



For Polish Trotskyism!

What Next for Poland?

Imperialists Weep for Counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc

With the Polish government's preventive coup on December 13, a counter-revolutionary bid for power by Solidarnosc has been checked. Previously the one thing everybody seemed to agree on was that order could be restored only by Russian military intervention — and that would mean a bloodbath. Yet it was the Polish army which not only suppressed pro-Western Solidarnosc, but did so with only a dozen or so deaths.

There was little bloodshed because there was little resistance. The workers intoxicated by the clerical-nationalist fervour of Solidarnosc have received a sobering shock. Many are asking themselves what went wrong and are now open to new solutions. This situation represents a crucial opportunity to create the nuclei of a Trotskyist party in Poland, through constructing underground cells of a propagandistic and educational nature.

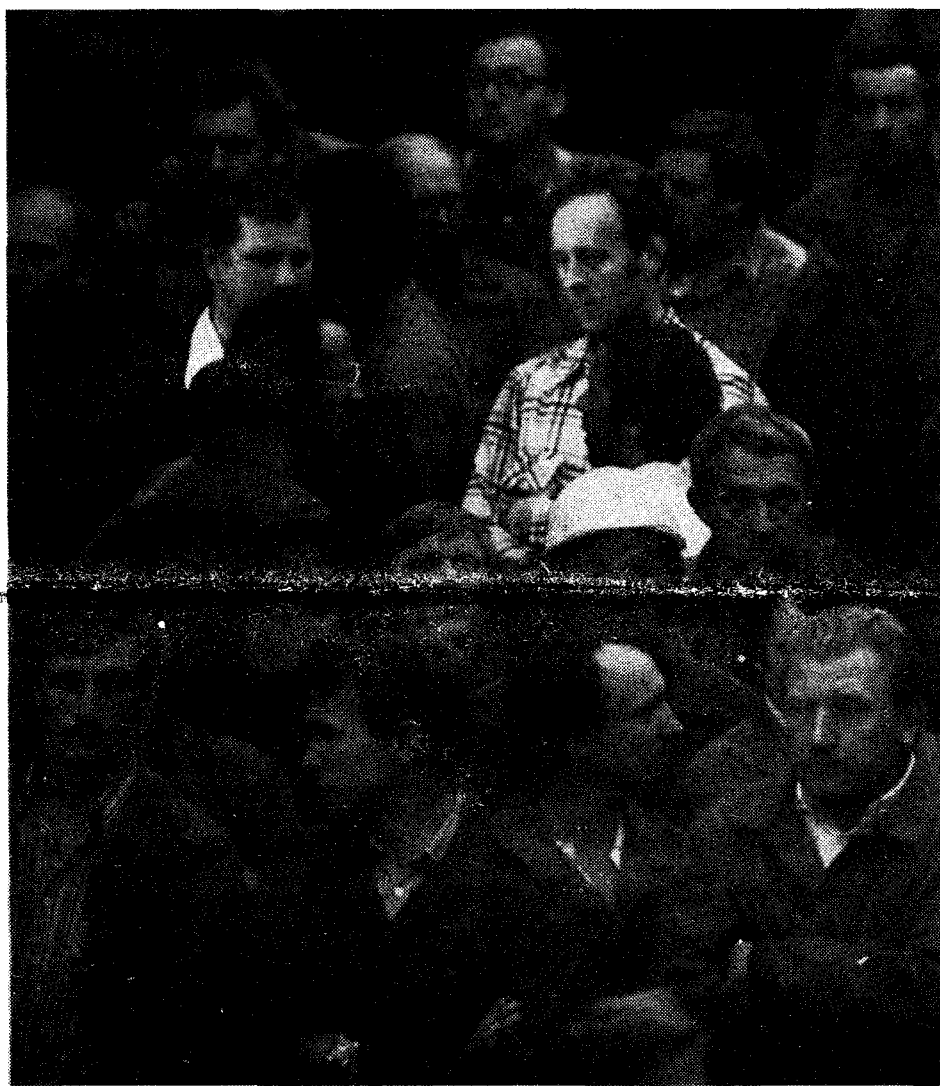
Pentagon official Richard Perle admitted "we were taken by surprise" that the Polish government could "crush Solidarity". All Washington's scenarios to whip up anti-Communist frenzy over a Soviet invasion had to be revamped. So ever since December 13 the Reaganites have tried to convince the world that it's really the Russians who have taken over Poland. They only look and talk like Poles. Frustrated at not seeing Russian and Polish blood flowing in the streets of Warsaw and Gdansk, Reagan has lashed out with economic sanctions against both Poland and the USSR.

It was not only the American imperialists that were taken by surprise at the ignominious defeat of their Polish company union. So were the Poles... on both sides. An aide to General Jaruzelski told Western journalists rather exultantly: "If anything, I am surprised that it went so easily. The radical wing of Solidarity underestimated the feelings of the silent majority" (*New York Times*, 6 January). A Solidarnosc spokesman said pretty much the same thing, only in his case with anguish:

"We always believed that Polish soldiers would never shoot Polish workers — and it's still true, they haven't really. But the diabolical thing is they don't have to."

— *New York Times*, 1 January

The Western bourgeoisie, which glorified Solidarnosc as an uprising of the entire Polish nation, is hard put to explain how it was suppressed so easily. Journalists now point out that Solidarnosc



Crucial opportunity to build Trotskyist vanguard party.

leaders were overconfident, believed the government would never dare use force against them and so made no preparations to counter it. Many acted as if they already enjoyed government office.

But delusions of grandeur at the top do not explain the passivity at the base. Some Western journalists attribute this to fear of Soviet military intervention; others talk of the Poles' traditional respect for the army. Such explanations are at best superficial. Evidence suggests that even before December 13 the wave of popular support for Solidarnosc was receding. People had begun to realize that endless strikes and demonstrations were only making the desperate economic conditions worse. At the famous December 3 Radom meeting, where Solidarnosc leaders planned the overthrow of the government, Karol Modzelewski insisted:

"The trade union has not become stronger; it has become weaker, much weaker. And all activists are aware of this.... There are several reasons for

this: weariness as a result of the crisis, weariness experienced by people waiting at the end of a line. Some people blame us for the prolongation of this state of affairs and want us to reach an agreement."

— *Washington Post*,
20 December 1981

According to a colleague who was not interned, the prominent social-democratic dissident Jacek Kuron predicted in early December a successful crackdown:

"The people, he said, were tired, they were longing for a rest, and it would not at all be difficult to intimidate them effectively. [He said] verbatim: 'People will strike a little and then give up'."

— *Der Spiegel*, 18 January

And that's exactly what happened.

But can the fact that workers — and not that many — struck a little for Solidarnosc and then gave up be explained simply by tiredness after 16 months of crisis? Public reaction to the government's exposure of the Radom tapes ("Radomgate") point to another import-

ant factor. Western journalists all agree that this was a big propaganda coup for the Jaruzelski regime. Many Poles were genuinely shocked to hear Walesa say that "the confrontation is unavoidable" and that "we are bringing this system down". And then there was the Solidarnosc congress last September with its provocative "free elections"/"free trade unions" resolutions. One liberal party member said that a military operation against Solidarnosc wouldn't have succeeded a year ago:

"Six months earlier, I myself would have turned in my [party] card. It was by no means obvious then that Solidarity was opting for a confrontation. Only the hard-liners expected it. They maintained that we were fooling ourselves. The pity of it is that on this point they were proved right. They kept saying you are facing people who don't want to reform socialism — they hate socialism."

— *New York Times*, 5 January

While millions rallied to Solidarnosc as an oppositional movement, many pulled back from supporting it in a bid for power. They had no confidence that Solidarnosc offered a way out of the crisis. The organization had become increasingly faction-ridden and unstable. It was split between so-called "radicals," like Rulewski and Bujak, who wanted a confrontation no matter what, and the moderates, like Walesa and Kuron, who hoped to take power gradually. It was also split between the open advocates of capitalist restoration, like the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), and those whose pro-imperialist appetites were cloaked in rhetoric of "self-management". Millions of Poles must have wondered whether a government of Walesa, Rulewski & Co would only perpetuate and deepen the social anarchy and economic collapse.

Nevertheless, if a certain disillusionment with Solidarnosc has set in, the Polish working masses remain deeply hostile to the corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy, which has ruined the economy. And Jaruzelski's "state of war" cannot make Polish workers love their rulers. Moreover, even Moscow is reportedly becoming a little uneasy over army rule in Poland. The *New York Times* (2 January) noted:

"The Kremlin has made no secret of its discomfort at the party's loss of effective power to a military council, the first time that any Eastern European country has had to move the Communist apparatus aside."

Already at the time of the crackdown we warned of the danger of military bonapartism. This was one of the most ominous aspects of the Chinese "Cultural Revolution" when Lin Piao's People's

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Fake Lefts Can't Cover Tracks Over Poland.

SWP in Reagan's "Third Camp"

Last October the Communist Party (CPA)'s Dave Davies wrote, in what was intended as a snide reference to the Spartacist League, that he would "not only flinch, but wince, recoil, shrink, blink, squirm, writhe and twitch" rather than defend the crushing of Solidarnosc's counterrevolution (*Tribune*, 21 October). Well, look who's squirming now. "Reagan's exploitation of the Polish crisis creates immense problems for socialists in the western labour movement" say the "third-camp" International Socialists (IS) (*Battler*, 13 February). Trying to put a left cover on the drive for capitalist restoration in Poland under the banners of Pilsudski and the Catholic Church isn't easy, especially since Reagan and Haig have cornered the market on "solidarity with Solidarnosc". So now the CPA, IS, the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the tiny group of Laborites around Paul White's ostensibly "Trotskyist" *Socialist Fight* are all preoccupied with the same question: How to "distinguish ourselves" (as *Socialist Fight* puts it) from Reagan when we're on the same side? Answer: you can't.

Socialist Fight has even issued precise instructions for how to try and outmanoeuvre the right-wing labour bureaucrats over Poland: amend their resolutions, and if that doesn't work, "If a resolution ends up going to the vote clearly identified with the Reagan/Fraser campaign it must be voted down" (10 February). To no avail. When the right-wing leadership of the NSW Labor Council made the running in defence of Solidarnosc, pushing through a resolution condemning the military crackdown, CPA supporters on the Council could only unhappily complain that their parallel but "credible viewpoint" (ie, also condemning the crackdown) was gagged. But of all of Solidarnosc's fans in the Australian left, none has been quite so touchy about being in Reagan's camp than is the SWP. That's right, the people who screamed "imperialist propaganda" when we told the truth about Khomeini!

Direct Action has virtually been on campaign footing to "expose" Reagan's "hypocrisy" over Poland, with headlines week after week like "Reagan, Fraser — No Friends of Polish Workers" or "Shows Support for Polish Solidarity a Fraud — Fraser Plans More Union Bashing" and repeated warnings that "tactics" in defence of Solidarnosc must be "very carefully chosen". What cynicism! Now they advise that "those in the labour movement have to make sure they are not caught up in the scheme of Reagan and Fraser", and chide right-wing ALPer Barrie Unsworth for sharing a platform with "Captive Nations" spokesmen while whitewashing their own pro-Solidarnosc rallies as examples of independent "class action". Just who do they think they are kidding?

As we reported last month, the SWP along with the IS and members of the CPA demonstrated shoulder to shoulder with the anti-communist "Free Poles" and the fascistic "Captive Nations" outside Sydney's Polish Consulate on 14 December (see "Anti-Red Front Over Poland", *ASP* no 91, and the photo accompanying this article). SWPers gave these arch-rightists the clenched-fist salute when, as the reactionary crowd grew, they prudently left. But not before Charles Weyman, who called the anti-communist protest, spoke on their platform. SWP leader Jim Percy later pretentiously boasted that "his party was the most closely aligned to Solidarity in Australia", but it is Charles Weyman, the central organiser of anti-communist activity over Poland, who has Solidarnosc's Australian franchise.

To shore up any doubts in its membership and periphery, the SWP recently put out a special "Statement of the Political



ASP photo

SWP (banner, left background) mixes with "Free Poles" and "Captive Nations" reactionaries outside Sydney's Polish Consulate 14 December 1981.

Committee" on Poland (*Direct Action*, 10 February), most of which is devoted to proving that black is white. Example: the US bourgeoisie was happy to see Solidarnosc suppressed because they feared it would set an example for American workers. Which is why, we suppose, Reagan and Haig launched "Solidarity Day" on 30 January with rallies across the US and a special TV show telecast around the globe in defence of this "free trade union". As a Spartacist leaflet, titled "SWP Can't Cover Its Tracks Over Poland" (18 February) noted:

"The SWP is caught with its pants down. And they know it. Witness the obsessive insistence that Reagan doesn't really support Solidarnosc (except that the US imposed sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union), that the labour bureaucrats aren't really friends of Solidarnosc (except that the AFL-CIO tops had been working for months with Walesa), that Fraser secretly hates it (except that he sent a cheque for \$1 million to Solidarnosc through the Catholic Church), that the Western Bankers really do support Jaruzelski (except that they refused

Warsaw's request for a loan to cover their interest payments), ad nauseum."

Of course, not everything the SWP says about Poland is stupid. So we are told the obvious truth that the imperialist outcry on Solidarnosc's behalf is part of Reagan's drive to war. But war against whom? For the SWP Reagan's anti-Sovietism is just a propaganda pretext. Everyone gets a mention, from Palestinian guerrillas to Nicaragua's Sandinistas, but not the Soviet workers state against which Reagan's multi-billion dollar nuclear arsenal is aimed. "They [the imperialists] are still a long way from a world relationship of forces that would permit them to launch a direct military assault against Eastern Europe" the Political Committee statement baldly states. Thus Soviet defencism is conveniently disappeared. In the wilfully inverted view of the SWP, Reagan's provocations around the globe — shooting down Libyan planes over disputed waters, threatening blockades against Cuba and Nicaragua — has nothing to do with war preparations

against the Soviet Union, the strongest state to have overthrown capitalism!

Such acrobatics in order to duck the "Russian Question" is nothing new for the SWP. When China, in collusion with US imperialism invaded Vietnam in 1979, the SWP insisted that in no way was the Soviet Union threatened. While denouncing the invasion as reactionary they refused to demonstrate against the Chinese Stalinists so as to avoid any suggestion that they might be on the same side as the Soviet Union. And in Afghanistan, where the SWP maintained its support to the Soviet-backed PDPA forces after their mentors in the SWP/US switched to Washington's "Soviet troops out" line, the SWP had to create from whole cloth a myth of a "workers and peasants insurrection" so that they could pretend that what was really upsetting the imperialists was not Soviet intervention, but the "Afghan Revolution".

More recently, in June of last year, the SWP drew a *bloodline* against defence of Cuba and the USSR and for military victory to the Salvadoran leftist insurgents by launching a thug attack against the SL-initiated Anti-Imperialist Contingent. Why? Because they believe that by aggressively avoiding the key issues of the imperialist Cold War and revolution versus counterrevolution in a raging civil war, they can forge a bloc with labour reformists and bourgeois liberals for whom defence of the Soviet Union is anathema.

Even the SWP's support to Castroism is presented in a "third campist" spirit. The SWP ludicrously denies that Castro's Cuba is part of the Soviet bloc, instead focusing on Castro's role in the "non-aligned movement" which by its very name suggests a "third camp" between imperialism and the USSR. And where the SWP differs from Castro, they do so from the right, especially where imperialist anti-Sovietism is involved. Poland is only the latest example. In Portugal in 1975 the SWP supported Mario Soares' CIA-financed Socialist Party, as it fuelled

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The Spectre of the "Russian Question"

SPA Faces Split

A serious factional crisis within the pro-Moscow Stalinist party, the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), is threatening it with the prospect of a deep-going split. The SPA is torn between a struggle by supporters of the central leadership of Peter Symon, Jack McPhillips and Alan Miller against an opposition grouping based on its most prominent trade union officials in NSW — where its industrial base is strongest — including the SPA's national president and leading public spokesman, Pat Clancy.

The first signs that something was afoot were last May when the letters column of the SPA's *Socialist* carried a controversy over a pamphlet issued by the party's NSW Industrial Committee. A criticism, ostensibly by a lone rank and filer, of it as "essentially economist" prompted a stiff defence in the next issue by 15 leading SPA union officials from the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF), Building Workers (BWIU), Seamen, Miners and others. This was the cue for 26 SPA leaders to reply, denouncing the trade unionists' pamphlet as "economist and reformist" and not dealing with the struggle for socialism and the party. Its unauthorised publication was denounced as a breach of democratic centralism, it was withdrawn from sale and the public discussion terminated.

The differences reappeared in several public discussion bulletins issued before the SPA's 4th congress in October. Charges of "reformism", "right opportunism" and "opposition to democratic centralism" against the trade unionists were met with accusations of "left sectarianism", "dogmatism" and an "authoritarian style of leadership" against Symon/McPhillips, the charges on both sides totally abstract and politically vacuous. At the congress itself the "leadership group held a narrow majority but faced strong opposition from almost the entire activist membership in unions and social movements", gloated the Communist Party's *Tribune* (16 December). According to *Tribune* the opposition was censured by the congress for "divisive actions" but an organisational split was avoided and Clancy and some of his supporters retained their positions on the Central Committee.

The factional lid really blew off over the Xmas/New Year strike by waterfront metal tradesmen demanding restoration of pay relativities with the WWF. When the bosses threatened to stand down WWF members, the WWF Federal Council reactivated its "industrial unionism" campaign as a cover for launching a raid on the tradesmen's unions, at that time under heavy attack from the bosses and government. The WWF threatened to do non-tradesmen's work normally done by tradesmen and the Melbourne WWF *Branch News* actually bragged of doing so. When the SPA's *Maritime Bulletin* (7 January) made the obvious point that these actions were inciting "forms of strikebreaking and almost scabbing" (a charge repeated in the 13 January *Socialist*), the SPAers who run the union's Sydney branch retaliated with a campaign across the Sydney waterfront. Numerous job resolutions denounced the SPA's "scurrilous attack" and declared that until the SPA apologised "no financial and other assistance is to be given by our Branch executive and membership to the Socialist Party" (*Branch News*, 15 February).

A Sydney WWF branch executive statement condemned McPhillips as "a disruptive and divisive individual" and disassociated the four SPA executive members, including branch secretary Tom Supple, from the SPA's "slandrous attacks". Supple himself used the 28 January Sydney WWF *Branch News* to

launch a red-baiting attack on his own party declaring that "The Federation is not the property of any political party" and he targeted "a small group of elitists in the Socialist Party" who he equated with "right wing groupers". The SPA's reply and hopes "that the incidents will be put in the past" were dismissed by Sydney Acting Secretary (another SPA member) Wal Jennings in the next *Branch News* (15 February) as "wishful thinking" until the SPA completely backed down and gave "a



SPA President Pat Clancy (left) and General Secretary Peter Symon (right).

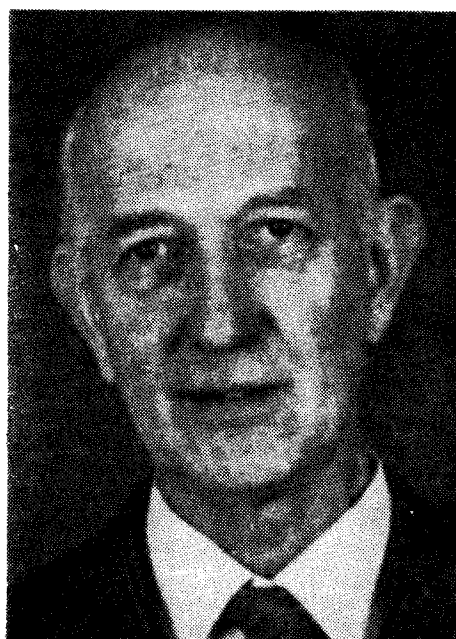
retraction and apologises for their filthy abuse". This, to put it mildly, is the language of split.

Cold split — Cold War

So what are the real politics here? The waterfront explosion made it clear that at least a section of the SPA's trade-union bureaucrats are aggressively willing to put their narrow bureaucratic interests and working relations above and against any party ties. For Stalinist and social-democratic parties this is always part of the overhead for opportunism. But what has fuelled these long-standing tensions to their present feverish state is the changed international climate in which detente has given way to intense anti-Soviet militarism producing a sharp shift to the right in bourgeois circles domestically and among their lieutenants in the labour movement. The SPA's ties to

the Moscow bureaucracy, its pro-Soviet line on Afghanistan and Poland, threaten to isolate it from "broad unity" with an increasingly anti-Soviet social-democratic union bureaucracy.

Similarly the SPA party functionaries in their efforts to rejuvenate and recruit to their largely aging organisation have no doubt run into resistance from careerist union bureaucrats with their own social base and interests to protect. But these are merely symptoms of the SPA's



present crisis which rests in the fact that Cold War II has arrived. The SPA is under pressure, and the one area where the Stalinists have some social weight, in the trade-union bureaucracy, is also where they are most vulnerable. No matter how much they would like to avoid it the Stalinists are facing the Russian Question.

The spectacle of Symon/McPhillips fighting "economism", let alone strikebreaking, is certainly grotesque. The opposition SPA officials of the BWIU, WWF and Seamen's Union (who formed the backbone of the 1971 split from the CPA) are now what they have always been — a conservative, thoroughly reformist and economist layer entrenched in the trade-union bureaucracy. They quit the CPA, as they emphasise in their contributions to the current discussion, as much over the CPA's "left sectarian" domestic line of the late 60s/early 70s as

over the Aarons leadership's break from Moscow. They saw the CPA's worker control rhetoric, its militant Builders Labourers (BLF) trade union showpiece, its tailing of New Left radicalism — which for a time masked its basic rightward thrust — as a threat to their comfortable bureaucratic arrangements with Labor Party union bureaucrats. In this period SPA-led unions consistently blocked with the Ducker/Unsworth right wing in the NSW Labor Council against the CPA forces' militant posture. The BWIU tops in 1974-5 were quite happy to stand aside as the Maoist federal BLF leadership, in league with the bosses, smashed the elected CPA leadership of the NSW BLF. Needless to say Symon & Co ran the SPA throughout this whole period.

As for strikebreaking, SPA supporters on the NSW executive of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU) had no qualms about instructing their members to cross striking journalists' picket lines in the June 1980 Fairfax strike at a time when the Chapel leadership itself resigned over the question. McPhillips himself made his name as a leading Stalinist union bureaucrat in the 40s by enforcing labour discipline during WWII for "democratic" imperialism. In 1943 he personally led scabs across a picket line to break a bitter strike at the Sydney Austral Bronze munitions factory.

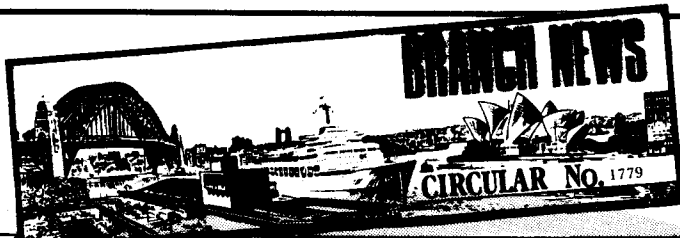
SPA: for "unity" with anti-Soviet forces

The SPA's external opponents, ie, the forces which the oppositionists have been working with on a day-to-day basis for years, have been quick to take advantage of its present factional disarray. *Tribune's* report of last year's congress had nothing but praise for the "respected" trade union officials against their arch-foes, Symon and McPhillips. And the ALP-dominated Fitzgibbon federal leadership of the WWF has shown no lack of sense for the jugular, playing the Sydney waterfront fallout for all its worth. Two full pages in its February *Maritime Worker* were devoted to reprinting every attack and resolution against the SPA. The federal WWF leadership had earlier enthusiastically lined up with imperialist reaction over Poland by imposing a week-long ban on Polish shipping, motivated partly no doubt by the opportunity to gore the ox of the Sydney Stalinists. At the time federal organiser Tas Bull (himself an ex-CPer) was reported in Murdoch's *Australian* (23 December) red-baiting the "hard-line Moscow supporters" as representing "only about 2 per cent of union members".

The Sydney branch of the WWF eventually came out against the ban but the tone of its mild disclaimer to Fitzgibbon over Poland compared to its vitriolic assault against the SPA over the tradesmen's dispute is itself telling. Moreover Supple, McFarlane & Co took it upon themselves to endorse another Fitzgibbon resolution for "no outside interference" in Poland, a flat capitulation to Reaganite propaganda which disowned in advance possible Soviet intervention against Solidarnosc. Symon/McPhillips also took a dive on this anti-Soviet attack, Symon cowardly refusing to comment on the ban on the grounds that it was an internal union affair.

No wing of Stalinism can answer the Polish crisis. That the Polish proletariat turned to the forces of clerical nationalism is graphic testimony to the criminal bankruptcy of Stalinism which for decades lied and broke every promise of democratic reform while conciliating the

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The Federation and the Branch in its history has withstood similar attacks from the right wing groupers within the A.L.P., attacks in the 1950's from various groups, in the splits from within the Communist Parties and now a small group of elitists in the Socialist Party.

At the stop work meeting it was made abundantly clear that members of the Socialist Party on the Sydney Branch Executive, Wal Jennings, Ron Anderson, Merv MacFarlane and myself disassociate ourselves completely from the articles of the *Maritime Bulletin* of the Socialist Party of Australia.

The Federation is not the property of any political party; whether it be the A.L.P., C.P.A., S.P.A. or any other Party. The Federation has been built on all members being able to express their views. All policies are made by the rank and file at stop work meetings.

— Sydney WWF Branch News 28 January 1982

They refer to their right to comment on matters of public interest. On this point we have no opposition—comment is one thing, but outright abuse and insults is another.

They refer to the good relations that the S.P.A. has had with the W.W.F. and hope they will continue in the future and that the incidents will be put in the past.

This is wishful thinking and until such time as the Socialist Party leadership concedes to the demands of our membership for a retraction and apologises for their filthy abuse and attacks on the membership the decision of our stop work meeting will be adhered to strictly to the letter, i.e. no financial and other assistance is to be given by our Branch Executive and membership to the Socialist Party.

The Sydney Branch Executive discussed this matter last Tuesday, 9th February, 1982

— Sydney WWF Branch News 15 February 1982

What Next for Poland?

Continued from page one

Liberation Army essentially took over administration of the country. At that time a succession clause was written into China's constitution which made the selection of the pope look like an exercise in participatory democracy. As we wrote in "Power Bid Spiked" (WV no 295, 18 December 1981):

"The Stalinists only make hypocritical reference to socialist forms, the acknowledgment that vice gives to virtue. But compared to the naked armed fist, those forms are important."

The military crackdown against Solidarnosc has been a cold shower for the Polish masses. The bankruptcy of the Stalinist bureaucrats, who have ruined the country economically, is clear as day. The intoxication of Solidarnosc clerical-nationalism, which took Poland to the brink of counterrevolution, is beginning to wear off. Many are seeking new answers, and some will be open to the authentically communist program of the Leninist-Trotskyists, the Spartacists, who demanded "Stop Solidarnosc Counter-revolution!" while fighting for a proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic bureaucracy.

A tremendous political/psychological shakeup has taken place in Poland. Suddenly Polish society has been arrested, just plain stopped. But the repression has not gone so deep as to prevent the emergence of an underground opposition. Petitions for an end to martial law circulate openly; well-known dissidents give interviews in the Western press; the state radio polemicalizes against underground Solidarnosc manifestos. Now is the time to start building educational and propagandistic cells of a Trotskyist vanguard to defend and extend the historic gains of socialized property, inherited from the October Revolution, by ousting the usurpers who undermine them and crushing those who would destroy them.

Real Polish revolutionary hero: Rosa Luxemburg

The present Polish situation could develop only in a political vacuum reflecting the destruction of the traditions of international communism in Poland through savage persecution — Polish Pilsudskiite, German Nazi and Stalinist. The Western media now present Polish history through the distorting prism of Solidarnosc. The Polish nation is supposedly fanatically nationalistic, fervently religious, the most anti-communist of peoples. The regime, on the other

hand, relegates the history of the Polish workers movement before 1945 to the academic realm. In reality Poland had one of the oldest and strongest traditions of Marxist proletarian socialism of any European country. A genuinely revolutionary vanguard must build on those internationalist traditions.

The first Marxist working-class party in the tsarist empire, the party Proletariat, was formed in Warsaw in the early 1880s. Significantly, Ludwik Warynski's Proletariat rejected the traditional Polish radical program of a national uprising and worked closely with the Russian populists for a social revolution throughout the tsarist empire. The anti-nationalist tradition of the party Proletariat was taken over in the next generation by the greatest Polish proletarian revolutionary leader of all, Rosa Luxemburg. Luxemburg rejected the struggle for an independent bourgeois-democratic Poland and fought for the overthrow of tsarist absolutism through the united struggle of Polish and Russian workers:

"... the idea of making an independent Poland into a buffer and a protective barrier for the West against the reactionary Russian tsardom was unrealizable, the development of capitalism, which had buried this idea in the first place, created in its place the revolutionary class movement of the united proletariat in Russia and Poland and in it a far more stalwart ally of the West, an ally that would not merely mechanically protect Europe from absolutism but would itself undermine and crush it."

— Foreword to the anthology "The Polish Question and the Socialist Movement" (1905), in *The National Question: Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg* (1976)

The political struggle between the internationalist Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL) of Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches and the nationalist Polish Socialist Party (PPS) of Josef Pilsudski dominated the pre-World War I Polish workers movement.

As Lenin insisted, Luxemburg was wrong to reject the bourgeois-democratic right of national self-determination, ie, the right to a separate state, for Poland. Her dogmatic stubbornness on this question weakened her correct struggle against Pilsudski and chauvinist currents within the Polish working class. Yet she was right to insist that the fate of Poland was inextricably bound up with the proletarian class struggle in its oppressor nations, Russia and Germany. The creation of an independent Polish bourgeois state in 1918 was not the result of a national uprising but of the Bolshevik Revolution and Germany's defeat in World War I. Moreover, that defeat was in good measure caused by the rising of war-weary German workers with Luxemburg as one of their leaders. It is one of those ironies of history that Luxemburg's activities on behalf of the Russian and German revolutions contributed more to the national liberation of Poland than did Pilsudski's legionary movement.

Today both sides in the Polish crisis disdain Rosa Luxemburg, Poland's greatest representative of proletarian socialism. The clerical-nationalist Solidarnosc idealizes Luxemburg's arch-enemy, Pilsudski — and, moreover, not in his pre-1914 role as right-wing socialist but in his later incarnation as anti-Soviet militarist and fascist dictator. The Stalinists, too, have nothing in common

with proletarian internationalism and desperately try to give themselves a "patriotic" coloration. Last fall for the first time the Jaruzelski regime celebrated the anniversary of the founding of the bourgeois Polish republic on 11 November 1918. This national holiday is in fact a commemoration honoring Pilsudski.

But the Stalinist denigration of the great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg is not peculiar to the Jaruzelski regime. As Trotsky wrote in the early 1930s:

"Yes, Stalin has sufficient cause to hate Rosa Luxemburg. But all the more imperious therefore becomes our duty to shield Rosa's memory from Stalin's calumny that has been caught by the hired functionaries of both hemispheres, and to pass on this truly beautiful, heroic, and tragic image to the young generations of



Founders of Polish Communism (from left): Adolf Warski, Leo Jogiches, Julian Marchlewski.

the proletariat in all its grandeur and inspirational force."

— "Hands Off Rosa Luxemburg!" *Writings* [1932]

If Rosa Luxemburg remains unhonored in the Poland of Stalin and Solidarnosc, it is also because she was a Jew. For both the Walesas and Jaruzelskis, a Jew is not a "true" Pole. One of the ugliest and most grotesque aspects of the current crisis is the revival of Jew-baiting on both sides, although almost all Polish Jews were killed by the Nazis and the few remaining tens of thousands were driven out by the Stalinists in 1968. While the Stalinists dare not attack Pope Wojtyla's hierarchy, the real force behind Solidarnosc, they readily fabricate "Zionist plots". One target singled out in government propaganda is the Jewish social-democratic dissident Adam Michnik, a figure of no great influence in the present Solidarnosc line-up. Also a government radio program after the December 13 crackdown "exposed" the fact that Solidarnosc adviser Bronislaw Gemerek was the son of a Jewish religious teacher. But the hardened anti-Semites are on the other side. Even the *Wall Street Journal* admits that Leszek Moczulski's KPN, a strong faction in Solidarnosc, is "tainted by a history of anti-Semitism". And last fall the "radical" Solidarnosc leader in Szczecin, Marion Jurczyk, declared that three-quarters of the Communist party leadership were really Jews who had changed their names!

Before the Holocaust Jews played a very important role in the leadership of the Polish revolutionary workers movement, providing much of its internationalist elan and cosmopolitanism, acting as a barrier against social-patriotic influences. By "purifying" the Polish nation at Auschwitz and elsewhere, Adolf Hitler indirectly contributed to the utter wretchedness of postwar Polish Stalinism, the enormous influence of the Catholic church and the rise of the clerical-nationalist Solidarnosc.

The tragedy of the Polish Communist Party

The Polish Communist Party was formed in late 1918 as a fusion between

Luxemburg's SDKPiL and the Polish Socialist Party-Left, a large centrist party which had split from Pilsudski in the wake of the Revolution of 1905. The outlook animating these first Polish Communists is well described by Isaac Deutscher in his important 1958 essay, "The Tragedy of the Polish Communist Party" (reprinted in *Marxism in Our Time* [1973]):

"The Party's ranks were further united by a sharp awareness of their common and unyielding opposition to the nationalist and reformist Poland, to the Poland of the landlords and petty nobility."

That opposition would soon be tested, and in the severest way. In early 1920 Pilsudski launched a war of conquest against Soviet Russia. There was no question that the Polish Communists would perform their internationalist duty, as they did. Deutscher explained:

"The Polish Party treated this war — as it had every reason to do — as a war of the Polish possessing classes (or of their decisive elements) against the Russian Revolution, and as an integral part of the capitalist powers' intervention in Russia. The Party felt it was at one with the Russian Revolution and obliged to defend it."

In the early 1920s the pro-Soviet Communist Party was, on balance, stronger within the Polish working class than the Pilsudskiite social democrats. Moreover, there was a saying in the Comintern: "The German party is the largest; the Polish party is the best." In good part because of its roots in the revolutionary SDKPiL of Luxemburg, the Polish party offered more resistance to Stalinization than did any other large Comintern party. In December 1923 its central committee sent a letter of protest to the Russian party which stated: "... for our party, nay for the whole Comintern, for the whole revolutionary world proletariat the name of Comrade Trotsky is insolubly connected with the victory of the Soviet Revolution, with the Red Army, with communism" (quoted in M K Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland* [1976]).

This is not to idealize the Polish Communist Party of the 1920s or the regime of the "three Ws" (Warski, Walecki, Wera Kostrzewa). In 1923 the Polish Communist leadership let slip a potentially revolutionary situation. A few years later they made a far graver error, this time one of commission. Momentarily overcome by the popular enthusiasm for Pilsudskiite bonapartism, Warski threw his party's support behind the marshal's coup in May 1926 (see "Pilsudski and Counterrevolution in Poland", WV no 293, 20 November 1981). Yet the Polish Communists soon recovered from their "May mistake" and were the only opposition to the consolidating fascist dictatorship.

The political authority which the Polish Communist Party gained through its heroic struggle against the right-wing dictatorship was soon squandered by Stalin's 1929 turn to "Third Period" adventurism. The party was prohibited from engaging in united action with the social democrats and peasant parties against the deepening white terror. In 1931-32 an opposition to this suicidal course emerged led by Isaac Deutscher. The Polish opposition was soon won to Trotskyism, centrally due to Trotsky's determined struggle for a united defense by the German proletariat against the menace of Nazism. While the Deutscher



Polish military cracks down on counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc.

group was expelled from the Polish CP in 1932, the American Cold War historian Dzewanowski observes, "A pro-Trotsky undercurrent continued to remain a factor of some importance until the party's dissolution [in 1938], particularly among the Jewish membership".

When Hitler came to power in early 1933, the Trotskyist movement considered calling upon the Soviet Red Army to invade Germany before the Nazis could consolidate their regime and rearm. This would necessarily have violated Polish national independence, but this was a minor consideration when weighed against the historic interests of the world proletariat.

The growing white terror of the Pilsudskiite "regime of the colonels" forced ever larger numbers of Polish Communists to take refuge in the Soviet Union. While many foreign Communists were killed in the Great Purges of the late '30s, Stalin's war against the Polish party was exceptional, indeed unique. Practically all Polish Communists in Soviet territory were either physically liquidated or sent to concentration camps. Many Polish Communists were lured back under one or another pretext. The entire Party leadership — Warski, Walecki, Wera Kostrzewa, Unszlicht among others — was killed. In 1938 in an unprecedented act Stalin dissolved the entire Polish Communist Party as a "nest of Pilsudskiite-Trotskyites". Deutscher sought to explain Stalin's insane hatred for Polish Communism, his determination to destroy it root and branch:

"Stalin saw the Polish CP as the stronghold of hated Luxemburgism — the Polish 'variety of Trotskyism' — which had defied him as long ago as 1923; the Party in which some leaders were close to Bukharin and others to Zinoviev; the Party of incurable heresies, proud of its traditions and its heroism...."

For Polish Trotskyism!

One point all observers agree on is that the immediate origins of the present Polish crisis are to be found in the catastrophic economic mismanagement by the Gierk regime over the last decade. It's also clear that the level of corruption and venality in the Polish bureaucracy is extreme even compared to the rest of the East European deformed workers states. This reflects Stalin's destruction of the Polish Communist Party, which meant that the governing apparatus put in place by the Soviet army after World War II had no connection with a revolutionary past to live down. Thus the bureaucracy that has run Poland ever since was recruited from simple opportunists and careerists. But the deeper origins of the Polish crisis lie in *Stalinism*, the attempt by a bonapartist bureaucracy to balance between imperialism and the working class, expressed in the dogma of "socialism in one country".

All the central problems facing Poland flow from the bureaucracy's narrow nationalist policies and particularly its conciliation and strengthening of the social base for counterrevolution. The ability of the peasantry to hold the country ransom lies in the failure to collectivize agriculture. The clerical-

International Women's Day 1982

All Honour to Rosa Luxemburg

This year on International Women's Day, the proletarian holiday that marked the opening battles of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, it is all the more appropriate to honour the memory of Rosa Luxemburg — Poland's greatest contribution to the Marxist movement. A Jew, a woman, a communist, murdered by the social democrats because of her struggle for a German revolution that would link hands across Poland with the Red Russia of Lenin and Trotsky.

One can be sure that this outstanding revolutionist will not be paid tribute in Poland on March 8 or on any other day. Not by the Stalinists for whom she remains too powerful a symbol of proletarian internationalism, and certainly not by the now-suppressed Solidarnosc, whose national symbols are the Black Virgin of Czestochowa and Josef Pilsudski — the interwar fascistic dictator of Poland who in 1920 launched war against the Soviet Red Army. With the Vatican serving as a central agency of capitalist counterrevolution in Poland today, Luxemburg's simple and powerful words on the Church stand as a basic statement of Marxist opposition to what Marx called the "same old crap" of religious obscurantism:

"The clergy, no less than the capitalist class, lives off the backs of the people, profits from the degradation, the ignorance and the oppression of the people".
— "Socialism and the Churches"

Certainly there can be no doubt that the "new Poland" Solidarnosc's leaders claimed to be building would conform to the guidelines of the Catholic Church to which they all profess their deepest allegiance. For women this would mean bringing Christ and the Virgin Mary back into the family, the end of the right to abortion and women's withdrawal from the factories to take up their "traditional" role as moral-religious guardians. When a CGT woman worker in

nationalist hold on Solidarnosc is rooted in the regime's attempt to find a *modus vivendi* with the Catholic church, which is rooted in the peasantry. The explosion over price increases which led to the Gdansk strike was the result of mortgaging the Polish economy to the Western bankers, who are now demanding their payoff. What's needed is not more concessions but a truly revolutionary, internationalist policy. And that requires the ouster of the Stalinist parasites through a proletarian political revolution, led by a Trotskyist vanguard.

The Polish workers' answer to the Stalin-era regime of police-state commandism was given in 1956 by the powerful proletarian revolt that began in Poznan (and helped spark the workers revolution in Hungary that same October). This forced an attempt to reform the regime through some kind of liberal Stalinism, using more individual incentives and loosening the screws of



France asked Walesa why he tells women to stay at home and not struggle for their rights, he replied that he was speaking only for *Polish* women! Heaven help the Polish women Walesa was speaking for! For women's participation in work outside the confines of the individual household is an absolute precondition to emancipation. To again quote Rosa Luxemburg:

"As bourgeois wives women are parasites on society, their function consisting solely in sharing the fruits of exploitation. As petit bourgeois, they are beasts of burden of the family. It is as modern proletarians that women first become human beings, for it is struggle that produces the human being...."

— "The Proletarian Woman", March 1914

In the past several years most of the left has trampled underfoot not only the elementary Marxist opposition to organised religion, but also what every

the repressive apparatus. This, too, failed — twice. The Polish proletariat repudiated Gomulka in the 1970 Baltic workers uprising and ousted Gierk with the 1980 shipyards strike. This also meant the end of illusions in liberal reform, and now pro-Western forces in and around Solidarnosc managed to win the support of the Polish masses. But their triumph would mean a calamity of epochal proportions, turning Gdansk into a Detroit with its unemployment lines and soup kitchens.

Moreover, counterrevolution on the banks of the Vistula would not be limited to Poland. It would immediately pose *capitalist* reunification of Germany and a thermonuclear imperialist world war, aimed at eradicating the Soviet degenerated workers state and the remaining conquests of the October Revolution of 1917. Only the Trotskyists have a program to root out the sources of counterrevolution, by returning to the

socialist since Fourier has understood — that the progressive character of any social movement can be gauged in its attitude towards the emancipation of women. At the height of Khomeini's popularity in Iran the Spartacists, uniquely on the left, called for his downfall, explaining that his viciously anti-communist, Persian chauvinist program meant the enforced brutalisation of women. In the fighting over Afghanistan, probably the only shooting war in modern history ignited over the most basic issues of women's rights, the Spartacists again stand alone in hailing the victory of the Red Army over the rule of the mullahs. Yet the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party *still* claims Khomeini's Islamic regime to be progressive, even revolutionary, defending the veil as a "symbol of resistance", while the "independent" Communist Party and "third-camp" International Socialists (IS) take the side of imperialism and feudal barbarity in denouncing Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the IS actually *supporting* the Afghan "rebels"! Indeed, it is no accident that all of these deeply opportunist organisations have now come out for anti-Soviet clerical-nationalist counterrevolution in Poland.

It is an index of the bankruptcy of feminism that none of these crucial issues that touch so profoundly on the liberation of women will be taken up at this year's IWD events. Many feminists have even embraced the obscene puritanism of the Catholic Church, campaigning against black garter belts while remaining indifferent to the plight of women who spend their entire lives shrouded in black chadors. Only the communists who defend women from barbaric clerical-reaction in Iran and Afghanistan, and against Solidarnosc's program of "kinder, kuche, kirche" in Poland can claim International Women's Day as their own. ■

authentic communism of Lenin and Luxemburg. Key elements of such a program to mobilize the Polish working class include:

Down with clericalism! For the strict separation of church and state! As Rosa Luxemburg wrote in 1905: "The clergy, no less than the capitalist class, lives off the backs of the people, profits from the degradation, the ignorance and the oppression of the people" ("Socialism and the Churches"). Today the Vatican serves as a key instrument of Western imperialism, a central agency for capitalist counterrevolution. The core leadership of Solidarnosc around Lech Walesa came out of the church-backed "dissident" circles, and one of the famous 21 demands in the Gdansk strike was for broadcasting Catholic mass over state media — in effect establishing a state church. Moreover, the Polish

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Polish October, 1956: Workers brought liberal Stalinist Wladyslaw Gomulka (speaking) to power.



Party headquarters burned in Gdansk during 1970 Polish workers revolt. Workers sang the Internationale.

Poland...

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army is the only one in East Europe to have Catholic chaplains.

Kuron and other Solidarnosc leaders have called for a tripartite government including the Catholic hierarchy. Washington, Wall Street and social democracy are united in seeking to restore the Roman church to its medieval dominance over Polish social life. And seeking to conciliate Pope Wojtyla, the Stalinists may well adopt some of its reactionary social programs — such as restricting or eliminating women's right to abortions. The separation of church and state is a historic gain of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, yet today only the Trotskyists fight for it.

For the collectivization of agriculture! For decades the Polish economy has been wracked by the contradiction between a backward smallholding agriculture and a rapidly expanding industry. Government food subsidies have been an ever-greater drain on the entire economy. Yet Rural Solidarity's attempts to eliminate state marketing would not only go against the immediate economic interests of the working class, through vastly higher prices, but it would also strengthen the danger of counterrevolution. An immediate, key task for a revolutionary workers government in Poland would be to promote the collectivization of agriculture.

For trade unions independent of bureaucratic control and based on defense of socialized property! This is an integral part of the Trotskyist program to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. And it has nothing in common with the slogan of "free trade unions", which has long been a battle cry of NATO imperialism. At the start of the Cold War, the fanatically anti-Communist US labor bureaucracy set up the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in closest collaboration with the CIA. Polish workers must understand that narrow, economist trade unionism is *not possible* in a collectivized economy. Any redistribution of income requires wresting control of economic administration from the Stalinist bureaucracy. And Polish workers must implacably oppose "AFL-CIA unionism", committing their organizations to defend socialized property and proletarian state power against imperialism.

Cancel the imperialist debt! To meet Poland's present enormous indebtedness to the imperialists would mean years of severe austerity. Yet the Solidarnosc leaders call for Poland to join the International Monetary Fund, the Western bankers cartel. The IMF would bleed Polish workers no less savagely than it does "Third World" workers. Desiring to maintain social peace in its important ally, the Kremlin has, at least indirectly, shelled out ever larger sums to pay Poland's debts to Wall Street. It is not our task as proletarian revolutionists to advise the Warsaw bureaucrats on how to get out of the hole they are in. But a Trotskyist leadership would immediately cancel the imperialist debt and appeal to the workers of West Europe and the US to combat the inevitable imperialist retaliation.

For international socialist economic planning! Solidarnosc leaders have expressed admiration for Western capitalism and called for the reprivatization of a significant sector of the economy. They have demanded the abolition of central planning in favor of autonomous "self-managed" enterprises operating on the basis of market competition. In Poland's present economic conditions, this would immediately bankrupt hundreds of enterprises throwing hundreds of thousands, if not millions of workers into streets. It would also enormously facilitate imperialist economic penetration. The goal must be not to return to the anarchy of the market but to give the working class democratic control over the economy which can only be realized through central planning by soviet power, with factory committees to monitor production and consumer cooperatives to monitor quality and price of commodities. Polish workers must look toward a Socialist United States of Europe in which a united Soviet Germany will be an industrial motor force.

For soviet democracy, not bourgeois parliamentarism! For proletarian political revolution! Just hours before the imposition of martial law, Solidarnosc called for a referendum to overthrow the Communist government and replace it with a government based on "free elections". In present Polish conditions such elections would have led to the victory of a clerical-nationalist party, which would attempt to restore capitalism, or perhaps have led to an anarchic outcome. In either case, civil war would be posed pointblank. The Polish working class must fight for the rule of soviets (workers councils) as in the Russian Revolutions of 1917. Soviet democracy should encompass those parties, chosen by the workers and their allies, which stand for and defend a socialist order.

Defend the USSR against imperialism! For the revolutionary unity of Polish and Soviet workers! Walesa & Co saw themselves leading the entire Polish nation, supported by Western imperialism, against "Russian Communism". The "appeal" by the Solidarnosc congress last September to Soviet workers was a provocative declaration of solidarity with Reagan's "free world". This was readily understood not only by the Kremlin bureaucrats but also by the Soviet working masses. Western journalists all report that the Soviet man-in-the-street has no sympathy for Solidarnosc and what it stands for.

The revolutionary tradition of Polish/Russian working-class solidarity represented by Rosa Luxemburg is crucial to the reforging of Polish Trotskyism. A Polish proletarian political revolution must be extended to the USSR and the rest of the Soviet bloc or it will be crushed. But Polish workers cannot appeal to their Soviet class brothers, who lost 20 million people fighting the Nazis in World War II (600,000 of them in Poland), unless they assure them that a workers Poland will defend the Soviet Union against imperialism. The Soviet people know that US imperialism's ambition is "rollback": the transformation of East Europe into hostile imperialist-allied states, extending NATO to the Soviet border as the prelude to capitalist restoration in the USSR itself. A Polish workers government must be a military bastion against NATO!

In his essay on "The Tragedy of the Polish Communist Party", Isaac Deutscher stressed as his main conclusion: "If the history of the Polish CP and of Poland at large proves anything at all, it proves how indestructible is the link between the Polish and Russian revolutions." Today it is necessary to revive the tradition of Lenin and Luxemburg, of revolutionary unity of the Polish and Russian proletariat. Today this must be directed against the Stalinist bureaucracies, in defense of the collectivized economies and proletarian state power against imperialism. That tradition and program will be carried forward by a Polish Trotskyist vanguard, section of a reborn Fourth International. Now is the time to lay the roots of a Trotskyist vanguard in Poland.

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 298, 5 February 1982

SWP...

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massive anti-communist mobilisations in the name of "democracy". And although they later tried to cover it up, they maintained a pro-imperialist neutrality in face of the 1975-76 South African imperialist invasion against the MPLA and Cuban troops in Angola.

The SWP's siding with imperialist reaction over Poland is no aberration. Nor is its portrayal of Solidarnosc — the "union" that wanted to turn Poland's economy over to the IMF, the international bankers cartel that starved Chile — as "socialist" simple dishonesty, though there's plenty of that. Support for classless "democracy" has always been a cardinal principle for these social democrats. Under this banner the SWP has shamelessly championed every anti-Soviet dissident to emerge within the USSR, from Tsar-lover Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov, who refused to comment on the bloody 1973 Pinochet coup in Chile on the grounds that it was "too far away", to Anatoly Shcharansky who tried to hand over Soviet defence secrets to the CIA.

Now the SWP baits anyone who has qualms about Solidarnosc, notably elements in the Victorian ALP Socialist Left, as being under the "influence of Stalinism", dismissing the clerical-nationalism of Solidarnosc with the banality that 10 million Polish workers can't be wrong. SWP leader Allen Myers told one Spartacist supporter that the SL represented the "right wing of Stalinism"! But it is the SWP which presents the alternatives in Poland as either accommodation to the Stalinist bureaucracy or accommodation to "democratic" imperialism. Naturally, the SWP has opted to be the "left" tail of the latter.

In the world view of the SWP one must believe that there is a conspiracy over Poland, involving not only Ronald Reagan and the Kremlin and Warsaw Stalinists, but Castro and tiny Grenada's New Jewel Movement, which also came out in support of the crackdown. In fact there is an unholy alliance over Poland, and the SWP, CPA, IS and *Socialist Fight* et al are part of it... along with Ronald Reagan, Fraser, the Pope, Murdoch's *Australian* and ultrarightist emigres. You've made your bed, SWP. Now sleep in it! ■

Socialist Left...

Continued from page eight

turned by some clique of union bureaucrats. But as the stolidly respectable *Age* noted (28 January) of the Socialist Left "it is sensitive to the reality that any brutal use of this influence [in the branches over MP's selections] would disrupt the party". That is, the Socialist Left has promised not to rock the boat by dumping right wing MPs or trying to impose policy on them in emulation of the Bennites in the British Labour Party. The same *Age* piece concludes: "At its worst it is the party's embarrassing ratbag fringe; at its best, it is an important part of labour's traditional conscience."

Quite right. The Socialist Left is part of a division of labour in the pro-capitalist ALP. The right wing runs the government and implements what the bourgeoisie wants while the left wing has the task of selling its betrayals to Labor's working-class base and heading off militant struggle against them. The relatively "left" face of the Socialist Left is a product of its history and the dominance of the "left" in the Victorian trade-union bureaucracy. Its reputation for militancy in the unions is undeserved, a reflection of Victoria's more militant labour movement stemming from the massive 1969 strike action against the penal powers that followed the jailing of Tramways union official Clarrie O'Shea.

But the Socialist Left has the same fear of class struggle and reverence for arbitration, parliament and the other props of bourgeois rule as the rest of the labour bureaucracy. For years Socialist Left-led

unions banned the construction of the Newport power station on environmental grounds, only to climb down abjectly when the Liberals' Essential Services Act made the bans illegal and scabs were brought in. The two faces of "left" Laborism were sharply seen in the defeat of last year's militant strike at the Ford Broadmeadows plant. On the one hand the Victorian ALP gave its platonic support, on the other its union bureaucrats isolated and betrayed the strike, while at the same time mobilising thousands of workers from the Ford Geelong plant to march for protectionism.

The ALP wants a repeat performance of the NSW Wran government to further demonstrate that it can implement anti-working class austerity policies more effectively than the capitalists' own parties. In last year's NSW state elections the Spartacist League said "No vote to Labor" after six years of capitalist austerity by the Wran Labor government. But with 27 years of Tory government in Victoria and widespread hatred for Fraser's union-busting federal government, there are real illusions and expectations in the working class that the Socialist Left-run Victorian ALP will govern in its interests, illusions being actively fostered by the trade-union bureaucracy with its "don't strike, wait for a Labor government" line. We thus give critical support to Labor in these elections to draw the class line against the openly capitalist parties and to facilitate our political struggle against Laborite reformism, giving the Socialist Left in particular the opportunity to demonstrate its treachery in office.

The basis for this is already being laid with Cain's approaches to the LaTrobe Valley unions for a no-strike deal, paralleling the national 38-hour week/no-strike agreement in the metal industry and the AMWSU's "social wage" compact with ALP leader Hayden. Having installed Cain in the leadership, the Socialist Left will be fully responsible for his austerity policies. Already it is promising that "Labor's connection with its trade union base... will lead to greater understanding between government and unions; and hence a decline in industrial disputation" (*Socialist Objective*, no 3). Moreover, the Socialist Left's nationalist isolationism and bourgeois pacifism (ie opposition to US bases) is likely to come into conflict with the federal ALP's aggressive support to the anti-Soviet war drive, Fraser's military budget, US bases, etc, especially if the federal ALP wins in 1983.

Real victories for the working class are won in the streets, the factories and on the picket lines, not as an outcome of elections. But the electoral arena is still seen by the overwhelming bulk of the working class as the pinnacle of politics. Our use of critical electoral support, but one tactic in the Marxist arsenal, is designed as a weapon to speed the destruction of these illusions and to break Labor's hold of the working class. Not so with fake-Trotskyists like the Socialist Workers Party and the tiny group around Paul White's *Socialist Fight* whose approach to Labor is sometimes "critical", but always loyal. In advising the careerist ALP politicians on how to better put their confidence trick over the workers, prescribing "socialist policies" and "mass movements" as a pressure mechanism, they say nothing that the Socialist Left doesn't already say itself.

The reformist left presents electoral victories for the ALP as the highest expression of working class power. To the contrary. It is in the struggle against the ALP, with its nationalist populism, white racism and commitment to capitalist rule, austerity, strikebreaking and war, that a revolutionary party with a program for soviet power, a workers government, will be forged.

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El Salvador

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took place in early December, it was not until late January that the grisly atrocity was confirmed by American reporters. Then came the news that an FMLN commando squad (perhaps with the aid of disaffected junta troops) had just blown up virtually the entire Salvadoran air force in a spectacular raid on the Ilopango air base.

One day later Reagan, provoking an intense liberal outcry, certified to Congress that the Salvadoran killer junta was "making progress" on human rights and proceeded to triple the amount of military aid slated for El Salvador for the coming year and to almost double the amount of economic assistance. Under the guise of "replacing" the Huey helicopters destroyed on the 27th, the administration authorised sending not only more choppers but fighter-bombers, troop transports and spotter planes as well.

For there is no doubt that US-backed forces in El Salvador are losing on the battlefields. The territory controlled by the FMLN continues to expand. The junta's troops control only the ground they stand on. And increasingly, they are standing still, protecting major cities, power transmitters, dams and other targets while the left-wing guerrillas roam at will.

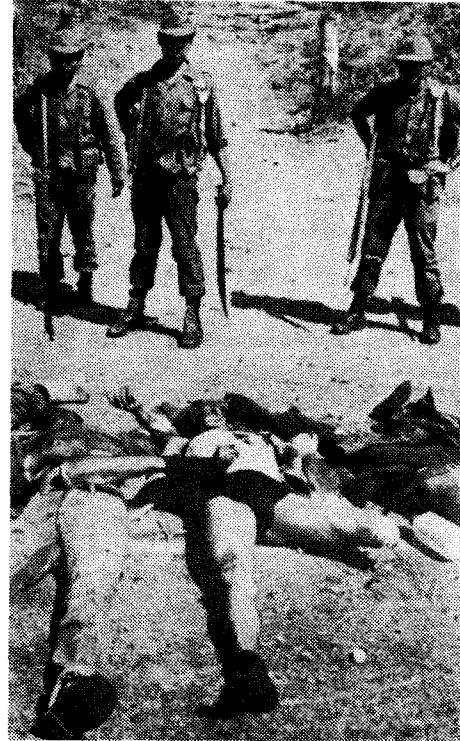
Political Solution?

Anyone who believed Haig's tales of Cuban-armed terrorists run amok in El Salvador would be surprised to find that the Salvadoran opposition coalition, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), a popular front uniting left-wing guerrillas with small bourgeois liberal and petty-bourgeois parties, does not call for a "socialist" government. In fact the FDR and its FMLN guerrilla component say they do not want to win a military victory over the junta. Instead they appeal for negotiations leading to a "political solution" and the formation of a broad "democratic" government in which the FMLN would be integrated into a purged capitalist army.

The leader of the most left-wing of the FMLN's five factions, Salvador Cayetano Carpio of the FPL (People's Liberation Forces), recently demonstrated his sweet reasonableness and willingness to "compromise" in an article printed by

the *New York Times* (9 February). Carpio indicated that "... there is room [in a future government] for everybody's contribution, from large businessmen to small farmers and merchants — for anyone who supports the independent development of the country, opposes fascism, and wants democracy. We don't believe that this broad program has anything to do with Socialism or a

NACLA Report



Mutilated victims of junta butchers

Socialist government." It certainly doesn't.

This craven appeal to imperialist opinion was supplemented by an open letter to Reagan signed by Carpio and his fellow FMLN commanders on January 18. "The Salvadoran people," they wrote, "which so greatly admire the progressive and democratic vocation of the United States, cannot understand why you are determined to support a genocidal government". "What we have said," they continued, "leads us to respectfully request that you change your policy toward El Salvador."

These words could only be written by people who never expect them to get back to Central America, which has suffered US aggression 40 times in the past 126 years. And this is not just some "clever" ploy to fool the gullible imperialists. The FDR-FMLN leaders are willing to pay far more than lip service to their pledge to preserve private property, the army

officer corps and ties to the "progressive and democratic" US of A. They are prepared to give away at the bargaining table what the blood of the Salvadoran workers and peasants has been shed to win.

Just what this commitment to a "political solution" really means was made clear by the FDR's representative in Washington, Ruben Zamora. Zamora, who heads a breakaway faction of Duarte's Christian Democrats, was formerly a professor at the Jesuit university in San Salvador. Now he prowls the halls of Congress on behalf of the FDR, presenting the image of a moderate politician forced by unhappy circumstance to cohabit with unsavory Marxist elements. As *Newsweek* (15 February) put it, his pitch is that "a negotiated settlement offers the only way of keeping the guerrillas from winning the war in El Salvador outright".

Join us, he bids Duarte, and stay in power: "If the left achieves a military victory, the CD [Christian Democratic party] is out, a party defeated in war." But in a negotiated settlement, he implies, there is room for this criminal consort of the junta colonels. As his horrible example of the dangers of a leftist military triumph, Zamora holds up Nicaragua:

"For me [the example of Nicaragua] is one reason for supporting a political settlement... A military victory of [the rebels] will find the U.S. completely hostile. We would have an immediate counter-revolution in Guatemala even if the U.S. would come to accept it. And the people in the business community and the professions would get out. Under these circumstances, what are the chances of pluralism?"

— *Newsweek* (15 February)

Military Victory and Workers Revolution

This is one point on which Marxist revolutionaries and FDR popular-front politicians can agree. Military victory for the leftist insurgents would make "pluralism", ie, continued capitalist rule, difficult to preserve. For this reason Zamora, who has everything to lose if the FMLN wins on the battlefield, is the perfect advocate of a "political solution". For this reason the Spartacist League is the strongest advocate of a military victory. The Salvadoran civil war, despite the FDR's attempts to portray it as a struggle for self-determination and capitalist "democracy", grows out of the irreconcilable class antagonisms between

the masses of impoverished Salvadoran workers and poor peasants and the handful of capitalist landlords and their army. The defeat of the junta's armed forces would quickly pose the possibility of overturning capitalist rule. It would almost inevitably regionalise the conflict, drawing in the Guatemalan and Honduran dictatorships and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. The US would frantically try to stop the establishment of a "new Cuba" in Central America.

The CISCAC organisers of the reformist El Salvador rallies in this country, centrally the fake-Trotskyist SWP and "third camp" IS, worked hard during last June's "Days of Action" to keep out communist politics for fear of antagonising their allies, the priests, ALP dignitaries and sundry Latin American Stalinists. Where last year they fought for the classless "Hands Off El Salvador" against the Spartacist-organised Anti-Imperialist Contingent's call for military victory to the leftist insurgents, this year the featured slogan is "No More Vietnams". But Vietnam was a victory over imperialism and its puppets! Not because the Vietnamese Stalinists were able to engage in negotiations with Henry Kissinger, but because the negotiations led to nothing. Instead of getting a "political solution", the North Vietnamese army took Saigon and expropriated the South Vietnamese capitalists. Despite the Stalinist deformation of the Vietnamese workers state, that victory was a tremendous blow against US imperialism and a tremendous triumph for the world working class.

Frustrated over Poland in its anti-Soviet war drive, the US is already turning the heat up in the Caribbean. "Contingency plans" for a naval blockade between Cuba and Nicaragua are ready; the *gusano* and *somocista* exiles are training at Camp Cuba-Nicaragua near Miami while a counterrevolutionary invasion force is assembled in Honduras, making murderous border raids into Sandinista Nicaragua. This is no localized conflict that could be amicably settled if only Uncle Sam would just go away, as the reformists pretend. Today the battle line of the Cold War runs through Central America. Military victory to leftist insurgents in El Salvador! For workers revolution! Defence of Cuba and the USSR begins in Central America!

— Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* nos 298 and 299, 5 and 19 February 1982

SPA...

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Catholic Church and its land-owning peasant base, and mortgaging Poland's economy to the Western banks. The threat of counterrevolution in Poland and the imperialist war drive that stands behind it sharply bring home that the Trotskyist program of proletarian political revolution against the parasitic bureaucracy is fundamental to defence and extension of the revolutionary gains in the USSR and Eastern Europe. The Stalinists can only answer with empty talk of "problems of building socialism", ie, lawyering for the hated and discredited bureaucracy. Operationally they just hope to lie low.

Back in 1980 Symon and Clancy scurried into a "unity agreement" with the CPA only months after the CPA had joined the imperialist hysteria against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Now over Poland the SPA is first of all concerned to reassure its anti-Soviet allies of its desire for continuing "unity". Following the NSW Labor Council debate on Poland where the CPA trade-union supporters' pro-Solidarity line put them in the anti-communist right-wing camp against the SPA, a grovelling unity-mongering letter appeared in the CPA's *Tribune* (10 February) from the SPA's Pat Gorman. Gorman, editor of the miners union journal and part of the Clancy faction, complained that "ill-conceived remarks" by CPAers undermined the SPA's "credibility" and dismissed the

CPA's pro-imperialist line on Poland as "political and ideological differences" which "we should recognise and respect"!

Only Trotskyism can defend the gains of October

Such cowardly evasion in the face of anti-Soviet hostility is not limited to the SPA's trade unionists. The dispute has also spilled over into how much to accommodate the anti-Sovietism of the social democrats and bourgeois liberals with whom the SPA seeks to bloc in the "peace movement". One letter to the *Socialist* (23 September 1981) warned that "the temptation to enter into a wordy defence of the Soviet Union and its peace moves can defeat the cause of peace as well as waste time". Here again the Stalinists reap the harvest of their own opportunism as their "peace activists" draw the conclusion that any mention of the Soviet Union gets in the way of better pressuring the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Any aggressive class defence of the Soviet Union is anathema to Stalinism which seeks a "peace front" with a section of the bourgeoisie based on jingoist appeals to Australian nationalism and the criminal pursuit of "peaceful co-existence". When the Spartacist League answered "Hail Red Army!" over Afghanistan, when we raised defence of the Soviet Union and Vietnam as central slogans during the pacifist anti-Sinai force and anti-nuke protests, when we say that defence of Cuba and the USSR begins in Central America, the Stalinists

shout "provocation" in chorus with anti-Soviet social democrats.

So far fealty to Moscow has not figured openly in the SPA's still-cold internal split, nor is Moscow's attitude at all clear. Moreover, both wings include long-standing Stalinist cadre with figures like Freda Brown in the "opposition", suggesting a whole series of competing alliances, blocs and counter blocs. But no Stalinist party can long tolerate a factional opposition that works openly against it with dominant forces in the trade-union bureaucracy. If the SPA splits along the present lines of factional division, losing key union strongholds, it

will be reduced to little more than an Australia-USSR friendship society.

Those who are looking for communist answers to the questions thrown up by Poland, by the anti-Soviet war drive, and the past period of factional war within the SPA will not find them in either wing of the SPA, both of which are committed to class collaboration at home and abroad. Only the Trotskyists of the Spartacist League understand that defence of the gains of October begins in unrelenting class struggle against "our own" bourgeoisie and its labour lieutenants. This is what Marxism-Leninism is all about. ■

CLASS SERIES Melbourne University

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Readings available from Spartacist Club bookstall outside Fisher Library
Wednesdays and Thursdays.
For more information phone 264-8195.



For Workers Revolution! Defend Cuba, USSR!

El Salvador Leftists Must Win the War!



Salvadoran rebels on the offensive.

A series of military successes for El Salvador's leftist rebels has shaken the bloody US-backed military junta in that tiny Central American country, and prompted US Secretary of State Alexander Haig to threaten "whatever is necessary" — including US troops — to stop the guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). By turning the tide of the Salvadoran civil war in their favor, the guerrillas have put a kink in Haig and Reagan's plans to "draw the line" against Communism in Central America. So now Washington is escalating military aid to the blood-thirsty Salvadoran colonels, directly

aiding Somozaist exile terrorists based in Honduras and stepping up preparations for naval action in the Caribbean aimed at Cuba.

El Salvador is the cockpit of Cold War II. Burning with frustration at their inability to provoke an anti-Soviet uprising in Poland, the Reaganites are desperate to claim a victory over "international Communism". Liberals and reformists talk about a "political solution" in El Salvador. But neither the US imperialists nor their junta puppets, who have butchered more than 30,000 Salvadoran workers and peasants in the past two years, are about to negotiate anything.

The latest horrific evidence of this was yet another savage massacre by the junta in the name of defending the "free world" against Communism. A sweep through the rural province of Morazan by an elite US-trained brigade left a thousand corpses strewn along the mountain trails and piled in the village chapels, victims of the blood-crazed military butchers.

A survivor told the *Washington Post's* Alma Guillermoprieto what happened,

"Around noon they began with the women. First they picked out the young girls and took them away to the hills. Then they picked out the old women and took

them to Israel Marquez' house on the square. We heard the shots there. Then they started with us in groups. When my turn came ... I slipped behind a tree and climbed up. I saw the lieutenant then. He was personally machine-gunning people ...

"A soldier said 'Lieutenant somebody here says he won't kill children'. 'Who's the sonofabitch who said that?' the lieutenant answered. 'I am going to kill him'."

— *Washington Post*, 27 January

In its scope and calculated barbarity the Morazan massacre screamed "My Lai" from the mass graves. Although it

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Victorian State Elections —

Socialist Left — Mark of Cain

Opinion polls show that the ALP could win power for the first time in 27 years in the upcoming Victorian state election on April 3. Its leader Mr John Cain, described by the *Melbourne Age* (12 February) as a man of "impeccable Right-wing credentials", is the son of the last Labor premier whose government was a casualty of the 1955 ALP split. The Liberals who have run the state since then are on the skids. With the economy sliding downhill, and the Liberals plagued by incompetence, internal squabbles and scandal, sections of the bourgeoisie are seriously considering a change.

If parliamentary elections for Marxists are merely a window dressing concealing the real power in capitalist society and the contest only a pale reflection of the

class struggle, then this is doubly true for elections to state parliaments with their limited powers and parochial concerns. And this is true with these elections except for two aspects. Firstly it is a curtain raiser for next year's federal election. Secondly, the Victorian Socialist Left, the long-time bane of respectable Laborism, effectively runs the state branch of the ALP in alliance with the small right-wing Independent faction headed by Cain. Cain owes his position to the Socialist Left's decision last September to dump former colourless leader Frank Wilkes when it was clear he was an electoral liability.

Fraser immediately jumped into the election fray, trying to whip up the old Socialist Left "red bogey" and paint Cain as a "prisoner of the left". But with the

smell of the state treasury benches in the air the "realist" wing of the Socialist Left around state secretary Bob Hogg and Kevin Hardiman have been heavily pushing a responsible image, promising to use their base in the union bureaucracy to police austerity policies for capitalism.

The bourgeoisie still don't trust the Socialist Left though. A grouping that encompasses elements who support the Russians in Afghanistan, that makes waves about American bases, or who publish the names of ASIO agents, as did Joan Coxedge, might endanger "national security" if let loose in government departments. Not to speak of idiosyncratic types like Bill Hartley who used to have links with Qaddafi, and still does with the Iraqi regime. Australia's powerful allies can get very upset, as Gough Whitlam

found out when he got too nosy over sensitive matters like the CIA's Pine Gap spy base in 1975. The bourgeoisie still remembers that it was Socialist Left backing that substantially swelled the anti-Vietnam protests in Victoria including significant trade-union protest strikes.

The ruling class is also suspicious that the Socialist Left might interfere with the autonomy of the parliamentary party and try and subordinate it to control by the party machine. They prefer a Labor cabinet free of any accountability to its working class base and more directly open to their own influence. They did not like the Wilkes ouster for the reason that should they decide to back an ALP led by Cain they do not want their decision over-

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