

SPARTACIST



No 24

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15p

BRITAIN

No to import controls - class war, not trade war!

Depression Britain

July was a month for statistically recorded misery and gloom headlines. Unemployment up. Vacancies down (for the thirteenth successive month). A record jobless total bound to hit two million by year's end. But the shocked posture assumed by bourgeois press and politicians alike was fake. They all knew it was coming and they know it's going to get worse. On top of the massive social service cuts and chronic inflation, for those on the dole queues it will mean much more than squalor. As the long, grinding recession deepens, so will social tension, violence and political crisis.

But don't despair. Margaret Thatcher says everything's going to plan and her policies are 'just beginning to show results'. No job? Well, cheer up in the thought that you're helping to 'squeeze inflation out of the economy'. But just who's getting squeezed? Decrepit British capitalism, which has been decomposing over decades, can now offer millions nothing more than a life on welfare. And as in the thirties the unemployment threat will hang over those 'lucky' enough to work. That means lousy pay, rotten work conditions, uncertainty and fear for masses of British proletarians, while fascism and war -- the end products of capitalist decay -- lurk around the corner. Only the workers can stop it all!

Bourgeois politicians have no solution to this mess, except to suck a little bit more out of the workers and hope they do nothing in response. The Iron Lady doesn't even pretend much different -- she *wants* mass unemployment as 'shock treatment' for the economy. So the Tories will let capitalist 'market forces' do their worst -- save a little 'state intervention' (like the Prior Bill) to hamstring union resistance. Callaghan, in contrast, would prefer to revive the politics of his 'Social Contract' with the TUC, which collapsed in the 1978-79 'winter of discontent'. And in place of the needed bread, they offer the sideshow of Parliament.

When the June record jobless figures appeared left-talking MP Dennis Skinner (the 'Beast of Bolsover' to the Tory press) actually had to leave the chamber for defying the Speaker. And things blew up in early July when James Prior, Employment (sic) Secretary, told a Select Committee of his idea for 'alleviating the effect of unemployment' by putting jobless kids into slave-labour 'voluntary work'. But the entrenched Tory majority has nothing to fear from the Labour fakery and their doomed-to-defeat pro forma censure motions. In fact, during the uproar following July's figures Thatcher said it all by quoting the words of Callaghan on the subject of mass unemployment when he was prime minister in January 1977: 'When we are trying to squeeze inflation out of the economy that is unfortunately one of the consequences we must face.'

And saddled with a treacherous and spineless
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Consett BSC workers march against closures, London, July 9: bureaucrats betrayed fight for jobs, now blame it on foreign workers

Labour fiddles

After less than a year and a half this Tory government is already the most hated in living memory. Yet unlike in the Heath years of the early seventies, working-class enthusiasm for a new Labour government is visibly lacking. Labour in opposition, 'left' or right, rightly seems no better than it was in office -- a strike-breakers' government. And since its defeat of May 1979 Labour has been embroiled in bitter internal factional warfare, with the right-wing parliamentary leadership set against the Bennite 'left' majority of the National Executive Committee. The provocative late July open letter from the Shirley Williams/David Owen/William Rodgers right-wing 'Gang of Three' heightened the tensions once again. The Gang, stating that they were 'proud to be members of the last Labour government', threatened to split if the Bennite forces emerge victorious at the October party conference.

Benn & Co in turn think that the last government and the current leadership are just too discredited. With Callaghan warning the NEC that 'enough is enough' and his trade union allies like Terry Duffy threatening to stop financing the (already nearly empty) NEC-controlled treasury, the party could be set for a showdown on the sands of not-so-sunny Blackpool this autumn.

Big NATO vs little England?

The Tory gutter press tries to paint Tony Benn as a flaming red Bolshevik. But does the 'left' really offer a positive alternative to the craven pro-capitalist, anti-working-class

policies of Callaghan/Healey, Williams & Co? Most 'far left' organisations, always eager for something to tail, have predictably leapt forward to answer with a resounding 'Yes!' To do this they must ignore or dismiss the Benn/NEC role as loyal 'left' handmaidens for the last reactionary government, their support for the wage-slashing Social Contract and the Lib-Lab pact. And they must ignore or deny the bankruptcy of their current political posture.

Take the Cruise missile question. William Rodgers, Shadow Defence spokesman, made a big to-do about the NEC's declared opposition to the deployment of Cruise missiles in Britain and its toying with unilateral disarmament. But the pacifist pipedreams of the 'lefts' are explicitly premised on support for the imperialist anti-Soviet NATO cabal. Moreover, the entire NEC rushed to join the chorus of imperialist condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan last winter.

The opposition of the 'lefts' to the EEC flows from chauvinism, not from the EEC's role as an economic adjunct to NATO. And so too their call for import controls and their reveries of 'planning agreements' with capitalist monopolies. Indeed for all their 'left' facade, important aspects of the NEC programme are potentially even more dangerous for the working class than the politics of the Labour right. In their 'open letter', the Williams/Owen/Rodgers Gang was easily able to make a hypocritical principled-sounding attack on the NEC policy as 'nationalist, even chauvinist, fostering the belief that Britain, by itself, can solve its
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**Korea and the
Cliff group ... p6**

(Continued from page 1)

19 March 1980

Dear Spartacist,

I am not a 'sympathizer' (i.e. a potential member); I am, however, a subscriber to your paper and a student of your politics (which I respect, even though I don't agree with them!). I am writing to you because I came across a report in the 'Jewish Chronicle' (14 March) of a meeting at the LSE addressed by the Soviet Ambassador at which vocal opposition was expressed to various aspects of Soviet policy (mainly, it would appear, the invasion of Afghanistan and the treatment of Soviet Jewry). According to the 'J.C.' report, a girl from the SL (I presume SL/B) was selling the 'Shcharansky' copy of *Workers Vanguard* outside the meeting.

Now Shcharansky may well have been 'as guilty as hell'; I don't know, but that is not the issue. There would have been nothing wrong with selling that issue of *WV* if you had also sold/distributed other material indicating recognition of/opposition to the ethnic oppression of the Soviet Jews by the ruling bureaucracy (apart from anything else, I should not need to refer you to your own past positions! -- or to the clear distinction always made by Trotskyism between defence of the Soviet Union and rapprochement with the Stalinist bureaucracy). If the 'J.C.' report was accurate, then you merely provided a 'Trotskyist' cover for the hatchetman from the Kremlin (by *collapsing* the issue of Soviet Jewry into the Shcharansky trial). You can say what you like about the Zionist campaign on this question (and I'm sure I would go along with most of it), but you will not do anything to weaken it by failing to acknowledge the *reality* on which it is based (i.e. the Zionists *exploit* the issue *but do not invent it*). I think it was Lenin who said that 'only the truth is revolutionary'.

Anyway, I'd be interested in any comments you might like to make about what I've written.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Adler

Spartacist Britain replies: Our first comment would be to note that a Zionist rag like the *Jewish Chronicle* is hardly the place we would start for an unbiased account of the Trotskyist stand on the Soviet Union. The *Chronicle* article in question (which appears right above a piece denouncing the sale of arms to the PLO which 'could be used not only against Israel but against Britain and other civilised [!] countries') is a typical piece of enlightened Zionist propaganda. After describing the blissful unity of Zionists, 'Third World students' and bourgeois journalists 'Competing for Freedom' outside a meeting for a Kremlin emissary, it concludes with a reference to the only discordant note in the prevalent anti-Soviet mood:

'Nevertheless, a girl from the Spartacist League which, she said, was a Trotskyist movement, was determinedly selling issues of the "Workers Vanguard" with a front-page story headlined: "Shcharansky is as guilty as hell! [sic]" The story claimed that the CIA had admitted that Mr Shcharansky was one of their agents, and that he was "guilty of a crime against the world proletariat." It also labelled Gush Emunim as "ultra-Right fascistic."'

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Monthly newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the international Spartacist tendency

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The account is accurate as far as it goes, though it fails to mention that our comrades were also selling articles headlined 'Hail Red Army in Afghanistan' and 'We are the party of the Russian Revolution' and carrying placards which included 'Defend the Soviet Union' and 'For political revolution in the USSR'. But obviously, the particular literature our comrades happened to be selling, in and of itself, is not the issue.

What is of issue, much as Adler denies it, is precisely the question of Shcharansky's guilt and, more broadly, the defence of the Soviet Union against an escalating imperialist offensive, aimed not at ending Stalinist repression, but at restoring capitalist property relations. For the Zionists and the rest of this anti-Soviet rabble, as well as their 'socialist' help-mates ranging from Eurocommunists to fake-Trotskyists, the fact that Shcharansky revealed secret Soviet military establishments to Western governments is at best secondary, if not highly commendable. For Trotskyists, the enormity of Stalinist crimes against Jews and other ethnic and national minorities, genuine dissidents and socialist oppositionists in no way excuses or condones acts which threaten the security of the Soviet workers state. Indeed, as the Shcharansky article (*Workers Vanguard* no 212, 28 July 1978) noted, 'For the Kremlin bureaucracy his case was a godsend, enabling them to make the amalgam they have always sought to assert: dissidents are traitors and spies.'

The Stalinist bureaucracy's embrace of anti-Semitism and Great Russian chauvinism is one of the more grotesque measures of the reactionary character of this caste which sits atop the progressive social system established through the October Revolution. As part of our perspective for workers political revolution to restore the genuine soviet democracy of Lenin and Trotsky, as we said in the Shcharansky piece, 'against the Kremlin's crushing censorship we defend the freedom of speech for all whose political activity is not aimed at overthrowing the dictatorship of the proletariat' (eg engaging in active counterrevolutionary intrigues or providing military assistance to the imperialists). Thus we also defend the right of emigration for Soviet Jews, indeed all Soviet citizens, insofar as it does not threaten the state or collectivised economy (as could, for example, a mass out-migration of scientists or skilled workers). But this has nothing in common with the Zionists who were bellowing for an anti-Soviet boycott of the Moscow Olympics long before Afghanistan hit the headlines. These consummate hypocrites want to 'free Soviet Jewry' only to embarrass the Soviet state and to provide fodder for the Zionist garrison state's revanchist aims.

So, it is not that we have failed to acknowledge the reality of Stalinist repression, whose target first and foremost has been the Trotskyists, but the rest of the left which has failed to take a forthright stance in defence of the social gains established by the Bolshevik Revolution. The Soviet incursion into Afghanistan -- pitting the Red Army against feudalist mullahs fighting for the veil and the brideprice -- has provided the pretext for a wave of virulent anti-Sovietism.

Today the Russian Question is posed point blank; and, not surprisingly, the petty-bourgeois radicals are scurrying for cover. The new mood is reflected in the latest issue of *Critique*, which has abruptly dropped its subtitle of seven years' standing, 'a journal of Soviet studies and socialist theory', as well as its formerly reasoned and academic tone, in favour of a rather shrill and hysterical Stalinophobia. And it is reflected as well in the increasingly widespread characterisation of the Spartacist tendency as 'Stalinophiles'; thus, Adler's charge that we may be providing a 'Trotskyist' cover for the hatchetmen from the Kremlin. No, our Trotskyist line has not changed. But if the defence of the Soviet Union occupies a greater emphasis in our propaganda in recent years, that too is a reflection -- a Marxist one -- of the world political situation.

As we wrote less than two years ago, in the midst of the US-Chinese collusion over the invasion of Vietnam, 'The Fourth International was founded on the principle of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union and we will not flinch in the decisive hour!' (*Workers Vanguard* no 226, 2 March 1979). And that is the issue today: the rest of the ostensibly Trotskyist left has flinched, indeed, furiously backpedalled, to avoid the slightest identification with the Soviet Union. We have not, and will not.

own problems and the world's'. How true. But the right wing's alternative is the 'internationalism' of NATO and more 'defence' spending.

And where was the 'left' during the key class battles of last winter? Did anyone do anything other than put in token appearances at a few steelworker rallies -- much less campaign for the urgently needed general strike? Of course not. Even the NEC proposals for 'party democracy' through constitutional reform are either minor and tokenistic or based on schemas which are almost as arbitrary as the status quo. Revolutionaries of course support real democratic reforms inside the Labour party, which open up possibilities for political debate and the fight for a revolutionary alternative. In particular, we support an end to all bans and proscriptions against left-wing tendencies. But the idea of changing the mangy Labour leopard's reformist spots through 'democratisation' is a ludicrous sham.

The 'gains of Brighton'

Yet not only are most so-called revolutionaries tagging along behind Benn, they are increasingly playing along with the illusion that the Labour Party can be reformed to meet the interests of the working class. The rightward-rushing Workers Action (WA) tendency and its Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory have lately been speculating openly about the possibility of a transition to working class rule via a left Labour government (dubbed by WA a 'workers government') presided over by a Labour Party which has been transformed into 'a real instrument of the working class' (*Workers Action*, 26 April 1980). They ludicrously claim that the constitutional reforms for reselection of MPs passed at Brighton last year were 'the most important political breakthrough by the labour movement for decades [!]' and 'big steps towards repossessing [!] the PLP'. (Since when did the working class ever 'possess' the Labour parliamentarians?!) Happily ensconced in the reformist universe of constituency Labour Party politics, the WA tendency has now pulled together a formal alliance with the Bennites and sundry others in a new 'Rank and File Mobilising Committee'. Their stirring slogan is 'Defend and Extend the Gains of Brighton!'

Only a couple of steps behind them comes the Workers Socialist League. After years of sowing illusions in the Bennite forces with their 'make the lefts fight' slogan, the WSL has now gone one further with a call for 'a socialist leadership of the Labour Party' (leaflet to Labour special conference, May 31). Supporters of the WSL paper *Socialist Press* are now busy fighting for such a leadership alongside the mainstream 'lefts' as Labour local councillors up and down the country.

And the International Marxist Group sees in Benn & Co 'the soul of the party', tells them to 'give Jim the boot', and advises sagely that 'it is only by organising the left in the constituencies and the unions that it is possible to win'. But *Socialist Challenge* (12 June) feels compelled to inject a note of caution into this otherwise rosy picture:

'It is true that Benn is not the same as Callaghan, and a government with Bennite policies of reflation and planning agreements would bring many benefits to ordinary people. But we doubt [!] if it would be socialism.'

Doubt if it would be socialism? Trotsky used to describe the Labour leaders of his day, 'lefts' and rights, as 'self-satisfied pedants, drivelling eclectics, sentimental careerists and liveried footmen of the bourgeoisie'.

The 'left' boot of reformism

The Labour Party -- 'left' and all -- is and has been for decades one of the most important props to capitalist class rule in this country. Benn & Co are not of course the same as Callaghan/Healey; they are, to paraphrase Trotsky, the 'left' boot on the feet of reformism. They fit squarely into the long line of Labour left reformists, who mumble about 'socialism' when the party is in opposition, only to snap smartly to attention when it is a question of directing the realm on behalf of Her Majesty. Leading 'left' Eric Heffer explicitly acknowledged their antecedents in a recent *Times* (14 July) article:

The Labour left is heir to the Bevanite tradition, as well as to those earlier left-wingers such as George Lansbury, John

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Anti-Sovietism in action

SWP thugs assault Trotskyists

The leaflet reprinted below was distributed at the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) 'Marxism into the 80s' school two nights after the thug attack it describes. Despite protests from working-class organisations and activists covering a wide range of political views, including veterans of the Trotskyist movement (see statements, this page), the SWP has yet to either formally acknowledge or repudiate its despicable behaviour.

When a Spartacist League (SL) member asked whether the SWP condones such violence within the workers movement, SWP leader Duncan Hallas snapped: 'A. There was none. B. You're not in it.' Hallas' haste to write us out of the workers movement is a desperately absurd cover for the SWP's political cowardice. As for 'A', even the *Tribune* (25 July), in an account aimed at embarrassing the 'ultra-Left', reports 'some disturbing jostling'. Beyond this the SWP's own silence condemns it. As we wrote in a July 14 letter (as yet unanswered) to the SWP:

'You have not denied any of the facts. You have not repudiated the thuggery of your supporters. You have not responded to a petition condemning such practices which continues to gain wide support from organisations and prominent individuals in the labour movement. Rather, an SL delegation at "Marxism into the 80s" to distribute the petition and leaflet exposing your methods was met with further abuse and threats....

'The SWP cannot provide the slightest "justification" for its action. No evidence of "disruption" by the SL exists. At its own meetings and those of other organisations, the SL upholds the right of tendencies to debate freely. For this reason we oppose row-

diness and indisciplined behaviour, and support all efforts by the chair to ensure fair discussion within the norms of workers democracy....

'Already the past protestations of the SWP for workers democracy stand exposed as hypocrisy. But we will not stop fighting to ensure that the whole labour movement has the conditions of free and open debate necessary for the achievement of political clarity, free from bureaucratic intimidation and anti-communist thuggery. Stop your cowardly evasions. We insist on an answer!'

On the evening of Sunday, July 6, members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) violently assaulted members and supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) who were engaged in a peaceful protest picket outside an SWP-sponsored debate at North London Polytechnic. The SL picket was a protest against the SWP's blatantly political exclusion of the SL from the public debate between SWPer John Molyneux and Communist Party member Monty Johnstone, part of the 'Marxism into the 80s' school. Known SL supporters were denied entrance to the meeting even though they had purchased tickets. Not only did the SWP exclude any supporter of the SL it could identify, not only did it physically and threateningly eject from the meeting an SL supporter who on a point of order attempted to protest against the exclusion, but it also threw out those, like supporters of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, who raised a voice against this criminal attack on workers democracy. After the finish of the debate a number of SWPers approached the picket, tore placards out of the hands of SL supporters and ripped them up and began to kick and punch the SLers. One SWP member carrying a half-full pint of beer bellowed at an SL supporter, 'Fuck off or I'll smash this in your face.' Even as our comrades retreated down the road to avoid further violence and the possibility of police intervention, the SWP thugs followed them and continued their vicious attacks.

The reason for this thug attack and the physical exclusion which preceded it is quite clear. The SWP right now is not prepared to tolerate even the most elementary principles of workers democracy when it comes to Trotskyists, because it is in a political bloc with the most right-wing and rabidly anti-Soviet elements of Margaret Thatcher's Tory government.

Uniquely in the British left -- and internationally -- the Spartacist tendency has come down foursquare and openly in defence of the Soviet state and the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan against the mullahs, the bride price, the veil and illiteracy, against the open imperialists like Carter and Thatcher and against their social-democratic apologists like the Labour Party and the SWP. When we proudly proclaimed, 'Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!', the SWP joined the imperialists and snivelling social democrats to scream, 'Soviet troops out of Afghanistan!' Today the SWP has surpassed Thatcher herself. In his regular column in the *Daily Mirror*, leading SWP member Paul Foot has made it his business to condemn the Thatcher government for not being hard enough on the Soviets. Foot complains that British beef is being shipped to Russian troops in Kabul -- and his line has even been taken up by Tory MPs in the House of Commons. Foot's advice to the British bosses is echoed in the SWP's *Women's Voice*, which denounces Thatcher for 'signing treaties with Moscow to increase Anglo-Russian trade! Principles seem to stop short when it comes to boosting profits' (*Women's Voice*, June 1980). The SWP's line is: Don't let profits stand before anti-Sovietism! Starve the Russki bastards!

The hysterical quality of the SWP's exclusionism and thuggery simply matches the hysterical quality of Carter/Thatcher's anti-Soviet war drive, with which for all its social-pacifist pleadings against Cruise missiles, the SWP today finds itself in harmony. This is the naked



SWPer keeping out SLers from July 6 'public' meeting, shortly before thug attack

logic of the SWP's self-styled 'third campist' refusal to defend the Soviet degenerated workers state and the gains of the October Revolution against the imperialist warmongers: a blood pact with the bourgeoisie. It is no accident that they have singled out the Spartacist League. Trotskyists are today -- as we have always been -- the only consistent and intransigent defenders of the gains of October against imperialist war threats and against domestic counterrevolution. It is only on the basis of defence of the USSR that a principled fight can be waged for workers political revolution to overthrow the treacherous, detente-loving Kremlin bureaucracy -- to destroy their privileges, stolen from the results of the planned economy, and to restore the genuine Soviet democracy of Lenin's time.

It is their hysterically anti-Soviet line which today fuels SWP members to the point of brutal assault against the Trotskyists of the SL. Such thuggery and bureaucratic exclusionism is a threat to every leftist and indeed to every worker. Honest political debate is impossible in an atmosphere of threats and intimidation. On the contrary, such practices are an open invitation to the agents provocateurs of the bourgeois state and even the fascist scum who will exploit them to further disrupt and break up left-wing meetings. And it is an open threat to any worker who wants to stand with the Soviet Union against the anti-Soviet imperialist war hysteria.

Nor is it the first time the SWP has used such methods. Other political tendencies have got this kind of treatment in the past, and the SL has been excluded before from Birmingham SWP's 'public' meetings, and from supposedly open forums of the SWP's 'Real Steel News' front during the steel strike. But today, when the march of world political events demonstrates

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Letter to SWP by Communist Party, Independent Labour Party, Workers International League and Revolutionary Communist Party veterans:

21 July 1980

Comrades,

We were shocked to read in the Spartacist League press that the S.W.P. had used Stalinist tactics against supporters of the Spartacist League.

If the accounts and statements made by members of the Spartacist League and the Revolutionary Communist Tendency are accurate, then the membership of the S.W.P. should be reminded that the big battles between Stalinism and Trotskyism in which thousands of oppositionists were murdered, started on the single issue of 'workers democracy'.

It should be noted that there has been a marked deterioration in the public conduct of the left-wing organisations over the last five years. 'Forums' have been staged in order to prevent floor speakers. Debates, ironically with the Communist Party, have been rigged to exclude outside participation. Such methods could only be justified on the assumption that the groups involved in them have everything to teach and nothing to learn from the working class.

We would add that adopting such practices to silence political opponents however mistaken they may appear to be, can only be the first step towards a bureaucratic degeneration of which the W.R.P. and the C.P.G.B. are outstanding examples.

As workers who have spent a lifetime in the struggle for socialism, and have seen the havoc which a denial of free speech can make, we appeal to the S.W.P. membership and all other working class tendencies not to use the methods of Stalinism to defeat political opponents but the traditional way in the working class movement of open discussion and debate.

Fraternally,

Sam Bornstein, ex. I.L.P., W.I.L., R.C.P.

Ann Keen, ex. W.I.L., R.C.P.

Sam Levy, ex. W.I.L., R.C.P.

George Leslie, ex. R.C.P.

A. E. Atkinson, ex. C.P., W.I.L., R.C.P.

Labour Movement Protest Against Exclusion and Thuggery

The statement below is signed by organisations and individuals in the workers movement with various political standpoints, who are opposed to the squashing of political debate on the left by the Socialist Workers Party at its 'Marxism into the 80s' school. The SWP excluded known supporters or members of the Spartacist League (SL) from the school on July 6, physically ejecting SL and Revolutionary Communist Tendency supporters who tried to protest against this exclusion inside the school. Later on that evening SWP members violently assaulted an SL protest picket outside the school, kicking and punching SL comrades and ripping up a placard.

The SWP must be compelled to cease using such methods by the pressure of labour movement opinion. We appeal for further support for this statement. More information, including statements describing the exclusion and the attacks, is available from: Spartacist League, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE, telephone (01) 278 2232.

Spartacist League (British section of the international Spartacist tendency) 24 July 1980

We the undersigned support the principles of workers democracy which demand that all tendencies of the left and labour movement be allowed to participate in meetings and events advertised as 'public'. On the basis of reports which have come to our attention that supporters of the Spartacist League were physically excluded and subsequently violently attacked at the 'Marxism into the 80s' school, we are writing to the SWP members and to the other supporters of the Spartacist League and of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency protesting against these exclusions were also excluded, we register our outrage and condemnation.

Association of Kurdish Students Abroad (UK branch)
Association of Kurdish Students Abroad (International Relations)
Sam Bornstein
Susan Binley Convenor Feminist History Group
Jack Collins NUM Area Secretary Kam
Jeremy Corbyn Agent/Organiser, Hornsey Constituency Labour Party
Mike Davis Socialist Charter
Reg Groves
Martin Hart TGWU Shop Steward, BSC Stainless Works, Sheffield
Ron Heald Hackney Central Labour Party
Nicky Hinchey
Questionnaire Editorial Board, *New Left Review*, FI sympathiser
Ted Knight Leader of Lambeth Council, Lambeth Constituency Labour Party
Ken Livingston GLC Labour Councillor, Hampstead
S. Mairi North East Croydon Constituency Labour Party, Executive Committee
J. McNeill President, Essex University Students Union, Communist Party
Ian Olley TGWU Branch 1/37, Division No2 delegate
Pat Olley TGWU Branch 1/1208, Newham Labour Council
Janet Pickering Croydon NW Labour Party
Jon Pickering Executive Committee, Croydon NW Constituency Labour Party
R. Poole NUPE National Officer
Reg Race MP, Wood Green, Labour Party
Maurice Rea National Organiser, Tribune Group, Bristol City Councillor, FOC NATSOPA
Frank Richards Revolutionary Communist Tendency
Al Richardson
F.A. Ridley
Jon Rothchild
Majida Selman
Spartacist League/Britain
Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain
Keith R. Vaneas GLC Labour Candidate (Croydon North East), Islington Central CLP
Valerie Vaneas Islington Labour Councillor, Islington Central CLP
P. Williams NUPE, Labour Party
Tim Woodhead FOC, Social Work Today, NATSOPA Workers Forum
(Partial listing of signatories up to 24 July 1980)

*Signed in a personal capacity. Organisation and/or position listed for identification purposes only.

Workers Power:

The Russian question point blank

Since splitting from the Cliffite 'state capitalist' reformists five years ago, the Workers Power (WP) group has embarked on a leftward trajectory. It reached a nodal point last February when, in the face of the imperialist anti-Soviet offensive over Afghanistan, it decided to formally embrace a Trotskyist, defenceist stance on the Soviet Union. But the following month's 'Theses on Afghanistan' denounce 'cold war hysteria' against the USSR but only 'suspend the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet troops' because the Afghan 'working class and its allies are unable to take independent military action'. It is not surprising WP's break from a 'third camp' heritage is partial and incomplete. Thus WP in its leftward motion found itself on common ground with the fake-Trotskyist groups moving right in its condemnation of the Soviet invasion, refusing to recognise the possibility of a socially progressive role for the Red Army in Afghanistan.

This was reflected most clearly in an article

country's transformation along the lines of Soviet Central Asia or Mongolia. Such a social revolution, although imposed from without and bureaucratically deformed, would have an enormously liberating effect for the Afghan masses. That is why the international Spartacist tendency raised the slogan: Hail Red Army! Extend the social gains of October to the Afghan peoples!

More mullahs than workers

We are not unique in recognising the progressive role the Red Army can play in Afghanistan. Liberal journalist Jill Tweedie writes: 'It is unnecessary to subscribe to the minutest part of Soviet ideology to guess that if they occupied Afghanistan for any length of time, by influence or in reality, women would cease to be illiterate, poverty-stricken chattels, to be bought and sold, and

side with reaction against the Soviet Union, and it equally refuses to 'capitulate to Stalinism' by ascribing a potentially revolutionary role to the Soviet army in Afghanistan.

But it will not resolve that contradiction by looking for a 'revolutionary force' which does not exist. As even *Critique* editor Hillel Ticktin, a vitriolic opponent of the Soviet intervention, observes: 'There is no point in calling, as some have done, for uprisings of workers when there is no working class.' The United Nations *Statistical Yearbook* for 1978 records 35,000 people employed in manufacturing in a population of some 20 million, as against a parasitic caste of 250,000 mullahs. These few statistics reflect the limits to social change from within Afghan society, and the powerful social base for reactionary resistance to even the most moderate of bourgeois-democratic reforms. Even had it not moved with a bureaucratic commandism and arbitrariness which alienated many of its potential supporters, particularly among the rural poor, it is highly unlikely the bourgeois-nationalist PDPA regime would have succeeded in carrying out its programme of (for Afghanistan) ambitious democratic reforms without massive outside military aid.

Cuba and the Revolutionary Tendency

Why does Workers Power feel compelled to find a proletariat in Afghanistan for the Red Army to suppress? It is an axiom of Trotskyism that only the conscious proletariat under the leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard can create a revolutionary workers state and that Stalinism is the grave-digger of revolutions. To believe otherwise is to give programmatic content to a liquidationist impulse, and Workers Power shies away. But that is only the beginning of wisdom. The Stalinist bureaucracy balances between the proletariat and imperialism. In order to maintain its privileged Bonapartist position it will seek to crush any revolutionary proletarian challenge. But in Afghanistan there is not even a proletariat to speak of, much less one led by a revolutionary vanguard. And in the absence of such an organised proletarian alternative, Stalinists -- and other petty-bourgeois formations -- can and have overturned capitalist property relations in exceptional circumstances. To say as much is to concede nothing to Pabloite revisionism. 'The crucial qualitative distinction between a workers state and a deformed workers state', we noted in 'Genesis of Pabloism' (*Spartacist* no 21, Fall 1972), is 'demarcated in blood in the need for political revolution to open the road to socialist development and the extension of the revolution abroad' -- and that task is reserved uniquely for the conscious proletariat under Trotskyist leadership.

It is not surprising that Workers Power finds its analysis inadequate and contradictory in attempting to deal with this question. It was the post-war Stalinist expropriations in Eastern Europe which caused the extreme theoretical disorientation allowing Pablo's liquidationist programme to destroy the Fourth International. The International Committee (IC) maintained Trotskyist orthodoxy in the face of Pablo's revisionism on the necessity for a vanguard party, but their own theoretical understanding was highly inadequate.

In the wake of the Cuban Revolution the split between opportunism and a flawed orthodoxy was now recapitulated inside the IC. Here there was a social overturn without even the historical association of Stalinism. The US SWP hailed Castro as an 'unconscious Trotskyist' and Healy/Lambert clung to a sterile orthodoxy which denied even that capitalism had been overthrown because there was no party. US SWP theoretician Joseph Hansen sought to justify their liquidationist appetite towards Castro by arguing that this petty-bourgeois guerrilla movement with no relation to the proletariat had instituted a 'workers and farmers government', under which the bourgeois state was peacefully transformed into a workers state (a revision of the Leninist theory of the state methodologically replicated by Wohlforth's 'anti-revisionist' theory of 'structural assimilation').

One tendency was able to carry through the struggle begun in 1951 against Pablo's revisionism without falling prey to a wooden denial of



Havana rally: Castro's guerrilla force smashed bourgeois state

entitled 'Karmal's support crumbles' by WP leader Dave Hughes in the June *Workers Power*. Hailing Kabul anti-Soviet student demonstrations (whose aims were unknown) the month before, Hughes stressed their significance as pointing to the possibility of a potential third 'revolutionary force' mobilised against both the Red Army and the imperialist-backed feudal reactionaries. He then asserted:

'If a new period of black reaction and potential partition is to be avoided, it will not be as a result of the action of the SAF [Soviet Armed Forces].'

The implication here is that the Stalinist bureaucracy is incapable of carrying out a social revolution in Afghanistan (which would certainly preclude a 'new period of black reaction') and indeed, this possibility is effectively excluded from consideration in all WP's analysis on Afghanistan.

For Trotskyists, it is axiomatic that the Stalinist bureaucracy is counterrevolutionary -- in a world-historic sense. But it is a counter-revolutionary caste resting atop revolutionary property forms, capable of carrying out social-revolutionary measures in its own defence. And in Afghanistan today, that is a distinct -- and desirable -- possibility.

Of course the conservative bureaucrats in the Kremlin did not send 100,000 troops into Afghanistan to effect a social revolution, but simply to make secure an unstable, strategically-placed client state. However, with its intervention the Soviet army became the dominant power in Afghanistan, whose present fate will be decided in Moscow, not Kabul. And in the unlikely event the Kremlin succeeds in striking a deal with the imperialists and their feudalist allies allowing a Soviet withdrawal, that would be a counterrevolutionary crime against the Afghan peoples.

The more likely outcome, a prolonged Soviet occupation, would open the possibility of the

become at least as equal as their Uzbeki sisters.' (*Guardian*, 31 July)

Even the rapidly rightward-moving *Workers Action* (21 June), WP's former partner, is prepared to grant 'that the Russians (unlike Amin's Khalq regime) have ... the ability to consolidate a military victory by introducing revolutionary social reforms'. Workers Action, ever more securely ensconced in its Stalinophobic, Labourite niche, feels no compunction in taking a counterrevolutionary defeatist line on the Soviet incursion because it has all but written off the USSR as a workers state. Thus it blatantly flaunts Trotsky's statement that:

'Whenever we are confronted with the necessity of choosing between the defence of reactionary property forms through reactionary measures and the introduction of progressive property forms through bureaucratic measures, we do not at all place the two sides on the same plane, but choose the lesser evil.'

This is the method of Trotsky in *In Defence of Marxism* which WP seeks to emulate. Yet if Workers Power followed through the logic of its analysis, it would find itself closer to the 'method' of the Austrian IKL, which demands a Soviet troop withdrawal because it 'refuse[s] to accept the party of the Stalinist counter-revolution, which is not a "lesser evil" as against the counter-revolution of the mullahs and the landlords' (reprinted in *Workers Action*, 21 June). To its credit, WP shrinks from this openly reactionary position. Its programmatic impulse right now is superior to its analysis. Thus when Hughes intervened against 'troops out' advocates Tariq Ali and Chris Harman at a July 4 'debate', he did not capitulate to the pervasive anti-Sovietism, failing to so much as mention his third force perspective in his defence of the Soviet presence. WP is impaled on the horns of a contradiction -- it refuses to

Courting the 'third camp'

SWP spurns IMG

Readers of the 3 July *Socialist Challenge*, paper of the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group (IMG), caught the latest chapter in the 'Unrequited Love Story of the Decade'. Twenty-first century anthropologists may find it revealing for insights into the courtship customs of political opportunists. But for members of the IMG who always thought there was something more to Trotskyism than building one big happy party together with a bunch of unabashed Russia-haters, it must be rather distressing to see their leadership on its knees begging to get into bed with the 'state capitalist' Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Especially when the rejection is so humiliating.

An early IMG *billet doux* in 1978 was unceremoniously turned down as a 'sectarian abomination' for representing the SWP's politics as 'a syndicalist break from revolutionary Marxism, ie Trotskyism' (SWP *Bulletin*, December 1978). SWPer Chris Harman, father of the reluctant bride, explained that it looked too much like the IMG only wanted to get inside the SWP to fight for its politics (in their many factional hues). With the opportunities for big breakthroughs on the cheap looking increasingly meagre to the IMG, an even more flexible approach managed to scrape through with a narrow majority at last February's IMG conference (see 'IMG lurches towards Cliff', *Spartacist Britain* no 19, March 1980). The offending, albeit exceedingly limp, characterisation was apologetically withdrawn and the IMG 'launch[ed] a public campaign to unite the forces of the IMG with those of the SWP'.

The recent exchange, appropriately framed by a display of graphics depicting parallel headlines in recent issues of *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Worker*, represents the first, disappointing, fruits of that campaign. The display is tastefully designed to avoid anything which might be obtrusive to the Cliffite eye. Thus the various *Socialist Challenge* headlines calling for a (half-hearted) general strike during the steel strike are absent -- the SWP after all stubbornly refused to call for one even in the face of mass sentiment. And the most identical pair of headlines -- for Soviet troops out of Afghanistan -- is also conspicuously absent because the IMG's decision to back down from that *explicitly defeatist* position after a welter of denunciatory letters is a reminder of its still formal, if faint, lip service to Trotskyism.

But the IMG's determination to prevent even the most fundamental of formal programmatic considerations from standing in the way of 'unity' has simply allowed the SWP to feign 'principled' contempt. Dismissing it all as 'a waste of time', Harman lectures that the SWP's 'recipe for building a party rooted in the workplace' does not include the sort of perennial factionalising which has historically been a part of life in the centrist IMG. Indeed Harman makes it clear the 'recipe' calls for *no* serious inner-party struggle. Unchastened the IMG whines that, 'The mass party we need to build will contain differences far wider than those between us' and dredges up the pose of Lenin the unity monger

first contrived in the IMG's 'Party and Faction' series to lend a bit of misappropriated historical authority: 'In 1919 Lenin was quite clear that the unity of revolutionaries, in one big Communist Party, was of an importance that far outweighed differences over questions as far-reaching as the correct attitude to bourgeois parliaments.'

Leaving aside the fact that Lenin waged a ruthless struggle within the Comintern for a correct attitude to bourgeois parliaments, that a mass International standing on the overwhelming authority of the first successful workers revolution had regroupment tasks rather different than those of relatively small propaganda organisations, and that the international workers movement had just been irrevocably split between open defenders of the bourgeoisie and defenders of the Russian revolution, this is still a piece of shameless historical charlatanism whose only purpose can be to console IMGers troubled by making common cause with an outfit of Soviet-defeatists. Lenin's conditions for unity were infinitely more stringent than those of the IMG today. The IMG and SWP might have found grounds to fuse had they been around in 1919, *but not inside Lenin's Comintern*. The fourteenth of the '21 Conditions' for admission to the Comintern was: 'Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to give unconditional support to any Soviet republic in its struggles against counterrevolutionary forces.' 'Soviet troops out of Poland' would have been viewed rather dimly by these comrades!

For the IMG not even this historical divide stands in the way of blissfully 'working together': 'We consider that the SWP's analysis of the Soviet Union is not only wrong but potentially dangerous. It could [!] lead the SWP out of the camp of the working class... But if we can agree on a campaign to stop Cruise missiles being stationed in this [!] country; if we can share a position in favour of unilateral disarmament and Britain out of NATO, then we should work together and carry on debate on the Soviet Union.' This is rather difficult when working together on the SWP's terms means 'above all' a campaign that says 'we don't take sides

with the superpowers'. This said, it is no accident that the IMG stubbornly *refused* to join our chants of 'Defend the Soviet Union!' at the June 22 anti-Cruise march.

This is more than simply opportunist *capitulation* to the SWP's counterrevolutionary line. After years of sweeping the Russian question under the carpet the United Secretariat (USec) is now reaping the reward in the form of a massive anti-Soviet bulge in the face of US imperialism's warmongering over Afghanistan. Falsely accused of 'pro-Russian apologetics over the question of Afghanistan' by Harman, the IMG replies that 'there are differences inside the Fourth International [sic]'. We noticed; so has the SWP. Tariq Ali 'remains unrepentant' for siding with the 'fiercely independent' Afghan mullahs against the Red Army, and the SWP is now making an open bid for this incipiently defeatist wing in the IMG. Harman's letter advises the IMG's budding 'third campists' to break from those 'who still see defence of the actions of the "Red Army" as the lodestone for their world politics'. At a July 4 'debate' with Tariq on the Cold War, Harman endearingly asked, 'Why on earth is he not a member of the SWP?' Tariq cooed back that this had been his secret desire *since 1969*. Chris consoled flatteringly: 'Tariq has shown that he has class instincts on the question of Afghanistan.' He certainly has! But which class?

Ali's current vanguard role in the 'third camp' movement inside the USec is not accidental. This representative *par excellence* of New Left movementism and Third World nationalism within the tailist USec long ago not only hailed Mao and Ho Chi Minh as among the 'new revolutionaries' but echoed the Maoist line that the Soviet Union exploits backward countries in its economic relations with them. But the 1960s New Left Maoism is mixed with a dollop of Khrushchevite 'peaceful coexistence' in Ali's reponse to the Afghan crisis. The USec minority resolution presumably submitted by Ali and his co-thinkers actually hits Brezhnev & Co from the *right* for something like 'left adventurism' in provoking imperialist militarism. This is the same rationale by which Soviet Stalinism has for decades justified *not* supporting revolutions in other countries. This combination of rightist arguments and anti-Soviet impulses is certainly a winning combination for wooing the SWP.

Is there anything left of the primitive leftist energies which once characterised the young USec cadres who built barricades in the Paris streets in May '68 and carried Vietcong flags in the radical 'mobilisations' over Vietnam. Or have the 'children of '68' grown up through the years of tailing popular frontism into ordinary anti-Soviet social democrats? The SWP is waiting for an answer. ■



reality. The Revolutionary Tendency (RT) in the US SWP, precursor of the Spartacist tendency, was formed in struggle against the US SWP's course towards Pabloism and simultaneously carried out a clarifying fight for a correct analysis of the Cuban question within the anti-revisionist wing of the IC. The RT insisted that 'peasant-based guerrilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime' ('Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International', 12 June 1963, *Marxist Bulletin* no 9, pt 1). In the course of further clarification we came to the recognition that for a period of time after Castro's guerrillas smashed the bourgeois state there was no state in the Marxist sense -- the guerrilla regime was not decisively committed to capitalist property forms nor to the defence of proletarian property forms until the widespread expropriations of October 1960. Today that analysis stands validated by twenty years of history.

But for Workers Power today simply to recapitulate the theoretical inadequacies and dis-

orientations of the past would represent a refusal to learn from history. Moreover it cannot simply recapitulate them. Today there exists a tendency which embodies those experiences and the lessons gleaned from hard programmatic struggles, the international Spartacist tendency.

Reforge the Fourth International!

Workers Power must confront the programme and analysis of the iSt consciously and openly. When the Workers Socialist League (WSL) leadership first examined the Cuban question it failed to do this, writing out the RT's central role by ludicrously asserting that within the IC only Wohlforth attempted to grapple with the theoretical problems. It was this claim which first brought the positions of the RT/iSt to the surface in the discussions of the WSL, foreshadowing the developments which a year later led to the formation of the Trotskyist Faction. The WSL leadership would agree only that the iSt might have been right on a few things but 'un-

necessarily' isolated itself and could never recruit 'real workers'.

Programmatic correctness and consistency over two decades has enabled the Spartacist tendency to build a democratic-centralist international tendency rooted in Leninism and unflinching in its defence of principle. Through hard political combat with the revisionist betrayers who repudiate proletarian principle to chase whatever is 'popular' at the time, we have carried out successful fusions with many formerly left-centrist currents won over to our granite hard Marxist programme.

The expelled Leninist Faction of the WSL which recently fused with the SL in Britain began its life as a grouping facing many of the problems growing out of the revisionist destruction of the Fourth International which confront WP today. Workers Power has made a significant programmatic shift on a central question of this epoch. It is now at a crossroads. If it wants to play a role in reforging a genuinely Trotskyist Fourth International it must study our history and draw the requisite political conclusions. ■

The origins of the SWP Korea and the Cliff group

Five years ago, the Vietnamese Stalinists were at the peak of their popularity in petty-bourgeois circles and 'detente' with the Soviet Union was still the imperialist order of the day. For Tony Cliff's International Socialists (now the Socialist Workers Party -- SWP), 'steering left' and hoping to intersect the thousands of youth who had come to radical politics through identification with the Stalinist-led struggle against US imperialism in Indochina, the merest suggestion that the Korean War figured in the group's origins elicited cries of 'calumnies and falsifications'. Nothing of the sort, explained Cliff's court historian, Ian Birchall:

'It is sometimes alleged that the creation of the Socialist Review group represented some sort of concession to Cold War pressure at the time of the Korean War. In fact, the Korean War was not the issue at the heart of the split. Rather it was the shamelessly opportunist support for Tito's Yugoslavia by the rest of the Trotskyist movement from 1948 onwards that highlighted the principled differences.' (*International Socialism* no 76, March 1975)

Today, 'detente' lies mangled beneath the imperialist anti-Soviet juggernaut, the Vietnamese Stalinists have fallen in the popularity ratings and the posture of being principled fighters against Pabloite liquidationism has been exchanged for something more closely resembling the truth. Bob Dylan once said: 'You don't need a weatherman to tell which way the wind blows.' With the winds of the Cold War blowing, Tony Cliff's 'third camp' has once again, proudly, raised its true colours: social-democratic anti-communism. And those self-styled Trotskyists, notably the International Marxist Group (IMG), who hold sacred the myth of the 'revolutionary' SWP, reflect only their own opportunist appetites and rightward motion. Today the SWP makes no bones about its hatred for all things Russian. And the self-same Birchall makes the appropriate (and rather more honest) revision of his tendency's history:

'It is thirty years this month since the outbreak of the Korean War.... Last but not quite least it precipitated a crisis in the depleted ranks of British Trotskyism which gave birth to the *Socialist Review* group, ancestor of the SWP.' (*Socialist Review*, 15 June-12 July)

To be more precise, what the Korean War precipitated was a capitulation by a section of the British Trotskyists to bourgeois anti-communist hysteria, which impelled it to break from the Marxist movement.

Front line of the Cold War

The Korean War was the climax of US imperialism's post-war drive to 'roll back' the Soviet sphere of influence. But the victory of



Imperialist troops in retreat following Chinese assault (top); behind the lines, North Koreans stage insurrection in imperialist prison camp (above)

Mao's People's Liberation Army in China in 1949 inflicted a massive blow on the 'Truman Doctrine' of 'containment'. 'Who lost China?' became the rallying call of anti-Communist revanchism; and there was no shortage of US strategists, prime among them the megalomaniacal commander of the American occupation forces in Korea, General Douglas MacArthur, who advocated the 'liberation' of China and the USSR. Speaking at the inauguration of puppet dictator Syngman Rhee's 'Republic of Korea' in Seoul in 1948, MacArthur vowed that the 'barrier' between North and South 'must and will be torn down'.

But for Stalin's unflinching adherence to the treacherous 'spirit of Yalta', that barrier might never have existed. Soviet forces entered Korea on August 10, 1945, a month before the Americans. But Stalin readily acquiesced to Truman's 'General Order Number One', which ceded everything south of the 38th parallel to the Americans, dividing the former Japanese colony into two zones of occupation. In the face of increasing imperialist belligerence Stalin took the same tack as in Eastern Europe, eliminating the capitalists and landlords as a class and installing in power a regime headed by Kim Il Sung to rule a deformed workers state. Meanwhile in the South, the US forces buttressed the corrupt tyrant Rhee and the capitalist/landlord clique around him.

For several years South Korea teetered on the edge of a civil war. In 1947 there was a wave of riots, strikes and minor insurrections. When the American occupation government decided to impose separate United Nations elections in the South in 1948, it led to open guerrilla warfare in the Cholla provinces and Cheju island, which continued without interruption until the outbreak of the war. Then, on June 25, 1950, North Korean troops rolled across the 38th parallel in a wide front, allegedly in response to a South Korean

incursion. The question of who fired the first shot, always secondary from a class standpoint, was in this case virtually meaningless. The 38th parallel had already been a 'real front line' for several months, reported a US State Department official in April, with 'very real battles, involving perhaps one or two thousand men'. Now it became the front line not only in a full-scale civil war, but in the international Cold War.

It is clear that Stalin was at least caught unprepared by the North Korean assault. The Soviet Union was not even present when the question came up before the United Nations Security Council, boycotting it in protest at the treatment of Mao's China. The absence of the Soviet veto enabled the US to gain a 'United Nations' propaganda fig-leaf for its genocidal onslaught against the Korean workers and peasants. Khrushchev was to claim later: 'I must stress that the war wasn't Stalin's idea, but Kim Il Sung's. Kim was the initiator.'

For the US ruling class, however, Korea provided a welcome opportunity for gearing up the American war machine in line with its new post-war role as the chief imperialist gendarme of the world. Within two days, Truman 'interdicted' the straits of Taiwan in defence of the defeated butcher Chiang Kai-shek, who had previously been abandoned by the US; offered aid to the French in Indochina; made preparations to fight in the Philippines; and began an intensive militarisation programme across the board.

Liberators vs occupiers

The North Koreans did not yet have their army up to full strength. Nonetheless they made swift advances, nearly driving the imperialist/South Korean troops into the sea in the first few months. Popular support for the Stalinist-led forces was widespread, a fact painfully obvious even to the American imperialists. General Dean described how the civilian attitude in the South to the 'invasion' forces 'appeared to veer between enthusiasm and passive acceptance' Seoul changed hands four times, with tangibly different popular reactions to the opposing armies. A member of the ignominious US Military Government in Korea, Albert Crofts, recounted a decade later that:

'... millions of South Koreans welcomed the prospect of unification, even on Communist terms. They had suffered police brutality, intellectual repression and political purge, Few felt much incentive to fight for profiteers or to die for Syngman Rhee. Only 10 per cent of the Seoul population abandoned the city; many troops deserted, and a number of public figures, including Kimm Kiu Sic, joined the North.' (*The Nation*, 25 June 1960)

When the United Nations forces recaptured Seoul later in the year, a United Press dispatch reported the 'coolness of the welcome received by the liberators'.

Not only were the North Korean forces welcomed as the real liberators by the southern population, but there is no doubt that mass support actively aided their advance. When they approached the city of Kwangju, for example, the workers rose up in a general strike. An article in the *New York Times* of 25 July 1950 (headlined 'Guerrillas Rose Before Army Came') reported: 'The students and textile workers began to come into the open early this week... Red tank and infantry teams were then still sixty miles away.' When the general strike was called, 'the manager of the mill was stoned and fled early next morning'.

If not for the lack of Soviet air power the North Korean army might well have achieved an early victory saving millions of lives. As it was the imperialist forces took advantage of Stalin's criminal passivity to overwhelm Kim's army with superior troops and firepower. Following a surprise landing at Inchon -- behind Communist lines -- on September 15, they surged past the 38th parallel within weeks and continued to thrust towards Korea's border with China, the Yalu River. They effectively destroyed not only the North Korean army, but Korea itself. Two buildings were left intact in the Northern capital of Pyongyang. The head of the US Bomber Command in the Far East, Rosie O'Donnell, was forced to lament:

'Everything is destroyed. There is nothing standing worthy of the name. Just before the Chinese came in we were grounded. There were no more targets in Korea.'

O'Donnell's solution to this dilemma was to repeatedly urge a nuclear attack on China. MacArthur, equally determined to 'liberate' China, even at the risk of touching off another

world war (this shortly got him sacked -- and sent home to a hero's welcome), ignored Chinese warnings that they would not tolerate an advance on the Yalu.

The Chinese did come into the war and the American military advance was rapidly stopped. By the year's end the imperialists had been forced back to the 38th parallel through a series of Chinese human wave assaults, a heroic effort costing nearly a million casualties. In July 1953, the ceasefire was signed, after more than a year of military stalemate. The Korean peninsula had by then been reduced to rubble and scorched earth, and littered with at least two million corpses.

Since then, the US imperialists have maintained a massive military presence, without which the corrupt capitalist dictatorship would undoubtedly long since have fallen. For their part, the North Korean Stalinists gave immediate evidence of their treacherous willingness to 'peacefully co-exist', trying a leading member of the Korean Workers Party in 1953 for 'wanting to fight to the death rather than accept the armistice'. 'Socialism in half a country' a la Kim Il Sung has been particularly vulgar in its nepotism and cult of the personality. Only with Trotskyist-led political revolution in the North and socialist revolution in the South will all Korea have a truly revolutionary regime. But this does not diminish in the least the progressive character of the North Korean workers state. While the Southern masses remain immiserated in poverty despite the high economic growth rates, the lives of the people in the North have undergone a dramatic improvement under the collectivised economy.

No turning back

Yet for prosaic renegades like the SWP's Birchall this heroic struggle against the world's mightiest imperialist power was nothing but a 'squalid test of strength'. It was a test of strength -- for the new imperialist hegemony of the American Century. And no sooner had the fighting broken out than Cliff & Co deserted their revolutionary posts in order to seek an accommodation with the imperialist bourgeoisie and its social-democratic lieutenants. The Tribune 'lefts' sanctified the imperialist rape as fighting 'to uphold a Labour Party principle' and some toyed with the idea of using nuclear weapons.

A measure of the intensity of the anti-communist pressure and the disorientation in the Trotskyist movement was reflected in the initial response of the then-Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party (US SWP), which failed for several weeks to state its unequivocal support for the Northern forces. From then on the Trotskyists took a clear, revolutionary stance:

'What each side represented in the revolutionary war in Korea was indicated by the social and economic programs they instituted in territories they had captured... This is the fundamental issue in the war as far as the Korean people are concerned. One side is taking the land from the landlords and giving it to the poor peasants. The other side is taking it from the peasants



Megalomaniacal US commander Douglas MacArthur (on right) wanted to 'liberate' China; Incheon devastated by similar imperialist 'liberation'

and returning it to the landlords.' (*Militant*, 18 August 1952)

But for Cliff, this was not a momentary disorientation; it was a decisive break, theoretically prepared two years earlier when, under the influence of the developing Cold War mood, he abandoned the Trotskyist analysis of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state in favour of a 'state-capitalist' analysis. Now the Cold War had become a shooting war, and Cliff's 'third camp' analysis served the purpose it had for others before, as an exit visa from the camp of revolutionary Marxism.

When the question of Korea came up for a vote in the Birmingham Trades Council, one of Cliff's supporters in 'The Club' (the Trotskyist entry grouping in the Labour Party), Percy Downey, publicly repudiated a defencist stand. As the Cliffites described it themselves in a statement 'To the members of the club', Downey was expelled by the Trotskyist majority for 'opposing both the Russian puppet Government of North Korea and the American puppet Government of South Korea'. Following Downey's public breach of discipline, the majority demanded an assurance -- unsuccessfully -- that the rest of the opposition would abide by discipline. Some were expelled, others left, and the *Socialist Review* was born.

The first issue, in November 1950, scarcely touched on the question of Yugoslavia, so decisive had it been in the split, but the very first sentence declared: 'The war in Korea serves the Great Powers as a rehearsal for their intended struggle for the redivision of the globe.' Elsewhere it attacked the Trotskyist *Socialist Outlook* for campaigning,

'... for full and unconditional support for the Stalinist forces in Korea, who (so it claims) are conducting a genuine struggle for the national and social liberation of the oppressed Korean people. This attitude of course, is fundamentally identical with that of the Stalinists and their fellow-travellers.'

As even the fake-Trotskyist IMG was able to

recognise in 1969, 'One has only to substitute the word Vietnam for Korea to see what a right wing policy that was' (*International*, November 1969).

The break was definitive, and there was to be no turning back. The deepening of the imperialist anti-Soviet vendetta only deepened the Cliff group's determined defeatism. A year after the split, a resolution of the National Committee (Minutes, 22-23 September 1951) affirmed that,

'... the world Trotskyist movement is divided into defencists and anti-defencists... We declare that we will not make any fusion with any group that stands for the defence of either Russian or American Imperialism.'

Cliffite 'analysis': hate 'bloody Russia'

As the pressure of the Cold War anti-communist hysteria subsided and the political climate changed, so did the Cliffites' colours. The yellow of social democracy took on a pink tinge. Statements from 1959 that Luxemburg had been right as against Lenin were rewritten to read the reverse. They began to move out of their home in the Labour Party and took up support for the Vietnamese NLF. But for all the tortuous theoretical attempts to discern a distinction between Korea and Vietnam, there was no qualitative difference. The only substantial difference was in the severity of the anti-communist pressures around them. It is telling in that context that, to our knowledge, throughout the 1950s *Socialist Review* featured not a single word of support for the NLF's direct predecessor, the Vietminh. Both were civil wars, genuine struggles for national and social liberation. There was the camp of the proletariat, and there was the camp of the imperialists and their compradores; there was no 'third camp'.

Thirty years after the fact, not even Birchall attempts to deny that on one side Korea too was a war of liberation:

'Originally the war had been -- partially --

continued on page 10

Thirty years later, SWP says: Starve the Reds!

Jimmy Carter got short shrift from his imperialist partners when he tried to enlist EEC support for a trade boycott of the Soviet Union. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has since stepped in to fill the breach here in Britain, with a campaign aimed at embarrassing the Tory government for trade ties with 'Russian imperialism'. Not surprisingly this campaign has not gotten as much play in the pages of *Socialist Worker* as its 'anti-Thatcher united front', but it is getting plenty of attention where it counts -- in the bosses' press and the bosses' Parliament.

A small item in the SWP's *Women's Voice* (June 1980) kicked it off by complaining:

'Why is everyone talking about boycotting the Moscow Olympics?

'The thing is it is all TALK. While Maggie Thatcher is proclaiming the scandal of athletes going to Moscow while Russian tanks are in Afghanistan, she is signing treaties with Moscow to increase Anglo-Russian trade. Principles seem to stop short when it comes to boosting profits.'

Not many bourgeois politicians read *Women's Voice*. But the *Daily Mirror* is a different matter. As we reported last month (see 'Smash anti-Soviet war drive!'), SWP leader Paul Foot has been using his weekly column in the *Mirror* for sensationalist 'exposés' aimed at mobilising public opinion to put more muscle behind Thatcher's anti-Soviet 'talk'.

Foot's first scoop (*Daily Mirror*, 18 June) 'exposed' the shipment of two British-built chemical factories to Soviet cities in the Urals, a deal financed by a syndicate of British banks. A week later he followed up with a report that inexpensive EEC meat ('our beef') being exported to Rumania was rumoured (scooped first, apparently, by *Livestock Farming*) to be finding its way to Red Army troops in Afghanistan. Two weeks later, the front page of the *Daily Star* (9 July) screamed 'British Beef For Red Invaders!' A more sober piece in the *Times* (25 July) noted that the beef was more likely headed for 'Soviet consumers', not the 'invading army'. The British bourgeoisie may not now be interested in a trade embargo of the Soviet Union, but

they have been in the past -- when they attempted to starve the Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky into submission following the Russian Revolution -- and they might be again in the future.

Foot's crusade has already struck a response among MPs on both sides of the floor. The same day the first 'exposé' appeared, flamboyant Labour 'left' Dennis Skinner tabled a question in Parliament demanding to know 'the involvement of Morgan Grenfell in the financing of two chemical factories for Russia'. A week later Labourite Bob Cryer interrupted the Commons debate on the Venice Summit to denounce Tory Sir Frederic Bennett for 'lining his pockets from deals with the Russians' -- as the 25 June *Daily Mirror* boasted, following disclosures by 'the *Mirror's* Paul Foot' -- Bennett is director of a bank which deals with the Moscow Narodny state bank. Foot's 'disclosures' have since come up in Parliament -- from Tory and Labour alike -- nearly a dozen times.

continued on page 8

Daily Mail witchhunts WSL

The *Daily Mail* has singled out the fake-Trotskyist Workers Socialist League (WSL) of Alan Thornett for an anti-communist witchhunt. Red-baiting slander pieces first started appearing in the *Daily Mail* following a campaign over the Oxford Labour Party's expulsion of *Socialist Press* supporter 'Red Ted' Heslin. But on July 14 the arch-Tory gutter rag really let it rip. Taking the pretext of the WSL's annual summer school -- this year held under the aegis of the 'Trotskyist International Liaison Committee' (TILC) -- the front page blared 'ROW OVER SCHOOL FOR REDS'. An entire centrespread, with a follow-up the next day, was devoted to an 'exclusive' red-scare 'special investigation' filled with such sensationalist lies as the claim that the WSL had links with terrorist organisations.

Despite the obviously fabricated character of much of this 'expose', it is clear that the *Mail* has been able to gain access to large amounts of up-to-date information on the internal life of the WSL and relations with its international bloc partners. According to an account in *Socialist Press* (16 July), regular harassment and surveillance of WSL members and supporters by the *Mail*'s team of 'investigative journalists' included one Charles Cramp, a freelance photographer, pulling a revolver on Thornett when interrupted in his dirty spy game stationed in a parked car outside the WSL leader's house.

Like the sensationalist scare stories earlier this year of the staid Militant group's 'Trotskyist infiltration' of the Labour Party, the aim of the *Daily Mail* witchhunt is to whip up anti-communist hysteria and embarrass the Labour 'lefts'. For this right-wing rag, which yelled 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts' in the 1930s, Tony Benn is a 'dangerous subversive', particularly given his recent demagogic appeal for all 'left-wingers' to join the Labour Party. The centrist WSL, with its perspective of pressuring the Labour 'lefts' to 'fight' and its defence of scabbing, hardly poses the threat to the bourgeois order painted by the *Mail*. But this witchhunt is a scurrilous attack on the entire left and workers movement and must be condemned! Statements in the *Mail* by red-baiting EETPU bureaucrat Frank Chapple calling for the tapping of WSLers' phones and action against their 'foreign' co-thinkers deserve the contempt of every EETPU member and all trade unionists.

The Spartacist League (SL) immediately informed the WSL of its solidarity and readiness to participate in united-front action aimed at exposing and countering the *Daily Mail* witch-

hunt. SL supporters in the Magazine Branch of the National Union of Journalists put a motion at the July branch meeting to condemn this scurrilous anti-working class attack and to initiate expulsion proceedings against Cramp. Though WSL and Workers Party supporters joined in fighting for the motion against a successful move to rule it out of order, supporters of the International Marxist Group scandalously left the meeting early on fully aware the motion was coming up.

But the WSL itself, instead of fighting the anti-communist witchhunt, has used it as a further pretext for its own continuing campaign of slander and intimidation against the SL.

This motion was submitted by Spartacist League supporters at a July 21 London meeting of the National Union of Journalists Magazine Branch:

This branch expresses outrage at the key roles played by Robert Porter, Harry Longmuir and Charles Cramp in the *Daily Mail*'s anti-working class, red-baiting witchhunt against members and supporters of the Workers Socialist League.

We note, in particular, reports that Cramp, a member of the London Freelance Branch, threatened WSL members with a gun when interrupted spying on a private house. Cramp's claim to police that he used a tyre lever not a gun does not alter the fact that the trade-union movement has no place for weapon-carrying anti-communist scum operating as 'journalists'. This branch believes Cramp should be expelled from the NUJ and calls on the NEC to take appropriate action immediately.

This branch undertakes to distribute this motion to other NUJ branches and to the press.

First the WSL contacted the SL to request our comrades not sell literature outside the now well-publicised summer school site because of the 'security' situation. To placate the WSL's paranoia, an SL spokesman suggested that our supporters instead sell *inside* the foyer for a brief period before the internal discussion began. WSL leader John Lister rejected this with the outrageous slander that our very presence was a 'security risk'. His 'evidence'? Our adherence to the Comintern practice of making accurate reports of political interventions and sending them 'around the world' to other sections.

It certainly takes some gall for a laughably

sloppy, scab-apologist, Menshevik outfit like the WSL to accuse the SL of posing a security risk. The only purpose to this vile innuendo that our internal reports somehow end up with the bourgeois state or press, as well as the ludicrous assertions made publicly by some WSLers that the *Mail* gleaned some of its information from SL public meetings over two years ago (!), is to seal off the WSL's membership from the SL's revolutionary Trotskyist politics. They are of a piece with the WSL's charge three months ago that our exposure of scabbing by IMG supporters on the Birmingham BL Rover strike was a 'brazen provocation'. Thornett has lost two cadre-rich oppositions to the Spartacist tendency already and will use any underhanded means his limited creative capacities allow to ward off a third. So opposition to scabbing becomes a provocation and the tendency whose international defence campaign freed the man who now heads his Chilean affiliate from the clutches of the Argentine *gorilas* is rendered a security risk.

It is the Spartacist tendency's political challenge, not contrived 'security risks', that plagues the WSL. Thus the TILC refused to invite a speaker from the international Spartacist tendency (IST) to its July 23 public meeting in London, though both the United Secretariat and the Parity Committee (among others) were invited to address this revisionist soiree billed as a 'full discussion on the crisis in the world Trotskyist movement'. No speakers were taken from the floor either. But when the whole tedious affair was over members of the GBL, the WSL's Italian bloc partner, launched a physical attack on SL supporters in the midst of a discussion on Thornett's scabbing, joined by some particularly hysterical members of the WSL. Leading WSLer Ian Swindale intervened to restrain them, but it is the WSL leadership, with its provocatively slanderous campaign of innuendos hinting that the SL is outside the workers movement, and Thornett's own past history of physical attacks, which must take responsibility for such outrages.

We will not stand idly by in the face of a bourgeois witchhunt against the WSL. But these small-time centrists will not prevent us from continuing to expose their rotten caricature of genuine Trotskyism through slanders and intimidation. We look forward to the acquisition of still more cadres disgusted with the repulsive antics of the WSL and seeking a Trotskyist alternative. ■

Starve the Reds ...

(Continued from page 7)

It was Thatcher's chum, Tory Teddy Taylor, who first raised the beef scandal, on June 30. How much beef, butter and wheat was being shipped to the USSR, demanded Taylor, and at what prices? Labour MP Tom Torney stepped in to inquire about the Rumania connection. Minister of State Buchanan-Smith's reply indicated that Foot's articles had already exerted some pressure on the Thatcher government: there was as yet no evidence of Rumania re-exporting Common Market beef, but he had 'asked the Commission to investigate'. It has since gone beyond simply embarrassing questions. Two weeks later, a number of Tory and Labour MPs clamoured to know when beef and butter shipments to the Soviet Union would be stopped. Tory backbenchers have already mooted curtailing export credits and low interest rates on trade deals with the USSR and Labour's Dennis Howell has expressed concern to emphasise that 'support from the British Embassy for trade delegations does not imply that Her Majesty's Government condone the Russian aggression in Afghanistan.

Organising a popular front formation against fascism -- like the Anti Nazi League -- is a betrayal of class interests, but at least its target is the Nazis. But the SWP's vanguard role in attempting to mobilise a 'popular front' alliance of Labour and Tory based on jingoistic appeals to keep 'our beef' from feeding 'the Reds' can only fuel the right-wing atmosphere of patriotic fervour and anti-communism which provides a culture medium for the growth of fascism and reaction. It should make some SWPers stop and think what we mean when we say: 'The "third camp" is Thatcher's camp!' ■

Labour...

(Continued from page 2)

Wheatley, Jimmy Maxton, Tom Mann, Keir Hardie, William Morris, etc.' While being tossed in with such company is perhaps unfair to poor old William Morris, these illustrious gentlemen were hardly a threat to capitalist class rule in their time. Writing in 1926, Leon Trotsky had some specific comments about the communist attitude to such 'lefts': 'It would be the crudest blunder to think (and such a tendency is to be observed) that the task of the united front consists in obtaining a victory for Purcell, Lansbury, Wheatley and Kirkwood over Snowden, Webb, and MacDonald.' ('Problems of the British Labour Movement')

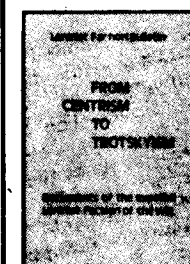
Yet this is precisely what the IMG, WSL, WA et al try to do today.

The Labour Party, under Callaghan, Benn or anyone else, is a pro-capitalist bourgeois workers party. It will never be an instrument for social transformation in this country. To talk of reforming it or giving it a 'socialist leadership' is to criminally mislead the working class. Any left-wing organisation that tries to claim the contrary has already taken a giant step down the well-travelled road (Militant, Chartists ... now Workers Action?) towards becoming an organic component of rotten British social democracy.

The Labour Party must be split, its proletarian base won to the programme of proletarian revolution. Depending on the circumstances, communists can use certain tactics to help effect such a split, such as critical support against the direct bosses' parties in elections, or even short-term entry in order to win a

leftward-moving wing of the party away from social democracy to communism. But there is no basis today to support one of these gangs of social-democratic traitors against the other. At all times the key arena for the struggle against the grip of Labourism is in the trade unions, where the fight to oust the treacherous pro-capitalist bureaucrats (who are an integral part of the Labour Party leadership) is strategic in the fight for a new revolutionary party. It is this kind of party alone which can show the way out of the mess that is British capitalism today, that can reindustrialise the country, that can give jobs and a decent standard of living to the masses of the population. Benn & Co are enemies of the workers' struggle for state power. ■

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Australian militants honour picket lines – and win!

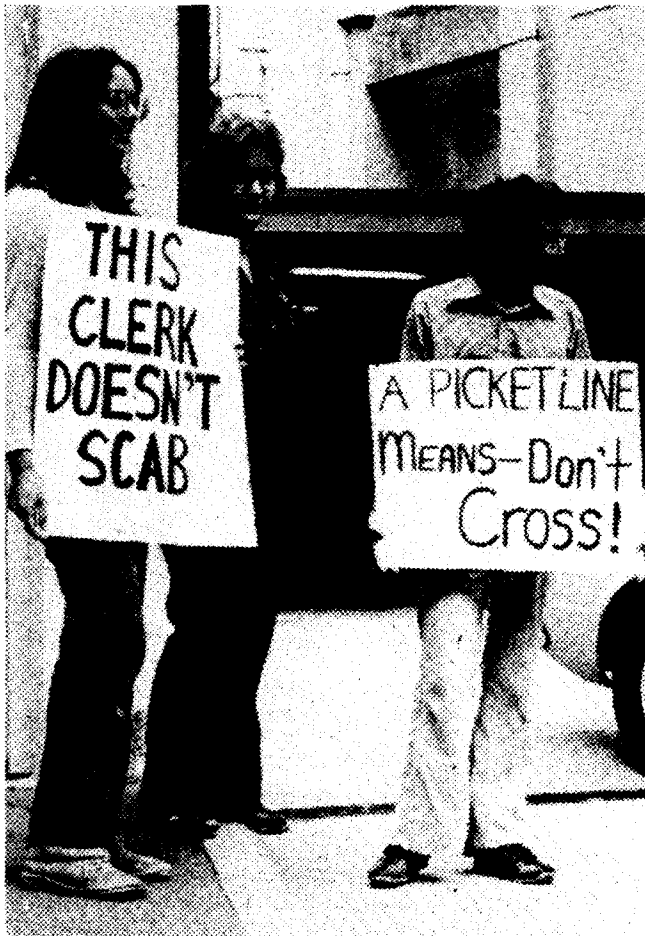
'This clerk doesn't scab'

The ongoing Isle of Grain dispute presents the repulsive spectacle of unions openly strikebreaking and crossing each other's picket lines. The reformist trade-union bureaucrats, more concerned with protecting their own securities than the interests of their members, consciously perpetuate the pernicious craft divisions which excuse and exacerbate such scabbing. And many a self-styled communist, like Workers Socialist League (WSL) leader Alan Thornett, readily bow before these 'traditions' in order to justify their own capitulations, attempting to paint respect for picket lines as some sort of misplaced individual heroics.

But 'One out, all out' and 'Picket lines mean don't cross' are not abstract ideals. They are crucial, tested principles of the class struggle. And their centrality in the struggle for class solidarity and industrial unionism was demonstrated yet again, vividly, in a series of strikes at one of Australia's major press empires, John Fairfax and Sons in Sydney, earlier this year. This centre of industrial militancy was the scene of a bitter nine-week strike against job-slashing technological changes (the introduction of Visual Display Terminals -- VDTs) in 1976, which escalated into the first major test of strength of the Tory Fraser government's union-bashing policies. That strike was defeated despite significant moves towards industrial unity, including the formation of a Combined Unions Committee consisting of nine of the eleven unions at Fairfax, because the two other unions, the Federated Clerks Union (FCU) and the Australian Journalists Association (AJA), herded their members across the picket lines. The same defeatist policies prevailed in the recent strikes. But two militants, supporters of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SLANZ), took an exemplary stand in defence of the elementary principles of class solidarity that pointed the way forward for Fairfax workers and all trade unionists.

In January members of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU) struck in defence of a chapel representative provocatively victimised by management. The PKIU was joined on the picket lines, which at times were over 100 strong, by metal tradesmen, iron workers, engineers, plumbers, sections of the Transport Workers Union (whose officials called for scabbing) and by one clerk, Linda Menzie, who refused on principle to scab on another union's picket line. Menzie was the first clerk in memory to honour a printers' picket line at Fairfax. When the FCU leadership instructed her to get back to work and hold to the FCU's scabbing tradition, Menzie stuck to her guns, regularly standing alongside the PKIU on the picket line with a placard which read, 'This clerk doesn't scab'.

The PKIU strikers certainly didn't find Menzie's solidarity misplaced, and insisted that she accept PKIU strike pay. The union passed a resolution to defend all those, from any union, who might be threatened by victimisation for having supported their strike. And the workers who crossed the picket lines appropriately received their thanks from the management. A company letter quite correctly told those who had kept production going -- with the result



On the Fairfax picket line

that long weeks of struggle ended in only a partial victory -- that 'we couldn't have done it without you'. When the strike was over, Menzie was the only clerk who could return to work without shame -- and she was not victimised for her courageous stand.

But when some 80 maintenance workers, primarily metal tradesmen, went out a few weeks later, the PKIU leadership showed itself to be no better on the question of scabbing than the notorious FCU. The metal trades leaders refused to set up picket lines in the belief that having a militant union like the PKIU on the inside would prevent the use of scab labour in maintaining the presses. That craftist myth was quickly shattered when, following two brief walkouts over the use of staff labour, the PKIU leaders agreed to the legal coercion of the maintenance apprentices to keep the presses rolling. The only way to prevent company strikebreaking is by setting up solid picket lines -- and shutting down all production. At a PKIU mass meeting after the first walkout, a significant minority of 50 or so printers voted against returning to work. But only one, Ron Rees, a SLANZ supporter and nine-year member of the PKIU, argued that picket line or not, Fairfax was a struck plant and he would not return to work regardless of the vote.

Just as the striking printers had come to Menzie's defence, so now the striking metal workers came to Rees's defence when the PKIU leadership attacked him for being 'outside the rules' of the union in the face of management threats. Fourteen shop stewards and strike leaders signed a protest letter defending Rees's stand as 'purely one of Union Principle'. The spectre of another union defending one of their members put the PKIU bureaucracy on the defensive. Backed by both unions Rees won an arbitration hearing to get him reinstated. But in failing to follow Rees's example, the PKIU chapel leadership undermined not only the metal workers' strike, which ended after 11 long weeks without a clear victory, but their own union's militant traditions -- formerly militant PKIU members were ashamed to show their faces in pubs frequented by the strikers.

And when 2000 journalists on metropolitan newspapers around Australia went out on May 13, the tables were turned completely, with the traditionally scabbering AJA on the picket lines, and the traditionally militant PKIU going through them. After weeks of dawdling and 'informational' pickets, the New South Wales

branch of the AJA finally voted -- against the wishes of the AJA federal executive -- to set up picket lines in an attempt to bring out the production unions and shut down the presses. The metal workers immediately voted to honour the picket lines. The PKIU leadership, however, appealed to the same craftist treachery the AJA had three years earlier -- arguing that since the AJA dispute was over pay scales for operating the VDTs which were stealing jobs from printers, this strike was of no concern to them. But as one metal worker put it to a printer, 'Just because they're scabs doesn't make us scabs.'

To their credit, the PKIU chapel executive at Fairfax argued for honouring the picket lines. When they were overwhelmingly defeated at a mass meeting they resigned their positions and joined the pickets outside. A total of some 90 to 100 PKIU members, including the resigned father of the chapel, Don Paget, and the former father, Ian Joliffe, decided to defy the state leadership and a 'democratic' vote to scab. Joliffe was seen carrying a placard saying, 'Not all printers cross picket lines', similar to the one carried by Menzie during the printers' strike. As they had done with Rees, the PKIU bureaucrats now threatened to discipline these militants for failure to abide by a majority decision in refusing to cross the AJA picket lines. Those who cross picket lines have no place in the union movement -- those who respect them do! But Paget and Joliffe and the other chapel leaders had themselves prepared the way for the bureaucrats' strikebreaking measures when they led their chapel to work during the tradesmen's strike and supported similar action against Rees for defying their instruction to scab.

The journalists were finally forced back to work on the basis of an abject sellout a month after the strike. But their unexpected militancy began transforming the AJA from an association of 'committed and creative' professionals into something resembling a real union, and some AJA members -- witnessing their picket lines being crossed -- began to swear that they would never again cross another picket line no matter what. Throughout the three strikes, the disunity fostered by craft prejudices benefitted only the company. Strong industrial unions -- on the premise of one boss, one union -- are key to transcending these destructive divisions. And it is through building effective pickets -- and respecting them -- that militant industrial unions will be forged, not through bureaucratic amalgamations at the top.

To the cynical scabbing of Thornett and his ilk, we counterpose the example of Menzie and Rees. These militants stood by union principles despite prevailing craftist traditions and won, both returning to their jobs with the company unable to victimise them. The enthusiasm with which the various strikers greeted their stand demonstrated the power of the picket line for welding class unity in struggle. The basic lessons of the struggles of the past are well known. But it takes Trotskyists to defend them consistently because we have the only programme which speaks to the real needs of the entire working class and which can unite all workers in the fight against capitalism -- the programme of socialist revolution. ■

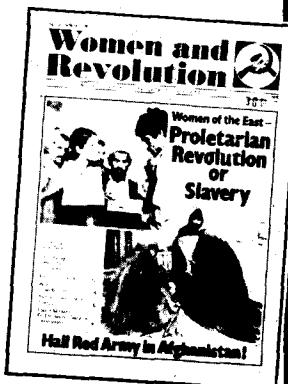
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Korea...

(Continued from page 7)

a national liberation struggle. When North Korean forces came into the South workers and students rose in their support.' To say less would be to fly in the face of overwhelming evidence, even from bourgeois accounts. As for the supposed equivalence of the 'Russian puppet government' and the 'American puppet government', Birchall concedes that:

'In the South the US gave short shrift to the revolutionary committees which had emerged out of the anti-Japanese resistance; where necessary Japanese forces were used against them.

'In the North the resistance was incorporated into a pro-Russian regime, which was consolidated by a land reform.'

But with the entry of China into the war and the increasing importance of Russian military aid, the character of the war as a national liberation struggle became 'non-existent', claim the Cliffites, subordinated to 'Russian imperialism'.

It is a strange breed of imperialist capitalism which encourages and incites revolutionary uprisings and general strikes, incorporates revolutionary committees into the regime it establishes and strikes fear into the hearts of comrades and landlords. When Max Shachtman opted for the 'third camp' in the wake of the Stalin-Hitler pact carving up Poland in 1939, Trotsky pointedly asked: 'Why was it chiefly revolutionists, "democrats", and Jews who fled from [Nazi-occupied western Poland], while in eastern Poland -- it was chiefly the landlords and capitalists who fled?' ('From a Scratch to the Danger of Gangrene'). Explained Trotsky: 'the social foundations of the USSR forced a social revolutionary program upon the Kremlin'. Shachtman, Trotsky observed, 'lacks the time to think it out'.

In their headlong rush from Trotskyist defencism, the Cliffites too lacked the time or inclination to 'think it out'. The only significant theoretical reply to the Trotskyist analysis is a cheap syllogism which denies the possibility of creating workers states in the absence of revolutionary workers parties. This supposed anti-Pabloism is simply the inverse of the Pabloite thesis that where social overturns have taken place, they have necessarily been led by 'unconscious' revolutionaries. The premise is the same -- that there is no qualitative distinction between a deformed and a healthy workers state. The former denies the reality of a social overturn, the latter the necessity of a Trotskyist-led political revolution to remove the bureaucratic barrier to the development of socialism.

'State capitalism' is not intended as a serious Marxist analysis; it is a flimsy revisionist rationale for escaping the unpleasant task of defending a proletarian revolution. In a moment of rare candour, Tony Cliff said it: 'And I say no, no, we have nothing to do with bloody Russia, because it is not a source of strength.' (Leveller, September 1979)

And now that hating 'bloody Russia' has again become a source of strength in social-democratic circles, the Cliffites have graduated from merely standing aside from a struggle against reaction to enthusiastically aiding the reactionaries, putting their energies to use encouraging Margaret Thatcher to starve out the Red Army soldiers fighting against obscurantist mullahs, feudal landlords and enslavers of women.

That is why defence of the Soviet Union has been a question of proletarian principle and a touchstone of revolutionary Marxism from the first days of the October Revolution. A decade ago, even the IMG was prepared to recognise as much:

'The logic of their position leads them to

deny that we should be on the side of other workers states against imperialism. This is why the difference between Trotskyists and "state capitalists" is a principled one.' (International, December 1969)

From the 'renegade Kautsky' in 1918 to the renegade Cliff today, one thing has not changed: those who abandon the proletarian duty of defending the Soviet Union end up in the imperialist camp. And that is why we chant, as we have had occasion to do frequently of late, 'Afghanistan today, Korea '53 -- Cliff's still a friend of the bourgeoisie'.

Turkey...

(Continued from page 12)

fascists were given free rein to rampage and terrorise.

Even as official state terror intensifies, the Demirel government has come to rely more and more on open fascist bands, the Grey Wolves. NAP supporters occupy key positions in the police and armed forces. In league with Demirel they are now carrying out a purge of their opponents, supporters and appointees of the bourgeois opposition Republican People's Party (RPP) of former prime minister Bulent Ecevit, from all state agencies. And fascist purges mean workers' blood! When the NAP seized control of the town of Yozgat, they forced the leftists to leave, and wall posters threatened: 'We will either shut them up completely or make them vomit blood.'

The fascists derive their bourgeois support as shock troops to crush the organised workers. But as always their mass base comes in large measure from exploiting national and religious antagonisms. The Alevis (Shi'ites), primarily Kurds, have been a frequent target of fascist-instigated mass terror mobilising majority Sunni Muslims. Defence of the national rights of the oppressed Kurdish minority is thus key to effectively combatting the rightist threat.

Not surprisingly there is a strong component of Islamic clerical reaction. Fascist mobs recently converged on the town of Corum for an anti-Alevi pogrom which left fifty dead in three days. Alevi-owned shops were attacked by mobs chanting 'Allah-u-Ekber, Allah-u-Ekber, Corum will be a grave for communists' (Yanki, 14-20 July). When the army moved in it tore down the defensive barricades erected by the townspeople (which they rebuilt at night), only to stand by and watch the murderous Grey Wolves continue to loot and burn. The fight against these fascist scum demands an immediate struggle within the trade unions for the formation of armed workers militias to defend the workers' districts and Kurdish and other minority communities. In the pre-revolutionary situation facing Turkey this would rapidly lead to a situation of dual power and the possibility for even a relatively small revolutionary nucleus to gain hegemony within the working class and oppressed minorities.

The left in disarray

But despite admirable militancy and heroism, there is not a single tendency in Turkey which is capable of advancing a clear, revolutionary course of action for the proletariat. With anti-Sovietism a favourite theme of the rightists, the Maoist groups find it difficult even to distinguish their own counterrevolutionary line on the Soviet Union from the fascists' anti-communist appeals. According to the English-language *Turkey Today* (May-June 1980), 'Not only has the theoretical level dropped sharply, but all the revolutionary trends have split at least once during the past year.'

The Stalinist heritage common to most of the groups makes them cling to Dimitrov's writings on the 'anti-fascist people's front' as if it were their own version of the Koran. Thus *Iscenin sesi* ('Workers Voice' -- paper of a left-Stalinist opposition within the TKP with which *Turkey Today* identifies) poses the choice facing Turkey as 'either fascism or an advanced democratic people's revolution that will grow into socialism'. The programme of the 'advanced people's democracy' is the programme of popular-front betrayal! Almost to a man, the Turkish left supported the 'progressive' bourgeois RPP when it made its 'populist' turn following the last military coup -- the same RPP which today wants a coalition with Demirel to stave off a civil war and which has even sought a coalition with the Islamic fundamentalist National Salvation Party.

Most egregious in this respect was the TKP. After helping the RPP purge other leftists from the DISK, the TKP then found itself the victim

of a purge by its erstwhile ally. While *Iscenin Sesi* today denounces the grossly rightist policies of the old TKP leadership for being 'stagist' and insists that the 'advanced people's democratic revolution' must smash the present bourgeois state, it clings to the class-collaborationist Stalinist two-stage theory in principle. It accepts an alliance with the 'progressive' bourgeoisie (to smash the bourgeois state?!), arguing only that Ecevit is not it.

Linked to this view that a political bloc with the bourgeoisie is permissible is the call for the bourgeois state to ban the fascists, a demand pervasive on the Turkish left. Are not Taris and Corum sufficient evidence of how the bourgeois state -- particularly under martial law -- 'deals' with fascists? Nor does the answer lie in the neighbourhood 'struggle committees' set up by the Guevarist Devrimci Yol ('Revolutionary Way'), which skirts the question of winning the mass workers organisations and thus reflects a substitutionist denial of the centrality of the proletariat in the struggle against fascism.

What is absolutely necessary is a party committed to intransigent defence of proletarian class independence, a Trotskyist party. But not one of the three (!) competing groups claiming allegiance to the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat advances this perspective. The official sympathising section calls for a 'united action front based on a revolutionary action programme'. The class-collaborationist logic of this is clear from the parallel it offers of the 'united front' in Sri Lanka -- a popular front with the bourgeois-nationalist SLFP sealed in the workers' blood! Indeed it goes so far as to justify a vote for the RPP (*Ne Yapmali* no 1, January 1980).

The Turkish working class is faced with the prospect of going down in blood or rising to power. The struggle to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard, to regroup the best elements of the disoriented Turkish left around the revolutionary programme of permanent revolution, that is the task of the day.

- Avenge Kemal Turkler! Smash the fascist NAP/Grey Wolves! Build workers militias based on the trade unions!
- For the right of self-determination for the Kurdish nation!
- Down with martial law! Black all military shipments to Turkey!
- Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union! No NATO/US bases in Turkey!
- For a workers and peasants government in Turkey!
- For a Trotskyist party, section of a reformed Fourth International!

SWP thuggery...

(Continued from page 3)

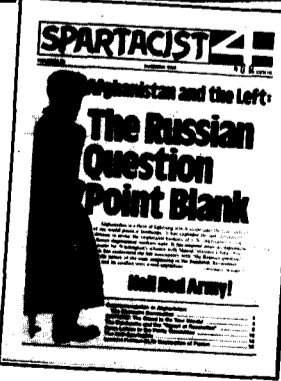
decisively that the SWP's 'third camp' really does lead to Thatcher's camp, anti-democratic, anti-working class methods take on a particularly sinister connotation. Social patriotism and anti-communism take many forms -- but they always aim to silence the real Bolsheviks.

The entire left and workers movement must condemn, without any hesitation, the SWP's violent exclusion and thug assault. Squashing and stifling political debate, excluding left-wing oppositionists, the use of thuggery and intimidation -- these are the classical methods of the trade union bureaucrats, anxious to police the labour movement for the capitalist class. SWP members had better recognise before it's too late that their 'third camp' politics are taking them at breakneck pace down the road to becoming Jimmy Carter and Maggie Thatcher's bootboys, the so-called 'revolutionary' counterparts of the treacherous union leaders the SWP professes to hate. Down with bureaucratic exclusionism and thuggery in the workers movement! Defend the Soviet Union against imperialist war threats!

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1980

West Bromwich: Smash NF scum!

Despite Fuhrer John Tyndall's departure the National Front (NF) is still spewing out its anti-working-class race-hate terror. Thwarted in Corby it marched in London twice in May and June; and each day brings new NF/British Movement violence. The August 17 West Bromwich march for 'British jobs for British workers' is rumoured to plan entry into mainly immigrant Handsworth. If allowed, under cop escort, to spread its filth unhindered, the NF will be emboldened. Stop the fascist scum! When NF National Organiser Martin Webster was in West Bromwich in July he had to flee from angry Asian youth -- mobilise the Midlands labour movement and immigrant organisations to drive out all his rats!

The NF plans have seen the popular-frontist Anti Nazi League (ANL) resurface after months of

virtual inactivity. With the NF electoral flop in May 1979 the ANL proclaimed its strategy of social-patriotic petitions and pacifist Carnivals victorious over the fascists. But the NF vermin are feeding again off rotting British capitalism and the increasing drive to Cold War. The ANL's gang of priests, pacifists, Liberals and Lords only succeeded in demobilising a once-militant, if misguided adventurist anti-NF movement. The NF acts more freely than five years ago!

When the Sandwell Committee Against Racism and Fascism (SCARF) called an August 17 counter-mobilisation the ANL nationally called a separate one. And ANL/SCARF leaders both subordinate such calls to pleas for the cops to 'act'. A July 22 Birmingham meeting saw SCARF speakers (backed by old and 'New' Communist parties), and

Socialist Workers Party/ANL star Paul Holborow, beg the West Midlands Chief Constable to ban the NF march. A Spartacist League (SL) spokesman denounced such criminal illusion-mongering: the capitalist state invariably uses bans against the left and labour movement. The best thing cops can do on August 17 is get out of town. Let the workers movement deal with the fascist scum!

Stopping fascism means mass labour/black mobilisations. When the ANL was scabberding the 80,000-strong Carnival 2 to Brixton in 1978, the SL built a large contingent in defence of Brick Lane, Spitalfields, against the NF. Recently the SL/US built anti-fascist actions with strong union/black components in Detroit and San Francisco. It is a proletarian class-struggle strategy, not liberal pacifism or misdirected minority confrontations, that will crush the NF and point the way to destruction of the system which feeds it. For a mass union/black mobilisation in West Bromwich! Stop the NF!

Depression...

(Continued from page 1)

leadership the workers 'face the consequences' of a dying capitalism. Britain is not alone -- American workers are deep into a depression which even the bourgeois analysts now admit is headed for a replay of the thirties. But the world recession simply magnifies and exacerbates Depression Britain -- the terminal spasms of the pioneer of world capitalism. Many of the factories which are shutting down are closing for the last time -- and everybody knows it. The absolute decline of British capitalism is reflected most clearly in the once-prosperous industrial heartland of Britain, the West Midlands. This is where the biggest July unemployment increases were recorded. And as a *Guardian* journalist put it, the 'list of companies who have pared their workforces reads like a Who's Who of the motor industry'. Component firms like Lucas, Rubery Owen and Triplex have also been laying off, running at greatly reduced capacity or shelving projects.

It is no accident then that it is in the Midlands that the fascists of the National Front (NF) are planning to march in August for 'British Jobs for British Workers' (see box, page 10). after a failed march in Corby following the steel strike. Depression brings despair. And in the absence of a revolutionary leadership to galvanise the workers in struggle against the root cause of unemployment, the NF scum seek to tap the despair of jobless youth, the middle class and backward workers and use it in their plans for anti-union 'strong government' and ultimate holocaust. Fascism remains a palpable threat, and the West Midlands' slide into structural unemployment/social devastation characteristic of Merseyside, Scotland and the North-East provides a culture medium for its growth.

But unlike these other high-unemployment centres the West Midlands has large immigrant populations -- easy scapegoats for job losses and urban decay engendered by the crisis. The renewed spate of racial thuggery and the gangs of skinhead thugs in Birmingham sporting 'Anti Paki League' T-shirts, give a glimpse of things to come. The fight for the right work becomes inseparable from mobilising the proletariat to mercilessly crush the fascist vermin: strike pickets are the nuclei of the proletariat army, strikebreakers the nuclei of the fascist army.

But as the Tories move to impose legislative

shackles on the right to picket and moot the use of unemployed youth to break strikes, the labour misleaders and would-be misleaders do nothing but increasingly seek to compete with the fascists in jingoist flag-waving over jobs. The latest TUC-Labour joint paper, *Trade and Industry: A Policy for Expansion*, centres on the reactionary plea for import controls, and its growing popularity runs the reformist gamut -- right to 'left'. Even as the imperialists gear up their war machines in confrontation with those states which have instituted planned economies counterposed to the chaos of capitalism, the workers' own misleaders pave the road to war with the patriotic rubbish of protectionism. Having betrayed the steel workers, the Leyland workers and countless other struggles whose success could not only have staved off the mass redundancies but tempered the working class in combat to end capitalist unemployment for good, the bureaucrats now point the finger at workers overseas and call for increased trade war. Communists answer: The main enemy is at home -- not trade war, but class war.

'Buy British' won't save jobs

Their thirteen-week strike betrayed, Consett steel workers are today reduced to pleading their threatened plant's profitability to Downing Street. The government's cash handouts to this economically strategic industry are conditional on job losses and rationalisation. The bureaucrats comply, squealing for import controls. And the supposed Trotskyists of the International Marxist Group (IMG) back a Llanwrn 'Steelworkers Charter' which demands 'a market for all steel which can be produced by existing plant'. In the context of its other 'realistic and attainable' proposals, this can only mean more backhanded support for a 'Buy British' campaign.

And having accepted Sir Michael Edwardes draconian 'recovery plan' in Leylands, Terry Duffy and the TGWU bureaucrats now campaign for import quotas on foreign cars. As Ford limits its own imports into Britain it is beginning rationalisation of assembly production. Right now 'only' 2700 immediate redundancies are planned, primarily in the small plants, while Dagenham and Halewood are reserved for 'natural wastage' and speed-up. In the next ten years Ford projects a reduction of the workforce from around 70,000 to 30,000 through 'robotisation'.

But the response of Communist Party shop stewards in Dagenham in late June was to step up their protectionist campaign 'to keep Jap cars out', as one steward put it, by collecting 4000 signatures on a petition to that effect. On July 4 convenor Dan Connors carried a vote on the same theme at a mass meeting. 'Let's get the Japs, is the CP message to carworkers today -- just like the 'good old days' of 'people's war' under Winston Churchill -- fuelling existing racial divisions. Some white workers in Dagenham joke about an 'alphabetical' redundancy system -- 'Asians. Blacks and Coloureds first'.

A massive miners' strike later this year could turn it all around. But it won't be at the behest of people like Arthur Scargill. Writing in the gutter Daily Star (7 July) 'King' Arthur offered the 'sensible answer' to unemployment in the mines: 'introduce import controls and use British coal in our power stations, steelworks and industry in general'. And the supposedly 'revolutionary' Socialist Workers Party (SWP), supposedly opposed to protectionism, goes along with this sort of reactionary drivel. Back in December Socialist Worker hailed South Wales miners picketing docks against US coal imports. A Welsh SWPer even wrote in to ridicule the

'revolutionary purity' of 'some comrades', arguing that 'while we never support a passive demand' for import controls, when 'workers are actively fighting for jobs we must give them every support'. Why not try it when backward workers are misled into 'actively fighting' for immigration controls, SWP?

Workers must rule Britain!

Not only won't import controls solve the problems facing British workers, if the bourgeoisie did implement them widely it would hit the proletariat *harder*. Higher tariffs and import limits on foreign goods mean higher prices, both on those goods themselves and on goods from British manufacturers who would no longer have to compete with low-priced imports. Import controls would also mean *more*, not less, unemployment. Even under crumbling, uncompetitive British capitalism many jobs still depend on access to foreign markets. And when competitor countries respond in kind to British trade war measures those markets will disappear and so will the jobs.

And *protectionism means war*. Trade wars lead to shooting wars. It happened in the 1930s and it could happen again. Import controls could be the first step on the road to an imperialist World War III. No -- workers in Britain (the country that couldn't even win the 'cod war' with Iceland) have everything to lose and nothing to gain from the protectionist poison. Instead of backing 'their' bosses against foreign workers they must join hands with their class brothers around the world in a struggle against all the capitalist exploiters.

Inflation and unemployment are not 'choices' for the proletariat but twin evils of the capitalist system. And they demand, as Trotsky observed in the Transitional Programme, 'generalised slogans and methods of struggle'. Strikes and factory occupations must demand *work sharing on full pay* and a *sliding scale of wages* to follow the real movement of prices. Such demands pose a direct challenge to capitalism. As Trotsky pointed out:

'The question is not one of a "normal" collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralisation and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish.'

That British capitalism should have perished long ago hardly needs saying today. Outdated plant and tragi-comic labour productivity, held together for years by state handouts and Labourite 'nationalisations' must all be swept away.

The creative and socially necessary projects needed to put people to work in this decaying little island and build a better future, are only conceivable through drastic rationalisation and modernisation. Britain needs the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the destruction of capitalist anarchy and parasitism, and a couple of good 5-year plans under the iron dictatorship of the proletariat. Against the imperialist Common Market of the anti-Soviet NATO alliance or the 'little England' isolationism of the Labour 'lefts', communists fight for a Soviet Britain integrated into a United Socialist States of Europe. If you don't want a future of unemployment, fascism, poverty and war then your answer lies with the Spartacist League. Help build the revolutionary party that will smash the whole disgusting system and deal out some rough class justice to the leeches which feed off it. Forward to a workers government! ■

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Avenge Kemal Turkler — Smash the Grey Wolves!

For workers revolution in Turkey!

On July 22, fascist gunmen struck down Kemal Turkler outside his home in Istanbul. Turkler was head of the militant metal workers union (Maden Is), a founder and former president of the left-wing Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DISK) and a known sympathiser of the illegal Communist Party of Turkey (TKP). Three days earlier, leftist guerrillas had killed Nihat Erim, the former prime minister installed by the military coup of 1971. In May the deputy chairman of the fascist Nationalist Action Party (NAP), Gun Sazak, was blown away. Turkler was the victim of fascist reprisal. His murder was a direct fascist provocation against the whole of the workers movement.

Many Maden Is workers walked out in spontaneous strikes immediately. Faced with threats by the martial law authorities to sack every striker, the DISK leaders capitulated, channeling the workers' outrage into a one-day general strike. Despite efforts by the right-wing trade union confederation, Turk-Is, to prevent any act of solidarity by its members, fifteen unions jointly pledged that 'we will not let this attack go unanswered', and Turk-Is workers in Izmir joined the strike.

Turkler's assassination and the general strike it nearly precipitated underscore the social crisis in Turkey which has deepened since Suleyman Demirel, leader of the rightist Justice Party, became prime minister last October. The central government has lost control of whole areas of the country, either to fascist terror or to the left. Political violence leaves ten dead each day. Inflation is running near 100 per cent; 25 per cent of the workforce (some 5 million people) is unemployed. For the masses, life in Turkey today is exemplified by the new vocation of 'queueing' -- those out of work make a meagre living by selling their places in the long queues for petrol, cooking oil, sugar, light bulbs, virtually any basic necessity.

Particularly given the stepped-up anti-Soviet war drive and the events in Iran and Afghanistan, this instability deeply concerns the imperialist powers. This is 'where the eastern

tip of NATO and the western end of Islam overlap', intones the Economist (23 February), 'whose collapse could make the fall of Afghanistan sound by comparison, a distant rattle of stones in the hills'. Turkey is a strategic bulwark for military bases and listening posts aimed at the Soviet Union -- reflected in the right-wing press hysteria over possible Soviet invasion. And to stave off the collapse of this 'eastern tip of NATO' the imperialists have been pumping in huge amounts of economic aid, most recently a £1160 million aid package from the IMF.

In return they demand freer access for foreign investment, a cutback in the state enterprises and rigid austerity measures. Attempts have been made to extend the working day at the old daily pay rates, and to weed militants out of the unions. The Ministry of Employment circulates its own blacklist to the private sector of those who have been sacked for political reasons. But the workers retain their militancy. Some 25,000 workers were on strike in the metal trades in April, along with 16,000 textile workers, among others. Meanwhile fascist terror grows unabated and martial law has been extended to 19 provinces and every major city in the country. It will either erupt into a full-scale civil war reminiscent of Spain in the thirties, or a fascist-backed military coup will intercede to suppress the workers movement in blood. There is no middle road in Turkey today: the choice is a barbaric fascist/military dictatorship or a socialist proletarian



Bourgeois state will not ban fascists. Here Turkish police carry out brutal assault against leftist students.

dictatorship.

Barricades in Izmir

The military's failure thus far to take power directly is in part a heritage of the last coup, which badly tarnished its reputation as the bearer of Kemalist integrity and political neutrality. More importantly, the generals recognise that mass resistance to a coup attempt might well split this conscript army of peasants and workers -- and the workers have already demonstrated their readiness to fight, arms in hand.

When the government ordered a search for arms in the Tiris nationalised agricultural cooperative in Izmir last January, workers in the complex defended themselves. In rapid succession, the government sacked several hundred of them, 10,000 workers responded with a strike and government threats of closure were met with an occupation. Barricades were thrown up in the surrounding workers' districts. For three weeks, from January 22 to February 14, Tiris was in the hands of the workers, the police powerless to enter. But the DISK did little more than send a protest telegram to the president and call a token two-day strike which it ended prematurely, causing a general strike in Izmir to collapse. Finally the government sent in 10,000 troops, backed by tanks and helicopters, to overrun the barricades and crush the occupation. A brutal house-to-house search followed in the working-class districts. When the military was done, the

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July 26 protest against fascist assassination of Kemal Turkler outside Turkish embassy in London. A contingent from the Spartacist League carried placards in Turkish reading (from left to right): 'Workers militias to smash fascism in its own lair', 'Down with martial law', 'We will avenge Kemal Turkler, we will smash the Grey Wolves'. Turkish militants at the protest took up Spartacist-initiated chants, including 'Smash anti-Soviet war drive! Down with NATO!'. The protest was concluded with the singing of the Internationale in Turkish and English.



Spartacist Britain