



# For an Australia/NZ general strike!

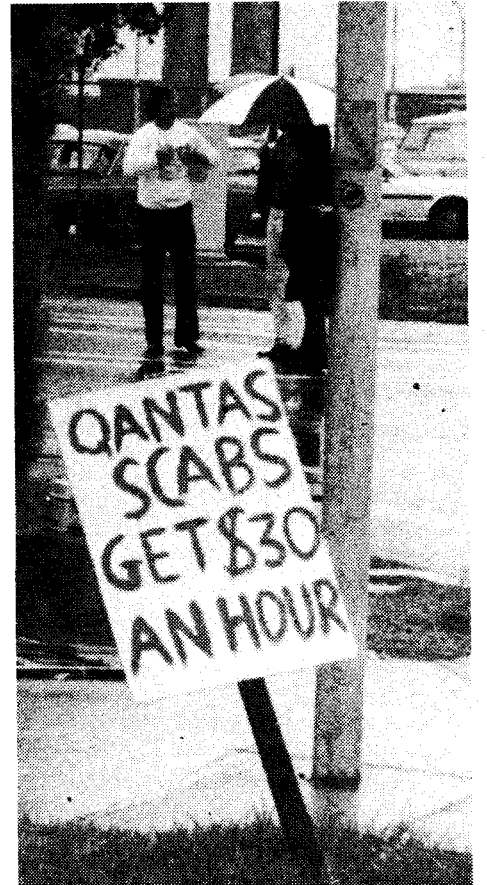
## SMASH FRASER/MULDOON STRIKEBREAKING!

1 March — The biggest government strikebreaking operation since Chifley's Labor Government sent in the troops to break the 1949 coal miners' strike is under way as we go to press tonight. Malcolm Fraser and New Zealand Prime Minister "Piggy" Muldoon have sent in the RAAF and RNZAF to smash the Qantas and Air New Zealand strikes in what is officially described as a "rescue operation". Fraser and Muldoon are mobilising the bulk of the RAAF's 24 Hercules transport planes and 2 VIP Boeing 707s to airlift "stranded passengers" across the Tasman. Fraser is also threatening to implement Section 45D of the Trades Practices Act against air refuellers who are blacking Qantas, in a bid to end their "secondary boycott". This state-organised scabbing must be halted now — through massive general strike action in both Australia and New Zealand organised around the demands: Stop Fraser/Muldoon's "airlift" anti-union offensive! Smash 45D! Victory to the Qantas/Air New Zealand strikes!

Instead of calling out Australian workers to beat back this attack, ACTU President Cliff Dolan could only mutter that the airlift would not affect the strike (*Sun-Herald*, 1 March)! In New Zealand, Auckland bus workers have reportedly refused to ferry travellers to the RNZAF base; in retaliation, the government has brought in military vehicles to do its own dirty work. Dolan's counterparts in the Federation of Labour (FoL) have been working overtime, however, to ~~derail the countrywide eruption of strikes that took place after Auckland cops arrested 48 pickets at Mangere International Airport on 24 February. With workers streaming out of Auckland's factories and worksites — many of them going to Mangere to join the picket lines; with seamen, meat workers, engineers, and metal workers also out and public transport, pulp and paper mills shut down, the stage was already set for a general strike to free the arrested unionists, reverse Muldoon's union bashing and win significant gains for the working class as a whole.~~

But on 27 February the FoL tops agreed to call off the strikes in return for a government "review" of legislation affecting strike picketing. The issue at the centre of the strike wave — the jailed militants — was not even referred to in the FoL statement! The general strikes should also demand: free the imprisoned unionists! Drop all the charges now!

Class traitors like Dolan and the FoL's Jim Knox, whose inaction demonstrates that they fear working-class militancy more than Muldoon or Fraser, will inevitably betray in any real class confrontation. Strike committees, elected by mass meetings of workers and subject to immediate recall, are required to see a general strike through to victory. While limited and defensive in their initial aims, general strikes in New Zealand and Australia could also be the starting point for an offensive *by labour* against Muldoon and Fraser's anti-working-class austerity policies. The drop in real wages experienced in the past period must be recouped by demanding hefty wage in-



Flight stewards picket Qantas at Sydney airport.

creases with a sliding-scale clause which ensures that wages rise point for point to keep pace with inflation. And to combat unemployment a drastically shorter work week — not just the ACTU's paltry 35-hour proposal — at no loss in pay is needed.

Any general strike, regardless of its immediate aims, also necessarily poses the question of power — the question of who rules. For the workers of Australia

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## US imperialism's anti-Soviet frenzy

# Reagan: war president



24 February — Within days of taking the oath of office as new imperialist commander-in-chief, US president Ronald Reagan began rattling the sabres of his anti-Soviet Cold War drive. To kick things off his four-star secretary of state, Alexander Haig, used his first press conference to accuse the USSR of "training, funding and equipping international terrorism". And the next day the US president himself railed that the Soviet Union seeks "world revolution and a one-world Communist state". With rhetoric going back to the John Foster Dulles "rollback" era, he accused Russian leaders of "reserv[ing] the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat in order to attain" this goal (*New York Times*, 30 January). What was previously implicit under Jimmy Carter's cloak of "human rights" — a transition phase from American post-Vietnam paralysis ("detente") to Cold War II — is now flashing in red, white and blue. Reagan's hard-line anti-Communism expresses

imperialism's implacable hostility to the Soviet degenerated workers state.

Despite the best efforts of Brezhnev & Co, detente is dead. Even the trappings are being stripped away: one of Haig's first acts was to inform the US Soviet ambassador Dobrynin that he could no longer use the garage entrance at the State Department to avoid the press and public. Now every time the representative of the USSR wants to personally deliver a message, he runs the risk of being blown away by some crazed Ustashi terrorist. Reagan's first foreign visitor was Jamaican leader Edward Seaga, known as "CIAga" because of the considerable US "destabilisation" effort which aided his election last October. Next came Korean dictator General Chun, who was spared embarrassment by the postponement of a State Department report on the torture, assassinations and suppression of democratic rights in this blood-drenched outpost of the "Free World". Haig then sacked the US

ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, accused of being a "social reformer" (1980s equivalent of "com-symp") for sponsoring a Vietnam "pacification"-style "land reform". And to top off Week 2, Reagan brought on board an ultra-conservative think-tanker who thinks "human rights" is none of the United States' business. His post: Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights.

Meanwhile the new administration is issuing rapid-fire threats to Moscow over everything from El Salvador to Poland. Reagan & Co have not so much a "domino theory" as a domino tactic: "From El Salvador to Nicaragua, to Cuba, to Poland, to the Soviet Union". An article in the 5 February *New York Times* by former Nixon staffer William Safire spelled it out:

"We could also buttress the Polish worker with the threat of an effective Western response to a Soviet invasion. The United

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## General strike ...

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and New Zealand what would then be posed is the need for workers governments to expropriate the capitalist class. Such governments cannot be constructed within the framework of the bourgeois parliamentary system, but must necessarily be based on mass working-class organisations. And they would be directly counterposed not just to Muldoon's National Party and Fraser's Liberal/NCP governments, but also to parliamentary "Labor" governments such as Bill Hayden's ALP or Bill Rowling's NZLP would form.

### "Staff labour" means scabs!

Fraser/Muldoon's scab military airlift comes after weeks of government/management attempts to end the Qantas and Air NZ strikes through the wholesale use of what the bosses and their press euphemistically term "staff labour". At the beginning of February Qantas — the "flying kangaroo" which flogs "I own an airline" T-shirts — brought in new 747SP planes in a bid to recapture some of the New Zealand air trade. (The SP can land at Wellington's rather dangerous airport, unlike the airline's 747Bs.)

Management provoked a strike by

flight stewards, the first in 16 years, by demanding reductions in manning levels on the SP. When the stewards walked out, Qantas activated its "contingency plan" which involved 200 staff labour "volunteers", trained in secret, manning the planes. When ground crews at Sydney airport refused to service the blacked aircraft and were stood down, all Qantas ground unions came out. The strike gained support internationally, particularly in Fiji and New Zealand, where Air NZ engineers were involved in an industrial campaign around their own log of claims. With the mass arrests in Auckland on 24 February of pickets trying to stop staff scabs, the two disputes became interwoven.

In addition to using "staff labour", Qantas, Fraser and the media have gone all out to brand the ACTU as "un-Australian" bully-boys for appealing to "foreigners" (ie the working class of other countries) to black the Aussie airline. But now Fraser is blocking with the "foreigner" Muldoon to break strikes. "Internationalism", it would seem, is ok — as long as it's confined to the ruling classes.

The papers have also been trying to whip up anti-union "public opinion" by running sob stories of stranded tourists and holiday-makers cut off from home. Management has also played upon the

sex division between the all-male Flight Stewards Association and the all-female Airline Hostesses. This bore fruit when in a reportedly NCC-inspired operation they found some hostesses to fly the blacked SPs: "I'm doing it for Australia", one of the scabs proclaimed. Pilots who could ground Qantas immediately have also worked throughout the strike. And now, after making a deal with management, the flight stewards are also scabbing on the ACTU action! The result is that Qantas has been operating at 90 percent of its normal schedule. This is an outrage! Qantas must be grounded now by shutting down every airport in the country! One out, all out! For industrial union solidarity in the airlines and airports!

Fraser and Muldoon's touching concern for "the public" is hogwash. The way to end public "suffering" is simple: grant the workers' demands in full. Instead what is being proposed is to load hundreds of people into Hercules planes which are so noisy that passengers have to wear earplugs to protect their ears against damage; where canvas webbing seats are fixed directly to the fuselage and whose toilets are modestly referred to as being "primitive". In May 1977, Fraser threatened to use the RAAF to break an air pilots' ban on flights to Tasmania. In 1979, the RAAF helped get

a Malaysian DC-10 — blacked by Sydney workers in solidarity with 22 imprisoned Malaysian trade unionists — back to Kuala Lumpur by allowing it to be refuelled at the RAAF's Richmond base. This latest provocation also comes in the context of Fraser's attempts to smash the BLF through deregistration. Muldoon's alacrity in jumping at Fraser's offer of military strikebreakers shows too that he is determined to crush the Air NZ strike which — judging by the numbers "stranded" — has proven very effective.

If they get away with this massive scabbing, the Australian and New Zealand bourgeoisies will only feel more confident about using their armed forces against future strikes. Every worker has a vested interest in halting this attack — now! But the only way to beat back the provocation of the Nareen grazier and his piggy friend is through all-out working-class action on both sides of the Tasman. International solidarity is key — from Fiji (where 40 workers have been stood down for honouring the Qantas workers' bans) to Hawaii and the US West Coast to London. Now is the time to take on and defeat the Qantas industrial provocateur and its government backer. For general strike action to stop Muldoon/Fraser's military scab airlift! Victory to the Qantas/Air New Zealand strikes!

## Victory to the Sydney Uni SUPRA strike!

SYDNEY, 27 February — Two days ago, one hundred post-graduate part-time tutors and demonstrators, members of the Sydney University Post-Graduate Representatives Association (SUPRA) voted to strike against a vicious 30-50 percent cut in their wages. This outrageous attack on their living standards, affecting over 200 at Sydney Uni, is the result of a decision made by the Academic Salaries Tribunal last June (the Ludeke Decision), and is being implemented now by the campus administration. These cuts are part of Fraser's campaign to attack the social services, including education, and will affect every student and worker on the campus. The Ludeke Decision should be dumped in the rubbish bin where it belongs, along with the Williams Report of last year. Fraser must be stopped in his tracks! Every campus worker, academic staff member, and student has an interest in supporting the SUPRA strike!

The Spartacist Club on campus responded immediately by putting a motion at a meeting of leftists, which was then passed with an amendment at a Student Representative Council (SRC) meeting. The motion as passed read:

"That the SRC supports the strike by SUPRA (part-time post-grads) and calls on the administration to meet their demands immediately. That the SRC calls on all students to honour the strike and to boycott all tutorials and practicals.

"That the SRC set up a student strike support fund for the SUPRA strike, donate \$250.00 to that fund, and organise further collections campus-wide.

"That the SRC organise a strike support rally on the front lawn for next Wednesday, March 4 at 1pm."

The original motion had contained a clause calling on all academics to go out in support of the post-graduates' actions, and for 'reps [to] be sent to the campus workers' unions to notify them of the SRC's decisions and to elicit their support for the SUPRA strike". This clause was amended out thanks to the efforts of one member of the campus group, Left Action. Apparently Left Action thinks that the best way to "support" a strike is to isolate it! This is counterposed to the strategy need to win the strike, that put forward by the Spartacist Club whose statement to the campus paper, *Honi*

*Soit*, called for boycotting of all classes and the setting up of picket lines by SUPRA. The way to win the strike is to shut the campus down tight!

SUPRA originated as a social club, and is not a union. This strike clearly demonstrates that the SUPRA workers need a union, affiliated to the ACTU, which can fight for their demands. SUPRA workers have no interest separate from other campus workers, though. What is needed is a campus-wide union which will mobilise every campus worker in the fight against Fraser's public expenditure cuts.

The cuts affect the students too. For

students already live below the poverty line, on the miserable pittance they receive from TEAS. Even students in decrepit Britain receive twice the stipend of Australian students! We demand an allowance equivalent at least to the minimum wage. Ironically students on TEAS are the "lucky" ones, who have managed to attain the "privilege" of an education. But education is a right, not a privilege! We demand: Open admissions to end the class bias of university education! No wage cuts! Fight the administration's attacks on education! Victory to the SUPRA strike! ■

## Drop the charges against Fairfax pickets!

SYDNEY — Seven pickets arrested during a strike of Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU) workers at Fairfax early last year are still facing charges arising from their attempts to stop distribution of the scab-produced *Sun*. The initial success of these "flying squads" — the streets around Fairfax-Broadway were littered with trashed *Suns* — led to some vicious attacks by Wran's "Labor" government police, who eagerly played their role as Fairfax company thugs. The cops were able to paralyse the pickets because the PKIU leadership failed to mobilise mass, militant picketing to close down production and stop scabbing.

The PKIU leadership has not given the cases publicity or led organised protest, despite the seriousness of some of the charges. On the contrary, the whole affair has been kept unusually quiet, with the union tops going along with legal advice to have the defendants plead guilty in exchange for government promises to keep the cases unrecorded. Although two militants have already been convicted under this arrangement, the deal was exploded when one defendant, Alan Liddell, refused to plead guilty to a false charge of assaulting a police officer. This unionist is entirely correct to distrust this phoney deal, when under the charge he could spend years in jail simply for supporting a militant strike picket. The union should organise a militant campaign to defend those whose only "crime" was doing their union duty. Drop all outstanding charges now! For a massive union protest at Alan Liddell's hearing on 17 March!

The absence of such a campaign to defend last year's pickets is all the more glaring because the PKIU is currently entering a struggle around a new log of

claims, including wage rises and a shorter work week, around the demand for 35 hours. At recent stop-work meetings, the Fairfax chapel rejected management's latest offer of a \$10.40 increase with no change in hours. Furthermore, Fairfax journalists in the Australian Journalists Association (AJA) have their own log of claims against the company. Last year's national and unusually militant AJA strike was especially significant at Fairfax, where the PKIU chapel split over honouring the picket lines of the historically-hated journalists. A large minority of the PKIU walked out to join metal unionists and others in refusing to work during the AJA strike. However, it was this split that brought the present PKIU chapel leadership of Father of the Chapel (FOC) Peter Bayliss and deputy FOC Graham Quinn into office, on the basis of working during the strike.

It should be obvious that what is needed now is *solidarity* — with victimised pickets from last year, and between print workers and journalists in a common struggle against management. But such is not the intention of the PKIU chapel leadership, whose "program" is rooted in the internecine quarrels of the past. At the 27 February stop-work meeting, Bayliss reportedly refused to put to a vote a motion from the floor calling for "an agreement for unified strike action" with the AJA. The motion was foreshadowed by Ron Rees, one of the militants to honour the AJA strike, and the only PKIU member to refuse to work during the strike of metal unions at Fairfax last year.

The historic union principle of "one out, all out", together with well-organised mass pickets, is the only way to

win in the newspaper industry. Without such unity, the relatively strong (but getting weaker) PKIU will have little chance of a satisfactory outcome even of the paltry and insignificant demand of 35 hours, let alone on a substantially shorter work week with no loss of pay, or replacement of the outrageous 1976 redundancy agreement with guaranteed full employment. Only a united workforce can bring the viciously anti-labour Fairfax & Sons to its knees! ■



Fairfax picket line, 1979: cops herded scabs, jailed striking printers.

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## Four-way panel debate

# Which way for Polish workers?

SYDNEY — On 19 February a mainly student audience of 75 at Sydney University heard a panel of four left-wing groups debate the crisis in Poland. After hearing the contributions of the International Socialists (IS), Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Communist Party (CPA), some may have found themselves humming bars from Tom Lehrer's song "Vatican Rag" ("bow your head in great respect and genuflect, genuflect, genuflect..."). All three groups did more than their share of worshipping before the clerical-nationalist leadership of the Solidarity unions, personified by the crucifix-toting Lech Walesa. The audience heard something a lot different from the Spartacist League speakers on the platform and from the floor: the Trotskyist program for workers political revolution in Poland and the other deformed workers states, based on intransigent opposition to those forces represented by Pope Wojtyla's church which want to smash the gains of the Eastern European workers. Against this perspective, the other self-styled socialists united as *opponents* of the struggle for a revolutionary leadership of the working class in Poland or anywhere else.

The debate proposal had been initiated by the Spartacist Club on campus at the end of last year, and was only reluctantly taken up by the Left Action Group (LAG) there. The LAG is a classic rotten bloc, uniting among others CPAers who claim to defend the Soviet-bloc countries as some sort of "post-capitalist societies" and IS supporters who call them "state capitalist" and vehemently oppose their defence against Reagan's imperialist anti-Soviet war drive. Rather than jeopardise their opportunist cohabitation, the LAG simply refused to have any speaker at the debate. Also absent was the Socialist Leadership Group of Bob Gould and the Moscow-loyal Socialist Party, which were each offered a speaker on the platform but turned it down.

All three of our opponents at this debate have a record of attempting to bureaucratically exclude the Spartacist League from public political events, usually covered up with slanders of SL "disruption" — slanders which this de-

bate certainly exposed as a blatant fraud. Especially ironic was the participation of the IS, which a year ago ran from an SL challenge to debate their support for reactionary bands against the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan. ("We note with some amusement your challenge...", began their flippant reply — see

"So the workers have taken on the bureaucracy — good.... However, ... the Solidarity leadership is very deeply influenced by the church and anybody's insane who doesn't see that.... It's a real crime of the bureaucracy in Poland that they've driven the workers into the arms of the church....  
"The burning, urgent need of the Polish



Members of Rural Solidarity occupy municipal offices at Ustrzyki Dolne.

*Australasian Spartacist* no 71, February/March 1980.) Following the debate at Sydney University both the CPA's *Tribune* and the SWP's *Direct Action* thought better of even mentioning it.

"It's not coincidental that although they have different analyses of the character of the Polish state, they all have the same program — namely cheer the church, cheer the [pro-imperialist] dissidents and cheer the peasants," the Spartacist speaker, Patricia Peters, observed of her opponents on the panel.

"Poland's a deformed workers state and that means that it has a socialist, planned economy that's ruled over by a bureaucratic, parasitic ruling caste who have a monopoly of power in Poland. And they've mismanaged the economy for decades. They've put the country into hock to West Germany and they've repressed the workers' rights. And they've completely isolated themselves....

workers today is a party that will lead them to political revolution and against capitalist restoration, a way which will counterpose the workers to the bureaucracy and to the dissidents and to the Catholic church and the forces of reaction."

Outlining the program necessary to lead that struggle, she declared: "we have a solution to the massive foreign debt — cancel it!" The basic democratic demand for the separation of church and state is "absolutely key in Poland"; to see what a Pope's Poland would look like if the church had its way, "you can look at Italy, you can look at Spain and you can look at Ireland. And what that means for example ... is no abortion and no contraception."

The church hierarchy has a potential social base for capitalist restoration in the country's 3.5 million small landowning peasantry — which has recently been or-

ganising its own "union", Rural Solidarity. Their demands are for "the right to buy up land which the state now owns ... the right to hand down their land to their children ... to stop Russian being taught in school ... to build more churches ... for religious instruction in school. Now those demands are not progressive and we do not support Rural Solidarity", comrade Peters explained. "Of course, the IS does, and so does the SWP. They're thrilled." However, for a Trotskyist party in Poland a key demand would be to defend the existing agricultural collectives and to promote collectivisation of agriculture.

John Minns for the IS had opened the debate by spending his 12 minutes trying to prove that all the Soviet-bloc countries are really "state-capitalist", virtually ignoring Solidarity and not even mentioning the church at all. This complete failure to attack or even criticise the genuine pro-capitalist forces in Poland rendered totally hypocritical Minns' protestations of "evenhandedness" in his concluding slogan, "Neither Moscow nor Washington but international socialism".

According to Minns, in the aftermath of World War II the economies of Eastern Europe "were nationalised ... *against* the working class in those countries". It will be hard to convince the expatriate former bosses and landlords of Eastern Europe that their *expropriation* under the gun of the Soviet Red Army was a blow on behalf of their class rule! Stalin did indeed carry out this social revolution from above for defensive military reasons and accompanied by many crimes against the oppressed, while betraying workers struggles elsewhere (eg Greece). Nevertheless it was the social foundation established by the October Revolution which made possible the overturn of capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe and the establishment of bureaucratically deformed workers states.

But Minns had his own "facts": "Poland, Inc" is a unit like BHP, operating as a "single bloc of capital on the world market", with an economy "just as unplanned and anarchic as the West", "subject to the same sort of [cyclical]

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## Pope to Filipino masses -

# Love Marcos, hate class struggle

The globe-trotting anti-communist pope is on the move again. Since his election in late 1978, the Polish pontiff has jetted his way around the world telling the oppressed and exploited to shun communism and meekly lie down before their rulers. In Mexico in early 1979, he told the starving masses to beware of revolutionary agitation against the Catholic dictators of the continent; in the United States, he bid jobless blacks to eschew material values; in Ireland, he tiraded against contraception and abortion. In Poland his church works tirelessly as a "temporal power" trying to forge the private landholding peasants into a battering ram to shatter Poland's collectivised property forms.

Now, in the Philippines, the chief druid of Rome has come out in open support of the notoriously corrupt, brutal dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. With a jewel-encrusted crucifix in his hand, the pope walked through leper colonies, urban slums like Tondo (parts of which were prettied up for the occasion), and the sugar island of Negros where the vast majority of workers make only 50 cents a day. At Marcos' opulent Malacanang Palace he paused to deliver himself of this homily:

"I pray that everyone will work together with generosity and courage, without hatred, class struggle or fratricidal strife, resisting all temptations to materialistic or violent ideologies."

Translated: love Marcos, hate communism! He then moved to bring his priests and nuns, some of whom have been talking social reform (and a small fraction taking up the gun with the New People's Army associated with the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines) into line: "You are priests and religious. You are not social or political leaders, officials of a temporal power...." The very temporal church apparatus in this country of 40 million Catholics (out of a population of 47 million) — 491 elementary schools, 921 high schools, 12 universities, 21 radio and TV stations, 3 monthly national magazines etc — were henceforth to concentrate their fire on the communist menace, and leave the bloody dictator Marcos alone.

Anti-Marcos elements in the church's ranks were reportedly shocked: "He was so pro-Government I couldn't believe it", one nun was quoted as saying. We're not surprised. As a character in Luis Bunuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* once put it: "I've heard of worker priests, but what's a worker

bishop?" This particular bishop couldn't care less about the well-being of the impoverished Filipino masses. When he looks at this archipelago, he sees an anti-Soviet bulwark in the Far East, bristling with US arms located at Clark Air Force Base and the naval base at Subic Bay, within striking distance of Vietnam and the USSR. With Ronald Reagan sharply escalating his imperialist war drive, it was more than just symbolic that this anti-communist crusader's plane had "Hooray for Hollywood" daubed on the fuselage, and that his first touchdown on leaving the Philippines was the US' nuclear first-strike base at Guam.

The majority of the fake left have pushed the line that in Poland the church is either "not the issue" or is progressive. The pope's support to Marcos shows however that he is the bitter enemy of the oppressed and all human progress. (Even Galileo remains condemned a heretic, simply for teaching that the earth moved around the sun. The pope's rumoured moves to "rehabilitate" him are probably due to the fact that Galileo was trying to verify the hypotheses of Copernicus, Wojtyla's fellow-Pole.) In this epoch it will take international socialist revolution to rid the world of corruption, poverty,



Motto on pope's stole: "Poland ever faithful"

oppression and superstition — along with the Marcoses, Reagans and Wojtylas who alone benefit from this decaying capitalist system. Or to paraphrase Voltaire, authentic freedom will come only when the last capitalist is found hanged in the entrails of the last priest. ■

# "... at last I could criticise the Soviet Union from the left" For class-struggle defence of the USSR!

We reprint below an application for membership in the international Spartacist tendency by comrade Bill M, a founding member of Sydney University Left Action. While Left Action seeks to bury itself in parochial "student issues", the Spartacist Club fights to win students to Trotskyism, raising particularly the Marxist program on the Soviet Union and stressing the need to defend it against imperialism. Comrade Bill's letter vindicates our insistence that the Russian Question is central to revolutionary politics.

Dear comrades,

I first came into contact with the SL because of the "Victory to the Red Army" headline in the February/March issue of the 1980 ASp. Due to my un-informed, Stalinist, anti-Trotskyist upbringing, I was under the impression that Trotskyism meant anti-Soviet Union. I had some doubts about the USSR — the nuclear family is still the basis of the society, and although there are no capitalists, some people are clearly benefiting from their positions in the Soviet bureaucracy. The SL's line on the USSR made me quite excited. At last I could criticise the Soviet Union from the left. The SL calls for the defence of the gains of the October Revolution, ie collectivised property and planned economy, but calls for political revolution to oust the parasitic bureaucrats who are hindering the advance of Bolshevism both in the USSR and throughout the world. With this ammunition I could defend the Soviet Union against a whole spectrum of people — from the so-called anarchists at Sydney Uni through the various lefties to the hard right wingers. This kept me coming back to the SL to argue more points that I had come across.

One point that I had my doubts about was the SL's unwillingness to accept a so-called "lesser of two evils". Iran was an

example of the unique position which put the SL on one side of the class line and various other left groups such as the SWP and IS on the other — both of whom backed the religious fanaticism of Khomeini who calls for the stoning of women who have pre-marital sex or who don't wear the chador. What puts these groups into this anti-worker position is that they consider Khomeini to be slightly better than the shah because of his "anti-US" attitude. However, Khomeini's attitude to Marxists is brutally exposed by his shooting and gaoling of Iranian communists. Rather than bringing the revolution one step closer, as they are claiming, it has meant its postponement.

The same sort of logic applies to the SL's attitude to the Labor Party. While all other left groups, from the SPA to the SWP, consider the ALP the "lesser of two evils", giving it so-called critical support, the SL — like the Bolsheviks — supports the ALP "like a rope supports a hanging man", ie they want the ALP in office in order to expose them to the workers for the traitors they are. Traitors who arrested striking printers at the Fairfax printing plant in January 1980 and later helped smash the Gosford meat workers' picket lines. This was done by Wran's police force. Or who criticise the Liberal Party for not spending enough on defence and attack Fraser's handling of the Olympic boycott with the slogan "Malcolm's wool keeps the Russians warm". At first I thought the ALP shouldn't be criticised for fear of aiding the Liberals. However, after the ALP's record — from sending the troops in to smash the 1949 coal strike to stopping the general strike proposed in 1975 after the sacking of Whitlam — it is clear that the reformism of the ALP must be replaced with a revolutionary program. This won't come through left pressure on the ALP bureaucrats, but through the conscious

intervention of a revolutionary party which fights to win the class-conscious elements of the ALP to a revolutionary class perspective.

Due to my Stalinist upbringing, the question of the Stalinist parties was very important. For revolutionaries, the SPA's programmatic faults are easily exposed. That they defend the USSR, it is true. The question to ask is how — by making peace with the bosses?! For example, the peace movement which seeks to unite the "peace-loving" elements of the bourgeoisie with the working-class "peace-lovers"... During recession and capitalism in decay, amidst the start of a Cold War II by Reagan and Fraser, there is only one way to defend the USSR — by building around the platform of class war, which doesn't build pacifist illusions but destroys them in creating a revolutionary movement. A movement which calls at the same time for political revolution to smash the Stalinist bureaucracy.

For quite a long time I agreed with the SL's lines; however, I thought they were too "sectarian", that they try to "split and wreck" and did nothing to build and unite. The comrades repeated again and again... "Build around what? Build for what? What program will lead the workers to state power?" In response to the notion that Sparts do nothing but criticise, I'd like to say that it was only the SL that brought the Fairfax strike to Sydney Uni campus by collecting for the strike fund and condemning craftist divisions by telling us about the clerk, Linda Menzie, who went on strike in the "one out, all out" tradition. No other group did such work on campus.

Another major victory for the working class was the mobilisation of 500 workers in Detroit and 1200 workers in San Francisco against the Klan and Nazi terror that has been hitting the USA. This is in direct contrast to the SWP position of

debating the scum on TV, or the SP/CP "tactic" of uniting with the bourgeoisie.

All this was wonderful, I thought. "The lines are right, but they scare too many people away by their dogmatism; they are so small." So I took part in the creation of a socialist group on campus, Left Action. This was to be a "broad" group as opposed to the "sectarian" SL. I was hoping that this group would take on at least some of the SL's positions. I was badly mistaken. By its very nature, this group can take no lines; it can come forward with no plan or program or even a slogan for a demonstration. An excellent example of this is on the question of defence of the USSR. When we came to discussing demands for the anti-Fraser mobilisation on October 17, one demand was "No ties with US imperialism". "Well", says someone, "if we say this we should say 'No ties with USSR imperialism'". To some in the group, like the IS, this was perfectly logical. To others like the SL, it was unprincipled. Rather than fight out the question, debate was bureaucratically stifled and a compromise was reached of... "No US bases on Australian soil"! Principled people would defend their position and seek to win people to it. This is against the very nature of Left Action. It washes over and dilutes politics to the lowest common denominator. Left Action could not take on the positions of the SL that I agreed with, for it would no longer be a broad group. It is no coincidence that revolutionary politics go hand in hand with a revolutionary, Leninist party. These positions that I agreed with are meaningless outside the context of what the SL is — a democratic-centralist party which learns the lessons of history and advances a program for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Bill M



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## SLANZ Twelfth National Conference

# Toward the construction of the Leninist vanguard!

In January the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL) held its Twelfth National Conference. The conference, highest body of the organisation, was our largest ever, reflecting significant growth since the last conference a year ago. The gathering provided fresh evidence of our continuing struggle to transform the SL into the nucleus of the vanguard party and demonstrated the organisation's increased ability to intervene with our Trotskyist program in major arenas of political struggle: the trade unions, the campuses, the ostensibly revolutionary organisations.

A leading representative of the International Secretariat of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) also attended the conference. In addition to giving an educational on the history of the SL/US, she reported on the problems and tasks of the iSt's other sections, in Canada, the US, Britain, France, Germany and Italy. This geographical spread is vivid testimony to our commitment to reforge the Fourth International as a democratic-centralist world party of socialist revolution. Australia's geographical distance from the major centres of world history, politics and culture has helped engender a particular parochial complacency combined with a national inferiority complex relative to Europe/America and racist xenophobia toward Asia. Conscious of these deforming pressures, the conference underscored the necessity of the international integration of our cadre, both through overseas travel to other sections and through increasing our foreign language capacity, enabling us to partake of the political life of our non-English speaking sections.

The conference census report noted the SL's striking growth over the past year, evidenced by the fact that 33 percent of the members of the organisation had joined since January 1980. However, many of those attending identified themselves as former members or supporters of ostensibly revolutionary groups. A number came out of the (now virtually defunct) Maoist milieu, having been won to left-wing politics during the anti-Vietnam War radicalisation. Others were won from the Communist Party (CPA), including the comrades in the 1975 left-oppositional Bolshevik Tendency, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP),



SWP/HKE Fallahi Tour: SL exposed lie of Iran's "beautiful revolution".

and most recently the semi-clandestine Trotskyist Study Group (TSG)/Melbourne Discussion Group (MDG) lash-up. As conference speakers repeatedly noted this growth in recruitment brings with it a challenge to integrate and train these comrades — through political struggles, involvement in the labour movement and critical study of the history of the Marxist movement — to become fully-rounded communist cadres rooted in the living continuity of Leninism.

The new comrades were won on the key questions of the class struggle in the last year, in particular the Russian Question and Iran. At the 1980 conference we noted that "the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan is having a strong shake-up effect on the Australian left, leading ... to new openings and opportunities for intervention by us". So it proved. At the beginning of the year the TSG/MDG clot came out to set up "Stop the Carter/Fraser War Drive" committees. But these were classic rotten blocs: the prime mover behind the Melbourne venture, for example, was one Paul White, who stands for Soviet troops out of Afghanistan, while in Sydney his "co-thinkers" in the TSG, Janet Burstall and Tony Brown, defended (privately) the Soviet action. The SL aggressively sought to united front these blocs on the basis of action against the imperialists' Cold War drive, while exposing the contradictions beneath their "unity" facade.

Shortly after, the committees disappeared and the TSG/MDG went back to their study circles. But our intervention had made its mark: in November two comrades, Steve King and Angelo Rosas (both former members of the SWP), were to take up the fight for the SL's Trotskyist program at an MDG conference. As Comrade King put it in a statement explaining how he was won to the SL,

"What really brought home the bankruptcy of the group was its reaction to the Red Army's intervention in the Afghan civil war. The SL said 'Hail Red Army' and I agreed. The rest of the left capitulated to the bourgeois pressure — with varying degrees of openness."

— *Australasian Spartacist* no 80, Summer 1980/81

Our forthright defence of the USSR marks us sharply from the rest of the left. When the Polish events broke in August, the third-camp International Socialists, the SWP and CPA rushed to endorse un-

critically the clerical-nationalist Solidarity leadership around Lech Walesa, while the pro-Moscow Socialist Party — equally uncritically — took up the defence of the despised Polish bureaucracy. Only the SL had the program to intervene against the dangers of capitalist restoration and for proletarian political revolution. As one comrade from a Stalinist background noted in joining at the conference (see statement page 4), our line alone allowed him to criticise the deformed workers states *from the left*.

When "chador socialist" Fatima Fallahi of the HKE, Iranian sister group of the SWP, toured Australia in July, the SL actively protested and exposed her apologies for the anti-communist, anti-woman Khomeini regime. In Melbourne a militant picket of 50 denounced her shameless justification of every bloody repressive act the mullahs have carried out. At LaTrobe and Sydney University campuses our comrades intervened to nail her lies about the "progressive" character of Iran's "Islamic Revolution". One comrade who joined shortly after Fallahi's tour described her reaction to the SWP/HKE: "I find it difficult to take seriously any organisation which can so blatantly crawl to a mass movement irrespective of its class nature" (*Australasian Spartacist* no 76, August 1980).

The SWP's tailist method isn't just confined to Iran, as two comrades who attended the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA — youth group of the SWP) conference in June discovered. The Sandinistas, they later told us, were hailed as "the greatest thing since sliced bread". As for Castro, the SYA acclaimed him as "the best thing possible for Cuba". His role in supporting Mengistu's Derg in the war against the Eritreans was passed off as just "a bit of bad luck"! To top this off, the SYA also disgustingly applauded a scab who "told of having crossed picket lines, [and] worked strikers' machines" during a strike at Melbourne's Government Aircraft Factory. No wonder one of our comrades later described how she "practically ran to the SL office, determined that [we] should expose this farce".

As a small propaganda group, the SL's central perspective for building the Leninist vanguard is one of splits and fusions. We seek to politically destroy our opponents and to win from them individuals and tendencies with which we can unite on the basis of the revolutionary

Trotskyist program. Given our size, we recognise that we will not assemble our basic cadre through a strategy of direct recruitment of trade-union militants whom we intersect in struggle.

While rejecting the fake mass work perspective of our opponents, we have pursued opportunities for exemplary trade-union work at selected industrial locations. At the Redfern Mail Exchange, SL supporters stood out, in the words of one militant won to our politics, as "the only people to say what was really needed — an indefinite statewide stoppage to smash the bosses' union-busting plans" (*Australasian Spartacist* no 76, August 1980). At Fairfax printing plant in Sydney, supporters of SL views fought to uphold the basic principles that "picket lines mean don't cross" and "one out means all out". SL supporter Linda Menzie became the first clerk in living memory to honour a printers' picket line when she refused to work during the January 1980 strike. PKIU member Ron Rees subsequently stayed out in solidarity during a three-month strike by metal workers, who later successfully beat back management attempts to sack him.

The conference noted the need to extend our implantation in strategic sections of the working class. Deepening our roots in the working class also means confronting the question of the ALP. As an international visitor noted in mid-year, "we're nothing ... until we can destroy the social democracy in this country". Splitting the mass base of the ALP away from its treacherous tops may be a way off yet, but it must remain the strategic goal of the conscious Leninist vanguard in this country.

The national report noted that unlike our comrades in the SL/US "we don't have the Reagan years in Australia". Fraser's Olympic boycott fell flat on its face and the October election results showed the growing unpopularity of his arrogant, anti-working-class government. Based on our past year's gains, the conference looked forward confidently to 1981. The consolidation of our branch in Melbourne remains a top priority. During 1980 we reestablished an effective presence in the city, winning many new recruits from CPA circles and at LaTrobe Uni.

In the coming year too we look forward to possible geographical expansion, either to a third city or to the industrial suburbs of Sydney or Melbourne. A central part of such an expansion is our monthly paper, the collective organiser of the party's work, whose increased size and improved technical quality was a major achievement of 1980. Our press's polemical and propagandistic character is integral to our tasks of revolutionary regroupment as well as individual recruitment.

Going forward is our motto for 1981, forward to vindicate the statement of a recently joined member that "Just as the Bolsheviks were the party of 1917 so the Spartacist League is the party of our epoch". But to do so we need committed revolutionaries, comrades who agree with our program — from unflinchingly defending the USSR to respecting the picket lines of striking workers. If you agree with the central policies we advance, you belong in the SL: there is no such thing as a passive revolutionary. The job today is to forge the Leninist party, section of a reformed Fourth International, which can lead the Australian October as part of the struggle for world-wide proletarian revolution. ■

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"Russian women don't talk — they howl", commented one Parisian journalist on the latest dissident sensations from the Soviet Union, four women (now exiles based in Vienna) who published the samizdat journal *Woman and Russia* last year in Leningrad. These women's "spontaneous howlings", so "purely personal, so passionate", have been translated, reprinted and hailed by virtually the entire Western left, feminist and petty-bourgeois radical circles. "At last, the first real feminists in Russia!" they cheered.

"Feminist" some of these Russian women may possibly be, but there is nothing progressive about the group. They are certainly dramatic though — blood-curdling even. Here's a few samples from *Woman and Russia* (Translated by the "Women and Eastern Europe Group", Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1980):

- "Men ... are destroying themselves with wine, cigarettes and sexual excesses... The conservatism of this mass of alcoholics, degenerated to the utmost, the unheeding malevolence towards women of this stunted one-celled organism, this gigantic, spineless amoeba — that is the cruel brake to social progress!" (editorial staff)
- "... then she appeared, rescuer of the fallen. Rejoice, the Daughter, our Saviour. Prayer to the Most Holy Queen helped me to discover and resurrect my female self in all its purity and absoluteness." (Tania Sororeva)
- "To fulfill one's destiny as a mother is the greatest blessing nature holds in store for a woman." (V Golubeva)
- "You may escape pregnancy ... but then such 'trifles' as menstruation, menopause will still exhaust and destroy you.... Pregnancy, undoubtedly a parasitic phenomenon, destroys your youth.... A trail of blood leads from the beds, from the labour to the delivery ward. A trail of blood.... The foul face of patriarchy. Its convulsions. Agony." (R Batalova)
- "The patriarchy degenerated into a phallocracy.... The cruel pressure on women of this phallocratic 'culture' crushes any sort of female core in women, and pushes them also towards a hatred of other women.... Women's disdain for each other furthers the disintegration of the family...." (editorial staff)

These daughters of Holy Mother Russia paint the Soviet Union as a bloody medieval torture chamber for women (significantly they chose to call themselves *Woman and Russia*, not the Soviet Union). In all their (admittedly widely diverse) writings one finds a common theme: women are worse off in the USSR than in the capitalist West; women's true nature as nurturing mother is crippled and deformed by the "obligation" to do socially productive labor; men are brutal drunken beasts who care only for war and violence.

Is this really the inchoate cry of the imprisoned female soul of Russia? By no means. Where the group comes from is clear from the hysterical Dostoevskian quality of their writing — in fact, they are part of the crackpot fringe of Leningrad's pro-Western dissident intelligentsia. Most are poets and painters, at least one is a theologian, and all are long-time habitués of the smoky little gatherings, excitable and grandiose, of those alienated and arrogant *artistes* and other "sensitive souls" who despise their grey and repressive homeland, contemptuously ignore its working people, and dream only of glamour and fame in the "free" West outside.

Marxists do not claim that the USSR today is any "workers paradise". But even after the political counterrevolution which consolidated a repressive Stalinist bureaucracy, undermining the great liberating goals of the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, Soviet women remain closer to legal, educational and social parity with men than women in even the most advanced capitalist

## Fake-left hails feminist dissidents

# Holy Mother Russia's daughters

"democracies". This is by no means the least of our reasons for defending the USSR against capitalist restoration and imperialist aggression; as utopian socialist Charles Fourier observed, the level of women's emancipation is a telling index of social progress.

In Russia prior to 1917, although capitalist property relations prevailed, social relations especially in the countryside remained semi-feudal. A typical woman in Russia prior to the revolution was illiterate, routinely beaten by her husband, hag-ridden by the priests. In non-Russian areas, for example the Muslim regions, her status was even more debased through feudal institutions like enforced veiling, the bride-price, etc.

Like every doubly oppressed stratum of society, Russian women were among the immediate, direct beneficiaries of the Russian Revolution. The victorious

Bolsheviks put more than legal reform (eg abortion, divorce) at the service of female liberation, devoting even in the early years of great economic hardship considerable material resources to providing communal facilities (day-care and so forth) aimed at freeing women from household drudgery in isolated family units and laying the material basis for the abolition of the nuclear family.

But women, like all the workers and oppressed, became the victims of the privileged bureaucratic caste which usurped political power from the working class. The conservative role of the bureaucratic strait-jacket was nowhere more evident than over the woman question. The ideology of the "socialist family", for instance, was as much a betrayal of the aims of Lenin and the Bolsheviks as the blood-purge "Moscow Trials" of the same period.

As Trotsky explained in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937):

"The revolution made a heroic effort to destroy the so-called 'family hearth' — that archaic, stuffy and stagnant institution in which the woman of the toiling classes performs galley labor from childhood to death.... The triumphal rehabilitation of the family is caused by the material and cultural bankruptcy of the state. Instead of openly saying, 'We have proven still too poor and ignorant for the creation of socialist relations among men, our children and grandchildren will realize this aim,' the leaders are forcing people to glue together again the shell of the broken family.... It is hard to measure with the eye the scope of this retreat."

These "feminist dissidents", however, have nothing but contempt for the efforts

of Marxists to replace the oppressive family. Instead, they wish to restore "feminist privileges" for themselves so their "true nature" as women may shine undisturbed. That they care not at all for the liberation of the masses of women is quite clear in their attitude towards Afghanistan.

Here you have a shooting war in which the liberation of women from the most backward, feudal oppression is at stake. The Red Army's intervention is the only thing preventing the Afghan mullahs from keeping women enslaved, veiled and ignorant — yet these Russian women call on the soldiers to *desert*, and spit on their "shameful uniform". Indeed, several even hid their husband and sons to keep them out of the army. No wonder they were expelled from the USSR! The very first act of the first three to arrive in the West was to issue a public

woman who isn't ostentatiously medieval and is therefore more palatable to Western liberal tastes (Mamonova recently and "painfully" separated herself from the other three, who have gone on to form the "Club Maria" the better to honour god's mother).

We're not surprised that imperialist ideologues, willing to pick up any stick to beat the USSR, may be able to use these only-too-willing women. We doubt though that tiny emigre circles bowing before Mother of God ikons will cut much ice with the Western working class. Even Solzhenitsyn's tsar-loving mysticism finally alienated some of his more liberal bourgeois supporters. Far more useful are types like Mamonova with their admiration for Western "freedoms" and condemnation of the Red Army. Obviously an ambitious woman, Mamonova clearly believes she's got a future in the West. After all, she thinks women have almost got it made under capitalism. The editorial statement of *Woman and Russia* explains:

"... in Europe this question [of the position of women in society] is close to being resolved — particularly in France, where four women are in the cabinet." The statement goes on to note approvingly the examples of "Margaret Thatcher ... Indira Gandhi, Sirimavo Bandaranaike"! More vicious, anti-working-class demagogues we can't imagine.

As Marxists we stand for literary and cultural freedom in the Soviet Union. We do not accept the brutal, Russian-chauvinist bureaucrats as the arbiters of "culture" and we recognise that the repressive Stalinist bureaucracy represents a greater direct threat to the gains of October than the literary apologists for tsarism, clericalism, "Russian feminism" or what have you. But we remain implacably hostile to the so-called "dissidents" who make common cause with imperialism's "human rights" crusade for capitalist restoration in the deformed workers states. The new "Russian feminists" are nothing new; they are merely the women's auxiliary of a "movement" which believes Russian society should be "democratised" through such measures as Western imperialist economic blackmail against the Soviet masses.

### A "state capitalist phallocracy"?

That ostensible Marxists — from the so-called "Trotskyists" around the United Secretariat (USec) of Ernest Mandel and Jack Barnes to Tony Cliff's state-capitalist followers — should have actually cheered *Woman and Russia's* blasts of confused obscurantism, feminist mysticism, all-sided contempt for Soviet society and blatant pro-Western appetite is genuinely scandalous. A joint project of the USec and the British Cliffite group, *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, published four of their articles under Alix Holt's enthusiastic recommendation as "a new and very significant development for the democratic movement in Eastern Europe" (February-March 1980). The reformist American Socialist Workers Party too thinks they're great; the *Militant* (8 August



1905 Russian Revolution poster: Woman breaking chains of religion

statement denouncing the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. With the United States making the Red Army's presence in Afghanistan a major justification for its renewed Cold War, these "feminists" are truly a godsend to the imperialists.

A recent US tour by Tatyana Mamonova made clear the anti-communist thrust of the group: The sob-stories about "our Russian sisters" horrible plight are intended to whip up support for the American war drive against the USSR. The *haute bourgeoisie* Ford Foundation certainly didn't throw away its money sponsoring Mamonova's tour; *Ms. magazine*, which featured "First Feminist Exiles from the USSR" on its November cover, has once again eagerly done the bourgeoisie's dirty work in hosting Mamonova around the country — naturally picking the one



1980) hailed the journal's purpose in "publish[ing] the truth about the day-to-day suffering and humiliation of women in the USSR". The local followers of Tony Cliff, the International Socialists (IS), went one further in an adulatory article in the 6 December 1980 issue of the *Battler*. This particular piece, expanded from an original article in the 5 July *Socialist Worker*, showers praise on the Russian feminists: "brave", "extraordinary", "astonishingly powerful", "outstanding contribution" are just some of the epithets.

The IS' starting point is Stalino-phobia — hatred of the Kremlin bureaucracy above all else. Given this they don't care who they block with — fascistic "Captives Nations" types, Islamic feudalists rebels in Afghanistan, or mystic feminists — just so long as they oppose the USSR. To bolster this reactionary position, the IS openly claim that "woman's position [in the Soviet Union] is in many ways as bad and in some ways worse than that of women in the west". This is a flat lie. Even the Leningrad feminists de facto concede that the economic opportunities for Soviet women are greater, and their status in society in general is higher, than in the United States, Australia or Western Europe and don't deny the reams of statistics easily available on the high percentages (compared to the West) of Soviet women doctors, engineers, government bureaucrats, etc.

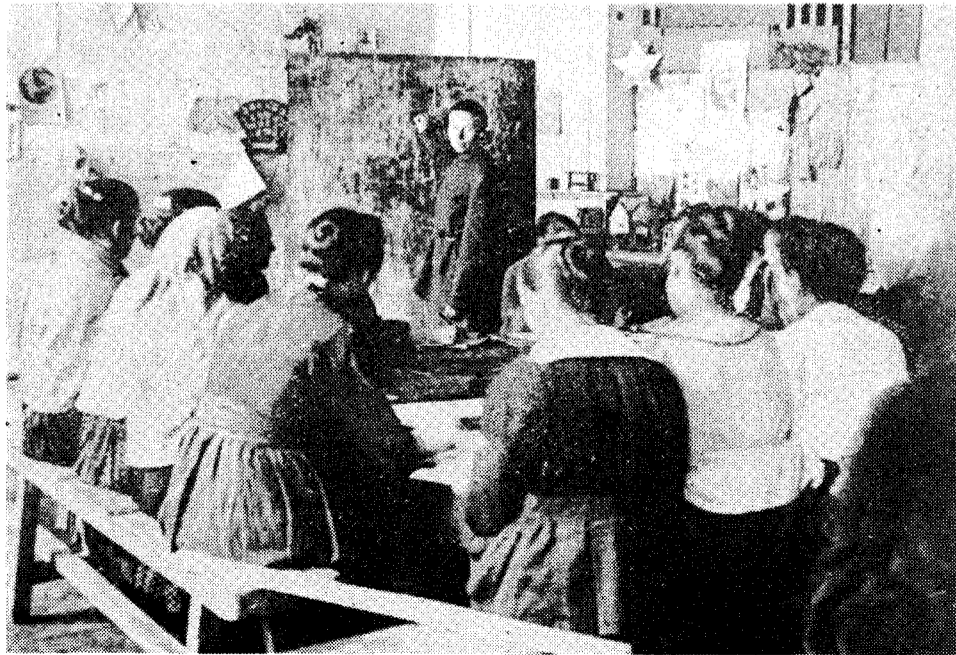
But for *Woman and Russia* these gains constitute women's oppression, and they attack precisely what is democratic and progressive about Soviet society. And the *Battler* tails along behind them, bemoaning the fact that 90 per cent of Soviet women go out to work, since this means that women work a "double shift" — one in the factory and one at home. What do they care that integrating women into the workforce is a means of liberating them from the drudgery of domestic labour? After all, this is Russia and so must be worse than the "democratic" West. Abortion may be "legal and almost free", the *Battler* admits, but "it is certainly as unpleasant as a backstreet abortion in Australia". (Why bother fighting for "free abortion on demand"

then?) Moreover, contraception isn't "freely available" as it is in the West! (We wonder when the last time was that an ISer sought the "freely available" contraception facilities of Dublin or Madrid — or for that matter the British Midlands.)

The IS echoes the claim of these pro-imperialist weirdo feminists that the USSR is a "patriarchy which has degenerated into a phallocracy", and present them as "the first women in Russia since the twenties to demand 'not token emancipation but real liberation'". We would point out, though, that far from being heirs of Kollontai or Clara Zetkin, who fought intransigently against supra-class feminist alliances, *Woman and Russia* is more closely allied to the Women's Battalion of Death, which flung itself between the Bolsheviks and the Provisional Government in October 1917 to prevent the storming of the Winter Palace.



Afghan woman shrouded in veil.



First measures of the Bolshevik Revolution: literacy class for women.

**"Dissident feminists":  
Voznesenskaya, Goricheva,  
Malakhovskaya, Mamonova.**

The IS can't distinguish between a reactionary and a progressive movement. That was clear enough in its support to Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution", in which women are veiled and homosexuals shot. Now the IS even welcomes the Russian Orthodox Church as "progressive", claiming that the "apparent humaneness of religion is making it increasingly popular in the Soviet Union as an alternative to the official ideology". As imperialism's Cold War against the Soviet Union threatens to turn hydrogen hot, the IS finds its refusal to defend the degenerated and deformed workers states more useful than ever.

### Women in the Soviet Union

None of these "new Russian feminists" is likely to make inroads into the Soviet population — and certainly not the "Club Maria". Even before the Revolution, the Russian intelligentsia despised the barbaric Russian Orthodox church, and today 90 percent of the Soviet people profess themselves to be non-believers. In contrast, in Poland the Catholic church, headed by the vigorously anti-Communist Polish pope Wojtyla, acted as symbol, supporter and advisor to the recent workers' strikes, which is precisely why they were so enthusiastically hailed by the imperialist West. The bourgeois ideologists know — as do we — that the Catholic church's influence is the spearhead of capitalist counterrevolution there. The Russian Orthodox church would be only too happy to play a comparable role — and it's a damned good thing it can't.

An article by Shusha Guppy in the *London Guardian* (17 August 1980), titled "How Russian freedom makes women monsters", summarised the views of the new Russian feminist movement, indicating its position on equal rights to a livelihood is at best equivalent to right-wing "Right-to-Lifer" Phyllis Schlafly's:

"Russian women do not aspire to the external forms of freedom, but fight against these because they have been turned into monstrosities: equal pay for equal work and access to all jobs, for example means being given jobs like road-building or truck-driving, which are so heavy that they destroy women's health and their ability to bear children. Women have not been given equality with men, but men's destiny, which negates their own fundamental nature." (emphasis in original)

The accusation that Soviet women are forced into doing body-destroying labour is a lie pure and simple. Outside the collective farm sector, there is a free market for labour in the USSR, as attested to by all reputable Western bourgeois experts on the Soviet economy (eg, Alec Nove). No worker in the Soviet Union, man or woman, is coerced to do heavy construction work or mining. Rather, wages for this work are put well above the average. And there are women who want to work on construction gangs or in coal mines — indeed, *Ms. magazine* proudly displays their smiling faces, when they're American. In the Soviet Union they can do it.

Not only do various pro-Western Soviet dissidents oppose equal economic opportunity for women, but some defend the most barbaric practices oppressing women. Valery Chalidze (now in exile), Sakharov's main collaborator in the Moscow Human Rights Committee, condemns the Bolsheviks for outlawing polygamy and the forcible abduction of brides in Islamic Central Asia:

"In the Central Asia republics, for a very long time polygamy existed. But when the Bolsheviks arose, polygamy was prohibited. It may seem strange to you that I talk about the right of women to participate in polygamous marriage contracts, but it is an important right

and important personally to each woman."  
— *New York Times Magazine*,  
4 March 1973

This is equivalent to denouncing Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation for violating the "right" of blacks to be chattel slaves!

The genuine liberation of women in the Soviet Union can only be brought about by those with a vision of a communist future in which the traditional patriarchal family is superceded. Revolutionary Marxists in the Soviet Union would far more effectively combat the ideology of the "Russian feminists" than can the ruling Stalinist bureaucrats, who in their own way appeal to traditional Russian chauvinism, anti-Semitism and other backward social attitudes. A Soviet revolutionary government would more fully integrate women at all economic levels, especially at the top. It would undercut the reactionary ideology of the family, reimposed by the Stalinist bureaucrats, and make fully available state child-care services, community household service institutions, etc to liberate women from their tedious "family hearth" drudgery.

To accomplish all these things requires a political revolution against the deeply conservative Stalinist bureaucracy. What forces will lead it? Certainly not the decayed, reactionary Russian Orthodox church — and certainly not these would-be liberated ladies who want to work only if it's being an artist or a prime minister. It will be the working people of the Soviet Union, defending their socialised property forms, who will reestablish the revolutionary traditions of Bolshevism. A key aspect of the platform of a workers opposition in the USSR today is support of the Red Army's intervention into Afghanistan. It is no doubt a profoundly radicalising experience for many of the young Soviet soldiers to compare conditions in Afghanistan today, with Uzbekistan or Tadzhikistan in Soviet Central Asia — areas liberated by the Russian Revolution from the social control of the mullahs.

Even some bourgeois commentators have recognised the historic gains made by women of the Soviet East in comparison to feudal Afghanistan. Jill Tweedie in the *London Guardian* (31 July 1980) admitted that women in Afghanistan needed the Red Army:

"Whatever the reasons for the Soviet presence ... one fact seems rather certain: one half of the population can only benefit from the continued presence of the Soviet troops and has everything to lose if the rebels win."

Mamonova & Co want the veiled women of Afghanistan to "do their own thing", not to rely on those "war-mongering men". But Tweedie recognised the absurdity of that too:

"But how exactly are you supposed to determine your destiny when you are illiterate, beaten down by poverty, haunted by fear and have not one word to say politically and socially about this destiny? Particularly when it is evident that the interests of the capitalist West are that you remain in this state of abject feudalism."

These "Russian feminists" who say "Carrying the Red banner is really no different from wearing the veil" ought to try living the life of a veiled Afghan woman, enslaved to the religious obscurantism they hail (and too bad if they're Great Russian chauvinists who don't happen to like Muslims).

Soviet women can expect nothing from such a feminist movement, allied to one of women's worst enemies domestically, the Church, and to imperialism internationally — except maybe counter-revolution. The emancipation of Soviet women will be completed only when the proletariat throws out the Stalinist bureaucracy in a political revolution and reestablishes the proud and liberating traditions of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky.

— adapted from *Women and Revolution*  
no 21, Winter 1980-81

## War president

Continued from page one

States should let it be known that if the Russians are going to clean up their front yard, the Americans are going to clean up their back yard: instead of countering Nicaraguan aid to the rebels in El Salvador, we would help the friendlies defeat the Sandinists in Nicaragua, and put a cordon sanitaire around Cuba, which is fighting the Soviet Union's battles in Ethiopia and Angola."

This is not just idle talk by an ex-Nixon speechwriter. One presidential adviser, Edwin Meese, has recently openly threatened to blockade Cuba and "take the steps necessary to keep the peace in the world", ie possible military intervention.

But things have changed since the Cuban Revolution two decades ago. Should Washington again attempt to blockade Havana or stage another Bay of

Pigs, the Kremlin could itself decide to "draw the line" at Berlin... or the Persian Gulf. The Soviet diplomat who negotiated the withdrawal of Russian missiles from Cuba in October 1962 remarked: "You Americans will never be able to do this to us again!" (Charles Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969*). Reagan's dreams of eyeballing it with Brezhnev aside, today the Soviet Union has the military muscle to back up its envoy's warning. In any such confrontation, Trotskyists pledge their unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism.

### Down with detente illusions!

In response to the Reagan/Haig diatribes, lifted straight out of J Edgar Hoover's *Masters of Deceit*, Moscow pleaded innocence. It is a sad testimony to the destruction of Lenin's Bolshevik Party by Stalinism that imperialist accusations of "exporting revolution" are quite literally a slander. Even the *New York Times* (30 January) could note that,

since Trotsky's defeat, "Soviet leaders have generally espoused variations on the theme of what is now called 'peaceful co-existence' and have denied trying to foment 'world revolution'."

The reward for this policy, the product of Stalin's anti-Marxist dogma of "socialism in one country", is a mammoth Western arms build-up aimed directly at the Soviet Union. Everything from the B-1 bomber to the neutron bomb is being dragged out. In an 18 February speech, Reagan unveiled the economic program associated with this arms escalation: a \$US7.2 billion increase in defence spending, taking it to 32.4 per cent of the budget by 1984, and the elimination of over 100 domestic social programs. Thus the consequences of Cold War II lead to a frontal assault on the US labour movement and minorities, both economically and through race-terror/union-busting attacks spearheaded by the most virulently reactionary forces.

For decades the Stalinist bureaucrats

have fostered illusions in a "peaceful" imperialism, a "democratic" capitalism. Yet history teaches that Cold War is no temporary aberration but the essence of imperialism's unwavering determination to "roll back" the historic gains for mankind achieved by the October Revolution of 1917. Thus the fight against Reagan/Haig's policies can only be a class fight against capitalism.

If in Russia of 1917, the question of socialist revolution was posed by the three slogans "bread, peace, land", then in America today it comes down to: fight the Klan/Nazis, respect picket lines, defend the Soviet Union. And, of course, the necessary conclusion — for a revolutionary proletarian dictatorship, without which the imperialists will sooner or later reduce the world to nuclear rubble. As the Trotskyists have repeatedly stressed, the choice today is between socialism and irradiated barbarism.

— adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 274, 13 February 1981

## Spartacist League/US forum

# "Facing the Reagan years"

*Despite Fraser's feverish efforts, the chill of imperialism's anti-Soviet Cold War drive has not been felt in Australia to the same degree as it has in the US. But as capitalism's decay continues, the bourgeoisie's attacks on the working class here will become bolder and more vicious. We reprint below excerpts from a speech by comrade George Foster of the Spartacist League/US at an SL/US forum at the University of California on 17 January on how our comrades are facing the changed situation in the US.*

... Now, we're going to talk about the Reagan years. Before doing that I'd like to read a quote from a lecture on the 1905 Revolution:

"We of the older generation may not live to see the decisive battles of this coming revolution. But I can, I believe, express the confident hope that the youth which is working so splendidly in the socialist movement of Switzerland and of the whole world will be fortunate enough not only to fight but also to win in the coming proletarian revolution."

Those words were penned in Switzerland on 22 January 1917 by V I Lenin. So it's a problem to be a prophet and have foresight — sometimes events overtake you. It's interesting that Lenin would write that scarcely a month before the February Revolution which destroyed tsarism in Russia.

Okay, "Facing the Reagan Years". It may be an optimistic title. We hear that Reagan is unlikely to launch a witch-hunt, for example, against the California Peace and Freedom Party. But on the other hand, he and his advisers could get us into World War III without believing it. And don't assume, as liberals do, that with power comes a sense of responsibility. You recall when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Reagan's response was: Well, we ought to blockade Cuba. "We" — the American bourgeoisie. If the USSR goes into Poland, which is a distinct possibility, and he tries to blockade Cuba, people should reflect on what response the Soviets could make to that. There's a joke that's been circulating that must have reached Khomeini. What's flat and sandy and glows in the dark? The answer is, Teheran five minutes after Reagan takes office. Unfortunately, this reflects a certain reality.

Reagan's election means a sharp turn to the right on all social and political questions. The right-wing yahoos are feeling their oats. They want to abolish rent control, slash all these "entitlements", which just happen to be things like welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, pensions, unemployment compensation.

Barry Goldwater, Jr wants to help the post office out by allowing it to sell advertisements on the postage stamps. The oil companies have sent their people into the administration to deregulate oil. Boeing has sent their people in to regulate aeronautics. If Reagan's new administration is not solidly Orange County kooks, the rest of it's pretty solid Wall Street: right-wing, without much of a facade.

The main manifestation of this rightward turn is anti-Sovietism. It began with Carter's "human rights" crusade which now has to be seen as a transient manifestation of bourgeois hypocrisy. It was designed to refurbish US imperialism's image which was pretty tarnished coming out of the Vietnam War, and then Watergate came on the heels of that. Carter's "human rights" crusade was mainly aimed at the Soviet Union, and his anti-Soviet war drive paved the way for Reagan. It also encouraged the Klan and the Nazis — biggest resurgence since the 1920s. These people are basically the far-right cheering section of the anti-Soviet war drive. They've been pretty much confined to the backwaters in the past, but now they're trying to raise their heads in the urban centers. And our policy has been to try to interdict them in these centers, to mobilize labor and minorities to crush them in the egg.

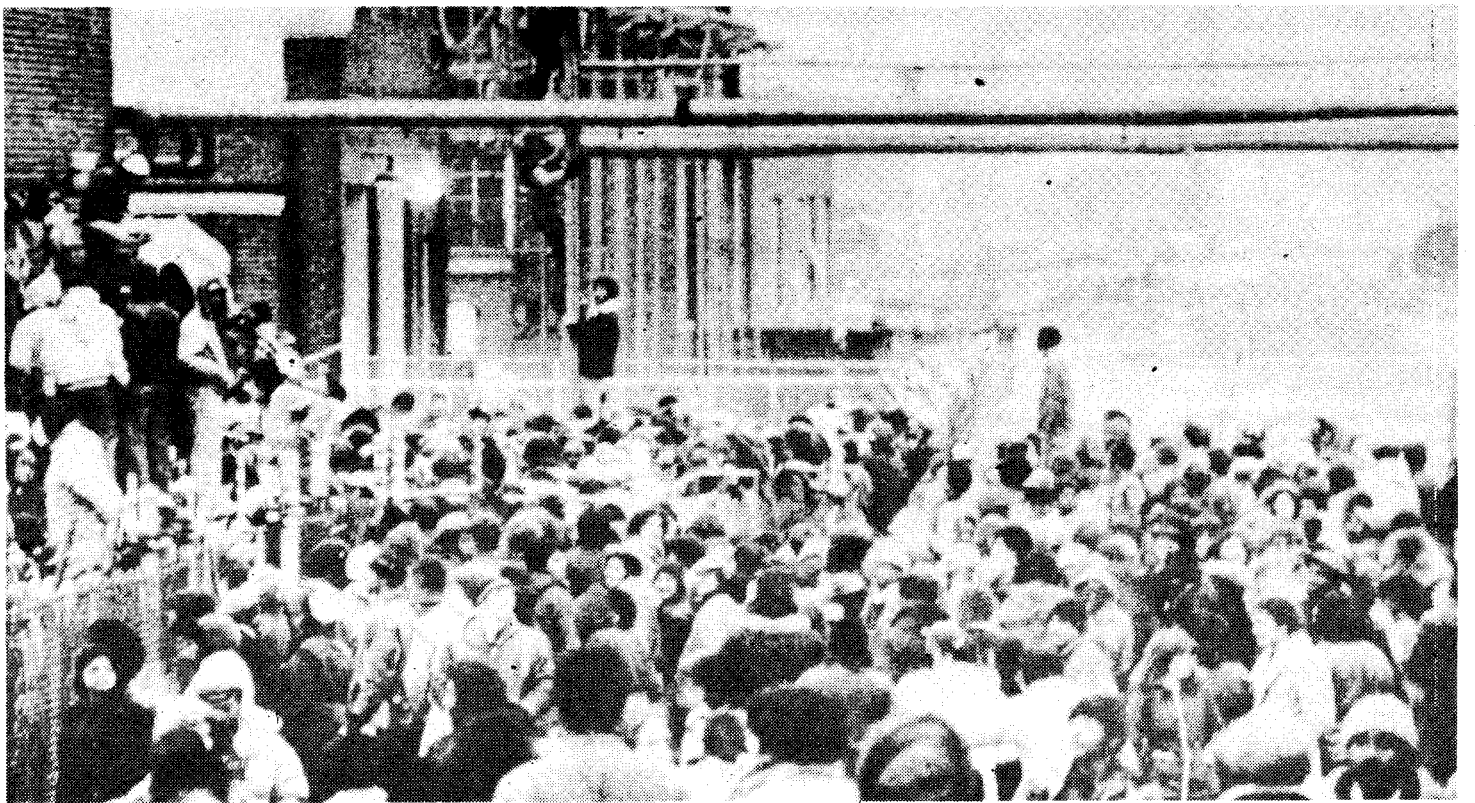
So the question of the Klan is connected with this drive against the Soviet Union. It goes pretty deep, too, and we exist in capitalist society. The Spartacist League does, the rest of the left groups, the self-proclaimed socialists and revolutionaries. And it puts pressure on us as an organization and on them. One can see it very clearly on questions like Afghanistan, one of Carter's "human rights" causes celebres, where human rights apparently means backing people who are opposed to women being able to read and write, who are for bride price — essentially to be able to buy and sell women like so much cattle.

You get people like the Socialist Workers Party, who used to be a Trotskyist organization, but now they're through and through social-democratic. Originally they had a position of soft support to the Soviets against the reactionaries. Actually it wasn't the Soviets — what they supported was the so-called Afghani Revolution. They didn't want to support the USSR militarily; they didn't want to deal with that question. So they cooked up this Afghanistan Revolution that nobody ever heard of. They recently changed their line and decided it was wrong for the Soviets to go in. Why? Well, the most outrageous argument was: This will give the American bour-

geoisie and imperialists an excuse to start new Vietnams in Latin America, in Nicaragua and Cuba. At least Fidel Castro has a little more guts than they do on that question.

Poland. We were the only tendency of people who call themselves Trotskyist in the world who did not deny or underplay the reactionary role of the Catholic church in the current events in Poland. All the other groups just wish that away as some minor event. Why do they do that? It flies in the face of reality. The reason is, because it poses the possibility of a confrontation between the bureaucracy and at least a section of the Polish population led by clerical reactionaries and social democrats like the KOR who proclaim that they want to turn Poland into a Finland, ie, a capitalist country. They don't want to take a side in that... Again it reflects this anti-Soviet pressure.

We're Trotskyists. We don't prettify the Soviet bureaucracy. The Soviet workers state to us is a degenerated workers state, deformed through a political counterrevolution by Stalin and the bureaucracy he led. And we call for workers political revolution to overthrow that bureaucracy. But it's still a workers state. A lot of the historic gains of the October Revolution remain, particularly the economic ones, the nationalized



10,000 jobless queue for no jobs: recent scene at Chicago steel plant, US.





Black workers at Spartacist-initiated anti-Klan rally, Detroit, November 1979.

property forms, the planned economy. And just as we defend the Teamsters in strikes against the employers, even though it's a corrupt union run by a bunch of gangsters, in the same way we side with the Soviet Union or the other deformed workers states in military conflicts with imperialism.

Now the main thing in Poland is that this is a condemnation of Stalinism as a system. Because that's what brought on the events in Poland. Here we have 30 years of so-called socialism, and all it's succeeded in doing is driving the Polish working class into the arms of the Catholic church. It reflects the fact that the present Polish state did not come about through an indigenous revolution, even a deformed one, but came with the baggage trains of the Red Army. It was imposed from the top down. There's the difference between the USSR and Poland, because the memory of the revolution in the USSR still exists. These dissidents who occasionally show up in Red Square really don't need the KGB to repress them. A lot of them are seen for what they are — the pro-imperialist ones — simply traitors, very unpopular.

### Targeting the communists

There are other pressures. Things are getting hot in the US — people are getting shot. Greensboro — the acquittal of these Nazi murderers gives them the green light. Detroit [November 10] and [San Francisco] April 19 — we were very serious about those demonstrations; we intended to march. We were quite prepared to take 400 or 500 arrests in Detroit and we were quite prepared to have a confrontation — not an adventure, but a confrontation with the Nazis should they show up. Because we didn't want them marching in San Francisco on April 19.

So things are getting more serious than they have been in the past. A sign of the times, of the rightward shift: so you can say anything about communists now, right? All across the country we're hearing it. In Detroit there was a fire at Wayne State in a room that the SYL — the Spartacus Youth League, our youth section — was going to have a forum in the next day. It was written on the blackboard, "Sparticus Revolution Begins" [sic]. It was a pretty bad fire, and a picture of Carter or somebody like that, some bourgeois notable, was purposely left half-burned on the floor. The student newspaper simply printed a story giving an account of this stuff that was a patent attempt to frame us up for arson.

Then in LA, the *Daily Bruin*: there was a letter to the editor of the *Daily Bruin* that was written by some anti-Iranian rightist that ranted and raved about PL, the RCP, the Spartacus Youth League and these groups and what the California attorney general has to say about them. We thought, well, you know, it's possible we're in this report, but we didn't believe it. We got a copy and sure enough, there

we were in it. Now this is a report on "Organized Crime in California, 1979", by the California attorney general George Deukmejian. And presumably it's supposed to deal with organized crime. But a lot of it is devoted to terrorism. This is "Part II, Terrorism: Summary, Political Terrorism, Prison Gangs in California, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs...." This is the company we're in: the Mansons, the SLA, Hell's Angels, Mexican Mafia, the Aryan Brotherhood.

Presumably this is the sort of stuff that the lieutenants in the LAPD [Los Angeles Police Department] read before they brief their guys about dealing with the demonstration we called. And it's not even a "subversives" list. There are some people missing from here: SWP, CP.... It's essentially an attempt to label us in particular as terrorists, as people whom you deal with militarily, "mad dogs — shoot 'em down". Very simple.

Well, it happens we're not terrorists. We're revolutionary Marxists. We oppose terrorism as a political strategy, because it's substitutionist — it substitutes heroic individual acts for mobilizing the masses. And secondly, it doesn't work. And we oppose indiscriminate mass terror where, in the name of fighting oppression, innocent people are destroyed. Ulster is a good example: you set off a bomb in a pub, you set off a bomb in a working-class pub in Britain....

But they want to try to push us; they want to try to make it stick. And we're getting this stuff all around the country, that you can say anything about us, therefore you can do anything to us. So we intend to take legal steps to fight this thing. Because while the other groupings on there, the left groups, might be flattered by this, they don't understand what it means, and the danger behind it. And we're going to give the State of California a big pain in the ass over this this thing. We want a retraction.

### A few good communists

Okay, so it's not so easy to be a communist any more. We're expecting a rotten time with Reagan and the social climate in the country. So you're going to see political dives. I've mentioned a couple on the part of the so-called left. We're going to see other stuff too, mainly a loss of nerve and a loss of will. Which is going to find a program: run and hide, drop out. In the '50s, during the witchhunt, the Communist Party got a lot of heat, COINTELPRO stuff though they didn't call it that then. People being fingered, victimized through their jobs, hounded, and so on. But what really corroded the CP then was it took a dive. It was fear — they didn't believe in their program any more. They sent some of their members underground; they didn't fight. It was corrupting.

Now, they were already an organization that had been reformist for a long time. But you have to fight this stuff. The

contradictions of US capitalism are not going to go away. Castro landed in Cuba with 12 men. We have our political disagreements with Castro, but his landing party got wiped out, yet he didn't stop — he kept going. A few years later, they led a successful revolution. There's another quote I'd like to read, this one from Tito, in April '43:

"Experts do not usually take sufficient account of the strength of the human will. If human beings are really determined to do something, they will do it, even if all calculations show this to be impossible."

So we don't particularly welcome the coming political period. But we're going to use it to temper our cadre, and to find out who the nervous nellys are. There's something else. It's not all bleak. We're entering a strategically defensive period. But there are going to be opportunities. Every section of the oppressed is going to get it. We want to be cautious, but we don't want to have a policy of caution. The unions are going to get it from Reagan. Already he's given a green light to go after the unions. The cost-of-living allowances are the first things they are going to go after. And black people in this country — with Strom Thurmond as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. NAACP solutions are not going to seem very realistic with Reagan in office. But where can black people hide? They can't. They can't take a dive like a lot of petty-bourgeois students who give the best four or five years of their lives to the revolutionary movement and move off to smoke dope, and whatever, sit in their hot tubs. It's not an option for the minorities in this country.

There's going to be a lot of illusions again in liberalism, the Democrats, and getting a "veto-proof" Democratic Party Congress. So we have to combat those. The labor skates already are doing two things. One, they're essentially laying down and dying. Well, Reagan's in power — it's going to be a rough time, we've got to take a dive. So Doug Fraser recently negotiated a new wage cut for the Chrysler workers so that there could be a new bailout. At the same time they're starting to talk militant. But a lot of it is talking Democratic Party. Just like the Labour Party in Britain when it's in power screws the workers, and when it gets out suddenly it becomes militant again.

I read that quote from Lenin in the beginning. Now this can all change overnight, all these projections. One big labor upsurge, some explosion that takes off, that you can't predict, could change the climate overnight. France in '68 was the example. Ten years prior to that De Gaulle administered a country that was very passive socially. The French New Left were writing that the French working class had been bought off, that they had cars, they had television, and we saw the largest general strike in the history of France. We can't guarantee people that a revolutionary situation will occur in your lifetime in the country you happen to live in. But the contradictions are there. In the imperialist epoch revolutionary situations are pretty rare, but they

develop very quickly and they can be missed if you don't have a party that's prepared. And it may be a generation before you have a chance at another.

Now as proletarian revolutionists, we're after state power. We're not for diddling with the state, the bourgeois state, or trying to reform it. History has shown that's impossible. We want our own state. The problem is right now we're about 500 people on the planet. And that's hardly big enough to step on, or worth stepping on. With 5,000 people in the country we can be a factor in the working class. 50,000 rooted mainly in the industrial proletariat and with a revolutionary situation arising and knowing what to do, you can take power. Sometimes I feel like the Marine Corps. You see that slogan, "The Marine Corps Is Looking For a Few Good Men"? Well, we're looking for a few communists in the coming period who will be in for the duration.

Reagan wants to tinker with the economy a lot. He's got his economic game plans. But US capitalism is in hot water. Reagan can cut welfare, he can cut unemployment, he can cut Medicare, but it's not going to make the Japanese or West German automobile and steel industries go away. Or be less productive. The US has fallen quite a bit: in 1979 the United States ranked only 10th among the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in per capita income, outranked by Switzerland, Denmark, West Germany, Sweden, Luxembourg, Norway, Belgium, Iceland and France. So the country is heading in the direction of Britain. The bourgeoisie is running it into the ground. Chrysler's an example, a looted industry: They took the profits out of it, kept outmoded, outdated capital, and so on.

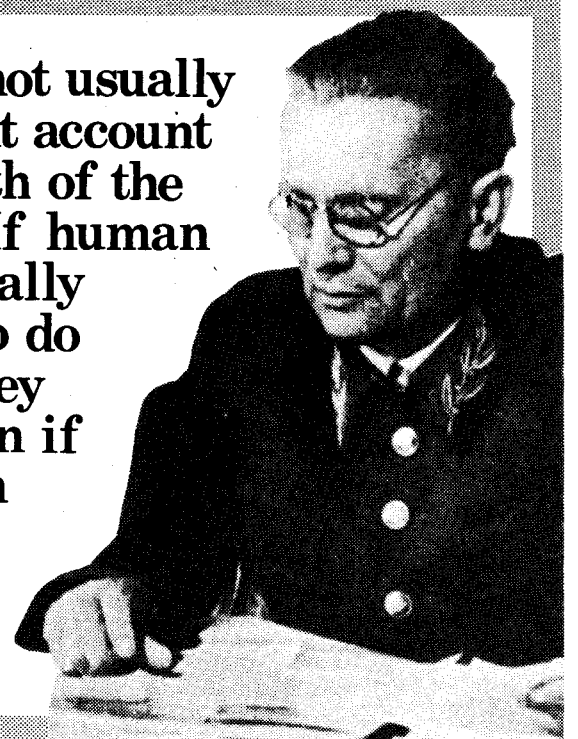
So the US was top dog in a period from the end of World War II until the early '70s when Nixon devalued the dollar, which was the sign of the fall from pre-eminence of US capitalism. But the reason it was top dog in that period is it won World War II. It came out of World War II with its economic plant intact, basically barely scratched, compared to its imperialist rivals who lost their colonies and many of whom were on the verge of civil war. Germany was shattered, divided. So they were able to put the capitalist world on the dollar ration. But over this period the Vietnam War intervened — the US tried to be the world's policeman, and Vietnam proved they couldn't do it. Also a big economic factor was the fact that the Japanese and the Germans had all their industry bombed out and built new and modern plants that were more efficient.

And we can expect trade wars. Not only are the labor bureaucrats pushing them, but we're going to see the bourgeoisie increasingly pushing them. You see, a lot of Reagan's advisers argue that what America needs is a good dose of capitalism — "free enterprise", the term Adolf Hitler coined. But free trade? In steel? The trouble is

Continued on page ten

"Experts do not usually take sufficient account of the strength of the human will. If human beings are really determined to do something, they will do it, even if all calculation shows it to be impossible."

— Tito, April 1943



## Poland...

Continued from page three

crises", complete with a "tendency of the rate of profit to decline" even. Nonsense! In Poland the entire national economy rests on economic planning, in which society's major resources are allocated on the basis of conscious political decisions. In any capitalist economy this allocation is on the contrary determined by the relative rate of profit. Capitalism is inherently anarchic because it is based on atomised *private ownership* of the means of production — which has been abolished in Poland!

"Cyclical crises"? Massive layoffs during depressions and an unemployed "reserve army of labour" are essential features of capitalism. So where are the dole queues in Poland? There are none! That the Soviet bloc countries are capable of maintaining essentially full employment illustrates the vast potential of economic planning, which is what makes

important "reality" is the supremacy of the capitalist class at home. It is no accident that the IS denizens of the "third camp" explicitly reject the proposition that this epoch is the epoch of the imperialist decay of capitalism and consequently reject the *necessity* of the program for workers power — the Trotskyist Transitional Program.

### Peasants, priests and anti-Sovietism

For the SWP, the clerical anti-communist influence within Solidarity is nothing to worry about — on the contrary, they are ready to embrace it. The SWP's speaker claimed the workers of Gdansk showed their "understanding" of "democratic rights" by demanding that the church be given special permission to propagate religious obscurantism and the oppression of women over the Polish mass media. The problem with the church, she claimed, was that it was reluctant to exercise this "right"! As for the close concrete ties of Solidarity's

fought *against* the Czar's "gendarmes in cassocks" — *not* clerical nationalists associated with the Russian Orthodox Church. And without the Bolshevik Party, there would have been no October. The SWP's "analogy" is designed simply to cover for their abject tailing of Walesa & Co — which the SWP panelist only grudgingly admitted "isn't infallible", presumably unlike its Vatican mentor.

Speaking for the CPA, Peter Murphy chimed in that support for the church within Solidarity "shouldn't be used as a means to criticise the politics of Solidarity". His perspective? "We support the development within the Communist Party of Poland" — ie the frantic post-Gdansk round of purges and leadership reshuffles in the Stalinist PUWP — which he laughably claimed "has led to progressive changes in the government of Poland". Like the replacement of Gierk by Stanislaw Kania, the former head of the security police? An unlikely candidate indeed for "anti-bureaucratic" reform!

Murphy *opposed* cancelling the state debt to West Germany, claiming it would "involve the liquidation of trade relations with the West" — no doubt preferring to see the Polish workers slave to pay off the corrupt PUWP bunglers' bad debts. It never enters the head of such a reformist that the Soviet bloc's "relations" with the West can and must be transformed by the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist ruling classes by the Western proletariat. So for Murphy the "main question" in Poland is not the church or the peasants but "pluralism", encompassing "simple bourgeois principles" like an "independent judiciary" and "free elections", as he said in his summary. This is a program for the extension into Poland of *bourgeois* parliamentary democracy; in the context of a deformed workers state, such Euro-communist reformism is objectively counterrevolutionary.

### Left Opposition vs Kulaks

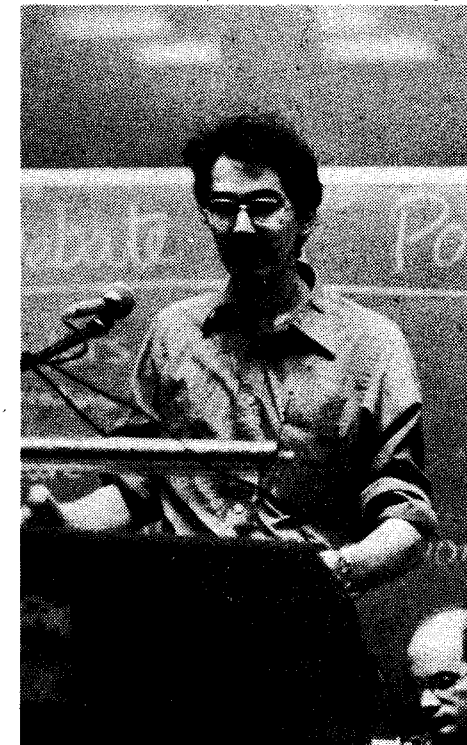
During the discussion, SWPer Steve Painter postured as an "orthodox" Trotskyist on Eastern Europe in response to the IS. In Poland today, however, the SWP stands alongside the IS and CPA against the defence of the collectivised property forms in the concrete case of Rural Solidarity. The SWP tried to dismiss its social character by reference to the small average size of Poland's private farms; the IS and CPA agreed that the peasantry could not possibly provide a base for capitalist restoration. The SWP speaker even claimed in her summary that *all* the demands of Rural Solidarity are compatible with collectivised property relations.

When Lenin wrote that "Small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale" (*Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder* — emphasis in original), he was re-stating an elementary Marxist truth. In the 1920s it was Stalin — supported by the right-wing Bukharin/Rykov faction — whose conciliation of the kulaks brought the Soviet workers state to the brink of disaster.

This policy was fought at every step by Trotsky and the Left Opposition, who continually warned of the danger of a mass capitalist-restorationist force in the

country. Thus the 1927 Platform of the Joint Opposition declared: "The party must level a jarring blow against all those currents tending toward the annulment or undermining of the nationalization of the land — one of the foundation pillars of the dictatorship of the proletariat", and put forward a strategy to "transform agriculture along the lines of large-scale, mechanized collective

A Sp photo



SLer intervenes at Poland panel debate: The Russian question is key

production". In contrast the SWP is supporting a movement in Poland which aims to attack precisely this "foundation pillar" at the expense of the state farms.

Behind the debate on Poland is the Russian Question: the imperialist war drive against the Soviet Union, and the elementary duty for revolutionaries of defending the deformed and degenerated workers states against the class enemy. By shunning this task, the reformists of the IS, SWP and CPA abandon the Polish workers in the face of a possible historic defeat. As one Spartacist supporter put it at the debate:

"The workers [of Poland] don't need an alliance with religious groups. What they need is an alliance with the working class of West Germany and the Soviet Union. It's not pluralism inside Poland which is going to resolve the economic conflicts in the workers state. It will be international proletarian revolution that overthrows imperialism in the West, that will set the conditions for international socialist-planned economy."

And as Comrade Peters said in her summary, "The most important question that's being debated here really is the party question". Only a Trotskyist party in Poland can lead a political revolution to victory, ousting the Stalinist bureaucracy, establishing workers soviet democracy and installing revolutionary internationalism as the guiding principle of the workers state. That is why the international Spartacist tendency is pledged to that struggle, as part of the struggle to reforge the Fourth International. ■



The October Revolution did not kneel before the Russian Orthodox church but attacked its reactionary influence. The Bolsheviks organised atheist rallies in the large cities and expropriated the church's wealth. Here Red Army soldiers confiscate icons from a chapel.

it such a critical historic gain for the international working class. And that holds true despite the grotesque distortions — special shops and extravagant privileges for the bureaucrats, food queues for the workers — imposed by the parasitic caste at the top.

Why the IS' compulsion to produce absurd "theories" to "prove" that the deformed workers states aren't worth defending against the imperialists? Like the SWP and CPA, the IS is wedded to a deeply defeatist and conservative reformism (for the IS, in the form of "rank-and-file" trade unionism) for which the prospect of international socialist revolution is pie-in-the-sky, and the most

leaders to the church hierarchy, the SWP well knows how to respond to that: lie brazenly. The church in Poland has "told the workers ... to stay away from Solidarity", and has opposed Rural Solidarity, she said with a straight face. Pity no one told the pope, who gave Walesa an unprecedented hero's welcome in the Vatican!

Just because the hierarchy is reactionary doesn't mean that everyone associated with it is too, SWPer Jon West "responded" to the SL; a "good analogy" was "the Russian Revolution itself". West's fantasies notwithstanding, the Russian working class in 1917 followed the party of Lenin — which

Then they run off to the Sun Belt because wages are low there, but a lot of those people have never worked in industry. It'll take a generation at least to get a layer of skilled industrial workers. In the meantime they get people who can't weld, shipyards that build ships that sink. Literally, Litton Industries built a shipyard in Mississippi; sure, they pay low wages, and a lot of the workers hadn't even heard of unions. But the ships, almost all of them, were rejected, and they had to go back time after time. So things don't look good for the American bourgeoisie. The contradictions are not going to go away.

And so we have our opportunities. And we'd better be prepared to take

them. It's always better to fight. In Chile, the workers didn't fight, mainly because they had illusions in the democratic nature of the army. In Spain 1936 Franco rose up in a right-wing coup, but the Spanish working class didn't have illusions in that army because they didn't have a long period of bourgeois democracy. They fought a civil war that opened up the possibility of a revolutionary situation. It couldn't be taken advantage of — the Trotskyist forces were too weak. But there was that historic possibility. It's always better to fight.

As I said, we don't welcome this period, but we will use it to temper our cadre. Revolutionary situations are very rare and one thing is crystal clear: the

United States badly needs a socialist revolution, not only for itself, but for the rest of the world. Because we've got a bunch of maniacs running the country who could very well destroy the world. In order to get that socialist revolution, you need a revolutionary party, tested, rooted in the working class, when a revolutionary situation occurs in this country. Engels said, "Freedom is the recognition of necessity". And the proletarian revolution is going to be critical to the survival of the human species. And we don't have the time to botch it a couple times. Time is short, and it's necessary to prepare.

— abridged from *Workers Vanguard* no 273, 30 January 1981

## Reagan...

Continued from page nine

that the US bourgeoisie, a significant chunk of it, is tied to the steel and auto industries, and they're not going to let their industries be driven out of business by Japanese and German imports. And so, if they can't economically compete, by speeding up their working classes and squeezing people so they have more money for capital, they're going to compete through trade wars. And if that doesn't work, there's another way you compete: it's called a shooting war.

# Central America ...

Continued from page twelve

bourgeois aspirations, proven worthless to the junta, to the leftist opposition. Despite their negligible social weight, the political role of Ungo and his ilk is to limit the FDR's reform program to capitalism and to stand ready to head any government to succeed the junta, should it fall. Their role in the FDR is like a drop of ink in a bucket of water: they give it its entire colouration.

For Marxists it is the character of the political leadership that is key. We have a simple question for the SWP. If indeed Ungo and company are "irrelevant" why are they put forward as leading spokesmen for the FDR? The SWP reformists know the answer. When it suited them, in their factional warfare with the European centrist followers of Ernest Mandel in the "United Secretariat" in the early '70s, they cynically espoused Trotskyist orthodoxy in characterising both the Chilean Unidad Popular and French Union of the Left as popular fronts. In Chile the presence of small bourgeois parties and splits from the Christian Democracy (and later army generals, including Pinochet) in the cabinet was a pledge to the presumed "liberal" wing of the bourgeoisie of Allende's fundamental loyalty to capitalism. His popular front was a road-block for the Chilean masses, politically and militarily disarming them as the bourgeoisie and their generals plotted their bloody coup.

"Having staked everything on a military dictatorship, the possessing classes were able, at the same time, to make use of their political representatives of yesterday in order to paralyze, disorganize and afterward strangle the socialist movement of the masses in 'republican' territory" (Trotsky, *The Spanish Revolution*, p310).

And what of the program of the FDR that the SWP dubs "revolutionary"? Reprinted in the NACLA Report of July/August 1980, the FDR program is openly class-collaborationist and counterposed to workers power, calling for a "democratic revolutionary government" resting "on a broad political and social base, formed above all by the working class, the peasantry, and the advanced middle layers" and also including "honest professionals, the progressive clergy, democratic parties such as the MNR, advanced sectors of the Christian Democracy, worthy and honest officers of the army". This "anti-imperialist" and "anti-oligarchic" program reflects the classic Menshevik/Stalinist stageist perspective of a "democratic" government with the progressive bourgeoisie which removes socialism from the political agenda.

The SWP's all-out political support to the FDR coalition mimics their approach to the ruling coalition between the Sandinistas and the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie in Nicaragua. Since coming to power the FSLN leadership has sought to precariously balance between the competing pressures of imperialism and domestic capitalism on the one hand and their worker and peasant supporters on

butchers of My Lai, authors of the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the 1965 invasion of Santo Domingo. Its call for aid is its appeal for federal troops to Boston to "protect" black children writ large. Would revolutionary Marxists have called for "massive allied aid to the Russian Revolution" after overthrowing the Tsar in February 1917? Of course not, because such aid — strings or no strings — would necessarily have been aimed at preventing the Bolsheviks from taking power and keeping Russia in the imperialist war.

All this the SWP justifies by the repeated assertion that Nicaragua is a "workers and peasants government" which is far advanced "along the road to the creation of a second workers state in Latin America". For Marxists, but not of course for the SWP, a workers and peasants government means nothing less than the dictatorship of the proletariat. But what of the SWP's Nicaraguan "workers and peasants government"? The liberal *Guardian Weekly* (1 February, 1981) recently reported on the FSLN economic program:

"The private sector, which controls 70 per cent of national production, has been given special priority in the programme. Subsidies and low interest credits have been poured into the main export industries — cotton, coffee, and sugar. The Government has stressed its commitment to maintaining production, and thus maintaining the private sector untouched."

Some SWPers have attempted to justify away this Sandinista promotion of capitalism as simply a "smart" short-term expedient comparable to Lenin's Bolsheviks who nationalised Russian industry in mid-1918, several months after the October Revolution. We must remind the SWP that the October Revolution was the conquest of state power by the conscious working class, organised in soviets and led by a Leninist vanguard party. In October the bourgeoisie was politically expropriated and all political power passed to the working class, supported by the peasantry. All wings of the bourgeoisie, without exception, accompanied by their reformist hangers-on the Mensheviks and the Right Social Revolutionaries, disappeared from the scene to organise counterrevolution through civil war. In Nicaragua the FSLN has ruled in coalition for eighteen months with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie without taking one decisive act against capitalism.

The *Guardian Weekly* article also carried a report on a 100,000-strong rally in Managua in November 1980 which provided a striking illustration of how the petty-bourgeois Sandinistas act as a road-block to the full liberation of the working masses:

"The main speaker was Jaime Wheelock, who heads the key agriculture ministry. The most dramatic moment of his speech was completely unplanned. He tried to explain that, if it had not been for the discipline and the political loyalty which the Sandinistas can command, there would have been far more land and factory occupations by the work-force. Making his point he told his audience it would cost nothing to declare 'All the farmland and all the factories are yours — put them into production'. At that point he was interrupted by a tremendous ovation, and he had to add hastily that, No, the means of production would not be nationalised."

Faced with the El Salvadoran civil war the Sandinista leadership in Managua will be forced to confront head-on the dilemma it has sought to escape: either breaking sharply with the bourgeoisie and arming the Salvadoran leftists, or capitulating to the imperialists' pressure and likely sealing its own doom. It is not excluded that confronted with imperialist threats and an increasingly rebellious local bourgeoisie, elements in the FSLN could be pushed to go further than they now intend and expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class. But having atomised the working class as a conscious independent force the bonapartist guerrillaists could at best transform Nicaragua into a society identical in essence to Castro's Cuba and Brezhnev's Russia — a bureaucratically deformed workers state.

The SWP's adulation of the FSLN and other petty-bourgeois movements in Central America knows no bounds. In a *Draft Resolution* submitted to its recent

national conference, the group issues the following clarion call:

"The task which confronts the Fourth International today is to link up with the Marxist leadership which has come out of the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions, to merge our forces together with other emerging revolutionary currents in a common political and organisational framework."

This would-be liquidation into the petty-bourgeois Sandinistas, not to mention the bourgeois-populist New Jewel Movement of Grenada, cannot even be passed off as "critical support". The classic formula for such a treacherous policy of "critical support" towards a bourgeois "revolutionary power" of course was provided by Stalin in March 1917 before Lenin returned from exile and presented his April Theses and his call for "all power to the Soviets". The Bolsheviks would support the Provisional Government, wrote *Pravda* under Stalin and Kamenev, "insofar as it struggles against reaction or counterrevolution". But today's SWP is worse than the 1917 Stalin, for these raving all-the-way-with-the-FSLN hundred percenters give a blank cheque to their idols.

Stalin's support for the Provisional Government in 1917 anticipated his reformist degeneration in the '30s, tying the workers to their class enemy through the policy of the "People's Front". And it is a hallmark of the SWP's fully flowering reformism that it today defends popular frontism against left critics. The SWP hails the policy of class-collaborationist coalitions in El Salvador and Nicaragua as "correct, intelligent and revolutionary policy". But as Trotsky wrote, "there can be no greater crime than coalition with the bourgeoisie in a period of socialist revolution" ("Trotskyism and the PSOP", July 1939).

The SWP's sycophantic defence of the anti-working-class policies of the FSLN in Nicaragua and the FDR in El Salvador can only besmirch the name of Trotskyism before the Central American masses. Today it is the international Spartacist tendency alone which upholds the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution for this region — for proletarian revolution to smash imperialism's stranglehold and to put an end to the decades of bloody junta rule. But this task requires the establishment of Trotskyist parties which will fight for workers and peasants governments throughout Central America, as part of a Socialist United States of Latin America. US/OAS — Hands of Central America! Military victory to the leftist insurgents in El Salvador! Break with the bourgeoisie — for workers revolution! For Trotskyist parties in Nicaragua, El Salvador and throughout Central America! For the rebirth of the Fourth International! ■



Asp photo

Ex-Navy minister Don Chipp addresses Melbourne El Salvador rally.

In Spain, Trotsky's classic analysis in the '30s of the betrayal of the popular front, the bourgeoisie had almost to a man gone over to Franco. Only Azana and Companys, individual bourgeois lawyers who represented only themselves, remained in the republican government. But this "shadow of the bourgeoisie", as Trotsky called it, set the limits of the Popular Front — a "democratic republic" that through the petty-bourgeois and reformist parties tied the masses to capitalism and smashed the workers vanguard, as in the Barcelona "May Days" of 1937. Trotsky, writing in 1936, could have been speaking of El Salvador today:

the other. They have hoped to limit the revolution to the basis on which it rode to power — "government of unity against Somoza" — to replace the tyrant with a reformed popular-democratic capitalist regime. But they have had to do this against the tendency of the working masses to turn the victory over Somoza into full-scale social revolution.

The FSLN has not been slow to suppress those who wished to further the class struggle. The self-proclaimed Trotskyists associated with the Simon Bolivar Brigade of charlatan-adventurer Nahuel Moreno, for example, initiated a demonstration soon after the fall of Somoza by 3000 Managua factory workers calling for "Power to the Proletariat". They were denounced as "counterrevolutionaries" and expelled from Nicaragua by the FSLN. The SWP supported this repression, allegedly going so far as to finger their then comrades in the "United Secretariat" to the FSLN. The Sandinistas have repeatedly suppressed would-be leftists such as the eclectic Stalinist People's Action Movement (MAP) and its trade-union arm, the Workers Front (FO), for attempting to set up unions independent of the FSLN bonapartist union structure. This too the SWP defended.

The SWP has also campaigned internationally for US imperialism to grant "economic aid" for "reconstruction". Even with the US imperialists going into high gear with their anti-Soviet war drive the SWP showed a touching faith in the reformability of Yankee imperialism, the

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## US/OAS hands off!

## Defence of Cuba, USSR begins in El Salvador!

# For workers revolution in Central America

The Reagan regime has wasted no time in getting down to business in Central America. First, Carter's El Salvador ambassador, Robert White, was bounced as a "social reformer". Carter's existing military aid program was quickly boosted and more CIA counterinsurgency "experts" put on station. The next step was the launching of an intense international big-lie effort claiming that the leftist insurgents in El Salvador were receiving large-scale arms shipments from the Soviet Union via Cuba and Nicaragua. Sandinista-led Nicaragua was punished by cutting off its promised \$75 million in economic aid despite the Sandinistas' fervent and apparently truthful denial of Washington's charges. Reagan envoys are now jetting around the "friendly" capitals of Western Europe, Latin America and Africa armed with a State Department "White Paper" which flatly asserts that the Salvadoran civil war "is a textbook case of indirect aggression by communist powers" — ie, a Soviet plot.

In vowing to prevent a "Marxist takeover" of El Salvador Washington has committed itself to bitter-end support to its Central American *gorillas* in what it plans as a textbook case of counterrevol-

aragua, restore capitalism in Cuba, again in Poland, then on to the Soviet Union. Class-conscious militants must demand: Military victory to the left-wing insurgents in El Salvador! US/OAS hands off El Salvador and Nicaragua! Defend Cuba and the Soviet Union!

With a virtual international news blackout on El Salvador it is difficult to obtain hard information after the January "general offensive" of the guerrilla coalition, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). The junta has claimed victory but the guerrilla offensive seems primarily to have been aimed at demonstrating the Front's military capacity and presence in the country. Thus rather than being an all-out insurrection it was subordinated to the opposition's "diplomatic offensive" and intended as the beginning of a longer civil war. The Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the popular-front coalition including the FMLN as well as mass-based worker-peasant-student blocs and bourgeois politicians, has appealed to the US for a negotiated settlement. "We want to deal with the circus owner, not the acrobats" said Guillermo Ungo, the former junta member and "social-democratic" liberal



Steps of San Salvador cathedral after May 1979 massacre by government troops.

## Military victory to left-wing insurgents! Popular frontism disarms masses

utionary mass murder and a bloody warning to Cuba and the Soviets. The Reagan gang are denying any immediate intention of sending in the marines. But this was never the most likely first option. Initially they may "just" pile in arms to the junta and let loose the hundreds of Cuban gusanos and ex-Somoza thugs now in Miami, many of whom are already killing for the "reform" junta in San Salvador. There is also the option of an Organisation of American States (OAS) "peace-keeping" force financed by the US. What is likely is increased economic/military sanctions against Nicaragua and Cuba, leading up to a possible blockade of Cuba. As Reagan man, Edwin Meese, put it, "We don't rule out anything". They mean that!

The labour movement internationally must resolutely oppose Reagan's imperialist adventures. A Pentagon-aided rightist victory in El Salvador would soon extend the bloodbath to Nicaragua despite the Sandinistas' criminal refusal to aid the Salvadoran guerrillas. The bloody implications of US intervention would go far beyond Central America. This could be the opening shot of anti-Soviet war escalation. The Reagan strategy is: draw the line in El Salvador, knock off Nic-

leader of the FDR. The popular front is looking to such allies as Mexico, Panama and the West German-dominated Socialist (Second) International and exposure in the UN to ease its way to power.

As Washington's threats have mounted there has been a rising tide of El Salvador "solidarity" demonstrations around the world. Perhaps the largest outside Latin America was a 20,000-strong march through Frankfurt, Germany on 31 January. The basic aim of the demo organisers was to pressure Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's ruling social-democratic/liberal coalition to recognise the FDR and pressure Reagan to negotiate with the FDR. Fat chance! But here "solidarity" with El Salvador was turned in reality into a bloc with German imperialism. For some time now the social-democratic flunkies of German imperialism have been trying to make inroads into the US "backyard". But the social-democratic soft-core support for the FDR popular front is above all designed to ensure the struggle remains within the framework of capitalism. Schmidt is no less an enemy of the workers and peasants of Central America than Reagan. A militant contingent of about 40 sup-

porters of the Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD, German section of the international Spartacist tendency) participated in the demonstration, highlighting proletarian opposition to popular frontism (in both El Salvador and Germany) and defence of Cuba and the Soviet Union against Western imperialism.

In Australia, El Salvador solidarity activity has been heavily pacifist and class-collaborationist, thanks largely to the local (self-appointed) PR men for Castro, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The SWP has centred its propaganda around "US hands off El Salvador! No more Vietnams!" For the SWP the demand "no more Vietnams" is an appeal directed above all at the liberal bourgeoisie ie, no more dirty, *losing* imperialist wars. It is a rerun of the SWP's class-collaborationist role in the anti-Vietnam war movement when its single-issue campaign for "Out now" sought a bloc, both in the US and Australia, with that section of the ruling class that wanted to cut its losses and get out. Thus it was no surprise that at the 30 January Melbourne rally the SWP-dominated Committee for Reconstruction of Nicaragua featured as its keynote speaker Don Chipp, leader of the trendy Australian Democrats and ex-Liberal Minister for the Navy during the Vietnam War. Sure, Chipp's for "no more Vietnams" — after all, his class *lost* there. What price now the famous call of Che Guevara, whose portrait hangs in SWP bookstores, for "two, three, many Vietnams" against US

imperialism? With his Stalinist politics and his guerrillaist strategy Che was no revolutionary Marxist. But neither was he a legalistic, pacifist coward. Not so the SWP!

### Break with the bourgeoisie!

At the El Salvador rallies in both Melbourne and Sydney, and at a 6 February Melbourne Spartacist forum on El Salvador, SWP supporters have been simultaneously denying that the FDR is a popular front at all and then claiming that the presence of bourgeois forces in the coalition is in any case irrelevant. Speaking from the floor at the 6 February Melbourne forum, an SWP supporter admitted: "The bourgeois forces, right, they have gone over to the revolution, they are fighting for the revolution ... that doesn't necessarily subjugate the program." But it does ... *necessarily*. The leading spokesman for the FDR is Guillermo Ungo, a "social-democratic" bourgeois politician who was once in the junta and whose party, the National Revolutionary Movement, is so small that, as the *New York Times* observed, "it would fit into a volkswagon and leave room for the chauffeur". Other ex-junta members such as Colonel Majano (now arrested) and ex-Agricultural Minister and Christian Democrat Cordova have thrown in their lot with the FDR. But these recent defections from the bloody junta are hardly "joining the revolution". They have simply transferred their liberal

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