

Free Irish hunger strikers!

Imperialist butchers out now!

For workers revolution in Ireland!

The hunger strike by seven Republican prisoners in the H Blocks of Long Kesh, now joined by three women in Armagh jail, is bringing the long-simmering Irish crisis back towards boiling point. The Tory Cabinet, zealously backed by Labour's front bench, remains intransigent: the prisoners' demand for the rights of political status will not be met and they will continue to be treated as common criminals. Bipartisan imperialist arrogance was summed up by Northern Ireland secretary of state Humphrey Atkins: 'If they die, so be it.'

And well they might. The first hunger strikers will be in critical condition by mid-December, and the prisoners have announced that for each one who dies another of their number will join the strike until the government gives in. Far from being the 'criminals' painted by Westminster and the capitalist press, the hunger

strikers are victims of British imperialist repression and its draconian laws, which shore up Protestant ascendancy by intimidating and suppressing the Catholic minority. 'Suspects' are arrested without charges, held incommunicado until 'confessions' are beaten out of them, and then convicted on this 'evidence' alone in juryless courts. British 'justice' in Northern Ireland is summed up by the case of Pauline

McLaughlin, now seriously ill in Armagh jail. She was found guilty on the basis of a 'signed confession' -- even though she can neither read nor write.

The H Block prisoners' five demands -- the right to wear their own clothes; to freely associate with each other; to refuse to do prison



15 November, London. Spartacist contingent called for class struggle to free hunger strikers.

work; to organise education and recreation and send and receive a weekly letter, parcel and visit; and to full remission of sentences -- are completely just and supportable. But H Block is not a liberal 'human rights' issue and political prisoner status is manifestly not enough.

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Thatcher's Britain Enough is enough!

Margaret Thatcher should justifiably be nervous about the fact that some 150,000 people were prepared to hit the streets of Liverpool on a wintry Saturday afternoon on 29 November just to demonstrate their hatred for her 'party of unemployment'. The venue could not have been better chosen. Liverpool is the promise of Britain's future under capitalism: social devastation, pervasive lumpenisation, industrial wasteland. And the big electronic clock that ticked off one more man for the dole queues every 15 seconds was far more eloquent than all the Labour politicians at the podium put together.

It is not only that the Iron Lady presides over this depression misery that makes her a favourite for effigies; her Friedmanite policies express open contempt for those whom the misery most afflicts -- the unemployed, the pensioners, the coming victims of 'hypothermia'. 'Tory-bashing' is so cheap these days that even Tories are doing it: the Cabinet 'wets', old rival Edward Heath and the CBI's Sir Terence Beckett have all spoken out, whether their concern is high interest rates or the political consequences of a restive mass of unemployed.

So recycled ex-'left' Michael Foot no sooner ascended to the leadership of the Labour Party than he announced he would march at the head of the anti-Tory protest; then he broke his ankle. It was an exquisite metaphor for this party of reformism in a crippled economy in which it is hard to scrape up even the most meagre of re-

forms. Foot issued fiery calls for a 'mobilisation of the British people' to see that 'this government is thrown out'. But sections of the crowd booed when he told them how he wanted it done: 'Prepare to destroy at the ballot box, which is the only place they can be finally defeated, the party of unemployment.' Wait three years to stuff a piece of paper in a ballot box in order to replace the party of unemployment with the party of the Social Contract?

Sir Geoffrey Howe's November 'package' hiked up National Insurance while slashing public spending and Social Security/pensions indexation. And the only categories exempt from the new 6 per cent public sector pay freeze are the bosses' paid strikebreakers -- the cops and the armed forces. But all the bureaucrats can do is complain about how the Tories mismanage the economy, mutter about 'foreign competition' and point to a brighter future with their man Foot in Number 10. Firemen's outrage at withdrawal of their promised 18.8 per cent pay rise was diverted into a work-to-rule and one-day strikes. Engineering workers were forced to settle for 8 per cent with no pretence of a fight. And Leyland workers have been told to take it in the neck again because of Michael Edwardes' closure threats. A former Consett steelman summed it up at the ISTC special conference in London, 23 November: 'Enough is enough!'

That's right -- enough is enough. But if the deep-seated hatred for the Tories is channelled into Labourite anti-Toryism, it will only be

more of the same. Yet while Foot was writing his speech for Liverpool, miners were voting at the pitheads over whether to accept the NCB's 13 per cent offer (including productivity bonus) agreed to by NUM president Joe Gormley or stick to the original 35 per cent pay claim. Two weeks before the vote, NUM officials (as the 15 November *Economist* noted) were 'already planning their various excuses for doing nothing'. It looked as though the bureaucrats had succeeded in their criminal sabotage, a crime directed not just against NUM members but every worker. Because if the miners did go out, it could turn things around in Thatcher's Britain. It's not just the pay claim that could set the pace for every unionist attempting to keep ahead of a 16 per cent inflation rate. If Wales is to be saved from a wave of decimating pit closures it won't be through talk of a new 'Triple Alliance' of the do-nothing misleaders of the NUM, NUR and ISTC but through militant industrial unity in struggle.

And even more importantly, a militant national miners' strike could galvanise the anti-Tory sentiment that permeates large sectors of the population and point the way to ending the numbing cycle of Tory attack and Labour betrayal. The miners are in a better position to lead such a fight than most other sectors of the British proletariat. They could do the job Bill Sirs' betrayal kept the steelmen from doing: to spearhead a classwide counter-offensive to knock the

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Enough is enough!...

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Tory juggernaut reeling and place the British working class on a higher terrain of class struggle. Heath met his fate at the miners' hands; so could Thatcher, and with her the spending cuts, the hospital closures, the wage freezes, the anti-picket laws. If the 'left' NUM leaders like the Communist Party's Mick McGahey in Scotland and 'King' Arthur Scargill in Yorkshire -- who were campaigning for a no vote -- had such a perspective, they would have been arguing for a lot more than that Gormley 'carry on negotiations' (*Morning Star*, 24 November). They would have announced their determination to lead their regions in the vanguard of a national strike regardless of the ballot outcome.

But Scargill and McGahey offer the workers the same package of trade-union economism and Labourite parliamentarism wrapped in a 'socialist' cover. What the British workers need now is a militant lead from a miners' strike that refuses to be diverted by the claptrap of Labourism. Miners: to hell with Gormley's excuses! Fight for the full 35 per cent! Stop the redundancies! Offer a lead against the Tory offensive! A decisive victory by the miners could open the road to the struggle for the only solution to the problems facing the proletariat: a revolutionary workers government to administer a planned economy and fight for a Socialist United States of Europe.

The alternative to a bout of decisive class confrontations resolved in favour of the working class is the spread of the Liverpool plague. As a TGWU convenor from the once prosperous West Midlands told the *Economist* (29 August): 'Birmingham has become like Liverpool. People are suddenly realising that there is nowhere else to go.' An industrialist from the same area put it another way: 'The theory is that a phoenix will arise from the ashes of this slump. In reality it ain't like that.'

No it ain't. And everybody had better know it. In Britain the effects of the international recession combine with and exacerbate a long-term structural decline -- the sun is setting on British capitalism. Liverpool shows it, Wales shows it, increasingly the Midlands shows it. The latest regular feature in the bourgeois press is a column announcing that day's plant closures and redundancies -- quite a complement to the closing prices on the stock exchange. And when a *Times* (24 November) leading article tried to look on the 'bright side' of Britain it could only manage 'our success in tourism' and the claim that 'our broadcasting has no equal', before despairing:

'Even some of the fields of activity in which our pre-eminence is unassailed [sic] ... [have] a dubious aspect. No doubt Italy was the centre of the world art market before the Sack of Rome.'

The irony is excruciating -- the *Times* itself is planning to close up shop, an increasingly common feature of life on Fleet Street. Yet when one militant demanded unified strike action in response to the massive redundancies and 'voluntary' wage freeze shoved down the throats of Express Newspaper workers, a union official replied that the time was not right. 'It never seems to be the right time to fight', the bureaucrat added wistfully.

For the reformist bureaucracy, confronted with the palpable bankruptcy of reformism, it is never the right time to fight. And the passivity

preached by the bureaucrats is mirrored by the polyanna 'business as usual' union militancy pushed by the likes of the International Marxist Group (IMG) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Both roads lead to Liverpool. Both share a fundamentally reformist premise -- that British capitalism can continue to linger on in the same old way. The fascists who are taking to the streets with increasing visibility know better -- they have a real 'shock treatment' in store if they get the chance. Revolutionaries know better too: reformist business as usual is a recipe for working-class demoralisation and defeat, especially in Britain 1980-81.

Even in Leyland, which has witnessed defeat after defeat, opposition to the latest wage sellout ran deep. Edwardes was not prepared for the wave of resistance to his slave-labour plans last spring. And in late November, only days after the latest sellout, workers at Longbridge, home of the Mini Metro, exploded in rage after one too many management attacks.

But the way the IMG tried to win BL workers to strike action last month was by saying that closure threats were all hot air: 'British capitalism needs BL... Axing BL would be a blow at the strength and viability of the whole of Brit-



Thatcher's vision of Britain: poverty, unemployment.

ish capitalism' (*Socialist Challenge*, 13 November). The IMG's programme for BL workers is to fight for work sharing on full pay. Commendable -- except it's no secret that Leyland has precious little work to share. In fact the point is that the 'whole of British capitalism' is epitomised by the plight of BL. What 'strength and viability'?

What provides the bureaucracy's treacherous passivity in the face of Edwardes' vicious attacks with a semblance of rationality is that BL workers know that Leyland could well be expendable to the capitalist class. Even so, before the November pay sellout, militant workers at Rover Solihull were talking about a 'Custer's last stand' -- with Edwardes playing the role of the ill-starred general. They understood that it is far better to fight than roll over and die. And a fight at BL could succeed -- if it went beyond BL, with a conscious perspective of sparking a broader struggle which enlisted the heavier battalions of the proletariat against 'the whole of British capitalism'.

Lacking that revolutionary perspective the IMG, SWP et al settle for the small change of isolated militancy and Labourite street rallies. That is why they all pounced on the seven-week-long occupation at Gardner's, Manchester (which was eventually settled when management withdrew a compulsory redundancy threat to 590 workers in favour of a scheme for voluntary redundancies). The euphoria over Gardner's was exemplified by the SWP's Paul Foot:

'It is difficult to think of a dispute in postwar history upon which so much hangs -- or, for that matter, a dispute where the forces of brotherhood and democracy are so clearly set against the forces of hierarchy and exploitation.' (*Socialist Worker*, 8 November)

Gardner's showed the use of a powerful tactic -- the plant occupation. But even discounting an obvious proclivity for romantic poetry, this is incredible. What about the miners in 1974; the steelmen in 1980?

Likewise the IMG and SWP practically get delirious over the prospect of the Labour misleaders taking the 'anti-Tory struggle' into the streets on 29 November. In successive issues of *Socialist Challenge* there was only the mesmerised repetition: '100,000 expected at Liverpool demo'. And *Socialist Worker* (22 November) which generally tries to counterpose to Labour its own brand of social democracy (iced with apolitical 'militant' economism), could not contain its glee over Michael Foot's call for a 'hurricane of protest against this blackhearted government'.

'That's exactly what we need', crowed the SWP.

The bureaucracy can tolerate a few Gardners, if only they do not spread. What it cannot tolerate, what it dreads, is an upsurge which breaks out of the straitjacket of simple economist trade unionism and poses a challenge to the bourgeois order. Yet in today's Britain virtually any reasonable demand to defend or improve the living standards of the working class poses an impossible and threatening challenge to a capitalist economy with little to give. Even the steelworkers' simple demand for a wage increase which kept pace with inflation edged towards a test of strength between the organised working class and the capitalist state which would have rapidly escaped the grip of the pro-capitalist bureaucracy. Incapable of securing substantial wage increases to pacify the workers the bureaucracy has only one strategy -- channelling all discontent into the promise of a better future under Labour. And for that it needs a Labour Party which at least appears like it can offer an alternative to Tory despair. So Michael Foot won the leadership, not Denis Healey. Foot made no bones about why he intended to hobble down the streets of Liverpool:

'I think there is a very deep ferment growing. When it will explode I do not know. But I want it to explode in a way which will make it possible to maintain democratic institutions in this country, and that means that representation outside this place [Parliament] has got to have its representation here. People outside have got to have some faith in what happens here.' (*Guardian*, 13 November)

And the fake-revolutionary left does its share to keep the faith. Incapable of posing a political challenge to the stranglehold of the reformist bureaucracy, the fake left instead accommodates itself to the small-change struggles acceptable to the bureaucrats and falls in step behind the 'anti-Tory united front', offering a ready base of support to every 'left' reformist who comes along to rekindle the workers' illusions worn thin by betrayal. It is not a question of subjective will, but of programme. The only counterposition to reformism within the workers movement is communism -- Trotskyism -- and there is only one Trotskyist programme, the programme of the Spartacist League.

Thus, it was not only the IMG, SWP and Stalinists who sided with the ~~lesser evil~~ reformist in the recent AUEW elections, but even the left-centrist Workers Power (WP). Terry Duffy is certainly a reprehensible, notoriously right-wing traitor. But what did the Broad Left's Bob Wright offer that advanced the working class even a step forward in the struggle for a dictatorship of the proletariat? Nothing. The best that WP could say, of Wright that 'He does not stand on a positive programme of destroying the elements of rank and file democracy that exist in the AUEW' (*Workers Power*, June 1980). No, he simply stood on a 'positive programme of keeping the working class tied to its bourgeoisie economically through protectionist chauvinism and politically through Labourism. Is it any wonder then that despite WP's claim to be fighting in the unions for a programme for the 'workers dictatorship', its real programme for the AUEW offers no alternative to the 'left' reformism of a Bob Wright: some more democracy, opposition to a merger with the EETPU, nationalisation of the engineering industry.

The working class needs a communist leadership at its head, nothing less. In the struggle to win authority for the communist programme among the workers, revolutionaries may at times extend critical support to someone who claims to stand on key elements of that programme. But our task is not to advise the workers on the 'best' alternative for winning a few crumbs from the bourgeoisie's table, even when there are crumbs to be had. We seek rather to win them to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie by mobilising them in a struggle for their own state power. Against economic nationalism, we counterpose proletarian internationalism exercised in defence of the Soviet workers state and in opposition to imperialist troops in Ireland. Against reliance on police and Parliament, we counterpose the necessity for workers defence guards to defend strike pickets and crush fascist provocations. Against craftist, racist and sexist divisions within the working class, we offer a fight for unity around a programme which meets the needs of the entire working class.

Britain has already had too many 'winters of discontent'. What it needs now is a winter of decisive working-class victory which will roll back the Tory austerity onslaught. And then it needs a revolutionary workers party which can take it all the way -- to the destruction of this system of despair and depression. ■

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Workers Power on 'anti-imperialism'

Two years ago the Workers Power (WP) grouping cheered on the mullah-led movement which replaced the tyrannical monarchy of the shah with the reactionary theocracy of Khomeini. Once installed in state power the mullahs proceeded to carry out the reign of terror they had openly promised against women, gays, communists and oppressed nationalities. In the intervening period the left-centrist WP has been wont to point to the 'warnings' it muttered as it was urging the masses on behind Khomeini. But warnings come cheap; it is programme which is decisive. And in refusing to repudiate its support to Khomeini against the shah, WP has now come to the defence of Khomeini's 'territorial integrity' against his neighbouring despot in Iraq.

For ostensible Leninists to justify support to one reactionary regime against another in this epoch in the absence of qualitative distinctions between them necessitates a considerable distortion of the Marxist attitude towards war. And WP has attempted a polemical defence of its line with the gamut of shoddy and deceptive arguments. An article in the November *Workers Power* by Mark Hoskisson, essentially repeated in a presentation by the author at a 7 November public meeting in London, is devoted in large measure to 'proving' the unremarkable thesis that Leninists are not ... pacifist. Thus Hoskisson noted Marx's support to German national consolidation in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 -- in a period when the bourgeoisie was still capable of carrying out a historically progressive role. Then he quoted a letter from Lenin to Zinoviev in August 1916:

'But in the imperialist epoch there may be also "just", "defensive", revolutionary wars. (namely (1) national, (2) civil, (3) socialist and suchlike)'. (Collected Works, vol 35, p 229)

Indeed there are national wars by colonial and semi-colonial countries against imperialist powers and even, as in the case of Somalia's attempt to conquer the Somali-inhabited Ogaden from Ethiopia three years ago, supportable wars of national consolidation against qualitatively equivalent capitalist states. But Iran is fighting not for national consolidation, but to preserve an oppressive prisonhouse of nations. Nor is this a civil war, and WP certainly does not claim Iran to be socialist. So Hoskisson resorted to pointing out that Lenin had underscored the word 'suchlike' -- thus inventing a new type of war, the 'etcetera war'! WP's search for historical justification for supporting Iran against Iraq has more in common with a businessman's search for tax loopholes than a Marxist's attempt to understand history.

After all the 'dialectical' footwork and historical irrelevancies, the *Workers Power* polemic gets to the real point:

'To deny the progressive aspect of the masses struggle against such elements in this war, and to see only that they are defending Khomeini and his counter-revolutionary aims, must logically lead to denying that the Iranian revolution had any progressive content.'

And that leads to 'those like the International Spartacist Tendency who never saw anything progressive in the overthrow of the Shah [whose position on the war] it is at least consistent'. That's right! Unlike the rest of the left internationally, the iSt was consistent in denying that the mullahs were in any way more progressive than the butcher they replaced.

Confronted with this choice, the 'consistency' that WP has chosen is to hark back ever more to the 'gains' of this still 'unfinished revolution'. For example? As one WPer enumerated them at the London meeting: Iranian leftists now have the freedom to offer themselves up as cannon fodder for Khomeini's 'holy war' against Iraq 'as long as they take their red armbands off'; women can protest against Khomeini's imposition of the chador -- if they are prepared to face bloodthirsty Khomeinist mobs; and the shoras 'however Islamicised ... can discuss what's going on in their factories'. Within days of this acclaim of the Iranian left's freedom to organise, the bourgeois press reported a massive

crackdown by Khomeini on the left.

But beyond such rubbish, WP raises a further, fundamentally anti-Trotskyist argument, as presented by *Workers Power* editor Dave Hughes, that the 'Iranian revolution' had 'dealt real blows to imperialism'. Iraq, on the other hand, is now on 'an objectively pro-imperialist course ... designed to allow imperialism to re-establish its control in a crucial region' (*Workers Power*, November 1980; emphasis added). For Trotskyists the central tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, including, in the words of the Transitional Programme, 'national independence, ie the overthrow of the imperialist yoke', can be achieved in a country like Iran only by breaking with capitalism through the conquest of power by the proletariat, drawing the peasantry behind it. For Workers Power the imperialist yoke in Iran has, presumably been ... bent a bit.

Permanent revolution v 'anti-imperialist united front'

WP's position and argumentation on the Iran/Iraq war reflects an effective denial of the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution -- a position on the national question which WP has maintained from its earliest origins. In common with a number of others, WP broke from the Cliffite International Socialists (IS) over its cringing capitulation to imperialist 'anti-terrorist' hysteria after the defensible bombing of the Aldershot barracks by the IRA in 1972. But unlike those cadre who were to find their way to the Trotskyism of the iSt, WP's alternative to Cliffite capitulation to imperialism was to seek a more consistent accommodation to petty-bourgeois nationalism and to embrace the 'anti-imperialist united front'. If WP members sat down to some serious study of, say, Stalin's *On the Opposition*, they would find some disturbing parallels between their line and Stalin's attitude towards Chiang Kai-Shek.

Thus the recent polemic in *Workers Power* claims that, 'Like Chian Kai Shek [sic], who the left opposition and Fourth International tirelessly opposed, the Iranian regime can be forced, because it was installed by an anti imperialist revolution in which the masses played an overwhelming part, into a role they abhor.' In the first place, unlike Chiang, who waged a war against militarists who were open and direct agents of Britain and other imperialist powers, Khomeini's movement toppled a despot who, though favoured by US imperialism, was by no means a puppet.

Moreover, despite WP's attempts to paint Khomeini as a Thermidorean betrayer of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, Khomeini -- again unlike Chiang -- never even claimed to be for bourgeois democracy. He has betrayed nothing except the illusions fostered in him by his 'left' apologists. Chiang, on the other hand, was a genuine bourgeois nationalist who opposed, for example, the binding of women's feet; his Kuomintang (KMT) claimed commitment to a national-revolutionary programme and the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 was marked by significant proletarian and peasant uprisings. But WP's reference to Chiang is not only skewed in its attempts to compare him to the clerical-reactionary Khomeini; it also reflects an understanding of the struggle against imperialism closer to Stalin's than the Left Opposition's.

Indeed, it was not the Left Opposition but

Stalin who sought to 'force' Chiang further along the road in an 'anti-imperialist revolution'. It was on the basis of the Chinese experience that Trotsky generalised his perspective of permanent revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, which he had developed for Russia following the 1905 Revolution. In the epoch of imperialist decay the programme of the bourgeois revolution could only be carried to a successful conclusion by a proletariat wielding state power -- and in this task it would find the bourgeoisie not a bloc partner but an implacable foe.

In its espousal of the 'anti-imperialist united front' WP rejects the lessons of the bloody experience of the Chinese Revolution. The slogan of the 'anti-imperialist united front' was raised by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International (1922) in the 'Theses on the Eastern Question'. As applied to specific, time-limited agreements (Trotsky later gave as an example of this an agreement with the Kuomintang Youth for a joint demonstration against imperialism) it was on the whole principled and supportable. But the theses were sufficiently ambiguous in places to be easily used by revisionists. Thus it was under this slogan that Stalin liquidated the Chinese CP with murderous consequences into the KMT in an early equivalent of the popular front in the colonial and semi-colonial world. But calling for a vote to the petty-bourgeois nationalist Provisional Sinn Fein, as WP does, is not one whit qualitatively different from entering the KMT.

In the wake of the Chinese experience the slogan for an 'anti-imperialist united front' was not to be used again by Trotsky. The Bolsheviks, he emphasised, unlike the Stalinist epigones, 'entirely reject[ed] the charlatan "anti-imperialist" blocs with the numerous petty-bourgeois "national" parties of czarist Russia' ('On the South African Theses', *Writings 1934-35*, p 251).



Fruits of 'anti-imperialist united front': massacre of Communist militants in Shanghai, 1927.

For Stalin two-stage revolution was part and parcel of a reactionary, Thermidorean strategy for winning bourgeois allies rather than spreading the revolution internationally. WP actually stands historically closer to the transient current which sought to wedge itself between Trotskyism and Stalinism, represented outstandingly by Kamenev and Zinoviev. At bottom their common guiding principle was -- always go with the masses. And for all its leftward shifts on key programmatic positions, it is this cardinal rule of centrism, so faithfully followed by Workers Power, which separates it from Trotskyism and makes it see in the Spartacist tendency 'classical sectarian values', as Hughes put it in the London public meeting. In every decisive test, WP draws back from the hard programme of Trotskyism in preference to confronting backward consciousness among the masses.

When the Iranian masses are swept along in a fervour of clerical reaction, WP would rather conjure up an 'anti-imperialist' movement than fight to uphold the banner of the proletariat. It recognises the danger of capitalist restoration in Poland and warns against it, but hails even openly pro-Vatican leaders like Walesa while the mass of the workers is behind him. It recognised the necessity of standing with the Soviet Union against the imperialist furore over Afghanistan but went off on a futile search for a mass movement pitted both against the Red Army and the imperialist-backed mullahs rather than support the Red Army's just war against Islamic reaction. It stands apart from its centrist and

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Hunger strikers...

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Yet sundry British pseudo-revolutionary organisations, notably the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and International Marxist Group (IMG), are using the hunger strike to collapse ever-deeper into single-issue 'humanitarian' politics aimed at cajoling a more liberal policy out of the imperialists. For Republican petty-bourgeois nationalists in Ireland, the use of classless 'human rights' rhetoric is natural -- their programme is openly for a united capitalist Ireland. But the British left's rightward motion on Ireland has a different impetus. They have noted a small but growing section of bourgeois opinion which views continuing support for the sectarian Northern statelet as an unacceptably expensive and politically embarrassing burden for failing fifth-rate British capitalism. And, being inveterate opportunists, the SWP, IMG et al have rushed straight towards a popular-frontist alliance with this burgeoning wing of imperialism.

Eighteen months ago, the SWP and IMG endorsed a Young Liberal-initiated Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland (CWI) demonstration whose social-patriotic rhetoric called merely for a vague 'commitment to withdrawal' by Britain sometime in the indefinite future. Now, arguing that support for the hunger strikers should be based on the single demand 'Don't let Irish prisoners die', they have embraced such 'exemplary actions' as a 48-hour fast outside Downing Street by Lord Gifford and pacifist Pat Arrow-smith. An SWP/IMG-championed Ad Hoc Hunger Strike Committee has accepted as its basis for unity a letter by 'left' Labour MP Ernie Roberts appealing for the Tory government to 'compromise' in order to avert further violence in Northern Ireland.

For real revolutionaries, the Republican hunger strike is not an occasion for moralist protest in alliance with a war-weary wing of murderous British imperialism, or for pleas for 'compromise' to the Iron Lady. In the same way that popular-frontist alliances like the Anti Nazi League and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament cannot stop fascism or imperialist war, so campaigns on Ireland like the CWI and the SWP's 'Charter 80' movement are worse than useless. The only way to defeat the imperialists' plans is through a strategy of proletarian class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Centrists in retreat

On a 15 November CWI demonstration through London, while all and sundry fake revolutionaries were tailing liberal imperialism and nationalism, the Spartacist League (SL) contingent provided an anti-imperialist, proletarian revolutionary pole. Our banner read 'Smash Britain's torture camps, troops out now!', and our slogans drew the class line for both Britain and Ireland: 'Freedom for the hunger strikers!', 'Trade unions, take a stand -- black military goods to Ireland!' and 'Troops out now! Not Green against Orange but class against class, for a workers republic in Ireland'. Such slogans were anathema not only to the IMG/SWP cabal but even to the most 'left' of the pseudo-revolutionaries, the Workers Power (WP) group, who refused to support our calls for blacking and an Irish workers republic.

Since that demonstration events in Sheffield have further underlined the pernicious role of the new popular-front style alliances over Ireland, and the bending of even the most left-wing centrists like WP towards them. A meeting of left organisations to plan local action around the hunger strike was held on 18 November, and two counterposed proposals were put forward for action. One, presented by Workers Power and supported at the time by the SWP and IMG, was for a demonstration organised on the basis of 'Solidarity with the hunger strikers' and 'Political status now'. In order to adopt this proposal, the various groups had to unite against a Spartacist proposal for a united-front demonstration around the demands 'Free the victims of imperialist repression in Northern Ireland' and 'British troops out of Ireland now'. To a WP representative's prattle that the SL's proposal must be opposed because 'we don't want to place conditions on people supporting the hunger strikers', an SL spokesman replied that the point was to organise an action that took the basic questions head on: What right have the British to be in Ireland, and why should fighters against imperialist repression be left to rot in Britain's torture camps?

In a characteristic attempt to cover their left flank, Sheffield Workers Power has issued a fiery leaflet which castigates other groups for 'headlong retreat on the major political ques-

tions raised in carrying out solidarity work' and denounces the 'Charter 80' campaign for 'opportunistic short-cutting techniques' and using 'the method of the lowest common denominator'. WP puffs itself up to pronounce that 'the issues must be confronted, in an unflinching, consistent and principled fashion'.

Sounds fine. But the only 'difference' WP has been able to concoct with the IMG, SWP et al over the hunger strike is that while they stand for political status, the other groups only support the five demands of the prisoners. Some difference! In fact, Workers Power employs the same 'opportunistic short-cutting technique' as the rest, decrying demands for 'troops out now' and freedom for the prisoners as too advanced, as they succumb to the same popular-frontist conciliation over Ireland that is currently infecting the entire British fake left. Like the IMG, SWP et al, Workers Power also flinches. Two years ago, these organisations were on the fag end of their Republican-tailing enthusiasm of the 1970s and would have screamed with rage at abandoning 'troops out now' as a central mobilising slogan. But no more. Indeed, at a recent 'Charter 80' rally in Sheffield, the Spartacist League was the *only* organisation to call for immediate troop withdrawal!

For an Irish workers republic!

The H Block hunger strike has captured political sympathy among the Catholic population in both the North and South of Ireland to an extent not seen in years. Twenty-five thousand marched in support of the strikers in Belfast, twenty thousand in Dublin and thousands more in smaller

Socialist Worker (18 September 1969) supported troops to Ireland. SWP remains consistent in its capitulation to imperialism.



towns and cities. Belfast dockers and workers throughout Derry have staged political strikes in solidarity.

But the politics of Republicanism offer no way forward for the oppressed Catholic masses of the Six Counties. The Republican movement's perspective is reunification with the southern Republic -- with its rampant clericalism, its own Long Kesh at Portlaoise and its own draconian 'anti-terrorist' legislation. Even as the H Block prisoners battle on in the North, the Dublin government is today preparing the gallows for the execution of three Republican militants convicted of murdering a policeman. Moreover, the Provisional IRA and other Republican nationalist groups are also guilty of sectarian atrocities against the Protestant working people of the North. While revolutionaries shed no tears for British imperialist or Orange state representatives killed by the nationalists, we adamantly oppose indiscriminate terror like the 1978 La Mon fire bombing which killed 12 innocent Protestants, and call for anti-imperialist, anti-sectarian workers militias to combat both Orange and Green terror.

Today Northern Ireland teeters on the brink of another major escalation in imperialist and sectarian violence. Loyalist paramilitary groups have launched a murderous sectarian offensive, with the active complicity of British and Northern Ireland state forces. The Ulster Defence Association openly threatens to 'take the Ulster people to the brink of civil war' (*Times*, 21 November). A particular target for the Orange reactionaries has been H Block defence campaigners, like Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little who were brutally assassinated in a raid on Bunting's home on 15 October. Bunting and Little

were special targets for the Orange supremacists and their imperialist backers, for both were Protestants who broke from their Loyalist heritage to join the Republican movement. Indeed Ronnie Bunting's father was none other than Major Ronald Bunting, Ian Paisley's 'commander in the field'.

Imperialist terror and Orange supremacy must be smashed -- but through a fight for proletarian revolution, not Green nationalism. What is needed is a revolutionary proletarian party that can cut through the sectarian divisions in the working class and end the cycle of repression and terror by showing the way to working-class political power. Smash the torture camps! British troops out now! For an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles!

CND 'debates' war lord

Birmingham University student union witnessed an obscene spectacle on 27 November when spokesmen for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) engaged in a polite debate on nuclear disarmament with leading Tory government and military spokesmen. The military was represented by Lord Hill-Norton, currently Admiral of the Fleet, until last year Chairman of NATO's Military Council and top-level strategist for imperialism's war plans against the Soviet Union -- a war-mongering butcher who should never have been allowed near a student union building in the first place. But among the several hundred gathered for the event only the Spartacist Society objected to the spectacle of 'dialogue' with this architect of imperialist war, whose military career was built over the bodies of Malaysian anti-colonial insurgents.

When one Spartacist spokesman rose to protest the presence of Hill-Norton she received a lesson in pacifism from the student union's thugs, who dragged her viciously from the floor. The attackers then set upon another Spartacist comrade who joined the protest, while sundry pacifists and supporters of the Communist Party and International Marxist Group remained happily silent in their seats, presumably waiting to try and persuade Hill-Norton and his co-debater, Tory Under Secretary of State for the RAF Geoffrey Pattie, that unilateral nuclear disarmament is the way to 'save Britain'.

The whole disgraceful event illustrated the unity of the no-nuke social patriots and the British ruling class. Bruce Page, editor of the *New Statesman*, speaking for the 'unilateralist' proposition, made it explicit: 'We face a difficult intellectual task ... to separate legitimate national defence from the insanity of nuclear warfare.' The British bourgeoisie didn't need A/bombs when it roasted vast numbers of Germans in the fire-bombing of Hamburg. Neither do they need nuclear weapons to kill and maim Republican militants in Northern Ireland, as Stan Orme, former Labour Cabinet spokesman on Ireland and another scheduled pro-unilateralist speaker could have testified. In opposition to patriots and chauvinists of all stripes, we counterpose our proletarian-revolutionary path to peace: unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union from imperialist attack and class war to disarm the bourgeoisie and sweep Hill-Norton and his ilk off the face of the earth.

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Ireland, Afghanistan, anti-Soviet war drive

Why we are joining the SL

SWP: 'left' cover for imperialist anti-Sovietism

Dear Comrades,

I joined the Socialist Workers Party in January 1979, thinking it to be a genuine revolutionary organisation. Being still at school at the time, I became mainly involved in the SWP youth group, Rebel. Rebel had a very unstable existence, to say the least, since its method of recruiting youth was not on the basis of politics, but by patronising them and offering them 'excitement' in a 'revolutionary' youth group. Rebel recruited radicalised, mainly unemployed, youth and offered them nothing politically. It was simply the SWP's attempt to cobble together a youth group out of the glossy, superficially attractive, popular-frontist politics of the Anti Nazi League, rather than fighting for the revolutionary programme of communism among working class youth. Thus the SWP still hasn't got a stable youth group, because its trendy, patronising substitute for politics, which derive from the SWP's own bad politics, repel serious minded would-be revolutionary youth.

When someone joins the SWP, they are often recruited out of some campaign or other and are not told about the SWP's politics on Russia etc, but that 'you'll learn that later' or 'it doesn't matter much anyway'. This seemed to work well enough for the SWP in the period when I joined, since such arguments were regarded as abstractly theoretical, 'sectarian' and not important. Especially since Afghanistan, however, the leaders of the capitalist world have embarked on a frenzied cold-war drive against the Soviet Union. The SWP's line about 'Russian Imperialism' and 'national liberation for Afghanistan' only adds a 'left' cover to imperialist propaganda. Every SWP member should ask

themselves -- do they really wish to side with the reactionary, feudalist, CIA-backed Afghan rebels against the world's first workers state, created by the October revolution and never overthrown? The Soviet Union is not a workers democracy; political power is monopolised by a parasitic caste which must be overthrown by political revolution. But the socialised property relations created by the October revolution still exist, and are a historic gain of the workers which must be defended.

I came to agree with this point of view over a period of time, and began to realise the importance of the Russian question through talking to people from various organisations, but once I came round to this point of view, I realised that the only group that was serious about this was the Spartacist League. I thought about the IMG, but the fact that they want to fuse with the SWP, burying the Russian question, shows that they're not serious about it.

In my last few months in the SWP, I became involved in Irish work, being delegated to

Troops Out Movement meetings as an SWP representative, and getting involved in TOM activities. (I became Birmingham TOM treasurer.) Not knowing much about Irish politics, and having illusions in Republicanism, I took a lot of persuading of the correctness of the SL's position. Most groups on the left are absolutely scared stiff of having a position counterposed to that of the petty-bourgeois nationalists, and refuse to expound a programme for proletarian revolution in Ireland. At the same time, they capitulate to the worst imperialist hysteria over 'terrorism' against symbols or representatives of imperialism, for instance the killing of Airey Neave. The Republican nationalists have a bourgeois programme for Ireland, and Irish communists will have to fight against them, while at the same time fighting the national oppression of the Irish Catholics and the British imperialist presence. This means opposition to both nationalist programmes, Orange and Green, and the creation of an anti-sectarian, anti-imperialist workers militia and a revolutionary party to achieve class unity for the struggle against capitalism.

The SWP, IMG etc are now trying to build a broad-based movement around 'Britain in Ireland', involving a defeatist wing of the bourgeoisie, ie the Young Liberals. Bourgeois defeatism is no answer to the Irish question, and blocs with such people on the basis of demands which absolutely do not contradict capitalism are no way forward for the Irish or British workers. The only road forward is the independent working class politics of the SL: Troops out now -- For an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles!

I discussed with comrades from the SL over a period of time and came to realise that the SL is the only organisation that fights for independent proletarian politics.

Ian D

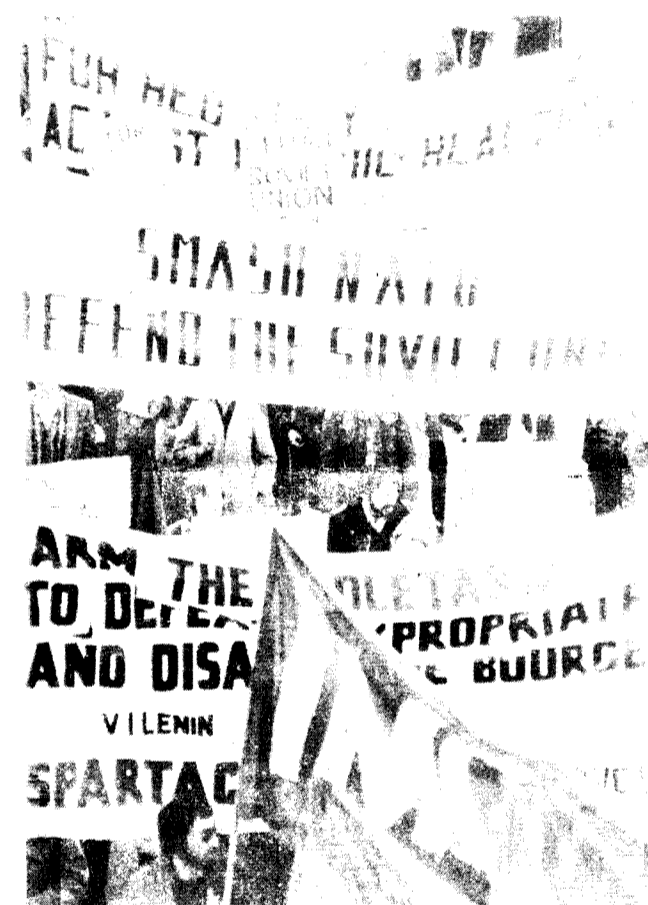
CP: rejects the traditions of Bolshevism

Dear Comrades,

I am writing this letter to give my reasons for joining the Spartacist League. The economic decline of Wales and the apathetic misery which this produced in the sections of the working class with which I came into contact convinced me as a teenager of the need for a drastic change in society. Originally emotionally attached to nationalism, on questioning several Plaid Cymru members I was told that their party could embrace people of all political opinions around the banner of an independent Wales. Apparently the question of what kind of independent Wales we should have did not come on to the agenda. I decided that this lack of programme provided no acceptable solution to our problems, and was later repelled when various Plaid Cymru sympathisers displayed an attitude towards the English (of all classes) which can only be compared with racist bigotry.

On being introduced to Marxism by older pupils at school, I found it an objective expression of my subjective feelings. Although I had read Trotsky and recognised the shortcomings of the deformed workers states, I saw that nothing could be achieved without the leadership and organisation of a revolutionary party, and therefore joined the Communist Party in April 1979 under the mistaken impression that it still acted in the historic tradition of the Bolsheviks. I was soon told, however, that this was out of the question because 'the working class would laugh at you if you told them they have to have a revolution'. When I suggested that creation of a revolutionary class consciousness was the CP's task, this was rejected as due to a youthful enthusiasm which I would soon grow out of.

It soon became clear that the CP has no intention of doing more than tail the 'left wing' of the Labour Party, seeing Tony Benn as a messiah who will relieve the proletariat of the necessity to take action on its own behalf. CP



members either accepted that modification of the capitalist system is all that is necessary or believed that on the election of a 'progressive' government the present ruling class would quietly sit back whilst being stripped of political and economic power. This shows a touching but ridiculous faith in the class enemy's selflessness. The CP also echoed the Labour Party's call for import controls as a means of exporting unemployment. Presumably the international proletariat is extinct outside the UK.

My work with the CP was restricted to short-term and essentially parochial projects, reflecting their stand of operating within the present system -- a campaign against local government cuts in library and nursery school services -- failing to overcome each interest group's desire not to fight the cuts but to ensure that they fell on somebody else, so that local officials were able to defeat our action by playing off one section of the resistance against another. Even this experience failed to convince the CP of the futility of its reformist policies.

As economic decay brought increasing support for the fascist British Movement in Shotton, the CP at least realised that to call for a state ban of fascist groups could only backfire against the left wing, but in place of this they could only call for the formation of an Anti Nazi League branch in the area to arouse 'public opinion' against the BM. When the ANL collapsed, instead of offering a real revolutionary alternative to fascism or liberal-reformism, local CP activists exposed their bankruptcy by

suggesting that the party could be built by organising discos and social events in order to give it a trendy image!

During the recent steel strike the CP was impotent. The area secretary could do little more than report that 'the Trotskyists' were outside Shotton steel works day after day talking to strikers, whilst the local CP was unable to do more than set up an occasional *Morning Star* sale. They rejected the call for a general strike as 'ultra-leftism', claiming that workers would not respond, but did not realise that this was largely due to their own failure to provide leadership.

This was quite to be expected in view of the fact that many branch members showed a degree of dedication which allowed them to attend party socials but not branch meetings or sessions of work. It was obvious that for them politics was nothing more than a pleasant hobby. The branch chairman even refused on one occasion to report on a weekend union meeting on the grounds that weekends were a sacred break from work!

I asked several members their opinions on Trotsky's political views and the campaign conducted against him by official Communist parties, but received only embarrassed attempts to change the subject. One person I spoke to replied that there had been regrettable incidents during Stalin's career but the nature of the Soviet Union had changed since then and it was no longer necessary to criticise it.

Final disillusionment with the CP came when the Red Army moved into Afghanistan. For me the most important question was defence of the Soviet Union against reactionaries of the Carter-Thatcher ilk, yet the CP could only reply with a list of Anglo-American imperialist invasions. On an issue as important as this one it was limited to a schoolchild's 'it takes one to know one' taunt. Despite their obvious failings the party in North Wales at least showed a healthy response to this issue. Of three branches covered by the area committee only one member spoke up in favour of the official line, but a resolution sent in by Rhyl and District

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Carter paved the way

Reagan reaction

The US presidential election contest between Republican Ronald Reagan and Democrat Jimmy Carter resulted in a decisive Reagan victory. The following is abridged from the post-election article in Workers Vanguard no 268 (14 November), fortnightly paper of the Spartacist League/US.

Ronald Reagan is in the saddle. The Democrats have been stamped. The Republican challenger ended the '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. But after massive repudiation of the incumbent administration, American working people are nervous about what they got in its place. The decay and disaster of US capitalism accelerates. Racist terror is still on the rise. The anti-Soviet Cold War drive escalates. The morning after, things don't look a bit better.

Across the country people are trying to figure out what it means. Frustration over the Iran hostage crisis? A 'conservative tide'? One racist, anti-labor warmonger beats another at the polls. Then, after this contest between two undeniably 'greater evils' -- probably the most negative campaign in US history -- it is hailed as the beginning of the 'Reagan Era', the long-prophesied thunder on the right. The questions are particularly urgent from those who know in their political bones that they are the targets in these elections: blacks, labor, the Soviet Union. If Reagan has a 'mandate', what is it a mandate for?

There is no such thing as a negative 'mandate'. 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. The Reagan 'landslide' was created with about one voter out of four eligible. In this regard the so-called 'exit polls' are instructive. According to a *New York Times*/CBS News poll, 'Two-thirds of the voters yesterday cited economic problems such as unemployment, taxes and inflation as a key reason for their vote' (*New York Times*, 5 November).

This cannot be dismissed merely as a protest vote against Carter. Unlike Nixon's 1972 landslide victory over McGovern, this time the Democrats were beaten as a party, losing control of

the Senate for the first time in decades. The bankruptcy of New Deal liberalism made easy targets of McGovern, Church, Bayh and the others on the hit list of the multi-million-dollar computer boys of the 'New Right' and the electronic evangelists of the 'Moral Majority'. Elections 1980 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 summer we did not delete the expletive when we expressed the feelings of millions with the headline: 'Reagan, Carter? Oh Shit!' As we said at the time:

'Carter's "human rights" campaign, brain-trusted 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)

Carter and the Democrats whipped up an atmosphere of anti-Soviet fanaticism, then acted shocked when an anti-Soviet fanatic got elected. Reagan has good cause to speak of a 'bipartisan' foreign policy because the war consensus runs deep in both bourgeois parties.

And 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-labor 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. When Ronald Reagan says openly that he opposes 'busing', he merely seems to be more honest than the Democrats who talked about integration but offered up even the token gains of the 1960s civil rights movement to the anti-busing racists in the streets.

Most importantly, Reagan's vote included a large portion of working-class ballots. Many trade unionists voted for a certified symbol of anti-labor reaction, the preferred candidate of the KKK, a well-known ideological nuclear hip-shooter. The Republicans claimed a new constituency for conservative social issues like anti-abortion and classroom prayer among industrial workers (the workers

Reagan's analysts snidely call the BCECs -- blue-collar ethnic Catholics). 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 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 of the workers who voted for him are by no means part of his conservative, anti-labor 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 little 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.

Ironically it is the labor bureaucracy -- which bears the responsibility for the relative quiescence of the unions -- which cannot now hustle up the vote from the rank and file for the Democratic Party 'friends of labor'. Perhaps the most important fact of this election is that it confirms that the Democrats' New Deal coalition is in a complete shambles. Only black voters could be persuaded to vote as a bloc for the 'lesser evil' against the choice of the KKK. As for the new Jewish Republican Zionists, they are likely to be in for a surprise from the party of John Connally and the 'sun belt' oil interests.

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. We now face a government with Reagan as the chairman of the board and patriotic schmaltz salesman for TV-side chats. 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' cranks for window dressing. Workers at US Steel's Gary Works looked at the roster of Reagan's 'transition team' and easily picked out the 'Secretary of Higher Prices' and 'Secretary of No TRA' [Trade Readjustment Act layoff compensation] and so forth.

All the Reagan talk about unleashing the great American capitalist productive machine is nonsense. What has shackled this 'great machine' from the point of view of these reactionary ideologues? Welfare? Laze-about bureaucrats in Washington? All of the federal government's non-military expenditures don't add up to even 55 per cent of the war budget. Even if they try to fiddle around with the economy, there is not a whole lot anybody in the White House or Congress can do. Bill Buckley and Paul Laxalt may not believe it, but the US hasn't fallen victim to welfare-state 'creeping socialism'. The US is not England, where Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher can at least try to cut away at the nationalized industries propped up by Labour. Nor is it Chile, where the political costs of a brutal austerity program can be borne by a military junta that doesn't have to worry about the next election.

Wall Street prices soared when Reagan won, but more significant was the fact that interest rates were being raised at the same time in the anticipation of more, not less, inflation. Although 60 per cent of the electorate who said they regarded inflation as the number 1 economic problem voted for Reagan, one thing that's certain about Reagan's stated economic programs is that they are inflationary. In fact, if he gets both his maximum military spending proposals and his maximum tax cuts through Congress (though this is highly doubtful), we could end up with a 30 per cent annual rate of inflation within his first year in office. No competent bourgeois economist or financier takes seriously the harebrained 'supply side' notion that a



Protest against Carter's anti-Soviet draft registration.

Young Spartacus

cut in the tax rate will produce an equivalent increase in revenue by stimulating greater work effort. The latest *Business Week* (17 November) spoke for the capitalist class when it warned that a 30 per cent tax cut in three years (the Kemp-Roth bill) 'would be violently inflationary unless tax cuts are matched by dollar-for-dollar spending cuts'. And given Reagan's commitment to military superiority over the Russians *uber alles*, that is out of the question. The ultimate 'solution' to the bourgeoisie's economic dilemma is, of course, imperialist war.

'When did the cold war ever end?'

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 center after being elected. But in banking on this conventional wisdom it appears that Soviet leaders are pushing the astounding idea that Reagan's election was ... a victory for 'detente'! According to a TASS dispatch:

'... the voters rejected the provocative stand [of the Carter administration] in respect to detente, demonstrating their understanding of the irrefutable fact that not a single question can now be resolved along the lines of the arms race.' (quoted in *Washington Post*, 6 November)

It's hardly the first time we have heard such dangerously wishful thinking from Moscow. In 1977 the Soviet press agency hailed the return of the Democrats to the White House as a big step toward 'the removal of all nuclear weapons from the earth'. So Jimmy Carter was the 'peace-loving statesman' -- but in the next four years he brought the world closer to nuclear holocaust than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. And he paved the way for Ronald Reagan.



Murderous Ku Klux Klan thrives amid 'respectable' racism and anti-communism pushed by Reagan/Carter

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 campaigned on a platform calling for US 'military superiority' over the Soviet Union and wants to abolish the word 'detente' from the English vocabulary. In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* (3 June) Reagan 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 thinks that

Ronald Reagan may be another Richard Nixon, recalling that it was under his Republican administration that the first SALT agreement was negotiated. Brezhnev & Co have also added up several of Reagan's positions: he was against the Soviet grain embargo, opposed Carter's boycott of the Moscow Olympics, was not for the draft and backs Taiwan. Perhaps Moscow was convinced by Brzezinski's arguments that Reagan was a 'phony hard' against the Soviet Union. But the Republicans criticized Carter's measures as largely *symbolic*, whereas they advocated 'the real thing' -- a genuine anti-Soviet war drive. No SALT II, and an empty 'SALT III' where any disarmament is 'linked' to Soviet concessions, such as on Afghanistan. (But if, as the Republican right-wingers claim, Russia really is mili-

continued on page 11

San Francisco elections: 7000 vote Spartacist

On the evening of election day, November 4, over 80 supporters of Diana Coleman's Spartacist campaign for San Francisco Board of Supervisors wound up the intensive eight-week race with a celebration party. Cheers rose each time campaign workers stationed at City Hall called in the mounting vote total. And with good reason. Running on a hard, clear communist program, Diana Coleman received the support of 7183 SF voters!

A post-election precinct-by-precinct review of the vote results revealed that the response to our communist campaign was neither random nor scattered. Even more than campaign supporters initially expected, votes for Coleman were most concentrated in several SF neighborhoods: the heavily black inner city areas (such as the lower Western Addition and Hayes Valley), the young and integrated Haight/Ashbury, the heavily gay Castro district and the predominantly Latino Mission district. While Coleman's citywide average was 2.7 per cent of the vote, in her top 20 precincts, she received 8.47 per cent of the vote.

Growing out of last April's successful mass labor rally against the Nazis, Diana Coleman's socialist campaign drew wide recognition among blacks, unionists and the left in San Francisco. And it was the message of ANCAN (the April 19 Committee Against Nazis, initiated by the Spartacist League, which stopped the fascists from 'celebrating' Hitler's birthday in SF) which Coleman hammered home: not electoralism, but mass labor/black mobilizations in the streets will be necessary to stop the fascists.

Coleman's campaign took its socialist program directly to the working class, addressing union meetings, visiting work locations and reviving the socialist tradition of street-corner soap-boxing. The receptivity to an openly 'red' candidate was evidence of the difficulties which labor officialdom and black misleaders had in stumping for Jimmy Carter's Democrats. The union-busting rampage of Democratic mayor Diane Feinstein and the Board of Supervisors also created openings for our campaign. Coleman was the only one of 65 supervisorial candidates invited to address the SF local of the Communications Workers of America (CWA -- her home local when she was a phone worker and member of the union's class-struggle opposition, the Militant Action Caucus).

Diana addressed the executive board of the

transit drivers union, TWU Local 250, leading to a discussion of the reasons behind the defeat of the 1976 city workers strike. The TWU leadership, which had talked about general strike action in 1976 before backing down, wanted to know Coleman's position on crossing picket lines. 'Did you have any friends that worked behind the picket lines then?' 'No', she replied, 'people who cross picket lines aren't my friends'. Coleman was also the only candidate invited to meet the membership of one of the local postal unions. When Democratic candidates showed up, they were pointedly barred entrance to the meeting.

The real worker backbone of the campaign staff came from unionists of the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] and CWA. Members of the ILWU's Militant Caucus and CWA's Militant Action Caucus, both politically supported by the SL, mobilized fellow union members to support and work for Coleman. It was in these industries that the campaign probably had its most direct impact on workers. On the one hand, militant unionists used Coleman's campaign to make concrete their program for the formation of a workers party. And Coleman pointed to the struggles of these militants to turn their unions to the path of class struggle as key to forging a fighting labor movement.

Coleman's repeated visits to the ILWU hiring halls and weekly 5.30 am trips to the longshore pay lines led one longshoreman to comment that he thought she was the union's official candidate. When Longshore Local 10 executive board members Stan Gow and Howard Keylor, both 20-year veterans of the industry, accompanied Coleman around the hall introducing her, one campaign worker noted, 'the guys would be on their feet to shake hands and talk as soon as they saw us coming'. One worker at a downtown street corner on election day told campaign workers: 'My sister works for the phone company and our whole family voted for Coleman.' The response to the Coleman campaign indicates what could have been done on a much larger scale if even a couple of unions broke with the Democrats and rallied labor to run its own candidates, on a class-struggle program, against the capitalist parties.

This campaigning began to show results long before the polls opened. A black woman taxi driver pulled up outside a supermarket in a predominantly black neighborhood where Coleman was

speaking, rolled down her window and yelled, 'Right on, Diana, you've got my vote.' At City College, two black women secretaries approached the Coleman supporter distributing literature. One pulled a brochure out of her purse and pointing to the 'Stop the Nazis' sign, declared, 'She's our candidate.'

Had disgruntled San Francisco voters simply wanted to record a protest vote against the incumbents, there were plenty of choices: 65 candidates for 11 seats. Yet Coleman ran ahead of 24 other candidates. Or compare Coleman's vote to that of 'third party' candidates on the ballot. To Coleman's 7183 votes, the Peace and Freedom Party presidential candidates received 939 votes in SF; Barry Commoner -- 5163; Libertarian Ed Clark -- 4080. But the most important point is that Coleman ran on a Bolshevik program. Her revolutionary policies were well publicized, not only by our own efforts, but in a hard hitting statement included in a Voter Information Pamphlet mailed to over 400,000 registered SF voters.

Let us give our reformist opponents on the left their due. Two of the three candidates of the 'Grass Roots Alliance' did better than Coleman, with 10,700 and 8700 votes. But they did not run against the Democratic Party -- their only program was a non-binding ballot proposition to ask the board of supervisors to consider increasing the rate of corporate taxation by an unspecified amount. On the other hand, SWP [US Socialist Workers Party] candidate Louise Goodman, in her 100-word statement for the Voter Information Pamphlet, did not identify herself as a socialist, never mentioned the SWP and only proclaimed as her maximum program a labor party and 'public ownership' of the energy industry. With this social-democratic program, Goodman got 6500 votes. Out of 126 precincts where either Coleman or Goodman got more than 15 votes, Coleman scored higher in 102 precincts.

Diana Coleman ran in this election to make effective communist propaganda and to bring the program of class struggle against capitalism to SF workers and minorities. She ran against the 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 change this society by creating a workers government. We are proud that Spartacist supporter Coleman received more than 7000 votes. Another equally important indicator of our success is the nearly 20 non-members who actively worked on this campaign, many of whom have moved closer to joining us as a result. We run in elections not to hold down a desk in City Hall, the state legislature or Congress, but to use this platform as a vehicle for the Trotskyist program and for building the revolutionary party. By these standards, the Coleman campaign was a very satisfying success.

abridged from *Workers Vanguard* no. 268, 14 November 1980

Sassenach Temperance League

On 1 October our comrades of the Spartacist League/United States played a prominent role in a demonstration called by Irish Republican supporters in New York. Responding to the call for an all-Celtic rally to 'greet' Prince Philip, some 200 demonstrators turned out carrying the Irish tricolour, Scots, Welsh and Cornish flags and chanting 'Down with the Crown, Philip go home!' and 'England out of Ireland now!' Back in England the editor of the Workers Socialist League's (WSL) *Socialist Press* (5 November) looked at the picture (if not the article) in *Workers Vanguard* (no 266, 17 October), reprinting it in a box entitled 'Cranks' Corner'. Now *Socialist Press* is not in the habit of reporting the activities of our American comrades -- for example, the WSL won't be running an article entitled 'Cranky sectarians win 7000 votes in San Francisco'. So there must be something which particularly got the WSL's goat.

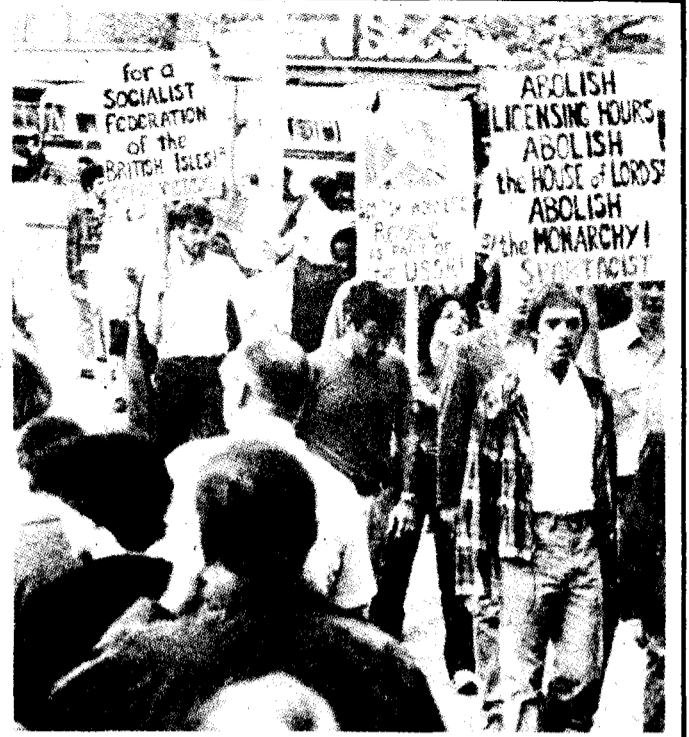
Sure enough, we seem to have trampled on their little-England moralist and Stalinophobic sensibilities. First they take umbrage at the slogan for a 'Scottish workers republic as part of the USSR', screaming with horror that this is our 'unique full programme for Scottish workers'. And *Socialist Press* continues:

'But even this is outstripped by the Sparts' maximum demand for the Scottish proletariat: in pride of place, above the routine demands "Abolish the House of Lords" and "Abolish the Monarchy" came the most unique slogan to spring from the

Augean stable of Spart guru James Robertson -- "Abolish the Licensing Hours!"

What can we say? During the last century the trade unions and friendly societies sought to drag the newly industrialised slum proletariat out of its degradation. But this process also involved the adoption of artisan guild consciousness and Methodist discipline. In short your benefit was cut if you were found in an ale house. All this helps to explain why there has been so little opposition to the laws introduced to keep the munition workers toiling patriotically during World War I. 'Abolish the Licensing Hours' -- boy, have the 'Sparts' gone over the top this time! Sounds like a demand the unruly Scots might approve of! Maybe the WSL's dream of a socialist Britain looks something like Cadbury's Bournville but it is not ours.

And what about the 'Scottish workers republic as part of the USSR'? Not so long ago the queen was telling parliament how 'we' were 'disquieted' by the threat of the break-up of her 'Realm of the United Kingdom'. We hope and argue that the workers of Scotland take their part in a united class struggle throughout the British Isles. But if they were to choose a course of separation or simply to find themselves in an isolated Scottish workers republic, they could do a lot worse than seek an alliance with the Soviet Union. The prospect of going it alone for Scotland would be bleak, and we are positively repulsed by the Scottish Nationalists' promises to keep the monarchy and stay in NATO. We don't think that it is 'natural' that so many Scots have bled for the glory of the British Empire. Scotland was once independent, and allied with others, like the French for many years. In John MacLean's day the idea of an alliance with the Soviet Union had a powerful appeal. There are revolutionary slogans which,



even if they might not be precise, are evocative and can in their time elicit a powerful response (right now how about 'India: give Prince Charles a virginity test!'). We do not have a crystal ball, but only the small, literal and simply present-day minded can deny that authentic revolutionary variants on what now seems most likely might come into being as a result of different developments in the international class struggle.

We can only guess at the paroxysms of horror we could have provoked from the Stalinophobic WSL if we had presented the demands 'Turn Holy Loch into a Soviet U Boat Pen' and 'Revive the Scottish Regiments as part of a Red Army'. Why it could even mean that while Alan Thornett is still chattering away about nursery meal cuts on the Oxford Trades Council that the revolutionary proletarian 'Tartan Army' is marching on Westminster.

Workers Power...

(Continued from page 3)

reformist competitors in refusing to enthuse over the supposed gains for the working class achieved at the Blackpool Labour Party conference, only to turn around a month later to praise Tony Benn for being 'right not to stand in this UDI election' and echo the Bennites in its main demands: 'Break PLP Control! Conference Must Elect Leader' (*Workers Power*, November 1980).

The Bolshevik road to the masses

When WP challenges us, as they did at the London meeting, what do we have to say to the Iranian workers defending Abadan, we reply as Lenin did: The main enemy is at home! Turn the guns on the butchers of the Kurds and the executioners of 'adulteresses' in your own country! When Kamenev argued in April 1917 that the Bolsheviks had to stay with the masses or risk turning 'into a group of Communist propagandists', Lenin replied:

'Comrade Kamenev contraposes to a "party of the masses" a "group of propagandists". But the "masses" have now succumbed to the craze of "revolutionary" defensism. Is it not more becoming for internationalists at this moment to show that they can resist "mass" intoxication rather than to "wish to remain" with the masses, i.e., to succumb to the general epidemic?' ('Letters on Tactics', *Collected Works* vol 24, p 54)

Formal adherence to the principles of Trotskyism means nothing if they are not maintained and fought for at the risk of momentary unpopularity. To the 'sectarian values' of Bolshevism, WP counterposes 'tactics' and flexibility. With this methodology they will go nowhere. It was the intransigent Lenin, and not the conciliator Kamenev who won the masses to proletarian revolution. And, as Trotsky noted in *Third International After Lenin*:

'It was not flexibility that served (nor should it serve today) as the basic trait of Bolshevism but rather granite hardness. It was precisely this quality, for which its enemies and opponents reproached it, that Bolshevism was always justly proud. Not blissful "optimism" but intransigence, vigilance, revolutionary distrust, and the struggle for every hand's breadth of independence -- these are the essential traits of Bolshevism.'

ANL: back in business ... cops welcome

Only a few months after Anti Nazi League (ANL) national secretary Paul Holborow smugly dismissed the fascist threat as 'deteriorated into schisms' (*Time Out*, 2 May), it would take a pretty ostrich-like social democrat to deny that the menace of the brown plague has increased -- nationally and internationally. So now the ANL, by its own founders' admission 'moribund', is to be born again, starting with an 'international anti-fascist rally' on 8 December. But back in business to do what?

The representative of French anti-fascists at the rally is to be ... a cop! Henri Buch, secretary-general of one of the police 'unions' will bring greetings from the French brothers of the murderers of Blair Peach. For the Spartacist League (SL), which has tirelessly explained that the ANL has 'always been an organised betrayal of the fight against fascism' (SL leaflet, 24 September 1978), this comes as no great shock. ANLers who wince -- the leaderships of the Socialist Workers Party and International Marxist Group are undoubtedly quite happy about their publicity coup -- must understand that this is not some minor 'excess' but part and parcel of the popular-frontist strategy of the ANL, a political bloc in which the interests of the working class (ie smashing fascism) are subordinated to avoiding a clash with the Liberal lords, stars of stage and screen and the other worthies who dictate ANL policy.

The 'magic' of the ANL's 1978 Carnival 1 was followed by the march of fascists through London the next day, unopposed for the first time since the war, because the ANL deliberately hushed it up. Carnival 2 led thousands away from Brick Lane where the National Front was marching to a park where 'The sun was out' and 'All was celebration' (*Socialist Worker*, 24 September 1978), because a militant anti-fascist mobilisation would have meant 'disintegrating the ANL'.

While *Socialist Worker* seeks to appeal to the 'natural anti-authoritarianism' of youth, the SL recognises that young people, who face the capitalist rubbish heap before they have even started, need real answers. 'Rock against

Racism', 'Youth against Nazis' and 'Footballers against Nazis' are gimmicks which offer only transient and illusory gains for the fight against fascism. Apolitical recruitment leads to reports that, for example, 'former supporters of School Kids Against the Nazis are now hanging around with NF skins' (*Socialist Review*, 14 July-6 September).

Frustration with the ANL will arouse impulses towards a return to street confrontations by groups of militants. But this will not drive the fascists off the streets. To replicate the victory at Cable Street in 1936, and to carry it further, the working class must be politically mobilised. The companion cul-de-sacs of substitutionism and popular-frontist legalism and reliance on the state are both doomed to failure. It is going to take a long, hard fight within the mass organisations of the working class to mobilise workers to crush the fascist vermin and the rotting capitalist system which breeds them, but it is the only way. ■

Why we joined...

(Continued from page 5)

branch to the Executive Committee protesting at this line received only an acknowledgement. Ostensibly Trotskyist organisations were eager to join the anti-Soviet campaign, but one thing stood out -- the SL's slogan 'Trotskyists stand with the USSR'.

On arrival in London this September, I carefully examined the SL, together with several other organisations. The SL is the only one to display a true international Marxist-Leninist perspective, reflected in our analysis of the situations in Ireland and the Mid-East; this, together with our critical defence of the deformed workers' states, is what sets us apart as the only true Marxist-Leninist organisation to be found today.

Tracey S
(CPGB, Rhyl and District Branch 1979-80)

Matgamna's wedding, Thornett's funeral?

WSL going down

Those who managed to keep awake through the 15 November national conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement (CDLM), do-nothing trade-union front of the Workers Socialist League (WSL), would have noticed two things. It was the smallest CDLM ever -- the usual soporific tales of workaday life and empty exhortations to 'Bring down the Tories this winter' were presented to a half-empty hall -- and the exchanges of sweet nothings between the WSL and Sean Matgamna's Workers Action (WA) group were shamelessly open. The two observations are not unrelated: the WSL's fling with the openly Labourite WA is its latest, and possibly last, grasp for a new lease on life as it thrashes to find a way out of ever-deeper political decay.

The WSL is in a mess. Its early pretensions to anti-Pabloite orthodoxy have been shattered in the course of two factional struggles which propelled many of the organisation's best cadres to the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) and left behind a rightward-moving rump. But the WSL's confused programme has never been its main attraction. For years Alan Thornett's 'base' in 'The Factory' at BL Cowley was the bargaining counter tossed on the table in one failed manoeuvre after another.

WSL running short of time

Even in the 'golden days' Thornett's reputation was built on little more than trade-union militancy, not Trotskyist politics. Now even the myth lies in ruins. Amid BL's death agony and periodic industrial struggles at other plants, Cowley has for years appeared as a relative haven of class peace. And when there was some action -- during the national engineering strikes of 1979 -- Thornett scabbed, publicly arguing that his union position was not worth sacrificing for considerations so petty as respecting a national strike call.

In the absence of a real base to sell out, treachery does not offer a very high reward. But it does breed demoralisation. Membership turnover is high, members at Cowley have quit and senior cadres continue to vote with their feet. National Committee member Dave Whitfield, a key writer on *Socialist Press*, and Gill Blackwell, then editor of *Woman Worker*, are two recent cases. Fred Carmichael -- a founding member also on the National Committee -- had to be expelled for walking out of Cowley with a voluntary redundancy pay-off in violation of declared union policy.

The WSL's courtship of the Workers Party of Stephen Johns and Royston Bull came to naught despite appeals to their common past in Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party. An open bid for unity with the left centrists of Workers Power never got off the ground. Its pursuit of the main fake-Trotskyist rotten-bloc 'internationals' -- the 'United Secretariat' (USec), then the 'Parity Committee' of Moreno/Lambert -- got it nowhere. It finally had to settle for its own 'Trotskyist International Liaison Committee' (TILC).

The TILC is just as rotten but several orders of magnitude smaller. While *Socialist Press* editor John Lister penned long polemics against the USec's airing of 'internal' differences, especially with its reformist US supporters, the WSL's own US 'co-thinkers', the microscopic Socialist League/Democratic Centralist (SL/DC) came out for the defence of Khomeini's Iran against the 'Iraqi invaders' in counterposition to the WSL's half-hearted defeatist line. That some WSL members first heard of this public line clash from the SL speaks volumes about TILC-style 'internationalism'. Aside from the desire to bask in Thornett's reflected -- if shabbily faded -- glory, what draws them together is hatred for the Trotskyist iSt. Thus the TILC's latest flirtation is with another US grouplet, the certifiably pro-scab and anti-Spartacist Revolutionary Workers Group based in the university town of Ann Arbor, Michigan. And while the TILC is clearly devoid of any solid programmatic foundation, the WSL's capacity for holding it together even as a decorative international facade is declining as its own crisis deepens.

So that brings us to Workers Action and its Labour entry creature, the Socialist Campaign

for a Labour Victory (SCLV). In recent months the WSL and WA/SCLV have held common platforms to vent their shared Labour-loyal anti-Sovietism on the question of Poland, sponsored joint motions at a cuts conference organised by Lambeth's 'left' Labour council and cooperated in the production of a trade-union bulletin for BL Longbridge. Two years ago *Socialist Press* (19 July 1978) denounced the SCLV as an 'ad-hoc grouping of debaters [which] will act as little more than "left" recruiting sergeants for Callaghan'. Now with the SCLV doing the same job for Foot and WA liquidated into it lock, stock and barrel, Alan Clinton announced at the CDLM conference the discovery that the SCLV's work is 'exemplary'. SCLV spokesman Jim Denham returned the compliment, praising the CDLM's 'adequate, but not explicitly revolutionary, programme' the same way WA praised the programme of the SCLV



Labour Party at Blackpool (top), CDLM (above): not much to choose between politically.

when it was founded. While WA backed the WSL's main CDLM resolution, WSLers voted for a WA/SCLV-sponsored motion epitomising its wretchedly cretinist 'intervention' into the Labour Party -- a formula for how many union bureaucrats, parliamentarians and constituency delegates to place in the 'electoral college' to select the Labour leader. It all conjures up the classic social-democratic 'division of labour' between the political and industrial wings: Matgamna could run the footslogging for Labour while Thornett runs the scabbing in the unions. But the action these days is in the Labour Party and while Thornett could never be accused of an excess of intelligence, he does have enough animal cunning and sense of self-preservation to realise that a manoeuvrer as slippery and experienced as Matgamna could rapidly chew him up inside a fused organisation.

So the WSL's traditional Oxford leadership has been playing a (not unprecedented) Bonapartist role, while a virtual factional struggle takes place in the letters column of its paper over the WSL's orientation to the Labour Party and the SCLV. While a limp left grouses over the organisation's increasingly open accommodation to Labourism, the WSL's rightward degeneration and crisis of perspectives provides fertile ground for the reformist right wing and its *Socialist Press* supporters -- centred around Clinton, Keith White and Newham Labour councillor John Plant -- to pursue a vociferous campaign for a final solution to the WSL's illness: dispense with 'small group' politics and join

WA/SCLV in the Labour Party. Meanwhile poor John Lister zigzags from one week to the next fending off attacks from both sides in the pages of *Socialist Press*.

'Make the "lefts" fight?'

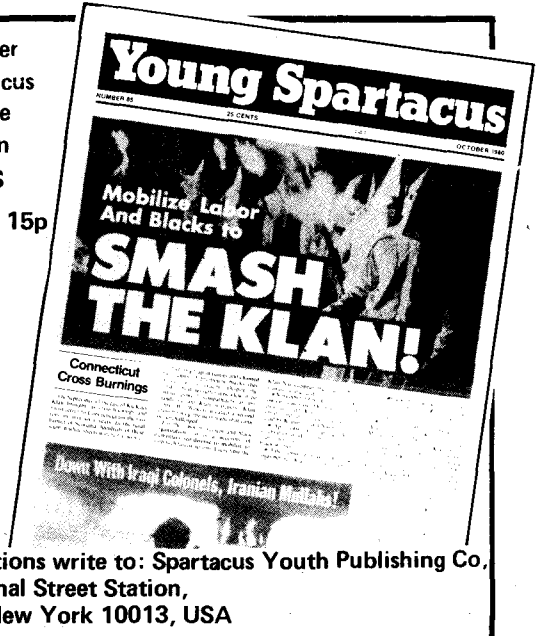
Those WSLers who are queasy about the prospect of running errands for Michael Foot will find no answer in the WSL's past positions. The WSL has always capitulated to Labourism. At its inception it revived the late-1960s Healyite slogan 'Make the "left" MPs fight' as its guideline. In the WSL's earlier, more orthodox-sounding period this call was most often presented as a propaganda demand to 'expose' Benn & Co, to highlight the social democrats' refusal to struggle against the bosses. But the logic of advising the working class to look to Labour's 'lefts' for leadership and to concentrate on 'kicking out the right wing' from the Labour Party is ruthless: As workers' illusions in Labour begin to be rekindled, the WSL has joined the fake-Trotskyist stampede into Labour's arms:

'Instead of providing a reliable second option to direct Tory rule, the Labour Party now threatens to fall into the clutches of the very workers it has fraudulently claimed to represent for three quarters of a century.' (*Socialist Press*, 8 October)

This could have come straight from the pen of the SCLV's John O'Mahoney, or for that matter, the Militant's Ted Grant. If Labour can 'fall into the clutches of the workers', why bother to go through the motions of building an independent 'Trotskyist' party? Indeed, that is precisely the point argued by White in a letter to *Socialist Press* (5 November) objecting that Lister did not go far enough in rebutting the criticism of a (very slightly) left oppositional clot in Leicester. 'The time when it was necessary to build organisations outside the mass party of the workers' movement is now over', argues White, so let's put aside all the 'petty differences' between the SCLV's *Socialist Organiser* and *Socialist Press* and 'Roll on the day when supporters of these two papers can stop competing and produce one journal.' When Lister replies that *Socialist Organiser* provides only a 'minimum basis for principled agreement', Ernie Stubbins writes in to attack Lister for 'distorting' the SCLV's programme. No offence intended, pleads Lister, it's just not enough even if it is 'militant, generally anti-capitalist'. 'It is some of the positions that *Socialist Organiser* does not hold' that the WSL considers 'central'. How about one that it does hold -- that the parliamentary road to socialism is possible? On this Lister is silent.

One way or another the future does not look bright for the WSL -- whether desertions, a right-wing split or wholesale liquidation into the Labour Party. Those members who don't want to be taken along for the ride have even fewer options than Thornett. There is only one way to be a Trotskyist inside the WSL -- and that is to fight for the programme of Trotskyism, following the road of the Trotskyist Faction, the Leninist Faction and a number of individuals into the Spartacist League.

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French elections...

(Continued from page 12)

ference rang with criticisms and denunciations of the popular front. Henri Malberg noted that three times, with the popular front of 1936, following 'Liberation' (1945), and with the signing of the Common Programme (1972), 'the PCF-PS union, although born in happiness, met a bad end' (*Le Monde*, 14 October). And Georges Marchais, in what must have been a new and painful experience for him, claimed to 'be using his head'.

It's true. Three times the PCF tried the popular front. Three times (its current leaders admit) the bourgeoisie won. For fifty years the Stalinists have been the gravediggers of revolutions. When Thorez declared in 1936 that it is necessary 'to know how to end a strike' he was acting with the explicit perspective of giving the capitalists a breathing space to consolidate their power against the working masses. In 1939, when Trotsky referred to Stalin as 'Hitler's quartermaster', the PCF hailed the Hitler-Stalin pact as serving 'the cause of peace in Europe' (*L'Humanite*, 23 August 1939).

In Spain, Stalin explicitly opposed a revolutionary policy, calling for 'democracy now, revolution later' (ie never). It was leading Stalinists like Andre Marty who were proud of their role in murdering Trotskyists and leftists in Spain, and the PCF has never denied its role in the 'disappearance' (murder) of a leader of the Fourth International, Blasco, when he escaped from prison together with a group of Stalinists during World War II. The blood on Marchais' hands is not only the systematic extermination of left oppositionists and other 'old Bolsheviks' in the USSR and the murders of countless Trotskyist militants in Europe, Vietnam and elsewhere. By refusing to unite the working class to oppose Hitler's rise to power, by uniting instead with the bourgeoisie in popular fronts in Spain, France, etc to put a lid on the workers' will to struggle against capitalism, Stalinism, the 'great organiser of defeats', shares responsibility for the bloody carnage of fascism and world war.

Defend the USSR: For political revolution

The bureaucracy also directly undermines the defence of the gains of October in its own 'fatherland'. The hideous sufferings of the Soviet people in World War II (20 million dead) were in part the result of Stalin's policies -- the blood purge which stripped the Red Army of military leadership on the very eve of war, the refusal to act on information about the imminent German attack on the USSR secured by communists who risked their lives for dozens of years as heroic Soviet spies (Sorge, Trepper).

And today in Poland the stultifying repression, economic mismanagement and bureaucratic inequities have alienated every section of the population. If the dissident movement seems to be dominated by the mortal enemies of the working class -- the capitalist restorationists, imperialism and the Vatican -- it is thanks to Stalinism which has turned the ideals of communism into a dirty word, pushed poisonous nationalism and anti-Semitism, mortgaged the country to the German bankers. Now vast sections of the population seem prepared to sweep away socialised property in order to sweep away the bureaucracy. This would be a historic defeat for the workers of Poland and the world. Trotskyists' call for revolutionary defensism -- defence of the gains of the October Revolution through political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and to establish Soviet democracy -- is an elementary conclusion.

It is in part through the exacerbation of its internal contradictions that Stalinism will be swept away. The contradiction inherent in Stalinism is not only the contradiction of all 'bourgeois workers parties' between the desires of the working-class base and the class collaborationism of the sellout leadership, which in the last analysis serves as a prop for the bourgeoisie in its period of decay. The very existence of Stalinism -- the ideology of the bureaucratic caste which usurped political power from the Russian workers -- was the reflection of the pressure of world imperialism in the first workers state in its isolation following the defeat of the German revolution. Stalinism came into being as the ideology of socialism in one country, appropriate to a parasitic, nationalist, privileged bureaucracy. Its survival is predicated on a stand-off on a world scale between the deformed workers states and imperialism; a proletarian upsurge which smashes capitalism in the advanced capitalist countries

will also settle accounts with the bureaucratic regimes which exist in contradiction with the collectivised, ie proletarian, property forms of these states.

It is this contradiction which we seek to exacerbate in our campaign of critical support to Marchais, with our emphasis on the necessity of defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attempts at capitalist restoration. The struggle for the defence of the USSR through proletarian political revolution against the conservative nationalist bureaucracy which undermines that defence at every turn, not least by working against the international extension of the revolution which Lenin knew was the only safeguard of the gains of October, is indissolubly linked to the struggle for socialist revolution in the capitalist countries.

Eurocommunists: sheep in sheep's clothing

Every reformist workers party contains a contradiction between the reformist leadership and the working-class base. This is true not only of the PCF which has propped up the bourgeois state in governmental coalitions -- both official and unofficial -- but also of the Socialist parties which by themselves have been the sole administrators of capitalist governments -- eg the British Labour Party or the German SPD. But today the PS is running on anti-Sovietism and for a new popular front, possibly enlarged to include Chirac's RPR. This is why it is impossible for revolutionists to call for a vote for the PS. Despite their current independent stance, the PCF is no less reformist than the more overtly rightist and/or more pro-American social-democratic parties.

The difference between them is the bourgeoisie's present intransigence towards parties linked to Moscow. The Gaullists and Giscardians are willing to dine with Mitterrand, but the bourgeoisie is presently manifestly unwilling to entertain the idea of even a corridor coalition with the PCF. When Marchais followed Carrillo and 'renounced' the dictatorship of the proletariat, it had the same meaning as Stalin's dissolution of the Comintern (indeed the PCF has the same relation to the dictatorship of the proletariat as the Stalinised Comintern had to internationalism, ie none). Just as the dissolution of the Communist International during World War II was a gesture of appeasement towards the 'democratic' bourgeoisie, so the formal renunciation of Leninist phraseology long since discarded in practice constituted an overture to the ruling class. But in the present climate of anti-Soviet bellicosity the bourgeoisie is no longer in a mood to listen. In order to prove their loyalty to their own bourgeoisie, the Eurocommunists, unlike the Stalinist PCF leadership, want to decisively break with Moscow, and openly espouse social democracy.

With the polarisation between the Eurocommunists and the rest of the PCF rapidly sharpening, after Marchais sided with the hardliners, a split in the PCF (for example, over a Soviet invasion of Poland) is entirely possible. The situation cries out for a Trotskyist party capable of intervening to deepen the contradictions of the PCF, to polarise it through forcefully posing a clear class programme and ultimately to split it, exposing the sellout leadership and winning its best elements to authentic Leninism. In fact, we'll make LCR leader Alain Krivine an offer: he can have the Eurocommunists (Ellenstein and Mandel would get along famously), we'll take the militants who believe that the proletariat, organised in a vanguard party, is the motor force to change history and who can be broken from the betrayals of Stalinism.

These are the issues -- the popular front, defence of the Soviet Union -- which make the present political conjuncture a classic example of when the tactic (not strategy) of critical support can be applied. Today, Marchais is against the popular front and for the Soviet Union. Tomorrow, who knows?

The present configuration recalls Trotsky's call on the American SWP to offer critical support to the Communist Party candidate Browder during the brief period of the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939-40, when the Comintern was not supporting the imperialist democracies, Roosevelt and Co.

'What I propose is a manifesto to the Stalinist workers, to say that for five years you were for Roosevelt, then you changed. This turn is in the right direction. Will you develop and continue this policy or not? Will you let the leaders change it or not? Will you continue and develop it or not? If you are firm we will support you. In this manifesto we can say that if you fix a sharp pro-

gram for your candidate then we will vote for him.' ('Discussions with Trotsky', *Writings 1939-40*, p 273)

This is the spirit in which the LTF raises the question of support to the PCF today.

Marchais, speaking on the television programme 'Cards on the table', pointed out that even though PS leader Mitterrand had been the perpetual candidate of the left, the right wing was still in power:

'Therefore we aren't going to repeat, unity, unity, unity ... elections, unity, elections, like parrots. We are using our heads and we say, since we haven't succeeded that way ... we must find another path.' (*Le Monde*, 15 October)

'Unity' has become a code word for reconstitution of the defunct popular-front Union of the Left. And the fake-Trotskyist groups which repeat 'unity, unity' like parrots are hopelessly condemning themselves.

LCR: crime does not pay

But once again the fake Trotskyists of the French 'far left' show themselves to be not merely incapable of such a course but obstacles to it. It goes without saying that the Stalinophobia of the reformist OCI of Pierre Lambert, revealed graphically over Portugal, constitutes an appeal to the most backward sections of the working class. The OCI actually stands to the right of the PCF when the latter makes its face-saving attacks on the Socialists, as for example at the PCF national conference:

'... it has always been buried in the politics of the right, preparing the latter's return in force after having sown disillusion and bitterness among workers and democrats, we just saw it in Portugal.' (*L'Humanite*, 13 October)

For when the Communist Party headquarters were being burned down by anti-communist mobs in Portugal, the OCI added its voice to that of the CIA-backed Portuguese Socialist Party in hailing these assaults as part of a struggle for 'democracy'! Small wonder that the comrades of the LTF, selling their press which headlined 'Hail Red Army' in Afghanistan, encountered Stalinist workers who told us: 'I didn't know that Trotskyists defend the Soviet Union.' And the right centrists of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire are little better. While the Lambertistes campaign for 'unity' empty of content under the rubric of a 'candidat unique' [single candidate], the LCR trails along behind with its calls for 'desistement' [standing down]. Truly, six of one, half a dozen of the other.

The LCR has no more than the OCI to say about programmatic criteria for working-class unity, and in fact wages the same campaign for the reconstruction of the popular-front Union of the Left -- in the name, of course, of 'Giscard out'. While the OCI rivals the PS in Stalinophobic denunciation of Kremlin 'expansionism' in Afghanistan, the LCR counterposes only cringing and confusionism, stopping short (most of the time) from a call for withdrawal of troops. Over Poland, both tail the nationalistic dissidents 'unconditionally' -- in other words without any 'dogmatic' concern for such things as the preservation of nationalised property. The idea that either of these formations could ever convincingly appeal to the PCF ranks to 'return to the road of Lenin' is simply ludicrous.

At the Mutualite on 30 October, LCR superstar Alain Krivine showed he has not forgotten how to talk out of the left side of his mouth. To the applause of his comrades, he sharply castigated the PCF for its social chauvinism, its calls on the state to deal with the fascists, and so forth. He even made reference to 'popular frontism'! But the militants of the LCR should be asking themselves where all the pretty words were when Krivine was interviewed on the front page of *Le Monde*, proudly reprinted by *Intercontinental Press*. The half a million people who saw this interview will find no reference there to popular frontism, only nostalgia for the 'unity' of the bygone days of the Union of the Left. Not only did Krivine come forward as a parliamentary cretinist par excellence but he tilted his pro-unity rhetoric unmistakably towards the PS:

'One gets the impression that the PCF is doing everything to push the PS into the arms of the right.... But in a perhaps less visible way the Socialist Party is also playing a role in the disunity, notably with its increasing winks in the direction of the Gaullists.' (*Le Monde*, 29 October)

Krivine sees nothing but 'disheartenment' coming out of the PCF's hypocritical left turn on the Union of the Left:

'You cannot with impunity get hundreds of thousands of people to march in the streets, from 1972 to 1978, to cries of "Union, action,

Common Programme", and, in the space of 24 hours, explain that this Union was not a good union, that this Programme was not a good programme, and turn your back on any perspective of unity.' (ibid)

Well, comrade Krivine? Was the popular front with the left radicals 'a good union' on 'a good programme'? The worst Krivine can bring himself to say about the Union of the Left is 'that the workers at the base were not sufficiently consulted: 'The workers are beginning to open their eyes on the electoralist combinations of the Union of the Left and the Common Programme, in which they were not involved.'

If ever it were cheap and easy to be against the popular front, now would be the time. Even the Spanish POUM of the 1930s could be savage against the popular front -- so long as one did not exist. But not so the LCR. The reincarnation of Krivine the far leftist at the Mutualite reminds one of nothing so much as an old social democrat trotting out calls for socialism on May Day, only to go back to 'practical' -- in other words reformist -- politics the next morning. The Krivine of *Le Monde* and the Krivine of the Mutualite are nothing but a minimum/maximum programme, LCP style.

The LCR is truly without perspectives. It gambled on the social-democratisation of the PCF along the lines of the 'Eurocommunist' model of Spain and Italy, hailing 'Eurocommunist' currents in the PCF as a healthy pressure towards 'democratisation' of the Stalinist parties. But unfortunately for the LCR, the PCF pulled back from a 'Eurocommunist' course. Indeed, it was precisely at the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that Marchais made his pilgrimage to Moscow.

The practical consequence of the LCR's line of 'unity, unity' is that it can unite fewer and fewer people behind its own party banner. Its campaign for 'desistement' being virtually indistinguishable from the 'strategic united front' policy of the OCI, the LCR nourishes pro-Lambertist currents within its own ranks. First came the split of the LCI (Ligue Communiste Internationaliste), which immediately gave the lie to its formally left-critical stance by taking off full speed in the OCI's direction, fusing with the OCI less than a year later. Now the Mattistes can be heard muttering that the OCI is 'revolutionary'. It doesn't take a crystal ball to predict that the LCR will continue to haemorrhage to the profit of the OCI so long as both put forward basically the same social-democratic line, the main difference being that the Lambertistes are not only rather more consistent but larger.

In France today, beset by economic crisis, capitalist 'austerity' and a resurgence of fascist terror groups, the objective conditions for socialist revolution are not merely ripe but overripe. And once again what stands in the way is the crisis of working-class leadership. The grip of Stalinist and social-democratic reformism on the French working class will never be broken by empty sloganeering about 'unity'. Only a clear class programme can unite the working class by breaking it from the social-chauvinism and backwardness which pit the different layers of the workers against each other in partial and sectoral struggles. Only a revolutionary, proletarian, internationalist vanguard can lead the working masses forward in struggle for their real needs, uniting behind their class banner all the oppressed and exploited.

- PCF workers: 1936, 1944, 1972. Yes, three times is enough! Demand a rendering of accounts from your leadership! Prepare yourselves to oppose the new popular front that your leadership will impose on you!
- For an electoral campaign of class against class! If the PCF continues its posture of an independent, anti-'unity' campaign, to give the candidacy of Stalinist bureaucrat Georges Marchais savagely critical support!
- No votes for the Parti Socialiste, the most overt practitioners of working-class subordination to the bourgeoisie!
- Down with 'Desistement', 'Candidat unique' and all the slogans of nostalgia for the popular-frontist Union of the Left!
- Down with NATO! For defence of the USSR and all the deformed workers states against imperialism! For workers political revolution against Stalinism!
- For working-class unity behind a class-struggle programme, the Transitional Programme of intransigent struggle against capitalism!
- For international working-class solidarity! For a workers government in France!
- For a return to the road of Lenin! For a Trotskyist party and the rebirth of the Fourth International!

Reagan reaction...

(Continued from page 7)

tarily superior, why do they want to put conditions on their disarming?)

A brief look at Reagan's advisers shows that this gang means business. Number 1 is Richard Allen, a member of the war-hawk Committee on the Present Danger, Nixon's main foreign policy man in 1968, who joined the National Security Council staff but soon quit, accusing his boss, Henry Kissinger, of being 'soft on Communism'. One of the leading candidates for a Reagan 'defense' secretary is Democrat Henry Jackson, the senator from Boeing, a member of Joe McCarthy's witchhunting 'internal security' committee in the 1950s, mouthpiece for Kennedy on the phony 'missile gap' in the 1960 elections, author of the Jackson amendment linking Soviet trade to escalating Jewish emigration from the USSR. And then there is the sinister General Alexander Haig, who went into Kissinger's White House basement a colonel and emerged a four-star general, 'chief-of-staff' of Nixon's bunker in the shell-shocked Watergate days, then NATO commander-in-chief, top candidate for 'general most likely to lead a coup in Washington'

And who was selected as Reagan's vice-president, the 'voice of moderation' to 'balance the ticket'? Former CIA director George Bush -- a member of 'the Company', now and forever. A big red, white and blue poster, 'George Bush for President' was tacked up over the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. The past director of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, Jack Coakly, put it this way: 'It's sure as hell not a CIA coup or anything like that, but I can tell you there is a very high level of support for George Bush among current and former CIA employees.' A few years ago when exposes of the CIA dirty tricks and misdeeds were in the headlines daily, no candidate would have dared accept such blatant support. But the Reagan/Bush team trumpeted this backing and made the call for a 'stronger CIA' an up-front issue in the campaign.

To be sure, Reagan has been careful to include 'detente'-symbol Kissinger in his 'transition team'. But even Kissinger isn't for detente any more: this was, as we pointed out, a temporary ceasefire which the United States took advantage of to recover from its post-Vietnam stalemate (see 'That Was the Detente That Was', *Workers Vanguard* nos 253 and 254, 4 and 18 April 1980). Carter's 'symbolic' attacks on the Soviets reflected the transitional nature of his regime, beginning on the theme of moral rearmament of US imperialism (the 'Human Rights' crusade) and soon passing over to military rearmament. There were ever more aggressive provocations, the flap over Soviet troops in Cuba, deployment of Poseidon and Cruise missiles in West Europe, the drastic increase in the US arms budget -- all before Afghanistan. Then came the economic blows at the USSR (wheat and computers), the Olympic boycott, 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: this Hopalong 'Rough Rider' is a fervent believer in the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny. And 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. (According to UPI, only three days after the US elections, right-wing killers in El Salvador left signs over the bodies of two of their victims bearing the message, 'With Ronald Reagan, it's the end of spoiled children and guerrillas in Central America...') In Nicaragua the Carter administration wanted to avoid 'another Cuba' by adopting a softer policy than the hard line taken by Eisenhower toward Castro in 1959-60. But Reagan's men are dead set against aid to the Sandinista regime and want to return to Big Stick diplomacy -- with potentially explosive consequences.

Most dangerous of all could be Reagan's policy toward East Europe, particularly Poland. While opportunist leftists try to claim that relations between leaders of the Baltic coast strikes and the Catholic church are irrelevant, the incoming US administration may try to exacerbate the dangers of counterrevolution there. (Reagan launched the Republican campaign by embracing Polish strike leader Walesa's father against the backdrop of the Statue of Liberty.) 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 1956 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 'destabilization' schemes. Down that road lies World War III in a hurry.

Hardliners and the class line

With the Democrats' New Deal coalition on the rocks, the traditional American form of popular frontism has less hold over the working class than at any time since FDR. And right-wing Reaganism is no basis on which to reforge a version of that class-collaborationist bloc. Revolutionaries seek to organize working-class anger against the Democratic liberals in new opportunities for class struggle and the fight to build a workers party. On the other hand, the reformists are already trying to repair the battered bandwagon of class collaboration. The Communist Party's *Daily World* has been quick to cheer every labor faker who, in the wake of Reagan's victory, now calls for all 'progressive forces' to unite under the slogan, 'fight the right'.

The Socialist Workers Party (US SWP) seems as benighted as the Kremlin bureaucrats who hail Reagan's win as a victory for detente. The front-page editorial in the 14 November issue of the SWP's *Militant* 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). The *Militant* insists that 'the "Vietnam syndrome" has broadened into a healthy suspicion of US foreign policy aims anywhere in the world'. Besides, they say, elections don't really decide anything anyway -- and this from one of the most electoralist outfits on the US left, a group that began its 1980 election campaign in 1976.

Recent readers of the *Militant* may with some justification surmise that the SWP's compulsive denial of obvious reality is some sort of political pathology. But it is method not madness. The 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*.

The rightward drift in the US 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. Ronald Reagan will have his 'Decision '80' with the working class -- and it won't be at the polling booth. But lying about what is happening won't help.

Our class faces some hardliners in the White House. And we had better know it, tell it straight and draw the class line hard ourselves. The last thing the working class needs now is more of the same class-collaborationist lesser-evilism that brought us Jimmy Carter. The same Mine Worker bureaucrats who sabotaged the great 1978 coal strike delivered the miners' votes to 'Mr Taft-Hartley' two years later. The same black misleaders who rushed to Miami to cool things down and earlier called for relying on the courts and Congress to defend busing, once again called on the minority poor to vote for 'Mr Ethnic Purity' in 1980. The slogan of the Spartacist-backed socialist candidate in San Francisco, Diana Coleman, answers this excruciating contradiction: 'Enough! It's time for a Workers Party!' Not the kind of parliamentary-reformist device the SWP or CP 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.

Not in recent memory have blacks been so leaderless, ghettoized, disorganized and threatened with growing racist terror. For the first time in decades, workers have abandoned the Democrats in large numbers. The real 'fight against the right' must be a fight against both parties of the ruling class. It must be a political fight to mobilize the workers as a class and the ghetto/minority poor behind their leadership, the fight for a workers government. ■

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French elections 1981: Down with 'unity'!

Socialists no, Stalinists maybe

This adaptation from *Le Bolchevik* (November/December 1980), paper of the *Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF)*, explains the attitude of our comrades towards the Communist Party (PCF) and Socialist Party (PS) campaigns for the 1981 French presidential elections.

For defensive reasons, the PCF has responded to the government's austerity policies and to the new Cold War atmosphere by making a bureaucratic shift to the left. Drawing back from a fling with Eurocommunism in the mid-1970s, the PCF today could be described as more-or-less Kremlin-loyal 'Eurostalinists'.

For the moment at least, the PCF candidate is running as a fierce enemy of 'unity'. Georges Marchais, who greeted Carter's pope in Paris, who helped sabotage the fight against redundancies in steel, now says that the popular front doesn't work. Marchais' campaign is above all an anti-PS campaign. Faced with an increasingly confident PS, which profits from the rightward-moving international political atmosphere to attack the PCF for its links to Moscow, the PCF is seeking to consolidate its ranks. For his own bureaucratic reasons, and in solidarity with the bureaucratic caste which rules the USSR, Marchais is the only candidate who defended the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the candidate of the only party which minimally mobilised against NATO missiles in Europe. The PCF has again trotted out its class-struggle rhetoric, and is even organising bureaucratically and well-controlled 'mobilisations' against Giscard.

Down with 'unity' - Vote PCF

We are not so naive as to think that the PCF's new-found left face is more than skin deep. The PCF's current independent stance is merely a conjunctural tactic in the context of its profoundly class-collaborationist historic role comparable to that of social democracy. However, the contradictions inherent in a mass reformist workers party do surface when it stands in its own name, without the excuse of conciliating its bourgeois electoral partners (and in this case it cannot even use the convenient scapegoat of the PS).

But the crucial point is that the PCF is currently running in its own name and against collaborationism. If the PCF continues its campaign along these lines, the LTF will call for savagely critical support to Marchais next April. To cast a vote for Marchais is not to forget the strikebreaking social chauvinist role of this Stalinist bureaucrat and his 'Communist' party. Our policy of critical support to the PCF can be a vehicle to expose the bureaucrats to their ranks, to set the base against the top. It has nothing in common with the uncritical apolitical tailism practised by the fake Trotskyists who must quiver with horror at Lenin's idea that critical support is undertaken in the spirit of 'the rope supporting a hanged man'. Undoubtedly all the fake Trotskyists will complain that our slogan 'Down with "unity" -- Vote PCF' is sectarian. Sectarian? Ask 2 million CGT members!

In this period of bourgeois anti-Sovietism, we are pleased to be able to give critical support to a pro-Moscow Communist Party. For us, it is a way to highlight our Trotskyist defence of the deformed and degenerated workers states. Not so for the Stalinists, who remain French Stalinists committed to the defence of the capitalist order in France and to French imperialist military power, to the *force de frappe*. As PCF leader Fiterman said in his presentation to the October party conference:

'A policy of non-alignment which -- without renouncing its alliances -- would permit France to speak with its own voice, to act in its own name, so demonstrating its desire to free itself from the policy of blocs and go towards their simultaneous dissolution.'

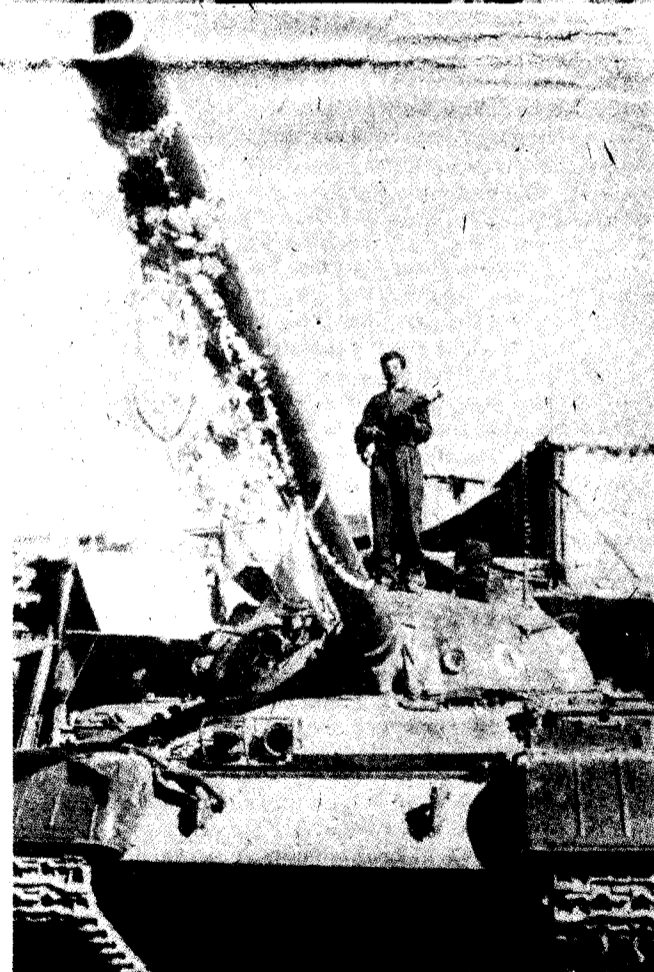
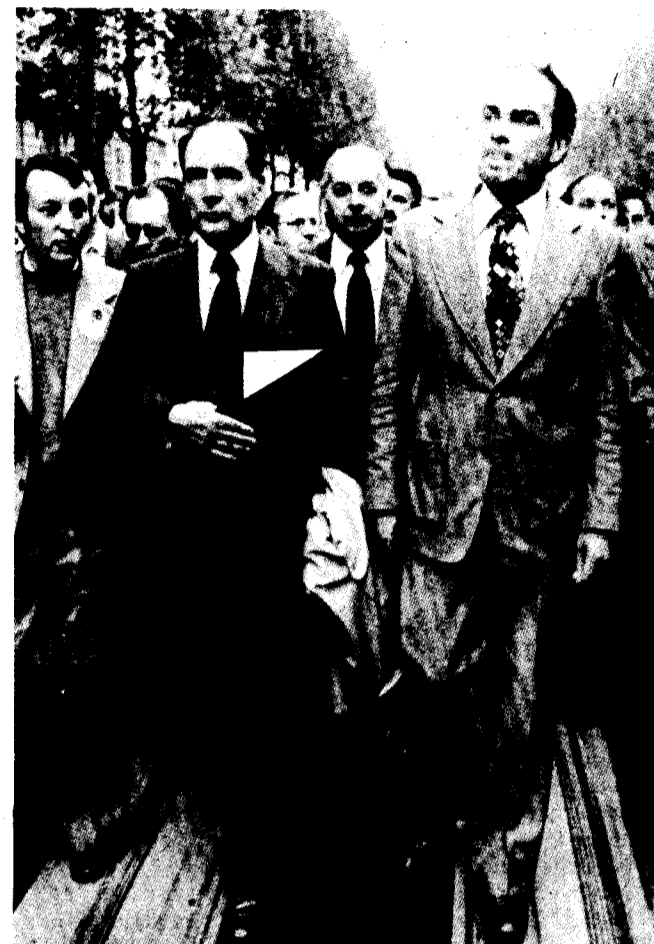
(*L'Humanite*, 13 October)

This is not the pro-imperialist 'Atlanticism' of a Mitterrand or a Rocard, but it is certainly not a defence of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact against imperialism. It is formally a policy of 'neutralism' reminiscent of a certain Charles de Gaulle -- but here Fiterman also explicitly endorses the anti-Soviet 'alliances' of French imperialism, presenting the PCF as an enlightened Gaullist opposition to Giscard. The only saving grace of Fiterman's babble is that the French bourgeoisie is convinced that it is all crap.

Proletarian internationalism v social patriotism

The savagely critical aspect of our support is directed in particular against the PCF's notorious anti-German chauvinism, which stretches from 'Get a Kraut!' at 'Liberation' to its attacks against German steel imports in 1979. Today, the PCF 'merely' pushes the slogan 'Produce French', but after the last war, PCF ministers in the government acted to maintain the 'French Union' including by means of the massacres of Setif and Madagascar, implementing a policy of 'Kill French'. Economic nationalism and protectionism lead to shooting wars between the imperialist powers. Revolutionaries reject the 'unity' of the working class with its 'own' bourgeoisie and its profits. Not so the fake Trotskyists of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) and the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR -- sister section of the International Marxist Group), whose call for the 'unity' of the reformist apparatuses would tie the workers to their traitorous leaders and ultimately to the 'union sacree' and national defence.

Participation in a few 'anti-racist' demonstrations will not change the fact that the Stalinists have a long history of support to the racist policies of French colonialism in Vietnam, North Africa and other French colonies. In fact, it was the chauvinism of Thorez and Co which fed the petty bourgeois nationalism of Messali Hadj and indirectly of the FLN in Algeria. We know that our programme of consistent proletarian internationalism and militant opposition to racism against immigrant workers will not find an immediate echo in a proletariat trained by the Stalinists to defend their 'own' empire. Only an authentic Marxist programme to



Marchais (right), Mitterrand (left). Today PS runs on anti-Sovietism, PCF defends Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and turns its back on Union of the Left. Tomorrow...

combat the social patriotic traitors -- the Trotskyist programme which embodies the slogan 'Workers of the World Unite' -- can break the workers from the chauvinist false consciousness which ties them to their own bourgeoisie. As Karl Liebknecht said, the main enemy is at home.

PCF: gravedigger of revolutions

In gearing up their ranks for battle, the Stalinists now feel obliged to take up previously taboo subjects, most notably the line which has dominated Stalinist policy for some 45 years: the popular front. The last PCF con-

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