

For workers revolution in South Africa

Avenge apartheid terror!

Once again black South Africa is rising up against its oppressors. After two months of the largest and most militant anti-apartheid struggles since the student protests of June 1976, black and 'coloured' (mixed race) workers and students are marking the fourth anniversary of the Soweto massacre with strikes and demonstrations throughout the country. From the coloured townships of Cape Town to the car plants of Port Elizabeth, from the sprawling slums around Johannesburg to the Indian Ocean docks of Durban, the victims of the apartheid system are defying heavily armed cops and troops and demanding an end to racist rule.

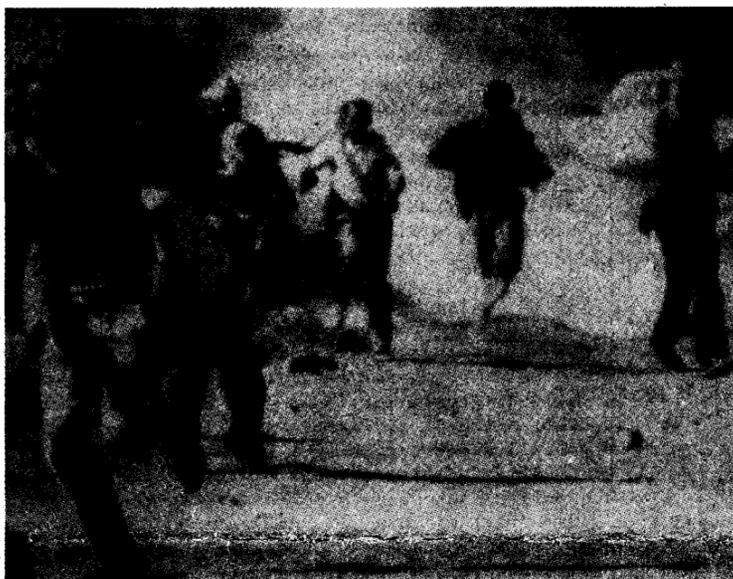
The South African army and police, who slaughtered more than 600 young protesters four years ago in Soweto, this time shot to death well over 32 persons and wounded 175 between June 16 and June 20. Those are the government's figures and South African newspapers and hospitals report that the real toll is at least twice as high. Panicked by the upsurge of the oppressed majority, which outnumbers the privileged whites by more than five-to-one, the Pretoria regime has put the regular army on a war alert -- something that was not done even in 1976. In an effort to cover up their murderous repression and the extent of the unrest, the apartheid rulers have banned reporters from 'trouble spots'. But no amount of official censorship can hide the fact that the oppressed masses of South Africa are militantly challenging apartheid rule.

The shadow of Soweto hangs over both the white rulers and the black masses in the current struggles. Black students, who four years ago marched headlong into the automatic weapons fire, today are more cautious, dissolving their demonstrations when the killer cops and troops arrive. For its part, the government of Prime Minister Pieter Botha is wary of provoking another uprising by randomly mowing down hundreds of schoolchildren. But a distinguishing feature of the current upsurge, one which is crucial to the success of the anti-apartheid battles, is the central role being played by organised black and coloured workers in Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth.

Also important has been the vanguard role played by coloured students, who began this spring's actions with a nationwide boycott of schools to protest against inferior education. Reports from South Africa agree that many of the young coloured generation are rejecting their traditional status as a relatively privileged intermediate group in apartheid's 'separate development' and are throwing in their lot with the black majority, even to the point of rejecting the label of 'coloured' and identifying themselves as 'blacks'.

The strikes and protests around the coloured students' boycott grew in size and intensity after police viciously attacked demonstrators commemorating the June 16 Soweto anniversary. Shotgun-wielding cops wounded at least 20 persons on the 16th in Soweto as black youths defied the government's ban on public gatherings. In Cape Town a one-day 'stay at home' general strike was honoured by about three-quarters of the workforce and in the city's textile factories up to 90 per cent of the workforce stayed home. In the coloured townships in the Cape Town Flats, cops repeatedly charged groups of protesters with truncheons and teargas.

The following day angry coloured youths burned and looted white stores, set up street barricades blocking the roads leading to the airport and stoned white motorists. The cops, enraged be-



Soweto 1976 (right) and today: apartheid rule means racist massacre

cause one protester managed to knife a cop to death in self-defence, broke out their automatic rifles and loaded their shotguns with deadly buckshot. Police Commissioner Mike Geldenhuys gave the OK to 'shoot to kill', urging his men to show 'no mercy' to protesters. Two planeloads of riot cops were rushed in to reinforce the locals.

Stone throwing and street barricade fighting spread to Soweto, Durban and Port Elizabeth. Then, on June 20, the wave of protests reached a new level as 10,000 workers joined the struggle. Port Elizabeth's Ford, GM and Volkswagen assembly plants, the Goodyear Tyre factory and a dozen other plants were shut down solid by strikes for higher pay and an end to racist discrimination. At Volkswagen, the United Auto and Rubber Workers, one of the few recognised black unions, demanded an 80 per cent rise.

As black workers waited at the gates, management gave its answer: lockout. Cops fired shotguns and teargas into crowds of strikers. Goodyear workers responded by stoning white homes in the industrial town of Uitenhage. The government, recognising that the black car workers are the muscle of the anti-apartheid upsurge, called in the regular army to occupy the plants. A reporter who slipped through police lines reported that the Volkswagen plant, ringed by Hippo armoured cars, had been turned into an armed camp.

'Verligte' apartheid under siege

South African Prime Minister Botha assumed office last year promising to reform various of the minor forms of apartheid restrictions. But the bloody police terror unleashed against the unarmed street protesters and strikers is the clearest possible evidence that Botha, like his predecessors, is committed to preserving white minority rule at any cost. And just to prove it he launched the biggest South African foreign military operation since World War II this month. Thousands of troops poured over the border from South Africa's Namibian colony to strike South West African People's Organisation refugee camps in Angola.

Even before this spring's protest/strike wave, Botha under pressure from the 'verkrampste' ('narrow') wing of his ruling National Party, had backed off from such sub-tokenist 'reforms'

as integrated white-coloured high school rugby matches. In this way he duplicated the history of his predecessor, J B Vorster, who also started off by promising to reduce 'petty apartheid', until it threatened to break up the unity of the Afrikaner *laager*. Botha, the leader of the so-called 'verligte' ('enlightened') wing of the National Party, is now trying to give the appearance of flexibility by advocating an appointive 'president's council' which, while having no real power, would include coloured, Indian and even Chinese representatives -- but no blacks.

The 'verkrampste' racists are holding out against any weakening of apartheid, fearing that it would be the beginning of the end of their caste privileges and minority rule. The 'verligte' white supremacists maintain that it is necessary to promote a privileged black stratum in urban South Africa having a material stake in the status quo. However, the fate of the oppressive apartheid regime will not be determined by the manoeuvring and pseudo-reforms of white ruling-class politicians, but in the struggles of the black masses against the massive police-state apparatus designed to keep them 'in their place'. The black working class now flexing its muscles occupies a key spot in the South African economy. Out in the desolate bantustan 'homelands' the black majority's numbers don't necessarily mean strength. But in the heart of South Africa's gold-fuelled and growing economy, black labour is vital.

The growing reliance on black skilled and semi-skilled labour is the Achilles heel of apartheid. 'Separate development' is contradicted by the need of the white capitalists to have the black proletariat in the urban centres. As Botha told a heckler who dismissed the need for more black housing by shouting 'Send them to the homelands'. 'My friend, if they were all there, who would bring you your coffee in the morning?' (*Foreign Policy*, Spring 1980). And who would bring the gold, the diamonds, the cars, the textiles and all the other goods and services provided by black labour? The fact is, by bringing more and more black workers into the urban labour force, apartheid capitalism digs its own grave.

Recognition that the six-million strong black

continued on page 7

SL/IMG exchange: Censorship and scabbing

30 April 1980

Comrades,

On 21st April in Birmingham, five British Leyland workers sympathetic to the politics of the Spartacist League were violently excluded from a public meeting of the 'Leyland Action Committee'. The physical assault, led by Alan Thornett of the Workers Socialist League, could have ended in serious violence had it not been for the self-restraint shown by those workers.

The sole reason given for this outrage against these trade unionists was their charge that Leyland Action Committee members who had crossed their picket lines during the recent British Leyland strike were guilty of scabbing. Suppression of political debate on this basis gives the go-ahead to every scab-herding bureaucrat like Terry Duffy to exclude oppositionists and critics who fight to preserve the class line. The right of free and open debate in the workers movement must be preserved.

We protest this flagrant violation of workers democracy and demand that every component organisation of the Leyland Action Committee repudiate these Stalinist/Healyite methods. We demand, and will seek to ensure, that the principles of workers democracy will in the future be upheld.

Fraternally,

Paul Lannigan
for the Spartacist League

[copies to International Marxist Group, Workers Action, Workers Power, Workers Socialist League]

6 June 1980

Dear Paul Lannigan,

Re: Circular dated 30 April, received, 25 May

We do not accept that the charge of scabbing that you aim at members of the Leyland Action Group [sic], including members of the International Marxist Group, amounts to political debate. We think it is a slander.

As you full well know our members *aided* the struggle at British Leyland by their decision to go into the SD-1 plant to convince workers there they should join the strike. Their purpose was to obtain the unity of the struggle by fighting for the SD-1 workers to join in with the strike action taken by workers in the other two plants to defeat Michael Edwardes' 'Slaves Charter'. They succeeded in their aim after only two days of discussion with the workers, when they were able to reverse the previous decision of a mass meeting and join the strike.

Your own members in British Leyland resorted to rather more dubious methods when they obtained sick notes to avoid the political consequences of the situation faced by all genuine militants in Leyland.

As to the meeting to which you refer -- once again, you full well know that this was confined to supporters of the aims and activities of the Leyland Action Committee (LAC). This was made clear in both the publicity for the meeting, at a previous meeting of the LAC, and it was also

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pointed out to your members by the Birmingham organiser of the IMG.

It is patently obvious from your letter and from articles in your press that the Spartacist League in no way supports the aims and activities of LAC. That is your choice. However, the LAC has the democratic right to organise its meetings on whatever basis it chooses. It was your denial of this right -- in attempting to attend a meeting where you refused to accept its terms of reference -- that led to your expulsion from it.

We do not consider your circular an attempt to gain political clarity. It is nothing other than a poorly disguised attempt to continue with your methods of slander which are alien to the workers' movement and which only serve to muddy the political issues involved.

Yours,

Steve Potter,
for the International Marxist Group

'To be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's programme on the logic of the class struggle;... these are the rules of the Fourth International', wrote Trotsky in the *Transitional Programme*. Comrade Potter's reply to our April 30 protest letter makes it clear the IMG has different rules: censorship, slander and scabbing. His explicit defence of political exclusion has in common with Thornett's thuggery (which Potter implicitly condones) an attempt to suppress our revolutionary exposure of the IMG and WSL's class betrayals. The growing impact of the SL's Trotskyist politics makes it increasingly difficult for these *fake* Trotskyists to dismiss the SL as 'irrelevant' in the hope that we will disappear.

Potter's lying account of the exclusion is simply a smoke screen for asserting the LAC's 'democratic right' to suppress and exclude revolutionary opponents, which the IMG/LAC has since exercised again at a June 8 LAC conference and at a June 28 'public' Revolution Youth rally in Oxford. Proletarian militants certainly respect the right of working-class organisations to hold meetings exclusive to their supporters, but that was *not* the case with the April 21 meeting, which was publicly and openly advertised in an LAC flyer as a meeting to discuss a strategy for the BL strike, with no stated restrictions on attendance. 'Come to the Leyland Action Committee meeting', it said (so long as you don't want to discuss the question of scabbing is what the LAC meant -- but didn't say).

Clearly an organisation which holds a public meeting does so in order to put forward its own political viewpoint, with not only the right but the obligation to establish rules of procedure. But there are democratic and undemocratic rules of procedure. Thus, at SL public meetings floor speakers are granted equal time, with an aim of ensuring that all opponents who wish to speak so, to facilitate the political struggle and clarification necessary for the working class to determine its objective class interests and the strategy needed to achieve them. If the charge of scabbing were really a slander, as Potter claims, what better way to refute it than in open discussion. The IMG's variant of 'workers democracy' might suit a solicitor concerned with bourgeois property rights, but not an unaffiliated Leyland militant intent on finding out if crossing picket lines *is* the best way to 'aid' a strike.

The truth obviously is that it is not -- scabbing is how strikes are *defeated* -- and it is that truth which the IMG, WSL and LAC were out to exclude from their meetings. Potter's glowing 'success' story omits the simple fact that 'after only two days' of *militant picketing*, the TGWU bureaucracy was forced to declare the strikes official; only then did SD1 vote to go out. If Potter's mates had held their 'discussions' on the picket line, where any self-respecting militant belonged, instead of on the production line, the strike would have taken effect *sooner*. And if the IMG's sole reason for scabbing was to fight for SD1 workers to join the strike, why then did one IMG supporter, an AUEW steward, *continue* to work after SD1 went out (see *Spartacist Britain* no 21, May 1980)?

Graphic evidence that being *on* the picket line and not working *behind* it is what counts in winning strikes was unwittingly provided in a

Socialist Press (14 May) piece by WSL supporter and NUJ member Peter MacIntyre on the recent NGA strike. No claptrap here about being invited by the strikers to cross the picket line. On the contrary, MacIntyre *admits* that he and the five others 'who were clear that by staying at work we were siding with the company [!] against the NGA', turned a deaf ear to strikers' pleas to respect their picket line, all in order to -- you guessed it -- 'fight to bring out' their co-workers. Only after MacIntyre finally *stopped* crossing the picket line, a week later, did other NUJ workers start following this example and honouring the NGA picket.

But the real issue is not IMG scabbing, Potter (and the WSL) cynically protest, but ... 'Spartacist sick notes'. Perhaps Comrade Potter can tell us why he professes more concern over a *tactic* directed against the bosses (by a militant who, need we repeat, was neither a Spartacist member nor supporter) as a minimal defence against victimisation than over a *betrayal of principle* committed against the workers. The only sure defence against victimisation is of course the greatest degree of solidarity and unity in struggle -- which this militant demonstrated and which the IMG and WSL undermined by their scabbing!

And that is what the picket line question is all about, comrades of the IMG and WSL -- class solidarity. Crossing picket lines by appealing to existing craftist divisions within the trade union movement or to the bureaucratically-engendered backwardness of the workers (ie 'they told me to cross') simply reinforces those divisions, retards the crucial struggle for *industrial unionism* and in fact necessarily weakens a strike. Modern industrial organisation and technology render craft unionism and craft-exclusivist strikes particularly ineffective. The picket line has only one meaningful purpose: to *enforce* the withdrawal of *all* labour from a workplace. Even the charlatans of the WSL recognise that:

'The history of trade union organisation is the history of bitter -- often violent -- struggles for such basic discipline [in which workers obeyed picket lines] against the individualism and backwardness of blacklegs.' (*Socialist Press*, 25 June)

As Oscar Wilde put it, 'Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue.'

The IMG enthusiastically embraced the 'Rank & File Code of Practice' which came out of last year's Socialist Workers Party 'Rank & File Conference'. The first rule of this minimalist 'code' was: 'No crossing of picket lines'. But centrists and reformists subordinate even those principles to which they pay lip service to the opportunities of the moment, real or perceived.

In the absence of a revolutionary alternative, these betrayals of principles are swept under the carpet. But we will not be party to the fake lefts' non-aggression pact -- and that is what drives them into a frenzy of bureaucratic exclusionism and outright thuggery. Workers democracy can be consistently upheld only by those who stand on the revolutionary programme; bureaucratism is a necessary by-product of revisionist betrayal. Comrades Potter and Thornett should rest assured that they will succeed neither in their attempts to suppress workers democracy nor in their attempts to palm off scabbing as Trotskyism. Not as long as there are genuine Trotskyists around. ■

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US militant beats Carter's Secret Service

Detroit, July 16, 1979: only minutes before Jimmy Carter is scheduled to address the Communications Workers of America (CWA) annual national convention, the US Secret Service walks onto the convention floor and seizes an elected delegate and union official, Jane Margolis. Dragged into another room out of view of the delegates, Margolis is manhandled, interrogated and threatened with being held incommunicado for days on the basis of 'reports' from unidentified 'sources' for suspicion of 'threatening the life of the president'. She is finally released after a television newsman accidentally enters the room and demands an explanation. Daily newspapers from New York to San Francisco report the outrage; hundreds of CWA members immediately sign protest telegrams to Washington, demanding an apology to delegate Margolis and the union as a whole. White House officials at first deny that anyone was seized, then stonewall.

Now one year later, after a militant protest campaign including the launching of a court suit against the Secret Service, Margolis and her supporters in the Union Campaign Against Secret Service Harassment (UCASSH) have won an important battle on behalf of the CWA and the rights of all American labour. In a June 17 press conference at this year's CWA convention in Los Angeles, UCASSH announced that the Secret Service had made a formal written apology for seizing Margolis. The government also handed over \$3500 to prove in hard cash that it 'regrets' the incident. In a dramatic expression of labour solidarity, Margolis announced that since the attack was directed at the whole union and turned back by the determined action of hundreds of telephone workers and other trade unionists around the country, she was endorsing the cheque over to the CWA Defense Fund.

That the Secret Service and the Carter administration now 'regret' the official mugging of Jane Margolis, there can be no doubt. They regret that they couldn't discredit and silence this militant union official. They regret that they couldn't make this secret police invasion of a union convention a precedent. They regret that their stone wall was cracked and their dirty trick boomeranged, forcing them to apologise. Most of all they regret 'regretting'.

What happened in Detroit last July 16 was a naked assertion by the American government that it has the prerogative to disrupt the business of a duly constituted union convention. Jimmy Carter's private police were trying to guarantee that there would be no criticism of the president while he was at the convention, using police powers for political censorship. Jane Margolis had been elected a convention delegate by her San Francisco union Local on the platform, 'Not a dime, not a vote to the strike-breaking Democrats and Republicans'. She is a spokesman for the Militant Action Caucus (MAC), the main opposition group in the CWA, which has a nine-year history of fighting for a programme of class struggle against the capitalists. The Secret Service wanted to prevent her from speaking out against Jimmy Carter and his anti-labour policies.

However Jane Margolis would not be silenced so easily, or allow herself to be treated as a 'non-person' and her union to be violated. She stood up and fought for her rights, for the rights of labour -- and won. And unlike any other American civil liberties case in recent memory, this victory was won by a union-based campaign from start to finish. It was outraged CWA members and other unionists who formed UCASSH and began to gather support for their case from coast to coast. Forty-nine CWA stewards endorsed the case, along with Locals from New York City to Portland, Oregon. Hundreds of endorsements came from local unions, well-known civil libertarians, other frame-up victims. Two of the former 'Hollywood Ten' McCarthyite black list victims endorsed the case, as did the two sons of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

And socialists joined the fight early on. James Robertson, national chairman of the Spartacist League/US (SL/US) and a close personal friend of Margolis, immediately telephoned the White House to demand that Jane be released and an official apology made. Told by

a White House staff member, you can't talk to me like that or I'll hang up, Robertson told him to stop stonewalling and reminded him what happened to Richard Nixon. SL/US supporters and friends played an energetic role in backing UCASSH, particularly in fundraising, and a staff counsel of the Partisan Defense Committee joined the legal team headed by noted lawyer Charles Garry to fight the case in court.

But the case did encounter obstacles and opposition. Many CWA bureaucrats, from president Glenn Watts (a prominent Carter supporter) to leaders of Margolis' own Local stood passively on the sidelines or actively tried to sabotage the campaign. Fake socialists like the Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) too had not a word to say; the ex-Trotskyist SWP even physically excluded Margolis from one of their public meetings when she tried to make an announcement to build for the recent San Francisco anti-Nazi demonstration. But, no thanks at all to these reformist cretins, Jane Margolis and the CWA still won their victory.

A 'regrettable misunderstanding'?

Seldom do the government's snoops say they're sorry. The Secret Service was forced to issue a formal apology and award a cash settlement to Jane Margolis not least because it didn't have a leg to stand on legally. At first it denied any arrest had been made, and the official letter from Secret Service Deputy Director Myron Weinstein refers to an 'alleged false arrest'. But then it tries to explain the 'regrettable misunderstanding' as a comedy of errors resulting from 'our agent's confusion over why you were actually being arrested'. Never mind, says the letter, 'it is now apparent that no arrest should have been made under the circumstances'. So the government now admits Jane Margolis was arrested even though she had 'not violated any law'.

Why was she hustled off the floor of her own union convention? Because she was 'a threat to the life of the president'? Then why wasn't she searched, not even her handbag? And as Margolis noted in her statement for the June 17 press conference, 'No wonder they settled. They would have looked pretty funny when the fact they allowed me to install [Vice President] Mondale's phones in his hotel suite came out in court!'



Was it really only a 'regrettable misunderstanding'? Then why even after she was released did Secret Service agents continue to hound Margolis for the rest of the convention, even following her to the toilet?

The government of course denies 'any political motivation' to the seizure. But why was she singled out from among the more than 2900 trade unionists present? It was the idea that militant labour opposition to the strikebreaking, war-mongering Democratic Party might be voiced that panicked the president's private political police. That is why they seized Jane Margolis' notebook, and why the 'question and answer' session following Carter's speech was abruptly cut off before she could speak. Margolis was politically gagged.

'Whose union is this, anyway?'

The legal complaint filed by her lawyers began, 'This is no ordinary lawsuit.' Unlike many would-be oppositionists who routinely drag the unions into the bosses' courts, Margolis asserted labour's right to decide its course free from government interference. And the suit pointed out how this fight goes a long way back, citing the important Minneapolis Teamster trial of 1941 as an example of how the capitalist state witchhunts militant trade unionists and socialists like Jane Margolis.

The familiar US government 'dirty tricks' are apparent: anonymous G-men seek to discredit a militant leader in the eyes of fellow trade unionists, trying in a dramatic incident to make her appear as a dangerous criminal. The Secret Service's formal apology and cash settlement demonstrate that Margolis was a victim of official persecution reminiscent of Nixon's COINTELPRO. Of course this victory for Margolis and her UCASSH supporters, as well as the CWA and the whole labour movement and defenders of democratic rights, is only one step. The same letter of apology vows that the political police will do it again and again ('the Secret Service cannot be absolutely certain that other misunderstandings will never occur'), all in the name of protecting the imperial president. But Margolis' victory will give pause to the secret police witchhunters before they try such a stunt again.

Finally it will not be mainly through legal suits but on the picket lines and in the class struggle that this fight must be won. The only real protection the working class has against victimisation by the capitalist state is a militant, vigilant labour movement politically mobilised against the big-business politicians and government. But Jane Margolis, UCASSH, MAC and their supporters fought the White House ... and won. And that counts for a lot in the American working class. CONGRATULATIONS ON A VICTORY WELL WON!

—adapted from Workers Vanguard Supplement, 18 June 1980

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20223

JUNE 18 1980

Mr. Jane Margolis
475 Alvarado Street, #3
San Francisco, California 94114

Re: Alleged False Arrest/Jane Margolis/CWA Convention
Detroit, Michigan; July 16, 1979

Dear Ms. Margolis:

Please be advised that in response to the above referenced matter the Secret Service Office of Inspections was directed to look into this claim to determine, as accurately as possible, what did in fact occur at the time of the original incident. Based upon this inquiry it is the opinion of this Service that a misunderstanding between a Secret Service agent and a Detroit police officer resulted in your being removed from the convention floor.

The Secret Service's involvement in this misunderstanding, which is obviously regrettable, arose from our agent's confusion over why you were actually being arrested. It was his belief that he was assisting a Detroit police officer in making an arrest. At the same time, the Detroit police officer believed that the arrest was being made for a violation of federal law. In any event, it is now apparent that no arrest should have been made under the circumstances.

It should be noted that there is no indication whatsoever that there was any political motivation to these actions.

Following your initial removal from the floor of the convention, the law enforcement personnel on the scene began questioning why, in fact, you had been removed. As soon as it became apparent that you had not violated any law, but rather that an error in judgment had been made, you were released.

The Secret Service, of course, regrets that this incident occurred. Obviously, due to the extreme complexity of supplying protection to the President and others, and the sensitive and sometimes conflicting interests that come into play, the Secret Service cannot be absolutely certain that other misunderstandings will never occur. You can be assured, however, that every effort will continue to be made to assure that errors of this nature are kept to a minimum.

Again, the Secret Service regrets that this misunderstanding has caused you distress.

Sincerely yours,
Myron I. Weinstein
Myron I. Weinstein
Deputy Director

Ernest Mandel's parody of Trotskyism -- the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' (USec), whose components have found themselves on opposite sides of the barricades from Portugal 1975 to Afghanistan 1980 -- seems to be producing rotten-bloc images of itself through cloning. First, in a spectacular split last autumn over the pretext of Nicaragua, it gave birth to the 'Parity Committee for the Reorganisation (Reconstruction) of the Fourth International', an alliance of French crypto-social democrat Pierre Lambert and Argentine would-be caudillo Nahuel Moreno that is every bit as unprincipled as the United Secretariat. Now the Parity Committee has generated its own replica in miniature, the 'Trotskyist International Liaison Committee (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International)'. The three giants of this micro-USec are the Workers Socialist League (WSL) of Britain, the Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista (GBL) of Italy and the Chilean Liga Obrera Bolchevique (LOB).

For a time it looked like Lambert/Moreno would attract the flotsam and jetsam thrown off by previous outbursts of factionalism in the USec. Their talk of an independent Trotskyist party in Nicaragua and defence of leftists from Sandinista repression gave them a militant image. But when Afghanistan tore off this cover to reveal the Parity Committee's underlying Stalinophobia -- calling for military support to anti-Soviet Islamic reactionary guerrillas -- the wavering centrists got cold feet. Roberto Massari's Revolutionary Marxist Faction, after seeking and being refused attendance at Mandel & Co's 'Eleventh World Congress', retaliated by publishing voluminous correspondence showing how it unsuccessfully tried to crawl back into the USec, and declared itself independent. Guillermo Lora's Fourth Internationalist Tendency called down a 'plague on both your houses' finding the USec split of no interest in its struggle to form an 'anti-imperialist front' with the Latin American 'national' bourgeoisie. And the WSL/GBL/LOB founded a home for the Orphan Annes of pseudo-Trotskyism.

Conceived in opportunism, born of a marriage of convenience, the Liaison Committee has only one reason for being: anti-Spartacism. It set as its goal 'to drive out all forms of revisionism from within the Fourth International' (which one -- the USec, Parity Committee, Healyites, Posadistas or Vargaites?). Thus behind its anti-Pabloist rhetoric is the bankrupt conception of a 'family of Trotskyism'. The first public statement of the new grouping declared, 'After political agreement has been reached on strategic principles and fundamental attacks, the Liaison Committee intends to form itself into a democratic-centralist International Fraction [sic]' (*Socialist Press*, 13 February 1980). Thereby the WSL/GBL/LOB admit that their bloc is based neither on democratic centralism nor agreement on strategic principles. But if after two years of cohabitation their goal is not achieved, the contracting parties agree in advance to separate.

In the meantime, the Liaison Committee's lack of basic programmatic agreement has not stopped it from publishing a series of leaflets on current events from Afghanistan to Peru. Its Afghanistan flyer 'condemn[s] the intervention of the Soviet troops' but also warns that a withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan ... would also give a major boost to the policies of imperialism'. This is about as clear as a barrel of tar. But as soon as the bourgeois press bemoaned the suppression of a shopkeepers 'strike' in the Kabul bazaar, the WSL solidarised with the 'masses' against the Soviet army. With this position (some abstract verbiage about defence of the USSR notwithstanding), it's a toss-up whether the authors belong in the muddled USec or the anti-Soviet Parity Com-

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'Contrappunto lamenta WSL/GBL/LOB: an'

mittee. Clearly, though, they flee from the hard Trotskyist line of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) which proclaimed 'Hail Red Army!' against Afghan reaction.

The Liaison Committee wants to inhabit more or less the same niche on the USec's left flank occupied in 1976-77 by the short-lived 'Necessary International Initiative'. Once again the bloc partners take their sweet time in facing up to fundamental programmatic differences, hoping that their lash-up can help swing a deal with the 'big-time' revisionists of the Parity Committee or USec. This time, even more than before, it is an Anti-Spartacist League. Each of the component groups has been centrally defined through confrontation with the iSt. And their rejection of a consistent Trotskyist policy has been sealed with betrayals. *The Liaison Com-*

League/Britain in March 1978. In early 1980 this was followed by the Leninist Faction (LF), expelled with three more of the WSL's NCers, two more editorial board members, the head of the WSL youth group and the co-author of the main document against the TF. As a parting shot, the LF warned the WSL leadership to be on the lookout for a 'Sverdlov Faction', and fused with the SL/B in early April.

The WSL bases its claims to Trotskyist orthodoxy on a document, 'The Poisoned Well' (based on a quote by the American SWP's Jack Barnes!), which presents its analysis of the development of Pabloist revisionism after World War II. This document claims that Pabloism is simply an empirical method (shades of Healy), rather than a programme rejecting the basic tenets of Trotskyism, and locates its origins in



Allende's popular front paved the way for Pinochet's terror



mittee is the combination of an Italian group that called for votes to the 'Historic Compromise' of repression, austerity and clerical domination; a Chilean group which calls for votes to the key popular front of recent times, Allende's Unidad Popular, even after its bloody demise; and an English group whose principal leader is notorious for scabbing!

WSL: Scabbing

Let's dissect this Anti-Spartacist League par excellence. The Liaison Committee was formed at a conference of the British Workers Socialist League in late December. But this only came after the WSL had been given the cold shoulder by both the USec and the Parity Committee, all in the space of six months. In August a draft agreement had been reached stating that despite 'substantial differences', there was 'the objective possibility of the WSL fusing with the USFI [USec]'. This became a dead letter only when the USec backed out. Then the WSL resumed its on-again, off-again flirtation with the Morenoites and Lambertists, 'welcoming' their initiative and formally applying to join the Parity Committee. However, Moreno/Lambert raised as a condition for entry that the WSL refer to them as 'Trotskyists'. Thereupon *Socialist Press* (19 December 1979) complained that 'it begins to look as if the [Parity Committee] conference may not be as "open" as it appeared....'

The WSL's relationship to the international Spartacist tendency is strictly involuntary: the WSL continues to produce and expel factions which solidarise with the programme of the iSt. First there was the Trotskyist Faction (TF), which walked out with a fifth of the WSL's active membership, including two National Committee members, three editorial board members, several regional and local organisers and two-thirds of the commission appointed to draft a reply to an iSt letter of June 1976. The fusion of the Trotskyist Faction with the London Spartacist Group gave birth to the Spartacist

'middle class and intellectual forces with little experience and few links to the working class'. The WSL finds evidence of this method everywhere since World War II, thus ignoring its quintessential expression: the destruction of the Fourth International in 1951-53 as a result of Pablo's liquidationism. Not once does it mention the Spartacist tendency's nearly 20-year struggle for a consistent Trotskyist programme, even when discussing the Cuban deformed workers state where the iSt's contribution is inescapable for honest Marxists. The WSL seeks not to destroy those who have betrayed the banner of Trotskyism but to pressure or 'educate' the Mandels, Lamberts and Morenos.

But most of all, this workerist document tries to provide a justification for the syndicalist practice of WSL leader Alan Thornett. Originating as a right split from Healyism, the Thornett tendency has always been nationally centred with the faintest hint of internationalism. And its left-Labourite trade unionism has led it to condone and even engage in scabbing as it tails after the backstabbing union bureaucrats, first in a national engineering strike and most recently in the bitter 12-week British steel strike.

GBL: Historic compromise

The Italian Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista, in contrast to Thornett's WSL, has been an ardent suitor of the iSt. The GBL was thrown out of the Lambertist OCRFI in 1975 for refusing to go along with Lambert's hysterical slander campaign labelling the highly dubious Michel Varga a CIA agent. That same year the GBL authored a document, 'Theses on the Crisis of the Fourth International (Draft)', stating that of the forces claiming to be Trotskyist there was 'an orthodox left wing, whose main component is the iSt'. It added, 'the "Statement of Principles" of the Spartacist League (1966) may be taken as the basis for the international regroupment of orthodox Trotskyism'. More than two years of

ntabile in basso buffo'

anti-Spartacist bloc

discussions ensued during which the GBL argued that, despite sharp differences on two of the most controversial questions facing the left, it was principled for it to join the iSt as a faction. We replied that the goal of Trotskyists was not to build a phony 'International', a mini-USec, that would fall apart at the first real test of the class struggle.

'Notoriously', wrote the GBL, 'your organisation holds the strange opinion that electoral support to a workers party involved or implicated in a Popular Front, or inclined toward it, equals capitulation to the Popular Front itself' (*Il Militante*, October 1976). According to the GBL, this 'strange opinion' -- our proletarian opposition to class-collaborationist coalitions -- indicated a 'sectarian attitude toward the mass movement'. So since the masses consider the popular front their own, these 'Trotskyists' tail along rather than patiently explain that this bourgeois formation is a deadly enemy of the workers movement. And we are not talking about just any old popular front but Enrico Berlinguer's 'Historic Compromise' with Christian Democracy -- the popular front in a priest's cassock which meant anti-working-class austerity, 'strong state' witchhunting against the far left, opposition to abortion and divorce, and support to NATO against the Soviet Union! So intent was the GBL in avoiding 'sectarianism' toward the 'mass movement' (read, the Eurocommunist PCI) that it insisted on voting for the Communist Party *against* the far-left Democrazia Proletaria slate. (The iSt also refused to support the latter, but for opposite reasons, because the DP simply wanted to pressure the PCI into a more left-wing, Chilean-style popular front.)

On the national question the GBL accused the iSt of feeling 'the pressures of the Bronx' (ie, capitulating to pro-Zionist imperialist public opinion) for refusing to support the Arab colonels and sheiks against Zionist Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Near East wars, and for refusing to take sides in the 1974-76 communal war in Lebanon. Claiming that the Muslim side was really a popular front, the GBL declared that the massacre of the Christian village of Damur (in response to a massacre of the Muslim district of Qarantina in Beirut) had 'no value from the Marxist viewpoint' ('First Balance Sheet of Discussions Between the iSt and GBL'). Well, in our modest view, Marxism is opposed to genocide. In the face of the GBL's critical support to the popular front and apology for communal violence, the iSt responded in a letter of 18 April 1977:

'As we have repeatedly pointed out to you, the iSt seeks principled regroupments and a cohesive (though certainly not monolithic) international tendency based on programmatic confluence. You are already aware that your positions on voting for reformist workers parties in popular front formations and on support to petty-bourgeois nationalist movements (such as in Lebanon and Angola) are considered by us to preclude such a prin-

ciplined fusion at this point. Your refusal to recognize this fact appears to indicate a serious difference on the organization question as well.'

LOB: Voting for Allende

Unlike the WSL and GBL, the third group in the Liaison Committee bloc, the Chilean Liga Obrera Bolchevique, makes no pretence of internationalism. As the vehicle of a union caudillo, the LOB's only real claim to fame is to distribute in Europe a newspaper allegedly coming from the interior of Pinochet's bloody dictatorship. In exile its main activity is participating (along with the rest of the Chilean Trotskyoid groups) in a low-level propaganda bloc, the Committee for the Defence of Trade Union and Human Rights (CODESH), that is the likely starting point for a 'far left' popular front. As for the LOB's *lider maximo* he arrived in Europe in the autumn of 1976 as the result of an international campaign waged by the Partisan Defense Committee and the iSt to rescue him from the bloody Videla junta in Argentina, where he had fled after the September 1973 Santiago coup. Unable to break from his syndicalist and viscerally anti-Leninist political origins, he consequently parted ways with the Chilean Organizacion Trotskista Revolucionaria in mid-1977 as the OTR was joining the Spartacist tendency.

But the LOB has clearly stated its position on one question that was a main difference with the iSt: voting for Allende. Although terming the UP a 'classical popular front', it emphatically insisted 'revolutionaries could not remain aloof from the struggles waged by the proletariat to impose Allende as president'. Thus, it was necessary to 'convert the vote for Allende into a vote *against* the popular front' (*Alternativa Proletaria*, June 1978). That would be a neat trick indeed, seeing as the 'Comrade President' was the single candidate of the popular front!

The Spartacist tendency was unique in warning from the beginning that the 'people's government' of the UP was a capitalist government, a roadblock that would have to be swept aside by revolutionary mobilisations of the workers if a bloodbath were to be avoided. In contrast, the LOB 'could not remain aloof' from the masses' illusions, and while muttering a few criticisms of the 'limitations' of the UP says it was necessary to tag along with Allende while reaction was rearming, preparing the bloody debacle. And that was in 1978, only a year after separating from the OTR. More recently the LOB signed a joint political declaration with the Izquierda Socialista (Socialist Left -- ex-Dissident Faction of the MIR) which ignores the character of the UP altogether and raises 'the slogan of a sovereign constituent assembly as centralising the activities of the workers and people's movement' (*Lucha Socialista*, February 1979). So while the iSt calls for workers revolution to bring down the junta, the LOB/IS put forward a purely 'democratic' programme, leaving the door open for a political bloc with anti-Pinochet bourgeois forces.

Nine Points

The 'Trotskyist International Liaison Committee' is a collection of cast-offs who are defined by their abject willingness to compromise Marxist principles out of fear of isolation from the masses, and by their hatred of the Spartacist tendency. There is a clear note of desperation in the pleas by the GBL and WSL to be allowed

into an international -- *any* international -- and programme be damned, so long as they can 'discuss'. (The LOB could care less.) If there is a 'family' of renegades from Trotskyism, these are certainly the poor relations. And the Liaison Committee clearly is going nowhere, for with their politics there is no principled reason why the various components should not end up with the USec or Parity Committee. As a measure of the difference between this small-time Menshevism and the Bolshevism of the iSt, one need only contrast the nine-point 'programmatic' document adopted at the first meeting of the Liaison Committee with a nine-point platform raised three years ago by the Spartacist tendency as a potential basis for revolutionary regroupment with dissidents breaking to the left from the reformist and centrist USec leaderships.

The only hard line drawn in the document put forward by the GBL was against the iSt (declared, in the first paragraph, 'to be considered as irreparably lost for orthodox Trotskyism'). For the rest, it is a collection of homilies and generalities about destroying capitalist society, the crucial importance of democratic tasks in 'oppressed countries', and the need for 'an international organisation' based on 'the Marxism of the present epoch'. (And what is that, a reader might ask. 'Bolshevism-Leninism' says the document, adding in a parenthesis -- why not a footnote? -- that this is Trotskyism.) In contrast the draft declaration by Trotskyists expelled or driven out of the USec who now adhere to the Spartacist tendency called for:

- No political or electoral support to popular fronts; for conditional opposition to workers parties in open or implicit class-collaborationist coalitions;
- Uphold the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution; for proletarian leadership of the national/social struggle;
- For military support to petty-bourgeois nationalist forces fighting imperialism, but absolutely no political support to such forces; for Trotskyist parties in every country;
- Against violence within the workers movement;
- For unconditional defence of all the deformed/degenerated workers states against imperialism; for political revolution against the bureaucracies; no political support to competing Stalinist cliques and factions;
- For communist fractions in the unions, based on the Transitional Programme;
- For the communist tactic of the united front from above; for the tactic of regroupment to unite subjective revolutionaries in the vanguard party; for intransigent exposure of centrism;
- Rejection of the claims of ostensibly Trotskyist Internationals to speak for the Fourth International, destroyed by Pabloism in 1951-53;
- For the reforging of a democratic-centralist Fourth International which will stop at nothing short of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

These points constitute a programme which was tested in Chile and Portugal, one which uniquely armed the Spartacist tendency to confront the rise of clerical reaction in Iran when the rest of the left was bowing to Khomeini. This programme prepared the iSt to stand at its post in the onset of a new Cold War, while many ostensibly Trotskyist groups were tailing Carter's anti-Soviet 'Human Rights' crusade and siding with CIA-backed mullahs in Afghanistan. This is a programme to lead the proletariat to power, not for making slimy deals with Mandel! Break with all the centrist and reformist attempts to play bricologe with the Trotskyist programme! Join the iSt in the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International, to build a granite hard world communist party the way Lenin and Trotsky did!

—translated from *Le Bolchevik Supplement*, May 1980



CIA-backed Afghan rebels. WSL's *Socialist Press* hails 'Mass resistance to Soviet invaders'

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Why RCT opposed a general strike

Last winter's national steel strike was an acid test for would-be revolutionary organisations -- and, virtually without exception, they failed abysmally. But one, the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT), a small academic-orientated outfit which has lately been trying to step out into the real world of the class struggle, didn't even try to point a way forward to victory. The April/May issue of the RCT's review, *the next step*, featured a lengthy polemic denouncing the call for a general strike in terms worthy of Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the only other 'far-left' organisation to take such a right-wing position. This was the clearest example yet of the passivity and programmatic rightism which lurk behind the RCT's cultivated 'revolutionary communist' facade.

According to the article, written by *next step* editor and RCT theoretical guru Frank Richards, a general strike last winter was an 'absurdity', 'day-dreaming', 'irresponsible' and even 'reactionary'. Organisations ranging from the Labour-cretinist Militant tendency to the Spartacist League (SL) were attacked as one for engaging in empty 'bombast' by talking about such a strike. The SL fought for solidarity strike action alongside the steelmen and demanded that the TUC call an immediate all-out general strike -- not with the perspective of putting Labour back on the Treasury benches but around limited, defensive demands aimed at smashing the Tory/employer offensive. This perspective, which could have opened the road for a pre-revolutionary situation and the rapid growth of a revolutionary vanguard party, was denounced by the RCT as 'leaving it to Transport House'.

But it was the RCT that left it to Transport -- really Congress -- House. Warning the steel strikers against 'frustrations in the heat of the struggle', *the next step* counselled them to wait, while the RCT undertook the 'basic groundwork' of educational campaigns to build a 'credible revolutionary alternative' to the Labour Party.

RCT metaphysics

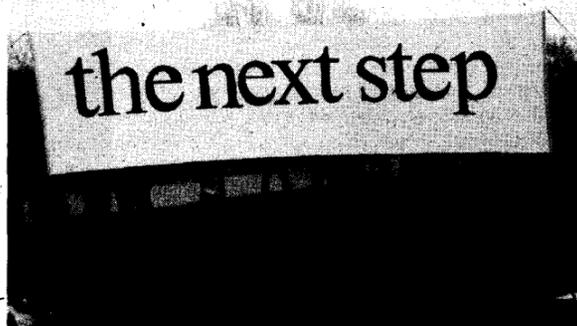
In a polemic full of apparently wilful lies and distortions aimed at putting a 'left' gloss on the RCT's line, Richards first claims that it was ludicrous to call for a general strike because there was no revolutionary situation in Britain last winter. He asks rhetorically, 'Where is the "extreme political tension"? Where is the "revolutionary situation"?' and answers himself with the smug comment, 'Just asking these questions brings out the absurdity of the call for a general strike.' But who is being absurd here? Trotsky had some words to say about this kind of anti-Marxist scholasticism:

'Marxist thought is *dialectical*; it considers all phenomena in their development, in their transitions from one state to another. The thought of the conservative petty bourgeois is *metaphysical*: its conceptions are fixed and immovable, and between phenomena it supposes that there are unbridgeable gaps. The absolute opposition of a revolutionary situation to a non-revolutionary one is a classical example of metaphysical thought.' ('Once Again, Whither France?', 1935,

emphasis in original)

What was the concrete situation last winter? Against the backdrop of the Prior Bill and the other Tory/employer attacks on the workers and oppressed, 150,000 steelworkers were out on a long and bitter strike. Flying pickets were travelling up and down the country in an attempt to tie up basic industry. Tens of thousands of strikers marched in Wales and South Yorkshire calling for a general strike, and thousands of Sheffield engineers and Liverpool dockers went on strike in solidarity with the steelmen. A general strike was both objectively necessary and sharply posed. But, said the RCT, there was no revolutionary situation -- so no general strike. QED.

As his second line of defence, Richards claims that since a general strike would pose the question of state power in the absence of a currently credible revolutionary alternative to the Labour Party and TUC it could only end in disaster for the working class. He paws through



March 9 TUC rally: RCT out of step with the class struggle

Writings on Britain and Whither France? for suitable extracts aimed at showing that Trotsky also thought there could be no perspective for a general strike short of an immediate frontal assault on state power. Thus:

'Trotsky: "A real victory for the General Strike lies only in the winning of power by the proletariat and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (*Writings on Britain*, 1925 [sic]).'

Richards must hope that no one bothers to read the sources he cites, for in the *very next paragraph* Trotsky goes on to flatly contradict the RCT thesis:

'This in no way means, however, that the present strike faces the alternative: all or nothing.... The more broadly it develops, the more powerfully it shakes the foundations of capitalism and the further back it thrusts the treacherous and opportunist leaders the harder it will be for bourgeois reaction to go over to the counter-offensive, the less proletarian organisations will suffer, and the sooner will follow the next, more decisive stage of the fight.' (*Writings on Britain*, vol 2, p146)

Trotsky consistently made the same point in later years, supporting the French Bolshevik-Leninists' call for a general strike at a time when their organisation had only a few hundred adherents:

'... independently of its immediate results, a general strike will not of course be a "putsch" but a necessary stage in the mass struggle' ('The ILP and the Fourth International', 1935)

So much for the syllogism that no revolutionary leadership means no general strike -- and for Frank Richards' pretence of historical accuracy.

And the RCT's thesis that if the proletariat does not seize state power through a general strike then 'the organisations of the working class will be destroyed' is also proven historically false. What does the RCT make of the Belgian general strike of winter 1960-61, or the French general strike of May 1968? Despite the betrayals of the Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders, the organisations of the working class were hardly 'destroyed' there. And anyway according to the RCT's schema revolutionaries should have *opposed* these general strikes because there was no 'credible revolutionary

alternative'! The fog must have been very thick on the Channel when Frank Richards sat down to study historical examples of the general strike, for he seems only to have heard of The General Strike, Britain 1926. And even here he turns the historical lessons upside down, claiming that a general strike without a revolutionary leadership *must* play into the hands of the bureaucracy.

Richards and Co must have been the only people in Britain last winter to believe that a general strike would *strengthen* the grip of the labour misleaders. *the next step* claims:

'The call for a general strike is not only irresponsible: it is reactionary. Because only the TUC could lead a general strike today, its practical consequence is to strengthen the labour bureaucracy's hold over the working class.'

The RCT truly seems to believe that the consciousness of workers will only be changed in academic study-circles -- not by active intervention around a revolutionary programme *in struggle*. Thus they stand Leninism on its head. In fact, their position on the general strike starts from precisely the same anti-Leninist defeatism that animates the SWP et al, who *counterpose* the way forward in concrete struggles to the hard and patient fight to cohere a revolutionary vanguard. A leading article in the June/July *next step* recognises this explicitly:

'Most radical left organisations distinguish themselves by their inability to put forward a realistic assessment of the present balance of class forces. Hence they advance empty slogans about general strikes and all sorts of militant action at a time when class-conscious workers are losing their struggle to preserve shop floor organisation. Socialist Workers Party leader Tony Cliff does not make this mistake.'

For the SWP, a general strike was too 'advanced' because the day-to-day economist grind is all. For the RCT it was too 'advanced' because *any* effective response to the capitalist offensive was not on today's agenda. In contrast, the Trotskyist Transitional Programme (sneeringly rejected by both organisations) is a vehicle for revolutionaries to intervene in partial and reform struggles to *bridge the gap* between workers' present consciousness and the objective need for socialist revolution.

Charlatans and lies

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency has been around in one form or another since its founding cadres were expelled from the Cliff organisation in 1973. (The split gave birth to the Revolutionary Communist Group [RCG], from which the RCT issued in turn in 1976.) Having no programmatic basis for existence (indeed it has never even *claimed* to have a programme, merely a 'method' from which a programme will someday be derived), the RCG/RCT have been prone to repeated splits and gimmicks to keep themselves together. But with the publication of *the next step* from late last year, the RCT is now having to convert its 'method' into programmatic positions on more and more questions -- and they are invariably rightist in content.

In a leaflet distributed to the RCT two years ago, we noted the organisation's rightist tailing of Irish Green nationalism and its labelling any attempt by leftists in Britain to project a programme for Ireland as 'chauvinist', and predicted that this right-wing line would not remain isolated to the Irish question:

'This classic division between minimum and maximum programme will undoubtedly lead the RCT, whenever it departs its study circles, to more gross and obvious opportunism -- just as surely as this happened to the RCG.' ('RCT: Wrong Tasks, Wrong Methods', 5 August 1978)

And so it has been -- on the general strike, on the Soviet role in Afghanistan (which the RCT opposed, despite its seven-year-long failure to decide the class character of the Soviet Union) and on Iran.

In late 1978, the RCT had no line on Iran -- except to condone our exclusion from anti-shah demonstrations by mullah-lovers, dubbing our slogan 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs! Workers must rule Iran!' as 'reaction-

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ary'. Having finally gotten around to producing a position paper, the RCT's only point of clarity is the outrageous slander that the SL 'wound up backing the shah against the workers'. 'Now some of the dust has settled', reads the RCT's advertisement for *Revolutionary Communist Papers* no 6, 'we ask: is there anything progressive about Khomeini and the movement that follows him?' And after 27 pages and 174 footnotes, their answer is ... maybe. But they do assert that the shah's overthrow was 'an important step forward for the working class'. Indeed, if Khomeini's terror is to be considered a 'step forward' over the shah's!

'We can't wait'

Finally, there is the RCT's latest gimmick: organising against fascist and racist attacks in the East End of London. Noting the gap in anti-fascist activity since the collapse of the Anti-Nazi League, the RCT has formed an 'East London Workers Against Racism' (ELWAR) front group which vows to take up 'vigilante work' (their words) against racists and fascists in the East End. Already the RCT has started to organise its own little demonstrations against the National Front, like a 70-strong effort at Hyde Park against an NF march in mid-June at which only the cops stood in the way of possible attack by vastly superior numbers of fascists.

Not for the RCT/ELWAR Trotsky's insistence that defence against fascist/racist attack cannot be left to small groups but must be organised through the trade unions and other mass organisations of the working class! An ELWAR leaflet proudly boasts that, 'The RCT is prepared to organise workers' defence.' East London RCT leader Judith Harrison justified this position at an RCT day school on June 21 with the immortal words, 'We can't wait.'

Either this is just cynical 'hot air', or else the RCT is engaging in criminally irresponsible substitutionism, playing with the lives of anti-fascist militants for a bit of bravado. The steelworkers must wait, until the RCT has finished its ideological campaigns against nationalism. Iranians must wait until 'after the dust has settled' -- and then some. Workers who want a programme to fight the anti-Soviet war drive must wait on and on. But not the RCT, as it lurches from maximalist pillar to minimalist post down the road in the wrong direction. ■

South Africa...

(Continued from page 1)

black proletariat has the power to smash apartheid is the key to a revolutionary programme to liberate the oppressed South African masses. South Africa is the industrial powerhouse of the continent. But unlike those of virtually every other African state before independence from direct colonial rule, the black South African masses do not face a thin layer of colonial bureaucrats and expatriate settlers. Instead, they must defeat a powerful capitalist class at the head of an entrenched, quite large and well-armed white racial caste. Proportionately the white minority in South Africa is five times as large as its Rhodesian counterpart. And if they must go under, the country's rulers are quite prepared to unleash a fiery holocaust in the process.

To open the door to the South African socialist revolution the black masses must break through the present apartheid shackles and win a degree of freedom needed to mount organised, mass social struggles. Key to this is fighting for the legalisation of independent black trade unions, abolition of the hated pass laws and bantustan system and an end to all racist job privileges and the contract labour system.

International labour solidarity action plays a crucial role in this struggle -- not the utopian calls for total boycotts and 'international isolation' of the apartheid regime which serve only to prettify US or British imperialism but concrete industrial actions aimed at strengthening the one force capable of smashing apartheid rule, the organised black proletariat. Industrial solidarity action by German, British and US car workers against Ford and Volkswagen, for example, could provide powerful assistance to their striking brothers in South Africa. Trade union militants must also fight for industrial action against companies with subsidiaries in South Africa to force recognition of independent black trade unions and for the blacking of all military cargo to the racist regime.

A South African revolutionary movement would, of course, strive for the unity in struggle of

the black masses with the coloured and Indian populations. But what of the four and a half million whites? White wages in agriculture and mining range from 18 to 20 times those of blacks in agriculture and mining (according to 1970 estimates), and six times those of blacks in manufacturing; there are effectively no unemployed or unskilled whites. They constitute an enormously privileged caste, not a nation for which one can advance the right of self-determination, ie the right to their own separate state. At the same time, as against some black nationalists and their left apologists, communists recognise the right of South Africa's whites to exist. Furthermore, their skills would be of tremendous value to a revolutionary regime. A black-centred workers and peasants government would grant to that portion of the white population which chose to remain the same democratic rights as to South Africa's other peoples. And it cannot be ruled out in advance that for some white workers, appeals to class unity could overcome racist solidarity.

In the present anti-apartheid struggles, as black workers take to the streets along with the students, the need for a proletarian perspective is clearly posed. Reformist pressure politics will not break down the hardened racialist apartheid regime; nor can a guerrillaist strategy be more than a heroic dead-end against the powerful and highly industrialised white laager. Petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Stalinist-backed African National Congress (ANC) and other exile and underground nationalist organisations offer no effective strategy to defeat apartheid. 'We can't fight a bush war', admits ANC spokesman Thabo Mbeki. 'Look at a map. It is all developed' (*New York Times*, 20 June). The ANC's occasional guerrillaism is not counterposed to,

but part and parcel of a strategy of pressuring the 'anti-apartheid' bourgeoisie. Thus in 1958 the ANC even backed the United Party of the English gold-mining magnates as the 'lesser evil', only to have the 'liberal' UP come out for the death penalty for all 'subversives' under the Suppression of Communism Act.

The would-be Kenyattas and Nyereres of South Africa seek to subordinate the workers' struggles to their own petty-bourgeois ambitions. They also appeal to US imperialism to pressure the apartheid rulers for reform. Their model for post-apartheid South Africa is based on the experience of anti-working class middlemen for imperialism like Mozambique's Samora Machel (who still sends contract labour to South Africa's mines) and Zimbabwe's strikebreaking Robert Mugabe.

If South Africa's oppressed non-white masses are to achieve full victory over the white racist regime they must look elsewhere for leadership. A key task in South Africa is therefore the construction of a Trotskyist party armed with a programme for workers revolution through smashing apartheid. South Africa, a regional imperialist power, is the key to socialist revolution throughout the entire extremely economically backward region. The South African working class therefore bears an historic responsibility beyond even its own liberation from the chains of apartheid slavery. It can become the vanguard of social revolution for a whole continent. With the country's vast mineral resources and industrial power harnessed for social emancipation instead of apartheid profits, a black-centred workers and peasants republic in South Africa would be the real beginning of the African socialist revolution.

—adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 259, 27 June 1980

War drive...

(Continued from page 8)

fraction?) that parts for chemical plants are being shipped to Russia, Foot railed against a project director who remarked that 'cross fertilisation is better than Cold War'. And when a second 'friend', a lorry driver, told him a week later 'it seems we are delivering meat to Russian troops', the headline screamed 'Are we putting beef into Russia's invasion?' (*Daily Mirror*, 25 June). The SWP's line is: don't deprive the Olympic athletes of their chance to compete, get the 'red tsars' where it hurts -- starve the bastards! It takes little imagination to figure out what role loyal SWPers will play in the unions and against pro-Soviet co-workers when the Cold War really gears up.

The SWP's treachery is no surprise, although it is grotesque. But IMG members should be clear that they are travelling down the same road.

Their lust to be at one organisationally with the SWP is complemented by politically seeking in the 'colonial revolution' a new 'third camp' refuge which avoids the unpopularity and inconvenience of having to defend the Soviet Union. Reading *Socialist Challenge*, one might even conclude that Cruise missiles were pointed at Managua and Tehran, as though the presence of a well-armed Soviet workers state had nothing to do with US imperialist hesitation to 'send in the Marines' to backward countries with impunity. Not once did the IMG join in the numerous defencist chants raised by the SL contingent marching behind it, even when directly challenged. Disquieted IMGers would do well to ponder the probing question raised by an SL comrade through the megaphone: 'IMG -- Why won't you chant "Defend the Soviet Union"?' Why, IMG?

The conclusion is inescapable: there is only one Leninist-Trotskyist organisation in Britain today, the Spartacist League. Our distinctive position and impact at the march was

noted from many corners. One NCP'er remarked upon seeing our contingent, 'You're the first pro-Soviet Trotskyists I've ever met.' The arch-Tory *Daily Mail* (23 June), out to tar the 'peace-loving' Labour 'lefts' with the taint of 'communist conspiracy', singled out the SL contingent as the communist counterposition at the march to all the social-democratic and pacifist mush. 'Scores of supporters of a Marxist group, the Spartacist League', it reported, drowned out pacifist pleas with 'a shout of "one, two, three, four, we don't want Imperialist war. Five, six, seven, eight, defend the Soviet workers' state." In a way it was summed up by the woman who sought out our contingent and asked, 'Are you the ones who are defending the Soviet Union? Then I'm marching with you.' In years to come, many more who want to fight imperialism and defend the gains of October will learn to hate all the peddlers of the 'third camp' and 'detente' and will be compelled to 'march with us'. ■

'Third Camp' is Thatcher's camp...

British left condemns intervention by Moscow

THE TIMES

DAILY MIRROR

ARE WE PUTTING BEEF INTO RUSSIA'S INVASION?

...Trotskyists stand with USSR

Daily Mail

Six months after Times (10 January) lauds IMG, SWP for condemning Soviet intervention SWP's Paul Foot attacks Thatcher for being soft on Russia. Even the Daily Mail (23 June) knows who the real communists are

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Peaceniks, Labourites rally round the Union Jack

Smash anti-Soviet war drive!



Spartacist contingent at June 22 anti-Cruise march: Trotskyists stand with the Soviet Union!

The Labour Party sponsored demonstration on June 22, called against the siting of US Cruise missiles in Britain, took place under the slogan 'Nuclear Arms, No. Peace, Yes.' It was the first Labour 'peace' initiative since 1956, and in the context of Carter/Thatcher's anti-Soviet Cold War frenzy it caused a political storm. The mainstream of British bourgeois opinion sees no future except as a loyal ally of Washington. Thatcher's anti-Sovietism is the voice of the ruling class, and any tampering with the notion that Britain must 'do its bit' -- even from the timid and thoroughly social-patriotic Labour 'lefts' -- is deeply resented. Within the Labour Party itself June 22 was used by the most open agents of capital, in particular the Shadow Defence spokesman, William Rodgers, to step up the campaign of the Labour 'moderates'. Rodgers, along with Shirley Williams and David Owen, has threatened to resign from Labour should it adopt a policy of withdrawal from the Common Market. He casts even the tamest opposition to NATO in the same mould -- all creeping Marxism.

In fact, the varying shades of 'opposition' by Labour's 'lefts' to nuclear weapons, and their criticisms of NATO, do flow from the same outlook as their grumbling over the EEC. They oppose it not because it is an imperialist economic combine underpinning the NATO anti-Soviet imperialist military pact, but because it is European, foreign. Their 'socialist' alternative is an isolationist strategy for 'saving' crumbling British capitalism -- a little Englander attempt to 'escape' world capitalist recession and the international arms race. A million miles from Marxism, the deeply parochial recipes of the Tribunate ladies and gentlemen are best summarised in the formula, 'stop the world, I want to get off'. Far from offering opposition to imperialist war and anti-Soviet frenzy such sentiments actually feed into the mass social-patriotic sentiment necessary for war.

Social chauvinism vs Soviet defencism

As 25,000 rain-soaked demonstrators wound their way to the Hyde Park rally on June 22 with the Labour Party followed by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) there was a mood of Aldermaston revivalism in the air. Though the peaceniks were greying and now pushed children's prams, their balloons and sticks of rock with pacifist slogans summed it all-up. The speeches -- a wretched blend of pacifism, anti-Sovietism,

reformism and anti-American little England nationalism, were almost exclusively from Labour/CND spokesmen and 'celebrities' such as actress Susannah York.

In Hyde Park Michael Foot sought to strike a chord of nostalgia with the aging CNDers and hippies in his audience. As the sun broke through the clouds, Foot intoned, 'This sun is coming out as proof that the demonstration is going to lead to even greater demonstrations.' But Foot was hard put to recapture his one-time image as a 'radical' politician. A thorough social patriot and loyal strikebreaker in Callaghan's Cabinet, he is precisely the kind of Labour traitor who will find reasons for workers to go into the slaughterhouse of imperialist war. As it was, Foot went out of his way to reassure Rodgers and his ilk that he, along with other Tribunites on the platform like Jo Richardson and Joan Lester -- indeed like the entire 'left-wing' NEC -- roundly condemned Soviet 'aggression' in Afghanistan. Afghanistan, opined Foot, 'makes it more urgent to implement the programme of multinational disarmament'. From E P Thompson to the Labour 'lefts', the rallying cry was: the Soviet Union must shed its weapons too. Placards against the Soviet SS-20 were sprinkled liberally throughout the crowd.

In this critical historical period it is hard to find any differences of substance among the sundry 'friends of peace'. The only road to peace is to build a revolutionary proletarian movement to overthrow the imperialist bourgeoisies whose drive to war is fuelled by inter-imperialist rivalries and revanchist appetites for the territory lost to capitalist exploitation through the historic October Revolution. Yet without exception the entire array of fake revolutionaries tail the Labour 'lefts', rejoice over their isolationist social-chauvinist mutterings and/or join in the condemnation of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. It was difficult indeed to draw any sort of political distinction at the June 22 rally between 'left' Labourites, pacifists, Stalinists, fake-Trotskyists, the gamut.

For the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group (IMG) the task was to get 'Britain out of NATO -- NATO out of Britain'. Why? Out of fear of a 'Soviet retaliatory attack'! The Workers Socialist League joined in the IMG's utopian call for 'unilateral nuclear disarmament'. While Workers Power's leaflet did say Cruise is 'targetted on the Soviet Union' and called for defence of 'the gains of the October

Revolution', this was almost buried in the hand-wringing over the imperialist threat to the Middle East, Ireland, the 'Iranian revolution' -- anything, but the Soviet Union. The Kremlin-loyal New Communist Party (NCP) was no different, parroting the Stalinist bureaucracy's counterrevolutionary line of subordinating defence of the Soviet Union to 'detente' with imperialism, cloaking itself in the Union Jack with patriotic appeals ('Yanks go home!').

One contingent stood out in sharp relief in this menage of peaceniks, parliamentarians and pseudo-revolutionaries. With its militant chants of 'No Cruise! Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!', refusing to bend to the social-democratic betrayers of the working class, the Spartacist League (SL) alone represented the Soviet defencist camp. We proved again the point: only Trotskyists stand openly and boldly with the USSR against the imperialist war drive. An SL banner spelled out the only way to end war, in the words of Lenin: 'Arm the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie.'

SWP: Thatcher soft on Russia

A period such as this reveals graphically the real nature of political tendencies. We responded to anti-Soviet jeers from newspaper salesmen of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of Tony Cliff with 'Afghanistan today, Korea '53 -- Cliff's still a friend of the bourgeoisie'. For the still formally (if barely) defencist IMG the mere mention of such home truths is grossly impolite and a hindrance to the chase after 'unity' with the SWP reformists. But today there could be no more striking proof, as one of the SL chants said, that 'The "third camp" is Thatcher's camp'. The fulminations against 'Russia's Vietnam' and the feigned 'anti-imperialist' neutralism in the SWP press have now been supplemented by strident, scarcely-veiled appeals for a tougher imperialist stand against the USSR.

Writing in his *Daily Mirror* column, leading SWPer Paul Foot is not only aiming to out-distance his Labourite uncle Michael in anti-Soviet social-patriotism, but to run a few laps around Thatcher herself. His gripe against the British imperialist butchers is that they place profits before anti-Sovietism! 'Tipped off' by a conveniently anti-Soviet dock worker friend (who might just be in the SWP's industrial

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