

SPARTACIST



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BRITAIN

Pentagon plots nuclear first strike Anti-Soviet war fever

Not in a generation has the threat of atomic holocaust entered so alarmingly upon the political stage. One need only glance at the candidates for president of the deadliest imperialist power on earth to see why the nuclear fallout shelter industry has sprung back to life. Democrat Jimmy Carter and Republican Ronald Reagan have been calling each other out as the fastest nuclear triggers in the West. Carter's cold war drive against the Soviet Union has created the climate for ominous atomic bravado from Reagan. The Republicans argue with Orwellian 'war is peace' logic that the Democrats' arms build-up, which projects spending \$1 trillion in the next five years, is 'disarmament'. Reagan hails the genocidal Vietnam War as a 'noble cause', while the Democrats run television campaign commercials reminiscent of a John Wayne war film: jets, rockets, napalm aflame and ending up, 'Jimmy Carter, A Military Man, A Man of Peace'.

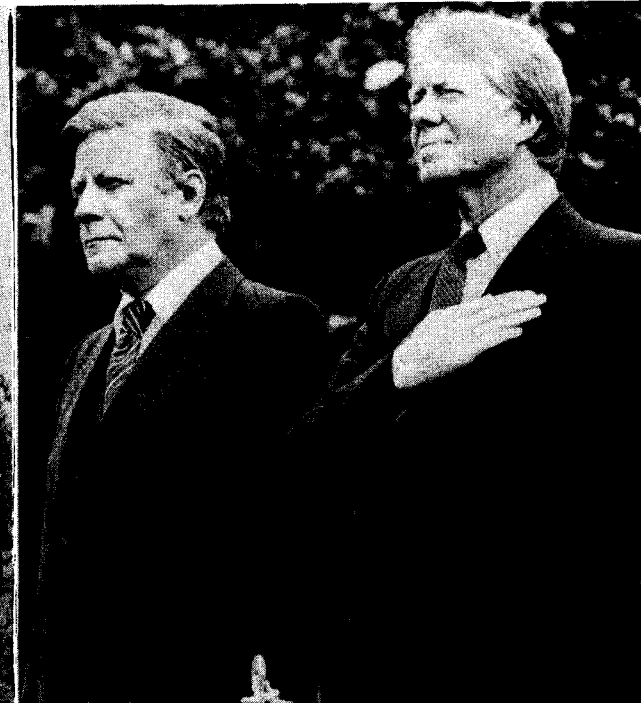
On the eve of the Democratic Party convention in August, word was 'leaked' that Carter had formally adopted nuclear war plans long advocated by military hardliners, previously known as 'counterforce strategy'. Presidential Directives (PD) 58 and 59 envisage fighting a 'prolonged but limited nuclear war', aim at knocking out the entire Soviet strategic missile force and train the cross hairs on the political and military leaders of the USSR (*New York Times*, 6 August). This was followed up by further revelations that the US had developed an 'invisible' plane to foil Russian radar, new 'uncannily accurate' missiles known as 'fire-and-forget' weapons, and in the future laser-armed 'battlestars' to orbit the earth incinerating the Soviets.

Carter's new directives spell out what has been implicit in the US' rearmament drive since its ignominious defeat in Vietnam. America's rulers seek to return to the days following World War II when they could throw their weight around with nuclear blackmail. Their now stated goal is to achieve a first-strike capacity, the ability to destroy the Soviet nuclear arsenal so that imperialism can dictate its terms with the threat of annihilating Russia's peoples and industry. Way beyond thinking the unthinkable, they're planning it.

The MX missile, which makes the US' now explicit 'hard-target counterforce' strategy possible, was excluded from the current strategic arms limitation talks (SALT II) limits and went into production in 1979. The MX is a mobile missile, 200 of which (with ten highly accurate warheads apiece) are to be made invulnerable to attack through an elaborate 4600-mile underground 'racetrack' -- at a total cost of over



Cruise missile - aimed at Soviet Union.



Helmut Schmidt (left) with Jimmy Carter.

\$100 billion. A leading bourgeois critic of the programme, Herbert Scoville, has pointed out that the only rationale for such a huge missile is to carry more warheads, that the only conceivable target for the warheads is the Soviet ICBM fleet (presently estimated at 1400 missiles), and that 'a silo-busting force is of value only for a "first strike" since an attack in response would only hit empty silos'.

Planning the 'unthinkable' is nothing new for the US imperialists. And they are prepared to go way beyond the planning boards. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed in an act of calculated savagery -- calculated to keep the USSR out of the Pacific basin. It was not so much the last explosion of World War II as the first shot of the post-war Cold War/hot war against the Soviet Union. Capitalist class hostility towards the Russian degenerated workers state has been at the heart of US nuclear policy ever since. And they were ready to push the button all along: Truman contemplated it in 1951 over Korea, Eisenhower's National Security Council discussed it in 1954 over Vietnam, and Kennedy threatened it over Cuba in 1962.

After the 'golden years' of nuclear blackmail in the post-war 'American century' (which actually lasted only twice as long, 25 years, as Hitler's 'Thousand Year Reich'), the Pentagon warhawks were forced to come to terms with the Russian Bomb. After Sputnik they launched a major nuclear armament drive which Kennedy justified by the claim of a bogus 'missile gap'. On the basis of clear US atomic superiority, Kennedy put Khrushchev up against the wall in the Cuban missile crisis. But to assure nervous liberals, his university think-tank advisers devised a strategic policy known as MAD -- Mutual Assured Destruction -- the aptest acronym ever, as one bourgeois journalist noted. MAD had a simple premise: if the US bombed Russia's major cities, the Russians would do the same to the US. Thus the impulse to a first strike was supposedly checked, and it was fatuously argued nuclear war had become 'unthinkable'. Yet it was clear that in the war-simulation rooms of American imperialism the generals, braintrusts and presidents thought of little else than winning against the Soviets.

If the US nuclear arsenal came to be considered 'political deadwood', as Kissinger put

it later, it was not for qualms about being the first to unleash atomic annihilation but for a very different reason: relative nuclear parity with the USSR. The Soviet Union had substantially caught up with the West in numbers of ICBMs while the US was bogged down spending billions of dollars on rifles and helicopters for its Vietnam quagmire. But while the computer bombs and laser beams burped and hummed and twinkled destruction, American imperialism was defeated nonetheless -- a reminder to the technology freaks that it is not military technique but class forces that determine the course of history. Ever since the North Vietnamese drove the American army off the peninsula, the Pentagon has sought to recover from this humiliating rout by regaining global nuclear superiority over Russia. But in the post-Vietnam political climate of pervasive bourgeois defeatism the Republican administration of 'Tricky Dick' Nixon was unable to mobilise support even for a modest imperialist adventure in Angola, much less a massive arms drive.

What is new and most dangerous now is that the US bourgeoisie has reestablished a political base for aggressive militarism. This has been the constant goal of the Carter administration, as we have pointed out from the very beginning (see '"Human Rights" Crusade Fuels US War Machine', *Workers Vanguard* no 154, 22 April 1977). While the rest of the left was calling on Carter to 'live up to his words', we warned that this moral rearmer would soon be militarily rearming American imperialism for war against the USSR. Now the chauvinist furore over the Tehran hostage seizure and US threats over Soviet intervention in Afghanistan have created the Cold War climate for the biggest weapons build-up since 1945.

Masses' fear of war

Not since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 has there been such open and official talk from Washington about winning a 'controlled' nuclear war -- now euphemistically called a 'nuclear event'. Soviet Communist Party leader Brezhnev responded to Carter's directives that their purpose was to 'make the idea of nuclear war sort of acceptable to public opinion', and *Pravda*

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Our morals and theirs

Depression Britain's miserable enough. And then on top of everything you're expected to swallow megadoses of ruling class hypocrisy. Sometimes the gall is surreal, as in the Blunt affair. Margaret Thatcher admitted Blunt was the 'Fourth Man' in the Philby/Burgess/Maclean spy ring after he was exposed in *The Climate of Treason* by Andrew Boyle. But if the ruling class was shaken it had little to do with espionage; more a fit of pique. A high-level cover-up was blown open and now the 'public' knew. Blunt had confessed all to a select circle including the Queen (but not the Prime Minister) in 1964. Since then he had worked on as Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures and received a knighthood. It was a bad show all round. 'Blunty' had to go -- even if he was Her Majesty's distant cousin.

The old aesthete's fall from grace had ironic sides -- and not just because homosexual KGB agents devalue feudal titles. As we noted at the time in 'Queen of Spies?':

'For years part of the Philby circle, on the face of it Anthony Blunt finally opted for betraying not his class origins but his comrades, and the cause for which they fought. If this is so, it is fitting that as a turncoat Blunt must end his days reviled by those who 'turned' him, while Maclean and Philby are honored in Moscow.' (*Workers Vanguard* no 246, 28 December 1979)

But that doesn't make the antics of Blunt's erstwhile chums any less repulsive. In July a bunch of dons, mainly from Cambridge, tried to expel him from the British Academy. At first they lost to resistance from Oxford (the boat race won't be the same), but they kept the heat

on and in August Blunt resigned.

The 'Blunt must go' campaigners thought spying and 'free intellectual inquiry' were incompatible. Of course other academy fellows were spies too. Historian Hugh Trevor-Roper was in British intelligence and is now Lord Dacre; Blunt worked for the Soviets and is a victim of 'intellectual freedom'. Well, the British Academy stinks anyway, but it was nice to see A J P Taylor and Professor Richard Cobb decide that it wasn't cricket and resign in protest. (It's not the first time Taylor's cut through bullshit either. In 1977 he said that British troops oppressed Irish Catholics and should get out -- and that the longer they remained the more likely the conflict would be resolved by bloody civil war. And as a historian he doesn't just blame World War II on Germany either.)

The British ruling class doesn't have much left to be proud of -- save a couple of very profitable City banks and an efficient SAS. So it rubs hard when someone goes to public school to learn faggot, a stiff upper lip and requisite skills in cynicism and duplicity, and then after all that good education ends up helping the Reds. Even now there may be young Etonians who don't relish joining the chinless wonders who run this little island. They could do a lot worse than emulate that most honourable schoolboy, Soviet master spy Kim Philby.

Then there's Lord Mountbatten, an imperialist butcher who -- among other noble acts -- deliberately starved hundreds of thousands of Bengalis to death as part of British military policy during the Second World War. His long-delayed exit (courtesy of an IRA bomb) caused a



Nehru, Mountbatten and wife: for king and country?

flood of nauseating eulogies. But the publication of Richard Hough's *Mountbatten: A Hero of our Time* a year later has caused a furore -- the ex-earl's kin rushed to disown it. Hough says 'Lord Louis' liked the company of 'handsome social chaps' and couldn't sate his wife's sexual appetite. Sex ought to be a pleasurable act among consenting individuals but Mountbatten apparently only got worked up about sex in the context of power politics and got a voyeuristic kick from Lady Edwina's accounts of her extramarital affairs. Hough suggests that negotiations over Indian independence were influenced through the medium of Lady Mountbatten

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Consett: Set up for the kill

After more than a century of continuous production the furnaces of Consett steelworks in this County Durham steel town have finally been blown out. On September 12 2900 men were thrown on the scrap heap -- three of them were found new employment by the local jobs centre -- and another 500 were kept to run the plant down. The British Steel Corporation (BSC) vacated Consett's stay of execution after a fortnight of rumours that a mysterious consortium would buy the works. When hopes had been strung out long enough they were dashed. As steelmen who had spent their adult lifetimes slaving away for BSC went through the gates for the last time, knowing they had no future and would even wait a year for full redundancy pay, they took with them BSC's last 'gift'. In jobless years to come they can stare at the bosses' bitterly ironic 'souvenirs' -- small ingots of Consett steel -- and remember with hatred their exploiters, and their betrayers.

Consett steelmen can now recall the words of Bill Sirs, who sold out the thirteen-week long steel strike with chatter about 'gird[ing] our loins for the next struggle in which we can



fight the case for jobs'. Struggle? Fight?! These workers were in the forefront of the strike for week on bitter week -- they fought and they fought valiantly -- till they were traded for the miserable eleven per cent 'self-

financing' pay rises. And their fate was sealed then. Now the steelmen's plight is captured in the words of the union branch secretary at Consett, John Lee. He refused to appear on television though offered cash -- but he told the *Guardian* (13 September) of his trip to the local jobs centre: 'They had nothing for me. All I know is steelmaking.'

The Consett men tried everything they knew. They protested; they lobbied the TUC; months after the steel strike was betrayed they marched on London -- and they didn't have to be betrayed. But it would have taken turning the steel strike into a general strike -- and that's what militant strikers wanted.

The workers of Consett have every cause to hate those that effected and aided that betrayal. From Bill Sirs, through 'left' local leaders like South Yorkshire's 'We're going back united' Brian Molyneux, to the Socialist Workers Party and International Marxist Group who were

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RCT cornered on support for mullahs

A four-way debate on Iran September 7 became the highlight of an otherwise dreary conference organised by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT) on 'Imperialism in the 80s'. What made it the highlight is that the left-centrist Workers Power (WP), the Iranian Fedayeen group and the RCT were forced to confront the Trotskyist programme of the Spartacist League (SL), the only tendency which refused to capitulate to clerical reaction in Iran.

RCT speaker Phil Murphy began by insisting that this time the RCT would discuss something other than its little England hobby-horse, 'fighting chauvinism' in Britain. But the RCT's 'internationalist' line consisted of little more than apologetics for the mullahs and (bad) 'advice to the Fedayeen'. After the SL opened fire, Murphy retreated to the usual RCT know-nothingism, pompously lecturing on the need for 'British revolutionaries' to 'prevent imperialism's advance in the Middle East' and slandering the SL for having 'supported the shah'.

What this opportunist jargon means, as SL speaker Di Parkin pointed out, is that unlike them we refused to support Khomeini, pointing

the way instead to an independent proletarian mobilisation against both the tyranny of the shah and the reaction of the mullahs. 'There are those who believe there are "gains of the Iranian revolution" to be defended', challenged comrade Parkin, 'or in the title of the Workers Power pamphlet, "made permanent". We say there are no gains, and that the way forward is to recognise that.'

The Fedayeen speaker proved that in the negative by calling for 'critical support' to Khomeini and a 'just peace' in Kurdistan, while joining the RCT in slandering the SL. But a just peace for the Kurds is contingent on their right to self-determination -- and this the Fedayeen spokesman opposed with the time-worn counter-revolutionary plait that the Kurdish struggle was 'dividing the people'. In refusing to repudiate their support to the mullahs, the Fedayeen, who have fought arms-in-hand alongside the Kurds, openly betray their just struggle.

The best Workers Power could do throughout the debate was to stand in the shadow of the SL and show that they had also talked out of the other side of their mouth, 'warning' against Islamic reaction while alibiing Khomeini and supporting the movement to put him in power. WP spokesman Dave Stocking did avoid the vulgar pro-shah baiting of the others and he did make a good point: while Iranian groups, 'as the Spartacists say in their paper', may have blood on their hands, 'the RCT will probably never have more than ink on their fingers'. ■

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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'Thank you for producing a fine revolutionary newspaper'

Kettering
9 September 1980

Dear Comrade,

Could you send me the next 24 issues of 'Workers Vanguard' plus Spartacist theoretical journal and the next 10 issues of 'Spartacist Britain'. I would also like a copy of 'The Russian Question Point Blank'.

Thank you for producing a fine revolutionary newspaper.

Yours fraternally
John Lunetto

Peckham
2 September 1980

Dear Spartacist Britain,

Although I am not a sympathiser of your organisation, I am a regular reader of your press, i.e. 'Spartacist Britain' and 'Workers Vanguard'. I find your attitude towards other left groups extremely sectarian. I am not a member of any group and would describe myself as an independent revolutionary socialist, sympathetic to Trotsky(ism). I was a member of the Labour Party 78-80, but decided the reformist road was no longer an option.

In the process of my leaving the Labour Party I approached the 'Militant' group, but found their contortions/rationalising of belonging to the Labour Party left them in the same reformist swamp! In particular their hostility towards the palestinian revolution led them to capitulate to the pro-Israel camp! I tried working as an individual, but that didn't lead anywhere -- so I've left.

Now when one leaves the Labour Party, boy have you got problems since there are a myriad of left groups available; SWP, WRP, IMG, WSL, SL/B and so on. (n.b. serious revolutionaries should discount the Communist Party as a body, which has become just another left-reformist Party!). I read the press of all these groups which brings me to the SL/B.

Your paper makes interesting reading in that you raise the ideological disputes on the left, but that is where it ends. With capitalism reeling into crisis, and the class under attack, I cannot see the logic of devoting 8 out of 12 pages to denouncing other left groups in your August/September issue (no 24). What we need is unity of the left and an end to the incestuous squabbling that exists. After all we all wish to see socialism a reality and not a pipedream, don't we?

Instead of your so-called ideological purity and your claim to be the sole continuation of Trotsky's Fourth International, how about trying to reach agreement with other left groups towards left unity with an organisation that emphasises the democratic part of democratic-centralism so that intolerance no longer reigns!

Let us learn from the lessons of the Left Opposition and their struggle against the bureaucratic/autocratic manipulation of the party. Let us unite to bring down capitalism and Stalinism through a re-forged Fourth International!

Yours Fraternally,
Howard J Fuller

Spartacist Britain replies: It's hard to understand why comrade Fuller left the Labour Party except to have a lot of extra time to write letters. He has also appealed (unnecessarily) to the IMG's *Socialist Challenge* to renew its 'socialist unity' offensive. Lately, a letter signed 'HJF Peckham' appeared in the WSL's *Socialist Press* praising the IMG and WSL's 'great contribution' to 'unity' and denouncing 'the pedantic diatribe of groups like the sectarian "Spartacist League" whose rantings are divisive in the class'.

Like Trotsky's Left Opposition, we stand for unity -- around the programme of socialist revolution -- not with scabs, mullah-lovers or capitulators to imperialist anti-Sovietism. What makes our paper 'interesting reading' as opposed to the dreary rags that Fuller praises like *Socialist Press* and *Socialist Challenge*

with their phoney pretensions to address the masses is that our paper is directed towards the tasks of a fighting propaganda group -- revolutionary regroupment based on programmatic clarity, not opportunist unity, and exemplary interventions into arenas of mass struggle, not indiscriminate tailism. Unity? Yes. Betrayal of the revolutionary programme? No.

Surrey
20 August 1980

Dear Comrades,

Was it just coincidence that my subscription renewal slip came with a very, very good issue of Spartacist Britain?

Seriously, I thought that Spartacist Britain 24 contained some very good analysis, especially in its centre-page article on the SWP's genesis & degeneration. I must point out that I do not agree with quite a few of your policies,

but that, as I consider myself to be a Trotskyist, I wholly support your defencist stance vis-a-vis the USSR, which is, I believe, one of the acid tests of any revolutionary socialist. It would be very easy to join the SWP's bleatings about the Soviet Union, but ease should not be a guide to revolutionary action.

However, I feel that your analyses of both the SWP and the IMG lack a truly materialist perspective. You do not seem in Spartacist Britain to acknowledge the causes for the twistings & turnings of either group. What is so clear throughout the SWP is that it represents petit-bourgeois socialism. It is this which makes them concentrate on anti-statism & opposition to Chinese & Soviet 'adventurism' (read: revolutionary war). The reason the SWP holds so dearly to Cliff's theories of 'state capitalism' is because, in a typically trendy middle class

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Subscription drive

Spartacist Britain is holding its first public subscription drive this month. Who else said that mullahs' rule in Iran meant dark reaction? Exposed the vacillators and betrayers who stood between the steel workers and a general strike? Hailed the Red Army's fight against enslavers of women in Afghanistan? No one! Our coverage and polemics are unique on the British left for their hard-hitting honesty -- because they are written uniquely from the perspective of the proletarian revolution. And Workers Vanguard, the paper of the Spartacist League/US, provides a broader range of coverage every fortnight. That's why you should subscribe now to Spartacist Britain and Workers Vanguard.

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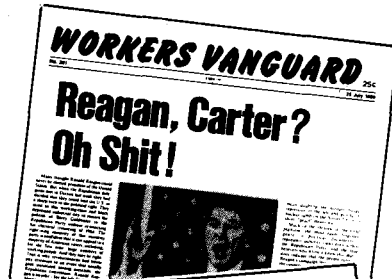
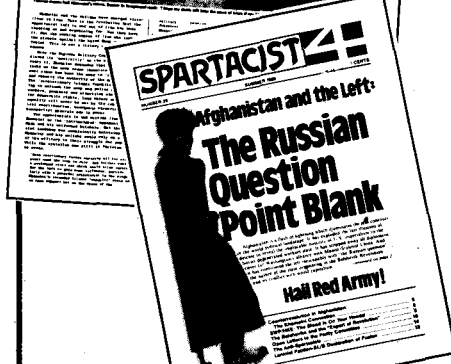
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All the way with the imam

USec 'chador socialist' on tour

'Protest against Fatima Fallahi, apologist for Islamic reaction!' That was the theme of a campaign waged by the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ) during July in answer to a speaking tour of Australia by this pro-Khomeini 'chador socialist' organised by the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Australian section of the rotten-bloc United Secretariat (USec). And from Sydney to Melbourne, for all those who heard Fallahi speak, one thing was crystal clear: the SL/ANZ was right. Fallahi, her organisation, the HKE ('Revolutionary Workers Party'), and her Australian co-thinkers of the SWP are mullah-lovers who have 'followed the imam's line' to the hilt, willing to defend virtually every crime of the Khomeini regime against the left, the working class, the national minorities and the women of Iran.

At meeting after meeting, Fallahi lovingly recounted the 'progressive' role of the mullahs in overthrowing the shah; how since then, the Iranian people have never had it so good; how the Islamic *shoras* are 'soviets' in the making; and how all is *still* for the best in what she sees as this best of all possible 'revolutions'. Her method of 'argument' followed well the pattern of the SWP's 'Pollyanna goes to Tehran' coverage of Iran: see no evil, speak no truth. In the name of 'getting out the truth about our revolution', she resorted time and again to the Big Lie. And just as Goebbels advised, she told them big.

But our campaign ensured that her lying public relations effort for Khomeini was challenged all down the line. In Melbourne the SL/ANZ organised a picket of nearly fifty people outside the SWP's exclusionist meeting. Spirited chants 'Defend the left in Iran -- SWP says no!', 'Smash Persian chauvinism! Send Khomeini to the Kurds!' and 'SWP! HKE! Running dogs of Khomeini!' rang out to greet people trickling in, at least ten of whom decided *not* to go in after speaking to Spartacist supporters.

At the meeting at the Sydney Trade Union Club on July 11, the SL/ANZ distributed leaflets demanding that Fallahi answer ten questions on Iran, and inviting people to come to the counter-meeting our comrades had organised in the same building that night. The SWP too had its leaflet, 'justifying' its exclusion of Spartacist supporters from its 'public' meeting. But individuals in the audience -- among them SL/ANZ sympathisers whom the SWP goons had failed to catch when vetting the audience at the door -- nonetheless demanded answers. As one woman comrade put it:

'Why have you made no mention of the slaughter of the left on the campuses? Why is your organisation the only one that can freely operate? Why is your newspaper published and 48 others suppressed? Why were you released just a few days before the killings on campuses? ... There is no room in a Trotskyist programme for a religious reactionary regime of mullahs....'

Fallahi's response? Evasion, then silence -- even on the question of why the HKE was allowed to operate legally, while the rest of the left was systematically harassed. When a Kurd from Turkey asked, 'Thousands of Kurds were killed by Khomeini, what do you say?', Fallahi's answer was a straight lie: 'Khomeini did not kill them.' Unable to deny that Kurds have been massacred en masse in Iran, she attempted to pin the killings on anonymous generals left over from the old regime, but when 'Khomeini heard about it, he made a statement that brother should not kill brother. After he made this statement the majority of Kurdish peasants supported the imam's line, and only those who went against the imam's line were shot.' Even *Intercontinental Press* (14 July), published by the US SWP for the HKE's international tendency, recently printed a statement by the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' admitting that 'Since April 15, the Tehran government has launched, on the command of the Council of the Islamic Revolution and Ayatollah Khomeini, its second large-scale offensive against the Kurdish Revolution'. Another 'imperialist slander' against the 'Iranian Revolution'? No wonder a number of people, includ-

ing ordinary liberals, walked out of the Fallahi meeting in disgust, some coming to the SL/ANZ meeting to hear the *truth* about Iran.

My imam right or wrong

Confronted with the mullahs' execution of gays and anyone engaged in extra-marital sex, Fallahi justified these atrocities too by saying, 'these are our traditions'. What these 'traditions' are was graphically illustrated just eight days before Fallahi spoke by a barbaric execution which took place in the southern Iranian town of Kerman. Four people, including

Fatima Fallahi speaks:

'Our revolution is a progressive revolution and one of the beautiful revolutions in the whole world history.'

'We've got the only Islamic socialist revolution in the world.'

'We're proud of the chador, a symbol of our struggle against US imperialism.'

'I wear my chador, go to the mosque at five o'clock, join prayers and after prayers sit down and talk politics. And they know I'm a socialist and they respect me.'

(Question: '... is it true that homosexuals are being stoned to death in Iran?')

'Well, it is not true.... those people that were executed ... they were not homosexuals. These people, they were rap[ing] the kids, or gave money to the kids to have a sexual life with them.... The majority of the Iranian people, they don't know what the homosexuality is.' ... if a girl is going to have a sexual life before getting married, the family don't want to let her in the house anymore. So the majority of the Iranian people, their custom is not to have any sexual rights before getting married....'

On the stonings of gays and adulterers:

'This is a backward country; these are our traditions. As a socialist I am personally against violence of this kind. You have to understand it is a 95 percent Moslem country ... out of revolution comes evolution.'

two middle-aged women, had been convicted of 'sexual crimes' and were ritualistically stoned to death in the traditional Islamic manner. The four victims were sacramentally washed by the clergy, clothed in white garments and 'hoods of death', buried in the ground up to their chests, and then stoned for fifteen minutes until they died, with the presiding judge casting the first stone.

Nor is this the only 'tradition' that Fallahi defends. At her meetings she consistently hailed the *chador*, the veil which symbolises the oppression of women in Iran, as something 'beautiful', something 'we're proud of', 'a symbol to fight against US imperialism and about the capitalism inside the country'. It's just like wearing a 'sari', a 'workers uniform', 'blue jeans' even! And she openly *boasted* about her own routine in Iran:

'I wear my *chador*, go to the mosque at 5 o'clock, join prayers and after prayers sit down and talk politics. And they know that I'm a socialist and they respect me.'

At her forum at Sydney University on July 14, she also explained her 'position' on gay rights to a questioner who had said, 'I am not a Spartacist, but is it true that homosexuals are being stoned to death in Iran?' She replied:

'Well, it is not true.... We are opposed, as socialists, to any execution of anything. But the thing is, the homosexuality in Iran is different from Europe and the United States ... those people that were executed ... they were not homosexuals. These people, they were rap[ing] the kids, or gave the money to the kids to have a sexual life with them.... The majority of the Iranian people, they don't know what the homosexuality is.'

When this drew a derisive laugh from the audience, she quickly added that of course, if Iranians wanted 'to have it [homosexuality], they can have it at home'! Sure -- whatever the local 'imam's committee' says about its victims must be true. If Khomeini says homosexuals are all child-molesters and rapists, the HKE says

the same thing. After all, 'the imam' is their hero -- and the protector of their legality amid slaughter! He 'has been right before, he never compromises, and he is right now', as Fallahi put it on July 11. Fittingly, when a Spartacist reporter intervened at the Sydney University talk -- against attempts by SWPers to shout her down -- to denounce such nauseating justifications for oppression and murder, it was a woman clad in a veil who rose to defend Fallahi and her revered ayatollah.

For Fallahi and the HKE, the mullahs' victory against the shah in February 1979 was 'a pro-



gressive revolution and one of the beautiful revolutions in the whole world history'. What now exists is the opportunity for the peaceful development of this 'revolution' or, as she put it at the Sydney Trade Union meeting, 'out of revolution comes evolution'. To back up this wholesale adaptation to the mullahs' rule, Fallahi necessarily conjures up a post-shah Iran in which 'women are participating more in the social life than ever before' in which the Kurdish national minority in particular has gained 'a lot', like the opportunity to 'speak in their own language'; in which there is 'freedom of press, freedom of political activity, freedom of all those groups' outlawed under the shah (try telling that to the Fedayeen, Fallahi). Even the HKE, the USec's other Iranian section, attacks the suppression of the press in its (banned) newspaper for helping 'to destroy the gains of the February uprising' (*Che Bayad Kard* no 23, August/September 1980), revealing in the process the same perspective of an 'Iranian Revolution' with which it tailed the mullahs on the road to suicide.

During the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, Stalin too painted Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang as 'progressive anti-imperialists' in order to justify his 'two-stage revolution' dogma (first a bourgeois-democratic one, then someday a socialist sequel). But the pseudo-Trotskyist SWP/HKE have gone the Stalinists one better by discovering an 'anti-imperialist' feudal caste -- the Persian Shi'ite clergy. And they have explicitly ruled out any further 'revolution' by saying that it's all downhill 'evolution' from here on.

Even before Khomeini came to power, the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) was alone in warning that a Shi'ite Muslim theocracy would be just as reactionary as the justly hated Pahlavi monarchy. But this obvious truth was branded as heresy by the SWP and the other opportunists who only saw 'the masses in motion' and so hailed the 'Islamic Revolution' ('the

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Workers and Kurds face savage repression

Down with Turkish dictatorship!



On September 12, after months of spiralling political instability, the Turkish military under chief of staff General Kenan Evren seized power from the government of Suleyman Demirel's rightist Justice Party. As army limousines whisked politicians off to 'protective custody', the new National Security Council cracked down on potential opposition. All party headquarters were shut down, thousands of 'extremists' rounded up, strikers ordered back to work and 750 labour organisations banned. Evren appeared on television immediately after the 'bloodless' coup to warn that resistance would be 'broken in the severest manner instantaneously'. And though resistance was virtually non-existent, some 3000 were reportedly arrested at one Ankara university alone and 108 people detained in a dragnet in one heavily Kurdish area. On September 21 the military decreed draconian censorship and state control over all union activity and ordered soldiers to shoot to kill those disobeying them. The next day more than 500 people were arrested as tanks and troops were sent into the Kurdish community of Baglar in eastern Turkey following a protest demanding 'an end to martial law' and 'a curse on exploitation' -- the first significant action against the coup. Military dictatorships are never bloodless -- and this one promises to exact its share from the long oppressed Kurds.

The imperialist response was summed up in the *Economist's* 'Welcome back, generals'. Washington openly admitted advance knowledge and, after a few ritual genuflections to 'democracy' and expressions of 'dismay', bourgeois politicians throughout the EEC countries joined in with unabashed 'relief'. Turkey is a strategic bulwark in the anti-Soviet NATO alliance, with the second largest army in NATO and a common border with the Soviet Union. Evren, a veteran of the imperialist aggression in Korea, immediately pledged loyalty to NATO; NATO manoeuvres sited in Turkey continued without interruption during the coup.

The bourgeois press lauded Evren's 'evenhandedness', pointing out that a fascist paper and the small fascist-run 'labour' organisation were banned in addition to leftist papers and the powerful Confederation of Revolutionary Unions (DISK). The Turkish military makes much of its 'Kemalist tradition' of political 'neutrality', harking back to the secularist and modernising independence movement of 1919-1923 led by the former Ottoman general Mustapha Kemal (Kemal Ataturk). One right-wing Turkish paper heralded the coup with the headline, 'Continuing in the way of Ataturk'. But



Military roadblock: shoot to kill workers and Kurds.

the 'way of Ataturk' includes the brutal repression of the Kurdish minority and the nascent organisations of the working class -- the Turkish Communist Party (TKP) has been officially outlawed since 1926. The 'evenhanded' Evren is a self-proclaimed enemy of 'separatists' (ie the Kurds) and 'those who sing the Communist Internationale instead of our national anthem' (*Financial Times*, 13 September).

With its strong commitment to separation of mosque and state, the military may indeed have been alarmed -- as some papers have speculated -- by the growth of the Islamic fundamentalist National Salvation Party (NSP) of Necmettin Erbakan. A month before the coup the NSP led a march through Konya (Turkey's equivalent of Qom) demanding imposition of the 'Sheriat' (Islamic law) and carrying banners in Arabic script, which has been illegal since the introduction of the Latin alphabet in 1928. Nor could Turkey's NATO allies have been too pleased about the prospect of a bunch of mullahs gaining sway as in Iran. So Erbakan may face a hard time -- following an earlier coup in 1960, the military executed the former prime minister Menderes -- a prospect which should not disturb class-conscious workers, whose demand should be for the defence of the military's class-war prisoners.

Two decades, three coups

The bonapartist role of the military in Turkish society has historically been strong. It is no accident that the president of the republic has always been a former high-ranking officer. The Turkish masses today find themselves under the yoke of a military dictatorship for the third time in two decades, interspersed with periods of fragile parliamentary rule maintained only at the military's sufferance. In 1960 the corrupt and ineffectual Menderes government was toppled because of its failure to put a halt to economic chaos and stagnation and direct an orderly capitalist development. In 1971 the military moved in again to suppress a rising tide of working-class struggle and widespread left-wing unrest in the universities, which were reflected even within the army. The army handed the government back to the political parties in 1973, but only after dealing the workers movement a blow from which it has never recovered. The resulting demoralisation within the proletariat was exacerbated by the futile 'armed struggle' strategy embraced by many of its best militants -- including Guevarist groups like the defunct Devrimci Genclik -- who were killed in shootouts with the army or tortured and murdered in its dungeons.

The situation today is different in one ominous respect. The decimation and disorientation of the left since 1971 has been coupled with the growth of fascist and rightist forces. The bourgeoisie wants to 'shock' the deeply troubled Turkish economy with a dose of Friedman's Chile treatment. And if the bonapartist military dictatorship fails to do the job effectively, the fascists are waiting in the wings. Indeed it has long been part of the fascists' strategy to provoke a military coup.

The officer caste (its self-styled 'neutrality' to the contrary) is deeply penetrated by the fascist Nationalist Action Party (NAP) of former army colonel Alparslan Turkes. (Though he later surrendered, Turkes was the only party leader to escape the initial army swoop.) Evren may feel safe in tackling the Islamic fundamentalists, but even if he wanted to suppress the fascists -- if only to safeguard the military's own monopoly over violence and repression -- he is held back by the prospect of paralysis within the army and another, fascist-inspired coup.

The road forward for the Turkish proletariat today hinges on its most militant elements repudiating the class-collaborationist policies which helped pave the way for the military takeover. Despite heroic struggles, exemplified by the barricades in the proletarian districts of Izmir in January or the strikes which followed the fascist murder of DISK leader Kemal Turkler in July, the Turkish workers were led further and further into an impasse. The very fact that the coup met little initial open resistance (and may even have been welcomed by broad layers of the population, long afraid to frequent their local cafes for fear of terrorist attacks) sharply underscores the absence of an authoritative revolutionary leadership with a clear line of action to defend the workers, the left and the Kurds from fascist terror.

No to popular frontism

Virtually without exception the Turkish left has capitulated to the 'progressive' illusions fostered in the once discredited bourgeois Republican People's Party (RPP) by its current leader Bulent Ecevit. From the Stalinist TKP right through to the fake-Trotskyist groupings affiliated to the United Secretariat, they extended 'critical' political support to this bourgeois party, even when an Ecevit government presided over the invasion of Cyprus and condoned the permanent military occupation and repression of the Kurdish regions. The craven TKP went so far as to assist the RPP in purging other leftists from the DISK, only to be rewarded by a purge of its own supporters at the hands of the RPP.

The development of a 'Leninist' wing of the TKP (effectively a separate party grouped around *Iscenin Sesi*, published in Britain) undoubtedly reflects indignation among some Turkish leftists at such unremitting grovelling before Ecevit. But *Iscenin Sesi's* continuing espousal of an 'advanced people's democratic revolution' and its belief in 'progressive' generals is evidence of a refusal to break from Stalinist popular frontism. Today its intransigent-sounding denunciation of the coup as 'fascist' only paves the way for a new 'anti-fascist people's front', replete with RPP politicians and even possibly Islamic reactionaries.

Turkish leftists who seek a revolutionary road must confront the real record of Stalinism -- including the notoriously pervasive violence against opponent working-class tendencies -- steeped in class-collaborationist treachery. In a previous article (*Spartacist Britain* no 24, August/September 1980) we counterposed to the road of popular frontism and the complementary 'armed struggle' substitutionism of Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Path) and the smaller Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left) -- offspring of Devrimci Genclik -- the necessity for the independent mobilisation of the proletariat. We emphasised in particular the urgency of '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'. A successful defence would have laid the basis for a pre-revolutionary situation, posing the prospect of the only real solution to the plight of the Turkish workers and oppressed, not a 'democratic' but a proletarian revolution.

The article was flawed however in its over-estimation of the immediate revolutionary possibilities given the defensive position in which the working class found itself:

'In the pre-revolutionary situation facing Turkey this would rapidly lead to a situation of dual power and the possibility for even a

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The programme of political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist usurpers is the property of Trotskyism and Trotskyism alone. A successful speaking tour September 10-12 by Spartacist League (SL) Central Committee member Mark Hyde underscored that point in presenting the Marxist analysis of the Polish workers upsurge to audiences totalling some 100 people in Sheffield, Birmingham and London.

Tracing the background to the recent upsurge in the strikes of 1956, 1970 and 1976 and in the economic concessions by the bureaucracy which benefitted the landholding peasantry, bolstered the Catholic church and tightened the imperialist economic stranglehold, comrade Hyde said:

'The grievances of the Polish workers are very deep and real. The Stalinist bureaucracy has brought Poland to the brink of the present crisis -- but it is not sufficient simply for there to be an endless cycle of demands for higher wages. It's no solution to the crisis of the Polish workers. What's necessary is workers political revolution, its international extension. It has to be based on preservation and extension of the planned economy.'

But the latest strike wave, though supportable insofar as it enhanced the workers' power to struggle against the bureaucracy, was extremely contradictory, warned Hyde, posing both the promise of workers political revolution and the danger of capitalist counterrevolution. 'The Polish workers could have burned a few US flags.... It would have been a symbol to the Russian proletariat who their enemies were and who their friends were.' Emphasising a key difference between Hungary 1956 and Poland today in the menacing influence of a highly organised counterrevolutionary institution -- the Catholic church -- comrade Hyde referred the audience to an interview with strike leader Lech Walesa on BBC's 'Panorama' (8 September). Filmed carrying a two-foot crucifix into his new union headquarters, Walesa revealed his credo of 'free trade unionism' to the bourgeois reporter: 'That crucifix will remain in that office as long as I work there.'

Hyde outlined the necessity of raising demands aimed at the ruling bureaucracy's parasitic privileges and political monopoly -- for trade unions independent of the bureaucracy and based on a programme of defending collectivised property, for workers control through soviets over production, prices, distribution and foreign trade, etc. But it was just as necessary to combat the pernicious restorationist danger posed by clerical reaction -- a Trotskyist party 'will centrally be forged among those workers who will not be the dupes of the Catholic church'. In their rush to be at one with a struggle against Stalinism -- any struggle against Stalinism -- the fake Trotskyists have consciously obscured, if not simply whitewashed, the threat of clerical-inspired counterrevolution.

WSL: 100 per cent Stalinophobic

Unlike many of these opportunists, whose concern for 'democracy' never seems to extend to their treatment of revolutionary criticism at their own meetings, Trotskyists have nothing to fear from open political debate. We encouraged our ostensibly Trotskyist opponents to participate and even offered them extended speaking time. Each of the three meetings witnessed a sharp clash between the confused left centrism of Workers Power (WP) and the consistent Trotskyism of the Spartacist tendency. In the case of most of the rest it was their absence which attested eloquently to the bankruptcy of their 'Trotskyist' pretensions. The centrist International Marxist Group stationed a salesman outside the door of our Birmingham meeting, but dared not venture inside. Several members of the Workers Socialist League (WSL), their Stalinophobic spirits presumably boosted by being in a position to support workers' strikes rather than openly anti-communist mullah-led

demonstrations in Kabul, decided to confront us politically for a change.

Talking about the Polish dissidents, many of them pro-capitalist, leading WSLer Keith White whined in response to our intransigent defence of the collectivised property relations: 'We have to show them that we are not Stalinists. You've shown us tonight that you are Stalinists.' White demonstrated how he was not Stalinist -- just social democratic -- by lauding 'prominent members of the labour movement [like Frank Chapple?] concretely calling for workers in Britain to actually take the Polish road and fight the Thatcher government'. This implicit identification of the Giersek regime with the capitalist Thatcher government is of a piece with the WSL's demand for the unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland. The WSL's Stalinophobic credentials were also sealed by the pledge that 'We're 100 per cent in defence of the freedom of worship in Poland, 100 per cent....' If only these self-styled Trotskyists were even 50 per cent in defence of the social gains of October! Certainly a healthy

look at our paper', challenged Hughes, 'What we say is that there are three options facing the situation in Poland at the present time. Either the Polish workers will march forward to political revolution, or there will be a Stalinist clawback of the advances in forms of self-organisation which the workers have managed to build for themselves -- and in that case the Stalinists will rely on the Catholic church -- or there can be the force for counterrevolution and for the restoration of capitalism.'

Not quite, remarked an SL floor speaker, 'Your paper *doesn't* put forward three options, it puts forward two options' -- Stalinist clawback or political revolution, completely ignoring the threat of restoration (see 'Workers Power must draw the line', *Spartacist Britain* no 25, September 1980). He went on to explain that Hughes' characterisation of

'Our alleged Stalinophilic degeneration coincides exactly with Workers Power taking the position that they defend the Soviet Union.... That position brings your organis-

Spartacist speaking tour A Workers Poland, Yes! The Pope's Poland, No!



workers state would grant the democratic right to pollute one's mind with superstitious and obscurantist rubbish. But, as several comrades pointed out in the discussion, persecution of the powerful, entrenched Catholic church with its 18,000 priests, loyal cadre for counterrevolution, is hardly the key question in Poland today. (Cannon, in *Notebook of an Agitator*, called the church 'first of all a political power, the most reactionary and obscurantist force in the entire world'.)

How many options for centrism?

The climax of the tour came the following evening in London, as leading members of Workers Power engaged the SL in a hard-hitting exchange which graphically exposed the contradictory tensions tearing at Workers Power. Speaking after comrade Hyde, *Workers Power* editor Dave Hughes charged that our programme for Poland -- which, to lend some weight to his argument he conveniently, and falsely, reduced to two points, separation of church and state and collectivisation of agriculture -- was one-sidedly aimed against the 'alternative of capitalist restoration' and reflected a Stalinophilic impulse to want to back the 'Red Army in struggle against the Polish workers'. 'Have a

ation qualitatively closer to our programme ... and that problem is really reflected in the difference between what your paper says and what you say under our pressure.'

This difference reflects the dilemma of left centrism when the choice between Bolshevism and confusionist vacillation is concretely posed. In the face of decisive questions, WP flinches. It recognised the USSR as a workers state but refused to hail its intervention against a pack of reactionary Afghan mullahs. It saw the Iranian mullahs as reactionary but could not break from Khomeini's 'mass movement'. At the London meeting WP felt the simultaneous pressures again -- conceding to the SL an (albeit distant) restorationist danger in Poland, yet covering for restorationist forces in counterposition to our Trotskyist politics.

For example, Hughes apologised for the consciously clericalist Walesa as having 'a very confused and muddled, almost syndicalist, programme of workers control'. Comrade Hyde replied in summary, 'If Walesa's just a simple syndicalist, right, he could do himself a big favour by dumping that big, heavy two-foot cross. He'd have gone down badly in the IWW with that.' Hughes also found himself blocking with the KOR, denying any restorationist influences and even attempting to explain away Kuron's call for 'the Finlandisation of Poland' as simply 'in his own terms ... a change in political form in Poland without a consequent change in the property relations in Poland at the present time'. An SL speaker retorted:

'Do you know what "Finlandisation" means? It means the slaughter of the Red workers in Finland in 1920. It means Baron von Mannerheim.... [It means] a capitalist state!' In a deformed workers state not even the cardinals would be foolish enough to openly call for a return to capitalism short of a move to civil war, relying instead on code words like 'pluralism'. Another floor speaker, not an SL member, said to Hughes:

'You asked for the name of a member of the KOR who explicitly calls for restoration of



Khomeini's 'mass movement' praying to Allah. Anti-imperialist?

capitalism, I'll give you his name -- Leszek Kolakowski. It's not surprising that Kolakowski is the only member of KOR who doesn't live in Poland ... Kolakowski lives in Oxford, and in Oxford you can say what you like about the restoration of capitalism in Poland.'

A mass movement—but for what?

Notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence of Catholic influence and their concession of the 'option' of a restorationist movement, WPers still maintained that 'in Poland we're clearly faced with a revolutionary situation'. As 'evidence' of the strikers' independence from the Catholic church and the church's ties to the bureaucracy, they pointed to the strikers' refusal to return to work following Cardinal Wyszynski's appeal. The undeniable influence of clerical reaction was dismissed simply as backward religious ideology, just as the Islamic influence in the Khomeinist movement less than two years ago was considered subordinate to the 'anti-imperialist' character of the mass movement. 'We don't continually look over our shoulders and say, "Oh Christ, there's a possibility of clerical reaction."' said a WP spokesman in Birmingham. 'No, we have to be optimistic, we actually have to aim ourselves at these bureaucrats.'

But there is revolutionary optimism, and there is idiot -- opportunist -- 'optimism' which serves only to disarm the proletariat in the face of its class enemy. The priests do not -- today -- have hegemony over the 'mass movement' in Poland as the mullahs did in Iran. But after an eighteen-month reign of Islamic terror ushered to power by a mass movement which WP supported, albeit with warnings against Khomeini, WP might be well-advised to take the occasional 'look over its shoulders'. But today, as then, as WPer Keith Hassle put it in London, they see only 'a progressive mass movement with clerical ideology ... and its logic -- you can accuse me of Pabloism -- is actually pushing it towards the overthrow of the bureaucracy'. We can indeed make the accusation! What is this but the 'unfolding dynamic' which sweeps all subjective obstacles aside. Shi'ite Islam represented more than an obscurantist doctrine; it represented a social caste, a social base and a social programme -- a reactionary one -- reflecting definite class interests. The Vatican likewise, except it is all the more powerful. Its programme in Poland is capitalist restoration, not simply leading prayers. Pointing to 'two methodological problems which the Workers Power tendency has', an SL speaker said:

'The way you approached Khomeini and the way you approach Cardinal Wyszynski today is not as the representatives of alien class forces but as misleaders who are simply diverting the struggle.... [You say that] Wyszynski told the workers to go back and they didn't.

But Wyszynski has the aim of seeing capitalism restored. Right now his tactics are different -- he told them to modulate. But if you want to confront their consciousness and transform it, you have to confront it on the central contradiction, which is that Wyszynski is not simply a misleader. He represents everything which is opposed to the just aspirations of the Polish workers. He represents black reaction. He represents women oppressed and anti-Semitism.'

'The revolutionary party is built through a clash with workers' consciousness', added comrade Hyde -- a clash which WP avoids.

The second methodological problem, posed sharply in WP's motion on the Russian question was dealt with by the above speaker in replying to Hassle:

'Comrade Hassle said we see good uprisings against the bureaucracy and bad uprisings. Precisely. There are bad uprisings against the bureaucracy, when their motive is the restoration of capitalism. The bureaucracy is not an independent social formation... It is not the germinal instrument of counterrevolution as you see it. I think that has something to do with your Cliffite background.'

Indeed Hughes' horrific warning that the Spartacist tendency might 'end up blocking with the Stalinists' was shot through with the 'third campist' notion of the bureaucracy as a monolithic formation 'counterrevolutionary through and through'. It is expressed as well in WP's view of the Warsaw Pact solely as a 'tool of counter-revolutionary Stalinist diplomacy' and not as a military alliance which also serves the purpose of defending the Soviet bloc against imperialism. WP's refusal to offer a sharp, Leninist counterposition to the 'mass movement' is an adaptation to the social-democratic conception of the party of the whole class per-



Polish dictator Pilsudski (right) with papal nuncio, later anti-Semitic Pope Pius XI; Vatican's programme: a return to reaction.



Mark Hyde at London meeting.

meeting the Labourite-infested British left. But linked to its implicit misconception of the character of the bureaucracy, it opens the door for WP to end up blocking with capitalist restorationists! Indeed in the exchanges which continued after the meeting formally came to a close, Hassle explicitly defended a 'united front' with the Catholic church for 'democratic rights' in Poland. On what basis? Will the church come over to the struggle for revolutionary workers democracy, or is WP offering up the proletariat to fight for capitalist democracy? Or is this the Kautskyite thesis that democracy is 'classless'?

WP ducked the key strategic questions facing the Polish proletariat but seized on our 'failure' to call for the immediate arming of the workers in a desperate attempt for a left flank against the SL. 'Your programme, that is the decisive thing for us, comrades', added a WP spokesman. Yes, programme is the decisive thing -- and before rushing ahead with its plans to arm the workers, Workers Power had better decide which workers and for what aim. Would WP advocate the arming of the 150,000, many of them undoubtedly workers, who marched behind Wyszynski to commemorate Pilsudski's defeat of the Red Army in 1920? Programme is the decisive thing -- not subjectively revolutionary impulses, nor a patchwork of seemingly 'orthodox' positions, nor a desire to be with the masses. As comrade Hyde concluded:

'We want to take our programme into struggle ... We want to spell out to the Polish proletariat that the Catholic church is a major danger. It's a major restorationist force. And it would have been tough fighting for that just as it would have been tough fighting against Khomeini in Iran. It would require all kinds of methods of work. But at the end of the day, Bolsheviks in the Gdansk shipyards and Walesa in the Gdansk shipyards with his cross on his shoulder are incompatible.' ■

Eyewitness account from Poland

EDITOR'S NOTE: This interview was given to Spartacist Britain by a left-wing student, Joe C. Joe was in Poland for four weeks during the recent mass strike/protest movement. He spent the final week in Gdansk. Although not a supporter of the Spartacist League, he provides some useful observations of the situation in Poland which we offer to our readers.

Spartacist Britain: How did you hear about the strikes?

Joe: There was nothing in any of the Polish newspapers at all the entire time I was there. Where I actually was in Krakow in the hotel you could get English newspapers. For a while you'd get the *Guardian*, the *Times*, the *Morning Star*, but after about two weeks it was a steady diet of the *Morning Star*....

Spartacist Britain: What did you see when you got to Gdansk?

Joe: Well, when we first got there the first thing we noticed was the way it was very, very carefully organised. I mean, this is the last day now. There were signs on the side of the factories saying '21 times "tak"' -- '21 times "yes"' -- as if a victory had been achieved for everybody concerned there. And still there were no outrageous celebrations. It was very strict, very orderly. There would never be more than a hundred people outside the [shipyard] gates.

They would wait until they saw a strike leader or Walesa. He would be clapped, given a picture of the Madonna or something. Then they would go. They would file off and another group would come in.... Western cameramen were allowed to go up to the gates. They'd film what was going on and they'd file out. The whole of the gates were covered with the Pope or the Madonna. And then Walesa would come up to the gates and give his spiel. He would bring out the priest, out to the gates. There would be a hymn or a Polish folk song and he would go back. And this continued throughout the day. I mean, it was always in tandem, Walesa and the priest. He'd always humbly introduce the priest. He always had -- I don't know -- an ingratiating expression on his face. It felt like a double act. Above the factory gates there was a slogan saying 'proletariat of all factories unite' and then suddenly there'd be the priest as well.

Spartacist Britain: Did you get to talk to any strikers?

Joe: The men we spoke to were mostly members of the KOR who were getting leaflets from the strike committee. They were taking it to distribute in Warsaw. They'd chuck a handful of pamphlets at the people waiting at the gates, who would go crazy just trying to get one.

Spartacist Britain: Did you hear any anti-Russian sentiment?

Joe: The anti-Russianism is very, very strong... And the only time when I was there when someone wanted to try to speak Russian someone turned around and spat in her face.... The statues of Lenin are defaced, are covered in shit. In Krakow one of the main attractions is Wawel Castle, where they've got Pilsudski's memorial tomb, and also the plaques and tombs of kings who rolled back the heathen hordes in the fif-

teenth and sixteenth century to preserve Catholicism. And there's no mistaking the analogy, you know.

Spartacist Britain: Did you get any sense of the privileges of the bureaucracy?

Joe: It's quite ironic. One of the demands of the workers is to close the Pewex shops, the commercial shops. Now to Western eyes if you go into one of these shops they don't look like luxury shops at all. There's nothing in them -- they look like Woolworth's. And yet these are the shops that are meant to be luxurious, which gives you some idea of what the other shops are like.... There's these long queues; there's nothing in the supermarkets.

Spartacist Britain: What attitude did Poles have to the West?

Joe: The people I spoke to in Gdansk weren't really interested in what the West had to say about it, what the West's attitude towards it was. I mean the *Times* may have taken up the courageous struggle of the workers -- nothing was said about it. There was no great urge to find out what's in the West's papers, what's going on. At the time it seemed there were some more immediate things than what the West's attitude was.

Spartacist Britain: The *New York Times* said there were Soviets.

Joe: There are strike committees and they were very well organised between the main industrial centres with the exception -- while the strike was on -- there wasn't a particularly strong link between the Silesian miners and the Gdansk shipyard workers. The people we talked to were quite clear that if they had managed to get the Silesian miners out at the beginning of August things would have been that much heavier, developed a lot more quickly. ■

Letters ...

(Continued from page 3)

'Guardian' way, they dislike the power of the state. They throw up abstract concepts such as freedom for dissidents in the USSR, almost in opposition to, or at least in ignorance of Trotskyist claims for freedom from hunger, unemployment, destitution & disease. They support the incredibly abstract (& wholly un-Marxist) concept of the 'freedom of self-determination' for Afghanistan. These are just pretty phrases (if that) to the average Afghan. What the SWP refuses to consider, in common with the majority of petit-bourgeois commentators, is the real situation in Afghanistan. If they want a Soviet withdrawal, they must pose the question 'what then?'

Under the rule of the mullahs, will Afghan women have the right to self-determination? No. Will Afghan children & students have the right to self-determination? No. Will the Afghan workers have any rights at all? No. Will the peasants? Again, no. So what is all this talk of self-determination?

The British petit-bourgeois class does not quite have the same ideology as the capitalist class, but retains, amended slightly, the ideology of merchant capitalism that gave the class its genesis. Indeed very strongly in that ideology was the wish for freedom from state interference, which has become generalised for politically progressive sectors of the middle class as opposition to any state.

For the SWP then, class analysis is secondary to a state-ist analysis, & hence their culpable errors with regard to the USSR. Class-analysis of the Soviet Union could never produce the thesis of state capitalism. And a class analysis would never lead a socialist to call for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The question must be asked. Who will benefit from the Soviet presence in Afghanistan? The Soviet bureaucrats? Probably. The workers & women & progressive peasantry of Afghanistan? Yes. The mullahs & reactionary landlords? No. Where is there in such answers a class-based objection to the Soviet presence?

To move on to your handling of the IMG, I think that whilst your attack on the liquidationist elements led by T. Ali is quite correct, I believe that you are wrong to almost totally ignore the rank-and-file of the IMG. It is clear from the change in 'Socialist Challenge' from support for Soviet withdrawal to a more principled defencist pose that there is a strong defencist strand within the membership of the IMG cadres. This is clear to me from personal experience as well, and I think such a stand is very important. When Ali submerges his followers in the SWP, the Trotskyist elements in the IMG will be left on their own. If they despairingly flow into the SWP, or are left on their own to form a yet smaller sect, they will represent a great loss to British Trotskyism. Rather than being ignored, such a group ought to be fully explored & debated with.

Yours
Owen Tudor

Spartacist Britain replies: Comrade Tudor makes the correct observation that the SWP's world view includes a deeply petty-bourgeois 'anti-statism', a point we expand on in our pamphlet 'Why the USSR is Not Capitalist':

'... the position that the development of the industrial strength of the workers state is not of the highest importance, is not a decisive component of a world revolutionary perspective, is genuinely counter-revolutionary.' (p 95)

But the comrade seems to differ with our insistence that the anti-communist programme of the Cliff group started from and continues to reflect anti-communist pressures in a bourgeois state, not wrong, middle-class libertarian, ideas. The SWP's 'petty-bourgeois socialism' is social-democratic revisionism bound to be present in the workers movement under imperialist capitalism, a point which is fundamental to the Leninist understanding of the party question. As we demonstrated in the article to which comrade Tudor refers, the SWP was born in the abandonment of revolutionary defence of a workers state under attack, in a betrayal which began not with a 'pure' theoretical revision but with capitulation to Cold War pressure, in anti-communist appetite not 'culpable errors'. And its reaction over Afghanistan and Poland today has the same root cause. Thus the present pseudo-syndicalism of the SWP does not prevent it from capitulating to the parliamentarist Labour 'lefts' -- nor would it have any qualms about accepting a ministerial portfolio should it ever get the opportunity.

We certainly agree with comrade Tudor that the IMG, a centrist organisation still claiming to stand for Trotskyism, is very different from the SWP (although we seek to win militants from both). The IMG is an organisation which, in a more left-centrist phase in the early 1970s, could contain numerous members who, to quote the report of an anti-Spartacist oppositionist in the US SWP, 'wish[ed] the Sparts were our American section'. But the IMG has undergone a deepening rightward degeneration since that time, bringing it dangerously close on key programmatic questions to the openly anti-Trotskyist SWP. It would be criminal if, through whatever combination of deepening cynicism and liquidationism, those cadre of the IMG who are subjectively Trotskyist were lost forever to authentic Trotskyism. But if they are to be won to Trotsky and not Tariq Ali -- or worse -- they have to be shaken and shaken hard. And that is the purpose of our polemics.

Against SWP thuggery

1 August 1980

Dear Friends,

Please could you send details and signatory form about the exclusion of Spartacist League members from a Socialist Workers Party meeting. May I say that on the information I have so far that I am disgusted at any infringements on a democratic debate. As a gay activist, a socialist and a trade unionist I feel that the terms of democracy must be widened. Such tactics as this expulsion serve only to discredit the labour movement and the meaning of socialism.

Yours
Tony Benn
Chairperson NATSOPA Clerical

Fallahi ...

(Continued from page 4)

only Islamic socialist revolution in the world', according to Fallahi).

The Fallahi tour showed the extent to which the SWP leadership are prepared to go to try and suppress our revolutionary critique of their gross opportunism. Before the Sydney University meeting, SWPers present enthusiastically welcomed the arrival of the campus cops, the 'grey men', and unsuccessfully appealed to them to stop Spartacist supporters leafletting the meeting. At LaTrobe University in Melbourne, the SWP youth front group on campus put out a leaflet which tried to paint us as pro-shah disrupters, with the outrageous lie that we 'promised physical disruption of her meetings'. But the real disrupters were revealed when the SWP's lone supporter on campus, one John Hall, was caught tearing down Spartacist Club posters. (Hall later promised in writing that he wouldn't do this again.) At the Melbourne picket, SWP honcho Peter Annear openly invited the police to break up our protest.

Fallahi and the SWP found out on this tour that the Khomeini and the mullahs are hated by anyone who hates the oppression of women, minorities, gays and workers in Iran. The SL/ANZ campaign met with a wide response, and drew in many non-members, because we alone have a programme for simple human decency in Iran -- a

Dublin
28 July 1980

Dear Comrade,

I enclose my name on your protest. When I read your statement it put me in mind of the Stalinists during the war. They used to beat us up when we exposed them and their filthy war. I never thought I'd see the day when so-called Trotskyists would beat up other comrades. It shows you their cause must be very weak when they cannot defend their position. You must come out on top. Keep up the good work.

Comradely Greetings
John Byrne

22 August 1980

Re. Spartacist League petition against the S.W.P. (GB)

We received your letter dated 11 July 1980, a leaflet appealing for support for the petition dated 8 July 1980 entitled 'A blood pact with Thatcher. SWP THUGS ASSAULT TROTSKYISTS.', and other materials.

We will not sign your petition which we regard as part of an ongoing campaign of disruption [sic] which the Spartacist League promotes against other left Organisations.

S. Potter
National Secretary
[International Marxist Group]

Spartacist Britain replies: Fortunately many militants have a better understanding of workers democracy than comrade Potter.■

programme to put the working class in power and so rid the country of all vestiges of medieval superstition and barbarism. But what Fallahi and the SWP/HKE stand for is the filth associated with Khomeini's reactionary rule. As one comrade who left the Sydney Trade Union Club meeting to come to the SL counter-meeting put it in her contribution:

'... this woman [Fallahi] is doing a very good job for the mullahs, that is why she's been allowed to go out of prison [last April]. They're [the HKE] opportunistic, they change their line, they're surviving at the price of the death of the rest of the left in Iran. That's the bargain... 'She stands up there and calls herself a socialist ... she's not. She's representing a religious regime, that is all, under the guise of Trotskyism.'

For those in search of a revolutionary alternative, the campaign powerfully confirmed our Trotskyist line, showing the ist as the ones who told the truth about the mullahs from the start. Largely precipitated by the SL/ANZ activities in exposing Fallahi, several new comrades applied at the end of the campaign to join. And that too was a striking and pleasant corroboration of one Sydney SWPer's peevish complaint that the 'danger' about the SL/ANZ is that they win 'good cadres' away 'from our organisation'. We assure the SWP, that's the way it's going to continue to be.

adapted from Australasian Spartacist no 76, August 1980

Protests hit at Sri Lanka repression



Workers Vanguard



Spartacist Britain

Coordinated demonstrations in New York (left) and London (right) were called on August 29 and August 30 respectively by the international Spartacist tendency to protest against the Sri Lanka government's repression of a 100,000-strong general strike earlier that month. The Jayawardena regime

sacked thousands of strikers and arrested dozens of strike leaders. As the slogans emphasised, the popular-frontist politics of the Sri Lanka fake left means bloody JVP massacre in 1971. But truly scandalous was the scab role of USec leader Bala Tampoe, who opposed a general strike call.

Beyond the political The god that fragmented



Sheila Rowbotham at 1978 Marxist Symposium. Cosy consciousness-raising at 'Fragments' conference.

George Orwell captured something about the British middle-class socialist in his essay *The Road to Wigan Pier*. 'One sometimes gets the impression that the mere words "Socialism" and "Communism" draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, "Nature Cure" quack, pacifist and feminist in England.' The words these days seem to be 'Beyond the Fragments'. And drawn they were -- 1400 of them -- to a one-day conference in Leeds this August aimed at developing a 'new kind of socialist politics' and a 'clearer vision of socialism'.

They didn't get very far. In the nature of things, the 'fragments' were ... fragmented. Some were upset by the neglect of 'feminism and patriarchy' and the failure of the conference organisation to reflect the 'autonomous women's movement' (by letting men in?). The childcare fragments decided that children had been deprived of their right to participate. And the gay workshop decided that they were not a fragment at all. It took a special appeal from guiding light Hilary Wainwright even to squeak through the main 'action' proposal -- to have another conference next year. 'On what?' cried participants.

On what, indeed? It was so bad that even the opportunists had a hard time scraping up a kind word for this latest 'mass'. The workerist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) sneered, but still pleaded for 'unity in action' against Thatcher (*Socialist Worker*, 6 September). Workers Power dubbed this barely political melange 'right centrist', and the genuinely right-centrist Workers Socialist League confessed a need to 'learn from the experience of many who choose to remain outside a revolutionary organisation'. The International Marxist Group (IMG) likewise conceded that their 'criticisms of the revolutionary left ... have a certain amount of truth'.

If the IMG discerns 'truth' here, it is primarily because this trendy reincarnation of utopianism is regurgitating in its purest form the anti-Leninist schooling for which the IMG can take a good share of the credit. The conference's namesake and inspiration is a book by 'socialist feminists' Sheila Rowbotham, Hilary Wainwright and Lynne Segal, subtitled 'Feminism and the Making of Socialism', with a centrepiece based on a talk by Rowbotham at an IMG Marxist Symposium two years ago. The book topped the radical best-seller list as soon as it appeared last year, and has since gone through three printings. Why all the fuss?

The book has tapped into the vein of disillusionment with the 'far left' that grew against the background of a right-wing Labour government at home and 'human rights' anti-Sovietism internationally. Its message, such as it is -- and one has to persevere through the meanderings of three distraught souls and a lengthy memoir of the glorious experience of building socialism in the London borough of Islington to find it -- is a rather straightforward rendition of feminist-inspired (but definitely not male-exclusionist)

anti-Leninism:

'... the assumptions of what it means to be a socialist carried within Leninism and Trotskyism and which prevail on the left now block our energy and self-activity and make it harder for socialism to communicate to most people....' (p 49)

There is nothing new about Beyond the Fragments: it's the 1960s, 1980s-style. But like everything else in Britain, it's not as good as it was. These are the aging 'children of '68' who, having given the 'best two years of their lives' to the 'revolution', graduated to become social workers, community organisers and academics. Where once they cheered for the NLF, today they cheer for solar energy. Older, but definitely not wiser. Many of them passed through the SWP/IS (as Rowbotham did) or the IMG (like Wainwright). Indeed, as one member of the fraternity put it once, the ex-IS is the biggest organisation in Britain. And having descended for a decade or so into the life of the personal, many of them still feel the stirrings of the sort of guilt which drove their grandmothers to run soup kitchens. So they seek their 'clearer vision of socialism', clear only in its hostility to Leninism.

The Leninist aim of wrenching power out of the hands of the capitalist class as a precondition to creating the material basis for a decent, satisfying life for the workers and oppressed holds no charm for them. Rowbotham put it succinctly at the 1978 Marxist Symposium: 'It's not that socialist feminists don't think that taking power is important -- many socialist feminists do -- but there are many other issues that have to be dealt with along the way' (*International*, Autumn 1979). Is this Eduard Bernstein's 'the movement is everything'? No, Rowbotham is thinking more along the lines of Wilhelm Reich. Offering up her bloodless stereotype of the Leninist revolutionary who is 'hard, erect ... without the time or ability to express living passion', she counterposes - cosiness! 'If a version of socialism is insisted upon which banishes cosiness ... this socialism will not attract or keep most people. Why should the ruling class have a monopoly of cosiness? We'll tell you why, sister. Only the ruling class can afford it.'

Despite the faint reminiscence of 'the god that failed', it would be an injustice to that generation of renegades from communism to compare the 'fragments' to them. Rowbotham's lot did not become disillusioned with years of Stalinist treachery; they were not worn down by the isolation and persecution of the anti-communist witchhunts. Their 'god' succeeded only too well. If 'Leninism' meant consciousness-raising, 'communication', 'self-activity' and the 'autonomy of the oppressed', it hardly required the rigours of party membership -- even in menshevik parties -- for its pursuit. As former leading IMGer Karen Margolis, who describes herself as 'another corpuscle in the protracted haemorrhage which the left groups have suffered since the early 1970s', put it: 'By late 1978, I had concluded that what was wrong with the IMG was not its lack of feminism but its adherence to rigid traditions of revolutionary organisation' (*Feminist Review* no 5, 1980). Just how 'rigid' these traditions are in the IMG is reflected in the 'autonomous' male-exclusionist women's caucuses within the organisation Margolis helped secure (see 'Chasing the children of '68', *Spartacist Britain* no 2, June 1978).

It certainly was not the IMG's 'lack of feminism'. Pabloism told them that consistent feminism/nationalism/pacifism/democracy -- even consistent clerical reaction these days -- leads to socialism. But, of course, as the IMG has been finding out, truly consistent feminism leads ... out of the IMG. And with no program-

matic reason for a proletarian vanguard party -- if 'Leninists' are just cheerleaders for the 'autonomous' struggles of the oppressed -- Margolis could justifiably whine, 'Where once we were told that feminists needed a good fuck, now what we're missing is the Party.'

This is the end product of the Pabloite school of adaptation which blessed every sector of the oppressed to go out and do battle for their kind, obliterating the distinction between proletarian Leninism and bourgeois personalist feminism in order the better to tail the feminists. Wainwright recalls when she

'... was a member of the IMG while being involved in the women's movement. At first we in the IMG used to prepare our "interventions" as if we really could, and had a duty to, give an overall political lead to the movement. This soon seemed too absurd to carry on, not because we were a politically isolated vanguard trying to convince a mass of "backward elements", but because all sorts of other socialist feminists had developed better ideas and initiatives along similar lines.' (*Beyond the Fragments*, pp 246-47)

The IMG is not unique in its adaptation to feminism, though Pabloism has the singular virtue of offering a shamelessly explicit theoretical justification for abandoning the Leninist programme. Workers Power, in its leftward motion, calls for a working-class women's movement armed with a revolutionary programme. But this supposedly revolutionary programme includes the demand for separate women's and gay caucuses within the trade unions and for positive discrimination in favour of women for union positions -- an open accommodation to the feminist notion that it is gender and not programme which is the determining factor in the struggle against women's oppression.

It is not moral imperative but *historical* -- materialist -- truth which uniquely endows the working class led by its revolutionary vanguard with the task of eradicating oppression. In posing the Leninist party as some sort of steering committee to coordinate the disparate struggles of the oppressed -- each imbued by their own partial, bourgeois ideology -- the IMG & Co deny its fundamental purpose, as the sole repository of the communist programme. Only the overthrow of capitalism and the workers seizure of power can uproot the material foundations for the oppression of women.

And if the opportunists' readiness to accommodate to feminist 'autonomy' is a betrayal of the historic interests of the proletariat and the oppressed, it is equally a disservice to the potential revolutionary fighters whose energies have been dissipated in the morass of personalist concerns. The shelter of 'autonomy' -- either within or outside the party -- does not steel women to become better fighters against their oppression, but rather relegates them to wallow in that oppression, albeit as anointed spokesmen. Women become communists as fighters for the *communist* programme -- which alone transcends the divisions of bourgeois society. It is no accident that the Spartacist tendency -- which uncompromisingly counterposes to bourgeois feminism the proletarian road of socialist revolution -- has a far higher proportion of politically rounded, recognised women cadre than the numerous capitulators to feminism. Beyond the fragments there is only the continued decadence of bourgeois society which no amount of utopian daydreams or personal introspection can escape. There is no other road to socialist revolution than the patient construction of a communist vanguard around a programme to smash the exploitative and oppressive capitalist system, and there is no other road to the emancipation of the oppressed than socialist revolution. ■

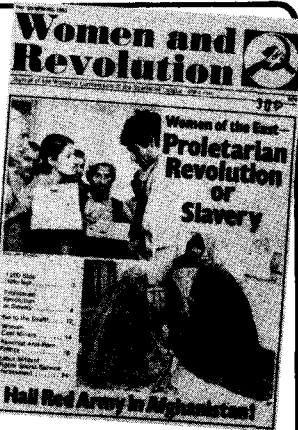
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Turkey ...

(Continued from page 5)

relatively small revolutionary nucleus to gain hegemony within the working class and oppressed minorities.'

Turkey even before the latest coup was not akin to Spain in the 1930s (with which the article drew an analogy). There the workers movement was significantly stronger than the fascists -- capable of wresting democratic concessions from the bourgeoisie and successfully resisting the Francoist military coup of 1936 -- the culmination of a decade and a half of a rising line of class struggle. In Turkey the workers movement, more atomised and partly illegalised, was relatively weaker than the forces of reaction and it was the military which defined the limits of an unstable bourgeois democracy. But in the absence of a revolutionary leadership, even the Spanish proletariat was beheaded.

Particularly given the immediate repressive situation, international labour solidarity can play a vital role in defending the Turkish workers, leftists and oppressed Kurds and forging strong bonds of internationalism through the many thousands of militant Turkish workers in West Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe. If broken from Stalinism to the Leninism of today they can play a crucial role in forging the nucleus of the revolutionary vanguard the Turkish masses so desperately need.

- Free all class-war victims of military repression! Down with martial law!
- Black all military shipments to Turkey!
- Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union! No NATO/US bases in Turkey!
- For the right of self-determination of the Kurdish nation!
- Turkish troops out of Cyprus!
- Down with Evren's dictatorship! No popular-front alliances! For a workers and peasants government!
- For a Trotskyist party in Turkey, section of a reformed Fourth International!■

Morals...

(Continued from page 2)

screwing Jawaharlal Nehru, who became India's first prime minister. Titillating perhaps, but it doesn't quite match up to mass starvation. Sexual manipulation fits right in with imperialist cynicism. One can just imagine him: 'Edwina, lie back and think of England.'

That Mountbatten's ilk still holds sway in Britain is connected to the Labour leaders' congenital incapacity for challenging the double-bookkeeping 'morality' of the ruling class. In fact they are its main transmission belt into the proletariat. Most Labour MPs wet themselves at the thought of a knighthood or making the honours list, and to their masters' outlook they only add their own parochialism, a dose of Methodism and quadraplegia of the will. Trotsky said history turned its backside to the Labourites and there they found their programme. Comparing them to the bourgeois revolutionaries of 1649 he noted that the Labourites 'have taken over from Cromwell's comrades-in-arms only their religious prejudices'. Cromwell axed Charles I -- a commendable act of regicide. The last Labourite

'assault' on monarchy was on Princess Margaret for lounging on Caribbean beaches with a failed rock star. Not even on the Civil List, or on Prince Charles reviewing a loyal regiment -- just the most marginal 'royal' who's mainly disliked because she forgets she's a feudal institution when picking her boyfriends.

The monarchy is not just a quaint feudal remnant or a waste of money. It symbolises egregious, pre-ordained social inequality -- an unequal place for everyone -- and is a 'constitutional' rallying point for reaction. The army swears loyalty to a queen with the right to dismiss governments during 'national crisis'. In modern capitalist Britain minimal demands of the bourgeois-democratic revolution are still on the agenda. The proletariat in power will have to sweep away the monarchy, the House of Lords and established church.

And abolish pub licensing laws too! The ruling class has its private clubs for leisurely, civilised drinking and the proletariat swills beer to beat the pub clock. It's a class thing. British workers go out and get blind drunk, while Churchill ran a war tanked up. But licensing hours were introduced to make munitions workers speed up production for the carnage of World War I. At the same time troops in the trenches on the Western front were given army-issue rum before they went over the top to be mown down (their officers shot those who didn't go over). Eleven shell-shocked survivors remained out of 610 men of the 11th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment after one day's work in 1918. To this day the same regiment gets a holiday to 'celebrate' the event, but its predecessor fought with Cromwell against the Crown so it still doesn't get to have the title 'Royal' or wear the royal red in its dress. In contrast

Sir Douglas Haig, on the other hand, was a supremely inept and senselessly bloody military commander; he got to be a field marshal and a lord. His whisky-distilling family still use his name on the label of their product; any decent working-class militant should want to vomit at its mere mention.

Naturally royal palaces -- including Westminster -- are free of closing time. Ex-MP Tom Driberg and Lord Fenner Brockway tell tales of young 'likely lad' Labour MPs forgetting their humble origins when let loose in the bar of the 'mother of parliaments'. Brockway even stopped Independent Labour Party MPs drinking, in line with the Methodist morality of Labourism. Well, revolutionary proletarians shouldn't have to live like Quaker girl guides. And if the working class is going to be a ruling class it should get to act and drink like one.

Dennis Skinner, the 'Beast of Bolsover' and 'leftest' of the 'left' MPs, has boasted that he doesn't have, or intend to have, a passport. Perhaps it's too much to hope that even travel would broaden the minds of such fog-over-channel, little England socialists. And we don't expect much. But at least if he put down a Private Member's Bill to abolish pub licensing laws he'd be doing *some* service to the proletariat.■

Consett...

(Continued from page 2)

busy writing obituaries for the strike before it was over: they all did their bit. Workers should

remember them -- for their betrayals. And they should remember the spirit of class solidarity of the young Consett worker who explained to *Spartacist Britain* why he was marching in Birmingham last winter: 'My job's gone. I'm fighting for the others.' As we wrote in *Spartacist Britain* no 21 (May 1980): 'What is so galling is that it came so close ... to turning into the generalised working class offensive needed to beat back not only the BSC attacks but the Tory juggernaut behind it.'■

War fever...

(Continued from page 1)

warned that it meant turning West Europe into a 'radioactive desert'.

Pravda is not alone in recognising that Europe risks being reduced to ashes by the madmen in the White House. Washington's efforts to launch a new Cold War against the Soviet Union have frightened the European masses. They regard Carter, and even more so, Reagan, as just crazy enough to start a war with Russia over far-off Afghanistan and then seek to limit the battlefield to Europe. Britain has seen a revival of 1960s-style 'ban the bomb' pacifism, directed against the emplacement of NATO Cruise missiles on this 'sceptred isle', and the children of the Aldermaston marchers are today queueing up in their hundreds to replenish the once depleted ranks of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

It's a class bomb

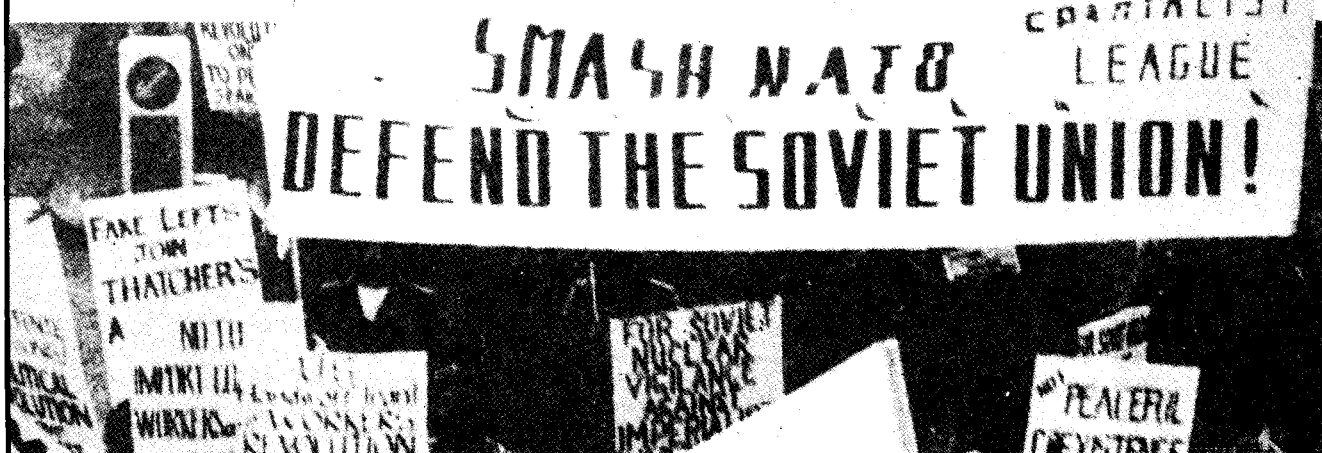
The Labour 'lefts' have also taken to spouting 'unilateral nuclear disarmament'. But while different wings of the Labour Party may have different ideas about how avidly to prepare for or go after war with the Soviet Union, the fact is that British imperialism is too weak to pursue *any* policy unilaterally -- even if it wanted to. All capitalist powers are not in this position, however, and the West Germans are using similar rhetoric to pursue their own imperialist interests.

In Germany the widespread pacifist mood has been reflected in large anti-NATO protests. On May 7, thousands of anarchists, Jusos (Young Socialists) and liberal Protestants massed on a military ceremony in Bremen celebrating NATO's 25th anniversary, culminating in an hours-long street battle between police and protesters. Last month thousands more demonstrated against the 'Crusader '80' NATO manoeuvres.

The national election campaign which dominated the political scene in West Germany last month had a markedly different character than the US election campaigns with Helmut Schmidt's ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD) presenting itself as the party of 'peace and detente' against the warmongering intrigues of the reactionary Christian Democratic leader Franz Josef Strauss. Those enamoured with the pacifist claptrap of the Bennite 'lefts' might find in the SPD's campaign as well evidence of its socialism. But as one West German air force general, hardly a pacifist, averred:

'I am firmly opposed to their [tactical nuclear weapons] use on our soil. I cannot

October 26: March with us!



'In this conflict the Trotskyists know where they stand: shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet workers against counterrevolutionary attack. The Fourth International was founded on the principle of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and we will not flinch in this decisive hour!' (international Spartacist tendency, March 1979)

'Our slogan must be: arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie.' (V I Lenin, 1916)

Spartacist League Public Meetings

Anti-Soviet war fever

SHEFFIELD Tuesday
October 21, 7.30pm
Station Hotel
The Wicker

BIRMINGHAM Wednesday
October 22, 7.30pm
Room 46, Dr Johnson House
Bull Street B4

LONDON Friday
October 24, 7.30pm
Central Library
68 Holloway Road N7

For more information contact the SPARTACIST LEAGUE at PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE or ring London 01-278 2232; Birmingham 021-459 9748; Sheffield 0742 686427

favour a nuclear war on German territory while the super-powers observe safely at a distance.'

If this sounds remarkably like Tony Benn or E P Thompson, it is because there is currently a rather strong conjuncture between petty-bourgeois social-patriotic pacifism and the independent interests of some major European imperialist powers.

Deutschmark imperialism

The differences between Schmidt and Strauss have nothing to do with socialism. They reflect tensions among the European bourgeoisies over what attitude to adopt towards Carter's anti-Soviet hysteria. German imperialism commands the largest conventional army in Europe (outside of the USSR), is developing its own nuclear capacity through secret collaboration with South Africa and is allied to US imperialism with its expanding nuclear arsenal. But the German ruling class recognises that in a military confrontation with the USSR in the present period it can only lose. That the mainstream of the British bourgeoisie is firmly aligned to the US reflects as much as anything upon its pathetic weakness -- unlike Britain's, the German bourgeoisie has something to lose.

Especially since the end of American post-war economic hegemony (symbolised by the ending of the dollar-exchange standard in August 1971), West Germany, like Japan, has become the dominant imperialist power in its region of the world. Once the most loyal, most virulently anti-Russian of NATO's allies -- a place now filled in large measure by Britain -- it is increasingly, as the American *Business Week* (3 March) headlined a feature article, 'Germany: The Reluctant Ally'.

To be sure, German imperialism aspires to overthrow proletarian state power in the Soviet bloc no less than does the US, but since the *Ostvertraege* (treaties with East Europe) of 1970-72, West Germany's trade with the Soviet bloc has reached a point where it is almost as large as that with the United States, much of it monopolised by the biggest German capitalist interests. Carter's insulting warning didn't stop Schmidt from using the 'Euromissiles' as bargaining chips in his recent trip to Moscow. And this was followed up by a state visit from Giscard d'Estaing in which the French president stressed a special relationship between the Bundeswehr, the largest armoured force in Western Europe, and the neutron-bomb-armed *force de frappe*. Behind the emergence of regional imperialist powers are growing inter-imperialist rivalries, which the Russian Stalinists hope to take advantage of in their illusory quest for 'peaceful coexistence' with world capitalism.

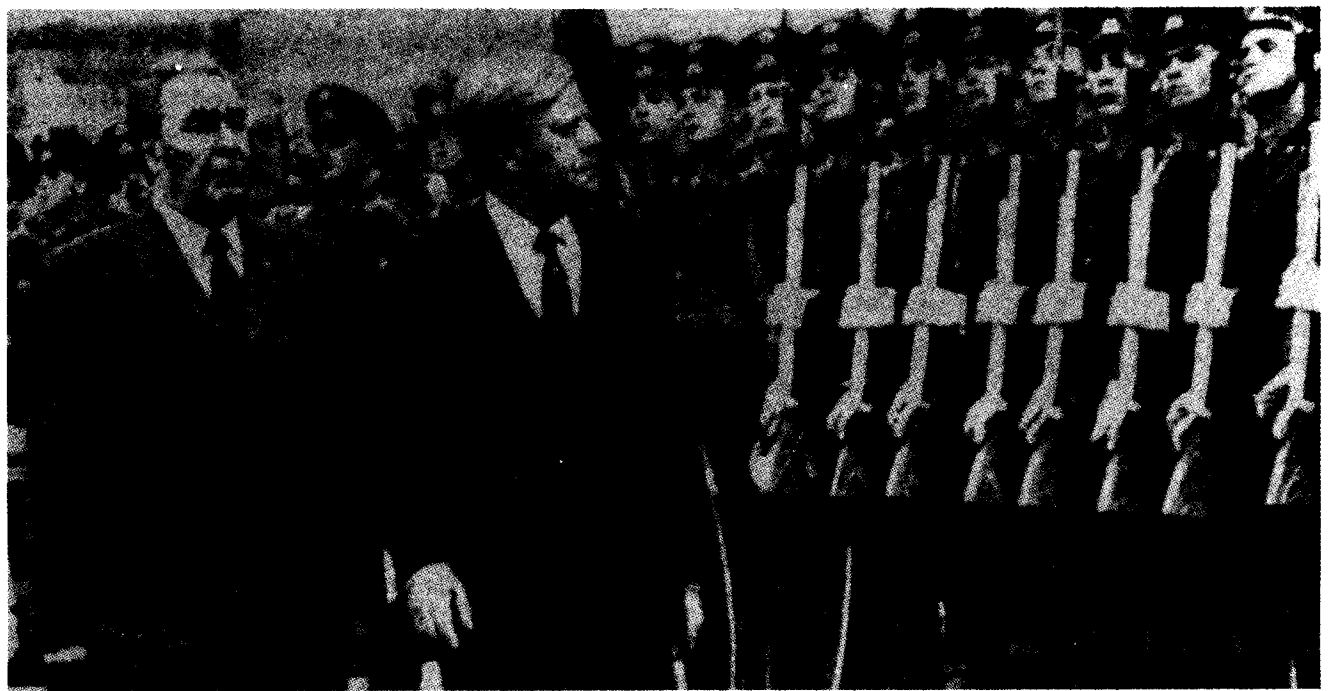
MAD delusions of disarmament

Such illusions are a dangerous thing. Far from being a meaningless game, the arms race is today the most serious business on earth. Should US imperialism succeed in qualitatively outstripping Soviet nuclear military technology through the successful development of a first-strike capacity, it will threaten not only the progressive social system established by the October Revolution, but the very future of humanity. The choice posed in the midst of the first imperialist war by German-Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg still stands:

'Friedrich Engels once said: "Capitalist society faces a dilemma: either an advance to socialism or a reversion to barbarism".... This World War -- that is a reversion to barbarism. The triumph of imperialism leads to the destruction of culture, sporadically during a modern war, and forever if the period of world wars which has just begun is allowed to take its course to its logical end.' ('The Crisis in German Social Democracy', *The Junius Pamphlet*, 1916)

Today a new imperialist global conflagration would have as its target the degenerated/deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc. Thus the 'Russian question' is directly posed: which side are you on? 'Disarmament' schemes, as shown again by the experience of SALT, merely allow the capitalist merchants of death and imperialist warmongers breathing space to improve their armaments. The choice now is proletarian revolution or irradiated barbarism.

The petty-bourgeois pacifists, their aversion to war notwithstanding, would seek to deny the only obstacle to an imperialist-initiated nuclear holocaust, the military might of the workers states and the revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat to smash imperialist capitalism. But it is not only CND guru E P Thompson and his ilk who foster such dangerous illusions. The supposedly Trotskyist Inter-



German chancellor Helmut Schmidt with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in Moscow.

national Marxist Group (IMG) has all but abandoned even its formal defence of the Soviet Union in tailing this latest mass movement. A decade ago, the IMG was repulsed by the classless, pacifist antiwar movement organised by the US Socialist Workers Party. If the IMG tailed the Stalinist NLF, at least it found itself on the right side of the class line, while the US SWP was scrambling avidly after the liberal wing of its own bourgeoisie.

Today the IMG, having undergone considerable rightward degeneration, has plunged itself heart and soul into the pacifist swamp. Its erstwhile criticisms of the CND have disappeared, as virtually every issue of *Socialist Challenge* these days sports the CND peace emblem. But not one word is to be found criticising the slogans of the October 26 peace crawl: 'No Trident, No Cruise Missiles, Cut [!] Arms Spending'. On the contrary *Socialist Challenge* devotes its pages to enthusiastically building outfits with names that come straight out of the lexicon of Stalinist popular frontism, like 'Women's Movement for Peace'. The class line -- defence of the Soviet Union -- is submerged beneath rubbish about the 'colonial revolution', but since everybody knows the nukes are pointed at Moscow, not Managua or Tehran, the IMG scrapes together an 'orthodox' cover for this implicit 'third campism' in its latest pamphlet, *Don't Die for Thatcher* (how about Benn?). What does the US want a 'first strike capacity' for?, explains the IMG -- why, to 'effectively deter the USSR from aiding or supporting such [colonial] revolutions'. An 'effective deterrent' indeed -- nuclear obliteration of the Soviet workers state!

Ultimately defence of the Soviet bloc cannot be left to the Stalinists and their dangerous illusions of detente with rapacious imperialism.

Only proletarian political revolution in the deformed workers states, led by Leninist vanguard parties, can sweep aside the bureaucratic caste with its dangerous nationalism, illusions in detente and stultifying mismanagement. Only workers democracy can fully mobilise the planned socialised economy and provide communist unity against imperialism.

In contrast to the IMG, we stand with American Trotskyist leader James P Cannon, who wrote three decades ago:

'The ultimate aim [of American diplomacy] is nothing less than the overthrow of the Soviet Union, its dismemberment, and the re-establishment of the private property and landlord system, overthrown by the Revolution in 1917. The United States is driven, as the price of its own existence as the leading imperialist power of the world, to include all these aims in its program. That is what its diplomacy works for and that is what they are arming for.'

'Pacifist sermons will not deflect them from their course. Pseudo-serious chatter about the "necessity and desirability of peaceful coexistence" can deceive and disarm workers and sincere but impractical people who think the boon of peace can be bought with shibboleths. But peace cannot be secured that way. The only road to a stable and enduring peace for the people of the world is the hard road of struggle pointed out by Lenin.' ('The Road to Peace', 1951)

Or as Trotsky put it in the 1938 Transitional Programme, 'The only disarmament which can avert or end war is the disarmament of the bourgeoisie by the workers.'

adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 264, 19 September 1980

Iran/Iraq ...

(Continued from page 12)

Ironically the IMG has now found a new bed-fellow -- son of the dead shah Reza Pahlavi has made an offer to the chief of the Iranian armed forces from Cairo:

'In this crucial moment for the life of the country, I would like to be able to offer my blood to safeguard the inviolability of our dear country.'

We hope the proletariat will give Pahlavi a chance to offer his blood, along with the Husseins and the Khomeinis. When the workers

rule they will deal out some rudimentary class justice to those who used the masses as cannon fodder and bomb targets. And those who lead the proletarian revolution in Iran and Iraq will have nothing but the deepest contempt for the fake-left apologists for murderous dictators. ■

Correction

A photograph appearing in *Spartacist Britain* no 24, August/September 1980, was wrongly captioned 'Havana rally'. It was in fact a photo of a rally of the French LCR -- sister group of the IMG -- taken in its pro-Guevarist period. ■

Spartacist Forums

A Workers Poland, Yes!

The Pope's Poland, No!

Thursday
October 2, 6pm
Room B12 (TV Room)
Kentish Town Site,
Prince of Wales Road,
North London Polytechnic

Friday
October 3, 7.30pm
Committee Room 1
Guild of Students,
Birmingham University

Monday
October 6,
London School of Economics
ring (01) 278-2232
for details

Tuesday
October 14, 7.30pm
Committee Room
Oxford Committee for
Community Relations
Princes Street
Oxford

SPARTACIST

BRITAIN

The 'Iranian Revolution' meets the 'Arab Revolution'

Iran/Iraq blowout

The month of September ended with the spectacle of Persian and Iraqi toilers fighting each other in the name of their respective 'anti-imperialist' tyrants. On September 17 Iraq's president Saddam Hussein abrogated the 1975 Algiers accords fixing his country's border with Iran. Five days later Iraqi jets struck Tehran's Mehrabad international airport, blowing away at least one Iranian air force Boeing 707, and blitzed nine other military and air bases in Iran. The 'anti-imperialist' ayatollah responded by declaring another 'holy war' -- against the military bonapartist Ba'ath regime of Iraq. Khomeini sent his 'soldiers of Islam' to the slaughter with a promise of reward: '... like the soldiers of early Islam... If you kill the enemy you will go to heaven, and if they kill you, you will still go to heaven.'

In the first few days of fighting, Hussein's troops broke into Iran at several border points and established bridgeheads, threatening oil refineries and export terminals around the Shatt Al-Arab waterway. Both sides traded air strikes, knocking out key oil and petrochemical installations: Iraq announced that it was suspending oil exports; in Iran the oil refinery at Abadan was forced to a halt. The imperialists registered their concern as they always do -- as proletarians fell, the price of gold rose.

For the workers, the peasants, the oppressed nationalities in both countries, the price was paid in blood. For the Iranian and Iraqi masses there is no choice to make in this squalid border war between the Ba'athists, who butchered the Iraqi Communist Party, and the murderous mullahs. It does not matter who fired the first shot. Who wants to die for Hussein's territorial ambitions? What interest does an Arab oil worker have in the Algiers accords -- made by the shah and upheld by Khomeini? Why should workers care if the terror of the mullahs is divided from the butchery of the Ba'athists by the shallowest part of the Shatt Al-Arab waterway or by the deepest part? Khomeini called on the Iraqi masses to rise up and overthrow their tyrants. The Iranian masses should do the same. Not national war but class war -- turn the guns around!

The Algiers agreement moved the water boundary between the two states from the Iranian side of the Shatt Al-Arab to the deepest part of the channel. The deal was apparently accompanied by a 'protocol' on land boundaries providing for the now disputed border areas to be returned to Iraq. Hussein wants this territory and control over the waterway which is strategically crucial to the otherwise landlocked Iraqi state. The Ba'athist regime also has longstanding appetites for the bordering area of Khuzestan -- the Arab-populated territory under the rule of the Great Persian chauvinists in Tehran and Qom.

Imperialist concern about the conflict centres primarily on the chronic political instability of this strategic region and the threat to Western oil supplies. The Carter administration, always looking for opportunities to whip up anti-Soviet sentiment and anxious about the Soviet Union benefitting from disruption in the area, warned the US SR to stay out.

The 27 September *Economist* noted with appropriate cynicism:

'The Iraqis have called for autonomy for the Arabs of Khuzestan and expressed sympathy



Martyrs for Khomeini captured by Iraq. 'Anti-imperialist' butchers send workers to the slaughter.

with the Baluchis and Kurds as well (somechutzpah that, given Iraq's long bloody battle with its own Kurds).'

Self-determination for the Kurds

For the Kurds -- the downtrodden victims of chauvinist oppression on both sides of the border -- seeing a few of their respective oppressors' military installations knocked out should be cause for celebration. Kurds bombed by Khomeini in Sanandaj have no cause to regret Iraq's success in taking out a few of his air bases. And the disputed Algiers accords were made on the backs of the Kurds -- the shah agreed to stop financing and arming the struggle of the Iraqi Kurds -- and Hussein signed the agreement only because (as he now admits) he did not have the weapons to crush them once and for all. The Kurdish people have long battled to break the shackles of national oppression in the bourgeois states through which they are dispersed. If the Kurds now seize the opportunity and strike a blow for their national liberation against both the Persian and Ba'athist chauvinist regimes this might be the only progressive outcome of this bloody confrontation. For the right to self-determination of the Kurdish nation!

Even in the midst of this squalid war, the Iranian left appears to remain trapped in its suicidal support for the clerical-reactionary 'Islamic revolution' of Ayatollah Khomeini. The Fedayeen Khalq guerrillas, brutally repressed by the mullahs, came out for defence of 'the revolution and the independence of the country' from 'the Iraqi fascist regime'. What 'gains of the revolution' are the Fedayeen defending against their Iraqi class brothers? The veiling of women, the stoning of homosexuals, the genocidal suppression of the Kurdish and Arab minorities, the torture and execution of their own comrades?

But it is not only leftists in Iran, faced with the direct pressure of the mullah regime, who capitulate to this nationalist slaughter. The 5 September *Socialist Challenge*, paper of

the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group (IMG), shamelessly blares 'Hands Off Iran' in a back-page article by IMG leader Brian 'Allah Akhbar' Grogan. Condemning Iraq's invasion as an attempt to 'turn back the gains of the Iranian revolution', Grogan goes so far as to offer himself up as a military adviser to the blood-soaked mullahs, calling for a 'general mobilisation to lay the basis for an invincible fighting force' -- invincible against whom? If Grogan's so keen why doesn't he just fly over and enlist? He also counsels that 'a call to defend the Iranian revolution would carry more weight if Khomeini's present attack on the Kurds was called off and national rights granted' (Khomeini hadn't thought of that, right?).

Class war, not national war!

Even after the February revolution of 1917, which stood on a bourgeois-democratic programme, Lenin mercilessly lambasted those who would offer 'defence of the fatherland' to the class enemy. And then there were gains for the workers. The IMG willingly repudiates the Leninist position of revolutionary defeatism -- even calling for the strengthening of the capitalist state.

A few years ago these same Pabloites glorified the 'Arab revolution' exemplified by none other than such stalwart 'anti-imperialists' as the Iraqi Ba'athists! Today, set in its course of tailing shamelessly after the latest reincarnation of 'anti-imperialist' reaction in the Middle East, the IMG discovers that the Ba'athists are now serving the cause of imperialism. For the consummate cynics of Upper Street it means little. For subjective revolutionaries trapped in this opportunist cycle, it means demoralisation -- and in some cases -- death. Apparently Grogan would now like his comrades in the Iranian HKS to give up their lives in defence of Khomeini against his fellow tyrant across the border. The HKS has already paid a price for helping Khomeini's terror come to power.

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