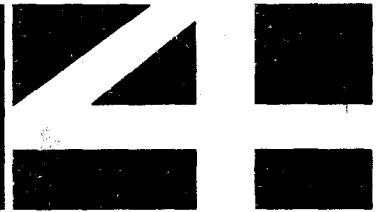


SPARTACIST



NUMBER 31-32

SUMMER 1981

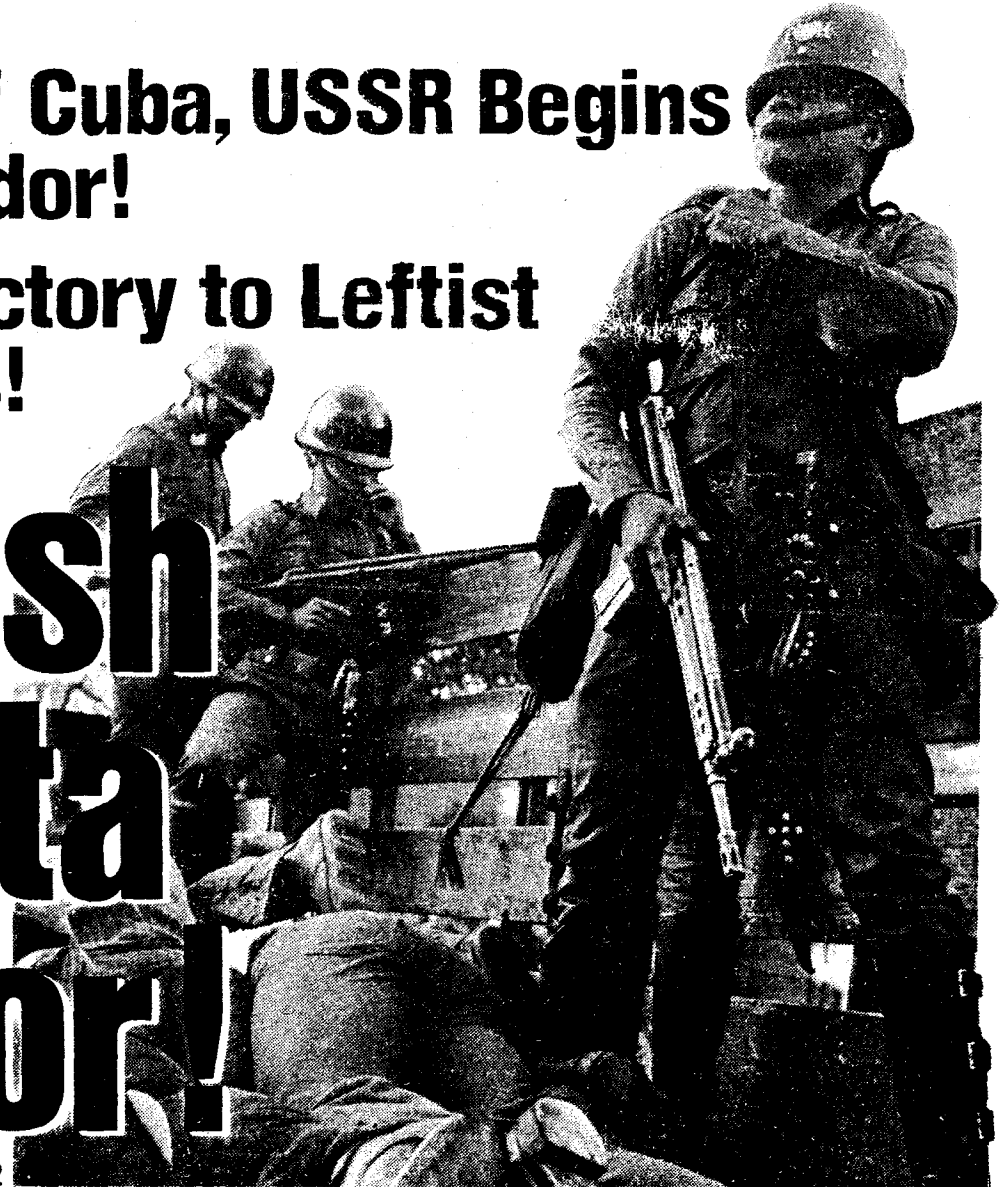
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Defense of Cuba, USSR Begins in El Salvador!

Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents!

Smash Junta Terror!

SEE PAGE 2



Philippot/Sygma

May 3 El Salvador Protests:
Anti-Imperialist Contingent Draws
Class Line..... 7

Healyite Libel Suit:
An Attack on Workers Movement 8

No to the NATO Popular Front
in France!..... 13

Behind Pro-Imperialist "Third Campism"
SWP's About-Face on
Afghanistan..... 16

SWP Slanders James P. Cannon ... 28

Workers Unite!
Down With the Mullahs and Colonels!
Iran/Iraq Blood Feud..... 30



Chauvel/Sygma

Smash Junta Terror!

It's high noon in Central America. The whole isthmus is red-hot, bubbling like the volcanic chain that forms its backbone. There is a general crisis of bourgeois rule in the region. And in this explosive situation a new administration has moved into the White House which is determined to send a bloody lesson to the Kremlin. The message consists of Huey helicopters, 105 millimeter bazookas, PT patrol boats and U.S. "military advisers." The blood is supposed to be that of the Central American masses.

With its all-sided anti-Soviet war drive, riding hell-for-leather down the road to thermonuclear World War III, the

Reagan administration is bringing the war in Central America home. Tiny El Salvador has become a major issue in imperialist capitals from Washington to Paris to Bonn, but above all in the U.S. where it has crystallized liberal fears of a losing adventure in "another Vietnam." This has awakened protests on a scale far larger than anything seen since the early 1970s. Once again the reformists are seeking to play the role of brokers for Kennedy-style liberal Democratic "doves." Their maximum program is "U.S. hands off," "self-determination for the people of El Salvador," and a "political solution" bringing together sections of the popular-front opposition with sectors of the bloody military/Christian Democratic junta.

Today the international Spartacist tendency stands virtually alone in warning that an illusory "negotiated settlement" would lead to a bloodbath of the workers and peasants and calling for *military victory to the left-wing insurgents* in El Salvador. Linked to this is our call for militant demonstrations of international proletarian solidarity with the working masses fighting on the Cold War front in Central America, from actions against imperialist militarism by the American labor movement to actively taking a side for the left-wing insurgency. This unique position, the only one posing a revolutionary answer to the issues raised by the Salvadoran civil war, was expressed in the significant impact made by the Anti-Imperialist Contingent organized by the Spartacist League/U.S. in the May 3 Washington, D.C./San Francisco El Salvador protests.

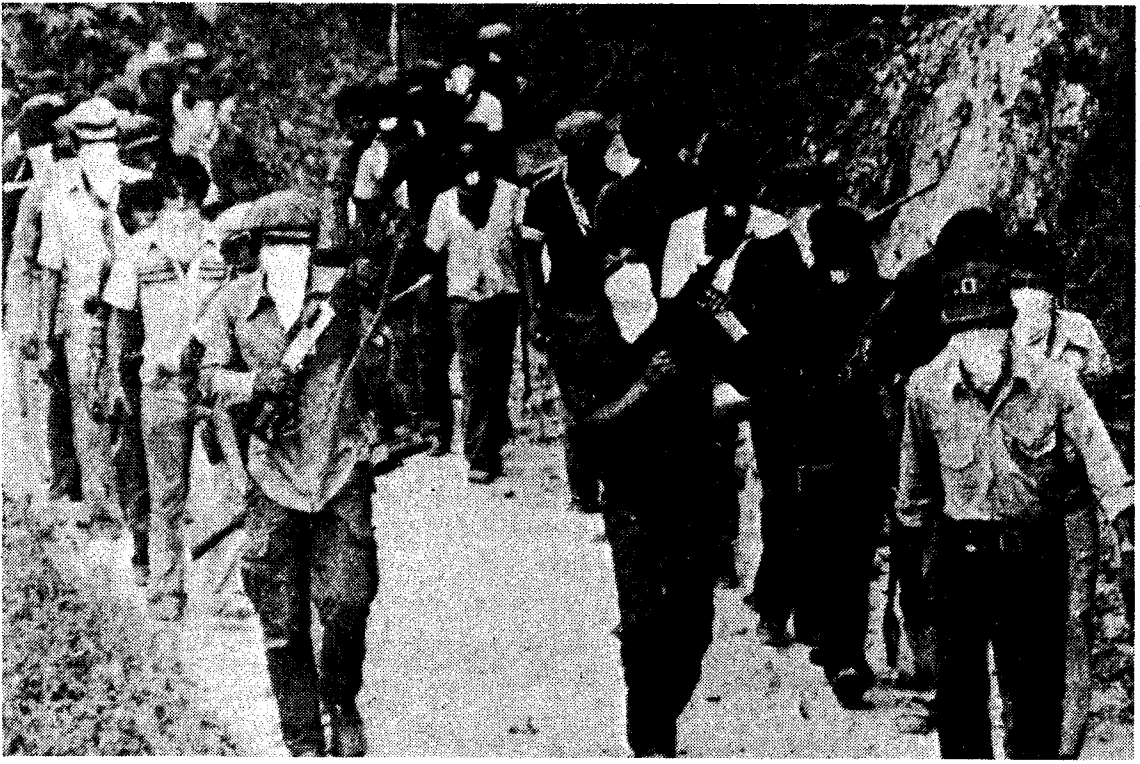
In the U.S. the protest sparked by Reagan/Haig's bloody war on the Salvadoran masses has enabled the SL/U.S. to break out of several years of relative stagnation during the political quiescence of the late 1970s. The ability of the Trotskyists to seize this opening to significantly expand their forces is key to further advances in consolidating the nucleus of the vanguard party.

Central America: Hot Front of Cold War II

In the name of "stopping Communist expansionism," Ronald Reagan's Cold War bloodbath has begun in Central America. But the stakes in El Salvador go far beyond the fate of the long-suffering Salvadoran masses. Washington is challenging the Soviet Union and Cuba to a showdown in Central America. In this anti-Soviet crusade, Yankee imperialism has pointed a gun at the head of Sandinista Nicaragua, demanding that it cut off aid to Salvadoran left-wing rebels. As Central America becomes the focal point in Reagan's Cold War drive, the danger of a counterrevolutionary invasion of Nicaragua is posed, and the defense of Cuba and the Soviet Union is directly at issue.

The Reagan administration is bent on making a demonstration of American power in a way that has not been possible since its humiliating defeat in Indochina half a decade ago. Then came Jimmy Carter's hypocritical "human rights" crusade, whose sole purpose was imperialist moral rearmament against the Soviet Union in preparation for war—and not just Cold War. U.S. imperialism is flirting with starting the hot war in Central America. Reagan and his four-star secretary of state Haig have made their real target clear: the USSR and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc, particularly Cuba.

Cambio 16



Column of Salvadoran leftist guerrillas in a liberated zone.

Already there are more than 40 American warships in the Caribbean to intimidate Cuba and to stop arms shipments to Nicaragua and El Salvador's leftists. Havana is being told that unless they stop arms shipments to the Salvadoran leftists they will face a naval blockade. Reagan is spoiling for a fight and might provoke a repeat of the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. At that time the Soviet diplomat who negotiated the Russian backdown warned that the USSR would never let the U.S. do that again. Now the Russians have nuclear parity. But what the U.S. war hawks got out of the Cuban missile crisis was "evidence" for their most cherished fantasy: to unleash nuclear weapons to destroy the Russians and to live to tell the tale.

To meet this challenge the left, both in Latin America and in the imperialist centers, has to take a stand in the confrontation between rapacious imperialism and the deformed workers states. While liberals and reformists talk only of "self-determination" for El Salvador—refusing even to take clear sides in the civil war raging there—revolutionaries place the struggle in its global context. As the international Spartacist tendency has underlined, "Defense of Cuba and the Soviet Union Begins in El Salvador!" The left and all class-conscious militants must demand: U.S./OAS Hands Off Central America! No U.S. Aid to the Salvadoran Junta! Labor: Boycott Military Goods to Central American Rightist Dictatorships!

To justify all its war talk of throwing a *cordon sanitaire* around Cuba and "refusing to rule out" U.S. troops to Central America, the Reagan administration has raised an outcry over Soviet arms in El Salvador. But the unfortunate reality is that there is no effective Soviet aid going to the insurgents. It is criminal that the Soviet ambassador in Washington can truthfully plead innocent to Reagan's charges! Fidel Castro has been counseling "moderation" and a "political settlement" of the civil war.

Even if Cuban arms have found their way to El Salvador, Castro basically is starving the insurgents of military aid, just as during the Spanish Civil War Stalin provided the Republicans with only enough aid to ensure Soviet influence over the popular-front government, not enough to defeat Franco. And the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, hoping for a *modus vivendi* with Yankee imperialism, have now stopped the meager flow of guns to the Salvadoran leftists. *If there were adequate Soviet, Cuban and Nicaraguan aid to the left-wing forces in El Salvador, the bloodthirsty junta's army and rightist death squads couldn't have killed more than 12,000 people in 1980!* As revolutionaries, we would welcome the maximum in military aid by Cuba and

continued on next page

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Summer 1981



Workers Vanguard

Washington, May 3: Anti-Imperialist Contingent marches for victory for Salvadoran leftist insurgents.

the Soviet Union to the Salvadoran guerrillas. And in the face of Reagan's war threats against Castro, we call on the USSR to come to the defense of Cuba with whatever means are necessary.

Break with the Bourgeoisie!

Despite their staggering sacrifices, the Salvadoran masses may be denied their victory by the petty-bourgeois left leaders of the popular-frontist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), backed by the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, the Stalinists and imperialist "statesmen" of the Second International. The FMLN, a component in the popular-front Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), is not seeking a battlefield victory, much less a workers revolution, but a "political solution" with a section of the Christian Democratic/military junta, arranged through international pressure.

In the name of "democratic unity" the FDR preaches respect for the private property of the "progressive" bourgeoisie, the "integrity" of the armed forces, the "serene guidance" of the Catholic church, and so on. The FMLN called on the masses to support the so-called "reform junta" that was put in by Carter in October 1979, consisting of bourgeois liberals masquerading as social democrats, some liberal army officers, a labor minister supplied by the Communist Party and two hard-line colonels. The military hawks pushed aside the liberals, one after another, in a "creeping coup" and unleashed the worst bloodbath in decades. A "land reform" was implemented, braintrused by the same U.S. advisers who were responsible for the infamous "pacification" program in Vietnam. Land was distributed to members of the fascist ORDEN organization, while the original tenants—impoverished peasants and agricultural laborers—were driven into the hills, where they were branded as "guerrillas" and gunned down by the army. It's called "reform by death" in El Salvador.

The FDR is another version of this class-collaborationist

coalition. At first it was headed by the landowner Alvarez Córdova, a scion of one of the "14 Families" of El Salvador, and now by the "social democrat" Guillermo Ungo, who governed alongside the military butchers in Carter's 1979 "human rights junta." Ungo and the other "progressive" bourgeois politicians in the popular-front coalition, their allies in the Mexican and Panamanian governments, etc. have been pushing for a "political solution" to the civil war. But the Salvadoran left's endless efforts to make a deal with bourgeois forces have held it back from mobilizing the masses in a truly revolutionary insurrectionary direction. The general strike of last August failed in part because petty-bourgeois components of the FDR kept their shops open and their buses running. And the "final" offensive of January 1981 was conceived not as a countrywide uprising, a struggle for power based on the mobilization of the working class and poor peasants, but rather as a pressure tactic on the international bourgeoisie. The FDR wanted to get a piece of "liberated territory" where they could set up their alternative government and get recognized by the UN or the OAS.

But the Salvadoran capitalist/landlord ruling class and its mercenary militia have made it clear that they are not going to retire peacefully to Miami because of international disapproval. If they go down, it will be fighting. In 1932 the Salvadoran oligarchs and their officers drowned a Communist-led peasant uprising in the blood of 30,000 victims. Today they talk of such an outcome costing 200,000 lives (in a country of fewer than 5 million people). And they know that *Reagan stands by his dictators*. There is little chance that Reagan's Washington would permit the installation of any kind of left-leaning government (even of the impotent "constitutionalist" Allende type) in El Salvador, unless compelled by outright military victory of the insurgents. Reagan is interested in only one kind of "solution" for the Central American left: a "final solution." He wants the blood to flow in rivers. Delaying the

necessary military day of reckoning with Reagan's puppets in the hopes of cutting a deal with U.S. imperialism is both politically and literally suicidal.

Moreover, even if some sort of negotiated settlement were possible in El Salvador, it would cheat the workers and peasants out of a victory for which they have shed so much blood. The bourgeois forces in the FDR seek above all to preserve at least part of the *gorila* officer caste. Any deal which would preserve even a part of this corps of sadistic murderers would simply prepare savage repression in the future. One must not forget the bloody lesson of the Spanish Civil War: 100,000 proletarians were killed *after* Franco won. Military victory to the left-wing insurgents! Break the dangerous popular front with "democratic" bourgeois politicians and military officers! For workers revolution in El Salvador!

Which Way Forward for Nicaragua?

The struggle in El Salvador cannot be separated from the fate of the Nicaraguan revolution. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) took power in July 1979 by overthrowing the dictator Anastasio Somoza through a genuine national uprising, including virtually the entire bourgeoisie outside of the Somoza family and its own private army, the National Guard. But the real power in this insurrection was in the hands of the FSLN, a movement which in its broad outlines is similar to Castro's July 26 Movement at the time when it took power. The FSLN regime, which is essentially the Sandinista army, is a petty-bourgeois bonapartist force, not yet wedded to a particular property form. Since coming to power the Sandinista leadership has sought to follow a so-called "middle road," precariously balancing between the conflicting pressures of imperialism and domestic capitalism on the one hand, and the workers, peasants and plebeian poor on the other. The Sandinistas have been careful to preserve capitalist property and to share the ruling junta with bourgeois representatives, while cracking down on the left and breaking workers' strikes.

But pressures are rising sharply, exacerbated by the civil

war in El Salvador. For those bourgeois figures who are still willing to work with the Sandinistas, aid to the Salvadoran guerrillas is a split issue—this is where they draw the line. While the FSLN denies, apparently truthfully, sending sizable aid to the Salvadoran rebels, many thousands of Sandinista fighters remember that only a year and a half ago leftists from El Salvador were their comrades-in-arms in the fight against Somoza. Meanwhile, the Nicaraguan capitalists, already deeply embroiled in coup plots and economic sabotage, are a point of support for counterrevolution, and the FSLN leaders know it. A strike force made up of former Nicaraguan National Guardsmen who fled to Honduras, Cuban *gusanos* trained by the CIA in Miami, Guatemalan and Honduran military personnel and mercenaries has been formed—killers without a country who have been staging terrorist incursions into both El Salvador and Nicaragua. Continued efforts by the FSLN *comandantes* to placate imperialism (a policy endorsed by Castro) by preserving the private sector, curbing working-class militancy and refusing to aid the Salvadoran guerrillas could endanger their own existence.

The outcome of this unstable situation in Nicaragua is still very much in doubt. Reagan's hard line against Nicaragua may force the FSLN to go further than it intends and to expropriate the bourgeoisie. But if Washington's hard-lining forces the consolidation of a deformed workers state in Nicaragua, American policy will not end there: the U.S. rulers will try to roll on into Managua with their ex-Somoza mercenaries after smashing the left in El Salvador. The Sandinista regime must confront head-on the dilemma it has sought to avoid: either breaking sharply with the bourgeoisie and arming the Salvadoran insurgents, or capitulating to the imperialist pressures and likely sealing its own doom.

A government of the petty-bourgeois Sandinistas can give rise *at best* only to a bureaucratically deformed workers state like Cuba. And even this would in all likelihood be but an episode if Nicaragua remains isolated. As the imperialist pressure mounts and it becomes ever

continued on next page



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more obvious that the Sandinistas' program of "national unity" is at a dead end, what is clearly needed is a *workers revolution*. Key to such a revolution is the construction of a proletarian, Leninist-Trotskyist party.

Fight "Liberal" Imperialism, For Class Struggle

The Central American upheavals have become a major issue in the imperialist centers, above all in the U.S. Seeking to placate imperialist liberals like Ted Kennedy and social-democratic administrators of imperialist West Europe like Helmut Schmidt, reformist organizers of El Salvador protests *refuse to take a side with the Salvadoran rebels*. It is not enough to demand no American intervention. Self-determination, the liberals' slogan, is not the issue. We want the leftist insurgents to *win* the civil war, to *defeat* the military junta and its imperialist godfathers.

There is a lot of talk of a "new Vietnam" in Central America. This phrase means different things to different people. For Reagan, imperialism's dirty war in Southeast Asia was a "noble cause." He wants to get even for the humiliating defeat inflicted by the Indochinese (supported by Soviet arms) by drowning the Central American masses in blood. For the liberals, Vietnam was above all a *losing* war, and they are afraid of going under with another tinpot dictator. Their program: the same phony CIA land reform that was called "pacification" in Vietnam. Don't forget: the liberals brought you the Bay of Pigs and the Gulf of Tonkin.

In the U.S. the reformists see a "new Vietnam" as the excuse for reviving their coalition with Democratic "doves." Yesterday Gene McCarthy and George McGovern, today Ted Kennedy and Carter's ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White. The reformists climbed on the bandwagon of bourgeois defeatism over Vietnam. But there is no bourgeois defeatism unless the bourgeoisie is being defeated!

The reformists claim that their popular front with the "peace" Democrats "won" in Indochina. No. Everything that was won in Indochina was won on the battlefield. When the U.S. army was forced to withdraw in 1973 the "antiwar" movement simply collapsed. It took two more years of bloody fighting against the American-backed Thieu dictatorship before the NLF/DRV could take Saigon. And because the liberal/radical antiwar movement did *not* build a revolutionary opposition to imperialism, only a few years passed before the so-called "Vietnam syndrome" was largely overcome through Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade which paved the way for Reagan.

In Vietnam the reformists called for "negotiations now" and "bring our boys home." Revolutionaries proclaimed, "All Indochina Must Go Communist," and said that *our* boys over there were the heroic fighters in the Viet Cong. We called for labor political strikes and for a workers party—this was how to mobilize the power of the American proletariat, which could stop the imperialists in their tracks.

Then as now, liberal "peace" crawls are futile attempts to pressure imperialism into more "realistic" policies. What is really needed is a mobilization for military victory to left-wing insurgents in El Salvador with the labor movement using its power to stop Pentagon warmongers and State Department MacArthurs. The real lesson of Vietnam is that *anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home!*

The central slogan of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) and the People's Antiwar Mobilization (PAM), the main popular-front protest groups in the U.S., is "self-determination." Presumably then if the Salvadoran junta by itself bloodily crushes the insurgency, it is of no concern to these reformists and liberals. The program of CISPES and PAM is the program of the imperialist liberals, support to a Congressional bill cutting off *military* aid to the junta, but not the far larger "economic" aid which keeps the bankrupt regime afloat. They talk only of "self-determination" so they can bloc with Ted Kennedy, who denounces military support "from Communist and other radical states to the insurgent forces." They call for a "political solution" in El Salvador, which means appealing to the imperialist soft cops to broker a deal with the junta murderers.

These reformists are desperately looking for an alliance with a "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie. But there is no progressive bourgeoisie in the imperialist era. Who do they want? A Franklin Roosevelt whose "Good Neighbor" policy installed the first Somoza? A John F. Kennedy who launched the Bay of Pigs invasion and the dirty war in Vietnam? It is only the Trotskyists of the international Spartacist tendency who fight imperialism's anti-Soviet war drive which seeks to enslave and massacre the Central American masses and menaces the entire world.

For Permanent Revolution!

What is urgently required in Central America is the forging of an authentic Trotskyist vanguard party in a sharp struggle against reformist, popular-frontist politics. The Trotskyist program of permanent revolution—not for bogus "democratic" capitalism, but for a workers and peasants government to expropriate the bourgeoisie—is the only way Central America will be liberated from the military boot, oligarchic exploitation and imperialist domination. This program is starkly counterposed to all brands of nationalist populism and Stalinist reformism.

In El Salvador one of the urgent tasks is the splitting of the army, not between "democratic" and "fascist" officers, but between its proletarian/peasant ranks and an officer corps committed (even in its most liberal elements) to the preservation of capitalist rule. Here the program of agrarian revolution—not mere land reform—is key to winning the peasant youth conscripted into the army. Splitting the army is also key to arming the working class and organizing it into proletarian militias that must form the vanguard of the popular insurrection against the junta. A revolutionary uprising in El Salvador would send shock waves throughout Central America, undoubtedly triggering a revolutionary explosion in the Sandinistas' Nicaragua. But an isolated workers state in one slice of the inter-American isthmus would have no historical viability. Not only will there be no "socialism in one banana republic," but an isolated Salvadoran or Nicaraguan workers state would be massively vulnerable to imperialist-sponsored counterrevolution. All of Central America must be ignited if revolution is to succeed anywhere in the region. And such an offensive would set off rumblings throughout Latin America, threatening the Pinochets and the Portillos, posing the question of proletarian power from Chile to Mexico, one of the powerhouses of revolution in Latin America. ■

May 3 El Salvador Protests:



Anti-Imperialist Contingent Draws Class Line

"1, 2, 3, 4—Leftist Rebels, Win the War!" chanted the 500-strong Anti-Imperialist Contingent as they swung onto the Arlington Memorial Bridge on May 3 in Washington, D.C. "5, 6, 7, 8—Nothing to Negotiate!" they added, in a sharp attack on the Democratic Party liberals and fake-left reformists who spread treacherous illusions in a "political solution" in El Salvador. Such a "solution" could only be a deal with the puppet Christian Democratic/military junta or with the puppeteers in Washington to cheat the Salvadoran masses out of the victory they are suffering and dying for. The Contingent's huge red-on-white banners drew the point home: "Avenge the Blood of El Salvador: Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents!"

In the massive 80,000-person demonstration in Washington, and in smaller marches in San Francisco and Seattle, the Anti-Imperialist Contingent, organized by the Spartacist League and Trotskyist League of Canada, was the reddest and just about the *only* militant section in the rad-lib anti-Reagan demonstrations. They alone took sides with the workers and peasants in the raging Salvadoran civil war against the gang of uniformed murderers backed up by U.S. imperialism. Only the Anti-Imperialist Contingent took on Reagan's anti-Soviet Cold War threats, proclaiming, "Defense of Cuba, USSR Begins in El Salvador!" And it was the red flags and banners of the Anti-Imperialist Contingent, not the pale green flags of liberal "concern" carried by

the march organizers, that flashed around the world as *the* photo of the El Salvador protest.

A sharp political line ran through the demonstrations, the first big protest marches since the Vietnam antiwar movement. The Anti-Imperialist Contingent challenged demonstrators to take a side with the leftist rebels. The People's Antiwar Mobilization (PAM), organized by Sam Marcy's Workers World Party/Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF) made it clear where they stood by slandering the Contingent as "violent" and then setting up a line of "marshals" to physically block protesters from joining the Anti-Imperialist rally. These provocateurs made it clear that theirs was a rally for liberal imperialist "doves" and *against* military victory to the left-wing insurgents in El Salvador. Sam Marcy, by his words and deeds, has proclaimed himself a conscious counterrevolutionary.

The Spartacist League fought for the victory of the Indochinese revolution and we fight today for *victory* to the toilers in the Salvadoran civil war—by posing a clear *class line* in El Salvador and at home. Marcy's PAM/YAWF goons are making their bid for the role played by the Socialist Workers Party in the '60s—organizers of radicalized youth for the liberal Democrats like Bella Abzug, the featured speaker at their May 3 rally. The line between revolution and counterrevolution has been drawn by the Anti-Imperialist Contingent: Military victory to the leftist insurgents! Smash junta terror in El Salvador—For workers revolution!

Defeat Messengers of Qaddafi!

Healyite Libel Suit: An Attack on Workers Movement

We reprint below material documenting the attempt by the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) of Gerry Healy and Michael Banda to silence, through the bourgeois courts, *Socialist Organiser* (SO), a fortnightly newspaper of a tendency within the British Labour Party initiated by and politically identified with Sean Matgamna's Workers Action grouping. The WRP (formerly the Socialist Labour League) had long been notorious for seeking to bludgeon left-wing critics into silence through physical gangsterism and use of the agencies of the bourgeois state. After more than a decade of political banditry of the most extreme sort, the Healyites decisively departed the ranks of the workers movement by 1978 by politically and materially subordinating themselves to a host of murderous Muslim dictatorships, most notably that of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, protector of Idi Amin and self-proclaimed apologist for Adolf Hitler. The current threat of libel action against SO (with the WRP's Vanessa Redgrave fronting for them) represents a sinister attack against the right of political expression by the workers movement as a whole, and must be vigorously opposed by all tendencies of the left and labor movement.

To the best of our not uninformed knowledge, we affirm that the charges and characterizations alleged against the WRP by SO are true. We emphasize comrade Matgamna's observation that Redgrave's attorneys conspicuously choose *not* to contest the allegation of the WRP's ties with the oil-rich bloodthirsty bourgeois tyrant of Libya. In April 1979, we noted the WRP's role as "shameless apologists for white terror in Iraq" through its open support for the murder of 21 Iraqi Communist Party militants by the bourgeois nationalist Ba'ath regime:

"For a small propaganda group without a significant mass base, moreover, program is decisive in determining a group's class character. In the case of the Healy/Banda organization, the contradiction between its 'Trotskyist' pretensions and the dictates of its Libyan patrons has repetitively come down in favor of the latter."

— *Workers Vanguard* No. 230, 27 April 1979

We explained in the same article that this action, though decisive, was by no means isolated, but capped a long period of bizarre and venomous behavior, targeted in more than one brutal instance against supporters of the international Spartacist tendency:

"The Healy/Banda tendency has long had an extremely unsavory flavor. It combines idiot organizational sectarianism with the wildest gyrations of gross political opportunism to create an aura of extreme instability. Its penchant for elaborate conspiracy theories and its well-known readiness to employ physical gangsterism against

left-wing opponents denote more than a trace of paranoia. But in the past couple of years the Healyites have added another element to their political banditry: they have become the British press agents for Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, the fanatical dictator of Libya."

In *Spartacist* (No. 9, January-February 1967) we publicized the savage beating of Canadian United Secretariat supporter Ernie Tate outside a Healyite meeting at London's Caxton Hall which inflicted injuries so severe as to require Tate's hospitalization. The Healyites then sought to cover their tracks, not by denying that they beat up Tate, but (as today) by instituting legal proceedings against him to stop the circulation of an open letter by Tate describing the thug attack. In fact, Healy succeeded in frightening two weak-kneed British left-wing publications into publishing retractions of Tate's letter under threats of libel actions against them. Healy's then-loyal American toad, Tim Wohlforth, shamelessly defended the vicious beating with typically convoluted Healyite "logic" (workers rightly beat up scabs, Tate was scabbing on the Healyite International Committee, Q.E.D....).



**Healyites' master: crazed Islamic despot
Muammar el-Qaddafi.**

Der Spiegel



New York City, May 1979—After Healyites defend murder of Iraqi Communists, Spartacist League/U.S. exposes the sinister Qaddafi connection.

As noted, the libel action against *SO* is taken in the name of performer Vanessa Redgrave, the most well known of the WRP's dwindling constellation of supporters and "angels" within the entertainment industry. Though it is common practice under British libel law to set up a personality to pursue a libel suit (organizations generally have a very difficult time pursuing a libel case), the use of Redgrave's name and money against a working-class tendency is particularly scandalous. Nor is it the first time they have done this. In 1975 Redgrave dragged former Healyite Alan Thornett, a car worker, into court over an outstanding personal loan. This action against Thornett was taken by one who, as we noted at the time, has a lifestyle which would do no shame to Princess Grace of Monaco or Princess Ashraf, lately of Iran.

Since the material we are reprinting below came in hand, five writs, used to secure prior censorship through vicious and punitive methods, have been served against *SO*, its printing firm and the secretary of the defense committee. Indeed, one of those writs was used to prevent publication at the last minute of an article in *Socialist Press*, weekly paper of Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL), which is printed at the same firm (which also prints a number of other left-wing papers in Britain). Some clients have already been intimidated into withdrawing their business from this printer.

Every working-class militant should look forward to the day when the Healy/Banda gang is politically removed as a menace to the left and labor movement. A victory by *SO* against this attack would constitute a step toward that goal and we are therefore compelled by basic class principle to offer such resources as we can to assist in the defense of this case, including fund-raising and publicity, not least internationally. (The very English Healyites have a few shriveling international connections known as the "International Committee of the Fourth International.") We offer as well to make available our extensive files

documenting the Healyites' history of slander, internal intimidation and violent hooliganism. We urge our readers to likewise support this important defense of the workers movement.

* * * * *

SOCIALIST ORGANISER,
c/o 214 Sickert Court,
London N1 2SY.
2nd March 1981.

The Editor,
Spartacist Publications,
26 Harrison St.,
London W.C.1

Dear Friend,

Socialist Organiser appeals for support to the left wing and labour movement press against the attempt by the WRP to stifle accurate reporting and fair comment about them. The enclosed documents give the details of the WRP's threatened legal action and the case which looks likely to go to court.

I draw your attention to the curious fact that the WRP have not chosen to regard as libellous the statements about their relationship with Colonel Gaddafi, and to the proposals that were made at the end of Sean Matgamna's letter of 26th February 1981, including for a jointly agreed working class movement inquiry on the issue.

Yours fraternally,
John Bloxam. Secretary.

* * * * *

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YOUR REF	OUR REF MR/AS	5th February, 1981
Sean Matgamna, Esq., Socialist Organiser, 5 Stamford Hill,		

5th February, 1981

Sean Matgamna, Esq.,
 Socialist Organiser,
 5 Stamford Hill,
 London, N.16.

Dear Sir,

We are instructed by our Client Miss Vanessa Redgrave a well known member of the Central Committee of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP). The WRP is referred to on page 10 of the issue of *Socialist Organiser* No. 33 dated January 24, 1980, and in particular in an article at the bottom of page 10 under your name, with the headline "GADDAFI'S FOREIGN LEGION TO KNIGHT'S RESCUE". The Knight in question is Ted Knight and your article referred to the support by the WRP for Lambeth Council's rent and rate rises discussed, on January 17, 1981, at the second "Local Government in Crisis" conference. It is therefore obvious that this issue of *Socialist Organiser* should have been dated 1981 and not 1980.

In view of her widely known association with the WRP our Client regards the attack on the WRP in your article in this issue of *Socialist Organiser* as a libel on her as well as on the Party itself. While we understand that the article contains very many untrue and defamatory statements and implications (for instance by the headline quoted above) about the WRP we are instructed to call upon you to undertake to publish an unequivocal withdrawal of certain of those statements which constitute particularly gross libels. These are contained notably in the second and third full paragraphs of the second column where you state that the WRP:—

"is a pseudo-Marxist gobbledegook-spouting cross between the Moonies, the Scientologists, and the Jones Cult which committed mass suicide in the Guyana jungle three years ago.

It recruits and exploits mainly raw, inexperienced, politically socially and psychologically defenceless young people. It employs psychological terror and physical violence against its own members (and occasionally against others)."

At the end of the above second paragraph there is an asterisk which refers to a footnote naming "The Battle for Trotskyism" published by the Workers Socialist League

"For an account of its (i.e. the WRP's) internal life". We are instructed that the publication in question most certainly does not substantiate the allegations made in the said paragraph which have been completely refuted in WRP publications published subsequently, e.g. in "The Thornett Clique Exposed".

As you must know, the WRP bears no resemblance whatsoever to the Moonies, the Scientologists or the Jones Cult. Nor does it exploit young people or anyone else amongst its recruits. Further, it not only does not employ psychological terror and physical violence against its own members or against anyone else but has gone on record repeatedly to dissociate itself from any policy of violence in support of its Marxist aims.

If any future issue of the *Socialist Organiser* is to be published we would ask you to let us hear from you in immediate reply to this letter, that is within seven days of its date, as to the intended or proposed date of such publication and the date when it should go to press, together with the names of the paper's Editor or members of its editorial committee and its proprietors. We learn that *Socialist Organiser* is not registered as a business name and note that, contrary to the law, its printer's name and address do not appear anywhere in its pages, as to which your explanation is awaited. Our Client's primary concern at this point is to have your undertaking that, with appropriate prominence to be agreed, a disclaimer and apology in the following terms will be published in the next issue of *Socialist Organiser* or in such other publication as may replace it as the newspaper put out by the publishers of *Socialist Organiser*, whoever they may be, or in any such other publication to which you are contributing:—

Vanessa Redgrave and the Workers' Revolutionary Party

"Sean Matgamna and the Editor and Publishers of *Socialist Organiser* acknowledge that the terms in which they referred to the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP) in their issue of the 24th January last contained wholly unwarranted suggestions that the WRP is a 'cross between the Moonies, the Scientologists, and the Jones Cult' or bears a material resemblance to those non-political, non-Marxist organisations. Further, it is acknowledged that the WRP does not, as falsely stated in Sean Matgamna's article, recruit and exploit 'mainly raw, inexperienced, politically, socially and psychologically defenceless young people' or, indeed, exploit anyone; nor does it employ

'psychological terror and physical violence against its own members' or others, being on record repeatedly as condemning violence in support of its aims. We apologise to the WRP and to Vanessa Redgrave, who is in particular associated with it, for having published wholly unwarranted and grossly libellous matter which we now expressly withdraw."

While we await your undertaking as to the arrangements to be made to publish the above disclaimer and apology and your response to our above request for information, we must also ask you to acknowledge receipt of this letter

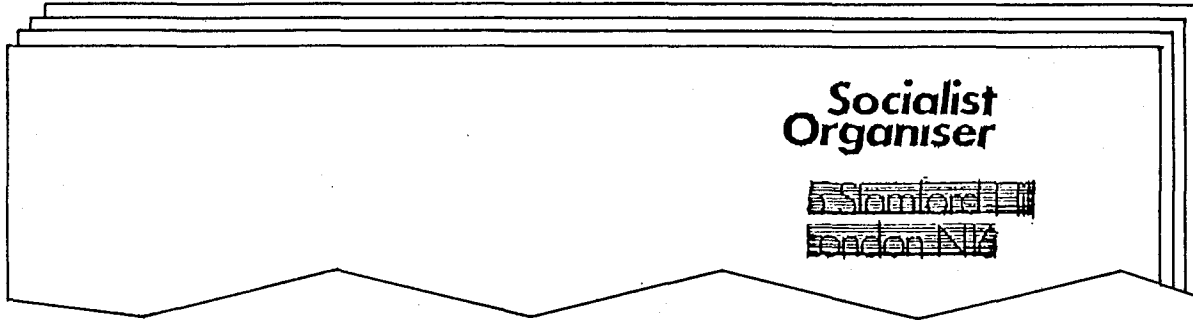
within seven days of its date and to undertake not to repeat the same or any other libels on the WRP or on our Client in the future.

Pending a fully satisfactory reply to this letter our Client's full rights in the matter are reserved.

Yours faithfully,
Rubinstein Callingham

cc: Morning Litho Printers

* * * * *



Socialist Organiser
c/o 214 Sickert Court,
London N1 2SY.
26th February 1981.

Your reference: MR/AS.

Rubinstein Callingham,
Solicitors,
6 Raymond Buildings,
Grays Inn,
London WC1R 5BZ.

Dear Sirs,

I am in receipt of your curious letter of 5th February 1981, which is in fact more an attempt at a political polemic than a normal legal communication.

I hereby formally acknowledge sole responsibility for *Socialist Organiser*, and declare myself to be the publisher and political editor of the paper. The printer's name was inadvertently left off *Socialist Organiser* no. 33, but there was a name and address on the paper. The printer's name and address has appeared on previous issues. There was therefore no intention of evading legal responsibility. I owe you no explanation, and that section of your letter reads like a rather feeble attempt to intimidate the printer. I do offer you the assurance that our relations with the printer are proper commercial relations, without benefit of subsidies from the Arab or any other bourgeoisies.

I note that your letter refers to the headline of my article 'Gaddafi's Foreign Legion to Knight's Rescue', alleging that it is "one of the very many untrue and defamatory statements and implications....about the WRP", and goes on to contrast it with what you say are "particularly gross libels" and for which you demand a public apology. You make no reference to the clear statements in the text which clearly imply that you are subsidised by the Libyan Government, and perhaps other Arab Governments. Can it be that Ms Redgrave and the organisation for which she is in this affair acting as a front do not consider important what the labour movement believes about their relations with Libya? The implication is inescapable that your client knows that she must treat this as not libellous because it is

true and, moreover being true, not something disreputable nor something which places the WRP *outside* the ranks of the labour movement because they have every appearance of acting as agents within that movement of the bourgeois Libyan Government. The implied admission in your client's letter is therefore a valuable, if inadvertent, step to admitting the truth and to enlightening the labour movement on matters that concern it.

As regards your client's reputation, although my article names three prominent leaders of the WRP organisation (Gerry Healy, Cliff Slaughter, Michael Banda) it makes no reference to Vanessa Redgrave. In my view, our readers would not be likely to consider Ms Redgrave to be a member with control of the WRP. In fact, the invocation of Ms Redgrave's reputation, such as it is, is a transparent hypocrisy. Those who have decided to threaten a legal action obviously regard Ms Redgrave's reputation, like Ms Redgrave's money and her publicity value, as an expendable asset. The attempt to invoke the courts against a labour movement publication, like *Socialist Organiser*, can only tarnish Ms Redgrave in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of labour movement activists who consider it a fundamental breach of principle to involve the bourgeois state in the affairs of the labour movement. In fact, Ms Redgrave's threatened action will provide topical illustration to show even more clearly that the WRP has, as my article asserted, ceased to be part of the labour movement.

In fact, my article in *Socialist Organiser* no. 33 (which was written in response to the *Newsline* editorial of Monday 19th January 1981 which attempted to brand the entire left at the second 'Local Government in Crisis' Conference as agents of Thatcher) contains not one single untrue statement or implication about the WRP. Every single statement in the passage you complain of is either true or fair comment and reasonable construction on the stated facts, or both. I would not choose to go to court with you over this. That decision is yours. In the event, however, that you force it on me, I will have no inhibitions or qualms about bringing into court some of the mass of evidence

continued on next page

which has accumulated in the labour movement in order to establish that my article was in no way untrue or unfair to the WRP.

In your letter you make the absurd claim that your client's organisation has "completely refuted" the account of the WRP contained in the publication 'The Battle for Trotskyism'. This is laughable. One of the prime examples of the mental world of the WRP is the latest pamphlet 'The Thornett Clique Exposed' dealing with it. Here I draw your attention to the fact that the cover of that publication consists of a photostat of a document stolen, together with a filing cabinet full of other documents, in a burglary of a house in Oxford in 1977. This burglary was on Alan Thornett's house. I would be interested in your client's explanation of where they got this document.

You say that the WRP has gone on record "repeatedly to dissociate itself from any policy of violence in support of its Marxist aims". This is disingenuous. I know very well that the WRP has publicly disavowed in the courts, during the 'Observer' libel case, the Marxist teaching on violence—which is essentially that the bourgeoisie, if faced with defeat by the majority of the people, will impose on the working class the choice to either defend itself and secure its interests by defensive violence or to peacefully accept the alternative which is bloody counter-revolution. My article clearly refers to the internal regime of the WRP. What it said about that regime is, as stated above, factually true and can be substantiated with oral evidence and documents. I want to add here, however, that anything the WRP says, whether by way of denial or affirmation, has little credibility in any existing section of the labour movement which is even slightly familiar with the WRP. That organisation has lied systematically and to a degree never paralleled (except by the Stalinists in the 30s, 40s and 50s) in the entire history of the labour movement, of which the WRP was part until 4 or 5 years ago.

My approach to this matter is governed by the responsibility to tell the truth to the labour movement and to call things by their right names where the WRP is concerned. While I am determined to discharge that responsibility, I nevertheless would not choose to go to court. There can however be no question of gainsaying what I know to be true or of publicly lying for the WRP according to the terms of your proposed letter of apology. I make the following proposals to you however.

1. As I said above, I would be willing publicly to explain that I do not consider Ms Redgrave to be a member with control of the WRP and its policies, with the precise

wording of such an explanation to be agreed between us.

2. I would be willing to publish a reply of the same length as my article in *Socialist Organiser* by Ms Redgrave or even by "the leadership", namely Mr Gerry Healy. They could probably have had that for the asking, as *Socialist Organiser* is an open and democratic newspaper. It is offered now, however, only in exchange for one of the following:

(a) an article to be published in *Newsline* (of the same length as the WRP's article in *Socialist Organiser*) by Alan Thornett of the Workers Socialist League, to explain to the readers of *Newsline* how 20 members of the WRP came to Oxford 2 weeks ago and made a mass distribution at British Leyland's Cowley plant of a printed broadsheet which, among other things, implied that he was a police agent and was clearly aimed, for the WRP's own sectarian and vindictive reasons, to help Michael Edwardes to discredit and then smash the militant rank and file leadership in the Cowley plant;

(b) an article to be published in *Newsline* (of the same length as the WRP's article in *Socialist Organiser*) by George Novack, on behalf of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, to reply to the WRP's campaign of libel;

(c) an article to be published in *Newsline* (of the same length as the WRP's article in *Socialist Organiser*) by the Stalinist Iraqi Communist Party, the slaughter of whose members *Newsline* has publicly justified;

(d) an article to be published in *Newsline* (of the same length as the WRP's article in *Socialist Organiser*) by myself, discussing the recent statement by Colonel Gaddafi calling for the rehabilitation of Hitler and Nazism.

3. I do not consider the WRP to be part of the labour movement any longer. The WRP however pretends that it is. I propose that a working class movement inquiry be set up to investigate the statements in my article and contribute to the public debate on the issue, with the composition and other details of the inquiry to be agreed between us.

4. I would be willing to publish a clarification about the point on violence, explaining clearly that for anyone who knows the WRP the idea that the "leadership" would contemplate violence against the bourgeois state is an absurdity. That, however, would be done in such a way as to make our own Marxist views clear.

Yours faithfully,

Sean Matgamna.

... raising them.
The central problem for

... But ...
... the Left ...
... line for its conviction that

... my Labour ...
... could expect a campaign

by Sean Matgamna

SOMETHING strange and nasty happened at the 'Local Government in Crisis' conference. Gerry Healy's so-called Workers' Revolutionary Party turned up to support Ted Knight and rent and rate rises.

Perhaps as many as forty delegates were members or sympathisers of the WRP, which had obviously made a big effort to mobilise for the conference. It has been many a long year since the WRP concerned itself with a mainstream labour movement event like this, and the labour movement has been the cleaner for their absence.

At the conference the WRP formed a bloc ...

GADDAFI'S FOREIGN LEGION TO KNIGHT'S RESCUE

movement: "Labour groups and constituency Parties, action committees, immigrant organisations, ratepayers (!) and tenants' groups, small business organisations (!), civil rights, child rights and women's rights groups".

Quite a few delegates ridiculed this nonsense before throwing it out decisively. But the WRP is no laughing matter. It is a pseudo-Marxist gobbledegook-spouting cross between the Moonies, the Scientologists, the Jones Cult which

from one or more Arab governments, from Gaddafi's Libya at least. Of course there is no public proof of this. But for years, during which its membership has not been more than four or five hundred, it has published a very glossy daily paper, *Newsline*, which has survived despite having only a tiny circulation.

Its relationship to Gaddafi was and is that of a mercenary. Hollywood publicity-

lim regime it also supports. Its vehement campaign against Israel and much-publicised support for the Palestinians has nothing in common with socialist or working-class politics when it is coupled with crawling, uncritical, cap-in-hand support for the Arab bourgeois regimes who have in the past betrayed the Palestinian masses (& will in the future) the WRP has spent the last 5 years or so in a paranoid spy-hunting campaign in which it has trad-

rate rises and confrontation with the government] are really 'Thatcher's people' [Newline quotes] because they are speaking 'her' language [Newline quotes]. The revisionists want [Newline emphasis] the 'Tory commissioners in Lambeth. They are now calling for rent and rate strikes in the borough with the aim of deliberately destabilising the council and hoping to force it into bankruptcy. In other words, (take 'left' words

Soon now *Newsline* will tell its readers which of us work for the CIA, which for the KGB, and also who among the critics of Ted Knight are the double agents working for both.

Today the WRP — the sycophant of Gaddafi and other bloody anti working class dictators — is no longer a part of the labour movement. Gerry Healy, Cliff Slaughter, Michael Banda, etc. long ago betrayed Trotskyism, socialism and the working class itself. (And, as a matter of fact, they betrayed themselves too. But that's their business).

Yet, Ted Knight and his friends accepted without protest or comment or visible embarrassment the public support of this ...

PCF Capitulates to Anti-Soviet War Drive

No to the NATO Popular Front in France!

The defeat of Valery Giscard d'Estaing by Socialist Party (PS) candidate François Mitterrand in the second round of the French presidential elections on May 10 was hailed as a victory by the misleaders of the French working class. But the formation of a new popular front government committed to anti-working-class "austerity" at home and the interests of NATO imperialism abroad is no victory for the workers and oppressed! "Mitterrand is the hostage of his Gaullist and Radical partners," noted the Ligue Trotskyiste (LTF), French section of the international Spartacist tendency, recalling the 1936 popular front of Leon Blum which opened the door to Vichy and also the post-war "national unity" government which broke the French workers' strikes and drowned in blood the struggles of the colonial masses:

"Each succeeding popular front, limited in advance to half-measures by its ties to the bourgeoisie, has proved incapable of overcoming the economic and social crises which confronted it. The impotence of the popular front drives the desperate petty-bourgeois masses into the arms of a Pétain or a DeGaulle or worse. It is only when the working class is a contender for power in its own name, when it shows that it is able to expropriate the bourgeoisie, that it can rally to its side the masses of the petty bourgeoisie.... The workers do not have to suffer the 'austerity of the left' with clenched teeth, blackmailed by the prospects of the right's return to power. The road

forward is the mobilization of the workers independent of, indeed *against*, the popular front."

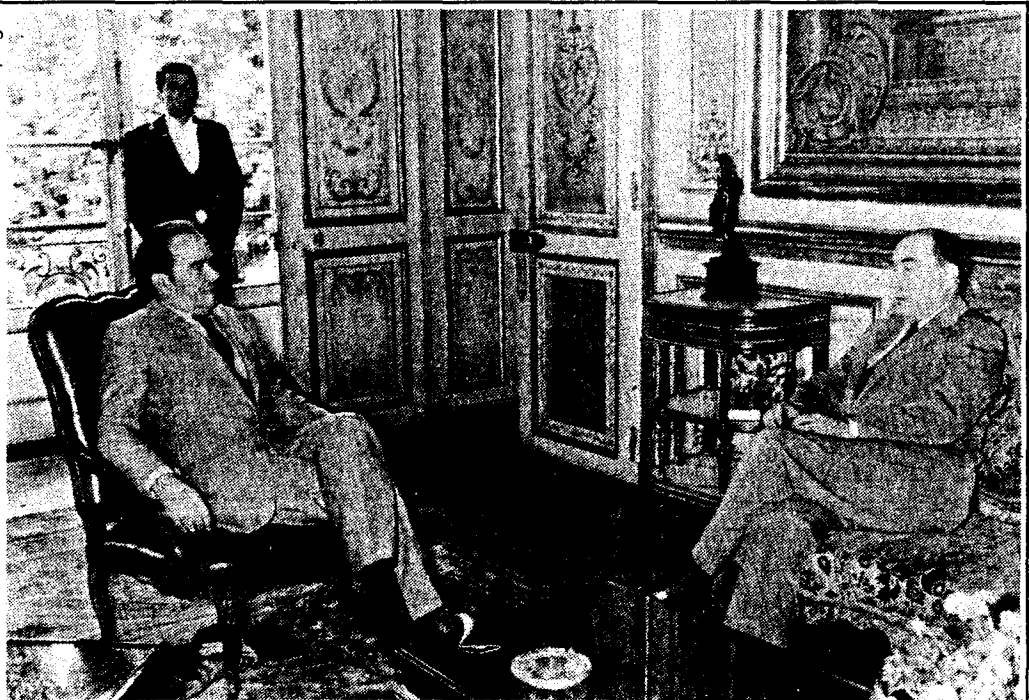
—*Le Bolchévik*, June 1981

The popular front takes office in the context of a new Cold War campaign orchestrated by American imperialism. The PS cemented its bloc with the Gaullists on the basis of virulent anti-Sovietism. Mitterrand over and over again charged Giscard with being "soft" on the Russians; he underlined his anti-Sovietism with a pre-election visit to China and slavish support to new American missiles in Europe and to the Common Market, the economic annex of NATO. To obtain a few minor ministries in the hard-line pro-NATO government, French Communist Party (PCF) leader Georges Marchais had to drop all pretense at opposing Western imperialism's current Cold War offensive.

Alone among "far-left" groups in France, the LTF opposed votes for the "socialist" Cold Warrior Mitterrand. To highlight its opposition to pro-imperialist class collaboration, the LTF last fall raised the possibility of savagely critical support to Marchais of the PCF, which for defensive reasons had taken a conjunctural posture of equivocal independence from the bourgeois parties and social democrats. In the wake of the 1974-75 Portugal crisis, Western imperialism, spearheaded by Carter's

continued on next page

Der Spiegel



French CP chief Marchais (left) bows before imperialist anti-Sovietism to obtain a few minor ministries in Mitterrand's (right) pro-NATO government.

Atlan/Sygnia



Symbol of PCF's chauvinist electoral campaign. In late December PCF mayor of Vitry bulldozed homes of black African immigrants.

"human rights" campaign, had become increasingly anti-Soviet. In this climate Mitterrand's Socialists went on the offensive against the PCF over its ties to Moscow, undermining its electoral base while seducing its Eurocommunist right wing. Pushed to the wall by the social democrats, the PCF leaders defended themselves by a "left" shift, leading to the 1977-78 break-up of the Union of the Left. It was this event, returning the PCF to the "ghetto" of electoral isolation, which set the context for the 1980-81 Marchais campaign.

The LTF recognized in the Leninist tactic of critical support a means of exacerbating the contradictions in the PCF's campaign, setting the base against the top within this reformist party which retains the loyalty of the most militant sectors of the French working class. The PCF's hypocritical posture of independence from the bourgeoisie involved "self-criticism" over the popular fronts of the 1930s and 1940s as well as the 1972 Union of the Left: "three times is enough." The verbal left turn tended to generate among the PCF ranks expectations of some kind of "independent communist" policy, counterposed to the class collaborationism which has been the Stalinists' perspective for nearly half a century—and which remained their only real program. In view of this the headline of the

November-December 1980 *Le Bolchévick* stated, "PS No, PCF Maybe":

"For its own reasons, in solidarity with the bureaucratic caste which rules the USSR, Marchais is the only candidate who defended the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the candidate of the only party which minimally mobilized against NATO missiles in Europe. The PCF has trotted out its class-struggle rhetoric, and is even organizing bureaucratically well-controlled 'mobilizations' against Giscard...."

"In this period of bourgeois anti-Sovietism, we are pleased to be able to give critical support to a pro-Moscow Communist Party. For us, it is a way to highlight our Trotskyist defense of the degenerated and deformed workers states. Not so for the Stalinists, who remain French Stalinists committed to the defense of the capitalist order in France and to French imperialist military power, to the [nuclear] *force de frappe*...."

Initially the PCF's electoral campaign represented a conjunctural backing away from its earlier "Eurocommunist" flirtations. But *Le Bolchévick* (April 1981) pointed to the PCF's fundamental dilemma:

"Eurocommunism is a transitory stage in the social-democratization of Stalinist parties. As reformists for almost half a century (ever since they allowed Hitlerite fascism to march to power unhindered), the Stalinists have definitively passed over to the side of the bourgeois order

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against proletarian revolution. But their primary loyalties were originally to the Kremlin bureaucracy, and when the Soviet Union came under attack from imperialism they were capable of withdrawing into a besieged fortress condition. Trotsky pointed out that over the years Stalin's nationalist policy of 'socialism in one country' would lead to the breakdown of the Comintern, as Communist parties outside the USSR increasingly swear fealty to their 'own' bourgeoisies. But to be accepted as 'normal' governmental partners like the British Labour Party and [German] SPD, and not just as a last resort to stave off the imminent threat of revolution (as in the case of the mid-'30s and post-WWII popular fronts), then the Stalinists would have to fulfill the imperialists' demand that they break totally with Moscow. That is what they required of the PCF."

This contradiction dominated the PCF's electoral campaign from the outset. On the one hand, Marchais' campaign presented a vehicle for a protest vote against imperialism's aggressive anti-Soviet war drive. In response to the bourgeoisie's hard line against the PCF, the French Stalinists in December 1979 launched a mini-campaign against new U.S. nuclear missiles in Europe, and in 1980 Marchais supported the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. At the same time, a central slogan of the campaign was "Produce French," a shameful incitement to French chauvinism placing the PCF squarely in the camp of the capitalists in blaming economic crisis and unemployment on imported products and immigrant labor. Protectionism, pitting the workers of different countries against each other in support of their "own" ruling classes, ultimately foreshadows French workers slaughtering their class brothers in the imperialist wars endemic to the capitalist system in the epoch of its decay. Thus, in our initial statement on Marchais' election campaign, we especially noted: "The savagely critical aspect of our support concerns in particular the highly notorious chauvinism of the PCF...."

At the end of December, the PCF made a spectacular appeal to the chauvinism of backward workers and petty bourgeoisie by becoming shock troops of anti-immigrant racism. This was also an attempt to reassure the bourgeoisie of its unconditional loyalty on the domestic front. The PCF mayor of Vitry led a commando raid on a housing project where 300 black Africans were living. Phones, water, electricity and heat were cut off, while a bulldozer ripped out the front staircase and blocked the doors. In the months that followed the PCF waged a systematic campaign of hysteria against immigrant workers. On January 10, PCF bigwigs, including Marchais himself, participated in an anti-immigrant demonstration to underline, in the words of the party press, that "the entire party will not budge one inch in its policy on immigration." And the PCF pandered to the most backward, racist sentiments, portraying immigrant workers as drug-pushers and so forth.

In a major article published just before Vitry, the LTF had denounced the PCF's campaign to stop immigration and its willingness to support the bourgeoisie's efforts to expel some one million foreign workers over the next four years. After Vitry *Le Bolchévique* (March 1981) appealed in its headline: "Workers of the PCF and the CGT, Is This What You Want?" In the campaign initiated with Vitry the PCF offered the bourgeoisie a most graphic guarantee of its willingness to undertake the most shameful tasks to defend the interests of its "own" ruling class. For the bourgeoisie, fixated on "the Russian question," even Vitry

was not a sufficient display of French patriotism. But for the Trotskyists of the LTF, the PCF's racist campaign—mobilizing one section of the working class against the most vulnerable section, the bourgeoisie's first target as it seeks to place the burden of economic crisis on the backs of the workers—precluded us (or any class-conscious worker) from supporting candidate Marchais, no matter how critically, in the absence of any other element in the election campaign which would relegate Vitry to a back seat. *Le Bolchévique* (April 1981) stated:

"His disgusting campaign of racist provocations against immigrants gives a vote for Marchais a meaning which nothing else has superseded so far, namely a referendum in favor of Vitry and [the CP's] chauvinist anti-immigrant line."

By the time the elections rolled around, the PCF was centering its propaganda on appeals for PCF ministers in a Mitterrand government. The obstacle, of course, was the PCF's pretense of opposing Western imperialism's Cold War offensive against the USSR. On June 23 Marchais & Co. capitulated to the bourgeoisie's humiliating conditions, enforced by Mitterrand: now the PCF echoes Mitterrand's pro-NATO call for nuclear "equilibrium" in Europe, demands Red Army withdrawal from Afghanistan, jumps on the NATO bandwagon over Poland and makes what amounts to a no-strike pledge in the name of "governmental solidarity."

The LTF was the only organization in France to demonstrate against the PCF's groveling capitulation. Our comrades' picket line held the day after the announcement raised the slogans: "Victory to the Red Army in Afghanistan!" "We Trotskyists Defend the Soviet Union!" "Communist Ministers in NATO Popular Front: Betrayal!" and "PCF Members: Reject Abandonment of the Soviet Union!" With Marchais' gross capitulation to imperialist anti-Sovietism, many Communist militants must be repelled by the parliamentarist cretinism of their leaders. To these militants the LTF says: the proletarian internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky is the only road to resolving the crisis of working-class leadership through building revolutionary vanguard parties to struggle for power. ■

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Behind Pro-Imperialist "Third Campism"

SWP's About-Face on Afghanistan

For revolutionary socialists, there is nothing ambiguous about the war in Afghanistan. The Soviet army and its left-nationalist allies are fighting an imperialist-backed counter-revolutionary mélange of landlords, money lenders, mullahs, tribal chiefs and bandits committed to serfdom, usury, the bride price, the veil and mass illiteracy. In the face of U.S. imperialism's exploitation of Afghanistan as a pretext for a renewed Cold War offensive (e.g., a massive arms buildup), there is nothing ambiguous either about what is demanded of Trotskyists, who understand that the Soviet state rests on the historic social gains of the October Revolution in spite of the subsequent Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration. The Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union was placed squarely on the agenda. Thus, the international Spartacist tendency raised the slogan, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

We were somewhat surprised that the self-styled Trotskyist but actually reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) initially supported the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, albeit in a lukewarm and confused way. At the time a front-page editorial in the *Militant* (25 January 1980) stated correctly: "The Soviet troops sent into Afghanistan are there to help crush the U.S.-backed counterrevolution." And we were not surprised when the SWP brought its position on Afghanistan into line with its cringing reformism and consistent capitulation to the liberal wing of the American imperialist bourgeoisie. The new position was announced publicly in the *Militant* of 22 December 1980, which reprinted a National Committee resolution, "Upheaval in Afghanistan," and was explained last August by the party's top leader, Jack Barnes, in his "Correcting Some Errors on Afghanistan" (*International Internal Information Bulletin* No. 4, December 1980).

The SWP has now joined the chorus of Carter/Reagan, pro-NATO Maoists and "third camp" social democrats in demanding Red Army withdrawal, thus surrendering the Afghan peoples to imperialist-backed counterrevolution.



Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!

Mingam/Gamma-Liaison

This should be termed a line *shift* rather than a line *reversal*, however, because the underlying "third camp" methodology, behind which stands the programmatic denial of the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism, has remained a *constant* for the SWP throughout the Afghan events and indeed as far back as the Cuba missile crisis of 1962.

Initially the SWP tried to pretend that the Russian question was not posed in Afghanistan and to appeal to liberals by casting the Afghan events in terms of big bully America ganging up on poor little Afghanistan. The *Militant* (15 February 1980) declared to an unbelieving world:

"So the issue is not Soviet intervention, but a growing U.S. intervention—aimed at taking back the gains won by the Afghan masses—that finally forced the Soviet Union to respond."

But the SWP denied the Russian question to no avail. American liberals didn't need a weathervane to know which way the Cold War winds were blowing. They had their own version of events in Central Asia to remain in harmony with the Carter/Brzezinski anti-Soviet hysteria. It was a case of the Russian big bully ganging up on poor little Afghanistan and its "courageous freedom fighters." It didn't take the SWP very long to realize that its line on

Afghanistan would alienate the bourgeois liberal milieu with which these "respectable socialists" have sought to ingratiate themselves since the anti-Vietnam War movement. So, perhaps with an eye toward Reagan's imminent inauguration, the SWP announced its line shift.

If from the one side the imperialist bourgeoisie prevented the SWP from ducking the Russian question in Afghanistan, the Spartacist tendency prevented it from the other. Barnes makes it clear that the line shift was in part to avoid being tarred with the brush of Spartacism (i.e., Trotskyism):

"I also read the press of the Spartacist sect. 'Hail Red Army,' was the main headline in the first issue after the Soviet intervention....

"According to the Spartacists, we 'minimize the Soviet intervention,' which they say is bringing 'revolution from without' as in Eastern Europe. Revolution from within is impossible in Afghanistan, says the Spartacist League, because the working class is too weak. They say that socialists must demand of the Soviet bureaucracy that it 'impose a social revolution on backward, mullah-ridden Afghanistan.'

"Of course, this is not the position of the Australian, New Zealand, Canadian or American revolutionary Marxists. But it did make me think about the devastating political logic that could be drawn from some of the assumptions we were starting from. There had to be something off base in the way we were approaching the issues posed.

The Cuban Position

"At the same time that I was mulling over these points, I also began thinking about the stance of the Cubans on the Afghan events. Their stance was different from ours....

"That bothered me. When we have a political difference with the Cuban leadership, we should stop, think, and review our position."

—"Correcting Some Errors..."

So according to Barnes, when he discovered the SWP's position was seemingly closer to the Spartacist tendency than to the Castro regime, he got panicky. Actually, he was more bothered by his differences with Carter and Reagan.

Since the start of Carter's "human rights" campaign, we have warned of the growing imperialist war drive against the USSR. Among those who call themselves Trotskyists, we are today known above all as Soviet defensists. Barnes fully recognizes this. Seeking to cover the SWP's capitulation to U.S. imperialism, he counterposes to the Spartacist tendency the Castro regime, which he falsely contends does not support the Russian action in Afghanistan. Ballyhooing Cuba's role in the "non-aligned movement," the SWP claims Havana's politics for its own "third campism."

From "Combatting" to Capitulating to "Third Camp" Pressures

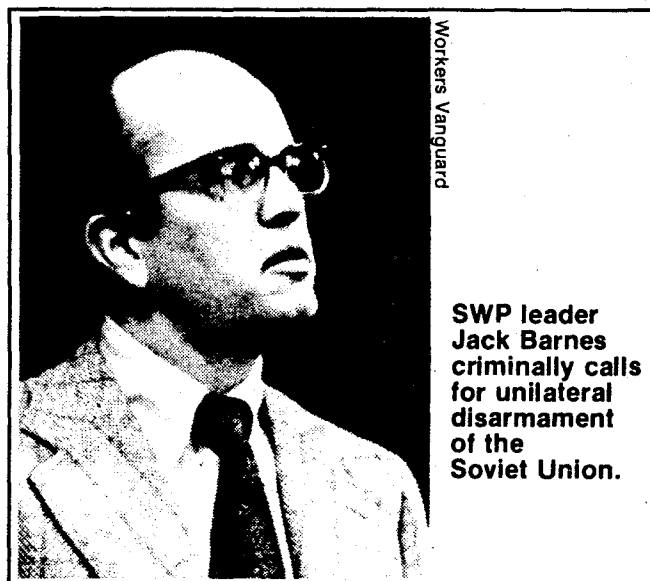
It should be clear that the SWP is for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The SWP *presently* eschews "campaigning" for Soviet withdrawal since this "would only serve to add fuel to the imperialist propaganda campaign, militarization drive and intervention in Afghanistan" ("Upheaval in Afghanistan"). Instead it shifts the responsibility for such a campaign to some mythical "revolutionary Marxists in the Soviet Union," who presumably would not in this way fuel imperialist anti-Sovietism just as the SWP claims that Andrei Sakharov's call for a Western economic boycott of the USSR over Afghanistan is a mere exercise in "free speech" which does

not strengthen the imperialists' anti-Soviet war drive. So the SWP is not "campaigning" for Soviet withdrawal? The new line is graphically expressed in an article, "Resistance to Soviet Troops Increases Inside Afghanistan" (*Intercontinental Press*, 16 March). The very title mirrors the most right-wing yellow press accounts hailing the "Afghan freedom fighters."

The SWP's line shift on Afghanistan was codified at least as early as August 1980. Why the leadership waited five months to go public with it remains a mystery, not least to the SWP membership. Perhaps Barnes & Co., who over the years have mastered the art of being sycophants and fellow travelers of the Cuban (but *not* Russian) Stalinist bureaucracy, were waiting for the Castro regime to make a definitive statement against the Soviet action in Afghanistan. Page after page of "Upheaval in Afghanistan" and "Correcting Some Errors..." is devoted to arguing that Cuba and the Soviet Union "have divergent policies" in Afghanistan. Unhappily for Barnes & Co., almost simultaneous with the SWP's public announcement of its line shift Castro gave an unequivocal endorsement to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in his main political report to no less an event than the Second Congress of the Cuban Communist Party! (See box on page 19.)

In the very beginning of "Correcting Some Errors..." Barnes expresses satisfaction that the line shift was greeted with enthusiasm by most members of the SWP and its affiliate, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA). Indeed, the enthusiasm was such that the SWP/YSA eagerly "leaked" the impending line shift to radicals across the country. Barnes hails the line shift as providing a "clear orientation for our industrial fractions, our candidates and all our comrades who work with political people day in and day out...." The SWP's industrial fractions and its ubiquitous electoral campaigns serve its ambition to displace the old CIA-connected and largely discredited official social democracy as the "respectable" party of American parliamentary socialism. According to Barnes, "the capacity of our fractions to respond to the Afghan events" and "to provide feedback on the questions that fellow workers raise—is one of the factors that has helped us

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reevaluate our position." Supporting Soviet tanks in Kabul did not facilitate serving as public relations men for notorious anti-communist union bureaucrats like Lane Kirkland and Doug Fraser. And it is perhaps not accidental that now that the SWP is calling for withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, it has just procured Doug Fraser's endorsement of its eight-year "socialist Watersuit" against government harassment.

Barnes brags about "countering the 'third camp' pressures from the petty-bourgeois left that have intensified in the wake of the propaganda campaign unleashed by the imperialists and the bourgeois press following the Afghan events." In fact, the SWP has capitulated completely to these pressures, not simply from the petty-bourgeois left of which it is a part, but from its own rapacious imperialist bourgeoisie.

Barnes even claims the SWP "sounded the alarm against the dangerous impact of such 'third camp' pressures inside the Fourth International." By "Fourth International" Barnes does not mean the organization founded by Trotsky and the International Communist League in 1938 but rather the fake-Trotskyist rotten bloc of the United Secretariat (USec). The *initial* reactions of the two main wings of the USec to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan were the opposite of what one might have expected given their basic political character. The reformist right wing led by the American SWP initially supported the Soviet intervention while Ernest Mandel's European-centered centrist swamp joined the imperialist chorus in condemning it. Some Mandelites agitated for withdrawal, others didn't go that far. (See "Afghanistan and the Left: The Russian Question Point Blank," *Spartacist* No. 29, Summer 1980.)

Barnes singles out as the worst example of his European comrades' response to Afghanistan that of the British USec section, the International Marxist Group (IMG), whose "Third World" guru, Tariq Ali, wrote an article for *Socialist Challenge* (3 January 1980) with the Fleet Street tabloid headline, "Soviet Troops Out of Afghanistan!" In "Correcting Some Errors..." Barnes says of Ali's article:

"The entire thrust of the article was against Moscow, not against imperialist intervention in the region or the propaganda offensive whipped up by the capitalists."

He goes on to relate that the European USec sections have since backtracked from such outright "third campist" formulations, which have now been taken over by none other than Barnes himself! In demanding Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the SWP placed itself to the right of the Mandelite centrists, who a few months later adopted the same pro-imperialist demand (see box on page 27). The entire thrust of these two documents is against Moscow, which only in passing mentions imperialist intervention in the region or the propaganda offensive whipped up by the capitalists.

Referring to Carter's anti-Soviet war drive, Barnes claims: "If anything, the Afghan events gave him a bit of an edge. He was able to use the situation there as an excuse to try to carry out the things he projected and as an excuse for another big increase in the war budget." Here is "third camp" anti-Sovietism straight out of the books of a Tariq Ali or even a Michael Harrington. Worried about the draft, the bloated arms budget, the threat of nuclear annihilation? Then blame "Soviet expansionism" for provoking the peaceful or at least passive American imperialists!

The Spectre of Spartacism

As previously noted, reaction against the forthright Soviet defensism of the Spartacist tendency was a real factor in the SWP's line shift on Afghanistan. Thus, the Spartacist tendency is the *only* opponent organization polemicized against in the two lengthy documents codifying the shift. In particular, Barnes uses the spectre of Spartacism to frighten his Australian and New Zealand comrades, whose response to the Soviet intervention was more positive than their American cothinkers'.

Barnes is upset that the Australian Socialist Workers Party (SWP) press "carried a giant front-page headline: 'Soviet Troops Aid Afghan Revolution!'" Even more disturbing to Barnes' "third camp" disposition was the response of the Australian SWP's cousins across the Tasman Sea. The New Zealand press carried an editorial which began: "Socialist Action hails the sending of tens of thousands of Soviet troops to help defend the revolution in Afghanistan." "That," Barnes winces, "rubbed me the wrong way." Indeed, it must. How would it play in federal Judge Greisa's courtroom, where the SWP's "Watersuit" is being pleaded?

Barnes' attempt to frighten his Australian/New Zealand comrades with Spartacism has not succeeded, at least to date. A recent national conference of the Australian SWP reaffirmed support to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, though in a watered-down form. Its resolution states:

"'Upheaval' does not deny that the [left-nationalist] PDPA government would in all probability have been overthrown by the right-wing guerrillas in the absence of the Soviet troop intervention. In our view, and in the view of the US comrades in January, the victory of the guerrillas would have been a catastrophe for the Afghan toilers

Et tu, Fidel!

"The Cuban statement was also notable in that it did not present any defense of the Soviet action or point to anything positive about the Soviet troops being in Afghanistan."

—"Upheaval in Afghanistan," SWP National Committee Resolution, 26 November 1980

"In Afghanistan... imperialism and international reaction's savage acts of provocation, subversion and interference against the revolution, plus the divisions and serious mistakes committed by the revolutionary Afghans themselves, brought the situation to such a point that the U.S.S.R. had to help save the process and preserve the victories of the April 1978 Revolution."

—Fidel Castro, "Main Report to the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba," 18 December 1980



Der Spiegel

comparable to the disasters suffered by the workers and peasants in Indonesia in 1965 or Chile in 1973. Such a defeat would have reversed the gains won by the workers and peasants and closed off the possibility of further advances for at least several years."

—*Afghanistan—Where the New Line of the American Socialist Workers Party Goes Wrong*. A criticism of Analysis, Framework and Conclusions by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (Australian Section of the Fourth International). (15 January 1981)

This is the first time since it was established eleven years ago that the Australian SWP has taken a line different from its American big brother. This difference basically reflects the very different climate of opinion in the two countries. As the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand explained:

"In a country where even sections of the Victorian ALP [Australian Labor Party] Socialist Left defend the Soviet intervention, where Fraser's anti-Soviet Olympic boycott campaign was massively unpopular, the Percy leadership [of the SWP] feels a pressure to *maintain* its position—if only to distinguish it from mainstream social democracy." [emphasis in original]

—"SWP Revisionists Fall Out Over Afghanistan," *Australasian Spartacist*, February 1981

Barnes is particularly irked that the Australian SWP (like the Spartacist tendency) maintained that a victory of the imperialist-backed counterrevolutionaries in Afghanistan, which shares a thousand-mile border with the USSR, might constitute an imperialist military threat to the Soviet degenerated workers state. "That puts the entire discussion in the framework of the immediate military defense of the Soviet Union under a new major imperialist threat. But it's

not true," he protests. Tell that to the Soviet workers and peasants looking at warmonger Reagan and his four-star secretary of state Haig with their trigger fingers on 10,000 nuclear warheads!

Barnes, ever the amateur *Realpolitiker*, claims that U.S. imperialism wouldn't dare put military bases in Afghanistan even if the rightist anti-Soviet forces came to power:

"Such a gigantic move, which would threaten a major confrontation with the Kremlin, would only be made if Washington felt this was necessary and possible, given the balance of military power between itself and Moscow and the relationship of class forces in the world. This is clearly not the case today."

But it might well be the case on the morrow *if* the imperialist-backed Afghan counterrevolutionaries were to triumph over the beleaguered left-nationalist forces in the wake of a Soviet withdrawal (and this is what Barnes advocates). U.S. imperialism has chosen to make the war in Afghanistan a *test* of the relationship of class forces in the world and of the balance of military power in the region. Is there any question that a counterrevolutionary Afghan regime which came to power with the direct support of imperialism would be more under the control of the Western powers than was the old Durrani monarchy, which survived after World War II because it provided a buffer between the USSR and the American and British spheres of influence in South Asia and the Persian Gulf?

Whether Washington decided it needed bases in Afghanistan would be based entirely on strategic military considerations. But U.S. imperialism, especially with super-hawks Reagan/Haig at its head, is looking for a

continued on next page

major confrontation with the Soviet Union. And a victory for its forces in Afghanistan could only embolden U.S. imperialism.

The SWP's line on Afghanistan is "third campism"—with a tilt. Barnes' whole view of world politics is predicated on the notion that the U.S. will never undertake "a major confrontation with the Kremlin"; indeed, the SWP's denunciations of the Russians for jeopardizing world peace over Afghanistan are precisely the rationale of every "State Department socialist" for supporting U.S. imperialism as a purported lesser evil to "Soviet aggression" and "expansionism." The reality, long understood by Trotskyists and increasingly apparent for all to see, is that the conservative Stalinist bureaucrats seek above all to preserve the global status quo, in the expectation of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism; but the imperialists, never reconciled to the ripping of the Sino-Soviet states out of the clutches of capitalist exploitation, go right on nerving themselves up for anti-Soviet confrontations posing the possibility of global holocaust.

In addition to our forthright Soviet defensism, Barnes & Co. are particularly up in arms over our demand: Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples! They chide the Spartacists as being "ultraleft tough guys":

"In their [the Spartacists'] opinion, revolution from within is impossible because of the small size of the industrial working class and the large number of mullahs. They call on the USSR to 'impose a social revolution on backward and mullah-ridden Afghanistan'."

—"Upheaval in Afghanistan"

Do the SWP leaders then deny this empirical reality and maintain that an indigenous proletarian socialist revolution is actually possible in Afghanistan? Actually, no. Barnes himself admits "there are more mullahs than proletarians" in Afghanistan. The resolution "Upheaval in Afghanistan" is even more explicit:

"... the Islamic hierarchy wields great power in upholding the abominable social conditions in the country. There are

about 250,000 mullahs, some of whom own large tracts of tax-free land, many of whom control educational institutions, and most of whom wield local political influence."

There is no way the SWP can claim to call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops in order to open the road to an indigenous proletarian revolution (which is, of course, always preferable to revolution from without). Rather the SWP advocates the withdrawal of Soviet troops to permit an Islamic feudalist political counterrevolution!

We might note in passing that the Islamic hierarchy wields great political power in upholding abominable social conditions also in neighboring Iran. In Iran the SWP grotesquely hails the rule of the mullahs in the name of the "Iranian Revolution" and takes their "anti-imperialist" rhetoric as good coin. But the real relationship of Iran's mullahs to imperialism was decisively demonstrated in Afghanistan. In "Correcting Some Errors..." Barnes states that the Afghan "rightist rebellion... is aided and abetted by the CIA, the military dictatorship in Pakistan, and by British and West German imperialism, and Washington's friends leading the bureaucratic caste in Peking." The one conspicuous ally of counterrevolution in Afghanistan Barnes fails to mention is none other than Imam Khomeini's Islamic Republic. Khomeini, whose "anti-imperialist" credentials are reasserted almost weekly in the pages of the *Militant*, rushed to join hands with his fellow mullahs in Afghanistan in their *jihād* against "godless communism." (See "Counterrevolution in Afghanistan: The Khomeini Connection," *Spartacist* No. 29, Summer 1980.)

The difference between Iran and Afghanistan is not to be found in the less reactionary character of the former's mullahs. The difference is that Iran is a major oil producer for the world market and has undergone a certain industrial development and with it the development of a significant industrial working class. In fact, insofar as an Afghan proletariat exists at all, it works in the oil fields of Iran's Khuzistan (or did until it was expelled as part of Khomeini's Persian chauvinist policies).

In Iran there exists the social basis for a proletarian dictatorship which alone can liberate the society from feudalist backwardness and imperialist domination. But in regions without a significant proletariat like Afghanistan the tasks of achieving democratic rights and national emancipation can only be completed as they were completed in Central Asia after the Bolshevik Revolution, that is, in closest alliance with the victorious proletarian dictatorship centered in Great Russia, the Ukraine and the Baku oil fields. In turn, the victorious proletariat is duty-bound to provide every form of material support, including military aid, to assist the toiling masses of backward regions in achieving their social liberation.

Barnes simultaneously denounces the Spartacist tendency for calling on the Soviet Union to carry out a social revolution in Afghanistan and condemns the Kremlin for *not* advancing the social revolution! Opportunists are never bothered by such contradictions. According to Barnes, "In Afghanistan, the Kremlin's policy toward the potential for social revolution had been counterrevolutionary from the start." By the time one finishes reading "Correcting Some Errors..." one can only conclude that the Soviet army intervened in Afghanistan in league with

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For Barnes, the Soviet government is damned if they do and damned if they don't. He denounces them for not carrying out a social revolution in Afghanistan; he would denounce them just as strongly if they did. An indulgent Kremlin official might throw up his hands and exclaim: "What does this man Barnes want us to do?" What the SWP leader wants, of course, is exactly what the American imperialists want—he wants the Russians out of Afghanistan no matter what.

We recognize full well that the Red Army in Afghanistan is Brezhnev's, not Trotsky's. Thus we criticized the Soviet Union not for intervening but rather for attempting to conciliate the forces of counterrevolution, especially Islamic fundamentalism, instead of undertaking a thoroughgoing social revolutionary program. And we further warned:

"It is possible the Kremlin could do a deal with the imperialists to withdraw, for example, in return for NATO's reversing its decision to deploy hundreds of new nuclear missiles in West Europe. That would be a real counterrevolutionary crime against the Afghan peoples."

—"The Russian Question Point Blank,"
Spartacist No. 29, Summer 1980

As we shall see, it is just such a deal that Barnes calls for in "Correcting Some Errors...."

The Bolsheviks and Social Revolution in Backward Countries

Like Michael Harrington and all other good social democrats writing on the Afghan events, Jack Barnes elevates the right to national self-determination to the highest of political principles and categorically opposes revolution from without. Unlike Michael Harrington (though rather like Enrico Berlinguer), Barnes contends that Lenin was really a national-liberal, who supposedly in principle opposed military interventions to support revolutions in other countries. To back up this contention,

the SWP leader cites the Eighth Bolshevik Congress in 1919, where Lenin upheld the right of nations to self-determination as against Bukharin's formulation of "the self-determination of the working people." Since national rights are a democratic question, Lenin's position was right and Bukharin's wrong.

But what are the real issues in Afghanistan? Barnes & Co. now choose to disregard that the Soviet Union intervened in a *civil war* in which the imperialists were supporting a reactionary feudalist insurgency against a modernizing petty-bourgeois democratic regime. In the same 1919 debate on the national question that Barnes cites, Lenin says something quite germane to the present Afghan situation:

"... we must tell the other nations that we are out-and-out internationalists and are striving for the voluntary alliance of the workers and peasants of all nations. This does not preclude wars in the least. War is another question, and arises out of the very nature of imperialism. If we are fighting [the U.S. president] Wilson, and Wilson uses a small nation as his tool, we say that we shall oppose that tool. We have never said anything different."

—"Speech Closing the Debate on the Party Programme," *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (1965)

Lenin's Bolsheviks had to apply the principle of national self-determination in regions so backward the proletariat barely existed as a class, moreover, in the context of many-sided civil wars and imperialist interventions. For these reasons the experience of the Bolsheviks in the Muslim borderlands, Central Asia and Outer Mongolia is particularly instructive in looking at Afghanistan today.

In his 1919 debate with Bukharin, Lenin specifically refers to the Bashkirs. These were a formerly nomadic Turkic-speaking people only recently settled into agriculture and forestry. The new Soviet government immediately saw the need to win a base of support in the Turkic-speaking borderlands of the former tsarist empire and appealed to the Muslim toilers, who were subjected to ruthless, pre-capitalist forms of exploitation. The Commu-

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nists paid special attention in their work to the hideously oppressed women of the Muslim East, who were considered something of a "surrogate proletariat" in regions too backward to have an industrial working class. However, Bolshevik proclamations of the right to self-determination for the peoples of the East did not prevent some Muslim leaders from supporting the Whites in the civil war.

For example, immediately after the October Revolution an independent Bashkir government was set up headed by a Muslim nationalist school teacher, Zeki Validov. Validov's Bashkir regime allied itself with the Orenburg Cossacks and White forces against the new Soviet power. However, after suffering for a year from the rapacious requisitions, banditry and Great Russian chauvinism of the Cossacks and Whites, when confronted with a victorious Red Army sweeping through the Urals a Bashkir army of 2,000, including Validov himself, went over to the Soviet side in early 1919. The application of the principle of self-determination to the Bashkir people, codified in the establishment of the Bashkir Autonomous Region in May 1920, was possible *only after* the Red Army triumphed over the imperialist-backed Whites and other counterrevolutionary forces in this region.

Even more directly relevant to the present Afghan situation is the case of Outer Mongolia. Here was a country even more backward (if less ethnically heterogeneous) than Afghanistan. It was even more priest-ridden. According to a 1918 census, 45 percent of the entire male population were either Buddhist lamas or monks! The social structure of Outer Mongolia at this time is described by British historian E.H. Carr:

"...its population in the nineteen-twenties consisted primarily of nomadic herdsmen and breeders of livestock—camels, horses, cattle, sheep and goats.... Of the herds which constituted the main wealth of the country, a considerable part...belonged to a small number of secular nobles and a large number of monasteries. The nomad herdsmen who tended the

animals were either serfs tied to the nobles or to the monasteries or nominally free men who hired the cattle from the monasteries for their use."

—*Socialism in One Country 1924-1926*, Vol. 3 (1964)

Like Afghanistan, Outer Mongolia maintained its nominal autonomy because of its location between two competing powers, China and Russia, and the threat of intervention of a third power, Japan. As in Afghanistan, there developed in Outer Mongolia with Soviet backing a nationalist party, the Mongolian People's Party (MPP), which was extremely heterogeneous in its social composition and aspirations. Some of its leaders were of humble origin, others were nobles who had repudiated their titles as the party became radicalized. The first president of the MPP's central committee was a former Buddhist lama.

The MPP was formed in the winter of 1920-21 in response to Chinese violation of Outer Mongolian autonomy and the attempt to form a warlord government. This attempt soon collapsed, but the power vacuum was filled by a Japanese-backed White Russian adventurer, Ungern-Sternberg. When in early 1921 Ungern-Sternberg attempted to take over Outer Mongolia, the MPP declared a Mongolian People's Government as the legitimate government of the country. In May 1921 Ungern-Sternberg launched an attack against Soviet territory. He was rapidly repulsed by Soviet forces, his army deserted, and the Mongolian People's Government was carried into the country's capital, Urga, on the bayonets of a triumphant Red Army.

In the 1920s-30s the Mongolian People's Republic underwent a profound social revolution from above. Today the social conditions of Outer Mongolia are centuries in advance of Afghanistan. And to this day imperialist and social-democratic propagandists point to the Mongolian People's Republic as an early example of "Soviet imperialism" following in the footsteps of the tsars. In reality, the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution



People's Republic of Mongolia in the early 1930s (right). Today the condition of Mongolian women (below) is centuries in advance of Afghanistan.

Time



Daily World

Kabul nationalists greet Soviet armed forces (left). First women parachutists in Afghan army (above). Soviet intervention opens possibility for liberating Afghan women from hideous oppression.

and national emancipation could only be genuinely undertaken in a country as backward as Outer Mongolia with the aid of the Soviet proletarian dictatorship and its armed forces.

SWP leader Barnes argues the opposite and would logically oppose Lenin and Trotsky's policies of aiding, including militarily, the Bashkirs and Mongolians. He therefore would have abandoned these regions to imperialist intrigue and feudal oppression. Barnes & Co. would certainly have joined the chorus of imperialists and social democrats who demanded a Soviet withdrawal from Caucasian Georgia in 1921 in the name of "self-determination." Because the Hendersons, Vanderveldes and Kautskys, that is, the big-time Jack Barneses of Lenin's day, did *not* have their way, Soviet Central Asia and the Mongolian People's Republic have made enormous strides in social and economic progress despite the Stalinist degeneration of the October Revolution.

Someone might object that while the Red Army of Lenin and Trotsky could play a progressive role in backward countries, this is never true of the Red Army of Stalin and his successors. This question was posed sharply in the international Trotskyist movement in 1929 over the Chinese Eastern Railroad. In the 1890s tsarist Russia forced the Manchus to cede it control of a vital railroad crossing northern China to the port of Vladivostok. During the revolutionary turmoil in China in the 1920s, the Soviet government maintained control of this railroad. In 1929 Chiang Kai-shek's right-wing nationalist government demanded that Moscow give up the Chinese Eastern Railroad, the fruit of tsarist imperialism.

Some elements in and around the international Left Opposition supported the Chinese position in the name of national self-determination. An extreme spokesman for this view was the French syndicalist Robert Louzon. Here

is what Trotsky said of Louzon's politics:

"The highest duty of the proletarian revolution, it appears, is to carefully dip its banners before national frontiers. Herein, according to Louzon, is the gist of Lenin's anti-imperialist policy! One blushes with shame to read this philosophy of 'revolution in one country.' The Red Army halted at the frontier of China because it was not strong enough to cross this frontier and meet the inescapable onslaught of Japanese imperialism. If the Red Army were strong enough to assume such an offensive, it would have been *duty-bound* to launch it. A renunciation by the Red Army of a revolutionary offensive against the forces of imperialism and in the interests of the Chinese workers and peasants would not have meant the fulfillment of Lenin's policy but a base betrayal of the ABC of Marxism. Wherein lies the misfortune of Louzon and others like him? In this, he has substituted a national-pacifist policy for the international-revolutionary policy." [emphasis in original]

—"Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition," *Writings [1929]* (1975)

Every word of this polemic could be aimed at Barnes except that the SWP leader's position on the defense of the Soviet Union is far worse than Louzon's. And we emphasize again that Trotsky is here speaking of the Red Army of *Stalin*.

Stalinism and Deformed Social Revolutions

The SWP's line shift on Afghanistan represents the capitulation of cowardly social democrats to the anti-Sovietism of their own imperialist bourgeoisie. However, some of Barnes' argumentation looks for a left cover to the disorientation of the then revolutionary SWP and European Trotskyist leaders toward the expansion of Soviet Russian power after World War II. Thus, he cites as "orthodox precedent" a 1946 Fourth International resolution calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Europe ("Resolution on the Withdrawal of Occupa-

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tion Troops," *Fourth International*, August 1946).

The Trotskyists reacted to the Soviet military occupation of East Europe with a combination of wooden orthodoxy and a tendency toward Stalinophobia. They categorically denied that the Stalinist forces could overturn capitalism in this region. In a polemic written in late 1946 against the "bureaucratic collectivist" American Shachtman group, Ernest Germain (Mandel) dismisses out of hand the idea "that the Stalinist bureaucracy has succeeded in overthrowing capitalism in half of our continent" ("The Conflict in Poland," *Fourth International*, February 1947). It was not until 1951 at its Third World Congress that the Fourth International officially acknowledged the social transformation in East Europe. As we wrote several years ago in "Genesis of Pabloism":

"Clinging to orthodoxy, the Trotskyists had lost a real grasp of theory and suppressed part of Trotsky's *dialectical* understanding of Stalinism as a parasitic and counter-revolutionary caste sitting atop the gains of the October Revolution, a kind of treacherous middle-man poised between the victorious Russian proletariat and world imperialism." [emphasis in original]

—*Spartacist* No. 21, Fall 1972

If the Trotskyists at the time flatly denied the possibility of a deformed social revolution in East Europe, they were simultaneously overly optimistic about proletarian socialist revolutions in West Europe, and in the SWP's case in the United States as well. They saw imminent proletarian revolutions inexorably sweeping across Europe destroying both capitalist-imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Therefore, they believed that the Stalinist Red Army in East Europe, like the Stalinist CPs in West Europe, could only play a counterrevolutionary role in the face of an unfolding European-wide proletarian revolution.

This was the outlook which underlay the 1946 Fourth International resolution. Certainly with the advantage of hindsight, it is a politically disoriented and defective document. It contains a number of bad formulations simply equating capitalist-imperialism and Stalinism. It does state that: "In demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army from the territories it occupies, the Fourth International nowise abandons its slogan of unconditional defense of the USSR." But the Red Army's occupation of East Europe was not some kind of gratuitous "Soviet expansionism." It was the direct outcome of the military defense of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany.

If Stalin's policies were to be faulted, it is for keeping the sphere-of-influence deals he made at Yalta, Cairo and Potsdam, for halting the march of the Red Army westward, for throwing the Stalinist-led workers movement into the "national reconstruction" of capitalism in Italy and France, for strangling the revolution in Greece and for dividing Germany instead of aiding in the creation of a united German workers state. As the ensuing Cold War demonstrated, the 1945-47 period was but a respite in which the victorious "democratic" imperialists under U.S. leadership rebuilt their forces for new assaults against the Soviet Union. To call for Red Army withdrawal from East Europe in this situation was objectively tantamount to calling for the disarmament of the USSR.

It was one thing for Trotskyists in 1946-47 to be disoriented by the extension of the Soviet military power, to believe the Stalinists organically incapable of effecting a social revolution from above, to project an imminent



Der Spiegel

At Teheran conference in 1943 Stalin agreed to give American imperialism postwar control of West Europe.

European-wide proletarian revolution and therefore to call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Europe. It is something very different for Jack Barnes to retrospectively endorse this position in Reagan's America of 1980. For Barnes denies the Russian Stalinist forces could carry out a bureaucratically deformed social revolution in East Europe not before it happened or while it was happening but *three decades after* it happened! In "Correcting Some Errors..." he declares: "After defeating the German army, what did Moscow do? It carried out a counterrevolution." Period. Then how was capitalism overthrown? According to Barnes, with the onset of the Cold War:

"...the Soviet bureaucracy, with the Red Army still occupying most of Eastern Europe, allowed the workers to overturn capitalist property relations and set up workers states—of course, under tight bureaucratic control. I stress that the workers of those countries set up workers states, as opposed to simply the Soviet troops doing it."

This is the most patent historic nonsense imaginable. It is hard to imagine Barnes believes it himself.

The political and economic expropriation of the bourgeoisie went hand in hand with the totalitarian regimentation of the working masses. The East European Stalinist ruling apparatuses effectively suppressed all independent and spontaneous working-class action. This was fully recognized by all Trotskyists, indeed by everyone save the more gullible Stalinists. The 1951 Fourth International resolution, "Class Nature of Eastern Europe," does no more than state the obvious: "These states have arisen not through the revolutionary action of the masses but through the military-bureaucratic action of the Stalinist bureaucracy" (*Fourth International*, November-December 1951).

Barnes spins his fairy tale of a "controlled workers revolution" in East Europe in order to deny that the Soviet Red Army could ever and anywhere be an agency of historic progress. He asserts: "There are no 'workers' Napoleons' bringing revolution from above with tanks. There is only counterrevolution from above." This has nothing in common with Trotsky's analysis of the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy. For it was Trotsky who in a 1939

polemic against "third campism" drew the analogy between the Soviet military occupation of eastern Poland and Napoleon's abolition of serfdom in the same country in the early nineteenth century:

"This measure was dictated not by Napoleon's sympathies for the peasants, nor by democratic principles, but rather by the fact that the Bonapartist dictatorship based itself not on feudal, but on bourgeois property relations. Inasmuch as Stalin's Bonapartist dictatorship bases itself not on private but on state property, the invasion of Poland by the Red Army should, in the nature of the case, result in the abolition of private capitalist property, so as thus to bring the regime of the occupied territories into accord with the regime of the USSR."

—*In Defense of Marxism* (1940)

While Barnes denies that the Russian Stalinists can ever effect revolution from above, he falsely attributes to us the exact opposite position, that the Red Army always brings social revolution in its wake:

"They [the Spartacists] act as if... the Kremlin bureaucrats are actually some kind of bureaucratic revolutionaries, and that anywhere the Red Army goes, it carries with it not only the policy of the caste but also the seeds of the proletarian revolution."

—"Correcting Some Errors..."

Barnes knows quite well that this is *not* our position. It was, however, the position of the Haston/Vern-Ryan tendency in the Fourth International in the late 1940s-early '50s. This tendency was in part a simplistic reaction to the Fourth International's denial of what was clearly occurring in East Europe. As we wrote a number of years ago of the Haston/Vern-Ryan thesis:

"In the short run the Russian Stalinist leadership could and did exercise choice (choice not freely arrived at) as to the social outcome—hence the elementary error in the Haston/Vern syllogism 'class character of the state equals domination of that class in society' when the state (army) is Russian and the society is, for example, Austrian or Hungarian. The Russians evacuated the areas they

controlled in Austria and Iran but directed the transformation of the bulk of Eastern Europe into social and political counterparts of the Soviet Union—i.e., *consolidation in the wake of Russian conquest.*" [emphasis in original]

—"Addition to MB No. 8 Preface" (1973), in "Cuba and Marxist Theory," *Marxist Bulletin* No. 8

Where the Stalinist bureaucrats have no freedom of maneuver is where the organized proletariat is centrally involved in the struggle as a contender for power. Thus for example in Spain during the civil war, Stalinism played an outright counterrevolutionary role, up to and including sabotaging the fight against Francoism, because what was posed in Spain was not Franco or the GPU but Franco or proletarian revolution. No doubt the expectation of indigenous proletarian revolutionary uprisings in Eastern Europe, which Soviet troops would have been used to smash, conditioned the Fourth International's call for withdrawal of Russian troops from Eastern Europe.

In any case, Barnes' present effort to cast us as Pabloites is simply ludicrous. Barnes knows perfectly well that we cut our teeth as an oppositional faction within the SWP precisely in opposition to the SWP's uncritical adulation of Castroism as an "unconscious Trotskyist" current. Our insistence on the need for a Trotskyist party and program in Cuba was a crucial programmatic struggle which defined our tendency as the Trotskyist opposition to Pabloist tailism of Stalinism and petty-bourgeois nationalism. Still, it is not simple cynicism that prompts Barnes to paint us as some kind of crypto-Stalinists. In fact it is a good index of the SWP's position as an opponent of Pabloism *from the right*: the Stalinophobic reformists of the SWP can no longer distinguish very well between the Stalinophilic impressionism of Pabloist centrism and the Trotskyism of the Spartacist tendency.

We are defensists of the Soviet armed forces not always and everywhere but only insofar as they serve the interests

continued on next page

Y. Khaldei



Red Army marches into Austria in 1945. Occupation of East Europe was not gratuitous "Soviet expansion," but the direct outcome of the defense of the USSR against Nazi German imperialism.

of the world proletariat. Where they clash as over the Berlin workers' uprising of 1953 or the Hungarian revolution of 1956 or where Soviet troops are used to restore tight bureaucratic control over the working masses as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, we are squarely opposed to Soviet military intervention. But in any case the East European analogy hardly applies to Afghanistan where indigenous proletarian revolution is not possible. Every page of Barnes' "Correcting Some Errors..." including appending the defective 1946 Fourth International resolution, only serves as testimony to the SWP's anti-Soviet stance.

Once the Fourth International recognized that the Kremlin bureaucrats had directed a deformed social revolution in East Europe, a section of it led by its secretary, Michel Pablo, looked to the Stalinist movement to overthrow capitalism on a world scale. In this way the Pabloites liquidated the historic vanguard role of the Fourth International and reduced Trotskyists to being a mere pressure group on other "objectively revolutionary" forces. As we explained in "Genesis of Pabloism":

"Pabloism was more than a symmetrical false theory, more than simply an impressionistic over-reaction against orthodoxy; it was a theoretical justification for a non-revolutionary *impulse* based on giving up a perspective for the construction of a proletarian vanguard in the advanced or colonial countries." [emphasis in original]

James P. Cannon's SWP rightly opposed Pabloite revisionism and liquidationism. But it did so in a way that perpetuated Stalinophobic tendencies. While the SWP did not deny the social transformations in East Europe, it did deny the *contradictory* nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy which made these transformations possible. Thus, leading SWP theoretician Joseph Hansen defended the formulation of a co-factionalist that the Stalinist bureaucracy is "counterrevolutionary through and through." This characterization truly only fits hardened imperialist formations like the CIA or Nazi SS.

The SWP's idea that Stalinism was "counterrevolutionary through and through" produced considerable theoretical disorientation when it was faced with the Chinese Revolution. When the victory of Mao's Red Army was well in sight, Cannon insisted that the Chinese Stalinists would again capitulate to Chiang Kai-shek. The SWP did not recognize that a deformed workers state had been established in 1949 with the smashing of the old state apparatus and the destruction of the Chinese bourgeoisie as a politically organized class. It did not acknowledge that a social revolution had occurred until 1955 when the Maoists dropped the rhetoric of "people's democracy" and nationalized the few remaining capitalists.

Barnes' SWP has turned Cannon's methodological error into a full-blown revisionist doctrine. This is clearly seen in the case of Vietnam. The SWP claims that South Vietnam remained capitalist after the North Vietnam army marched into Saigon in 1975 and even after it was incorporated into a single state power dominated by North Vietnam a year later (thus positing in flat opposition to Marxism a two-class state). Only after the last of the Cholon Chinese merchants were expropriated in 1978 (many wantonly driven out in a chauvinist anti-Chinese campaign) would the SWP acknowledge a social revolution in South Vietnam.

The SWP's criteria for judging an anti-capitalist social revolution are both Stalinist and social-democratic: Stalinist insofar as it is made dependent on administra-

tive measures taken by an already consolidated state apparatus; more important and less obviously, social-democratic in that the decisive factor is *not the smashing of the old bourgeois state but the quantitative extension of nationalization.*

"Third Campism" Via Fidelismo

An apparent inconsistency in the SWP's essentially social-democratic outlook is its fulsome support to the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy. In reality, the SWP's cowardly reformism often causes it to take positions *to the right* of the Castro regime, especially where imperialist anti-Sovietism is involved—Portugal 1974-75, Angola 1975-76 (!!), pro-Western Soviet dissidents, Poland, the Iran/Iraq war and now Afghanistan. But what is really important is that the SWP *interprets* Castroism in a "third campist" spirit. Here it is worth recalling that in the 1950s and early '60s many West European social democrats looked quite favorably upon Tito's Yugoslavia as "an independent, non-aligned socialist state."

Because of the unrelenting hostility of American imperialism, Castro's Cuba (unlike Yugoslavia) is part of the Soviet bloc. The SWP's constant allegations to the contrary are political charlatanism. While acting as a loyal ally of Moscow, Castro has on occasion shown dissatisfaction in this role. He seeks to extend the range of his autonomy and throws out hints that given a changed world situation he might pursue a more independent, "non-aligned" foreign policy.

What Barnes says he appreciates about the Cuban regime is that it provides political "input" from a "source that has the responsibility of looking at world politics and responding to developments from the standpoint of revolutionists who hold state power." Barnes is having some trouble now getting that "input" as his pipeline to Havana seems clogged in the aftermath of Castro's endorsement of the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, it is important to consider *how Barnes thinks* Castro looks at world politics for it provides us with an understanding of how the SWP looks at politics.

According to Barnes, Havana is trying to negotiate a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. "In pursuit of these aims," he goes on, "they are using their authority within the non-aligned movement." The SWP makes much of the "non-aligned movement" for its very name indicates here is to be found hopefully the "third camp" between imperialism and the Soviet bloc. In fact, what is to be found here are neo-colonial petty despots with a few exceptions like Cuba and Yugoslavia.

Barnes claims that "the Cubans haven't gotten very far" over Afghanistan because Moscow was waiting until after the U.S. elections to negotiate. Now with Reagan in the White House Moscow finds little to hope for from that quarter even if it wanted to sell out. No matter, claims Barnes, who proposes to conduct small-power diplomacy and simply ignore imperialist intervention:

"...the next thing that can be done for the Afghan revolution under these concrete conditions is to get an agreement between Islamabad, Moscow, and Kabul—even a private agreement—to get those Soviet troops out of there. That is the road to opening up possibilities for the advance of the Afghan revolution once again."

That, of course, is the road to destroying any possibility of

USec Hops on NATO Bandwagon

As this issue of *Spartacist* goes to press, an account in *Internationales* (18 June), organ of the Swedish Kommunistiska Arbetarförbundet, indicates that at a May meeting of the International Executive Committee the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat changed its line on Afghanistan and now appeals "For an end to Soviet occupation of Afghanistan!" Western imperialism has made the demand for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan a major focus of its current Cold War offensive. That is why the French Communist Party (PCF) had to reverse its support for the Soviet intervention to obtain a few minor ministries in a NATO-allied government. And that is also why Ernest Mandel's USec, too, has recently changed its line.

Unlike Marchais' PCF, the USec has not actually reversed its position, since it never supported the Soviet intervention against the Islamic reactionaries to begin with. While strongly condemning the Soviet move, the Mandelite center stopped short of the outright counter-revolutionary demand for withdrawal. A USec majority resolution in late January 1980 stated correctly that "the

demand for Afghan national sovereignty in the name of the rights of peoples to self-determination would be nothing but a democratic guise for the aims of imperialism and reaction" (*Intercontinental Press*, 3 March 1980).

What, then, has changed? Certainly not the war in Afghanistan. The issues there have remained substantially the same since the massive Soviet military intervention in late December 1979. But the rightward motion of the European-based Mandelite current is so rapid that in little more than a year it now calls for what it previously characterized as a "democratic guise for the aims of imperialism and reaction." The European USec sections are now talking about liquidating into the pro-NATO social-democratic parties of Francois Mitterrand, Tony Benn and Helmut Schmidt. The pro-imperialist line shift on Afghanistan exposes in advance any claim that such an entry would be designed to win working-class militants to Trotskyism, a decisive element of which is defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism.

an Afghan revolution as well as creating a hostile imperialist client state on the Soviet border.

But Jack "Woodrow Wilson" Barnes doesn't limit his utopian-pacifist diplomatic fantasy to Central Asia. His Soviet defeatism is more ambitious than that:

"Think of the stupendous impact it would have on people throughout the world, the vast majority of humanity, if Brezhnev were to go on television and announce that the USSR is destroying a big part of its nuclear arsenal and propose to Washington a schedule to destroy the rest at short intervals. Wouldn't that put Washington on the spot? Wouldn't that clearly put the spotlight on the U.S. imperialists as the true warmakers in the world?"

This is pacifism carried to its most criminal conclusion. Delusions about disarmament have always been castigated in the harshest terms by Leninists and Trotskyists. This was directed at the petty-bourgeois pacifist myth of universal disarmament, a myth spread by the Kremlin through SALT. Violence is inherent in capitalism and the capitalists will be disarmed only after the proletariat is armed. Universal disarmament requires the world proletarian revolution.

But Barnes' proposal is far worse than the traditional pacifist utopia. He is for the *unilateral* disarmament of the Soviet degenerated workers state in the face of the most massive armaments drive of the most dangerous imperialist power the world has ever seen. Most of the oppressed of the world (in Latin America, for example) know very well that the U.S. imperialists are the true warmakers. They have suffered first-hand from U.S. warmaking in one form or another. Even in imperialist West Europe the U.S. ruling class is widely viewed as a bunch of trigger-happy warmongers, which is why "détente" is still popular even within major sections of the European bourgeois establishment.

The SWP leadership actually blames the Soviet

bureaucracy for the violence of the American ruling class! They preach that if the Soviet army would withdraw from Afghanistan, if the USSR would scrap its nuclear arsenal for ploughshares, if Brezhnev & Co. would demonstrate what peace-loving folks they really are, then Reagan and Haig too would become more peace-loving. Perhaps they would let up on the anti-Soviet hysteria and create a less anti-communist atmosphere for the SWP's next election campaign. Perhaps they would scrap the B-1 bomber and let some of the crumbs fall on the inner cities again so the SWP could go back into the "community control" racket. In the short run maybe life would be easier for these small-change social democrats.

But the short run would be very short indeed. "Correcting Some Errors..." is a document as stupid as it is pernicious. The SWP's line shift on Afghanistan has lined them up with "the true warmakers of the world." It is the Soviet nuclear arsenal which up to now has kept U.S. imperialism at bay, which kept it from invading Cuba and overthrowing Castro, from using nuclear weapons in Vietnam and from destroying the beleaguered forces of social progress in Afghanistan. The Soviet military strength even in the hands of a nationalist bureaucratic caste, has bought the world proletariat a little more time to resolve the question of socialism or nuclear annihilation.

As Trotskyists we stand for the military defense of the USSR and proletarian political revolution from East Berlin to Moscow, from Havana to Peking, so that the resources of the degenerated and deformed workers states are not squandered on genocidal butchers like Ethiopia's Mengistu or sacrificed to utopian-pacifist disarmament schemes, but rather placed entirely in the service of world revolution. Our fight is for the world party of proletarian revolution, the Fourth International, which will disarm the bourgeoisie once and for all. ■

How They Renounce Soviet Defensism

SWP Slanders James P. Cannon

EXCERPTED FROM *WORKERS VANGUARD*
NO. 278, 10 APRIL 1981

For the last seven years the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has been pressing its "socialist" suit against the U.S. government for decades of secret police spying, harassment, burglaries, mail and phone "covers," and more. And for seven years SWP leaders have been swearing on stacks of bibles that the SWP has never done or advocated anything but the most "peaceful, legal, educational" activities. Before Judge Thomas Griesa and the civil libertarians they hope to attract to their "Watersuit," these reformists have denounced the actual content of the socialist revolution.

Now the case has finally come to trial, and the FBI has gone for the political jugular in the increasing Cold War atmosphere, saying that in the event of a U.S.-Soviet conflict the SWP would defend the USSR. "Who, us?" asks the SWP, admitting nothing of the sort. And they are telling the truth—the reformist present-day SWP is indeed what it wants the government to think it is: the left wing of the bourgeois political spectrum. The only lie is their slander of the earlier generation of American Trotskyists, seeking to portray SWP founder James P. Cannon as just another Jack Barnes who refuses to defend the Soviet Union. It is *our* tradition they are attacking. And we will not let this slander stand.

This repudiation of their own revolutionary past is being made in the course of the SWP's answer to an FBI affidavit filed in February by Special Agent Charles Mandigo. Mandigo, attempting to compile a list of "illegal" activities performed by SWP leaders past and present, put together a wildly inaccurate hodgepodge of charges, most of which amount to advocacy of Marxism or decades-old smears (e.g., charges Cannon might have tried to wreck a train in 1942!). But in denouncing Mandigo's scurrilous affidavit, the SWP has taken a big step toward making explicit what has long been implicit in their reformist politics: rejection of the fundamental Trotskyist principle of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union from imperialist attack.

Mandigo wrote: "In 1950, Cannon stated that he believed that in the event of a world conflict, the SWP would support Russia against imperialist America" (*Militant*, 13 March). The SWP, in a footnote to this citation, rhetorically asked, "When and where did Cannon state such a belief? Is this paraphrase based on 'testimony' by an FBI informer or wiretapper? If from a speech or article, where was it given or printed?" When Mandigo quoted former SWP leader Joseph Hansen as having said in 1951 that, "in the event of war between Russia and the United States, the SWP would be forced to fight on the side of Russia....," the SWP treated it as a slanderous joke. "What was the source of this statement?" another footnote

asks. "Did it include any explanation about who or what was going to 'force' the SWP to take this position—the Soviet government? the Fourth International? sunspots?"

The SWP is clearly claiming (albeit in a devious footnoted fashion) that these alleged defensist positions are not only spurious, but that they never represented the views of Cannon and the SWP. The SWP implies that unconditional defense of the USSR against imperialism is a position the FBI cannot find in Cannon's many writings on the subject and that only a lying wiretapper or clandestine informant could make such a slanderous allegation.

Yes, James P. Cannon is being slandered—but not by the FBI. In its single-minded campaign to convince Judge Griesa that they are peaceful, legal parlor pinks and no threat to the U.S. bourgeoisie, the SWP is trying to cover up its own past. But defense of the Soviet Union is part of the ABCs of Trotskyism, and wiretaps or fink testimony are hardly necessary to establish Cannon's views on the subject. In a speech given during one of the key political fights of his career as a revolutionary, the 1939-40 faction fight with the Max Shachtman-led anti-Soviet opposition in the SWP, Cannon clearly stated:

"Our motion calls for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. What does that mean? It simply means that we defend the Soviet Union and its nationalized property against external attacks of imperialist armies or against internal attempts at capitalist restoration, without putting as a prior condition the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy."

—"Speech on the Russian Question," *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*

And how did Cannon respond when he was dragged into court with 17 other SWP leaders in 1941 on Smith Act charges? Did he duck the defense of the Soviet Union? No. Facing jail, not merely a civil suit to get the government to cough up a lot of money and proclaim their respectability as is the SWP today, Cannon did exactly the opposite of Barnes & Co. He had SWP lawyer Albert Goldman specifically ask him during the trial proceedings about the party position on the defense of the Soviet Union. And Cannon answered:

"We are in favor of defending the Soviet Union against imperialist powers for the reason I just gave, because we consider it a progressive development, as a workers' state, that has nationalized industry and has eliminated private capitalism and landlordism. That is the reason we defend it."

—*Socialism on Trial*

It was for testimony like this that Cannon and his co-defendants spent a good part of World War II locked up in Sandstone Federal Prison. It wasn't "sunspots" that forced Cannon to uphold Trotskyism on the Russian question—it was revolutionary principle. But it is downright despicable that in pledging allegiance to capitalist law and order they lie about James Cannon and drag his name through their mud in order to make the finest revolutionary workers' leader this country has yet produced appear more like the dirty reformists they are themselves. ■

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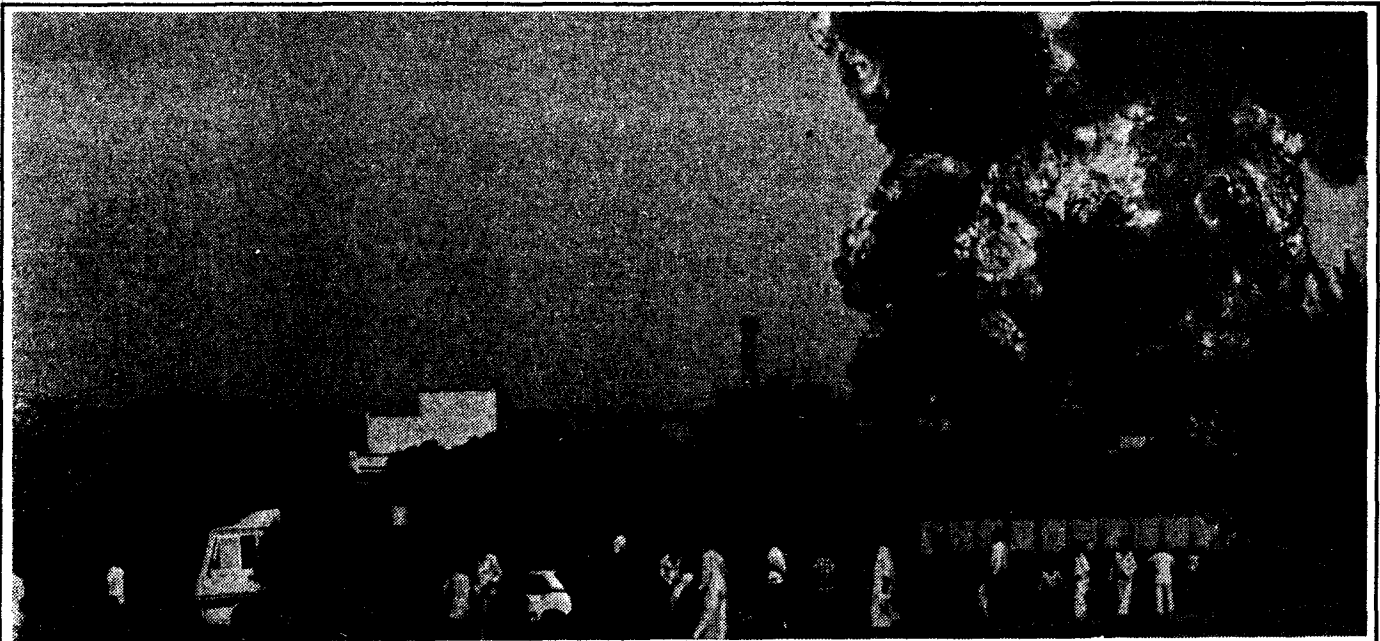
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Baghdad in flames.

Setboun/Sipa-Black Star

Workers Unite!
Down With the Mullahs and Colonels!

Iran/Iraq Blood Feud

Turn the guns the other way! Down with the bloody dictatorships of the Shi'ite mullahs and the Ba'athist colonels! The working people and oppressed of the Near East have no interest in the victory of either side in this squalid war over territory. This should be the instinctive response of every revolutionary socialist.

Leaving aside their conflicting Arab and Persian nationalisms, the two regimes now at war have much in common. Both seek to crush any independent workers movement and routinely murder and torture leftists. Both suppress the national minorities, notably the Kurds, imprisoned in their respective states. Both rule over Islamic societies in which women suffer the enslavement prescribed by Koranic feudalism. (The Ba'athist colonels prefer to keep the mullahs in the background.)

The underlying similarity of Hussein's and Khomeini's regimes is revealed in that they direct the same political insults at one another. Someone listening to the war propaganda broadcast from Teheran and Baghdad might have a hard time telling which is which. From Teheran: "the enemies of God and Islam" are fighting for "the Zionist American stooge." From Baghdad: "the Zionist stooges... will be crushed without mercy or compassion" (*New York Times*, 7 October 1980). And naturally both sides accuse U.S. imperialism of backing the other. Addressing the UN in mid-October, the Iranian prime

minister asserted "American imperialism... has been directly or indirectly helping Iraq." Not to be one-upped, a week later the Iraqi foreign minister expressed "doubts" about Washington's professed neutrality, especially in light of the "pro-Iranian" speeches of Carter and Secretary of State Edmund Muskie. He went on to assert that "Iran would not be averse to an increase in American influence in the region" (U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, *Near East/North Africa Report*, 13 November 1980). And so it goes.

The main difference between the two countries is that since the overthrow of the shah two years ago, the Khomeiniite regime has not been able to reconsolidate a stable bourgeois state apparatus. But this war and the chauvinist rallying cry of "defend the Iranian fatherland" provide the best opportunity yet to reintegrate the shah's old officer corps into the Islamic Republic. While the Khomeiniites (and their left lawyers) make much of Baghdad's harboring a few of Pahlavi's former generals, hundreds of his Pentagon-trained officers are now fighting for the imam's greater Persia. *Le Monde's* Eric Rouleau reported how the wave of national defensism had recemented the splintered officer corps:

"...not only did Iranians not revolt against the Islamic regime, they have joined forces with the Government to oust the invader. Examples abound. There is the case of two officers expelled from the armed forces last summer, one for plotting against the state's security, the other for

acting in defiance of the precepts of Islam. Both men are now fighting on the front."

—*New York Times*, 19 October 1980

"Arab Revolution" Meets "Iranian Revolution"

When the ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the butcher shah in February 1979, virtually the entire left in Iran and internationally hailed his clerical-reactionary regime as "progressive" or even "revolutionary." Uniquely the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) warned that the mullahs in power would seek to reimpose the veil, restore barbaric punishments (e.g., flogging, amputations), suppress the national minorities and crush the workers movement and left as ruthlessly as did the shah. Our slogan was "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!" and our perspective was "For Proletarian Revolution in Iran!"

There was nothing abstract or utopian about this line. It was drawn directly from the experience of the October Revolution in Russia—like Iran a "prison house of peoples" where the militant, pro-socialist working class was vastly outnumbered by a backward, priest-ridden peasantry. The liberation of the Russian masses from semi-feudal oppression and imperialist domination, the addressing of classically "bourgeois-democratic" tasks (land reform, separation of church and state, women's emancipation, the rights of national minorities, etc.) required the proletariat to take state power in its own name, expropriate capitalism and reorganize the economy along socialist lines. Had Iran's combative, pro-Communist proletariat come forward independently as the axis for the revolutionary democratic reconstruction of Iranian society, challenging the mullahs' claim to be "the opposition" to the shah's bloody rule, it could have united behind its leadership all the oppressed and exploited of Iranian society. What prevented a revolutionary dynamic from emerging from the massive, many-sided disaffection with the shah was above all the Iranian left's prostration before the mullah-led "mass movement."

Of course, when the Khomeini fanatics won and began to massacre Kurdish villages, smash strikes by Arab oil workers, bloody the left and stone to death so-called "sinners," even some of the more enthusiastic partisans of the Islamic Republic both domestically and internationally began belatedly to distance themselves from the mullahs' dictatorship. When, for example, in late summer 1979 fourteen members of the Iranian affiliate of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) faced the rigors of "Islamic justice," their comrades of the British International Marxist Group screamed, "White Terror in Iran" and declared, "Khomeini has become the Shah of Iran" (*Socialist Challenge*, 30 August 1979). And under the impact of clerical-fascistic thugs attacking their university strongholds, the Iranian radical populist Fedayeen split last summer, throwing off a left minority more critical of the regime. A supporter of this tendency now laments: "The leftist organizations that played a key and perhaps decisive role in the toppling of the shah's regime are today slandered and attacked, banned from national politics and from open political activity" (*Guardian* [New York], 11 February).

But under the pressure of popular patriotism, much of the Iranian left has once again made common cause with the Khomeiniite fanatics, now joined by the shah's son, crown prince Riza. The Fedayeen Majority called on its followers "to defend the revolution and independence of

the country in the face of attacks from the Iraqi fascist regime" (*New York Times*, 25 September 1980). Internationally as well the left is responding in the spirit of Iranian social-chauvinism. The United Secretariat declaration exhorts, "Defend Iran Against Iraqi and Imperialist Attacks!" (*Intercontinental Press*, 27 October 1980). When the war broke out the reformist American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), one of the most servile of the imam's "socialist" servants, emblazoned on the front page of *Intercontinental Press* (29 September 1980): "Washington Stands Behind Iraqi Attacks—Hands Off Iran!" Likewise, the centrist British Workers Power group asserts that "the politics being continued on Iraq's part" is "one designed to allow imperialism to re-establish its control in a crucial region" (*Workers Power*, November 1980). Now especially after Israel's air attack on a nuclear power plant in Baghdad with Reagan voicing only the most mild disapproval, the contention that Ba'athist Iraq is an agent of U.S. imperialism is so preposterous it is embarrassing to have to refute it in serious political argument. Nonetheless, since this is the left's main rationale for Iranian defensism, we obliged to do so.

During the past decade or so no bourgeois state in the world has had worse relations with the U.S. than has Ba'athist Iraq. Since the 1967 Arab-Israel war Baghdad has not even had formal diplomatic relations with Washington. In the early 1970s the CIA in cahoots with the shah armed the Kurdish insurgency against the Arab Ba'athist regime. (The shah then sacrificed the Kurds in 1975 for a favorable border settlement, which Hussein is now trying to reverse.)

On the Palestine question, Ba'athist Iraq is the most rejectionist of the "rejectionists" in opposing any Washington-sponsored deal with the Zionist state. To be sure, Hussein's Iraq (like Qaddafi's Libya) is in the happy circumstance of *not* sharing a border with Israel. In the Near East intransigence to the U.S.-backed Zionist state is usually inversely proportional to the distance from it.

Had a war between Iran and Iraq broken out five years ago, the opportunist left would actually have taken exactly the opposite line. They would have defended that "bastion of the Arab revolution," Ba'athist Iraq, against that "tool of U.S. imperialism," the shah's Iran. Tailists frequently change their clients; their method remains the same.

Since the early 1970s Iraq has been the Soviet Union's principal client state in the region. Despite some friction between Moscow and Baghdad, Iraq is still being supplied with Soviet weaponry without which its war effort would be gravely weakened. In contrast, the Iranian army is using American arms and American-trained officers. Recognizing the underlying continuity between the shah's armed forces and Khomeini's, then U.S. war minister Harold Brown actually took some credit for the Iranians' unexpected powers of resistance: "What this says to me is that American military equipment and American training are pretty good" (*New York Times*, 15 October 1980)!

While the ex-Pentagon chief's posturing as the father of Khomeini's army does take nerve, U.S. imperialism is certainly protective of the Iranian state. Since the fall of the shah, Washington's main policy aim has been to prevent the disintegration of the Iranian state in the face of anarchy, popular unrest and rebellious national minorities. U.S. imperialism looks upon Iran above all as an important

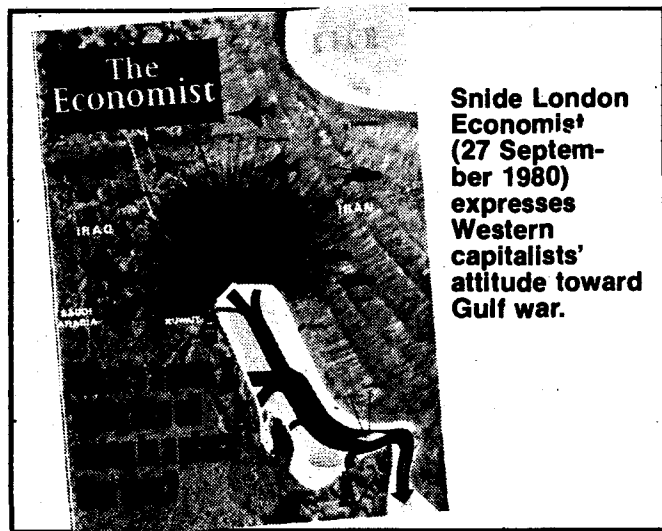
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regional ally against the Soviet degenerated workers state—its main enemy. Better the fanatic Khomeini than chaos, which the Russians can take advantage of, is the line taken by the Pentagon and Wall Street.

That is why in the summer of 1979, just a few months after Khomeini came to power, the U.S. sent arms to the new regime to suppress the Kurds. When a few months later Khomeini's boys seized the American embassy, the influential U.S. bourgeois organ *Business Week* (10 December 1979) sought to counter the "nuke the ayatollah" mood of the American masses:

"To protect its citizens and its prestige, Washington is tempted to undertake actions against the present weak power center in Tehran. However much that would assuage America's mounting frustration and bitterness, it would be catastrophic—not only for Iran but also for long-term U.S. interests.... Any U.S. action to splinter what is left of the Iranian state could cause its disintegration. And it is unlikely that anyone could pick up the pieces—except the Russians who live next door...."

And despite the hostage provocation and all the "Great Satan" baiting, the Carter administration pretty much adhered to this line. (Unlike the opportunist sects, the imperialist bourgeoisie usually determines its policies not



Snide London Economist (27 September 1980) expresses Western capitalists' attitude toward Gulf war.

on the basis of subjective pique but of class interests.)

When the war broke out in mid-September, the imperialist powers were neutral and only desired that the conflagration end quickly so as not to disrupt the flow of oil. The arch London *Economist* (27 September 1980) caught the Western capitalists' displeasure with the feuding Gulf states in its cover headline: "What's a Nice Thing Like Oil Doing in a Place Like This?"

Then in mid-October when it looked as if the Iraqi army might overrun Khuzistan, leading to the dismemberment of Iran, Washington *tilted toward its old client state*. Secretary of State Muskie declared that "the cohesion and stability of Iran is in the interest of the region as a whole. The integrity of Iran is today threatened by the Iraqi invasion." And Carter echoed: "It is to our advantage to have a strong Iran" (*New York Times*, 21 October 1980). And this policy involved more than diplomatic pronouncements. In early October the U.S. and Britain pressured the Saudi royal family to prevent Iraq from using Oman as a base for air attacks against Iran. Later in the month Carter promised to resume arms shipments to Iran if the hostages were released.

But for revolutionary Marxists, all this is really irrelevant. Even if U.S. imperialism had tilted toward Iraq (which it definitely did not), we would have the same line: Turn the guns the other way—the main enemy is at home! As Leninists we would take a revolutionary defeatist position toward both sides in a war between two such bloody-handed bourgeois regimes *regardless* of their transient and reversible relations with Washington and/or Moscow.

All the Old Social-Chauvinist Crap

Reacting against the Khomeiniite defensism rampant in the Iranian and Western left, British radical journalist Fred Halliday exclaimed: "If there was ever a time to remember the internationalist lessons of 1914, this is it" ("A War of Nationalist Ambitions," *In These Times*, 8 October 1980). Halliday's reference to 1914 is well taken. For all the old social-chauvinist arguments come alive again in the mouths of the "defend Iran" leftists. Iraq started the war; Iraq is seeking to annex Iranian territory; and above all, the Iranian government is "progressive" or even "revolutionary" compared to Ba'athist Iraq.

The social-patriots of 1914 likewise did not appeal to nationalist ideology pure and simple, but claimed they were defending the gains of the bourgeois-democratic revolution against a reactionary foe. The German social-chauvinists like Ebert and Scheidemann argued, sometimes even citing Marx and Engels for authority, that they were defending constitutionalism and a legal workers party against tsarist absolutism. In their turn, the French social-chauvinists like Vaillant and Guesde claimed to be defending a democratic republic (one of the few existing at the time) against Junker militarism. It was precisely this kind of argument (in part sincerely held) which distinguished the defensism of the reformist "socialists" (i.e., social-chauvinism) from that of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

The struggle against social-chauvinism and for revolutionary defeatism marks the starting point of Leninism as a world-historic movement. It was here that the line was first drawn in blood between the revolutionary and reformist currents of the international workers movement. Here is the origin of the Communist International. Regardless of which country attacked first, regardless of which occupies the other's territory and regardless of the governmental form of the warring capitalist state powers (democratic republic or monarchy)—the main enemy is at home!

The social-chauvinist methodology of the "defend Iran" leftists is, if anything, more graphically highlighted by February 1917 than by August 1914. Lenin stood for revolutionary defeatism not only for the Russia of Romanov absolutism but also for the Russia of Kerensky's democratic republic, which Lenin termed "the freest country on earth." When the shah was overthrown in February 1979, it was common in the left to identify the Iranian upheaval with the Russian February Revolution. Especially in fake-Trotskyist circles, the absurd analogy was made between the ayatollah Khomeini, the unquestioned head of the dominant religious sect, and the accidental, transient figure of Alexander Kerensky.

For the sake of political clarity, let us suspend disbelief and accept this false picture of the "Iranian revolution." Let us assume that Iran is in the throes of a great liberating democratic revolution making it, in Lenin's words, one of

the "freest countries on earth." Let us assume that governmental power is in the hands not of religious reactionaries but a popular front of bourgeois liberals, petty-bourgeois radicals and reformist "socialists." Let us further assume that the working class has established strong organs of dual power. *Even then*, even under such conditions, Iranian revolutionaries would *still* take a defeatist position in a territorial war with neighboring Iraq.

This was the position Lenin took in just this situation. In the famous April Theses of 1917 he states in the most categorical language:

"The slightest concession to revolutionary defensism is a *betrayal of socialism*, a complete renunciation of *internationalism*, no matter by what fine phrases and 'practical' considerations it may be justified." [emphasis in original]
—"The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution,"
Collected Works Vol. 24 (1964)

On the morrow of the February Revolution this position was far from popular. The overthrow of centuries-old absolutism and mood of revolutionary renewal strengthened tendencies toward national defensism, though more so among liberal and radical politicians than among the war-weary masses. Petty-bourgeois radical groupings which had not supported the war under tsarism (e.g., the center of the populist Social Revolutionaries [SRs]) now felt they had something to defend. The "defend the revolution" line even penetrated to some degree into the right wing of the Bolsheviks (e.g., Kamenev). In his 1924 *The Lessons of October* Trotsky describes the post-February shift in the Russian left's attitude toward the war:

"The Zimmerwäldian Mensheviks and SRs who had criticized the French Socialists because they defended their bourgeois republican fatherland, themselves immediately became defensists the moment they felt themselves part of a bourgeois republic. From a passive internationalist position, they shifted to an active patriotic one. At the same time, the right wing of the Bolsheviks went over to a passive internationalist position (exerting 'pressure' on the Provisional Government for the sake of a democratic peace, 'without annexations and without indemnities')."

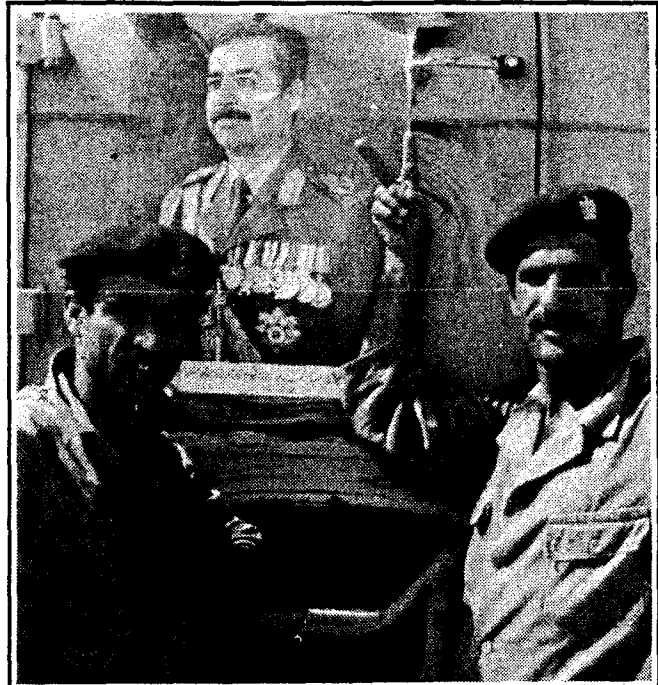
But the day of the February revolutionary defensists proved short-lived. In part through the effect of Bolshevik propaganda and agitation, the masses soon saw through the slogan, "Defend the revolution," just as they had earlier seen through the slogan, "Defend Holy Russia." The revolutionary-defeatist Bolsheviks came to power. That was when they (and we) became defensist in defense of the Russian *workers state*.

A New Argument for Social-Chauvinism

In the World War I period, the then ultra-leftist Nikolai Bukharin pushed Lenin's view to a logical extreme and argued that there could no longer be progressive wars involving bourgeois forces. Lenin responded that the modern world was not such a simple place. In particular he pointed to national-liberation struggles against a colonialist oppressor state (e.g., the Irish Easter uprising of 1916). Thus, in his 1916 article, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," Lenin wrote:

"...they [socialists] must also render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these [colonial] countries and assist their uprising—or revolutionary war, in the event of one—*against* the imperialist powers that oppress them." [emphasis in original]

—*Collected Works Vol. 22 (1964)*



Bureau/Syigma

Iraqi soldiers (above) and Iranian soldiers must turn their guns against their own bloody regimes, murderers of worker militants, Communists and Kurdish rebels.

Such national-liberation struggles were regarded by Communists in a sense as an exception to the general principle that in a war between bourgeois states—the main enemy is at home. But just as corporate lawyers can expand a loophole in the tax code enough to break the bank at Monte Carlo, so revisionists have expanded the "loophole" of national liberation into a general defense of social-chauvinism, at least for backward countries. This is accomplished through the ingenious "tool of imperialism" theory. It really works very simply. Whenever revisionists want to support one side in a war between two backward bourgeois regimes, the other side becomes *ipso facto* "a tool of imperialism."

The "tool of imperialism" theory has found great favor among bourgeois-nationalist regimes, which are always willing to talk "Marxism-Leninism" to justify their little-power chauvinism. In the Near East it is practically diplomatic protocol at the outbreak of any war for both sides to accuse the other of being "a tool of Zionism and imperialism." When, for example, in 1976 Ba'athist Syria intervened in Lebanon to suppress the Palestinian forces, Damascus radio predictably denounced Yasir Arafat's Al Fatah as "serving Zionism and imperialism" (*New York Times*, 8 June 1976)! If the Israeli leaders had a sense of humor, in the next war they might accuse their Arab foes of being "tools of Zionism and imperialism."

As Leninists we draw a fundamental distinction between the advanced capitalist (imperialist) states and the backward, oppressed countries. We do *not* extend the *imperialist camp* to include feudalist, right-wing and pro-Washington regimes in the colonial world (even leaving aside that such regimes can and do change their patrons overnight). Where genuine national rights are threatened

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by imperialist attack, we are prepared to make common cause even with extreme reactionaries—with emperor Haile Selassie's Ethiopia against fascist Italy, with generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's China against imperial Japan. But in wars between backward bourgeois states, there is no basis for revolutionary defensism toward either side based on "anti-imperialist" posturing.

To be sure, in a war between two backward states one side could be or become subordinated to the imperialists. But this is also true of supportable movements for national liberation. Thus, during World War I Lenin set aside the demand for the national self-determination of Poland and considered that Pilsudski's national-liberation forces had in effect become a tool of Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany. He maintained that for the moment the independence of Poland had become a subordinate factor in the conflict between German and Russian imperialism.

Such considerations have nothing to do with the present Iran/Iraq war, where the "tool of imperialism" theory falls flat even in its own terms. Hussein and Khomeini are outbidding one another in "anti-imperialism." The imperialist powers are more or less neutral, while the U.S. at one point tilted toward Iran. But our position would be the same even if there were significant differences between the warring regimes, and the imperialists did favor one side. Consider, for example, the 1947-48 India-Pakistan war, the 1963 Algeria-Morocco border war and the 1971 India-Pakistan war.

The difference between India and Pakistan at the time of independence in 1947 was far greater than that between Iran and Iraq today. Nehru's India was a bourgeois democracy, whose leaders had for decades stood at the head of a mass national-liberation movement against British colonialism. Pakistan was an Islamic confessional state and, moreover, the product of an imperialist-engineered partition expressly designed to weaken nationalist India. No one in the Fourth International of the time advocated Indian defensism. The Trotskyists of the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India of course opposed the imperialist partition, but never conceived of supporting Nehru's bourgeois-nationalist state against the Muslim separatists.

A similar situation was presented in 1963. King Hassan's Morocco was a feudal monarch and servile French neocolony. Ben Bella's Algeria had just won its independence in one of the most massive, bloody and heroic of national liberation struggles. One million (out of nine million) Algerians were killed fighting French colonialism. The FLN regime enjoyed considerable popular authority and presented itself as in the vanguard of the "world revolution."

But by 1963 the Fourth International had been destroyed by revisionism, initially that of the European-centered Pablo/Mandel group in the early 1950s. A decade later the American SWP succumbed to the same degenerative disease. This laid the basis for their organizational reunification in 1963 in the form of the United Secretariat.

One of the main points in common between the American and European revisionists was their uncritical enthusing over the petty-bourgeois nationalist Algerian regime, which they glorified as a "workers and peasants government." Pages of the SWP's *Militant* and the European Pabloite press were repeatedly filled with Ben Bella's speeches and other Algerian government pronouncements. Against this impressionism and tailism, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT, forerunner of the Spartacist tendency) in the SWP maintained that the Algerian FLN regime was a petty-bourgeois nationalist government in the process of consolidating a bourgeois state on the order of, say, Nasser's Egypt. An RT resolution for the 1963 SWP convention called attention to the "anti-working-class nature" of the Ben Bella regime and characterized Algeria as "a backward capitalist society with a high degree of statification" ("Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International," *Spartacist* No. 1, February-March 1964).

Needless to say, the USec revisionists rallied to "revolutionary" Algeria in its border conflict with Morocco. The front-page headline of the SWP's *Militant* (4 November 1963) exhorted, "Defend Algerian Revolution Against Moroccan Attack!" Under this it reprinted a USec declaration:

"The attack on Algeria is a desperate attempt by the decayed, feudal-capitalist regime of the Moroccan monarchy, backed by French, American and Spanish

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imperialism, to cut short the growing influence of the Algerian Revolution...."

Sound familiar?

While Morocco was a feudalist monarchy and its attack was encouraged by the imperialists, this war remained essentially a border conflict between two bourgeois states. In this situation revolutionaries were obliged to take a defeatist position toward both sides, seeking through class struggle to destroy the masses' illusions in the "socialist" nature of the Algerian regime.

Less than two years after the border clash with Morocco, the Pabloites' "Algerian workers and peasants government" was brought to an ignominious end with a palace coup led by the army commander-in-chief, colonel Houari Boumediene. The hapless Ben Bella spent the next 14 years in prison or under house arrest. His USec former sycophants shrugged off the Algerian debacle and went on to seek and discover similarly fictitious "workers and peasants governments" elsewhere.

In the 1971 India-Pakistan war, as in the 1963 Algeria-Morocco border clash, much of the left lined up with one side, in this case Indira Gandhi's. The war originated in a genuine national uprising of the East Bengali people against the oppressive and corrupt Punjabi overlordship. Yahya Khan's military dictatorship reacted with a campaign of mass butchery running into the hundreds of thousands. Thus, when Indira Gandhi's army invaded East Pakistan (Bangladesh) in November 1971, India presented itself as a national liberator of the Bengalis and was so regarded by many of them. Moreover, U.S. imperialism clearly tilted toward Pakistan. The Nixon administration saw the conflict as a proxy war involving its South Asian client state against Moscow's.

Most of the left, predictably including the USec, accepted Indira Gandhi's claims to be a national liberator as well as an opponent of imperialism. For example, the rapidly degenerating Healyite grouping, reversing its defeatist (and correct) line in previous India-Pakistan wars, now became champions of "progressive" Indian bourgeois nationalism:

"Gandhi could no longer hold back the tremendous pressure of the Bengalis and the Indian masses to avenge these murders and win their independence.

"The war is a class war of the oppressed masses of the subcontinent against all the imperialist slavery and exploitation...."

—*Bulletin* [New York], 13 December 1971

Against the opportunists' claims for the liberating role of the Indian bourgeois state, we wrote at the time:

"For the Bengali masses only the international client relationships of their masters will change through an Indian victory. The Indian bourgeoisie vies with the Pakistani in viciousness toward national minorities and perhaps exceeds it in hypocrisy.... But a proletarian revolution which turns the guns of both armies against their own rulers will be a brilliant giant leap forward in the world struggle for socialism."

—"For Revolutionary Defeatism on Both Sides in the India-Pakistan War!" *WV* No. 3, December 1971

These words apply with equal force to the present Iran-Iraq war, the reactionary nature of which is far more obvious.

War Is the Mother of Revolution

Because of the political and economic turmoil in Iran since the fall of the shah, there has been much discussion



Pabloites glorified Ben Bella's (left) Algeria as a "workers and peasants government" until he was overthrown by the palace coup of Colonel Boumediene (right).

and speculation about the effect of the war on the newly formed Islamic Republic. Yet beneath the surface stability of the Ba'athist military regime, the explosive material for a revolutionary upheaval is no less than in Khomeini's Iran. The Iraqi proletariat, centrally the oil workers, are strategically powerful and have a long history of militant mass struggle. Historically, the Iraqi Communist Party, with its roots among the oil workers and oppressed Kurds, has been the strongest working-class party in the Near East.

Following the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy in 1958, the Iraqi Communists actually stood at the threshold of power. But this priceless revolutionary opportunity was deliberately thrown away by the Iraqi CP, acting at the behest of its masters in Moscow. How the Iraqi revolution was betrayed for "peaceful coexistence" with Eisenhower's America ("the spirit of Camp David") was well described at the time by historian Isaac Deutscher:

"The Baghdad revolution of July 1958 gave them [the Iraqi Communists] great opportunities.... They led the trade unions; they captured the student organization; and they entrenched themselves in the armed forces. They demanded their share of power, and when [the bourgeois nationalist] Kassem refused to offer them seats in his government it looked as if they were preparing to carry the revolution a stage further and to overthrow Kassem."

But, Deutscher goes on,

"Khrushchev refused to countenance a communist upheaval in Baghdad, afraid that this would provoke renewed Western intervention in the Eastern Mediterranean, set the Middle East aflame, and wreck his policy of peaceful coexistence."

—"Russia and the International Communist Movement" (1959) in *Russia, China and the West: A Contemporary Chronicle, 1953-1966* (1970)

Encouraged by Moscow's support and the demoralization of the Communist ranks, Kassem moved against the
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CP, purging its members from the trade unions and driving the party underground. The 1963 Ba'athist coup intensified the repression which Kassem had begun. Yet the Communists retained (and still retain) political hegemony over the most militant and class-conscious Iraqi workers. In 1972 in return for the CP's support, the Ba'athists allowed the party's representatives to enter its "National Front" government. But by 1978 Hussein felt threatened by the Communists' growing influence and struck against them, executing 21 party members accused of forming clandestine cells in the army, and jailing a reported 15,000. Today the Iraqi CP leadership (largely forced into exile) is calling for an anti-Ba'ath popular front with the same Nasserites and nationalists who bloodied them under Kassem.

Now, with Hussein's army bogged down in Khuzistan and the likelihood of a popular reaction against his destructive military adventure, is the time for Iraq's socialist proletariat to strike back against the bloody Ba'athist regime. Key to this perspective is the creation of an Iraqi Trotskyist vanguard capable of winning Communist militants away from the literally suicidal policy of supporting today's "progressive" bourgeois nationalists, their executioners of tomorrow.

And what of Iran? There the fragility of the mullahs' rule is uncontested, though a victory in this war would greatly strengthen the Islamic Republic. Not all groups on the Iranian left have been so overcome by social-patriotic fever as the Fedayeen Majority and pro-Moscow Tudeh Party. The Fedayeen Minority's attitude toward the war can be characterized as vaguely neutralist, though it condemns the Iraqi Ba'athists far more harshly than its own government:

"We, the Iranian Peoples' Fedaii Guerillas, believe that the recent war has a reactionary content, and because of this, we feel that while the outcome can be anything for the Iranian and Iraqi governments, the result for the oppressed masses of both countries can only be ruin and misery."

—"We Condemn Iraq's Military Intervention," 23 September 1980

A somewhat similar position is taken by the Ashraf Deghani organization, an earlier left split from the Fedayeen: "We judge the war between the Iran and Iraq regimes as unjust, refuse to participate in it and call for its cessation" (*Über den Krieg der beiden Staaten Iran und Irak* [September 1980]).

The Fedayeen Minority and Ashraf Deghani organization declare for themselves a kind of conscientious objector status; they will not fight in this unjust war. While such a position is better than the national defensism of the Fedayeen Majority and Tudeh, it nonetheless offers the toiling masses of Iran and Iraq no relief from the horrors of war and from the oppression of the two reactionary regimes waging that war.

Revolutionary defeatism is not pacifism nor above-the-battle neutrality. In fact, Lenin's main political energies in World War I were not so much directed against the out-and-out social-chauvinists like Scheidemann, Plekhanov and Vaillant as against the pacifistic centrists like Kautsky, Martov and the Italian Socialist Party leadership. The task of socialists, the founder of modern communism maintained, was *not* to pressure their respective bourgeois governments to conclude a "democratic peace" or a "peace without annexations," but *to utilize the war*—the disruption of the normal functioning of society, the masses' growing longing for peace, the destruction of the bourgeois

military cadre—to overthrow their own capitalist state.

A basic statement of revolutionary defeatism is found in Lenin and Zinoviev's 1915 pamphlet, *Socialism and War*:

"A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, and cannot fail to see that *the latter's military reverses must facilitate its overthrow*. Only a bourgeois who believes that a war started by governments must necessarily end as a war between governments, and wants it to end as such, can regard as 'ridiculous' and 'absurd' the idea that the socialists of *all* the belligerent countries should express their wish that *all* their 'own' governments should be defeated. On the contrary, it is a statement of this kind that would be in keeping with the innermost thoughts of every class-conscious worker, and be in line with our activities for the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war." [our emphasis]

—*Collected Works* Vol. 21 (1964)

Turn the reactionary nationalist war into a class civil war! That must be the perspective of Iranian and Iraqi revolutionary militants. This war and the position of revolutionary defeatism demands the revolutionary regroupment of leftist militants on both sides of the Shatt-al-Arab into Trotskyist parties. Khomeini and Hussein must go the way of the shah and the Hashemites, but in their place must rise a socialist federation of the Near East! ■

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Sri Lanka...

(continued from page 40)

left-wing toadies—the viciously repressed Tamils of the Northern and Eastern provinces, the Tamil workers of the upland tea and rubber plantations (stripped of citizenship rights since 1948), the rural Sinhala villagers, the urban Sinhala workers, the unorganized women workers in the Free Trade Zone factories—and unite them all behind the banner of proletarian revolution.

Our Lankan comrades stand alone in their commitment to the internationalist tasks of Trotskyism, from opposing an anti-Soviet U.S. war base at Trincomalee to undertaking the struggle for Trotskyist parties throughout South Asia as sections of a reborn Fourth International. We are proud to welcome these comrades to our international movement.

Agreement For Fusion

The working masses of Sri Lanka have suffered decades of class betrayal and bloody repression committed in the name of socialism. Today the banner of authentic Trotskyism—the program of international proletarian revolution—is unfurled anew on the island. The international Spartacist tendency and the Bolshevik Faction, expelled left opposition of the Revolutionary Workers Party, having reached essential political agreement, agree to fuse into a common democratic-centralist international organization.

This fusion is based on adherence to the principles of the first four Congresses of the Communist International (1919-22) and recognition of the 1938 Transitional Program as the programmatic and methodological basis of our movement. Other documents (in both English and Sinhala) which represent the basis of this agreement include: the Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League/U.S., 1966; the nine-point regroupment program toward the left wing of the United Secretariat majority in "Reforge the Fourth International!" *Workers Vanguard* No. 143, 4 February 1977; the report of the First Delegated International Conference of the iSt and especially those passages dealing with the RWP in "Toward the International Trotskyist League!" *Spartacist* No. 27-28, Winter 1979-80; "Hail Red Army!" *Spartacist* No. 27-28, Winter 1979-80; "A Workers' Poland, Yes! The Pope's Poland, No!" *Spartacist* No. 30, Autumn 1980; and the Documents of the Bolshevik Faction, June 1980.

It is above all the struggle of the comrades of the Bolshevik Faction against the parochial and vacillating centrism of the Edmund Samarakkody/Tulsiri Andradi leadership of the RWP which determines the principled nature of this fusion. From late 1971 the iSt and RWP had fraternal relations and an international discussion was carried out about outstanding political differences, mainly over the national question and the question of voting for workers parties in popular fronts. Following the visit of a senior RWP delegation to Europe and North America in 1974, these relations reached an impasse. But on 10 February 1979 a special conference of the RWP voted to seek unification with the iSt, over the opposition of the historic leaders Samarakkody and Meryl Fernando. Despite their generally honorable record of opposing coalitionism, these older RWP leaders had been unable to translate their personal authority into recruitment, especially among Tamils, women, and the Sinhala youth

attracted to the JVP. Those who were the driving force for fusion with the iSt were at the same time the most activist elements of the RWP, including the newer young comrades as well as several experienced cadre. These comrades wished to break out of the stagnancy of the RWP's tiny sect-like existence; they had no desire to remain simply a maggot group feeding off the rotting corpse of the LSSP.

In mid-1979 an authoritative iSt delegation visited Sri Lanka and a Unification Agreement was signed with the RWP, which noted that "The iSt for its part could perceive, as an extreme characterisation, the RWP as partaking at least in part of a centrism which tails petty-bourgeois nationalism and gives critical support to the worst aspects of revisionism and reformism, while in its own propaganda is largely unable to transcend mere democratic demands." While noting the need for further political clarification, the Agreement maintained that this could be pursued within the framework of a single international organization.

On this basis an RWP delegation (composed primarily of comrades opposed to unity with the iSt!) attended the iSt's First Delegated International Conference in August 1979. The political behavior and cowardly departure of this delegation furnished a definitive political evaluation of the old Samarakkody leadership of the RWP. Faced with the challenge of integrating into a genuinely democratic-centralist international, Samarakkody balked, refusing to debate politically and then precipitously returning to Sri Lanka with apolitical slanders against the iSt. The trip to the international conference was revealed as a maneuver to inoculate the RWP membership against the iSt. The iSt vowed to carry the fight against the left centrism of the RWP into Sri Lanka itself.

At this time the comrades who became the Bolshevik Faction faced a decisive test. Refusing to accept the delegation's "report," they insisted that the perspective of fusion with the iSt was the only correct course. On 4 May 1980 three RWP Political Committee members declared an opposition faction on this basis. In addition to fighting for unification with the iSt, the Bolshevik Faction stood in political agreement with the iSt on several key questions. They shared the iSt's opposition to voting for workers parties in popular-front coalitions. Another decisive issue involved the 1964 vote by MPs Samarakkody and Meryl Fernando against the Throne Speech, which brought down the popular-front coalition government. Under pressure from elements of the LSSP milieu, the RWP leadership wanted to renounce this principled and courageous action while comrades of the iSt and the Bolshevik Faction defended this historic stand against class betrayal. The Bolshevik Faction also fought against the RWP leadership's view that the movement which brought Khomeini to power in Iran was a popular revolutionary struggle, and opposed their refusal to openly defend the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan against the Islamic reactionaries. The Bolshevik Faction comrades succeeded in winning new adherents from the younger, activist ranks of the RWP by their struggle to uphold the program of revolutionary Trotskyism on the central questions of Sri Lankan and international politics.

Two days before the decisive June 1980 RWP conference, the central leader of the Bolshevik Faction, Laksiri Fernando, demonstrating a lack of revolutionary will and a fit of ivory-tower intellectualism, chickened out

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of the fight. This robbed the BF of their potential majority at the conference, and dealt a crippling blow to their language capacity and thus the possibility for meaningful communication with the international movement. But the remaining comrades fought on. Aware that the RWP as a whole would not adopt a revolutionary, internationalist course, they remained inside in an attempt to win others to their positions. Stepped-up bureaucratic measures against them by the RWP leadership culminated in the expulsion of the entire Bolshevik Faction in March 1981. Today the RWP is a tiny moribund sect, its most vital and energetic cadre gone to the iSt.

The Bolshevik Faction, which now proposes to adopt the name Spartacist League of Sri Lanka, faces the challenge of building a powerful section of the iSt on this island. In its struggle to build a revolutionary party to lead the working masses to smash capitalism and establish the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, the group must develop a characteristic political identity, certainly including the following positions:

1) *Against popular frontism in all its forms.* While the rightist UNP government of J.R. Jayewardene carries out increasingly repressive measures, the traditional parties of the working class, the LSSP and the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking CPs, have instituted a new drive toward yet another popular front with the bourgeois SLFP, for another government like the one that massacred the JVP-led insurgent youth in 1971. The NSSP, which stands in all essentials on the record of the LSSP before 1975, is nothing more than an attempt to revive the LSSP. Its sometime left-sounding talk and verbal opposition to coalitionism is nothing more than an expedient and temporary acknowledgment of the disgust among the working masses at the popular-front betrayals of the LSSP. But it is not just the LSSP and its sibling NSSP who have besmirched the banner of Trotskyism. It has been the practice of the smaller ostensibly Trotskyist groups to wallow in the popular-front parliamentary milieu. These groups, from the USec's RMP (until recently led by the despicable strikebreaking trade-union bureaucrat Bala Tampoe) with its calls for a United Left Front, to the RWP which calls for votes to workers parties in the popular front, all capitulate before the popular front. For working-class independence—No more popular fronts!

2) *Defend the rights of the Tamil people.* Coalition politics has meant not only subservience to the capitalists but also to Sinhala chauvinism. An essential demand is for the right of self-determination, that is, the right to a separate state, for the Tamils of Ceylon's North and East. At this time we do not advocate the establishment of a separate state, but urge the Tamil working masses to join in a common class struggle with the Sinhala workers and peasants. One danger of deepening communal divisions and a struggle within that framework by the Northern Tamils for national liberation is that the other Tamils of Sri Lanka, especially the plantation workers but also those spread throughout the island, would become the principal victims of communal pogroms. We demand the withdrawal of the Sri Lankan army and police from the Northern Tamil areas, where they are carrying out increasingly brutal repression. We demand an end to all discrimination against the Tamil people and other national and religious minorities. Tamil must become an official language and be given equal status with Sinhala. There must be an end to

the deportations of Tamil plantation workers, and those already deported must have the right to return. For full citizenship rights for the Tamil plantation workers! By their actions such as organizing Sinhalese students to fight for the right of Tamils to gain admission to Colombo University, the Bolshevik Faction comrades have already demonstrated their willingness to struggle around this question. The Tamil question is *the* question of internationalism in Sri Lanka, the acid test for revolutionaries in the struggle against Sinhala chauvinism.

A workers revolution in Ceylon could well be the spark that ignites the massive Indian proletariat, spreading the flames of socialist revolution throughout South Asia. But a workers state isolated on this island could not long survive without powerful support from the working masses of India. The revolutionary intentions of Sri Lankan militants will be proven by their practice on the Tamil question. Across the narrow Palk Straits live many millions more Tamils. The struggle to win Tamil comrades expresses the commitment to helping build a revolutionary party in India, for such comrades can play a vital role in the struggle for a socialist federation throughout the Indian subcontinent, including Sri Lanka.

3) *For the liberation of women.* Recent events in Iran and Afghanistan have sharply demonstrated that in the underdeveloped countries of the East the woman question has particular significance. We must raise demands that address the special oppression of women and develop special methods for work among women, for once aroused the working women will provide many of the best fighters for communism, as they did for the Bolshevik Revolution in Soviet Central Asia. The Tamil women plantation workers and as yet unorganized women workers in Free Trade Zone industries like textiles are important sectors of the Ceylonese proletariat, and must be won to our cause. We must demand equal pay for equal work, union organization, an end to all forms of economic and social discrimination, as well as social services like childcare which can free women from the stultifying routine of household drudgery. Special attention must be paid to winning women comrades to our party, including from among the many educated young women students.

4) *Against imperialist bases and the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive.* Led by U.S. imperialism, the imperialist powers have mounted a new war drive aimed at destroying the Soviet degenerated workers state. The Diego Garcia naval and air base is being extensively developed by the U.S. above all for this purpose. The iSt repeatedly urged the RWP leadership to bring this issue to the forefront. Its failure to do so indicated its inability to see the aim of such unsinkable aircraft carriers, and a "third worldist" view that the world is simply divided into progressive and unprogressive peoples. As Trotskyists we defend the Soviet Union and the conquests of the October Revolution against imperialism, while calling for a workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucratic caste. No country is immune from this world-historic question, least of all Sri Lanka.

The Jayewardene government, hoping to soften the impact of the capitalist economic crisis and the rampant inflation and unemployment it creates, is trying to lure imperialist investment to Sri Lanka by emulating Singapore with his Free Trade Zone. But the price of capitalist investment is imperialist military bases. So today the UNP



Only the newly-formed Spartacist League defended Tamils among Sinhala working masses of Colombo.



Victim of anti-Tamil terror in Jaffna, Balasothy, TULF activist murdered by the army.

government proposes to join the anti-communist ASEAN alliance and, as "goodwill" visits are made by imperialist armed forces, there is more and more talk of the great naval harbor of Trincomalee becoming a U.S. base. We note that in the 18th century, a decisive factor which determined whether the French or British won control of India was who controlled Trincomalee. Its strategic military importance continues to this day. No to imperialist bases! U.S. out of Diego Garcia! Defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack!

Other demands with particular significance in Sri Lanka include the call for the organization of all workers into industrial unions (that is, a single trade union for all workers in a particular industry) which cut across the communal and party divisions, and can break the grip of the UNP and SLFP unions. Another critical task must be to raise a program which addresses the needs of the rural working masses, long ignored by the traditional working-class parties who left them to the SLFP. Forward to a revolutionary workers and peasants government in Sri Lanka!

Around these demands and others the Spartacist League of Sri Lanka will fight to regroup the best militants into the nucleus of a Trotskyist vanguard party. The old Trotskyists, the best of whom were represented by people like Edmund Samarakkody, are finished. But there are comrades with ten or twenty years of experience in struggle who can be won. Already the Bolshevik Faction includes comrades with such experience. Groups like the NSSP with its present claim to oppose coalition politics can generate left splits as their leaderships reveal their true colors.

The largest group with revolutionary pretensions in Sri Lanka is the JVP. It may no longer be the same organization as it was in 1971 and it has lately made a turn towards the parliamentary arena. Its sectarianism (epitomized by its refusal to support last year's general strike) and physical violence against its opponents on the left make it difficult to approach. Its strongest base is among rural youth but it does have credible support in the urban working class and among urban and educated youth. The JVP was able to win so much support precisely because so many young militants were repulsed by the betrayals of the old working-class parties. The split of the Ceylon Teachers

Union led by H.N. Fernando when the JVP refused to support the general strike shows that this eclectic organization does face contradictions and pressures. We must find ways to win comrades from among the supporters of the JVP.

Geographical distance, great differences in culture and living standards, and the language barrier make this fusion an extremely difficult undertaking. Nevertheless, we will struggle to uphold a bonafide and binding international democratic centralism. This means "acceptance of majority decisions where there is not agreement and agreement to struggle internally where there are differences.... For the iSt tactical variation by sections, albeit in the face of possible international criticism, is a necessary fact of life if strong, capable section leaderships are to develop. Correspondingly on international and strategically posed issues, a binding international line is mandatory." (from Agreement on Unification of the RWP of Sri Lanka with the iSt, June 1979)

Essential to this is the integration of the Ceylonese comrades into the life of the international. This must include travel and participation in the political activity of other iSt sections by these comrades, and especially immediately the intensive efforts to develop and extend respective language skills in English and Sinhala, as well as the development of capacity in Tamil.

The Spartacist League of Sri Lanka must build up a simple propaganda machine and apparatus commensurate with its tasks. It must develop the capacity to produce written propaganda in the form of leaflets and small pamphlets. It must have a financial structure with regular pledges from its members, a regular pledge to the international, and must maintain the accounts which have hitherto been meticulous. In accordance with standard iSt practice, international resources will be made available according to priorities decided upon internationally.

Build the Spartacist League of Sri Lanka! For the Rebirth of the Fourth International!

Colombo
24 May 1981

international Spartacist tendency
Bolshevik Faction/Spartacist League of Sri Lanka

Stepping Stone Toward South Asian Revolution

Spartacist League Formed in Sri Lanka

We reprint below the agreement for fusion between the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) and the Spartacist League, formerly the Bolshevik Faction of the Revolutionary Workers Party, in Sri Lanka. This fusion represents a qualitative extension of our tendency into the formerly colonial regions of the world, a significant step in the direction of the formation of the International Trotskyist League, world party of proletarian revolution.

Ceylon was one of several colonial countries where the mass working-class parties developed in a period when Stalinism had become, as had social democracy earlier, deeply discredited among the anti-colonial masses because of its open alliance with "democratic" imperialism, i.e., support to the continuation, lightly or not at all attenuated, of colonialism. Thus the mass socialist party, the Lanka Samasamaja Party (LSSP), took on a Trotskyist coloration from the outset. But much of the real content of Trotskyism, from the Bolshevik organizational norms to an appetite for authentic internationalism, never penetrated into the leftist traditions of the island. Instead, the LSSP reflected from the beginning a characteristic preoccupation with parliamentary activity and a narrow nationalistic parochialism. Its early capitulation to Sinhala chauvinism against the Tamil minority prefigured its subsequent support for and finally entry into the bourgeois popular front government of Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in 1964—the first time since the 1938 founding of the Fourth International that an ostensibly Trotskyist party committed such an act of open class betrayal.

The bloody consequences of the popular front were soon realized. Where elsewhere the popular front served to disarm the workers in the face of reaction, in Ceylon it itself carried out counterrevolutionary butchery: crushing the workers' strikes, fomenting racialist pogroms against the Tamils, savagely repressing the 1971 uprising of Sinhala youth led by the Guevarist JVP. Little wonder that hatred for the popular front and the left reformist parties which built it is widespread and deep among all sectors of the workers and oppressed.

In Sri Lanka there are many elements calling themselves Trotskyist which long ago lost

any resemblance to it in reality, from the despised parliamentarists of the LSSP to the Healyite thugs of the RCL, whose richly rewarded fealty to Libya's megalomaniac Qaddafi and other Near Eastern oil-rich military butchers has carried them out of the workers movement altogether. But real Trotskyism—intransigent opposition to class collaboration and an authentic commitment to revolutionary internationalism—is today represented by only one tendency on the island: the Spartacist League.

The recent wave of resurgent government terror against the Tamils of the North and East has drawn the line sharply between revolutionists and traitors: our Lankan comrades were the only voices raised in the Sinhala community to oppose this murderous assault on the Tamils. Likewise, ours was the only tendency internationally which joined with exile Tamil groups in New York, London and Bonn in common protests against the anti-Tamil terror. (For a fuller exposition of the Tamil question, see "Down with the State of Emergency in Sri Lanka!" *Workers Vanguard* No. 240, 28 September 1979.)

Our comrades in Sri Lanka alone defend the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution: the industrial and agricultural proletariat leading all the oppressed in the struggle against the semi-feudal backwardness that is the heritage of centuries of colonial subjugation, a struggle which can attain victory only through the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of proletarian power. These comrades alone uphold the banner that can fuse all elements of society scorned by the bourgeoisie and its

continued on page 37



Bonn, June 1981—2,000 Tamils demonstrate against murderous repression in Sri Lanka. Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands participated, defending Tamil workers and the right to national self-determination.

Spartacist