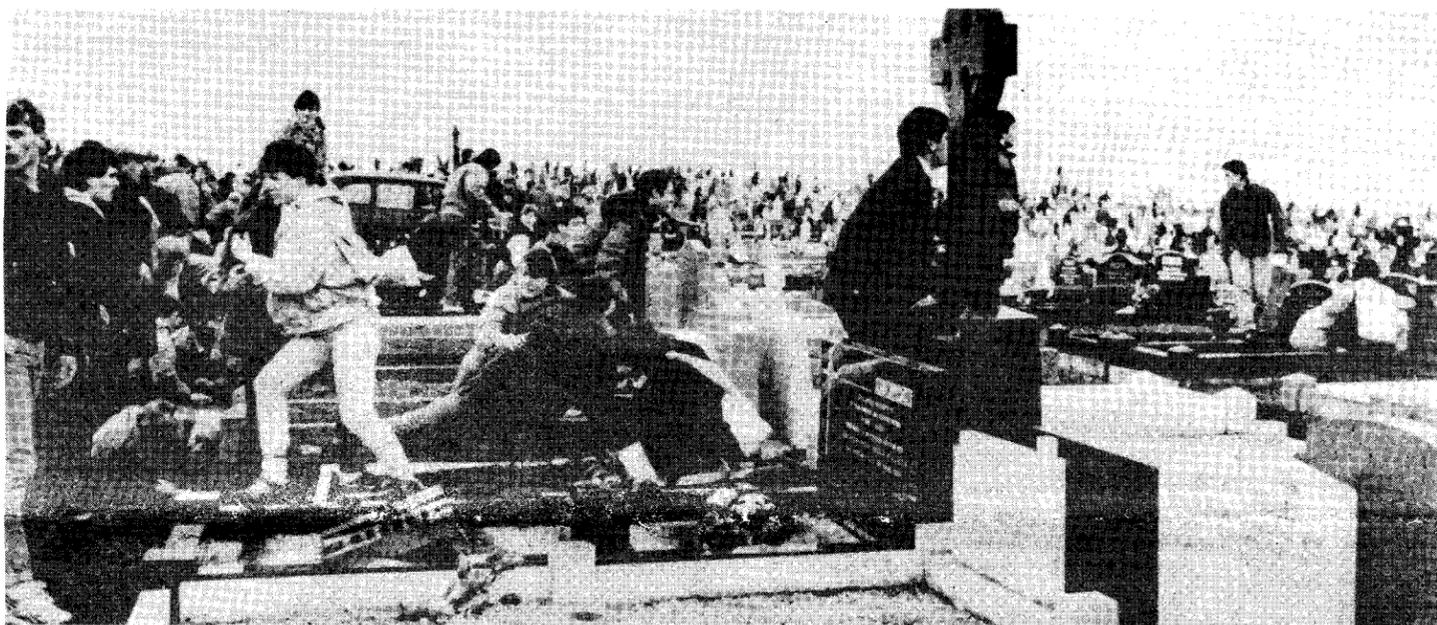


Republican mourners despatch army provocateurs

British troops out of Ireland now!

British imperialism's campaign of state terror in Northern Ireland has been escalating steadily and deliberately. British troops and the Royal Ulster Constabulary remorselessly carry out their shoot-to-kill campaign against Republican activists. The army has been increasingly provocative and trigger happy. The cold-blooded SAS assassination of three IRA militants in Gibraltar followed a series of murderous operations of state terror. The IRA is not even allowed to bury its dead in peace and dignity, as Orange reactionaries and British soldiers murderously target their funerals. Outside one Catholic housing estate in Belfast, British soldiers from a nearby army base erected a banner offering "Fenian bastards" first-class tickets to Gibraltar. But the troops have not stamped out defiance: all over West Belfast black flags flutter from lampposts to honour those butchered by British imperialism. Northern Ireland is at a boiling point, with the flames of anti-Catholic terror and sectarian violence being stoked by Thatcher's death squads. Troops out of Ireland now!

- In January, the Birmingham Six, framed up for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings and languishing in jail ever since, lost their appeal for a new trial. The six clearly innocent men are being left to rot in English prisons. Former Master of the Rolls Lord Denning opined that "Wrongfully convicted prisoners should stay in jail rather than be freed and risk a public loss of confidence in the law" (*Observer*, 21 February).



Stewart Smith, Reflex

16 March: Three killed, nearly sixty wounded at Milltown cemetery as Orange fanatic fires on IRA funeral.

- On 21 February, Aidan McAnespie, a Catholic Republican supporter, was shot in the back as he crossed a British army checkpoint into the North on his way to buy sweets before a football match.

- A few days later, Private Thain, the only British soldier to be convicted for murdering a Catholic, was released from prison after serving only three years of his sentence.

- On 6 March, three unarmed members of an active service unit of the IRA – Sean Savage, Mairead Farrell and Daniel McCann – were assassinated in a planned operation by British SAS commandos in Gibraltar.

The Gibraltar operation was a green light for deadly provocations directed against Catholics and Republicans.

- On 16 March, as the coffins of two of the murdered IRA members were being lowered into the grave, a crazed Orange fanatic, Michael Stone, rained grenades and gunfire into the crowd of thousands of mourners attending the funerals in Milltown cemetery. Three men – Kevin Brady, Thomas McErlean and John Murray – were killed instantly and nearly 60 people wounded, some critically.

Three days after Stone's murdering attack, at the funeral cortege in Andersonstown of one of his victims, a car driven by two gun-wielding British army corporals sped into the procession at 40 mph. The outraged crowd disarmed and dragged them away, and they were shortly despatched. This time some of Thatcher's butcher boys got what was coming to them. Now the arrogant British rulers, who only days earlier assassinated the IRAers in Gibraltar, are baying for the blood of those who defended themselves against this armed incursion. Five men have been arrested, two charged with murder. All five must be released immediately!

The bourgeois media has done its bit, too. After initially threatening to tough it out, both BBC and ITV turned over television footage of the funeral to the government without even being served with a court order. With the press vying to splash what photos they had to "responsibly" finger Republican mourners and the release of the footage, the RUC's announced round-up of fifty-four "sus-

pects" has been given a hand. And now for the first time since the suppression of the Stalker report, the RUC and the Irish Garda are holding regular meetings to map out further "seek out and destroy" operations targeting the IRA.

The government predictably has denied that the two corporals were on a military mission. Indeed, they offer *no* explanation at all: Secretary of State Tom King claims he "simply doesn't know" how the soldiers got there, while the bourgeois press circulated stories that the soldiers "got lost" or were "taking a shortcut". These lame-brained "explanations" only raise additional questions. How can it be that the two were "lost" when one of the men had been in service in Northern Ireland for four years? Why did they enter a part of West Belfast that was well known to be off limits that day?

continued on page 10



Sunday Express

19 March: Two British army corporals drive into a Republican funeral cortege. Outraged mourners disarmed the gun-wielding soldiers. Two of Thatcher's butcher boys were despatched.

**Spectre of
Trotskyism
haunts
Leninist/TKP**

... p6

McCurbin inquiry, Broadwater Farm frame-up

Down with racist "justice"!

Police sieges of minority communities, officially-sanctioned cop executions, frame-up trials, confessions extracted under brutal "interrogation": these are the hallmarks of British "justice" from Belfast to Tottenham.

Last year on 20 February Clinton McCurbin, a young black man, was strangled to death by Wolverhampton cops in a grisly, violent act of racist terror. Soon thereafter, three young men were sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Blakelock – the cop who expired during the 1985 police riot in Tottenham. The three – Engin Raghip, Mark Braithwaite and Winston Silcott – were convicted on the basis of no evidence whatsoever. Two had made "admissions" while in police custody which were later retracted; Silcott never "confessed" to anything at any time.

At the time of Clinton McCurbin's murder we demanded: "Jail the killer cops!" Now, over a year later, the family and friends of Clinton McCurbin are still fighting for a public inquiry. On 1 February, the coroner's inquest was adjourned amid claims

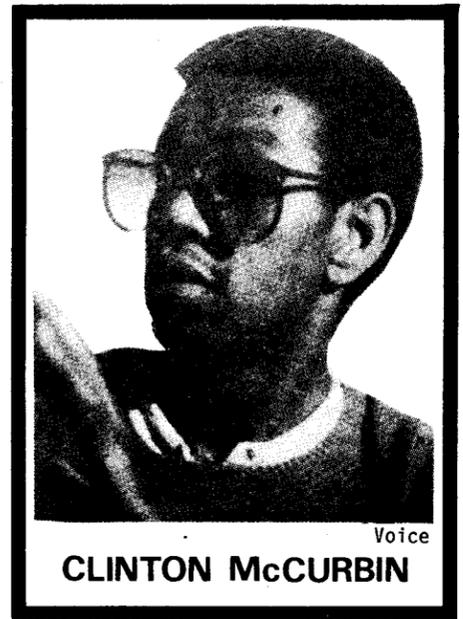
"that the West Midlands police force were planning to set the seal on a cover-up by submitting as evidence a selection of confidential files not available to the McCurbin family's legal counsel" (*Caribbean Times*, 5 February). To add racist insult to murder, the jury selected to hear the inquest was all white. Clinton McCurbin's mother, Mrs Esther McCurbin, announced: "I do not think we will get justice with an all-white jury and I am here to get justice"; she added "I am more bitter now than when it happened" (*Guardian*, 2 February).

As for the Broadwater Farm frame-ups (stemming from the cop riots in Tottenham in 1985), they were so clearly an example of racist injustice that even Amnesty International has been forced to take notice. In its report entitled *Alleged Forced Admissions During Incommunicado Detentions*, Amnesty concludes that during the massive roundups following Blakelock's killing and cop invasion, "many suspects, including juveniles, were denied access to solicitors and their families during lengthy

periods of interrogation thereby creating 'the universally-known pre-conditions for coercion of admissions'" (*Guardian*, 19 February). The cops' tactics included extracting "admissions" from a 13-year-old boy clad only in underpants and a blanket after being held incommunicado for three days and holding another youth with a mental age of seven incommunicado for 54 hours, forcing a 57-page "admission". Three of the original six defendants were acquitted because even the star chamber at the Old Bailey found their "confessions" inadmissible.

But the state would have its vengeance for the "bloody good hiding" received by the cops at Broadwater Farm. So three are behind bars for nothing as the killer cops of Clinton McCurbin and countless others walk free. Meanwhile, the six Irishmen (the "Birmingham Six") framed up for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings on publicly discredited "evidence" – including "confessions" extracted under torture – have recently lost their appeal against the conviction.

The ugly face of British racist injustice finds a fond courtier in the Labour Party leadership. The same racist cop-loving scab Neil Kinnock who placed a wreath at the memorial to the cop Blakelock also opposed even the minimal demand for a public inquiry into McCurbin's killing; preferring that the police conduct their own internal white-wash. Indeed, the Labour Party has



Voice
CLINTON McCURBIN

Labour party in and out of office is unspeakable.

Moreover, "left" Labour politicians push the fraud of "democratic accountability" of the cops. The cops are part of the armed fist of the state; racist police "executions", cover-ups, frame-ups and all the brutality which necessarily accompanies them are endemic to rotting capitalism. This repression is the handmaiden of a system which produces atrocities such as the King's Cross inferno, the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, the war crime sinking of the *Belgrano* and the Gibraltar SAS murders of unarmed IRA members. It is also the system which reduces much of the population to such grinding poverty that the following can and did occur in Birmingham this month: three black children, between the ages of three and seven, died in a blaze at their home because their mother, who was also severely injured in the fire, had run out of electricity tokens and had been forced to use candles to light the home.

There will be no final justice for



Leon Trotsky on the nature of the Soviet Union

In contrast to the "theorising" that goes on about the Soviet Union by reformists and centrists of all stripes – from those who openly capitulate to "democratic" imperialism to those Stalinists who ostensibly defend the Soviet Union – Leon Trotsky's crystalline precision on the nature of the Soviet degener-



LENIN

ated workers state in this passage from The Revolution Betrayed retains its full force today.

The Soviet Union is a contradictory society halfway between capitalism and socialism, in which: (a) the productive forces are still far from adequate to give the state property a socialist character; (b) the tendency toward primitive accumulation created by want breaks out through innumerable pores of the planned economy; (c) norms of distribution preserving a bourgeois character lie at the basis of a new differentiation of society; (d) the economic growth, while slowly bettering the situation of the toilers, promotes a swift formation of privileged strata; (e) exploiting the social antagonisms, a bureaucracy has converted itself into an uncontrolled caste alien to socialism; (f) the social revolution, betrayed by the ruling party, still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses; (g) a further development of the accumulating contradictions can as well lead to socialism as back to capitalism; (h) on the road to capitalism the counterrevolution would have to break the resistance of the workers; (i) on the road to socialism the workers would have to overthrow the bureaucracy. In the last analysis, the question will be decided by a struggle of living social forces, both on the national and the world arena.

– Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)

WORKERS HAMMER

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John Harris (IFL)

March 1987: 2000 protesters marched through streets of Wolverhampton, outraged by brutal racist police killing of Clinton McCurbin.



such a record of insult and outrages to the black and Asian population – including the witchhunting of black Labour parliamentary candidate Sharon Atkin during the last elections for her perfectly truthful statement that the Labour Party is "racist" – that even "moderate" TGWU deputy general secretary Bill Morris was moved to ask "whether the local Labour MPs were representing Birmingham, West Midlands or Birmingham, Alabama" (*Caribbean Times*, 4 March). From presiding over Thatcher's killer cuts to evicting Gypsies in Islington and Irish homeless in Camden, from administering "virginity tests" for Asian women wishing to join their husbands in Britain, the backstabbing racist treachery of the

the victims of this vicious system short of its revolutionary overthrow. For massive, union/minority mobilisations demanding the jailing of the killer cops and the freeing of those victims of racist "justice"! For the right of armed self-defence against the state and fascist terrorists! Integrated defence guards of responsible union and community men and women can provide some protection against the racist boot boys and their "extra-legal" pals in the fascist gangs. And hard class struggle against the Tory regime and its Labour props can turn around the unrelenting attacks on the people of these isles, on the road to a victorious socialist revolution. *Free the Broadwater Farm Three and Birmingham Six! Jail the Killer Cops!*

Mordechai Vanunu sentenced to 18 years

The following article is adapted from Workers Vanguard no 450, 8 April 1988.

In October 1986, the *Sunday Times* published a bombshell: the small, primitive nuclear cache of 15 or 20 weapons Zionist Israel was considered to own was in fact a mammoth arsenal ten times that size, more than enough to bomb every Arab city and the Soviet Union. By the time this blockbuster hit the newsstands, the man responsible for exposing it to the world had been "disappeared", kidnapped by Israeli intelligence, the Mossad. For nearly 18 months Mordechai Vanunu has been caged in a six-by-nine-foot dungeon in Ashkelon, monitored day and night by a video camera, deprived of even the minimal rights normally accorded prisoners, sealed off from the world and, but for rare brief visits, also from his family. On 27 March, Mordechai

camp survivors who came to testify against this murderer to be humiliated and harassed. But the Zionist rulers, whose apprenticeship was served in seeking to collaborate with the Nazi Third Reich, are themselves war criminals. The Zionist state deems Vanunu a traitor because he exposed the scope and scale of their terrifying doomsday machine.

Mordechai Vanunu's courageous act was a service to all humanity. He must not be forgotten. There must be an outcry of protest from the international workers movement demanding the release of this man from the clutches of Zionist terror. *Free Mordechai Vanunu!*

Israel's possession of atomic weapons has been an open secret for years, a common subject of popular fiction such as Gerald Seymour's *Glory Boys*. As far back as 1974, a CIA memoran-

another version with a range of 900 miles, making the Baku oil fields and strategic Soviet naval installations on the Black Sea accessible.

Several times after retiring as prime minister, Ben-Gurion hinted that Israel was prepared for a "preventative war" against the surrounding Arab states and had the "great equalizer" which would offset the fact that three million Israeli Jews faced 100 million Arabs (*Ha'aretz*, 14 November 1980, translated by Israel Shahak). When an Israeli defeat looked imminent in the first days of the 1973 October war, an earlier version of the Jericho armed with nuclear warheads was placed on combat readiness. In response, the Soviet Union was reportedly prepared to ship nuclear warheads to its Egyptian client state and the US put its forces on red alert.

As we wrote in response to the Vanunu revelations:

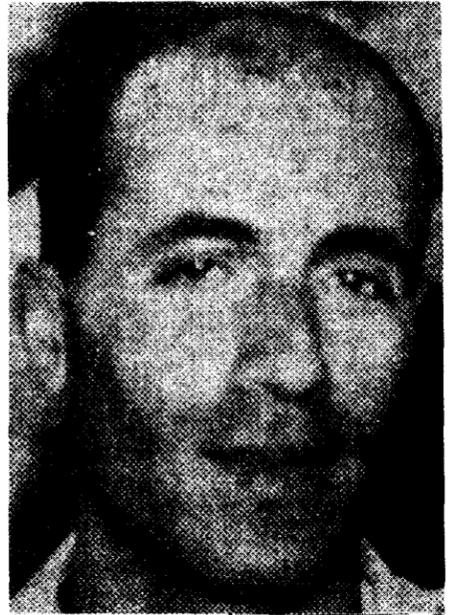
"A dozen or so A-bombs could nuke every Arab capital and make Hitler's Holocaust look like child's play.... But 200 nukes would mean the warmongers in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem have a much bigger target in mind: *Russia*. Is this a joint operation with Washington in preparation for nuking the Soviets?... The Zionist madmen could very easily - and perhaps deliberately - trip over the trip wire for World War III."

- *Workers Vanguard* no 416, 21 November 1986

Can anyone doubt that the bloodthirsty Zionist rulers, if driven into a corner, would be prepared to take the whole world with them? The same day Vanunu was convicted, Israeli troops killed two more Palestinian protesters. At least 111 Palestinians have now been gunned down by the Israeli butchers since the start of "The Uprising".

The Zionist terrorists, in collaboration with their imperialist allies and patrons, claim extraterritorial rights around the world. Even before he got to London, Mordechai Vanunu was being tracked in Australia by ASIO, Australian security. In London, Thatcher's MI6 assisted the Mossad. Lured from there to Rome by the infamous "Cindy the Spy" (Cheryl Bentov, a transplanted American Jew from Orlando, Florida married to Mossad agent Ofer Bentov), Vanunu was drugged and spirited to Israel in a cargo boat, as his brother Meir put it in a CBS *60 Minutes* (27 March) interview, "landed like Kunta Kinte, chained" and held incommunicado.

The Jerusalem court where Vanunu was tried was completely sealed off and surrounded by guards. Vanunu was driven to court in a van with painted windows, led to a sealed courtroom through a special "Vanunu tunnel" and forced to wear a motorcycle helmet to cover his face - all so he could not even be photographed. He became known as "the man in the



Rev. John McKnight

Mordechai Vanunu

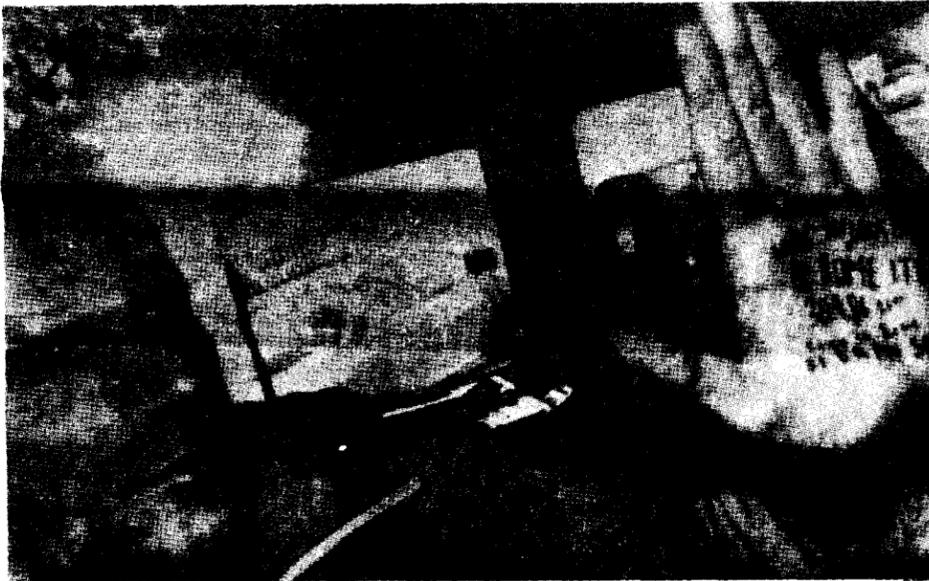
iron mask".

Vanunu's family and supporters were forbidden to speak about the case at all. When Meir Vanunu talked to Italian government officials and journalists in Britain about his brother's kidnapping, the Israelis charged him with espionage as well. He is currently seeking political asylum in Britain.

When Mordechai Vanunu's lawyer, Avigdor Feldman, challenged the court's jurisdiction on the grounds that Vanunu had been illegally abducted to Israel, the judges contemptuously dismissed his challenge out of hand. Vanunu's lawyer also tried to argue that since Israel's nuclear arsenal is meant to be a deterrent, revealing its existence could not damage state security, even bringing in as defence witnesses Israeli defence minister Shimon Peres and Abba Eban, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee.

To be sure, there are elements in the Israeli military and political establishment who argue for cutting back on Israel's enormous arms expenditures by making it clear to the world at large that Israel has and will use a massive nuclear arsenal. But any appeal to the Zionist butchers on the common ground of "national security" could only fall on deaf ears. To them Mordechai Vanunu went beyond the narrowly circumscribed chauvinist pale by which they define a "loyal Jew". But to the peoples of the world he is a hero for revealing the Israeli rulers' demented plans for a thermonuclear holocaust.

Though news about his case has been suppressed, Mordechai Vanunu has clearly served as an inspiration. When 200 people were arrested in Australia last October for demonstrating against the CIA's spy station in Alice Springs, six protesters identified themselves in court by saying, "I am Mordechai Vanunu." On 13 February, nearly 40 people joined a protest initiated by the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand outside the Israeli consulate in Sydney to demand "Freedom for Mordechai Vanunu!" The international Spartacist tendency and the Partisan Defense Committee have participated actively in the fight to free this courageous man. International protest must be mobilised now to free Mordechai Vanunu from the Israeli dungeons. Send donations to the Mordechai Vanunu Legal Defense Fund, P.O. Box 45005, Somerville, MA 02145, U.S.A. ■



AP

Jerusalem, December 1986: Courageous Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu flashes message to reporters from police van, saying he was hijacked in Rome by Israeli agents.

Vanunu, aged 34, was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment, most likely to be spent in solitary confinement.

So tight was the shroud of secrecy enveloping Vanunu's trial that even the 60-page decision by the three-judge court three days earlier was censored, but for a single sentence: "We decided the defendant is guilty on all three counts." The three charges: gathering information with the intent to harm state security, disseminating information to harm state security, aiding and abetting the enemy in time of war. Who is the enemy? What war? To the Zionist nuclear madmen, it doesn't matter - they are at war with the whole world, everybody is the enemy.

Mordechai Vanunu is treated by the Zionist state terrorists far worse than they treat a Nazi war criminal like John Demjanjuk, known as "Ivan the Terrible" for his sadistic butchery at the Treblinka death camp during World War II. Demjanjuk has been handled with kid gloves in a public trial, while the judges allowed death

dum noted that "Israel has already produced nuclear weapons". But these were considered to be a handful of primitive bombs, similar to the 20-kiloton bomb dropped by the US on Nagasaki. Then came the *Sunday Times* (5 October 1986) story. According to the *Sunday Times*, "as many as 200 nuclear weapons of varying destructive power have been assembled...." Vanunu provided photos as well as detailed information about the Dimona nuclear facility in the Negev desert where he had worked for nine years, which proved that it produced 40 kilograms of plutonium a year. To shield this massive nuclear arms factory from prying eyes, the Israelis had built an elaborate structure, with false walls hiding access to a six-storey underground reactor called Machon 2.

Last year Israel purchased 800 (!) nuclear bomb triggers from an American firm. At the same time Israel successfully tested its Jericho 2 ballistic missile, with a range of 500 miles, and is expected to soon have

Afghanistan: Soviet pullout would mean bloodbath

Fake-lefts caught in Cold War vice

The nuclear nuts in Washington are gloating over the prospect of achieving at the bargaining table in Geneva what they couldn't win in more than eight years on the battlefields of Afghanistan: the withdrawal of Soviet troops sent in to combat a blood-thirsty CIA-sponsored feudalistic insurgency. In a dramatic 8 February announcement on Soviet TV, Mikhail Gorbachev confirmed his intention to pull the Red Army out, if an agreement was reached with the US and Pakistan at the Geneva talks by 15 March. Gorbachev's deadline has since been buried under an avalanche of ever more humiliating "conditions" and ultimatums by the Americans and their Pakistani clients, finally forcing the Soviets to postpone the beginning of the withdrawal. But the Kremlin remains adamant about pulling out, agreement or no.

From the outset, all wings of the imperialist rulers loved the Afghan war. Here the US Democrats were the hardliners, seeing an opportunity to get Russian soldiers killed on the cheap without danger of getting sucked into "another Vietnam" as in Central America. From "Socialist" Mitterrand's France to Tory Thatcher's Britain, the US' imperialist allies enthusiastically echoed Washington's declaration of Cold War II over Afghanistan, parroted by their lackeys on the left and in the labour bureaucracy. We Trotskyists, however, loudly proclaimed, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!", pointing out that the Soviet intervention provided a lifeline for the Afghan masses out of mediaeval misery and into the 20th century. Today we warn emphatically of the terrible consequences which withdrawal will have on the Afghan peoples and the Soviet workers state. *Red Army - Mop up the mullah-led insurgency! Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!*

Now even the most stalwart imperialist backers of the *mujahedin* are predicting a bloodbath. US officials describe Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, one of the main fundamentalist chiefs and recipient of \$200 million in CIA aid since 1979, as "scary...vicious...a fascist". Meanwhile the mullahs' Pakistani godfathers have been aggressively acquiring nuclear weapons capability, effectively bankrolled by the US as a quid pro quo for providing a staging ground for the Afghan counterrevolutionaries.

In the face of the Cold War frenzy over Afghanistan, the international Spartacist tendency took a clear stand:

"There can be no question that for



Afghanistan Today

Afghan women march through Kabul (left); Reagan's Afghan cutthroats pose over downed Soviet helicopter. Victory of Islamic reactionaries would mean re-enslavement of women, mass slaughter in Afghanistan.



Wildenberg - SIPA/Black Star

revolutionaries our side in this conflict is with the Red Army. In fact, although uncalled for militarily, a natural response on the part of the world's young leftists would be an enthusiastic desire to join an international brigade to fight the reactionary CIA-connected rebels."

- "Hail Red Army!"
Spartacist no 27-28,
Winter 1979-80

This was an elementary position for any leftist, let alone a Trotskyist. But the Spartacist tendency was unique. Why?

Because over Afghanistan there was no middle ground. When the imperialists declared Cold War II, you had to choose which side you were

on. Many of the fake-Trotskyists had already enlisted as foot soldiers in Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade. And as the Soviets fought CIA-backed mullahs, these "anti-imperialists" joined the imperialist hue and cry over Afghanistan. In different ways - some squirming, some cheering - they took their side: with Islamic reaction and their "own" bourgeoisie. The bottom line was anti-Sovietism.

LEFT APOLOGISTS FOR CIA'S AFGHAN WARRIORS

Within Ernest Mandel's "United Secretariat of the Fourth International", one wing (led then by Tariq Ali) open-

ly endorsed the Cold War "containment" line of "Soviet troops out". Jack Barnes' American Socialist Workers Party supported the Soviet-backed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime but denied that the Soviet intervention was an issue. And the Mandelite USec majority condemned the Soviet intervention, while drawing back at calling for withdrawal.

As the imperialists turned on the heat in the coming months, the Barnesites (fearing they sounded too much like the "Sperts"?) decided Soviet intervention was an issue and condemned it. And the Mandelites began squealing for Soviet troops out. A recent recap of the USec's positions on Afghanistan laments that "many people still confuse calling clearly for withdrawal of the Soviet troops with an attitude of support for the *Mujahideen*" (*International Viewpoint*, 6 April 1987). Why this "confusion"? Because in bloody Afghanistan there is no mythical "third camp": calling for Soviet withdrawal is supporting the CIA's mullah-led warriors.

For anyone claiming to follow the programme of Leon Trotsky's Fourth International, unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism is ABC. But where the Mandelites squirmed, the late Argentine adventurer Nahuel Moreno flaunted the absurdity of trying to combine opposition to the Soviet intervention with any pretence of Trotskyism. First Moreno's followers denounced the Soviets' "criminal action against the Afghan people" and rhapsodized about the "possibility of extending the Iranian revolution within the borders of the USSR" (see "Morenoites Call for Counterrevolution in USSR", *Workers Vanguard* no 249, 8 February 1980). The CIA was putting its money on precisely this "option". But in a 1985 resolution, after luridly denouncing Soviet "barbarism", "massacres", "economic pillage" and "genocidal war" against the Afghan people and calling for Soviet withdrawal, they



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1979 Soviet intervention in Afghanistan posed Russian question pointblank. We stood firm while fake-Trotskyists sang Washington's tune.



then call on the Red Army to carry out a social revolution by "expropriating the landlords and laying the political basis for the emergence of a workers state in Afghanistan" (*El Socialista* [Nicaragua], May 1985).

For years the Morenoites denounced Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as a "counterrevolutionary operation in the service of democratic stability and imperialism". But now that the Kremlin has agreed to withdrawal, they have the chutzpah to denounce Moscow for the "great global agreement between imperialism and the counterrevolutionary soviet bureaucracy...to prevent revolutionary processes in those hot spots" such as Afghanistan and Nicaragua (*Working Class Opposition*, November 1987). David North's Workers League pushes a similar "damned if you do, damned if you don't" line - in the same sentence! - claiming that the "deal between Moscow and Washington" to pull out of Afghanistan confirms the "counterrevolutionary character" of the Soviets going into Afghanistan! As Stalin is reported to have remarked, paper will take anything that is written on it.

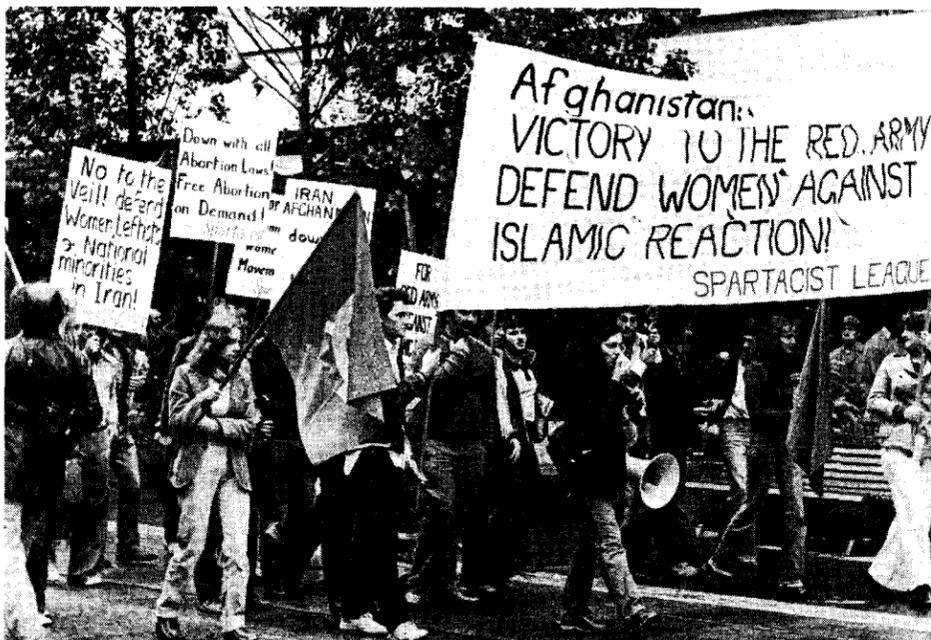
Most of the pseudo-Trotskyist left, however, has taken refuge in empty "factual" reporting about the prospect of the Soviet withdrawal they longed for, with a deafening silence about the mass slaughter which will accompany it. This is the case for both the American SWP and the Mandelite USec majority. But some in this anti-Soviet swamp have no compunctions whatever. Sean Matgamna's group, buried deep in the NATO-loyal British Labour Party, denounces the Soviet intervention as a "war of colonial conquest", and even while admitting that "Muslim fundamentalism is very strong" and dismissing illusions in a "neutralist" coalition government, Matgamna rants: "Despite all this, the USSR can be driven out!" (*Socialist Organiser*, 14 January). This Stalinophobe positively welcomes the impending bloodbath by the Islamic reactionaries.

AFGANOS, KABULISTI AND TANKIES: WHAT NOW?

The left-Stalinist milieu has seen a symmetrically opposite development. A decade ago, most of the West European CPs sharply divided between Moscow-loyal Stalinists and so-called Eurocommunists who sought to integrate themselves into mainstream social democracy. When the Red Army crossed the Afghan border, the "Euros" joined with their own bourgeoisies in anti-Soviet vituperation. What had been a seething cauldron erupted in open factional warfare, as those Stalinists - variously labelled "afganos" (in Spain), "kabulisti" (in Italy) and "tankies" (in Britain) - who wanted to maintain at least some semblance of opposition to NATO imperialism came out in support of the Soviet tanks moving into Afghanistan. It was a knee-jerk reaction: educated in the Stalinist school of class collaboration, they could go no further than pressure groups for the Moscow bureaucracy aimed at pulling their recalcitrant, pro-NATO leaderships into line.

But now the Kremlin has effectively disowned their struggle and denounced all they stood for as "Trotskyite heresy". With Gorbachev's renewed "detente" offensive aimed at conciliating US imperialism, many of these left-Stalinists are at a loss. Do they simply repudiate the last ten years of struggle against the pro-NATO compromisers who opposed

the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan from the outset, or do they look in the mirror and see there the ogre of "Trotskyite heresy"? Some in this "anti-opportunist" milieu were already driven to develop broader criticisms of the Stalinist bureaucracy, particularly when the flowering of a mass-based counterrevolutionary movement in Poland exposed the



Spartacist League contingent in 1980 International Women's Day demonstration in Melbourne, Australia.

criminal incapacity of the Stalinist regime there. In France the Tribune Communiste group made a clean break from Stalinism and last month fused with the French section of the international Spartacist tendency (see "Revolutionary regroupment in France", *Workers Hammer* no 96, March 1988).

In Britain, a group in and around the Communist Party affiliated to the so-called "Leninist" wing of the Turkish Communist Party in exile ran a headline demanding, "Afghanistan: no sell-out!" (*Leninist*, 10 February). In recent months the *Leninist* not only has expressed its opposition to Gorbachev's INF missile deal with Reagan, but has come out with a call for a political revolution against the Soviet bureaucracy, even identifying the decisive degeneration of the Soviet Union and the consolidation of bureaucratic power with Stalin's pronouncement of "socialism in one country" in 1924. However, despite these rather exceptional declarations, the *Leninist* still carries with it much of the political baggage of Stalinism. Against Gorbachev's Afghanistan policy, they argue:

"The Soviet Union has no right to horse trade the Afghan revolution. It is a living revolution, not a piece of real estate. The Afghan Revolution was not facilitated by the presence of the Soviet Army. The revolution was the work of Afghan revolutionaries organised in the *Khalqi* wing of the PDPA. A proletarian dictatorship was established through local daring and initiative."

Viewing the Afghan war through the nationalist prism of Stalinism, albeit of a Third Worldist variety, the *Leninist* is forced to conjure up a dictatorship of the proletariat in a country where there is no proletariat to speak of. And they ordain as a proletarian revolution a putsch by a group of reform-minded petty-bourgeois nationalists, primarily junior officers in the Afghan army, of the *Khalq* wing of the PDPA. In fact, Afghanistan is not even a nation but feudal-derived state comprising a mosaic of nationalities, ethnic and tribal groupings. Much of the rural population has never lived under the

effective rule of any central state power. Now even the US imperialists are worried that the various factions of the *mujahedin* will slaughter one another (and reportedly they have already begun to do so). If Soviet Central Asia is taken as a model, the various peoples of Afghanistan would enjoy more national rights in a Soviet-bloc satellite than under an "Islamic

imperialism, Gorbachev & Co now see sending troops into Afghanistan as an inadvertent adventure. But from the standpoint of Bolshevik internationalism, defence of the Soviet Union required intervention against the imperialist-bankrolled anti-Communist uprising on its border and raised the real possibility of bringing social revolution to this hideously backward country on the bayonets of the Red Army. To be sure, a Leninist government in the Kremlin would have announced its revolutionary mission from the outset rather than seeking to conciliate the feudalist opposition. As we pointed out some years ago:

"...instead of capitulating to the mullah reaction, by limiting land reform and literacy campaigns, the Soviets should be pouring the money in there on a massive scale: land to the tiller and cheap credit, health programs, etc. But that means social revolution, a tremendous leap from feudalist backwardness to proletarian dictatorship on the backs of the Soviet Red Army. And that does not square with the Kremlin's policies of detente and 'two-stage' revolution. Reformism abroad, by conciliating the forces of reaction, undermines defense of the Soviet Union."

- "Reagan, Begin & Hitler",
Workers Vanguard no 308, 25 June 1982

The counterpart of the Stalinist-nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" on the international plane is the "popular front", class collaboration tying the workers and oppressed to their exploiters as a bulwark against revolution. Now the counter-revolutionary repercussions of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan will be felt internationally, from South African blacks fighting apartheid slavery to the Nicaraguan masses pitted against CIA contra terror.

In his statement giving the timetable for pulling out of Afghanistan Gorbachev promised, "When the Afghan knot is untied, it will have the most profound impact on other regional conflicts.... Behind the political settlement in Afghanistan already looms a question: which conflict will be settled next? And it is certain that more is to follow." So now there is increasing pressure on the Vietnamese to pull out of Kampuchea in an attempt at a rapprochement with the US-allied Peking Stalinists. Now a leading Soviet journal (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 17 February) proclaims that "international cooperation" over "na-

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republic".

In its previous issue, the *Leninist* (21 January) denounces as an example of "big power chauvinism" a statement by *Izvestia* that the Red Army went into Afghanistan to wipe out a hostile regime on its border. From the standpoint of proletarian internationalism, the Red Army has not only the right but the duty to defend its borders against CIA-backed reactionary insurgencies. When Pilsudski's Poland, acting as cat's paw for the French imperialists, invaded Soviet Russia in 1920, Lenin argued for transforming the Red Army's defensive campaign into a military offensive aimed at revolutionary war - and Poland was a modern, industrialised nation-state. While Trotsky opposed waging a revolutionary war on Poland at this time, he did so on tactical grounds, not as a matter of principle.

RETURN TO THE ROAD OF LENIN AND TROTSKY!

From the standpoint of the Soviet bureaucracy, which seeks to defend its privileged position atop the collectivised economy through futile attempts at placating hostile world

International Women's Day 1988

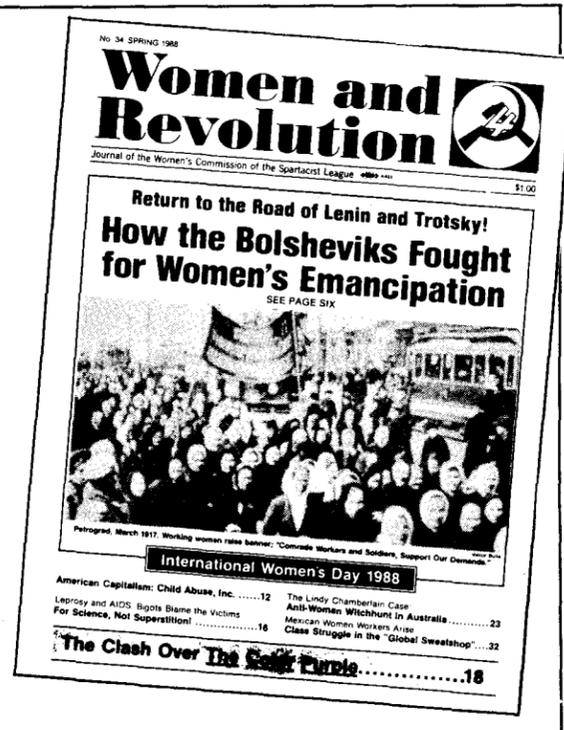
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Glasnost rattles left Stalinists

Spectre of Trotskyism haunts Leninist/TKP

The crisis-ridden Communist Parties, from the staunchly "Eurocommunist" Italian CP to the fractured, split British CP have been deeply affected and disoriented by the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Gorbachev's troika of glasnost, perestroika and a concerted push for "peaceful coexistence" with the war-mongering NATO imperialists has opened up a Pandora's box in the Soviet Union itself. Gorbachev has simultaneously lifted the lid on Soviet society and has dangerously conciliated the anti-Soviet madmen in Washington, notably in Afghanistan. This is a highly contradictory and potentially explosive combination, not least for "left", "critical", "anti-opportunist" Stalinist currents who initially arose in response to "Eurocommunism" with its attempt to disassociate itself from Moscow and to prove to their "own" bourgeoisie that they could be entrusted with ministerial portfolios. The role of Afghanistan in these internal differentiations was marked, as "afganos" (Spain), "kabulisti" (Italy) and "tankies" (Britain) upheld the Soviet intervention against the Euros' open support to imperialism.

Last month we were proud to report the fusion of Tribune Communiste (a grouping which broke from the Communist Party of France and Stalinism) with our French section, the Ligue Trotskyste de France. We noted:

"Not only does Gorbachev project permanent 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism, but he has acceded to the imperialists' demands to pull the Red Army out of Afghanistan! These oppositional tendencies,



David King Collection

Bolshevik leaders VI Lenin and Leon Trotsky shown here chatting after Moscow rally in Sverdlov Square, 5 May 1920. Lenin and Trotsky fought for defence of young Soviet workers state through international revolution.

Afghan peoples to be massacred by Islamic reaction, they must confront the historical roots of 'peaceful coexistence' in the Stalinist political counterrevolution in Russia. The objective possibilities for such a fundamental reexamination of Communist history are facilitated as well by the phenomenon of Gorbachev's *glasnost* which has tended to take the question of Trotsky and the Left Opposition (as well as Bukharin and the 'Rights') out of the realm of demonology. No longer can Trotsky's fight against the Stalinist usurpers be simply dismissed with slanders about 'Mikado agents' and 'anti-socialist saboteurs'; thus, even Stalin's successors in the Kremlin bureaucracy acknowledge

already led to public debates on topics formerly taboo. Trotskyism is denounced by Gorbachev et al as "ultraleftism", and it is conceivable that those who consider themselves to the left of Gorbachev may be drawn to Trotskyism as they understand it. Certainly should the Soviet people be allowed to read Trotsky's writings they would have at hand weapons to return to the revolutionary road of authentic Bolshevism – in particular the programme of proletarian political revolution to overthrow the usurping Stalinist bureaucratic caste and reinstitute revolutionary soviet democracy.

Recent issues of the *Leninist*, the publication of a grouping in and around the British Communist Party and politically associated with what was formerly called "Leninist wing" of the Turkish Communist Party – now the TKP/*Iscin Ses*, have carried headlines like "USSR needs political revolution" and "Afghanistan: no sellout!" Indeed, the *Leninist* has gone so far as to identify the decisive degeneration of the Soviet Union and the consolidation of bureaucratic power with Stalin's pronouncement of "socialism in one country" in 1924. Its article on the rehabilitation of Bukharin states that "surely in the name of openness the writings of Preobrazhensky, Rakovsky and Trotsky and the Left Opposition should be at the disposal of all Soviet citizens" and characterises Trotsky's Left Opposition as "those who fought the consolidation of a privileged bureaucracy at the head of the Soviet party and state" (*Leninist* no 58, 21 January 1988). For an organisation which has monotonously repeated its determination to "reforge" the wretched Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), this represents something of a contradiction.

Today the *Leninist* propounds a number of left-sounding criticisms of Gorbachev and in Britain has a posture of resisting the strong pull of Labourite social democracy. But its

failure to break decisively from the class-collaborationist programme and worldview of Stalinist reformism is glaringly clear on the question of Ireland. While the *Leninist* correctly demands the withdrawal of the British Army from Ireland, it tails the green nationalist Republican movement. This represents a particularly grotesque version of the Stalinist/Menshevik theory of "two-stage" revolution, in which the proletariat is shackled to its class enemies in the name of "national liberation", "democracy", "anti-fascism" and "anti-imperialism". In this spirit, the *Leninist* grovels to the IRA and INLA, whose bourgeois nationalist strategy of the "armalite and the ballot" is *counterposed* to the communist programme of united working-class struggle cutting across the communal divide. In some cases, the green nationalists will strike a military blow against representatives of British imperialism, or defend the Catholic minority against Orange reaction, but its ultimate genocidal logic is that the Protestant population as a whole has no right to exist. Thus, their bombs are also likely to explode in a Protestant *and/or* integrated working-class pub. This has nothing to do with the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. The *Leninist's* profoundly anti-Marxist position on Ireland is rooted in its failure to learn the lessons of the victorious October revolution which succeeded because the Bolshevik Party at its head had decisively rejected "two stages", maintained the independence of the proletariat and resolutely struggled to smash the capitalist state.

The "Leninist wing" of the TKP originated in a break with the official Turkish pro-Moscow leadership of I Bilen in 1979. Centred around the paper *Iscin Ses* (Workers Voice), published in exile in Britain, today the TKP/*Iscin Ses* has "reclaimed" the title Communist Party of Turkey as the pro-Moscow grouping has liquidated itself into the social democratic Workers Party of Turkey. The British *Leninist* originated in late 1979, when a group of young members of the obtusely Kremlin-loyal New Communist Party (NCP – which split from the CP in the late 1970s) were expelled. When Solidarnosc threatened a counterrevolution in Poland, the TKP Leninists correctly took a side in demanding the crushing of this threat. The events in Poland also forced the grouping to critically examine the Stalinist bureaucracy responsible for the crisis, but its positions remained confused and contradictory precisely because it sought a solution from the perspective of reforming the Stalinist regime. At the time, we noted that its Stalinist baggage prevented *Iscin Ses* from taking its left-leaning impulses over Poland to the logical conclusion. We wrote:

"The difficulties and contradictions of *Iscin Ses* have surfaced most



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

which coalesced in support of the Soviet intervention, have necessarily been thrown into disarray now that they can no longer claim that their leftist impulses find support in the Soviet bureaucracy or a section of it. If they do not want to solidarise with the horrifying prospect of abandoning the

at last that Trotsky was an historical figure of the Communist movement who waged a fight over policy and programme" ("Revolutionary Regroupment in France", *Workers Hammer* no 96, March 1988).

Permitting the Soviet masses to critically examine their history has

sharply over the Polish events, which pose pointblank the Trotskyist analysis of the deformed and degenerated workers states of the Soviet bloc and the Trotskyist programme of proletarian political revolution based on defence of the collectivised property forms to oust the bureaucracy. Their critique of the bureaucratic character of Polish (and Soviet) society is far-reaching; yet their refusal thus far to see that this bureaucracy is a caste ruling in its own interests leads them to pursue a confused and utopian perspective of reform while leaving them theoretically disarmed before the neo-Kautskyan (and implicitly counterrevolutionary) calls for 'classless' democracy advanced by the Eurocommunists and suchlike.

"Likewise, in continuing to cling to a perspective of reforming the 'world communist movement' through 'ideological struggle', they look to the most craven opportunists as ideological allies against revisionism and resist an examination of the non-revolutionary premises upon which their programme and strategy remain founded.

Today the TKP Leninists have gone about as far as they can within their present methodological framework. Only by making a complete break with their Stalinist heritage and coming to terms with Trotskyism can Iscinin Sesi supporters uphold their avowed desire to be revolutionary, proletarian-internationalist Leninists." ("Poland and the TKP 'Leninists'", *Spartacist Britain* no 42, May 1982, emphasis added)

This has been confirmed by the current evident programmatic disarray of the TKP and *Leninist* over the Russian question. Even more than those who simply counterposed pro-Moscow loyalty over Afghanistan and Poland to the Euros, these "critical" Stalinists are confronted with the non-revolutionary content of their methodology.

In their own words: "*The Leninist* has begun to develop its critique of Soviet reality" ("*Splitters in Tatters*", no 58, 21 January 1988). In February 1986, the *Leninist* carried an article on the CPSU's new programme, in which they said that "The USSR is the world's revolutionary centre and the CPSU is the most influential Party in our world movement." In concluding the article, rich in friendly advice to "comrade Mikhail Gorbachev", Jack Conrad wrote: "We hope that our Soviet comrades...will read our views in the proletarian internationalist spirit that they are delivered" (no 27, February 1986). Two years later "our Soviet comrades" have become "a privileged bureaucracy", and "Gorbachev stands at the head of this very same regime which ruthlessly murdered and terrorised in order to consolidate its power" (*Leninist* no 58, 21 January). A recent issue of *Iscinin Sesi* (no 349, 2 March) declared that there is "no trace of communism in 'the world communist movement'."

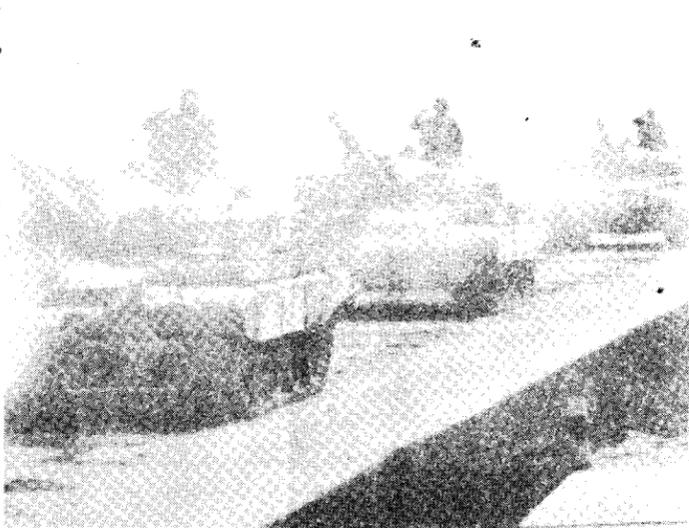
"Our" CPGB, as the *Leninist* has been wont to put it "is only a Communist Party in terms of its name... its essence is reformist, its leadership revisionist and its practice class collaborationist" (*Leninist* no 57, 27 December 1987). Nevertheless, in the same breath they were denouncing the Communist Campaign Group "cabal" for planning to "split our CPGB", even though it "has become social democratised". Lately, however, the *Leninist* seems to have become somewhat coy about its af-



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Trotsky addressing Red Army troops departing for offensive in Poland, 1920 (left); Red Army tanks in Afghanistan (right).

Novosti Press Agency



fection for "our" CPGB. Has the "gradual, sometimes imperceptible" abandonment of the Communist programme, the "thousand centrist cuts", finally become "qualitative"? After all necrophilia has its limitations. Events in the real world seem to be catching up on the *Leninist*.

The process of social democratisation of the CPs was located precisely by the *Leninist* in "the acceptance, first by the CPSU in 1924 and then by the 5th Congress of Comintern, of Stalin's theory of building full socialism in one country". The conclusion they drew was to wage an "open ideological struggle...going to the root of opportunism in our movement and ruthlessly destroying it" (*Leninist* no 57, 27 December 1987). But what does that mean concretely? On what programme and through what means does the *Leninist* intend to wage this ruthless struggle? Uncomfortably aware that its left criticisms of Gorbachev and analysis of the disintegration of the CPs brings it into some proximity to Trotskyism, the *Leninist* rejects as "subjective idealism" the fact that a qualitative transformation occurred within the Third International after Stalin's rise to power.

Long before its formal liquidation in 1943, the Communist International had been destroyed as the world party of socialist revolution. This did not occur without a "ruthless

was a crime, generalised and underscored by the Stalin-Laval pact and the adoption at the Comintern's Seventh World Congress of the 'People's Front' line which sanctified consistent class collaboration in the name of an 'alliance' with the 'progressive' imperialist bourgeoisie." ("Revolutionary Regroupment in France", *Workers Hammer* no 96, March 1988)

Paid for in the bloody defeats of revolutions in China 1926-27, Germany 1933, Spain 1936-39, the destruction of the Comintern founded by Lenin and Trotsky was certainly "qualitative" for the international proletariat. The fight waged by the Left Opposition and later by the Fourth International was the struggle for Leninism against the degeneration of the October Revolution, the workers state which issued from that revolution and the International founded by the revolution's leaders.

LENINIST AND POLITICAL REVOLUTION

To the extent that it borrows formulations historically associated with Trotskyism (ie political revolution in the USSR) *Leninist* must and does remove the hard programmatic content of these terms, substituting an often classless concept of "democracy" and vague references to "proletarian internationalism". Their most authoritative statement so far

utilise this situation to make a real political revolution, in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. This will bring a renaissance in the world communist movement."

But if the workers are to achieve a "real political revolution", don't they need a revolutionary party? It is all good and well to make references to Lenin and to proletarian internationalism, but if this means anything real, shouldn't such a Soviet party be a section of a revolutionary *international*? Yes, the Soviet working masses need just such a party, not least because as Yurukoglu correctly points out both leftist and rightist activity will appear. Anti-bureaucratic upsurge is not invulnerable to either the machinations of restorationist forces nor their allies in the imperialist West.

Thus, if in the course of proletarian political revolution, soviets are to be organs of *working-class* power, "free and open elections" is a very mistaken slogan. Should anti-socialist right-wing groups be allowed to partake freely of "socialist democracy"? Are the TKP/*Iscinin Sesi* and the *Leninist* suggesting that the fascistic anti-Semites of Pamyat be allowed to grow into Russian "Grey Wolves"? Individual members have already reported their position that Pamyat be allowed to organise. Such a position indicates that the *Leninist* does not understand or agree with the necessary class content of workers democracy. For instance, when the Left Social Revolutionaries, who were far from Pamyat-type scum and in fact participated in a Soviet coalition government with the Bolsheviks, unsuccessfully attempted to stage a coup d'etat in July 1918, they were rightly suppressed.

If anything the fascistic Pamyat is far worse than the Pilsudskiite clerical reactionaries who were in control of Solidarnosc, which the TKP/*Iscinin Sesi* rightly demanded should be crushed. At that time, too, we noted their weakness over "pure", "abstract" democracy, particularly their positions that those parties which "do not oppose the democratic order of the proletarian state" would be allowed to organise (*Iscinin Sesi*, 8 February 1982, our translation). We countered that Soviet democracy would allow only those political parties which stood on the defence of the dictatorship of the proletariat, since it is quite conceivable that capitalist restorationist forces would choose to work through the organs of workers democracy given the chance. As a norm all groupings which do not actively work to overthrow the socialist revolution should have freedom of expression, which is not the same as the right to form soviet parties. Against the renegade Kautsky, Lenin emphasised that: "The indispensable characteristic, the necessary condition of dictatorship

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Hungary 1956: Stalin's statue toppled in proletarian political revolution.

struggle" which smashed the Bolshevik cadres assembled by VI Lenin and reduced the various national parties to instruments of Stalin's policy of "socialism in one country" - and only one country. As we pointed out in our last issue:

"Stalin's Comintern, as a transmission belt for this policy of international class collaboration, became essentially similar to the social democrats of the Second International, who rallied to their 'own' bourgeoisies in 1914. The catastrophe of 1933, when Hitler's fascists came to power unopposed by the powerful German workers movement, was not just an 'error' or a defeat, even a defeat of enormous proportions which paved the way directly for world war; it

available in English ("Democracy, Socialism and Revolution", *Leninist* no 55, 1 November 1987), is an interview with leading TKP member R Yurukoglu. He says:

"The one party system must be abolished. Plurality of parties must be allowed. Not only parties which accept the leading role of the Communist Party and so on, but really independent parties. The opposition must have full facilities for meetings and propaganda.

"Soviets must become the ultimate power in the land. There must be free and open elections to them....

"... in the coming months and years all sorts of political activity to the right and left will appear in the Soviet Union. And there is every chance that the working class will

(Continued from page 7)

is the forcible suppression of the exploiters as a class, and consequently, the infringement of 'pure democracy', i.e., of equality and freedom in regard to that class." (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, p 32 [emphasis in original]).

In Britain the refusal to ask Lenin's question about democracy: "for what class?" led the *Leninist* to support the call for a scab ballot in the miners strike. The supporters of the TKP and *Leninist* would benefit from reading Lenin's polemic against Kautsky quoted above and Trotsky's companion piece *Terrorism and Communism*.

SOCIALISM AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Leninist, while advocating "political revolution", persists in characterising the Soviet Union as "socialist". When a reader wrote asking if they would not "agree with the Trotskyist view of degenerated workers' state rather than 'socialism' " regarding the Soviet Union, Jack Conrad replied, without taking up the question of the degenerated workers state, that: "when we use the word socialism all we mean by it is the dictatorship of the proletariat" (*Leninist* no 56, 23 November 1987). But this is not what Marx and Lenin meant. Lenin noted that "Socialism means the abolition of classes.... And classes still remain and will remain in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat" (*Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, *Collected Works* vol 30, 1919, pp 114-115, emphasis in original). A left Stalinist grouping, the Communist Working Collective, which was won to Trotskyism and fused with the Spartacist League/US in 1971 described its struggle on this very question:

"An essential task of ours was a re-establishment of the basic axioms of Marxism-Leninism. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin all believed that communism would replace capitalism only after a transitional period during which the proletariat enforces its dictatorship over all the other classes.

"Socialism according to Marx and Lenin means the lower phase of communism. It is a society characterized by common property ownership, very high productivity of labor, the absence of class-based social antagonisms, the replacement of the standing army by a universal people's militia, material incentives limited to equal pay for equal work, full emancipation of women, disappearance of the age-old distinction between town and country, etc. In short, it is only the beginning, but definitely the beginning, of man's ascent from the 'kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom.'

"It was obvious that the socialism which Marx and Lenin envisioned would be a world society, necessarily embracing the industrialized countries of Europe, the United States and Japan.

"Now we understood why Stalin was forced to deny one year after the great purges that there was any longer any class struggle in the Soviet Union. To proclaim socialism in the Soviet Union he had to deny the glaring non-socialist features of the Soviet Union. The Chinese 'discovery' that classes still exist under socialism is equivalent to discovering that their socialism is not socialism." (*Marxist*

Bulletin no 10, "From Maoism to Trotskyism")

Lenin's Bolsheviks were quite clear in opposing the idea that "socialism" could be created in one backward, encircled workers state. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia meant a bridge to revolution in the West.

According to the British *Leninist*, the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the fledgling Soviet workers state was also "inevitable" and, "Even



China: Stalin's criminal policy of subordinating CP to "anti-imperialist" Kuomintang resulted in execution of communists, smashing of revolution.

in a Britain or Japan, working class power will have to be exercised indirectly through a bureaucracy". Furthermore:

"There never was a pre-Stalin golden age. Even under Lenin Socialist democracy was more an aim than a reality. This was by and large unavoidable. The CPSU's adaption to backwardness and its centrist doctoring of scientific tenets of Marxism-Leninism was not. The Soviet Union did not degenerate, its Communist Party did.

"The bureaucracy must be brought under control through far reaching measures of socialist democracy. If the Soviet working class decides that this requires a political revolution we will whole-heartedly support it." (*Leninist* no 55, November 1987).

The isolation of economically backward Soviet Russia amidst hostile imperialist encirclement, especially after the failure of the German revolution in 1923, gave rise to a conservative, narrowly nationalist bureaucratic caste. But by not recognising that Stalin developed a *different programme* in the face of the difficult conditions confronted by the USSR, *Leninist*, at worst, gives aid and comfort to those in the camp of opposing the Bolshevik revolution from the outset as not (bourgeois) "democratic" and at best objectifies the historic process. Was Lenin utopian when he waged his last struggle against bureaucracy and the General Secretary Stalin? To assert that the party degenerated without affecting the state profoundly underestimates the subjective factor. When Stalin & Co usurped control of the party in 1924, it represented a political counterrevolution: the Soviet Union became a degenerated workers state. Trotsky's Left Opposition continued Lenin's struggle at great human cost against the bloody counterrevolution; the Left Oppositionists exiled to and executed in Siberian camps never relinquished their heroic fight to defend the land of October against imperialism from without and the Stalinist epigones within. Their defeat was decisive from the standpoint of the world working class. Their victory could have changed the course of

world history.

To be precise about the class character of the Soviet Union, the origins of the ruling bureaucracy and thus the tasks of proletarian political revolution, the *Leninist* would have to shed many of its present formal positions. What the *Leninist* has served up so far by way of theory is confused and contradictory and some of it quite dangerous. When Stalinists discover that there is something wrong with their "socialism" (in one

that liberated Hungary in 1944-5 from German fascist rule, that chased away the collaborating big landowners and big capitalists and made possible the land reform and the beginning of Socialist construction - this army now had to fight the best sons of the Hungarian people." Lacking in Hungary was the necessary leadership, ie a Leninist party. Those left Stalinists like *Leninist* who swam against the anti-Soviet stream over Poland and Afghanistan and now must grapple with the contradictory Gorbachev era, might profitably re-examine the Hungarian Revolution. Our comrades from Tribune Communiste explained in their document "From the Illusory Transformation of the PCF to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky":

"We conceived the question of revitalising the soviets in the USSR and the deformed workers states abstractly and inconsistently. Our view that the intervention of Soviet troops [in Hungary] against the workers councils was an act in defence of the gains of October; that the workers councils were a kind of Solidarnosc, did not stand up to an analysis of the facts and historic documents. Hungary 1956 was in fact an attempt to build a real dictatorship of the proletariat based on workers democracy and the power of the soviets. We would have been on the same side of the barricades as the insurgents."

The impact of a proletarian political revolution in the Soviet Union would be immense throughout the international proletariat, East and West, especially because the Soviet Union is the military-industrial powerhouse of the non-capitalist world, the homeland of the October Revolution. *Leninist* has reacted to and recognised this to a certain extent; it acknowledges that: "So there are real dangers with the road Gorbachev is taking. The pre-crisis situation he spoke of when taking over the reins of leadership could become a full blown crisis. This need not result in a Solidarnosc scenario" (*Leninist* no 55, 1 November 1987). But the question begged here is *what* scenario revolutionists must fight for.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION AND THE LESSONS OF OCTOBER

Clearly the spectre of Trotskyism haunts the *Leninist* grouping. And it is therefore no accident that on the question of permanent revolution, which Trotsky himself noted "represents the original sin of 'Trotskyism' ", *Leninist* is not merely confused but dead wrong. In an exchange on the question (no 53, 17 September 1987), editor Jack Conrad asserts that: a) Trotsky was a Menshevik; b) "Where did Lenin and Trotsky disagree? Not on the perspective of permanent revolution"; c) "The simple fact was that, in essence, Lenin was right, Trotsky was wrong. The October Revolution was indeed bourgeois, but because it was under the hegemony of the proletariat (ie under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party - the vanguard party of the proletariat) it was able to go on *uninterruptedly* towards the tasks of socialism".

In fact, Trotsky was never a Menshevik, but neither until 1917 was he a Bolshevik. He sided with the Mensheviks at the 1903 Congress, collaborated at various times with Menshevik journals, and his fundamental error, in Lenin's view was his "conciliationism" to the Mensheviks especially after 1912. Trotsky was won to the Bolsheviks and Lenin's conception of the party - and Lenin was won to Trotsky's conception of the course the Russian Revolution would take. As we put it in an article en-

titled "In Defense of 'Permanent Revolution'", *Workers Vanguard* no 321, 14 January 1983): "There ceased to be 'debate' on the character of the revolution after 1917 because the question was solved by the revolution's course. When Lenin appeared before the Petrograd Soviet several days after the insurrection, he announced, 'We shall now proceed to construct the Socialist order!' So much for the "bourgeois" character of October.

In Trotsky's "Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution" (August 1939) he defines precisely the three major arguments within the pre-revolutionary Russian workers movement: the Menshevik two-stage theory, Lenin's algebraic formulation "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" and Trotsky's position that "the complete victory of the democratic revolution in Russia is conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry.... Only the victory of the proletariat in the West could protect Russia from bourgeois restoration and assure it the possibility of rounding out the establishment of socialism." In April 1917 Lenin vacated his algebraic formulation. His greatness was precisely that he did not pare down his revolutionary programme to fit an inadequate formula, but seized the possibility presented in life to lead the proletariat to the conquest of state power, through the revolutionary combat party he had built for that purpose. In an opposite spirit, *Leninist* creates the absurdity that October 1917 was a "bourgeois" revolution because they seek to make history fit with their programme.

The debate over permanent revolution was resurrected...by Stalin in the service of his return to the Menshevik two-stage theory, a necessary corollary to the dogma of "socialism in one country" which means popular fronts and class-collaboration everywhere else. This applied with disastrous results in China. Russia 1917 confirmed the theory of permanent revolution in the positive sense, China 1927-28 confirmed it in the negative as the Communists were slaughtered on the altar of the alliance with (and liquidation into) the "progressive" Kuomintang nationalists. It was over China that Trotsky generalised the Russian experience to the rest of the colonial and semi-colonial world—ie that the unfinished bourgeois tasks in these countries could only be completed through proletarian revolution. And China was a central plank in the programme of the Left Opposition for this reason.

In backward countries many of the central tasks have a democratic character. This flows inevitably from the diversity of problems inherited from the old capitalist order, the combined and uneven development upon which the theory of permanent revolution is premised. The Bolsheviks undertook democratic tasks along with immediate socialist measures: the state defending bourgeois property forms was smashed and replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat which went on to expropriate capitalist enterprise and establish a planned economy. The Stalinist strategy of not transgressing the bounds of bourgeois democracy (the "first stage") signifies in practice a repudiation of democratic revolution, since its bourgeois allies will oppose essential democratic demands (eg land to the tiller, self-determination of oppressed nations). The TKP/*Iscinin Sesi* nostrum for countries like pre-revolutionary Russia and Turkey today is an "advanced peoples' democratic revolution" which will

"grow over" "uninterruptedly" to socialism. But there can be no "hegemony of the working class" without socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The "advanced peoples' democratic revolution" is at best a hapless attempt to bridge Bolshevism and Menshevism or a cynical gloss on the Menshevik/Stalinist "two stage" theory of revolution.

That *Leninist* has not broken from the Menshevik/Stalinist theory of stages is evident not only in its assertion that the October Revolution was bourgeois, but also in its gross capitulation to nationalism, notably its support to the green nationalism of the Irish Republican groupings. Ireland provides an especially graphic illustration that it is only workers rule that can solve the democratic tasks. *Leninist* (no 57, 27 October 1987) hailed the criminal sectarian Enniskillen bombing as an "act of war", adding that "It is farcical to suppose that it is possible to support Ireland's right to self determination without supporting the fight for it, no matter how 'messy' the violence at times. And that means unconditional defence of armed actions of the IRA and Inla, whether they be mortar attacks on the security forces, or the Enniskillen bomb." By the "right to self determination" *Leninist* means what all the other cheerleaders for green nationalism mean: the forcible reunification of Ireland irrespective of (and against) the existence of the Protestants in the North.

As we explained in "Theses on Ireland" (*Spartacist* no 24, Autumn 1977):

"Ireland, like other situations of interpenetrated peoples as in the Middle East and Cyprus, is a striking confirmation of the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution. The inevitable conclusion is that while revolutionists must oppose all aspects of national oppression, they must also recognise that the conflicting claims of the interpenetrated peoples can only be equitably resolved in the framework of a workers state. We struggle for an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles. While the establishment of a united workers state of the whole island may be preferable, the above demand is algebraic, leaving open the question of where the Protestants fall. This recognises that the nature of the Protestant community has not yet been determined in history. As such, it is counterposed to calls for a 'united workers republic' or for a 'united socialist Ireland' (where this demand is not simply an expression for left/nationalist or Stalinist two-stage theories). Placing the demand in the context of a socialist federation has the additional advantage of highlighting the essential relationship of the proletarian revolution in the whole area and the virtual impossibility of the resolution of the Irish question on a working-class basis outside this framework."

"Either for or against the IRA's struggle" says *Leninist* utterly negating the role of the working class organised independently of the nationalist demagogues. When they commit defensible acts against the British imperialist state and its representatives, we defend the IRA and other Republican groupings. But we do not confuse this elementary anti-imperialist stance with political support at any time. And in the case of indefensible outrages such as Enniskillen—targetting not the British state, RUC forces or anything of the

sort, but Protestant civilians—Communists condemn such atrocities for the anti-working-class actions they are.

In a polemic against the Spartacist League the *Leninist* (no 31, 13 May 1986) stated categorically that: "Orange violence is reactionary, pro-imperialist and anti-Catholic. IRA or INLA 'Green violence' like that of the Fenians, no matter how blunt and misdirected on occasions, is revolutionary, directed against British imperialism and its minions." According to this criteria, British imperialism's "minions" constitute anyone who is in the wrong place when a bomb goes off. That is the genocidal logic of nationalism: the IRA's "ballot and armalite" reformism necessarily means sectarian slaughter. And cheering it along from afar is a form of vicarious petty-bourgeois blood-thirstiness. If the *Leninist* were consistent it would also endorse the massacres of Turkish villagers in Cyprus by the Greek EOKA when it was fighting British imperialism.

When the *Leninist* lectures its friends in the Irish Republican Socialist Party/*Starry Plough* for their failure to break from "left nationalism" and their failure to grasp "communism with both hands", the fact is that *Leninist* fails to provide any communist alternative to "left nationalism". It doesn't have one. Indeed, the *Leninist* simply echoes the IRSP/INLA's position over the December 1982 Ballykelly pub bombing which killed six Protestant civilians as well as eleven British soldiers. We shed no tears for the British soldiers, but the pub bombing indiscriminately

anism." (*Spartacist Britain* no 47, February 1983).

Since then the IRSP has had a murderous split but hasn't fundamentally changed. It is not unusual for British left groups to coddle for a while some Republican group, and it's typical that the relationship reflects liberal guilt in awe of the "struggle for national liberation", however nationalist.

But atypically, in Britain, the *Leninist* group has maintained—against all wings of the CPGB milieu as well as the myriad fake-Trotskyists who provide such a convenient foil—a distance from the NATO-loving enemies of working-class struggle in Kinnock's Labour Party. Thus during the last general election, *Leninist* was one of the few groups to take the position for which we Spartacists became infamous: no vote to Judas Kinnock. *Leninist's* willingness to go against pervasive Labourism is one of their more attractive features, but their position contains a soft underbelly. During the elections, it not only opposed Kinnock, but also called for a vote to the candidates of the CPGB, "distinguished" from the Tankie *Morning Star* grouping by taking capitulation to the Labour Party one worse and advocating "tactical voting", ie an explicit appeal for an anti-Thatcher popular front with the likes of Owen and Steele. This is just one graphic example of the contradiction between *Leninist's* perspective to "reforge" the CPGB and its opposition to Labourism: well over five decades ago the CPGB gave up every semblance of revolutionary struggle and since then has operated mainly as a



Paris, 27 January: LTF/Tribune Communiste contingent march in PCF-called protest against the fascist Le Pen.

targetted anyone and everyone in the pub and was thus an act of sectarian murder. We wrote of the INLA/IRSP at the time:

"The short history of the INLA and its political wing the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) is a living refutation of the lie that Republicanism is not counterposed to a programme of proletarian socialism. When the IRSP emerged from a split in the Official IRA in 1974-75, in rhetoric (and perhaps even in the subjective impulse of many of its founding members) it went further to the left within the framework of Republicanism than most past Irish nationalist groups. It claimed James Connolly as its historical mentor and vowed to combine the traditions of Republicanism and socialism. But, like oil and water, the two do not mix. "Within a few years of its foundation the IRSP had settled back into the Republican mainstream. If anything it presently exceeds the Provisional IRA in militarist sectari-

pressure group on the fringes of the Labour Party.

The *Leninist's* contradictions will eventually be resolved in one or more directions. Its self-definition as a left pressure group within the CP, now purged of the supposed Soviet-defencist *Morning Star* elements, is not tenable for any length of time. The starting point—starkly presented today by Gorbachev's policies—of any group claiming to be "Leninists" would obviously be an examination of authentic Leninism, which means its revolutionary Trotskyist continuity beginning in 1924. As world imperialism gears up for military destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state it is ever more urgent to reforge the international party of world revolution, the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky. And this is completely counterposed to the dead-end of "reforging" the class-collaborationist shells of the old Communist Parties. Only world revolution can save the USSR for socialism—*Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!* ■

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Ireland...

(Continued from page 1)

The satirical magazine *Private Eye* (1 April) noted that the British security operation at the funeral relied on a helicopter fitted with high-power television equipment, but without effective capacity to pick up sound. Both corporals were experts in signals. "A tiny bugging device in a car parked near the procession would, if supervised by experts, provide the pictures with accompanying sound." Perhaps not coincidentally, the soldiers' car was parked on the side of the road down which the procession was to pass, when it was challenged by IRA stewards.

Even right-wing politicians - concerned that British security is "compromised" by the association with Dublin - have been poking holes in the government's stories. Thus racist Unionist Enoch Powell, (who states outright the possibility that Gibraltar was "deliberate, cold-blooded premeditated murder") denounced the Andersonstown operation as a "military catastrophe, the result of military default, by incompetence or worse" (*Independent*, 1 April).

If there is one body that has bought Thatcher's lies hook, line and sinker, it is her majesty's "opposition" in the Labour Party. In the aftermath of the Gibraltar assassination, the rabidly right-wing *Daily Telegraph* quipped, "We find ourselves less satisfied with the government's account of events than the Labour Front Bench." Indeed, the first words out of the mouth of Labour's foreign policy spokesman George Robertson were, "May I congratulate those responsible." And while some Labour left MPs got queasy after it was clear that large sections of the populace weren't going for Thatcher's line, the Labourites were even more silent when Thatcher was whipping up hysteria over the killing of the British soldiers. The only criticism of the government came from right wing Unionists, who demanded heavier policing. Kinnock himself voted for the suspension of Ken Livingstone for calling the government "accomplices to murder" over the Stalker affair, while his response to the verdict in the case of the framed-up Birmingham Six was "no comment". This despicable record continues Labour's "tradition" as the party which in government sent in the troops in 1969 and which enacted the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act.

It is fashionable in Labourite circles to demand that the Thatcher and Reagan governments impose permanent trade bans against South Africa. Appealing to the racist imperialist powers to clean up apartheid is on the face of it absurd; in practice, these cheap gestures, which would do nothing to aid the impoverished black masses, are often championed for chauvinist reasons. A case in point is miners' leader Arthur Scargill's protectionist demand to ban South African coal imports, which simply means providing job for British miners at the expense of African miners. But where are the Scargills, Benns, etc when it comes to the question of mobilising the trade unions and the workers movement against British imperialism in Ireland, where the British regular army, MI5, the UDR and RUC are carrying out their butchery on a massive scale? Silent as the graves. Revolutionaries would demand that all military shipments to Northern Ireland be blacked! For political strikes demanding the immediate withdrawal of the troops!

Ireland is an acid test of the anti-imperialist mettle of any ostensibly revolutionary organisation. A substantial section of the fake left solidified with Thatcher and British imperialism when the British corporals were blown away. *Socialist Organiser*, buried deep in the Labour Party, condemned the killing of the soldiers as "peculiarly horrible"; *Militant* described it as a "barbarity".

the RUC, to hit Republican strongholds on both sides of the border.

In addition, the international spotlight on Northern Ireland has proven an embarrassment to the British government. When the liberal Amnesty International recently called for a full public disclosure around Gibraltar, Thatcher exploded in hysterical fury, joining her Tory cohorts who labelled this civil libertarian

ity in the face of seething communalism.

As one observer noted about the accord: "Everybody involved is disappointed because the SDLP, who are supposed to be the main beneficiaries, have singularly failed to dent the rock-solid Sinn Fein ghettos of West Belfast" (*New Statesman*, 25 March). The IRA has maintained considerable support among the Northern Catholic masses because it is seen as the only force standing between them and the British army and Orange reactionary gangs. Conditions in the ghettos remain hellish. While unemployment in Ulster is officially at 22 per cent, the ratio of joblessness for Catholic males is two and a half times that of Protestants. In some areas, like the Divis flats in West Belfast, joblessness reaches astounding proportions like 80 per cent! And overwhelmingly Catholics are the victims of sectarian killings.

The bomb planted in a public area in Enniskillen last November that killed 11 civilians (all Protestants) - and wounded several others, including Catholics - was a grisly and indefensible act. Such acts are not aberrations but flow logically from the petty-bourgeois nationalist politics of the IRA. Unlike the blowing away of Airie Neave, Lord Mountbatten or British army corporals, terrorist acts directed against the Protestant community are in no way a blow against imperialism and are no more "progressive" or defensible than similar acts by Protestant paramilitary



Time

Thatcher murdered ten Republican hunger strikers in 1981. Today Irish nationalists continue to fall to the blows of the Westminster butchers. Troops out of Ireland now!

Meanwhile, the different wings of the Communist Party compete in genuflecting to British imperialism. *Seven Days* (26 March) blamed the IRA and its "violence" for making "matters worse...for nearly two decades", while *Morning Star* (21 March) denounced the elimination of British soldiers as "senseless".

THE ANGLO-IRISH ACCORD

The thoroughly reactionary Thatcher regime is certainly committed to maintaining Protestant ascendancy in the North. But the 1985 Anglo-Irish accord, brokered by Washington and endorsed by Labour and Tories alike, was an attempt to subordinate longstanding national antagonisms by appealing to the common interest of anti-Sovietism and anti-communism. There is no bar in principle to Irish participation in NATO: the nominally "neutral" Irish clerical state is in its own right virulently anti-Soviet. It did not extend diplomatic recognition to the USSR until after WWII. As part of the London/Dublin rapprochement, the British Trident submarines will be able to nest in Irish waters.

Apologists for green nationalism falsely assert that the Ulster Protestants are simply an extension of British imperialism into Ireland. In fact, from the standpoint of British capitalism's strategic economic interests, maintaining the Ulster connection is a dead loss. As British manufacturing has sunk into decline, Belfast's once strategic heavy engineering and shipbuilding industries have long ceased to be important. With the growth of investment opportunities in the South, the border is an obstacle to Britain's overall intentions. Under the accord, the Irish bourgeoisie were given a token say in judicial affairs in the North in exchange for their assistance in suppressing the Republicans. In the aftermath of the IRA's criminal bombing at Enniskillen, Irish prime minister Charles Haughey - who in his youth was once arrested and charged with running guns to the Republicans in the North - dispatched 7000 cops and troops in a joint operation with

organisation as a mouthpiece for IRA propaganda.

Reflecting bourgeois frustration, the conservative *Economist*, which essentially supports Thatcherite policies in Ireland, recently noted: "Most political problems have solutions. A few do not. Northern Ireland is one of them, certainly not now and perhaps for decades" (26 March). The halfway measures of the Anglo-Irish Accord have succeeded only in antagonising the region's various forces while failing in its fundamental goal of breaking Catholic resistance in the North. The Ulster Protestants are furious, while the blatantly anti-Catholic prejudice displayed in the Birmingham Six, Stalker and Gibraltar affairs has made the accord massively unpopular in the South. And in Britain itself, some 50 per cent of the population favours pulling the troops out, according to a recent poll. The Benn/Livingstone wing of the Labour Party has flirted with such schemes as a British withdrawal guaranteed by the insertion of UN troops, thus setting the stage for a bourgeois reunification of Ireland. The fundamental obstacle to British withdrawal, however, is the need to maintain capitalist order and stabil-



no credit

Irish socialist James Connolly

groups. The green nationalist IRA - as well as those who cheer it on from a safe distance, like the misnamed Revolutionary Communist Party, the Leninist and Workers Power - write off not only the Ulster Protestant

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workers but the much larger British proletariat as allies in the struggle against imperialism.

Because it opposes a proletarian strategy, the IRA is ultimately reduced to appealing to a wing of British imperialism and/or the green bourgeoisie. Irrespective of its occasional socialist rhetoric, the programme of these petty-bourgeois nationalists boils down to forcible reunification of the whole island within a unitary bourgeois state irrespective of the wishes of the Protestant community. While it is certainly not precluded that capitalist interests in Britain and Ireland may ultimately attempt such a solution, that is a recipe for communal bloodbath—and one the Catholics may lose. Thus, one possible outcome is that the heavily armed Ulster Protestants drive the Catholics out of the North and consolidate an Ulster Protestant nation.

The only way out of this quagmire is revolutionary class struggle that unites Catholic and Protestant workers against their capitalist masters. In that regard, the starting point for any revolutionary solution must be the demand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. Furthermore, the working class and both communities must be guarded against the sectarian rampage of the Orange gangs and the communalist atrocities by the Republicans such as Enniskillen. Thus, we fight for the formation of integrated anti-sectarian workers militias to combat sectarian terror, Orange and Green, as well as imperialist butchery.

There must be an unflinching battle against anti-Catholic discrimi-

nation in jobs and housing. However, this does not mean economist trade unionism. Indeed, much of the Catholic population of Northern Ireland is unemployed, and largely excluded from what exists of heavy industry like the Harland & Wolff shipyards. What is necessary is a programme which attacks the oppression of the Catholic masses at the expense not of their Protestant class brothers, but of the capitalists. Against entrenched Orange privilege we advance a series of transitional demands which transcend the constraints of capitalism, including a sliding scale of wages and hours, in order to cut through the fear that more jobs for Catholics means fewer for Protestants.

A PROLETARIAN PERSPECTIVE

The present communal barriers between Protestant and Catholic workers are not immutable. There have been many albeit often transient opportunities for revolutionary working class struggle. These extend from the militant struggles of transport workers led by the revolutionary socialists James Connolly and Jim Larkin to the 1919 Belfast engineering strike to the mass integrated unemployment marches of the 30s. But at that time, when groups of Protestant workers tried to join United Irishmen commemoration parades with banners reading "Break the connection with capitalism", the IRA ordered them thrown off the demonstration. The bourgeoisie has continually sought to inflame communal tension to disrupt class unity. To combat this requires a revolutionary

workers leadership that has won authority not only through leading economic strike battles but by its proven opposition to national privilege of all kinds.

Recently, there were a series of protests throughout Northern Ireland against cutbacks in the NHS in which both Catholic and Protestant workers participated. As miserable as are the existing health and social benefits provided by the British government, they are far superior to what exists in the Southern part of Ireland. In this clerical state both divorce and abortion are banned. In the early 1950s a major scandal erupted when the Irish minister of health, Dr Noel Browne, was forced out of office for having the temerity to propose a free Mother and Child Health Service. But according to the Irish state, child care and related matters were the province of priests and not doctors! To this obscene clerical reaction, the IRA has bowed and kowtowed: refusing in the early eighties to oppose the anti-abortion referendum and in 1977 even issuing a leaflet citing the 70,000 "babies killed" following the 1967 British Abortion Act as evidence of "Brit oppression"! Is it any wonder that many Northern Catholics, as well as Protestants, are not enchanted with the prospect of living within the borders of reactionary, capitalist Green Ireland? For that matter, the emigration rate from the South is eloquent testimony to the desperate desire by youth and workers to escape that impoverished hellhole.

The conflicting claims of the interpenetrated Catholic and Protestant

population can only be resolved within the framework of proletarian revolution. We call for an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British isles—a slogan both emphasising the iron link between class struggle on the two islands and leaving open the question of the future place of the Protestants in such a socialist federation. Above all, such a perspective requires the forging of a genuine Leninist/Trotskyist vanguard party built in struggle against all variants of nationalism and economism and intransigent opposition to British imperialist domination. ■

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Afghanistan sellout...

(continued from page 12)

State events were preceded by mullahs' prayers. The flag ceased to be red and included a green Islamic fragment. The country's star and sickle disappeared. The party stopped speaking of constructing a socialist society.... And most important—the declaration of a policy of national reconciliation....

"All this taken together permits one to say: the original aims proclaimed by the PDPA have not been achieved.... If this is the case, the presence of Soviet forces in the country loses its meaning. A departure is inevitable and logical."
— *Literaturnaya Gazeta*,
17 February

In fact, it was the abandonment of a revolutionary *social* programme which has weakened the PDPA regime. And at every step—cutting back on land reform, toning down the campaign for women's rights, restoring Islam as the state religion—the PDPA's policies were dictated by the Kremlin, which has held the reins of power in Kabul. More importantly, a social revolution in this profoundly backward country could only be introduced from without, through the agency of the Red Army. That is why a Soviet withdrawal, whatever policies the PDPA pursues, is necessarily a betrayal of the cause of social progress for the Afghan peoples. The prospect of a "future traditional Islamic, non-aligned Afghanistan" which Prokhanov holds out means a return to the dark night of mediaevalism.

In his attempt to prepare the Sov-

iet population for pulling out of Afghanistan, Gorbachev has called the Afghan war a "bleeding wound", echoing imperialist propaganda that this was "Russia's Vietnam". For years the Americans have been hoping that the Soviet Union would get bogged down in a losing war in Afghanistan like the US war in Indochina. The comparison is spurious: America was defeated on the battlefield by the Vietnamese workers and peasants in a *social revolution*, whereas the Soviet bureaucracy never really tried to win in Afghanistan because it refused to implement a social revolution. One bourgeois commentator recently recognised that "The Soviet army has never committed itself fully in Afghanistan" (*Independent*, 2 March).

Furthermore, the Soviet Union shares a 1000-mile border with Afghanistan. A US-backed and fanatically anti-Communist regime in Kabul poses a direct threat to Soviet security. By contrast, the Vietnam War was an ideologically motivated anti-Communist adventure on the other side of the globe.

The difference between America's losing colonial war in Vietnam and the Soviet Union's progressive intervention in Afghanistan is captured well in the responses of their respective veterans. Large numbers of Vietnam vets came back from that filthy, racist war emotional basket cases, many angered and indeed radicalised by their experience into becoming opponents of US imperialism. Soviet veterans, in contrast, are demanding official recognition for carrying out their "internationalist duty" and deeply resent any comparison between their just war and the imperialist war in Vietnam. By all accounts, it is the veterans of the Soviet war in Afghanistan, who saw with their own eyes what a mullah victory would

mean, who are in the forefront of opposition to a Red Army withdrawal.

Afghan war songs, once forbidden, are now being released on records. The secretary of a club of Afghan veterans told the West German magazine *Der Spiegel* (7 March): "Our sacrifices were not for nothing. We have after all brought there the achievements of the civilized world." One of his comrades echoed these sentiments: "The people there could at least live in peace for a while, had bread, could educate their children. What will be there tomorrow only Allah knows." Kim Selikhov, a Soviet journalist who has covered the Afghan war, writes:

"I know many internationalist fighting men who, after completing their time in Afghanistan, ask to go to

the front line again as volunteers. Those who serve here are primarily children of workers and peasants."
— *Literaturnaya Gazeta*,
14 October 1987

"The time has come," Selikhov demands, "to erect a monument in Moscow to the Soviet internationalists who have died valiantly in foreign lands at various times in our history."

Soviet veterans of the Afghan war justly view themselves as fighters for revolutionary internationalism. But the Kremlin bureaucrats abuse and betray these ideals. To truly build a monument to Soviet internationalism in Moscow, it is necessary to oust the Stalinist usurpers and return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky. ■

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Soviet pullout...

(Continued from page 5)

tional reconciliation" with the CIA's *mujahedin* in Afghanistan is a model for "liquidating regional conflicts", for example by "the revolutionary government of Nicaragua" in dealing with the CIA's contras. And now the Soviets are pressuring the ANC to make a deal with Pretoria that, according to the *Los Angeles Times* (5 February), "would give the white minority an effective veto within a majority-rule government".

From the strangulation of the Spanish Revolution in the 1930s, which paved the way to Hitler's Operation

Barbarossa, to Gorbachev's acquiescence to the "Reagan doctrine" of global counterrevolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy's nationalist perspective serves only to endanger the Soviet degenerated workers state. To restore the Soviet state and the Red Army to their revolutionary and internationalist mission requires a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist usurpers of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party. Today that means the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International, as the continuity of the revolutionary Communist International. ■

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Gorbachev's Afghan sellout: some Russians say Nyet

Faced with a massive imperialist military buildup and domestic economic stagnation, the response of the Gorbachev regime has been to introduce market-oriented reforms at home while seeking to accommodate the rapacious imperialist warmongers abroad. The Kremlin's desire to get out of Afghanistan is in fact the international extension of *perestroika*, Gorbachev's policy of economic "restructuring" labelled "new thinking". Now the 1979 Red Army intervention is called a "mistake" of the "old way of thinking under Brezhnev". To be sure, it was the first time since World War II that the USSR has committed troops outside the borders of the Soviet bloc. But this was in response to the growing aggressiveness of US imperialism, seeking to recover from its humiliating Vietnam debacle. In addition to Washington's arming of the Afghan counterrevolutionary *mujahedin*, 1979 was the year that NATO voted to deploy first-strike Pershing 2 missiles in Europe, only six minutes flying time from Moscow.

The stodgy Brezhnev was hardly the global class warrior he is now made out to be. The conservative bureaucrats in the Kremlin simply wanted to make secure an unstable, strategically placed client state. Though this objectively opened up the possibility of a social revolution through the Sovietisation of Afghanistan, almost from the outset the Kremlin tried to limit the scale of social reforms in order to conciliate the feudal opposition. Committed to its nationalist dogma of building "socialism in one country", the bureaucracy maintained a shamefaced silence about the Afghan war. Far from being a measure of the war's unpopularity at home, as the bourgeois press claimed, this refusal to acknowledge what many Soviet citizens rightly saw as their internationalist role in Afghanistan was deeply resented by the population at large. Popular demands were not for withdrawal, but for official recognition of the sacrifice of the sons of the Soviet Union who fell fighting in the internationalist cause.

Now that the Gorbachev regime has decided to pull out, it is actually encouraging war-weariness at home, which certainly exists. A lead article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (17 February) waxes lyrical about how "the soldiers will go back to their mothers". But pulling out of Afghanistan will not bring peace to the Soviet Union's southern border. Emboldened, the US-backed *mujahedin* will do everything in their power to extend Islamic counterrevolution to Soviet Central Asia, with all kinds of provocations and cross-border raids.

So there is significant opposition in Russia to surrendering Afghanistan. The above-quoted *Literatur-*

naya Gazeta article also hints at high-level divisions over the question: "A few of our citizens, basing themselves on statism, patriotism, an understanding of the agonies, of all the problems seizing us, 'catch out' their own state." Speculation abounds that key sections of the top



Der Spiegel
Moscow club of Afghan war veterans with decorated veterans of World War II. Soviet soldiers are demanding official recognition for their internationalist duty in Afghanistan.

Soviet leadership including former foreign minister Andrei Gromyko (known as "Mister Nyet"), KGB head Viktor Chebrikov and "hardline officers" in the military are opposed to a Soviet withdrawal. Anatoly Dobrynin, a prominent spokesman on international relations, while expressing support for withdrawal, warns that "We are not prepared to withdraw at any cost" (*Washington Post*, 21 February).

Indeed, there is clearly significant opposition at all levels of Soviet society to pulling out. The regime has been pushing withdrawal as a popular demand, yet a recent poll in Moscow found only 53 per cent in favour. A survey of Soviet youth – the age group who would end up going to Afghanistan – found that almost half

opposed pulling out until a stable, neutral government could be left behind, and fully two out of three people were concerned that "the Western powers want to establish control over Afghanistan in order to use it as a base against the Soviet Union". One veteran of the Afghan war, Aleksandr

welcomed by the population at large. This was especially so in Soviet Central Asia, which well within living memory had been a wretchedly backward, mullah-ridden society like Afghanistan. In the early days of the war one young student and reservist in Soviet Tadzhikistan explained, "most of them were glad to go to help – it's a very backward country and we are neighbors, after all" (*New York Times*, 11 April 1980). And today, eight years later, the *New York Times* (12 February) reports: "Several Central Asian men who had served in Afghanistan, when asked their strongest personal impressions of the war, said without hesitation that they were shocked by how poorly the Afghans lived compared with their Soviet neighbors." One of the few Soviet cities to erect a monument to a martyred veteran of the Afghan war is Dushanbe, in Tadzhikistan.

In order to bring the Turkic peoples of Soviet Central Asia into the 20th century – liberating women from the veil, teaching girls as well as boys to read and write, introducing modern medicine – during the 1920s the Red Army had to fight a savage war against Islamic fundamentalists, the Basmachi, similar to the Afghan *mujahedin*. Today, the Gorbachev regime not only repudiates social revolution in Afghanistan but actually *blames the civil war there on the left-nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)* for seeking to modernize their country! Thus, Aleksandr Prokhanov, an apologist for selling out Afghanistan to the CIA-backed Islamic fanatics, argues:

"Mistakes in the political line, incorrect formulas for directives, the spreading of socialism in such an 'un-Afghan,' 'un-Islamic' form that offended tradition, flowing over into violence and repression. "...the political course of the Kabul government has repeatedly changed.

continued on page 11



Afghanistan Today
War materiel, including land mines, captured from CIA-backed Islamic fanatics.