



Shcharansky is "guilty as hell" Cold war over dissident "trials"

For workers democracy through political revolution in the USSR!

Banner headlines proclaiming new "Moscow Trials" behind sinister red and black Kremlin walls (the cover of the 24 July *Newsweek*) and a full-scale press blitz known as "The Anatoly Shcharansky Story" have dominated the Western media for the past weeks. Almost universally, attention has focused on the just concluded trial of Soviet "refusenik" Shcharansky, found guilty of treason 15 July by a Moscow court, as a fundamental test of just how "tough" the Carter administration is going to get on the USSR.

The Stalinist bureaucracy which runs the USSR has recently been cracking down hard on dissidents in a series of trials: Vladimir Slepak, sentenced to five years in Siberia for hanging the banner, "Let us join our son in Israel", out his window; Yuri Orlov, organizer of the Helsinki Watch Committees, sentenced to a seven-year prison term for "anti-Soviet agitation"; Alexander Ginzburg, found guilty of setting up a fund for political prisoners' families ("financing criminal elements") with money from exiled author Solzhenitsyn, sentenced to eight years in a labor camp.

While all of these cases have received attention in the imperialist press, the US government has highlighted the Shcharansky trial, making it the cause celebre in the Carter administration's heaviest "human rights" propaganda barrage yet against the Soviet Union. Carter personally proclaimed the innocence of the Jewish computer programmer on charges of supplying American intelligence agencies with Soviet state secrets. And in response to the trial the US took "reprisals": cancellation of two scientific-cultural missions and of a computer sale.

Coming from the murderous "democracy" whose watchword for "undesirables" (Indians, blacks,

communists) is, "The only good one is a dead one"; from the imperialists who dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, firebombed Dresden, launched the Bay of Pigs, casually wiped out entire villages in Vietnam (slaughtering three million Indochinese) -- this talk of "human rights" reeks with blood-drenched hypocrisy. Yet in spite of the screaming headlines, "human interest" sob stories about the "wryly humorous" dissident and his beautiful young wife, the Shcharansky case has been less than a glowing success for Carter.

Naturally, the Kremlin is using the latest series of trials to smear the entire Soviet dissident movement as a gang of spies inspired purely by Western intelligence agencies, a time-worn ploy. This is so patently absurd that nobody believes it. Slepak, Orlov and Ginzburg, whatever their anti-communist and/or Zionist views, have committed no known crimes and yet have been outrageously victimized. But it is just as false to pretend that the CIA and other Western agencies are not deeply interested in exploiting this movement. They have already been caught trying to get information from dissidents (getting their fingers badly burned when it turned out one source, Shcharansky's roommate, was a KGB plant).

Shcharansky himself was targeted by the Russian secret police for his dissident activities, set up and entrapped. Nevertheless, he clearly was deeply involved in passing information along to the West -- the basis for the treason charges against him. For the Kremlin bureaucracy his case was a godsend, enabling them to make the amalgam they have always sought to assert: dissidents are traitors and spies. This time they could get away with it. To put it bluntly, as one State Department official admitted to *Newsweek*, "In Soviet eyes, Shcharansky is guilty as hell".

Not just in Soviet eyes, either -- the more responsible US bourgeois press has felt obligated to raise "disturbing questions" about Shcharansky's heavy involvement with the Western press which, as the *New York Times* and Congressional investigations have extensively documented, has cooperated extensively with the CIA. The *Chicago Sun-Times* (15 July) took this seriously enough to print a guest column asking, "Can We Be Sure Shcharansky Is Innocent?" So Carter has picked a hero whose claim to innocence even sections of the imperialist establishment find hard to swallow. But that was just for openers.

No sooner did Washington decide to use this case as a symbol of the lack of "human

rights" in the Soviet Union than Andy "The Lip" Young, Carter's black front man in the United Nations, mouthed off again. Remarkably off-handedly in an interview with a Paris newspaper that the US had "hundreds, maybe thousands" of political prisoners of its own, he very nearly lost his job and certainly ruined the American propaganda campaign around the SALT talks in Geneva....

Even the human interest angle has turned out to be fraught with pitfalls. Who could resist the appeal of the beautiful, shy young wife who hasn't seen her husband for four years, tearfully pleading -- in interviews, at Zionist demonstrations, on TV, before Congress -- just for her Anatoly to be free? The Israeli government certainly couldn't and is paying the bills for her globe-trotting tour. But the "Avital Shcharansky Story" is more complex than that. It turns out that her brother Mikhail (whom she says "spends all his time with me and my problems. He is very close friends with Anatoly") is a big wheel in the ultra-rightist fascistic Gush Emunim movement....

Framing up the guilty

Given the mass of explosive issues involved in the Shcharansky case -- the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union, the Kremlin's bureaucratic suppression of dissent, the dangers of Carter's anti-Soviet crusade, Zionist anti-communism, CIA spying, charges of treason, etc -- a meticulous examination of the facts is necessary in order to arrive at a position.

As Trotskyists, we are irreconcilable opponents of the brutal counterrevolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy. The same charges of treason were used to imprison, exile and murder our comrades in Stalin's purges. (What, by the way, was the attitude of the American rulers to those Moscow Trials? In those days they had nothing but respect for "Uncle Joe" and his "housecleaning", expressing conscious class hatred for the persecuted Trotskyist revolutionists.)

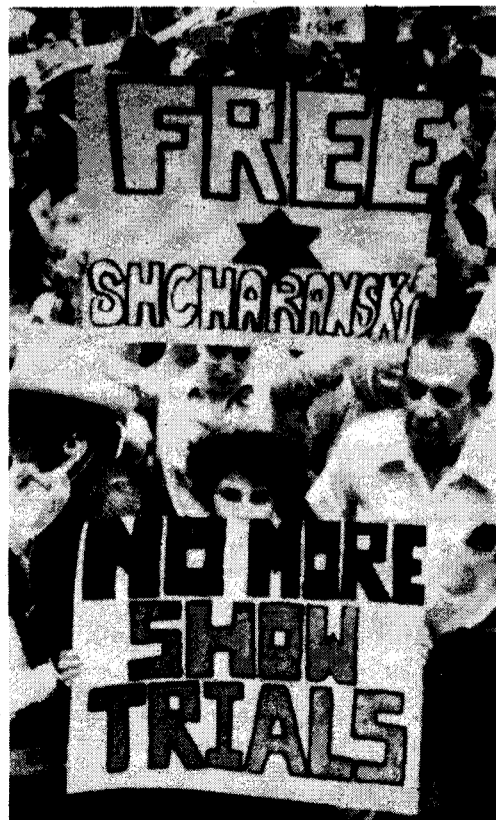
The cynical KGB necessarily runs all its trials as frame-ups, knowing no other techniques but mindless intimidation, anti-Semitic slander and other sledgehammer techniques of a despotic bureaucracy.... The Soviet people fiercely and quite rightly hate collaborators with the imperialist West -- the Solzhenitsyns, Sakharovs and Shcharanskys. We, too, stand on the defense of the USSR against counterrevolution, but our consideration of the question of Shcharansky's guilt or innocence is conditioned by the understanding that the parasitic bureaucracy is the worst danger to a real defense of the gains of the October Revolution.

Was Shcharansky simply framed up -- is he innocent of the charges? The Soviet indictment

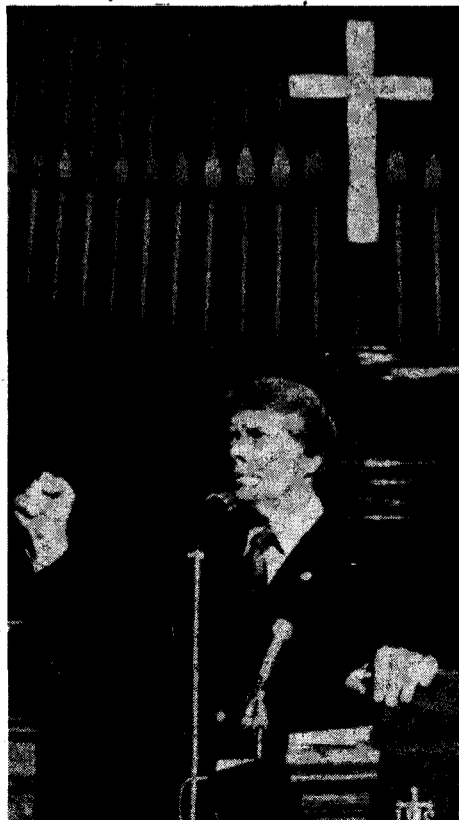
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Anatoly Shcharansky.



Placard demands "Free Shcharansky" at New York demonstration against trials of Soviet "dissidents" (left); Bible-thumping anti-Soviet crusader Jimmy Carter (right).



"Eurotrotskyists" fete
Eurocommunists 3

You don't have to sell out to win!

Spartacist elected

AUS delegate

Among the usual gaggle of student careerist politicians of both the "left" and right, there will be a revolutionary communist delegate at the next Australian Union of Students (AUS) January Council. Last month Neil Florrimell, the Spartacist Club candidate, was elected one of six delegates to AUS Council from LaTrobe University. Comrade Florrimell's 41 first preference votes (roughly seven percent of the formal vote total) reflected the real political support the Spartacist Club has gained in its five-year history as the revolutionary Marxist pole on campus. Significantly, the overwhelming majority of those who voted for Florrimell did not direct preferences to any other candidate. Against the entire array of fake-left opportunists, the Spartacist Club has consistently, resolutely fought to win students to the principles of proletarian revolution. That is the underlying significance of this election victory: You don't have to sell out to win!

The once-hegemonic Maoists of the Students for Australian Independence (SAI) have been reduced to a passive, sterilised and demoralised sect churning out trashy anti-Soviet tirades. Their current isolation is due in no small part to the Spartacist Club's relentless exposure of their thuggery and of the counterrevolutionary politics of Maoism. When in 1975 a vicious Maoist assault on Spartacist supporters was used as a pretext by the rest of the left for bureaucratic reprisal, only the Spartacist Club defended the Maoists against Clubs and Societies disaffiliation and threatened administration action.

Despite its eager adaptation to whatever liberal fad is currently popular, the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) has been hard put even to gain a toehold on LaTrobe. In 1975 its leading LaTrobe member, Ted Murphy, defected to become a prominent and particularly slimy anarchist. In early 1977 its sole member quit to join that "consistent" expression of the SYA's favoured anti-uranium movement, the utopian-reactionary ecologist Friends of the Earth. In contrast to last election "closet" SYAer John Hall stood openly as an SYA candidate this time. He lost.

The largest political tendency on campus remains the "Socialist Left" (formerly "Independent Left") melange of anarchist Libertarian Socialists, ALPers and independent social democrats. But it is mainly preoccupied playing musical chairs through the bureaucratic maze of SRC and administration committees; leading anarchist "libertarians" have even won the "distinction" of serving on the administration's disciplinary Proctorial Board! These "SRC socialists" idea of "fighting" Hamer's attacks on student unions was to invite state Liberal back-bencher Lacy onto campus during the AUS election to engage in polite debate as to whether the government should carry out its intended crackdown on student organisations! The Spartacist Club denounced Lacy; likewise it energetically built a 13 April AUS protest against the attacks while fighting with equal energy the capitulatory policies of the "progressive" AUS leadership the "Socialist Left" crew supports.

Our program is not one of campus-parochialist, reformist "student unionism". We have consist-

ently fought for an end to the systematic class bias of tertiary education through open admissions to all universities coupled with unrestricted TEAS payments at least to the minimum wage; counterposing to the bourgeois administration and its student "socialist" flunkies the democratic demand for student/staff/campus worker control of the university. It was the Spartacist Club alone which actively defended striking LaTrobe campus workers in 1975, daily manning picket lines, fighting for a solidarity student strike against the opposition of the rest of the campus "left". And last year the Spartacist Club organised the largest student meeting seen for some time at LaTrobe to gain support for the embattled LaTrobe Valley power workers. At January Council we will be fighting, as in our day-to-day work on campus, to draw a hard class line on the issues of the day, an essential part of the struggle for a communist youth movement which in solidarity with the Leninist vanguard party will help lead the socialist revolution. ■

Dissidents...

Continued from page one

charged he had "betrayed his homeland" and engaged in "activities detrimental to the state independence and military might of the USSR". Specifically he was charged with supplying state secrets, from 1974 to 1977, to "Western diplomats, intelligence officers, as well as to an agent of a foreign military-intelligence service who worked under the cover of a journalist in Moscow". The journalist is one Robert Toth of the *Los Angeles Times*, who was arrested and questioned by the KGB for three days before leaving the country at the end of his tour of duty last year.

It is acknowledged by all concerned that Shcharansky was a key contact man between Soviet dissidents and Western newsmen in Moscow and did have extensive contact with Toth. In particular he supplied the correspondent with information for articles on Soviet "refuseniks" -- Jews denied permission to emigrate to Israel on the grounds that their work gave them access to state secrets. Toth vehemently denies he published any "secrets", but one of the articles he wrote based on Shcharansky's information was entitled "Clues in Denials of Jewish Visas: Russ Indirectly Reveal 'State Secrets'" (*Los Angeles Times*, 22 November 1976). The article details various scientific operations which he argues are actually secret defense establishments.

Toth argues the Soviet authorities exposed themselves by refusing visas. Whether or not this is true, Shcharansky put this material together, found people for Toth to talk to and handed it all over. As a US official explained to *Newsweek*: "What Shcharansky did, in effect, was give Toth a list of secret defense plants". And what of the *Los Angeles Times* correspondent -- was he an agent? The Soviet prosecutor introduced as evidence a letter found in Toth's garbage ("How stupid I was not to have eaten that goddamn letter", Toth now says) from the US military attache in Moscow, Major Robert Watters, Jr, thanking Toth for his "cooperation" and passing on praise for the correspondent's good work from Lieutenant General Samuel Wilson, then head of the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency.

That American newsmen act as CIA or military intelligence agents, sources or "assets" is nothing new. Whether or not Shcharansky knew what he was doing, the fact remains that he passed on state secrets to what was likely a Western intelligence conduit. A *New York Times* investigation last year revealed that since World War II at least 100 newsmen had acted as paid CIA agents, while literally thousands of foreign newsmen, editors and news organizations have been CIA conduits of one sort or another....

What about the CIA? Carter's vehement denial last year of any US intelligence connections with Shcharansky was badly undercut by revelations that the dissident's roommate, Dr Sanya Lipavsky, had worked for the CIA for some months in 1975-76 -- a fact known to Carter at the time he made his defense. Answering charges that the CIA tried to penetrate the dissident movement Washington replied that Lipavsky was only "used for routine intelligence, on the activities of the Soviet scientific community with whom he was in touch -- but not in connection with the dissidents" (*Man-*

chester Guardian Weekly, 16 July). Of course, most of the dissidents are from scientific-intellectual backgrounds, and Lipavsky's main contact with this community was through Shcharansky.

The evidence is circumstantial, but in its mass quite damning. At best Shcharansky was incredibly stupid, and more likely he knew what the destination of his information would be.

In the face of the bureaucracy's total suppression of legal means of communication to the dissident movement the latter are forced to go to the bourgeois media. But to rely on these agents of imperialist propaganda becomes a program, and it is no accident that many dissidents support such imperialist blackmail as the Jackson amendment, which seeks to promote "human rights" in the USSR by threatening to cut off grain shipments. Most of the dissident movement today in the USSR, and particularly its Zionist component, appeals directly to the West to use them as pawns in its pressure on the degenerated Soviet workers state. As long as they and their associates can get out to earn royalties on anti-communist tracts they do not care a whit for the military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism; for the most part they are actively opposed to it....

Given Shcharansky's right-wing Zionist beliefs, it is probable that he would inform Western imperialist governments of whatever he knows about Soviet military defense. In any case, this time the Stalinists had a good case. Shcharansky clearly did pass on the information he is accused of transmitting and he has expressed no regret that he revealed secret Soviet military establishments to Western governments. However, we have no trust whatsoever that the bureaucratic thugs of the KGB can judge Shcharansky's culpability and apply proletarian justice accordingly. These are the people who massacred thousands of Trotskyists and Old Bolsheviks following the Moscow Trials of the 1930s, all on fabricated charges of treason and acting as imperialist agents; today they lock up any opponent of the ruling clique in psychiatric hospitals, corner their targets with agents provocateurs, etc.

Soviet dissidents and political revolution

The dissidents in the Soviet Union are a heterogeneous lot, encompassing everything from tsar-loving reactionaries such as Solzhenitsyn to ardent Zionists like Shcharansky, pro-Western liberal intelligentsia (Sakharov), Stalinist reformers (Medvedev), vague social-democratic "neo-Marxists" (Plyushch), defenders of oppressed national minorities, and even possibly a few genuine proletarian revolutionary oppositionists -- although unfortunately the latter are presently hard to find. We have deep political differences with many of the "dissidents" -- indeed, we often stand on the opposite side of the class line -- but against the Kremlin's crushing censorship we defend freedom of speech for all whose political activity is not aimed at overthrowing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Soviet bureaucracy has dragged the democratic traditions and liberating goals of Marxism through the mud, generating such cynicism and hatred for the proud name of "communist", that it is not surprising that the dominant dissident trends today are openly pro-imperialist. The battle for political revolution in the USSR to oust the bureaucracy and restore workers democracy requires intransigent struggle against such tendencies. But the pro-Western and Zionist dissidents must be politically defeated by proletarian revolutionaries in the USSR, and this requires an equally intransigent struggle for full soviet liberties through workers political revolution to oust the bureaucracy.

In this context it is particularly disgusting to see the European Communist parties -- French, Spanish and Italian -- lining up with Western imperialism in defending Shcharansky. In the US, the reformist, ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), long a most enthusiastic supporter of Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" campaigns, has hailed each new pro-Western dissident as a heroic fighter against oppression. The SWP's defense of Shcharansky is particularly revolting. The 21 July *Militant* lays out its main theme: "Like the French Captain Alfred Dreyfuss in 1894, and the Americans Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1953, Shcharansky is the victim of an anti-Semitic political frame-up".

Certainly it is true that the Stalinist bureaucracy encourages anti-Semitism, and the

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French LCR defends "socialist" generals and admirals "Eurotrotskyists" fete Eurocommunists

It was a Pabloist's dream come true: a star-studded gallery of Eurocommunist notables, prominent social democrats, "progressive" generals and Soviet dissidents, all brought to you courtesy of the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR). Not content with the company in the little cesspool of "far-left" opportunism, these pseudo-Trotskyists have been looking for an opportunity to jump into the reformist swamp of class betrayal where they can swim with the big boys. They saw their chance and leaped with both feet, turning the LCR's *Rouge Fete* into a gala weekend in honor of Eurocommunism. More than 10,000 attended the May 27-28 gathering at the Porte de Pantin on the outskirts of Paris, entitled "May 1968 -- May 1978: Reform or Revolution?"

The LCR lost no time making clear which it was for. In this grand celebration of classless "democracy", they courted the right-wing Communist Party (PCF) dissidents, who in recent weeks have become the darlings of the bourgeois press, and defended "socialist" officers of the French imperialist armed forces against enraged protest from the audience. Guests of honor at the "fraternal debate" included noted French Eurocommunists Jean Elleinstein, Jacques Fremontier and Jean Rony, "premature Eurocommunists" Roger Garaudy and Fernando Claudin, an official delegation of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), French Socialist Party (PS) national secretary Gilles Martinet, Ukrainian dissident Leonid Plyushch and military reserve officers air force General Becam and Admiral Sanguinetti.

The bourgeois press took note of the unusual event.... Even the *New York Times* (4 June) covered it, commenting that "A new current is stirring in the French left, bringing together representatives of a broad sweep of views from extremists to ecologists and moderate reformers in opposition to Communist Party orthodoxy"....

The weekend fete was indeed designed to capitalize on the current uproar in the PCF, which



Platform at LCR fete: from left, Fernando Claudin (ex-PCE leader), Henri Weber (LCR leader), Leonid Plyushch (Ukrainian dissident) and translator, PCF dissident Jean Elleinstein and PS National Secretary Gilles Martinet.

has spilled over into a heated public controversy, as leading party intellectuals have taken to the pages of *Le Monde*, the leading French daily, to denounce the PCF leadership as responsible for the recent electoral defeat of the Union of the Left. Neo-Stalinist philosopher Louis Althusser published a four-part copyrighted series entitled "Things Can't Go On This Way in the Communist Party", and historian Elleinstein, deputy director of the PCF's Center for Marxist Studies, called in his series for dropping the name "Communist" as a liability before French public opinion. At the *Rouge Fete* the LCR provided a platform for the most thoroughgoing Eurocommunists seeking to pressure those CPers resistant to exchanging pro-Soviet Stalinist reformism for anti-Soviet social-democratic reformism.

Although at first glance the speakers' platforms at the fete appeared contrary to nature, there was in fact a political logic uniting PCF right wingers with LCR "far leftists": both accused the Communist Party leadership of being responsible for the March 19 electoral defeat of "the left" by breaking the "unity momentum". This charge, raised by a "Declaration of 100" PCF militants (*Le Monde*, 17 May), is the theme of a propaganda barrage initiated by PS leader Mitterrand and picked up by virtually the entire bourgeois press. It ignores the fact that the PCF's reflexive "hardening" came in response to threats to its electoral base by the Socialists and indications from Mitterrand that the PCF would have little effective power in a Union of the Left government. Thus the Pabloists and super-Eurocommunists find common ground on the rightist program of unconditional unity of the reformist bureaucrats.

Commenting afterwards on the star-studded weekend, the LCR's first crack at the big time, LCR leader Alain Krivine underscored the significance of the *Rouge Fete*.

"For us this was not a publicity stunt or a factional operation ... the breach has been opened, the precedent set, nothing will be the same as before." (*Rouge*, 30 May)

Discovery of "Eurotrotskyism"

Leading off the discussion on Eurocommunism Elleinstein reaffirmed his support to a Union of the Left and declared that "unity is debate". This was music to the ears of the LCR, which had been seeking debates with the PCF ever since well before the March elections. Elleinstein also called for joint action between the Eurocommunists and the LCR, between "we who are in the Party and you who are a vital force but who today are feeling the dead end you are in". But the basis for such collaboration, he specified, must be:

"... a line which of course is neither that of Stalin nor of Mao, but which is also not that of Lenin or Trotsky, a path which is the original path toward socialism imposed on us by history and is precisely, I'll say it: the Eurocommunist path."

This meant, said Elleinstein, first of all support for "representative democracy" and the "extension of public liberties". He added, "I think that in many respects Rosa Luxemburg was right in 1918 in criticizing certain aspects of the Russian Revolution", endorsing in particular her claim that "lack of representative democracy" would lead to "the domination of a bureaucracy".

"Eurocommunism", said the PCF historian, "implies total independence from the Soviet Union". The representative of the PCE, Malo de Molina, declared that it "assumes the negation of the model of the Soviet revolution, the model of class against class, and the model according to which one must end up with the destruction of the state". Neither here nor at any time in the weekend did the LCR defend the Leninist "model" or even mention the need for defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism.

There were a few murmurs from the audience when Molina praised the Italian Communist Party's austerity policy as a "theoretical innovation" and went so far as to oppose cost-of-living escalators as "inflationary". LCR spokesmen attacked this apology for the anti-working-class, wage-cutting policies of the Andreotti and Suarez governments, but refused to criticize the policies of the French Union of the Left. Not only did they fail to denounce this coalition as a popular front, tying the working class to the bourgeoisie, but throughout the weekend these fake-Trotskyists hardly even mentioned the Communist-Socialist-Left Radical bloc which has dominated French politics for the past six years.

In contrast there was stormy applause when PS national secretary Martinet, an ex-Stalinist and Krivine's father-in-law, denounced anti-Trotskyism as "the anti-Semitism of the workers movement". Fernando Claudin, the former member of the PCE central committee expelled in 1964 for ultra-reformist positions similar to those of the present-day Eurocommunists, went even further,

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The "progressive" generals vs the LTF

The following exchanges took place in the forum on the army at the *Rouge fete* sponsored by the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire. On the platform were "socialists" General Becam and Admiral Sanguinetti, who were repeatedly confronted by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France.

Becam: "What do I think of the wars I participated in? Well, we participated in the World War in '39 to '45.... What helped the people who carried out these operations (bombing missions) not to pose these problems about what they were doing was the risk they ran. Because in spite of all the bombing gear they ran an absolutely enormous risk during the war and only one out of two survived...."

LTF: "Bombed the German proletariat with a little risk - that's what you were doing!"

Becam: "It was a question of beating German fascism...."

LTF: "Hamburg was German fascism?"

Becam: "... and I do not regret this war at all, absolutely not. Then I was in the Indochinese war...."

* * * * *

Sanguinetti: "A draftee army is better able to maintain order.... You need numbers to search and destroy. When we had to carry out search and destroy operations in Algeria, our strength rose to two million men...."

LTF: "It's a scandal, the way the speakers platform is composed...."

Chairman of the session protests: "... against the insults addressed to the Admiral inside this hall."

Becam: "An army cannot be really efficient if it's not democratic.... There was a certain democracy in the Wehrmacht, that's why it was so efficient.... But you have to watch out for workers militias, they risk becoming even less democratic than the army.... There is an example of a workers militia: the German SA. A workers militia can rapidly resemble the SA...."

(Cries of protest in the hall)

LTF: "That's what comes of making blocs with the General Staff.... This man is consciously fighting against the working class. He just said it. He bombed the German proletariat, with no regrets."

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Renaissance du trotskysme britannique p. 8

Spartacist League/Britain founded

The rebirth of British Trotskyism

The fusion this March between the Trotskyist Faction (TF), a left opposition in Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL), and the London Spartacist Group (LSG) to found the Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B) was one of the largest and most important regroupments in the 15-year history of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt). Attempting at first to virtually ignore the split of one-fifth of its active membership at a February WSL conference, the WSL was eventually forced to run a lengthy three-part polemic in its Socialist Press centring on the shop-worn opportunist argument that the iSt's principled Trotskyist politics is "abstentionist" (for the SL/B's reply, see

Part 3 of 3

Spartacist Britain no 2, June 1978). But militants disillusioned with the WSL's brand of opportunist fake mass work and national parochialism continue to turn to the iSt. The remaining members of the "centre" Murray-Kellett faction have resigned and two of them have submitted an application to join the SL/B (reprinted in Spartacist Britain no 3, July-August 1978). Also reprinted there is a resignation statement by two other WSLers who declare their intent to pursue political discussions with the SL/B.

Part 3 of this article is abridged from Spartacist Britain no 1, April 1978. Parts 1 and 2 (reprinted in ASP no 54, June 1978 and no 55, July 1978) traced the history of the WSL, born when Thornett's tendency was expelled from Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party in 1974, and the origins of the TF in political struggle against the WSL leadership's abandonment of the Transitional Program, its accommodation to Labourism under the slogan "Make the Lefts Fight", its revisionism on the popular front and other questions. Opposition on some of these questions was expressed in the document, "The Coalition, 'Make the Lefts Fight' and the Worker Government Slogan", written in late 1977. In mid-1977, influenced by the polemics of the LSG, a number of the emerging oppositionists realised the need for a full-scale programmatic combat against Thornett's workerism, and the need to come to terms with Spartacist politics.

★ ★ ★

As the document on "The Coalition, 'Make the Lefts Fight' and the Workers' Government Slogan" went through successive drafts over two months, the discussions within what had been an amorphous left wing of the WSL showed a growing political differentiation. By the time the jointly written document was submitted it was apparent that the signatories were on the verge of a parting of political paths. The majority (represented by Green, Holford, Quigley and Short) were coming to the conception that, while it was conceivable that much of the WSL membership and even a section of the leadership could possibly be won to the revolutionary programme, this could only be done through the process of insurrecting against the WSL's Healyite-derived practice and tradition, which had to be destroyed.

Murray and Kellett, however, pulled back sharply and went on to play a dishonourable role as a left cover for the WSL leadership, sharing

many of the programmatic positions of the Trotskyist Faction but subordinating these to their desire not to break with Thornett. This political differentiation was extremely important because it ruptured the personal ties between the ex-IS/RCgers [International Socialists and Revolutionary Communist Group], establishing unambiguously that programme comes first. Within a short period after this break with the Murray clot the TF had produced its comprehensive political statement, "In Defence of the Revolutionary Programme".

INDORP provided for the first time what the WSL had lacked from the beginning, a coherent Trotskyist programme and perspective. It took up many of the questions raised by the iSt letter of June 1976 (Cuba, history of the IC, trade-union policy, "make the lefts fight") and other key issues facing a revolutionary vanguard in Britain, notably the Irish question (see more below). It also drew a sharply critical balance sheet of the WSL's incompetent and opportunist international work:

"Unable to build an anti-revisionist, democratic centralist international tendency on the basis of a clear programmatic attitude to the basic tasks of revolutionaries in this epoch and the decisive issues of the class struggle internationally (opposition to popular frontism, defence of the deformed workers'

January 1978), presents a version of the degeneration of the Fourth International heavily flavoured by the WSL's workerist perspective. But the key, as the TF pointed out, is that:

"The entire thrust of the document 'The Poisoned Well' despite the promised amendments is to attempt to straighten out what the leadership sees as 'methodological' weaknesses of the thoroughly reformist American SWP so as to better equip it for the fight against the centrist ex-International Majority Tendency wing [of the USec]. If agreement can be reached on the uncontentious theses at the end of the document then the 'reunification' (sic) discussions can begin. The EC [Executive Committee] of the WSL is taking the organisation down the road to liquidation into the United Secretariat." ("In Defence of the Revolutionary Programme"; emphasis in original)

At the February conference the WSL central leadership tried to claim that the most egregiously capitulationist references to the SWP and the USec were "slips of the pen", and submitted amendments to sanitise their document. Alan Holford of the TF dismissed this by pointing out that four single-spaced pages of amendments hardly constituted "slips". In the debate Socialist Press editor Lister said that while he was not opposed in principle to characterising the USec as centrist, to say so in writing would



May Day 1977: Turkish army attacks workers demonstration in Istanbul, killing 35 workers and wounding hundreds.

states, political struggle against nationalism and the necessity to re-create the Fourth International), the central leadership has led the WSL into a world of rotten blocs, cover-ups, diplomacy and intrigue -- masquerading as the fight to 'reconstruct' the Fourth International."

In the WSL, "international work" is mainly an extra-curricular activity, and at least some of its international connections have been made without directives by the NC by one comrade who uses his holidays to make political contacts outside this tight little island. Mostly the WSL should just be embarrassed by its international "co-thinkers", the contemptible Socialist League (Democratic-Centralist) [SL(DC)] of the US (referred to in INDORP as "lower-than-reformist wretches who stand in the tradition of one Albert Weisbord against Cannon and Trotsky") and the Pabloist Greek Communist International League (CIL), which last year was engaged in "unity" manoeuvres with the local USec section.

However, the WSL is not content with such small fry and is quietly stalking the big game of "the world Trotskyist movement". With his reputation and history, Thornett reasons, he should be able to reach an accommodation with Mandel and company or someone in the big time. Currently the WSL is entertaining leading representatives of the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI). (Thornett's documents inside the WRP contain sections which closely parallel the OCI conception of a strategic united front front.)...

A contribution to the pre-conference discussion by the WSL leadership purported to offer its orientation to "the world Trotskyist movement". The document entitled "The Poisoned Well" ([WSL] Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin no 1,

preclude an invitation to the USec congress, thereby rendering the WSL's prospects "very small". Some prospects!

The WSL's attitude towards the Pabloist United Secretariat was accurately captured by Holford in a quote from *Tristram Shandy* which he included in his presentation as minority reporter: "Courtship consists in a number of quiet attentions, not so pointed as to alarm nor so vague as not to be understood".

A class line vs left republicanism on Ireland

One of the consequences of the blinkered Cowley-centred economism of the Thornett leadership was that for the first three years of its existence the WSL has not had a position on the Irish question -- of crucial importance for any organisation with pretensions of providing revolutionary leadership to the workers of the British Isles. In order to plug this rather embarrassing gap in its programme, the leadership established an Irish Commission which was charged with developing a position for the WSL. In the course of the political struggle within the WSL three members of this four-man commission came to agreement on a class-struggle programme for Ireland paralleling the unique position of the iSt. This was presented as the Trotskyist Faction document "No Capitulation to Nationalism: For a Proletarian Perspective in Ireland!" ([WSL] Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin no 13, February 1978).

In recoiling from the anti-sectarian, proletarian position of the Spartacist tendency, the WSL wholeheartedly embraced the kind of pseudo-socialist "Republican" position on Ireland common to most of the British fake-Trotskyist groupings. The Thornett leadership's document attempted to step around the difficult problem posed by the existence of the separate Protestant people (who

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comprise 60 percent of the population of the six counties of Northern Ireland and a quarter of the population of the island as a whole) by simply ignoring it and putting forward a call for "self-determination for the Irish people as a whole".

The TF document pointed out that such a call "is meaningless precisely because there is no sense in which we can speak of the [Irish] people as a whole", and challenged the vicarious green nationalists of the WSL leadership to "face up to the implications of such a programme. It is in effect a call for the forcible unification of the whole island by the Irish bourgeoisie irrespective of the wishes of the Protestant community", a move which "could only precipitate a bloody communal conflict offering nothing for the proletariat". The majority document clearly confirmed the WSL's alignment with mainstream petty-bourgeois Irish Republicanism:

"We do not argue as such for a united capitalist Ireland. But it must be clear that were such an unlikely development brought about in the course of struggle it would represent an historically progressive development." ("Outlines of a Programme for Ireland", *ibid*; emphasis in original)

The Trotskyist Faction document rejected the leadership's open support to Catholic Irish nationalism, stating that: "We are AGAINST THE FORCED UNIFICATION OF IRELAND UNDER BOURGEOIS RULE". Instead it raised the algebraic call for an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles. The TF stated clearly that the struggle to unite the Protestant and Catholic working people across sectarian lines must be premised on inflexible opposition to the continuing oppression of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, and also on a fight for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. However, the TF document added:

"... the removal of the troops, unless a class-conscious proletariat led by a revolutionary party is able to intervene, may well be the occasion for enormous sectarian slaughter (as occurred in India after independence) but as Marxists we must reject out of hand the reformist proposition that imperialist troops can ever be a fundamental guarantee against barbarism. The continuation of British imperialism's military occupation of the north is even more inimical to the prospect for socialism than the slaughter which might follow its departure." ("For a Proletarian Perspective in Ireland!")

In the debate on Ireland at the conference one Thornett supporter after another rose to speak in defence of the majority's sketchy but clearly Catholic nationalist document, yet felt it necessary to preface their remarks by admitting they knew little about Ireland. In contrast, the position of the Trotskyist Faction, drawing on the considerable collective experience of its members in the struggle in Ireland, was presented by Paul Lannigan, a former member of the Irish National Committee of Healy's SLL from 1968 to 1970. Lannigan, who had first-hand experience in recruiting Protestant shop stewards in Derry to the SLL, opposed the leadership's "socialist" green nationalism, which effectively denies the possibility of revolutionaries being able to win Protestant workers to an anti-sectarian, socialist programme.

Mass work fakery, menshevism and bundism in Turkey

With the exception of its loose ties to the Greek CIL and the American SL(DC), the WSL's only work outside Britain has taken place in Turkey. Beginning with a few Turkish members recruited from the WRP, the WSL recruited a handful of raw militants and established two small branches in Turkey. In every respect the Turkish work was a criminal fiasco as a minuscule grouping of politically uneducated militants attempted to translate the WSL's "mass work" approach from



British Labour/Liberal coalition government used troops to break firemen's strike. WSL electorally supported coalition.

chummy England into the harsh reality of Turkish society where labour and leftist militants are regularly set upon and often murdered by fascist thugs.

The Trotskyist Faction recruited two members of the WSL's Turkish group in London who recounted the bitter experience of a strike (for union recognition) sparked by the Turkish WSLers: "We were totally ill-prepared to give even good trade union leadership to back up our advice to these workers" ("Enough of Opportunism, Adven-



Official IRA checkpoint in the Bogside, Londonderry, 1972, at that time a "no-go area" for British troops.

turism, Bundism: For a Trotskyist Perspective in Turkey", [WSL] *Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin* no 12, February 1978). The WSL leadership wasn't taken aback. True, the majority document admitted, "... the strike was isolated, was broken, and all the strikers were sacked". However, "Though the battle was lost, our comrades were developed and new contacts won" ([WSL] *Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin* no 6, February 1978)!

Having experienced the dead end posed by the WSL's economist activism, these two militants came to fundamental agreement with the Trotskyist Faction's insistence on the centrality of programmatic clarity and the struggle to educate and recruit cadre as key to building the revolutionary party. Thus the TF Turkish document attacked the leadership's Bundist approach to the national question as applied to the Kurds (a national minority presently divided among Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria and the USSR). According to the WSL majority the Kurds must achieve "national unity first", ie, the establishment of a bourgeois Kurdistan; consequently Kurdish workers living in Turkey must be organised into a separate Kurdish party. Recognising the Kurds' right to self-determination, the TF document attacked this Bundist organisational norm and Menshevik two-stage strategy.

On the thorny Cyprus question the faction took a clear internationalist position:

"Up until 1974, the Turkish population of Cyprus was nationally oppressed by the Greek population -- since the invasion by the Turkish army, the Greeks have been in the more oppressed position. Because the two populations have been thoroughly intermingled on this small island it is clear that the reality of 'self-determination' for either people can only come at the expense of the other and thus 'self-determination' is not applicable. We call therefore for the withdrawal of all foreign troops (whether Turk, Greek, UN, NATO, or any other) and for the unity of Greek and Turkish working peoples of Cyprus to overthrow capitalism and establish a workers state under the leadership of a Trotskyist party." ("Enough of Opportunism, Adventurism, Bundism ...")

Thornett "counterattacks"

For the longest time the Thornett leadership sought to ignore the international Spartacist tendency. After a year's procrastination, the WSL's sometime resident literary dilettante, Adam Westoby, finally produced a draft reply to the June 1976 iSt letter. This work was so blatantly unserious that the WSL NC rejected it in summer 1977. Since Westoby had left the organisation to pursue his "theoretical" activity, the job of drafting a new reply was commissioned out to someone else -- whose work was rejected for being too soft on the iSt. Finally leadership loyalists like John Lister and Tony Richardson pro-

duced their own reply -- with a little help from their friends in the Murray clique....

The Lister-Richardson-Murray "reply" is a broken record stuck on the single refrain that the iSt is "sectarian" because we recognise that "a currently embryonic party organisation must necessarily constitute itself in the form of a 'fighting propaganda group'" and we frankly state that the character of our trade-union work must be "exemplary", rejecting the workerist notion of intervening in every daily struggle of the masses. "What type of forces will such a stand attract?" the Thornett group asks rhetorically, answering: "Talkers, debaters, and those disillusioned with struggle for leadership within workers' organisations ..." ([WSL] *Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin* no 5, February 1978). At another point they wax indignant: "Your refusal to fight to recruit workers ... means that your role is reduced to that of political vultures, preying on other tendencies on the left".

This absurd charge -- reminiscent of Wohlforth at his nadir, when sputtering for lack of anything to say he would charge that Spartacists "hate the workers" -- is consummate dishonesty coming from authors who are not unfamiliar with *Workers Vanguard*. But at least the Thornett supporters make clear what it is they object to: the authors complain that the London Spartacist Group interventions in WSL public meetings "seem determined to cut across any dialogue with [workers who attend these meetings] and drive them away from the WSL, turning every meeting into a debate on the most abstract level".

And just what are these "abstract" topics of debate? The same points that were the axis of the TF faction fight: the need to break from Labourism and illusions in the Labour "lefts"; the need for a proletarian strategy in Ireland, to draw the class line against popular frontism. This is too "abstract" for the Thornett group because they seek to recruit politically raw workers at their present level of consciousness, ie, militant trade unionism. We, however, aspire to recruit workers who despise the IMG's line of Menshevik "unity" or the SWP's refusal to defend the gains of the October Revolution....

The one issue which seems to have stung the WSL central leadership into something resembling a political defence is the question of voting for popular front candidates and the nature of a workers government. John Lister's document, "What the Fourth Congress of the Comintern Really Decided" ([WSL] *Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin* no 3, February 1978), is really just an attempt to institutionalise the confusion sown by Zinoviev and Radek in that discussion. If the WSL really wants to say that it considers a Labour Party cabinet resting on a majority in Parliament to be a "workers government" -- this is one of Zinoviev's five variants -- they are free to do so. We would only remind them of the company they are travelling in. One Pierre Frank, in a commemorative article on the Transitional Programme (*International Socialist Review*, May-June 1967), congratulated the Pabloist United Secretariat in having "revived and enriched" the concept of workers government to mean something other than the dictatorship of the proletariat. As for the Spartacist tendency, it stands on the "unrevised" programme of Trotsky's Fourth International, which states:

"This formula, 'workers' and farmers' government', first appeared in the agitation of the Bolsheviks in 1917 and was definitely accepted after the October Revolution. In the final instance it represented nothing more than the popular designation for the already established dictatorship of the proletariat.... "When the Comintern of the epigones tried to revive the formula buried by history of the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry', it gave to the formula of the 'workers' and peasants' government' a completely different, purely 'democratic', i.e., bourgeois content, counterposing it to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Bolshevik-Leninists resolutely rejected the slogan of the 'workers' and peasants' government' in the bourgeois-democratic version." (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*)

A slightly more serious attempt to deal with the question was made by Clinton, Hyde and White (a trio whose opening shots in the political struggle in the WSL were their arguments that the police deserved a "sliding scale of wages"). Their document ("Strategy and Tactics -- A Reply

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"Eurotrotskyists"...

Continued from page three

suggesting that the debate be extended to include "Eurotrotskyism", since they were in the presence of "non-sectarian" Trotskyists:

"... this is perhaps the sign that there is also a 'Eurotrotskyist' phenomenon, that is a certain opening of Trotskyism toward other currents of the communist movement."

In response, LCR leader Daniel Bensaid returned the compliment and went out of his way to demonstrate the compatibility of "Eurotrotskyism" with social-democratizing Eurocommunism. Thus he defended the Pabloist perversion of Trotskyism against charges of "underestimating the struggle for democratic rights" by saying: "It seems there is agreement -- everyone says 'representative democracy, democratic rights,' and we defend them too..." Bensaid also solidarized with Rosa Luxemburg's critique of the Russian Revolution for "limiting freedom of the press, limiting freedom of association, which leads to sclerosis of democracy" and approved of Elleinstein's use of this reference which has been cited for decades by social democrats as part of their attack on Leninism.

In answer to Claudin's opposition of parliamentary to non-parliamentary forms of democracy, Bensaid made a fundamental and far-reaching revision of Leninism on the central question of the state:

"You will find the debate on the articulation of parliamentary democracy and grassroots democracy with Lenin vs. Kautsky on the subject of the constituent assembly in Russia, you will find it between Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin on the same problem, you will find it in Trotsky, you will find it broadly among some people who are coming back into style today, and not by accident, that is the Austro-Marxists like Adler. However (left-wing) social-democratic they were at the time, they said that parliamentary forms and forms of self-organization could cohabit, but that the forms of self-organization must have the last word... As for us, we say it is necessary to take the question to its conclusion and say which should predominate."

So ... instead of smashing the capitalist state, and with it bourgeois parliamentary forms of government, to replace it with the proletarian democracy of soviet rule, it is necessary to combine them, to "articulate" them; and like the Austro-Marxists, this arch-Pabloist says that it is simply necessary to specify that forms of "grassroots democracy" should predominate over parliamentary forms!

The reference to Austro-Marxism is, as Bensaid remarks, not an accident. Together with the German Independent Social Democrats, the Austrian Socialist Party was the mainstay of the ill-fated "Second and a Half International" set up in reaction to the proclamation of the Comintern, and Friedrich Adler was its architect. As far as the "cohabitation" of parliamentary and soviet democracy, this program was actually carried out by the Austro-Marxists, who used their domination of the Vienna Workers Council to prevent any revolutionary attempt to sweep away the institutions of capitalist rule. In Berlin, where the Spartakusbund had found support among sectors of the proletariat, this "articulation" was achieved by the bloody massacre of the January 1919 uprising and the assassination of Luxemburg and Liebknecht! Bensaid will no doubt say that there the wrong element predominated, but it was only because the Independent Social Democrats refused to call for all power to the workers councils,

instead hoping for peaceful coexistence between the councils and the national assembly, that the "majority" social-democratic butchers Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske could carry out their bloody work, eventually suppressing the workers councils as well. These are the fruits of the tradition with which the "Eurotrotskyists" solidarize!

Comrade Bensaid has a history of getting carried away with whatever is the current line of the majority of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec), as when he proposed importing to Europe the USec's guerrillaist policy for Latin America. However, in this case he is simply making explicit the capitulationist policy toward Eurocommunism authored by the USec's top theoretician, Ernest Mandel. Thus in



A Eurocommunist scab: Cover of US edition of PCE leader Carrillo's book shows him crossing picket line at Yale in 1978.

the introduction to his book, *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism*, Mandel refers to the Eurocommunist current as analogous to "classical Social Democracy of 1910-1930, which should not be confused with contemporary Social Democracy". Social Democracy before World War I, the world historic event which marked the passage of social democracy to the camp of defense of the bourgeois order? Without saying so explicitly, Mandel is implying that the Eurocommunists have not yet definitively betrayed.

As for Bensaid's defense of "representative democracy" and political pluralism, this is already foreshadowed in the USec resolution on "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (*Inprecor*, 7 July 1977) in which the Pabloists reject the Trotskyist position of democratic rights for all parties standing on the gains of the October Revolution, instead calling for "freedom for the defenders of reactionary ideologies [presumably including fascism] to defend these ideas, [for] ideological cultural pluralism" even for active counterrevolutionaries, just so long as they are not caught bomb-in-hand. The remarks by Bensaid during this debate constitute a deliberate attempt to present a common platform on which the Eurocommunists and Pabloist "Eurotrotskyists" can "cohabit": namely, left-talking social democracy, formally independent of the Second International and modeled on post-World War I Austro-Marxism.

Defending the popular-front butchers

While Bensaid's discourse on the "articulation" of bourgeois and proletarian democracy provided the political framework for a Eurocommunist/"Eurotrotskyist" lash-up, it was in the forum on the army that the LCR most vividly demonstrated the depths to which it will descend in order to gain admission to the reformist swamp. Krivine, Bensaid and company have been assisting in the formation of a Committee for Rights and Freedoms in the Military Institution, organized by the bourgeois League for the Rights of Man with the participation of two ranking reserve officers, General Becam and Admiral Sanguinetti. These two general staff officers had star billing in the oh-so-fraternal "debate" on a podium chaired by the LCR leadership.

Sanguinetti, who had run for parliament in March on the PS ticket, justified attempts to "democratize" the army on the grounds that it would be more "efficient" in "maintain[ing] order".... After a supporter of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), sympathizing section of the international Spartacist tendency, protested the scandalous composition of the speakers platform, the LCR chairman of the session denounced "the 'insults' addressed to the Admiral inside this hall"....

In a subsequent intervention during the debate an LTF spokesman again denounced the presence of these professional butchers of the Vietnamese and Algerian peasants and workers:

"The question is, what is there to debate with ex-officers, generals who defend the bourgeois army, who are for the defense of the fatherland, when you are an organization that says

it is socialist, that even claims to be Trotskyist. As for an ex-general, an ex-admiral, so long as they haven't renounced their past ... I think these characters still merit the name given them by the soldiers' committees themselves, namely *crevures* [roughly "butchers", the worst insult a soldier can make to an officer in the French army, punishable by long stretches in the stockade]."

A second LTF comrade linked the LCR's incredible call for an "alliance of the workers movement, the soldiers movement, the career officers" to the Pabloists' capitulation to popular frontism, and counterposed the revolutionary Trotskyist program of opposition to collaboration with the class enemy:

"Obviously the question of the army is the key question for a popular front. The LCR, if it wants to maintain its alliance with the popular front, its essentially popular-frontist policy, is compelled to have a reformist policy toward the army. Which, moreover, explains why they have also abandoned all their guerrillaist postures,... while today they take the side of the bourgeois state against the Red Brigades in Italy.... "Today the LCR wants us to believe that the officer caste ... can be split between the elements in favor of the proletariat and those in favor of the bourgeoisie. The officer caste is selected, educated and structured to destroy the organized proletariat.... And the Trotskyist program is the destruction of the officer caste...."

"The objective of Trotskyists in the army is to effectively defend the democratic rights of soldiers in the army -- but we link the defense of democratic rights with the goal of the destruction of the bourgeois army, the destruction of the officer corps, the constitution of workers militias, the creation of a Red Army with nuclear arms against the imperialist armies that will intervene. And we will struggle also for the creation of a Trotskyist party which can lead the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeois army!"

In a recent special issue of *Inprecor* devoted to the May 1968 events, the USec announced that its analyses in the post-1968 period had been too optimistic and called for Communist-Socialist parliamentary governments as the axis of its propaganda in southern Europe. In an interview Bensaid remarked that "everyone now agrees" that the elusive "new mass vanguard" "will be radicalized mainly in the reformist parties and the unions" (*Inprecor*, 25 May). Hence the USec's new orientation toward Eurocommunism. If Eurocommunists like PCE leader Carrillo and PCF dissident Elleinstein are ready to renounce Leninism, and "Eurosociologists" like Spanish leader Felipe Gonzalez renounce Marxism, then in order to get into the act Mandel and company are prepared to take off their tattered fake-Trotskyism as the price of admission in this obscene political striptease. ■

(abridged from *Workers Vanguard* no 210, 30 June 1978)

Homosexuals...

Continued from page eight

ment, insults, moral denunciation and pervasive discrimination; faced with the choice between a furtive shadow existence and the intensified victimisation accompanying "coming out"?

The necessary refusal to accept the self-denigration urged on gays by bourgeois society cannot be used to make of "gay pride" an end in itself, a *political* solution. Homosexual leftists who do not transcend their oppression by struggling for a revolutionary, materialist understanding of society as a whole must remain its prisoners. This is the lesson of the political experience of the Red Flag Union (RFU -- originally named the Lavender & Red Union), a self-proclaimed "autonomous Gay liberation/communist organization" in the US which went on to fuse with the Spartacist League/US in mid-1977, consciously rejecting its role as the left-wing of the "gay movement" to become a part of the nucleus of the revolutionary vanguard party.

In the course of breaking from gay-lifestyle radicalism to the Trotskyist politics of the SL/US the RFU spurned the political advances of those, like the US SWP, who sought to tail its sectoralist illusions. It came to recognise that the fundamental questions confronting the world proletarian movement -- the Russian question, the party question etc -- are of central importance to the struggle against capitalist oppression; the gay question is not. It came to recognise, as one RFUer put it at an RFU-sponsored "Stone-wall '77 Conference" shortly before the fusion, that "Sissies will not make a revolution" -- that homosexual leftists must seek to become effective *proletarian* fighters.

Unlike women's oppression, homosexual op-

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pression is not a strategic question for the proletarian revolution. But while gays are a small and generally petty-bourgeois layer, and much of the oppression of homosexuals is situated in the realm of discriminatory denial of democratic rights, it is nevertheless a reflection of the bourgeois institution of the nuclear family, which conditions sex roles inherently oppressive to those who deviate from the accepted norms. The elimination of all discriminatory restrictions on gays, although highly unlikely, is not incompatible with capitalism; but even such democratic rights as are granted under bourgeois democracy are fragile and eminently reversible. Only through a workers revolution which overthrows the capitalist system, laying the material basis for the replacement of the nuclear family through the socialisation of all household drudgery, will the pervasive hostile social attitudes from which homosexuals suffer begin to disappear.

Communists and "coming out"

"Coming out" can clearly have no effect on the underlying causes of homosexual oppression. Yet for the lifestyle radicals it is made a political principle. Thus both the CG and SWP try to paint the SL as "anti-gay" by pointing to our organisational policy restricting *all* members from doing anything in their personal lifestyles which would detract from the presentation of the SL's politics, the so-called "closet rule". The SWP simply slandered the SL for a policy of "proscription of open homosexuals from their organisation" (*Direct Action*, 6 July) -- ironic indeed coming from an organisation whose US counterpart *did* in fact proscribe open homosexuals from its organisation until it began tailing the gay milieu in the early 1970s. The very fact of our fusion with the RFU is eloquent refutation of the SWP slander. In demanding that gay communists "come out" on principle, the reformists betray not only deep-seated illusions in bourgeois democracy, but a belief that the communist program *per se* is qualitatively inadequate to fight gay oppression. As the RFU explained:

"A communist who is a homosexual, or any communist, does not for the most part have the luxury of 'coming out.' A communist seeks to be identified exclusively in people's minds in terms of the party and program they represent.... By being a representative of the communist vanguard one makes oneself a walking target for the bourgeoisie.... Therefore, it is the obligation of the party to do everything in its power to shield its supporters from such victimization." (*Red Flag* no 2, July 1977; emphasis added)

Behind the lifestyleism of the gay movement -- from the openly bourgeois-reformist *Campaign* to the "radical" GSG -- stands a common political perspective: pressuring the bourgeois state for reforms. That is the meaning of the GSG's central demand to "enact a charter of rights which includes sexual preference to protect the democratic rights of lesbians and male homosexuals". Communists certainly support full legal equality for homosexuals or other oppressed groups, even purely formal measures like the US Equal Rights Amendment for women, but we do *not* endorse the dangerous illusion that the bourgeois state is about to "protect" those whom it oppresses.

GSG charter -- program for defeat

The GSG's charter demand is a *program* for lobbying Parliament, essentially similar to *Campaign's* (July 1978) call on gays to vote for "candidates of all parties" who support gay rights. A prime example, presumably, is Peter Blazey, the Gay Liberation candidate in the recent Earlwood by-election, who was press secretary to Andrew Peacock (currently foreign minister) when Peacock served as army minister during the height of the Vietnam war. Classless "gay solidarity" means class collaboration.

Gay rights can only be defended by mobilising the working class. But the call for gay workers to organise separately in "gay trade-union caucuses", raised by the IS in a leaflet distributed at the 15 July march, applies the same sec-

torialist approach to pressuring the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. Nor is it counterposed to the IS's workerist glorification of the backward prejudices of straight male workers exemplified in "ockerism"; by organising gays *separately* it simply accepts those prejudices as irreversible. The IS might well be asked if David Shaw, its supporter in the Builders Labourers Federation, has done anything about setting up a gay caucus in his union.

The trade-union bureaucracy, which is the purveyor of all sorts of bourgeois ideology in the working class, including backward social prejudices, is the main obstacle to mobilising the working class. It can only be challenged through a full program of anti-capitalist demands -- the Trotskyist Transitional Program -- which would include such democratic demands as an end to all forms of sexual discrimination, particularly in employment.

The proletarian vanguard is the tribune of the whole people, of all the oppressed. We have a particular interest in tearing down the ideological/social/moral trappings of the bourgeois nuclear family, of combating backward attitudes in the working class which prolong its enslavement. The fusion between the SL/US and the Red Flag Union was a living, unique affirmation that there is only one place for those who wish to lead the struggle against all oppression -- in the ranks of the proletarian vanguard and its nucleus, the Spartacist League. ■

British Trotskyism...

Continued from page five

to Our Petty Bourgeois Critics", [WSL] *Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin* no 10, February 1978) prints pages of citations to argue that Trotsky in the 1930s did not take an explicit position against voting for the workers parties in a popular front. What these scholastic "theoreticians" ignore is that Trotsky faced situations in France and Spain which were pre-revolutionary, with parliamentary and electoral tactics quite secondary in the context of massive factory occupations and direct military struggle with the fascists. In France Trotsky urgently and repeatedly called for the formation of committees of action (in the context of a strike wave) as the vehicle for breaking the workers from the popular front and splitting the reformist parties.

Our snide academics don't mention this, nor does the WSL present any programmatic axis for struggle against the reformist parties and against bourgeois coalitionism. On the contrary it makes a ritual denunciation of the Lib-Lab coalition... and then promises to vote for Labour anyway. If ever there were a case of sterile propagandism, this is it. The French Pabloists were consistent, at least, in refusing to characterise the Union of the Left as a popular front; should they do so, said the Mandelites, "This would lead logically to abstention in the [1977] municipal elections" (quoted in *International*, Summer 1977).

The WSL's own policy -- refusing to vote for coalitionist candidates only if joint Liberal-Labour slates are presented -- is a purely juridical conception of the bloc, which implicitly or explicitly denies the essential fact: that the popular front is a *bourgeois* political formation. The left oppositionist document on the workers government slogan answered this subterfuge in advance with a quotation from Trotsky:

"The question of questions at present is the People's Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical manoeuvre so as to be able to practice their little business in the shadow of the People's Front. In reality the People's Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism..." ("Letter to the RSAP", *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1935-36*)

The heart of the Clinton-Hyde-White document is unadulterated class baiting: eg, "They appeal to tired petty bourgeois members who prefer academic debate to the class struggle...." Etc. What drives these three (who, by the way, are themselves teachers) into a frenzy is the Trotskyist Faction's rejection of the guilty workerism which passes for politics in the WSL. Attempting to be condescending, they only articulate their own philistinism. Moreover, when they finally get around to justifying their all-purpose slogan "make the lefts fight", their mystical glorification of the "daily grind" spells itself out in the language of frank opportunism:

"Until such time as significant sections of workers look to alternative revolutionary leaders, we must take the workers through the experience of trying and testing the alternatives that exist." ("Strategy and Tactics...")

Just as revolutionaries begin with the objective needs of the proletariat rather than its present consciousness in formulating their programme, we do not "take" the proletariat through the experience of reformism. If they have not yet broken from the Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders we must indeed accompany them through the experience of *exposing* these betrayers. But the WSL does indeed mean to take British workers through a new experience of reformism -- first the Callaghans and Healeys, then the Foots and Bennis, and then....

Results and prospects

In describing the loss of 20 percent of its active membership as "A Step Forward" (*Socialist Press*, 22 February), the Workers Socialist League declares its firm intent to continue in its ostrich-like position. As a result of the split by the Trotskyist Faction it has been reduced to a national network of supporters of Alan Thornett's activities at the Cowley Leyland plant (reverently dubbed "The Factory" by the WSL leadership). The loss of a sizeable number of younger comrades has clearly stung them, as has the departure of a layer of experienced cadres; and the haemorrhaging of the WSL has not stopped yet.

For the international Spartacist tendency, the fusion with the comrades of the TF greatly increases the authority of our Trotskyist programme, in Britain and internationally. In Britain today there is one -- and only one -- organisation which intransigently fights coalitionism, opposes all brands of nationalism and is part of a democratic centralist international tendency: the Spartacist League.

One parting reply to the WSL's embarrassingly empty class baiting: we do not wish to begrudge Alan Thornett his unstinting dedication to defending the interests of the Cowley workers as he perceives them. Under the proper leadership of a disciplined Trotskyist party such mass leaders can perform a crucial role in preparing the working class for revolutionary struggle. But such a party will be far different from the support apparatus for one or a group of trade unionists (the most degenerated example of the latter being the Ceylonese "section" of the USec, which is nothing more than an appendage of a conservative white collar union run by the corrupt Bala Tampoe). It must be a party whose Marxist programme is formulated and tested through the kind of political struggle which the WSL has systematically avoided, whether in the factories, in mass demonstrations, public meetings or the party itself.

Yes, the WSL conference was indeed a step forward -- for Trotskyism and the international Spartacist tendency. It was a savage blow, however, to the pretensions of the parochial workerists from the South Midlands of little England. ■

Dissidents...

Continued from page two

Labeling of dissidents as "discontented Jews" has historically been used to discredit them in the eyes of backward Russian workers and peasants. However, the Rosenbergs were witchhunted primarily as Communists and on charges of allegedly passing military secrets to the USSR, while Shcharansky is accused of passing *Soviet* defense secrets to the West. There is a *class* difference involved here which the SWP totally ignores. The *Militant* goes so far as to claim that "the charges against Shcharansky are absurd on their face" -- so "absurd" that Washington sources have confirmed them!

Anatoly Shcharansky is *guilty* of a crime against the world proletariat -- transmitting military secrets of the USSR, a degenerated workers state, to the imperialists. Given the record of other dissidents who as soon as they set one foot in the West become rabid running dogs of imperialism, there is no reason to believe that Shcharansky, as soon as he is one inch off Soviet soil, will not do the same. So why not dump him out of the country, which is what he wants in any case -- but with one proviso. Since this Zionist friend of the CIA is so eager to spend "next year in Jerusalem", have him sign a statement to serve his sentence in Israel preferably in some border area kibbutz!

Anatoly Shcharansky is guilty as hell! Let the punishment fit the crime: 13 years in Israel. ■

(abridged from *Workers Vanguard* no 212, 28 July 1978)


Spartacist League

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For a class-struggle defence of the Sydney 74!

Smash homosexual oppression through workers revolution!



26 June courthouse protest against arrest of the 53; SL slogans called for class-struggle defence.

June actions -- and the demonstrators for supposedly "provoking" the police.) That many gays, reacting against working-class backwardness, reject the working class altogether is, if understandable, nevertheless disastrous. That self-proclaimed Marxists like the SWP should urge them on is criminal.

Not surprisingly a 15 July protest march organised by the GSG, though it attracted over 1000 people, succeeded mainly in channelling outrage away from militant protest into an impotent celebration of "gay pride". Gone was the angry cry for jailing the sadistic cops; instead, the Darlinghurst Police Station was presented with a wreath of pansies (!) ... "lest we forget". Chants of "Ho-ho-homosexual" and "Better blatant than latent", not to mention the SWP's "An army of lovers will never be defeated", abounded; but the chant to "Defend the sixty! Drop the charges!" was initiated by the SL contingent alone, as was the class-struggle call "For trade-union action to defend gay rights!"

And the 60 soon became 74, as the cops indiscriminately rounded up another 14 people after a handful of demonstrators threw bags of flour and banged at the doors of the cop shop. Having sabotaged the defence of the 60, the CG and SWP now abjured the defence of the 14. Instead the respectable-above-all SWP (whose supporters at the 26 June protest had conspicuously melted away when the cops started moving in) used the occasion to denounce "the violence" and call for "peaceful" protests in future. Yet it was the frustratingly impotent and apolitical character of the march itself, for which the CPA and SWP bore direct responsibility, which gave rise to such acts of idiot frustration.

Homosexual oppression and the nuclear family

"Gay power" was in fact *lack of power*: the cops were not about to be convinced that "gay is good" or be intimidated by "gay pride". Viewing the world from Oxford Street, the centre of Sydney's gay community, it might seem that it is possible to find "liberation" in such enclaves. But at best the "gay ghetto" offers only a temporary and partial refuge from direct oppression; in the long run, ghettoisation can only set up homosexuals as a target. And what is good about being gay under capitalism: the constant harass-

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The anti-homosexual rampage by Sydney police on 24 June was a grim reminder of the cop harassment and discrimination which homosexuals suffer every day, even in social-democratic, "sophisticated" Sydney. Following an unprovoked and clearly premeditated assault on the nearly 2000 participants in a "mardi gras festival" capping off "International Homosexual Solidarity Day", Neville Wran's uniformed thugs dragged 53 people off to Darlinghurst Police Station, notorious for its "poofter-bashing". Two days later the cops arrested another seven, as more than 100 angry protestors turned out for the Monday morning court hearings. The protestors' militancy was conveyed by the chant many had picked up from the title of a Spartacist League (SL) leaflet: "Jail Wran's sadistic cops!" That evening a defence meeting unanimously approved a proposal put by the SL to set up a united-front "Defend the Sixty Committee" based around two demands: "Drop all the charges! Full democratic rights for lesbians and male homosexuals!"

A committee for broad-based action around these clear, immediate demands could have broken down the social isolation of the ghettoised homosexual population from the only social force capable of defending gay rights: organised labour. Wharfies who stop work in protest against apartheid have demonstrated both the perceived class interest and the social power to effectively fight the anti-gay rampage endorsed by "progressive" labour traitor Wran.

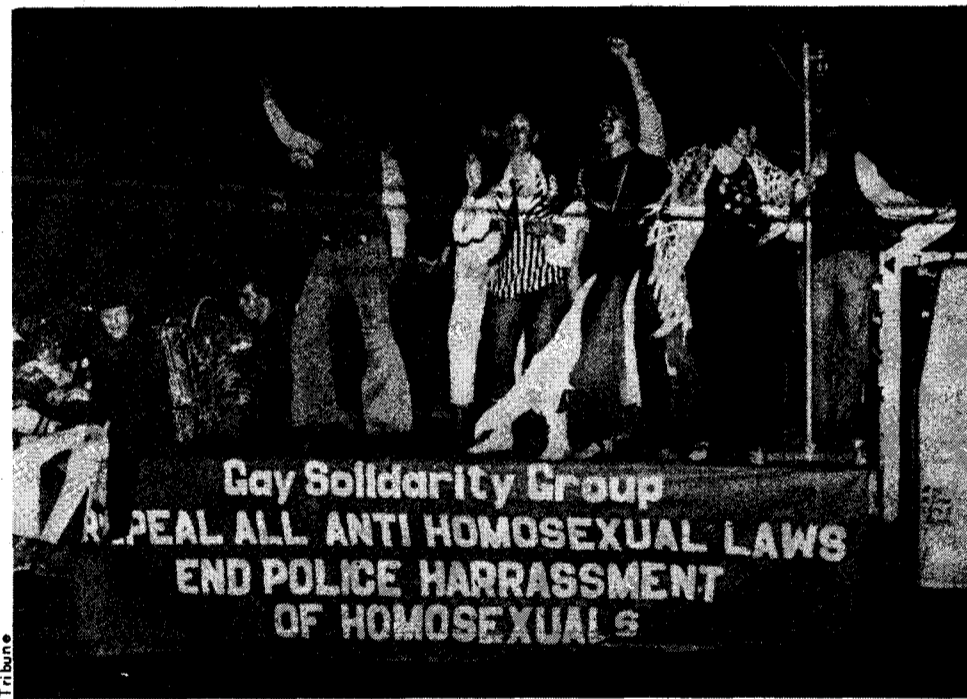
But instead of seeking to broaden the defence campaign, the reformists and proponents of lifestyle radicalism worked overtime to *narrow* it; instead of seeking to break through the isolation, they sought to *reinforce* it! The possibility of an effective defence of homosexual rights was criminally *destroyed*, victim of a sectarian wrecking operation by those who wanted only a vehicle to push the politics of "gay pride" which glorify the social isolation and powerlessness of homosexuals.

Even in voting for the SL proposal on 26 June, the reformists of the Communist Party (CPA)-inspired Sydney University Communist Group (CG), the Socialist Workers Party/Socialist Youth Alliance (SWP/SYA) and the International Socialists (IS) made it clear that their prime concern was in "building the autonomous gay movement". At

CPA scabs at Sydney Uni

The International Socialists, Socialist Youth Alliance and Communist Group (CG - Sydney University supporters of the Communist Party), which constitute the "Broad Left" slate in SRC elections at Sydney University, have glaringly revealed the real content of their "leftism": SCABBERY. When SRC staff went on strike for three hours on 14 July demanding job security, outgoing SRC president Barbara Ramjan and CG leader Gary Nicholls leapt to scab on them - in order, claimed Nicholls, to work for the election. When the campus Spartacist Club exposed their cover-up of this atrocity, the "Broad Left" held an emergency meeting on 31 July. But far from expelling the scabs Ramjan and Nicholls, they refused even to censure them - admitting it was scabbing, but, you see, with "complications"! The Spartacist Club stood as the class-struggle slate in this election; the "Broad Left" on the scab slate, enemies of the class struggle.

the same meeting they, along with a number of independent "gay activists", moved to re-form the Gay Solidarity Group (GSG), initially set up to organise the 24 June events. While Spartacist Club members at Sydney University were busy gathering more than 150 endorsements and \$140 in legal defence funds, the CG carried out only one "mobilisation" that week: to stack a Friday committee meeting and push through a vote transforming it into a sub-committee of the GSG, closed to any who refused to accept the GSG's reformist/sectoralist politics. While the SWP did not join the CG and IS in voting for the liquidation of the united-front committee, it wholeheartedly endorsed the GSG's suicidal, sectoralist approach,



Sound truck confiscated by police during 24 June "mardi gras". Gay lifestylism offers no answer to homosexual oppression.

which places on every section of the oppressed the sole responsibility for struggling against its oppression, arguing even that the GSG should be open only to gays!

And what of the organised working class? The CG, of course, was not about to call on its trade-union-official comrades like John Halfpenny to mobilise the workers around gay rights when these bureaucrats refuse even to respond to direct attacks on the workers' livelihoods. But SWP "gay activist" Ken Davies (at a 2 July SWP forum on "Homosexual liberation and socialism" in Sydney) expressed most clearly the hostility of gay sectoralism toward class struggle when he sneered at the "macho image" of unions such as the wharfies, builders' labourers and metal workers which the SL had called for mobilising.

Certainly the working class harbours widespread backward prejudices against gays. Those "revolutionary" currents like the Stalinists and the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) who echo this bourgeois ideology consciously attack not only homosexuals but the working class itself. (A 29 June editorial in the SLL's *Workers News* pays lip service to homosexual rights, but only for the purpose of vilely slandering both the SL -- which is ludicrously claimed to be a "chief political force" behind the 24 June and 26