

## For Polish Trotskyism!

# What next for Poland?

### Imperialists weep for counterrevolutionary Solidarność

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

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

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

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

'We always believed that Polish soldiers would never shoot Polish workers -- and it's still true, they haven't really. But the diabolical thing is they don't have to.' (*New York Times*, 1 January)

The Western bourgeoisie, which glorified Solidarnosc as an uprising of the entire Polish nation, is hard put to explain how it was suppressed so easily. Journalists now point out that Solidarnosc leaders were overconfident, believed the government would never dare use force against them and so made no preparations to counter it. Many acted as if they already enjoyed government office.

But delusions of grandeur at the top do not explain the passivity at the base. Some Western journalists attribute this to fear of Soviet military intervention; others talk of the Poles' traditional respect for the army. Such explanations are at best superficial. Evidence



Crucial opportunity to build Trotskyist vanguard in Poland.

suggests that even before December 13 the wave of popular support for Solidarnosc was receding. People had begun to realize that endless strikes and demonstrations were only making the desperate economic conditions worse. At the famous December 3 Radom meeting, where Solidarnosc leaders planned the overthrow of the government, Karol Modzelewski insisted:

'The trade union has not become stronger; it has become weaker, much weaker. And all activists are aware of this.... There are several reasons for this: weariness as a result of the crisis, weariness experienced by people waiting at the end of a line. Some people blame us for the prolongation of this state of affairs and want us to reach an agreement.' (*Washington Post*, 20 December 1981)

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

'The people, he said, were tired, they were longing for a rest, and it would not at all be difficult to intimidate them effectively. [He said] verbatim "People will strike a little and then give up".' (*Der Spiegel*, 18 January)

And that's exactly what happened.

#### A chance to learn the lessons

But can the fact that workers -- and not that many -- struck a little for Solidarnosc and then gave up be explained simply by tiredness after 16 months of crisis? Public reaction to the government's exposure of the Radom tapes ('Radomgate') point to another important factor. Western journalists all agree that this was a big propaganda coup for the Jaruzelski regime. Many Poles were genuinely shocked to hear Walesa say that 'the confrontation is unavoidable' and that 'we are bringing this system down'. And then there was the Solidarnosc congress last September with its provocative 'free elections'/'free trade unions' resolutions. One liberal party member said that a military operation against Solidarnosc wouldn't have succeeded a year ago:

'Six months earlier, I myself would have turned in my [party] card. It was by no means obvious then that Solidarity was opting for a confrontation. Only the hard-liners expected it. They maintained that we were fooling ourselves. The pity of it is that on this point they were proved right. They kept saying

you are facing people who don't want to reform socialism -- they hate socialism.' (*New York Times*, 5 January)

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

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

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

Already at the time of the crackdown we warned of the danger of military bonapartism. This was one of the most ominous aspects of the Chinese 'Cultural Revolution' when Lin Piao's People's Liberation Army essentially took over administration of the country. At that time a succession clause was written into China's constitution which made the selection of the pope look like an exercise in participatory democracy. As we wrote in 'Solidarnosc Counterrevolution Spiked' (*Spartacist Britain* no 39, February 1982):

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

The military crackdown against Solidarnosc has been a cold shower for the Polish masses.

**Communist Party  
in crisis ... p3**

# How Socialist Organiser 'replies' to Michael Foot

## Arguments for social democracy

At the time of the fake-Trotskyist fusion which produced the Socialist Organiser Alliance (SOA) last summer, we said that it had been 'fixed on the terrain of the Cold War and formalised at the altar of the "broad church": anti-Soviet, pro-Labour' (*Spartacist Britain* no 34, July 1981). Since then this marriage of supporters of John O'Mahony's *Socialist Organiser* and Alan Thornett's *Socialist Press* has done nothing to surprise us -- proclaiming itself 'Bennite' and hailing the clerical-nationalist, pro-imperialist Solidarnosc alongside the likes of Frank Chapple, Denis Healey and Ronald Reagan.

Its latest effort is a five-part series on 'Socialism and Democracy' by SOA guru O'Mahony in reply to a two-part smear against extra-parliamentary 'Trotskyites' by Labour leader Michael Foot in the *Observer* (10 & 17 January). Like the left-reformist Militant tendency, the centrist SOA is currently the target of anti-left witchhunting in the Labour Party, and Foot's musings on 'My kind of socialism' are part of this. Dragging out the old anti-Communist bugbear that Leninism equals Stalinism, Foot claims that the crackdown on counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc is proof of the 'failures -- and the accompanying horrors -- of Soviet Communism'. He counters that:

'Whatever its manifold deficiencies Parliament can still symbolise the attempt to settle disputes by better methods than brute force.' (*Observer*, 10 January)

### Nobody here but us 'democratic Trotskyists'

Foot's kind of socialism can be summed up as Social Contract plus social imperialism. But O'Mahony's major criticism of his articles is that this veteran anti-Soviet, Labourite lieutenant of capital has failed to 'understand' democracy and so consequently cannot effectively fight against 'Stalinist totalitarianism'. Throughout his turgid magnum opus (*Socialist Organiser*, 7, 14 & 28 January, 4 & 11 February), O'Mahony is at pains to distance himself from any taint of connection with the Soviet Union and is equally as strenuous in his defence of 'democracy'. Readers of Lenin's 'Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky' will recognise the symptoms.

So Wat Tyler, R H Tawney, Torquemada, Luis Bunuel (?!) and, god forbid, Trotsky are served up in a potpourri designed to prove that socialist revolution is simply the most expedient way of 'developing and deepening democracy' and that Marxists are merely super-democrats. For O'Mahony, everything, but everything -- extra-parliamentary activity, armed struggle, 'even armed insurrection against this [Thatcher] government' -- can be justified 'according to the principles of classic bourgeois democracy'.

Lenin described bourgeois democracy as 'restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and a deception for the poor'. O'Mahony is similarly unequivocal ... from the opposite viewpoint. 'We will not abandon bourgeois democracy or democratic rights', he says -- wilfully obscuring the distinction between Marxist defence of democratic rights and opposition to the bourgeois-democratic system of class rule. The Marxist commitment to soviet democracy is not, he claims, 'counterposed to the basic labour movement commitment to parliamentary democracy'. Unfortunately for O'Mahony the history of the world over the past seventy years has not been

kind to the idea that proletarian and parliamentary democracy are compatible. Lenin's Bolsheviks didn't think so; they suppressed the Constituent Assembly after the soviets had taken the power. And the Communist International, in its 1920 'Reply to the ILP', addressed the question directly:

'... even had the British workers acquired power and failed immediately to deprive the bourgeoisie of its political rights and expel it from parliament, there is no doubt whatever that they would soon be driven to do so, if they wished at all to utilise their power for their own liberation....

'The dictatorship of the proletariat in the epoch of capitalist concentration is bound up with the soviet system....' (reprinted in *Labour Review*, November 1977)

Intent on revising the whole body of Marxism from the Paris Commune onwards in the light of the world-historic, epoch-shattering significance of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, O'Mahony is not about to be bothered by such trifles. He not only pledges to 'fight to rejuvenate the existing [parliamentary-democratic]



Queen opening Parliament: SOA says this is not 'counterposed' to soviets.

cratic] system', but even agrees with Michael Foot & Co that a socialist government 'should be willing to accept its own dismissal by a majority of the electorate'.

Marxists do not see soviets as the vehicle for proletarian revolution simply because they are more democratic than parliamentary government, which in itself is undeniable, but because they are class organs of power. When led by Marxists, they exist in counterposition to bourgeois democracy and act to oppose and suppress the bourgeoisie. The very first law of proletarian democracy is not free elections, instant recall or the right of 'every cook to rule' but the suppression of the capitalist class. In his polemic against O'Mahony's political grandfather, Lenin writes that Kautsky avoids the central question of proletarian revolution, 'namely the fact that the proletariat cannot achieve victory without breaking the resistance of the bourgeoisie, without forcibly suppressing its adversaries, and that, where there is "forcible suppression", where there is no "freedom", there is, of course, no democracy' (emphasis in original).

This class understanding of democracy has been a first principle throughout the history of the Leninist-Trotskyist movement. Nonetheless O'Mahony attempts to present Trotsky as a fellow 'democratic socialist' -- ripping a quotation from his 1934 writings about the need for the working class to wage a united struggle against 'violent attacks from the Bonapartist and fascist bourgeoisie' against bourgeois democracy, and then claiming this 'proves' Trotsky was a partisan of 'the struggle to deepen, develop and preserve democracy'. O'Mahony wisely declines to cite a source for his quotation, since the

relevant article, 'A Program of Action for France', emphasised how Bolshevik-Leninists are separated from 'the party of "democratic" socialism (SFIO) ... by irreconcilable differences in doctrine and method', and is in fact entirely devoted to a strategy to 'replace the capitalist state ... by the workers' and peasants' proletarian state'.

### 'Best fighter' against 'Soviet totalitarianism'

But the whole purpose of O'Mahony's exercise is to deny precisely this sort of class distinction. And the finest 'democratic' speeches will not admit you into the 'democratic socialist' club, if you are tainted with the so-called 'totalitarian' states of the Soviet bloc. Thus against Foot's slander that Leninism equals Stalinism, O'Mahony replies that they are separated by the most fundamental of criteria ... democracy. 'The workers' state is not Stalinist collectivism, a tyrannical all-controlling state which is the instrument of the bureaucracy against the people and especially against the working class', says O'Mahony, explicitly denying any continuity between the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet Union today. Nowhere is there a mention of the class character of the Soviet state, nor, needless to say, of the necessity for its defence.

Indeed O'Mahony explicitly tries to make common cause with Foot against the workers states -- even to goad him on towards deeper anti-Sovietism. 'The road to democracy in Eastern Europe and the USSR -- surely even Michael Foot will agree -- is the road of armed revolt', he writes. Not only would Foot agree, but so would the capitalist restorationists in the leadership of Solidarnosc, and likewise Ronald Reagan, who sends guns for the 'armed revolt' of feudalistic guerrillas against the Red Army in Afghanistan. Indeed O'Mahony, like Foot and like Reagan, supports both the Afghan 'freedom fighters' and Polish Pilsudskites, advising the latter in particular to 'raise the cry of national revolt against Russian Overlordship'.

O'Mahony claims his only difference with Foot on the Russian question is one of terminology. Whereas Foot calls the Solidarnosc counterrevolution a 'struggle for human rights', O'Mahony calls it a 'revolution against the bureaucracy (which for reasons of technical definition we call political revolution, but which will in fact also be a tremendous social revolution'. 'For reasons of technical definition! Political revolution, social revolution, capitalist counterrevolution ... what difference does it make when you have no intention at all of defending the collectivised property underpinnings of the workers states? To clinch his argument that Stalinism represented a complete (social) counterrevolution, O'Mahony links its establishment to 'a bloody civil war against the workers and peasants after 1928' -- ie not the Thermidor of 1924 analysed by Trotsky, but the forced collectivisation and the Great Purge.

The conclusion of all this is neither abstract nor historical. It means support to counterrevolution today. While fighting for socialist revolution in the capitalist West, genuine Trotskyists stand for unconditional defence of the Soviet bloc states against imperialism and counterrevolution, the only genuine basis from which a fight for proletarian political revolution can be waged. Not so John O'Mahony and the SOA.

That arch class traitor Michael Foot would agree with many of O'Mahony's political conclusions for the Soviet bloc should make SOA supporters stop and think. O'Mahony is enough of a smart operator and charlatan to say anything at any time if it will advance his petty organisational perspectives one iota. But such mis-education leads subjective revolutionaries to become embittered anti-communists. There is an alternative to the road followed by James Burnham and Max Shachtman in America, or more recently Thornett's former political collaborators Robin Blick and Adam Westoby, whose repudiation of defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism has now led them to become open anti-communist witchhunters. Several layers of cadres who grew weary of Thornett & Co's incessant campaigns for 'democracy' and contempt for the revolutionary programme waged political struggles which brought them to the authentic Trotskyism of the Spartacist League. If you want to fight the anti-Soviet 'democratic' politics of Michael Foot, that's the road for you too. ■

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## SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Monthly newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the international Spartacist tendency.  
EDITORIAL BOARD: Len Michelson (editor), Caroline Carne (production manager), Lawrie Harney, John Masters, Charles Silver, David Strachan  
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Arnold Michaels

Published monthly, except in January and September, by Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE.  
Subscriptions: 10 issues for £2.00; overseas airmail £5.00.  
Printed by Morning Litho Printers Ltd (TU).  
Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

# Poland: Communist Party in crisis

We reprint below a leaflet addressing the current factional warfare raging in the Communist Party of Great Britain over the party leadership's refusal to oppose counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc (see 'CP erupts over Poland', Spartacist Britain no 39, February 1982). Neither the Eurocommunists and their leadership allies nor Moscow-loyal Stalinists can address the questions posed by the Polish crisis. But Trotskyists can. At CP meetings around the country our interventions have gone unanswered. From the start of the massive Gdansk-centred upsurge of August 1980 the international Spartacist tendency uniquely advanced a programme to break the Polish workers from the clerical-nationalist Solidarnosc leadership, to win them to defence of the socialised property forms and to proletarian political revolution to oust the despised Stalinist bureaucracy. When Solidarnosc consolidated around a call for open capitalist restoration last autumn we said, 'Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution!' Members of the CP who seek a Leninist understanding of the Polish events must read our pamphlet, 'Solidarnosc, Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers', available from Spartacist Publications.

When the Red Army moved into Afghanistan in December 1979 against the forces of CIA-backed Islamic reaction, the Spartacist League said, 'Hail Red Army!' The Communist Party (CP) said, 'Soviet troops out!' In the two years since Afghanistan, a sharp choice has been posed to every socialist, and that choice is posed most sharply over Poland. 'Which side in the Cold War?' is the determining question in world politics today. The crisis which has erupted inside the CP is a crisis of perspectives in the face of renewed anti-Soviet Cold War. Enrico Berlinguer's PCI has made it irrevocably clear which side it takes; the CP here is being torn apart over the question.

Years of preaching 'peaceful coexistence' and offering up one disarmament deal after another in the search for an illusory 'detente' are now being repaid by the not-so-peaceful imperialists as Ronald Reagan goes about trying to provoke a thermonuclear World War III against the Soviet Union. Central America is the front line, Cuba is faced with a mortal threat. And with the virtual collapse of the Stalinist regime in Poland in the face of a cataclysmic social upsurge, Poland became centre stage. US imperialism saw the best opportunity to 'roll back Communism' since the end of World War II. Had the clerical-nationalist Solidarnosc been successful in its counterrevolutionary bid for power, it would have led directly to the restoration of capitalism in Poland under the guise of pluralist parliamentary democracy; the planned economy, the motor force of Poland's tremendous social progress, would have been dismantled; an imperialist time bomb would have been planted right on the border of the Soviet Union.

Solidarnosc had to be stopped. And it has been -- for the moment. But where does Poland go now? The torrent of letters to *Morning Star* and *Comment* rejecting the CP's line-up behind Reagan and Thatcher express more than anything else the utter absence of any understanding of how a counterrevolutionary crisis could develop after 35 years of 'socialism' in Poland, and thus an utter absence of any solution to that crisis. To recognise that there was a counterrevolutionary bid for power which had to be suppressed is only the beginning of wisdom. Martial law will not suppress the conditions which gave rise to it. One pro-Solidarnosc letter to *Morning Star* (23 December 1981) makes a telling point when it says: 'Workers may be forced to work by bayonets, but never with the sort of enthusiasm essential to deal with Poland's most serious economic crisis.'

## A programme to get Poland working . . .

If Poland is to remove the danger of pro-NATO counterrevolution, it needs a bold, revolutionary programme. A revolutionary workers government in Poland would wage a sharp ideological struggle against the influence of nationalism and Catholic clericalism, impose the strict separation of church and state, and suppress openly pro-capitalist parties. It would cancel the imperialist debt which exercises a stranglehold on the economy and bleeds the Polish and Russian workers white. It would promote the collectivisation of agriculture, undercutting the social base for clericalism and counterrevolution. It

would seek to restore the revolutionary unity of the Polish and Russian workers which existed in the time of Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin as a bulwark against the imperialist war drive.

It would sweep away the PEWEX shops and the 1001 other corrupt sinecures of the bureaucracy. It would legislate the right of trade unions independent of the state but committed to the socialised property forms, not the clerical-nationalist Solidarnosc. It would encourage the formation of factory committees and consumers committees and integrate them into planning decisions to make the plan function. And it would base itself on the decisions of workers soviets open to all parties which defend socialism, instead of the phoney rubber-stamp Parliament which includes the parties of the Catholic hierarchy.

## . . . versus the programme of Stalinism

Many of these measures are obvious. How many letters have there been in *Morning Star* which remark on the failure to collectivise agricul-

(*Morning Star*, 4 January) lamented, 'Perhaps if there had been a firmer line taken earlier with counterrevolutionary forces. . . . Perhaps if steps had been taken to collectivise agriculture. . . . Perhaps if there had been less dependence on the IMF and Western loans. . . . Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps. If these are simply mistakes they are of astounding historical proportions. And when will they stop? After 1956, too, it was realised there had been 'mistakes', and after 1970, and after 1976. Kania made mistakes; Gierek made mistakes; Gomulka made mistakes. Soon it will be Jaruzelski's turn to have made mistakes. After all, once he had dropped dead, it was discovered that even 'comrade Stalin' had made . . . mistakes.'

These are not mistakes. Nor are they peculiar to Poland. One letter to *Comment* (17 October 1981) argues that the instability in Poland is the 'exception that proves the rule', comparing it to the 'stability of neighbouring socialist countries'. Another in *Morning Star* (28 December 1981) tries the same tack blaming it all on the

## Trotskyists say: Against Solidarność counterrevolution! For proletarian political revolution!



Hungary 1956: CP supported bloody suppression of nascent political revolution.

ture, the excessive influence of the reactionary Catholic church, the danger of relying on imperialist loans, etc. But does anybody seriously believe that the Jaruzelski regime will implement this programme? *Straight Left* (February 1982), echoing the old Stalinist homily of 'non-interference' (which Stalin dictated for others to follow -- the very antithesis of the revolutionary internationalism of Lenin's Comintern), tells you to put your trust in 'the decisions of organised socialists on the spot'. Do you want to put your trust in the PUWP, which has driven Poland to the brink of counterrevolution? Take a look at what the regime is doing even now.

The regime responds to the pervasive clerical-nationalist influence within the working class by cloaking itself in the mantle of 'national salvation' and emphasising 'constructive relations and dialogue with the Catholic Church' (*Morning Star*, 24 February). It encourages anti-Russian chauvinism by pointing to the Soviet threat across the border if the Polish people don't step into line (see *Times*, 22 February, interview with deputy prime minister Rakowski). It takes on the Pilsudskite anti-Semitism of the Solidarnosc extremists by itself engaging in vile Jew-baiting against 'Zionist conspirators' (as the Gomulka regime did in 1968) and officially condoning such reactionary anti-Semitic outfits as the sinister Grunwald organisation. It has announced that private farmers will be allowed to increase the size of their landholdings five-fold. And it continues to reschedule and service the imperialist debt and applies for admission into the imperialist bankers cartel, the IMF.

Many in the CP opposition have pointed to the 'mistakes' of the Polish regime. One letter

'weakness of the working class both pre and post World War II, both numerically and philosophically, [which] brought about in the conditions since 1945 a Communist Party which manifestly failed in its task.'

If the PUWP is somewhat more venal and corrupt than its neighbours, it is only because it has no revolutionary past to live down. But that is not the fault of the historically socialist Polish proletariat. In 1938 Stalin liquidated in toto what had been one of the strongest parties in the Comintern, the Polish Communist Party founded by Rosa Luxemburg. Beyond that this attempt to explain away the Polish crisis as an 'exception' does not wash. Instability and crises are a fact of life in the Soviet bloc because these are bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states. What about the three previous Polish upheavals? What about Germany 1953, Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968? Polish Solidarnosc was an exception -- because the others were genuine proletarian uprisings against the Stalinist regime (or, in the case of the Prague Spring, an experiment in liberal, reform Stalinism), not against the socialist foundations.

## Neither 'pluralism' nor Stalinism, but soviet democracy

Not surprisingly, for all their talk about 'socialist democracy', the Eurocommunists dare not honestly confront the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 any more than the Stalinists, because both sides in the debate reject Leninist soviet democracy. The Eurocommunists point to the utter bankruptcy of Stalinist rule in Poland in order to demand bourgeois-democratic 'pluralism'.

continued on page 6

# What next for Poland?

(Continued from page 1)

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

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

## Real Polish revolutionary hero: Rosa Luxemburg

The present Polish situation could develop only in a political vacuum reflecting the destruction of the traditions of international communism in Poland through savage persecution -- Polish Pilsudskite, German Nazi and Stalinist. The Western media now present Polish history through the distorting prism of Solidarnosc. The Polish nation is supposedly fanatically nationalistic, fervently religious, the most anti-communist of peoples. The regime, on the other hand, relegates the history of the Polish workers movement before 1945 to the academic realm. In reality Poland had one of the oldest and strongest traditions of Marxist proletarian socialism of any European country. A genuinely revolutionary vanguard must build on those internationalist traditions.

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

'...the idea of making an independent Poland into a buffer and a protective barrier for the West against the reactionary Russian tsardom was unrealizable, the development of capitalism, which had buried this idea in the first place, created in its place the revolutionary class movement of the united proletariat in Russia and Poland and in it a far more stalwart ally of the West, an ally that would not merely mechanically protect Europe from absolutism but would itself undermine and crush it.' (Foreword to the anthology 'The Polish Question and the Socialist Movement', 1905, in *The National Question: Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg* [1976])

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

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

more to the national liberation of Poland than did Pilsudski's legionary movement.

Today both sides in the Polish crisis disdain Rosa Luxemburg, Poland's greatest representative of proletarian socialism. The clerical-nationalist Solidarnosc idealizes Luxemburg's arch-enemy, Pilsudski -- and, moreover, not in his pre-1914 role as right-wing socialist but in his later incarnation as anti-Soviet militarist and fascist dictator. The Stalinists, too, have nothing in common with proletarian internationalism and desperately try to give themselves a 'patriotic' coloration. Last fall for the first time the Jaruzelski regime celebrated the anniversary of the founding of the bourgeois Polish republic on 11 November 1918. This national holiday is in fact a commemoration honoring Pilsudski.

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

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

(*'Hands Off Rosa Luxemburg!' Writings* 1932)



Rosa Luxemburg.

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

Before the Holocaust Jews played a very important role in the leadership of the Polish revolutionary workers movement, providing much of its internationalist elan and cosmopolitanism, acting as a barrier against social-patriotic

influences. By 'purifying' the Polish nation at Auschwitz and elsewhere, Adolf Hitler indirectly contributed to the utter wretchedness of postwar Polish Stalinism, the enormous influence of the Catholic church and the rise of the clerical-nationalist Solidarnosc.

## The tragedy of the Polish Communist Party

The Polish Communist Party was formed in late 1918 as a fusion between Luxemburg's SDKPiL and the Polish Socialist Party-Left, a large centrist party which had split from Pilsudski in the wake of the Revolution of 1905. The outlook animating these first Polish Communists is well described by Isaac Deutscher in his important, 1958 essay, 'The Tragedy of the Polish Communist Party' (reprinted in *Marxism in Our Time*, 1973):

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

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

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

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

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

The political authority which the Polish Communist Party gained through its heroic struggle against the right-wing dictatorship was soon squandered by Stalin's 1929 turn to 'Third Period' adventurism. The party was prohibited from engaging in united action with the social democrats and peasant parties against the deepening white terror. In 1931-32 an opposition to this suicidal course emerged led by Isaac Deutscher. The Polish opposition was soon won to Trotskyism, centrally due to Trotsky's determined struggle for a united defense by the German proletariat against the menace of Nazism. While the Deutscher group was expelled from the Polish CP in 1932, the American Cold War historian Dziewanowski observes, 'A pro-Trotsky undercurrent continued to remain a factor of some importance until the party's dissolution [in 1938], particularly among the Jewish membership'.

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

The growing white terror of the Pilsudskite 'regime of the colonels' forced ever larger numbers of Polish Communists to take refuge in the Soviet Union. While many foreign Communists were killed in the Great Purges of the late '30s, Stalin's war against the Polish party was exceptional, indeed unique. Practically all Polish Communists in Soviet territory were either physically liquidated or sent to concentration camps. Many Polish Communists were lured back

under one or another pretext. The entire party leadership -- Warski, Walecki, Wera Kostrzewa, Unszlicht among others -- was killed. In 1938 in an unprecedented act Stalin dissolved the entire Polish Communist Party as a 'nest of Pilsudskiite-Trotskyites'. Deutscher sought to explain Stalin's insane hatred for Polish Communism, his determination to destroy it root and branch:

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

#### For proletarian political revolution

One point all observers agree on is that the immediate origins of the present Polish crisis are to be found in the catastrophic economic mismanagement by the Gierek regime over the last



Polish private farmer--collectivisation of agriculture key task for political revolution.

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

All the central problems facing Poland flow from the bureaucracy's narrow nationalist policies and particularly its conciliation and strengthening of the social base for counter-revolution. The ability of the peasantry to hold the country ransom lies in the failure to collectivize agriculture. The clerical-nationalist hold on Solidarnosc is rooted in the regime's attempt to find a *modus vivendi* with the Catholic church, which is rooted in the peasantry. The explosion over price increases which led to the Gdansk strike was the result of mortgaging the Polish economy to the Western bankers, who are now demanding their payoff. What's needed is not more concessions but a truly revolutionary, internationalist policy. And that requires the ouster of the Stalinist parasites through a proletarian political revolution, led by a Trotskyist vanguard.

The Polish workers' answer to the Stalin-era regime of police-state commandism was given in 1956 by the powerful proletarian revolt that began in Poznan (and helped spark the workers revolution in Hungary that same October). This forced an attempt to reform the regime through some kind of liberal Stalinism, using more individual incentives and loosening the screws of the repressive apparatus. This, too, failed -- twice. The Polish proletariat repudiated Gomulka in the 1970 Baltic workers uprising and ousted Gierek with the 1980 shipyards strike. This also meant the end of illusions in liberal reform, and now pro-Western forces in and around Solidarnosc managed to win the support of the Polish masses. But their triumph would mean a calamity of epochal proportions, turning Gdansk into a Detroit with its unemployment lines and soup kitchens.

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

class include:

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

Kuron and other Solidarnosc leaders have called for a tripartite government including the Catholic hierarchy, Washington, Wall Street and social democracy are united in seeking to restore the Roman church to its medieval domi-

inating their organizations to defend socialized property and proletarian state power against imperialism.

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

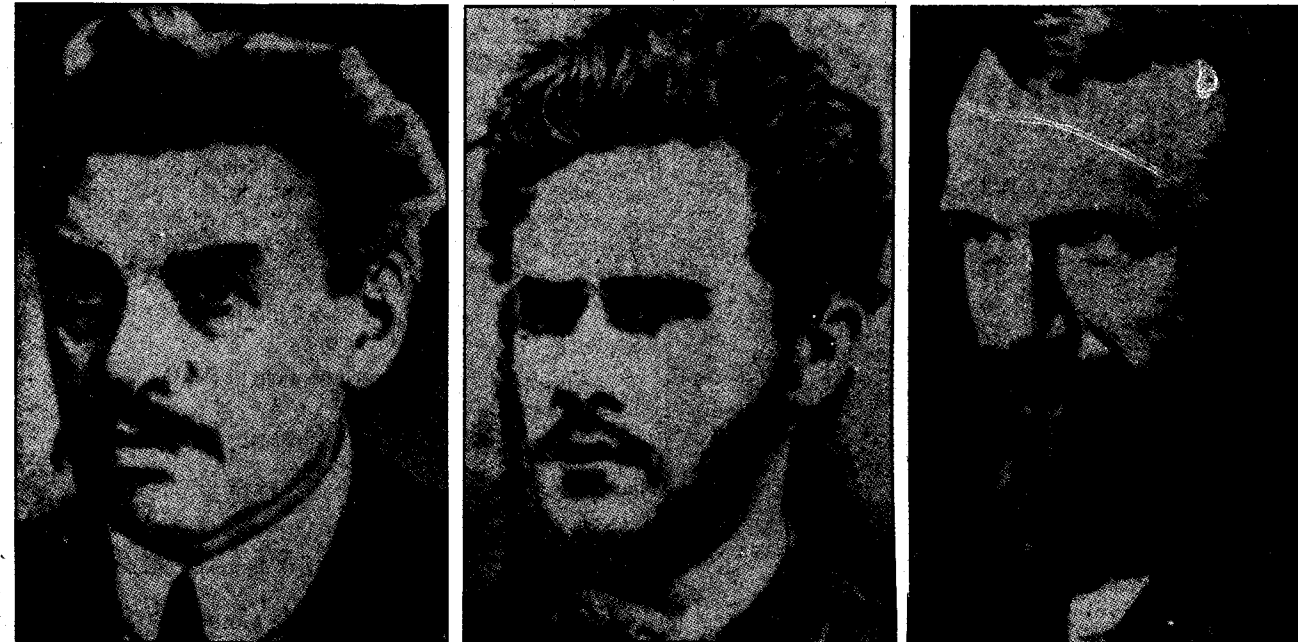
*For international socialist economic planning!* Solidarnosc leaders have expressed admiration for Western capitalism and called for the re-privatization of a significant sector of the economy. They have demanded the abolition of central planning in favor of autonomous 'self-managed' enterprises operating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

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

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

The revolutionary tradition of Polish/Russian working-class solidarity represented by Rosa Luxemburg is crucial to the re-forging of Polish Trotskyism. A Polish proletarian political revolution must be extended to the USSR and the rest of the Soviet bloc or it will be crushed. But Polish workers cannot appeal to their Soviet class brothers, who lost 20 million people fighting the Nazis in World War II (600,000 of

continued on page 6



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

# Poland...

(Continued from page 5)  
them in Poland), unless they assure them that a workers Poland will defend the Soviet Union against imperialism. The Soviet people know that US imperialism's ambition is 'rollback': the transformation of East Europe into hostile imperialist-allied states, extending NATO to the Soviet border as the prelude to capitalist restoration in the USSR itself. A Polish workers government must be a military bastion against NATO!

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

Reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 298, 5 February 1982

# Communist Party...

(Continued from page 3)

Berlinguer openly repudiates the 'Soviet model', while Monty Johnstone lauds Berlinguer's stand for 'a new socialism in the West founded on the principles of freedom and democracy' (*Marxism Today*, February 1982). This 'new socialism' was amply exposed by Lenin in 1918 in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. But the pro-Moscow opposition responds to these attacks on the dictatorship of the proletariat with a defence of the bureaucratic dictatorship of the Stalinist regime.

In order to hide its bureaucratic, anti-working-class character Stalinism must smear and falsify the Hungarian Revolution and the other proletarian-socialist challenges to its rule as CIA-financed, fascist-inspired rebellions against socialism. Of course the CIA and counter-revolutionaries will seek to exploit unrest in the Soviet bloc. But the Hungarian workers themselves suppressed counterrevolutionary provocateurs. 'Anti-socialist'? Compare the 'British Road to Socialism', which guarantees 'The freedom of all democratic parties, including those hostile to socialism', with the proclamation of one of the Budapest workers councils, which demanded 'free elections in which only those parties may participate that recognise and have always recognised the Socialist order, based on the principle that the means of production belong to society' (quoted in Spartacist pamphlet, 'Solidarnosc: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers'). The Hungarian Revolution, though confused given the absence of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, was a striking confirmation of the Trotskyist analysis of the bureaucracy as a brittle, contradictory caste (in Hungary 80 per cent went over to the insurgent workers); and of the Trotskyist programme of proletarian political revolution to institute a regime of workers (soviet) democracy.

And that is what Poland needs today -- proletarian political revolution. Straight Left seems to think all it takes is a purge of the PUWP

Central Committee for 'a fresh attempt to get socialism back on the rails'. The policies of the PUWP will not fundamentally change with a reshuffle at the top or with the arrest of a handful of former officials for the crimes and corruption of which the entire ruling clique is guilty. Because in essence they are the policies of a bureaucratic caste -- qualitatively similar to the Soviet bureaucracy which tore loose from the control of the proletariat through a political counterrevolution in 1924 -- narrowly nationalistic, conservative in its outlook, conciliatorist toward imperialism and other reactionary forces and hostile to the independent activity of the proletariat.

In the name of building 'socialism in one country', this caste balances between opposing class forces, bribing, accommodating, terrorising, in order to preserve its privileged status -- through its very measures threatening the planned economy from which its privileges derive. Indeed, the current agricultural crisis in Poland (nor is it unique -- 60 per cent of Hungarian farmland is in private hands) stems directly from Gomulka's bribing of the peasantry with massive subsidies in the wake of the suppression of the 1956 proletarian uprising.

How can the bureaucrats promote revolutionary unity between Polish and Russian workers when they drum into the heads of the workers that nation comes before class? How can they even conceive of cancelling the imperialist debt when they have no perspective of mobilising the workers of the West, particularly West Germany and the US, against the retaliatory steps which the imperialist powers would take. When the imperialists unleashed their wars of intervention against the new Soviet state, the Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky appealed to the workers of the West for assistance. And from the Jolly George in Britain to the Seattle soviet in America, they responded. But their appeal was based on the struggle for international workers revolution -- not to defend 'Mother Russia', but to defend the first workers state. But who would respond with revolutionary fervour to the discredited, corrupt, grey bureaucrats today who deal in big-power diplomacy and paint every action in nationalist and pacifist colours?

## Not 'peaceful coexistence' but international communism

The restoration of capitalism in Poland would pose a direct threat to the Soviet Union. Yet in justifying the suppression of Solidarnosc bid for power, the PUWP appealed to 'the interests of the post-war peaceful order in Europe' (*Morning Star*, 22 January). Reagan, Thatcher and the pope scream 'roll back Yalta'. Brezhnev and Jaruzelski respond, uphold Yalta. How immeasurably stronger the Soviet Union would be today if Stalin hadn't in the name of Yalta allowed the bloody suppression of the Greek proletariat, demanded the disarming of the Italian proletariat, imposed the [capitalist] Fourth Republic on the French proletariat.

The best, and in the end the only, way to defend the Soviet Union is through the class struggle for socialist revolution. Speaking in 1918, Lenin said:

'International imperialism ... could not, under any conditions, live side by side with the Soviet Republic... This is the greatest difficulty of the Russian Revolution, its greatest historical problem -- the need to solve international problems, the need to evoke a world revolution, to effect the transition from our strictly national revolution

to the world revolution.' (*Collected Works* vol 27, p 92)

'Peaceful coexistence' has nothing in common with Leninist internationalism. But both sides in the CP divide -- pro- and anti-Soviet -- appeal to the argument of peaceful coexistence to make their case. The only difference over the major resolution on peace at last November's congress was over the question of support or opposition to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. But if 'defending peace is the fundamental objective', then as the PCI argues in its reply to *Pravda* (reprinted in the *Guardian*, 8 February), it is only logical to oppose the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan -- or anywhere else -- as an attack on 'detente'.

And in this is to be found the key divide between Leninism and Stalinism. If socialism could be built in a single country, then the 'victory of socialism' could be assured simply by warding off imperialist attack. The once revolutionary parties of the Comintern were transformed into passive instruments of the Kremlin bureaucracy (until finally the Comintern was abolished even in name). Appeals for proletarian revolution became replaced by attempts to cajole and conciliate sections of the imperialist bourgeoisie into 'peacefully coexisting'. The method of class struggle was replaced by that of class collaboration; international revolution by national reformism -- from the 1934 People's Front to today's 'socialism in French colours', from the active alliance with Churchill to suppress strikes in the interest of pursuing the imperialist war effort to the British Road's 'primacy of Parliament'. That such betrayals have been carried out in the name of 'defence' of the Soviet Union is a travesty. How many of the 20,000,000 Soviet lives sacrificed in struggle against the Nazis were saved by breaking strikes for Churchill while he fought to save Egypt and India for the Empire?

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, his definitive and unchallenged analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution under the Stalin clique, Leon Trotsky warned:

'Will the bureaucrat devour the workers' state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat? Thus stands the question upon whose decision hangs the fate of the Soviet Union.'

And that question could not be posed more clearly than it has been in Poland. Trotsky called Stalin the 'gravedigger of revolution'. In Poland, Stalinism has been midwife to counterrevolution, propelling masses of workers from the inchoate Gdansk upsurge to open restorationism one year later. The challenge to members of the CP today is to break from Stalinism in the interests of defence of the Soviet Union and the world revolution. Read Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, study the material of the international Spartacist tendency on Poland. Confront the record of Stalinism openly and honestly. Join us in the struggle to build a Leninist-Trotskyist international party of world socialist revolution, a reborn Fourth International. ■

# El Salvador...

(Continued from page 8)

losing on the battlefield. The territory controlled by the FMLN continues to expand. The junta's troops control only the ground they still stand on. And increasingly, they are standing still, protecting major cities, power stations, dams and other targets while the left-wing guerrillas roam at will.

Meanwhile 'free elections' are to be held this month, complete with observers from Thatcher's Britain and Pinochet's Chile (!) to make sure they're fair. These elections are so free that the opposition could run only as an elaborate form of suicide. The nature of this farce is perhaps best indicated by the fact that the leader of the group highly likely to displace president Jose Napoleon Duarte's Christian Democrats as the leading party in the new 'Constituent Assembly' is ex-Major Roberto D'Aubuisson. D'Aubuisson is a fascistic would-be dictator, the head of a network of paramilitary death squads and author of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

The past few years of intense bloodletting in El Salvador have created a layer of kill-crazy rightist fanatics whose full-time occupation is kidnapping, torture, rape and murder. Anyone who thinks there can be a 'political solution' with these mad dogs has only to look at neighbouring Nicaragua. There the victorious Sandinistas released hundreds of proven National Guard killers in order to impress the Americans with their 'generosity' and 'pluralism'. The result is that many of these ex-Somoza thugs are now blowing up aeroplanes and staging murderous terror raids over the border from bases in Honduras.

NO. 41 SPRING 1982  
**Women and Revolution**  
Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League  
Hail Rosa Luxemburg!  
Reagan's War on Women ..... 3  
Jane Alpert's Growing Up Underground ..... 7  
Confessions of an FBI Fink ..... 7  
Interview with the Militant Action Caucus: Fighting Me Bell ..... 8  
The Russian Avant-Garde: Art and the Bolshevik Revolution ..... 14  
Seduced and Abandoned: The Politics of Opportunism Gays and the SWP ..... 19

## International Women's Day 1982

'You will see the priests organizing the workers and founding "Christian" trade unions. In this way they try to catch the fish in their net, to attract the workers into the trap of these false trade unions.' (from Rosa Luxemburg, 'Socialism and the Churches', 1905)

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

The leader of the most left wing of the FMLN's five factions, Salvador Cayetano Caprio of the FPL (People's Liberation Forces) underlined his willingness to 'compromise' in a 9 February *New York Times* article: '... there is room [in a future government] for everybody's contribution, from large businessmen to small farmers and merchants... We don't believe that this broad program has anything to do with Socialism or a Socialist government.' This craven appeal to imperialist opinion was supplemented by an open letter to Reagan signed by Caprio and his fellow FMLN commanders on 18 January. 'The Salvadoran people', they write, 'which so greatly admire the progressive and democratic vocation of the United States, cannot understand why you are determined to support a genocidal government.' 'What we have said', they continue, 'leads us to respectfully request that you change your policy toward El Salvador.'

The FMLN must clearly hope these words never get back to Central America, which has suffered US aggression 40 times in the last 126 years. Just what the FDR's commitment to a 'political solution' means was made clear by their representative in Washington, Ruben Zamora. As his horrible example of the dangers of a leftist military triumph, Zamora holds up Nicaragua: 'For me [the example of Nicaragua] is one reason for supporting a political settlement... A military victory [in El Salvador] will find the US completely hostile... And the people in the business community and the professions would get out. Under these circumstances, what are the chances of pluralism?' (*Newsweek*, 15 February)

### 'Political solution'?

This is one point on which Marxist revolutionaries and FDR popular-front politicians can agree. Military victory for the leftist insurgents would make 'pluralism', ie continued capitalist rule, difficult to preserve. For this reason former Christian Democratic politician Zamora, who has everything to lose if the FMLN wins on the battlefield, is the perfect advocate of a 'political solution'. For this reason the international Spartacist tendency is the strongest advocate of a military victory.

The Salvadoran civil war, despite the FDR's attempts to portray it as a struggle for self-determination and capitalist 'democracy', grows out of the irreconcilable class antagonisms between the masses of impoverished Salvadoran workers and poor peasants and the handful of capitalist landlords and their army. The defeat of the junta's armed forces would quickly pose the possibility of overturning capitalist rule. It would almost inevitably regionalise the conflict, drawing in the Guatemalan and Honduran dictatorships and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. The US would frantically try to stop the establishment of a 'new Cuba' in Central America. That is why, from the beginning of the protests against imperialist intervention in El Salvador, the Spartacist tendency has demonstrated under the slogans 'Military victory to leftist insurgents' and 'Defence of Cuba and the USSR begins in El Salvador'.

In Western Europe only Margaret Thatcher's Tory government has been prepared to cast its

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# Protest apartheid murder!

On 5 February the South African regime announced the 'suicide' of trade union organiser Neil Aggett -- the forty-sixth opponent of apartheid to be murdered in detention and the first white. The news triggered a rare display of black/white unity against apartheid terror and specifically in defence of black trade unions. All the main independent black unions backed a call for a 30-minute protest strike on 12 February, including black stevedores who shut down three major ports. The thousands-strong funeral procession the next day saw the display of black trade union banners and flags of the outlawed African National Congress.

This outrage gives the lie yet again to all the imperialist propaganda about self-reform of the brutal apartheid state and its attempts to spruce up its image. The current tour by English cricketers is an example of the lat-

ter. Though we do not support blanket cultural boycotts of South Africa and other appeals to the murderous 'democratic' imperialists, this tour is clearly a racist propaganda ploy which must be condemned by all enemies of apartheid. Workers in Britain must fight for their unions to black military goods to South Africa and use their industrial weight in support of black trade union rights.

Neil Aggett gave his life seeking to organise the one social force which can avenge his death: the five-million-strong black proletariat. Under the leadership of a South African revolutionary vanguard -- a Leninist-Trotskyist party -- the black proletariat will raze apartheid rule to the ground and create a black-centred workers and peasants government, powerhouse for a socialist federation of southern Africa.

lot behind Reagan and the Salvadoran junta -- and even then they haven't exactly been keen to shout about the fact. The US broadcasting service CBS recently reported that Britain had advised the American administration to limit itself to covert action to prevent arms supplies reaching El Salvador. And the Foreign Office decision to send observers to the 'election' was qualified by Lord Carrington who stressed that they were only going to 'observe'.

### Social democracy: imperialism's soft cop in Central America

Meanwhile the Labour Party has played the issue for all it's worth in Parliament, seeking to embarrass the government over its support for the bloodthirsty dictatorship (while conveniently forgetting its own bloody imperialist bipartisanship closer to home in Ireland). At one level, Labour's new-found interest in El Salvador reflects the fact that opposition to the Reagan/Thatcher stand is one of the few issues on which everyone from Tony Benn to Denis Healey can safely agree. After all such a bourgeois establishment mouthpiece as the *Sunday Times* denounces Thatcher's decision, unique among the West European powers, to send observers (who will perhaps be lucky to return alive). Even the pope decries the number of killings in El Salvador! More broadly, Labour's stance is in line with the role of West European social democracy as imperialism's soft cop in Central America.

French President Mitterrand has made a speciality of initiatives to establish a rapprochement between the Salvadoran regime and the rebels. In August a joint statement to the UN Security Council by France and Mexico embarrassed the Reagan administration by calling for recognition of the FMLN/FDR as a 'representative political force' and the establishment by negotiation of 'a new internal order' based on 'authentically free elections' and the restructuring of the armed forces. Shortly after his election, Mitterrand explained his view of El Salvador quite succinctly:

'How is it not possible to understand this popular revolution?... The West would be better advised to help these people rather than force them to exist under the oppressor's boot, because when they cry for help, I would like to know that someone other than Fidel Castro would hear them.' (*New York Times*, 2 July 1981)

The social democrats are no more friends of workers revolution in Latin America than in Europe. Indeed far from being a soft cop Mitterrand in particular is a hard Cold Warrior over issues more pressing to the European imperialists, from Poland to the nuclear arms build-up. Their intercession on behalf of the Salvadoran FDR and FMLN is an attempt to block the road to a left-wing victory and preserve capitalist rule.

Yet the fake-revolutionary left naturally goes right along with them. *Socialist Challenge* (25 February) simply calls for 'No British support for Reagan's plans in Central America' and gives uncritical support to the national El Salvador protest demonstration in London on 28 March. This demonstration, to be addressed not only by Labour Party and FDR spokesmen but also by the Liberal Party, makes its centrepiece the call for no US intervention and a strategy 'to end the conflict through negotiations'. In contrast, the Spartacist League says there is only one way to stop Reagan's plans to bleed Central America as part of a proxy war against Cuba and the USSR. There is only one 'political solution' for the exploited and oppressed Salvadoran working people: Military victory to the leftist insurgents! For workers revolution!

Adapted from Workers Vanguard no 299, 19 February 1982

## 'Fares Fair'...

(Continued from page 8)

will ever vote left again.' Yet Livingstone responded to the Denning decision by hoping it would be overturned by the Law Lords. His response to the Law Lords was to hope that it would be overturned by a parliamentary amendment of the London Transport Act. Only at the eleventh hour has there been a token and chaotic attempt to mobilise any support among the public, and more crucially, among the affected trade unions.

Yet Livingstone's GLC is the acme of 'radicalism', eliciting the ire and outrage of the Tory press and the City establishment in its ten months of existence. In a consummate expression of the narrow horizons of Labour reformism and its reliance on bourgeois 'good will', Livingstone crowed shortly after taking office:

'Our proposals for public transport will affect the lifestyle of people in Harrow and Bexleyheath, proving that socialist policies of high public spending are good for them as well.' (*Times*, 14 May 1981)

A 25 per cent reduction in transport fares -- 'socialist policies'? Yet the whole range of Labour lefts and fake Trotskyists have invested their energies in the fight for 'socialism in one council'. And they come straight up against the Tory austerity budget, the cash limits of Michael Heseltine, the banks and the general social reality of life in a capitalist economy which has been in terminal decline for years.

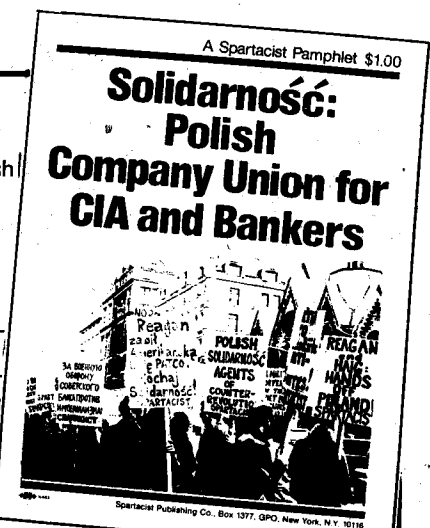
If the 'radical' Livingstone wanted to warrant at least a footnote in history, he would stand defiant and force the Tories into a showdown -- seeking to tap the seething frustration throughout the working class with this government's untrammelled attacks. But Livingstone just offers his apologies: 'If we were to say that the setback on fares is an excuse to quit then what chance for a Labour government...?' (*London Labour Briefing*, March 1982).

What chance indeed, if they can't even lower the fares? What will root out Britain's decay is not a fight to put more Labour reformists in County Hall or Westminster, but a fight for socialist revolution and a genuine workers government. Even the most minimal conveniences of life in this country cry out for the overthrow of capitalism and the institution of a rational, planned economy under working-class rule. No to the fares rise! For free public transport! ■

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# SPARTACIST BRITAIN

## Defend Cuba, USSR! No to 'political solutions'!

# El Salvador leftists must win the war!

A series of military successes for El Salvador's leftist rebels has shaken the bloody US-backed military junta in that tiny Central American country, and prompted American Secretary of State Alexander Haig to threaten 'whatever is necessary' -- including US troops -- to stop the guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN). By turning the tide of the Salvadoran civil war in their favour, the guerrillas have put a kink in Haig and Reagan's plans to 'draw the line' against Communism in Central America. So now Washington is escalating military aid to the bloodthirsty Salvadoran colonels, directly aiding Somozaist exile terrorists based in Honduras and stepping up preparations for naval action in the Caribbean aimed at Cuba.

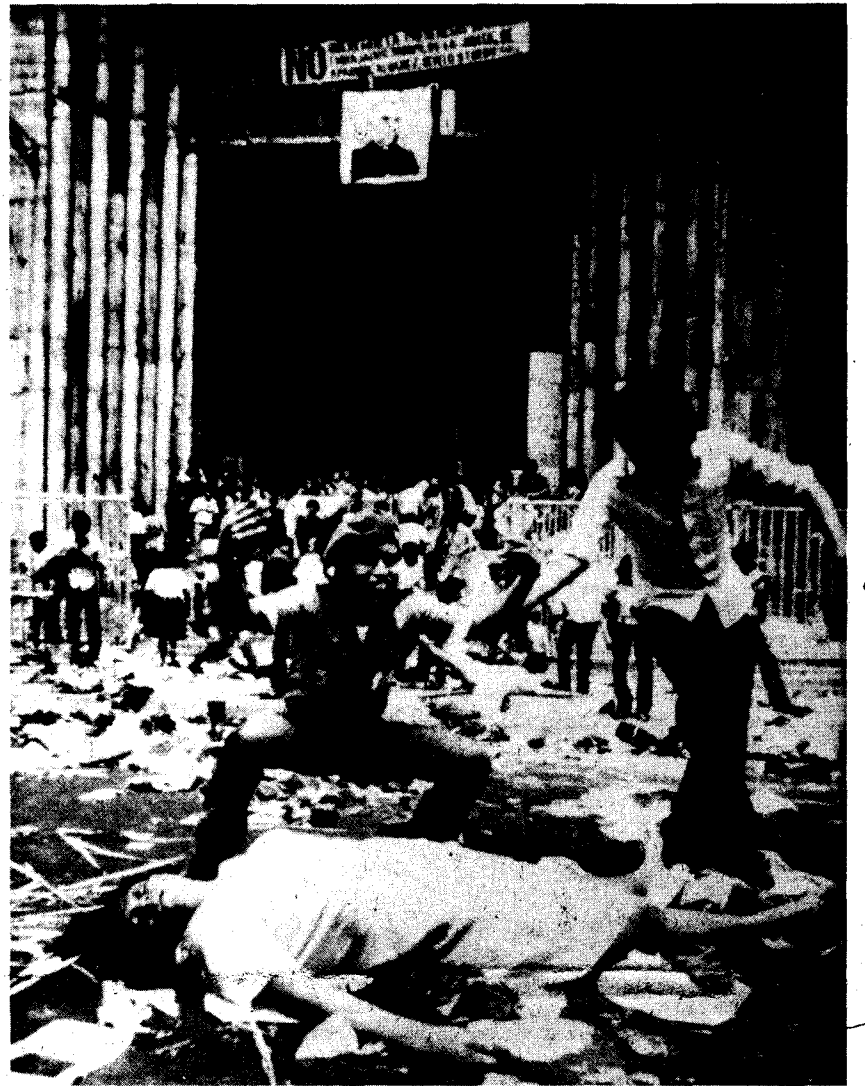
In the US Democratic Party doves are flapping their wings in fear of being drawn into 'another Vietnam', while throughout Europe Reagan's ultra-provocative stance has drawn protest in social-democratic/liberal circles. From Mitterrand's France to Schmidt's Germany and the Labour Opposition here in Britain, the cry goes up for Washington to seek a 'political solution' with the left-wing insurgents. Far from being 'soft on Communism', the social democrats believe that Reagan's attempt to bolster such a venal dictatorship against a never-ending tide of popular rebellion is a no-win situation. Worse, they fear that if the US were to become militarily involved a la Vietnam, and the US war drive stepped up to target Cuba, this could be a direct prelude to World War III -- with Western Europe becoming the theatre for thermonuclear war against the Soviet Union. And all for El

Salvador, a tiny dot on the map of no particular strategic interest to the West European capitalists?

### 'Human rights' massacres

Reagan's problems with El Salvador, on the battlefield and off, came together on 27 January. First came the front-page, eye-witness accounts in major newspapers of a horrendous massacre of women, children and old men by US-trained Salvadoran troops. Then came the news that an FMLN commando squad (perhaps with the aid of disaffected junta troops) had just blown up virtually the entire Salvadoran air force in a spectacular raid on the Ilopango air base.

One day later Reagan certified to Congress that the Salvadoran killer junta was 'making progress' on human rights and proceeded to treble the amount of military aid slated for El Salvador for the coming year and to almost double the amount of economic assistance. Parallels with Vietnam are evident. In February 1965 the Vietnamese NLF made a surprise attack on the US air base at Pleiku -- and that incident was used as the excuse to launch massive bombing of North Vietnam. Over and over the administration has recited a list of 'contingency plans' ranging from blockades of Nicaragua and/or Cuba to sending in the Marines. The latest leak to the press reveals a plan approved by the National Security Council for the CIA to train



'a series of paramilitary hit teams for military, political and intelligence purposes' in Central America (*New York Post*, 15 February).

El Salvador is the cockpit of Cold War II. Burning with frustration at their inability to provoke an anti-Soviet uprising in Poland, the Reaganites are desperate to claim a victory over 'international Communism'. Neither the US imperialists nor their junta puppets, who have butchered more than 30,000 Salvadoran workers and peasants in the past two years, are about to negotiate any kind of 'political solution'. And the Salvadoran masses don't need negotiations with their torturers and murderers, they need a revolution to smash the bloody junta and their oligarch masters.

In fact, US-backed forces in El Salvador are

*continued on page 6*

## Defend 'Fares Fair' against the Tory onslaught! For free public transport!

The Tory government's decision to kill the 'Fares Fair' scheme is a pure and simple act of malice against the working people of London. In the major metropolis of the country, one of the capitals of the West, it will cost upwards of a pound to go anywhere -- after having waited in the cold and rain for a bus that never seems to come. For working people it will mean some 10-20 per cent of their monthly income will go simply to the cost of getting to work. A shopping trip to the West End, a night out? Forget it! And as for the supposed benefits to the ratepayers that this doubling of fares will provide -- rates are still going up by 90 per cent! These are the skeletal features of life in Thatcher's Britain.

The 'Fares Fair' scheme, introduced as the major promised reform by Ken Livingstone's left Labour council, hasn't been much to boast about. It still leaves the cost of public transport

higher than most of the major cities in the world. But it has been a welcome respite from the ravages of Tory attacks on living standards, jobs, social services, everything. Now however fares are set to double. In the wake of the Law Lords decision, there was a threat to raise the relatively low South Yorkshire fares by 150 per cent, which appears to have been beaten back -- at the expense of a 20 per cent rate increase. Likewise the West Midlands Public Transport Executive has threatened a 70 per cent fare increase.

The slashing of the subsidy to London Transport will mean not only higher fares, but fewer bus and tube routes, earlier closing hours -- and a loss of up to 5000 jobs, fully a quarter of the LT workforce. It will mean a productivity drive and wage-slashing as LT makes a mad scramble to balance its books. The consumer-

based Fare Fight and 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' campaigns won't turn this around. The LT unions have a direct interest in stopping this attack on their jobs and livelihoods by a vindictive Tory government.

Two years ago, LT ticket collectors staged an effective protest against a spate of assaults by refusing to collect any fares. The 10 March LT protest strike must be a kickoff for serious industrial action to beat back the Tories' malicious attack. Defend 'Fares Fair'! Not one job lost -- for worksharing on full pay! Let the City pay! But public transport should be free just like any other necessary social service. For free public transport!

At the time the fare reduction was introduced, Livingstone declared: 'If we fail here papers like the *Express* will gloat so much that no one

*continued on page 7*