



Blackpool 'revolution' - not for the workers

Labour traitors wrangle



Spartacist Britain



Laurie Sparham (I.F.L.)



'Sunny Jim' waving farewell, Benn preaching at Blackpool - Labour misleaders join in selling out the workers like heroic steel strikers

From the bourgeois right to the 'far left' October's Labour Party conference drew sensational responses. Shudders and even hysteria in the bosses' papers; raptures of ecstasy in much of the left press. Blackpool was a 'watershed', 'half a revolution', indeed a new 'October Revolution' with Tony Benn its V I Lenin. The *Times* cringed: 'as a portent it is terrifying'. Margaret Thatcher held the spectre of a 'downhill slide towards socialism' before her assembled bluebloods in Brighton two weeks later. And *Socialist Press*, paper of the Workers Socialist League (WSL), discerned a 'germ of truth' in that.

Sorry, no. A storm is brewing in Britain, but Blackpool was a tempest in a teapot. A vote for withdrawal from the EEC -- the key policy victory of the 'lefts' -- was only a return to Labour's policy when last in opposition. The constitutional triumphs, primarily broadening the leadership election franchise beyond MPs, are accepted norms in such staid reformist parties as the German SPD. And James Callaghan was not kicked out for his ignominious class treachery -- he resigned, an ineffectual lame duck in any case, to smooth the path of his successor amid 'constitutional crisis'. Not one of the would-be replacements, Benn included, offers the workers who look to Labour any more than Callaghan did: contemptuous disregard for their basic class interests in order to preserve one of the most putrescent capitalist systems on earth.

The 5-2 Blackpool vote on the EEC, like an indicative vote against Cruise missiles in

Britain, reflected not class opposition to the anti-Soviet NATO alliance and its Common Market economic adjunct, but narrow British parochialism. The anti-Cruise motion also demanded 'urgent discussions for Soviet withdrawal of the SS-20', and a motion for withdrawal from NATO took a stinging 8-1 defeat. Labour 'lefts' -- and right wingers like the AUEW's Terry Duffy -- oppose the EEC only in the name of chauvinism and protectionism: shielding British capitalism from foreign competition through import controls and other trappings of national autarky.

The narrow vote for an 'electoral college' of MPs, constituency parties and trade union bureaucrats to choose the party leader was decried by the *Times* as 'damaging to parliamentary government'. Hardly. Of course the idea that Labour MPs should have a measure of accountability to their working-class electors and trade union backers is distasteful to the capitalists. But the Blackpool decisions, the product of much backstairs dealing and horsetrading for trade union block votes, don't even strike particularly hard at the cherished autonomy of Labour MPs. Revolutionaries favour the widest democracy in such workers organisations (eg doing away with anti-communist proscriptions) in order to facilitate the struggle to expose the treacherous pro-capitalist bureaucrats. But for the Labour politicians 'democracy' is a convenient cover for a power struggle on the basis of bourgeois politics.

William Rodgers of the right-wing 'Gang of Three' denounced the decisions as a 'day of total anarchy', then publicly urged Callaghan to resign quickly in order that the MPs' choice for leader could be presented to the electoral college (whose final composition awaits a January special conference) as a fait accompli. 'Sunny Jim' obliged. And Denis Healey, rumoured 'lefts' Peter Shore and John Silkin and ex-'left' deputy leader Michael Foot all jumped in. Benn himself, the conspicuous non-candidate, feigned disinterest (after reportedly considering it initially): 'When there is a real election I will be a candidate.' He stood no chance of winning in this election.

Whoever wins, it means little to the working class. What unites all of Labour, 'left' and

right, is its commitment to bourgeois parliamentary rule. Even Benn's call to abolish the House of Lords involved the creation of a thousand new Labour peers to pass the measure and get ... Royal Assent. As Ralph Miliband commented in his book *Parliamentary Socialism*:

'Of political parties claiming socialism to be their aim the Labour Party has always been one of the most dogmatic -- not about socialism but about the parliamentary system.'

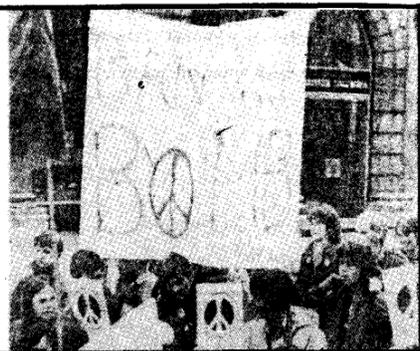
Britain needs a revolution. But nothing that happened at Blackpool was even a small step in that direction. The road to socialist revolution lies through breaking the stranglehold of all wings of Labourism on the working class and winning it to a revolutionary programme.

Blackpool illuminated the nature of Labour as a bourgeois workers party. It acted as a loyal tool of the bosses in power. Now in opposition, as always, it must 'regenerate' internally through some 'left' talk and a little bloodletting -- all a necessary step in regaining the ability to build up and refurbish workers' illusions in 'their' party. And Benn is nothing new either. He comes from a line of 'lefts' like Clement Attlee, Aneurin Bevan and Harold Wilson who, when faced with the exigencies of power, demonstrated in practice their loyalty to the capitalist system.

Of course there are differences between the competing Labour factions, and bourgeois consternation about the Bennites is not just Tory raving. The British bourgeoisie needs the Labour Party. Britain is too deeply class-stratified for open bourgeois parties to maintain credibility in the proletariat. Today the capitalists' preferred recipe is a firm, but flexible Tory regime, and a 'responsible' Labour opposition. But the Iron Lady is rather inflexible. She could push things too far. And the bourgeoisie, looking as always at the possibility of another Labour government, genuinely dislikes some of the notions peddled by the 'lefts'. It knows it has no future in 'splendid isolation' from Europe. It knows it can have no foreign policy independent of the US. And though Benn's leadership prospects are slim it fears a situation in which militant workers' expectations

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TILC cowards try manoeuvre

The following letter was sent to the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) by the 'Trotskyist International Liaison Committee' (TILC), a mini-rotten-bloc whose largest component is the British Workers Socialist League (WSL). For reasons which are made clear below, the iSt is replying only in public.

2 August 1980

Dear Comrades,

We are writing in connection with the increasingly disruptive actions of your members in various countries. Our meetings are being increasingly broken up by your interventions. It now seems to be your policy to break up any of our meetings, if you have the forces to do so.

We quote just two examples. In Paris recently at the Lutte Ouvriere fete your members refused to surrender the megaphone and took over our platform using your superior numbers at the meeting. They refused to recognise the chair and continued shouting and using abusive and provocative language.

In San Francisco, at a meeting of the Socialist League held last March your members tried to use force to gain access to a meeting having been excluded for refusal to accept the authority of the chair at an earlier meeting.

We are seeking an assurance from you that this kind of disruption ceases in each of the countries where you have groups, otherwise we shall consider excluding you from our meetings as an international tendency.

Whilst we support the widest democratic discussion in the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, we reject these disruptive and provocative methods.

If you think it is necessary we are prepared to meet you to discuss the contents of this letter.

Yours fraternally,
John Lister (signed)
for the TILC Secretariat.

Spartacist Britain replies: Lister's letter is a clumsy version of the 'have you stopped beating your wife yet?' ploy. His examples of 'disruption' are a pack of lies. Members of other organisations at the Lutte Ouvriere fete could testify that it was TILC supporters who tried to shout down one of our speakers. When politically excluded in San Francisco, our comrades could easily -- and probably should -- have entered the 'public' meeting of the TILC's pipsqueak Socialist League, but refrained. And how about quoting another two examples, Comrade Lister? Like WSL leader Alan Thornett's thuggery against trade union supporters of the Spartacist League in Birmingham and an unprovoked attack by supporters of the TILC's Italian group, the GBL, against SL members after a TILC public rally in London in July. If the TILC wants to try political exclusionism, bureaucratic suppression and thuggery to ward off further cadre losses to the iSt from their anti-Spartacist lash-up, don't expect our sympathy. For our part, there will be no 'assurances', just the continuing struggle to see that workers democracy is upheld.

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Spartacist election campaign in San Francisco Enough! It's time for a workers party!

In the November 4 US elections, one candidate stood on a programme of class struggle against the twin parties of American imperialism. Spartacist League/US (SL) supporter Diana Coleman, running for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (councillors) said: 'Our campaign will hit the real issues facing workers -- depression, the threat of war against the Soviet Union, the rightward turn taken by bourgeois politicians in this country that has encouraged the growth of fascist groups like the Nazis and the Klan.' The Spartacist campaign offered San Francisco workers and minority groups a revolutionary alternative to the strikebreaking Democratic 'friends of labour' and fake radicals: 'Enough! It's time for a workers party!'

Diana Coleman ran on her own record of class struggle, and on the record and programme of the SL. When Nazis threatened to hold a public celebration of Hitler's birthday in San Francisco last April, the Spartacist League initiated the April 19 Committee Against Nazis (ANCAN) to stop it. And it was stopped! ANCAN built a united-front rally of 1200 trade unionists, gays, blacks, Jews, Asian-Americans, Latinos and socialists that occupied the intended site of the Nazi provocation.

Diana Coleman has been an active union militant for ten years, six of them as a member of the Militant Action Caucus (MAC) in the telephone workers' union, the Communications Workers of America (CWA). She was a spokesman for the Union Committee Against Secret Service Harassment which won an apology and settlement from the US Secret Service for its illegal seizure of San Francisco MAC member Jane Margolis at her union's 1979 convention.

It had been so long since a genuine socialist ran for election in San Francisco that when Coleman first spoke before the Central Labor Council (CLC) its president commented: 'Oh yeah, sure, we heard all of that stuff for years from Eugene Debs, but it never worked.' But unlike Debs and the old Socialist Party, Coleman was talking about a workers party that struggles for proletarian state power. The interested unionists interviewed her for nearly twice as long as most of the other candidates. Asked 'What do you think of the Polish workers strike?', Coleman replied: 'Many of the workers' demands are justified ... but I want to see trade unions stand on some kind of socialist basis ... And I'm opposed to any kind of lash-up where the Polish Catholic church is trying to get NATO intervention in Poland to restore capitalism. I stand for a socialist Poland and workers democracy.'

Unlike Coleman, who confronted head-on the key questions facing workers internationally and put forward a programme to lead workers in the direction of the revolutionary conquest of state power, the pro-Moscow Communist Party (CP) and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP)



-- co-thinkers of the International Marxist Group), offered nothing but a bland recipe of utopian reformist slogans and alliances with trade-union bureaucrats and 'lesser evil' capitalist politicians. Even with Carter and Reagan attempting to outdo each other in anti-Soviet warmongering, the Stalinist CP continued to dole out its stale, now ludicrous, 'detente' pabulum.

And in this campaign, the once-Trotskyist SWP shamelessly pushed a well-known Democrat, union bureaucrat Stan Smith, running for supervisor. There was another Democrat, however, whom the SWP chose to debate. With the Klan and Nazis emboldened by the 'respectable' racism and anti-communism of the major bourgeois parties to organise cross burnings and lynchings from California to Connecticut, the SWP made the 'highlight' of its electoral activity a debate with open Ku Klux Klan 'Grand Dragon' Tom Metzger, a Democratic Party congressional candidate in southern California. Reported in the SWP's *Militant* (10 October): 'The debate was sponsored by the Santee Chamber of Commerce and was widely attended by the media. Claire Burgener, the Republican candidate, declined to attend because he said it would "give Metzger a forum for his ideas". What can we say? A Republican in reactionary southern California has more principled opposition to giving fascist scum a platform than the SWP!

For the SL, the Coleman campaign served the purpose election campaigns always have for revolutionaries: to combat electoral illusions; to proclaim that social gains will be made on the picket lines, not through the ballot box; to present the programme of socialist revolution in a concrete and immediate way as the only solution to the crisis of capitalist society. In the tradition of the Bolsheviks in the tsarist Duma, we use bourgeois elections to rally workers to the battle lines of the class war. ■

Sub drive success!

In a month of extremely heavy political activity, including a national mobilisation for the October 26 anti-Cruise march, our comrades in all three branches fulfilled their quotas a week before the sub drive ended. Our congratulations in particular to Comrade Ed in London who, at 26½ points, sold the largest number. Nearly ninety per cent of all subs sold were full-year subscriptions, a third of them joint subs to *Spartacist Britain* and *Workers Vanguard*, and over 16 per cent were renewals, subscribers who wish to continue receiving the only genuine Marxist paper in Britain. To them, and the new readers we welcome, we promise to continue providing an incisive revolutionary analysis and programme.

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Smash Hitler's heirs! For mass workers action!

Fascist terror explodes in Europe

Bologna, August 2: Eighty-four people are killed and nearly 200 wounded when a bomb explodes in the 2nd-class waiting room of the central railway station, overflowing with tourists and working-class holiday-makers. *Munich, September 26:* The annual Oktoberfest is rocked by an explosion from a bomb placed in a litter bin near the entrance to the fairgrounds -- 13 people are killed and a dozen more injured. *Paris, October 3:* Hundreds are observing the last day of Succoth in a synagogue not far from the Arc de Triomphe when a bomb on a parked car across the street is detonated. Four passers-by are killed -- three Frenchmen and an Israeli tourist -- and a dozen more injured; the force of the explosion hurls worshippers inside from their seats, overturns four parked cars and shatters windows in buildings blocks away.

Paris reverberated in horror at the temple bombing, the most dramatic attack on Jews in Europe since World War II. 'Monstrous' and 'Assassins' ran furious banner headlines in the bourgeois papers, and the outraged population of France poured out into the streets in protest. The blast immediately riveted attention back to those nightmare years of Vichy France when 75,000 French Jews were exterminated -- indeed, the Nazis had blown up the same synagogue, the 'Israelite Union', in 1944. But even as they were leading the protest demonstrations, the reformist misleaders of the French workers movement were once again seeking to answer the fascist threat, not with mass mobilisations to smash the fascists, but with a big show of 'national unity'. The demonstrators' popular slogan, 'From Marchais to Rothschild', expressed this yearning for popular-front alliance with the bourgeoisie -- that strategy which for the past 50 years has immobilised the workers' power to smash the fascists and led to the present situation.

The Paris synagogue bombing came on the heels of some thirty attacks against Jewish schools, places of worship, cemeteries, organisations and individuals over the last several months. No one has been arrested for any of these acts of terror. The two policemen stationed outside the front door of the synagogue to 'protect' it saw no evil and heard no evil -- until the bomb exploded. After the bombing, French prime minister Raymond Barre inadvertently revealed his true feelings and those of the French government: 'The bombing was aimed at Jews and it struck down innocent Frenchmen.'

In the day following the bombing over 100,000 people demonstrated against this fascist atrocity in Paris and almost all major cities in France. On October 7 a giant demonstration in Paris drew nearly 200,000. But its organisers, ranging from the Jewish bourgeois establishment, led by Guy de Rothschild, to the reformists of the Communist and Socialist parties, did their best to contain this anger in respectable limits by calling merely for the resignation of the minister of the interior and for 'purging' fascists from the police. In sharp contrast, the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF) marched in the demonstration behind a big banner calling for 'United Front Self Defence by Workers, Jewish and Immigrant Organisations' and for 'Workers Militias' to 'Crush the Brown Plague'.

Memories of Nazism in France are strong and could put the government in serious trouble. The authorities have made a great hue and cry about finding and punishing the guilty, while doing everything possible to put the lid on. The attorney general, Gaullist Alain Peyrefitte, has 'speculated' that the bombing was not committed by fascists at all, but was a provocation by a leftist group. Likewise, interior minister Christian Bonnet baited a Communist deputy that the direction of the government's inquiries 'might surprise you'. In this Peyrefitte and Bonnet are in chorus with the fascists, who have suggested that the bombing was masterminded by the KGB or Libyans, with Guy de Rothschild, who maintains the source of all terror is Marxism, and with the Israeli ambassador, who accused the Palestinians. Anybody but the fascists!

Historically the French government, like the governments of Italy and West Germany, has been up to its neck in fascist activity. It was public knowledge that in the 1974 presidential campaign the bodyguard which protected Giscard

was made up of members of the Secret Army Organisation (OAS) of ex-Algerian colons, and also Ordre Nouveau, then the main fascist group. Both the fascists of the European National Fascists (FNE), which is generally held responsible for the Paris synagogue bombing, and the police 'unions' claim that 30 of the FNE's reported 150 members are highly placed police officers, in particular in the Renseignement General, a sort of Special Branch. The point however is not to 'purify' the police force, to make it more democratic and 'republican'. The police cannot be 'purified' -- they are part of the armed might of the capitalist state and must be smashed. Revolutionists demand police out of the union movement.

Neo-fascists: the tip of the iceberg

In the last five years or so the far right in France and the rest of West Europe has after a lull emerged from its ratholes and acquired an increasing respectability. In 1978 with much fanfare the French Parti des Forces Nouvelles



Paris demonstration against Hitlerite atrocity October 7.

got together with the Italian MSI and the Spanish Fuerza Nueva to create the 'Euroright', supposedly as an answer to 'Eurocommunism'. These 'legalist' parties maintain close links with the state apparatus in their respective countries and serve as a conduit for fascists. The small paramilitary neo-fascist groups have increased their activity apace. Their not-so-secret conspiracy uses the tactics of murder and arson to encourage tendencies within the bourgeoisie toward a 'strong state' until the social disintegration of capitalism and the miserable failure of the reformist leaders of the working class allow them to come to power.

The present growth of the far right cannot be understood in terms of a plot by this or that intelligence service to 'destabilise' their government, but only in terms of the economic and social background which allows such plots, where they exist, to have even a slim chance of success. Following the 1974-75 economic crisis, West European governments turned to anti-working-class austerity programmes, the leading edge of which is anti-immigrant policies. They thus give semi-official sanction to racist attacks on immigrants, which have become commonplace and regularly go unpunished by the police.

Through calls on the state to ban the fascists, through schemes to resurrect the popular-front 'Union of the Left', reformist workers misleaders chain the powerful labour movement to its bourgeois rulers. Those who would seek a new popular front, those who sentimentalise 'The Resistance' and the 'glorious

tradition' of World War II -- 'The Great Patriotic War to End Fascism' -- must now answer a burning question posed by history: Why are the fascists back again?

During the 1930s, Stalin's party in France prepared the masses to accept their own bourgeoisie in a popular front 'against fascism'. The French working class was 're-educated' to learn that the main enemy was no longer at home but across the Rhine. And when the war was over the popular front remained, and the Stalinists organised ignominious defeat for the proletariat. It was the Stalinists who forced the workers to turn over their weapons so that the 'democratic, anti-fascist' capitalists could maintain their rule. Instead of a Socialist United States of Europe the imperialists were handed the reins of state power. Thus continued the cycle from popular frontism to bourgeois reaction. As Trotsky put it:

'Incapable of solving a single one of the tasks posed by the revolution -- since all these tasks boil down to one, namely the crushing of the bourgeoisie -- the People's Front renders the existence of the bourgeois regime impossible and thereby provokes the fascist coup d'etat. By lulling the workers and peasants with parliamentary illusions, by paralysing their will to struggle, the People's Front creates favorable conditions for the victory of fascism. The policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie must be paid for by the proletariat with years of new tortments and sacrifice, if not by decades of fascist terror.' ('The New Revolutionary Upsurge and the Tasks of the Fourth International', *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1935-36*)

Fascism or communism

Unlike the 1920s and the early 1930s, fascism is now no longer a new phenomenon. The experience of the holocaust remains within the living memory of the European working class, and there is little chance that the fascists can pretend to be what they are not. The demand to crush the fascists wherever they raise their heads will find enormous receptivity, for it taps into the workers' deep, almost instinctive hatred for Hitlerite scum.

The fascists are growing, perhaps not so much in sheer numbers but in boldness, in the belief that things are going their way. They are encouraged above all by the NATO chiefs' strident calls for a new crusade against Soviet Communism. 'We need more and more weapons to kill Russians', cry the leaders of West Europe and the US. The only thing that rivals the anti-communism of the speeches of bourgeois politicians today is their chauvinism and racism. Franz-Josef Strauss campaigns to drive foreign workers out of West Germany. The Giscardians and Gaulists, partly to be on the right side of Arab oil, indulge in scarcely veiled attacks on the Jews. 'Ethnic purity' Carter slashes social welfare for blacks, while KKK leaders state that the Republican electoral platform could have been written by them. If Strauss, Giscard, Carter and Reagan all have to dissociate themselves from the fascist terrorists, it is precisely because their ideological affinity with them is so obvious.

Of course, the situation today in the Western bourgeois democracies is not Germany in the early 1930s. To think so is to lose all sense of scale. Yet the basic thrust of imperialist-capitalist society -- towards war with Soviet Russia, wage-slashing and austerity, racist scapegoating and violence -- all find their realisation in fascism. United working-class action against the fascist terrorists, *urgently needed right now*, cannot ultimately succeed without overthrowing this rotting capitalist system throughout the world.

--adapted from Workers Vanguard no 266, 17 October 1980

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The following is an edited transcript of a speech given by Comrade Di. Parkin of the Spartacist League Central Committee to a public meeting in London on October 24.

Trotsky called this the epoch of wars and revolutions. And in the latter part of the twentieth century war also means nuclear war. The drive by the United States to war is the strongest it's been since the 1950s. As George Kennan, writing in the *New York Times*, said in February of this year: 'Never since World War II has there been so far reaching a militarization of thought and discourse'. Carter and Reagan, peanut farmer and film star, attempt to outrival each other in 'strength', religious fundamentalism and anti-communism. Then there's Iron Lady Thatcher, who acts as though she would like to see blacks and workers and socialists blown away by nuclear bombs -- why else would she be so anxious to put this run-down, shabby little former empire in the Russian bull's-eye? They're all united in their overwhelming desire to get a US nuclear first strike capacity against the Soviet Union -- the ability to fight a nuclear war and win.

So there's a real danger of nuclear war from these people and the response -- the fear of extermination -- by ordinary people, is very real. But instead of accommodating to that fear of extermination and cowering with it in its cries for 'peace', revolutionaries must seize on this danger of nuclear war to point out that there's only one way to end war -- and that's civil war against the bourgeoisie.

Movements for disarmament aren't new. The delusion that the ruling class might be persuaded to disarm is not new. Lenin wrote about it during World War I:

'If the present war arouses among the reactionary Christian socialists, among the whimpering petty bourgeoisie, only horror and fright, only aversion to all use of arms, to bloodshed, death, etc, then we must say: Capitalist society is and always has been horror without end. And if this most reactionary of all wars is now preparing for that society an end in horror, we have no reason to fall into despair. But the disarmament "demand" or more correctly, the dream of disarmament, is, objectively, nothing but an expression of despair at a time when, as everyone can see, the bourgeoisie itself is paving the way for the only legitimate and revolutionary war -- civil war against the imperialist bourgeoisie.'

It's argued by some groups that nuclear war makes a difference -- that it means Armageddon, the end of the world. The unilateralists see this ultimate moral terror as the final card which should make all people unite -- as people -- in their hostility to nuclear war. The end is high so let's forget our class differences and unite in the biggest popular front ever -- people against bombs, rather than class against class. But it's not the case that nuclear war is not winnable. And because it is winnable, it's even more scary. A nuclear first strike to decimate the Soviet workers state would actually be a rational act by these insane rulers of a system beyond its time. The slogan 'socialism or barbarism' is an old one, but nuclear war is barbarism plus.

Anyone who's read any books or seen any films about World War I will be aware of how horrifying a weapon mustard gas was. But Lenin didn't focus on mustard gas. He argued: 'Turn your guns the other way, the main enemy is at home.'

Weapons are forged because the ruling class wants to wage war, not the reverse. The pacifists don't have a monopoly on the realisation of the horror of war. But the only way to end war is to end the causes of war -- the imperialists' rivalry for markets and their desire to recapture the workers states lost to capitalism and to destroy the military/industrial powerhouse of the workers states, the Soviet Union.

Some people don't have any problems about defending the victory of the Vietnamese against the United States or

Pacifism disarms the workers

CND--THEN AND NOW



Old CND: Aldermaston 'ban the bomb' marchers.



New CND: IMG echoes Labourite pacifism.

about defending the Cuban Revolution, but have problems about defending the Soviet Union. But neither the Vietnamese victory nor the Cuban Revolution would have been possible without the existence of the Soviet state in Russia. So I want to say something about why we defend the Soviet Union. In 1917 the Bolsheviks disarmed the bourgeoisie -- by overthrowing the rule of capital and private property. And the British workers did take a side in the 1920s when they refused to load the ship the *Jolly George* with arms to be used against the Soviet Union. Now, albeit with a parasitic caste upon it, there remains the existence of collectivised property in the Soviet Union. There's been a level of industrial development inside the Soviet Union that would be unthinkable and impossible under capitalism.

There was a nice piece in the *Times* (24 October) which was headed 'Uzbeks happy to learn Russian language'. Uzbekistan is part of the Soviet Union which directly borders on to Afghanistan. The article says: 'Except for those from mountain villages, all Uzbek children now begin school with a fair understanding of Russian, picked up from television and in the street.' From television. If you look on the map -- I looked today -- and see how far Bukhara, the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan, is from the Afghan border, it's less than 200 miles. There are children who've all picked up Russian from the television some 200 miles from the Afghan border. Do you know what the illiteracy rate is in Afghanistan? And the mullah-backed, imperialist-backed rebels are totally opposed to literacy for women. We defend the gains of the Uzbek people whose children can watch television and learn a second language. That's one kind of gain that the Russian Revolution made.

Soviet defence and Stalinist 'detente'

In fact the greatest crime of the Stalinist bureaucracy is that, with their policy of 'peaceful coexistence', they can't really defend the gains of the Russian Revolution. 'Detente' and arms limitation (SALT) merely prepared the way for greater war efficiency by US imperialism, because disarmament paves the way for war. What was detente? On May Day 1975 the US colossus fell in Vietnam after a costly debilitating war which created a defeatist mood in the American masses and an underdevelopment in missile technology. Carter attempted to fight against the mood of defeatism through his drive for 'human rights'. We said as early as April 1977 that the 'human rights' drive was the ideological forerunner of a war drive, that it was part of Carter's offensive against the Soviet Union. The events in Iran were important in this context. A reliable despot fell and now there are 'revolutionary guards' running around in plimsoles and mullahs in aircraft control towers who are more used to calling the faithful

to prayer from the top of minarets and that's rather an unstable situation for the United States. And the mullahs also offended the United States' 'dignity' by capturing the embassy hostages. So a war mood built up in the US -- people wanted to 'nuke Tehran'.

The arms budget had increased 40 per cent from 1960 to 1969 but the money was spent on arms for use in a limited war and there was an underdevelopment in missile technology. That was why SALT, the arms limitation treaty, was necessary. Kissinger said: 'Our strategy was to agree on a five-year freeze, the interval we judged would enable us to catch up.' And between 1972 and 1979, the United States added three new warheads daily to its nuclear armoury and it can now destroy 200 Soviet cities. At the moment the USSR has 30 minutes warning of nuclear attack -- Cruise makes it six. So detente was a pause by imperialism to recoup its energies and its ability to fight.

So to end the rule of imperialism, you have to be for the class war -- and part of that is defence of the Soviet Union. That's what groups like the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the Workers Socialist League, backing the crazy and unrealistic demand of disarmament fail to see, and that's what CND and END -- Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and European Nuclear Disarmament -- cannot see. They can't see it now as they could not see it then. Eighteen years ago I was going around urging people to sign a petition renouncing the use of nuclear weapons. Now, I was fifteen at the time and was excusably naive. There's no excuse for groups which should be able to examine that history, to repeat the mistake.

The Second World War ended with nuclear explosions, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those nuclear explosions were to warn the Soviet Union -- the Japanese had already indicated that they were prepared to discuss peace terms. It was the first shot in the Cold War, and there was increasing hostility towards the Soviet Union in the early 1950s -- the Berlin blockade, the Korean War. But what ignited the CND fuse and why was it ignited in Britain?

Growing up in the 1950s in postwar Britain, every time an aeroplane went over you thought that it was going to drop bombs. When I heard on the radio that Britain had declared war on Egypt in 1956, I thought that immediately bombs were going to rain through the roof of the house. There was a real fear of war, a real fear of nuclear war.

So following Suez, there arose a movement of moral renunciation, of renouncing the horrors of nuclear war. And at the centre of it there was a kind of 'little England' nationalism, of British parochialism -- a desire to make Britain truly great again by renouncing nuclear weapons unilaterally. J B Priestley wrote in the *New Statesman* in 1958: 'Alone we defied Hitler -- alone we can defy this nuclear madness into which the



How Stalinist NCP 'defends' USSR on October 26 march.

spirit of Hitler seems to have passed to poison the world.' The CND was very much in the tradition of the 1930s pacifist movement -- the Peace Pledge Union, where people went around signing a pledge like the pledge against drink (an equally foolish pledge to sign): 'I renounce war and will never sanction another.' I speak no evil.

In 1958, 8000 people marched from London to Aldermaston. In later years the numbers marching from Aldermaston to London were to reach 50,000. There were the long-haired bearded youth (long hair was quite significant then). Then you had these stalwart white-haired ladies in tweed skirts carrying walking sticks -- Communist Party (CP) types, though the CP itself was not to support the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament until 1960, because it was supporting the Moscow line of arguing for test ban treaties. It was this very decent British current. It issued leaflets on the march saying: 'Do wear sensible shoes. Carry with you on the march, in a bag or haversack, a mackintosh coat and hat.' And there was also this equally decent British tradition of the co-op movement, the co-op youth -- the Woodcraft Folk. I can remember them in the marquees at the end of the march organising skipping games while older marchers were engaging in the other type of activity in the marquees, which was to be splashed across the bourgeois press -- 'Sex orgies in CND marquees'. In fact my mother after a while urged me to return on a coach to my home in Wimbledon from the march every night for fear that I might become implicated in this aspect of protest.

Eventually recognising that moral purity is not enough, the CND's energies turned into the Labour Party -- the party which had been in power when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, the party of NATO. In 1957 a unilateralist motion was put to the Labour Party conference by supporters of what became the Socialist Labour League (SLL) and at that same conference Nye Bevan, who'd hitherto been the darling of the left (including the Healyites in the early 1950s), spoke against 'going naked into the conference chamber', that is, he wanted the protection of nuclear weapons. And that was the great undoing of the illusions in Nye Bevan at that point.

By the end of the 1950s four big unions had gone unilateralist -- the T&G, USDAW, the AEU and the NUR -- and with their block vote the 1959 Labour Party conference took a unilateralist position. But Gaitskell, then leader of the Labour Party, fought back and he fought back against an opposition that was singularly naive and absurd. Even Peggy Duff, a CND leader said: 'They were basically very British, conservative and rather naive. They thought banning the bomb was a fairly simple matter and they never recognised the revolution in British politics that it required. They wanted to get rid of the bomb, leave NATO and abandon the American alliance without upsetting the pattern of life in Sutton, Totnes, or Greenwich, SE3.'

And though that point of view won a victory at the 1959 conference Gaitskell was able to win it back by 1961.

There was also a non-parliamentary, non-legalistic wing of CND, the 'direct action' wing. The Committee of 100, which was formed in 1960, held sit-downs. At first the police ignored them and then there were many and violent arrests. Hundreds and thousands of people hurled themselves against the state in order merely to urge the state to disarm. The aged philosopher Bertrand Russell rested his old bones on the pavement in a sit-down protest and was arrested for his pains.

All the CND's forces, militant and less militant, had the same, one-point programme -- the utopian demand for unilateral nuclear disarmament. There was one group, however, active around CND that did distinguish itself from the others -- the SLL. It was known at that time for two things: its demand 'black the H-bomb and the bases' and its defence of the 'workers bomb'.

The Labour Party Young Socialists was the forum for most of the radicalised youth in that period, unlike today. I was present at the Labour Party Young Socialist conference in 1964 -- having renounced the single-issue policies of CND -- as a supporter of the International Socialists (IS), the precursor of the Socialist Workers Party. Under its slogan 'Neither Washington nor Moscow but international socialism', the IS put an amendment to an SLL resolution calling for Britain out of NATO to equally condemn the Warsaw Pact.

Cuba and the 'paradox' of pacifism

The inability to take sides was CND's undoing and it was most sharply revealed during the

Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. The United States discovered missile bases in Cuba and demanded their removal and blockaded Cuba. The Russian ships sailed towards the blockade and you watched them get nearer and nearer every day -- convinced that you were going to die, that there was going to be nuclear war. I can remember standing at the bus stop going to school with my school hat on, being extremely annoyed because I knew I was going to die and I thought: 'It's not fair, I'm going to die a virgin.'

But the CND could only muster a few thousand in October 1962 and it milled hopelessly around. One of its leaders, Pat Arrowsmith, still a stalwart campaigner, was so convinced that there was going to be nuclear war and that she too was going to die that she took herself off to the west of Ireland. Some leadership against war! Christopher Driver, who wrote the history of the CND in a book called *The Disarmers*, said that it was a paradox that this first serious nuclear crisis marked the beginning of the decline of the CND. But this was no paradox -- the CND was hopelessly impotent in the face of this class confrontation. You'd have been better off at

home under the table with a paper bag over your head, like the government urged, than pointlessly marching with CND.

Following the Cuban missile crisis Gaitskell the leader of the Labour Party upped and died. The unilateralist fight in the Labour Party had been largely a fight against Gaitskell, the individual. And Wilson -- candidate of the 'left', mark you -- won the leadership election. And with the return of a Labour Party government in 1964 -- after 'thirteen years of Tory misrule' -- energies were channelled into the Labour Party. And today the Labour Party has again passed a non-binding motion in favour of unilateralism and the Labour 'lefts' are again salivating at the prospect of, perhaps, Benn as party leader as they did of Bevan. But when the ruling class decides it wants to make war, social democracy will go along with it, as social democracy has always gone along with war in the defence of the interests of capital, as it did in 1914. Because 'left', right or centre, a unilateralist Labour Party or an explicitly militarist Labour Party, social democracy offers:

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October 26 peace crawl Anti-Sovietism feeds fascist growth!



Soviet-defencist Spartacist contingent (top); anti-Soviet mood encouraged open presence of British Movement scum (above).

'CND born again' blared the *Daily Mail*. And so it seemed as some 100,000 (estimated by the organisers) marched from Speakers Corner to Trafalgar Square. The fake-revolutionary left blended in so well with the 'mass movement' that it was hardly distinguishable in the pervasive middle-class mush -- a twentieth reunion for Aldermaston marchers, an admixture of earnest youth, and something like a fancy dress ball with lemmings, buffoonish civil defence guards and rubbish bags all gathered under an inflatable nuclear mushroom cloud. The official slogans were 'No to Cruise, No to Trident, Cut arms spending' but a real central theme was expressed on thousands of CND placards: 'No to Cruise, No to SS-20'. A false, reactionary equation between the Soviet Union -- a deformed workers state -- and capitalist imperialism is key to CND.

Whether it was Stalinists pushing 'detente', the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group melting into the crowd with its inoffensive 'anti-imperialism', or the Socialist Workers Party leading the chorus against 'Soviet aggression' it made little difference. But when a Spartacist League contingent of more than 60 formed up as the only Soviet-defencists present, the vicious anti-communism lurking beneath the 'peace-loving' carnival atmosphere burst to the surface. It was prepared by CND loudhailers: 'Hail Red Army -- the Spartacists are here again'; 'Will the Spartacist League please go to Heathrow airport where a jet is waiting to take them to Moscow.' Before the march even started one 'pacifist' lunged at an SL supporter and attempted to rip up a placard reading 'For Soviet Nuclear Vigilance'. He was repulsed easily. But later the anti-Soviet mood found a real focus on the march as a small pack of black-flag-waving, jeering 'anarchists' became crazed by our chant, '1, 2, 3, 4, We don't want imperialist war; 5, 6, 7, 8, Defend the Soviet workers state!' Howling about 'red fascism' they attempted to physically disrupt our contingent. But if this wretched lumpen claque was relatively harmless the full-blown reactionary nature of their anti-Soviet histrionics was underscored with near-murderous consequences very soon.

Soviet-hating, fascist British Movement scum, who often hover around left-wing demonstrations to launch provocations, this time were able to join in as part of the anarchist-

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IMG, Workers Power: Die for Khomeini Tell it to the Kurds!

The dirty little war between Iran and Iraq has been grinding on for over a month. Workers of both countries are dying to readjust borders -- as the *Economist* noted -- 'drawn across deserts with pencil and ruler by (mostly British) colonial administrators'. For Leninists, proletarian internationalists, it is an elementary reflex that the Iranian and Iraqi proletarians should give no support whatever to either Khomeini or Hussein in this reactionary conflict -- rather they should seek to transform it into civil war to establish their own rule.

But, as far as can be seen, virtually the entire Iranian left -- an important exception being a minority wing of the Fedayeen -- has lined up behind the ayatollahs to crush the foreign infidel, the 'Arab scum'. And this rotten capitulation is being aped in Britain too -- most egregiously by the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the smaller left-centrist Workers Power (WP) group. For both these tendencies support for the reactionary Islamic political revolution of February 1979 -- which replaced the bloodsoaked Pahlavi dynasty with the barbaric theocracy of the mullahs -- has now been extended to cheering on Khomeini's war effort.

Brian Grogan: praise Allah and pass the ammunition

As soon as the shooting started IMG leader Brian (Allah Akhbar) Grogan rushed to the 'defence of Iran' in the pages of *Socialist Challenge*. His slavish advice to Qom on how best to win the war led several disgusted IMGers to publicly vent their spleen in indignation. And just as when, earlier this year, *Socialist Challenge* screamed 'Troops Out of Afghanistan', the letters page exploded into a public mini-bulletin. Even veteran Pabloite Charlie van Gelderen savaged Grogan's blather about the 'gains of the Iranian revolution' (presumably veiled women, 'adulterers' stoned to death and Kurds massacred). And long-time member Dave Bailey concluded his first contribution (only to claim a defencist position in a second letter):

'The people of the Gulf should ... overthrow the capitalists in Tehran and Baghdad to secure a just and democratic peace. You *Socialist Challenge*, demand neither revolution nor peace nor justice.'

But while these letters may indicate at least a germ of decency, Iran is not Afghanistan and *Socialist Challenge* will not change course. This time the protesters are counterposed not only to their local charlatans but to the entire leadership of the United Secretariat international rotten bloc -- of which the IMG is part. For these betrayers of Trotskyism there is no real contradiction -- they went all the way with the imam and now they're sticking with him.

But for the left-centrist Workers Power things are more difficult. Unlike the IMG, WP cannot claim that the beautiful Iranian revolution is simply moving in an 'anti-capitalist' direction. Indeed the first three paragraphs of the short statement in *Workers Power* (October 1980) on 'The Gulf War' seemed to reflect the views of individual WPers who declared themselves for the defeat of both sides in the war before their paper appeared. By describing a conflict between 'the Bonapartist tyrant Hussein' and 'the clerical bigot Khomeini' WP conceded the very basis for a defeatist stance -- the qualitative equivalence of the two regimes. And that makes WP's position all the more shameful and treacherous. For after all the 'class-struggle' rhetoric comes the real content -- 'defence of Iran's territorial integrity' (!) -- not against imperialist forces, but simply against 'a rival bonapartist dictator', one 'with an appetite for establishing good credentials with world imperialism'.

Still, WP wants to suggest that in some fashion, Iran is at war not with Iraq but 'Imperialism' -- even at second remove. The 'Iranian revolution', we are told, upset imperialism, and now the task of revolutionaries is to ensure the 'maintenance of imperialist dislocation in the area' by 'defence of Iran's territorial integrity'. But this is the antithesis of the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution! Just what is this 'imperialist dislocation' anyway? The only road to the real dislocation of imperi-

alism is through the proletariat taking the power at the head of all the oppressed masses -- there is no third road between the rule of imperialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat in this epoch. Trotskyists fight in any movement that opens the road to the rule of the workers, including genuine movements of national liberation against their oppressors. But we bitterly fight the Stalinist conception, peddled in essence by WP, of some kind of 'anti-imperialist united front' with the exploiters and oppressors in the colonial countries in the name of 'weakening imperialism'.

As October went by it became increasingly clear that this position was not only rotten from the point of view of methodology but had just about nothing to do with reality. If the US can only save face by getting the mad ayatollahs to let their embassy hostages go -- and Khomeini hardly needs that 'anti-imperialist' diversion any more now he has a



Khorramshahr: mullah defending 'the gains of the Iranian Revolution' against Iraq.

real 'holy war' to fight -- then the military spare parts will start rolling again. And that would suit the US bourgeoisie just fine; especially Carter, whose reelection prospects hinged a great deal on the outcome of the hostage negotiations the last few days of the month, Iran would be well on the way to once again becoming an ally (and anti-Soviet bastion), if an unstable one, in a strategically sensitive region.

Notwithstanding the anti-Iranian image of them painted by WP and the IMG, Carter publicly declared Iraq to be the aggressor, Secretary of State Edmund Muskie spoke up for the 'cohesion and integrity of Iran', and Ambassador Donald F McHenry told the United Nations:

'The United States believes that the cohesion and stability of Iran is in the interests of the stability and prosperity of the region as a whole. The national integrity of Iran is today threatened by the Iraqi invasion.'

Will WP now explain to the US bourgeoisie how it is fomenting its own 'dislocation'? Of course US imperialism is nervous for oil supplies. It has launched a massive military build-up and supplied Saudi Arabia with AWACS radar aeroplanes. Trotskyists demand that the imperialists get out of the Gulf, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, Diego Garcia included. But the imperialist build-up implies no support for Iraq -- Hussein felt forced to remind the US to stay neutral! Rather it confirms an ABC of Leninism which WP has junked: war is the mother of revolution. The defeat of either Iran or Iraq could open the road to proletarian power on both sides of the Shatt al-Arab. And the war is a tremendous opening for the oppressed Kurdish people dispersed across the countries of the region -- a Kurdish spark in either warring state could light a blaze throughout the area. That would cause 'imperialist dislocation'.

There are instances when one small power has genuinely acted against another as the agent of a powerful imperialism. In 1921 Lloyd George made a speech and the Greek army marched (with British weapons) against Turkey, then in the throes of national consolidation -- after first

going in as part of an Allied imperialist occupation force. The Comintern underlined the concrete political and material relationship, defending Turkey against Britain's 'vassal', as Radek termed Greece. But for WP 'imperialism', and therefore 'anti-imperialism', are mystifications and abstractions. And with the concoction of Iran's 'anti-imperialist' war on Iraq demonstrably a fig leaf, it must fall back on (if possible) even more rotten arguments.

Workers Power (October 1980) exhibited the relatively new tendency to trumpet 'the remaining democratic rights -- crucially the right to form Shoras -- won during the [Iranian] revolution'. And in an undated leaflet advertising a London public meeting on the war, WP added that 'a victory for the Iraqi despot, Hussein, will result in the rapid smashing of the remaining gains of the Iranian revolution'. To such chatter it is only necessary to reply that any rights exercised today by the Iranian masses exist despite and not because of the 'Iranian revolution'. But if WP wants to preach the wondrous gains of life under the mullahs, we can only say:

'Tell that to the Kurds, tell that to the families and friends of the 27 [leftists] killed, tell that to the 17 students expelled from a teacher training college in Avak for being "Marxists".'

Those lines were written in the June issue of *Workers Power*.

Workers Power against Lenin

Today, to tell any Kurd, leftist or oil worker that Iran must be defended against Iraq is to reinforce the rule of the imam and his reactionary religious hierarchy. But even if there had been a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Iran Leninists would not be defenders of capitalist Iran against Iraq. Workers Power: just how do you square your 'revolutionary defencism' over Iran with Lenin's insistence, in 1917, that the gains of the February Revolution (after which the workers movement and the Soviets were able to operate with almost unrestricted freedom) would only be defended in war when the proletariat took the power? Lenin was prepared to split the Bolsheviks on this question if the vacillators -- including Stalin -- had prevailed.

Of course there is no answer. The Bolsheviks were successful in October because they based themselves on the strategic axis of 'turn your guns the other way' and drew their tactics from that.

Two years ago WP chose to follow the Iranian masses on the road to suicide -- rather than be 'isolated' as Bolsheviks must be at times if they are to intervene to change history. Surely, WP muttered some 'warnings' about the mullahs out of one side of its mouth for such is in the nature of left centrism. But when the Spartacist tendency warned that Khomeini in power would mean women in veils WP loftily informed us that Shi'a Islam was flexible, that there were unveiled women in Khomeini's Paris compound, and lectured us about 'uncritical retailing of the chauvinist rubbish which filled the American press'. Well, the rule of the mullahs was just what we said it would be and since early 1979 the columns of *Workers Power* have contained some violent, if unimaginative, invective against the Khomeini regime. But when war came the choice once again was posed starkly -- for or against the 'Iranian revolution'?

WP could have claimed that supporting Khomeini against the shah was different from supporting Khomeini against Hussein. But this would have only raised the obvious questions in the

Spartacist League class series

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MARXISM

London

- 4 November - Why Britain Needs a Workers Revolution
 - 11 November - Fascism and Racism
 - 18 November - Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution
 - 25 November - Imperialism and Nationalism
 - 2 December - We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution
- To be held on Tuesdays at 6.30pm in the TV Room, Kentish Town Site, North London Poly. For details of readings ring (01) 278-2232.

Birmingham

Five-part series to be held at Birmingham University starting 10 November. For details of dates, times and readings ring (021) 459 9748.

ranks: Why did we support the 'Iranian revolution' in the first place? Why not the consistent Leninist opposition to Khomeini's Islamic reaction fought for uniquely by the Spartacist tendency? What were the 'progressive' gains of this mass movement which resulted neither in a break with imperialism nor even in fundamental bourgeois-democratic reforms?

In polemics WPers have tried to introduce every conceivable red herring -- examples from civil wars, dual power situations, wars of national liberation, anything to blur the abandonment of the basic tenets of Leninism and Trotskyism. Intransigent revolutionary defeatism in wars between qualitatively equivalent regimes, permanent revolution against fake 'anti-imperialism': these are the preconditions of revolutionary victory through the construction of a Leninist party. It is those who cannot understand this who will stand on the sidelines -- or worse -- when the decisive battles of history are waged.

We are proud to stand in the tradition of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party of the US when it advanced the Trotskyist position on the 1948 war in Palestine:

'Each side is 'anti-imperialist' to the bone, busy detecting the reactionary -- in the opposite camp. And imperialism is always seen helping the other side. But this kind of exposure is oil on the imperialist fire. For the inveigling policy of imperialism is based upon agents and agencies in both camps. Therefore, we say to the Palestinian people in reply to the patriotic warmongers: Make this war ... which serves the end of imperialism the common war of both nations against imperialism.'

'The only road to peace ... is turning the guns against the initiators of murder in both camps.' (Fourth International, May 1948) ■

CND ...

(Continued from page 5)

no challenge to the maintenance of capitalist rule. Pacifism and Labourism are like sickly twins within the British workers movement.

So what about the positions of some of the ostensibly Trotskyist groups on the question of the war drive. Unlike the Workers Socialist League and the IMG, Workers Power opposes unilateralism and points to the need to defend the Soviet Union. But they joined with the rest in condemning the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and their leaflet for the June 22 demonstration called for trade union rights in the army and trade union control of the army. But having the trade unions responsible for an imperialist army whose weapons are pointed against the Soviet Union -- that's 'defence of the Soviet Union'?

As for the IMG, they are the best, and in some areas the only, builders of the CND. For the IMG the CND is a kind of broad, single-issue mass movement which regardless of its class content -- as someone said in a Hackney IMG meeting on the CND, 'everyone can be against the bomb' -- everybody will be mobilised in it and then they can leap to revolutionary consciousness. The early IMG, which came out of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, looked better. They uncritically supported the Stalinist NLF, but at least they understood the need to take a side -- for the victory of the NLF.

These movements come and go, they evaporate. What doesn't evaporate is the need for a party to lead the proletariat to power. Our slogan is Lenin's: for arming the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie. That's on our banner. And it's only after the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie that we'll be able to rid the world of nuclear weapons, all weapons and war. ■

October 26 ...

(Continued from page 5)

initiated anti-communist hysteria. Having failed to provoke a bloody fight, and emboldened by the protective coloration of the anti-Soviet rabble, one of these animals -- openly wearing a British Movement insignia -- threw a small explosive device at the SL contingent as the crowd packed into Trafalgar Square. He missed -- and nearly maimed a small black child in a pushchair. Even some of the anarchists blanched when the murderous fascist scum defended his action against the outraged mother -- 'We're British'. But this is the cold-blooded logic of anti-Soviet reaction, pacifist or not. And that was the meaning of the SL contingent's chant 'Anti-Soviet Cold War feeds the fascist growth!' ■

Labour ...

(Continued from page 1)

could be aroused and all hell breaks loose.

The Labourites' role is increasingly untenable. To keep workers' loyalty they must be able to throw some crumbs from the bourgeoisie's table -- and there aren't many left. With little room for reformist manoeuvre the industrial wing of the social-democratic division of labour, the union bureaucracy, is doubly exposed, 'closer as it is to a restive and increasingly impoverished proletariat. During powerful upsurges (like the 1974 miners strike) the bureaucrats seek to divert workers struggle into the parliamentarist dead-end of putting Labour back in office. And even 'left'-dominated TUCs have generally opted for right-wing party leaders who are less likely to create utopian expectations in the ranks. So today most of them don't want Benn -- but they are backing Foot against Healey since Moss Evans and Co are not keen to sell the most hated enforcer of Social Contract wage-cutting to 'the lads'.

The bourgeoisie is not oblivious to the dilemma of reformism in Britain. In a soul-searching leader following Blackpool entitled 'The dark side of Britain', the *Times* (4 October) said:

'What has happened not just to the Labour Party, but to the whole Labour movement, is damaging to Britain in itself. It is also an unquestionable sign of the damage that has already been done to Britain by a progressive social, political and economic decline.'

Attacking Benn from the right, ex-Labour Cabinet minister Barbara Castle noted 'that he never spells out that responsibility involves choice and the choices in this country are grim for everybody'.

The choices are grim -- and the Tory/Labour cycle is no choice at all. Just how many more strikebreaking, anti-working-class Labour governments does the working class have to endure, hoping that attempts to bandage crippled capitalism will be slightly more sufferable than Tory rule? Bankrupt British capitalism must go -- and for that to happen the bankrupt Labour Party must go. The deadly, palpable danger is that if the workers don't despatch Labour, the fascists will -- and crush the whole workers movement.

Yet for the fake-revolutionary left, the idea of destroying the senile Labour Party is utterly absent, the idea of building it embraced. For the International Marxist Group (IMG) the ultimate crime at Blackpool was: 'Labour right threatens party unity'. Short of a deep split in the trade union bureaucracy Labour right wingers have only the Tories, Liberals or a short-lived 'centre party' to go to. But who cares? Revolutionaries want to see party unity threatened, and shattered, with Labour's working-class base broken from the pro-capitalist misleaders, 'left' or right. 'Party unity' is precisely the rationale been used to justify remaining in Callaghan's strikebreaking Cabinet -- allegiance to Labour 'on the grounds that a Tory government which would succeed it if it was defeated, would be much worse'. This is the pervasive rationale for Labour-cretinism. Even the left-centrist Workers Power group which makes no claims about the 'gains' of Blackpool voted for Labour in 1979 as it stood openly on a strikebreaking, wage-slashing programme and was widely discredited among the workers. The sundry fake-revolutionaries who seek to cuddle up to the 'left' betrayers hope it will bring them closer to the workers. It only brings them closer to the workers' reformist illusions. Trotskyists don't underestimate the depth of such illusions, which require many flexible tactics to be destroyed, including when appropriate critical support and entry. But first there has to be the revolutionary programme and the will to destroy them.

In contrast the IMG has become a virtual press agency for Benn. Benn of course knows the measure of the IMG et al. He openly welcomes 'those socialists who have got isolated in sectarian loneliness' back to Labour's bosom. But for what? Even the IMG admits 'the last thing Benn wants is a revolution'. Precisely: the last thing Benn wants is a revolution. And he is conscious of this, and has a programme (of sorts) to prevent it. He talks now of troop withdrawal from Ireland because 'violence could spread to England' and thinks loss of British power to the EEC could light 'the long fuse of revolution'. His 'little England' social-patriotic schemes and illusions are explicitly designed to stop that fuse being lit. But the IMG offers him advice on how to sell himself to the workers: walk a few picket lines. Have no fear,

IMG. When he needs to he will, just like he did on the Clyde in 1972. The social democrats' capacity to head off workers struggles is what makes them useful to the bourgeoisie.

In the 1930s, during rising class struggle, they went much further than manning pickets. The Spanish Socialist Party came out for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The French SFIO had a left-centrist wing. In Britain the parallel development was the Independent Labour Party split from Labour. And Trotsky advised the 'French turn' -- short term entry to split leftward-moving workers to revolutionary politics. But today, the paucity of any substantial leftist content to the Bennite 'left' reflects the absence as yet of the sort of groundswell of militancy from Labour's proletarian base which would force them to move qualitatively to the left in order to contain it.

Yet the WSL found it 'conspicuous that it was amongst the constituency delegations -- most closely linked to the rank and file of the labour movement -- that this new militant political current found most support' (*Socialist Press*, 15 October). Conspicuous? It's the norm. Constituency parties have long been a sandpit for fake-left oppositions to play in. And today a significant component of the 'left' consists of petty-bourgeois radicals moving right (the aging 'children of 68'), including a gaggle of self-styled Trotskyists who could only mislead any radicalising workers they might chance upon into footslogging and canvassing for left reformism.

Of course genuine Trotskyists could do work in the constituency parties, but the core of the Labour Party's strength is the unions. A strategy to split Labour must involve challenging the hold of the union bureaucrats with a class-struggle programme counterposed to craftism and class treason. But the fake-lefts are incapable of this. The WSL can only counterpose to the scabbing, Labourite policies of the bureaucracy ... its own scabbing Labourite policies.

History is littered with the forgotten initials of 'revolutionary' groups who first adapted to social democracy, then joined it. That's the fate before those who hail Blackpool, as it was for the Militant and Chartist groups before them. And while the right-centrist WSL is en route, the Workers Action (WA) tendency seems to have arrived. Two years after spawning the 'Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory' (SCLV) as a 'short-term' election-time tactic WA has relegated its paper *Workers Action* to the status of a monthly 'theoretical journal' in order to make the SCLV's reformist *Socialist Organiser* their fortnightly tool of 'intervention'. And now the SCLV in turn is part of a larger pro-Benn bloc -- the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy.

But more centrally WA has now embraced explicit reformist positions on the state. Leader John O'Mahoney claims in his analysis of Blackpool (*Socialist Organiser*, 11 October): 'Direct channels are being opened for the control by the labour movement over our representatives in Parliament and therefore, if Labour has a majority, control over Parliament.' After a previous revisionist redefinition of a workers government (ie the dictatorship of the proletariat) as a Labour government possibly 'resting on a parliamentary majority', this all adds up to the reformist 'peaceful road to socialism'. O'Mahoney called Blackpool 'half a revolution: the opening half' (presumably like the Russian Revolution -- sans soviets and Bolsheviks -- since *Socialist Organiser's* headline 'Five days that shook the Labour Party' alludes to the title of John Reed's account).

To such house 'Trotskyists' for social democracy, it bears repeating: a workers government in Britain will be established only through a revolutionary onslaught against the bourgeois state, Westminster and all. The Labour Party has demonstrated the bankruptcy of its claims to lead the workers for decades. What is needed is a revolutionary party to tighten the noose around its neck and break the workers once and for all from this obstacle to their emancipation. ■

Spartacist Meeting

Ireland --

Smash Imperialist Torture Camps,

Troops Out Now!

1.00pm

Thursday 13 November

ITV Room

Students Union

Sheffield University

For further information ring (0742) 686427.

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Ireland: No Liberal schemes! Troops out now!

Smash imperialist torture camps!

Eleven years after being sent in, British troops still stalk the towns and villages of Northern Ireland. Irish nationalists are hunted down, civilian bystanders slaughtered, in a bid to cow the oppressed Catholic community into submission. To achieve 'stability' and 'defeat terrorism', 'democratic' British imperialism -- which howls for the 'freedom' of reactionary Afghan mullahs -- has inflicted countless atrocities on the Catholic masses of the Six Counties. Even the plea that Republican nationalists fighting the obscene imperialist presence should not be treated like common criminals and animals in the torture camps has been spurned with colonial arrogance.

Last month seven prisoners began a hunger strike in H Block of Long Kesh. For the victims of imperialist repression they demand return of the rights of 'special category' prisoners, removed by the Labour government in 1975. Four years ago Frank Stagg died on hunger strike in Wakefield prison -- the government callously denying his wish to serve his sentence in the Six Counties. Now the Tory Cabinet, like its Labour predecessor, says 'let them starve!' Just one cynical 'compromise' was offered. Northern Ireland secretary Humphrey Atkins made a carefully timed announcement that henceforth all prisoners in the North could wear civilian clothes. The protesters rejected this; and Thatcher, Atkins and Co, keen to break the spirit behind the four-year-long 'blanket' protests, are ready for a stream of coffins out of Long Kesh by Christmas. The haughty butchers in Westminster will only back down if they are forced to -- by the massive strength of the proletariat. *Free all victims of imperialist repression in Ireland! Troops out now!*

While the hunger strike drags on, the bloody stalemate in Northern Ireland continues. The army and Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) on the one hand, Republicans on the other, all admit inability to make decisive advances. And the gulf between Loyalist-led Protestants and Catholics remains as wide as ever. After another failed attempt this summer at a formula for a devolved assembly acceptable to Protestant and Catholic politicians the Iron Lady remains committed to defence of Protestant ascendancy institutionalised in the Orange statelet. And the much-vaunted 'Ulsterisation' policy has only involved a transfer of repressive responsibility from the army to the RUC and Ulster Defence Regiment -- whose links to pogromist Protestant groups like the Ulster Freedom Fighters are notorious. These forces in turn have been supplemented by SAS-type undercover operations.

But the Provisionals and other Republican forces are still able to inflict blows on the army and state machine -- as last year's assassinations of Airey Neave and Lord Mountbatten showed. And though their bankrupt nationalism, militarism and anti-Protestant sectarianism, exemplified in the 1978 La Mon firebombing which killed twelve innocent Protestants, have all eroded support, the Provisionals can still tap a significant reservoir of sympathy. More than 10,000 marched in Belfast on the eve of the hunger strike, and support will grow.

In this apparently intractable situation Britain has come under increasing pressure to seek an alternative 'solution', ending military involvement. In 1979 it was Irish-American poli-

ticians like Tip O'Neill and Ted Kennedy. More recently Charles Haughey, prime minister of the Irish Republic, came to Britain, bearing the gift of a teapot for Margaret Thatcher. Haughey, long identified with the most nationalist wing of Fianna Fail, seeks a deal for a confederal Ireland, with the North somehow linked to both Britain and the South. But the 'solutions' of teapot diplomacy are easier theorised than realised -- as the reactionary 1974 Ulster Workers Council general strike against Sunningdale power-sharing showed. Facing an increasingly restive proletariat at home, Haughey wants an image as an international statesman.

But not just overseas politicians want an alternative bourgeois policy. War-weary sentiment for an end to unfettered imperialist repression is stronger in Britain than ever before. Significant minorities in the Labour and Liberal parties have come to see military involvement in Ireland as inimical to capitalism's long-term interests (and in some cases also to fulfilment of Britain's NATO commitments). Tony Benn, who supported sending in troops in 1969 and reactionary legislation like the Prevention of Terrorism Act, now talks about withdrawal. A resolution for withdrawal at the Labour Party conference won a sizeable vote from constituency parties. Meanwhile, there is a new 'Charter 80' campaign. And the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland, initiated by a wing of the Liberal Party, has called a demonstration in London on November 15 on the same lines as one in August 1979 -- calling on the government to 'commit itself to a policy of withdrawal'.

The supdry new 'withdrawal' movements have nothing to do with justice for Ireland's masses. They represent an 'enlightened' strategy to 'defeat the terrorists' and uphold imperialist interests after the demonstrated failure of a policy of open repression. Marxists do not beg the capitalist state for a pledge of good conduct or reformed policies. We demand that the troops get out *now* as a basic expression of opposition to imperialist repression. But we also warn against illusions that the day after the troops leave Belfast, everything will be rosy. Troop withdrawal could very likely bring bloody civil war in its wake -- and the well-armed, well-trained Loyalists could very possibly inflict a brutal, crushing defeat on the Catholic minority.

The presence of the imperialist gendarme does nothing to avoid such a tragic outcome. There is no just solution for Ireland outside the framework of a workers republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles. The only road for the oppressed Catholics of Northern Ireland lies through revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat on both sides of the Irish Sea -- transcending sectarian divisions through a programme of class struggle. Marching in step with the defeatist wing of the imperialist bourgeoisie is *directly counterposed* to that perspective. Support for Liberal imperialism's 'withdrawal' ploys is a betrayal: *you can't fight the imperialist bourgeoisie in a bloc with one of its wings!*

Yet fake revolutionaries have hopped on to this popular-frontist bandwagon. In under ten years the International Marxist Group (IMG), to take an egregious example, has gone from insist-



ence that 'Victory to the IRA' be a precondition for united action on Ireland in Britain, to arguing that even the call for 'Troops Out Now' is too maximalist a basis for demonstrations. The IMG's capitulation to IRA Green nationalism is now more subdued as it chases bourgeois defeatist allies, sponsors calls of the Young Liberals, and calls only for 'Troops Out Now' contingents within the 'broad' movement of popular-frontist treachery. In contrast on November 15 the Spartacist League will march in intransigent opposition to the representatives and agents of imperialist reaction.

We advance the only programme to break the cycle of intercommunal strife and imperialist terror: construction of a Trotskyist party against not only pro-imperialist Loyalism, but also petty-bourgeois Republican nationalism. A revolutionary outcome in Ireland demands that the barriers between Catholic and Protestant workers be shattered. Amid depression and mass unemployment there must be a fight against all discrimination in jobs and housing and for a sliding scale of wages and hours. Integrated workers militias must be built to fight against all imperialist and sectarian attacks -- not only by troops and Orange pogromists, but also by Green nationalists. Workers have no interest in a capitalist 'united Ireland' but in smashing bourgeois rule North and South. We look not to Haughey's *gombeen* Republic but to the tanker drivers on national strike who faced his army last month. Not to nationalism, Orange or Green, but to the Protestant and Catholic workers who picketed last spring in a united fight against army presence in Royal Victoria Hospital. And in Britain, not to the Liberals but to the power of a proletariat which must be mobilised against its 'own' imperialism. Bloody imperialism's victims, including the heroic hunger strikers, will be avenged when a vanguard party, section of a reformed Fourth International, leads the Irish proletariat to power, marching in league with their class brothers in Britain.

- Down with Liberal imperialism -- troops out now!
- For trade union blacking of military supplies to Ireland!
- Free all victims of imperialist repression!
- For an Irish workers republic, part of a socialist federation of the British Isles!