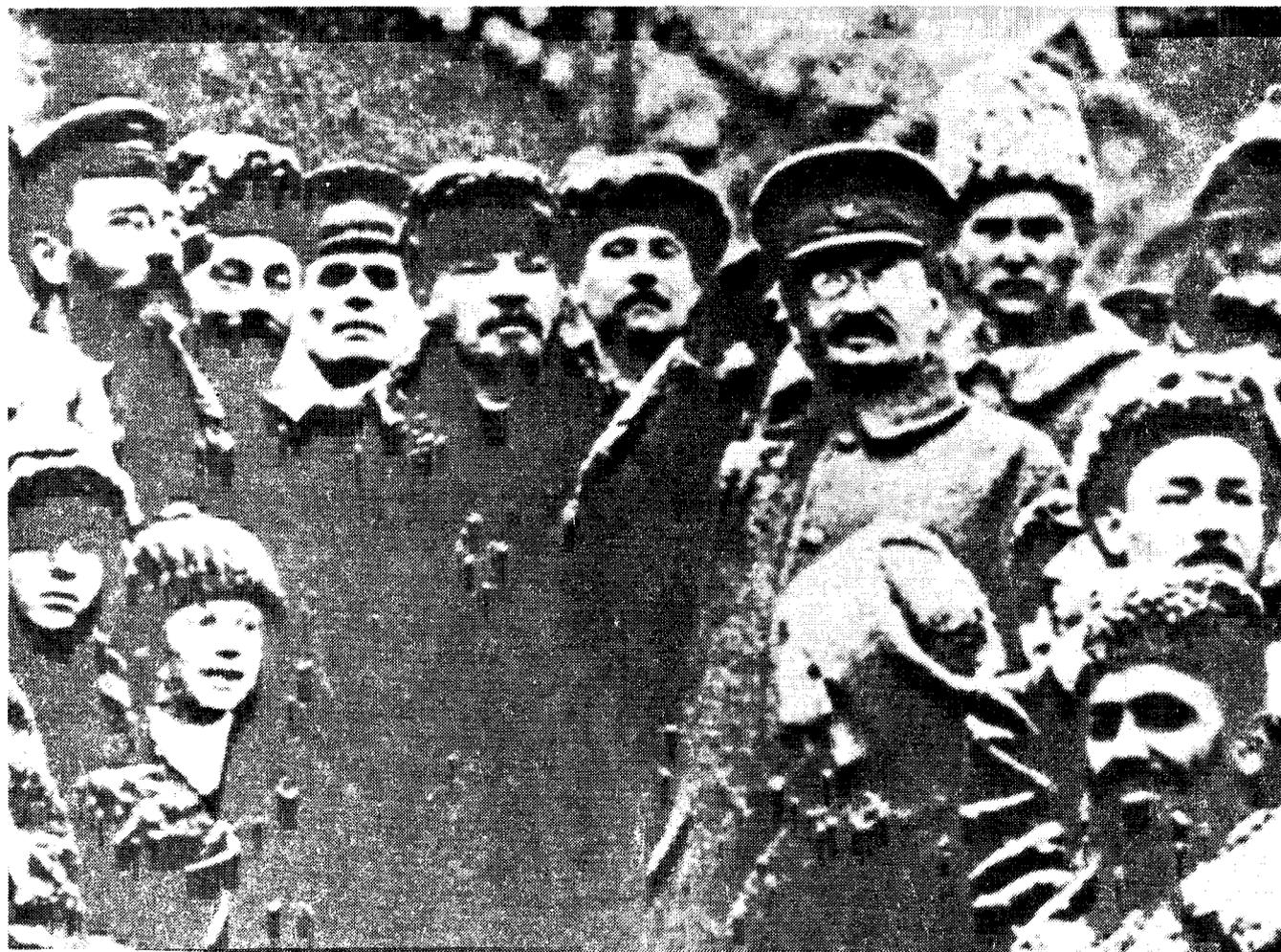


# Trotskyism: What It Isn't and What It Is!



V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, leaders of the Russian Revolution, on its second anniversary in Moscow's Red Square. L.Y. Leonidov

# Trotskyism: What It Isn't and What It Is!

*This article was first published in Spartacist (German edition) No. 14, Winter 1989-90. There are two additions to the English text, one dealing with the "Trotskyist" revisionists as the political heirs of the London Bureau and the other with the role played by former American Healyite leader Tim Wohlforth against the struggle for authentic Trotskyism in the U.S. Other minor changes and corrections have also been made.*

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*To the workers of Germany,  
East and West, and to  
European and other militants*

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In East Germany, what had seemed to be the most entrenched Stalinist regime in Eastern Europe is crumbling under mass opposition to its rule. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) stand with all those in the DDR who are seeking to establish genuine socialist egalitarianism, through breaking the repressive political apparatus of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

We stand with those members and ex-members of the SED who defend the gains the working people achieved through the overthrow of capitalism. We stand for the communism of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

The "reformers" in the bureaucracy are promising "socialist renewal." But Stalinism can't deliver any kind of "renewal." As an ideology Stalinism is simply an apology for the rule of the bureaucracy. Its slogans and "debates" are but arguments about how to put the best false face on the policies of betrayal. Without state power, Stalinist ideology is an empty shell, devoid of any relevance to the question of proletarian power.

The bureaucracy headed by J.V. Stalin arose from the devastation and atomization of the Russian working class in the Civil War and from the failure and defeat of the proletarian revolution internationally—particularly the 1923 German Revolution. Lenin's program of proletarian internationalism—concretely embodied in the understanding that the survival of the October Revolution depended on its *extension* through working-class revolution, particularly in the advanced capitalist countries—was dumped and

## Trepper Salutes Trotskyists

Leopold Trepper, leader of Soviet "Red Orchestra" network in Nazi-occupied Europe, saluted the Trotskyists' intransigent fight against Stalinism. Quotation at right is from his memoirs (for translation see indented quote, facing page).



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„Но кто протестовал в то время? Кто поднял свой голос против беззакония?

На эту честь могут претендовать троцкисты. По примеру своего неуступчивого вождя, чья жизнь была прервана ударом ледоруба, они противостояли сталинизму до самой смерти. Они, и только они. Когда начались повальные чистки, они могли выражать свое возмущение лишь в далеком, холодном безлюдье, куда их загнали, чтобы уничтожить. В лагерях они вели себя безупречно. Но их голоса затерялись в безбрежной тундре.

Сегодня троцкисты имеют право обвинить тех, кто, следуя пословице, живя с волками выл по-волчьи. Но при всем том они не должны забывать, что у них перед нами было огромное преимущество — у них была своя вполне сформировавшаяся политическая система, способная заменить сталинизм. У них было на что опереться — сколь бы ни была глубока пропасть отчаяния при виде того, как предается революция. Они не „признавались“, ибо знали, что „признание“ не послужит ни делу партии, ни делу социализма.”

Большая игра. Леопольд Трэппер.  
ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО „ЛИБЕРТИ“

replaced by the Stalinist "theory" of "socialism in one country."

To consolidate its rule the bureaucracy had to destroy the entire leadership of the Bolshevik Party that had made the 1917 Russian Revolution. Millions of Communists were murdered. During the Moscow Trials false "confessions" were extracted from Stalin's victims—not simply through sheer police-state terror but through the belief of many of the victims that in going along with Stalin's monstrous accusations they were "serving the Revolution."

In his memoirs Leopold Trepper—the founder and leader of the Soviet "Red Orchestra" espionage network in Nazi-occupied Europe, whose heroism was "rewarded" with ten years in Lubianka—damned "all those who did not rise up against the Stalinist machine." In answer to "who did protest at that time?" Trepper, who was not a Trotskyist but a Polish Jewish Communist, wrote:

"The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honor. Following the example of their leader, who was rewarded for his obstinacy with the end of an ice-axe, they fought Stalinism to the death, and they were the only ones who did...."

"Today, the Trotskyites have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed. They did not 'confess,' for they knew that their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism."

—*The Great Game* (1977)

The Trotskyists knew that Stalinism—the bureaucratic stranglehold over economic, political and cultural life in the Soviet Union, the betrayal of revolutionary struggle and appeasement of imperialism internationally—was not communism but its antithesis. And they knew that rather than "serving the Revolution" this parasitic bureaucratic caste endangered the very survival of the Russian Revolution.

Trotsky analyzed both the social conditions which led to the rise of Stalinism and the instabilities and contradictions inherent in the rule of this bureaucratic caste—which is simultaneously dependent on the collectivized property forms of the workers state and reflects and acts as the transmitting mechanism for the pressures of imperialism in undermining the workers state. Trotsky foresaw that this balancing act was inherently unstable; the contradiction must be resolved either in the direction of capitalist restoration, or by proletarian political revolution against the bureaucracy to restore state power to the working class, organized on the basis of internationalist soviet democracy.

In his work (most systematically in *The Revolution Betrayed*, written in 1936) Trotsky analyzed the Stalinist deformation of Soviet society and proved scientifically that Russia was not "socialist" nor was it moving in that direction. He demonstrated that wage differentials among the layers of the working people had sharply *increased*, and contrasted to the Marxist understanding of the gradual "withering away of the state" in the progress toward socialism the cancerous growth of Stalin's monstrous apparatus of police-state repression. He castigated the social conservatism of the bureaucracy, documenting for example the reversal of Bolshevik policies aimed at securing for women equal participation in social and economic life. He analyzed the bureaucratic disorganization of economic life and the demoralizing effect on the working people of the display of the privileges of the bureaucratic elite and



AP



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AFP

**Stalinism in crisis. Beijing Spring 1989 (top), Chinese workers enter the battle under the banner, "Students the Workers Have Arrived." Striking Soviet miners challenge Gorbachev's anti-working-class "market reforms" (center). SED members demonstrate in East Berlin, 8 November 1989 (bottom).**

wrote: "Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery." And reasserting the once-common Leninist understanding that socialism is and must be an international system, Trotsky insisted that the looming Second World War and the prospect of social convulsions in the capitalist countries would also shake the brittle Stalinist regime to its foundations.

More than 50 years ago, Trotsky predicted the unraveling of Stalinist bureaucratic rule which is now being seen from Prague to Beijing. In Poland, decades of Stalinist economic mismanagement, corruption and stultifying bureaucratic repressiveness deprived the regime of any moral authority to combat the restorationist schemes of international finance capital and the Vatican; the bankruptcy of Stalinism in Poland has now resulted in the election of an openly counterrevolutionary Solidarność government. In East Germany, where a Tiananmen-style massacre was narrowly averted, members and former members of the SED have demonstrated in the streets under banners demanding "Return to Lenin," but in other demonstrations ominous revanchist slogans have also made their appearance.

In the Soviet Union, where Gorbachev now faces opposition from miners and other workers resisting the effects of perestroika, the regime's fostering of "market socialism" has unleashed deadly conflict between the republics, as the better-off areas seek to benefit at the expense of their

neighbors; from the bloody conflicts in the Caucasus, to the Baltic nationalists who carry the flags of the "independent" imperialist-puppet interwar regimes, to the Great Russian chauvinists and anti-Semites of the sinister Pamyat, these forces threaten the dismemberment of the multinational USSR. In China, where "market socialism" has achieved its fullest expression accompanied by enormous social dislocation, the accumulation of vast private fortunes and a huge increase in the gap between rich and poor in the cities and countryside, it was the entry of discontented workers into the student-initiated pro-democracy protests that precipitated the government's Tiananmen massacre.

Trotsky was a leader, together with Lenin, of the Bolshevik Revolution. He founded and led the Red Army that defeated the forces of counterrevolution during the Civil War. Decades of Stalinist lies and calumnies against Trotsky and the physical obliteration of his supporters in the Soviet Union ultimately did not succeed in burying this history. The Gorbachev bureaucracy of Stalin's heirs today encompasses a substantial layer of "Western-oriented" intelligentsia, mainly the sons and daughters of the bureaucracy, which was getting pretty tired of sitting down to sip champagne with Western "academic Marxists" and U.S. State Department hacks only to be confronted with gibes about the yawning "blank spaces" of Soviet history. Thus glasnost—although intended centrally to facilitate perestroika against the resistance of bureaucratic conservatives

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№ 52-53

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Above: *Bulletin* No. 52-53, October 1936  
Headline: "The Moscow Trials—Trial of October"  
Picture caption: "The Real Defendants"

## Bulletin of the Opposition

(Bolshevik-Leninist)

The complete Russian *Bulletin of the Opposition* is a primary documentary record of the struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists during the period of Leon Trotsky's exile from the Soviet Union in 1929 until August 1941. Addressing the urgent programmatic issues for revolutionists facing World War II—Hitler's rise to power, the Popular Front, the defense of the Soviet Union—the *Bulletin*, edited by Trotsky, was the journal most heavily and directly influenced by him during this period.

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**Yeniseisk, Siberia, 1928: Russian Trotskyists exiled in Stalinist camps demand on the anniversary of the 1917 Revolution, "Turn the Fire to the Right. Against Kulak, Nepman and Bureaucrat—Not in Words but in Deeds."**

as well as to rehabilitate Nikolai Bukharin, the leader of the Right Opposition whose policies in many ways prefigured "market socialism"—has also generated pressure toward removing the figure of Trotsky from the realm of demonology and restoring him to official Soviet history.

Of course it is a welcome turn of events if the heirs of Stalin are forced to try to *rehabilitate themselves* by acknowledging what "everybody knows" to be the truth. But Trotskyism isn't just "history," it is the *program* of struggle to preserve and carry forward the heritage of Leninism—the rule of the proletariat organized on the basis of Soviet democracy and the struggle for world socialist revolution—against the fierce resistance of the bourgeoisie and their social-democratic lackeys and against the perversion and betrayal of Leninism by the Stalinist usurpers.

While Stalinism was created as an ideology to justify the existence of a privileged bureaucratic caste and has survived solely on the material basis of holding state power, Trotskyism has a political vitality. As Trotsky wrote in the founding document of the Fourth International, "its indestructible force stems from the fact that it expresses not only revolutionary tradition but also today's actual opposition of the Russian working class. The social hatred stored up by the workers against the bureaucracy—this is precisely what from the viewpoint of the Kremlin clique constitutes 'Trotskyism'."

With the 1945 victory of the Allied imperialists and

Stalin's Russia over Hitler, the postwar world took shape. The Communist parties in capitalist West Europe worked overtime to derail the possibility of socialist revolutions there, while in East Germany and throughout Eastern Europe capitalism was abolished by the Red Army from the top down. What was excluded in both cases was the revolutionary mobilization of the working people. Eastern Europe was freed from its pro-Nazi ruling classes and from capitalist exploitation, but the working class was politically padlocked and well aware that the Soviet military held the decisive levers of power. Today Gorbachev, impelled by his own internal problems, has turned the key and Eastern Europe is exploding with political ferment—from all quarters, in every conceivable direction from outright capitalist restorationists to anti-bureaucratic Communists.

Today, with everyone from Gorbachev on down willing to say bad things about "Stalinism," there is a renewal of interest in Trotsky—although few really know what he stood for (since his life and work have been both hidden and lied about for decades in the "official" histories). Now seeking to intervene into the events in East Germany are numerous claimants to the mantle of Trotskyism hoping to trade on his revolutionary heritage. The question is: how are people who have been deprived of any knowledge of "Trotskyism" supposed to be able to tell the real thing as opposed to the fakers and pretenders? To assist we will offer a little history.

## I. Leon Trotsky and the Coming of World War II

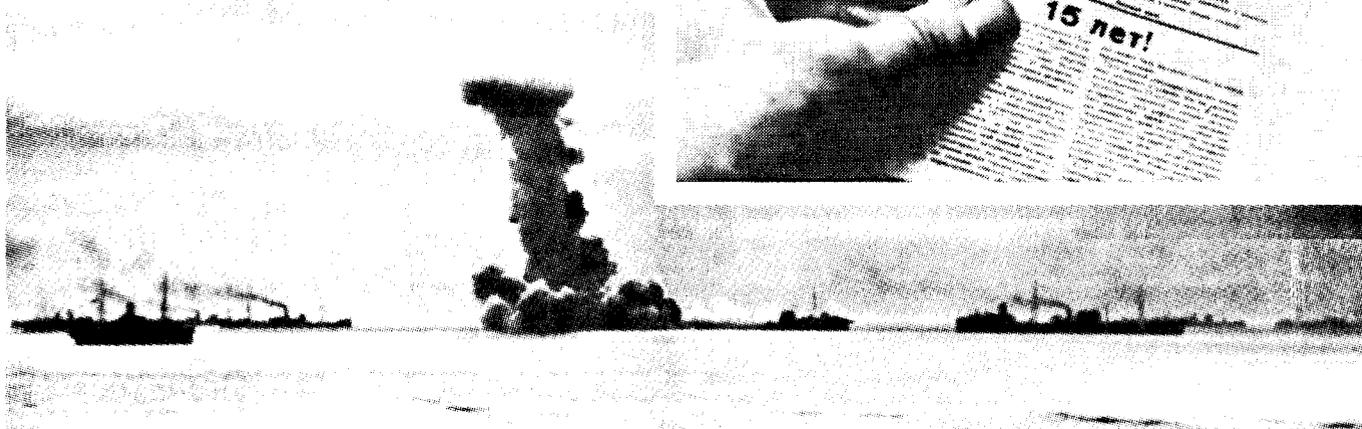
### The Foundation of Trotsky's Fourth International

In 1938, on the eve of World War II, Trotsky proclaimed the founding of a new revolutionary International in the urgent attempt to resolve the "crisis of leadership" that had left the international proletariat defenseless before fascism and imperialist carnage. Hitler's Nazis had come to power in Germany unopposed by the Stalinists or the Social

Democrats who overwhelmingly commanded the allegiance of the powerful German workers movement. That this crime did not provoke fights and splits within the Communist parties internationally led the Trotskyists to conclude there was no place for revolutionaries in the Stalinized Third International. This conclusion was compounded by the CI's policy of the "People's Front," of allying the workers movement with the parties of so-called "democratic" imperialism.

Freighter hit by German torpedo near Murmansk in WW II. At least seven American Trotskyist merchant seamen were killed during the war, some sailing on the Murmansk run in attempt to distribute miniature copies of the *Bulletin of the Opposition* (inset).

Scherschel/Life



The *Transitional Program*, the founding document of Trotsky's Fourth International, was the continuation and extension of the program that had led to the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution. It upheld Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" which was confirmed in the course of the Russian Revolution—that in the epoch of imperialism in underdeveloped countries even the most elementary bourgeois-democratic tasks can only be accomplished by the working class taking power at the head of the oppressed masses.

Against the betrayal of proletarian struggle to the "People's Front," the *Transitional Program* reasserted the fundamental Marxist principle of the unconditional independence of the working class from its capitalist exploiters and oppressors. It was under this banner, embodied in the slogan "Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers! All Power to the Soviets!," that Lenin and Trotsky led the proletariat to power in 1917.

The Trotskyists steadfastly stood for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, despite the Stalinist misrulers. At the same time the Fourth International understood that this defense also required a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats who had robbed political power from the working masses and whose hideously repressive, nationalist rule threatened the conquests of the Russian Revolution. Trotsky called for the return to the working people of their state through restoring the rule of *soviets* (councils of workers and soldiers) and sought to mobilize the Soviet working masses against the bureaucracy on the basis of the socialist egalitarianism and revolutionary internationalism that were the foundation of the Russian workers state.

For all their youth, inexperience and episodic disorientation, the small forces of Trotskyist cadre fought with courage and audacity during the war to carry out this program. American Trotskyists risked their lives to sail on the Murmansk run to get their propaganda into the hands of

Russian workers and soldiers. The 1945 Saigon uprising was led by Vietnamese Trotskyists. In the far-flung colonial empires of the Allies, particularly Indochina and the Indian subcontinent, currents identified with Trotskyism had a strong appeal to advanced workers and independence fighters, as against the Stalinist parties—bound to the bloc on a world scale with the "anti-fascist" colonial imperialist camp—which had to rein in mass struggles against the imperialist masters.

The Dutch Trotskyists struggled, with great capacity and few cadre, in illegality during the Nazi occupation of Holland. As early as 1943, with Germany already decisively defeated but with no Allied imperialist landings having taken place yet, they saw that it was a race against the clock between European working-class revolutions and an Allied-led counterrevolution leading to the division of Europe between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin which would work against the revival of the German workers movement at the war's end.

There are more examples of the heroism of the forces of the Fourth International in the face of overwhelming odds. But by the end of the war, large numbers of Trotskyist cadre had been wiped out by war and repression. Many were murdered by the Stalinists.

### The Defectors

The 4 August 1914 betrayal of the German Social Democrats, who in the face of war went over to the side of their "own" ruling class, has been repeated many times in the workers movement. In World War II, the Stalinist Communist parties allied with one gang of imperialist warmongers, opposing working-class struggle in the "Allied" countries as treason to the so-called "Great Patriotic War Against Fascism."

The Trotskyists recognized that the war was not a struggle between "democratic" imperialism and fascism but an interimperialist conflict aimed at the redivision of the world. Toward the imperialist powers the Trotskyists were,

as Lenin was in World War I, revolutionary defeatist. At the same time, they called on the international working class to militarily defend the Soviet Union.

Nonetheless, although on a smaller scale, the second imperialist war also produced deformations in and defections from the Trotskyist movement. In the U.S. party, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact together with the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland and the invasion of Finland produced an opposition which renounced defense of the Soviet Union in adaptation to a frenzied outcry of petty-bourgeois public opinion over the supposed violation of "poor little Finland" and the identification of Stalinism with fascism.

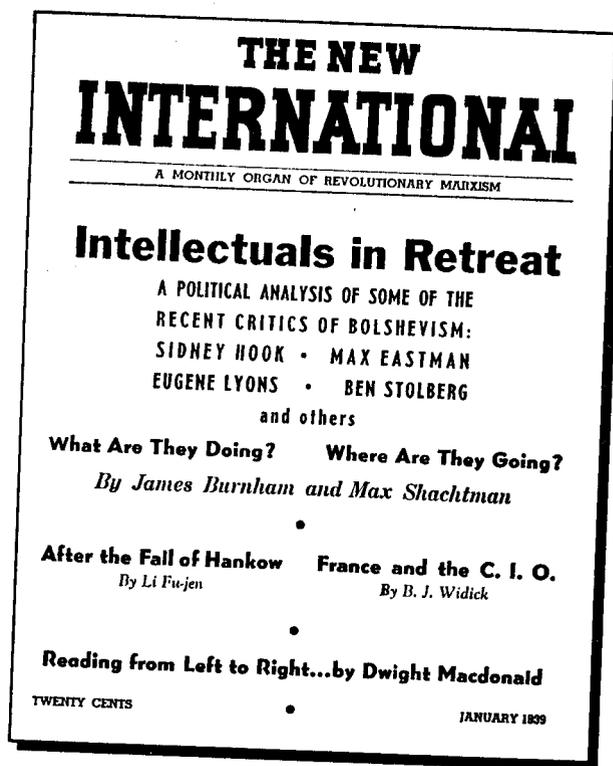
Up until the outbreak of the war, the SWP opposition led by Max Shachtman and James Burnham had declared that they too stood for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, despite the Stalinist bureaucracy. They did not shrink from this position when the Stalinists betrayed the workers by strangling the forces for proletarian revolution during the Spanish Civil War. But at that time the Kremlin's participation in the Republican camp was supported by bourgeois democrats around the world. In 1939-40 when the question of the defense of the Soviet Union was posed in the concrete, the opposition "welched on their promise," to use the words of SWP leader James P. Cannon.

Trotsky played a major role in the ensuing faction fight in the American party. The close collaboration of Trotsky, combined with the fact that the SWP, unlike other sections of the Fourth International, was not directly subjected to the ravages of the war, made the fight with the anti-Soviet opposition a surrogate for such a struggle throughout the international Trotskyist movement.

The Shachtman-led minority split from the organization. Over the years, and heightened under the pressures of the Cold War, they evolved into anti-Soviet "socialist" advisers to the State Department and the CIA. At the time of America's 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, Shachtman gave a speech alibiing the counterrevolutionary invaders as including some "good stout working class fighters" who were fighting Stalinist "totalitarianism."

When on 17 June 1953 the East German workers were the first to rise up against Stalinism, they immeasurably assisted authentic socialists in the West to reject the blandishments of "State Department socialism." The monstrous crimes of Stalinism—the purge trials and labor camps—facilitated the fake—"democratic" pretensions of imperialism, and the onset of the Cold War unleashed a barrage of bourgeois "political theorists" (exemplified by Hannah Arendt) arguing that Stalinist totalitarianism had reduced the workers of the Soviet bloc to mindless, soulless slaves rendered now and forever incapable of struggle. Therefore, they argued, partisans of the workers' struggle should be in the front ranks of the new imperialist crusade against Stalinism. The East German workers, by their revolutionary action, punctured this myth and made it possible for those Western radicals who wanted to do so to make an aggressive counterthrust against imperialist propaganda. But of course many "radicals" wanted only to continue their bloc with their own bourgeoisie.

The Sozialistische Arbeitergruppe (SAG) are the direct heirs of Max Shachtman. Their British leader Tony Cliff split from the Trotskyist movement in 1950, refusing to

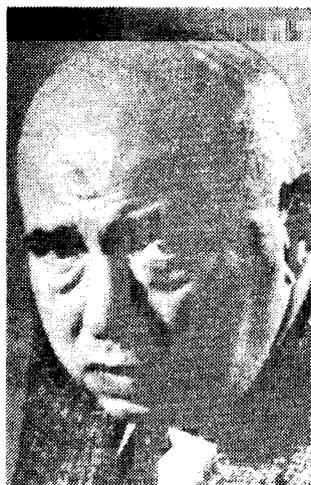


**1939 article by James Burnham and Max Shachtman. Trotsky called Shachtman's skepticism on dialectical materialism "the greatest blow that you, personally, as editor of the *New International*, could have delivered to Marxist theory." This was soon expressed in Shachtman's opposition to Soviet defensism.**

defend the North Korean deformed workers state against U.S. imperialism. Today, the SAG sees the mass protests in East Germany as an uprising against "capitalist" exploitation. For them, there are no social gains to be defended in the collectivized property forms that exist in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Like Shachtman, this position has led the SAG not only into supporting some of the darkest forces of imperialist reaction but into offering them as a model for struggle against Stalinist "totalitarianism." Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Cliffites cheered on the CIA-funded *mujahedin* who were preparing to drown any and every element of social progress in blood, with declarations that a "Mojahedin victory will encourage the opponents of Russian rule everywhere in the USSR and Eastern Europe" (*Socialist Worker*, 4 February 1989)! It is small wonder that the SAG has attracted to its ranks many skinheads, among the most loathsome SA-type [*Sturm-Abteilung*] expressions of resurgent German nationalism and imperialist revanchism.

The British Workers Power organization and its League for a Revolutionary Communist International (in West Germany the Gruppe Arbeitermacht and the Gruppe ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt in Austria) drifted left from its origins in the Cliff organization. Workers Power has done such things as supporting the Ayatollah Khomeini in his struggle for power and initially in his war with Iraq. They also "critically" championed Solidarność while admitting that if Lech Walesa & Co. should conquer it



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**The renegades didn't stop with Kautsky. Left to right: Max Shachtman, Tony Cliff, Michel Pablo, Ernest Mandel.**

would mean capitalist restoration. Now that there is a Solidarność-led government, Workers Power pathetically opines, "Poland: No Return to Capitalism"!

Most recently this outfit tried out the nasty practice of calling upon capitalist governments to throw out the ambassadors from "bad" deformed workers states. As far as we know only one of the groups that adhere to the LRCI's "democratic-centralist" international did this, the Irish Workers Group who called on the southern Irish Republic

to throw out the Chinese ambassador as a statement of "solidarity" with those murdered by the Chinese Stalinists in Tiananmen Square. Of course if pushed by tens of thousands of students defending a woman's right to abortion, the government of the Irish Republic would probably want to pull its own Tiananmen Square to stop the demon of dissolute youth desecrating the values, most sacred to the government forces, upon which this bourgeois-clericalist state was formed.

## II. The Cold War and "Trotskyist" Revisionism

In Europe, the decimation of Trotskyist cadre during the war combined with events in the aftermath of the war led to the emergence of a revisionist current within the Fourth International. Trotsky had predicted that the war would provoke social convulsions throughout the capitalist world, as the First World War had done, which would necessarily have a profoundly destabilizing effect on the Stalinist bureaucracies.

Trotsky's warning that Stalinism posed a deadly danger to the USSR's very survival was borne out in the initial collapse of the Red Army, which had been decapitated by Stalin, in the face of Hitler's invasion, before the Soviet masses rallied to the defense of their country (ultimately, 20 million Soviet citizens gave their lives in the smashing of Hitler's armies on the Eastern Front). Trotsky's predictions of renewed capitalist crisis were fully confirmed by the objective situation at the end of the war, as the old imperial powers of Europe were militarily devastated and politically tainted with fascism, the ties to their colonial empires disrupted or shattered. All that remained was to throw them out and the means were in the hands of the proletariat.

Instead Stalin propped up his "democratic" Western allies. In Italy and Greece, naked treachery was required to militarily and politically disarm the Resistance forces and hand power back to the capitalist class. In France, the Stalinists had to work overtime as proponents of capitalist "national reconstruction" in order to establish a stable bourgeois regime.

A postwar development unanticipated by Trotsky was

the expansion of Stalinist-ruled states in Eastern Europe. With the military victory of the Red Army over the Nazis and their puppet regimes, the former rulers fled to the nearest American headquarters leaving behind a power vacuum which was filled by the Soviet army. Confronted with the onset of the Cold War, the Stalinists were forced to establish deformed workers states in these countries as a "buffer zone."

These deformed workers states, which carried out the expropriation of these ruling classes whose power was broken when Hitler's Nazis were smashed, were established without revolutions (with the exception of Yugoslavia, where Tito's partisans prevailed in a peasant guerrilla war). These were cold social revolutions from the top down. The Soviet military forces were the state power; they established governments of the Walter Ulbrichts, the surviving Stalinist hacks who arrived back in Germany from Moscow and set up the SED in 1946 as the ruling party whose "leading role" was until just recently prescribed in the DDR constitution. The structures set up paralleled those which issued from the Stalinist degeneration of the USSR. Thus the expansion of "Soviet-bloc" states was at the same time a padlock and chain on the working class—a chain which despite episodic workers' struggles was in place for four decades but has now been broken.

Just as the restabilization of capitalist imperialism with the containment of the "Russian menace" was at the root of Stalinism, after World War II the revisionist current which arose in the Trotskyist movement (under the leadership of the impressionist Michel Pablo) adapted to the ap-

parent stability and geographical extension of Stalinism. The ascendancy of this revisionist current destroyed the Fourth International as the nucleus of a disciplined world party of socialist revolution (which has not prevented assorted pretenders to "Trotskyism" from claiming to be "the Fourth International" when it suits them).

Worshipping the accomplished fact of Stalinism's survival, the Pabloists projected a "new world reality" of "centuries of deformed workers states" and opined that under mass pressure the Stalinist parties could be forced to play an "objectively revolutionary role." The need for revolutionary Trotskyist parties to lead the struggle for socialist revolution in the West and for political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies was thus obviated. Today the main continuators of this revisionist current are the "United Secretariat" (USec) led by Ernest Mandel.

At the time of the 17 June 1953 uprising in East Germany the Mandelites advocated the self-reform of the bureaucracy under the slogan for the "real democratization of the Communist Parties." Three years later they backed away from the Hungarian workers who had risen up against the bureaucratic rulers and their hated secret police. At the time, they wrote that the absence of political leadership in Hungary provoked "exactly those shortcomings and dangers" which had been avoided in Poland "thanks to the leadership role" played by "the Gomulka tendency" (*Quatrième Internationale*, December 1956)!

In the 1960s the United Secretariat adapted to every petty-bourgeois radical craze. They wrote off the working class in the West as hopelessly bought off and counterposed the idea that "red universities" would be oases of revolution in a supposed sea of stagnant proletarian reaction. They passed through a period of vicarious pick-up-the-gun guerrillism. Junking Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, they postured as armchair Che Guevaras.

Enthusing over the Vietnamese NLF, in his book *Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien* (Paris 1973) French USec leader Pierre Rousset did not condemn the murder of the Vietnamese Trotskyists by the Vietnamese Stalinists but rather whitewashed these assassinations with the explana-

Quatrième Internationale

**Trotskyists led 1945 Saigon insurrection. Independence fighters rounded up, jailed and killed by French. Inset: Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau murdered by Vietnamese Stalinists.**



Keystone

tion that they showed "the width of the political gulf which then separated the Trotskyist groups from the Indochinese CP, the former probably underestimating the importance of the national question in the revolutionary mobilization of the masses, the latter profoundly underestimating the social question in the colonial revolution." Since Rousset also heralded the NLF leadership as having "assimilated the decisive implications of the permanent revolution," their murder of the Vietnamese Trotskyists was alibied as simply an unfortunate mistake.

In the mid-1970s the USec refused to even recognize the existence of the surviving Vietnamese Trotskyists in exile,

AP

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Sanders/Life



**No to the party of Stalin, Ernst Thälmann and Walter Ulbricht! After 40 years the corrupt bureaucratic rule of the Stalinist SED must go! Forge a new communist party in the revolutionary tradition of Luxemburg, Lenin and Liebknecht!**



At a rally to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Trotsky's Fourth International in New York City, Claudio Magnani representing the United Secretariat openly admitted: "We committed many mistakes, big mistakes, terrible mistakes" (printed in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, December 1988). Mandel's USec is shamelessly opportunist, wildly impressionistic and given to extreme vacillations in line—a chronic instability that reflects the lack of a programmatic anchor. What differentiates Bolshevism from these centrist impostors is the ability to "swim against the stream" when the masses are being misled against the historic interests of the proletariat. There would have been no October Revolution if Lenin's party had submerged itself in the sea of social-chauvinism that inundated the Russian workers at the start of World War I. But Lenin persevered, and three years later the Bolsheviks achieved state power.

The various revisionists who claim the name of "Trotskyism"—like Mandel's United Secretariat, Tony Cliff's organization and Workers Power's League for a Revolutionary Communist International—have followed the general political pattern established by Max Shachtman in both reflecting and capitulating to alien class pressures. In the postwar period they have come to occupy roughly the same political niche as that of the "London Bureau" in the 1930s.

The London Bureau (also known as the London-Amsterdam Bureau or the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity) was a lash-up of centrist organizations including, at one time or another, the German Socialist Workers Party (SAP), the Dutch Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP, later the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party, RSAP), the British Independent Labour Party and the Spanish POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification), who were driven by despair and distrust of the Second and Third Internationals following Hitler's victory in Germany.

As Trotsky noted in his 1934 article "Centrism and the Fourth International," the coming to power of the Nazis, followed by the bloody defeat of the 1934 general strike in Austria in which hundreds of workers were killed and thousands more imprisoned, "placed a final cross over 'classic' reformism," i.e., the perspective of peaceful, parliamentary "evolution" to socialism. Open reformism was supplanted by various shadings of centrism. The Trotskyist Left Opposition energetically sought to intersect and win over elements from these centrist currents but for the most part was unable to overcome programmatically the congenital reformism of these organizations.

Writing of the irresolution and chronic vacillations of the organizations in the London Bureau, the refusal to draw revolutionary conclusions posed by the impending war and increasing political ferment among the working class, Trotsky predicted, "The failure of this group is absolutely inevitable." The London Bureau collapsed on the eve of World War II. Many of its former leaders, such as Willy Brandt, Marcel Pivert and Fenner Brockway, returned to social democracy.

### The Political Bandits

This brings us to the Bund Sozialistischer Arbeiter (BSA). The statement issued by the BSA's Political Committee entitled "East Germany—Forward to the Political Revolution" certainly sounds very Trotskyist in many re-



Stone/SF Examiner

**American Mandelite leader Nat Weinstein joins anti-Communists in rally for counterrevolutionary Solidarność, December 1981 (above). Spartacist League/U.S. demonstration at Solidarność' New York office, September 1981 (below).**

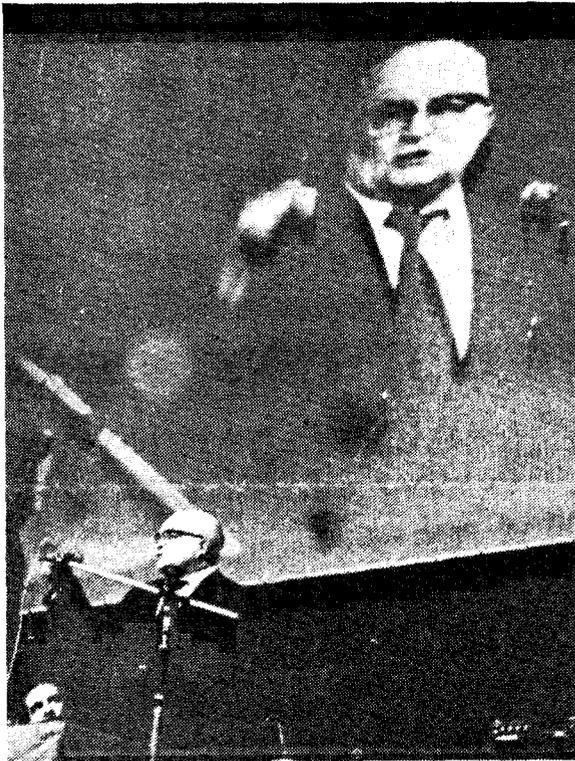
Workers Vanguard



spects. They call to defend the planned state economy. Yet for over a decade, in any and every case this question was concretely posed vis-à-vis the defense of the gains of the Russian Revolution, the BSA and its sinister "International Committee" stood for every force that was hostile to the USSR.

They hailed the victory of Khomeini's viciously anti-Communist "Islamic Revolution" in Iran. In Afghanistan, they stood on the side of imperialist-financed Islamic feudal reaction against the Soviet intervention. In Poland, they heralded Solidarność' counterrevolutionary bid for power as the beginning of a "political revolution."

The BSA calls on East German workers to unite with the working class in the capitalist West in the struggle for the Unfit Socialist States of Europe. A good demand. Yet



Workers Press

**Gerry Healy, founder of the BSA's International Committee, a megalomaniac of J.V. Stalin's proportions. At least from 1976, Healy's organization was bought and paid for by money from Near East regimes. Article in American Healyite press alibis Iraq's execution of 21 Communists (inset).**

**LETTER AND REPLY**

# THE IRAQ REVOLUTION AND STALINISM

Dear Editor,

This is a straight case of Moscow trying to set up cells in Iraqi armed forces for the purpose of undermining the regime. It must accept the consequences. It ill-behoves Mr. A. and the British




**Bulletin**  
16 March 1979

during the 1984-85 British coal miners strike, the most militant class battle in the capitalist West in decades, the BSA's then-leaders in Gerry Healy's British Workers Revolutionary Party acted as the finger men for the most right-wing agents of British capitalism in the labor movement in trying to isolate and betray the miners strike—and they did it in defense of Solidarność counterrevolution in Poland.

The Healyites pilloried the miners' leftist union leader Arthur Scargill because he had, quite correctly, remarked some months earlier that Solidarność was an "anti-socialist organization" seeking the overthrow of the Polish state. The Healyites' attack on Scargill was featured in their press on the eve of the miners strike, precisely timed to create a huge furor in Margaret Thatcher's union-hating press and among the Cold War British trade-union and Labour Party tops who used it in an attempt to cut off any solidarity with the miners strike.

Our organization in Britain sought in every way we

Socialistiese Uitgeverij Nijmegen

EFE

Morning Star



**Leaders of the London Bureau (left to right): H. Sneevliet and Andrés Nin, veteran communist leaders, and Fenner Brockway, perennial social-democrat. An unstable bloc of left and right opportunists, the London Bureau collapsed on eve of World War II.**

could to aid the miners, fighting for workers to honor the picket lines, campaigning for joint strike action by other major unions, while internationally we successfully waged a campaign of financial aid, largely from labor unions, to support the miners strike and, when it was defeated, continued to aid those miners jailed by Thatcher.

There was nothing new in the Healyites' appeasement of Cold War unionism. At the height of the Vietnam War, the American Healyites proposed a "labor party" whose platform made no mention of either the war or the fight against white racism (which is key to unlocking proletarian struggle in the U.S.). Today they charge us with being "obsessed with race" and even "black nationalists" because we insist that leading the working class as a whole to champion the rights of its most oppressed sections is an essential component of a real proletarian revolutionary program, in keeping with Lenin's insistence that the workers vanguard must be a "tribune of the people."

With mind-boggling hypocrisy and *chutzpah*, the BSA's International Committee is now attacking Ernest Mandel as "an agent of capitalist restoration" in Poland for his support to Solidarność. Excoriating Mandel as "absolutely hostile to questions of political principle" they point to the Mandelites' embrace of Jacek Kuron as a "Trotskyist" despite Kuron's "refusal to defend the conquests of the October Revolution, conquests which, in a deformed character, were extended into Poland following World War II."

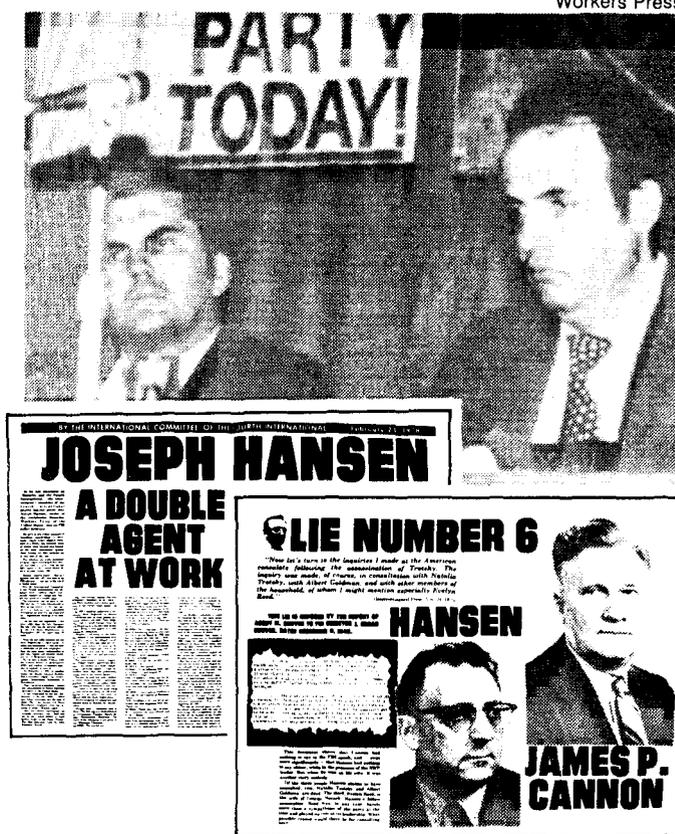
Mandel has certainly abandoned most every principle of Marxism in desperate pursuit of whatever force is "in motion." But who are the Healyites to talk? Like Mandel, they championed Solidarność in the name of "anti-Stalinism." Like him they embraced Mao's Red Guards during the Chinese "Cultural Revolution"—a bloody power struggle between antagonistic cliques in the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy in which Mao's control of the army proved decisive.

But the Healyites have gone further. When the Healyites discovered the "Arab Revolution," they simply traded any shred of political principle for cold, hard cash, and plenty of it. For years, the International Committee operated as the press agents for a variety of oil-rich Middle Eastern colonels, sheiks and dictators. They were handsomely rewarded with millions in money from Iraq, Kuwait, Libya and Abu Dhabi, among others. SED members should beware the BSA's call for resolute struggle against Stalinism. In 1979, the Healyite press hailed the Iraqi Ba'athist regime's murder of 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party, which historically had commanded the allegiance of key sections of the working class in that country. Railing against "counterrevolutionary Stalinism" they applauded the execution of these Communists by a vicious bourgeois regime.

Of course the BSA would like to say that this is all past history, simply the work of Gerry Healy, the self-proclaimed "founder-leader" of the International Committee who was ousted from the organization in 1985. Without the trappings of state power, Gerry Healy occupied a position in the organization somewhat equivalent to that of J.V. Stalin in the Russian Communist Party. But like Stalin, Healy did not operate alone in running a regime that was characterized by thuggery and gangsterism internally and externally. He had his loyal henchmen and toadies, including the current leader of the International Committee, David North.

Not one of the leaders of the International Committee objected to the vicious betrayals that were carried out to get the money that came pouring in from Middle Eastern regimes. On the contrary, Healy was deposed by his former lieutenants only *after* the money was no longer coming in. Now the BSA pays its allegiance to David North—a man who not only made his way into the leadership of the organization as Healy's loyal running dog but who continues to carry out Healy's most despicable practices. A Healyite renegade who has always opposed every practical and military measure to defend the Soviet Union from imperialism, North recently committed the giant fraud of speaking as a Trotskyist at the Historical Archival Institute in Moscow.

The BSA claims to base "itself on the struggle of Leon Trotsky" and his fight to defend the Leninist program of proletarian internationalism against the rise of the Stalinist

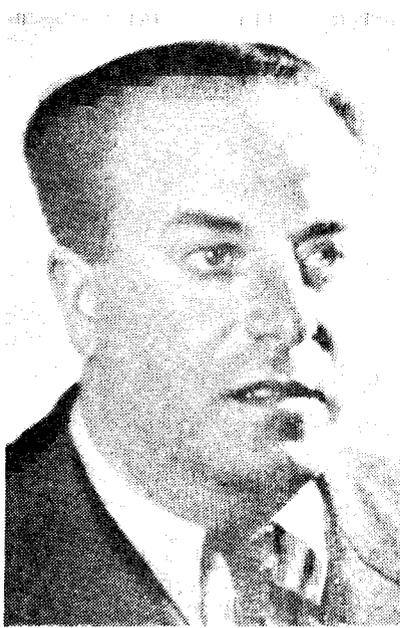


**Alex Mitchell (left) and David North (right), co-authors of "Security and the Fourth International" slander campaign against SWP leaders. For his efforts North became a leader of the International Committee which he now runs.**

bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. The statement of their Political Committee correctly notes that it was this struggle that made Trotsky not only the main target of the Moscow Trials but which led to his murder by a GPU agent. However, for more than a decade the Healyites, and now the Northites, have peddled a version of the Stalinist lie that Trotsky was killed by one of "his own."

The Northites charge that Joseph Hansen, who was Trotsky's personal secretary in Mexico and a leader of the American Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1979, was an accomplice of both the GPU and the FBI in Trotsky's murder. This slander was used by North's Workers League in the Alan Gelfand case to take the SWP before the federal courts of U.S. imperialism, demanding that the courts determine the membership of the SWP. Most recently the North group waged an international campaign in support of the capitalist state's prosecution of an SWP cadre, who is now in prison on a 25-year sentence.

While North's Workers League has never once concretely stood for the defense of the gains of the October Revolution they have spent thousands of dollars to cripple the Socialist Workers Party, an organization known for its ardent support to Castro's Cuba and Sandinista Nicaragua. From the Bay of Pigs invasion to CIA plots to assassinate Fidel Castro, the U.S. rulers have long aimed their fire at Castro's Cuba to stop the spread of revolution in "their own backyard" and as a stepping stone in their drive to reconquer the Soviet Union for capitalist exploitation. Domesti-



Vladimir Kibalovich

**Ignace Reiss, heroic Soviet spy murdered by Stalin's NKVD after declaring for Trotsky's Fourth International in 1937.**

cally, the American imperialists have waged a campaign of political repression and disruption of organizations known for their defense of the Cuban and Nicaraguan Revolutions.

The SWP was the target of heavy infiltration, burglaries, wiretaps and harassment of its members by FBI agents. North's outfit claims that this infiltration "proves" that the SWP is controlled and run by the U.S. government! On the contrary, what is questionable is the fact that the Workers League has never claimed that it has been penetrated by agents of U.S. imperialism as has been the experience of every other socialist or radical organization in the U.S. How could this be?

This is all the more suggestive given that the present top leadership of the Workers League includes the people who

studied in post-graduate Slavic studies departments at elite American universities where the CIA does its heaviest recruiting. Financed by Arab gold and perhaps from elsewhere, these Workers League leaders have done their level best to paralyze the pro-Fidelista Socialist Workers Party through an incessant and expensive campaign in the American courts. Did they learn all this in their elite graduate schools of anti-Communism? Only a paranoid believes that history is a plot but everybody knows, there are plots in history. And about this outfit we can only warn: Beware!

The BSA calls to "Overthrow the Stalinist Bureaucracy! Build Workers' Councils in East Germany!" On the surface of it, this would appear to echo Trotsky's call for a proletarian political revolution. In fact, the BSA's characterization of the Stalinist bureaucracy as "counterrevolutionary through and through" owes more to the social-democratic anti-Sovietism of Max Shachtman and equates simple membership in the Communist Party with being a part of the bureaucracy.

In the *Transitional Program*, the founding document of the Fourth International, Trotsky wrote that "all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko)." Trotsky saw that the bureaucracy was not a new ruling *class* but a brittle and contradictory *caste*. He foresaw that under the impact of proletarian political revolution a section of the bureaucracy would come over to the side of those rebelling against Stalinist rule. This was witnessed during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

In 1938 Trotsky observed: "If tomorrow the bourgeois-fascist grouping, the 'faction of Butenko,' so to speak, should attempt the conquest of power, the 'faction of Reiss' inevitably would align itself on the opposite side of the barricades. Although it would find itself temporarily the ally of Stalin, it would nevertheless defend not the Bonapartist clique but the social base of the USSR, i.e., the

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property wrenched away from the capitalists and transformed into state property.”

In July 1937, Ignace Reiss, who had worked for the GPU, declared in a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR:

“No. I cannot stand it any longer. I take my freedom of action. I return to Lenin, to his doctrine, to his acts.

“I intend to devote my feeble forces to the cause of Lenin. I want to continue the fight, for only our victory—that of the proletarian revolution—will free humanity of capitalism and the U.S.S.R. of Stalinism.

“Forward to new struggles! For the Fourth International!”

In September 1937, Reiss was murdered by the Stalinists in Switzerland.

By the BSA’s maxim Reiss would have been dealt with as simply another “counterrevolutionary” Stalinist—like the 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party whose execution they hailed.

When it wants to this outfit can spout orthodox Leninism but they are, to borrow Lenin’s term, “political bandits,” i.e., political pirates who will show any flag to attack any target. When it has suited their own episodic interests the BSA’s International Committee has turned to the capitalist courts and taken subsidies from oil-rich regimes, served the Queen and the venal right-wing British trade-union bureaucracy by smearing the leader of striking unionists on the eve of a desperate class battle, and have generally crawled before alien class forces, above all any and every force hostile to the social gains that exist for the working people in the collectivized property forms from the Soviet Union to Eastern Europe to Havana.

The Healyite/Northite tendency has always made a big deal out of its supposed “international” organization, which in practice meant that Healy and his British group called the tune and everyone else danced. At the same time, they are second to nobody, not even the ultra-legalistic American SWP, in their use of reactionary American legislation to justify a federated organization. To a man, the American fake-Trotskyists have hidden behind the “Voorhis Act,” a patently unconstitutional, unenforced U.S. law (passed nearly 50 years ago and never used against anyone) “prohibiting” international affiliation—a very convenient screen behind which centrists and reformists hide to preserve their freedom to carry out mutually incompatible opportunist ventures on each national terrain. By contrast, our American section, the Spartacist League/U.S., has denounced this reactionary law—and has ignored it. While the revisionists embrace an excuse to disaffiliate from their overseas comrades, we take pride in the vibrant debates and common discipline of international democratic central-



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**17 June 1953: East German workers march in workers' district of West Berlin. DDR workers said: "We're cleaning house in Pankow [East Berlin], you sweep out the crap in Bonn."**

ism, a necessary corrective to the pressures of one's "own" imperialist ruling class.

Like the social democrats who claim to be "socialists" and the Stalinists who claim to be "communists," the revisionists who pose as "Trotskyists" have left a trail of slime wherever they have gone. In their opportunism, they recall Oscar Wilde's famous description of a fox hunt: "the unspeakable in pursuit of the inedible."

### III. The Balance Sheet

#### Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!

One-party rule is a synonym for Stalinism. Now the lid has come off and the working people of the DDR are demanding personal freedom, free speech, democracy. If these legitimate aspirations for democratic liberties are not to be wielded by imperialism and its social-democratic agents for capitalist restoration, they must be expressed in the creation of a regime based on workers councils which include the whole of the working people: soldiers, foreign

laborers, technicians, farm workers, the mass of office workers, with advisory status for students, intellectuals and pensioners. *Workers democracy* means passionate political debate among the parties in workers councils over all the urgent political and economic problems and the alternative programs put forward for solving them. It means free and open discussion and, when the issues are serious, it means vituperative and if necessary *factional* struggle. Anything less than the democracy of freely elected workers councils is fake—bureaucratically controlled elections or else "free





DPA

### CIA's Afghan mujahedin murder schoolteachers for bringing literacy and education to young women.

through the agency of his American toady Tim Wohlforth, Healy broke up the left-wing tendency in the Socialist Workers Party. On behalf of Healy and in pursuit of supreme local authority for himself, Wohlforth—claiming that we had a “split perspective” and that it was necessary at all costs to remain in the SWP which remained a “revolutionary party” (!)—split the opposition to the SWP’s right turn, cut it off from winning valuable comrades from a section of the old-time SWP membership and set up our tendency for expulsion from the SWP in a situation of weakness and isolation.

We refused to accept the 1962 rupture as definitive given that, despite their unprincipled organizational practices, Healy/Wohlforth still proclaimed to stand on a program of

anti-revisionism. Yet the declaration by the Spartacist delegation at the 1966 London conference of Healy’s IC that “Up to now, we have not done very well, in our opinion, in smashing the Pabloites” was considered one of our greatest crimes by Gerry Healy and his followers who declared themselves to be the Fourth International. According to Healy’s megalomaniacal posturings, the revisionism of Pablo, Ernest Mandel and Joseph Hansen had long since been destroyed within the working-class movement.

That generation of communist trade unionists, in good part revolutionary syndicalists, who had been won over by the victory of the October Revolution to Lenin and Trotsky’s Third International, not least by Lenin’s book “*Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*,” found in James P. Cannon and his faction, one of the three that led the Communist Party in the United States in the early 1920s, senior Communist functionaries who voiced their interests and feelings. In 1966 we were simply following Jim Cannon’s precept to say what is, an idea quite alien to maximum leaders and megalomaniacs.

Healy’s break with us and our demand for the reform of his group was followed within one year by a host of major political differences as Healy broke loose from such political anchors as he had had. These were exemplified in an already extant dropping of any political criticism of Vietnamese Stalinism in the just war against U.S. imperialism. Within a year the Healyites were enthusing over Mao’s Red Guards during the Chinese Cultural Revolution and had embraced the “Arab Revolution” as permanent, continuous and always requiring of support no matter what the particulars. The latter was to become the source of millions in pounds sterling from the grateful local masters and exploiters of this chronic “Arab Revolution.”

As for Tim Wohlforth, he was unceremoniously dumped by Healy in 1974. After years of serving as Healy’s fawning American accomplice, who emulated his mentor’s organiza-

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**Soviet veterans of Afghan war commemorate their comrades who fell doing their internationalist duty (left). Women in Afghanistan take up arms to defend social progress.**



Franklin/Sygma

tional practices of Stalinist-style gangsterism, suppression and slander, when Wohlforth was deposed as National Secretary of the Workers League he suddenly “discovered” that: “Open discussion and political struggle was discouraged by Comrade Healy’s tendency to push every discussion to the most extreme point and to seek to break the person who disagreed with Comrade Healy. Only the most muted discussion ever took place in the international movement under such conditions.” Truly the son of the “god that failed,” in the 1980s Wohlforth resurfaced in the pages of rad-lib journals as an academic-sounding neo-Kautskyan, nostalgic for the “good old days” of Shachtmanism. What Wohlforth doesn’t mention is his own history as the bullying *líder máximo* of a particularly nasty Healyite section.

From a handful of people in the United States we continued the fight to root out the revisionism which had de-

stroyed Trotsky’s Fourth International. Our tendency extended itself internationally through political struggle to win cadre and militants away from organizations which laid claim to being Trotskyist while they betrayed every fundamental principle on which the Fourth International had been founded. In the 1960s this was largely fought over the question of permanent revolution vs. guerrillaism and pro-Stalinist enthusiasm. In the 1970s, the major question was the defense of the class independence of the proletariat against suicidal popular-front alliances with the class enemy, particularly as exemplified in Allende’s Chile.

With the onset of “Cold War II,” the question that was concretely posed was the defense of the gains of the October Revolution. We forthrightly championed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan declaring: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan—Extend Social Gains of October to Afghan Peoples!” The PDPA government which came to power in 1978 in Afghanistan was based overwhelmingly on students, schoolteachers and Soviet-trained officers who, having some direct comparative experience of how truly backward their country was, sought far-reaching modernization. As soon as the PDPA regime attempted to implement its reforms—particularly education for girls and the lowering of the bride price—in the countryside, it was confronted by a reactionary insurgency organized by landlords, tribal chieftains and mullahs.

It was only the intervention of the Red Army which *objectively* provided an external social base for a thoroughgoing social transformation of the pre-feudal class structure existing in the country. This was not the proletarian internationalist Red Army led by Trotsky. Nonetheless we heralded the intervention of Soviet troops in Afghanistan as not only a defense of the USSR against imperialist encirclement but as a military force whose battle against CIA-financed Islamic reaction necessarily generated the possibility of bringing the social progress embodied in the remaining gains of the Russian Revolution to Afghanistan.

After the Soviet troops had been withdrawn we offered to organize international brigades to fight in defense of social progress against the bloodthirsty *mujahedin* in Af-

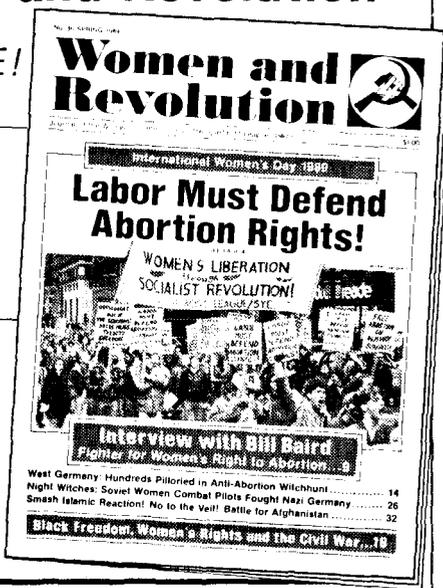
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ghanistan. We anticipated drawing into this internationalist effort not merely volunteers from our own forces but from the ranks of militant fighters in many parts of the globe who would recognize in the defense of heroic Jalalabad an opportunity to strike a powerful blow against the imperialist system by which they are themselves oppressed and dispossessed. We also calculated that the formation of an international brigade could have a powerful effect within the Soviet Union among veterans of the Afghanistan intervention, many of whom—both officers and enlisted men—see themselves as having performed an internationalist duty in Afghanistan which was shamefully left unfinished when the Soviet troops were withdrawn in the name of international “détente.” Thus in offering to “fight to the death” against the agents of imperialism and reaction in Afghanistan, we were at the same time seeking to push forward the program of Leninist internationalism and proletarian political revolution within the Soviet Union itself.

When the government of Afghanistan turned aside our offer of a brigade as militarily unnecessary, at their request we undertook a publicity and fund-raising campaign for the embattled civilians of Jalalabad as a vehicle to bring the Afghanistan civil war to the attention of the working people of many countries. This work was an impetus toward our changing our name from “international Spartacist tendency” to International Communist League, in recognition that over the Afghanistan issue and in response to developments in the USSR and Eastern Europe, there would be

**Rosa Luxemburg. A Polish Jew, German Communist leader and supporter of the Russian Revolution, Luxemburg symbolizes the Leninist tradition of revolutionary internationalism.**



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found many subjective communists who want to be in a communist organization worthy of the name. The Jalalabad campaign was also central to extending the Partisan Defense Committee (a legal and social defense organization inspired by the early work of the International Red Aid and its American section, the International Labor Defense) into Western Europe and Australia.

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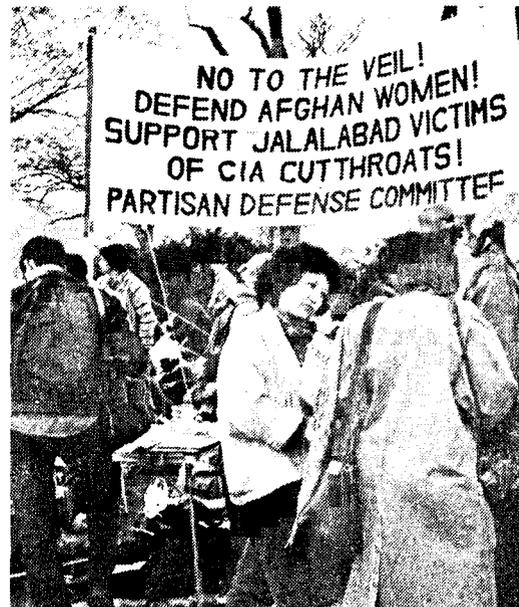
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Workers Vanguard

London, 28 October 1989: Spartacist League/Britain protests death of Kurdish victim of Thatcher's racist immigration laws (left). Partisan Defense Committee launches campaign to aid civilian victims of Jalalabad siege. Blacks and unionists mobilized by the Spartacist League/U.S. celebrate victory over KKK fascists, Washington, D.C., 27 November 1982 (bottom).

Workers Vanguard



In 1981 we recognized that the leadership of Solidarność were traitors to the working class on behalf of NATO imperialism. The rest of those who are now trying to present themselves as "Trotskyists" in East Germany cheered Solidarność. They saw a chance to earn their stars and stripes as a left cover for the social democrats and the pro-capitalist "labor statesmen" who long ago enlisted as junior partners in imperialism's war drive against the Soviet Union.

Cold War II also produced defectors and renegades from our organization. Today they call themselves the Bolshevik Tendency and the Gruppe Vierte Internationale. Based in North America, the BT are parasites who often will put forward a parody of our positions (an imitation which is similarly attempted by the British Workers Power organization) while staging repeated provocations against our organization. As for the BT's own political positions, besides hatred of the Soviet Union, these highly dubious provoca-

teurs appear to dislike American blacks, are solicitous of Zionism and praise the indiscriminant mass killings of Americans. Of the state agencies in the world only the Mossad, the Israeli secret police, has similar appetites. Although they claim to be a separate organization the West German GIVIs have operated as the knowing cohorts of the BT, keeping whatever political differences they have an internal secret.

Now, when the Polish working class faces unemployment, austerity and immiseration under the Solidarność-led government, the false pretenders to Trotskyism are all trying to cover, downplay or otherwise evade their years of slavish support to this agency for the CIA, Western bankers and the Vatican. Now suddenly they "discover" the millions of American dollars funneled into Solidarność' coffers and even publish "exposés" of the role of Irving Brown of the "AFL-CIA," a professional buster of left-led unions beginning in postwar Western Europe more than 40 years

ago, whose invitation to Solidarność' 1981 congress they somehow all neglected to mention at the time. By their genuflections in the direction of "Trotskyism" today, these opportunists pay involuntary tribute to the power and persistence of authentic Trotskyism which has told the working people the truth all along.

The call for "communist unity against imperialism through political revolution" was first raised by our tendency at the time of the Sino-Soviet split. Unlike the Stalinists who seek through appeasement to persuade imperialism to join in "détente," we understand that the capitalist rulers have never reconciled themselves to the loss of the deformed workers states from the realm of direct imperialist exploitation. From the invasion of Russia by 14 foreign armies during the Civil War to the dropping of atom bombs on an already defeated enemy in a racist war crime largely aimed at intimidating the USSR for the forthcoming division of the spoils between the victors of World War II, the imperialists by their actions themselves expose the futility of "peaceful coexistence" illusions. A great gift to imperialism is Stalinist nationalism, as each regime seeks to mitigate capitalist hostility to itself by offering to sacrifice other people's revolutions. Refusing to be taken in by the more militant rhetoric occasionally found expedient by the Stalinist betrayers, as early as 1969 we predicted China's rapprochement with the U.S. which has led to Mao and his successors' despicable service as imperialist cat's paw from the Vietnamese border to southern Africa.

Today the call for communist unity against imperialism through political revolution has acquired even greater urgency as the question of "which class shall rule" is posed in Eastern Europe. The tyranny of the capitalist world market will never be abolished until it is supplanted by a world planned economy. But in the meantime, through the shattering of the Stalinist bureaucracies, who now strive for national economic self-sufficiency, a unified and more rational planned economy *can* be created from East Berlin to Hanoi. This must result in a vast improvement in the quality and quantity of consumer goods through a multinational division of labor, producing a great strengthening in the overall efficiency and modernization of the whole economies of these workers states.

There is a historic link between the German, Polish and Russian working classes particularly as embodied in Rosa Luxemburg, a Polish Jew and German Communist leader. The worshippers of Pilsudski's fascistic dictatorship who head Solidarność despise what Luxemburg was and everything she stood for. The Stalinists malign her. The Social Democracy, which was responsible for her murder, now seeks to portray her as a "democratic" alternative to Bolshevism. But proletarian internationalists hail Luxemburg just as she hailed the Russian Revolution at the founding conference of the German Communist Party in 1918. Now is the time to reverse the defeats of the German Revolution, which led to the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, through proletarian political revolution from East Germany and Warsaw to Moscow and Beijing.

The world's ruling classes, above all the American imperialists, are celebrating the "death of Communism." They hope to extend their system of raw exploitation, poverty and racism to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, a task for which the social democrats have eagerly enlisted.

Should they succeed it would mean bloody counterrevolution within the deformed workers states (counterrevolution is no more a "peaceful," "evolutionary" process than revolution) and the intensification of interimperialist rivalries in the fight to divide the spoils, heightening the prospect of thermonuclear World War III.

What we are seeing is not the "death of Communism" but the unraveling of the Stalinist bureaucracies. The choices are starkly posed—either workers soviets to replace the corrupt, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies or a string of imperialist victories and the terrible immiseration of the masses in the workers states and elsewhere. This cannot be separated from the need for revolutionary struggle against the rule of capital by the working people in the imperialist West.

Marxists believe that revolutionary leadership is decisive—the intervention of the *conscious factor* into history at crucial moments. Capitalism is a stinking corpse, but those whose misleadership of the workers has granted the

## International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

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Trotskyist paper *Arbeiter und Soldat*, circulated in illegality, aimed at revolutionary fraternization with the German workers in uniform. Editor Martin Monat (above) was assassinated by the Gestapo in 1944.

imperialist system a multitude of new leases on life still "prove" that that system can't be overthrown because...it has not been overthrown. Humanity has in effect paid thrice for the failure of a party like Lenin's Bolsheviks to emerge in Germany during the revolutionary wave following World War I. First, the failure of the German Revolution and the consequent isolation and Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union. Second, Hitler's rise leading to the holocaust of world war—the German ruling class handed the country over to the Nazis because it was terrified of the spectre of workers power, but the German workers movement lacked the resolute revolutionary leadership to smash capitalist rule instead of merely scaring the rulers. Finally, the Stalinists' commitment to allying with "democratic" imperialism allowed Western European capitalism to restabilize its class rule throughout West Europe after World War II, opening the way to the Cold War.

Now once again the German proletariat stands at a crossroads of history. If the workers of the DDR take power into their own hands, they will not only electrify the working class of West Germany and the advanced capitalist countries, they will as well send a powerful internationalist message to the workers and soldiers in the USSR and in every other country where capitalism has been overthrown but where Stalinist conservatism and nationalism has created new blocks to the extension of the revolution.

Since the invention of the "theory" of "socialism in one country," Stalinism has been the antithesis of Leninist internationalism. Today in East Germany nationalism openly serves the appetites of the Frankfurt bankers for capitalist reunification of Germany. Return to the revolutionary internationalism of Lenin! Concretely today, the revolutionary workers of the DDR must extend the hand of fraternity to the Soviet soldiers who perform a lonely duty to world peace as the military bulwark against rapacious NATO imperialism, and to the Vietnamese immigrant workers who have daily endured official and unofficial racist mistreatment in a DDR ruled by an arrogant Stalinist regime.

On the eve of World War II, Trotsky observed with increasing urgency that the objective preconditions for world proletarian revolution were overripe, but what was lacking

PROLETARIER ALLER LÄNDER.

VEREINIGT EUCH!

JULI 1944

# ARBEITER und SOLDAT

Organ des Bundes der Kommunisten-Internationalisten (Deutsche Sektion der vierten Internationale)

## NIEDER MIT DEM KRIEG SOFORTIGER FRIEDEN!

Der Mordanschlag auf Hitler ist der letzte Warnruf vor dem Bürgerkrieg

Die Propaganda der Nazipresse sieht überall den Finger der Vorsehung. Sie wartet jeden Tag auf die Wunder ohne die nicht mehr auf den Sieg gerechnet werden kann. Selbst der Mordanschlag dem Hitler enthielt, der von den Kreisen der hohen Offiziere und einem Teil des Groskapitals ausgeführt wurde, ist für die Nazipresse ein Zeichen, dass die Vorsehung mit Hitler ist. In Wirklichkeit zeigt dieser Mordanschlag, dass Kreise der hohen Offiziere und einem Teile der Grossbürgergesehen, dass Deutschland in einer aussichtslosen Lage ist und den Hitlerstaat mit einem anderen Bürgerstaat umzusetzen wollen. Aber die Hitlerbürokratie wollen nicht so

leisten Stellungen zurückgedrängt. Die Lage im Innern wird von Tag zu Tag immer schlimmer. Je mehr die Lage Deutschlands aussichtsloser wird, desto mehr spaltet sich die Kapitalisten und Bürgerklasse und wendet sich immer mehr von Hitler ab.

### Aber was kommt nach Hitler?

Nach fünfjährigem, unnutzigem Massenmorden hat der Soldat an der Front, der deutsche Arbeiter in der Heimat der unter der bedauerlicher Bedrohung an die Front geschickt zu werden, nicht mucken darf, und unter ständiger Bombardierung arbeitet, mehr als genug vom Krieg, der ihnen fast alles was sie sich mühsam zusammengekauft hatten, genommen hat. Sie sehen dass sie in diesem Kampfe nicht gewinnen können.

### Im Wege von Karl Liebknecht gegen den Imperialistischen Krieg

Am 1. Mai 1916 befand sich Karl Liebknecht in Berlin und hielt auf dem Putzdammer Platz eine Rede. Er wurde erschossen und von ein Kriegsverbrecher gerichtet. Um seine Meinung gegen den imperialistischen Krieg zu erklären, schrieb er eine Reihe von Dokumenten, wir veröffentlichen hier eines der Wichtigsten.

Die deutsche Regierung ist wegen seiner geschichtlichen Konstitution und seiner sozialen Zusammenstellung ein Instrument der Unterdrückung und Ausbeutung für die Arbeiterklasse. Innerhalb und außerhalb Deutschlands...

to uproot decadent capitalism on the world scale and establish a socialist world order was an authentic revolutionary leadership. Trotsky's insistence on the need for "a party, a party and once again a party," has only become more desperately urgent.

The International Communist League offers itself in the struggle to return to the authentic Communist tradition of the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky's time. We are compelled to believe that our fidelity to the work of Lenin and its continuation by Trotsky necessarily means that the ICL and its German section, the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands, formerly the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands, represents the highest expression of scientific socialism, the hope of humanity.

But, we too remain subject to the great pressures of the class struggle, pressures which demand new answers. Among our ranks we strongly need those who share a revolutionary perspective in order that Marxist answers addressing the interests of the working people will continue to emerge from the SpAD and our tendency internationally—expressed by a majority, or if necessary, a minority.

So long as the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat from the tyranny of the imperialist bourgeoisie continues to develop and be fought for, there will necessarily be fights to preserve and extend the program of revolutionary internationalism that inspired Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks against alien class pressures. Workers councils committed to the historic interests of the proletariat, above all internationally, must be the decisive arbiters in such disputes. Meanwhile all the impostors and fakers, who drag the banner of Leninism through all the old crap, must be fought.

We hope that we will be joined through a common political program with many individuals, loose formations and at least sections of parties in pursuit of our common goal.

- For proletarian political revolution, the rule of workers soviets, to replace the corrupt parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies who endanger the socialist foundations of the workers states! Defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!

- No to the capitalist reunification of Germany! For so-

viet power in the DDR! For socialist revolution in West Germany! For a red soviet Germany in a Socialist United States of Europe!

- For a Leninist-egalitarian party, regrouping all revolutionary internationalist forces in a German section of a reborn Fourth International!

- For world socialist revolution! Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!

### This article is dedicated to:

**Marcel Hic**, French Trotskyist leader who was the driving force in organizing the Trotskyist European Secretariat in Nazi-occupied Europe. Arrested in 1943, deported to Buchenwald, murdered by the Nazis at the Dora concentration camp;

**Piet van't Hart**, leader of the Committee of Revolutionary Marxists who fought with great heroism in illegality in Holland under Nazi occupation;

**Pietro Tresso (Blasco)**, member of the Political Bureau of the Italian Communist Party, expelled by Togliatti, organizer of the International Left Opposition and member of its International Secretariat in the 1930s. Died mysteriously while being "helped" to escape from a Nazi prison by Stalinist partisans;

**Abram Leon**, secretary of the Belgian Trotskyist section, leading Marxist theoretician on the Jewish question, arrested and killed by Nazis in Auschwitz in 1944;

**Walter Held (Heinz Epe)**, member of the KPD expelled as a "Trotskyist" in 1932, leader of the German section of the Left Opposition, "disappeared" after being arrested while trying to cross the Soviet Union by train in 1941;

**Martin Monat (Widelin)**, member of the European Secretariat, editor of *Arbeiter und Soldat*, assassinated by the Gestapo in 1944;

**Oskar Hippe**, participant in the 1918 Spartacus uprising, founding member of the KPD and the German Left Opposition, jailed by the Nazis from 1934-36, arrested in the DDR in 1948 for organizing a Trotskyist group and imprisoned for eight years;

and to the thousands of other revolutionaries who died directly at Stalin's hands in the Soviet Union; the hundreds of other militants from many lands, including the valiant comrades of South and East Asia, who fought and mostly died in the hands of that terrible excrescence of capitalism—Nazism. No one will ever know how their destruction facilitated "order" toward the end of World War II.

The International Secretariat of the  
International Communist League  
(Fourth Internationalist)

For further background and documentation to this article we refer our readers to the following articles and publications of the International Communist League:

"Genesis of Pabloism," *Spartacist* No. 21, Fall 1972.

"From Cream Puffs to Food Poisoning," *Workers Vanguard* No. 349, 2 March 1984 [on the Bolshevik Tendency, formerly the External Tendency].

"Healyism Implodes," *Spartacist* No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86.

"The SWP—A Strangled Party," *Spartacist* No. 38-39, Summer 1986.

"Documents on the 'Proletarian Military Policy'," Prometheus Research Series No. 2, February 1989.

"Why *Should* Anyone Believe David North?" *Workers Vanguard* No. 487, 13 October 1989.

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