



70th Anniversary of Russian Revolution

Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!

L Y Leonidov

The article reprinted below is Part One of an article first printed in *Workers Vanguard* no 440, 13 November 1987, paper of the Spartacist League/US. Part Two will follow in the next issue of *Australasian Spartacist*.

Seven decades ago there occurred the epochal event of our times, the Russian October Revolution of 1917. As the cruiser *Aurora* trained its guns on the Winter Palace, a new dawn broke for mankind. For the first time, the program of proletarian revolution was given flesh and blood. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Leon Trotsky, political power passed into the hands of the working class. In its first act, the Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies decreed land to the peasants, and offered a just and democratic peace to all belligerent nations, to put an end to the slaughter of the imperialist world war. As the delegates rose to sing the *Internationale* — "Arise ye prisoners of starvation! Arise ye wretched of the earth!" — it was a clarion call for world socialist revolution. Seventy years later, the Bolshevik Revolution remains the greatest victory for the working people of the world.

The Russian Revolution was the living confirmation of Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" — namely, that in the backward countries like Russia, the tasks associated historically with bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot be accomplished by the weak bourgeoisie, but require the proletariat to take state power at the head of the oppressed masses. This understanding enabled Trotsky to stand with Lenin, against Zinoviev and Kamenev (and initially Stalin) who flinched in the face of the opportunity to take power, refusing to go beyond the struggle for bourgeois democracy.

However, lacking the expected support of victorious revolutions in West Europe, the fledgling Soviet state was surrounded by a hos-



Moscow's Red Square, 7 November 1919: V I Lenin and Leon Trotsky, leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution, on its second anniversary.

tile capitalist world. Under these conditions — after several desperate years of engulfing civil war, loss of industry, decomposition of railways and starvation in the cities and countryside — there developed tendencies toward demoralization and depoliticization among the toiling masses and toward bureaucratic commandism and loss of programmatic ideals and of revolutionary confidence among cadres of the new workers state. These tendencies culminated in a political counterrevolution which found its supreme leader in Joseph Stalin and its program in the dogma of "socialism in one country." The forces of revolutionary internationalism, personified by Trotsky after Lenin's death, were defeated and later physically exterminated.

Yet fundamental conquests of the Bolshevik Revolution have remained to this day, principally the collectivized economy built by ripping the productive resources out of the hands of the capitalists and landlords. Ever since Novem-

ber 1917, the imperialists have sought to bring back capitalist exploitation to the USSR. Today, with a war-crazed maniac in the White House who dreams of "bombing [Russia] in five minutes," defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution is more than ever a duty for every class-conscious worker.

STALIN'S HEIRS AND STALIN'S CRIMES

To secure the rule of the bureaucratic caste, Stalin had to destroy the entire Bolshevik leadership. Fifty years ago, with the infamous Moscow Trials and the Great Purge, he instituted a reign of terror that wiped out the entire Central Committee which had made the Revolution — Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and the others — and decapitated the Red Army on the eve of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union.

With Khrushchev's revelations at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, the lid was partially lifted on

these years of infamy, only to be clamped down again. Under Brezhnev the Kremlin sank into lethargy as the USSR was ruled by colorless gray old men, leading some to recall the Stalin years with nostalgia — at least the lights burned late in the Kremlin.

After a tentative start by Andropov and a retreat by Chernenko, Soviet Communist Party leader Mikhail Gorbachev has vowed to get the country moving again. Suddenly there's great interest in the West in what's going on in Gorbachev's Russia. The words *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) have become so common in political discourse they're not even translated from the Russian.

A lot of the interest in Gorbachev's Russia reflects the visible difficulties of American imperialism. There is the phenomenon of "Gorby chic": kids in London and New York wearing T-shirts with Lenin's portrait, with "СССР" (USSR in the Cyrillic alphabet) as a big "screw you" to Ronald

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Lenin and Trotsky ...

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Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Reagan is still going down in the aftermath of the Iran/Contra fiasco, at loggerheads with the Democrats over domestic policy, outmaneuvered on the Central American "peace" plan, and threatening the Iranians and the world by his irrational adventure in the Persian Gulf. And to top it off, there's the stock market crash — a giant vote of capitalist no-confidence in the imperialist leadership. After "Black Monday," the Wall Street Journal quoted a Wall Street quip: "None of this would have happened if Reagan were still President." Hitler's Thousand Year Reich was finished in 12 years; the Reagan Revolution was over in half that.

To mark the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, Gorbachev was slated to review the whole subsequent course of the Soviet Union. The editor of the weekly magazine Ogonyok, the flagship organ of glasnost in Moscow today, had said: "Gorbachev's speech will give us back our past, both the good and the bad, so we may create our future." In fact the speech, delivered on November 2, was a lot limper than most people expected. His denunciation of Stalin's "repressive measures against a number of party leaders and statesmen" was abstract and bloodless. Not a single victim of the Moscow Trial frame-ups was named in this speech as having been executed. And egregiously, Gorbachev actually praised Stalin's military leadership in World War II.

Gorbachev lauded Stalin and Bukharin for defeating Trotskyism — "it was essential to disprove Trotskyism before the whole people, and to lay bare its anti-socialist essence" (Soviet Weekly, 7 November). At the same time, he endorsed Stalin against the Bukharinite Right Opposition in the late 1920s. After all the speculation in the Western press that Gorbachev would officially "rehabilitate" Bukharin, Zinoviev and Kamenev (and, some said, even Trotsky), the speech denounced Zinoviev and Kamenev for allying themselves with Trotsky and stopped short of rehabilitating Bukharin, who was shot as an "enemy of the people" in 1938 after Stalin's show trial focusing

on the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites."

But the re-examination of Soviet history which began under the slogan of glasnost has already turned into a political minefield which is ripping holes in the fabric binding together the bureaucracy. The discussions among the Kremlin tops were so intense, the New York Times (26 October) reported, that a heated Central Committee plenum was devoted to Gorbachev's speech before it was given. In the wake of this plenum — where Moscow party leader Boris

tense debate on Stalin's role and on the fate of the Old Bolsheviks. Last spring the organ of the Soviet Writers Union published the novel Children of the Arbat by Anatoly Rybakov. This devastating portrayal of capricious cruelty and terror in Stalin's Moscow during the 1930s touched a raw nerve, producing a flood of letters. One such letter by playwright Mikhail Shatrov (whose father was shot on one bloody day in March 1937 when 6,200 were slaughtered in four different camps) stated that Stalin "objec-



V I Lenin in Gorki, 1922 (left). Trotsky denounces Stalinist assassination attempt, 1940 (right).

Yeltsin, known as a strong Gorbachev supporter, lashed out at the slow pace of "reform" — there are reports in the Western press that Yeltsin's threat to resign his post may have been accepted.

Last February Gorbachev declared: "There should be no forgotten names or blanks either in history or in literature." For Gorbachev, overcoming the alienation of wide sections of the intelligentsia from the administrative hacks is a key to building enthusiasm for perestroika. Many intellectuals are repelled by the drabness of official cultural life, while the systematic falsification of Soviet history — the treatment of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin and other Bolshevik leaders as non-persons — is an embarrassment to Soviet scholars and even propagandists who want to deal with their Western counterparts without the burden of lies that no one believes and cover-ups that expose only their perpetrators.

Gorbachev's "no blank pages" has in effect sanctioned an in-

tively did more for its defeat — the [Russian revolutionary] movement's — than our class enemies all together did." About the same time, the June issue of Nauka i Zhizn (Science and Life) published posthumously a 1965 lecture by well-known writer Konstantin Simonov bitterly attacking Stalin's 1937 purge of Marshal Tukhachevsky and the Red Army officers. "If there had been no 1937, there would have been no summer of 1941," he said, referring to the Soviet army's collapse when Hitler's Operation Barbarossa began.

REVOLUTION AND TRUTH

In his own way Gorbachev recognizes that Trotskyism is the left opposition to Stalin's heirs: "Trotskyism was a political current whose ideologists took cover behind leftist pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric." If the discredited whole-cloth slanders of Trotsky as an "agent of imperialism" have been replaced in the mouth of the

present Soviet leaders by new distortions to serve Gorbachev's new purposes, at least the way has been opened for elements in the USSR who consider themselves leftist Communists to look into the political record of Trotsky's struggles against the bureaucracy.

This is despite the intentions of Gorbachev, whose 70th anniversary speech was far more mealy-mouthed about the crimes of Stalin than the Khrushchev "revelations" of three decades ago (at least Gorbachev did manage to put in a good word for Khrushchev). Khrushchev's famous "secret speech" was delivered at a closed session of the 20th Party Congress in 1956. When Stalin died in 1953 — after exterminating all his opponents and building an apparatus of one-man rule backed up by massive secret-police terror — a power fight was unleashed within the bureaucracy. The Kremlin tops — who had been accomplices in Stalin's crimes or at least had participated in covering them up — needed to dismantle some of the more onerous and bizarre aspects of Stalin's paranoid personal dictatorship. Thus, a few months after Stalin's death, his much-feared head of the secret police, Lavrenti Beria, was shot in the Kremlin and posthumously accused of having been a British spy since 1919!

Khrushchev's denunciation of the "cult of personality" was buttressed by the publication of Lenin's letter to the 12th Party Congress in January 1923 (known as Lenin's Testament) which was not presented to that Congress. It was verbally revealed secretly to the party tops at the 13th Congress and was subsequently suppressed by Stalin and his cohorts. In referring to Lenin's Testament, in his 2 November address Gorbachev carefully omitted Lenin's call that "the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post," namely, general secretary (Collected Works, Vol 36, p 596, [Moscow, 1966]). Gorbachev wanted to clearly signal the permissible limits of glasnost.

But it's not so easy. During the "Khrushchev thaw," an important layer of the Soviet political elite became aware of some salient aspects of Russian history. It is known that Lenin, in the last critical months of his active life, waged a fight against bureauc-

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Letter

14 November 1987

Dear Comrades,

Since the last issue of Australasian Spartacist, no 122, reports on the Philippines show the situation is getting sharper, shaping up to a showdown between the military and the organised working class and oppressed masses. The US imperialists and their allies like Hawke are very much concerned about regional anti-Soviet stability. A recent article in the Australian, 12 November, reports US State Department official Wolfowitz' concern over the threat to US bases by the communist insurgency expressed at the "Pacific 2000" conference in Singapore, attended by representatives of the butcher regimes throughout South East Asia. As the same article

said: "But because the Philippines bases are regarded as vital to Western defence in a global context, there is little doubt all countries of the region, including Australia, are concerned about the latest developments."

I enjoyed the eyewitness report in ASp 122, "Philippines on a Knife's Edge" which put forward the Trotskyist position of permanent revolution, centering on the vanguard role of the revolutionary proletariat leaning on the support of the peasant majority to overthrow capitalism in backward countries. However, I thought the overline to that article, "Workers/Peasants need a Revolutionary Party!" tends to equate the proletariat and the peasantry and as such is imprecise and could be misinterpreted. As the conclusion of the article warns of the danger in the CPP's popular frontist strategy, clarity on revolutionary

strategy is critical to the struggle to build a Trotskyist party which is able to imbed itself in the Filipino proletariat and lead the oppressed masses in smashing capitalism.

Comradely,
B Shannon

Correction

In Australasian Spartacist no 122 (September-October 1987) there is an omission from the article "Smash Racist State Terror Campaign!" In the sentence commencing at the end of the second column, page 7, the words "When 18-year-old" should be followed by "Eddie West died in jail...."

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Sri Lanka: Indian Troops Out of Eelam!

Workers to Power!

OCTOBER 27 — Less than three months after Sri Lankan president J R Jayewardene and Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi signed their much-vaunted "peace accord," the blood-soaked Jaffna Peninsula in northern Sri Lanka (Ceylon) has again become a scene of untold horror. After years of being ravaged and terrorized by Jayewardene's Sinhalese-chauvinist, officially Buddhist regime, the oppressed and long-suffering Tamil people (who are mainly Hindu) are now getting it from those whom they looked to as their saviors. For two weeks upwards of 20,000 Indian troops backed by heavy battle tanks, artillery and helicopter gunships have battled the nationalist guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). An estimated 700 civilians were slaughtered, in addition to Tiger guerrillas; up to a half million of the peninsula's 700,000 people are now refugees in their own land.

One week after the J R/Gandhi accord was signed, we wrote:

"...we have repeatedly warned that the Tamils' illusions in the Indian bourgeoisie are deadly dangerous.... Now they are getting what they wanted...and they won't like it.

"If the Tamil Tigers refuse to come to terms, they are likely to find the Indian army a far more formidable proposition than the Sri Lankan forces.

"But it is not just the Tigers' blood that will run. The Eastern Province is heavily interpenetrated, more or less evenly among Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims.... This arrangement is a recipe for massive communal bloodletting and forced population transfers as the different communities fight to control the province."

-- Workers Vanguard
No 434, 7 August

The "Indian Peacekeeping Force"



Indian troops lay siege to Jaffna, slaughtering hundreds in drive to crush Tamil nationalist "Tiger" guerrillas.

is now waging war on the entire people of the Northern Province, while in the Eastern Province the accord triggered a spree of indiscriminate communalist atrocities by the Tigers against Sinhalese civilians.

For years Tamil militants have desperately beseeched "Mother India," with 60 million Tamils just across the Palk Strait, to save their people from Sinhalese-chauvinist terror and aid their struggle for an independent state of Tamil Eelam. Now Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran laments that the Tamils are "the victims of India's geopolitical interests." When capitalist India finally moved, it was only to be expected that it would assert its own interests. Capitalist India, that prison house of peoples, can play no progressive role in the region. We demand: Indian Army Out of Eelam!

The government-instigated anti-Tamil pogroms of July 1983 created a *de facto* partition of the island. But what Eelam constitutes may well be determined — tragically, as so often in the past in cases of interpenetrated populations — through a massive communalist blood-letting. The

peoples of Lanka may well relive the horrors of the 1947 partition of India. The Tamil nationalists have come to mirror the bloodiest aspects of Sinhala chauvinism with their own murderous logic of racialism. Even in the best of circumstances, an isolated, impoverished Eelam offers a bleak prospect for the Tamil masses, while leaving untouched the hideous oppression of the Tamil plantation workers of the hill country tea estates. The superexploitation of these low-caste Tamil laborers, many of whom are women, is the material basis on which the island's economy rests. Only workers rule can end the communalist hell on the island and bring the emancipation of all toilers of South Asia. Down with murderous nationalism! For the right to Tamil Eelam! For federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka — For a socialist federation of South Asia!

THE "ACCORD" UNRAVELS

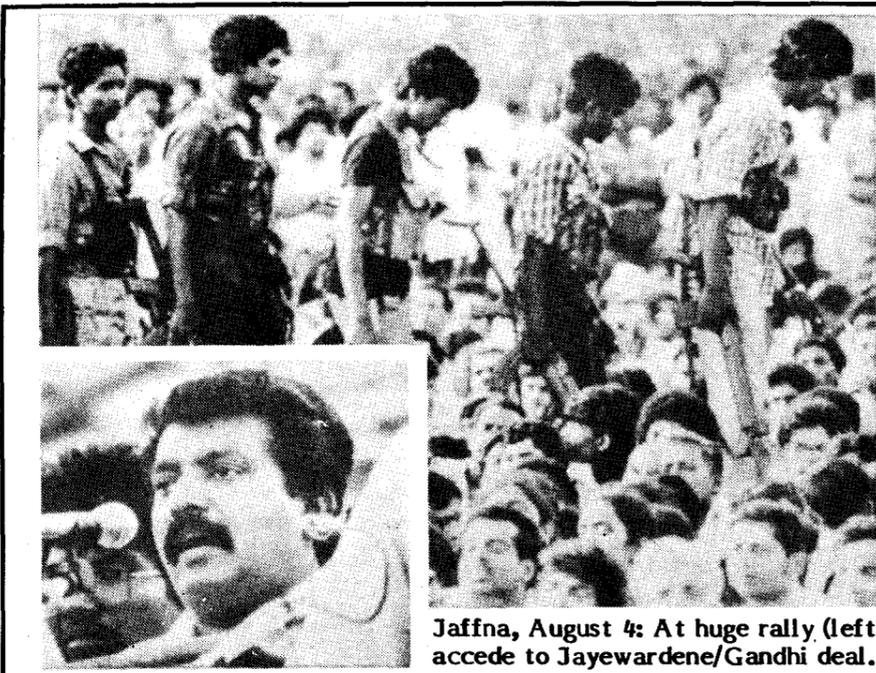
Mindful of anger among Tamils in India at the Sri Lankan slaughter and fearing a United States-brokered encirclement as Pakistan and other US allies aided Jaye-

wardene's UNP regime, India staged a relief airlift operation in the face of a major Sri Lankan offensive against the Tamils in June, signaling Jayewardene that it would not remain passive much longer. The July 29 accord between Gandhi and Jayewardene represented nothing less than overt Indian overlordship of the island. The US has long had particular designs on the Eastern Province, site of the strategic Trincomalee harbor, and this agreement was thus a setback for American anti-Soviet interests in the region.

Gandhi also promised to disarm the Tamil guerrillas in exchange for Jayewardene's grudging agreement to establish a federated administrative unit in the North and East, effectively under Indian suzerainty. The day after the accord was signed Indian troops disembarked in the north while Indian air force transports ferried Sri Lankan soldiers south. The Tigers and other Tamil groups went along with the accord very reluctantly, turning in a small fraction of their arms. The Sri Lankan government procrastinated on releasing Tamil detainees (by mid-September only about one-quarter of the 5,700 had been released) and on disarming its Sinhala-communist Home Guard rabble. At the end of September, Tiger militia leader Thileepan died after a hunger strike to demand the expulsion of Sinhalese colonists and Lankan army and police installations from the occupied areas.

Wide sections of the Tamil population at first welcomed the false promise of peace that came with the arrival of Indian troops. With the lifting of the siege on Jaffna it could be seen that the damage and destruction wrought by the Sri Lankan army was much more extensive than previously revealed. As one visitor to Jaffna observed, the Tamils liked the peace but not the peace accord. For the first time in years the Colombo/Jaffna train was running again, allowing Tamils in the

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Jaffna, August 4: At huge rally (left), Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran calls on reluctant Tamil youth to accede to Jayewardene/Gandhi deal. Indian troops (right) collect Tamil arms.



Sri Lanka...

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south to visit their families. Fish and onions from Jaffna soon started turning up in the Colombo market as Tamil and Sinhala merchants re-established trade.

Meanwhile, other Tamil militant groups who are mostly more favorable to the Indians than the Tigers, tried to re-establish themselves. But in mid-September Tigers carried out attacks in 20 different villages near Batticaloa, killing more than a hundred supporters of rival groups, including people just recently released from the Sri Lankan concentration camps. Then Prabhakaran started quibbling over exactly how much "power" LTTE leaders would get, demanding domination of the new interim administration. The Indians granted them seven out of twelve seats on the ruling body of this paper "Eelam," which in any case was to be an impoverished capitalist puppet regime totally subordinate to India. But the nationalist militants remained unreconciled, and continued to bury their weapons.

On October 5, the lid completely blew off this uneasy truce. Seventeen Tigers intercepted in the Palk Strait swallowed cyanide suicide capsules after J.R.'s National Security minister Lalith Athulathmudali, a hardliner unhappy with the accord, ordered that they be shipped to Colombo for interrogation. Most of them died immediately. The next day the Tigers shot dead eight Sri Lankan soldiers whom they had been holding prisoner for months, dumping their bodies at Jaffna central bus station.

That night Tamil nationalists went on a rampage of indiscriminate slaughter, murdering more than 200 Sinhalese, mostly civilians — men, women and children — in the Eastern Province. The Colombo/Batticaloa train was stopped, Sinhalese and Muslims were separated out and 40 shot. In the southeast 20 bus passengers were massacred and near Trincomalee 27 others killed in two fishing villages. In one fishing village an old Sinhalese woman described how laughing Tamils blew her husband's head off with machine guns. These widespread and calculated acts of indefensible terrorism sent thousands of Sinhalese fleeing their homes in the heavily interpenetrated Eastern and North Central Provinces. At this point, Indian High Commissioner J.N. Dixit announced that India would turn its guns on the Tamils; shoot-to-kill orders were issued and Tiger strongholds would be wiped out. The drive on Jaffna began.

But if the Indians thought they would get a quick victory they were mistaken. The Tigers have waged a fierce and fanatical resistance, at times halting the Indian advance completely. The original schedule to take control of Jaffna in five days was revised to ten, and fresh troops and weapons have been rushed in to bolster the Indian forces. At Jaffna University, the Tigers caught an elite helicopter force in the open and machine-gunned 30 soldiers.

India insists that it will stop at nothing short of unconditional surrender by the Tigers. But the Tigers are a guerrilla army. There

are now reports of attacks on the advancing Indian troops from behind, and the fighting may well continue "behind the lines" long after the Indians capture the area. On October 13, an American State Department spokesman commended this "firm and effective action against these militant groups" (*India Abroad*, 23 October). On October 26, Jaffna was taken.

Echoing Reagan's State Department, the president of the Eelam Tamil Association of

slogan was to address the likelihood of a bloodbath by the Indian army and to reassert the right of Tamil Eelam, for which the Spartacist League/Lanka (sympathizing section of the iSt) has fought, against the vicious backlash of Sinhalese racism.

From July 1983 and before, in our press and in demonstrations and marches around the globe we put forward slogans advising against illusions in the Gandhis. We warned, "Remember the fate of the Mukti Bahini" — the Bang-

the *Lanka Guardian* (1 October) observed:

"... we were pawns in a larger chess game, though we thought we were going to liberate Tamil Eelam.... We thought we were the most intelligent, hard-working, educated group of people in the whole country. And we couldn't see something that should have been obvious to a little child."

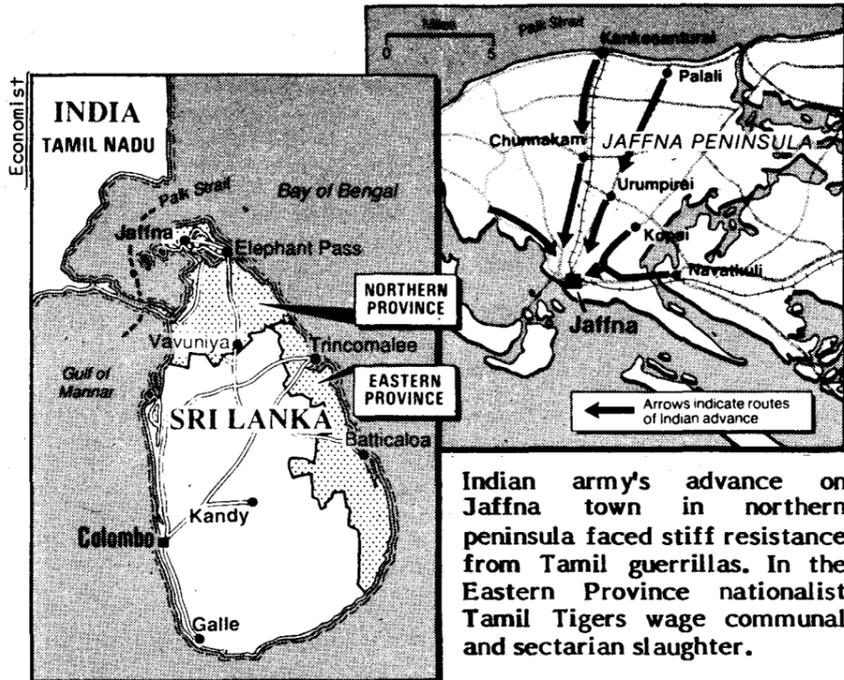
With their perspective of carving out Eelam, they were profoundly unconcerned with the plight of the island's "Indian Tamils" (so called because they were imported from India by the British over the last century and more to work the tea estates) in the highlands of Sri Lanka. Yet an alliance with the strategic Indian Tamil estate workers could have been a critical component in uniting all sectors of the oppressed in Lanka as well as the toilers of India in a struggle for social emancipation.

While the Tamil guerrillas in the early '80s rigorously limited their attacks to Lankan state targets, their nationalist strategy ineluctably led to indiscriminate terror against Sinhalese civilians. The massacre of 150 unarmed Sinhalese civilians at the holy city of Anuradhapura in May 1985 marked a watershed. Today, the Tigers adopt Zionist methods in the Eastern Province, driving out the Sinhalese and Muslims to ensure a Tamil majority. The government has for years colonized the province with Sinhalese to successfully overturn the pre-existing Tamil majority. The Tigers in turn demand that all Sinhalese colonized since 1982 be expelled, and their gunmen make no distinction.

Not surprisingly, given their perspective to become the new rulers of their own statelet, the various nationalist groups have also engaged in bloody internecine warfare aimed at securing a monopoly of political power, with the Tigers gaining the upper hand over the years. In 1985 they murdered two former MPs from the moderate bourgeois parliamentarist TULF. In 1986 they wiped out more than 150 militants of the TELO group, and delivered bloody body blows to the rival EPRLF and PLOTE groups.

Now, in the Sinhala-dominated south of Lanka, the UNP government is under assault from the same communalist forces that it itself fomented. Even as Gandhi arrived in Colombo to sign the accord, a member of J.R.'s honor guard attacked the Indian prime minister with a rifle butt. In the subsequent anti-accord riots, state property, nationalized services and cooperatives were the

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Indian army's advance on Jaffna town in northern peninsula faced stiff resistance from Tamil guerrillas. In the Eastern Province nationalist Tamil Tigers wage communal and sectarian slaughter.

America whitewashed the Indian campaign as "a disciplinary action" justifiably aimed at bringing the Tamil militants "into line in getting the peace accord going" (*India Abroad*, 23 October). It is notable that as soon as Rajiv Gandhi moved against them, the Tigers lost much of their traditional support among bourgeois politicians of south India's Tamil Nadu state. In fact one of the largest contingents of the Indian force in Jaffna is drawn from the Madras regiment from Tamil Nadu.

The Indian onslaught has wreaked unparalleled destruction and devastation in the Jaffna area. A doctor at the Jaffna Teachers Hospital reported that "the situation in Jaffna town is worse than anyone can imagine." Seventy-six bodies had been brought to the hospital just in the first four days of the fighting and he was certain of at least another 100 civilian dead. The desperation of Jaffna Tamils in the face of this is expressed in an appeal by 14 Jaffna civil servants, pointing to "indescribable bombing and shelling and aerial strafing" in which "almost 700 innocent civilians have died" and pathetically pleading that the butcher Jayewardene intervene with India on behalf of the Tamils (*New York Times*, 20 October).

FOR WORKERS INTERNATIONALISM!

The international Spartacist tendency discussed the looming crisis in Lanka last month at a meeting of the International Secretariat held in conjunction with the Spartacist League/US National Conference. The discussion was prompted by a thoughtful written contribution submitted by an SL/US comrade to our pre-conference discussion and resulted in a decision to propose to our tendency the slogan "Indian troops out of Eelam!" The

ladeshi liberation fighters who were put down by Mrs Gandhi — and pointed to the Golden Temple massacre of Sikhs in Amritsar in 1984. Our warnings were met with hostility by the various Tamil petty-bourgeois nationalists, whose "armed struggle strategy" was fundamentally aimed at provoking a bloody response by the Lankan regime in order to force India to act. Even after the Indian army had been slaughtering Tamils for a week, a Tiger-dominated demonstration in London on October 18 still appealed to Gandhi's India! A leaflet for the demonstration denounced India's "hasty genocidal military action" which "even surpasses Sinhalese state atrocities" — only to conclude with the pathetic plea: "India, land of Gandhian pacifism and leader among world's democracies, come to your senses, stop the slaughter."

The Tigers et al were not ignorant of the fate of the Sikhs and the Bangladeshis at the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie. The truth is, as with all nationalists, they didn't give a damn as long as "their nation" was not on the receiving end. One disillusioned Tamil nationalist interviewed in



Melbourne, 21 Feb: Spartacists, Tamils protest Lankan minister.

Reds Spike White's Provocation

On Thursday 1 October the Spartacist League (SL) held a lunch-time forum at Melbourne University entitled "Hawke's Cold War Regime Kills Blacks," detailing the urgent need for mass labour/black/minority mobilisations against the murderous campaign of racist terror against the Aboriginal population. This forum was subject to a premeditated and outrageous disruption led by one Paul White. White calls himself "Workers Revolution," a one man group linked to a tiny thoroughly anti-Soviet US outfit known as the League for a Revolutionary Party (LRP) which absurdly considers the USSR to be "state capitalist." He has attended the last few of our forums equipped with multi-page diatribes peddling filthy and provocative slanders of "racism" against us. At the forum White and two of his cohorts were all granted speaking time in the discussion period. But this clearly did not suit White's designs. In the closing moments of discussion he rose and began screaming disgusting insults, in defiance of the chairman's calls for order. This was the cue for his four stooges to join in — another long-time fake-left fringe dweller, Owen Gager; Mammad Panahe, a self-styled supporter of the Iranian Fedayeen Minority; and two Polish Solidarnosc supporters, Jan and Tony Kowalski — provoking a physical fight. SL comrades and union supporters were able to physically eject these disrupters, spiking their provocation and allowing the meeting to continue in good order.

So White is now squealing all over campus with a poison pen tract entitled "Denounce Spartacist violence" and a similar piece in *Farrago* (12 October) courtesy of the anti-communist student bureaucrats. It does not take much to see through White's litany of lies. While being ejected from the meeting, White screamed, "Hit me, go on hit me" and one of his stooges shouted "You'll never have another meeting on this campus." This brought a campus security guard to the scene. He just happened to be around! So did the student bureaucrats who came along offering to call the cops

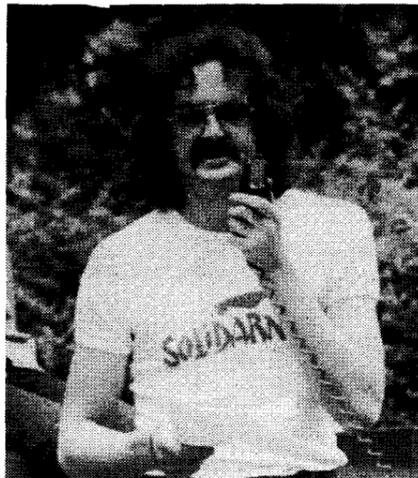
onto campus. Far from the ridiculous picture White paints of us attacking "the audience," those attending the forum remained to discuss with us, one student remarking that he was impressed with our defence of the meeting. Lurid talk of "brutal bashings" and "Spartacist thugs" peddled by White's leaflet, along with the lie that we "repeatedly kicked" (the far from unresisting) "Asian student" (the Iranian Panahe, who was seen sporting a bloodied nose afterwards) are really only excreta from White's morbid imagination. The fact is the forum was defended with the minimum amount of physical force necessary and the anti-communist provocateurs received a richly deserved lesson in workers democracy, which only the SL on the left has consistently defended.

THE POLITICS OF AN ANTI-SOVIET CRAZY

White has an enormously inflated ego (eg producing pamphlets authored by "Paul White and Leon Trotsky"! but he really doesn't count for much. For the sake of some political hygiene he ought to be known for what he is — a rabid anti-Soviet opportunist who for the last decade has submerged himself in the sellout ALP. White has been through at least seven different fake-left organisations, managing to be kicked out of two organisations that he helped found! With each new organisation he accumulates more rotten traits, displaying the political banditry of the Socialist Labour League and the enormous opportunism of the Socialist Workers Party. Since expulsion from the latter he has formed increasingly smaller cliques, his new incarnation comprising only himself. His partner-in-crime Gager is another one-man band with great pretensions, known as the Communist Left (Leninist).

His latest lash-up with the LRP is only a political fulfilment of his inveterate anti-Sovietism. In 1980 White went berserk against our slogan "Hail Red Army," which greeted the Soviet incursion in Afghanistan. White shares his Iranian associate Panahe's glori-

ASp



Solidarnosc-lover Paul White: Spartacists get his goat.

fication of Islamic reaction. After all, the Fedayeen lauded Khomeini's anti-working class, Persian-chauvinist anti-woman "revolution" in 1979 and fumed over our revolutionary slogan in 1979 of "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran." White has the breathtaking gall to accuse us of "sneering" at the Vietnamese Revolution. His third campist position puts him in the camp of Vietnam's enemies — he calls for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea — whereas the SL has stood out in defence of this great revolutionary victory. White hailed the rise of the counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc movement in Poland in 1981, which consolidated around a capitalist restorationist program. Solidarnosc, Reagan/Hawke's favoured "union" is the political equivalent of the reactionary Catholic NCC/DLP in Australia. For the opportunist White the epicentre of the class struggle has always been within the ALP, and over Solidarnosc he was able to line up with all wings. Now White's Workers Revolution heaps curses on the ALP — what a joke! Far from White breaking from Laborism, rather Hawke's ALP these days is too inhospitable even for White.

WHITE: ANTI-SPARTACIST BIG LIAR!

We know that the hard Soviet defencism of the SL drives White

and cronies into paroxysms. If it was any other way we'd be worried that we were doing something wrong. Now White has taken up the LRP's anti-Spartacist crusade, dredging up a ten-year-old Big Lie campaign from the bottom of LRP leader Sy Landy's garbage can. At an earlier SL forum on South Africa he passed out a five-page smear sheet entitled "Spartacist Chauvinism and South Africa's Revolution." We are referred to as "chauvinist scum" and a speech in January 1977 by Spartacist League/US National Chairman James Robertson is targeted for having "insulted" Albanians, Palestinians, Jews, Greeks, North Europeans, Canadians and US blacks!

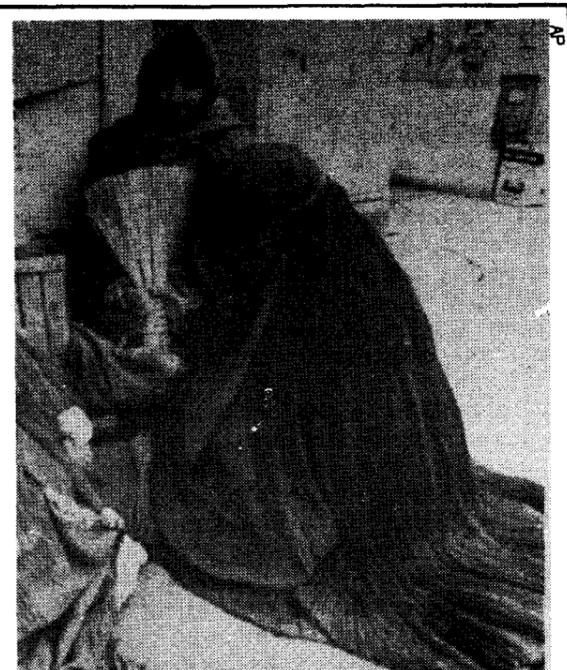
White's vitriolic smear of "racism" is his attempt at the Big Lie — bearing no relation to anything we actually say or do, he hopes that if you throw enough mud maybe some will stick. It aims to hide the reactionary logic of his own anti-Soviet politics. On South Africa White cannot stomach our program to build a Trotskyist party to lead the powerful black proletariat in a revolutionary struggle to smash apartheid capitalism. White tails the popular frontist nationalist politics of the ANC and slanders us as "opposing the struggle against apartheid" and as defenders of the right of "self-determination" of the South African Boers. Well, White, there are several million Boers in South Africa. They do not have the right to oppress and exploit the blacks but they do have a right to live. Only a class struggle perspective can break through the racial divide in South Africa, which threatens a bloodbath of the blacks by the well-armed white ruling minority.

Revolutionaries' insistence on class struggle solutions and the hard defence of the rights of all the oppressed is anathema to all shades of petty-bourgeois anti-communist moralists, whose world view does not go beyond the simple-minded division between "good" and "bad" peoples. For White the "good" people in

Continued on page eleven

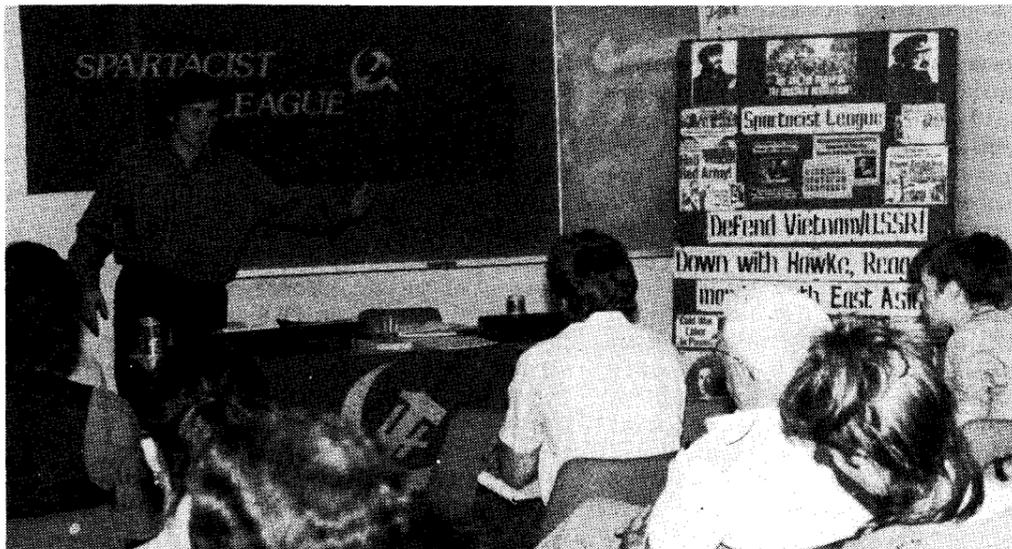


Hail heroic Red Army soldiers in Afghanistan (above). White supports Islamic reactionaries. Mullahs' idea of "freedom" for women — chattels in chador (right).



SL Celebrates the October Revolution

ASp



Spartacist Forums "Where is Gorbachev's Russia Going?" (Sydney left, Melbourne right) celebrate 70th anniversary of October Revolution. ASp

The Spartacist League celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution with well-attended forums in Sydney and Melbourne titled, "Where is Gorbachev's Russia Going?" In October 1917 the workers of the Tsarist Empire, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky and supported by the peasantry, overthrew their capitalist exploiters and established the world's first workers state amidst the bloody chaos of the first imperialist war. Today the two-year-old regime of Mikhail Gorbachev has initiated dramatic changes in the Soviet Union under the watchwords of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring). Tracing the history of the Soviet Union through the civil war and the Stalinist degeneration to World War II, Spartacist speaker David Garden noted that this has been "seventy years of warfare between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world in its various combinations and rivalries, which has run hot and cold, but always basically relentlessly since October 1917."

Addressing the current imperialist war drive against the USSR, comrade Garden told the Sydney meeting: "We have said from the get go that the Hawke regime is the most loyal regional ally, lackey and enforcer of anti-Sovietism. Hawke has gone out of his way to identify himself both personally and his government with Reagan. When he was in the US a month ago he told the US Chamber of Commerce that the US bases in Australia made Australia the US's most valuable ally. Indeed the US bases are intimately linked to the US war-fighting capacity. A key example in the recent past is the Korean airliner war provocation, when Reagan sent a passenger aircraft over the most important and sensitive Soviet installations in the Soviet Far East. The intelligence gathered by the vast array of satellites and other equipment was run through the US bases here, centrally Pine Gap. And to fulfil this regional role as anti-Soviet

enforcer Hawke has launched his own arms build-up. His position was perhaps most graphically illustrated earlier this year. After the first military coup in Fiji and a lot of hooah about Soviet/Libyan influence particularly in Vanuatu, the Wall Street Journal in an editorial demanded that Hawke do his job. Within 24 hours he kicked out the Libyan Embassy in Canberra.

"The White Australian bourgeoisie has always hated Red Russia. It volunteered an expeditionary force in 1918 to help the British particularly in the Murmansk region. Back in the 60s if you saw an ANZAC Day parade on TV, you'd see this contingent with their various medals, they were mercenaries in Russia in 1918. And it has been volunteering against revolution ever since, witness Korea, Malaya and Vietnam. Our racist bourgeoisie would play the counterrevolutionary mercenary for all occasions. For us the struggle to explode this racist capitalist state, which lives in constant fear of social revolution particularly in Asia, through workers revolution is intimately linked to the defence of the Soviet workers state. In Cold War II the Spartacist tendency internationally as defenders of the Russian Revolution have stood alone on the left over Afghanistan, over Poland, over all the other anti-Soviet provocations, in unconditional defence of the Soviet workers state. We have stood at our post and done our communist duty. For the working class internationally must understand that it cannot make new conquests if it cannot defend those already won."

DEFEND VIETNAM/USSR!

In the discussion comrade Kathie spoke about the Vietnamese Revolution: "Australia under the Hawke Labor government is playing its role as Reagan's junior partner in this region in its war drive against the Soviet Union, of which Vietnam is the central target. Australian imperialism

begged the US to let it send troops to fight in Vietnam and has fought in counterrevolutionary wars in such countries as Korea, Malaya and Borneo. Vietnam was a defeat for US and Australian imperialism — it was a victory for communists and we hail the defeat of our own imperialist government in this long and dirty war. By defeating US and Australian imperialism the heroic Vietnamese did more to defend the degenerated Soviet workers state than a thousand summits where Stalinists preach the illusory policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism, based on Stalin's policy of socialism in one country.

"The Vietnamese Revolution has stayed the hand of imperialism, it has bought us time and also the 'Vietnam syndrome' lives on, that deep-seated fear of more losing wars and defeats for im-

fought against imperialism and our debt to these heroic people is to fight for the international extension of communism under the program of Lenin and Trotsky."

COLD WAR AND THE LEFT

Comrade Greg Blythe took up the Australian left: "The Russian Revolution has divided the left ever since October 1917. It split the social democracies in Europe and across the world leading to the formation of the Communist International. It's been a key test of revolutionary will and tactics and strategy in all countries ever since that revolution. The Cold War in Australia has had a very big impact on the left. Virtually the entire left went along with the imperialist hue and cry over Afghanistan. Virtually the entire left supported the Polish Solidar-



Vietnam, 1975, Saigon liberated. Two, three many defeats for US and Australian imperialism!

perialism. Also the presence of the Soviet Union's base at Cam Ranh Bay in a small way has the capacity to challenge US superiority in this region, and we see this as a really good thing. Vietnam was as well an inspiration for the oppressed masses around the world. The struggles of the neo-colonial countries such as Nicaragua, Angola were a direct result of this victory. The Spartacist League has been unique in its defence of this great victory against imperialism. It was a war

nosc counterrevolution in 1981 and found thereby themselves in alliance with Reagan, Hawke, Thatcher and the Pope. That event moreover split the Stalinist party here, the Socialist Party, which lost most of its trade union base.

"We had the spectacle last week of the Socialist Labour League holding a celebratory meeting. This outfit has long been known as political bandits on the

Continued on page eleven

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST



• For a planned economy based on soviet democracy!

• Soviet archives belong to the Soviet peoples — Open the history books!

• For unconditional defence of the USSR against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!

Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!

Continued from page two

racy. But the bureaucracy won, and that fact is decisive in understanding the Soviet Union today.

Lenin formed a political bloc with Trotsky against the troika of Stalin and his then-allies Zinoviev and Kamenev. He sought Trotsky's active support in defense of the state monopoly of foreign trade and in curbing the abuses of the "Workers' and Peasants' Inspection" (*Rabkrin*) which was headed by Stalin until the middle of 1922 and still closely associated with him thereafter. Particularly, Lenin sought to gear up Trotsky to lead a sharp struggle against Stalin's highhanded abuse of the nationalities, particularly the Georgians, who after enduring national oppression under the tsar wanted guarantees of the equality of nations in the union of Soviet republics. Lenin insisted that "exemplary punishment must be inflicted" on Grigory Orjonikidze, Stalin's chief lieutenant, for brutality and Great Russian chauvinism in the Georgian affair. And he added: "The political responsibility for all this truly Great-Russian nationalist campaign must, of course, be laid on Stalin and Dzerzhinsky" ("The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'" [December 1922], *ibid*, p 610).

But Trotsky pulled back from the sharp struggle which Lenin urged. He was unable to discern in advance where Stalin was going (Stalin probably didn't know either). And he was in some isolation: while now being the number two leader in the Soviet state, he had only joined the Bolsheviks after the February Revolution (despite having then personally led the October). He feared being thought personally self-seeking. Trotsky was constrained to be too modest for too long when the necessities of maintaining a revolutionary policy required that he urgently push the Leninist policy

which he espoused, and therefore push himself.

Under the conditions of the exhaustion and atomization of the Soviet proletariat by the civil war and the resultant devastation of the economy — and the demoral-



Red soldiers demonstrate for communism in Moscow, 1917. Novosti

isation engendered by the defeat of the 1923 German Revolution — the soviets ceased to function as governmental organs. But debate could still take place within the Bolshevik Party and in December 1923 the pages of *Pravda* were opened again one last time for the ventilation of party discussion.

Lenin was incapacitated by illness and died on 21 January 1924 at the age of 54. At the 13th Party Conference held in January 1924, Stalin and his allies in the "troika" (Zinoviev and Kamenev) gutted party democracy to seize the decisive ascendancy. In the fall of 1924 Stalin announced his new schema of "socialism in one country": the negation of the Leninist understanding that the survival of the October Revolution depended upon its extension internationally, above all to the advanced capitalist countries.

In the *Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Trotsky explained the social basis for the rise of the bureaucracy as rooted in scarcity: "When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very

ation, while giving the rich peasants the upper hand in the countryside — Stalin then turned around and imposed forced collectivization. The wanton brutality and tremendous human cost of this policy is supposed to be a secret in the USSR today. In the course of this "left" turn, Stalin broke with and politically destroyed the Bukharinite Right.

To secure the rule of the conservative bureaucratic caste, it was not sufficient for Stalin to smash and isolate his political opponents. He had even to destroy the Stalin faction itself, since many of its leading members were opposed to shooting Communist opponents of their faction.

At the 17th Congress of the already multiply-purged party in 1934, Stalin's re-election as general secretary was conducted by secret ballot — and some 20 percent voted against him. The 1934 assassination of Kirov — a long-time member of the Stalin faction who was seen as Stalin's potential rival — became the excuse for mass murder, including a bloody revenge on the 17th Congress participants. Because of the secret ballot, Stalin was unable to distinguish the "enemies" who had voted against him from the "loyal" 80 percent — so he essentially killed them all. Khrushchev's 1956 speech revealed that 70 percent of the Central Committee elected by the 17th Congress had been executed, along with an almost equal proportion of the Congress delegates.

The degeneration of the Bolshevik Revolution was mirrored in Moscow's direction of the world Communist movement. In the mid-1920s the Communist International promoted revolution by bureaucratic means, sometimes (particularly associated with Zinoviev) engaging in lightminded insurrectionary adventures. The

Continued on page eight



G P Goldshtein



State Fine Arts Publishers

Stalin school of falsification: in original photo (left), Lenin addresses troops headed for Polish front, 5 May 1920, as Red Army leader Trotsky stands on steps; in later versions, Trotsky was disappeared. Open the archives — they belong to the Soviet peoples!

Lenin and Trotsky ...

Continued from page seven

Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 found Stalin and his then-partner Bukharin totally disoriented, first groveling before the bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang, then staging an insurrectionary adventure: the Canton Commune. Whatever Stalin tried, nothing worked. During the so-called "Third Period" which began in the late 1920s, the Comintern was given over to ultraleft and sectarian posturing — which in Germany allowed Nazism to triumph without a struggle by the powerful German proletariat.

Fearful of resurgent, rearming German imperialism under Hitler, Stalin then desperately sought an alliance with the "democratic" imperialist powers, France and Britain, under the rubric of the "Popular Front" adopted in 1935. Stalin's strangulation of revolutions abroad for the sake of the "Popular Front" went hand in hand with the extermination of the Old Bolsheviks inside the USSR. The Moscow Trials coincided with Stalin's betrayal of the Spanish Revolution in order to gain the confidence of the capitalist rulers in Paris and London. Successful proletarian revolution in Spain could have inspired the workers of the world — and given the Soviet workers the revolutionary confidence to sweep out the Kremlin oligarchy. Stalin, instead, sent in wave after wave of GPU agents and "commissars" to smash the advanced detachments of the insurgent workers movement who wanted to fight for socialist revolution; his "practical" policy was that the workers should uphold the Republic to "win the war" against General Franco. The result was the triumph of Franco, who ruled Spain for the next four decades. This was "socialism in one country" in action and at large. On the basis of such crimes against the international proletariat, Trotsky branded Stalin the "gravedigger of revolutions."

From the time of his exile from Russia in 1929 until his death at the hands of a Stalinist assassin in 1940, Trotsky carried forward the banner of the Left Opposition, the continuator of the authentic tradition of Lenin's Bolshevik Party. As against the obscene spectacle of the false "confessions" paraded at the Moscow Trials — confessions secured not only by terror but by the bewildered victims' belief that in going along with Stalin's monstrous accusations they were "serving the Revolution" — Trotsky and his comrades in Russia refused to "confess" or

to recant their revolutionary views.

Years later, Leopold Trepper, who was not a Trotskyist (he was in fact a Polish Jewish Communist who created and ran the Soviet "Red Orchestra" espionage network in Nazi Germany and occupied Europe during World War II), paid tribute to their steadfastness. Excoriating "all those who did not rise up against the Stalinist machine," he asked "who

Basil Blackwell Inc



Left Oppositionists in Siberian exile demonstrate on anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, 1928. The center banner, with pictures of Lenin and Trotsky, proclaims: "Long Live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

did protest at that time?" and then gave the answer:

"The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honor...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."

— Leopold Trepper, *The Great Game*, 1977

CONTRADICTIONS OF GORBACHEV'S RUSSIA

The contrast between the feverish debate leading up to Gorbachev's 70th anniversary speech and its cautious content highlights the contradictions of Gorbachev's Russia. The Gorbachev line is a response by the Kremlin oligarchy to the changed realities in the Soviet Union. The new general secretary seeks to maintain bureaucratic administrative rule in the presence of a sizable cultured petty bourgeoisie and the felt needs of the Soviet masses for a better life. The intellectual layer that Stalin pretty much destroyed during his reign is now a significant stratum in Soviet society,

and it interpenetrates the bureaucracy. Gorbachev — a representative of the new generation of Stalinist bureaucrats who did not participate personally in Stalin's crimes — is also the first Soviet leader since Lenin with a university education. It's been a long time since the direct and open application of terror; no longer are there millions of people in forced labor camps; police-state repression has become more indirect.

Under these conditions and with these constraints, Gorbachev needs to shake up the society as a means to overcome the sluggishness of the Soviet economy.

The Kremlin bureaucracy confronts a new generation which does not measure social and economic progress against the devastated condition of Russia after it defeated Nazi Germany in World War II. Boris Kagarlitsky, a Soviet sociologist and a principal organizer of the newly-formed Federation of Socialist Clubs, notes:

"The country which Gorbachev has inherited is already not the same as the one that came into Khrushchev's hands. It is an urbanized society with a large number of hereditary townspeople and skilled workers.... Young people have no memory of the poverty of the forties, but react acutely to any threat to lower their present standard of living."

— *New Left Review*, July/August 1987

What is involved here is not simply a hankering after Western gadgetry and consumerism. There is a sense in Russia, unlike in the West, that the country is supposed to belong to the working people. In fact, according to official ideology, the USSR is supposedly "building socialism" and moving toward a classless society — the disappearance of social inequality on the basis of material plenty. The people are bound to wonder why an economy that can put satellites into space "can't" make a decent pair of sneakers.

Gorbachev thus confronts a very different political conscious-

ness than in the capitalist West. Traveling to Murmansk, high above the Arctic Circle, the Soviet leader spoke of "revolutionary tasks" and gave the marching orders: "Work — this is what should be done now." That will certainly pose radical changes in a country where during the Brezhnev period the standard joke was: "we pretend to work, they pretend to pay us."

In moving to accelerate economic growth Gorbachev has more than exhortation in mind. Under the rubric of *perestroika* the present Kremlin leadership aims to minimize centralized economic planning in favor of "market socialism" along the lines of Yugoslavia and Hungary. This program if implemented — and there is bound to be powerful resistance to *perestroika* not only among the working class but also from vested interests within the bureaucracy — will undermine collectivized property and strengthen the internal forces for capitalist restoration. In Yugoslavia four decades of "market socialism" in the name of "self-management" have produced the highest inflation rate in Europe, East or West, massive unemployment and intensified national conflicts which can rip the country apart. Gorbachev's Russia is a long way from present-day Yugoslavia, but *perestroika* is a first step down that road.

At the same time, the policy of *glasnost* has unleashed enormous political and intellectual ferment. A broad spectrum of heterogeneous socialist-oriented informal groups, the *nyeformaly*, is beginning to surface. According to *Ogonyok*, there are 1,000 of these *nyeformaly* groups in Moscow alone, another 200 in Leningrad, ranging from "Green" ecological groups to rock clubs and radical-socialist circles. The Gorbachev regime has tolerated these groups (and some elements of the regime have evidently been promoting them), but this is juridically reversible — the unofficial groups can suddenly become really unofficial. Already the top hacks of the Komsomol (Communist Youth) are mapping out a strategy to combat this proliferation of political groups outside the bureaucracy's direct control:

"The document prepared by the Komsomol propaganda department says that many of the groups serve a valuable function, but it complained that others read the works of such politically unacceptable thinkers as Leon Trotsky, and that some seem to be setting themselves up in competition with state organizations."

— *New York Times*, 8 November

With the lid of repression lifted after 60 years, some vile creatures are also crawling out of the political underground. The most sinister development under *glas-*

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Sri Lanka...

Continued from page four

particular targets of the enraged communalist mobs. In the forefront of this opposition is the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of Mrs Bandaranaike, who smashed the 1971 New Left JVP insurrection. Today that same JVP, now rabidly communalist, is allied with Mrs B and the Buddhist monks are once again the shock troops of Sinhalese-communalist reaction.

In addition there is a shadowy and sinister terrorist organization, the People's Patriotic Movement. The "PPM" claimed responsibility for the August 18 grenade attack on a government caucus meeting which killed two and left both Prime Minister Premadasa and Athulathmudali wounded. Yet the assailant has not been caught. Last week a PPM bomb placed in the offices of the JSS, the government's strikebreaking "trade union," killed three. A former Communist Party MP in the southern town of Matara was shot and seriously wounded. And the newspaper offices of both the CP and the social-democratic LSSP have been attacked with grenades and dynamite.

At the heart of the decline of the once-strong workers organizations of Lanka was their capitulation to Sinhalese chauvinism in the form of popular-front alliances with bourgeois forces they falsely promoted as "anti-imperialist," like the SLFP, architects of the "Sinhala Only" language policy. To this day the CP and LSSP (and its offspring, the NSSP) refuse to fight for the right of Tamil self-determination.

And the "left" tail of these popular-frontist parties is veteran leftist Edmund Samarakkody's "Revolutionary Marxists," who issued a statement demanding "Indian Troops Out of Sri Lanka" at a time when this was the rallying cry of frenzied Sinhalese reaction. Significantly, it did not even mention the Tamil people's right to self-determination! Samarakkody wants to fight to the last Tamil, urging "Tamil Militants Resist the Indian Troops with All Your Might!" Meanwhile, his statement made no appeal to the Sinhala workers to come to the aid of the embattled Tamils. Instead it prettified the Sinhalese-communalist opposition to Jayewardene, claiming that "the Sinhala bourgeois and petty-bourgeois opposition forces... are using the genuine class hatred of the working class and toilers among the Sinhala people, against the oppressive Jayewardene regime to strengthen their Sinhala chauvinist forces."

With this sleight of hand, Samarakkody obscenely seeks to reach out to the same rabble that — in the name of combatting terrorism — hacked Tamils to death in the 1983 pogroms. What about the miserable unemployed workers in Weimar Germany in the 1930s who, in desperation, turned to the Nazi barbarians? They had genuine class hatred too — and became shock troops in genocide. And there were the mullah-led anti-shah forces in Iran in the late 1970s which under the guise of "anti-imperialism" brought us the feudal fanaticism of the Khomeini regime. Samarakkody, like many other leftists, supported them too. This populist tailism of the masses' most reactionary im-

pulses amounts to nothing but gross betrayal.

LEGACY OF IMPERIALIST DIVIDE AND RULE

Historically it is rather accidental that Ceylon did not become part of India. The boundaries that the imperialists drew, throughout Africa, Asia, etc, more often than not divided tribe, people and nation. It is the tinpot nationalists who are the most fervent defenders of these "sacred" borders. India is indeed a prison house of nations, religious minorities, oppressed castes and hundreds of millions of horribly exploited working people. At the same time, like Indian capitalism itself, Indian nationalism is attenuated and atrophied, trapped somewhere on the road to national consolidation, reflecting the combined and uneven development of a giant backward country deformed by imperialist exploitation.

What is being played out in Sri Lanka today is the tragic reactionary logic of nationalism and communalism, the continuing horror of British imperialism's divide-and-rule strategy, which exploited traditional communal divisions to set entire peoples against each other in bloody slaughter, reaching its nadir in the 1947 partition of India. Well over five million people fled in both directions across the partition lines as refugee routes became vast open graveyards and trains arrived filled with corpses. Today the Indian capitalist butchers of the Sikhs and Mukti Bahini are butchering Tamils, while in Tamil Nadu thousands have been arrested for protesting. At the time of the anti-Tamil pogroms in 1983 we wrote:

"While Marxists unconditionally defend the Tamils' right to form a separate state, we are less than enthusiastic about the prospects for an independent capitalist state in Jaffna. It would inevitably slide under the suzerainty of the oppressive Indian regime."

— Spartacist No 35
Autumn 1983

Had they broken from their narrow nationalist perspective, the Tamil militants who are today either dead or embittered racialists could have provided an important element for an internationalist proletarian party in Lanka, turning the struggle against the oppression of the Tamil people into a springboard for revolution throughout the sub-continent. The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky led the workers and peasants of the old tsarist empire — a vast prison house of peoples — to power through a program which transcended national particularities and forged unity against the common class enemy.

Today Bolshevik parties are needed in Lanka and India which can unite the rail workers of Calcutta, the Tamil estate workers, the Sinhalese women workers of the "free trade zones," in a struggle to bring down this vile system of racialist horror and grinding exploitation. This is the task to which our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka are dedicated. Indian army out of Eelam! For the right of Tamil Eelam! For the federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka, part of a socialist federation of South Asia! Workers must rule!

— Reprinted from
Workers Vanguard no 439,
30 October 1987

nost has been the more public emergence of nativist Russian fascism represented by Pamyat (Memory), which demonstrated in front of the Kremlin last May. Railing against heavy metal rock music, alcoholism, drugs and the "loose morals" of Soviet youth, this group harks back to the anti-Semitism of the tsarist Black Hundreds. It is trying to fuse the worst excrescences of Stalinism — which used anti-Semitism against the Trotskyist Left Opposition — with the backwardness embodied in the old Russian Orthodox Church. But Pamyat has a problem — they are nativist Russian fascists who are, however, constrained to appeal to the patriotism of all the Soviet peoples — because half the population of the Soviet Union consists of non-Russian nationalities.

Pamyat is not some collection of churchgoing old people and right-wing nutcases on the fringe of Soviet society. Some of its leaders are drawn from elements of the bureaucracy and the organization reportedly has the protection of the Ministry of Aviation Industry as well as top-level elements of the Communist Party hierarchy. Trotsky observed in the Transitional Program that "all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F Butenko)," with the Stalinist center playing a bonapartist role. The tendency toward such polarization exists because the bureaucracy is not a ruling class but a caste which has no ideological

justification for its rule, claiming to stand for the revolutionary ideals which it betrays.

Even the mystical blood-and-soil rhetoric which is a hallmark of fascism can find an echo among some Stalinist apparatchiks. For example, in the mid-1960s a functionary of the Moscow Komsomol distributed a leaflet demanding:

"Love for the motherland is a necessary and sufficient condition for citizenship. A cult of the ancestors must be set up....

"At first, a long campaign must be conducted in favor of native, moral, and physiological values of virginal purity and honor, and to persuade young people of the criminal nature of premarital sexual intercourse. We must not stop even at promoting ancient peasant customs: painting gates with tar, public showing of the sheet after the wedding night, corporal punishment of women who give themselves to foreigners, branding and sterilization of them."

— reproduced in Alexander Yanov, The Russian New Right (1978)

The strain of nativist Russian fascism represented by Pamyat has provoked widespread repulsion among the intelligentsia and political elite. A meeting last August in Moscow of 600 representatives from 50 unofficial groups was in large part a response to Pamyat. Out of this meeting came two associations. One was a Circle of Social Initiatives, with a loose membership and a broad social program along the lines of the

West European Greens, whose declaration proclaimed the ideals of "socialism, democracy, humanism and progress." The second was the Federation of Socialist Clubs, including 16 groups who signed a manifesto. The Socialist Clubs, which seem to include a component of veterans of the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, are also extremely heterogeneous politically. They include the Perestroika Club, sponsored by some of Gorbachev's closest economic advisers. Others are named the Che Guevara Brigade and Young Internationalist Communards.

The Federation's manifesto contains an implicit denunciation of Pamyat, a demand to "democratise the electoral system" and a call "to show support and solidarity to revolutionary, liberation and democratic movements in the capitalist world and in developing countries" (London Guardian, 12 September). At the same time, it declares that the "life and death of socialism in the USSR hang on whether perestroika succeeds" and demands "to switch the economy to self-management."

While there are many contradictory tendencies within the Socialist Clubs and other nye-formaly, the political and intellectual climate in Gorbachev's Russia is vastly different from the Poland of Solidarnosc in the early 1980s. Solidarnosc was a company "union" for the CIA, the Vatican and the Wall Street and Frankfurt bankers. Its leaders and supporters hailed Ronald Reagan and were bankrolled by US imperialism.

They reviled Poland's greatest Marxist, Rosa Luxemburg, and idolized Marshal Pilsudski, the fascistic dictator of inter-war Poland.

In Gorbachev's Russia some number of intellectuals and politically-minded workers are seeking the road back to Lenin. The conditions are ripe for the regeneration of Leninist-Trotskyist understanding. For as stated in the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, written 50 years ago, the "indestructible force" of Trotskyism in the USSR "stems from the fact that it expresses not only revolutionary tradition but also today's actual opposition of the Russian working class." "A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR," Trotsky wrote, "will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against social inequality and political oppression."

Today, a program for political revolution in the Soviet Union, to oust the privileged bureaucracy and defend the gains of October, can be elaborated beginning with the slogans: Stalin abused central planning — For central planning with Soviet democracy! Soviet archives belong to the Soviet peoples — Open the history books! For unconditional defense of the USSR against imperialism and internal counterrevolution! These can be the basis of a revolutionary program to return the Soviet Union to the road of Lenin and Trotsky.

TO BE CONTINUED

Interview...

Continued from page twelve

in the way is the protectionist Laborite leadership of John Maitland and Co. The ALP is historically the capitalists' favoured party for administering depression and war and is the primary obstacle to revolutionary struggle. It must be split, its working class base won away from the treacherous, pro-capitalist tops. Key to this is forging a real workers party with an internationalist class struggle program which can provide the revolutionary leadership so desperately needed for the proletariat to fight for a socialist future and the elimination of the misery of capitalism.

Australasian Spartacist: In league with US imperialism Hawke's Labor government is on war footing against the Soviet degenerated workers state and its allies and against the unions at home. What has this meant at Cockatoo?

Florrimell: What it means in defence establishments across the board is attempts by the government to discipline the work force and destroy union organisation. At Cockatoo it has meant massive job cutting over the years and now the planned closure of the dockyard. The unions, in particular the P&Ds, are considered potential obstacles to Hawke's grandiose plans for a "two-ocean navy." This military build-up is aimed against the Soviet working people, who settled accounts with their bosses 70 years ago, and against the Vietnamese who defeated Australia and the US.

Hawke's anti-Soviet war plans come home sharply at a place like Cockatoo. I was involved in a successful campaign to spike the government's attempt to introduce ASIO vetting of the work force. What particularly got the goat of the government and the company was my agitation to hold the Jervis Bay, a Navy training ship, which Hawke was sweating on rushing out to Fiji as part of its show of strength during the first Fiji coup. Hawke was playing his role as Reagan's Deputy Sheriff in the South Pacific.

ASp: So you were sacked because as a communist, a supporter of the Spartacist League, you stood out as a fighter for union power and against the Hawke government's war plans.

Florrimell: I have been consistently agitating for strike action to defend our jobs. In answer to company job slashing, I've said, jobs for all, spread the available work around, 30 hours work for 40 hours pay. This is in opposition to the Shop Committee and various and sundry so-called leftists who are abetting the government's closure of the island with a sellout redundancy pay scheme. So when I was sacked the ironworkers immediately went out on strike and a couple of days later the P&Ds, faced with victimisation of their delegate by the company, also struck. Both unions recognised that what was really going on was a first step in government and company plans to bust the unions at Cockatoo.

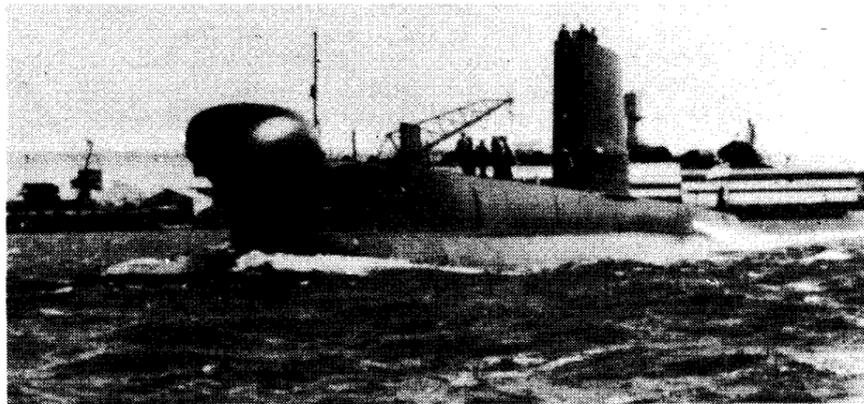
ASp: And what about the rest of the workers on the island?

Florrimell: Cockatoo was really

poised on the brink of total shut-down. For over a week it was on the edge. The FIA and P&Ds were out for two weeks and at different points both voted against their official's return-to-work line. My leaflet, with a strategy for an occupation and picket lines, which was distributed by FIA and other militants on the island, won widespread support for turning this anti-union, anti-communist victimisation into a struggle for our jobs and unions. In recognition that this was a fight for all, striking FIA members called for island-wide action in support of their strike.

ASp: One of the features of the reactionary ALP/ACTU Accord has been the role of the trade union bureaucracy as policemen of Hawke's capitalist austerity against the working class. In the destruction of the BLF virtually all wings of the bureaucracy actively collaborated with government union busting. What strategy did the union tops adopt to prevent an island-wide walkout at Cockatoo?

Florrimell: The FIA officials set out by saying this struggle could not be won. When it was clear that the ironworkers would not buy this defeatist line the bureaucracy tried everything to keep this struggle within the confines of Arbitration. Shop Committee Convener Bill Haggerty relied on craftist divisions on the island to attempt to isolate and



Refitted submarine leaving Cockatoo Island. Hawke's Cold War austerity targets all Cockatoo workers.

break the ironworkers' strike. Hand-in-hand with the FIA tops the Shop Committee pushed the line that what was involved was a question of procedures, that this was not a political sacking. But the bosses were quite explicit, even using my leaflet in the Arbitration Court as evidence of my "bad attitude." And the FIA bureaucracy's "it's just a question of procedure" line was an attempt to fuel the bosses' anti-red scare. When the Shop Committee could no longer ignore the demands for Cockatoo-wide action they organised a fake mass meeting excluding approximately a quarter of the union work force, that is, the striking P&Ds and ironworkers. Despite this, a third of the workers voted to walk out. The FIA bureaucracy and Max Callaghan of the Communist Party (CP)-supported Rank and File Ironworkers used this meeting to sell the lie that there was no support on the island for the FIA strike and as a result managed to secure a narrow vote to return to work. I can tell you there were a lot of guys who were left with a very bad taste in their mouth at this betrayal.

ASp: It's a feature of Cold War II that, with all their differences,

we find the CIA-loving FIA bureaucracy and the CP-influenced trade union bureaucrats united against class struggle.

Florrimell: The FIA as we know was taken over from the CP by the Catholic reactionary NCC in Cold War I. But in Cold War II the CP has found itself in alliance with these anti-communist Cold Warriors over support to clerical reactionary, CIA-backed Solidarnosc in Poland. At home the CP are the architects of Hawke's rollback campaign which goes under the name of the Accord. So they attempt to sabotage class struggle and push a program of racist protectionism which lines up the working class behind their bosses against the workers of other countries, especially our class brothers and sisters in Asia. As for the Rank and File Ironworkers, they proved themselves total flunkeys for the bureaucracy, trying to limit the fight to a question of procedures to be dealt with by the Arbitration Court, and pushed a return to work because the struggle could have posed a real challenge to the Labor government which they so cherish.

ASp: Can you tell us about the support the ironworkers strike attracted outside of Cockatoo?

Florrimell: It's interesting that at the same time the bureaucrats were saying that there was no support for the strike, in fact support was coming in from workers across the country. The

ASp: You had been targetted by the company back in 1985 as well. That was essentially a struggle for industrial unionism, cutting hard against the craftism which divides workers in places like Cockatoo in scores of ways. This strike also tended to cut across craft divisions, didn't it?

Florrimell: Yeah, in 1985 I was sacked for refusing to work with apprentices being used to scab on an electricians strike. I was reinstated when the electricians refused to return to work without me. That victory was a vindication for the principle of one out all out and for picket lines that mean don't cross. Similarly this struggle showed that to defeat the company all crafts and trades have got to fight together. What we really need to effectively fight the bosses is industrial unions — one industry, one union, and they're going to be forged in hard class struggle. Significantly, the struggle against my sacking brought together the two quite bitterly divided sections of the FIA at Cockatoo Island.

ASp: The SL fights for the independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state, which means basically a fight to smash the Arbitration system. Your strike ran up against Arbitration. How was the question dealt with?

Florrimell: Once the Arbitration Commission decided to let the bosses' sacking stand it was brought home to the workers that it is not neutral. Significantly, the ironworkers stayed out for about a week after the Arbitration Commission showed its real colours. I have been saying all along that Arbitration is the bosses' court. The striking FIAers saw the necessity to rely on their own organised strength which in turn pointed to the need to extend the strike in order to win.

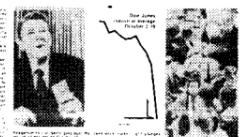
ASp: Obviously there is no lack of willingness to struggle in the working class. The problem is the crisis of leadership.

Florrimell: That's right. This struggle proved in a small way the enormous power of the program I've been fighting for. What's necessary is some hard class struggle to fight the offensive of the bosses and their government. For workers the ALP has traditionally been "their party," but they know Hawke is Reagan's man and he's anti-union and anti-working class. There's got to be a political struggle in the unions to break the workers from the stranglehold of the Labor Party and their lackeys, the trade union bureaucracy. The working class desperately needs a workers government, and to win that we have to build a revolutionary workers party. ■

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AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

BLF...

Continued from page twelve

lines smashed and its few remaining members victimised, the BLF has been reduced to a shell, with an apparatus and funds but no union, just a "rank and file" opposition in the Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU). For the Federal and State governments BLF-bashing has been the sharp edge of their anti-working class Accord which has locked the unions into their anti-Soviet war preparations.

BWIU TOPS: "YELLOW-DOG" UNIONISM

Cain/Crabb's haste to deliver the coup de grace to the BLF has everything to do with the current elections in the BWIU. The McDonald/Sharkey leadership, dominated by pro-Moscow Stalinists of the Clancyite Association for Communist Unity, are facing strong BLF-backed oppositions in both NSW and Victoria. They sold their services to the government and the bosses against the BLF for coverage of the whole building industry, but now this scabby crew and their patrons in the government and ACTU fear the wrath of the BWIU ranks. A surge of opposition to McDonald/Sharkey's "yellow-dog unionism" is not limited to ex-BLF members. There is anger at the drastic drop in wages, the loss of safety conditions, the rampages of the cops on building sites, the fruits of the destruction of the BLF.

The BWIU officials' propaganda has been featuring Cain/Crabb's lies about BLF "misuse" of funds. In NSW they have collaborated with Unsworth's cops to throw opponents off building sites. On October 1 five BWIU oppositionists and two BLF organisers were arrested at a Circular Quay building site when the boss called over 50 cops to break up an on-site meeting. After a bomb threat closed down the huge Darling Harbour Bicentennial site, one BWIU official launched a frenzied attack on the BLF for "terrorism," Libyan-inspired no doubt.

The decimation of the BLF in 1986 was backed by the treachery of all wings of the union bureaucracy. It was a powerful testament to the crying need for the working class to break the chains of Arbitration state control through some hard class struggle. Last year, only Spartacist League (SL) supporters in the BLF fought for an all-out industry-wide strike to defend the union, with militant mass picket lines that mean don't cross. The Maoist Gallagher leadership criminally refused to call strike action and threw the union away virtually without a fight when they cravenly directed their ranks to sign the government's scab contract. The fake left dutifully tailed behind. A Socialist Workers Party supporter in the BLF even voted against the SL supporters' motion for an industry-wide strike. The Socialist Labour League, two supporters of which are standing in the elections, made themselves notorious for scabbing when their supporter Bruce Cameron led his fellow plumbers union members daily across a BLF picket line at Footscray pool in Melbourne last year. BLF militants, including an SL supporter sacked for refusing to

sign the scab contract, were meanwhile battling cops on the picket line.

BREAK WITH THE LABOR TRAITORS!

Hawke and the ACTU plan to "restructure" Australian trade unionism through the forcible merger of 300-plus craft unions into 20 "industry unions." The BWIU is the model for their corporatist vision of the unions as instruments of government regimentation of the working class, in which the bureaucrats sort everything out in consultation with Arbitration and the government and the police handle any trouble from the rank and file. While the best minds of the ACTU tour West Germany and Scandinavia to bring us their detailed "Australia Reconstructed" blueprint for saving Australian capitalism, their Accord has brought one defeat after another, from SEQEB to the BLF to Mudginberri. Its latest version, the "two-tier" deal, has meant wholesale destruction of job conditions. The unions are being gutted of industrial strength and tied up by a forest of legal restrictions, and not surprisingly membership has fallen sharply over recent years. Real fighting industrial unionism will be forged on the picket line through independent class struggle against the ALP/ACTU/Arbitration straight-jacket. That will require forging a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership in struggle to oust the union misleadership and split Labor's working class base from its bourgeois top. Bust the union-busters! For a revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government! ■

Forum...

Continued from page six

left. They even abetted the murder of 21 Iraqi Communists by the regime in 1977. We exposed the fact that they had been printing the fascistic Vietnamese paper, the Saigon Bell for a while. It's a real joke that these people hold a meeting supposedly in defence and support of the Russian Revolution. For years what has defined these people has been rabid anti-Sovietism. They support the mullahs in Afghanistan and call for the Soviet troops to get out. They supported Solidarnosc. They supported, and still do, the reactionary anti-Soviet Khomeini regime. For all their talk about being Trotskyists and for defence of the Soviet Union, in practice their program has been for the hostile encirclement of the Soviet Union."

WE ARE THE PARTY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Interventions by members of opponent tendencies sparked controversy at both meetings. In Melbourne Alison Thorne of the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP), a fake Trotskyist group based in Seattle, USA, offered us a united front against the "born-again Stalinist" Socialist Workers Party. SL speakers noted that the SWP is actually a pro-Ustasha, Aussie-nationalist and fundamentally anti-Soviet group which apes the worst elements of Stalinism — grovelling conciliation of imperialism, popular front with the

bourgeoisie, hailing the murder of Vietnamese Trotskyists. On Poland Thorne claimed the FSP never supported counterrevolution nor the Solidarnosc "leadership" — no, they "only" supported the "movement," against whose bid for power we said at the time: "Stop Solidarnosc Counterrevolution!" Our comrades also nailed the FSP's scandalous defence of the Miskito Indian Contras fighting under CIA direction as part of the Contra front in Nicaragua. Because the Miskitos are an oppressed minority in Nicaragua, the FSP thinks it's OK to tour round the US left the likes of Miskito guerrilla leader and proven CIA agent Brooklyn Rivera. The overriding class question of defence, completion and extension of the Nicaraguan revolution, a hot spot of the anti-Soviet Cold War, finds these "contra socialists," as we have called them, on the wrong side.

In Sydney a representative of the newly formed Permanent Revolution Group of Wellington, New Zealand, was present, sparking some discussion. The PRG together with two other thoroughly anti-Soviet fake-Trotskyist grouplets comprises the "Socialist Alliance" in NZ, a rotten bloc characterised by parochial isolationist "little-NZ" nationalism which, from available published material, succeeds in completely ignoring the international anti-Soviet Cold War and ANZUS, safe in the assumption that Lange's New Zealand has opted out, apparently. Additionally the PRG is led by Mr Bill Logan, expelled from the international Spartacist tendency in 1979 by an authoritative international trial body, which after exhaustive deliberations found him to be a "proven massive liar and sexual sociopath who manipulated the private lives of comrades for reasons of power politics and his own aberrant appetites and compulsions in the guise of Marxism. His crimes are against communist morality and its substrate elementary human decency." Today passing himself off as a "gay movement leader" and even a "Trotskyist," this sinister stranger has no place in or anywhere near any left wing, working class or gay organisation.

The forums were no purely ceremonial observance, but a re-affirmation of the SL's determination to build a revolutionary party to do as the Bolsheviks did. As comrade Garden said: "As Trotskyists, revolutionary Marxists, we meet today as we and our kind have met for 70 years, as the most resolute defenders and partisans of the Russian Revolution. We in the Spartacist League proudly proclaim that 'We are the party of the Russian Revolution.' We say that the workers of the whole world must learn to speak Russian to their capitalist class, in the sense that they must do to their exploiters what the workers of Russia did to theirs in 1917, that is, overthrow them and destroy their system of exploitation root and branch. Only by extending the October Revolution to the whole planet can humanity live in equality, material abundance and freedom, free from exploitation and misery in a future communist world." The meetings concluded with a toast to the Russian Revolution and the singing of the "Internationale." ■

White...

Continued from page five

Afghanistan are the anti-woman, anti-communist cutthroats. Come real anti-racist struggles backed by the social power of the proletariat these types head for the hills. Thus in the US the LRP dismisses the Spartacist-organised demonstration of 5000 mainly black trade unionists which stopped a planned Ku Klux Klan march in Washington DC on November 27 1982 as a "fraud." At the October 1 forum the SL speaker outlined our long and proud history of anti-racist struggle including a demonstration we initiated in 1984 to protest the cop killing of Aboriginal John Pat, and exposing the reformist left's support for Hawke's whitewash Royal Commission. She pointed out that Aboriginals' enforced marginalisation "leaves them vulnerable to racist terror, with relatively little power to combat it. The working class, under a revolutionary leadership, can end racist reaction by exploding this white imperialist enclave from within." The speaker's description of the genocidal policies practised during European colonisation was denounced by Gager as liberal rhetoric and petty bourgeois guilt moralising. White's statement that "blacks are the most militant section of the Australian proletariat" denies the hard racial exclusion of Aboriginals from the economy which condemns them to massive and chronic unemployment. Criminally blind to the reality of Hawke's White Australia these people's political orientation remains hitched to racist Laborism.

Students who have witnessed White's largely unintelligible ravings at our forums have wondered about his strange obsession with goats. His "racism" smear seems to centre on the despicable lie that comrade Robertson in his 1977 speech called Albania a "nation of 'goat-fuckers'." Robertson actually said, "We have had our comrades checking, and it is not yet assured, but we believe that Marx referred to the Albanians as 'goat-fuckers'. Is that true?" lampooning not Albanians, but some Maoist groups who idealise this tiny backward country as the "socialist fatherland." Anyway, rural backwardness is hardly restricted by race or nation. In Australia for instance the often quoted saying, "the country where men are men and sheep are nervous" we don't believe can be attributed to Marx. We have yet to witness a corollary obsession on White's part with "sheep fucking." A detailed refutation of the LRP's slanders can be found in the Spartacist League/US paper Workers Vanguard, no 217, 20 October 1978. The truth won't matter to White of course — after all, to paraphrase Stalin, a word processor will take anything fed into it. For our part we are proud of our class struggle, anti-racist, Soviet defencist internationalist program, as White and Co found out on October 1. We fight to be the party of Lenin and Trotsky — the party of the Russian Revolution. We know that more than anything else today that is what is desperately needed by the proletariat of the world. ■
First published as a leaflet on 27 October 1987.



Cain's Gestapo Raid on BLF

The Australian

"The Swat Squad arrived in black boiler suits in a raid that had all the hallmarks of Germany in the 1930s. The only things missing were the swastikas." (Age 15 October)

This is how Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) Federal Secretary Norm Gallagher described the Gestapo-style cop raid on BLF headquarters in Melbourne on 13 October 1987. On the orders of Victorian Labor premier Cain and his hatchetman, Industrial Relations Minister Steve Crabb, 20 Special Operations Group "anti-terrorist" stormtroopers and over 100 cops held union organisers and office workers up against a wall while they smashed doors, cut telephone wires, smashed telex, fax and computer terminals and confiscated everything that could be moved. A safe was drilled open and BLF documents seized as well as the personal belongings of union employees. BLF organiser Mick Lewis, who suffers from a serious heart condition, was thrown to the ground and repeatedly kicked. He was arrested, charged with hindering police and refused medical treatment for several hours.

Within hours Crabb announced that up to six million dollars in BLF funds was to be frozen, appointing Arbitration Commission deputy president Sharp as "custodian." The pretext was that Gallagher was "misusing" BLF members' money, because he transferred union funds to various secret accounts in an attempt to prevent this vicious union-busting government getting its hands on



The Sun

13 October: Cain's cops steal everything from BLF office (left), angry workers battle cops next day (right).



it. Cain and Crabb weren't concerned that their story was patently absurd, probably thinking the gutter press and their ACTU and Trades Hall Council (THC) lieutenants would fill in the holes later. Nor were they bothered that the raid was flagrantly illegal, Crabb bragging that if there wasn't a suitable law sanctioning it, he'd make one. But the rapid collapse of their manufactured lies proved a major embarrassment, and workers reacted with anger. The following day 1000 unionists, mainly BLF members but also a contingent from the nurses union, which last year struck for 50 days against the government, and members of the Electrical Trades and Food Preservers Unions, marched to State Parliament and on to Crabb's office. The wall of cops barring the entrance took a well-deserved

beating and 13 were injured. It was good to see them get some of their own medicine, a reminder of the days when the BLF, one union not overawed by the sight of a blue uniform, had the power to command some respect from the cops. Four demonstrators were arrested — Drop the charges now! The cops have since been squealing that they need protective riot gear against "violent" demonstrations.

Confronted with widespread outrage from unionists that quickly spread nationally, the bourgeois press barons counselled Cain/Crabb to get their act straight. Murdoch's *Australian* (19 October) titled their editorial "Justice for BLF should be seen to be done." The sellout Victorian THC, which from day one has collaborated in smashing the BLF, suggested that the raid was a bit "gung-ho."

Three Socialist Left MPs, George Crawford, Joan Coxedge and Jean McLean, merely abstained on a vote sanctioning the raid, refusing to vote against for fear of expulsion from the ALP. This raid was no "excess" by Cain and Crabb, but the real face of Labor's vicious Cold War union-busting drive. Crabb borrowed from Hawke's anti-Soviet arsenal when he accused the BLF of receiving Libyan money. Nowadays any mention of a "Libyan connection," whether it's with Vanuatu or Aboriginal groups, is the codeword for impending government attack.

The joint government/bosses/ACTU carve-up of the BLF in 1986 culminated a years-long vendetta and was a watershed in Hawke's war on the unions. Its officials repeatedly jailed, its picket

Continued on page eleven

Interview with Sacked Cockatoo Island Militant

Hawke's Flunkeys Sabotage Strike

Below we print an interview with Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA) militant and Spartacist League supporter, Neil Flormimell. When Flormimell, a rigger at Cockatoo Island dockyards, was sacked on 1 September in an act of blatant anti-union and anti-communist victimisation, over 100 FIA members struck for two weeks in his defence. Cockatoo Painters and Dockers (P&Ds) also went on strike in defence of their victimised delegate, John Pannuccio.

At Cockatoo, an historic bastion of working class militancy in a strategic defence industry, Flormimell's exemplary fight showed the potential power of a militant class struggle program. The Cockatoo workers' struggle

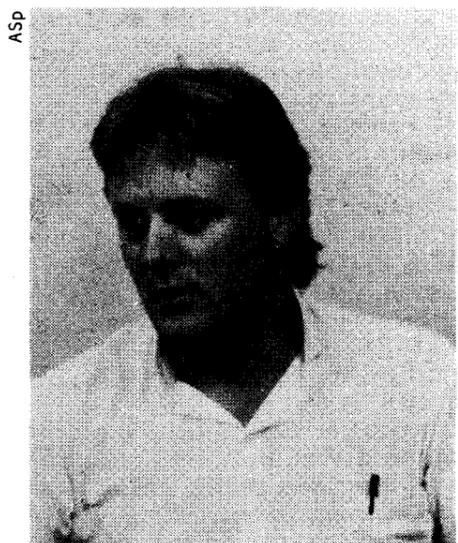
was an example for workers across the country, who are facing Hawke and his ACTU henchmen's attempts to ram through wage cuts and givebacks under the no-strike Accord. But as Flormimell makes clear, their struggle was sabotaged by the FIA bureaucracy, aided by the island's Shop Committee, who sought to keep the ironworkers and P&Ds strikes isolated. They rammed through a return to work without Flormimell, in the face of the ranks' desire to win this one.

The four years of Hawke's ALP government have seen all-sided attacks on the working people, from union busting like the smashing of the BLF, to its regime of racist terror against the Aboriginal people. The deep crisis

of capitalism, today more acute since the stock market crash, impels the bosses and the government to ever more vicious austerity measures against workers and the poor in concert with repressing and regimenting the population in preparation for anti-Soviet war.

To enforce capitalist austerity the Laborite tops and trade union bureaucrats are trampling on their own base. And sooner or later it will explode in their faces. Right now Hawke and the bosses are on a drive to break the militant and powerful Miners Federation by slashing thousands of jobs. The miners have the power and experience to galvanise a real class struggle fightback. Standing

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Neil Flormimell, sacked FIA militant.