



## Stalinists bow to counterrevolutionary Solidarność

# Poland on the brink

On 24 August, the Polish parliament, the Sejm, installed an open counterrevolutionary as prime minister. The new premier, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, is a long-time leading Catholic politician and close adviser to Solidarność leader Lech Walesa. The imperialist media triumphantly proclaim "An Epochal Shift" (*Time*) and "Communism Crumbles in Poland" (*Newsweek*). The *grande dame* of American TV, Barbara Walters, interviews Walesa on "the beginning of the end of Communism", as tears of joy glisten on her cheeks. Polish Cold Warrior Zbigniew Brzezinski foresees a "peaceful revolution" and "evolutionary termination of Communist total-

"Simply put, I'm a Christian, a Catholic who follows the social teachings of the Catholic church, which emanate from the instructions of Pope John Paul II." Upon taking office, Mazowiecki placed a phone call to the Pope to get his "instructions". Many people, not just Polish Stalinists, might not find life in Poland as a latter-day Vatican state to their liking.

Eight years ago when we called Solidarność a "company 'union' for the CIA and bankers" and demanded, "Stop Solidarność' Counterrevolution!" the international Spartacist tendency stood virtually alone on the left. Now as Solidarność takes the reins of government, it openly reaffirms its agen-

black market flourishes and the floating of food prices on the "free market" has doubled and tripled the cost of staples such as meat, cheese and milk. Desperation has spawned bitter strikes. Thousands of coal miners have occupied two mine complexes in Silesia in a strike which Solidarność warns could "dynamite" the new government. Thousands of rail workers struck in Lodz, the second largest city, only going back after Walesa denounced their action as a "provocation aimed against the first Prime Minister elected on the initiative of Solidarity". While Walesa calls on the workers to halt all strikes for six months, the new government's plans will mean mass lay-offs on

a "grand coalition". A majority of the PZPR parliamentary fraction even voted for Mazowiecki. In the deal worked out between the church and Polish president General Jaruzelski, Solidarność has the prime minister and most of the cabinet while the Stalinists hold on to the critical posts of defence and interior ministries, and Poland will remain in the Warsaw Pact. For anyone familiar with even the "A" of the "ABCs" of Marxism, this does not (yet) constitute a counterrevolution. The Stalinists still head the police and army, those "armed bodies of men" which constitute the core of state power. This is not a "coalition", but a state of dual power at the governmental level. It could



Newsweek



Burnett/Contact

Stalinist general Jaruzelski (left) and Lech Walesa in parliament. Pope John Paul Wojtyla masterminds Solidarność' drive to restore capitalism in Poland.

## Strikes break out against IMF austerity

itarianism". The fast-moving events in Warsaw signal the opening of a terminal crisis for Stalinist bureaucratic rule in Poland. But the announcements of the "death of Communism" are premature, and a successful counterrevolution would be anything but peaceful.

Already, what happens in Warsaw is being directed by the Polish Pope straight from Rome. Columnist Anthony Lewis revealed (*New York Times*, 24 August): "This summer Mr. Geremek [Solidarność' parliamentary fraction leader] and another leading intellectual adviser to Solidarity, Adam Michnik, were quietly invited by Pope John Paul II to his summer residence at Castel Gandolfo", where the intricate steps of the Polish parliamentary polonaise were orchestrated. The new prime minister Mazowiecki, in an interview with *Izvestia* (24 August), described his politics:

da for capitalist restoration. Lech Walesa, in an interview with the Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* (22 August), said the new government intended to pull Poland along the road "from a Communist system of ownership to capitalism". "Nobody has previously taken the road that leads from socialism to capitalism", he said. "And we are setting out to do just that, to return to the prewar situation when Poland was a capitalist country, after having gone through a long period of socialism." Their plans call for a "shock treatment" rivalling that applied to Chile by Pinochet after the bloody 1973 coup.

The first victims would be the Polish workers, who are already paying the price of brutal austerity dictated by Western bankers and carried out first by the Stalinists and now by Solidarność. The economy is in chaos—prices are skyrocketing and the shops are bare, the

top of the triple-digit inflation.

The Polish United Workers Party (PZPR), the mouthpiece of the Stalinist apparatus, talks of the new government as

even last for a while as the components dither around in parliamentary manoeuvres. However, the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus is disintegrating as Poland slides towards economic chaos and political anarchy.

The Polish Stalinist bureaucracy has created a situation where it is impossible for it to continue to exist as a parasitic

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### Civil war threatens in Baltics

### Statement of the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union

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# Civil war threatens in Baltics

We print here excerpts from a statement by the Central Committee of the CPSU, dated 26 August, distributed by the Soviet news agency TASS.

These words as printed are fair and even often true. But they come from an institution which has saturated the Soviet Union since the 1920s with a mass of unmitigated lies—in the first place by the regime of the infamous Stalin, and perpetuated by his successors in the bureaucracy of which he was the architect.

Today the Soviet population must tend to believe nothing that is published by the Soviet government. Thus they deeply disbelieve that there is poverty, racism, limited and expensive medical care, massive unemployment, homelessness and the like in the imperialist countries. They do not know that there is enormous ostentatious wealth that would put any Soviet bureaucrat to shame, displayed by the small numbers who are the vicious and arrogant capitalist ruling classes.

Exception must be taken to the statement's pejorative use of the words

"foreign organizations". Some "foreign organizations" are resolute military defenders of the Soviet Union; others are imperialist spies. The bureaucracy does not want to know the difference.

The statement by the CC of the CPSU also leaves out the critical element, insisted upon by Lenin, that all nations not seeking counterrevolutionary social change were promised the right to fully administratively disaffiliate from the rest of the Soviet Union. This right was incorporated in the founding constitution of the USSR.

In the guise of national separation, the Baltic nationalist independence movements seek not merely separation with full protection of all peoples within these borders, but a vicious capitalist restoration, rapidly producing a new and ethnically pure ruling class, and the degradation or exclusion of all other Soviet peoples.

It is in this context that it is necessary to view this often accurate document by the Soviet Central Committee.

But at a certain stage nationalist, extremist groups took advantage of democracy and openness and gradually began to introduce an unhealthy aspect into the development of events.

Having misappropriated the part of true proponents of the national interests, they, step-by-step, steered the course of affairs toward an alienation of the Baltic republics from the rest of the country and the disruption of long-standing organically formed links with other Soviet nations. Their position became more and more openly extremist and separatist. The anti-socialist and anti-Soviet nature of their projects became evident very soon. In some places, organizations resembling political formations of the bourgeois period and the time of Nazi occupation sprang up. Actually, parallel bodies of power began to be set up. Intimidation, deception and disinformation became routine, and even moral terror and defamation of all who disagreed, all who remained true to internationalism and the idea of an integral Soviet Union. Some of the mass information media served as sources fostering nationalistic attitudes.

Abusing freedom of international relations, nationalist leaders contacted foreign organizations and centres, seeking to involve them in what was in fact the internal affair of their republics and treating them as consultants and advisers, as if people in the West were better aware of the actual needs of the Baltic nations, as if they were guided not by their own open or concealed projects with respect to our country, but were in fact concerned about the Soviet people's welfare.

It came to direct acts of vandalism, mockery of state insignia, desecration of sacred things viewed as inviolable by any decent individual—monuments to those who fell in the Civil and the Great Patriotic Wars.

Soviet people across the country watched and read with astonishment and bitterness about things that in no way agreed with what they knew of Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian national traditions and would appear insulting to the national character of these people known for their honesty, sober-mindedness and respect for standards of civilized human relationships.

The activity of forces that are destructive, anti-Soviet and anti-national in their

core, the atmosphere of nationalism led to the promulgation, at the level of bodies of state authority in the republics, of unconstitutional acts contradicting our state's principles of federation and envisaging discrimination against the non-indigenous population of these republics.

On 23 August, 1989 attempts were made to fan up emotions to a point of actual nationalist hysteria. Slogans foisted upon thousands of people were brimful of animosity toward the Soviet system, Russian people, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Army.

The activities of the nationalist forces have already led to serious economic losses in the economy of the Baltic republics, as well as to inter-ethnic and social tensions. In some places, a real threat of a civil conflict and mass street clashes which will involve grave consequences, has arisen.

Things have gone far. The fate of the Baltic peoples is in serious danger. People should know into what abyss they are being pushed by the nationalist leaders. The consequences could be disastrous for these peoples, if the nationalists managed to achieve their goals. The very viability of the Baltic nations could be called in question.

We should say it openly and with a feeling of responsibility before the Baltic and all Soviet peoples.

It must be said that the leaders of these republics failed to do everything in order to contain the process in the normal channel of perestroika reforms. They failed to stem the negative tendencies, to redress the situation, to uphold the principled positions, to convince people of the harmfulness of the plans and practice of opposition forces. The genuine line, consolidating society on an internationalist basis, on nationwide and universal values of perestroika taking maximum account of national peculiarities and requirements, came against obstacles which are yet to be cleared.

One also has to admit that some Party committees and functionaries gave in to difficulties and lost heart. Some even began to play up to nationalist sentiments, weakened counteraction to separatist plans.

The situation that arose calls for a deep analysis, real and serious assessment and

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## Statement of the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union

The current situation in the Baltic republics is the cause of increasing concern. Developments there affect the vital interests of the entire Soviet people, our entire socialist motherland.

Perestroika paved the way for the rapid growth of the national awareness of peoples, made them confident that they can

independently solve the problems of their political, social, economic and cultural life.

The Baltic republics actively joined in the process of deep transformation. Workers' collectives got moving and the intellectual forces of all strata of society became active.

### Trotsky on the class nature of the Soviet state



TROTSKY

*Today the imperialist pundits are fantasising over the prospects of the "peaceful" restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe and the break-up of the Soviet Union. Yet, as Trotsky pointed out over 50 years ago, the restoration of capitalism in the deformed and degenerated workers states requires a social counterrevolution. The betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracies only bring closer the decisive battles and struggles which will decide the fate of the Soviet and Eastern European*



LENIN

*working masses. Revolutionaries must remain at their posts, as intransigent defenders of the gains of the October Revolution against imperialism and internal counterrevolution.*

Against the assertion that the workers' state is apparently already liquidated there arises, first and foremost, the important methodological position of Marxism. The dictatorship of the proletariat was established by means of a political overturn and a civil war of three years. The class theory of society and historical experience equally testify to the impossibility of the victory of the proletariat through peaceful methods, that is, without grandiose class battles, weapons in hand... In the last analysis, the theories of reformism, insofar as reformism generally has attained to theory, are always based upon the inability to understand that class antagonisms are profound and irreconcilable; hence, the perspective of a peaceful transformation of capitalism into socialism. The Marxist thesis relating to the catastrophic character of the transfer of power from the hands of one class into the hands of another applies not only to revolutionary periods, when history sweeps madly ahead, but also to the periods of counterrevolution, when society rolls backwards. He who asserts that the Soviet government has been gradually changed from proletarian to bourgeois is only, so to speak, running backwards the film of reformism.

—Leon Trotsky, "The Class Nature of the Soviet State", *Writings* (1933-34)

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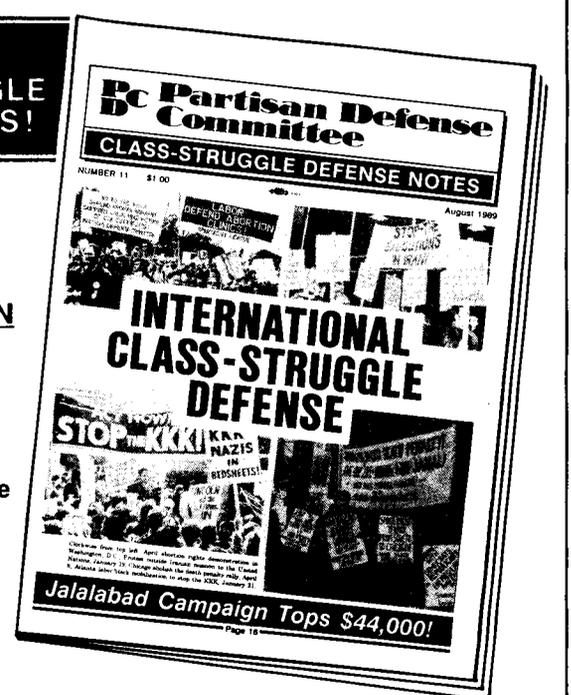
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# Stop Baltic counterrevolution!

Bloody counterrevolution is brewing in the Baltic republics of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Their appetites whetted by Gorbachev's policy of perestroika—encouraging market forces and private enterprise—bourgeois nationalist movements in this relatively prosperous region of the USSR have openly set course for restoring capitalism under the slogan of complete independence from the Soviet Union. The Estonian and Latvian People's Fronts and the Lithuanian Sajudis—overlapping with nationalist wings of the Baltic Communist parties—seek to resurrect the reactionary “independent” bourgeois republics of the interwar years, vassal statelets of German and British imperialism noted for repression of Communists and Jews. To this end, these supposed “democrats” have enacted discriminatory restrictions on language, voting and employment rights, and “immigration” controls directed against non-Baltic peoples.

What apparently finally provoked the Central Committee statement of the Soviet Communist Party excerpted in this issue was the 23 August “human chain” protest linking the capital cities of Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin pact. The protests were marked by flagrantly anti-Russian and anti-Communist manifestations, including the now omnipresent flags of the interwar bourgeois republics, banners reading “Soviet occupation army go home!” and signs equating the Nazi swastika with the hammer and sickle. Echoing the CIA’s “Captive Nations” crowd, protest organisers declared that the Soviet Union had “infringed on the historical right of the Baltic nations to self-determination...occupied them with overwhelming military force.” The Sajudis declared that Lithuania “is no longer under the administrative or judicial jurisdiction of the USSR with immediate effect”.

Stalin’s “non-aggression” pact with Hitler did not prevent the Nazis from invading the Soviet Union in 1941, but the Soviet annexation of the region in July 1940 cannot be separated from the exigencies of the German war threat at the time. Trotsky argued that although the territory was strategically important, the Red Army occupation would be seen as an act of violence, not liberation, and in the long run would do more harm than good. In any case, Stalin’s annexation lasted only until Hitler invaded and occupied the Baltics a year later, at which time many bourgeois nationalists enthusiastically joined with the Nazis in hunting down and murdering Communists and Jews. The social revolution which marked the real integration of the Baltic

republics into the USSR came following the Red Army’s heroic defeat of Nazi fascism.

We warned recently: “The stage is set for a bloody civil war in which capitalist counterrevolution will disguise itself as a struggle for ‘national liberation and self-determination’” (*Spartacist* no 43-44, Summer 1989). Last November, the Estonian parliament passed a resolution—subsequently ruled unconstitutional—asserting a “right” to unilaterally reject Soviet laws. Two months later, it

the protest strike and brought in scabs to run buses in Tallinn. But the strike continued for nine days, until the central government agreed to review the local legislation.

Latvia and Lithuania have already passed legislation aimed at restoring private property in agriculture by allowing lifetime possession and inheritance of “family farms”. When in late July the Supreme Soviet in Moscow endorsed a new programme of “economic autonomy”, giving the Baltic republics control

the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1919, the armies of newly independent Poland marched into and seized sections of Byelorussia and Lithuania, including Vilnius, and imposed Polish as the official language. The following year, Pilsudski invaded the Ukraine, provoking a Soviet counteroffensive.

Today, the nationalist resurgence in the Baltics poses once again the dangers of war and counterrevolution. In a sharp warning foreshadowing the 26 August Central Committee statement, Valentin



Estonian nationalists mobilise under the banner of reactionary interwar bourgeois state.

decreed Estonian the sole official language. Fully 40 per cent of Estonia’s population and half of Latvia’s are ethnic Russian, Byelorussian or Ukrainian, predominantly concentrated in the working class. In May, Lithuania followed suit with a law asserting its veto power over USSR legislation and its right to control migration into the republic. On 8 August Estonia passed legislation—again ruled unconstitutional—demanding a five-year residency requirement for the right to vote and ten years for the right to stand in elections. These chauvinist measures strike at the heart of the multinational Soviet state.

There has been significant resistance to these reactionary measures by workers in Estonia. The predominantly Russian “Internationalist Movement”, co-led by a Russian and, interestingly, a Siberian Estonian (a group also looked down upon by “pure” Estonians), called a strike for the second time in less than a month in protest against the discriminatory voting restrictions. Some 30,000 workers walked off the job, shutting down dozens of factories in Tallinn and bringing rail and air cargo transport to a halt. The Estonian government immediately moved to ban

of trade, industry and resources and the right to run their economies on a market basis, Estonian economist Mikhail Bronshtein cheered: “It opens the road for us to begin realizing our program of independence” (*New York Times*, 28 July). But these tiny countries, necessarily dependent on the Soviet economy, cannot hope for a semblance of independent economic life, should they win the local civil war necessary to restore capitalism. Like Hong Kong vis-a-vis China, the Baltic states could only serve as a spearhead for imperialist penetration into the Soviet Union.

On the right flank of the People’s Fronts stand even more extremist nationalist formations. According to a TASS dispatch reported in *Die Wahrheit* (25 August), newspaper of the West Berlin Socialist Unity Party, the Estonian city of Kohtla recently unveiled a public monument to a group of World War II Nazi collaborators called Counterintelligence-2-“Erna”. The monument was erected on the site of an earlier monument put up by the Hitlerite occupiers in 1942! At the unveiling ceremony a former member of “Erna” was given a platform to rant that Estonia must “be liberated from the Reds”. Even mainstream nationalist spokesmen like Estonian economist Tiit Made echo disgusting Nazi rhetoric: the *New York Times* (10 August) reports that he sees “Russians as aggressive people whose primitive behavior he traces to centuries of breeding with Mongol occupiers.” According to the racist Made, Russian “aggressiveness and violence is manifested even in love.... After rape, comes a feeling of love and delight.”

On the eve of the 23 August protest, the National Independence Movement of Latvia (LNKK) staged a two-day conference in Riga, as the *Washington Post* (22 August) put it, “to plot publicly the downfall of ‘the Soviet empire’”. Speakers included Republican US Senator Robert Kasten and a representative of Polish Solidarnosc. The rabid Baltic nationalists would do well to recall what this region looked like the last time it was “liberated from Reds”, under the sponsorship of imperialist intervention against

Falin, head of the CPSU’s international department, said: “If the striving to divide what cannot be divided continues, as was characteristic of the period before the previous two world wars, if lands and frontiers are being recarved while the lives and safety of people are neglected, the worst, and this time, the final disaster will be brought on” (*New York Times*, 23 August). Worried about developments in the Baltic, and responding in part to West German concerns over the flood of ethnic Germans seeking to emigrate, the Gorbachev regime has recently mooted establishing an autonomous ethnic German homeland around Kaliningrad (the former East Prussian city of Königsberg). This would conveniently establish a bulwark between the Baltic republics and Poland.

Decades of Stalinist nationalism and Great Russian chauvinism have created a sea of bitter nationalist sentiments, and Gorbachev’s perestroika has now opened the floodgates. The leadership of the “Inter-Movement” seeks to pressure the Kremlin to act as guardians of the Russian-speaking population in the Baltics. But strikers are careful to call for “equal rights for all nations” and to eschew privileges for any language. A proletarian challenge reasserting the principles of Leninist internationalism against all variants of nationalism—and particularly Great Russian chauvinism—could polarise the ethnic Baltic populations as well, at least some of whom must be shocked by the direction in which this reactionary nationalist crap is heading.

Potentially, the greatest nationalist threat to the unity of the Soviet peoples is that of Great Russian chauvinism, now spearheaded by the fascists of Pamyat. The Soviet working people must smash Pamyat and, with that authority, easily destroy more marginal fascists and counterrevolutionary threats. It will take proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy and re-establish Bolshevik internationalist principles, guaranteeing full and equal rights for all the nations and peoples of the Soviet Union.

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Boni and Liveright

Working masses of Latvia staunchly supported the Bolshevik Revolution. Latvian Smolny Battalion arrives in Petrograd, November 1917.

**For the immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops!**

# Northern Ireland: for a proletarian solution!

## Not Orange against Green but class against class!

On 14 August 1969, a British imperialist government—the Labour administration of Harold Wilson—sent its army onto the streets of Northern Ireland. The military objective was to squelch growing political unrest and the looming prospect of civil war brought by months of civil rights agitation in defence of the oppressed Catholic minority and a murderous sectarian backlash by Orange bigots. Under threat of extinction at the hands of rampaging mobs spearheaded by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the sinister, all-Protestant, paramilitary B-Specials, and in the absence of an internationalist Leninist organisation capable of organising programmatically based anti-sectarian workers defence guards, sections of the Catholic community initially welcomed the arrival of the troops.

Scandalously, sections of the Irish and British left also supported the forces of British imperialism in its oldest colony. The Socialist Workers Party went so far as to announce in the 11 September 1969 issue of *Socialist Worker*:

"The breathing space provided by the presence of British troops is short but vital. Those who call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom which will hit first and hardest at socialists."

The ensuing two decades "breathing space" has seen a reign of military terror directed primarily against the Catholic minority, SAS assassinations, internment without trial, torture, judicial frame-ups and police-state legislation that was the envy of the former South African premier John Vorster. Nine thousand troops remain, the RUC has ten thousand well-armed regulars and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) has taken the place of the B-Specials. Marxists demanded then and demand now *the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British army*. The RUC and UDR are sectarian forces, closely linked to reactionary Protestant paramilitary outfits like the Ulster Volunteer Force. They must be smashed.

Twenty years on, the killings continue. On 9 August, Seamus Duffy, a 15-year-old Catholic youth was shot dead by the RUC sadists in Belfast. He was the thirty-first young person murdered by the security forces in Northern Ireland since 1968 and the seventeenth victim of lethal plastic bullets. It has also come to light that the "security services" in Northern Ireland—the RUC, the Army and the UDR—provide detailed information on "republican suspects" to Protestant paramilitary outfits. One corporal Cameron Hastie received an 18-month suspended sentence for collecting information "that would be of use to loyalist paramilitaries" and has now been reinstated. But, as even the bourgeois press has acknowledged, it has been known for years "that the UDA and UVF receive a stream of allegedly secret intelligence material" (*Independent*,



Andrew Moore/Reflex

British soldiers terrorise Catholic community in the wake of Enniskillen.

31 August).

The presence of the army fundamentally oppresses the Catholic minority and further exacerbates the sharp communal antagonisms in Northern Ireland. Throughout the twenty years of bloodshed, the oppressed Catholic minority has remained defiant. Every attempt by British imperialism to extricate itself from direct political responsibility for Northern Ireland has foundered on the rocks of Protestant opposition to anything that smacks of an eventual reunification with the southern bourgeois clerical Republic. The reactionary 1974 Ulster Workers Council strike successfully spiked Britain's "power-sharing" initiative at Sunningdale aimed at uniting "moderate" Catholic and Protestant leaders and marginalising the "extremists" on both sides. The NATO-brokered Anglo-Irish accord—designed to cement cooperation between the armed forces of Britain and Ireland and facilitating passage of the extradition treaty—has enraged Protestant opinion by giving a legal right of consultation to the Irish Republic in decisions affecting the six counties, and enraged Catholic opinion in both the North and South, particularly after the Gibraltar SAS murder of three IRA members.

The British bourgeoisie is trapped in Northern Ireland. They are fearful of the consequences of withdrawal—the likelihood of a communal war situation which could not be controlled by the Dublin government—yet anxious to enlist Dublin as a full partner in the anti-Soviet war-drive and rid itself of the border which is now anachronistic from the point of view of the general interests of British imperialism. The proliferation of television debates and reams of newsprint devoted to Ireland throughout August illustrated the political bankruptcy of the British ruling class policy on the "troubles" today. An article by Harold Jackson in the *Guardian* (12 August) captured the mood

of bourgeois defeatism: "From early in my experience there I thought it one of those situations to which there are no solutions, only answers. That remains my opinion, founded in the belief that there is simply no political will anywhere to sort out the mess.... The only role for the mainland is to serve as the excuse for the continuation of the tangle, and to pay for its economic consequences."

It is especially criminal that some so-called leftists, particularly those most closely tied to the politics of Labourite reformism, have reneged on even the minimal demand for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British army in Northern Ireland. The *Militant* tendency, for example, calls for a trade

union militia to replace the British troops. Until such a militia is formed—in *Militant's* case, on the basis of simple economic issues—they argue for the troops to stay. Another deeply Labour Party-entrant grouping, *Socialist Organiser*, uses the spectre of communalist bloodletting to justify maintenance of the repressive status quo. No good has or ever will come from the continued presence of the British army. It is the elementary duty of communists to fight for the removal of Westminster's armed thugs and for a proletarian solution to settle the question of national oppression in an equitable, democratic manner.

The same Socialist Workers Party that applauded the British army's entry into Derry and Belfast in 1969 is now a major participant in Time To Go, a class-collaborationist coalition of liberals and sundry "left" Labour MPs like Clare Short and Ken Livingstone. Time To Go demands not "Troops out now!" but the conditional formula of a "phased withdrawal". Leading SWP spokesman Paul Foot has this to say in his recent pamphlet *Ireland: Why Britain Must Get Out*:

"My proposal is very simple: the British government should declare that it intends to withdraw its troops from Ireland forever; and that it will no longer sustain a separate state in the North of Ireland. It should set an irrevocable date for that withdrawal, and at once convene a constitutional conference at international level to determine how best that withdrawal can be accomplished, and what contribution Britain should make to a new, united Ireland."

This is a shameless call for an imperialist-sponsored "solution" to the Northern Ireland conflict, appealing to the sentiments of a defeatist wing of the British bourgeoisie. Eight years ago Labour "left" Tony Benn, reflecting such sentiments, called for a United Nations "peace-keeping" force to replace British troops. Foot appeals elsewhere in the



Derek Spiers

Falls Road, Belfast: funeral procession for the Gibraltar Three, murdered by British imperialist dogs of war, the SAS.

book "Why, therefore, when it costs much more than it earns for Britain, when it leads all the time to the death of British troops and to the insecurity of British Ministers—why does the British government hang on limpet-like to the excrescence of the Orange state?"

The left critics of Time To Go, notably the centrist Workers Power Group and *Leninist* did, in their separate respective contingents on the London demonstration on 12 August, raise the demand for "Troops out now!" (It is, however, the case that in 1981—as a participant in the H Block hunger strike committees—Workers Power buried the call "Troops out now!" in capitulation to the prevailing Sinn Fein and Labourite pressure to restrict protests to respectable "humanitarianism".) Both of these organisations however link the "Troops out" call to the call for "Self-determination for the Irish people as a whole" or "Self determination for the Irish people". These slogans echo the programme of the petty-bourgeois Green nationalists of Sinn Fein for the forcible reunification of Ireland.

The withdrawal of the army from Northern Ireland will not by itself resolve the conflicting national/communal claims of the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. Nor will British imperialism be defeated via the nationalists' "armalite and ballot box" strategy. As we noted in *Workers Hammer* no 103 (December 1988/January 1989, "Derry 1968: how the left failed"): "The underlying truth that there can be no democratic solution to the Irish question without the consent of the Protestants helps explain the craven approach of the Provisionals, who fight not so much to defeat imperialism as to bring it to the negotiating table."

We struggle for a proletarian axis—not Orange against Green but class against class. Integral to this is a programme addressing the oppression of the Catholic minority and appealing to the joint class interests of the Catholic and Protestant workers against the reactionary Orange demagogues, the Green bourgeoisie in the South as well as the Green nationalists in the North. Such a programme would take advantage of situations like the Civil Rights protests in Derry 1968 where joint struggle across communal lines was posed concretely, and would offer a communist solution to unemployment, housing, discrimination and sectarian violence. Thus linked to the demand for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British Army is the call for programmatically based anti-sectarian workers militias to combat Orange and Green terror and imperialist rampage. No forcible reunification! For an Irish workers republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles!

Our Marxist programme is premised on the recognition that there are two communities in Northern Ireland; it is a situation of *interpenetrated peoples*, where under capitalism the self-determination of one people can be carried out only at the expense of the other. Without confronting the national question and defending the right of *both* communities to exist, calls for class unity can only be abstract and empty incantation. Our call for no forcible reunification, for an Irish republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles, consciously leaves open the question of where the Protestants will fall in the course of the struggle for workers revolution in these isles.

Such a Leninist approach to the national and class questions posed in Ireland is counterposed to the capitulation of the reformist and centrist left either to Labourite chauvinism, Green nationalism or both. In 1988 both Workers Power and *Leninist* engaged in vicarious cheerleading for the IRA, supporting the criminal sectarian bombing at Enniskillen. Ultimately, the "logic" of nationalism leads to such indiscriminate, anti-working-class terror. Unlike defensible republican attacks on symbols of imperialist oppression, Enniskillen targeted Protestant (and



London, June 1981: Spartacist League anti-imperialist contingent marches in protest at Westminster butchers' H Block murders.

Catholic) civilians. At the time Workers Power in England supported the action (defending "the right of the Provisionals to struggle by any means to end Britain's rule"), but their affiliates in the Irish Workers Group (IWG) "unequivocally condemn[ed]" the Enniskillen bombing. We weren't alone in noting this glaring public difference in line; *Leninist* quipped that this was the basis for a split. Recently, Workers Power's international publication, *Trotskyist International* (number 3, Summer 1989), in an IWG polemic against the French Lutte Ouvrière group, offers the following formulation:

"It is for revolutionary communists fighting within Ireland, however, to impose conditions on their support for the IRA, as part of the fight to replace them with a revolutionary communist leadership.

"Our fraternal organisations in other countries, especially Workers' Power in Britain, must subordinate their criticisms of the IRA to the primary duty of winning the unconditional support of British workers for the IRA against their own state."

This is not only wrong, but it is an opportunist formulation designed to justify particular flip-flops over Ireland. In other parts of the world, Workers Power has no such qualms about criticising petty bourgeois nationalists, particularly when they appear in Stalinist clothing. Such was the case in Afghanistan, where Workers Power (and the IWG) refused to take an unequivocal stand in military defence of the forces led by the PDPA, locked in mortal combat with the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists armed to the teeth by American and British imperialism. Blinded by Stalinophobia, WP and the IWG opposed the intervention of the Red Army; proceeding from the same motives, WP organisationally boycotted our campaign to aid the civilian victims of Jalalabad.

Lenin insisted that the workers movement have a consistent programme internationally, while pointing out that in particular countries different aspects of it should be *emphasised*. Thus, he stressed that the proletariat of the oppressor countries had a special duty to combat in words and deeds the chauvinism of its own rulers. Today British revolutionaries have particular responsibility to lead the English, Welsh and Scottish working class to struggle for the withdrawal of the British troops and the blacking of all military goods and transport bound for Northern Ireland.

Lenin was particularly concerned with opportunists who used "criticism" of petty bourgeois nationalism to justify chauvinist capitulation to imperialism. In the context of Ireland, this would apply to groups like *Militant* or *Socialist Organiser*, who refuse to demand the withdrawal of British troops. But Lenin was intransigently opposed to *any political support* to petty bourgeois nationalists like Sinn Fein/IRA, whether it be expressed unconditionally ("subordinating criticisms" a la WP) or "conditionally", as the IWG claims to do. Lenin stressed: "Marxism

cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the 'most just,' 'purest,' most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism...." ("Critical Remarks on the National Question," *Collected Works*, Vol. 20).

The IWG, no less than WP, are wedded to politically tailing petty bourgeois nationalism in Northern Ireland. Thus, in the June Euro-elections, the IWG called for a vote to Sinn Fein, that is, they openly campaigned for a bourgeois party. In the South, where Sinn Fein has far less support, the IWG campaigned for the wretched Irish Labour Party—advocates of the Anglo-Irish accord which facilitates the extradition of Republican militants to British jails! Such is the real methodology of centrists like the IWG and WP: capitulating to different, and often contradictory, social forces depending on the national terrain. This is incompatible with proletarian internationalism, which requires the consistent application of a principled Leninist programme.

The differences between the WP and

IWG over Enniskillen testify less to principle than to differing opportunist appetites. We have often pointed to the *vicarious* quality of the cheerleading by various British leftists for Green terrorism—the further away it is, the easier it is to applaud. But the Enniskillen atrocity aroused deep revulsion throughout both parts of Ireland. Hence the about face by the IWG. In its own way this points to the impossibility of constructing a revolutionary party in Ireland that subordinates class to sectarian divisions. In the history of the Irish labour movement there have been significant examples of workers' solidarity which have temporarily cut across sectarian divisions, as in the case of the 1919 Belfast engineers' strike and the mass unemployment marches in the 1930s. They have been countered with massive sectarian mobilisations intended to wipe out the fragile proletarian unity. Our task as communists is to intervene, attempting to alter the course of the conflict towards a class determination and proletarian revolution throughout the British Isles. ■

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I don't know, but from what I hear  
 Eighteen sixty-one was a hell of a year.  
 The Southern slave-bosses met in secrecy,  
 To proclaim their rebel states 'the Confederacy'  
 Wasn't very long 'fore they fired the first shell,  
 Whoopin an a-hollerin' their mean Rebel yell.  
 But Lincoln's men in blue on the Northern side  
 Weren't for lettin' no slavers take em for a ride.  
 & right from the start (between you and me)  
 That put into the balance England's neutrality.

Now our ol' man river—that's the Mersey, I mean,  
 Was a long ways away—or so it seemed;  
 And if you think this his'try's all past and gone  
 I'm intendin' to show you, you might just be wrong.  
 Cos I do know, and it ain't no jive  
 There's still business unfinished from the year of sixty-five  
 The 4-year Civil War led to victory  
 The plantation owners lost supremacy—  
 But the struggle didn't die with their defeat  
 And what John Brown began it's down to us to complete.  
 —Roll Alabama Roll

## Roll Alabama Roll

A Workers Hammer review

by Tony D'Souza

The time is the 19th century as well as the present and the future (1992). The place is "over there", in the US, as well as here in Britain. The enemies are the slave-holding Confederates and their British bourgeois backers as well as their present-day apologists and clones. Cocking a pretty mean snook at them all is a spirited and unique play, *The Network's Roll Alabama Roll*.

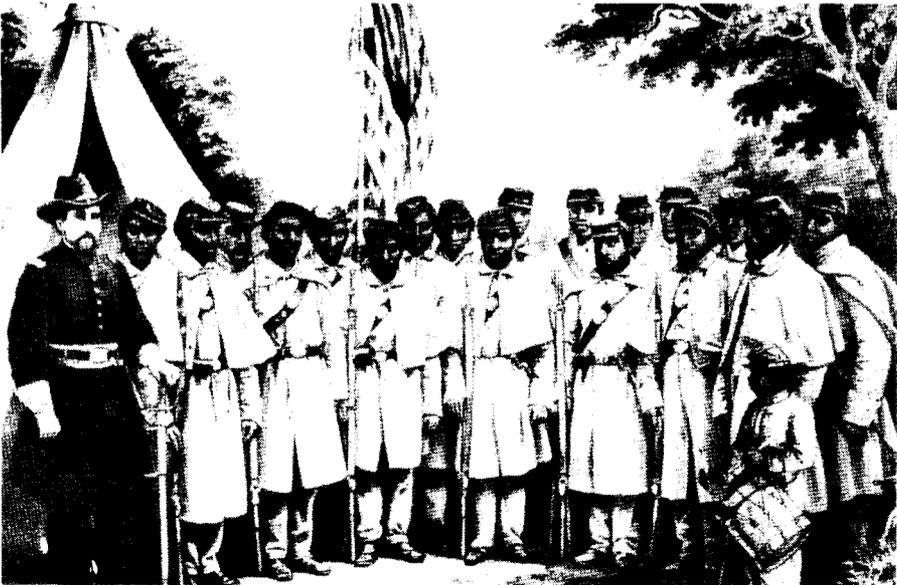
The Liverpool-based Network collective, "committed to standing with all oppressed groups and...opposed to racism in all its forms", produced *Roll Alabama* in response to the Wirral Borough's project to build a full-scale replica of the Confederate ship *Alabama*. As the group's handout explains, the play is set in 1992 on board the replica built by the fictional Merseyworld Trust: "Eight actors have been employed to write and perform 'The Alabama Story', a pageant about the ship's career." What follows in the next hour and a half, however, is a dramatic tussle between vicious lies and defiant truth, cynical deception and relentless debunking, oppression and resistance, reaction and revolution. The drama is centred on the defining question of the American Civil War: the fight to crush the slave system and break the chains of black oppression, a fight which galvanised support from the working class of this country.

The *CSS Alabama* was a steam- and sail-powered Confederate raider. Codenamed "Number 290", it was secretly built at Birkenhead by one John Laird at the behest of the Confederacy's naval agent in Europe, James Bulloch. In July 1862 it was sneaked out of Britain (remember "England's neutrality") past

British and Union patrols, to the Azores. There it was fitted out with arms and boarded by its notorious captain, Alabamian Raphael Semmes. Over a period of 666 days at sea, the *Alabama* is said to have sunk 64 ships, most of them the likes of US whalers and grain ships.

This bullying "commercial raider" was finally cornered by the *USS Kearsage*, which had been hunting the *Alabama* for two years. As the raider limped out of its repair docks, six miles off the French port of Cherbourg, the *USS Kearsage* "swiftly reduced the *Alabama* to flotsam". It was 19 June 1864, and the "pirate ship that had preyed on and destroyed the best part of the North's commercial fleet" was sent plunging on a 190-foot dive to the bottom of the English Channel, where its shattered hulk still lies rotting. It was a gratifying victory for the North, particularly for those black sailors who comprised a quarter of the Union Navy. Semmes jumped, and was taken, along with 42 others, by a British yacht to Southampton. After the war ended, Britain was forced to pay the victorious US government \$15.5 million in compensation.

Following a failed, internationally fractious attempt at dredging up the wreckage of the *Alabama*, something called the "Alabama Trust" has gone into partnership with Wirral Borough Council in the building of a £2.5 million replica of the Confederate raider, complete with the flags of slavery, to serve as a "tourist attraction" in Merseyside. As a member of The Network wrote of the "Alabama Trust": "It has high-level proven links with the 'Confederate High Command', an organization dedicated to the



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Union soldiers in the winter of 1862-1863. Two hundred thousand black recruits turned the tide for the Union Army in American Civil War.

# The flag o must not fly in

preservation of the 'ideals' of the Confederate States and employing, in its propaganda, formulations and attitudes which would not be out of place in bulletins of the National Front or the British Movement. Two members of the Alabama Trust left the Confederate High Command to establish the Trust." The ghosts of the Confederacy are trying to reverse the defeat inflicted on them by history, to raise the banner of slavery in Merseyside. This is an insult and an outrage against the multi-racial working class and all decent people: it should be stopped!

The Confederate flag is not simply the banner of the defeated slave South. It is today the symbol of racist terror in the US, the banner for Ku Klux Klan and skinhead scum, the swastika for American fascists. It is especially grotesque that this flag fly in the Liverpool area, which itself was built during the slave trade and on the trade in slave-produced cotton and where today racist oppression runs rampant. Wirral's "tourism development officer", HG Mortimer, responding on 23 January to a letter of protest from Merseyside Anti-Apartheid, makes clear the historical bias of the project. He writes: "It might be useful perhaps too to recall the origins of the Civil War and to stress that States Rights and not slavery was the principal cause of that war" and joins "virtually all modern historians" in "acknowledg[ing] however that the old traditional and simplistic view that the just North fought the evil South to end slavery is simply untrue." We are sure that it is indeed "useful" for HG Mortimer & Co to peddle this lie so reminiscent of those supporting the losers of the Civil War.

"Merseyworld", as the play ironically announces, is the "Symbol of the North-West.... Where the spirit of the 1860s meets the spirit of the 1990s"—from the wrong side. Up to their necks in this filthy "Alabama Project" are the Labour councillors who constitute a technical majority in the Wirral Borough Council. The Labour spokesman for Wirral's Leisure Services Committee, JR Cocker, euphemistically admits that the publicity pack accompanying the "project" "certainly does seem to praise and glorify the role of the Alabama and clearly sees its career as a good swash-buckling yarn". Then he jumps quickly to its defence: "I think, however, it is unfair to say...that the 'Alabama Trust seeks to glamourise the Confederates' States role in defending slavery." (Letter, 27 January 1989)! Assuring the "continued vigilance" of the Labour group, Mr Cocker will see to it "that the story is told in a way that it covers and condemns activities that are no longer seen as civilised or reasonable".

Reality is a hard act to follow in this case, but *Roll Alabama Roll* does aptly capture some of the mixture of outrage and incredulous hilarity rightly occasioned by such revolting absurdities. And central to its concern is the lie, put out by the Confederacy and retailed even by some so-called "Marxists" in Britain today, that slavery was at most a tenth-rate issue in the American Civil War. When Semmes demands "an unbiased view, an unprejudiced view, a balanced portrait. Of myself. In the name of justice! And in the name of liberty!..." Mary ("Scarlett") chimes in, "Why yes, Captain Semmes. We in the South were fighting for the God-given right to govern ourselves."



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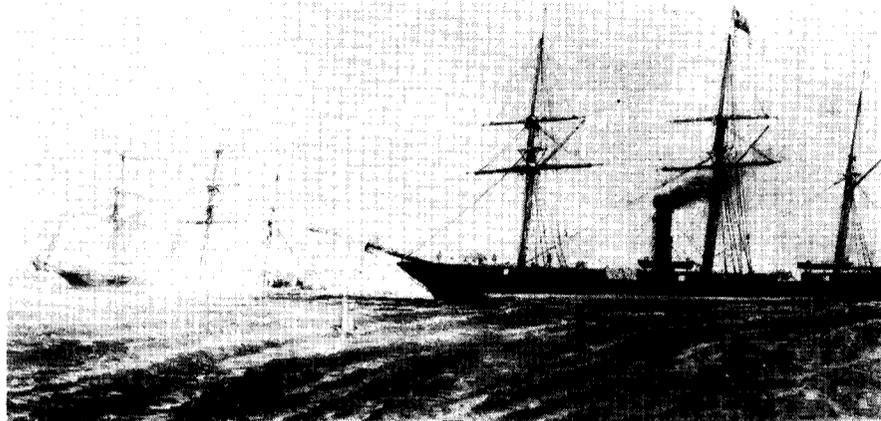
MATT: "I thought it was all about you governing slaves."

RICHARD (SEMMEs): "Well, there was a lot of propaganda on both sides. But States rights was the principal cause of the war."

When the debate gets too hairy, Janice, the superbly portrayed Thatcherite dimwit of a tour guide, intervenes with her toothpaste ad smile: "Here at Merseyworld we have taken every precaution to ensure that the Alabama story is told in a way that it covers and condemns activities that are no longer seen as civilised or reasonable."

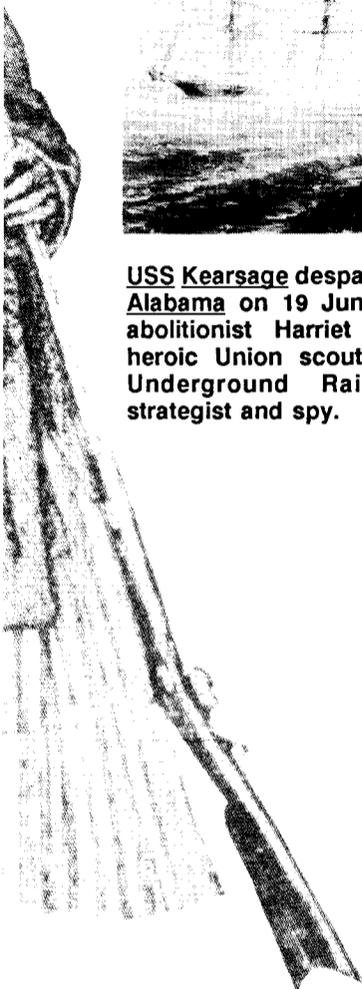
Another lie debunked in the course of the play is that the majority of the "British people", if they cared at all, tended to be enthusiastic fans of the Confederacy, not of the North. The disinformation pack put out by the pro-*Alabama* bunch lyingly claims: "The people of Liverpool were sympathetic to him [James Bulloch], after all they (South) sent much of their cotton to Liverpool for weaving in the mills of Lancashire." (*Wh'appen*, March). When the Southern whiskey magnate and financier of the project Devereux, manages in the play to sow confusion on this point among the crew, it proves to be the last straw. One actor says "But all the same, the City of Liverpool did support the Confederates...." Another answers "Who told you that? The Trust? The American Civil War Society? They're all soaked in Southern Pride." Instead of changing the script to sell Devereux'

# of slavery n Merseyside!



National Maritime Museum

**USS Kearsage** despatches slave-ship **Alabama** on 19 June 1864. Radical abolitionist Harriet Tubman (left); heroic Union scout, conductor on Underground Railway, military strategist and spy.



booze, the actors rebel. The entire tenor of the play is dramatically transformed: horseplay turns to anger, myth to history, and submission to mutiny.

As the curtain starts coming down for the interval, John sets the theme for the second act:

"Look. Cotton stopped comin' in before the war started. The plantation bosses were holding it back to keep the prices up. And the merchants and millowners and speculators over here were all making a killing. While people starved. But people weren't stupid. They knew what was going on.... they still supported the North, they knew slavery was a crime and they wanted to do something about it."

In a dazzling series of tableaux in the finest tradition of Brechtian agitprop, the *real* pageant presents to us the unsung working-class sympathisers of the North in England and the towering heroes of the American war against slavery—the radical abolitionists John Brown, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth and Angelina Grimke. One after another, protagonist and antagonist step forward and cross historical swords. Blow is answered with blow, blast with blast. The Confederacy and their British imperialist buddies are savaged. The origins of the Ku Klux Klan—the murderous race-terrorists whose banner is the flag of the defeated Confederacy—are laid bare. Days, weeks, months and even years whizz by in a welter of flags, historical slides, authentic historical speeches, musical revues and burlesques, embracing

several countries and epochs, all converging inexorably on the central message of the play, hauntingly articulated by John Brown in his speech before he was hanged: "I, John Brown, am quite certain that the crimes of this land will never be purged away but with blood.... In my death I may do more than in my life. Let them hang me."

The issue of slavery was settled by blood and iron in the Civil War. Often misrepresented as simply a war between the "Yankees" and the South, the Civil War was part of the American revolution—the Second American Revolution, an irrepressible conflict between social systems. At the heart of the struggle was the system of slavery. The burgeoning industrial capitalists of the North could only finish their revolution by crushing the slavocracy and establishing the system of free labour throughout the country. But the Northerners who were driven into war by the provocations of the secessionists tried desperately to save the Union without "freeing even one slave", as Lincoln put it. The great black abolitionist and ex-slave Frederick Douglass remarked that Lincoln's inaugural address "bends the knee to slavery". Douglass argued that the slogan must be "Death to Slavery!"

Karl Marx writing in November 1861 saw the character of the war and was confident that "events themselves drive to the promulgation of the decisive slogan—the emancipation of the slaves." Indeed, the course of the war proved to the Unionists that it could not be won unless it was fought as a real civil war. It could not be won without using revolutionary methods to destroy the entire social system of slavery. This finally resulted in the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the arming of 200,000 black soldiers who fought heroically under the Union flag.

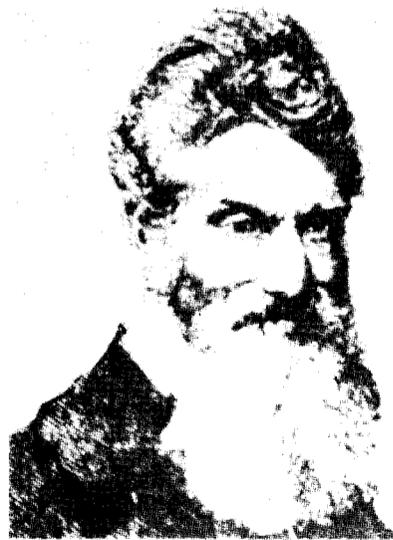
*Roll Alabama* honours the real heroes of the Civil War, the courageous fighters for black liberation. Some of the material used in the section of the play which sets the historical record right was taken from the Spartacist League/US *Black History and the Class Struggle* pamphlets as well as *Women and Revolution*, as acknowledged in its programme. In addition, the play explores the British connection to the Confederacy, quoting from the London *Times*, mouthpiece of the "Cotton Clique", ranting hysterically against the Emancipation Proclamation: "Is the reign of the last 'President' to go out amid horrible massacres of white women and children...Is 'Lincoln' yet a name not known to us as it will be known

to posterity—ultimately to be classed among that catalogue of monsters—the wholesale assassins and butchers of their kind??? This liberation of slaves can only be seen as monstrous, reckless and devilish." But *Roll Alabama* also takes the audience to Liverpool, St James Hall, Lime Street, and it's "Time for the suffering cotton-operatives of Lancashire to find their voice, time for the socialist agitators, for Republican orators, for democrats demanding the right to vote...no time for a man to hang back when his sympathies, as mine are, are with the North and not with the South...." The workers' meeting passes the following resolution, a standard pro-North statement passed at anti-interventionist meetings in Britain:

"This meeting, being convinced that slavery is the cause of the tremendous struggle now going on in the American States, and that the object of the rebellion is to perpetuate the unchristian and immoral system of chattel slavery, earnestly prays that the rebellion may be crushed and its wicked object defeated, and that the Federal government is entitled to the generous sympathy of Englishmen, and so be strengthened to pursue its emancipation policy till not a slave be left on American soil."

That same evening the anti-slavery Quaker MP for Rochdale, John Bright, debates Birkenhead MP and the builder of the *Alabama*, John Laird, reminding parliament that "the people of this country...still...lack the elementary right to vote." He is hissed and booed, while Laird is hailed and cheered in Westminster. "But for the time being...the pressure of the labouring men prevails.... Britain refrains from intervention."

Karl Marx is quoted in the play: "It ought never to be forgotten in the United States, that at least the working-classes of England, from the commencement to the termination of the difficulty, have never forsaken them. To them it was due that, despite the poisonous stimulants daily administered by a venal and reckless press, not one single public [pro]-war meeting could be held in the United Kingdom." Marx also campaigned in England and, as the American black poet Claude McKay related in his "Report on the Negro Question" to the Fourth



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Congress of the Communist International: "In the company of Richard Cobden, Charles Bradlaugh, the atheist, and John Bright, he toured England making speeches and so roused up the sentiment of the workers of that country against the Confederacy that Lord Palmerston, [the] Prime Minister, who was about to recognize the South, had to desist."

The International Workingmen's Association, of which Marx was a leading member, sent Lincoln the following letter at the time of his re-election in 1864:

"From the commencement of the titanic American strife the workmen of Europe felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class.... When an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the

world, 'slavery' on the banner of armed revolt; when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great democratic republic had first sprung up, whence the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the eighteenth century...then the working classes of Europe understood at once...that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labor...."

In the US, the destruction of slavery signalled the birth of the American labour movement, the rise of unions and agitation for the eight-hour day. Then as now, the fight for black liberation is the fight for the emancipation of all working people. Radical Reconstruction was destroyed in a political counterrevolution spearheaded by the nightriding race-terrorists of the Ku Klux Klan. Treacherously, the North withdrew its troops from the South. The unfinished tasks of the Civil War can only be accomplished by a third American revolution, a proletarian revolution led by an integrated Leninist vanguard. As we wrote in "Harriet Tubman: Fighter for Black Freedom" (*Black History and the Class Struggle* no 5):

"But the foundation upon which black equality must rest was never laid: only



no credit

Karl Marx (above). Civil War heroes John Brown (left), Harpers Ferry martyr; Frederick Douglass (right), leading abolitionist.



Historical Picture Service

confiscation of the huge plantation holdings of the ex-slaveowners and their distribution among the ex-slaves would have laid the economic basis without which 'equality' remained a legal formality. Having completed their revolution against slavery—the last great bourgeois revolution—the Northern capitalists turned their backs on the blacks. Although they may have been opposed to property in human flesh, the robber barons of the late 19th century allied with Southern landholders for private property in the means of production.... Only abolition of private property will remove the social roots of racial and sexual oppression."

The real history of the Civil War is also one of proletarian internationalism and revolutionary struggle. The smashing

*continued on page 10*

# Poland...

(Continued from page 1)

caste balancing between world capitalism and the socialised economy. To pay the Western bankers means imposing a level of hardship that guarantees massive strikes, slowdowns, the breakdown of labour discipline. Added to this is the prospect of a popular uprising. As a desperate manoeuvre, the top echelons of the bureaucracy around Jaruzelski have sought to get Walesa & Co to share responsibility for the economic shock treatment.

At the same time, a number of well-placed *apparatchiks* are looking out for number one by transforming themselves into private capitalists, now that they have run the socialised economy into the ground. A prototype is the former minister of industry, Mieczyslaw Wilcez, who is both a millionaire private entrepreneur and PZPR party member. Timothy Garton Ash writes in the *New York Review of Books* (15 June) that, "the process whereby members of the *nomenklatura* advance into private enterprise, using the power and connections that go with their official positions, proceeds apace." Ash notes the advantages of "compensating some members of the *nomenklatura* for their loss of political power, and dividing it between those who stand to lose and those who stand to gain. One might call this the '*nomenklatura* buyout' theory."

## Crisis of Stalinist rule

The Polish events reflect a broader crisis of Stalinism. In Hungary the ruling party is split, the majority now calling themselves social democrats, while a myriad of rightist opposition parties sprout up. And not far in the background is Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev. When PZPR chief Mieczyslaw Rakowski tried to hold out for more ministerial portfolios, Walesa told him to "stop rocking the boat" and a 40-minute phone call from Gorbachev delivered the same message. On a more fundamental level, the Polish events are a logical outcome of the Gorbachev perestroika "reforms". We have warned that this programme of "market socialism" emboldens counterrevolutionary elements, and in Poland they are now on the threshold of power. This will have a direct influence on the situation in the Soviet Union, particularly the Baltic states, where behind calls for "self-determination" forces of counterrevolution are mounting.

Counterrevolution in Poland or the Baltic would not be some "peaceful" and "evolutionary" process, as Brzezinski and others paint it, but a *bloody pogrom*. For as Polish Catholic nationalism gains the

upper hand, virulent anti-Communism and anti-Semitism come to the fore. Walesa is an open admirer of Polish prewar fascist dictator Pilsudski; he asked the *Solidarność* parliamentary fraction to open its first meeting by singing, "We, the First Brigade", the marching song of Pilsudski's legions. Just how deep these strains run is seen in the case of Bronislaw Geremek, Walesa's chief brain-truster, whom many considered the obvious candidate for prime minister. The London *Guardian* (18 August) noted that Geremek "has come under attack from the Roman Catholic right because of his early membership of the Communist Party and because he is a Jew".

The virulent anti-Semitism of Poland's Catholic hierarchy has been exposed by the dispute over a Carmelite convent on the site of Auschwitz death camp. A few years ago, under pressure from international Jewish groups, church officials from France and Belgium as well

still in force.

Fifty years ago, Leon Trotsky in his seminal article on "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (October 1933), which he characterised as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, foresaw a process remarkably similar to what is happening in Poland today. Trotsky notes: "The bureaucracy is not a ruling class. But the further development of the bureaucratic regime can lead to the inception of a new ruling class: not organically, through degeneration, but through counterrevolution." The strangulation of the party, soviets and trade unions, he points out, atomises the proletariat:

"The first social shock, external or internal, may throw the atomized Soviet society into civil war. The workers, having lost control over the state and economy, may resort to mass strikes as weapons of self-defense. The discipline of the dictatorship would be broken. Under the onslaught of the workers and because of the pressure of economic difficulties, the trusts would be

even though they ran unopposed, as voters crossed off their names from the ballot in disgust. *Solidarność* took 99 out of 100 seats in the upper house of parliament, and now holds a third of the seats in the Sejm. This arrangement was supposed to guarantee a PZPR-led government, but when the Stalinists' previously compliant satellites (the United Peasants Party and Democratic Party) went over to *Solidarność*, General Kiszczak gave up his attempt to form a cabinet.

*Solidarność* leaders "came home" to Gdansk on Sunday, 20 August, as Mazowiecki and Walesa attended an ornate celebratory mass. In the churchyard, Walesa had to silence a group of hecklers who shouted, "We want bread, not a prime minister." The protest was led by "Fighting Solidarity", a split-off connected with the ultrarightist clerical-nationalist KPN. At the first congress of *Solidarność* in 1981, these were the people who led opposition to any positive



Harrity/U.S. News & World Report



AP

Reactionary Polish nationalists thirst for blood: "Fighting Solidarity" cheers US imperialist chief Bush in Gdansk last July (left). Warsaw university group hails Marshal Pilsudski, fascist dictator of interwar Poland.

as Poland agreed to move the convent to a centre for Christian-Jewish dialogue to be built nearby. After a small group of American Jews protested the continued presence of the convent at Auschwitz last month, Polish Cardinal Glomp spoke at the national shrine of the Black Madonna in Czestochowa 26 August, accusing Jews of "offend[ing] the feelings of all Poles". Glomp ranted about Jewish-controlled media spreading "anti-Polish feeling", and vituperated: "dear Jews, do not talk with us from the position of a people raised above all others." While the Polish hierarchy has reneged on the promise to move the convent, the French and Belgian prelates involved insist the agreement is

forced to disrupt the planned beginnings and enter into competition with one another. The dissolution of the regime would naturally find its violent and chaotic echo in the village and would inevitably be thrown over into the army. The socialist state would collapse, giving place to the capitalist regime or, more correctly, to capitalist chaos."

Yet this does not mean the situation is hopeless, Trotsky insisted. As the working class entered into action, the Stalinist apparatus would be suspended in mid-air:

"A real civil war could develop not between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the resurgent proletariat but between the proletariat and the active forces of the counterrevolution. In the event of an open clash between the two mass camps, there cannot even be talk of the bureaucracy playing an independent role. Its polar flanks would be flung to the different sides of the barricade.... The victory of the revolutionary camp, in any case, is conceivable only under the leadership of a proletarian party, which would naturally be raised to power by victory over the counterrevolution."

An opening to build a revolutionary proletarian party now exists in Poland, especially because the workers are struggling not just against the despised Stalinist regime but also against Walesa & Co.

## Workers strike against *Solidarność* orders

The present events in Poland go back to the outbreak of workers strikes last year. The Stalinists tried to negotiate their way out via a series of "Round Table" discussions which led to the legalisation of *Solidarność* and the calling of elections for 4 June. The June elections produced a total rout of the Stalinists. While virtually every one of the Solidarity candidates got through on the first round, almost all of the PZPR's "national list" was defeated,

reference to "socialism" in its programme. When Bush came to Gdansk in July, "Fighting Solidarity" welcomed him with signs proclaiming, "A Good Communist is a Dead Communist." The Polish economic crisis is so sharp that it has fuelled support for these violent anti-Communists who reject the "Round Table" agreement. At the same time, the Stalinist-led unions have also won support by protesting austerity policies, while *Solidarność* unions have grown slowly, with only about a fifth the membership they had in their heyday of 1981.

*Solidarność*' economic calculations are based on somehow getting massive aid from Western capitalism. When Bush visited Poland in July, Walesa repeatedly asked him for \$10 billion to save his country from a "great, great upheaval". Yet the American president promised only \$115 million, barely one per cent of what Walesa asked for. Imperialist aid is crucial for *Solidarność*' plans: with all of the talk about restoring capitalism how can they do it without big infusions of capital? There's nobody in Poland with any capital to buy up state-owned industry, even at bargain-basement prices. Yet Washington and Wall Street are loaded up with debt—from the federal deficit, bankrupt S&Ls (Savings and Loans—similar to building societies) and Latin America—and those that have the cash, like Frankfurt and Tokyo bankers, are reluctant to pour it into the sinkhole of Poland.

And now *Solidarność* will have to take responsibility for the economic policies which spell misery for its working-class base. As an analyst from the US Council on Foreign Relations put it:

"As Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki is going to have two problems. First, he is going to have to stab his adversaries and then he is going to have to stab his supporters...he is going to have to shut

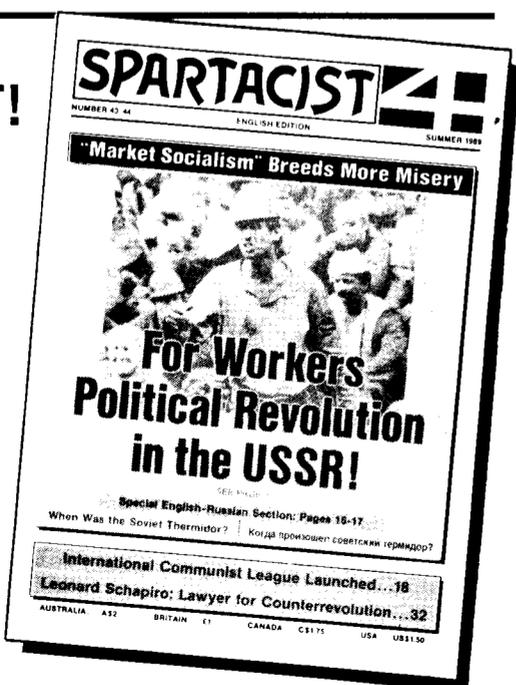
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Poland's revolutionary Communist tradition: Rosa Luxemburg and the "Three W's"—Adolf Warski, Henryk Walecki and Wera Kostrzewa of the early Polish Communist Party.

down inefficient, overmanned state enterprises, such as the Gdansk shipyards, where Solidarity was born, or some mines and steel mills...."

The architect of Solidarność' economic plans is Harvard professor Jeffery Sachs, whose claim to fame was advising the Bolivian government on how to defeat hyperinflation in 1985. Sachs' solution: firing two-thirds of the tin miners, the key section of the Bolivian proletariat. This programme could be explosive if tried in Poland, a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalism was abolished and the workers' interests are supposed to be paramount. As we pointed out in "Solidarność/Stalinist Pact Against the Workers" (WV no 479, 9 June), "The workers are beginning to recognize that Walesa & Co. are traitors to their class."

Now that Solidarność leaders have explicitly avowed that their aim is to restore capitalism in Poland, it lays the objective basis for defenders of socialist property to seek unity with the proletarian base of Solidarność in genuine class opposition to the Stalinist bureaucrats and former leaders of Solidarność who aspire to form a neo-bourgeoisie on the backs of the workers. But as Lenin noted, politics is concentrated economics, and militant labour struggles won't go very far without forging an authentic Marxist party, for which Poland has ample traditions.

#### Internationalist tradition of Polish communism

The Western press depicts the entire Polish people as always and irrevocably ardently nationalist and piously Catholic. Communism is presented as a totally alien element in the Polish body politic, imposed solely by the Russian Red Army in 1945. For example, a historical sketch of postwar Poland in the *New York Times* (18 August) is titled "40 Years of Communism in Poland: Stalin's House on a Soft Foundation." The reality is just the reverse. It was Stalin and his followers and heirs who destroyed and discredited Communism in Poland.

For decades Poland had one of the oldest and strongest traditions of Marxist proletarian socialism of any European country. The first Marxist working-class party in the tsarist empire, the party Proletariat, was formed in Warsaw in the 1880s. Ludwik Warynski's Proletariat rejected the traditional Polish radical programme of a national uprising and worked closely with the Russian populists for a social revolution throughout the tsarist empire. Warynski's anti-nationalist tradition was taken over in the next generation by the greatest Polish proletarian revolutionary leader of all, Rosa Luxemburg. The Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL), led by Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches, united the vanguard of the Polish proletariat and left-wing intelligentsia.

In the decade before World War I the mass of the Polish industrial working class adhered to the Polish Socialist Party-Left, a centrist formation which significantly did not agitate for the restoration of an independent Polish state.

The nationalist wing of Polish socialism, led by Josef Pilsudski, was supported by only a minority of the Polish workers in this period. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the defeat of Germany by the Western powers in World War I led to the establishment of an independent Polish bourgeois state, with Pilsudski at its head, in late 1918. At the same time the Polish Communist Party was formed through a fusion of Luxemburg's SDKPiL and the Polish Socialist Party-Left.

Roman Werfel, who joined the Polish Communist Party in 1923, told of the CP's internationalist spirit in an interview with a pro-Solidarność journalist:

"The most important thing for communists at the time was not the issue of frontiers, but that of an all-European socialist revolution, whose outbreak was perfectly conceivable. There seems to be an implication, in what you've just been saying, that a great nation, a nation worthy of note, is one which appropriates the greatest possible number of territories populated by foreign nations. But this view is false. It may be correct from the point of view of the exploiting classes, which profit from

with communism."

—quoted in MK Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland* (1976)

The Polish American historian Dziewanowski observes: "A pro-Trotsky undercurrent continued to remain a factor of some importance until the party's dissolution [in 1938], particularly among the Jewish membership."

In the late 1920s the Communists led the opposition to Pilsudski's fascistic dictatorship, while the social democrats served as Pilsudski's shock troops. The growing White terror forced ever larger numbers of Polish Communists to take refuge in the Soviet Union. While many foreign Communists were killed in the Great Purges of the late '30s, Stalin's war against the Polish party was exceptional. Practically all Polish Communists in Soviet territory were either physically liquidated or sent to labour camps. The entire leadership—Warski, Walecki, Wera Kostrzewa, Unszticht—was killed. In 1938 in an unprecedented act Stalin dissolved the Polish Communist Party as a "nest of Pilsudskiite-Trotskyites".

The destruction of Polish Communism



Almost a decade ago, international Spartacist tendency exposed Solidarność as a Polish company union for the CIA and Wall Street: demonstration outside Solidarność office in New York, September 1981.

such territories, but certainly not from the point of view of the people; they get some scraps from time to time, but later they pay for those conquests with sweat and blood."

—quoted in Teresa Toranska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets* (1987)

In the early 1920s the Communist Party under the leadership of the "Three W's" (Warski, Walecki, Wera Kostrzewa) was stronger within the Polish working class than the Pilsudskiite social democrats. There was a saying in the Communist International: "The German party is the biggest; the Polish party is the best." In fact, the Polish party offered more resistance to Stalinisation than any other large Communist party. In December 1923 its central committee sent a letter of protest to the Russian party which stated:

"...for our party, nay for the whole Comintern, for the whole revolutionary proletariat the name of Comrade Trotsky is insolubly connected with the victory of the Soviet Revolution, with the Red Army,

begun by Pilsudski, carried forward by Stalin, was continued by Hitler. Many Communist cadre were killed during the Nazi occupation. No less important, the extermination of the Jews radically changed the political balance of forces in Polish society. Jews constituted 10 per cent of the prewar population, proportionally greater than in any other country. As an oppressed and urbanised people, Jews played an important role in all Polish left-wing organisations. Thus the Nazi Holocaust destroyed a powerful counterweight to the clerical-nationalist forces of Polish reaction. Stalin and Hitler, along with Pilsudski, are the three godfathers of Solidarnosc.

#### Bitter fruits of bureaucratic rule

Nonetheless, Communism was by no means an insignificant and despised force in Poland when the Soviet Red Army liberated the country at the end of World War II. Many young workers and

intellectuals looked forward to the socialist reconstruction of their devastated country. Significantly, a number of prominent figures now in Solidarność were once ardent Communists. As a teenager in the early 1950s, Jacek Kuron, today a pro-Western social democrat, was a fanatical Stalinist who enjoyed publicly baiting Pilsudskiite reactionaries. Filmmaker Andrzej Wajda, currently a Solidarność senator, began by directing "socialist-realist" epics. Wajda's interesting film *Man of Marble*, made in the late '70s, depicts the socialist idealism of many young workers in the early postwar years.

That idealism was soon eroded by Stalinist police-state terror amid the economic privileges enjoyed by the bureaucracy. Yet the mass of Polish workers and intellectuals continued to believe in socialism. The crisis of "de-Stalinisation" in 1956 brought Poland to the brink of a proletarian political revolution. It was headed off by the liberal-national Stalinist Wladyslaw Gomulka. Once Gomulka had consolidated his power, in part by conciliating the Catholic hierarchy, he suppressed both the workers councils and leftist intellectual circles which had arisen during the 1956 "Polish October".

As the economy stagnated in the 1960s, Gomulka's once-great popularity declined. In 1968 a faction within the bureaucracy around secret police chief Moczar sought to channel the growing popular discontent into traditional anti-Semitic Polish chauvinism. Under the rubric of "anti-Zionism", the few tens of thousands of Jews who had survived the Nazi Holocaust, many of them loyal Communist cadre, were driven out of the country. This reactionary and cynical campaign further alienated the intelligentsia from the "Communist" regime and strengthened the forces of clerical nationalism.

In 1970 the Baltic ports exploded when the Gomulka regime raised food prices a few weeks before Christmas. Led by the shipbuilders, thousands of workers, some singing the *Internationale*, attacked police and burned down the Party headquarters in Gdansk and Szczecin. Gomulka ordered in the army: over a hundred workers were killed. Once again Poland stood on the brink of a mass workers uprising. And once again Polish Stalinism presented to the workers a new face and a new deal. Gomulka was replaced by Edward Gierk, an ex-coal miner with a reputation as a liberal reformer. Gierk personally went to the Baltic ports and vowed his government would never use force to suppress workers' protests. He further promised an era of unparalleled economic prosperity. Walesa recounted that he, like most Polish workers, welcomed and believed Gierk's promises.

Gierk's "economic miracle" of the early '70s was financed by massive borrowing from Western banks. When in 1976 Gierk imposed an austerity programme to pay back the loan sharks of Wall Street and Frankfurt, Polish workers reacted even more strongly because they felt betrayed. It was only after 1976 that the mass of the Polish proletariat and intelligentsia became totally disillusioned with the "real existing socialism" as practised in their country. Gradually, they turned to the Vatican and Western capitalist governments for salvation. Solidarność arose out of the "dissident" circles of workers and intellectuals nurtured and protected by the church hierarchy, now directed by Polish pope Karol Wojtyla.

#### Build a Bolshevik party!

The formation of a Solidarność-led government in Poland has heightened the triumphalist mood in Western ruling circles that the end of Communism is at hand. The latest rage at Washington cocktail parties is the apocalyptic vision

continued on page 10

# Roll Alabama...

(Continued from page 7)

of slavery has a particular resonance in Liverpool, whose fleet in 1752 "could carry 25,820 slaves, packed in the holds 'like books upon a shelf', each person allowed less than half the space granted, in the same period, to a transported convict" (Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*). At least one African in three "would either die of dysentery or commit suicide during the three-year 'seasoning' or acclimatisation period". By the 1780s, Liverpool was "the single largest English construction site for slave ships", two-fifths of British slavers being built there. As Fryer remarks, "Well might...[Liverpool]...display on its town hall, built in 1749-54, the symbolic heads of African elephants and African slaves."

## Black liberation through socialist revolution

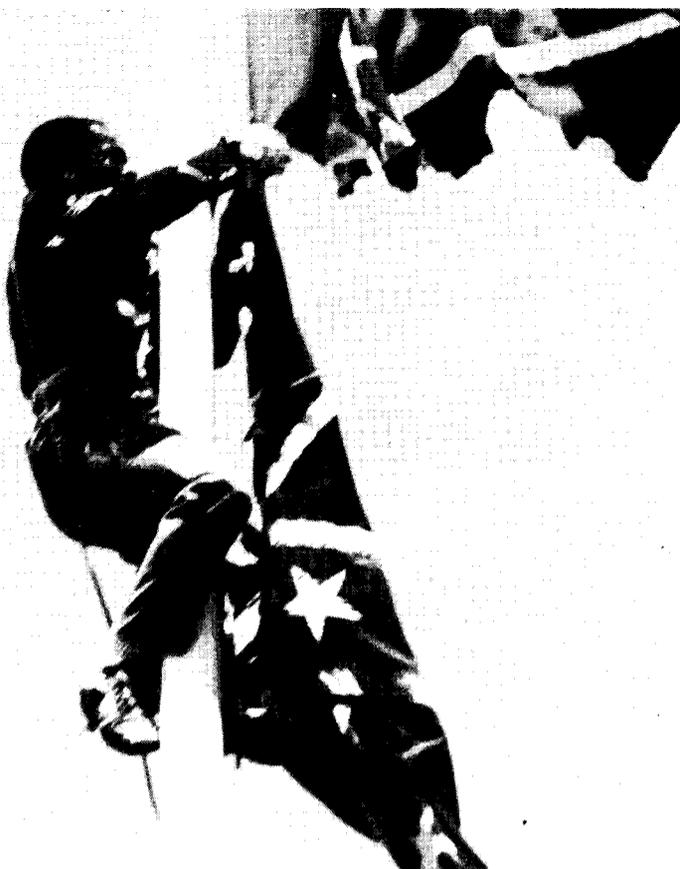
The recent report of the Gifford Inquiry, *Loosen the Shackles*, shows some of the vicious racism in Liverpool today. Unemployment in the heavily black Toxteth area can reach up to 80 per cent. In some areas, according to another report in the *Independent* (15 October 1988) unemployment among black youth is as high as 90 per cent. "Nowhere else in Britain are blacks so exposed to threats, taunts, and abuse if they leave an area of the city" (*Guardian*, 19 July). Racist cop terror is endemic: "In Toxteth they do not talk about racism, but 'apartheid'; not racial attacks, but 'racial terrorism'." Charges under the Public Order Act have risen to the point that the Liverpool 8 Law Centre "fears that Toxteth is being used as a public order training ground." The city's Labour chief Keva Coombes admits that "the council is

'racist' ". The Militant tendency, which upholds its wretched sub-reformism as Labourite lackeys in Liverpool as some sort of example, "refused to acknowledge race as an issue, arguing that disadvantage was purely a class issue" (*Independent*, 15 October 1988).

Liverpool has been a historic centre of militant working-class struggle—to this day the Liverpool dockers served as the hard core of the strike so ignominiously

sold out by Todd & Co. Now the bosses and Labour lackeys who have presided over the destruction of industry propose a money-making "tourist" attraction in glorifying the flag of slavery at the behest of Confederate-loving racists: an "employment training" scam with a grotesquely reactionary ideological twist.

*Roll Alabama* implicitly exposes and skewers these racists and their camp followers—be they Tory blue or



Workers Vanguard

**San Francisco, April 1984: Spartacist supporter, wearing uniform of Union Army, rips down Confederate flag, banner of sedition, slavery and race terror.**

Labourite pink. It celebrates the strong tradition of anti-racist, proletarian struggle that will one day be completely reclaimed and honoured by the revolutionary British and American proletariat. That tradition includes the black Chartist William Cuffay and his courageous contemporary, William Davidson, who defended the right to resist tyranny with arms, invoking the relevant guarantee provided in the Magna Carta. Frederick Douglass lectured in England and Scotland, to enthusiastic crowds, just before the American Civil War—during which £150 was collected for his liberation. He "teamed up with the Chartist leader Henry Vincent and specifically called himself a Chartist" (*Staying Power*). Douglass, too, when appealing to blacks to join the Union Army in August 1863, upheld the right to armed self-defence:

"Remember that the musket...is better than all mere parchment guarantees of liberty. In your hands that musket means liberty; and should your constitutional right at the close of this war be denied...your brethren are safe while you have a Constitution which proclaims your right to keep and bear arms."

*Roll Alabama* has fired a salvo in honour of the struggle for black freedom. It deserves to be seen by a wider audience, not least because its cause is just. In response to this gross provocation by Confederate apologists from the "Alabama Trust" to the Wirral Council, the organised workers movement in alliance with all the oppressed should mobilise to keep the flag of slavery and race-terror from flying in Merseyside. It wouldn't be a bad idea to construct a replica of the *USS Kearsage* to commemorate the destruction of the *Alabama*, either. As the *Roll Alabama* cast chant in unison, fists raised, at the play's end: "Finish the Civil War!" ■

# CPSU...

(Continued from page 2)

resolute urgent measures to clean the perestroika process in the Baltic republics from extremism, destructive and harmful tendencies.

The CPSU Central Committee urgently calls on the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, all those who cherish their homeland, peace and national accord to realise the full extent and reality of impending disaster, to display responsibility and wisdom at this turn of the history of the entire country.

The Central Committee appeals to the working class, peasants, and those who create the material base of life and are always the first to suffer most of all from social and national upheavals—we need jointly to seek and find a way out of the situation, to stop the hysterical elements and not to give in to nationalist hysteria.

We all share many difficulties. The country and its economy are in a difficult situation. Do not believe those who try to prove that the life of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians will be better off and comfortable, once the migrants are evicted, the Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Poles, Jews and others who live and work together with you put in an unequal position, the republics secede from the USSR. This is an obvious lie. This is delusion.

Each republic, each region are linked by thousands of economic, social, cultural, scientific, technological and simple human ties with others, with the entire country. What will happen if these ties are cut at one fell swoop? It is absolutely clear that none will be better off.

The Baltic republics, which are the first in our country to get the opportunity to organize truly independent management, to go over to self-reliance and cost-accounting, today face the broadest vistas

for initiative, innovation, economic development and better life. Accretions and distortions of the past, which prevented state bodies and the population of the republics from feeling and acting as masters in their house, are being removed.

The CPSU Central Committee hopes that the working class, working people of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, who have glorious revolutionary internationalist traditions of struggle for the happiness of their and all peoples of our great country will say their weighty word this time as well, defend the new revolution and uphold perestroika.

We appeal to the common sense of the peoples of the multinational Soviet Baltic region. It is time, in our common interest, to put an end to the fateful course of events, to come to your senses, go over from confrontation to dialogue and a painstaking search for expedient decisions and compromises.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is appealing to all communists of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, to Party veterans and those who recently joined their fate with that of the Leninist party: you must set an example of good-will and human communication and persuade people of the necessity of concord and consolidation.

Let's preserve the single family of the Soviet peoples and the unity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. ■

# Poland...

(Continued from page 9)

of State Department "theoretician" Francis Fukuyama who claims we are now witnessing "the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy" (*New York Times*, 27 August).

This kind of "the West has won the

Cold War" triumphalism rests on two fatal illusions: that the people of East Europe, the Soviet Union and China are longing to transform their societies along the lines of "free world" capitalism; and that the Soviet government, under Gorbachev, will not or cannot prevent capitalist restoration in East Europe. The latter view is strongly espoused by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who combines the blustering arrogance of American Cold Warriors with the anti-Russian chauvinism and Great Power illusions of the Polish petty nobility.



Chip Hires—Gamma/Liaison

**Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Solidarność prime minister for counterrevolution.**

Yet many of the social struggles which have convulsed the Communist world in the past year have been not *for* but *against* the efforts of the Stalinist bureaucracies to introduce elements of capitalism into the collectivised economy. The massive strikes of coal miners in Siberia and the Ukraine last month were directed against the effects of Gorbachev's market-oriented perestroika. The upheaval in China was fuelled by the resentment of working people over the gross corruption and inequalities generated by Deng's policy of "building socialism with capitalist methods". Even

in Poland workers are now striking against the IMF-dictated economic shock treatment being carried out by the Solidarność-led government.

While Western imperialist ideologues imagine the masses in so-called Communist countries yearning for capitalism, they have also convinced themselves that the Soviet government has become a "paper tiger" which will no longer protect its postwar sphere of influence in East Europe. The talk in Washington is that the 1945 Yalta agreement has become null and void and East Europe is up for grabs. Plans are mooted about to bring Poland and independent Baltic republics into the IMF. But if unfolding counterrevolution menaced the Soviets along their vital Western borders and threatened to blow apart the multinational USSR, Moscow would have little choice but to respond militarily. Thus Gorbachev's appeasement of imperialism, far from easing or ending the Cold War, has increased the danger of World War III.

Restoration of capitalism in East Europe would not introduce a new global order based on "liberal democracy"; it would mean bloody counterrevolution, nationalist pogroms and wars, which could lead to nuclear holocaust. The struggles now taking shape in East Europe will determine not only the near-term future of this region but possibly the fate of mankind. The bankruptcy and internal demoralisation of Stalinism has opened the road to capitalist restoration. But it also brings to the fore the possibility for proletarian political revolution establishing workers (soviet) democracy. For the working class of East Europe and the Soviet Union to triumph, over both the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies and the counterrevolutionary nationalists, requires the leadership of a genuine communist party modelled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 484, 1 September 1989.

# Britain out of Hong Kong...

(Continued from page 12)

revolution as well as sweat shop super-exploitation, Hong Kong industry built up its position. In the eighties, with other countries—from Sri Lanka to the People's Republic itself—seeking to emulate these conditions, Hong Kong turned once more to its role as conduit into China. Comments the *Economist's* 3 June survey: "Britain's borrowed place in the East is once again to be China's trader with the devils across the sea."

The rapprochement of China with imperialism preceded the Deng regime; the infamous Mao/Nixon accord in 1972 was sealed as US bombs rained napalm death on Vietnam. Since then the Chinese Stalinists have cemented an anti-Soviet alliance—backing the genocidal Pol Potists in Cambodia, CIA/South African-backed rebels in Angola, the CIA's reactionary cut-throats in Afghanistan and, above all, invading Vietnam unsuccessfully in 1979 as a "cat's paw" for Washington. Under the slogan "To get rich is glorious", Deng, Zhao & Co have introduced Hong Kong-style sweat shops into China. The Shenzhen Special Economic Zone abuts Hong Kong and was intended by its architect, the purged Zhao Ziyang, to be a clone of Hong Kong. There are 60,000 Hong Kong registered businesses operating in Guangdong province alone. At the same time the Chinese bureaucracy has used Hong Kong to make massive capitalist investments.

While Deng's "building socialism with capitalist methods" is bringing back all the old filth like child labour and prostitution, the Chinese people as a whole are to be denied the benefits of Hong Kong's wealth and gains its economic strengths could bring to the centralised planned economy. No wonder the *Economist* (3 June) salivates at the prospect of Hong Kong as "the *de facto* capital of southern China, linking its labour with the capital of Japan and Taiwan and the emerging consumer market of South-East Asia."

Hong Kong is a classic example of the evils of colonialism. As that hoary Hong Kong reactionary commentator Richard Hughes observed: "There is no nonsense about democracy in Hong Kong." Although 98 per cent of the population is Chinese, the language of the courts and government departments is English. Many of its institutions reek of the attitude that not so long ago put signs in parks: "No dogs and Chinese". Police memos still circulate labelled "For British eyes only". There is no minimum wage, no social security and no health service. While much of the working class live in tiny government-subsidised flats, 400,000 are jammed in abject poverty in the old walled city of Kowloon. The army, including 3000 Gurkha mercenaries, patrol a heavily fortified border wall to maintain the elite's riches and the marginal privileges of some of the rest.

The 56-member Legislative Council is a self-appointed oligarchy of colonial officials and the rich. Under the Thatcher-Deng agreement there will be no direct elections until 1991 and then only for ten seats. An unholy alliance of colonial officials, wealthy businessmen and the Stalinist bureaucrats who fear any challenge to their political monopoly has

opposed any extension of democratic rights.

## British fake left: Stalinophobic "democrats"

Stepping forward as the best defenders of "democracy" for Hong Kong have been groups of the British fake left. Some, like *Socialist Organiser* and *Militant* have floated the call for self-determination for Hong Kong. By this they do not mean the immediate unconditional withdrawal of British imperialism but some form of independence from the Chinese deformed workers state. The British presence in Hong Kong is a denial of Chinese self-determination and as a Chinese city Hong Kong could only have national self-determination as part of China. Hong Kong, like Taiwan and Macao, belongs to China. Otherwise this is a call for a) Hong Kong to remain a colony, *de facto* or *de jure*; b) maintaining capitalism there; c) depriving China of its richest city. This is social imperialism in the classic mould.

It is no accident that these groups push in one form or another bourgeois "democracy" as the amulet for warding off the Chinese deformed workers state. In a motion to a summer meeting of the "China Solidarity Campaign", SWP representatives stated: "Democracy in Hong Kong is the best defence against the likes of Li Peng." For this wretched third-campist organisation there are no gains of the Chinese Revolution of 1949 to defend and China is just another "totalitarian" government.

Like the centrists they are, Workers Power takes a more left-sounding position, while being careful to keep one foot firmly planted in the Labourite social-chauvinist camp. In one less slick version of their line, a 14 June Strike Bulletin put out for "the workers" in London Underground, WP bemoans the fact that only the rich will be allowed into Britain while "The rest must exchange British dictatorship for Chinese Stalinist dictatorship in 1997." The elementary class difference between British imperialism and the Chinese deformed workers state is denied in WP's equation of "dictatorships" here. Aside from various democratic slogans for Hong Kong, Workers Power's and the MRCI's main slogan was "For proletarian political revolution in China!" "For the revolutionary re-unification of all China including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao under workers democracy"—left sounding, but a centrist loophole.

WP's slogan for the "revolutionary reunification" sounds like a conscious echo of our ICL slogan for the revolutionary reunification of Germany. This is intended to assert the role of the powerful working class in West Germany and to be counterposed to a capitalist reunification of Germany, an assertion of the defence of the East German deformed workers state. Presented with particular application for Hong Kong (or West Berlin for that matter), an imperialist enclave, it is a little contrived. We have to ask what WP's attitude would be to the PLA marching into Hong Kong. Short of it acting to put down a proletarian uprising it would be the duty of proletarian revolutionaries to stand in defence of this action.

In December 1962 India invaded the Portuguese enclave of Goa. We would be surprised if Workers Power did not defend this as an "anti-imperialist" action. The Indian government claimed that "no aggression" occurred over Goa because it was "our rightful territory" under an "illegal occupation". But would WP give its "anti-imperialist" blessing if China did the same thing?

A careful search of Workers Power's press fails to unearth *one single* statement demanding the withdrawal of the British from Hong Kong. And the absence of any call for "Britain Out" by WP is of a piece with its many demands on the British colonialists: ie, "demanding of the British state the immediate and unconditional granting of democratic rights in Hong Kong and the right of abode in the UK"

(*Workers Power* no 120, July 1989). WP says: "Down with the cant of the British government who dare to speak of democracy even as they maintain their garrison in undemocratic Hong Kong"—would it be alright if the garrison left and the colony was more "democratic"?

Once again WP has tried to sound revolutionary while passing the word that they really don't have anything to do with those Stalinists and the deformed workers states they misrule. The only interpretation of WP's position is that they believe reunification is only supportable under a healthy workers state. What is so different in WP's failure then to demand British withdrawal from Hong Kong and the *Militant* tendency's refusal to demand the same from Northern Ireland?



Chinese student protesters mingled abstract calls for "democracy" with singing the *Internationale*.

Also indicative of the fake-revolutionary groups' refusal to stand against social democratic anti-communism is their reaction to the hysteria whipped up over the question of the right of the Hong Kong Chinese to emigrate to Britain. Typically the gutter press has conducted a racist campaign of anti-Chinese chauvinism while the Labour Party vies with the Tories for the racist vote by opposing any suggestion of mass immigration. The bourgeois debate over the question is an exercise in hypocrisy and duplicity. The rich elite of Hong Kong have already organised their escape routes and demonstrably prefer Australia, Canada and the United States. But Hong Kong might become "ungovernable" unless "confidence" is restored; gestures are wanted to maintain capitalist stability and keep the panicky middle classes dutifully functioning. Thus, the hand-wringing in the bourgeois press over "our responsibility" to the colony. (The Hong Kong colonial authorities and their Chinese capitalist allies meanwhile treat Vietnamese "boat people" in vile racist fashion—keeping them in virtual concentration camps so crowded and filthy that cholera has recently broken out, using tear-gas and mass baton beatings to suppress protests.)

In Britain, the fake left protest against racist reaction while pandering to the anti-communist aspects of the immigration question. They effectively provide a left cover for the imperialist con in Hong Kong in which an insurance policy for the lackeys is offered in order to keep the economy based on superexploitation running smoothly. Communists oppose the racist character of bourgeois immigration laws, demand full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and students, and defend the right of political asylum for leftists. But schemes for mass immigration under capitalism are either genocidal or utopian.

The way the Stalinophobes write, you would think the people of Hong Kong faced a situation analogous to the Jews

under the Nazis. *Socialist Worker* (17 June) headlines "They're welcome here" and *Workers Power* (July 1989) tries to outdo them with the headline "They are all welcome here!" The SWP pushed one of the idiot bourgeois "solutions" such as that courtesy of the Adam Smith Institute that the population of Hong Kong be moved to a Western Scottish island. They advise Thatcher that it would promote economic growth! (The only appealing thing about the proposal is a certain historical justice might be served given the role of Scottish businessmen like Jardine and Matheson in the opium trade; Scotland might give them Berwick-upon-Tweed.) In a letter to *Socialist Worker* (15 July) Kong Kheug Chee, a Hong Kong leftist in Britain, points out:

"When people suggest keeping Hong Kong out of the Chinese sphere I query the implications in the statement.... To be ruled by a hypocritical colonial government is a bloody shame in any sense. Britain should be out as soon as possible.... I don't think there is a sufficient material base for we Hong Kong people to build for an independent Hong Kong.... For the majority our hearts and roots still cling to China."

The reformists and centrists are in a great lather about getting everyone out of Hong Kong and into nasty, racist, wet, cold Britain, thereby "saving" them from Chinese Stalinist rule. (The peoples of the former empire under neo-colonialist capitalist rule are not offered the same option by the fake left.) We revolutionaries however know that the working masses of Hong Kong have an important role to play in the upcoming struggle for genuine workers rule in China and linking this to the triumph of workers revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, especially Japan—the industrial powerhouse of Asia.

The working class of Hong Kong has a proud and honourable history. The seamen's strike of 1922 was a landmark in the development of the organised workers movement in China. Their victory over the British rulers gave a powerful boost to the Chinese workers movement. In 1925 the British troops massacred protesters and the great Hong Kong Kwantung strike broke out lasting for 16 months. A boycott of British goods and strike action brought Hong Kong to a halt. The strikers organised armed pickets and even had their own gun boats. They shut down opium dens and gambling halls, turning them into strike and welfare centres. The strike committee, referred to as "government no 2", and its elected delegate conference were seen as the embryo of soviet power. After Chiang Kai-shek's coup of 20 March 1926, one of his first acts was to suppress the strike committee. By that time Stalin/Bukharin had imposed their line of liquidation into the Kuomintang on the CCP and the assault on the Hong Kong strike committee was the harbinger of the massacre of the Shanghai proletariat in 1927. While Mao sought a road of rural struggle and peasant nationalism, the Trotskyist Left Opposition, including its Chinese component, fought for the independence of the proletariat and the perspective of socialist revolution.

Since 1949 the CCP misleaders of the Hong Kong trade unions have kept the proletariat on a leash. But today there exists the opportunity to forge a Leninist/Trotskyist vanguard party in Hong Kong and throughout China. That party will take up the slogans of the Hong Kong militants of the 1920s: "Long live the world revolution!" and "Knock down the capitalist class!" Britain out of Hong Kong! Reforge the proletarian links of Hong Kong-Canton-Shanghai! One country, one system—under workers rule! The defence of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialist attack requires the smashing of capitalism in Hong Kong and victorious workers revolution in strategic Japan. For proletarian political revolution in China! Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

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## Reforge the Hong Kong-Canton-Shanghai proletarian axis!

# Britain out of Hong Kong!

The massive outpouring of defiant demonstrations and strikes in the spring signalled the beginning of the proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy in China. China was on the verge of civil war and only the bloody carnage of Tiananmen Square and savage repression by the Deng leadership have checked this process temporarily. The initial student protests had sparked the working-class mobilisations which the bureaucracy fears above all else. Despite the illusions in Western-style "democracy" and the activities of pro-capitalist elements, this was not a movement of pro-capitalist counterrevolution like *Solidarność* in Poland. Students sang the *Internationale*, not the praises of Chiang Kai-shek, China's Pilsudski. The students and workers were angered by the corruption, privilege and exploitation of Deng's "building socialism with capitalist methods". Today the struggle must be to construct a Leninist-Trotskyist party which leads the political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy and replace it with the rule of workers, soldiers and poor peasants councils defending collectivised property and the planned economy.

The British crown colony of Hong Kong is in essence a city of China. As such it is no wonder that the events in China have had powerful reverberations. On 21 May at least half a million people, one tenth of the colony's population, demonstrated in support of the Beijing demonstrators. Following Deng's 4 June massacre there was a one-day general strike on 7 June in Hong Kong. Significantly hitherto loyal pro-Beijing trade unions, teachers' organisations, newspapers (including the staff at Xinhua, the Chinese Communist Party's [CCP] *de facto* mission in Hong Kong) split, with many supporting the demonstrators. The hitherto pro-Beijing *Wen Wei Po* denounced the Li-Yang gang and called on the population to rise up and smash the conspiracy of these "butchers and thieves".

The incipient political revolution in China sent the message that the Chinese working class was not going to take anti-working-class market reforms lying down.



4 June: vehicles burn in Beijing. Deng's bloody crackdown checked incipient workers political revolution.

In Hong Kong the British government and its colonial authorities saw the spectre of the masses mobilised against them. On 7 June the police used tear-gas against demonstrators, alleging that a riot had broken out when youth sought to break into a bank. While the police were put on alert, the bourgeois and petty bourgeois organisers of "democracy" protests hastened to cancel all rallies and demonstrations due to be held. From Hong Kong Andrew Giannakis, an editorial board member of *Australasian Spartacist*, reported on the police attacks:

"That event raised a spectre in Hong Kong—a spectre that haunts the British administration and the Hong Kong capitalists. They fear losing control of the 'masses.' The arrogant, vindictive and brutal financiers and industrialists of Hong Kong expect 'passivity.' Their recurring nightmare is working-class struggle throughout the region. It has happened before in Hong Kong and it will happen again." (*Workers Vanguard* no 481, 7 July)

In Hong Kong and in Britain much attention has focused on the terms of and continuing negotiations about the 1984 Deng-Thatcher agreement by which the

colony will be handed over to the People's Republic of China on 1 July 1997. Under Deng's slogan of "one country, two systems" Hong Kong is to become a Special Administrative Region retaining its capitalist economy and semi-autonomy for fifty years. An anti-communist hue and cry has been drummed up to maintain the cosy arrangements for the exploitation of the Chinese people and the imperialists' freedom to promote counterrevolution. In Britain while both Tories and Labour have sounded off about protecting the population of Hong Kong from the "evils" of "communism", both react with racist vehemence to proposals to allow the Hong Kong Chinese to emigrate to Britain. The British fake left, linked by a syphilitic chain to Labourite social chauvinism, have taken the occasion to indulge in their customary Stalinophobic anti-communism.

One of the few remaining fragments of the British empire, Hong Kong is nevertheless a quintessential example of the murderous and vile character of that capitalist empire. The founders of the colony make the Colombian drug peddlers look good. Finding the Chinese little interested in their products except for expensive silver, the British traders introduced opium. In the rightly named Opium Wars of 1839-42 and 1856-60 the British defeated the decaying Chinese empire and opened China up for imperialist exploitation. Hong Kong was seized in 1841 and ceded "in perpetuity" under the 1842 Treaty of Nanking. The Convention of 1860 prised away Kowloon peninsula and the New Territories were leased for 99 years in 1898. From this base the British, followed by the other imperialists, claimed extra-territorial rights in other parts of China. Uprisings like the Boxer Rebellion were ruthlessly crushed. British troops joined in the suppression of the Canton Commune. The Japanese imperialist expansion in China effectively ended Britain's extra-

territorial rights in other parts of China before Hong Kong surrendered on Christmas Day 1942. Recognising reality and desirous that Chinese Kuomintang troops keep fighting to protect India, Britain renounced extra-territoriality in 1942. But at the end of World War II Mountbatten mounted an operation in defiance of his US imperialist partners to get the British back into Hong Kong.

Throughout this period Hong Kong served as a bolt hole for every warlord, profiteer and scum. In the twenties, the typical pattern would be for a warlord to rake in profits from every conceivable brutality and corruption, and then when things went bad, arrange the final payoff, perhaps for his army to surrender, and settle in Hong Kong. It was similar in 1947-49 with the Kuomintang as its corrupt regime collapsed.

When Mao's peasant-based Red Army overthrew Chiang's militarist clique in 1949, China experienced a deformed social revolution. Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been exploited from time immemorial. The rule of the murderous warlords and landlords, of the wretched bourgeoisie, was destroyed. Barbaric practices such as the binding of women's feet were finally stamped out. A nation ravaged and divided by imperialist powers for over a century was freed from foreign subjugation. Many British colonialists were pleasantly surprised when the People's Liberation Army halted at the Shumchun River. Like *HMS Amethyst*, stuck on a sand-bar hundreds of miles up a Chinese river, British colonialism in Hong Kong should have been sunk there and then.

Instead, Mao's adhesion to the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" halted the PLA as he sought to find other imperialist allies in the face of US imperialist hostility. During the Korean War—during which the US came very close to using atomic bombs against China—Hong Kong was used as a garrison for the imperialists. At great loss of life, the Chinese stood down the US aggressors who had only four years before dropped the A-bomb on other Asian peoples in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, then as now, the constant imperialist menace to the Chinese deformed workers state was aided by Hong Kong's existence as a base for counterrevolutionary military and espionage actions.

Today Hong Kong claims to be the third largest banking centre in the world and its thirteenth largest trading entity. The myth of the hardworking entrepreneur serves to mask the drug peddling and criminal origins of today's "respectable" British and Chinese Hong Kong bankers. Until 1951 Hong Kong's role was mainly as an entrepot. This continued in the years of China's isolation and ostracism in the face of imperialist hostility. But using the funds and machinery with which they fled the advancing

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Chinese workers militia 1927: Stalin/Bukharin betrayed developing Chinese Revolution to Chiang Kai-shek