



Avenge Bobby Sands! Smash H Block!

Troops out now!

Westminster butchers

It took 66 days to kill Bobby Sands, condemned to a slow and painful death by the arrogant butchers of Westminster. In Parliament, the announcement that 'Robert Sands, Esquire, the Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone' was dead met with an obscene solidarity of Labour and Tory with Margaret Thatcher's refusal to budge an inch on his just, elementary demands. But around the world it met with demonstrations of outrage and indignation at this calculated, imperialist murder. In Catholic West Belfast, the announcement that Bobby Sands, officer of the Irish Republican Army, was dead was met with the beating of dustbin lids, the construction of street barricades and the rattle of British rifle fire. Northern Ireland stands ready to explode.

Bobby Sands died a martyr in the struggle against brutal imperialist oppression. The proletariat will remember him, his death will be avenged. In the US, East Coast dockers announced a 24-hour boycott of all British shipping. In Ireland there is talk of a general strike the day of his funeral. In Britain the labour movement must sweep aside the treacherous leaders who condone this imperialist atrocity with massive demonstrations of protest against this vicious ruling class. The British government's terror and murder in Northern Ireland -- carried out with the full support of the Labour traitors -- is vile, repugnant and criminal. GET THE ARMED BUTCHERS OUT NOW! FOR THE IMMEDIATE, UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF THE BRITISH ARMY! SMASH THE IMPERIALIST TORTURE CAMPS! AVENGE BOBBY SANDS!

The British press claims it was 'suicide', but all West Belfast knows the truth. Cars blared their horns in the early hours of 5 May to awaken residents with the news that Sands had died in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, and within hours barricades were thrown up throughout the area. Youths hurled stones and petrol bombs at the hated army and RUC patrols. An army post at the top of Springfield Road was besieged for hours by angry crowds. Troops firing plastic bullets and live ammunition injured scores, at least one seriously. With daybreak, the street battles wound down and an uneasy calm hung over the city as preparations were made for Sands' funeral, to be held with full Republican mili-



tary honours two days later. But with nightfall the rioting started again, and in the coming days everyone knows that it will escalate.

Three thousand demonstrated in Paris to protest Sands' death; another thousand marched in Athens. In Dublin security was tightened outside the British Embassy while thousands queued behind black flags at the General Post Office to sign a book of mourning and 2000 marched to the Irish parliament. American demonstrators marched in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles. US imperialist politicians, keeping one eye on their Irish-American constituents and worried that Thatcher's hard-line policies will provoke a major crisis in Northern Ireland, expressed their 'concern' and 'regret' at the death.

But even as three other Republican prisoners on hunger strike for political status wait behind Sands in a grisly queue, Margaret Thatcher vows to stand firm. British troops continue to shoot down and kill unarmed H Block protesters in the streets of Belfast and Derry. Dozens of protest leaders have been arrested in Gestapo-style dawn raids. And the Loyal Labour Opposition backs Thatcher, Humphrey Atkins and the army to the hilt, crying 'No surrender! Defeat the terrorists!' The army's Spearhead battalion stands ready for despatch across the water to the Six Counties and all police leave has been cancelled. While international media correspondents cram Belfast hotels, Her Majesty's Government has provided a steady stream of black propaganda, including outrageous accounts of alleged IRA preparations to set fire to Catholic

homes and blame the Protestants ('IRA Plans to Burn Belfast', read the *Daily Express* headline).

In Belfast and Derry the population, Catholic and Protestant, has prepared for a bloody showdown. A few days before Sands' death the Protestant paramilitary Ulster Defense Association held a show of strength in the Shankill Road; the next morning two families reportedly moved from Bombay Street near the Falls. As an *Observer* (3 May) correspondent noted, 'memories of fire-bombed houses in the mixed fringes 12 years ago are still vivid'. Republican Citizen's Defence Committees have prepared contingency plans in West Belfast. Households have stocked up on bread, bottled gas,

tinned goods, powdered milk. Already in mid-April, Derry more and more resembled 1969 with barricades and petrol bombs against the army and police every day. Following the martyrdom of Bobby Sands, they will continue.

Years of mythmaking out the window

When the voters of Fermanagh and South Tyrone elected Sands their MP in a bye-election on 9 April, the government's long propaganda campaign to 'prove' the IRA were isolated fanatics was demolished forever. This was a sweeping, well-nigh unanimous vote by the Catholic community against imperialist oppression. The full pressure of imperialist opinion and scare-mongering had been unleashed on the voters of this border constituency, contested in a straight fight between Sands and Protestant Unionist leader Harry West. West placed adverts in the local Catholic press reminding readers of the Pope's words against the 'men of violence'. The imperialist propaganda mill put it about as a fact that 'an IRA gun' had murdered a Protestant census taker on the eve of the poll, even though the Republicans flatly denied responsibility for this atrocity.

Imperialism's Labour lieutenants pitched in to do their bit as well. In an unprecedented polling day appeal from Westminster, Labour spokesman on Northern Ireland Don Concannon told voters that they had a 'unique opportunity to denounce the men of violence'. 'A vote for Mr Sands', said this servile toady, 'is a vote of

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The unfolding dynamic of late Pabloism

IMG: Limping to Labour

In early April Tony Benn declared that he would stand against Denis Healey for the post of Labour Party deputy leader next autumn. Reactions were predictable right across the political spectrum. Establishment pundits saw further evidence of the unfitness of the Labour Party as a stable governmental alternative. Tory gutter rags once again saw the threat of a left-wing takeover. Various union bureaucrats and Labour parliamentarians howled about the damage done to party unity. But the most nauseating spectacle was the rush of fake-revolutionaries seeking a piece of the action as Benn's self-appointed campaign managers. Few were more ardent than the International Marxist Group (IMG).

Ever in search of a new 'main chance' to catapult them towards mass influence, the IMG's *Socialist Challenge* has been plumping for Benn in one way or another for some time. But Benn's

state is a gross travesty of any pretension to Marxism.

And Benn's calls for full employment, better social services and the like are all premised on a future Labour government adopting his 'alternative economic strategy' -- a strategy of capitalist economic protectionism. His call for withdrawal from the EEC, far from reflecting opposition to an anti-Soviet economic adjunct of NATO, is part of the same little England chauvinist perspective. Through import controls and parallel measures Benn seeks to shore up decaying British capitalism against its competitors, dragging the proletariat behind its exploiters for the purpose of trade war against its class brothers in other countries. Such a programme is not 'inadequate' -- it is counterposed to the communist perspective of a socialist Britain in a socialist United States of

the right, and in particular US imperialism has set out to 'morally' and politically rearm following its humiliation in Vietnam. From Jimmy Carter's 'human rights' crusade through to Ronald Reagan's choice of Central America as the front line for the struggle against 'Communist subversion', deep economic crisis internationally has gone hand-in-hand with stepped-up anti-Sovietism and the threat of imperialist war.

How long can it go on?

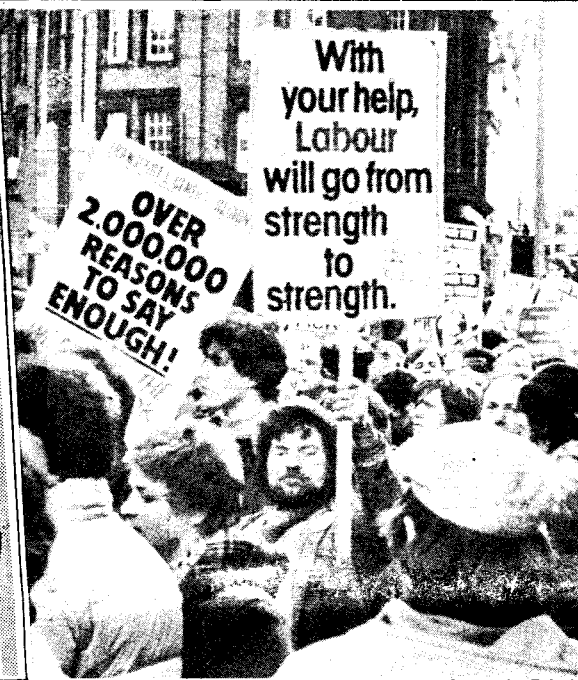
In a new issue of *International* (May 1981), the IMG's occasional theoretical journal, Alan Freeman takes the British Socialist Workers Party of Tony Cliff to task for not joining his organisation's enthusiasm over Bennery and its headlong dive towards the Labour Party. In vain: Cliff & Co long ago sold their soul to the bourgeoisie, but they have carved out a sort of niche as a small, organisationally independent, virulently anti-Soviet 'militant' syndicalist competitor to the Labour 'lefts'. But the IMG is centrist, and by virtue of that incapable of any consistent perspective and orientation. With the demise of the 'new mass vanguard', it has been reduced to clutching at one after another new 'mass movement' at an increasingly furious pace.

It is not surprising that in the present climate the reformist wing of the USec centred on the US SWP has been on the ascendancy internationally. In countries where the old Hansenite/Mandelite feud was settled by a fusion of competing sections (Canada, Australia), the centrists have been gobbled up and indigestible elements regurgitated. The disorientation of the centrists in the face of a right-wing Cold War climate is complemented by the organisational decline of the USec. The major split in 1979 by Argentine political chameleon and adventurer Nahuel Moreno -- leading to a rotten bloc with Pierre Lambert's Organisation Communiste Internationaliste and the creation of a competing 'Fourth International' has sharply undercut the pulling power of the USec as the 'Fourth International'. Thus particularly in France, the Mandelites have lost heavily to the Lambertistes.

The rightward political motion has, if anything, been less pronounced in Britain than in most other countries. The severely depleted French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, former flagship of the Mandelites, denounces the Communist Party not for its culpable betrayals of the proletariat, but for being 'splitters' by not coming together with the Socialists in a repeat of the 'Union of the Left' popular front. The Swedish KAF, once furthest to the left in the USec spectrum, today consciously mimics the line of Bukharin's Right Opposition in its front-page headline on Poland: 'Peasants, enrich yourselves' (*Internationaalen*, 29 January 1981). In Germany a protracted internal crisis culminated in the spectacle of the GIM publicly split and marching in separate contingents in Berlin last May, with one wing adhering to the syndicalist notion that the German SPD is a bourgeois party pure and simple, and the other calling for a vote to the SPD even though it rules in coalition with an openly bourgeois party. Now Mandel & Co seem to have sorted out their 'ultra-leftists' for the time being and are more and more capitulatory before the social democracy.

For all that, the Mandelites remain a centrist current, capable of empirically shifting to the left under the pressure of events. The centrist tensions which prevent them from pursuing virtually any course consistently are captured nowhere more graphically than in the letters column of *Socialist Challenge*. Three times in little more than a year -- over the

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IMG hopes to help 'left' social-democratic traitors go from strength to strength.

Spartacist Britain

challenge to the deal worked out between newly elected leader Michael Foot and Healey at Blackpool has driven them to euphoria. 'Back Benn's Campaign' ran the front-page headline in the 9 April issue. 'We give full support to the candidacy of Tony Benn', read the article. While calling on Benn to build more mass actions and admitting to 'inadequacies' in his programme, it declared: 'As far as it goes it should be supported.'

For Trotskyists the precondition for applying the tactic of critical -- let alone 'full' -- support in elections inside the workers movement is the existence of a candidacy with a programme which, however inadequate, represents a clear break from reformist class collaboration towards class struggle politics. But what is Benn's programme? The same *Socialist Challenge* provided this five-point summary:

- *Withdrawal from the Common Market.
- *A non-nuclear defence strategy, no Cruise, no Trident.
- *A return to full employment.
- *Full restoration of the social service cuts.
- *Extension of democracy, including defence of the democratic rights of women and blacks.'

This programmatic summary is heavily doctored by the IMG. For example it avoids any mention of Benn's support to the United Nations, that thieves' kitchen whose 'peacekeeping' activities in defence of imperialist order from Korea to the Congo may have been distasteful to some *Socialist Challenge* readers. And it carefully leaves out many other things Benn stands for: his support to NATO, his refusal to fight for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland, his advocacy of wage control.

But the potted programme supported by the IMG is bad enough. Amid Cold War hysteria against the USSR Benn dreams of keeping this sceptred isle out of the way should the shooting start -- and the IMG helps him peddle this reactionary pipedream. British imperialism has long applied a 'non-nuclear defence strategy' -- from India to Ireland. 'Full support', IMG? The very idea of support -- full, critical or otherwise -- to the military programme of the bosses'

Europe.

Such explicit support to a *bourgeois programme* is a graphic illustration of the extent of the IMG's rightward movement. Apart from a few tired older faces and the name, the IMG can hardly be recognised as the continuity of the IMG of ten years ago. Then, as a factional war dragged on inside the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' (USec) between supporters of Joseph Hansen's reformist US Socialist Workers Party (US SWP) and the centrist European-centred wing led by Ernest Mandel, the IMG was often held up by the Hansenites as the classical illustration of Mandelite 'ultra-leftism'. In an impressionistic appeal to a layer of youth radicalised through sympathy for the heroic Stalinist-led struggle against US imperialism in Indochina, the Mandelites based their strategy on tailing a 'new mass vanguard'.

IMG members participated in and defended the disruption of Labour Party speakers at public meetings. Capitalist elections were dismissed as 'carnivals' and *Red Mole* carried articles like Robin Blackburn's 'Let it Bleed', which, in the words of a domestic Hansenite critic, Alan Harris, 'argued that the Labour Party is a "capitalist party" not essentially different from the Tory party or the Democratic Party in the United States'. Harris was particularly chagrined by a cartoon strip which showed red moles beating up a Labour and a Tory election speaker, trampling them underfoot and tearing up the "Vote Labour" placard' (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, November 1973).

This was not Trotskyism -- far from it! -- but it certainly reflected a healthier, more revolutionary impulse than today's grovelling to Benn. Today IMG supporters are more and more ensconced in Labour CLPs, fighting not for 'Victory to the NLF!' or 'One solution -- revolution!' but for CND pacifism and sub-reformist rates and cuts campaigns.

The heady days of the 'red university' are long gone, and Tony Benn occupies the place in the Pabloite leaders' hearts that was once reserved for Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara. Since the mid-1970s the political climate in most advanced capitalist countries has been shifting to

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US imperialists provoke Soviet Union

Whose Poland?

For proletarian political revolution!

Poland is coming unstuck. The 'Solidarity' union movement (*Solidarnosc*) is polarizing. The Polish Communist party is in chaos. The economy is in a shambles. And United States imperialism is wildly seeking to provoke a Russian intervention. Reagan and Haig have seized upon Poland as a pawn for their superheated Cold War drive against the Soviet Union. And their ultimate aim is to overthrow the remaining conquests of the October Revolution, the main bastion of proletarian state power. Revolutionaries and all class-conscious workers must oppose this imperialist provocation and unconditionally defend the Soviet bloc states against counterrevolutionary attack.

Washington hectors its West European 'allies' to stiffen their anti-Soviet resolve with nuclear missiles aimed at the 'Russian aggressor in Poland'. General Haig tries to line up NATO governments to break off economic and diplomatic relations with the USSR. American secretary of war Weinberger threatens terrible reprisals if the Soviet Union intervenes. He even flashes the US' menacing 'China card', threatening to arm Peking, presumably with atomic weapons capable of reaching Soviet cities. And the Chinese are ready, even eager: they don't just want thermo-nuclear missiles, they want to use them!

Ever since World War II the American bourgeoisie has tried to talk itself into the idea that they can nuclear bomb the Soviet Union and live! This goal is now openly stated by the Reagan administration. White House Russia expert Richard Pipes says the Soviets face the choice of 'changing their Communist system in the direction of the West or going to war'. Reagan/Haig believe that Soviet intervention in Poland will remove all obstacles in their preparations for such a war.

Even if the Kremlin doesn't intervene, the US has already made Poland a focal point of the Cold War with its endless talk of 'invasion by osmosis', 'indefinite extension of Warsaw Pact war games', etc. The US 'seem[s] to be playing some kind of game with a whole nation', exclaimed one Pole angered by Washington's constant alarms (*New York Times*, 6 April). Indeed, Reagan and Haig have made it clear they want full-scale Russian intervention, and they're doing their best to spark it. They want to see Polish workers under the eagle and the cross throwing Molotov cocktails at Soviet tanks. They want to provoke a bloodbath in Poland so that they can use the battle cry of 'Russian aggression' to push forward on all fronts in their drive toward World War III.

Imperialist politicians and the Western press all speak of a Soviet 'invasion of Poland'. In fact the Soviet Army drove the Nazi German forces out of Poland and liberated the country in 1944-45. They have been there since, and today two Russian divisions guard the vital communication links to East Germany and the NATO front. To demand withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland is to demand that Warsaw leave the Warsaw Pact -- tantamount to calling for unilateral disarmament of the Soviet bloc. It is not an invasion that is posed, but a Russian military intervention into the civil life and class struggle in Poland. And those processes have undergone important developments during nine months at full boil.

The massive strike wave in the Baltic ports last August brought Polish workers before a 'historic choice: with the bankruptcy of Stalinist rule dramatically demonstrated, it would be either the path of bloody counterrevolution in league with Western imperialism, or the path of proletarian political revolution. With the clerical-nationalist influence in *Solidarnosc* and now the emergence of a mass organization of the landowning peasantry, the counterrevolutionary danger remains great. But a process of political differentiation has begun. Above all, 'Solidarity' has come to embrace the whole of the Polish working class, with all of its ten-



Warsaw Pact tanks in Poland.

sions and contradictions. One million Polish party members have joined the new unions, and the party is in deep trouble -- hardliners isolated, the leadership weakened, the ranks in uproar. And the church has pulled back from Walesa & Co, hoping to maintain itself as a stable pole for counterrevolution in the face of Russian military intervention.

This political fluidity by no means signifies a fundamental change in the relationship of forces, which is still distinctly unfavorable from a revolutionary standpoint. But if a genuine Leninist-Trotskyist opposition were precipitated, it could quickly grow and have a tremendous polarizing impact. Should the Kremlin, goaded by imperialist provocation, move to restore bureaucratic order in Poland, however, it would in the best case freeze that political differentiation necessary for the only progressive solution to the Polish crisis: workers political revolution. Thus genuine proletarian internationalists must bitterly protest a Russian military intervention, which would represent a defeat for the cause of socialism.

But far worse would be violent resistance by the Poles, which could produce a bloodbath. This would be a historic catastrophe. A 'cold' suppression would only postpone the confrontation between the Polish workers and their Stalinist rulers. If there is a Soviet tank on every street corner and the Polish people walk by them hissing, what has really changed? But if there is a violent response, the resulting repression would crush the Polish working class into the ground politically and produce an explosion of anti-Russian nationalism that would take years, perhaps decades to overcome. It would also fuel US imperialism's war drive to a white heat, which is why Reagan and Haig are pushing for such a bloodbath. *Proletarian revolutionaries must therefore emphatically oppose all violent resistance, whether mass action or individual terror, against such a Soviet military intervention in Poland.*

The present Polish situation is the product of decades of capitulation by the Stalinist bureaucrats to capitalist forces. It makes revolutionaries yearn for a Trotskyist leadership in the USSR which would make short shrift of the Polish crisis. Only a political revolution throughout Stalinist-ruled East Europe can open the road to socialism. And that requires internationalist Trotskyist parties which can reach out to the Soviet working class in defending the gains of the October Revolution.

Stalinism fuels clerical-nationalist reaction

The Soviet armed forces entering German-occupied Poland in 1944 were greeted as liberators in a social as well as a national sense. The expropriation of the large landed estates and big capitalists in the mid/late-1940's was a

broadly supported measure. Yet three decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule have turned much of the population, and much of the industrial working class, against what they view as the 'Russian-imposed Communist system'. And this is not simply a reaction to the police suppression of democratic rights and the gross privileges and corruption of the 'socialist' officialdom. The present Polish crisis, especially the dangerous growth of clerical-nationalist sentiment, has its roots in the failures and broken promises of *reform* Stalinism.

When Wladyslaw Gomulka came to power in 1956 proclaiming the need for the widest workers democracy, he enjoyed enormous popular authority. Then he turned and suppressed the workers councils and dissident intellectual circles which had supported him against the hard-line Stalinists. When Edward Gierk replaced Gomulka in 1970 after the Baltic coast workers' uprising, many believed his promises of unparalleled economic prosperity. Then he ruinously mortgaged Poland's wealth to Western bankers and also ruinously subsidized the landowning peasants!

So when under the pressure of rising prices and food and other consumer goods shortages the workers exploded last summer, they looked to the powerful Catholic church as the recognized opposition to the discredited Communist regime. The *Internationale* was replaced by the national hymn, 'Oh God, Who Has Defended Poland', and the new workers' leader, Lech Walesa, declared himself at every opportunity to be a true son of the Polish church. Many of the 'dissidents' who raised their heads are openly reactionary -- virulently nationalist, anti-communist, anti-democratic and even anti-Semitic (despite the fact that there are almost no Jews left in Poland).

The upsurge of clerical nationalism is associated with pro-Western sympathies, often expressed in calls for 'free trade unions' like in the US and West Germany. Polish workers would do well to look at the blood-soaked American neo-colonies before buying the Radio Free Europe line. The Russians would have to kill something like 150,000 Poles to proportionately match the number of workers and peasants slaughtered during the last year by Carter/Reagan's junta in El Salvador. In Brazil, the popular union leader 'Lula' has been sentenced to three and a half years in prison for far less than threatening to lead a political general strike every month or so. Even United Auto Workers observer John Christensen commented:

'It's incredible to me that in comparing Brazil and Poland, a Communist country, there seems to be more freedom there than here. Walesa is freer than Lula. There the Government agreed to hold a dialogue with him, not here.' (*New York Times*, 3 April)

A visit to El Salvador and Brazil by a 'Soli-

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Left oppositionist expelled

Workers Power:

In fear of Trotskyism



Soviet soldiers patrol village outside Kabul

We reprint below two statements to the National Committee and forthcoming national conference of the centrist Workers Power (WP) group by Comrade Charlie Shell. Shell, a founder and longstanding National Committee member of WP, was expelled from the organisation on 4 April, five days after leading WPers ransacked his bedroom to find evidence of his political collaboration with the Spartacist League (SL). As well as expelling him, the WP leadership instructed members that 'all personal and political contact with this renegade should be avoided'. The cause of this political purge lay in Shell's decisive break with the cliquist practices and programmatic confusion prevalent within WP. His experience inside the organisation -- in particular his opposition to the majority's support of Iran in the Gulf War and the potential political direction of the organisation's discussions on the Russian Question -- brought him to the understanding that the group had no revolutionary future if it failed to confront the genuine Trotskyism of the SL and international Spartacist tendency (iSt). But the leadership would have none of it.

WP's origins were in the Left Faction of Tony Cliff's International Socialists (IS -- forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party), expelled in October 1975. Despite retaining a Cliffite 'third camp' position on the Russian Question, shortly after its inception WP was sucked into a

classically unprincipled lash-up with Sean Matgamna's ostensibly Soviet-defencist Workers Fight group. Matgamna dismissed defence of the USSR as a 'tenth rate' issue and the International-Communist League was created -- only to predictably come apart just nine months later. So WP emerged anew (minus some members), having failed by self-admission to clarify any of the programmatic questions which faced it. Burned by Matgamna and under pressure from an International Marxist Group 'unity offensive', the group embarked on a leftward trajectory. But the evolution was slow and painful, reflecting how much WP was held together by cliquist ties rather than a common programme. Thus it effectively dropped its 'state capitalist' line in late 1978, but then had no position on the Russian Question until the beginning of 1980, when it took a Soviet-defencist line on Afghanistan.

Noting WP's leftward motion and important line shift on the Russian Question, the SL sought to engage the group in a dialogue which would enable it to make the break with centrism. But, seeking to preserve cliquist 'independence' and still adhering to much of the pervasive Stalinophobia of the British Labour-loyal 'far left', they proceeded to duck it. A series of SL approaches to initiate discussion met with the same wretched response. In a letter of 23 June 1980 the WP Political Committee rejected an SL proposal for a debate on the Russian Question but claimed that documents were being written: 'We will of course let you have the documents on publication.' In an undated letter received by the SL on 12 September WP rejected discussion on Cuba: 'We are however not immediately occupied with this question. We will nevertheless contact you again in this matter.' They didn't. And the same on 14 October in response to a proposed debate on the Russian Question and events in Poland: 'We will, however, contact you again on this matter.' Again, they

Meanwhile the real position was captured in a Sheffield WP perspectives document: 'We have no orientation towards the iSt whatsoever. Unfortunately they have one towards us.' They whined about the SL's insistence on sharp programmatic clarity in typical centrist style: 'What is more they are completely devoid of tact'. In pursuit of an orientation towards the local Cliffites, WP was primarily concerned not to be 'tarred with the same brush'. And when the

For a Trotskyist orientation

Fifteen months ago we took a decisive step in formally and publicly breaking with a state capitalist position on the Russian question. From the outset the extension and elaboration of that breakthrough on the key question for revolutionaries in this epoch, and indeed the central question facing Workers Power since the split from the International Socialists in 1975, was subjected to foot-dragging and backtracking by the leadership.

Things do not stand still in the world of politics; in refusing to go forward the organisation has been driven backwards. Increasingly since the adoption of a degenerated workers state position there has been a division between those who sought to tackle the programmatic questions head on and those who sought to avoid 'unpleasant' organisational conclusions. Every member of Workers Power should be aware that the positions of the organisation are increasingly being formulated to prevent a confrontation with the programme of the international Spartacist tendency.

The most glaring example of this was the position on the Iraq/Iran war. Within the space of less than a week the entire P.C. flipped over 180 degrees from the initial impulse to adopt a Leninist position of revolutionary defeatism. Why did this occur? Certainly not because of programmatic considerations. Even after the February revolution, in a situation of dual power, the Bolsheviks refused to abandon defeatism. The comrades of the P.C. don't have to be told that. No comrades, the newspaper admitted the real reason; a defeatist line was consistent only with the IST's opposition to Khomeini from the outset. The refusal to reexamine a previous position in order to avoid the IST is not a Leninist response but anti-Leninist and cliquist. The IST was right, the 'Iranian Revolution' deposed the shah only to impose a regime of clerical reaction upon the masses. Where are the gains of that revolution? Around which ques-

tions would revolutionaries urge the proletariat to join forces with the ayatollahs -- a struggle for democratic rights, for national self-determination for the minorities, against the oppression of women and gays, for freedom of proletarian organisation? No, nothing except Koranic law.

It's about time the lessons were drawn. Those who prefer to rummage through rooms looking for 'incriminating' evidence rather than debate out fundamental programmatic differences will not have a long lifetime in revolutionary politics. I have nothing to hide -- I supported the change in position towards defence of the Soviet Union a year ago, I support it today. That's why I have engaged in discussions with the Spartacist League in the recent period. Three times in the past year the SL has approached the leadership with proposals for discussion or debate on central aspects of the Russian question; three times the offers were rejected out of hand without discussion among the membership or even on the N.C. At the same time there were no hesitations about engaging in discussions with the WSL!

Let's have a look at the abuse and hysterical recriminations made against me. 'Spart agent'? I heard that three years ago from some comrades. My expression of leftist differences with the majority line is nothing new. Neither was I planted in Workers Power by the SL. Nor was I 'manipulated' into adopting my present positions by a sinister outside force. What I came to realise was that the extension and deepening of a Trotskyist analysis could not be carried through solely within the confines of Workers Power. This is evidenced by the hysterical anti-Spartacism which pervades every level of the organisation. Appeals to organisational norms are no substitute for programmatic clarification.

The most ludicrous charge made against me was that I 'acted in the manner of a police agent', a charge made at the kangaroo court which confronted me when I arrived home on 30 March. Since when is committing oneself to the defence of the revolutionary programme 'acting in the manner of a police agent'? Since when is collaboration with political cothinkers an act morally repugnant to revolutionaries? All these accusations are sheer hypocrisy on the part of the



Kurdish militants face Khomeini's hit squad. Workers Power tells Kurds to defend Khomeini's 'revolution'.

leadership. Particularly since the last group perspectives document contained a cynical and manoeuvrist conception of fusion. Remember that, comrades? The idea was to fuse on a programmatic level and use fusion as a means to break up opponent organisations. This method was actively considered in relation to the WSL. And whilst comrades are busy trying to denounce me in the manner it would be legitimate to use only against someone who has crossed class lines or worse, they would do well to remember back to the days of the fusion with Workers Fight. That fusion was orchestrated by Matgamna as a means of breaking up Workers Power. And indeed Matgamna succeeded in splitting off half the Birmingham branch. So do we therefore denounce Matgamna as 'acting in the manner of a police agent'? No comrades, quite the reverse! The leadership has responded favourably to every overture from Matgamna to

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SL initiated a successful united front demonstration involving WP against fascists at Sheffield University, the local leadership put it about internally that the whole action was a 'sectarian' Spartacist manoeuvre ... designed to demonstrate that WP was sectarian!

At the time, a minority led by Keith Hassell put forward the view that 'the correct line in Afghanistan for revolutionaries was to oppose the SAF [Soviet Armed Forces] from the start both strategically and tactically' (emphasis in original). Hassell's call for support to the reactionary Islamic rebels against the Soviet army and denial that there was anything progressive in the post-war social overturns which created deformed workers states was 'third campism' in practice at its worst. At the time the WP majority shrank from extending their mealy-mouthed condemnation of the Soviet invasion to the point of linking up with CIA-backed feudalist insurgents. But as they desperately seek a position on the Russian Question which distances them from the iSt, it is Hassell's positions which are gaining the ascendancy in WP today -- particularly a version of the 'theory of structural assimilation' once expounded by Ernest Mandel and later Tim Wohlforth as an explanation of the post-war social revolutions. (For a thorough demolition of this transcendental, Kautskyan 'theory', our readers are referred to the two-part series 'The Real Lessons of Cuba' in *Spartacist Britain* nos 3 and 4, July-August and September 1978.)

Unless it breaks with its present course the Workers Power organisation has no real future -- and the expulsion of Charlie Shell will certainly not resolve its crisis, only exacerbate it. Lacking a stable revolutionary programmatic basis for independent existence, centrists will take all kinds of measures in a bid to escape the contradictions generated by their own confusion. But it just doesn't work. At most such measures can lead to short-term 'success', and WP has not even achieved much of that. After six years it remains a small, isolated, nationally-based grouping. As Trotsky noted in 1929 'By its very nature opportunism is nationalistic'. Centrists truly are incapable of developing an international programme or forging a democratic-centralist internationalist party, and so it is with WP. Apart from some stagnating 'fraternal relations' with the Irish Workers Group, they have been reduced to flirtations with the degen-

erate centrists of the German Spartacusbund and its sister Austrian IKL (which recently split apart). These latter groupings certainly share WP's dilemma: castoffs from the mainstream fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat unwilling to come to terms with the politics of the Spartacist tendency, they have paid their price in stagnation, crisis and heavy loss of cadre in a series of splits to the iSt. Now their manoeuvres with WP too look like foundering, as the Germans and Austrians have adopted defeatist positions on the Iran/Iraq war while WP remains on the barricades for Khomeini.

Workers Power members who truly want to fight for Trotskyism and international proletarian revolution must recognise that an international Bolshevik party cannot be built without an international Bolshevik programme. While WP has gyrated and drifted and now pulls back to the right, the Spartacist tendency has an 18-year-long track record of fighting for Trotskyism and has built a truly international democratic-centralist revolutionary tendency. Now a senior WPer has been expelled for pointing to the only

road out of a history of playing hide-and-seek with the great questions of proletarian class strategy. Charlie Shell's appeal to his former comrades points to the only road to resolving these questions.

Years of centrist functioning have a debilitating effect on revolutionary integrity and revolutionary will. The cadre of Workers Power have been trained in a bad school -- a school in which adaptation to alien class influences within the proletariat is valued as non-sectarianism, in which programmatic contradictions are hidden beneath appeals to organisational loyalty and personal associations. It is possible to break from that training; Comrade Shell has taken the decisive step, other serious elements in Workers Power will follow. We do not prejudice who those serious elements are. Workers Power can choose to make use of its forthcoming conference to draw the organisational lines like a noose around its neck. Or it can use the opportunity we offer it to engage in a frank debate with cadre of our tendency to allow the programmatic issues to come to the fore. ■



Workers Power opposes capitalist restoration in Poland, but refused to take a stand against Vatican-inspired restorationist danger.

Confront Spartacist politics openly comrades!

I have been a member of Workers Power for six years, and I have worked hard for this organisation. Over the last period, I came to agree with the Spartacist League on a number of points that I considered central to revolutionary perspectives. For a while I accepted at face value the WP leaders' lip-service to the idea of discussing with the Spartacists. But after the abrupt shift to the right in WP marked by the Iran/Iraq position and the increasing tendency towards a Stalinophobic structural assimilation position both of which I strongly disagreed with, I became alarmed enough at our political course to begin working with the SL. The WP leadership now uses my 'indiscipline' as a pretext to avoid confronting my politics even going to the extent of instructing the membership not to talk to me. I collaborated with the Spartacists because of my politics, not the other way around. The fact that a long-time cadre of WP was led to a growing acceptance of the politics of the SL on many questions is no less significant because I took organised action to fight for my ideas.

Though we in WP sneer at the undisciplined dilettantes of the other small groups on the left, in fact WP is run in the 'disciplined' mode of social-democratic 'centralism': the leaders don't respect our 'discipline' or our conference decisions, but woe to the member that gets out of line. Time and time again our leaders claimed we were going to seriously discuss with the Spartacists, but nothing ever happened. I had to do something! Finally, I made a bloc with the SL to bring SL positions that I agreed with before the WP membership the only way they would be. Not the WP leadership's distortions, but the real politics. This was my 'crime'.

I should have expected that the leadership would also transcend chummy politeness. I should not have been so shocked when they went and searched my room. The political stakes were high -- high enough to push me into working with the Spartacist League, and high enough to push my

'comrades' into crawling around in my wardrobe. All the WP comrades who just 'can't stand' the bitterness of a real fight (not the faked-up internal discussions we have, where nobody ever draws any conclusions) like the discussion on the Russian Question at the 1980 conference where the theses were explicitly designed to cover over emerging differences and forestall debate -- had better wake up fast. Revolutionary politics isn't a gentlemanly game where nobody gets hurt. People who are so surprised that I put my political convictions before my organisational associations ought to ask themselves just what it is they're 'loyal' to. Look at the politics first, then decide your organisational loyalties.

Organisational loyalty is a very fine thing in the right hands. No bolshevist organisation could exist without it. This means: discipline in the service of a programmatically-defined vanguard party nucleus. If WP were such a thing, I would feel differently about people going outside our official discussion process. But we are a clique, violently unstable on the crucial Russian Question, held together by personal ties. With the differences we contain (and not just mine!) we don't deserve to exist as a separate organisation. Iran/Iraq demonstrates that there are split issues being contained in a 'party' which is not united by politics. If others in WP were principled, they would start from their political views, not deduce them from their clique ties.

What I mean by 'politics' is mainly the Russian Question. We are so used to looking at WP as an entity standing above politics that we don't see what really happened. When we adopted a leftist line on the Russian Question, we placed ourselves in an intolerable contradiction. We had removed a big barrier to real Trotskyism, but of course we weren't prepared to draw the conclusions. But the logic of the line change made us more vulnerable to the SL. We couldn't sit still, objectively politically flirting with Spartacism while keeping the

Spartacists at arms length. We couldn't 'enter' the SL; letting down the organisational barrier would just give their consistent, coherent programme a chance to win our people away from eclecticism and confusionism. So we never talked to the Spartacists, even though we knew we had to.

And we do have to. WP is parasitic on the Spartacists. Our good positions are cribbed from the SL; our bad positions are cynical rightist reflexes determined not by political considerations but by the need to draw a hard line to seal ourselves off from the SL. Iran/Iraq was the final straw: an anti-internationalist atrocity whose rightism is even out of character for us -- more gross than that of centrist groups we used to criticise for being so slavish in tailing Khomeini! The gross rightism of this line is an index of how vulnerable to Trotskyism our line change on the Russian Question made us: at all costs, we had to create a new barrier.

We have to come to grips with the international Spartacist tendency. It's like the famous quip about dialectics: we may not recognise the SL, but it goes right on trying to work its will on us. Why don't we take an active role in the process, through discussion and open debate?

Certainly, WP as it stands has no future. We've been around a long time and haven't got anywhere. Politically we aren't so different from the rest of the ex-IS and ex-Healyite milieu fragments floating around to the left of the USec. The logic of that fact already led us once into the endless blocs and 'unifications' and splits, resulting in the abortive fusion with Matgamna. Now that Matgamna's at it again, trying to swallow the WSL, it's just cliquist sectarianism and personal pique that keeps us from getting back into bed with these types. Indeed, if they pull off another 'fusion' -- rotten, faction-ridden and probably short-lived though it will be -- we will have a hard time resisting the pressure. Ultimately, unless we become simply an irrelevant personalist cult, we can either take part in the sordid reshufflings among the same cast of long-time operators of the centrist niche, or we can take on the iSt.

The members of WP presently stand no closer to SL politics than the leaders do. But a real

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Butchers ...

(Continued from page 1)

approval for the perpetrators of the La Mon massacre, Warrenpoint, the murder of Lord Mountbatten, and all the other senseless murders that have taken place in Northern Ireland over the years'. Yet in his fortieth day without food, Bobby Sands was elected a member of the imperial Mother of Parliaments on an 87 per cent turnout.

There was an outcry from the gentlemen of Westminster, who engage in polite debates about policies of mass deprivation and bloody repression, against having this 'criminal' seated among them. Eventually MPs decided not to expel Sands from their august body -- in the expectation he would soon be dead anyway. Imperialist

civility! Less than a score of Labour 'lefts' could even be heard to murmur that the government might consider *negotiating* ('imaginatively') with Sands. Left hero Tony Benn graciously hinted that 'someone' (someone else, that is) should propose seating Sands at Westminster. Of meeting his demands, not a word was heard from Benn or anyone else. With Sands' death, it has already been mooted on both sides of the House, there will be no haste to issue a writ for another bye-election. Disliking the voters' choice on 9 April, the MPs so fond of prattling about democracy will not be in a hurry to give them another chance.

Westminster's well-nigh unanimous message to Sands was crude and vicious in the extreme. Meanwhile he was also the target of more subtle 'humanitarian concern' by emissaries from Dublin, Rome, Brussels and almost everywhere else -- to put pressure on *him*, not the murderous Thatcher,

to concede. Snivelling pro-imperialist reformists like Belfast MP Gerry Fitt and the former Officials (now 'Sinn Fein the Workers Party') condemn the desperate hunger strike as 'violent', while others simply wheedle their 'peace' message. But there can be no peace so long as Britain lords it over Northern Ireland, and Bobby Sands, a determined man, stood firm to the last.

Free all victims of imperialist repression!

There is real tragedy in the death of this man with the courage to die for his beliefs in a slow and agonising way. The imperialists claim he was a criminal; but Bobby Sands' courage and dignity have made him an honourable symbol for the oppressed Catholic minority of Northern Ireland in their struggle against the obscene British presence. He was an IRA officer who would not ask his men to do what he would not do himself. Dr John O'Connell, a member of the Irish Parliament who came to Long Kesh to persuade Sands to give up his fast to the death, remarked after failing: 'I have never seen so determined a man.' Sands and his fellow hunger strikers have simply demanded that the Republican prisoners should not be treated as criminals. They are right. Their demands for political status and better prison conditions are just, even minimal. FREE THE HUNGER STRIKERS! FREE ALL VICTIMS OF IMPERIALIST REPRESSION IN IRELAND!

Bobby Sands' only 'crime' was to have fought against oppression. He was moved to join the Provisional IRA after his family was driven out of their predominantly Protestant neighbourhood and he was threatened out of his job at gunpoint. He spent only six months out of prison in his last eight years. Some old handguns were found in his home in 1972: this earned him five years in the Maze. Six months after his release in 1976 he was stopped in a car with three others, and the RUC found one revolver in the vehicle. Each of the four received fourteen years.

Contrast the British troops, armed to the teeth, killing with impunity. On Easter Sunday an army Land Rover ploughed into a group of protesting children in Derry at 50-60 miles an hour. Two young boys were killed and the vehicle was reversed over the broken, dead body of one. The Army Commander 'regretted' this 'traffic accident'. Fourteen years for possessing a handgun if you are in the IRA; 'regret' over a 'traffic accident' for coldblooded murder if you are in the army. Such are British imperialism's scales of justice.

But the other tragedy of Bobby Sands is the sad fact that his death, however honourable its intentions, is at the service of a programme which cannot further the cause of Irish liberation. The bankruptcy of the Republicans' strategy was shown with the defeat of the last hunger strike, whose 'humanitarian' focus and emphasis on recognition from notables in foreign capitals did nothing to stop the manoeuvring and arrogant refusal of elementary rights by Britain. The whole strategy of pressuring imperialism, whether by civil libertarianism or by the bomb, offers no road forward.

For anti-sectarian, anti-imperialist workers militias!

The tragedy of Republicanism is that it can only, ineluctably, fall into the communalist trap set by British imperialist divide-and-rule policies. British imperialism will face its day of reckoning in Ireland when there is a unified mobilisation of the proletarian masses surging towards power. But what Republicanism urges its supporters to fight for, to die for, is a united *capitalist* Ireland. And the Republican strategy, suited to this goal, is a unity of Catholics across class lines, not a unity of workers across communal divisions. Bernadette Devlin McAliskey summed up this perspective, which is a roadblock to the emancipation of the Catholic masses from their oppression, when she urged all Catholics to vote for Sands in the Fermanagh bye-election: 'Whatever our differences let us stand together thirty-two thousand strong, beat West, beat Thatcher and save Sands' life' (*An Phoblacht*, 4 April). But such cross-class unity did not save Sands' life, nor can it avenge it through smashing imperialist oppression.

With the situation in the North about to boil over, the Catholics will be on the receiving end of stepped-up repression -- from the British imperialist army, police and Loyalist paramilitary terror gangs. The IRA may well be the only force defending the no-go areas and Catholic communities from Paisleyite atrocities and imperialist rampage. Youth in the Catholic ghettos, trapped in a cycle of unemployment, social misery, discrimination and vicious repression, are attracted to Republicanism by hope of a better future. But it is in the very nature of Republicanism that as and when the conflict deepens, polarising along the lines of the early 1970s and



Protest Sands' murder!

'The International will not judge the British comrades by the articles that they write in the *Call* and the *Workers Dreadnought*, but by the number of comrades who are thrown into gaol for agitating in the colonial countries. We would point out to the British comrades that it is their duty to help the Irish movement with all their strength... We have a right to demand this difficult work of the British comrades.' (Karl Radek in *The Second Congress of the Communist International*, Vol 1, New Park, pp 127-28)

As the focus of world attention shifted onto Britain's brutal role in Northern Ireland, the responsibility for immediate action from proletarian revolutionaries in Britain was clear. The evening following Sands' death, as some 400 angry protesters rallied in London, the Spartanist League (SL) was there with a militant contingent to provide a clear, anti-imperialist lead. The protesters took up our chants of 'Westminster butchers' and 'Avenge the blood of Bobby Sands -- Troops out now!'. Our banner dominated the demonstration and pointed to the single most immediate task for the British workers movement in its struggle against the obscene imperialist presence in Ireland: 'Smash Britain's Torture Camps -- Troops Out Now!' In Sheffield likewise, almost all of the 100-150 protesters took up SL-initiated chants of 'Troops out now!' The day before the SL contingent at a Birmingham May Day march focussed on the Ireland issue.

Both in Sheffield and at North London Polytechnic (NLP) student supporters of the SL initiated united-front rallies to 'Protest Sands' Murder!' and demand: 'Political status now! Smash H Block! Troops out now!' To their credit, student supporters of the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), as well as Troops Out Movement (TOM) members, at NLP joined in building the rally.

But the general response of the ostensibly revolutionary left in Britain at this moment of solidarity with the oppressed Irish masses was abysmal. It is a savage indictment of these 'Marxists', who have nary a word of criticism for the mis-directed nationalism of the IRA, that the total numbers who came out to protest Sands' murder was *less than half* the number in

Athens, less than one-sixth the number in Paris. Having settled on a strategy of reliance on the spokesmen of Liberal imperialism, they waited for their erstwhile 'allies' to act. Their 'patience' was as futile as it was criminal.

Two years ago, when the Young Liberals became chief organisers of a 12 August 1979 march in London, it was not only Liberals, lords and Labourites who endorsed their plea that the Tory government 'commit itself to a policy of withdrawal' in the overall interests of British imperialism -- it was also such pseudo-revolutionaries as the SWP and IMG. The SL at the time raised the slogan -- 'No to Liberal imperialism!' During last winter's hunger strikes, virtually the entire left dropped the once prevalent call for troops out now in favour of a single-minded emphasis on the demand for political status (if that much!) in order to appeal to 'humanitarian' bourgeois public opinion. But as the situation in the North polarised with the renewed hunger strikes, the Liberals' 'humanitarian' pretensions were tossed to the wind. And the fake-left sat on its hands and waited for Sands to die.

Now some of them are reviving -- in a milkpoy way -- the call for troops out. The front page of the IMG's *Socialist Challenge* virtually pleaded with the murderous Thatcher to 'Take the troops out now'. But one little grouping, the centrist Workers Power, appears to have turned its refusal to support troops out as a minimal united-front basis into a principle of faith. The WP contingent in Sheffield maintained a pathetic, conspicuous silence -- as much out of sectarian hostility to the SL as out of its own disorientation -- when the marchers chanted 'Troops out now'. And when demonstrators joined the SL chant, 'Trade unions, take a stand -- black military goods to Ireland', WP counterposed 'Self-determination for the Irish people', a vague nationalist slogan which ignores the deep communal divisions. The British fake left renders internationalism as vicarious nationalism, denouncing our call for 'Not Orange against Green, but class against class' in Ireland as 'pro-imperialist'. But genuine anti-imperialism means class struggle in Britain and in Ireland, the struggle for international proletarian revolution.■

worse, their nationalist strategy will lead to an exacerbation of reactionary sectarian violence on both sides. Republican nationalism directs its acts of terror not only against imperialist targets like Earl Mountbatten and the British army of occupation. It is also capable of such indefensible atrocities as the killing of thirteen innocent Protestants in the La Mon restaurant firebombing of early 1978. Class unity can and must be forged against sectarian terror as well as against imperialist rampage, through the struggle for integrated workers militias.

And what about the political goal of the Republicans' fight for cross-class Catholic communal unity -- a capitalist united Ireland? What sort of future does a capitalist Ireland hold that is worth dying for? Looking south, a fellow Republican faces the death sentence in Charles Haughey's Republic right now, the economy is floundering, and unemployment and inflation are especially desperate in the deliberate absence of state benefits. With elections impending, Haughey has only the 'Irish unity' card to play in his bid to dodge the issue of the economy. But even here Haughey and other Irish bourgeois politicians are deliberately coy and evasive faced with the explosive H-Block issue. The prime minister lets fellow Fianna Fail member Sile de Valera do a little Green nationalist frontrunning for electoral purposes, but H-Block activists nonetheless denounce him for refusing to take a stand for Bobby Sands. Bernadette Devlin McAliskey insisted that Fianna Fail 'would never rule again if Bobby Sands dies'.

All the while Haughey has been working on some kind of deal with British imperialism, widely rumoured to involve a 'confederal solution' or some other chimera for Northern Ireland in exchange for the republic dropping its ostensible 'neutrality' and entering NATO. NATO has long been known to prize the strategic value of Shannon Airport and other potential bits of Irish real estate. The Dublin *Sunday Tribune* pointed out that a senior British diplomat recently posted to the second-highest position in the embassy in Dublin went straight there from a tour of duty at the NATO Defence College in Rome. The Soviet *Izvestia* worries out loud that Britain may use Northern Ireland as a bargaining counter to bring Ireland into the anti-Soviet war alliance. Thus even Haughey's wheeling and dealing in the name of 'Irish unity' is directly in the interests of imperialism.

Popular front demobilisation

If the Republican solution offers no solution to the plight of the Catholic masses, it is not for lack of courage but for lack of political perspective to focus a death blow against their imperialist oppressors. But the supposed 'revolutionaries' in Britain who enthusiastically echo Republican rhetoric and wallow in

Rallies: SMASH H BLOCK!

- Political status for the Republican prisoners now!
- Free all victims of imperialist repression!
- Troops out now!



LONDON

1.00pm, Thursday, 7 May
TV Room, North London Polytechnic
Ladbroke House

Initiated by NLP Spartacist Society

SHEFFIELD

1.00pm, Tuesday, 12 May
The Concourse, Sheffield University

Initiated by SU Spartacist Society

For further information contact the Spartacist League:
London: (01) 278 2232; Sheffield (0742) 686427

their role as 'moral witnesses', face nothing more 'threatening' than the pressure of pro-imperialist Labourism. And they whimper in capitulation. The fake-left scrambled after the handful of Liberals and 'left' Labourites who wanted a vague 'commitment to withdrawal' only in order to better 'defeat the gunmen'. They dropped campaigning for 'troops out now' to tailor their demands to fit the fashions of these latter-day Lloyd Georges. And now that the 'left' Labourites and the Liberals -- whose parliamentary spokesmen on Ireland oppose political status as staunchly as the rest -- have stopped marching, the 'left' isn't marching either.

As Bobby Sands prepared to die for his convictions, they awaited his death in order to act ... with vigils. There have been a few humanitarian protest rallies, petitions to Westminster and Downing Street and the like, but the biggest single action has been an impotent moral gesture of confrontation with the police by a few hundred leftists on London's Kilburn High

Road. The fake-left's disastrous record around the current hunger strike could not provide a more striking confirmation of the warning we have repeatedly given of the demobilising character of the popular-frontist perspective they have increasingly adopted for Irish solidarity work.

What is needed in Britain, as in Ireland, is a perspective of class mobilisation against imperialism and for a proletarian-socialist solution. The British labour movement today bears the brunt of endless vicious attacks by a government seeking to make them pay for the decrepitude of British capitalism. And this is the same government that has unleashed the troops on the population of Northern Ireland. To the labour movement of Britain we say: Black all military transport to Northern Ireland! Demand troops out now! Throw out your misleaders who uphold imperialist repression in Ireland just as they betray your own struggles at home!

Bobby Sands must not simply become another addition to the long list of martyrs for Irish freedom. He will only be avenged, and British imperialism and its vile deeds finally defeated, when the united Irish working class puts an end to the rule of capitalism, Orange and Green. An Irish revolutionary vanguard must be forged to lead the fight for an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles. That fight must begin now -- *Avenge the death of Bobby Sands! British butchers out of Ireland now!*

Vile Labour traitors

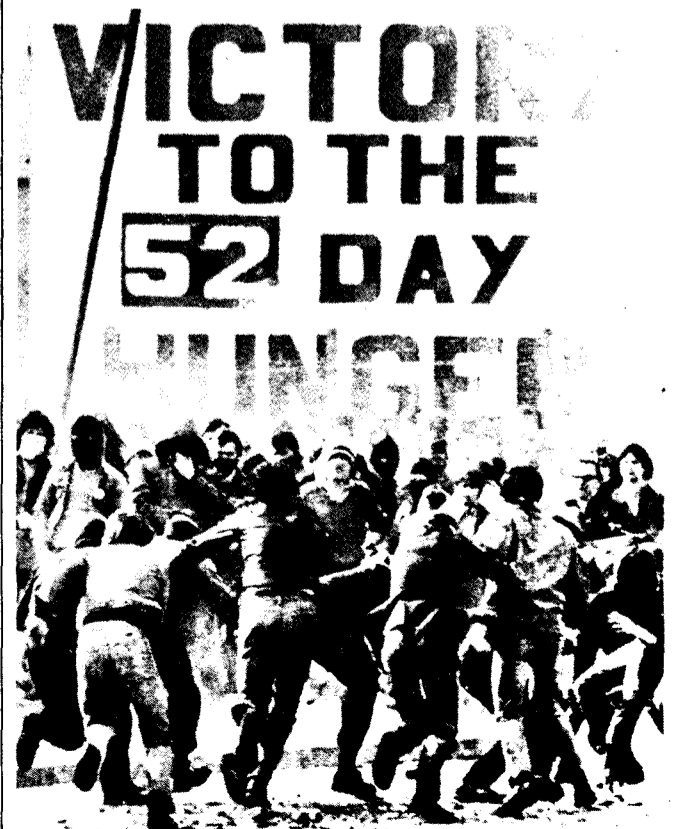
If ever there was a time for an MP with a shred of socialist principle to get himself thrown out of the Mother of Parliaments for disruption or an 'insult to the House', this was it. In the face of Tory/Labour bipartisan arrogance, someone like the German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht would have stood up, defied the Speaker, branded the assembled blood-stained lackeys and imperialist swine for what they are, and declared his intention to lead a mass labour protest to Downing Street in defiance of the government's month-long ban on marches in London. But only one Labour MP, Catholic Patrick Duffy, was outraged enough over the ruling-class killing of Bobby Sands even to rise to condemn Thatcher's 'moral bankruptcy' -- not to denounce the imperialist troops in Ireland or call for the hunger-strikers' demands to be met. And this was met by cries of 'shame' from both sides of the House.

As for the rest, 'left' as well as right, they demonstrated their social-imperialist loyalty to this murderous bourgeoisie to the hilt. Opposition Northern Ireland spokesman Don Concannon went out of his way to denounce a vote to 'the men of violence' when Sands stood for MP. Tony Benn, darling of the 'far left', has throughout the hunger strike assiduously avoided the issue, thus giving tacit support to the Labour leadership line. Challenged in Blackheath as Sands lay on his deathbed on 4 May, he promised only to say something on the matter ... later.

And when Sands' death was announced in Parliament the following day, an ITN news report correctly noted that 'Michael Foot could not have been more unswerving in his support' to the Tories' cold-blooded stand. An official statement by Foot and Concannon stank of smug ruling-class arrogance:

'Those who chose to advise Mr Sands to take his own life have known from the beginning that Parliament would not agree to sanction violence by acceding to such demands.' 'Sanctioning violence!' From Foot to Benn to Concannon, the Labourites are guilty of one violent crime after another against the Irish people. Labour sent the British army of repression into Ireland in 1969. Labour introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act which has seen over 5000 arrested without charges in seven years. Labour let Republican hunger striker Frank Stagg die in Wakefield prison in 1976, rather than let him serve his sentence in Northern Ireland. And Labour took away the political status granted by the Tories to Republican prisoners that Bobby Sands died to regain.

Concannon, like former Labour Northern Ireland minister Roy Mason, is sponsored by the NUM. That the militant miners should be associated with the likes of Concannon is an insult to their history of struggle against this ruling class. When they rid themselves of these social-imperialist swine, they will also rid themselves of the greatest obstacle to their own emancipation.



Trotskyist...

(Continued from page 4)

reopen political discussions. Only Matgamna's refusal to take his own proposals seriously has prevented this from happening.

The simple fact is that all the cries of anguish and thundering denunciations of my actions will be used by the leadership to further avoid political confrontation with the SL. The fact is that I refused to let matters of organisation stand in the way of political clarification. This is the action of a communist; I stand by my actions absolutely. The real issues at stake are political and programmatic and it is precisely these issues that the leadership are seeking to avoid. I am accused of damaging the organisation, of seeking to wreck its development. How is this the case comrades? I simply sought to sharpen the political debate within Workers Power. If an organisation is in danger of falling apart because it is attacked from the left then that organisation is truly worthless.

The more directly the SL has placed political pressure on the organisation, the more has the leadership's consciousness been fixated with attempts to escape -- dropping public meetings in London, attempting to pull out of principled united fronts in Sheffield, frequent references in the internal documents but at best sporadic attempts at polemics in the public press. These are not the methods of revolutionists. A correct programme can withstand the test of political struggle -- a revolutionary party will not be built through evasion. It didn't help us when we went into a fusion with Workers Fight despite principled differences; it didn't help us when we split from Matgamna without programmatic clarification. Matgamna, a slick operator and organisational manoeuvrer, predicted a fair while ago that the organisation would undergo a left/right split in which he would capture the right while the left went to the IST. Which is it to be, comrades?

There are only two consistent poles within the proletarian movement: the revolutionary one, reflecting the historic interests of the proletariat; and the reformist one, reflecting the alien class pressure of the bourgeoisie within the workers movement. These are never more clearly expressed than on the question of defence of the gains of the October Revolution. And the evidence is there. In recoiling from the dreaded spectre of Spartacism, the P.C. has come virtually full circle from the Afghanistan discussion over a year ago. The very positions on which comrade Hassel was beaten down then are all but predominant in the organisation today.

A year ago during the Afghanistan discussion comrades King and Hughes lifted arguments from the IST against comrade Hassel's position in favour of structural assimilation. They were right at the time: this position leads to fundamental revisions of Leninism on the question of the state.

The position now prominent in the organisation suggests that the bourgeois state itself is capable of overturning capitalist property relations. This 'feature' of the bourgeois state was somehow missed by Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. Apart from its obviously reformist implications this shoddy analysis attempts to equate directly the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie. Thus the Stalinist state is designated as bourgeois in form and content. We can accept the point about the form. Anyone with a passing acquaintance

with Lenin's *State and Revolution* could see that there is a particular form of state apparatus common to feudal absolutism, the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists. But how can the content of the Russian degenerated workers state be the same as that of U.S. imperialism? If it is then there is no reason to have a position of defence of the Soviet Union. And the abandonment of that position is precisely where this latest Workers Power new-think is heading. If private property has been overturned and the capitalist class politically and socially expropriated as a class, then it is meaningless to speak of the existence of a bourgeois state. Wohlforth used it to deny that Cuba had in fact undergone a social revolution. There was no state in Cuba between 1959-60 -- the bourgeois state had been smashed and the Rebel Army was not yet decisively committed to one set of property forms or another. In Eastern Europe, the bodies of armed men after World War II was the Red Army, committed to defence of proletarian property forms within the Soviet Union. In neither case was the bourgeois state appropriated. To argue that the bourgeois state under the Stalinists can equally be the agency of repression for the proletariat in defence of its property forms and for the bourgeoisie in defence of its property forms leads to an openly reformist conclusion that the bourgeois state need not be smashed at all in the process of destroying capitalism. Behind all the obfuscating 'analysis' lies a fundamentally Stalinophobic premise straight out of the 'third camp' book of Shachtman/Cliff -- that any social overturn accomplished through the aegis of Stalinism is counterrevolutionary. What would the comrades have done in Cuba -- joined with those who wanted to smash Castro's state, the state which defended the expropriation of the Cuban bourgeoisie?

In Afghanistan this line of thinking led comrade Hassel to argue for a Soviet troops out position -- a line directly counterposed to the change on the character of the Soviet Union -- that it is not 'Better to be occupied by the Kremlin than by the White House'. Indeed comrade Hassel explicitly argued that Trotskyists in Afghanistan would fight against the Soviet presence inside a nationalist movement whose 'short term outcome' would be a 'nationalist, pro-imperialist government'. A pro-imperialist anti-Soviet popular front -- is that what Trotskyists fight for? The P.C. opposed that line a year ago ... not by adopting a clear stand on the side of the Red Army in this conflict which posed a defence and extension of the democratic gains achieved under the P.D.P.A regime and, more fundamentally, a defence of the Soviet Union itself, but by waffling, refusing to oppose the Soviet forces, but refusing to support them. Now, in the latest issue we read that there is an equivalence between the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia -- where the Red Army was thrown against incipiently revolutionary working-class upsurges -- and the invasion of Afghanistan, where it is arrayed against an openly reactionary force (albeit one including comrade Hassel's mythical 'Trotskyists').

The Trotskyist programme is the defence and extension of proletarian property forms internationally. The recognition that the Soviet Union is a degenerated workers state necessarily entails an analysis of Stalinism as a contradictory phenomenon: counterrevolutionary in its programme and aspirations, bureaucratic in its methods, but resting on revolutionary social foundations. Even in recognising, in his most recent article, the possibility of counterrevolutionary challenge to the Stalinist regime in

Poland today -- and therefore to the proletarian property forms upon which the regime rests -- comrade Hughes still maintains that any Soviet invasion would be necessarily reactionary. What does that mean? If either before or after a Soviet invasion, the defence of the collectivised property hinged on the suppression of a reactionary onslaught backed by the imperialist powers and orchestrated by the Vatican, Trotskyists would of course bloc with the bureaucracy in the defence of the very existence of the workers state, even as we bloc with a trade union bureaucracy when a struggle is threatened by strikebreaking. To deny that the Stalinist bureaucracy must at times defend the collectivised property forms upon which it rests, if only to defend its own privileged caste position, is to deny the contradictory character of Stalinism; to deny that proletarian property forms are under all circumstances progressive in relation to capitalist property forms is to deny the essence of Marxism.

Loyalty, comrades? Yes, to the programme of Marxism, the historic interests of the proletarian struggle for international communism. That is the only loyalty any revolutionist can profess. And at least on this key question of Trotskyism that loyalty necessitates discussions with the SL -- not with Matgamna's Labourite, Stalinophobic outfit -- and not organisational games to skirt programmatic clarity.

If Workers Power is really serious about developing a principled position on Stalinism and not just utilising an analysis to demarcate itself from the SL then it is necessary to confront the programmatic issues head on. The SL will not go away; Workers Power is faced with a simple choice -- either take up and discuss the programme of the SL which has stood the test of the last 20 years or retreat to the right, back onto the terrain of Sean Matgamna. Once again, comrades, which one is it to be?

Charlie Shell
2 April 1981

Confront politics...

(Continued from page 5)

democratic discussion would give them a chance to learn, to decide if they want a political future. There's something very wrong with staying with a sinking ship so as not to offend your friends by impoliteness. What's at stake is not just whether you waste your future political activity, but the workers you can lead or mislead in the course of it. We must begin this discussion now, at this conference.

I've considered myself a Trotskyist for over six years, but real Trotskyism is just beginning to come together for me. I propose that we bring some authoritative Spartacist spokesmen to this conference and let them present the real positions. All we ever get to hear are the jokey distortions of Spartacist positions popularised by the leadership or the a-political gossip intended to titillate the imagination of the membership. Stop playing games comrades! If you are interested in finding out the real positions there are authoritative Spartacist spokesmen prepared to debate with you. I am confident that our members will learn more from this than from years of cliquish 'internal discussion' in the WP sandpit.

If the leadership rejects this proposition, then I urge you to think about the positions I have raised and study the published materials of the SL. But be prepared -- he who raises leftist 'deviations' will not be dealt with in the spirit of gentleness and pedagogy that structural-assimilationists expect in WP. The 'spectre of Spartacism' evokes a swift and brutal response from the leaders of WP. The organisation is making a lurch to the right. All comrades who want to oppose this had better act now. The only way to do this, and it's long overdue, is to confront the politics of the Spartacist League.

Charlie Shell
29 April 1981

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Brixton explodes

Racist cop occupation defied

For a class struggle fight against racial oppression

They said it had to happen, and on the weekend of 10 April it did. Black youth in Brixton fought back in three nights of spontaneous anger against the racist brutality of the occupying Metropolitan Police force. After three nights of resistance, fought behind makeshift barricades of burnt-out police vans, smoke rising above the country's best known black ghetto signalled in many eyes the coming of the 'long hot summer' to Britain.

The police and press tried to label the Brixton upsurge a 'race riot' or, alternatively, the work of 'outside agitators'. But the overwhelming testimony of eyewitnesses and the local community was, as the *Times* acknowledged, that 'the objects of the hatred were blue, not white'. Many local white youths joined in the running street battles against the police. In this area many youth under 20 have never had a job; for years the police have roamed the streets, arresting blacks at random under the hated 'sus' laws; and Special Patrol Group thugs earned such hatred that they were withdrawn from the area. The events of the weekend were but the culminating explosion of years of seething resentment in Brixton against a police force seeking to make it an offence to walk the streets if you're black.

More police than humans on the street'

In the preceding week, an intensive plainclothes police operation code-named 'Operation Swamp '81' had stopped 1000 people on the street, charging 150 with offences. In one instance, local schoolteachers were horrified to observe from their staff-room window a group of white men beating up a black and repeatedly banging his head against the pavement. They investigated. The white men were plainclothes cops.

On Friday evening a black youth seriously wounded in a stabbing incident was picked up by the police. Instead of rushing him to medical care, the cops held him in a police car and began interrogating him. Other youths, this time spurred into action by the sort of callousness they have come to expect, attacked the cops, rescuing the youth and seeing him off to hospital. The police reacted to this challenge to their control of the streets through a massive increase in their presence the following day. On Railton Road, at the heart of the black community, there were police on guard in pairs at every corner from early morning. As one black resident put it, 'There was more police than humans on the street.'

Then just before 5.00pm the police moved in

to arrest a black mini-cab driver for no apparent reason. The crowd gathered, and fighting broke out. Within an hour Railton Road looked like Falls Road, Belfast as young blacks and whites hurled missiles at the police, now huddled behind their riot shields. Buildings were set alight. The firemen, prevented from extinguishing the fires, nevertheless refused to turn their hoses on the protesters. 'It doesn't matter what happens, we can't turn the hoses on people', said one fireman. 'That makes us enemies as well.'

On Saturday night, when the main confrontations occurred, police were forced into chaos and panic by the fierce resistance of local youth, taking a long-awaited opportunity to vent their hatred at this enemy occupation army with bricks and cans, with makeshift petrol bombs and bare hands. Then with the cops in retreat, the explosion overflowed, as local buildings, shops and pubs were set alight, broken into and looted. Some of the violence was wantonly misdirected against small Asian-owned shops. But many of the targets were more consciously chosen. A local pub which had refused to serve blacks was burnt to the ground. As the cops counted their toll, reportedly 143 injured and 63 of their vehicles damaged, they began to take their revenge, with plainclothes police in squads armed with clubs, rubber hoses and chains, indiscriminately beating any local residents they got their hands on. Some 300 people were arrested. All the charges against the victims of this racist cop occupation must be dropped immediately! Cops out of Brixton!

Community control of police pogroms?

Alarmed by the inflammatory behaviour of the cops, community leaders and local Labour councillors had argued for a reduced police presence. But what has particularly worried the ruling class about Brixton was the manifest breakdown in the police's ability to maintain control. On the following Monday in Westminster, front bench MPs, both Tory and Labour, rose unanimously to condemn the local population and to commend the police brutality. Roy Hattersley, Labour spokesman for Home Affairs, despicably added his voice to the chorus, deploring the 'suggestion' that the police should have scaled down their operation and 'abandoned the protection of residents'. Home Secretary William Whitelaw announced a public inquiry under the direction of Lord Scarman, veteran of three previous inquiries aimed at whitewashing state repression. The *Times* leader was quite clear on the purpose of a public inquiry as an immediate measure: 'An inquiry could take the heat off the streets and put it in the tribunal room.'

The *Guardian* (18 April) daydreamed about an 'American scenario' for Brixton -- by which it meant a lower police profile and more economic aid. Even in the US, the token ghetto aid programmes which followed in the wake of the urban rebellions of the sixties have been reduced to scarcely a trickle. Given the state of the British economy and Thatcher's drive to slash social services to the bone, the very idea is a cruel joke. The only 'American scenario' the British ruling class could afford is guns for the thugs in blue. Indeed former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Robert Mark pointed to

the need for British police to adopt 'American' solutions -- the use of 'controlled gunfire at selected targets' (*Sunday Times*, 19 April).

The cops no doubt lust for the same sort of firepower employed by their American counterparts, who would have left plenty of dead blacks behind under similar circumstances. As proficient as anybody in dishing out a vicious beating in a nice, quiet police station cell, British cops are neither armed nor trained for the type of situation that arose in Brixton. The army, however, has developed ruthless professionalism in 'police actions' in the former empire and today in Northern Ireland. What the cops would like to do in Brixton is bring home the sort of treatment Britain's gendarmerie has traditionally meted out to blacks and Asians in the colonies -- not only for use against blacks, but in the expectation that there are bigger explosions ahead. Indeed the police raid on Birmingham strike headquarters and the anonymous (probably fascist) firebombing of Rotherham strike headquarters during last year's steel strike were portents of the future.

With the myth of the friendly British bobby being torn to shreds as the social crisis deepens, the social democrats leap in with utopian schemes for 'community control' of the cops. An LPYS-organised rally at Brixton Town Hall featured the Militant group's pet scheme for a 'labour movement inquiry' on Brixton. What is there to inquire about? Whether the cops are vicious, provocative and sadistic? Whether there is large-scale unemployment and black oppression? Born-again 'revolutionary' and Labour Party leader of Lambeth Council Ted Knight, endorsing the Militant proposal, declaimed about the need to 'make the police responsible to elected Labour movement representatives', ie Labour-run councils like his. *Socialist Press* (23 April), paper of the right-centrist Workers Socialist League, in turn touted Knight's call, touched up with its 'militant' appeal that 'resistance is channelled into a massive political fight against Thatcher and her police'. It wasn't Thatcher's police at Lewisham and Notting Hill, or when the SPG went into Brixton, or when Blair Peach was murdered, Labour or Tory in office, the cops are the hired thugs of the bourgeois state, racist to the core. Not surprisingly, the black population of Brixton sees little difference between their brutal treatment at the hands of the nearly all-white police force and fascist terror.

Predictably the fascists rushed forward to exploit the Brixton events, calling a march for 25 April through Brixton. Equally predictably, the Home Office imposed a month-long ban on marches throughout the London area under the Public Order Act, the second in as many months. In a graphic demonstration of the futile and reactionary character of the strategy of relying on state bans to stop the fascists, the fascist provocation took place as scheduled under the watchful eyes of the cops in a town just outside the limits of the ban. What the ban did succeed in stopping was any effective countermobilisation. Several leftist demonstrations were either prevented or harassed -- including a May Day march at which the cops arrested a number of leftists under the pretext of the ban.

The government has been employing the Public Order Act with alarming frequency of late. Today

continued on page 11)

Poland ...

(Continued from page 3)

arity' delegation might teach them a thing or two about the 'free world' -- if they got out alive.

With the strong clerical-nationalist influence over the new unions which became *Solidarnosc*, we have repeatedly warned of the danger of capitalist counterrevolution spearheaded by Pope Wojtyla's church. At the same time, we recognised that the emergence of a powerful workers movement fundamentally challenging Stalinist bureaucratic rule could also open the road to proletarian political revolution. We have therefore insisted that the key strategic task for a Trotskyist vanguard in Poland was to *split* the mass of workers from reactionary forces. This means fighting for a series of programmatic demands including strict separation of church and state, defense of collectivized property, defense of the Soviet bloc degenerated/deformed workers states against imperialism. A Trotskyist vanguard would seek to polarize the workers movement, attracting those who seek a genuinely socialist solution and are hostile to the Vatican and Western capitalism.

Solidarnosc in turmoil, Communist Party polarised

Today we see the beginnings of internal political differentiation within 'Solidarity' and the Communist party. For the first time forces are opposing bureaucratic rule not in the name of the eagle and the cross but calling for 'socialist renewal' and even a return to the principles of 'Marxism-Leninism'. The *New York Times* (12 April) now projects: 'Barring Soviet military intervention, the likely next phase in the workers' revolution in Poland will not be a struggle against the Communist Party but a struggle within the party itself.' This makes even more urgent the crystallization of a Trotskyist propaganda nucleus in Poland which alone can offer a way out of the desperate and seemingly endless crises which are wracking Poland.

The political landscape has changed considerably since the Gdansk-based general strike last summer. Walesa is under several-sided attack from within *Solidarnosc*. Meanwhile, many of the more than one million working-class members of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) now participating in 'Solidarity' must find their socialist convictions (however deformed by Stalinist ideology) in conflict with the reactionary views of Walesa and his associates. The church hierarchy, on the other hand, has pulled back, fearing a Soviet military intervention. A few days before 'Solidarity' had scheduled a general strike at the end of March, Cardinal Wyszynski issued a joint statement with Prime Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski urging that 'strikes can be eliminated as extremely costly to the enfeebled national economy' (*Daily World*, 28 March).

Most striking is the impact which the workers struggles have had on the Stalinist apparatus of the PUWP. The recent Central Committee meeting at the end of March turned into a political brawl. 'We must know that Solidarity is in the first place the working class itself', declared the party secretary of the Baltic port of Szczecin. Only the fear of the Kremlin's reaction prevented this meeting from throwing hardliners like Stefan Olszowski off the Politburo. A recent national conference in Torun of dissident groupings within the party called for full and adequate information, secret ballots, multiple candidates. One delegate protested: 'The authorities should not present the changes going on in our country as the work of antisocialist forces but as a proper restoration of Marxist-Leninist principles' (*New York Times*, 16 April). However, overall the PUWP dissidents are not



Felix Dzerzhinski, Polish revolutionary and Bolshevik leader.

moving toward a rediscovery of authentic Leninism. They tend rather toward liberal Stalinism, 'socialism with a human face', as the Czech Stalinist reformer Dubcek called it during the Prague Spring of 1968, and they seek a favorable hearing from the present leaders of *Solidarnosc*. Moreover, they are quoted expressing anti-Russian prejudices and political sentiments common in Poland today. One delegate at the Torun conference remarked: 'Our Soviet friends have a history that has accustomed them to absolutism in government. But the history of our nation is closely connected to democracy.' And what of the national hero and fascistic dictator Pilsudski, a former right-wing social democrat who defended Polish capitalism against the Red Army in 1920? As Trotsky pointed out, the Stalinist bureaucracy itself could generate a fascistic wing -- he called it the 'Butenko faction' -- which in Poland today would be imbued with virulent anti-Russian nationalism.

If the PUWP liberals are talking of a 'socialist renewal' in Poland, the Kremlin is warning of 'creeping counterrevolution'. The Brezhnevite Stalinists dare not attack the real basis for counterrevolution, the powerful Catholic hierarchy, but instead target relatively small dissident groups, notably Jacek Kuron's Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) and the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN) of Leszek Moczulski. Of course, the Kremlin hacks would denounce any political opposition, including and especially Trotskyists, as 'counter-revolutionary' and even 'fascistic'. But Stalinist slanders notwithstanding, KOR and KPN are each in their own ways enemies of socialism.

The KPN is openly clerical-nationalist and anti-socialist. This is not the case, however, with Kuron's KOR. In the West Kuron is widely regarded as some kind of left radical, even a 'Marxist' -- a reflection of his stance in the 1960s. As we have pointed out in the face of his pseudo-Trotskyist cheerleaders, he has since moved far to the right. Tamara Deutscher confirms this in an important recent article in *New Left Review* ('Poland -- Hopes and Fears', January-February, 1981). She recalls that when sentenced to prison in 1964, 'Kuron and his comrade defiantly sang the Internationale in court. Such a gesture on his part would be unthinkable today. He has moved towards social democracy, the Church and a nationalistic position.'

Above all, a revolutionary internationalist party

Whether or not Moscow intervenes militarily in the near future, the Polish crisis is fast heading toward the explosion point. The economic chaos is assuming disastrous proportions. Food supplies are shrinking rapidly; hard currency exports have fallen 25 percent since last year, coal exports have dropped 50 percent. Politically the situation is anarchic. There must be a tremendous felt need for the working people of Poland to take control of society, of the economy, and direct it in their interests. Seeking to placate the masses, the Stalinist leaders are now talking about granting more powers to the parliament, the *Sejm*, nominally the highest governing body.

In Poland today the classic Bolshevik demand -- all power to the Soviets, the democratically elected workers councils -- would have a broad appeal. A revolutionary vanguard might well de-

mand that the supposed powers of the *Sejm* be vested in a congress of soviets as in the Russian October Revolution. But soviets in themselves do not guarantee the socialist direction of society. Especially under present Polish conditions, they could fall under the influence of reactionary nationalist forces seeking imperialist backing against the USSR. The crucial element is an authentically revolutionary workers party capable of organizing the socialist impulses among the working masses around a Marxist, internationalist program.

A communist vanguard must be militantly anti-nationalist. It would look back to the tradition of the pre-World War I socialist party of Rosa Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches. In contrast to Pilsudski's chauvinist Polish Socialist Party, they called their organization the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. They maintained that the socialist transformation of Poland was inextricably bound up with the proletarian revolution in Russia.

One of the leaders of the Luxemburg/Jogiches SDKPiL was Felix Dzerzhinski, who later played a distinguished role in the Bolshevik Revolution as head of the Cheka, the police arm of the early Soviet power. Dzerzhinski, whose Polish accent in Russian became stronger when he was agitated, was chosen for this most sensitive post because he was a revolutionist of outstanding moral integrity. On a far lesser historic scale, there was Konstanti Rokossovski, a young Polish socialist who joined the Soviet Red Army in 1919. Imprisoned in the Stalin purges of the late 1930s, he reemerged to become one of the greatest Soviet commanders of World War II. Marshal Rokossovski was not a revolutionist but a Stalinist military officer. But his service in defending the Soviet Union against imperialist attack does him honor -- and he played a key role in liberating Poland in 1944-45 from nightmarish Nazi occupation.

In his great essay on 'The Tragedy of the Polish Communist Party', Isaac Deutscher stressed as his main conclusion: '... if the history of the Polish CP and of Poland at large proves anything at all, it proves how indestructible is the link between the Polish and the Russian revolutions.' Today it is necessary to revive the tradition of revolutionary unity of the Polish and Russian proletariat. Now it must be directed against the Stalinist bureaucracies, in defense of the collectivized economies and proletarian state powers against the threat of capitalist-imperialism.

The leadership of 'Solidarity' stands directly opposed to these principles. Walesa and his colleagues see themselves leading the entire Polish nation against Russian 'Communism'. This is most strongly expressed in their active support to the peasant organization, Rural Solidarity. In fact, the recent near general strike was called primarily on behalf of the peasant organization. Expressing the acquisitive appetites of Poland's numerous landowning peasants, Rural Solidarity aims at the complete reestablishment of capitalist relations in the countryside. Its non-economic demands include the construction of more churches, no restriction of religious education and an end to compulsory teaching of Russian in the schools. Little wonder, then, that Pope Wojtyla himself demanded that the Warsaw regime recognize Rural Solidarity, a potent base for capitalist restoration. The fact that the Stalinist regime has just legitimized this peasant organization, reversing its earlier stand, marks a major concession to the forces of reaction.

The socialist answer to Rural Solidarity is not maintaining the status quo in the countryside. For that situation is disastrous. Poland's inefficient, aging smallholders are a major barrier to balanced economic development. The \$10 billion food subsidy -- the difference between what the state pays the farmers and what it charges urban consumers -- is by far the largest item in the government budget and accounts for a significant share of total national income. Russian and Ukrainian collective farms now supply Poland with food, even though the consumption level, especially of meat, is much higher in Warsaw and Gdansk than in Moscow and Kiev. An immediate key task for a revolutionary soviet government in Poland would be to promote the collectivization of agriculture. Cheap credit and generous social services should be given to those peasants who pool their land and labor. Those who want to remain petty agricultural capitalists should be subject to higher taxes and other forms of economic discrimination.

Along with the backward smallholding agriculture, an enormous foreign debt is at the root of the current Polish economic crisis. During the 1970s the Gierek regime tried to buy off the workers and peasants with massive loans contracted from the West. His successors have accelerated this disastrous policy. Poland's debt

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to the West has increased by one-third in the last seven months alone! Repaying the bankers of Frankfurt and Wall Street will absorb all of Poland's hard-currency export earnings for years to come. (And no small share of Soviet hard-currency exports are expended on repaying directly or indirectly Poland's Western capitalist creditors.) The demand to cancel the imperialist debt is crucial in breaking the capitalist stranglehold on the Polish economy. But this would be possible only under a revolutionary soviet regime which could counter imperialist economic retaliation by appealing to the workers of West Europe to become comrades in international socialist planning in a Socialist United States of Europe.

As important as appeals to the working class of the capitalist West are to a proletarian political revolution in Poland, still more important is the perspective toward such a revolution in the Soviet Union. Should the Kremlin intervene militarily, the immediate fate of the Polish workers would in large measure depend on their ability to influence and win over Soviet conscript soldiers -- that is, young Russian, Ukrainian and Central Asian workers and peasants in uniform. Anti-Russian Polish nationalism, and especially violence directed at Soviet soldiers or officers, would sabotage the proletarian cause.

Here it is important to recognise that illusions about 'good will' and peacefulness of the Western capitalist powers, common in East Europe and particularly in Poland, do not extend to the Soviet Union. After losing 20 million fighting Nazi Germany, the Soviet people understand full well that NATO's nuclear arsenal is targeted at them. This understanding is now heightened by Washington's open threats of a nuclear first strike. The Soviet people legitimately fear the transformation of East Europe into hostile, imperialist-allied states extending to their own border.

The Kremlin bureaucrats exploit this legitimate fear to crush popular unrest and democratic aspirations in East Europe, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the situation in Poland today is significantly different from that during the 'Prague Spring'. Anti-Russian nationalism is far more virulent, while Washington and its NATO allies are being far more provocative and militarily threatening. For these reasons the question of defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism takes on far greater importance in the present Polish crisis. Revolutionary Polish workers cannot hope to appeal to Soviet soldiers unless they assure them that they will defend the social gains of the October Revolution against imperialist attack.

Only by addressing their Soviet class brothers in the name of socialist internationalism can the Polish proletariat liberate itself from the chains of Stalinist oppression. With this perspective a Trotskyist vanguard in Poland could turn a looming catastrophe into a great victory for world socialism.

—reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 279, 24 April 1981

El Salvador...

(Continued from page 12)

managed to capture the SWP's niche, doing the legwork for the 'respectable' liberals. So the SWP reformists first tried to outflank PAM with a counterposed 'legal, peaceful' proposal for a 9 May march, viciously baiting the 3 May march proposal as 'disruptive', 'narrow, confrontational' and 'almost guaranteed to result in a physical confrontation with the police or army' ([US] *Militant*, 27 March). Such disgusting statements, designed to assure the government of the SWP's respect for bourgeois legality, would make great evidence for the prosecution in future witchhunts of the left. But as church, community-group and low-level labour-faker support for the 3 May protest mounted, it became clear that the SWP had been outmanoeuvred. And when even the Unitarian Church and the War Resisters League endorsed 3 May the SWP had to admit 'May 9 is not viable' -- though still demanding further guarantees of a 'peaceful, legal' demonstration, working to try to shift the venue away from the Pentagon to better please 'respectable' people, and generally keeping a very low profile.

For liberals 'No more Vietnams' means no more losing imperialist wars. Contrast this to Che Guevara's exhortation for 'two, three, many Vietnams' -- imperialism was badly defeated by the NLF. The Salvadoran masses are heroically fighting against tremendous odds, sacrificing their lives in an unequal struggle against the most powerful imperialist war machine in history. They have chosen their side. And the vanguard of those in the US who will stand with them marched in the Anti-Imperialist Contingents on 3 May. ■

Brixton...

(Continued from page 9)

the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) tout their opposition to state bans. But they built the popular-frontist Anti Nazi League, lately 'reborn', which was designed to deflect the anti-fascist struggle into pressuring the bourgeoisie, even to the extent of dabbling with bans. The 'carnivals' went, but the fascists returned. What is necessary now as then is the independent mobilisation of the workers organisations to build trade union/black defence guards to crush the fascist vermin and defend the black communities.

Legacy of a dying empire

Brixton is the second massive explosion of black anger against unrelenting cop racism in a year. The deep-going social crisis of British capitalism has thrust the country's minority West Indian and Asian communities to the forefront in a battle for self-preservation. Chronic, climbing unemployment and decaying social services hit at blacks particularly hard, while providing a fertile recruiting ground for fascist terror among lumpenised white youth. The pervasive racism which is the fruit of Britain's long-decayed colonial past and encourages the increasingly brazen assaults of the fascists is today crystallised in the Tory government's Nationality Bill. Having stemmed the influx of black immigrants from the former colonies, the ruling class now wants to reverse it, by creating what amounts to an apartheid system in citizenship qualifications.

The black population of Brixton is itself the legacy of colonialism. The British bourgeoisie could have opted after World War II for the sort of 'gastarbeiter' scheme adopted by Germany, but chose instead to play the imperial card one more time. Now the children of those who came to keep London Transport running, to staff the hospitals, to take the jobs others didn't want are no longer wanted themselves. And they're beginning to fight back. They don't want to be 'repatriated' -- they want jobs, housing, an end to cop terror. They were born here, they want to stay here.

Brixton was not only bigger than Bristol and in the heart of the metropolis, it evoked the palpable feeling that Britain is coming apart at the seams. With unemployment slated to rise to three million before year's end, with Northern Ireland threatening to blow up, the government had to breathe one enormous sigh of relief that their cops proved able -- barely -- to contain Brixton. Not only are the colonies gone, the former colonial subjects demand to be treated as equals. And when the arrogant Thatcher paid a visit to that former jewel of the blood-drenched empire, India, she was forced to explain what happened at Brixton and to confront not only the official protests of the equally iron Mrs Gandhi over her racist Nationality Bill, but the anger of outraged demonstrators in the streets. Britain's pretensions to the status of a world power -- if only among its former imperial possessions -- are easily shattered by a look at life in Britain.

It is not only the bourgeoisie which is unnerved by this state of affairs, but the opportunists on the British left. A year ago, *Socialist Challenge*, paper of the International Marxist Group, proclaimed Bristol a 'carnival of the oppressed' and attempted to find a basis for its bizarre call for 'self-determination for blacks' in Britain. *Socialist Worker* exalted about how 'things can never be the same'. Today *Socialist Worker* solemnly warns that things will be the same:

'But after Saturday night came Sunday morning. Hundreds were arrested.... This has happened after every such explosion.... When the flames of defiance abated, the slums, the police and the dole queues were still there. But they will not be done away with through the SWP's simple-minded workerist 'Black and white, unite and fight' rhetoric. And certainly not by the IMG's current recipe, which is to channel the hatred of blacks for this oppressive system into support for Labour's 'lefts'. Thus the 29 April *Socialist Challenge* applauds the formation of the Asian Labour Party Alliance and its support for the 'lefts'. The IMG was closer to the truth six years ago, when it warned 'Labour lefts open door to racism'.

White workers today face the choice of being dragged down the road to the destruction of their class through racist appeals to 'get the blacks' or of recognising that they have a valuable ally in the class struggle among militant blacks who have good reason to hate this bourgeoisie. What is necessary is not 'labour move-

ment inquiries', but a fight to mobilise the labour movement around a class-struggle programme to smash racial oppression -- an end to all discrimination in jobs, housing and education, a fight for full and equal rights for all blacks, the mobilisation of trade union/black defence guards to crush the cowardly vermin who firebomb black families.

Likewise blacks who want to destroy this brutal imperialist bourgeoisie must look to the British proletariat, not to utopian suicidal schemes of 'self-organisation', to secure their rights here and avenge centuries of colonial rape and exploitation. A community increasingly under siege, with their very right to remain in the country being called into question, Britain's black minority simply does not have a hope in hell of overcoming on its own the oppression which it faces. Even the Brixton area, for example, is predominantly white and a stronghold for fascist recruitment.

The road forward for Britain's blacks requires the intervention of a revolutionary, Trotskyist party, with a programme capable of transcending racial and national divisions and defeating racial oppression through class struggle. Key to this task is to split Labour's mass working-class base from the pro-capitalist misleaders who relish the crumbs of a dying empire. Though not a strategic section, blacks are overwhelmingly concentrated in the proletariat, providing a lever for mobilising a unified working-class response to racist attacks. Only with the support of the organised working class, which has a vested interest in combating increased police repression and the growth of the fascists, will the struggle to defend Britain's West Indian and Asian communities be successful. It would be truly fitting if the former colonial slaves provided a significant cadre for the British revolution.

Drop the Charges! Cops out of Brixton! Smash the Nationality Bill! Full citizenship rights for Britain's blacks! No to state bans -- for trade union/black defence guards to halt racist attacks and smash the fascists! ■

IMG...

(Continued from page 2)

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the pacifist drift towards disowning the Soviet 'workers bomb' and the defencist line towards Khomeini's Iran in the Iran/Iraq war -- the letters page has exploded in vitriolic exchanges. Likewise, the IMG voted three different ways (with some supporters literally fleeing from the room) on a Soviet-defencist resolution put by the Spartacist League to the Manchester anti-missiles conference in March. And most recently, to the horror of senior IMGers present, a contingent of Revolution Youth (IMG youth group) members chanted 'Stop the US war drive, defend the Soviet Union' and even a call for 'Reagan out, Brezhnev in' at an Easter CND parade in Birmingham.

The enthusiastic paeans to Tony Benn are more than faintly reminiscent of similar kudos for erstwhile 'left' Harold Wilson in the early 1960s. Then the IMG's predecessor (centred around *The Week*) was firmly ensconced in the Labour Party as part of Michel Pablo's perspective of being a left pressure on pro-capitalist bureaucrats through entrism *sui generis* (deep entry) into mass reformist parties. IMGers have in the past scoffed at the very notion of the organisation's Pabloism -- after all, didn't Pablo openly break with the 'Fourth International' nearly two decades ago? Yes, but the USec has never broken with Pabloism, the abandonment of the struggle for a Leninist vanguard built in combat against all non-proletarian currents. Its hallmark has always been the chase after other forces to accomplish the historic mission of the working class and its Leninist vanguard -- socialist revolution. Impressionistically shifting with the climate, the IMG has wandered back towards capitulation to the main obstacle to proletarian revolution in Britain -- the Labour Party. And with its youthful energies sapped by years of stagnation, the IMG threatens to succumb to the same reformist pressures that made Labour entrism the political graveyard for many other would-be Trotskyists.

Those who joined the IMG in the desire to make a proletarian revolution must find themselves alarmed at the current rightist capitulations. The alternative to impressionist betrayals is not to forsake the authentic Fourth International (destroyed by Pabloite revisionism in 1951-53), but to struggle for its rebirth. If the will is there, the programme is there as well -- the programme of the international Spartacist tendency. ■

SPARTACIST

BRITAIN

MILITARY VICTORY TO LEFTIST INSURGENTS IN EL SALVADOR!



In the largest demonstrations in the US in a decade, 50-100,000 demonstrators marched in Washington and up to 10,000 in San Francisco on 3 May demanding no US intervention in El Salvador. Significantly over 500 at the march to the Pentagon and 250 on the West Coast joined the Spartacist League/US (SL) and Spartacus Youth League (SYL)-initiated Anti-Imperialist Contingents which, in contrast to the liberal imperialist 'peace' politics of the march leaders, proclaimed 'Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents in El Salvador!'

'It was the Democratic Party lib/rad anti-Reagan march; it just happened to be about El Salvador', reported *Workers Vanguard* editor Jan Norden of the main body of the Washington march. Against this background the impressive Anti-Imperialist Contingent's militant banners, red flags and spirited chants stood out sharply. Indeed the American press the following day all carried, as the photograph of the demonstration, a vivid SL/SYL banner reading, 'Military Victory to Salvadoran Leftists! For Workers Revolution Throughout Central America!'

The Anti-Imperialist Contingent rallied at the Pentagon to demonstrate its solidarity with the leftist insurgents in the Salvadoran civil war and its defence of the Cuban and Russian workers states in the Cold War. Shamefully, goons from Workers World Party, which controls the Peoples Antiwar Mobilization (PAM) -- an initiator of the 3 May action -- linked arms to prevent protesters from coming to this rally, attempting to label it a 'counter-demonstration'. So PAM wants to say that its tepid pacifism and footslogging for the Democratic Party hacks is counterposed to the simple, necessary demand for the battlefield victory of those fighting the Salvadoran junta!

An SL speaker explained the nature of the Democratic Party-dominated rally. 'It's no accident you won't find any FMLN flags over there, the flag of the leftist insurgents. They consider those people to be the enemy; they're for US imperialism. They just don't want US imperialism to lose another war.' The contingent demonstrated its internationalist stand by reading out a statement from the Spartacist League/Britain on Bobby Sands and raising the chant, 'Smash H-Block!'

The mobilising leaflet for the contingents, distributed in the tens of thousands at earlier protests in New York and Los Angeles on 18 April and elsewhere, on campuses and at workplaces, explained the need to *take a side*:

'A bloody civil war is raging in El Salvador. Nicaragua is threatened with counterrevolutionary invasion. Reagan has proclaimed Central America the front line of his anti-Soviet Cold War. *Which side are you on?*

'The US sends Huey helicopters and Green Beret "advisors" to prop up the junta, threatens military blockade of Cuba, rattles nuclear missiles over Poland. But seeking to placate imperialist liberals like Kennedy, reformist organizers of El Salvador protests refuse to side with the Salvadoran rebels.

'A militant protest is needed NOW against the imperialist war drive! The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League are calling for an Anti-Imperialist Contingent to march on May 3 in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco for the demands: *Stop all aid, military and economic, to the Salvadoran junta! U.S./OAS hands off Central America! Military victory to leftist insurgents in El Salvador! Defense of Cuba and the USSR begins in El Salvador!*

Badges and posters emblazoned 'Military Victory to the Leftist Insurgents' were distributed across the US. Rallies, public meetings, impromptu soapboxing and energetic interventions into the Salvadoran protest milieu on campuses helped to get the word out. In Los Angeles militant communications workers in the class-struggle Militant Action Caucus (MAC) centred a union election campaign on US intervention in El Salvador and their union's complicity with the CIA-backed American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). MAC participated with other SL-supported class-struggle unionists in the Anti-Imperialist Contingents.

A student co-operative at the University of Wisconsin sponsored a benefit so that as many students as possible could make the long ride (about a thousand miles) to Washington to march in the Anti-Imperialist Contingent. In Boston a member of the pro-FDR CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) explained why he was asking to march in the Anti-Imperialist Contingent: 'While I do not necessarily sub-

scribe to many aspects of Spartacist activism in the US, I am much more comfortable marching under that explicitly anti-imperialist banner than with a group which has failed to cleave itself from the Democratic Party, a capitalist party, which indeed under the Carter administration initiated economic and military aid to the junta.'

And what of the reformist American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), sister group of the International Marxist Group (IMG) in this country, which prided itself on being the 'best builders' of the Social-patriotic section of the anti-Vietnam War movement in the US? While the reformists generally squabbled among themselves over the rally site, speakers and money, the SWP took the prize for the most disgusting -- and ended up with egg on their face. *Workers World*

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EL SALVADOR:

Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents!

Smash Junta Terror!

Stop All U.S. Aid to the Salvadoran Junta!

U.S./OAS Hands Off Central America!

Defense of Cuba and USSR Begins in El Salvador!

March May 3
in Washington, D.C. with the
Anti-Imperialist Contingent!

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