

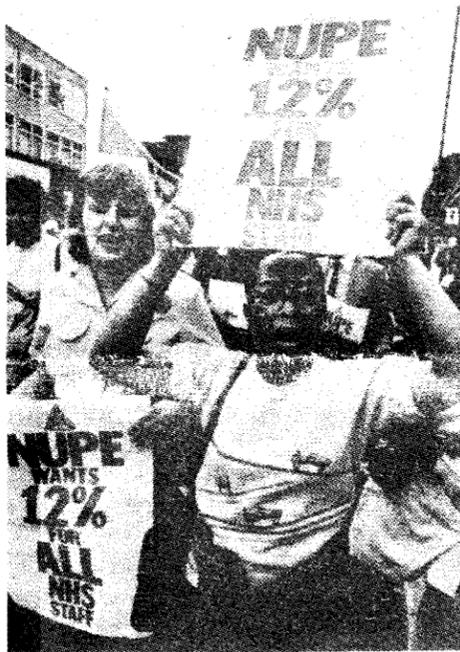


Bury the 'Falklands factor' Class war can sink Thatcher!

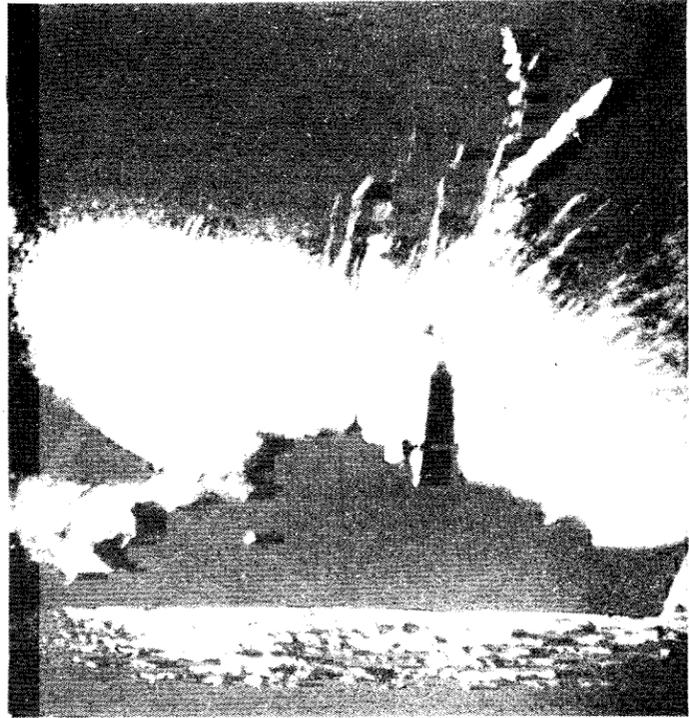
Once again the Union Jack flies over Port Stanley. Coalite reigns secure. All it cost was a thousand or so lives and a couple of billion pounds. But there is no booty to be brought back from the South Atlantic war, and the capitalist Britain to which the fleet returns remains as clapped out as before.

For the Tory government, the Argentine junta's misconceived military adventure in the Falklands has been a godsend. Here was an unexpected opportunity to galvanise patriotic fervour and reap electoral (and other) dividends. As the fleet sailed south from Portsmouth, Tory candidates swept to victory in local government elections and Thatcher's opinion poll ratings soared. The most unpopular prime minister in memory was transformed into a veritable national heroine, proud upholder of 'democracy', stalwart defender of the 'rights' of a handful of Empire Loyalists on a couple of windswept rocks 8000 miles away. Carefully orchestrated war fever helped marginalise (for now) the SDP and accentuate, yet again, the deep chaos in the Labour Party. While the fulsome support of the Foot/Healey leadership for Thatcher's war was as predictable as it was despicable, Tony Benn's limp pacifist opposition ('don't send the fleet, use economic sanctions instead') served only to fan the flames of Labour's internal war. Thatcher's 'opposition' is on the defensive, semi-paralysed. Now she wants more victories.

She won her dirty little war. And, buoyed by this, the ruling class looks to take on its main enemy, the working class. Fleet Street headlines in the aftermath of the war make it sound as if Argentine commandos are about to land in Portsmouth on a retaliatory mission. 'Now for the battle of Britain', screams the *Express*. But it is the class war the bourgeoisie is talking about.



Exit the Antelope; militant class struggle can get Thatcher: striking health workers (left), scab dustcart burns in Wandsworth



The Tories intend to milk the engineered mood of 'national unity' and patriotic euphoria -- which the workers' misleaders have themselves encouraged through their support for the Falklands adventure -- in their war on British workers. As the country braced for the first national rail strike since 1926, with London already in chaos with the Underground struck, with hospital strikes galvanising support in every region, with the miners too threatening strike and talk of a Summer of Discontent and a general

strike in the air, Tory party chairman Cecil Parkinson rolled out the appeals:

'Little more than a week after the liberation of the Falklands, there are trade union leaders intent on bringing Britain to a halt. It is as if they had something to fear from the belief in themselves that the British people have rediscovered.'

Sadly, the Tories have all too little to fear from these trade union leaders. Hours after the

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Stop the witchhunt against Militant!

The simmering crisis inside the Labour Party has once again exploded to the surface with the National Executive Committee's 16 to 10 vote in favour of general secretary Ron Hayward's report on the Militant tendency. Giving Militant three months to comply with clause II(3) of the constitution or face expulsion, and endorsing the establishment of an NEC 'approved' register threatening the rest of the 'far left' in the Labour Party with the same fate, the resolution marks a return to the witchhunting tactics of the Attlee/Gaitskell right wing of the 1950s. This anti-left witchhunt must be stopped. Down with bans and proscriptions in the Labour Party!

Still trying to buy time to paper over the deep fissures in the party, Michael Foot was unwilling to go for the immediate and direct purge demanded by the hard right around Denis Healey. Noting that Foot has 'no stomach for a purge' the *Economist* (26 June) points out that 'there are too many on the right and centre of

the party who are determined to act decisively to allow him to fudge it'. With Labour's disastrous showing in recent by-elections (leaving aside Scottish Labour stronghold Coatbridge and Airdrie), with recent opinion polls showing Foot to be the most unpopular opposition leader in living memory, and with a decisive Labour Party conference looming in September, Foot's days as leader are undoubtedly numbered.

The divisions in the Labour Party run far too deep to be contained by Foot's balancing act. More is at stake than simply the fate of Militant. As the *Times* (24 June) points out, Labour's 'future as a potential governing party of this country' hinges on the outcome of the left-right power struggle. Whilst the opening salvos have been fired against Militant, the real target is Tony Benn. And Benn knows it. Responding to the NEC decision Benn, who earlier declared his determination to 'fight like a tiger' against any witchhunt and is now threatening to

counterattack with a campaign for 'civil disobedience' in the constituencies, explained 'what this is really about is an attempt to reverse some very important policies in the party'. Targetting his central opponent, Benn referred to 'Denis Healey (who) is in favour of having cruise missiles here and nuclear weapons' (*Times* 24 June). Healey also stands for a strategy of coalition with the SDP, anathema to Benn who has built his following around a rejection of the record of the 1974-79 Labour government -- centrally the Lib-Lab coalition and its wage-slashing, union-busting corollary.

Three months ago we analysed the distorted and uneven class line cleaving the Labour Party between Bennite 'little England socialists' and Healey's CIA-loving NATO 'internationalists', arguing that Benn's challenge represented a threat to Labour's traditional postwar role as a pro-NATO bulwark in the labour movement (see

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Falklands: How chauvinists 'oppose' pacifism Militant stands with 'our boys'

In all the red-baiting of the 'Trotskyite infiltrators' of Ted Grant's Militant Tendency by the Labour right and the yellow press, there is one stick which has not been used to beat them. Nobody, not even the most rabid jingoist, could accuse these 'dangerous subversives' of doing anything to subvert British imperialism's shabby little war of reconquest in the South Atlantic. While the Bennite left and its fake-revolutionary camp-followers came under fire for offering the eminently sensible -- from the standpoint of British imperialism's real capacities and interests -- suggestion that the Falklands were not worth risking a fleet over, Militant attacked Tony Benn from the right. As *Guardian* columnist and SDP supporter Peter Jenkins put it, 'Ironically, Militant's line on the Falklands war was Foot's and not Benn's' (23 June).

Well, to be fair, not quite. Foot actually congratulated Thatcher on her defence of Empire. Grant has some 'Marxist' pretensions to look after, so he had to put some red bunting around the Union Jack before kissing it. The real question for these social-imperialists of the second mobilisation was how to retain a semblance of opposition to Thatcher's war without any taint of actually opposing British imperialism in practice. But Militant are past masters at pseudo-Marxist rationales for their knee-jerk genuflection before their 'own' bourgeoisie. In Ireland they preach class unity and oppose Republican nationalism in order to condone British imperialism's terrorisation of the Catholic ghettos (until such time as workers militias are formed). Their Sri Lankan co-thinkers of the NSSP criticised the anti-Marxist politics of the 1971 JVP youth uprising while sitting in the popular-front government (as part of the LSSP) which was slaughtering these heroic youth by the thousands.

So, from the start, *Militant* (9 April) swore 'no support whatsoever to the lunatic adventure now being prepared by the Thatcher government' -- only to echo the line of the British bourgeoisie and its loyal labour lieutenants in practice all the way. Militant averred 'no hesitation in condemning the [Argentine] invasion' and announced themselves stalwart defenders of the 'democratic rights of the Falkland Islanders' -- against Argentina. Reams of vitriol against the dictatorial junta were churned out which somehow managed to leave unscathed the British bourgeoisie, which has centuries of murderous colonialist oppression to its credit.

Militant attacked the Bennite call to withdraw the fleet as a 'meaningless, pacifist gesture' and a 'pacifist blind alley' and cynically attacked the Labour lefts for proposing no action to achieve this demand. True enough, but the only concrete action Militant proposed for the British working class was to black trade with Argentina -- hardly necessary given the Thatcher/EEC sanctions. And what upset Militant about the Labour left's social-pacifism is not that it weakened the proletariat's resolve to wage class war against its bourgeoisie. Rather it ran counter to the British proletariat's 'democratic' impulse to fight the Argentine bourgeoisie -- 'a genuine hatred of the methods of these military dictators' (*Militant*, 28 May). On the contrary, Militant reserve their greatest venom not for the pacifists, but for 'sectarian' revolutionary defeatists:

'The most monstrous absurdity of the sec-

tarians' position, however, is the idea that workers can be won to a socialist position on the basis of calling for the defeat of the Task Force, calling literally -- as representatives of the sectarians have stated in public -- for "the sinking of the fleet!"' (*Militant International Review*, June 1982) Defeatism, argues Militant, is an attack on the sense of 'class' solidarity within the proletariat with the 'workers in uniform' -- in this case, the crack troops of British imperialism like the SAS.

Militant renders Lenin a social-chauvinist

Militant seek to lend a veneer of Leninist authenticity to all of this social-patriotic rubbish by dredging up one historical reference after another -- all of them wrong.

the revolutionary opportunities such military defeats prepare. The scuttling of the Russian fleet at Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 was the direct precursor to the Revolution of 1905. Lenin welcomed it:

'It is believed that Russia's loss in naval tonnage alone amounts to 300,000,000 rubles. More important, however, is the loss of some ten thousand of the navy's best men, and the loss of an entire army...

'The cause of Russian freedom and of the struggle of the Russian (and the world) proletariat for socialism depends to a very large extent on the military defeats of the autocracy. This cause has been greatly advanced by the military debacle which has struck terror in the hearts of all the European guardians of the existing order.' ('The Fall of Port Arthur', 1904)



Spartacist League said: Use this war to bring down Thatcher!

Let us take just one of these ludicrous alibis. Ignoring all of Lenin's polemics against an imperialist peace before the revolutionary situation exploded in Russia in February 1917, Militant point to his remarks about the 'honest defencism' of the workers to claim that he rejected revolutionary defeatism and the slogan of turning the imperialist war into a civil war! In 1917 Russia was in the throes of revolutionary upheaval. The 'honest defencism' of the workers and peasants -- as distinguished by Lenin from the reactionary defencism of their Menshevik and SR misleaders -- reflected a desire to defend the gains of the February Revolution, which included the creation of soviets. Even so, Lenin understood this 'revolutionary defencism' as 'the worst enemy of the further progress and success of the Russian revolution' ('April Theses'). Far from abandoning his perspective of turning the imperialist war into civil war Lenin saw the February Revolution as 'the beginning of the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war'. What was now necessary was 'a second step, namely the transfer of state power to the proletariat'.

Militant's sympathy for 'workers in uniform', however, reflects its ingrained reformist belief that the bourgeois state -- whose kernel is the armed forces -- need not be smashed but can in fact be taken over holus-bolus by a 'Labour government pledged to socialist policies', its panacea for all seasons, including the Falklands war. Why fight to turn imperialist war into civil war when all that is needed is a general election and an 'Enabling Act' in the mother of parliaments? Indeed in that eventuality Militant argue an explicitly pro-British line: 'Using socialist methods, a Labour government could rapidly defeat the dictatorship...' (*Militant International Review*, June 1982).

'Sink the fleet' may well be an infantile slogan. However like Lenin, we look forward to

And in this statement is to be found not only a polemic against Militant but against the flock of pseudo-Trotskyist centrists who leapt to the defence of Benn-style social-pacifism. It is enough to condemn such as the International Marxist Group (IMG) simply to point out they consider the dyed-in-the-wool pro-imperialist Militant 'centrists' and entitled their main polemic against Grant 'Has Militant broken from Marxism?' (*Socialist Challenge*, 18 June)!

Despite a paper position of support to a supposed 'anti-imperialist struggle' by the Argentine junta, the IMG focussed almost exclusively on fawning appeals to Benn & Co to build a bigger and better single-issue campaign around 'Withdraw the fleet!' And the Workers Power (WP) group, for all its criticisms of the Labour left and its greater emphasis on junta 'anti-imperialism' has done likewise in practice. While the centrists' championing of the 'Withdraw the fleet' slogan does dovetail with support to Argentina, it is primarily motivated by a desire to build a movement for 'peace' -- a strategy counterposed to that of Lenin.

Thus despite their differences over whether or how much to back the Argentine junta, supporters of WP, *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Organiser* (which was neutral in the war) at a Handsworth Labour Party meeting on 18 May had no trouble blocking politically around a resolution calling simply for withdrawal. And three days earlier, Sheffield Workers Power offered to restrict their intervention into a Trades Council march to 'raise your voice for peace' only to slogans acceptable to the march organisers as the price for it going ahead. And they did just that even after the march organisers pulled out, monotonously repeating, 'Labour movement must support troops and navy back to port!' Which port? Belfast?

What content does a call for fleet or troop

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Let military defeat breed workers revolution

Argentine junta teeters

Hours after the fall of Port Stanley to SAS and paratrooper thugs, the chant '*Se va a acabar, la dictadura militar!*' ('The military dictatorship is coming to an end!') was again reverberating through the streets of Buenos Aires as it had in the days before the Argentine junta's military adventure. In the wake of its humiliating military defeat, the junta is wracked by bitter divisions, with acrimonious and bitter warfare raging within and amongst the three wings of the military as well as the bourgeois parties. President Leopoldo Galtieri's was the first head to roll. For the time being the Army has assumed sole control over government, with the Navy and Air Force pressing for a more rapid return to civilian rule as the only hope to avert a social explosion.

From the beginning of the Falklands war, the international Spartacist tendency advocated the Leninist-Trotskyist policy of *revolutionary defeatism* on both sides, pointing to the tremendous opportunities opened up by the war:

'... the bloody Argentine junta wracked only a few weeks ago by massive labour protests, and the Thatcher government which has driven the British people into the poorhouse *can be brought down* as a result of defeat and humiliation in war.' (*Spartacist Britain* no 42, May 1982)

The crucial element in determining whether the decades-long cycle of Peronist populist rule and military dictatorship in Argentina will be brought to a revolutionary end is the construction of a communist leadership, tested in oppo-

Peronists salute Galtieri

For General Galtieri, 'recovery' of the Falklands/Malvinas began as a textbook case of a despotic regime trying to take the heat off at home by launching a foreign adventure. One of the main purposes of the military takeover in March 1976 was to break the back of a militant workers movement, the biggest and best organised on the continent. But despite massive repression, arrests and anti-leftist terror, labour struggles did not stop.

As a direct result of the junta's economic policies, Argentina is in the midst of the worst depression in its history. For the sixth year in a row it had the highest rate of inflation in the world (130 per cent in 1981), industry is working at 50 per cent of capacity, unemployment is skyrocketing. Popular anger was still boiling over the *desaparecidos*, the 30,000 'disappeared' victims of the military's 'dirty war' against leftists and Peronists. Mass opposition to the dictatorship was growing. On 30 March the Peronist CGT reluctantly called a march to protest against the regime's economic policies -- 2000 demonstrators were arrested, scores wounded and two killed. A general strike to denounce the repression was called for 5 April. In the meantime Argentine commandos seized the Falklands/Malvinas.

As a diversion it worked -- though Galtieri's calculation that Reagan would restrain the decrepit British lion backfired, badly. Labour demonstrations stopped and patriotic fervour spread. And the entire Argentine left, the Peronists, union bureaucrats and politicians hailed this incredible adventure in order to show their patriotic colours. When Mario Benjamin Menendez, principal architect of the junta's war of extermination against the left, was sworn in as the new military governor of the Malvinas, present were leaders of the bourgeois opposition parties, most particularly the Peronists, and of both the CGT and CNT labour federations, some of the latter having just been let out of prison.

The calculations of the bourgeois parties were transparent. They figured that a successful occupation of the islands would cover the military with prestige so they could withdraw to their barracks with 'their heads held high'. The bourgeois-populist guerillas of the Montonero Peronist Movement were even more enthusiastic about 'Operation Malvinas'. While most of the Argentine bourgeoisie has never given a damn about some windswept outcrops in the South Atlantic, retaking the islands has

been a part of the revanchist-nationalist programme of Peronism ever since the 1943 coup (by pro-Axis officers) which brought Peron to power.

The Communist Party (PCA) also endorsed the Falklands/Malvinas adventure, following its general line of 'critical' support to the bloody dictatorship since the March 1976 coup. Days after the coup, PCA leaders announced their willingness to cooperate in paving the way 'towards the establishment of a military and civilian government on a broad coalition basis' (*Daily World*, 30 March 1976) and called on coup leader General Videla, to affirm their loyalty. The old-line Stalinist PCA is acting here simply as a mouthpiece for Kremlin foreign policy (which cuddles up to the viciously anti-communist junta because Argentina is the major supplier of wheat to the Soviet Union). In the UN Commission on Human Rights, Soviet representatives have repeatedly opposed investigations of torture and kidnappings in Argentina, though the Stalinists were quick to call on the UN den of thieves to negotiate a settlement in the Falklands dispute. Not surprisingly, while the Euro-leaning CPGB's *Morning Star* refused to veer from Tony Benn's social-pacifist line, the pro-Moscow *Straight Left* monthly embellished it with support to the junta's 'anti-imperialist' claim -- with not a word of criticism of the junta (*Straight Left*, May 1982)!

Of course, it was not only the Stalinists. The Mandelbrite United Secretariat and their former bedfellows, Nahuel Moreno's Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST), have a consistent record of tailing the Peronists and lately have been exhorting Argentinian workers to lay down their lives to ensure the success of Galtieri's adventure. In Britain there were fake Trotskyists aplenty, most notably the Revolutionary



Galtieri's junta prayed that Falklands diversion would stem rising tide of militant labour protests.

Communist Party and Workers Power (WP), to rally to the junta's 'anti-imperialist' cause.

In the May issue of its paper, WP claimed that a defeat for Argentina in this purportedly 'anti-imperialist struggle' 'would be a significant and potentially highly demoralising defeat for the oppressed Argentinian masses themselves'. With a dishonesty characteristic of these relentlessly confused centrists, WP then argues in its June issue that, 'The possibilities for the overthrow of the junta, for an end to military rule, are better, not worse as the result of an open clash with Britain.' Well, this particular 'open clash' resulted in a defeat for Argentina, so which is it, Workers Power?

The truth is far simpler than these contortions. There was nothing 'anti-imperialist' about the 'recovery' of this tiny archipelago hundreds of miles from the Argentine coasts. Did it affect the right of self-determination of the Argentine people? Not at all. In what way are the Falklands/Malvinas used as a means of economic pressure by Britain? By buying supplies in Argentina? Granted, the Falklands are a relic from the British empire, and communists demand that this decaying, second-rate imperialist power get out of all its colonial holdovers, from Hong Kong to the Falklands. But the Argentine working masses would gain nothing from Galtieri's adventure

(even if it had been successful). The main argument used by these centrists to justify support to the junta in this nationalist diversion is to repeat over and over that Argentina is a 'semi-colony'. Even if it were, the Malvinas adventure would still be a diversion. But Argentina is not a 'semi-colonial' country.

Argentina -- a semi-colony?

Around 1900, Argentina's average income was comparable to Canada's; in the 1920s they boasted of a European standard of living (while expressing racist contempt for dark-skinned mestizos in the rest of Latin America). Beginning with the Great Depression and up to the 1950s (under the first Peron regime), there was considerable industrialisation through 'import substitution', so that even today industry produces twice as much as agriculture in the Argentine economy. The class structure is European: 75 per cent urban (much more than France), with a large proletariat and a tiny peasantry (the commercial *estancias* hire agricultural workers). The country has suffered at times (not recently) from declining terms of trade, as have other exporters of beef and wheat (like Australia and Canada).

Despite the junta's pretensions to act as a regional gendarme (witness its role in the Bolivian 'cocaine coup' last year, and more recently in Central America), Argentina is not even a secondary imperialist country like Australia or Canada. Since the turn of the century at least, it has been in what Lenin called a 'transitional form of dependence'. Other examples of such intermediate capitalist states are much of Eastern Europe between the wars, Portugal, Greece or Israel today. They may be clients of particular imperialist powers, but they are more than simple puppet regimes,



'banana republics' or semi-colonies.

Like the US after the Civil War, Argentina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was largely developed by British capital. But whereas American capitalists were able to buy themselves out, establishing the US as an independent imperialist power, Argentina developed too late -- a crucial thirty years -- to overcome the imperialist division of the world. Thus British capital dominated Argentina up to the Second World War and still remains significant.

Argentina is a capitalist country which has suffered for the last three decades from arrested development or even retrogression. This is the result of a stand-off between a large, organised proletariat and an increasingly desperate bourgeoisie which has repeatedly resorted to military dictatorship to save its class rule. For more than 30 years it has stood at the crossroads where it cannot go forward without proletarian revolution. And the main obstacle has been the stranglehold of Peronist nationalism, the opiate of the Argentine working class. As the military junta teeters, the urgent task is for revolutionary militants in Argentina to learn the lessons of this latest nationalist diversion and forge a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard capable of smashing the military dictatorship through workers revolution.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No 307, 11 June 1982

Proclaiming a new 'crusade for freedom', Ronald Reagan vowed that 'the forces of good ultimately rally and triumph over evil' and that Marxism-Leninism would be thrown onto 'the ash heap of history'. 'Even without our encouragement' there have been 'explosions' in East Europe, the American president said at Westminster. MPs must have thought they had been caught in a time-warp and transported back to the short-lived 'American century', listening to John Foster Dulles call on Christendom to 'roll back' godless Communism. Or perhaps they were listening to newsreels of Winston Churchill's 1946 'Iron Curtain' speech (from which Reagan's writers borrowed liberally). But here it is Cold War II, and the chief imperialist was openly calling for counterrevolution to overthrow the bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc.

The immediate target of Reagan's plans to reconquer the Soviet sphere for 'free world' capitalism is Poland, and his chosen instrument is Solidarnosc, the Polish company union for the CIA and Western bankers. Poland and Solidarity were mentioned no less than ten times in his Westminster speech. Despite the crackdown last December which scotched a counterrevolutionary grab for power by Solidarnosc, Reagan vowed that 'the struggle continues in Poland'. But the prospect of NATO paratroopers landing in Warsaw to back up a Radio Free Europe-inspired uprising produced nervous tremors even among conservative elements of the European bourgeoisie. Not just peaceniks but significant sections of the West European ruling circles see a post-Vietnam America frustrated by the loss of global power and driving towards a nuclear apocalypse.

Overall, Reagan's Grand Tour of West Europe was judged a royal flop. None of the imperialist heads of state had a taste for Reagan-style anti-Communist crusading. For all his support to NATO rearmament and Polish Solidarnosc, despite his warm toasts to *mon cher* Ron, French president Mitterrand said he didn't want economic war with the Russians any more than a shooting war. German chancellor Schmidt was even more insistent in trying to resurrect detente. It's not that the European capitalists are any less anti-Soviet than their American counterparts. They're just worried about a nuclear war fought on their territory, and prefer to economically undermine and politically subvert the Soviet bloc by fostering internal counterrevolutionary forces like Polish Solidarnosc. And they're worried about unrest at home; as Edward Heath remarked: 'The younger generation isn't going to feel much for democracy when there are 30 million unemployed in the West' (*Washington Post*, 9 June).

If European conservatives were cool to Reagan, the social democrats were even more standoffish. In an unprecedented act, virtually the entire Labour Party parliamentary delegation boycotted Reagan's speech in the Royal Gallery. In an equally unprecedented open letter, penned by Denis Healey on behalf of the NEC, the Labourites bitterly denounced Washington's 'simple black-and-white' policies. 'We utterly reject an ideological crusade against the Soviet Union and its identification as the sole or even prime cause of conflict in the world', wrote Healey who can hardly be accused of being a Russia-lover.

Europacifism no solution

The Reaganites' talk of a 'limited' and 'winnable' nuclear war on the continent has frightened millions of Europeans out of their wits. Thus the decline of US imperialism's economic strength and the rise of insane anti-Soviet bellicosity in Washington have produced a nationalistic, social-democratic-led 'peace' movement in West Europe. Some 250,000 people turned out for CND's London rally; in Italy another quarter million turned out in a demonstration heavily built by the 'Eurocommunists', which explicitly and aggressively called for *multilateral* disarmament. In France, however, the Communist Party showed its loyalty to the government of NATO 'socialist' Mitterrand (in which it has some junior ministers) by doing absolutely nothing to disturb the presidential visit.

But Reagan's reception in Britain and France was positively warm compared to West Germany. *Der Spiegel's* cover labeled Reagan 'the disagreeable guest', and while the mass 'peace' rally of 400,000 at the June 10 NATO summit in Bonn was a relaxed affair, his welcome in West Berlin was very disagreeable.

In keeping with the true spirit of his 'crusade for freedom', all demonstrations were banned for the day; all, that is, except his anti-Communist ritual at the Berlin Wall. During preceding weeks, the police had raided the homes of many local radicals, letting it be known that if the US imperialist chief's

Million protest in London, Rome, Bonn, Berlin

Reagan's Cold War tour flops



London, 7 June

visit were disrupted there would be hell to pay. So while 80,000 turned out for a 'peace' picnic the day before, on June 11 just 3000 radicals, mainly spontaneists, battled with the cops a few blocks from Reagan's wailing at the Wall. The local Interior Minister said the repression was of 'horrifying brutality and intensity'. The contrast between John F Kennedy's triumphant visit to West Berlin a generation ago and this commando raid on the hostile former German capital was striking. In 1982, Ronald Reagan was no Berliner.

The protests over the Reagan visit were not anti-imperialist. At most they were anti-American, where they weren't downright anti-Soviet as well, as with the slogan 'Neither Pershings nor SS-20s' or 'For a nuclear-free Europe, from Portugal to Poland'. One of the favourite themes of the social patriotic Euro-pacifist demonstrations was 'For a Reagan-free Europe!' In contrast, the international Sparta-cist tendency (iSt) put out a statement under the headline 'The main enemy is at home!' and 'Smash NATO's anti-Soviet war drive through proletarian revolution!' The iSt statement, distributed in thousands of copies in Britain, France and Germany, noted:

'Capitalist America is the number one enemy of the world's working peoples. But "anti-Americanism" does not equal anti-imperialism. In the mouths of social-democrats and Stalinists, anti-American rhetoric only serves to amnestie one's own bourgeoisie. 'Down with NATO and the Common Market! Down with the Atlantic Alliance and the "Force de Frappe"!''

London

The 6 June anti-Reagan march and rally in Hyde Park took place in a political climate dominated by the popular jingoism unleashed by Thatcher's for-now successful colonial adventure in the Falklands. Thinking that the mood of patriotic unity had temporarily eclipsed the 'peace' issue, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament organisers themselves were surprised at the turnout of a quarter of a million. Politically the demonstration combined 'little England' nationalism with 'Stop the world, I want to get off' pacifism encapsulated in the slogans 'Defend Britain, defend peace' and 'For a Reagan-free Europe'. Labour 'left' and Dame of the British Empire Judith Hart added from the podium, 'Any country has the responsibility to have a coherent, sensible defence policy'.

The demonstration occurred just as 'Iron Lady' Thatcher was preparing the final bloody assault in her South Atlantic war. CND had earlier organised 'peace' protests over the

Falklands conflict, but when it came to this big march they were at pains to keep this issue strictly on the sidelines. After all, long-standing CND peacemongers like Michael Foot were supporting Thatcher down the line. The few 'peace' speakers who actually mentioned the war, like Tony Benn, only argued for a more rational policy for British imperialism. Instead of a shooting war they wanted economic sanctions against Argentina and UN intervention.

In sharp opposition to the anti-'superpower' nationalism and social-pacifism of the Bennites and their left hangers-on, a nearly 100-strong Sparta-cist League contingent demanded, 'Smash NATO, Defend the Soviet Union'. Another banner declared, 'Falklands: Workers have no side -- The main enemy is at home!' Calling attention to Britain's other dirty war, the SL chanted, 'Troops out of Ireland now!' As in the past, the CND pacifists answered our revolutionary Marxist politics by calling on the cops. One inspector told our comrades that the CND had made a deal with the Metropolitan Police to exclude us from the march if we chanted slogans to which they strongly objected. But they were unable to enforce this ban, and march we did, chanting, 'Benn says disarmament, Brezhnev says detente, but world revolution is what we want'. Several people attracted by our slogans joined us along the way. The following evening saw a 5000-strong picket of the US embassy and march through London. Although this demonstration, unlike the CND jamboree, was overwhelmingly composed of 'far leftists', its pacifist/neutralist political thrust was well-nigh identical -- and again the SL contingent with its banners 'Down with Reagan! Down with Thatcher! -- For workers revolution!' stood out sharply. Altogether during the anti-Reagan protests nearly 20,000 *Spartacist Britain* supplements with the iSt statement were distributed.

Paris

The most significant thing about the 5 June anti-Reagan protest here was its small size (about 20,000) compared to those in other West European capitals. Centrally, this reflected the abstention and downright sabotage by the French Communist Party (PCF). They made it clear to their ranks that PCF militants were not to be on the streets on 5 June; instead they called a counterdemonstration for 20 June, when Reagan would be safely out of the country. Thus, in a country with a working class in good part pro-Soviet, protest against this anti-Soviet fanatic was minor compared with such traditional strongholds of Cold War social democracy as Britain and West Germany. The incapacity of Stalinism to oppose imperialism's anti-Soviet war drive could not be more glaring.

Many people believe that France's formal non-participation in NATO will somehow miraculously spare it from the nuclear fallout of World War III. Such illusions, of course, did not prevent prime minister Pierre Mauroy from attending the NATO summit and pledging France's 'total fidelity' to the Atlantic Alliance. More importantly the small size of the Paris anti-Reagan protest shows concretely how popular-frontism demobilises the masses. The left and 'far left' could not bring hundreds of thousands into the streets against Reagan, 'mon cher Ron', because they themselves had systematically apologised for and supported Mitterrand's anti-Soviet offensive.

The 5 June protest was initiated by the three main pseudo-Trotskyist groups: Pierre Lambert's Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI), Alain Krivine's Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR) and Lutte Ouvriere. Though the politics of the demonstration were the same kind of reformist Europacifism that is thoroughly respectable in London or Bonn, the Mitterrand government pulled out the stops to mobilise public opinion against it. The pro-government *Le Matin* daily charged that it was pro-Soviet and pro-terrorist, and on 4 June the head of the ruling Socialist Party, Lionel Jospin, denounced the demonstration as 'unilateralist in inspiration'. This was too much for Lambert's PCI, whose virulent anti-Sovietism is not always second to that of the official social democrats. At the last minute the Lambertists pulled out of the demonstration, repeating the government's hysterical redbaiting.

In reality 5 June was a typical example of social-pacifism with the main slogan, 'Down with warmaker Reagan!' Krivine's LCR, the largest contingent, carried no banner against French imperialism or the Mitterrand government. But the 80-strong contingent of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF) held high the traditions of Leninism and the defence of the Soviet Union. Slogans on LTF banners included: 'Mitterrand/Reagan anti-Soviet warmongers' and 'Mitterrand supports counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc, turns CRS [riot police] loose on strikers -- Break with the popular front!' Our contingent caught the attention, among others, of the pro-government daily *Liberation* (7 June) which reported 'a newcomer in the hexagonal [French] Trotskyist galaxy', and commented, 'Worth noting: the slogan of the LTF, "The defence of Cuba, USSR begins in El Salvador".'

The combativeness of the LTF contingent attracted a number of unaffiliated militants, and several Communist Party members, to march with us. Altogether 7000 copies of a supplement to the LTF's *Le Bolchevik* with the 1st statement 'The Main Enemy Is at Home' were distributed on 5 June.

Bonn

The rally of 400,000 on 10 June in the West German capital of Bonn, supported by the youth groups of both the Social Democrats and the big business Free Democrats, the two partners of the ruling coalition, was the largest of the anti-Reagan protests. It was also perhaps the purest expression of Europacifism with its carefully 'balanced' opposition to bloody US imperialism and the Soviet degenerated workers state. The slogans 'Swords into ploughshares, East and West'



Bonn, 10 June: From El Salvador to Berlin and Dresden — Defend DDR/Soviet Union!

and 'Against NATO and the Warsaw Pact!' set the tone. There were few if any attacks on German imperialism, such as Bonn's support to the murderous Turkish junta. Quite the contrary. Increasingly, West German leftists talk about this industrial powerhouse of capitalist Europe as if it were some 'third world' American neo-colony.

More so than in other European countries, the massive West German 'peace' movement is associated with its 'own' bourgeoisie's ambitions to reconquer East Europe. The widely propagated programme for a 'reunified neutral Germany' is but a thinly veiled call for capitalist restoration in East Germany (the DDR). It was therefore especially important for our comrades of the Trotzlistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD) to emphasise defence of the Soviet bloc against Western imperialism, including against its 'pacifistic' and 'neutralist' social-democratic representatives. The TLD contingent of more than 50 at the Bonn demonstration chanted: 'Defence of the Soviet Union begins at Berlin!' One of its main banners said: 'For revolutionary reunification of Germany! Social revolution in the West, political revolution in the East!'

While official speakers hailed the Lutheran Church-inspired 'Swords into Ploughshares' 'peace' movement in East Germany, the Trotskyists carried signs proclaiming 'No disarming of the DDR!' This and other TLD slogans hailing Red Army intervention against CIA-backed reaction in Afghanistan and denouncing Solidarnosc counterrevolution in Poland drove the petty-bourgeois Europacifists into a frenzy. Nevertheless, more than 2000 supplements to the TLD's *Spartakist* with the 1st statement were distributed.

New York

As Reagan continued his tour of European capitals, 12 June saw another massive demonstration in New York, timed to coincide with the

United Nations 'Special Session on Disarmament'. Inside the UN, Menachem Begin bragged how he had 'disarmed' the PLO and Syrian army through his 'final solution' blitzkrieg into Lebanon; Pentagon spokesmen boasted of 'prevailing' in a nuclear war with the Soviets and reaffirmed their 'first strike' strategy; and the malevolent Margaret Thatcher prated about 'turning swords into ploughshares'. The Orwellian 'war is peace' scene was completed by the demonstration of three quarters of a million outside, called to support 'nuclear freeze' plans being pushed by notorious Vietnam war criminals (like Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy) from the Democratic Party.

The clear political message from the overwhelmingly middle class (and far less than one per cent black) crowd was 'Get ready for Teddy [Kennedy]' -- ie, bring back the Democrats, the party of Vietnam, Bay of Pigs ... and Hiroshima/Nagasaki. The Kennedy-sponsored campaign for a 'nuclear freeze' is the policy of imperialist circles who have only somewhat different plans for war against the Soviet Union, notably more powerful and useable, conventional military forces to face Soviet tanks. And while the reformist left from the Socialist Workers Party to the Communist Party (which now openly pimps votes for the Democrats) were simply part of the amorphous mass, an aggressive Spartacist League/US sales team sold more than 8000 pieces of Spartacist literature in New York and at a simultaneous rally in San Francisco.

There can be no detente, no 'peaceful co-existence' between Western imperialism and the Soviet-bloc bureaucratically ruled workers states. The only alternative to nuclear holocaust for mankind is proletarian revolution. What is needed to achieve this is an international party whose programme of defending past proletarian gains (centrally the Bolshevik Revolution) and struggling for their extension is key to uniting the workers of all lands against imperialist barbarism. ■



Paris, 5 June: Reagan/Mitterrand — anti-Soviet warmongers!

Le Bolchevik

American black trade

We reprint below an abridged and edited version of the presentation made by American black trade union militant Ed Kartsen at public meetings in Birmingham, Liverpool and London on the evenings of 8, 9 and 10 June. Some 135 people turned out to hear Comrade Kartsen describe the impact of Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive upon American workers and blacks and the struggles initiated by militant trade unionists and our comrades of the Spartacist League/US against all aspects of Reagan reaction as part of a perspective of mobilising US workers to bring Reagan down. Additionally listeners of Birmingham radio station BRMB heard an interview with Comrade Kartsen in which he outlined the necessity for mobilising workers in unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and for an anti-capitalist workers party in the US counterposed to the twin parties of capitalist reaction, the Democrats and Republicans.

As the brother from Britain has already stated, Reagan has come to Europe for the purpose of hardening up the NATO allies, preparing them to go on a full wartime footing, to basically calm down the people in Europe -- those who want to survive, they don't want to be blown up in nuclear war. He's basically instructing these various imperialist powers, British imperialism, French imperialism, and the rest of the European imperialisms, that they'd better get in gear with the leader of worldwide counterrevolution, and that's the United States, and they'd better understand that their class interests are with the destruction of the gains of the workers in the USSR.



Greensboro massacre, November 1979: KKK/Nazis murdered blacks, leftists.

What I want to talk about is primarily what this Reagan policy means to the American working class -- the tasks of the American working class to stop this warmonger. I want to start with firstly, that Reagan over the past year has gone on a pretty sharp campaign of reaction against organised labour in the United States. One of his first tasks was to do something that was unprecedented as far as repression against the working class ever since the pre-CIO days. That is, he destroyed a union, the air traffic controllers union.

Ronald Reagan decertified the union and fired all its members. And he even subjected some of its members to state harassment. Some of their families were harassed by the FBI. Some were blackballed -- that is they were prevented from getting other jobs. The FBI used to do this in the 1950s against Communist Party members calling up the employers and telling them you're hiring an undesirable to the American government and you shouldn't do so. He intervened as the open representative, as the personal rep-

representative of the interests of the bourgeoisie to set a precedent for every contract that was going to be negotiated with the municipal unions throughout the United States. If organised labour dares to resist the government organised labour will be smashed!

Bosses' austerity means workers murdered

I'm a member of the transport workers union in New York. It used to be one of the most powerful unions in the United States. In 1965 there was a successful strike which resulted in the transport workers getting one of the highest pay rates of any workers throughout the country. But the union today is no longer in the situation it was in the past. The various gains that the working class have won have been hacked to pieces.

And the example that stands out most vividly in my mind was a black motorman by the name of Jesse Cole, who was driving a train in one of the most dangerous, elevated transport lines in New York City, and there was basically a disabled safety system -- management incompetence. He was instructed to bypass all safety on the system, the red lights and so on, on the train. And coming into a tunnel round a curve, he smashed into a train ahead of him, and as he was bleeding to death in the cab, the manager of the entire metropolitan transit authority, Simpson, was organising a news conference to explain why it was the motorman's fault that this accident had occurred. This while the man's bleeding to death.

This was one of the first campaigns that I, along with some of my fellow transit workers, went on. With the support of the Spartacist League, we attempted to get our whole union and close down the entire system in order to protest the conditions of safety, and put this union back on its feet as a fighting union.

When I ran in the union as candidate for president, unsuccessfully, I ran not just particularly for trade union issues though. The fight for a strike is inseparable from the fight in New York City in particular against the massive control of the funds for transit and for all municipal services by capitalism, by big capital, the banks, Wall Street. So I ran on a programme of calling for the smashing of the [anti-strike] Taylor Law, demanding we will not pay with our lives like Jesse Cole.

We raised the issue of Sydenham Hospital, the hospital that Mayor Koch closed down, closed down the emergency facilities. And this is very significant for Harlem, one of the biggest New York ghettos, because it's the only place that poor blacks can get free emergency medical treatment. We want to make that link to the black community, we want to make the link between our struggle and the struggle of the mass of unemployed blacks. And we demanded that labour take political action against the entire Reagan counter-offensive against labour, that labour has to mobilise to bring down Reagan and, concretely I guess for you in this country, not a Labour Party but a revolutionary workers party that will bring down the system of exploitation, and one that will establish a government of the working class.

Because of the crisis of American capitalism, because of the forces working within American capitalist society, there are now big blocks on the streets of Detroit of empty factories, some of which are being torn down. And auto used to be the American industry. And what it's doing is dumping tens of thousands of black workers out on to the streets. Those black workers are des-



For labour bring down



Detroit, 10 November 1979: Militant car workers say: Klan won't ride in the

parate. And the American government knows it. That's reflected by the fact that there are various fascist organisations in the Midwest cropping up and their targets are those blacks.

Greensboro was an example where they allowed the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi Party, and I say allowed because there were FBI agents, known federal agents in the cars where the Ku Klux Klan emerged from with automatic and semi-automatic weapons, and on video-tape shot into the chests and the heads of various leftists, trade union organisers, civil rights workers, leftists and blacks who were marching in the streets of Greensboro, North Carolina. They got away scot-free, absolutely scot-free.

Black/labour protests stop Nazis/KKK

So Reagan's reaction is having more than just the effect of smashing back the labour movement, although that's one of the most disturbing facts because the labour movement is the fist that can reverse it. But Reagan's reaction is stimulating also a tremendous growth in Ku Klux Klan terror, a growth in Nazi terror, a fattening of the



Washington, 27 March: Spartacist League/US demanded military victory of Salvadoran left against Reagan's junta death squads.

Workers Vanguard

de unionist on tour



Spartacist Britain

action to down Reagan!



in the Motor City!

Workers Vanguard

ranks of these fascist organisations, and posing a serious threat, a very serious threat to both labour as well as blacks and all other minorities in the United States. Black people in the United States, as a matter of fact, view Reagan as something like a Klansman in the White House.

For that reason, black people didn't shed many tears for Reagan's pro-Solidarnosc campaign, that's his campaign to support that Polish company union in Poland. Reagan, the man who embraced South Africa, who took Haitians who were trying to escape from the dictatorship in Haiti (and it's a pretty vicious and savage one -- they hang people on the streets and mutilate them in all kinds of strange ways) across shark-infested waters, he took those people and put them in one of the coldest spots in the United States last winter under concentration camp conditions. This man was calling for the right of the oppressed and exploited masses in Poland to enjoy freedom and justice through labour organisation! Well the workers didn't go for it and the blacks didn't go for it either. They saw the pictures of these Polish Solidarnosc protesters on TV and they knew that they were fed a

lot better than the blacks in the ghettos, they knew that more black people were shot down just by police terror in the United States than by the crackdown in Poland.

There are people in the States, workers and leftists, who will not tolerate the existence of the Nazis and the Klan carrying the campaign of racist reaction further and further and further towards the destruction of blacks and the labour movement. After Greensboro, North Carolina where those militants were blown to pieces by the Klan, a Nazi group out in Detroit wanted to go on November 10th (1979) to down-town Detroit, as I say a black industrial city, and celebrate the massacre that occurred in Greensboro. So I, along with the Spartacist League, which was the only group that initiated this protest, wanted to be on the same spot as those Nazis were and make sure that it didn't happen.

Fortunately it was preceded by a campaign that was going on inside the River Rouge plant, which is a massive auto plant in Detroit which employs something like six thousand workers, predominantly black, where a white foreman came in with a Ku Klux Klan hood on, and militants in that plant organised a petition campaign that successfully got him driven out. That political victory was a precursor that resulted in laying the basis for a campaign to make sure that the Nazis were not able to come right back from this Greensboro massacre to a major industrial city, predominantly black, and celebrate this victory, which would have been a devastating defeat for the entire working class in America.

The mayor of the city happens to be black and Democratic. And this black Democrat was supposed to be a great leader of black people to show you that things really have changed in the United States. Well, this black mayor took the position that anybody who wanted to come to the same place that the Klan was going to protest was going to be arrested.

More recently [in 1980] there was another incident in San Francisco where the Nazis were going to celebrate Hitler's birthday. The April 19th Coalition to Stop the Nazis was set up, once again it was initiated by the Spartacists on the West Coast. And this one resulted in something like 1200 trade unionists and leftists coming out to stop the Nazis from demonstrating.

And, of course, Ann Arbor, on March 20th, this year, when the Nazis were going to come out for Kill Commies, Support Reagan's Policy in El Salvador, there was again a Spartacist-initiated contingent. This time, the liberals, instead of saying 'You won't demonstrate', said 'We're going to have a counterdemonstration calling for ignoring the Nazis.'

It turned out that there were at least about two thousand on the same spot in front of the city hall where the Nazis said they were going to come. And they came by in their cars, and they saw what was going on, and they drove off to the ignore the Nazis demonstration. It was fortunate that sections of our demonstration broke off and went over there and drove those little Hitler-lovers out of town under a hail of stones.

Class-struggle leadership needed

So it is possible, it has been proven, it has been shown that labour can reverse the trend of reaction, in America and in every other country around the world, if there is a correct leadership, if it is mobilised and organised in an effective way. On September 19 of this past year the AFL-CIO called a demonstration down in Washington to protest Reagan's treatment of the PATCO workers. This demonstration was to show a token force to threaten Reagan with the possibility that labour was going to resist his decertification and destruction of that union.

The leadership of that demonstration did not lead that demonstration and do what it had the capacity of doing, that is closing down Washington in protest at what occurred to PATCO, the destruction of that union. If there was a group of militants and revolutionaries of at least a thousand, it might have brought maybe two hundred thousand to such a demonstration, and the demonstration would have been far different from what it was. The labour bureaucracy didn't want that to happen. In fact, since that demonstration they have done absolutely nothing to resist what Reagan is doing. But half a million workers showed up, and that's without the militant trade union movement of Detroit which they didn't mobilise. They sent out only a few buses because they were afraid if all those hundreds of thou-

sands of black workers came, that they might change the character of the demonstration.

So labour is looking for an alternative. Labour needs to go on an effort to defend its unions, defend its organisations. And in America, labour has to go on an effort to defend the workers states, particularly the Soviet Union, because the United States is going on this massive drive against labour not only because of the contradictions of its own system, but also because it is attempting to cut out of the hide of labour the necessary monies in order to build that, something like 2.3 or 2.7 trillion-dollar, military buildup against the USSR.

And by the way my election campaign talked about that. There are a lot of workers, of course, in the United States who are anti-communist. But that does not and cannot prevent labour militants from confronting the fact that unless the Russian question, the question of the



PATCO strikers at head of 19 September mass labour protest.

defence of the workers' gains in the USSR is dealt with, there is no pretence of being for the rights of labour. Of course, when it comes down to it an imperialist war will mean the growth of fascism to the point where, like in Nazi Germany, it will be necessary to pound the proletariat to a pulp in order to permit the United States to go to war. And that's why the Nazis come out for Kill Commies. The Nazis say smash the October Revolution, kill Commies, kill blacks, smash the unions, forward to slave labour, forward to the age of feudalism, let's go backwards. They base their ideology on ruling under those conditions.

But the workers can have an alternative, they can have an alternative future, in crushing the fascists, in seeing that the interests of the American working class, the working class in Europe, are those to overthrow capitalist exploitation. In Russia that means that the job of the working class is to throw the Soviet bureaucracy out of power which is an obstacle to the defence of the gains of the October Revolution as well. And in the imperialist countries it is the job of the working classes to defend those gains unconditionally as the workers fight to achieve power in their own country. The main enemy in America is Reagan, the American bourgeoisie; the main enemy for the British working class is the British bourgeoisie. And all of us have to unite around the defence of the gains of the workers in our countries and in defence of the workers internationally. ■



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CPUSA says: Vote capitalist

The Communist Party USA has little to speak for it except that it takes pride of place in the 'world Communist movement' as the Kremlin bureaucracy's lapdog and mouthpiece, a trusted conduit in the English-speaking world for the Moscow line. This has earned CPUSA general secretary Gus Hall a misplaced reputation among pro-Soviet oppositionists in the CPGB as a 'Marxist-Leninist ideologue'. In particular, Hall's latest anti-Eurocommunist tract, 'Marxism-Leninism in the World Struggle Against Opportunism', is currently making the rounds in the CPGB as a weapon against the 'Euro'-leaning party leadership. In attacking the anti-Sovietism of the Italian and Spanish parties, Hall warns against the 'concept that the capitalist class is not necessarily your enemy' and traces a 'logical sequence of developments ... from small acts of ingratiating accommodation to the enemy to complete capitulation, collaboration, and betrayal of working class interests.'

Ah, but that's Italy and Spain! At home, Hall recently laid down a 'tactical shift' for the party in a report to a December 1981 central committee meeting (subsequently reprinted under the title *What the Reds Say Today*) calling for general electoral support to the openly capitalist Democratic Party of Jimmy ('ethnic purity') Carter of Afghan 'freedom-fighting' fame. Where a 'Right-wing reactionary, racist Reaganite' is on the ballot, 'if a bourgeois politician who is running against him/her is not "evil," we must give support, critical support or outright wholehearted support -- whatever is necessary -- to achieve our overall goal.' As for the CP running candidates in its own name, 'We must be careful not to appear in any way to be dividing the unity against the Reagan forces.' So anywhere anyone slightly to the left of a Reaganite is running, forget it.

Apparently Hall has run into some resistance from the CP ranks over this 'tactical shift' towards wholesale capitulation to the Democratic

Party. Certainly many of the black youth who joined the CP's Young Workers Liberation League didn't do so just to pressure the party of Tom Metzger, Southern California KKK grand dragon and Democratic Party candidate for congress in Orange County, to 'ban the Klan'. At an 'extraordinary conference' held in Milwaukee in late April, attended by 1500 CP delegates and supporters Hall recognised in his main report that, 'Some comrades have interpreted the tactical shift to mean that we give up the fight for Communist candidates or any participation of the Party in its own name.' And Hall had to polemicise against those who had 'drawn the wrong conclusion that for the time being we will put the campaign for political independence in moth balls....' The general secretary had certainly not forgotten that in 1972 a chunk of his central committee had voted for McGovern instead of the party's own presidential candidate!

But Hall is right about one thing -- the CP's 'tactical shift' is just that, a small adjustment in the CP's long-standing strategy of subordinating the working class politically to the bourgeoisie. Stalin's Popular Front, tying the workers to the 'progressive' bourgeoisie, was launched in the US with the 1936 presidential campaign, when CP leader Earl Browder ran a token candidacy while giving Roosevelt backhanded support by attacking only the Republicans. So in the period of militant strike waves which built the CIO, the CP helped lead the union movement into the dead end of the Democratic Party. The reward was world imperialist war (in which the CP hailed the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki!), followed by vicious Cold War reaction and McCarthyite witchhunts, Taft-Hartley strikebreaking, all courtesy of the Democrats.

Despite the wishful thinking of Gus Hall (and Brezhnev), there is a *bipartisan* imperialist consensus to slash social programmes in order to finance a massive arms buildup for war with the Soviet Union. This consensus was especially

highlighted by the avid support of *all* wings of US bourgeois opinion for the Polish anti-Communist 'free trade union', Solidarnosc. When the Polish government moved against the counter-revolutionary threat last December, Teddy Kennedy denounced Reagan for not immediately responding with economic sanctions against Poland and the USSR. This is the same 'progressive' that the Stalinists would like to put in the White House in 1984.

The CPUSA's one-sided 'popular front' with the Democrats represents something more than its own opportunist appetites. It also expresses the CP's ties to the conservative, nationalistic bureaucracy which rules the Soviet Union. This parasitic caste governing from the Kremlin has long since abandoned international proletarian revolution (which indeed it fears more than imperialist militarism) for the illusion of 'socialism in one country'. Instead they seek deals with one or another sector of the imperialist bourgeoisie, in a hapless quest for some 'peace-loving' wing of the American ruling class to support detente. In Britain, it is attenuated through support to the Labour Party, including even *Straight Left's* support to Michael Foot as party leader. In the US, it means support to the openly capitalist Democrats, who are no less racist, no less anti-Communist, no less anti-Soviet warmongers than the Republicans.

The CPUSA has now abandoned even the pretence of working-class independence to support the liberal wing of US imperialist militarism -- the Kennedys and McGeorge Bundys. Unable to mount any effective resistance to the Cold War offensive, the CP must simply retreat before it. Today it is only the Trotskyist Spartacist League/US that carries the communist banner of defence of the Soviet Union and independent working-class mobilisation against *all* wings of US imperialism, against the war criminals of Dresden, Hiroshima, Bay of Pigs, Vietnam and El Salvador. Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No 307, 11 June 1982

'Our boys'...

(Continued from page 2)

withdrawal have in the context of a war which is reactionary on both sides? In certain conditions it *can* have a revolutionary content. In Germany in 1918 it would have been an excellent slogan, feeding as it would into the revolutionary sentiments of war-weary workers and soldiers, bringing armed detachments to the side of a working class in the throes of an uprising against the German bourgeoisie. For Leninists the raising of such slogans in wartime must be an expression of the strategic task of transforming the war into a mobilisation for proletarian state power -- to paraphrase Lenin, to ensure that a war started between governments culminates in a class war aimed at the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

But during the Falklands war the call to 'Withdraw the fleet' was simply a call to 'end the war', for a 'democratic peace'. This was graphically underscored by the Labour left/Communist Party march organisers' attempts (albeit unsuccessful) in both Sheffield and London to exclude revolutionary-defeatist and pro-Argentine slogans from their 'Peace in the Falklands' marches. WP claim in their paper (June 1982) that the slogan 'The main enemy is at home!', raised throughout the war by the Spartacist League, is 'vacuous' (though a month earlier WP themselves touted the slogan as a central demand in their paper!). But this call, first raised by Lenin and Karl Liebknecht in World War I, in fact encapsulates the *revolutionary-defeatist* opposition to imperialist war and to vacuous calls for 'peace'.

It was not only against the social-chauvinists of the Militant type, best exemplified in World War I by the likes of Kautsky and Plekhanov, that Lenin waged his sharp political struggle. The right and centre of the Zimmerwald antiwar movement consisted of types very similar to the *Socialist Challenge/Socialist Organiser/Workers Power* spectrum, who were for revolution in words but saw as the main order of the day the building of a broad movement for a 'democratic peace'. Lenin's scathing attack on those (like Trotsky at the time) who 'defend -- in opposition to us -- the peace slogan, alleging among other things that "all Left-wingers" have united for the purpose of "action" under this very slogan', applies word for word to the centrists today ('The "Peace" Slogan Appraised',

1915). Trotsky later came over to Lenin on this question (as he did on the integrally connected question of the revolutionary party) and successfully fought for the realisation of Lenin's revolutionary perspective in 1917. But Trotsky's supposed 'followers' can only trample on this tradition.

War is a litmus test for ostensible revolutionaries. In the Falklands war, only the Spartacist League pursued a Leninist-Trotskyist strategy of revolutionary defeatism on both sides, refusing to capitulate either to social-chauvinism or social-pacifism and parallel illusions in the reactionary junta in Buenos Aires. We pointed out that it was a good thing that two of US imperialism's most loyal anti-Communist allies were at each other's throats, since this could only weaken the imperialist anti-Soviet war crusade. And as we said in a leaflet distributed

to a 23 May national demonstration in London:

'For the British ruling class, the Tory government's military adventure in the South Atlantic is an attempt to resuscitate the bloodsoaked heritage of the once mighty Empire. For British workers it must be seen as an opportunity to bring down this viciously anti-working-class government and open the road to destroying every last vestige of Britain's brutal colonial history through workers revolution. War creates misery, but it also leads to dislocation and social unrest creating the possibility of revolutionary upheavals, as the Russian workers showed in 1917. That is why the communists of the Spartacist League (SL) say: *The main enemy is at home! Let this war be Thatcher's downfall!*' ■



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YCLers won to Trotskyism

Printed below is an interview with two young black comrades, Norris and Krishan, who recently resigned from the Young Communist League (YCL) to join the Spartacist League (SL). Originally attracted to the YCL by its communist pretensions they were disillusioned by the YCL's support for counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc and belief that socialism could be legislated peacefully via the brutally racist British state.

In their letter of resignation from the YCL the comrades outlined how through discussion with the SL they had been won to the Trotskyist programme of unconditional defence of the degenerated/deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution and for political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies. And they pointed to how Lenin in his 'State and Revolution' rejected the reformist notion of the peaceful transformation of the capitalist state, whilst at the same time being an intransigent opponent of bourgeois 'peace' movements akin to the Communist Party/YCL-backed Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

We welcome these two comrades into our ranks and would urge all YCL members to take note of Norris and Krishan's parting shot in their resignation letter to the YCL: 'We say that everyone who is serious about wanting to make a revolution should do the same as us and discuss with the Spartacist League.'

Spartacist Britain: Why don't you outline some of the things that got you first interested in socialist ideas.

Norris: Well it started back in the Sixth Form. We did these lessons on the Cold War. (Well, to the teacher, it seemed like a lesson, but to me it seemed like a reality.) When the Americans had the A-bomb and were waving it over the Soviet Union, saying 'if you don't stay in line, we're going to nuke you!', it made me think. So I began to look around asking certain questions.

Krishan: Well I was always kind of political, and I used to support the Labour Party, but as I got more interested in Marxism, which I got from reading history books, I turned away from the Labour Party because they kept to the same old system, just Toryism with a more left wing outlook. So I got interested in Communism. I was born in this country, but I didn't consider myself British. But I didn't consider myself Indian because I was born in this country, so I was kind of torn between two cultures -- so the only alternative was internationalism.

Spartacist Britain: What did the YCL have to say about the Cold War?

Norris: The only answer for the people in the YCL and the CP to the Cold War is to join this CND movement... CND did not take a side in defending the workers states. This guy Lech Walesa, people looked at him as on the side of freedom, freeing Poland from the Communists -- they did not say Stalinists, but the Communists, Communism. I met the SL. They told me that political revolution was needed in Poland because the Stalinists created this problem, so the Stalinists for their part make this movement to come about and should be ousted and workers soviets should be created instead of the Stalinist bureaucracy which created this monster, Solidarnosc. Well the YCL/CP said that countries in the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union are socialist but they end up supporting a movement which admittedly states that they're anti-communist and nationalist, which wants to restore capitalism back in the Eastern bloc.

Spartacist Britain: What made you look to other politics than the YCL's?

Krishan: There were quite a lot of reasons. Mainly it was three or four basic questions which were CND, Poland, Afghanistan and the Russian question. I supported CND because I thought that was the only way to have world peace and have a better society but they never used to tell you what Lenin thought of CND -- well, not CND, but pacifism. But Lenin never believed in pacifism, he used to believe in establishing socialism first and only then can the workers discard their arms. But this wasn't the attitude of the Communist Party which totally believed in CND which was Euro-nationalist and supported any kind of movement which was 'peaceful' and coincided with their 'peaceful co-existence'.

Spartacist Britain: What has been your experience with racism and fascism living in Britain and how did the YCL deal with the question.

Krishan: Well, I'm from Handsworth, and most of the people who live in Handsworth are from a

an alternative to the programme of the YCL?

Krishan: In the YCL, we were told all these Trotskyites were trouble-makers. But talking to one of the SL members made me realise that Spartacist politics were the only alternative and that made me think about the State especially. Comparing the 'British Road to Socialism' and Trotskyist politics, it can easily be seen that it's the Spartacist League that are the really revolutionary alternative. A good example of today is Chile when a left-wing government came to power and they openly collaborated with the bourgeoisie, and they didn't repress the bourgeois state, they just let it alone, and when the coup from the CIA-backed forces came along they totally smashed the workers, the government there, and that was a big setback for the international working class. And in El Salvador the Stalinists and other similar organisations call for a political solution, which they also consider a military solution as well, a political solution which means collaboration with the 'left-wing' elements of the ruling



CP/YCL politics: pacifism, British chauvinism. Only one place for Leninists -- the Spartacist League.

minority background. But it was mainly racism within Handsworth that affected me, racism between the West Indians and Indians, and between Indians and Pakistanis, that got me. But I really didn't like that, I always had an internationalist kind of outlook. When you ventured outside of Handsworth, you saw all these swastikas on the wall and you realised that you were in a minority situation and some people hated you and they wanted to kill you or something like that. And then you began to hear about all these other organisations which opposed racism, like the Anti-Nazi League.

Norris: The Anti-Nazi League was this big movement back in 1978 in our school, right? I mean, everyone had Anti-Nazi League badges, 'Rock Against Racism'. Now the Anti-Nazi League said they were dedicated to smashing fascism but they had a popular front programme with liberals and the Church. Well, they failed. I mean they failed in not acquainting the fascists with the

Spartacist Britain: What convinced you then that the revolutionary Trotskyism of the SL was

junta there.

Norris: My first encounter with Trotskyism was when I read 'The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited'. The main interest which appealed to me was the popular front issue. When I went to London for the El Salvador demonstration, the SL said Vietnam was a victory, and the YCL chanted their anti-American slogans backed up by the IMG which said 'No more Vietnams'. And I thought that the IMG were 'anti-Stalinist' when they supported counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc, but they supported peaceful coexistence, the line of the Stalinists, peaceful coexistence in El Salvador, for a political solution in El Salvador.

Life is tough in Britain and world-wide. Look at the SL and our programme and see what we've got for the working class internationally. I don't like war. I want class war against the British state. I want to fight for the defence of the Soviet Union and the working class internationally. That's why I joined the Spartacist League. And that's why I think everybody should do the same. ■

Stop witchhunt...

(Continued from page 1)

'Labour's Cold War', *Spartacist Britain* no 41, April 1982). Now that division is again bubbling to the surface, threatening to tear the Labour Party apart.

In themselves Militant pose no real challenge to the right wing. Far from the dreaded 'Trotskyist' infiltrators conjured up by the bourgeois press, Militant are an organic and cretinously loyal part of British social democracy, and have been for a very long time. Often their politics stand to the right of Benn's (for example on the Falklands war, see article page 2). Militant's response to the witchhunt threat expresses only their determination to remain part of the Labour Party. Editor Peter Taaffe stated that he was sure they could comply with the NEC ruling, while a *Militant* editorial attacked the right for plunging 'the party into a nightmare civil war,

making a gift of the next election to the Tories and their allies in the SDP' (25 June).

In the past organisations accused of the crime of 'Trotskyism' have managed to weather proscription attacks. Gerry Healy's group, the 'Club', survived first the banning of *Socialist Fellowship* in 1951 and then the proscription of the newspaper *Socialist Outlook* in 1954 -- in the latter case by going on to sell *Tribune!* But today, with the world moving inexorably towards anti-Soviet World War III, with British capitalism in terminal decline, the right have no choice but to drive for the complete emasculation of the left. Militant may wish that life could go on in the same old way but reality is somewhat harsher.

Trotskyists carrying out an entry tactic into a reformist party would understand that the leadership will move against them sooner rather than later. Under such circumstances it is obviously correct to resist the attack -- but not to do as Militant are doing, defending the

integrity of a party committed since its formation to the interests of the blood-soaked British imperialist bourgeoisie. A Trotskyist entry would be aimed at a sharp programmatic split, posing a revolutionary challenge to all wings of the reformist leadership -- and our tactics would be accordingly informed. Militant's cringing appeal based on allegiance to these loyal lieutenants of the bourgeoisie within the labour movement is graphic evidence of its own reformism.

However, should the left-reformist Benn stick by his words and fight the right's purge attempt, it could well climax in the long-simmering split between the wretchedly NATO-loyal Healey wing and the 'little Englanders'. Trotskyists could only welcome such a split, driving the CIA-lovers out and placing Benn in a position where his left-reformist politics could be more effectively exposed before advanced workers. This could open up important opportunities for genuine Trotskyists to break away a section of Benn's mass base. Stop the witchhunt! Drive out the right!

Class war...

(Continued from page 1)

railmen went out on 28 June, NUR leader Sid Weighell (who proclaimed his opposition to the strike from the start) announced they were going back to seek an arbitrated settlement. Weighell has bent over backwards to satisfy his British Rail paymasters at the expense of his members' jobs. But the Tories have been hardlining it -- part of their longstanding project of 'rationalisation' of the public sector and in particular winding down BR in favour of increased road haulage. Railwaymen are the current target in the government's scheme to break the back of the union movement by picking off one sector at a time. As one NUR official put it as the abortive strike began: 'If we're going to the wall in any case ... we have nothing to lose in fighting.' And a lot to gain! But a fight needs an all-out strike -- and railwaymen like all British workers need a strategy to break the dead hand of Labour/trade union bureaucrat parliamentary reformism and betrayal that has led and is leading ever further towards disaster.

For all-out strike action!

The *Economist* (19 June) mused at the prospect of a series of strikes facing the returning 'conquerors of Port Stanley': 'Britain is still some way from being a land fit for heroes.' Too true, though not in the sense intended by this Tory mouthpiece. The 'liberation' of the Falklands won't put meat on the table or bring jobs to Merseyside. The unemployment which lay behind the inner-city social explosions in last year's 'long hot summer' has long since topped the once awe-inspiring three million figure and shows no sign of abating.

A sense of fight is in the air. This, despite a decade of virtually uninterrupted depression heaped atop long-term structural decay; despite five years of a treacherous and demoralising Labour government followed by three years of Thatcher rampage. And the 'strategy' of the TUC and Labour misleaders is to again dissipate it. Where a class explosion is needed, they offer one-day strikes and one-off isolated actions. Thus they sold out the steel strike two years ago to narrowly avert a possible general strike and have contained the class struggle since, with few exceptions, in small localised strikes.

In their mouths, the proud word 'solidarity' is prostituted to mean: 'We'll work while you strike; we'll eat while you starve.' The union chiefs' myopic defence of narrow sectional interests -- a vestige of craft divisions born of Britain's early capitalist development -- today means no defence at all. So Weighell's NUR stabs ASLEF in the back over flexible rostering; then left-talking Ray Buckton's ASLEF works (passively waiting to be laid off) while the NUR strikes alone. NUM president Arthur Scargill declares his 'solidarity' with everybody under the sun. But what does he do about it? The best sort of solidarity Scargill & Co could offer the ranks of rail and health workers (as well as their own members) is to lead them in a united front of solid strike action. Weighell's forced march to arbitration makes that possibility more distant. But the perspective of a classwide struggle that stops short of nothing -- up to and including a general strike -- is what is desperately needed today.

The questions confronting workers far transcend craft lines and union boundaries: flexible rostering in BR and pit closures in the mines both mean redundancies; the 5 per cent being offered rail workers and the 6 per cent put to the health workers both mean yet another cut in real wages. And the Tebbit bill threatens the very right of every union to organise and strike.

If these attacks are to be taken on and defeated they require a unified fight around demands which can not only reverse the attacks but win allies to the side of the working class and provide the motor force for an offensive against the bourgeoisie. That means a fight to reverse the cuts in social welfare and social services. It means a fight against the Tebbit bill and the Prior Act of two years ago through a lot more than the hot air and unfulfilled promises that have been forthcoming from the trade union bureaucracy thus far.

And central to any struggle right now is the fight for jobs. Is there a worker who does not feel threatened by being tossed onto the dole queue? Weighell's willingness to bargain away jobs for a 5 per cent 'rise' in wages points to the utter incapacity of the bureaucracy to defend either jobs or living standards. Throughout the country the cities are populated with school leavers who never expect to see a redundancy notice because they never expect to find a job. If they are not pulled in behind a generalised

trade union struggle for worksharing on full pay they remain a stagnant recruiting pool for future fascist strikebreaking gangs.

But all this comes down to the question of leadership -- to the question of how one can possibly win *anything* real in Britain today. Pointing to the possibility of a major industrial confrontation, the *Observer* (27 June) noted the 'mood of anger and frustration with Mrs Thatcher's Government and its wages policy towards the public sector', then hit on the central problem:

'But the outcome of such a crisis looks most unlikely to please the unions. If the Prime Minister decided to call an early general election, she could expect a famous victory and the annihilation of the Labour Party as the ally of the unions.'

For a revolutionary leadership!

Ever since Margaret Thatcher entered Downing Street three years ago, the labour movement misleaders have counselled caution in struggle and advised a strategy of waiting to elect a new Labour government in 1984. For the left (and the fake-revolutionary 'far left') it was enough to add that this must be a Labour government 'with socialist policies'. This 'strategy' has always been a dead end. Today with Labour in complete disarray (and with the left on the defensive) while the Tories ride the crest of the Falklands wave to unprecedented electoral popularity, it is *utterly, visibly* so. No-one can now believe that a new Labour government (let alone a 'socialist' one) is around the corner, if only we moderate our struggles and channel them towards a parliamentary 'solution'.

The programme of Labour in office, given the terminal decline of British capital, could differ from Thatcher's only in detail, not in substance. Nor do the autarkic utopian fantasies of a Benn offer a way out. But the chief problem with the Labourite nostrums is that they offer only a road to disaster *today*.

We do not expect of Benn and Scargill a revolutionary, a Trotskyist perspective for class struggle aimed at seizing state power through workers revolution. But they *said* they were against Thatcher's war; they *say* they are for a political struggle against the Tories. Why don't they act on that? Why don't they appeal to the ranks of railwaymen, health workers and miners for immediate joint strike action against their common attacks and common enemy? Why don't they break from at least the CIA-loving, NATO-loyal, coalitionist right wing of the Labour Party with whom they are locked in combat? That would not only provide a limited defence of the working class against the capitalists, but prepare the way for a further, revolutionary mobilisation and a far deeper and more significant split in the Labour Party away from all variants of pro-capitalist reformism.

Benn and Scargill won't do that -- because they are wedded to Labourite parliamentary reformism which subordinates the class struggle to the goal of placing Labour in office. Their pacifism is attuned to the 'national interest'; their socialism contained by the sham of bourgeois democracy; and thus no less than the open flag-wavers they stand for defence of the bourgeois order and its wars, misery and exploitation.

The jingoism around the Falklands war provided only a foretaste of the imperialists' preparations for the real war that is looming -- against the Soviet degenerated workers state. There is not an awful lot of time left to construct the only sort of leadership within the working class that can defend the workers on a day-to-day basis, a revolutionary leadership which will prosecute the class war against the capitalists until their class is defeated, disarmed and destroyed. Stop the sabotage -- all-out strike action to defeat the Tory attacks! Bury the 'Falklands factor'! Only class war can sink Thatcher! ■

Israel...

(Continued from page 12)

Bekka Valley.

US imperialist spokesmen have suddenly become Lebanese nationalists (there aren't any in Leb-

Notice

The June issue of *Spartacist Britain* did not appear. Instead we published a special free supplement for distribution to the anti-Reagan demonstrations which we are sending to all subscribers. As well, of course, all subscriptions will be extended to include 10 issues.

anon) demanding the withdrawal of all 'foreign' troops.

But there is a fundamental difference between the Syrian and Israeli armies in Lebanon, though both are oppressors and murderers of the peoples of Lebanon. Lebanon is *not* a nation separate and distinct from Syria, but a collection of religious-ethnic fiefdoms sharing a common ethnic makeup with Syria. Syria occupied Lebanon in 1975 because it feared that the Sunni Muslim rebellion against Maronite domination would spill over into Syria and inflame their own restive Sunni majority that is politically dominated by a much smaller Muslim Alawite sect. The Syrians in Lebanon are no more a 'foreign' army than the Maronite Phalange. Lebanon and Syria have been for centuries a common historical entity, united by language, culture and ethnic makeup.

Lebanon is a creation of imperialist divide and rule policy. At the 1919 Versailles conference the French colonialists carved out this artificial entity in the Levant in order to have a mandate territory which they could dominate through the pro-French Maronites. The role of the Ba'athist Syrian army in Lebanon, which in 1976 killed hundreds of Palestinians at the siege of Tel Zaatar (to the cheering of the Zionists) is not fundamentally different from its role in Syria where it levelled its third-largest city, Hama, and massacred countless thousands. In both Syria and Lebanon the Ba'athist army is an instrument for bloody class repression. But the Israeli occupation of Lebanon is in addition the occupation of a *foreign* and *colonialist* armed force. It is a murderous violation of the right to self-determination of the peoples of Lebanon, especially for the Palestinians who are clearly marked for genocide.

On the other hand the call for 'withdrawal' of the PLO is a grotesque parody of Zionist genocidal aspirations. Almost the entire Palestinian population in Lebanon has lived there for the last 35 years since they were driven into the *Palestinian diaspora* by Zionist terror, the forced population transfer imposed upon the Palestinian nation through the creation of the Zionist state. To call for the 'withdrawal' of the PLO, which the overwhelming majority of Palestinians support, is to call on the US-equipped and backed Israeli armed forces to realise their mission of driving the Palestinians into the sea. As for the UN troops who have served as (one-way) border guards for Zionist expansion, they should be removed not only from southern Lebanon but from the entire Levant. More significantly, we demand the removal of the multinational 'peacekeeping' force in the Sinai which under the cover of Camp David has led to the direct introduction of US imperialist armed forces and bases in the region.

For a communist federation of the Near East

Only yesterday Israel was the 'promised land' of Western social democrats and liberals where young, healthy kibbutzniks turned deserts into gardens and right-wing fanatics like Begin and Sharon existed on the fringe of Zionist society. As for the Arabs, the CIA-bribed scribblers of *Dissent* would exclaim, aren't they better off under the 'democratic' and pro-Western rule of the Ben Gurions and Golda Meirs than under the feudal despotisms and military dictatorships of the Arab League? Indeed, Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, even if they are second-class citizens, have more democratic rights and on average a higher living standard than the Arab population of every Arab country. Even the 100,000 West Bank Palestinians who migrate daily to work as super-exploited labour in Israel's sweatshops and service industries receive higher wages than in any Arab lands except a few Persian Gulf oil sheikdoms.

Of course, this has always been the argument for colonialism and imperialism. That Rhodesia's blacks had the highest standard of living in black Africa, with the possible exception of South Africa, always was the supreme defence of the white colonialists. But black liberation in southern Africa can be won only through breaking the chains of colonialism, white supremacy, apartheid and super-exploitation.

The dynamic of Zionist expansionism has indeed produced a Rhodesian white-supremacist or South African apartheid mentality and a growing, though still limited, corresponding economic structure. Arab labour, especially from the occupied Gaza and West Bank, represents a vast reservoir of super-exploited labour below a relatively privileged Hebrew-speaking working class (itself divided between the European-derived Ashkenazi and the less privileged Sephardic Jews from North Africa and the Arab East). Some years ago in an interview with *Workers Vanguard* the well-known Israeli civil libertar-

Workers Power apologise

We reprint below a public statement by the Spartacist League, dated 19 May, and a letter of apology from Workers Power, dated 20 May, regarding an assault of potentially fatal consequence against one of our comrades. The statements speak for themselves on the facts of the incident.

Whatever drove the generally abrasive and male-chauvinist Hassell -- a national leader of Workers Power and a rightist even within their centrist political framework -- to initiate the disruption and his seemingly faithful acolyte Ward to carry out its logic, the incident is symptomatic of a far broader phenomenon. It was preceded by a series of exclusions from publicly advertised Workers Power meetings. Exclusionism is soft-core violence, an attempt to suppress political exposure through organisational methods. More generally, we have marked in our fake-revolutionary opponents an increasing disorientation and political instability. Their programmatic incapacity in the face of an ever-present drive towards imperialist anti-Soviet war and the shooting war in the South Atlantic, leads them to appease the pacifists and reformists on their right flank, and to flail out against the Trotskyist SL on their left. Exclusionism from the SWP; cop-baiting, cop-calling (!) and even a provocative and seemingly irrational assault on one of our demonstration contingents from the IMG; and, most recently, an *explicitly political* exclusion by the erstwhile academicist RCP at a 19 June public day school in Sheffield.

This incident should serve to underscore two points: firstly, charges of Spartacist 'disruption' are cynically spurious attempts to justify attacks on us. Secondly, we can defend our programme politically as the only way forward for the proletariat, we will defend workers democracy, and we will defend the security of our organisation and the cadre of a future mass Bolshevik party.

Spartacist League statement

At a Spartacist League (SL) public meeting on Tuesday 18 May, held in the Red Deer pub, Pitt Street, Sheffield, two leading members of the local branch of Workers Power (WP), Keith Hassell and Helen Ward, provocatively and deliberately disrupted the orderly conduct of the

meeting. In the process Ward launched a completely unprovoked bloody assault on SL steward Alastair Green, smashing a beer glass into Green's head. Green was taken to hospital covered in blood, where he received three stitches to the wound caused by the attack. The assault was witnessed by all those present at the meeting including a member and supporter of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP).

This outrageous attack followed an exposure of Hassell's role in particular on the 15 May Sheffield demonstration against the Falklands war. Hassell's pleadings with the Communist Party and Trades Council organisers to go ahead with the demonstration on condition that WP would not chant any slogans calling for military defeat of British imperialism, and would take down their independent placards disgusted even some of his own members. Following a feeble justification of this action by Ward in her second contribution to the discussion in the meeting, Hassell and Ward got up as if to walk out and when challenged by the chairman to stay and listen to the reply Hassell stopped and began to loudly and repeatedly heckle. Hassell then stomped to the front of the room and stood over the woman comrade in the chair who was speaking at this point, shouting and waving his arms in a clear attempt to physically intimidate her and stop her from making her contribution.

Green intervened placing his arm between Hassell and the chairman stating firmly to Hassell 'If you want to remain in this meeting you'll maintain the discipline of the chair.' But Hassell continued to hurl abuse despite repeated requests that he either leave the meeting or sit down and behave in an orderly fashion.

It was clear that the meeting could not continue unless Hassell was removed. Green pushed Hassell towards the door. Before Green could get Hassell to the door Ward moved in behind him and smashed a pint beer glass into his head with considerable force. Hassell and Ward were then shoved out of the meeting. Hassell was simply physically restrained and pushed out of the meeting. Neither Hassell nor Ward were at any point attacked by SL members or supporters. Only after Ward had attacked Green was Ward excluded from the meeting room. After the attack on Green, the RCP member present jumped into the fray on WP's side, unsuccessfully lashing

out with his crash helmet at an SL member.

In a period of jingoist hysteria where both the SL and WP are under threat of exclusion from CP/Labour Party organised anti-Falklands war demonstrations this attack is doubly pernicious.

At the time of writing WP have issued no repudiation of this outrageous assault. Disruptive tactics and physical violence are intolerable in the workers movement and the SL has a long history of defending workers democracy against thug attacks. WP should be in no doubt that the SL will not tolerate such provocations and bloody attacks on its members.

Statements by witnesses to the incident are appended to this statement.

Spartacist League
Sheffield, 19 May 1982

Workers Power apology

Sheffield
20.5.82

To: Spartacist League, Sheffield

Comrades,

After investigating the incidents that took place at the end of your public meeting on Tuesday, May 18th. we have come to the following conclusions.

Instead of quietly taking his leave of the meeting Comrade Hassell (WP) interrupted the chairperson's remarks. This led to an attempt by Comrade Green (SL) to remove him from the room. In an attempt to prevent this Comrade Ward (WP) attacked Green with a glass, causing him an injury.

We wish to make it absolutely clear to you that Workers Power in no way condones the actions of these comrades. Violence in the labour movement is an anathema to us. We condemn it. We apologise unreservedly for the disruption and the attack. Comrade Ward has personally apologised to Comrade Green.

In order to underline our determination to stamp out violence in our movement we have censured Hassell, and suspended Ward for three months.

Sheffield Workers Power

ian and fighter for Palestinian rights Israel Shahak observed:

'An enormous number of security jobs -- army, police, and so on -- have been created on the one hand, and production of weapons on the other. The Jewish working class was sucked into these jobs.... By now a great part of the Jewish working class in Israel is in the position of, say, poor whites in South Africa.' ('The Israeli Working Class and Zionist Terror', *Workers Vanguard* no 182, 18 November 1977)

But the appetite to exploit Arab labour runs into flat contradiction with the Zionist vision of every Arab as a mortal threat to the Israeli state, who must therefore be liquidated. Israel is a by-product of the worst and most barbaric excesses of capitalism in its death agony: the Nazi 'final solution' and the closing of their borders by the 'democratic' imperialist countries (US, Britain), so that the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust had to flee to Palestine. The racially exclusionist 'Jewish' state envisioned by the Zionists could only be carved out of the living body of the Arab people through Hitlerite methods: mass terror (Begin's massacre at Deir Yassin) and forced population transfers. Yet no matter how ruthless its masters and powerful its backers, the infant state of Israel was not a great imperialist power like Nazi Germany and the Palestinians survived as a people even in their diaspora. That is why every Palestinian Arab constitutes a threat to the Zionist state and must be liquidated.

There is therefore a certain tension in present-day Israeli politics between 'pragmatists' like Moshe Dayan, who want to exploit more Arab labour, and fanatics like Ariel Sharon, who want to expand the borders of Israel to disperse and liquidate ever more Arabs. The 'fanatics' have now moved to the centre of the entire Zionist establishment because they express most consistently the oppressive, racist and genocidal component integral to every nationalism.

Every additional kilometre of territory occupied by the Israeli army creates new enemies who

in turn must be conquered, subjugated or eliminated. And every additional kilometre of conquered territory increases the chauvinism and racism of Israeli society. We have never been naive about the difficulties in breaking the Hebrew-speaking working class from the 'master race' attitudes inculcated by their capitalist masters. At the same time, we have always opposed those self-styled radicals who regard the Hebrew-speaking people as one reactionary mass, which must be exterminated or driven into the sea.

Israel is beset by severe internal contradictions which are aggravated by the dynamic of Zionist expansionism. There will be no Zionist Reich dominating the Arab East. Israel does not even have the relative stability of white-ruled South Africa. Its industrial base is too narrow and, more importantly, its population is too small. Furthermore that population is growing increasingly restless as they face 100-plus per cent inflation, rapidly declining living standards and perpetual military mobilisations to repress increasing numbers of rebellious Palestinians. So many Israelis are voting with their feet. Israeli expansionism is critically dependent on a steady stream of Jewish immigration. But Israel is, in fact, experiencing a *net emigration*. Zionism has produced its own Jewish diaspora!

Zionist expansionism contains the seeds of its own destruction. But with mad bomber Begin sitting on a nuclear arsenal, the working people of the Near East and the world do not have time to wait for the internal disintegration of 'Greater Israel'. The Hebrew-speaking working people must be broken from their Zionist rulers. They have been led, as Trotsky predicted on the eve of World War II, into a deathtrap. The only way out is united proletarian struggle together with their Arab class brothers against their Zionist rulers. The few million Jews in the Near East can be part of an extremely valuable cultural and technical vanguard in making the region a decent place to live. But only in unity with the Arab toiling masses.

Palestinian and other Arab leftists must also

draw the lessons of proletarian class struggle from the complete bankruptcy of Arab nationalism demonstrated by Israel's invasion of Lebanon. In the name of nationalism the PLO and other Palestinian groups claimed as allies the very Arab rulers who now remain silent or stab them in the back, and who ever since 1948 have contributed to the suppression of the Palestinian people. Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian and Jordanian workers must understand that the slogan of 'fight Zionism' in the mouths of their rulers has been used to divert class struggle at home, while these same Arab rulers have betrayed the Palestinian cause in a thousand ways from Black September to Tel Zaatar to Camp David. The main enemy is at home!

The struggle for the democratic rights of all the peoples of the Near East and for the survival and national emancipation of the Palestinians must necessarily sweep away the bloody bonapartists in Syria, bring down the rotten medieval structure in Lebanon, shatter the Zionist state and rip the Arab and Hebrew-speaking masses from their misrulers. This struggle must place the revolutionary proletariat with its vanguard communist party at the head of the exploited and oppressed, and can only find its fulfilment in a socialist federation of the Near East. ■

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SPARTACIST

BRITAIN

Defend the Palestinians! Stop Begin's 'final solution'!

Israel out of Lebanon!

After 60,000 Israeli troops and 500 tanks devastated Lebanon all the way to Beirut, after Sidon and Tyre were destroyed by Israeli jets and artillery, and even as thousands of Lebanese corpses were being buried in pits, mad bomber Menachem Begin went to speak at the UN Special Session on Disarmament. It was like Nazi war criminal Rudolf Hess being released from Spandau prison in Berlin to attend a UN conference against genocide. The destructive expansionism of the Zionist state is directed not only at exterminating the Palestinian people but, through its alliance with the vastly more destructive powers of US imperialism, towards obliterating the Soviet Union as well. Israel's invasion of Lebanon has brought the world a giant step closer to the ultimate holocaust. The international proletariat must demand: Israel out of Lebanon!

There is a profound political identification between Reagan, Begin and Hitler. For all three, the end of the universe is coequal to the end of their own class rule. All three would destroy mankind ten times over to keep power. Fortunately, Hitler in his bunker, about to be overrun by Red Army tanks, did not have a nuclear arsenal to take everyone with him in suicide. But Reagan does, and Israel, according to a US official, is 'only a screwdriver away' from activating a bomb. No doubt Begin would throw in his fledgling nuclear arsenal to accomplish the 'final solution' of the Palestinian and Arab question.

Zionist genocide

Begin came to sell the Israeli army as America's shock troops in the Near East. Now the Israelis are proposing to turn Lebanon into an anti-Soviet base, with a puppet regime headed by some Maronite Christian, and backed up by an American-led multinational force. The Palestinians are to be wiped out, the Syrians pushed out and the Lebanese Muslims cowed. 'We've given the West the gift of Lebanon', bragged one senior Jerusalem official. 'We've created a vacuum, and all we ask is for them to step into it' (*New York Times*, 16 June). The Israeli son is making an offer he hopes his American godfather cannot refuse. And perhaps he will not.

In order to put together an anti-Soviet alliance with various reactionary Arab sheiks and colonels (Reagan/Haig's so-called 'strategic consensus' in the Near East), Washington had made some slight effort -- totally unsuccessful -- to restrain mad bomber Begin. When the state terrorist in Jerusalem incinerated an Iraqi nuclear reactor last summer, the US suspended arms deliveries for a few weeks. And when in December Israel formally annexed the Golan Heights (captured from Syria in the 1967 war), the Reagan administration suspended the recently signed 'joint strategic cooperation' agreement. But these slaps on the wrist would hardly deter the likes of Begin and war minister Sharon, who are hellbent on 'redrawing the map' of the Near East in their drive for *Lebensraum* ('vital space') for Greater Eretz Israel.

Today, Begin can state truthfully that Reagan's pronouncements on Lebanon have been in harmony with Israeli policy. Certainly the anti-Communist fanatics on the Potomac are happy to see Syria, Moscow's principal client state in the region, humiliated and the Soviet-backed and -armed PLO crushed. And no doubt the Pentagon is very favourably impressed with what the Israeli military has done to the Soviet weaponry. The Syrians' Russian-supplied SAM-6 and SAM-8 anti-aircraft missiles were wiped out without the Israeli air force suffering a single casualty, and Israel has recently developed an artillery shell which can pierce the



Begin, terrorist with state power, orders extermination bombing of Palestinian population in Beirut.

most advanced Soviet tank, the T-72.

Begin has solemnly pledged to withdraw his troops from Lebanon if a US-led armed force would move in to suppress the PLO. Revolutionary internationalists say: Keep the Imperialist 'Peacekeepers' Out -- US Hands Off Lebanon!

Defend the Palestinians/PLO!

In addition to turning Lebanon into a bridgehead for Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive, the Israelis intend to destroy the Palestinians as a people. Those who are not slaughtered will be driven into hostile and distant lands. 'Now, all they have left is Syria, where they will be kept on a very tight leash', trumpeted one of Begin's men (*Newsweek*, 21 June). Every class-conscious worker, everyone who believes in democratic rights must stand for the military defence of the Palestinians and Lebanese Muslims against the Zionist terrorists and their Christian Maronite allies.

Whatever their military weaknesses, the PLO commandos have never lacked courage. While the PLO cannot win set-piece battles against the mechanised Israeli juggernaut, there are other effective forms of resistance. Had the PLO created small squads of snipers to take out Israeli soldiers, even if they themselves took two or three times the number of losses, the strain on Israeli society with its master-race psychology would have been intolerable. The Zionist belief that one Jew is worth hundreds of Arabs cuts both ways. Israeli war fervour will be sapped when their coffins begin coming back by the hundreds and thousands.

In the present fighting we defend the Palestinian forces against not only the Israeli army but also the Lebanese Christian militias which have become subordinate to the Zionist state. The 1975-76 civil war and subsequent blood-letting was essentially mutual communal terror. All sides in that conflict were squalid. As we wrote shortly after the Syrian army intervened to defend the Maronite Christians:

'In the present fluid conflict, and particu-

larly given the rapidly shifting allegiances, none of these nationalist and communalist formations are fighting a just struggle which would merit military support from the class-conscious proletariat.' ('Blood Feud in Lebanon', *Workers Vanguard* no 115, 25 June 1976)

But the situation in Lebanon has now changed. The Maronite Christian militias have become part of the Zionist offensive to exterminate the Palestinians and turn Lebanon into a direct outpost for US imperialism. Militarily they have become enemies of the working peoples of the world. Of course, our current military support to the PLO against the Maronite militias has nothing in common with the programme of obliterating the Christian community in Lebanon, as was envisaged and attempted by some Muslim 'leftists' and Palestinian nationalists in 1975-76.

Based on petty-bourgeois nationalist ideology, the Palestine Liberation Organisation has always looked to one or another of the Arab bourgeois states to secure the liberation of the Palestinians. In his own way and for his own reasons, Begin has now shattered the myth of Arab or Islamic unity behind the Palestinian cause. 'I don't understand how the Arabs can be so ineffectual when the Israelis are knocking on the gates of an Arab capital', exclaimed Yasir Arafat in bitterness and perhaps genuine shock. Because the Arab regimes, the 'radical' ones as well as the 'moderates', are not at all sorry to see the PLO humiliated, crippled or even crushed.

In their guts and when their lives hang on it, the Palestinian militants know the Arab nationalist regimes will treat them as ruthlessly as the Zionists. PLO military forces were driven out of both Jordan and Syria through savage repressions. During the Jordanian civil war of 1970, the 'Black September' massacre of Palestinians by King Hussein's Arab Legion left thousands dead. That's probably the main reason that the PLO decided to fight it out, if they had to, in Beirut rather than placing themselves under the 'protection' of the Syrian army in the

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