatcher hates British workers — Thatcher hates Russian workers. Defend the workers unions — Defend the workers states!"

Spartacist banners attracted considerable attention. An official attempt to silence the SL/B contingent was defeated as our comrades chanted, "Troops out of Ireland now!" A woman who joined us in an argument with anti-communists declared, "If not for the Soviet Union I would have been killed by the Nazis." Members of the Eurocommunist CP and the Kremlin-line New Communist Party sought out our salesmen to buy copies of the new iSt pamphlet, "Solidarnosc: Poland's Company Union for CIA and Bankers". For "ammunition" in internal discussions, some said. By the end of the day, the SL/B had hardly a single piece of literature left, having sold over 1,200 copies of the latest *Spartacist Britain* and 75 Poland pamphlets.

**Paris:** The demonstration in the French capital, called by Stalinist front group Mouvement pour la Paix, attracted mainly the ranks of the Communist Party (PCF) itself. Simultaneously the

Socialist Party, reflecting the Mitterand government's pro-Reagan stance, condemned "unilateral pacifist sentiment" in Europe. So in order to preserve their governmental respectability, at the last minute the Euro-Stalinists raised a gigantic banner in front of their youth group proclaiming, "Neither Pershings Nor SS-20s". Many Communist Party militants were visibly uncomfortable with their party's shameful anti-Soviet line. The two banners of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF) calling for defense of the USSR against the Cold War drive and opposing capitalist restoration in Poland were widely noticed. A number of CPers told us they agreed with our slogans, and by the end of the day 260 pieces of Spartacist literature had been sold by LTF comrades.

**Rome:** In order to prove its Euro-communist "independence" of the Kremlin (and subservience to NATO), the Italian Communist Party (PCI) has participated only half-heartedly in the European peace marches of the last year. Consequently the turnout of over 400,000 in Rome for the 25 October disarmament march caused general surprise. While the PCI controlled the march, demonstration organizers carried a manifesto "against all armaments systems in Europe, East and West" to both US and Soviet embassies. Sectors of the PCI, notably the so-called "Afghans", were disturbed by this "even-handed" policy and pleased to see someone standing for defense of the USSR, even if it was the

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## Europe...

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Trotskyists. Despite the modest size of the Lega Trotskysta d'Italia, our comrades sold some 400 copies of the Spartacist Italian-language pamphlet on Poland at the Rome and Milano demonstrations.

### Class struggle against imperialist war

Contrary to the propaganda of Reaganite US imperialism, the West European "peace" movement is not "soft on Russia". The leading social-democratic "pacifists" — Tony Benn in Britain, Erhard Eppler in West Germany oppose Reagan's Cold War military strategy, not his basic aim to roll back the historic gains of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution by reconquering the Soviet Union for capitalism. Given the existing military balance of forces, the "NATO reformists" prefer to undermine the Soviet-bloc degenerated/deformed workers states and to encourage *internal* counterrevolutionary forces such as have erupted in Poland in and around Solidarnosc. Thus in one sense this European "neutralist" sentiment, despite leftist overtones, reflects *inter-imperialist* conflicts of interest. This accounts for its nationalistic — anti-American and anti-Soviet — character.

While sectors of the West European bourgeoisies have real differences with the Third World Warmonger in the White House, they also have a clear sense of the limits of these differences — which they impart in no uncertain terms to the organizers of the "peace" movement. Unilateral disarmament, ban-the-bomb, petting not Pershings — all this is fine, they say, but the European imperialists are forcefully and unambiguously calling on the new "disarmament" movement to exclude communists who defend the Soviet Union. Their aim is to protect capitalism by witchhunting anyone who stands for a Leninist policy of *class* struggle against imperialist war. And because the Spartacist tendency does not flinch in its class duty to defend the deformed workers states, we have been singled out for denunciation, out of all proportion to our relative political weight on the left.

Thus the London *Times* of 24 October, on the eve of the Hyde Park anti-nuke demonstration, spent fully *one third* of its article on the CND warning against the Spartacist spectre:

"One possible source of trouble is the intended participation of the Spartacist group, which has called for a Soviet invasion of Poland to suppress the Solidarity movement. The Spartacists intend to march under banners saying, 'Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!' and 'Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!' Monsignor Bruce Kent, general secretary of the CND, said yesterday, 'Ours is a peace march and the Spartacists are no part of CND. Indeed they are usually extremely disruptive. We are not capable physically of excluding anyone, but if they come anywhere near a breach of the peace this will be for the police to deal with.' Monsignor Kent said the police had cordoned the Spartacists off from a CND demonstration outside Chatham House earlier this week...."

In other words, after slandering us as "disrupters" and distorting our position on Poland, the oh-so-peaceful CND spokesman threatens to call out the cops against leftists.

Reporting afterwards on the Saturday demonstration, the *Sunday Telegraph* (25 October) denounced "political splinter groups", in particular "members of the American founded pro-Soviet Spartacist group [which] attached themselves to the column". And as far away as West Germany the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (26 October) referred to the presence in the London protest of the "group of 'Soviet-Spartacists' founded by Americans".

In Britain the Eurocommunist turncoats flaunt their pathetic nationalism ("Defend Britain — Ban the Bomb") while unreconstructed Brezhnevites

# SL Defends Vietnam, USSR at Sinai Demo

The first demonstration against the Fraser government's commitment of Australian troops for the US anti-Soviet Sinai force took place in Sydney on 11 November. Choosing Remembrance Day, that celebration of imperialist hypocrisy and butchery to underline their loyalty to Australian capitalism, the Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament (AICD) "peace chiefs" built the march as a social-patriotic protest, saturated with concern for everything Australian. Despite the big-name speakers the turnout was a paltry few hundred, composed mainly of leftists and pro-PLO nationalists.

The character of the protest was best captured by one of the two main official slogans: "No more Vietnams!" Even today the humiliating *defeat* of Australian and US imperialist troops at the hands of the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants continues to haunt the social democrats and bourgeois liberals who dominated the Sinai protest. And so it should! The militant, communist Spartacist contingent brought this point home, chanting "Who won in Vietnam? The workers and peasants! Who lost in Vietnam? US and Australian imperialism!"

Only the Spartacist contingent drew the class line and took head-on Reagan/ Fraser's anti-Soviet war drive of which the Sinai force is a component, proclaiming, "No imperialist troops to Sinai!" and "Defence of USSR/Vietnam begins in Alice Springs, Diego Garcia, Trincomalee!" As we raised our signs pro-Moscow Stalinists stared intently while outraged social democrats pointed to those reading, "Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" against the threat of capitalist restoration in Poland. And in pride of place we carried the Trotskyist red flag of the Fourth International and the gold-on-red flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the latter intended

to emphasise our solidarity with the embattled Vietnamese deformed workers state which the revanchist US imperialists supported by ASEAN and Fraser are trying to starve and bleed into collapse.

Everyone knows that the massive US military buildup in the Near East is directed against the Soviet Union which Reagan longs to recapture for capitalist exploitation — the US imperialists could hardly be more explicit these days. Everyone, that is, except for the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) which idiotically, but typically, insists that the PLO is the primary, nay, exclusive target of the Sinai force so as to avoid raising defence of the USSR.

The SWP liquidated into the demonstration, of course lending their services as marshals for AICD. But surely the most exciting moment at the Sinai protest for these starry-eyed social democrats was when Australian Democrat Elizabeth Kirkby addressed the crowd. A real popular front, at last! But we remember Australian Democrat leader Don Chipp as the minister for the navy during the Vietnam war, responsible for plenty of atrocities such as shelling defenceless Vietnamese fishing villages. So following Kirkby's speech the Spartacist contingent chanted: "Remember Vietnam, the class line is drawn! Don Chipp's Democrats, we know which side you're on!" And when Kirkby warned against creating a precedent for "any force that the Soviet Union might want to send to 'trouble spots' in the future", an SLer replied: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

ALP "left" warhorse Tom Uren took the opportunity to push the ALP's "defence policy". "We have to look after our own defence priorities", he whined. Indeed Hayden has pledged that he will maintain the \$5000 million Fraser defence budget and stressed support for US bases in Australia, strategic com-

ponents in the Australasian region of US imperialism's international military deployment aimed against the Soviet Union and Vietnam.

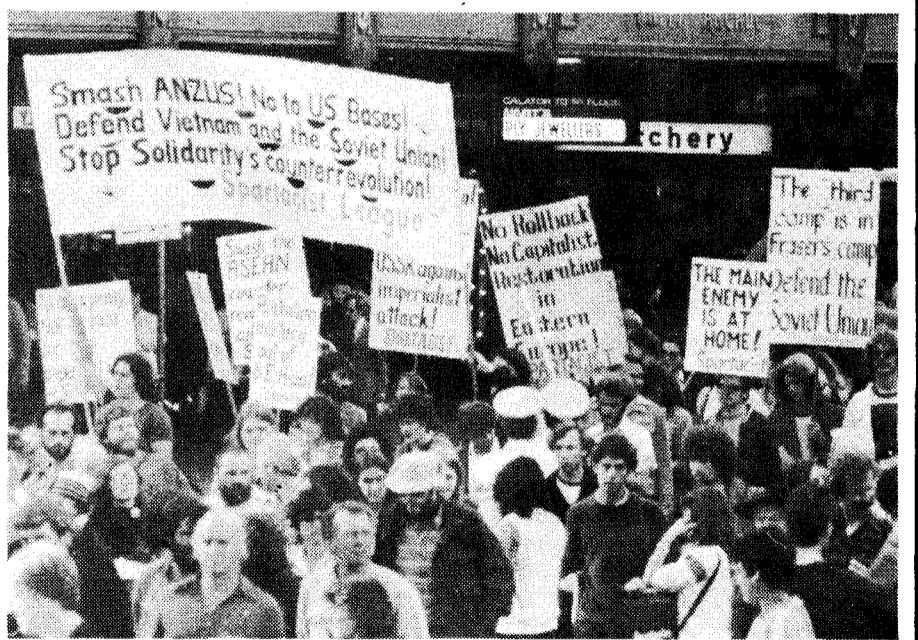
So just for good measure, Uren was careful to "balance" criticism of the US with an attack on Soviet involvement in the Near East. Apparently, this "left" social-imperialist was somewhat piqued over our militant defence of Vietnam and the Soviet Union. After a sharp exchange with a Spartacist supporter he stormed off huffing and puffing that he too defended Vietnam! But Uren was not the only "friend" of Vietnam to be incensed with the Vietnamese flag's presence at the demo. Some Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) Stalinists found this symbol of internationalist solidarity with the Soviet-allied Vietnamese deformed workers state to be a "provocation", no doubt for fear of upsetting their fragile "peace front" with anti-Soviet social democrats and bourgeois liberals.

Predictably the SPA marched under the auspices of the Australian Peace Committee which was content to oppose the Sinai force as unnecessary for "the defence of Australia". These slavish Moscow loyalists have the hapless task of pressuring the jackal imperialist Australian bourgeoisie to return to the long-gone days of detente. In this spirit, the *Socialist* (18 November) rebuked the AICD for its "evenhanded" denunciation of "superpower" rivalry, meekly arguing that this "weakens the peace front and objectively helps imperialism cover its face". But it is the Stalinist SPA which "objectively helps imperialism cover its face" by seeking a "peace front" with a section of the bourgeoisie based on jingoist appeals to Australian nationalism, and the criminal pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with a US ruling class which stands prepared to trigger anti-Soviet nuclear holocaust in order to roll back the gains of the Russian Revolution.

Only the Trotskyists stood for proletarian internationalism and defence of Vietnam and the Soviet Union at the 11 November Sinai protest. We understand that defence of the gains of October begins in unrelenting struggle against "our own" bourgeoisie and its reformist allies. As Lenin said, "the main enemy is at home". ■

## "For Class War Against Imperialist War!"

MELBOURNE, 20 November — Close to 8000 marched to "Stop Nuclear Madness", not in opposition to the anti-Soviet war drive mind you, but for fear that Victoria would be the target of Soviet retaliation! The answer to irradiated barbarism was presented with an absurdly provincialist twist: a "nuclear free Victoria" (!!) to be achieved by "keeping uranium in the ground". This social-patriotic crowd went wild with applause as Victorian opposition leader, John ("I'm not soft on unions") Cain turned the march into an ALP election rally, never mentioning, of course, the ALP's commitment to maintaining Fraser's defence budget and US bases in Australia. True to form, the fake-left blended neatly into the morass of new-leftovers and assorted greenies. In sharp contrast, the spirited Spartacist contingent chanted, "Down with bourgeois pacifism! For class war against imperialist war!" and marched under a banner demanding: "Smash Anzus! No to US Bases! Defend Vietnam and the Soviet Union! Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!"




ASp photo

demand "Detente not Destruction" in the face of Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive. The gutless French Euro-Stalinists, while hailing the Gaullist *force de frappe*, oppose Russian missiles which stand guard against imperialist nuclear holocaust. The nationalist logic of Stalin's "socialism in one country" leads his epigones to abandon any pretense of defending the conquests of the October Revolution. The Trotskyists of the international Spartacist tendency, in contrast, proclaim their proletarian internationalism: for unconditional defence of the deformed workers states, for communist unity against imperialism through proletarian political revolution from Moscow to Peking! Our comrades of

the Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands protested the visit of warmonger Haig with the slogan "Defense of the Soviet Union Begins in Berlin!" In Paris we proclaimed: "Down with Mitterand's Force de Frappe — Detente Is a Criminal Illusion". And against the threat of capitalist restoration in Poland we declare: "Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" As the social-patriots push "neutralist" rhetoric as a cover for refusal to oppose the militarism of their "own" bourgeoisies, we Trotskyists are guided by the revolutionary slogan of Leninism: the main enemy is at home!

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# SL/ANZ National Conference – Defend Vietnam, USSR!

## The Main Enemy is at Home!

Reagan's drive to war against the Soviet Union has taken centre stage in world politics, increasingly dominating and conditioning all significant local and regional conflicts from Central America to Indochina to the African continent. Reagan and Haig openly threaten nuclear war in Europe; the present "negotiation" proposals are aimed to defuse the West European "peace" movements while plans go ahead to deploy Pershing II and Cruise missiles targeted at Moscow. In this context, the impact of the anti-Soviet war drive in this country, the role of the Australian bourgeoisie as servile junior partner to Washington and the related tasks of Australian communists were the subject of a thorough and intense discussion at a recent national conference of the SL/ANZ.

The conference noted that the Australian bourgeoisie is an enthusiastic junior partner in Washington's anti-Soviet war drive. Ever since Afghanistan Malcolm Fraser has been pounding the anti-Soviet war drums in concert with first Carter and now Reagan, most recently committing troops for the US military bridgehead in the Sinai. Both the Liberal/National Country Party coalition and the ALP "opposition" defend the ANZUS alliance and the presence of US military bases in Australia, strategic components of US global war plans in the Asian region and its appetite to militarily dominate the Indian Ocean.

It was stressed that our program of unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and capitalist restoration is a program of action — the decisive criteria that separates genuine revolutionists from all shades of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world. As a resolution from the conference pointed out:

"For Australian revolutionists the concrete expression of defence of the Soviet Union and Vietnam is a relentless struggle against the Australian bourgeoisie and its reformist allies. Australia and New Zealand are the main bastion and most craven allies of US imperialism in Southeast Asia, and as such are strategic components of US imperialism's international military deployment aimed against the Soviet Union and Vietnam. This is the critical significance of the Pine Gap/Alice Springs CIA spy satellite tracking station, the B52 bases in Darwin, the Omega communication network for US submarines carrying nuclear warheads aimed at the Soviet Union as well as the US military base of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and the attempt by the US to acquire Trincomalee as a military base in Sri Lanka. Australia is the junior partner and military agent of US imperialism in this area. For the Australian section as for all sections of the IS the main enemy is at home. Opposition to these bases is the concrete expression of defence of the USSR and Vietnam in this region."

At the conference itself the perspectives outlined were rejected by some in the organisation who in the previous period had resisted such a course. Adapting to the profoundly social-democratic view that the "Russian question" is not fundamental to Australia, they denied the strategic necessity for Australian communists to struggle against their own bourgeoisie in fighting to defend the workers states.

We have noted the rightward flight of our reformist and centrist "Trotskyist" opponents internationally toward liquidation into mainstream social democracy, deserting any pretence to uphold the Trotskyist position of unconditional defence of the USSR against imperialist attack or internal counter-revolution. It began in earnest over Afghanistan, where the Eurocommunist Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and the anti-Soviet, "third camp" International Socialists (IS) quickly joined with the chorus of imperialist

anti-Soviet hysteria. And now groups like the IS, CPA, and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) parrot imperialist "democracy versus totalitarianism" cold war rhetoric as a screen for their fulsome support to pro-imperialist counterrevolution in Poland. Today intransigent defence of the gains of October is exclusive property of the international Spartacist tendency.

However, our party is not immune to the intensifying anti-Communist pressures of this period. We have had our share of "nervous Nellies", quitters who



CPA delegates Jock Garden, W P Earsman and Tom Payne with members of the Eastern Bureau of the Communist International, Moscow, 1922. This photo of Garden, NSW Labor Council Secretary, with Asian communists was used by Nationalists in 1925 elections to attack ALP "abandonment" of White Australia policy. When ALP responded by cutting out CPAers and crying "forgery", Garden kept silent! Internationalist opposition to white racism crippled by such adaptation to ALP.

give up fighting against the stream of social-democratic anti-Sovietism to either drop out or actively join it. An example of the latter course was Dawn McEwan, a five-year member whose search for a "third camp" in this period of intense anti-Soviet militarism led her straight to the social-democratic SWP. Along with Wall Street and the Pentagon the SWP has enlisted as "the most consistent" supporters of counterrevolution in Poland. McEwan's comment is indeed telling: "The SL increasingly looks at all political movements and developments through the prism of United States versus the Soviet Union. They are very close to a 'two camp' theory." (*Direct Action*, 10 June 81) In fact it is the SWP who pose the alternatives in Poland as either accommodation with the Stalinist bureaucracy or social-democratic accommodation with the imperialist bourgeoisie. Naturally, they opt for the latter.

The reformists assert national parochialism as a virtue, claiming that Australian capitalism can escape "superpower rivalry", be "non-aligned" and "independent" of its US patron. But the ALP can never fundamentally challenge the ANZUS alliance or the US military spy bases. Australia is a small, vulnerable imperialist power and white outpost in Asia. The interests of "national defence" against Asia overlap with the Australian bourgeoisie's necessary junior partner role to US imperialism and its anti-Soviet war plans in this region. As the Whitlam sacking showed, even toying with "independence" where strategic spy stations such as Pine Gap are concerned will bring the CIA down on your head.

### Defence of Vietnam, the Soviet Union begins in Alice Springs, Diego Garcia and Trincomalee!

When the Reagan administration made El Salvador the "front line" in

their stepped-up war drive with the intention of sending a "bloody message" to Moscow, we raised the slogan "Defence of Cuba, USSR begins in El Salvador". As noted at the conference, in this region Australian communists have a special responsibility to defend Vietnam and the Soviet Union from the US imperialist build-up stretching from Australia to Diego Garcia to the hoped-for naval base at Trincomalee. For Trotskyists it should be axiomatic that defence of the workers states begins in revolutionary struggle against one's

own bourgeoisie. To deny that defence of Vietnam and the Soviet Union has any concrete applicability in Australia and this region is tantamount to abandoning defence of the workers states, except in a purely literary fashion. Such a hollow and sterile "defencism", is a standard formula for "friends of socialism" in left Laborite circles and necessarily hides openly class collaborationist appetites.

The conference brought into sharp focus the question of genuine internationalism, and the necessity for and tasks of an international democratic-centralist world party. As the conference resolution explained:

"The proletariat needs an international party to unify the class across the national boundaries that divide it, a party bound together by a common program and democratic-centralist discipline. Through our national sections, we work a division of labour, struggling to lead the workers against their respective national bourgeoisies. Without the guidance and scrutiny of an international party, a nationally isolated section will inevitably succumb to the pressures of its own bourgeoisie."

Leninism is rooted in the necessity for continual internal struggle on an international scale to maintain and extend the communist program, including if necessary factional struggle. Particularly in this isolated and self-indulgently parochial country repudiation of the need for constant struggle and an international perspective as the necessary means for political self-correction inevitably means a political drift into adaptation to "little Australian" social-democratic nationalism with its pervasive white racist and brutally chauvinist trappings.

### The workers have no country

The conference noted the particular responsibility we have as proletarian internationalists to combat deeply-rooted white Australian racism as a precondition to forging international unity

with the workers and oppressed masses of Asia. The ALP is the party of Australian nationalism par excellence. "White Australia" racism has always been one of its principal ideological pillars and remains so despite the liberal cosmetics of the Whitlam period. Exclusion of cheap Asian labour is the basis of the social-democratic dream of bringing prosperity to its white Australian working class base through indigenous capitalist ownership and exploitation of Australia's natural resources. The deadly fear of the massively exploited, starving masses of Asia in their hundreds of millions to the north has similarities with apartheid South Africa, except here the racial threat to white supremacy is external. White racism is a critical part of that Australian "national character", so dear to the hearts of Laborite nationalists, which is not only white racist, but proud of its parochial philistinism and brutally male chauvinist — a glorification of the culture of "white pigs". The communist vanguard must incessantly root out and combat this to implement its internationalist and socialist program, along with its accompanying values, in the Australian proletariat.

After the Maoist victory in China in 1949, white racism was overlain by fear of revolutionary ferment in Asia; the "yellow peril" became the "red menace", which receded somewhat following the slaughter of the Indonesian PKI in 1965 and the stabilisation of Southeast Asia. But the bourgeoisie and its labour lieutenants' need for "national defence" against Asian communism mean that "independence" from its US imperialist patron is not an option. The nationalists' attempts to maintain Australia as a privileged white outpost against Asia must be mercilessly combated; it is completely counterposed to our program of a racially integrated Australia, part of socialist Asia.

The partial tradition of international solidarity with revolutionary struggle in Asia in the Australian working class is of entirely foreign origin, imported by our revolutionary predecessors, the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World and the Communist International. The above photo, taken during the CI's brief revolutionary period, shows CPA delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International with members of the Eastern Bureau. Following the Fourth Congress with the Stalinist degeneration of the CI, the CPA later on descended to the vilest anti-Japanese racism in World War II, to which the small Trotskyist forces presented the only internationalist opposition. Because the Australian left is tied to Laborism as though by an umbilical cord, opposition to white Australia nationalism and its manifestations like protectionism, immigration restrictions, etc, remains a dead letter. Today it is the unique task of the SL to combat Australian nationalism and white racism within the working class.

The conference represented both an important reaffirmation and deepening of understanding of the fundamentals of Trotskyism. It brought forward a whole layer of comrades who are anxious to shoulder greater responsibility and who richly grasp the necessity for a hard, programmatically-defined nucleus of the future Australian section of a reborn Fourth International. We now look towards recruiting from the significant layer of radical youth and trade unionists in this country who are open to a militant communist opposition.

Defence of Vietnam and the Soviet Union begins in Alice Springs, Diego Garcia and Trincomalee! Down with Australian jackal imperialism — the main enemy is at home! Forward to workers revolutions in Australia and throughout Asia! ■

The October 1917 seizure of state power by the Russian proletariat, led by its Bolshevik vanguard, was a monumental advance toward world socialism. Even today, despite the usurpation of the Soviet workers' political power by the Stalinist bureaucratic caste, it is crucial that revolutionaries stand solidly for the unconditional military defence of the USSR against imperialism, combined with the struggle for political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and reestablish the proletarian democracy of Soviet rule.

We reprint below a speech given in 1939 by James P Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism. A founding member of the American Communist Party, he led the Trotskyist Left Opposition's fight in the US against the rising Stalinist bureaucracy. In 1939, Cannon fought in the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party against a faction which broke from defence of the Soviet Union on the eve of World War II. As Reagan prepares for World War III against the USSR, Cannon's powerful speech is as valid today as it was 40 years ago.

## by James P Cannon

The Russian question is with us once again, as it has been at every critical turning point of the international labor movement since November 7, 1917. And there is nothing strange in that. The Russian question is no literary exercise to be taken up or cast aside according to the mood of the moment. The Russian question has been and remains the question of the revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks on November 7, 1917, once and for all, took the question of the workers' revolution out of the realm of abstraction and gave it flesh and blood reality.

It was said once of a book — I think it was Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" — "who touches this book, touches a man". In the same sense it can also be said, "Who touches the Russian question, touches a revolution". Therefore, be serious about it. Don't play with it.

The October revolution put socialism on the order of the day throughout the world. It revived and shaped and developed the revolutionary labor movement of the world out of the bloody chaos of the war. The Russian revolution showed in practice, by example, how the workers' revolution is to be made. It revealed in life the role of the party. It showed in life what kind of a party the workers must have. By its victory, and its reorganization of the social system, the Russian revolution has proved for all time the superiority of nationalized property and a planned economy over capitalist private property, and planless competition and anarchy in production.

### A sharp dividing line

The question of the Russian revolution and the Soviet state which is its creation has drawn a sharp dividing line through the labor movement of all countries for 22 years. The attitude taken toward the Soviet Union throughout all these years has been the decisive criterion separating the genuine revolutionary tendency from all shades and degrees of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world — the Mensheviks, Social Democrats, Anarchists and Syndicalists, Centrists, Stalinists.

The main source of division in our own ranks for the past ten years, since the Fourth Internationalist tendency took organized form on the international field, has been the Russian question. Our tendency, being a genuine, that is, orthodox, Marxist tendency from A to Z, has always proceeded on the Russian question from theoretical premises to political conclusions for action. Of course, it is only when political conclusions are drawn out to the end that differences on the Russian question reach an unbearable acuteness and permit no ambiguity or compromise. Conclusions on the Russian

question lead directly to positions on such issues as war and revolution, defense and defeatism. Such issues, by their very nature, admit no unclarity, no compromise, because it is a matter of taking sides! One must be on one side or another in war and revolution.

### The importance of theory

But if the lines are drawn only when political conclusions diverge, that does not at all signify that we are indifferent to theoretical premises. He is a very poor Marxist — better say, no Marxist at all — who takes a careless or tolerant attitude toward theoretical premises. The political conclusions of Marxists proceed from theoretical analyses and are constantly checked and regulated by them. That is the only way to assure a firm and consistent policy.

To be sure, we do not decline co-operation with people who agree with our political conclusions from different premises. For example, the Bolsheviks were not deterred by the fact that the left SRs were inconsistent. As Trotsky remarked in this connection, "If we wait till everything is right in everybody's head there will never be any successful revolutions in this world" (or words to that effect). Just the same, for our part we want everything right in our own heads. We have no reason whatever to slur over theoretical formulas, which are expressed in "terminology". As Trotsky says, in theoretical matters "we must keep our house clean".

Our position on the Russian question is programmatic. In brief: The theoretical analysis — a degenerated Workers' State. The political conclusion — unconditional defense against external attack of imperialists or internal attempts at capitalist restoration.

### Defensism and defeatism

Defensism and defeatism are two principled, that is, irreconcilable positions. They are not determined by arbitrary choice but by class interests.

No party in the world ever succeeded in harboring these two antipathetic tendencies for any great length of time. The contradiction is too great. Division all over the world ultimately took place along this line. Defensists at home were defeatists on Russia. Defensists on Russia were defeatists at home.

The degeneration of the Soviet state under Stalin has been analyzed at every



J P Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism.

step by the Bolshevik-Leninists and only by them. A precise attitude has been taken at every stage. The guiding lines of the revolutionary Marxist approach to the question have been:

See the reality and see it whole at every stage; never surrender any position before it is lost; the worst of all capitulators is the one who capitulates before the decisive battle.

The International Left Opposition which originated in 1923 as an opposition



in the Russian party (the original nucleus of the Fourth International) has always taken a precise attitude on the Russian question. In the first stages of the degeneration of which the Stalinist bureaucracy was the banner bearer the opposition considered it possible to rectify matters by methods of reform through the change of regime in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Later, when it became clearer that the Communist Party of Lenin had been irremediably destroyed, and after it became manifest that the reactionary bureaucracy could be removed only by civil war, the Fourth International, standing as before on its analysis of the Soviet Union as a workers' state, came out for a political revolution.

All the time throughout this entire period of 16 years the Bolshevik-Leninists have stoutly maintained, in the face of all slander and persecution that they were the firmest defenders of the workers' state and that in the hour of danger they would be in the front ranks of its defense. We always said the moment of danger will find the Fourth Internationalists at their posts defending the conquests of the great revolution without ceasing for a moment our struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Now that the hour of danger is at hand — now that the long-awaited war is actually knocking at the door — it would be very strange if the Fourth International should renege on its oft-repeated pledge.

### "Conservatism" on the Russian question

Throughout all this long period of Soviet degeneration since the death of Lenin, the Fourth Internationalists, analyzing the new phenomenon of a degenerating workers' state at every turn, striving to comprehend its complications and contradictions, to recognize and defend all the progressive features of the contradictory processes and to reject the reactionary — during all this long time we have been beset at every new turn of events by the impatient demands of "radicals" to simplify the question. Thrown off balance by the crimes and betrayals of Stalin, they lost sight of the new system of economy which Stalin had not destroyed and could not destroy.

We always firmly rejected these premature announcements that everything was lost and that we must begin all over again. At each stage of development, at each new revelation of Stalinist infamy and treachery, some group or other broke away from the Fourth International because of its "conservatism" on the Russian question. It would be interesting, if we had the time, to call the roll of these groupings which one after another left our ranks to pursue an ostensibly more "revolutionary" policy on the Russian question. Did they develop an activity more militant, more revolutionary, than ours? Did they succeed in creating a new movement and in attracting newly awakened workers and those breaking from Stalinism? In no case.

If we were to call the roll of these ultra-radical groups it would present a devastating picture indeed. Those who did not fall into complete political passivity became reconciled in one form or another to bourgeois democracy. The experiences of the past should teach us all a salutary caution, and even, if you please "conservatism", in approaching any proposal to revise the program of the Fourth International on the Russian question. While all the innovators fell by the wayside, the Fourth International alone retained its programmatic firmness. It grew and developed and remained the only genuine revolutionary current in the labor movement of the world. Without a firm position on the Russian question our movement also would inevitably have shared the fate of the others.

The mighty power of the October revolution is shown by the vitality of its conquests. The nationalized property and the planned economy stood up under all the difficulties and pressures of the capitalist encirclement and all the blows of a reactionary bureaucracy at home. In the Soviet Union, despite the monstrous mismanagement of the bureaucracy, we saw a tremendous development of the productive forces — and in a backward country at that — while capitalist economy declined. Conclusion: Nationalized and planned economy, made possible by a revolution that overthrew the capitalists and





# THE PARTY OF REVOLUTION!

landlords, is infinitely superior, more progressive. It shows the way forward. Don't give it up before it is lost! Cling to it and defend it!

## The class forces

On the Russian question there are only two really independent forces in the world. Two forces who think about the question independently because they base themselves, their thoughts, their analyses and their conclusions, on fundamental class considerations. Those two independent forces are:

(1) The conscious vanguard of the world bourgeoisie, the statesmen of both democratic and fascist imperialism.

(2) The conscious vanguard of the world proletariat.

Between them it is not simply a case of two opinions on the Russian question, but rather of two camps. All those who in the past rejected the conclusions of the Fourth International and broke with our movement on that account, have almost invariably fallen into the service of the imperialists, through Stalinism, social and liberal democracy, or passivity, a form of service.

The standpoint of the world bourgeoisie is a class standpoint. They proceed, as we do, from fundamental class considerations. They want to maintain world capitalism. This determines their fundamental antagonism to the USSR. They appreciate the reactionary work of Stalin, but consider it incomplete, insofar as he has not restored capitalist private property.

Their fundamental attitude determines an inevitable attempt at the start of the war, or during it, to attack Russia, overthrow the nationalized economy, restore a capitalist regime, smash the foreign trade monopoly, open up the Soviet Union as a market and field of investments, transform Russia into a great colony, and thereby alleviate the crisis of world capitalism.

The standpoint of the Fourth International is based on the same fundamental class considerations. Only we draw opposite conclusions, from an opposite class standpoint.

Purely sentimental motivations, speculation without fundamental class premises, so-called "fresh ideas" with no programmatic base — all this is out of

place in a party of Marxists. We want to advance the world revolution of the proletariat. This determines our attitude and approach to the Russian question. True, we want to see reality, but we are not disinterested observers and commentators. We do not examine the Russian revolution and what remains of its great conquests as though it were a bug under a glass. *We have an interest! We take part in the fight!* At each stage in the development of the Soviet Union, its advances and its degeneration, we seek the basis for revolutionary action. We want to advance the world revolution, overthrow capitalism, establish socialism. The Soviet Union is an important and decisive question on this line.

Our standpoint on the Russian question is written into our program. It is not a new question for us. It is 22 years old. We have followed its evolution, both progressive and retrogressive, at every stage. We have discussed it and taken our position anew at every stage of its progressive development and its de-



generation. And, what is most important, we have always acted on our conclusions.

## The decisive criterion

The Soviet Union emerged from the October revolution as a workers' state. As a result of the backwardness and poverty of the country and the delay of the world revolution, a conservative bureaucracy emerged and triumphed, destroyed the party and bureaucratized the economy. However, this same bureaucracy still operates on the basis of the nationalized property established by the revolution. That is the decisive criterion for our evaluation of the question.

If we see the Soviet Union for what it really is, a gigantic labor organization which has conquered one-sixth of the earth's surface, we will not be so ready to abandon it because of our hatred of the crimes and abominations of the bureaucracy. Do we turn our backs on a trade union because it falls into the control of bureaucrats and traitors? Ultra-leftists have frequently made this error, but always with bad results, sometimes with reactionary consequences.

We recall the case of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union here in New York. The bureaucrats of this union were about as vile a gang of labor lieutenants of the capitalist class as could be found. In the struggle against the left-wing in the middle twenties they conspired with the bosses and the AFL [American Federation of Labor] fakers. They expelled the left-wing locals and used hired thugs to fight them and to break their strikes. The difference between them and Stalin was only a matter of opportunity and power. Driven to revolt against the crimes of these bureaucrats the left-wing, under the influence of the Communist Party in the days of its Third Period frenzy, labelled the union — not merely its treacherous bureaucracy — as a "company union".

But this same "company union", under the pressure of the workers in its ranks and the increasing intensity of the class struggle, was forced to call a strike to defend itself against the "imperialist" attack of the bosses. Workers who had kept their heads, supported ("defended") the strike against the bosses. But the Stalinists, trapped by their own hastily-improvised theory, having already denounced the union as a company union, renounced support ("defense") of the strike. They denounced it as a "fake" strike. Thus their ill-considered radicalism led them to a reactionary position. They were denounced, and rightly, throughout the needle trades market as strike breakers. To this day they suffer the discredit of this reactionary action.

To defend the Soviet Union as a gigantic labor organization against the attacks of its class enemies does not

mean to defend each and every action of its bureaucracy or each and every action of the Red Army which is an instrument of the bureaucracy. To impute such a "totalitarian" concept of defense to the Fourth International is absurd. Nobody here will deny defense of a bona fide trade union, no matter how reactionary its bureaucracy. But that does not prevent us from discriminating between actions of the bureaucracy which involve a defense of the union against the bosses and other actions which are aimed against the workers.

The United Mine Workers of America is a great labor organization which we all support. But it is headed by a thoroughgoing scoundrel and agent of the master class who also differs from Stalin only in the degrees of power and opportunity. In my own personal experience some years ago, I took part in a strike of the Kansas miners which was directed against the enforcement of a reactionary labor law, known as the Kansas Industrial Court Law, a law forbidding strikes. This was a thoroughly progressive action on the part of the Kansas miners and their president, Alex Howat. Howat and the other local officials were thrown into jail. While they were in jail, John L. Lewis, as president of the national organization, sent his agents into the Kansas fields to sign an agreement with the bosses over the head of the officers of the Kansas district. He supplied strike breakers and thugs and money to break the strike while the legitimate officers of the union lay in jail for a good cause. Every militant worker in the country denounced this treacherous strikebreaking action of Lewis. But did we therefore renounce support of the national union of mine workers? Yes, some impatient revolutionaries did, and thereby completely disoriented themselves in the labor movement. The United Mine Workers retained its character as a labor organization and only last Spring came into conflict with the coal operators on a national scale. I think you all recall that in this contest our press gave "unconditional defense" to the miners' union despite the fact that strikebreaker Lewis remained its president.

The Longshoremen's Union of the Pacific Coast is a bona fide organization of workers, headed by a Stalinist of an especially unattractive type, a pocket edition of Stalin named Bridges. This same Bridges led a squad of misguided longshoremen through a picket line of the Sailors' Union in a direct attempt to break up this organization. I think all of you recall that our press scathingly denounced this contemptible action of Bridges. But if the Longshoremen's Union, headed by Bridges, which is at this moment conducting negotiations with the bosses, is compelled to resort to strike action, what stand shall we take? Any ordinary class-conscious worker, let alone an educated Marxist, will be on the picket line with the Longshoremen's Union or "defending" it by some other means.

Why is it so difficult for some of our friends, including some of those who are very well educated in the formal sense, to understand the Russian question? I am very much afraid it is because they do not think of it in terms of struggle. It is strikingly evident that the workers, especially the more experienced workers who have taken part in trade unions, strikes, etc., understand the Russian question much better than the more educated scholastics. From their experiences in the struggle they know what is meant when the Soviet Union is compared to a trade union that has fallen into bad hands. And everyone who has been through a couple of strikes which underwent crises and came to the brink of disaster, finally to emerge victorious, understands what is meant when one says: *No position must be surrendered until it is irrevocably lost.*

I, personally, have seen the fate of  
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Lenin addresses Red Army soldiers, 1919. Trotskyists defend unconditionally the gains of the October Revolution.

# Russian Revolution . . .

Continued from page five

more than one strike determined by the will or lack of will of the leadership to struggle at a critical moment. All our trade union successes in Minneapolis stem back directly to a fateful week in 1934 when the leaders refused to call off the strike, which to all appearances was hopelessly defeated, and persuaded the strike committee to hold out a while longer. In that intervening time a break occurred in the ranks of the bosses; this in turn paved the way for a compromise settlement and eventually victorious advance of the whole union.

How strange it is that some people analyze the weakness and defects in a workers' organization so closely that they do not always take into account the weakness in the camp of the enemy, which may easily more than counter-balance.

In my own agitation among strikers at dark moments of a strike I have frequently resorted to the analogy of two men engaged in a physical fight. When one gets tired and apparently at the end of his resources he should never forget that the other fellow is maybe just as tired or even more so. In that case the one who holds out will prevail. Looked at in this way a worn-out strike can sometimes be carried through to a compromise or a victory by the resolute will of its leadership. We have seen this happen more than once. Why should we deny the Soviet Union, which is not yet exhausted, the same rights?

## The danger of a false position

We have had many discussions on the Russian question in the past. It has been the central and decisive question for us, as for every political tendency in the labor movement. That, I repeat, is because it is nothing less than the question of the revolution at various stages of its progressive development or degeneration. We are, in fact, the party of the Russian Revolution. We have been the people, and the only people, who have had the Russian revolution in their program and in their blood. That is also the main reason why the Fourth International is the only revolutionary tendency in the whole world. A false position on the Russian question would have destroyed our movement as it destroyed all others.

Two years ago we once again conducted an extensive discussion on

the Russian question. The almost unanimous conclusion of the party was written into the program of our first convention:

(1) The Soviet Union, on the basis of its nationalized property and planned economy, the fruit of the revolution, remains a workers' state, though in a degenerated form.

(2) As such, we stand, as before, for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

(3) The best defense — the only thing that can save the Soviet Union in the end by solving its contradictions — is the international revolution of the proletariat.

(4) In order to regenerate the workers' state we stand for the overthrow of the bureaucracy by a political revolution.

But, it may be said, "Defense of the Soviet Union, and Russia is a Workers' State — those two phrases don't answer everything". They are not simply phrases. One is a theoretical analysis; the other is a political conclusion for action.

## The meaning of unconditional defense

Our motion calls for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. What does that mean? It simply means that we defend the Soviet Union and its nationalized property against external attacks of imperialist armies or against internal attempts at capitalist restoration, without putting as a prior condition the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Any other kind of defense negates the whole position under present circumstances. Some people speak nowadays of giving "conditional" defense to the Soviet Union. If you stop to think about it we are for conditional defense of the United States. It is so stated in the program of the Fourth International. In the event of war we will absolutely defend the country on only one small "condition": that we first overthrow the government of the capitalists and replace it with a government of the workers.

Does unconditional defense of the Soviet Union mean supporting every act of the Red Army? No, that is absurd. Did we support the Moscow Trials and the actions of Stalin's GPU in these trials? Did we support the purges, the wholesale murders of the forces in Spain which were directed against the workers? If I recall correctly, we unconditionally defended those workers who fought on the other side of the barricades in Barcelona. That did not prevent us from supporting the military struggle against Franco and maintaining our position in defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

It is now demanded that we take a big step forward and support the idea of an armed struggle against Stalin in the newly occupied territories of old Poland. Is this really something new? For three years the Fourth International has advocated in its program the armed

overthrow of Stalin inside the Soviet Union itself. The Fourth International has generally acknowledged the necessity for an armed struggle to set up an independent Soviet Ukraine. How can there be any question of having a different policy in the newly occupied territories? If the revolution against Stalin is really ready there, the Fourth International will certainly support it and endeavor to lead it. There are no two opinions possible in our ranks on this question. But what shall we do if Hitler (or Chamberlain) attacks the Sovietized Ukraine before Stalin has been overthrown? This is the question that needs an unambiguous answer. Shall we defend the Soviet Union, and with it now and for the same reasons, the nationalized property of the newly annexed territories? We say, yes!

That position was incorporated into the program of the foundation congress of the Fourth International, held in the summer of 1938. Remember, that was after the Moscow Trials and the crushing of the Spanish revolution. It was after the murderous purge of the whole generation of Bolsheviks, after the People's Front, the entry into the League of Nations, the Stalin-Laval pact (and betrayal of the French workers). We took our position on the basis of the economic structure of the country, the fruit of the revolution. The great gains are not to be surrendered before they are really lost. That is the fighting program of the Fourth International.

## The Stalin-Hitler Pact

The Stalin-Hitler pact does not change anything fundamentally. If Stalin were allied with the United States, and comrades should deny defense of the Soviet Union out of fear of becoming involved in the defense of Stalin's American ally, such comrades would be wrong, but their position would be understandable as a subjective reaction prompted by revolutionary sentiments. The "defeatism" which broke out in our French section following the Stalin-Laval pact was undoubtedly so motivated and, consequently, had to be refuted with the utmost tolerance and patience. But an epidemic of "defeatism" in the democratic camp would be simply shameful. There is no pressure on us in America to defend the Soviet Union. All the pressure is for a democratic holy war against the Soviet Union. Let us keep this in mind. The main enemy is still in our own country.

What has happened since our last discussion? Has there been some fundamental change in Soviet economy? No, nothing of that kind is maintained. Nothing happened except that Stalin signed a pact with Hitler! For us that gave no reason whatever to change our analysis of Soviet economy and our attitude toward it. The aim of all our

previous theoretical work, concentrated in our program, was precisely to prepare us for war and revolution. Now we have the war; and revolution is next in order. If we have to stop now to find a new program it is a very bad sign.

Just consider: There are people who could witness all the crimes and betrayals of Stalin, which we understood better than anybody else, and denounced before anybody else and more effectively — they could witness all this and still stand for the defense of the Soviet Union. But they could not tolerate the alliance with fascist Germany instead of imperialist England or France!

## The Invasion of Poland

Of course, there has been a great hullabaloo about the Soviet invasion of Polish Ukraine. But that is simply one of the consequences of the war and the alliance with Hitler's Germany. The contention that we should change our analysis of the social character of the Soviet state and our attitude toward its defense because the Red Army violated the Polish border is even more absurd than to base such changes on the Hitler pact. The Polish invasion is only an incident in a war, and in wars borders are always violated. (If all the armies stayed at home there could be no war.) The inviolability of borders — all of which were established by war — is interesting to democratic pacifists and to nobody else.

Hearing all the democratic clamor we had to ask ourselves many times: Don't they know that Western Ukraine and White Russia never rightfully belonged to Poland? Don't they know that this territory was forcibly taken from the Soviet Union by Pilsudski with French aid in 1920?

To be sure, this did not justify Stalin's invasion of the territory in collaboration with Hitler. We never supported that and we never supported the fraudulent claim that Stalin was bringing "liberation" to the peoples of the Polish Ukraine. At the same time we did not propose to yield an inch to the "democratic" incitement against the Soviet Union on the basis of the Polish events. The democratic war mongers were shrieking at top of their voices all over town. We must not be unduly impressed by this democratic clamor. Your National Committee was not in the least impressed.

In order to penetrate a little deeper into this question and trace it to its roots, let us take another hypothetical example. Not a fantastic one, but a very logical one. Suppose Stalin had made a pact with the imperialist democracies against Hitler while Rumania had allied itself with Hitler. Suppose, as would most probably have happened in that case, the Red Army had struck at Rumania, Hitler's ally, instead of Poland, the ally of the democracies, and had seized Bessarabia, which also once belonged to Russia.

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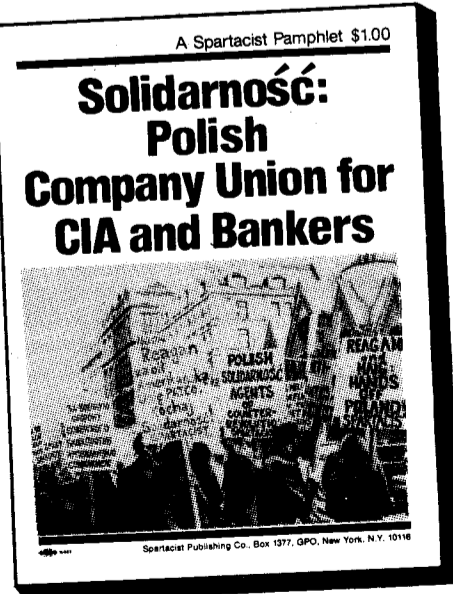
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Would the democratic war mongers in that case have howled about "Red Imperialism"? Not on your life!

I am very glad that our National Committee maintained its independence from bourgeois-democratic pressure on the Polish invasion. The question was put to us very excitedly, point-blank, like a pistol at the temple: "Are you for or against the invasion of Poland?" But revolutionary Marxists don't answer in a "yes" or "no" manner which can lump them together with other people who pursue opposite aims. Being for or against something is not enough in the class struggle. It is necessary to explain from what standpoint one is for or against. Are you for or against racketeering gangsters in the trade unions? — the philistines sometimes ask. We don't jump to attention, like a private soldier who has met an officer on the street, and answer, "against!" We first inquire: who asks this question and from what standpoint? And what weight does this question have in relation to other questions? We have our own standpoint and we are careful not to get our answers mixed up with those of class enemies and pacifist muddleheads.

Some people — especially affected bosses — are against racketeering gangsters in the trade unions because they extort graft from the bosses. That side of the question doesn't interest us very much. Some people — especially pacifist preachers — are against the gangsters because they commit violence. But we are not against violence at all times and under all circumstances. We, for our part, taking our time and formulating our viewpoint precisely, say: We are against union gangsterism because it injures the union in its fight against the bosses. That is our reason. It proceeds from our special class standpoint on the union question.

So with Poland: We don't support the course of Stalin in general. His crime is not one incident here or there but his whole policy. He demoralizes the workers' movement and discredits the Soviet Union. That is what we are against. He betrays the revolution by his whole course. Every incident for us fits into that framework; it is considered from that point of view and taken in its true proportions.

### The Invasion of Finland

Those who take the Polish invasion — an incident in a great chain of events — as the basis for a fundamental change in our program show a lack of proportion. That is the kindest thing that can be said for them. They are destined to remain in a permanent lather throughout the war. They are already four laps behind schedule: There is also Latvia, and Estonia, and Lithuania, and now Finland.

We can expect another clamor of demands that we say, point-blank, and in one word, whether we are "for" or "against" the pressure on poor little bourgeois-democratic Finland. Our answer — wait a minute. Keep your shirt on. There is no lack of protests in behalf of the bourgeois swine who rule Finland. The *New Leader* has protested. Charles Yale Harrison has written a tearful column about it. The renegade Lore has wept about it in the *New York Post*. The President of the United States has protested. Finland is pretty well covered with moral support. So bourgeois Finland can wait a minute till we explain our attitude without bothering about the "for" or "against" ultimatum.

I personally feel very deeply about Finland, and this is by no means confined to the present dispute between Stalin and the Finnish Prime Minister. When I think of Finland, I think of the thousands of martyred dead, the proletarian heroes who perished under the white terror of Mannerheim. I would, if I could, call them back from their graves. Failing that, I would organize a proletarian army of Finnish workers to avenge them, and drive their murderers into the Baltic Sea. I would send the Red Army of the regenerated Soviet Union to help them at the decisive moment.

We don't support Stalin's invasion only because he doesn't come for revolutionary purposes. He doesn't come at the call of Finnish workers whose confidence he

has forfeited. That is the only reason we are against it. The "borders" have nothing to do with it. "Defense" in war also means attack. Do you think we will respect frontiers when we make our revolution? If an enemy army lands troops at Quebec, for example, do you think we will wait placidly at the Canadian border for their attack? No, if we are genuine revolutionists and not pacifist muddleheads we will cross the border and meet them at the point of landing. And if our defense requires the seizure of Quebec, we will seize it as the Red Army of Lenin seized Georgia and tried to take Warsaw.

### Foreseen in program of Fourth International

Some may think the war and the alliance with Hitler change everything we have previously considered; that it, at least, requires a reconsideration of the whole question of the Soviet Union; if not a complete change in our program. To this we can answer:

War was contemplated by our program. The fundamental theses on "War and the Fourth International", adopted in 1934, say:

"Every big war, irrespective of its initial moves, must pose squarely the question of military intervention against the USSR in order to transfuse fresh blood into the sclerotic veins of capitalism...."

"Defense of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies, irrespective of the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict, is the elementary and imperative duty of every honest labor organization."

Alliances were contemplated. The theses say:

"In the existing situation an alliance of USSR with an imperialist state or with one imperialist combination against another, in case of war, cannot at all be considered as excluded. Under the pressure of circumstances a temporary alliance of this kind may become an iron necessity, without ceasing, however, because of it, to be of the greatest danger both to the USSR and to the world revolution."

"The international proletariat will not decline to defend the USSR even if the latter should find itself forced into a military alliance with some imperialists against others. But in this case, even more than in any other, the international proletariat must safeguard its complete political independence from Soviet diplomacy and thereby also from the bureaucracy of the Third International."

A stand on defense was taken in the light of this perspective.

A slogan of defense acquires a concrete meaning precisely in the event of war. A strange time to drop it! That would mean a rejection of all our theoretical preparation for the war. That would mean starting all over again. From what fundamental basis? Nobody knows.

There has been much talk of "independence" on the Russian question. That is good! A revolutionist who is not independent is not worth his salt. But it is necessary to specify: Independent of whom? What is needed by our party at every turn is class independence, independence of the Stalinists, and, above all, independence of the bourgeoisie. Our program assures such independence under all circumstances. It shall not be changed! ■

## Blockade...

Continued from page eight

at all and calls merely for elections (in a country where the word "electoral" is used solely as an adjective to describe "fraud") and an eventual "restructuring" of the armed forces to exclude only those guilty of "crimes and genocide".

Internationally the bulk of the left has taken up this call for a "political solution". Robert Armstrong, a leader of the US Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador explained:

"What has always united the US foreign policy establishment has been the common objective that the FMLN/FDR forces must not win a military victory."

— *Guardian*, 21 October True. So therefore the reformists such as CISCAC violently oppose the SL's call for military victory to the Salvadoran insurgents and call instead for an imperialist-imposed solution!

The petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership of Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) have been trying for more than two years now to follow a "middle course" between establishment of a Cuban-style social revolution and capitulation to imperialism and the local capitalists. Repeatedly they pledge their devotion to "national unity", the "mixed economy" and "political pluralism". It hasn't worked. The Sandinistas have neither appeased Washington nor achieved a modus vivendi with the domestic bourgeoisie. Now the working masses are getting restless, demanding an end to the economic exploitation they continue to suffer despite the overthrow of the murderous Somoza dictatorship. And on top of this the country is now faced with the imminent threat of imperialist blockade and counterrevolutionary invasion.

The FSLN's response has been an economic emergency law prohibiting any disruption of production. Under this decree, three leaders of the opposition businessmen's association COSEP were arrested in late October and sentenced to seven months for issuing a slanderous statement accusing the Sandinistas of planning genocide. At the same time they arrested 24 members of the tiny Communist Party (PCN), a dissident pro-Moscow group with influence among key sectors of the tiny Nicaraguan working class. Three leaders of the PCN and its CAUS union federation received three-year sentences for leading a factory occupation. Although there has been an imperialist outcry over the jailing of the COSEP leaders (including, quietly, from the social-democratic Second International), the government has announced they could be released upon payment of a fine of \$66 (*Barricada*, 30 October)! The arrested businessmen are staying in jail voluntarily in order to serve as a symbol for counterrevolution.

The SWP, which has justified Sandinista repression of leftists in the past, this time kept silent and left the dirty work up to their US co-thinkers, who claimed that the Sandinistas have treated the "ultralefts" and capitalists "quite differently in practice. Blows have been dealt to the exploiters, strengthening the workers and peasants government, while the occasional tensions with the ultralefts have given way to periods of collaboration." (*Militant*, 6 November) In contrast, the international Spartacist tendency has consistently defended leftists — from the Simon Bolivar Brigade to the pro-Albanian Workers Front to the Communist Party — against repression by the petty-bourgeois bonapartist FSLN and called for revolutionary justice against the torturers and murderers of Somoza's National Guard, many of whom received lighter sentences than the PCN/CAUS leaders.

The SWP is right, however, that the Sandinistas treat leftists differently. A report by Alan Riding in the *New York Times* (17 November) correctly notes that "agitation among trade unions was considered by the regime to be even more dangerous than the business group's protests". And he notes that, "So far, about 100 Communists have been arrested". Many of these were union militants at a CAUS-organised factory, Fabritex, accused of "psychologically torturing" the workers. And to put an end once and for all to this hotbed of worker agitation, the FSLN resorted to an extreme measure: dissolving the factory! Not only were the workers dismissed — as a "lesson to the confused" according to a *Barricada* (2 November) headline — but trucks arrived to remove the raw materials.

### Why no Cuban arms to Salvadoran leftists?

From the outset of the Reagan administration, Haig and his cohorts have waged an ever more intense campaign of lies and slander directed against Castro's Cuba. Lately they are passing over to threats and plans for imperialist attacks. On 30 July, Secretary of State Haig told the Senate Armed Services Committee he had "solid evidence" that Soviet supplies to Cuba were being "reshipped to

Central America". On 3 August, a State Department spokesman alleged Castro was arming "beyond Cuba's legitimate defence needs". On 8 August, the American UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick threatened from Chile that "Cuban expansionism" would be "directly dealt with". Later Haig accused Cuba of having 1500 military advisers in Nicaragua and of having advisers in "certain guerrilla areas" of El Salvador as well. On 12 October, US vice president Bush proclaimed that Nicaragua "still has the opportunity to free itself from the chains" of "5,000 advisors sent by Castro". To all the charges by US imperialism, Fidel Castro responded, "Lies, lies, and nothing but lies!"

Castro is right, though not to his credit. In a speech to the Interparliamentary Union in Havana on 15 September, the Cuban commander stated: "It is a lie ... that there are Cuban military advisers in El Salvador. It is a lie that part of the weapons supplied to us by the Soviet Union is being redistributed in Central America. It is a lie that Cuba is supplying weapons and ammunition to Salvadoran patriots" (*Granma*, 27 September [our emphasis]). What a shameful statement — and it is true, truth worse than slander! An authentically revolutionary workers government would consider it a question of honour and duty to supply arms to leftist insurgents in El Salvador. But as we wrote last spring:

"The reality is that there is unfortunately no effective Soviet aid going to the insurgents in El Salvador. Because if there were, we wouldn't have had 12,000 people who died at the hands of the right-wing death squads and the junta's army in the last year. That is the proof."

— *Australasian Spartacist*, no 83, April 1981.

The Cuban Fidelistas and Nicaraguan Sandinistas both fear to provide weapons to the insurgents because it could be used by the Reaganite Cold Warriors as an excuse for a blockade or invasion. But "socialism in one island" and "sandinismo in one banana republic" will not be preserved by appeasing Yankee imperialism, as events are demonstrating. Within the framework of the Stalinist nationalism of a bureaucratically deformed workers state, Castro has responded with dignity and courage to the Reaganite threats:

"The imperialists mention total blockade as part of their arsenal of measures against Cuba. Very well, we'll have a new experience and so will they, because one thing we're sure of is that our country can resist a total blockade as long as we have to."

— *Granma*, 1 November

But ultimately, the only real defence of the Cuban revolution is through its international extension — throughout Latin America and above all to the imperialist metropolis to the north.

### Defend Cuba and the Soviet Union! Hands off Nicaragua!

What will the imperialists do? We are not privy to the secrets of the Pentagon, the State Department and the CIA. An invasion of Cuba would be the start of World War III. As liberal think-tanker William LeoGrande wrote in the *New York Times* (17 November), the outcome of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis "was largely the result of the [US'] 5-to-1 nuclear-weapons superiority over the Soviet Union"; now that the US and USSR "stand at relative nuclear parity, the Soviet Union is much less likely to capitulate in such a crisis". And the '62 missile crisis is as close as we have come, so far, to nuclear Armageddon.

Socialist revolutionists do not rely on the Stalinist bureaucracy of the Soviet degenerated workers state, which has sold out plenty of revolutions, from Spain to Chile. The only guarantee of victory for the Salvadoran masses, of social revolution in Nicaragua, of defence of workers state power in Cuba is through international proletarian revolution under a Leninist-Trotskyist leadership. Hands Off Nicaragua! Military Victory to Salvadoran Leftists! Defend Cuba and the USSR! For Workers Revolution!

— adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 293, 20 November 1981



## Defence of Cuba/USSR Begins in Central America

# US Imperialists

# Threaten Blockade

United States imperialism stands poised to commit a counterrevolutionary act of war in the Caribbean. The Reagan administration is trying to head off revolution in Central America by drowning it in a sea of blood. Their global Cold War offensive ultimately aims at overthrowing the historic achievements of the workers states, from Cuba to the Soviet Union. In the face of this war danger we demand: Down with Reagan/Haig War Threats! No Blockade! Hands Off Nicaragua! Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents in El Salvador! For Workers Revolution! As we have repeatedly insisted: DEFENCE OF CUBA, USSR BEGINS IN CENTRAL AMERICA!

The war threat was issued as a "leak" to the *New York Times* (5 November) which reported that US Secretary of State Haig had ordered his staff to quickly assemble plans for various military "options" in the Caribbean and Central America. The most frequently mentioned action is a naval blockade of Nicaragua, a manoeuvre the US practiced only last month in joint exercises with Honduras. As for Cuba, the plans being bandied about in Washington range from stronger economic sanctions to "a show of airpower, large naval exercises, a quarantine on the shipment of arms to the island, a general blockade as part of an act of war, and an invasion by American and possibly Latin American forces". And on El Salvador a "knowledgeable source" told *Newsweek* (9 November), "Don't rule out US Marines".

Haig himself confirmed the *New York Times* report the next day and on 7 November the same paper ominously announced that, "Four-Week Navy Drill Is Begun in Caribbean". It turns out that the naval exercises, which include the aircraft carriers Kennedy and Eisenhower, began a week earlier and are supposedly "only coincidentally related" (1) to Haig's war threats. Nevertheless, the article added, "Pentagon officials said that the size of the fleet and the extent of the exercises could not help but send a message to Cuba". The next day Cuba announced a full military alert.

In hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Haig was asked if he would pledge that the US was not making "efforts to overthrow or destabilise the current government of Nicaragua". He replied, "No, I would not give you such an assurance" (*Daily News*, 13 November). And now the commander of US troops in Latin America is calling for a reversal of the formal prohibition on military "advisers" in combat operations in El Salvador.

Ever since he took office Reagan has been looking to score a quick Cold War propaganda victory by militarily smashing the Salvadoran leftists. The guerrillas

have proved tougher than expected, but the administration has not abandoned its plans to teach the Soviets a "bloody lesson", if only by proxy, in America's "backyard". Even if Haig has to wait a while to drop his "demonstration bomb" over the Baltic, he thinks he can get away with a "demonstration blockade" in the Caribbean.

The axis of US administration policy in Central America is its Cold War drive against the Soviet bloc. The US claims that the Russians, via Castro and the Sandinistas, are supplying arms to the Salvadoran guerrillas (unfortunately this is very much *not* the case), and as a result the war there "has become essentially stalemated". So in order to save El Salvador and other regional "dominoes" from toppling out of the "free world", the war gamesmen in Washington come up with a naval blockade. And from there



April 1980 — Cuban masses demonstrate against US blockade.

they see a straight line to Bay of Pigs II, Cuban Missile Crisis II and World War III.

The stage is set for a major clash in the Caribbean. Yet social-democrats like the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) hope that by aggressively avoiding the key issues of the imperialist cold war and revolution versus counterrevolution in a raging civil war, they can forge a bloc with labour reformists and bourgeois liberals for whom defence of the Soviet Union is anathema. Thus the SWP drew a blood line *against* defence of Cuba and the USSR and military victory to the Salvadoran leftist insurgents by launching a thug attack against the SL-initiated Anti-Imperialist Contingent last June. With the US imperialists openly plotting military action in order to "roll back" communism in Central America, the

SWP-dominated Committee in Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean (CISCAC) in a recent leaflet still pretends that the issue is "self-determination":

"It is this outside intervention which must stop if social progress and peace are to replace poverty and military tyranny."

The leaflet plays up Castro's denial of Cuban aid to the Salvadoran insurgents as if to agree that Cuban or Soviet "outside interference" would serve to legitimise US military intervention. The SL has insisted that the class line is drawn in El Salvador — for military victory to the leftist insurgents against the bloody junta, for workers revolution! Which side are you on?

### Stalemate in El Salvador

The civil war in El Salvador does indeed appear to be "stalemated", at least, which is much better news for the



have suffered a reported 10 percent casualty rate — extremely high for a guerrilla war. On a clear day businessmen in San Salvador office buildings can see FMLN camps on the slopes of the Guazapa volcano 15 miles away which the government has been unable to take in five attempts. At least six times junta forces have launched major offensives in the northeastern Morazan province, each time withdrawing with heavy losses and leaving the insurgents in control. Last August the FMLN occupied the town of Perquin in this area and held it for a week.

In mid-winter the rebels launched a major campaign of economic sabotage, targeting especially electric power stations and power line pylons. El Salvador's third largest city, San Miguel, has been without electricity and power for months. By September the country's two major power-generating dams had been cut off, and many key road and rail bridges had been destroyed. The FMLN "celebrated" the second anniversary of the 1979 coup by blowing up the most important bridge in El Salvador, the Puente de Oro (Golden Bridge) which spanned the wide Lempa River and was the main artery to the eastern third of the country. It will take years to repair. In the aftermath of this raid, the guerrillas have launched a new offensive cutting off the town of Suchitoto, only 20 miles from San Salvador.

In this favourable battlefield situation, a revolutionary leadership would call for redoubled efforts to achieve a military victory, extending the struggle throughout Central America by mobilising the workers and peasants to take power. But the Salvadoran Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), a popular front grouping of the FMLN guerrillas with a few liberal bourgeois politicians, and their cheerleaders abroad are instead pushing for a "political solution" negotiated with the puppet junta and its imperialist masters. By failing to destroy the rapacious oligarchy and its military butchers, such a treacherous "deal" would rob the working masses of the victory they have fought so hard and suffered so much to achieve. And it could open the door to another bloodbath such as the one that followed the failed insurrection of 1932 led by the Communist Farabundo Marti.

The fruitless search for a negotiated settlement has been the main line of the FDR/FMLN's strategy since the end of the general/final offensive last January. Every month the FDR's preconditions for negotiations have gone down, but Reagan/Haig aren't interested and much less so the Salvadoran colonels. Their latest offer, conveyed to the UN by Nicaragua last month, has no preconditions

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