

Women and Revolution



Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

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International Women's Day 1983



Dr. Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis:
A Man Who Saved Millions of Women 2

Canada:
Defend Dr. Morgentaler Against
Anti-Abortion Frenzy!..... 4

Australia:
Life in a Remote White Imperialist Enclave .. 6

Italy:
Workers' Protests Rock Italy 9

Sri Lanka:
Women Workers, Tamils Key to Revolution ..10

Ireland/Britain:
Clerical Crusade Targets Irish Women 12

France:
Mitterrand's "Moral Order":
Sexual Straitjacket..... 15

Spain:
Smash Francoist Anti-Abortion Drive! 18

West Germany:
No to "Kinder, Küche, Kirche"! 21

U.S.:
Will America Explode? 24

Dr. Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis:

A Man Who Saved Millions of Women

Women and Revolution has chosen International Women's Day this year as an occasion to commemorate Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis. As an obstetrician in mid-19th century Europe Dr. Semmelweis searched for, found and tried to apply the cure for puerperal (childbed) fever. For his actions he was ridiculed, forced out of his practice in Vienna and eventually driven to insanity. While his discoveries preceded those of Louis Pasteur and John Lister and were superior to the earlier work of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Semmelweis is little remembered today—even by many in the medical profession. Yet his simple concern for his female patients resulted in the saving of millions of women, in his lifetime as an originator of current medical procedure.

Semmelweis was born in Hungary in 1818. By 1844 he had begun work as an obstetrician in the First Maternity Division of the Vienna General Hospital, a facility for charity cases and the poor. An estimated 1,800 women a year died there of childbed fever, an extremely contagious and painful microbial infection which led to certain death within days after childbirth. Indeed, the First Maternity ward was notorious for these statistics, and women went to incredible ends to avoid it, sometimes even trying to hold off labor pains until they could be admitted to the Second (midwives') Maternity Division. When Semmelweis met his first patient she was shaking with fear, but he somewhat arrogantly assured her that the doctors' ward was certainly superior. She soon became one of the many thousand dead, and he was jolted. He checked the records of deaths at both wards for the previous six years and found a nearly ten percent mortality rate at the First and less than two percent at the Second.

For the next two years, Semmelweis devoted himself to researching the likely causes of the disease, nagging his rather uninterested superiors, unsuccessfully trying every conceivable corrective measure. He wrote, "I was like a drowning man grabbing at straws. Everything was questionable, everything inexplicable, only the great number of dead was an undoubted actuality" (quoted in *Men Against Death*, Paul de Kruif). In March of 1847 the assistant pathologist at the hospital died after cutting himself during the autopsy of a puerperal patient. Semmelweis noticed that his disease was identical to those of women who died in his ward after childbirth. He realized then that, unlike the midwives, doctors went straight from surgical and autopsy rooms to the maternity ward where they examined each woman in turn. This led him to the discovery that puerperal fever was not some unknown, cosmically-caused disorder emanating from within the childbearing woman (as was commonly believed at the time) but rather an infection that was conveyed to them by their doctors.

He immediately instituted the practice of doctors



**Dr. Ignaz
Philipp
Semmelweis,
1818-1865.**

washing their hands in calcium chloride solution before entering the maternity ward (and eventually between examining each patient). In April of 1847, 18 of every 100 women had died of childbed fever. By June of 1847, one month after Semmelweis' discovery, one out of every 100 women died, less than the mortality rate in the midwives' ward.

Semmelweis' findings were not exactly embraced by his colleagues and superiors. He had, after all, proved that doctors themselves were responsible for these deaths. More importantly, his discovery ran counter to the prevalent medical philosophy of his day. German medicine in the first half of the 19th century reflected the extreme idealism of intellectual thought generally. It was dominated by the Nature-Philosophy school, whose leading light, a naturalist named Lorenz Oken, was as inept as he was fanciful. Oken went so far as to declare, "Ideally every child should be a boy" (quoted in *History of Medicine*, Fielding Garrison). This doctrine, along with several equally mystical offshoots, was shattered as a result of the 1848 revolution. But its successor, the New Vienna School in which Semmelweis was trained, hung on longer. It subscribed to the theory of "therapeutic nihilism," taking great pains to diagnose and describe disease without any expectation of curing it. Patients were regarded merely as objects of investigation, and the humane aspects of medical

International Women's Day 1983

This year *Women and Revolution* celebrates International Women's Day with articles from the comrades of the international Spartacist tendency. On this proletarian holiday, which both honors the militant struggles of women workers and expresses the commitment of the socialist vanguard to women's liberation, we recall the words of the "Transitional Program," the 1938 founding document of Leon Trotsky's Fourth International:

"The decay of capitalism... deals its heaviest blows to the woman as a wage-earner and as a housewife. The sections of the Fourth International should seek bases of support among the most exploited layers of the working class, consequently among the women workers. Here they will find inexhaustible stores of devotion, selflessness and readiness to sacrifice."

As the imperialist nations, led by the U.S., gear up for war against the Soviet Union and try to make the working class pay for the anarchy of capitalist production, the bourgeoisie is seeking to reinforce the ancient oppressions of the family and religion—a striking negative confirmation of the Marxist axiom that the liberty of women is a decisive index of social progress in general. Today as we struggle to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, the fight for women's liberation is a key aspect of our program. We look forward to the creation of women's sections of mass Trotskyist vanguard parties around the world. Forward to women's liberation through international socialist revolution!

practice were ignored. When it came to treatment, the leading clinician of the school, Josef Skoda, would shrug and say, "Ah, it's all the same!" (ibid).

Hospital conditions reflected this attitude. No one used gloves or washed hands. Instruments and bandages were not disinfected, linen was not changed from one patient to the next, and open windows let in the putrid air of adjacent morgues. In an article entitled "Madness" in the 16 December 1982 *New York Review of Books*, Princeton University professor of history Lawrence Stone commented:

"It is now credibly believed that hospitals were lethal death traps before Pasteur demonstrated the importance of a sterile environment. It is now also generally recognized that doctors—presumably unwittingly—have killed more patients than they cured, certainly before the early nineteenth century, and maybe before the invention of anti-biotics in the mid-twentieth...."

Semmelweis began to make changes in these conditions, and the medical profession retaliated. While some—notably Dr. Skoda—stood by him, he became an object of derision. His boss finally had him demoted by having it brought to the attention of the medical authorities that Semmelweis had worn the plumed hat of a revolutionary in 1848 (which, if true, is certainly an honorable statement). Semmelweis returned to Budapest where he was again scorned and ignored. Yet he continued his fight, first as an unpaid obstetrician at St. Rochus Hospital and then as a professor at Budapest University. It was there that he published a treatise on his work and a scathing attack on his fellow obstetricians with the refrain, "This murder must stop." Semmelweis' anguish over and obsession with the needless number of deaths overwhelmed him, and he died in a public insane asylum of massive infection in 1865. It was not until the work of Pasteur and Lister that his breakthrough was accepted.

Feminists will doubtless denounce us for saluting the work of a man on International Women's Day, just as in

the past we have been assailed for upholding and implementing the revolutionary work of "old men with white beards." We are not champions of "sisterhood" but rather seek to strengthen the ranks of the working class in struggle against capitalist society, including the reactionary nuclear family which enslaves women. Semmelweis was hardly a Marx or Engels—nor is the medical profession now, despite greatly increased knowledge, a humane champion of women and the oppressed. What we share with Semmelweis is his desire to make childbirth an easy and safe procedure. The reality of having children with real choice, without the certain knowledge that motherhood means a life of mindless drudgery and the fear for the lives and livelihoods of one's children, awaits the socialist future. And it is the development of technology, not least through scientific achievements of such men as Dr. Semmelweis, which has laid the basis for a society with the resources to replace the family structure and ultimately liberate women. ■

Women and Revolution

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Trotskyist League of Canada

Defend Dr. Morgentaler Against Anti-Abortion Frenzy!

Last November Montreal doctor Henry Morgentaler announced plans to open abortion clinics here and in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in defiance of Canadian law which restricts abortions to accredited hospitals upon a doctors committee's determination that continued pregnancy would be likely to endanger the mother's life or health. Anti-abortion reactionaries responded with a vile, racist campaign against the Polish-born, Jewish doctor.

La Liberté, a Manitoba French-language weekly with ties to the Catholic church, published a vicious, anti-Semitic "cartoon" titled "The Smell of Auschwitz in the Air." It depicts Morgentaler with pointed ears, beak nose and fur skullcap, dressed in a butcher's smock, standing beside garbage cans stuffed with tiny figures against a background of death camp ovens. This is an outrage! Morgentaler, now almost 60, is a survivor of the infamous Nazi charnal houses of Auschwitz and Dachau. He justly denounced the perpetrators of this "cartoon" as "the spiritual descendants of Hitler."

Recently the Catholic-dominated Children's Aid Society (CAS) in a small Ontario town refused to allow a 15-year-old girl who had been raped to have an abortion. Both her foster and natural father had to spirit her off to Morgentaler's Montreal clinic, and now the CAS is investigating to see if it will lay charges. Several months ago one Laura McArthur, Metro Toronto Right to Life president, declared "Women rarely get preg-

nant as a result of rape," citing Nazi "medical experiments" on Jewish concentration camp prisoners (*Toronto Globe and Mail*, 20 November 1982)!

Morgentaler has been fighting Canada's abortion laws for over a decade. In the early 1970s he spent ten months in prison (suffering a heart attack when thrown into solitary confinement), and underwent six years of trials, despite three jury acquittals, on charges of performing illegal abortions. In December 1976 the Parti Québécois government finally dropped all the charges against him, but as the Trotskyist League of Canada noted:

"While Morgentaler's release is a victory in the struggle for women's rights, it does not represent a step toward the repeal, or even the liberalizing, of the anti-abortion laws. All anti-abortion legislation must be wiped off the books. Abortion is not a crime; free abortion on demand, performed by qualified medical personnel, should be the democratic right of all women."

—*Spartacist Canada* No. 12, January 1977

Today with Reagan and his Canadian junior partner Pierre Trudeau driving to war against the Soviet Union, all manner of reactionaries are flourishing in the Cold War climate, attacking even the most minimal social gains. And they've been aided by the wretched social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) and the fake-lefts who have stoked the fires of anti-Communism, tailing counterrevolutionary Solidarność in Poland and



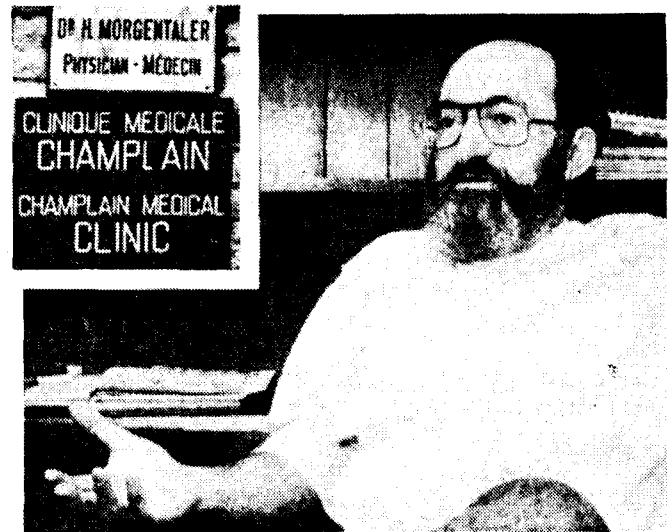
Spartacist Canada

Trotskyist League of
Canada at Toronto
International Women's
Day march, 1982.

lauding the murderous mullahs in Afghanistan. Indeed, leading the charge against Morgentaler in Manitoba is a former provincial NDP cabinet minister, Joseph Borowski! Now running a health food store, this ex-NDPer has publicly called Morgentaler "a foreign butcher" and "a Nazi butcher," venomously adding: "We don't need a guy who escaped from a death camp in Germany to come and set up another one in Manitoba. People have told me that it's too bad that guy escaped the death camps. They say they should have kept the ovens going for him" (*Toronto Globe and Mail*, 4 December 1982). Borowski has gone all the way to the Supreme Court in his efforts to overturn Canada's abortion laws.

The NDP, while officially "pro-choice," is chock full of anti-abortionists. A "Pro-Life Caucus" was formed in 1975 and 22 NDP 1980 candidates were endorsed by the "Coalition for the Protection of Human Life." One of them, NDP federal MP Father Bob Ogle, received plaudits from the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL—currently the United Secretariat's Canadian section) at a recent meeting here for his stand on Nicaragua! We wonder what Nicaraguan women seeking abortion might think of him.

While some groups like the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League and the Ontario Women's Committee of the NPD have come out in defense of Morgentaler, the "women's movement" has been preoccupied by something else: "pornography." On January 18 several demonstrations were held to protest a Canadian pay-TV channel's agreement to air programs produced by Playboy Enterprises. The feminists' line that *Playboy* is or leads to pornography (which is falsely equated with violence against women) parallels the Moral Majority's campaign against "smut" and fuels the efforts of local councils who are trying to ban books and magazines in cities across Canada. The capitalist state's vicious witchhunt of the gay liberation newspaper the *Body Politic* and homosexual-oriented Glad Day Books on "obscenity charges" makes the



Toronto Star

Dr. Henry Morgentaler (inset, sign on the front of his Montreal clinic).

political link very clear. The Trotskyist League has defended *Body Politic*, as well as gays victimized by the Toronto cops' gestapo-style "round-up" raids of bars and bathhouses (see "Protest Gay Bust in Toronto!" *W&R* No. 22, Spring 1981).

Politically marching side by side with reactionaries is not new for Canada's feminists and fake-lefts. Many of the same people protesting *Playboy* eagerly joined the attempts to whip up an anti-Communist frenzy behind pope Wojtyla's favorite "union," *Solidarność*, whose program for women is basically "kinder, küche, kirche" (children, kitchen, church). Back in 1981 a motley collection of feminists, Maoists and ostensible Trotskyists hosted and heralded the viciously anti-Communist Russian feminist Tatyana Mamonova. In Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver only Trotskyist League supporters confronted Mamonova on her denunciation of the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan. "I would like to ask how you can present yourself as a champion of women's rights," a Toronto TL supporter said, and yet display such contempt for Afghan women:

"... who unlike their sisters in Soviet Central Asia are sold like cattle, smothered under 30 yards of black muslin cotton, and never learn to read and write. It is a fact that the main thing standing between the women of Afghanistan and grotesque, barbaric feudal, pre-feudal, institutions is the Soviet Red Army. And you called on Red Army soldiers to desert."

Unlike the social democrats, the feminists, the Maoists and the RWL, the Trotskyist League, since its inception in 1975, has struggled consistently for the emancipation of women, be it in Canada, Poland or Afghanistan. Our defense of Dr. Morgentaler and call for "Free Abortion on Demand!" for all women is linked to our struggle for a vanguard party of the working class, which alone can lead all the oppressed against their common enemy, the capitalist class and its repressive state apparatus. As our banner proudly declared at last year's International Women's Day demonstration in Toronto: "Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!" ■



Brazao/Toronto Star

Protesters attacked by Toronto cops, February 1981, at mass demonstration denouncing cops' gestapo-style raids of gay bars and bathhouses.

Spartacist League of Australia/New Zealand

Life in a Remote White Imperialist Enclave

The Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ) joins our comrades in the international Spartacist tendency in celebrating International Women's Day, a proletarian holiday. In deeply chauvinist "White Australia," anti-Soviet war preparations and economic depression have fueled nationalist-racism and social reaction reinforcing the bourgeoisie's "sacred" nuclear family—the central pillar of women's oppression under capitalism. And it was Labor premier Neville Wran's cops that raided a Sydney gay club last month, charging six people under sections of the Crimes Act prohibiting consensual homosexual acts and a sixteen-year-old under the "age-of-consent" laws. Unlike Australian feminists and the fake-lefts who preach class collaboration and anti-Sovietism, mainly through their political commitment and ties to the Australian Labor Party (ALP), we understand that the fight against domestic reaction cannot be separated from revolutionary defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist war plans.

Australia is a weak, vulnerable imperialist power, with a very modest military capacity. Capitalist Australia's protection is afforded by the ANZUS military alliance with the United States, with the Australian bourgeoisie playing the role of most craven junior partner to Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive. Australian troops lend "international" credibility to the U.S. military bridgehead in the Sinai, while in this region

Australia is playing an increasingly aggressive role as U.S. proxy in Southeast Asia, bolstering counterrevolutionary alliances such as ASEAN, whose main target is the Vietnamese deformed workers state. The fate of Australia is nonetheless indissolubly bound to that of Asia; as we have insisted:

"The deadly fear of the massively exploited, starving masses of Asia in their hundreds of millions to the north has similarities with apartheid South Africa, except here the racial threat to white supremacy is external. . . . The nationalists' attempt to maintain Australia as a privileged white outpost against Asia must be mercilessly combated; it is completely counterposed to our program of a racially integrated Australia, part of socialist Asia."

—"The Main Enemy Is At Home!,"
Australasian Spartacist No. 90,
Summer 1981/1982

With the international recession devastating Australia's highly vulnerable manufacturing industries, women have been among the hardest hit, particularly the mainly immigrant women concentrated in unskilled factory labour. Racist reaction is on the rise, not only in the country towns where black unemployment runs at 90 percent, but in the industrial cities, like the coal and steel towns of Wollongong and Newcastle, where unemployment stands at 20 percent and protectionist poison is fueling anti-Asian racism. Women—especially youth and migrants, unskilled and poorly educated—in the most menial jobs and



Australasian Spartacist

Melbourne: SL/ANZ contingent chanted "Smash U.S.-China anti-Soviet Alliance" at February 1980 rally against Carter/Fraser war drive. Banner reads "Victory to the Red Army in Afghanistan! Down with Carter/NATO War Drive!"

sweatshops of the dying textile industry are especially vulnerable. Social services are being ravaged, among them remnants of concessions from days gone by such as childcare centres and women's refuges, often the last recourse for women in a country where wife- and child-beating are a "normal" part of life. Meanwhile the craftist Laborite union tops have not lifted a finger to save these women's—or anyone else's—jobs, instead joining the bosses in enforcing wage cuts and the four-day week. The fight for industrial unionism, sit-in strikes to fight sackings, a political break with the Labor traitors, the forging of an internationalist class-struggle workers party—these are among the critical issues facing the woman worker today.

In this penal settler-colony outpost in Asia, first of British and now American imperialism, "little Australia" social-democratic nationalism is not only white racist, but proud of its brutally male chauvinist and self-indulgent parochial philistine "national character"—best described as the culture of white pigs. Just as an index, in this land of "sport and drink," less than a decade ago women were still banned from drinking in hotel public bars. It is not surprising that the feminist movement of the mid-'70s, a direct product of revulsion at this male chauvinist culture, took on a mass character. Yet the reformists and feminists who claim to champion women's rights do not in any way challenge the white racist pro-imperialism of the labour bureaucracy, which thoroughly identifies with ruling-class privilege.

The Australian working class has historically been militant in pursuing its economic interests, but remains dominated by the reformist Labor Party bureaucracy. In November 1975 there was an enormous working-class response to the ruling-class offensive that deposed the Whitlam government, the first Labor government in 23 years. But the union tops refused to channel it in the direction of independent class struggle. The pompous, elitist Whitlam, who found out the hard way over Pine Gap that you don't mess with the CIA's strategic spy stations, was no more a friend of the working class than any other ALP bureaucrat; he just happened to be premier during a period of relative economic stability when the workers could be a bit more effectively bought off. The early '70s feminist movement got its crumbs too, many organisations directly dependent on funding from the Labor-administered capitalist state.

The rapid decline of the "autonomous" feminist movement actually began in its refusal to organise women along class lines and effectively intervene in the 1975 "political crisis." By the late '70s sections of the moribund women's movement were emulating the chauvinist, bourgeois leaders of the 20th century suffragette movement, while others were marching in utterly reactionary anti-pornography mobilisations to "reclaim the night." The Eurocommunist Communist Party of Australia (CPA), reformist to the core, played a dominant role in the feminist movement—and in fact the CPA broke its back on the woman question in Australia. An entire layer of older CPA women cadre turned to feminism in bitter reaction to male chauvinism, and the CPA's own adaptation to the feminist



Viet Nam News Agency

Heroic Vietnamese woman captures U.S. B-52 pilot. Defend Vietnam against U.S. and its Australian junior partner's war threats!

movement figured importantly in its break toward social democracy. For the CPA there is no inconsistency in claiming to fight for women's rights and being a strikebreaker for "sisterhood." Its bureaucrats are typified by then CPAer and Victorian State Secretary of the metal workers union (AMWU) John Halfpenny. His most grotesque betrayal in a long list since is probably that of women workers at the Everhot factory outside Melbourne in 1975—all members of the AMWU, all sacked illegally on the basis that "women's place is in the home." Halfpenny refused to defend them and covered for the male scabs that replaced them. The "consistent feminists" dismissed the betrayal by reference to the "male-dominated trade unions." Today the CPA debates the virtues of the central institution oppressing women—the bourgeois nuclear family—in its press, as it moves rightward toward

continued on next page

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liquidation into the Labor Party, dropping even its pretence of opposition to U.S. bases and ANZUS.

Our perspective is diametrically opposed: to break the working class from its treacherous, nationalist misleaders, and to mobilise working women in united class struggle to bring down the capitalist system of racism, economic depression and war. The liberation of women can only come through socialist revolution, led by a communist (Trotskyist) vanguard that will truly serve as the tribune of all the oppressed.

The connection between international counterrevolution and domestic reaction was made absolutely clear last September, when the National Civic Council (NCC), whose leadership for decades has worked closely with the CIA against "atheistic communism," and which represents the bastion of organised Catholic reaction in the working class, sponsored a tour of two Solidarność reps. It was a natural alliance. The NCC has been waging its holy war to save Australia from communism for 41 years through anti-union sabotage and anti-communist witchhunting, subversion on the campuses and in the anti-abortion movement—backed by the authority of the bourgeois state. Solidarność, the company union for Western imperialism, with its umbilical cord to the Catholic hierarchy, is no liberator of Polish women. The historic role of the church as a political institution for fomenting anti-Communism, and perpetuating the nuclear family, enslaving women in the home and ensuring they stay barefoot and pregnant, has not changed. This tour was a victory for the NCC in its campaign to reforge its Cold War II alliance with the mainstream Labor bureaucracy, who joined these dangerous forces of imperialist-clerical reaction in hailing Reagan's favorite Polish "freedom fighters."

The Spartacist League/ANZ has recruited and trained a layer of women cadres in political combat with feminism and the reformist left. And the woman question continues to be central to our recruitment to the internationalist communist program, as shown around Iran and Afghanistan. The international Sparta-

cist tendency's line of "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs! The Workers Must Rule in Iran!" and especially "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" drew the class line against the reformist left which, capitulating to anti-Sovietism, covered for religious reaction and the barbaric oppression of women in the East. The historic advances against feudal backwardness and against the degradation of women in Soviet Central Asia made possible by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution inspire us and show the only road forward for the desperately oppressed and exploited women of Asia and the Pacific—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

As Australian communists we have a particular responsibility to combat our own ruling class, American imperialism's proxy in Southeast Asia, and to defend the USSR and the Vietnamese revolution, which despite bureaucratic deformations represents a tremendous historic victory for the working class throughout the world. America has ten military installations in Australia, including the CIA's Pine Gap and the Darwin B-52 refueling base, en route to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. The Australian working class must break with its pro-imperialist misleaders—defence of the USSR and of our class brothers and sisters throughout Asia means opposition to imperialist military installations from Darwin to Diego Garcia to Trincomalee!

We salute International Women's Day in the knowledge that powerful fuel for the revolutionary movement will come from the specially oppressed sectors of the working class, in particular the women. As Trotsky said in the *Transitional Program*:

"The sections of the Fourth International should seek bases of support among the most exploited layers of the working class; consequently among the women workers. Here they will find inexhaustible stores of devotion, selflessness and readiness to sacrifice."

We look forward to the future Australian section of a reborn Fourth International where communist women will stand with their comrades as leaders of the Australian workers revolution. For women's liberation through international proletarian revolution! Forward to a workers Australia, part of socialist Asia! ■

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Lega Trotskista d'Italia

Workers' Protests Rock Italy

The Lega Trotskista d'Italia extends its warm greetings to *Women and Revolution* on International Women's Day 1983. For us, this holiday comes at a time of deep turbulence in the Italian working class. Massive demonstrations involving the core of the industrial workers and demanding "General Strike!" and "Workers Power!" shook the country on 18 January. The new center-left capitalist government, under old man Amintore Fanfani of the Christian Democrats, offers austerity and sacrifices to the workers while promising abject loyalty to the capitalist program of cold war. The government's first concern is to stem the killing inflation which lately has been running 18 to 25 percent. The prices of many staple items have increased by 500 to 1,000 times in the last dozen years! In an attempt to cut inflation to a mere (!) 13 percent, a whole range of harsh measures have been imposed aimed at dumping the burden of capitalist irrationality on the backs of the workers.

The current attack is aimed at the "scala mobile," a limited but rather important gain of the working class which means that a cost-of-living adjustment is automatically determined every quarter on selected



Economist

Capitalist attacks on working class sparked January 18 protests.

items. Anger at this attack, at the other recent anti-working-class measures and at the fact that many of the basic industries have been working without a contract for over a year, sparked the January protests. From the northern "industrial triangle" of Milano, Torino, Genova down to the Sicilian capital city of Palermo and with significant centers of struggle in Roma and Napoli as well, the Italian proletariat indicated its willingness to make a stand and fight to win.

Despite the union bureaucracy's desperate efforts to

keep the demonstrations "well behaved," the workers' response was loud and militant. But without a program to break out of the bureaucrats' pressure politics and provide real answers to the workers' needs, and without a leadership to carry forward a determined struggle, the workers' struggle will be derailed. In a leaflet distributed on 18 January the LTd'I showed how to defeat the bosses and get out of the capitalist crisis.

"The necessity of the Trotskyist transitional program for proletarian revolution couldn't be demonstrated more clearly. The present struggles arose from trade-union confrontations but, to win, what's needed is a class-struggle policy leading to the taking of power by the workers. To counter layoffs and unemployment we must institute a division of the work available among all workers, employed and unemployed, with equal pay and a sliding scale of wages and hours (30 hours work for 40 hours pay)... Instead of PCI "participation" in the government to reinforce the unstable bourgeois state with the popular front's "clean hands," what's needed is a workers government of soviets.... What's needed are elected, recallable strike committees to revive or replace the ossified [factory] "committees" and form pan-industrial strike committees to unite all workers in struggle with the unemployed, housewives, students and professionals who solidarize with the workers' cause."

The LTd'I recognizes as one of its key tasks the special organization of women. Women have been particularly victimized by Fanfani's measures through decrees such as reducing medical aid during pregnancy, refusal to count maternity leave toward seniority and drastic cut-backs in day care centers and many other social services. Hundreds of women demonstrated in Milano in January against these decrees. In addition, many women, who were among those fired and laid off at FIAT [auto plant], Alfa Romeo [state-owned auto plant] and Italsider [state-owned steel giant], have little chance of getting new employment.

Women in Italy suffer under the burden of special oppression imposed by the family, pillar of capitalism, bolstered, in Italy most directly, by the powerful Roman Catholic church. Italian women will not forget the intervention of the anti-communist pope Wojtyla, hand-in-hand with Fanfani's Christian Democrats, on the side of reaction in the abortion struggle last year. At that time, *all* the fake-lefts, supported by the feminists, capitulated to the Communist Party (PCI) and urged a vote to maintain a law restricting abortion. The LTd'I alone called for support of the Radical Party's liberalized law. The same holy alliance led by the pope supported the reactionary company union Solidarity in Poland. But when the treacherous Eurocommunists of the PCI tried to organize a demonstration in support of Solidarity, the workers' reaction, in the words of one, was "I don't strike for the madonna of Czestochowa."

In Italy, the alternatives posed in this crisis-wracked

continued on page 20

Spartacist League/Lanka

Women Workers, Tamils Key to Revolution

The programme for the liberation of women cannot be separated from the socialist struggle. The Spartacist League/Lanka stands with W&R for a perspective that will organise Lankan women against the capitalist state.

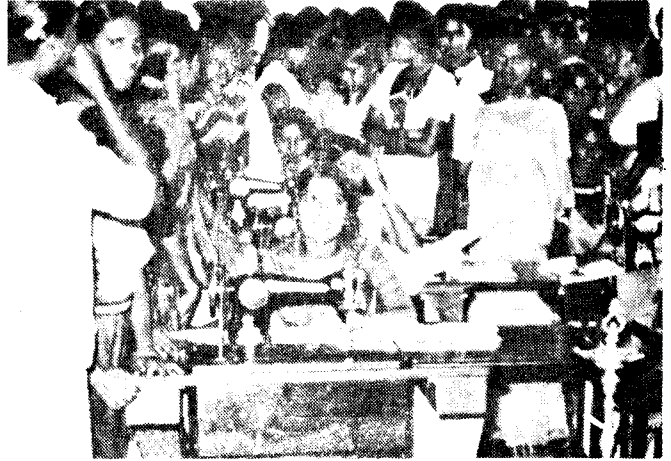
"Here we see already that the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework, which is private. The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women can take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree. And this has become possible only as a result of modern, large-scale industry, which not only permits the participation of women in production in large numbers, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domestic work also into a public industry."

—Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*

Here Engels explains that the struggle for women's liberation must go beyond the barriers of capitalism. The traditional "left parties" in Lanka have forgotten this and have no interest in winning women over to this cause.

Women on the Plantations

Of all women workers in Lanka, the Tamil women on the tea plantations, which produce the main share of the Gross National Income, are the most exploited. Their lives are full of misery. One third (450,000) of the women workers in Lanka work on the estates [plantations]. The women workers receive eight to ten rupees per day [one rupee equals about five cents U.S.] where



AAFLI

95 percent of Free Trade Zone workforce is made up of women without protection of unions or other rights.

the men will receive about 15 per day. Work days per month are not fixed.

After a full day's work in the field, a woman labourer has to attend to her husband and children. Their houses are known as "lines" which are about 100 to 250 square feet. Only 3.7 percent of these houses have electricity while 96.2 percent use kerosene. Due to lack of medical attention, the number of infant deaths is very high. "Indian" Tamil workers do not have civil rights. An act of Parliament [in 1948] took their right to vote. The majority of estate women never attend school. Since



W&R photo

Tamil plantation workers wait to have tea leaves weighed at day's end. About 450,000 women in Lanka are plantation workers; 300,000 of them are laborers.

the income of the family is very low, they start working on the estate as children.

Free Trade Zone Exploits Women Workers

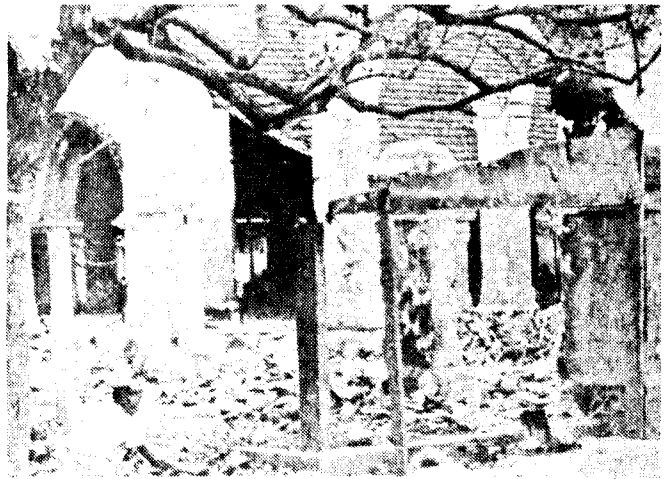
J.R. Jayewardene, right-wing president of Sri Lanka, invited the capitalists of the world to invest in his new industrial "Free Trade Zone" [FTZ]. In the already established factories in the Katunayake FTZ, 32 percent are garment factories. Women make up 95 percent of the work force. Recruited on a casual basis, these workers can be dismissed at any time. Some factories work for nine to ten hours and workers are made to work overtime.

Labour regulations that apply to other areas do not apply to the FTZ, hence factory owners can do anything they like. Practically the entire female work force is between the ages of 18 and 24. They do not have unions and any move to form a union will lose them their jobs. Approved public holidays are not holidays for these workers. Even the international workers day, May 1, is not a holiday for these workers.

For Women's Liberation!

The 24 May 1981 statement of fusion between the comrades in Lanka and the international Spartacist tendency centered on four programmatic points:

- 1) Against popular frontism in all its forms.
- 2) Defend the rights of the Tamil people.
- 3) For the liberation of women.
- 4) Against imperialist bases and the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive.



MIRJE

J.R. Jayewardene unleashed murderous rampage against Tamils, resulting in devastation to Jaffna peninsula in June 1981.

The third section states:

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

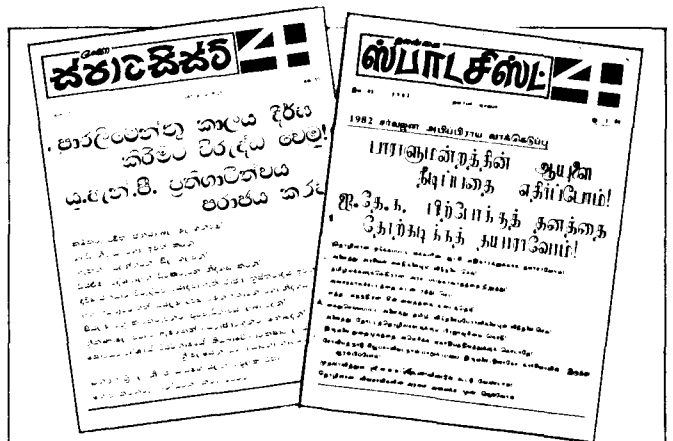
We invite you to join with us. ■

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Clerical Crusade Targets Irish Women

Reprinted from *Spartacist Britain* No. 46
December 1982/January 1983

Seventy years ago, James Connolly described women in Ireland as slaves of slaves. Over the past year and a half, the most sinister and reactionary forces in the Irish Republic have coalesced around a vicious anti-abortion campaign to bind their chains ever tighter. Under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, anyone obtaining or assisting another to obtain an abortion is *already* liable to life imprisonment. Now the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC) seeks a constitutional amendment to enshrine "the guarantee of the right of life to the foetus from the moment of conception" and ensure that Ireland's anti-abortion laws can *never* be repealed or amended.

This pernicious (and well-financed) crusade is a direct creation of the Catholic church hierarchy and has enlisted the support of every major Irish political party for a referendum to change the constitution. Mass demonstrations led by nuns denounce abortion as murder. Anti-referendum meetings are drowned out by "hymn-ins." School children are assigned art and essay projects about unborn babies in the horrors of Limbo. Women who have admitted having abortions and the few politicians who have spoken against the amendment are subjected to systematic harassment, including pickets and mock funerals.

With the defining feature of world politics an imperialist global "war on Communism," the social climate has been fostered which encourages such reactionary religious crusades. America has seen the rise of the book-burning, bible-thumping "Moral

Majority." In Poland, the Catholic church has been the motor force behind Solidarność' counterrevolutionary drive. In Italy and Spain, the church has also targeted abortion.

But in Ireland even more than Southern Europe, the church is able to garner strong support by playing on the theme of nationalism which runs deep throughout society. PLAC-organised protests denounce abortion as an "English plot to murder Irish babies." The Campaign itself got off the ground following the government's 1981 diplomatic manoeuvres with Margaret Thatcher in pursuit of a "confederal" agreement over the North. Fine Gael leader and then prime minister Garrett FitzGerald talked of cosmetically secularising the constitution in order to attract Northern Protestants—and the clerical-nationalists countered with their own amendment aimed at *reinforcing* the ties between church and state.

Fianna Fail, traditionally more nationalist, quickly came out in support, soon followed by both a backtracking Fine Gael and their Labour Party coalition partners. The major bourgeois parties, running neck and neck in the recent numerous general elections and with nothing to offer working people save Tweedledee/Tweedledum policies of wage slashing and continued social and economic misery, were afraid of alienating even the tiniest portion of their potential base. As *New Statesman* (12 November 1982) journalist Mary Holland put it, "Abortion is the one issue on which no politician in the major parties dares be seen to be 'soft'."

Underlying this campaign, like those against birth control and divorce, is the defence of "the morality and fabric" of the family—the fundamental social institution of women's oppression under capitalism. The Irish constitution already promotes the family as the "true" place for women, who should not be "forced" to work outside the home. The role of religion as a bulwark of social reaction could not be clearer than in the present attempt to further enshrine in this clericalist document the enslavement of women to church, children and the hearth. It is only through the destruction of capitalism, paving the way for the socialisation of household duties and the replacement of the nuclear family, that women can achieve their emancipation. And in Ireland the lasting achievement of even such basic democratic tasks as the separation of church and state awaits the morrow of the proletarian socialist revolution. Down with all restrictions on abortion rights—for free abortion on demand! Smash the reactionary referendum campaign! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!

The oppression of women in the South is extreme. In the newly-consolidating republic of the twenties the church instigated the elimination of the existing divorce laws; even today divorce remains completely



Spartacist Britain

London, November 1980: SL/B in protest over Thatcher's murderous policy toward Irish H-Block hunger strikers.



Priests organize anti-abortion reactionaries, appeal to Irish nationalism.

illegal. Homosexuality too is illegal, while legal contraception only saw the light of day in 1979—and even then in a severely restricted form. There are only nine Family Planning Clinics in the entire country (only three outside Dublin), and a “conscience clause” in the legislation allows doctors and pharmacists to refuse to prescribe or stock contraceptives.

The Republic has the highest rate of maternal mortality in Western Europe and is second only to Northern Ireland in infant mortality. Single mothers suffer both entrenched social stigma and extreme poverty: the combined social welfare and children’s allowance is about £40 [U.S. \$60] a month, while inflation and the cost of living are both higher than in Britain. Women seeking abortions, an estimated 10,000 a year, must either scrape together over £200 [U.S. \$300] to come to Britain or risk their lives in backstreet abortions. Of course this means that it is the poor and working woman who is saddled with the butchery of the backstreet.

In Ireland today a majority of the population are still practising Catholics. However even here the church fears the erosion of its authority—rooted in ignorance and superstition—in an increasingly secularised world. Numbers on the “abortion run” to Britain are rising by 20 percent a year; there have been growing calls for liberalisation of divorce and birth control laws; and the clergy’s hold over young people (more than 50 percent of the population is under 25) is visibly slipping. Thus the carefully orchestrated and sinister counteroffensive.

**The Republican Tradition—
Against Women’s Rights**

The backwardness of Irish society today is a legacy of the centuries of British imperialist stranglehold. Marxists have always stood forthrightly against this imperialist oppression; today we demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from

the northern Six Counties, defending the downtrodden Catholic community from imperialist rampage and the entrenched sectarianism of the Orange statelet. But in the mouths of fake-leftists, “anti-imperialism” becomes a code word for capitulation to Green nationalism—which far from being “progressive” is a proven obstacle to the liberation of the oppressed. Throughout the twentieth century Irish nationalism has had a strong, integral clerical component which is thoroughly reactionary. And this is not limited to the ruling parties of the Irish bourgeoisie in the South. Clerical nationalism and reactionary attitudes on the woman question have equally been championed by the supposed left wing of the Republican movement, with partial and honourable exceptions like Connolly.

As long ago as 1915, Irish Citizens Army activist Countess Markiewicz captured the nationalists’ view of women:

“Today women attached to national movements are there chiefly to collect funds for the men to spend. These Ladies’ Auxiliaries demoralise women, set them into separate camps, and deprive them of all initiative and independence.”

—*Irish Citizen*, 23 October 1915,
quoted in Purdie and Morgan,
Ireland: Divided Nation, Divided Class

The Provisional IRA and its political wing Sinn Fein carry forward this inglorious tradition today. Their programme *Eire Nua* (“New Ireland”) has in the past explicitly stated that “we are totally opposed to abortion”; their more recent tract “Women in Ireland” says *nothing* about abortion. A motion committing Sinn Fein to opposing the referendum campaign was defeated at its recent conference. And in 1977 they issued a leaflet in Belfast which cited the 70,000 “babies killed” following the 1967 British Abortion Act as evidence of “Brit oppression.” If, as Marx paraphrasing Fourier remarked, “social progress can be measured exactly” by the status of women, then so too can political programmes be measured. *Eire Nua*, no thank you!

Irish Left Bows to Catholic Reaction

And no thanks to the Provisionals’ fake-left cheerleaders either. Since Green nationalism’s politically reactionary character is exposed clearly on the woman question, the bankruptcy of those pseudo-Marxists who tail this nationalism has also been thoroughly and disgracefully exposed during the present anti-abortion crusade. Virtually every ostensibly revolutionary group in the country is affiliated to the Anti-Amendment Campaign (AAC), the chief organisation campaigning against the referendum. Yet this campaign refuses to call for the repeal of abortion laws, let alone free abortion on demand! Instead it is a bloc between fake-leftists, feminists, liberal and not-so-liberal petty-bourgeois and bourgeois forces (including many anti-abortionists!) around a programme which explicitly defends the maintenance of the present constitution.

The AAC argues that the referendum should be stopped “because it is not needed, and it will help
continued on next page

nobody. ... Abortion is already illegal in the Republic" (*Socialist Republic*, November 1982); moreover, "it's a complete waste of money." They even claim that "This referendum has nothing to do with the pro or anti abortion question"! As the pseudo-lefts happily hold hands with the Protestant clergy, they enthusiastically endorse this nonsense. The Socialist Workers Movement [fraternal to the Cliffite third-campist British Socialist Workers Party] argues that "the first priority is to keep the question open" (*Worker*, July/August 1982), while People's Democracy [co-thinkers of the British International Marxist Group, affiliated to Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat] chimes in that "Many within the campaign feel that abortion is still an emotive issue" (*Socialist Republic*, August 1982). PD's solution? Don't mention abortion when you campaign against anti-abortionists!

The small centrist Irish Workers Group (IWG—co-thinkers of the [centrist pseudo-Trotskyist] British Workers Power) is not affiliated to the AAC, proclaiming the need to "swim against the 'historic traditions' of Orange pro-imperialism or Green nationalism" (*Class Struggle*, Winter 1982/83). But in practice the IWG offers up exactly the same capitulation as their fake-left opponents. While having a formal position for "abortion on demand" in the pages of their journal, they explicitly refuse even to call for "the provision of clinical abortion facilities" in their proposed anti-referendum campaign. Instead the crowning demand of their proposed "united front" is "for free legal safe contraception on demand." This is a straight capitulation to "liberal" Catholic backwardness, as is the IWG's assurance to squeamish clergymen that it too shares their distaste for "the painful choice of abortion."

The opportunists who today bow to clerical nationalism in Ireland are the same people who four years ago were cheering Khomeini's clerical mass movement towards power in Iran, hailing the barbaric Islamic veil as an "anti-imperialist symbol." So far removed are these pseudo-leftists from Marxism that, from Iran to Ireland, they are unable to fight for even such elementary demands of the *bourgeois* revolution as the separation of church and state.

Genuine communists would say to women, the working class and all the oppressed of Ireland: this anti-abortion crusade must be defeated because it will strengthen the chains of oppression on Irish women and reinforce the most backward clericalist reaction throughout society. Our goal must be the repeal of all abortion laws, free abortion on demand, along with free, readily-available contraception and quality socialised medical care, maternity/paternity leave on full pay and free 24-hour child care. We must stand for the elementary democratic demand of the separation of church and state and universal secular education. But such demands cannot be secured in any lasting way in backward capitalist Ireland. The key to a successful struggle is the mobilisation of the Irish proletariat, North and South, Catholic and Protestant, men and women against capitalist rule—necessitating a sharp break with nationalism and accompanying clericalism.

It is only an apparent irony that the same fake revolutionaries who capitulate to Green nationalism in



George Morrison

Women running guns into Howth, 1914. Green nationalism remains an obstacle to the liberation of Irish women.

the North and thus write off the Protestant proletariat as an irredeemably reactionary mass now find themselves embracing the Protestant clergy in the South. In both cases it reflects a capitulation to backward consciousness. The intertwined social and national questions in Ireland can only be resolved through a proletarian mobilisation for state power on both sides of the border and both sides of the Irish Sea. The status of women in the North—which does not even have the minimal divorce or abortion reforms extended to women in Britain—differs scarcely from that in the South. And poverty and economic devastation ravage both the Six and Twenty-six Counties.

In 1917 the Russian Bolsheviks led the workers in revolution thus opening the road to the liberation of all the oppressed from wage-slavery and benighted reaction. The Bolsheviks were able to organise women, centrally working women but also women from other social classes won to a revolutionary outlook, not around the illusions of feminism but as disciplined fighters in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat. The road mapped out by the Russian Revolution is the road for Irish liberation today. Only a Trotskyist party committed to the programme of proletarian revolution can transcend the conflicting claims of the Irish Catholic and Protestant peoples, counterposing to both Orange and Green nationalism the perspective of united class struggle. Only this perspective can break the long-suffering Irish masses from the grip of imperialism and clerical reaction, whether of Paisley or the pope, and impel them on the road to social emancipation. Smash the reactionary crusade against Irish women! For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles! ■

Ligue Trotskyste de France

Mitterrand's "Moral Order": Sexual Straitjacket

In a sensational and bizarre witchhunt, last fall several radical psychologists, connected to experimental psychological centers dealing mainly with autistic children, and a radical academic who is an expert on Fourier, René Schérer, were charged with organizing an "international pedophilic network." "L'affaire Coral" (Coral is the most famous of 40-some "alternative institutions" for disturbed children) is a telling indictment of the reactionary climate being bred, tolerated and even encouraged by Mitterrand's popular front. The bourgeois press pushed the state's accusations with sinister headlines: "Pornographic Traffic in Center for Handicapped Youth" charged *Le Monde*, while *Libération* stated "An alternative structure for children and adolescents, a network of pedophilia, of porno photos... Uproar over 'Coral'."

Since the publication of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF) press release (reprinted below) it has been confirmed that all of the "evidence" in this case was totally fabricated. Furthermore, the main "witness" for the prosecution has been exposed as a deranged police informer, who first retracted then resubmitted his "testimony," during the course of which he changed his story five times. However not only are these men still facing charges, trial, professional disrepute and prison sentences, but Claude Sigala, principal organizer of the "Lieux de Vie" (centers for disturbed children), is still in prison, and his wife has also just been indicted for "child molesting" ("excitation de mineurs à la débauche") on the testimony of a six-year-old child!

That the fostering of reactionary social attitudes, especially against minorities and so-called "marginal elements," is the inevitable partner of capitalist austerity is perhaps nowhere so cogently revealed as in "socialist" France. When Mitterrand tested the waters with "l'affaire Coral" he had the help of the entire bourgeois press, which really went to town against the accused. Even the "aloof" *Le Monde* finally judged them "guilty" of the "crime" of having sexual relations with minors, although the defendants deny the basis of the charges. Then came the crusade against "terrorists," in which Mitterrand targeted various Italian leftists who had plainly renounced all political activities and only asked to live quietly in France. Last August there was also the spectacular arrest of three Irish nationalists; it has now come out that Mitterrand's favorite police unit, the National Police Task Force, simply faked all of the so-called evidence against the accused. Later in the fall Mitterrand recanted on his electoral promise to provide free abortions, reimbursed by social security, provoking a certain backlash even among members of the Socialist Party, some of whom thought that *this* example of the social-



Rouen: LTF contingent in October 1982 pro-abortion demonstration. Sign at left says "Cops, Priests Out of the Bedrooms!"

democratic "moral order" might lose too many votes.

There has been an ominous growth of the far right in France, exemplified by last fall's torchlight parade through Paris of small businessmen and shopkeepers led by the fascist politician Le Pen. "This is the vermin to whom the popular front kow-towed in the abortion controversy," the LTF pointed out. The government made a last-minute concession to reimburse abortion costs, but only under extremely rigid criteria, which continue to exclude minors and immigrant women. In pro-abortion demonstrations last fall in Paris and Rouen, the LTF called for "Free Abortion on Demand for All Women, Including Minors and Immigrants!" while insisting that "the issue of abortion is of concern to the entire working class; behind women and immigrants, the reactionaries have targeted the entire working class" ("French Trotskyists Fight for Women's Rights Against Popular Front," *W&R* No. 25, Winter 1982-83).

But when strikes by assembly line workers immobilized all of France's major automobile manufacturers for several weeks this January, the full significance of the social-democratic government's reactionary propaganda campaigns became clear. Most of France's assembly line workers are immigrants from North Africa and black Africa. They are not the newly arrived immigrant workers, easily intimidated, of 20 years ago. Most have ten if not fifteen years of work and

continued on next page



Joachim/Le Matin

Striking auto workers at Renault-FIIns In January. Mainly immigrants, assembly line workers were attacked by racist press campaign.

trade-union struggle in France behind them, and today they are among the vanguard of the struggle against capitalist austerity and the reduction in living standards that the government seeks to impose. Mitterrand's prime minister, Pierre Mauroy, set the tone with his declaration that the strikers had been "worked up by political and religious groups which define themselves by criteria which have little to do with French social realities" (*Le Monde*, 29 January). The strikers themselves responded indignantly to the charge that they were being manipulated by a religious fanatic the likes of Khomeini: "Give us a whiskey bottle and you'll see if we are Islamic fundamentalists," they said to journalists. But the racist press campaign goes on, with once again the oh-so-civilized *Le Monde* providing the most "respectable" ammunition. *Le Monde* (29 January) reports that to watch a meeting of the general strike assembly was like watching "a native market somewhere at the ends of the earth"! Obviously the former imperialist exploiters of Algeria and Vietnam, who were so satisfyingly crushed at Dien Bien Phu, have retained their racism, if not their empire.

The reactionary bourgeois moral order cannot be fought by pressuring the government to be "more responsive," as does the entire fake-left in France. Mitterrand's policy is not the result of "backward ideas" but of a strategy to demobilize and intimidate the working class, to make it pay the costs of the capitalist economic crisis. As the LTF slogan said in last fall's pro-abortion demonstrations, Mitterrand is "anti-working class, anti-Soviet, anti-woman." The path towards the defense of democratic rights and against capitalist austerity lies in breaking with the popular front and struggling for a workers government through the construction of a Trotskyist vanguard party.

Ligue trotskyste de France
international Spartacist tendency
Press Release, 31 October 1982

Declaration on the Coral Affair: Drop the Charges! Stop the Reactionary Witchhunt!

The Coral Affair has revived the old poisonous fears and the perverse repression that underlie bourgeois morality. At the instigation of a few myth-mongers and police informers—joined by the fascist rag *Minute*, a reactionary judge obsessed by an "international network of pedophilia," and the cops of the narcotics and prostitution brigade(!)—this "affair" is taking on the color of a witchhunt in its truest form; and one after another, the "lieux de vie" [centers for disturbed children] are being targeted for "contributing to the delinquency of minors."

As Marxists we oppose every effort to confine sexuality into "norms" either voted or fixed by decree. The governing principle for sexual relations between individuals should be that of effective consent—i.e., nothing more than mutual understanding and agreement, as opposed to coercion. We affirm that all sexual relations between freely consenting individuals involve only them, and that the State has no business intervening into their sexual activity.

Not only is there not the slightest proof of any sexual coercion whatsoever on the part of Sigala, Bardy and Chiapello (who is released from prison at present, but remains under indictment) at the Coral or anywhere else; but they fiercely deny any sexual relationship of any sort with the children of the Coral (except Bardy, who has admitted having had sexual relations, outside the Coral, with a minor over 15 years old inside the framework of a freely consensual emotional relationship). It is significant that none of the parents of the Coral patients have filed any charges and, what's more, that all of them have joined the support committee. Furthermore, Krief, on whose accusations the current charges are based, may be, according to his lawyer, on the verge of withdrawing the charges. We demand that the charges weighing on the physicians of the Coral be dropped. But in the case of René Schérer, professor of Paris University VIII, this suspicious intrigue takes on a still more sinister aspect; he was charged purely and simply on the basis of his *opinions* in favor of sexual freedom for minors. It is vital that the workers movement fight for elementary democratic rights, demand the lifting of all the charges and combat this reactionary witchhunt!

A large number of very real sex crimes are committed in France today. Fear, guilt and repression are inculcated into the young for simply thinking about sex. In certain educational establishments adolescents are still segregated according to sex, in an artificial and inhuman fashion. The religious yoke of the Catholic church and of other religious sects keeps thousands of women locked into an endless cycle of misery and pregnancies. And in "the very holy" Lourdes this summer we saw how a woman abandoned her baby in a garbage can. There is also the horrible frustration and sexual tension which occur inside the family itself,

accompanied by child abuse, including sexual molestation. Rapes and other very real crimes are, along with prostitution—eternal companion of forced monogamy—the sordid reality behind “public morality.”

In the face of what is clearly a reactionary plot, the hypocritical Social Democrats can only denounce “perversion” (as did Defferre on October 24). In upholding the “loi Veil” [the 1979 law legalizing abortion in France, but containing such rigid restrictions that an estimated 100,000 women a year must seek clandestine abortions], in offering only a miserable palliative (70 percent reimbursement based on a government budget which must be renewed each year by the National Assembly), the Mitterrand government refuses to grant the elementary democratic right of free

abortion on demand. Such is the morality of the Social Democrats! But it is not simply a question of capitulating to the reactionaries. Social reaction inevitably accompanies capitalist austerity. The government of austerity and of cold war seeks invariably to “enlist” the youth. Committed to managing capitalism, the reformists naturally leave intact the pillars of bourgeois order, like the family.

One of the first results of a socialist revolution will be the elimination of all discriminatory laws and of the punitive sanctions against so-called “deviant” sexual behavior. The ultimate goal of Marxism has always been the creation of a society where each individual will be able to develop his potential to the fullest, free from economic constraints and their attendant mental suffering. ■

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Report from Spain

Smash Francoist Anti-Abortion Drive!

Nothing more clearly exposes the superficial nature of the post-Franco "democratic reform" in Spain than the question of abortion rights. In January this year Barcelona magistrates condemned eleven women and a 78-year-old male nurse to sentences of up to 37 years for respectively undergoing and performing clandestine abortions (dating from 1968)! Likewise it is a measure of the minimal nature of the "change" promised by the ruling Socialist Party (PSOE), elected by a landslide vote last October, that it proposes only to "depenalize" abortions in cases of rape, deformation of the fetus and danger to the life of the mother.

Yet even this limited toleration of women's rights to avoid unwanted births is being violently contested by the Catholic church, the military and the state apparatus inherited from Francoism. Backed up by the arch-reactionary pope John Paul Wojtyla, they are seizing upon the abortion issue as part of a campaign aiming at a return to bonapartist "strong-state" rule. Next to the military the church has been the major prop of bourgeois class rule in the Iberian peninsula, both under the Franco and Salazar dictatorships and the present semi-bonapartist regimes. Thus abortion, particularly in Spain today, is far more than a "woman's question." We Trotskyists call for a mobilization of the working class for the basic democratic right of abortion. Release all victims of anti-abortion laws! For free abortion on demand, available to all women without restrictions!

Spain and neighboring Portugal are two of the few

countries in Europe where abortion remains totally illegal. Every year, an estimated 300,000 clandestine abortions take place in Spain and another 200,000 in Portugal, in the most appalling conditions. A small minority of women are able to obtain relatively safe operations by making the expensive and harrowing trip to clinics in Amsterdam or London. Even these are so numerous (over 20,000 Spanish women a year have abortions in England, two-thirds of all those performed on non-British citizens) that London's Harley Street has become practically an adjunct of the Spanish medical system. But most working-class women of course have no such option. They are condemned instead to the mercies of the backstreet butchers. Then, if they are lucky enough to survive the ordeal—and over 3,000 Spanish women a year do not—they face further humiliation at the hands of the state: condemnation as "murderers" and brutal prison sentences.

The ferocity of the repression in Spain against those accused of abortion is truly barbaric. Last March in the Basque city of Bilbao, eleven defendants finally came to trial after half a decade of horrifying vilification and abuse for the "crime" of terminating an unwanted pregnancy. Their case had become a cause célèbre, provoking mass demonstrations as the prosecutor demanded a grand total of 100 years imprisonment for these women from a workers district. Feminists considered it a "victory" when nine were acquitted (for lack of proof that they were pregnant in the first place!) and the abortionist received "only" 12½ years! In contrast, the simultaneous trial of the military coup plotters who took over the Cortes (parliament) on 23 February 1981 let most of the seditious officers off with minimal sentences, to be served in country club presidios.

The Catholic Church—Oppressor of Women

Opposition to the legalization of abortion is centered on the Catholic church and the Francoist and Christian Democratic right wing. Some ecclesiastical reaction was positively grotesque. Bishop Ramón Buxarrais of Málaga wrote a macabre letter to an unborn child, published by the Catholic daily *Ya*: "Someone, when you are still defenseless, will squash your tiny heart, tear out your minute eyes, and wipe out your future smile. Mummy will have chucked you out of her tummy"! When the fiercely anti-communist Polish pope visited Spain last year, days after the PSOE election victory, it was to reaffirm the Catholic stand of "no surrender" on abortion, birth control, divorce and parochial schools. And the latest outburst from the Vatican—promising excommunication for those who defy the pope on abortion—was eagerly reprinted on the front page of the Falangist *El Alcázar*.



Cambio 16

Recent demonstrations by Spanish women demand abortion rights. The Catholic church, the military and Francoist reactionaries are violently contesting even the inadequate, minimal toleration of abortion proposed by the ruling Socialist Party.



Ruedo Ibérico

Catholic hierarchy backed Francoist forces against Republic in Civil War. Here, priests give Falangist salute.

Underlying its fierce opposition to abortion is the church's role as chief support for the bourgeois family as a bastion of social conservatism. The oppression of women, rooted in the family, still approaches patriarchal norms in Spain today. Until recently, under the principle of "*patria potestad*" children were the exclusive property of the father. Wives are routinely beaten by their husbands to teach them their place. Secondary education for girls is still far from being the norm, and is mostly in the hands of religious institutions. Under Francoism, the values of children, kitchen and church were drummed into schoolgirls by the Sección Feminina of the National Movement. And the hold of religion over Spanish women, especially outside the main metropolitan areas, is still strong.

While the anti-clericalism of the Spanish working class is legendary, this is very much limited to men. The very partial character of the Spanish bourgeois revolution has meant that women lack even the minimal, formal democratic rights afforded to women in other countries. Particularly in the rural south, women are not integrated into the workforce, and the level of literacy and education is low. Thus they remain the most oppressed section of the population. But contrary to the illusions of many feminists and pseudo-leftists, this has not made Spanish women a hotbed of rebellion. Indeed, the PSOE has kept "a low profile on feminism" (and refused to take a strong position for abortion rights) in order to gain women's votes, as the American social-democratic paper *In These Times* (26 January-1 February) admitted. As in Chile, where the CIA mobilized middle-class housewives for the "march of pots and pans" against the leftist Allende regime, the very oppression of women makes them a potential base of support for counterrevolution.

But in an increasingly secularized world, the Catholic church's influence has been waning even in its traditional bastions like Spain and Ireland. Spanish bishops published a report last year bemoaning the

declining attendance at mass and concluding that "Spaniards have lost their sense of sin." Now the church hierarchy is yearning for a return to the days when the *caudillo* (strongman) ruled "by the grace of god" and the army, and is using its formidable wealth to finance reactionary mobilizations like the right-to-life "Defadles vivir" groups. What hypocrisy! This is the same church that gave its unqualified blessing to the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of proletarians during and after the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish bishops even refused to read in church the belated papal condemnation of Hitler and Nazism. And today they are inscribing opposition to abortion on the banners of a new anti-communist crusade.

The Fraud of Reformist "Change"

The spectre of a return to rule by the iron hand of reaction in Spain looms precisely because of the limited nature of the monarchical "reform," enacted with the consensus of all the major parties (especially the Communists and Socialists). Seven years after Franco's death, the country is buffeted by severe economic crisis, with the highest inflation and unemployment in West Europe, and masses of frightened petty bourgeois see no way out. As recently as November 1981 more than 200,000 gathered in the center of Madrid to give the fascist salute and sing the Falangist anthem "Cara al sol." Only last October, less than a month before the elections, a "captains' plot" was broken up; a "colonels' coup" and a "generals' takeover" are still gestating, waiting for the PSOE government to use up its credit with the public. If such a takeover occurs, leftists could well be put against the execution wall to cries of "down with abortion, long live death!"

During the 1930s one of the battle cries of the Spanish right against the Republic was opposition to the divorce law and the anti-clerical constitution. Today Felipe González and his Socialists seek to placate the

continued on next page

neanderthal right with "moderation." Now there is no republic but a monarchy with a king who can call off—and therefore can also endorse—military coups. Under the divorce law enacted by the preceding UCD government, it takes up to five years to get a judgment. And now the PSOE cabinet proposes to permit "therapeutic" abortions only, while allowing doctors to refuse to perform the operation for reasons of "conscience." As the center-right newsweekly *Cambio* 16 (7 February) commented, this law risks "leaving everyone dissatisfied without resolving the basic question"—namely whether 300,000 Spanish women yearly are guilty of a crime for refusing an unwanted pregnancy.

The Communist Party (PCE) had earlier introduced a bill essentially to "Western Europeanize" Spain's abortion legislation by allowing it for social as well as purely medical reasons. This is a far cry from free abortion on demand, but the PCE withdrew even this proposal last spring during the trial of the February 23 coup plotters in order to deny the right wing a target! Meanwhile, the rest of the left has tailed along behind Felipe González and his empty promises of "change." The "pro-Soviet" Catalan Communist Party (PCC), for instance, effusively congratulated "our comrades of the PSOE" on their October 28 election success and proposed a French-style popular-front "union of the left." As for the pseudo-Trotskyists, the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR—followers of Ernest Mandel), termed October 28 a "great victory," while for the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—followers of Nahuel Moreno) it was a "workers victory."

It's not surprising that fake-Trotskyists like the LCR and PST crawl for Felipe, for they share his social-democratic anti-Sovietism. The "far left" has been united in cheering for counterrevolutionary Polish *Solidarność*. (This is not at all the attitude of the Spanish working class, which is hostile to anything smelling of clerical domination.) Poland has had free abortion on demand since 1956. It was bitterly opposed by the church hierarchy then, and *Solidarność* has distributed

leaflets calling for outlawing abortion. But that shouldn't bother the cynical PST: Moreno & Co. already hail the "Islamic revolution" of Khomeini that puts Iranian women in veils, and supports mullah-led counterrevolutionaries in Afghanistan who shoot communist schoolteachers for teaching young girls to read.

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The international Spartacist tendency (iSt) warns that any political support, however critical, to PSOE and its popular front only serves to tie the exploited to their oppressors, lulling the masses with illusions of peaceful reform. Where the PSOE/PCE/PCC reformists downplay women's rights while channeling them into purely "democratic" ladies auxiliaries; where the "far left" tails after the petty-bourgeois feminist movement, which excludes male socialists and includes female bourgeois, the Trotskyists of the iSt raise the perspective of a women's section of the Bolshevik vanguard party, to facilitate breaking the centuries-old chains of women's oppression and win them to the communist cause.

Tied to the parochial bounds of the oppressive bourgeois family, Spanish women have been mobilized by the priest, the employer and right-wing political barons. But broken out of this imprisonment and mobilized around a communist program, women can become a stronghold of revolution. Some of the most heroic chapters of Spanish working-class struggle have been written by women on the field of battle: from the women of Oviedo who held firm during the Asturias uprising of 1934 when the men began to waver, to the Madrid women who under the leadership of the PCE's Dolores Ibarruri and shouting the slogan "*¡No pasarán!*" (They shall not pass) organized to pour boiling oil on the heads of fascist attackers. Yet in order not to frighten the "democratic" bourgeoisie, the Stalinists strangled proletarian revolution in Spain, opening the door to decades of Francoist dictatorship. It will take victorious workers revolution to lay the basis for replacing the domestic slavery of women by the collective institutions of socialist society. ■


Italy...

(continued from page 9)


society are stark. Either the bourgeoisie must eventually seek to crush the militant Italian working class through open state repression, as did Mussolini's fascists, or else the proletariat must triumph through socialist revolution. It is the task of the real communists, the Trotskyists of the LTd'I, to draw into the revolutionary movement women fighters who, in the course of engaging in the battles which directly touch their lives and with the Trotskyist program as a weapon, will come to make common cause with their class brothers to bring down this rotten capitalist system. We look toward a women's section of the revolutionary Trotskyist party in Italy and a reforged Fourth International! ■

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Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands

No to "Kinder, Küche, Kirche"!

In early January the West German Federal Labor Office announced almost two-and-a-half million were unemployed, almost half of them women. The current austerity campaign by Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (in coalition with the small Free Democratic Party) hits women particularly hard. "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" (children, kitchen, church) is the program of the Kohl government: "The most important function of women in society is motherhood" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 15 January). The government's reactionary line is supported by the Catholic church's "holy war" against financing abortions through health insurance. Recently would-be female ayatollah Ursula Zöller, associated with the *Katholische Bildpost*, won her case before the Dortmund Social Court charging that insurance-financed abortions were unconstitutional.

In this reactionary climate, women cannot expect a better deal from appeals to the Federal Constitutional Court. In West Germany today, abortion is legal only in the first three months of pregnancy, and then only with severe restrictions. Eight years ago the reformists, from the ruling Social Democrats [SPD] to the Moscow-loyal German Communist Party [DKP] refused, in the name of "Realpolitik," to fight against all restrictions on abortion rights—yet today even this pitiful "Paragraph 218" abortion law is under attack from the right. Terror attacks on shelters for battered women and family planning centers like "Pro Familia" are bloody demonstrations that there can be no "liberated" islands for women under capitalism. The way to women's liberation is not that of feminism, which promotes the division of the working class with its separate organizing of women. This attack on abortion rights, linked to attacks at all levels of society, must be beaten back by a mobilization of the working class. Strike Section 218 without replacement! For safe and free abortion on demand! Access to contraceptives for all!

It is no accident that the lawyer of Ursula Zöller (who herself probably has nothing against the bestowal of motherhood crosses practiced by the Nazis) is a co-signer of the "Heidelberg Manifesto." This racist hate literature attempts to make foreign workers responsible for the crisis of German capitalism—ominously reminiscent of Hitler's campaign against the Jews in his early days. Nationalism, attacks on women, murderous terror against foreign workers and NATO's anti-Soviet war drive are links in the same chain to strangle the working class. The NATO alliance aims at smashing the conquests of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, when the workers in alliance with the peasants seized power, abolished capitalism and opened up to women possibilities that are even today "unconstitutional" in the most advanced bourgeois democracies. The fundamental gains of October still remain, though the parasitic caste that usurped political power from the



Spartakist

Frankfurt, September 1982: TLD in protest against West German support to Turkish junta. Signs include: "Full Citizenship Rights for Foreign Workers and Their Families" and "Smash NATO Murderer Junta!"

working class must be overthrown through political revolution. This has nothing to do with counterrevolutionary Solidarność. The only woman who exercises power in this yellow union of the bankers and CIA is the Black Madonna of Czestochowa! One cannot expect a way forward to women's liberation from those who support Khomeini's regime of terror in Iran or pope Wojtyla's legions in Poland. For unconditional military defense of the DDR and Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!

Today the West German "left" is mobilizing for an electoral victory of the anti-Soviet popular front of the Social Democrats, the "peace" movement and the eco-freak "Greens." As against these electoralist illusions, we wrote in a leaflet distributed at plant gates and DGB [German Trade Union Federation] demonstrations: "The problem is not the workers' readiness to fight but rather a leadership which shrinks back from unchaining the enormous power of the organized workers...to confront the treacherous DGB leadership with the demand for *strikes now*, to push through 30 hours work for 40 hours pay. A fight for this demand would cripple the attempts to drive a wedge between German and foreign, male and female workers and unemployed. Equal pay for equal work! One class, one struggle, work for all!... Mass strikes can explode the treacherous plans of the reformist politicians inside and outside the SPD, can bring down the anti-working-class Kohl government and open the way to a workers government in a Germany reunited by revolution, in which exploitation, repression and unemployment are things of the past." ■

America...

(continued from page 24)

would come out to defend an isolated minority like homosexuals. But we proved them wrong, smashing through the Nazi "divide and conquer" sucker-bait with a massive, united mobilization of all those targeted by Nazi terror: Jews, Latins, gays, socialists, and most centrally trade unionists and blacks from the South Side. It was a striking confirmation of our slogan "Labor Must Defend the Rights of Gays," proving in action that the working class, under militant socialist leadership, will defend gays against right-wing terror.

"Sexual Counterrevolution" in Action

In Reagan's America, the right-to-lifers and fundamentalists of the Moral Majority are leading a vengeful crusade for "sexual counterrevolution" to restore the seamless public morality of the family allegedly so disrupted during the "liberated" 1960s. The FBI has been unleashed to persecute all those deviating from the official straitjacket morality of the nuclear family. Three recent cases, two recently reported on in *Workers Vanguard*, vividly highlight this reactionary offensive. In January a small group of gay activists known as NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association), whose purpose is defending the civil rights of "men and boys involved in consensual sexual and other relationships with each other," were viciously witchhunted (see WV No. 321, 14 January, "Moral Majority Witchhunt Against Gay Activists: Defend NAMBLA!"). In a wildly grotesque frameup, the scandal-mongers tried to pin on NAMBLA the kidnapping of a boy several years ago in New York City, with "evidence" that was instantly demolished by NAMBLA itself. The FBI has broken into members' homes and seized documents, while several NAMBLA members have been arrested. One, David Groat, was set up in prison to be brutally beaten by inmates (one beating left him unconscious, his teeth were knocked out in another). It is precisely because gays, and especially a group like NAMBLA, have so little clout that their defense is a basic test of political decency. The Spartacist League demands "Drop the charges against NAMBLA members!"

But if the bourgeois state seeks to force the values of the bourgeois family on everybody, when it comes to reds it's a different story. Thus, a left-wing political activist had her child taken in a government-sanctioned kidnapping. In 1981 Tina Stevenson, a supporter of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), had her child snatched by her ex-husband, an action upheld by the California courts. After two years of custody battles, on 21 December 1982 Stevenson was granted the right to have her daughter Riva back at the end of the school year. The whole thing was a punitive anti-communist legal vendetta; Stevenson was declared an "unfit" mother in 1981 simply for her radical political beliefs; the father's attorney stated, "The woman can't be trusted because she has no values; she doesn't believe in the system." In the WV article ("Return Kid to Leftist Mother: Anti-Communist Kidnapping," WV No. 321,

14 January) we pointed out: "The threat to take children away from left-wing, homosexual or interracial households is a particularly vicious form of blackmail. If they can take Tina Stevenson's child, any parent could be next. Keep the bourgeois state out of people's private affairs!"

In Georgia last year, a working-class white mother with a half-black baby daughter had her older son from her previous marriage taken away by the court, which charged her with failing "to provide adequate supervision, moral guidance and medical attention." So how come they didn't charge Kathy Blackburn with neglecting her half-black daughter, too? It was a chilling racist punishment for stepping over the color line; as the judge editorialized out of court, "How would you like to have a female relative living with a black man and having a child? I personally am opposed to it" (*New York Times*, 18 February 1982).

It Is Desperately Necessary to Fight!

There are literally hundreds of campaigns and right-wing political assaults right now at every level of government, all aimed at taking back whatever limited gains women and other oppressed groups have made over the past decades. The Equal Rights Amendment went down to final defeat last summer, a sign of the reactionary backlash sweeping America. This January, the tenth anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision (which overturned anti-abortion laws across the country) was marked by a demonstration in Washington of some 26,000 anti-abortion marchers, heavily dominated by religious forces. Ronald Reagan, who says he wants to make 1983 "the Year of the Bible," has reasserted his commitment to forced prayer in the schools and banning abortion. Vindictive hellfire-and-damnation lectures on the Christian patriarchal god are to be the only approved fare for women and youth. Laws have already been passed in several states forcing doctors to inform on young women having abortions, while the Reagan administration has recently announced a new regulation requiring federally-funded clinics to tell parents if young women even ask for contraceptives. Down with the "Squeal Rule"!

The present abortion laws are totally inadequate in the best of circumstances; already under Democratic president Jimmy Carter federal funds for abortion under Medicaid were cut off. The poor, black women (who have a disproportionate 30 percent of all abortions) and immigrant workers are largely excluded from access to this simple democratic right.

The liberals and reformists have no answers to this concerted reactionary campaign, the vicious expression of capitalism in crisis. At a debate last fall between arch-reactionary Phyllis Schlafly and Deirdre English, the rad-lib editor of *Mother Jones*, it was the Spartacist League that was the real opposition to Schlafly and the Reagan reaction she represents. We argued that it's not legalistic liberal gimmicks, like those pushed by *Mother Jones*, that can liberate women, but socialist revolution. As our leaflet (reprinted in *W&R* No. 25, Winter 1982-83) pointed out:

"Today, it is desperately necessary to fight. But you can't fight Reagan with Democrats. ... In the recent elections,



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Down with anti-abortion legislation and Reagan's "Squeal Rule" which forces doctors to inform on teenagers seeking birth control. Poor and working-class women, like these waiting in medical clinic, will be the first victims.

the SL/SYL ran Diana Coleman and Ritchie Bradley as revolutionary socialist candidates for San Francisco Board of Supervisors. As part of our full socialist program, our candidates called for free abortion and birth control on demand, free quality health care for all and free 24-hour childcare at the workplace. Obviously, these basic necessities, like any of the basic demands of the working class, cannot be gained simply through elections. That is why our campaign stressed the need for mass strike action to bring down Reagan and those overseeing his massive economic cutbacks—the big-city Democratic Party mayors like Dianne Feinstein and Jane Byrne of Chicago.”

The petty-bourgeois feminist tendencies reek with hypocrisy. Their anger about “violence against women” is directed solely against perfectly harmless “dirty books” and pictures—while they (along with Feinstein and other bourgeois politicians) adamantly refuse to allow women access to means to protect themselves against the very real crime and violence of this society. We oppose all gun control laws, which aim to keep the population, especially blacks, defenseless and terrorized.

The feminists have been silent, too, when it comes to the brutal oppression of women by forces backed by the CIA and U.S. imperialism, as in Afghanistan. At the English-Schlafly debate, an SYLer exposed the hypocrisy of “socialist feminists” like Deirdre English: “All feminists such as yourself say they are fighting for women’s rights. If this is so why has there been no outcry by feminists against the oppression of Afghan women by Islamic reaction? Could it be for you that it is more important to be anti-Soviet than for women’s rights?” We say “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” because the Red Army is literally the only thing standing between Afghan women and their continued

barbaric enslavement by poverty, illiteracy and the veil; should Afghanistan become absorbed into the social system of the USSR, it would be a tremendous historic step forward for the toiling masses of that backward region.

Hail Rosa Luxemburg! Defend the USSR!

Looming over every domestic issue, and deeply affecting every social and economic attack by the American ruling class, is U.S. imperialism’s relentless war drive against the Soviet Union, homeland of the first victorious working-class revolution in history. Despite the consolidation under Stalin of a counter-revolutionary bureaucratic caste, which must be overthrown by proletarian political revolution, the fundamental gains of the 1917 October Revolution in overthrowing capitalism remain and must be defended against imperialism’s war drive. If the Spartacist tendency is facing increasing pressures today in this reactionary climate, it is in good part because we have firmly and proudly insisted that defense of the USSR is the simple duty of all working-class socialists.

In our exposés of Wall Street’s favorite company union, the reactionary Polish Solidarność, we saluted the militant socialist internationalism of Rosa Luxemburg, the greatest proletarian revolutionist in Polish history. As we noted in our International Women’s Day issue last year, if the usurping Polish Stalinist bureaucracy cannot claim Luxemburg’s heritage, “Still less will Luxemburg, a woman, a Jew and a communist, find defenders among the fans of Solidarność, a ‘movement’ which embraces virulent anti-Semites and ultra-reactionaries.” Luxemburg’s revolutionary work and martyrdom exemplify the historically socialist tradition of the Polish proletariat. It is this authentic socialist tradition which must be recovered by the Polish working class through the construction of Trotskyist cells in Poland, nuclei of a Trotskyist party which will strip the mantle of “socialism” from the Stalinist usurpers whose nationalism, political/cultural repression and disorganization of the economy alienated every section of society and fueled the growth of clerical-reactionary Solidarność.

As revolutionary Marxists, we honor Rosa Luxemburg. Our policy in this period of imperialist war preparations is based on Luxemburg’s, who wrote at the time of the betrayal of the German Social Democracy in supporting its own bourgeoisie in World War I: “The sole defense of all real national independence is at present the revolutionary class struggle against imperialism. The workers’ fatherland, to the defense of which all else must be subordinated, is the socialist international.”

Today our fight, alongside the comrades of the other sections of the international Spartacist tendency, is to reforge the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky. As we are making strides toward becoming the American workers party, we continue to uphold our perspective of creating a women’s section of that revolutionary party, to link the fight against the special oppression of women to the liberating power of proletarian socialism. ■

Spartacist League/U.S.

Will America Explode?

Social Oppression Under Reagan's Rule

In the United States of America, the Spartacist League/U.S. and Spartacus Youth League are facing both sharp pressures and real opportunities. "The main enemy is at home!", the socialist rallying cry of opposition to the bourgeois rulers of every capitalist country, applies with triple force to the American ruling class. The growth of reaction throughout the capitalist world is at every key point encouraged (and financed and armed) by the USA, which is quite prepared to reduce this planet to irradiated rubble in its revanchist drive toward World War III against the Soviet Union. Domestically, the country is in its worst depression since 1929, with incalculable costs in human suffering, as entire sections of industry—auto, steel—are collapsing. In this increasingly desperate atmosphere, fascist Ku Klux Klan and Nazi race-terrorists are again raising their heads, emboldened by the reactionary, racist policies emanating from Washington, while the Moral Majority, with its man in the White House, seeks to drive women back into the stifling restrictions of mandatory motherhood and the nuclear family.

Among the oppressed and exploited, there is plenty of will to fight; our task is to forge the mass socialist workers party that can organize and lead those

struggles to victory. The SL-initiated 5,000-strong Labor/Black Mobilization that stopped the KKK from marching in Washington, D.C. on November 27 was a breakthrough in implementing this perspective. Our communist program intersected the bitter determination of the Washington area's black unionists and youth to stop the Klan's racist provocation. Reagan had been determined the KKK would march, but instead we *stopped the Klan*—capping similar, smaller labor/black mobilizations previously initiated by the SL from Detroit to San Francisco. In the wake of the Washington victory, we have established a Spartacist organizing committee there and launched intensive efforts, including tours through the South, to win new recruits to our organization. A black leadership component is key to the American socialist revolution; through our anti-fascist work and organizing drive, we are determined to make a leap in implementing our perspective of recruiting and developing black Trotskyist cadre and leaders for the American workers party.

Spartacist-initiated anti-fascist mobilizations demonstrate our commitment to building a party that can act, as did Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, as a "tribune of the people," mobilizing the working class to combat every form of special oppression. Last summer in Chicago, over 3,000 protesters rallied to the SL-initiated "June 27 Committee to Stop the Nazis." The Chicago-area fascists had planned to terrorize Gay Pride Day with a "death to queers" hatefest, figuring nobody

continued on page 22



Workers Vanguard

"We Stopped the Klan!" chanted triumphant protesters at 5,000-strong Labor/Black Mobilization in Washington, D.C., November 27. This successful Spartacist League-initiated mobilization was a historic victory for labor, blacks and all decent Americans.