

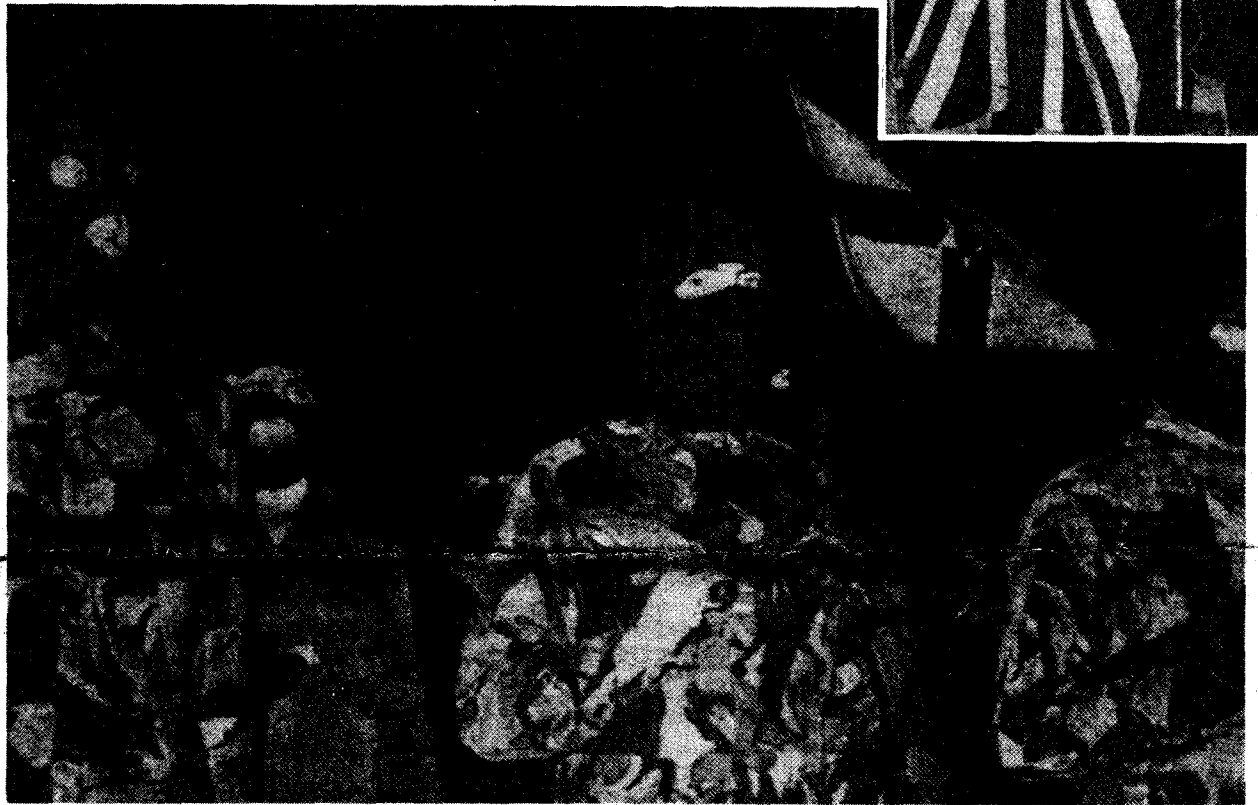
Orange reaction on the march

British troops out now!

**For anti-sectarian
workers militias!**

**Not Orange against Green
but class against class!**

**For an Irish workers
republic in a socialist
federation of the
British Isles!**



Pogromist mobilisation: Paisley's 'third force' marches through Newtownards, 23 November.

The thousands who marched in military formation and paramilitary dress through the darkened streets of Protestant Newtownards near Belfast on 23 November lent an ominous reality to the pogromist 'third force' threats of Loyalist bigot Ian Paisley. They demonstrated just how perilously close Northern Ireland is edging towards communal civil war. And they confirmed yet again how cruel and futile an illusion is the prospect of any capitalist solution to the deep sectarian divide which has dominated life in Ireland since Partition.

The Loyalist 'day of action' was the most significant show of strength by the Orange ascendancy since the reactionary Ulster Workers Council strike of 1974. Up to 90 per cent of Northern Ireland industry ground to a halt as Protestant workers struck and held mass rallies. Paisley seized upon the IRA's killing of his

political/clerical crony, Unionist MP Robert Bradford to galvanise Protestant support against the 'traitors to the Union' in Westminster and their scheme for an Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council. Threatening to make Northern Ireland 'ungovernable', he reiterated his demands for unrestrained terror by 'security' forces in Republican areas and the resurrection of the armed B Special pogromist 'volunteer' gangs, for forcing the Southern government to extradite Republican 'terrorists' and for abandoning the London/Dublin talks. Displaying none of the spinelessness so characteristic of British Labour politicians who profess to speak for the working class, Paisley and his two fellow Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) MPs dramatically disrupted parliamentary proceedings, shouting from a side gallery at Tory Northern Ireland secretary James Prior, 'The

blood of Ulster is on your hands!'

The blood of Ulster is on the hands of Prior and his cohorts, Tory and Labour alike -- but it is not the blood of a Robert Bradford. This Tory government which sent ten Republican hunger strikers to their deaths hardly has to prove it is not soft on the IRA. In the wake of Bradford's assassination, Thatcher despatched another 600 troops to the North from the Spearhead Battalion. All police leave in London was cancelled as the cops set out in search of an elusive cache of explosives supposedly hidden by the IRA in preparation for an escalated bombing campaign. Already in the past two months dozens of leftists and Republican nationalist militants have been detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. This reactionary legislation must be smashed. And as the prospect of communal war-

continued on page 3

Smash Tebbit's anti-union attacks!

The legislation being proposed by Thatcher's new hardline Employment Secretary, Norman Tebbit, represents a major new broadside against trade union rights from this viciously anti-union Tory government. Coming atop the Prior Employment Act's attempt to impose legislative shackles on the right to picket and 'secondary' action in industrial disputes, Tebbit's new proposals would represent a serious assault on the very existence of the closed shop itself. In addition to allowing for draconian fines of up to £250,000 for engaging in any trade union dispute deemed to be 'mainly political or personal', the legislation would remove legal immunity -- ie open up to prosecution -- any union involved in a 'secondary' dispute. This would effectively outlaw the tactic of blacking. Moreover employers would be given the legal right to single out union militants for victimisation through discriminatory dismissals. The offensive against the closed shop is stepped up through compulsory membership ballots and an increase in 'compensation' to anti-union scabs to a fig-

ure of more than £25,000.

The time to stop this bill is now -- not in Parliament, but on the streets and on the picket lines! Even now, the act this pernicious legislation seeks to strengthen is being used to victimise six stewards from Laurence Scott Electromotors (LSE) in Manchester, engaged in a bitter seven-month strike to save their jobs. Defend the LSE stewards! Victory to the LSE strike! The Tories' anti-union strategy hinges on picking off weak and isolated sections of workers one at a time. They must not be allowed to get away with it! A militant joint BL/miners strike last month could have buried Tebbit's bill before it ever reached Parliament. The powerful miners still stand in the wings. Now is the time for them to go out, to spearhead a massive working-class mobilisation to rip Tebbit's bill and its predecessor into confetti, to reverse the entire array of Tory attacks on trade union rights and living standards! Smash the Prior/Tebbit anti-union attacks through mass, militant industrial action!

Socialist Organiser's youth conference

Conditional defence of the Soviet Union?

On 21-22 November the founding conference of the National Left Wing Youth Movement (NLWYM) took place. The organisation behind the NLWYM is the Labour-entrism Socialist Organiser Alliance (SOA), supporters of the right-centrist marriage of convenience of Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL) and Sean Matgamna's International-Communist League (I-CL).

The conference, attended by some eighty youth, was instructive as to what self-proclaimed Bennite and sometime 'Trotskyist' Matgamna was teaching the youth. NLWYM members argued over raising the reformist demand for 'democratic control' of the police and that the sub-reformist plea for 'Jobs not bombs' has the same content in Britain that the Bolsheviks' revolutionary call for 'Peace, bread and land' did in Russia! Matgamna has been pushing the line for well over a year that a Bennite majority in Parliament could usher in a workers government. It is no wonder that his youth cannot differentiate between reformist pacifism and the Bolsheviks' struggle for soviet power.

But the most glaring example of what results from Matgamna/Thornett's consistent capitulation to Cold War Labourism was the sizeable minority at the conference explicitly opposed to the defence of the Soviet Union. The minority ranted about the 'superpowers' and their 'contempt for human rights'; how if you were in a 'third world' country 'it doesn't matter whose tanks are killing you'. They wanted to fight for disarmament 'both sides of the "iron curtain"' and hoped that the CIA-backed Polish Solidarnosc would become the base around which to build a 'free disarmament movement in Eastern Europe'. One-fifth of the conference voted for this anti-communist Cold War amendment.

Was there a split? Of course not. On the key question of divide within the proletarian movement there was conciliation. In a Trotskyist organisation there is no place for those who

renounce unconditional defence of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states: the defence of the progressive property forms which are the historic gains of the October Revolution, the socialised, planned economy which remains despite the subsequent degeneration at the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

'Potentially progressive' nationalised property?

But for the SOA defence of the Soviet Union is at best conditional anyway. And in the NLWYM 'Draft Policy Document' they try to drag Trotsky down with them, claiming: 'Like Trotsky, we believe nationalised property to be progressive on condition that the working class can seize political power from the bureaucracy.' To this they tack on a weak-kneed defence of the 'potentially progressive survivals from the October Revolution' (emphasis added). Elsewhere SOA leading cadre John Lister declares, 'Far from being some kind of half-way house to socialism, the deformed workers states are counterrevolutionary states' (*Socialist Organiser*, 12 November, emphasis in original). With a leadership which tells them that the deformed workers states are counterrevolutionary with at best 'potentially progressive' vestiges, any youth attracted to the NLWYM who defends the Soviet Union does so *in spite of*, not because of what they are taught by these pseudo-Trotskyists.

In Poland, where the SOA lines up with counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc in the name of 'democracy', with its call for free elections to the Sejm (ie for capitalist restoration under the guise of parliamentary government), even the conditional defence goes out the window. Hailing Solidarnosc's provocative call for pro-capitalist 'free trade unions' -- long a slogan of the CIA's 'Radio Free Europe' -- throughout Eastern Europe, SOA likens it to the revolutionary-internationalist appeal of the

Soviet government in 1917, 'To all the Toilers of the World!' The only unconditional defence it offers is extended to the counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc: 'even if the demands of the Polish workers were "right wing", revolutionary socialists would still stand with such a real workers movement, however misguided, against the Russian army's bloodletting' (*Class Fighter*, July-August 1981). Bennite 'socialists' would -- not revolutionary socialists!

For years, Matgamna has been pushing aside the Russian question as a 'tenth-rate question'. When they fused with the then 'state capitalist' Workers Power in 1975, they magnanimously declared the minority's right to publically profess its opposition to the 'defence of the USSR against imperialism' ('Political Resolution of the I-CL Fusion', *International Communist*, June 1976). Indeed they foreshadowed their present counterrevolutionary line on Poland by 'unconditionally oppos[ing] the interference of the Russian army in the states of Eastern Europe' and abdicating defencism, 'In any conflict, or apparent conflict, between defence against imperialism and the proletarian struggle against the bureaucracy'. This attempt at a lawyer's loophole denied that any genuinely progressive struggle against the bureaucracy -- which Solidarnosc is not -- presupposes a defence against imperialism.

At the time of the fusion between the WSL and I-CL last year the I-CL called for 'Soviet troops out' of Afghanistan. The WSL, while refusing to support the Red Army in its struggle against open reaction, shied away from lining themselves up directly with Thatcher and Reagan. At the fusion conference, Thornett and Matgamna came to a gentleman's agreement to 'defer discussion' on such trifling split issues.

Anti-Sovietism and pro-Labourism are two sides of the same coin. For youth who want to fight to defend and extend the gains of the October Revolution, the difference between Bennism and Trotskyism is pretty clear-cut. A number of NLWYM members felt compelled by the discussion in the conference to seek out and discuss -- particularly the Poland question -- with supporters of the Spartacist League, who had been excluded. The Spartacist League offers a Trotskyist perspective to break workers from Bennism, not to be the best builders of 'left' reformism; a perspective of defending the planned economy in Poland against the Pilsudskite reaction which would follow a victory of Solidarnosc's counterrevolution; a perspective of building a party to fight for world proletarian revolution. ■

By invitation only

Why is Workers Power hiding?

The small centrist Workers Power (WP) group shows all the signs of an organisation in trouble over the Russian question, and in particular over Poland, its sharpest current expression. The sum total of their written public analysis of the decisive national congress of Solidarnosc in September is restricted to one sentence in a polemic against our opposition to Solidarnosc's counterrevolution in their October issue. When three WP Political Committee members rolled up for a Spartacist League (SL) public

meeting in London on 16 October, our comrades took them on over Solidarnosc before the meeting, after which they slinked off mumbling that they had only come for a sale! And their behaviour since provides ample evidence that far from indicating an appetite for serious political combat with the SL on this question, it was in fact an attempt to put us beyond the pale of political debate as irremediable 'cheerleaders for the Kremlin'.

To this end, these 'creative Marxists' have invented a new category: the 'invitation meeting', to which (they openly confess) anyone, including opponent organisations, is 'invited' ... except the Soviet-defencist SL! The first time they tried this ruse, at Sheffield University on 3 November, they had to finally declare the meeting open. They tried it again a week later, with a public meeting in Sheffield on CND, with a flyer (which they even gave the CND [!] at Sheffield University to distribute) 'inviting all those interested in our answers [to questions on CND] to a meeting we have organised'.

We were certainly interested. But when we sat down, Sheffield WP *lider maximo* Keith Hassel, forcibly restrained by his own comrades from provoking a fist fight, threatened that if our comrades didn't leave, the SL 'will not be invited to any more Workers Power public meetings'. Hardly a body blow. Discovering that we refused to bamboozled into our own exclusion, WP hurriedly gathered together its forces and shifted to a secret venue, leaving the majority of the 'public' -- our comrades -- behind. In the best traditions of Dunkirk, WP supporters later described this flight as a victory! Does WP intend to consolidate this 'victory' by

nationally adopting the policy of its London and Birmingham branches -- which to our knowledge have held no public meetings for over a year?

Hassel & Co know they are in no position to deny the SL workers democracy; they are simply, desperately, looking for an organisational smokescreen. But WP's attempt to draw an organisational line against the SL in order to avoid political confrontation will not protect it from the ruthless logic of the Russian question. WP fails to actively fight for defence of the Soviet Union, despite its formal stance, flinching whenever the question is posed directly. When an SL picket protested against CND's platform for Vietnam war criminals and CIA men in Sheffield on 14 October, WP could only sneak an 'observer' past the picket to avoid taking a side. A week later, at an anti-Weinberger protest in London, WP ended up with the anti-Soviet clique on the other side of a police cordon from our Soviet-defencist contingent.

Programme begets theory. The March Workers Power carried a photograph of a US missile with the caption 'Headed for the USSR' and concluded: 'It remains necessary to defend the USSR against the plans of the capitalists to isolate, blockade and destroy that historic gain.'

The November issue, in an article on the 'Origins of the new Cold War', carries an analysis evocative of the reformist American SWP: 'It is the desire of the White House to close down these openings and re-establish its control (in Latin America, Middle East, Africa) that gives stridency to the "new" Cold War of the 1980s.' So the Cold War is all about the 'colonial revolution', WP?

We may not always know where WP is hiding, but we know why. And its slanderous echoing of CND that the SL is 'disruptive' should cause WP members to think. If raising the defence of the Soviet Union 'disrupts' WP's attempts to recruit, it is not the Trotskyist programme to which it is recruiting. ■

CONTACT THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE:

Birmingham..... (021) 643 5914
London..... (01) 278 2232
Sheffield..... (0742) 737 067

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Monthly newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the international Spartacist tendency.

EDITORIAL BOARD: Len Michelson (editor), Caroline Carne (production manager), Lawrie Harney, John Masters, Charles Silver, David Strachan

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Arnold Michaels

Published monthly, except in January and September, by Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE.

Subscriptions: 10 issues for £2.00; overseas airmail £5.00.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

Printed by Morning Litho Printers Ltd. (TU)

Tariq Ali knocking on Labour's door, while IMG drags along

There was little new about last month's national conference of the perceptibly demoralised International Marxist Group (IMG). There was the customary presence of four or so competing tendencies, and the customary absence of any principled political debate, particularly on key questions of the international class struggle like the anti-Soviet war drive. Unlike past conferences of this consummately impressionistic organisation, nobody (not even John Ross) was able to cobble together a new get-rich-quick scheme to tide the organisation over with a few phoney 'perspectives' -- like last year's short-lived campaign for 'fusion' with Tony Cliff's viscerally anti-Soviet British Socialist Workers Party. This year the ideas simply ran out. So the tendencies squabbled about whether to continue a 'turn to industry' and how much to liquidate into Bennism. One wanted to 'humanise' the turn, which has already led to substantial haemorrhaging; a second, composed mainly of teachers, opposed it; a third demanded total liquidation into the Labour Party; and the fourth, which carried a two-thirds majority, was for less than total liquidation while sending a 'second wave' into industry.

Indeed the most memorable political event of the conference took place the day after it ended. That was when Tariq Ali, longstanding IMG leading light and Fleet Street *bete noire*, announced that he had resigned and was applying for membership in the Labour Party. Not surprisingly, Ali had been one of the leaders of the tendency arguing for total liquidation. In a pre-conference discussion document he had attacked the central leadership's vague perspectives which, he said, 'don't lead ... in any particular direction at all'.

Well, not quite. Tariq Ali and his former comrades are travelling in the same general direction -- towards Cold War Labourism. This one-time quintessential expression of 1960s New Leftism (who once wrote that any idea of work in the Labour Party would be 'political necrophilia') now seeks 'to help transform the party into a campaigning vehicle for socialist objectives' (*Guardian*, 20 November). Though his membership application is now in doubt, having become a focus for anti-left witchhunting by the Labour right (see inset, this page), both he and the rest of the IMG have been arguing this perspective in all sincerity for the past year, even if the IMG has decided (for now) to reject Ali's call to go the whole hog. And it is not just the IMG. The entire European United Secretariat (USec) is well advanced on a liquidationist course towards NATO social democracy.

Far from opposing the rising chorus of anti-Sovietism, the IMG/USec have increasingly joined in. Ali may have been the first to call for Soviet troops out of Afghanistan, but now the majority of the USec sings that tune. They hail Catholic-nationalist reaction in Poland as Solidarnosc sets course for social counter-revolution. And they conspicuously refuse to call for defence of the Soviet Union in the European anti-missiles movement, championing instead CND-style pacifism and neutralist demands for a 'nuclear-free zone from Portugal to Poland' (*Socialist Challenge*, 26 November).

Hand in hand with the rightist degeneration of the European USec has come the increasing influence of the reformist US Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Ten years ago, in a more leftist phase, most IMG cadre despised the US SWP -- largely for good reason, for being the cravenly reformist architects of 'peaceful, legal' protest. And in the intervening years it has become even more cravenly (sometimes bizarrely) so. The US SWP's appetites to ingratiate itself as a loyal social-democratic opposition with the liberal wing of the American bourgeoisie has led it to such scandalous domestic practices as explicitly renouncing revolution in court and even voluntarily handing over sensitive internal details about international USec meetings (see 'Reformism on Trial', *Workers Vanguard* no 286, 31 July 1981). Its assiduous pursuit of the trade union bureaucracy led it to actively oppose solidarity strikes with the air traffic controllers being hounded by Reagan. And on international positions (which don't really matter all that much to it so long

as they don't go against the anti-Soviet grain) it is distinguished by a continuing fealty for the Iranian butcher Khomeini that almost defies credibility. It is consistent in its appetite to become the American party of social democracy.

This summer a group of senior IMG cadre around former national secretary Brian Grogan travelled to the US SWP conference in Oberlin, Ohio, and returned with stars in their eyes. Back home, the 'Oberlin Eight' formed a bloc with current national secretary Steve Potter around the single issue of deepening the turn to industry (ie becoming errand boys for the trade union bureaucracy). Thus in characteristic Pabloist style the majority 'tendency' at the conference was in fact a rotten bloc which stayed glued together during the perspectives discussion by refusing to discuss contentious international questions like Iran and Cuba. And again in characteristically Pabloist style it fell apart in a backstabbing apolitical slate fight in which the Potter clique deprived the Grogan gang of their hoped for organisational victory. And even the suppressed political

He wants in, let him in

Rumours have begun to float from Westminster that the Labour National Executive (NEC) is about to prevent former International Marxist Group leader Tariq Ali from joining the Labour Party. It was reported in the *Guardian* (27 November) that it is likely that the NEC will veto Ali's membership even if he is accepted by Hornsey Labour Party. This comes amidst a renewed right-wing move (now tentatively supported by Michael Foot) for some sort of purge of the Militant tendency.

Neither Tariq Ali nor the Militant tendency represent any threat to the social-democratic Labour Party, with their tepid brands of 'Trotskyism'. But that is beside the point. The Labour Party is supposed to be the party of the whole British working class; it is based on the mass organisations of the working class, the trade unions. If you pay your dues you've got the right to have your voice heard. But Michael Foot can say that he is against 'the return of the proscribed list' then endorse rejection of affiliation by the Communist Party. The Spartacist League in the interests of workers democracy and against bureaucratic censorship and control stands against all bans and proscriptions and witchhunts of individual leftists within the Labour Party.

If Tariq Ali wants in, let him in!

Orange reaction...

(Continued from page 1)

fare rears its head in the North, the lesson of 1969 must be underscored: the imperialist presence offers no progressive answer, not even in the short term. British troops out of Ireland now!

On both sides of the Irish Sea, 'respectable' bourgeois politicians expressed apprehension lest IRA 'terrorists' or Paisley's 'Protestant bully boys' (as Prior called them) upset the delicate diplomatic manoeuvres between Westminster and Leinster House. In the South, Fine Gael prime minister Garrett FitzGerald led the Dail in an unprecedented minute of silence for the dead Unionist politician. The *Irish Times* (17 November) denounced the IRA for seeking to 'wreck the political process set in motion by the Anglo-Irish talks ... and to drive Loyalists into a corner from which there is no escape'. And the Catholic clergy lent its 'moral authority' to the project by declaring cooperation with the IRA a mortal sin. In all the rivers of tears shed for Bradford, who was distinguished by such 'Christian-like' views as demanding untrammelled rampage by police and the army through Catholic ghettos, it was all but forgot-



Ernest Mandel's tired Children of '68: Brian Grogan, Tariq Ali (speaking).

differences reflected appetite more than principle. The IMG demonstrably has no difference in principle with tailing the reactionary mul-lahs, but today it is nowhere near as lucrative as tailing the Mujahedeen -- who also stand for the rule of Islam. As for Cuba, the differences revolve around whether or not it is permissible to criticise Castro or the petty-bourgeois nationalist Nicaraguan Sandinistas a little bit or not at all (as the US SWP would have it).

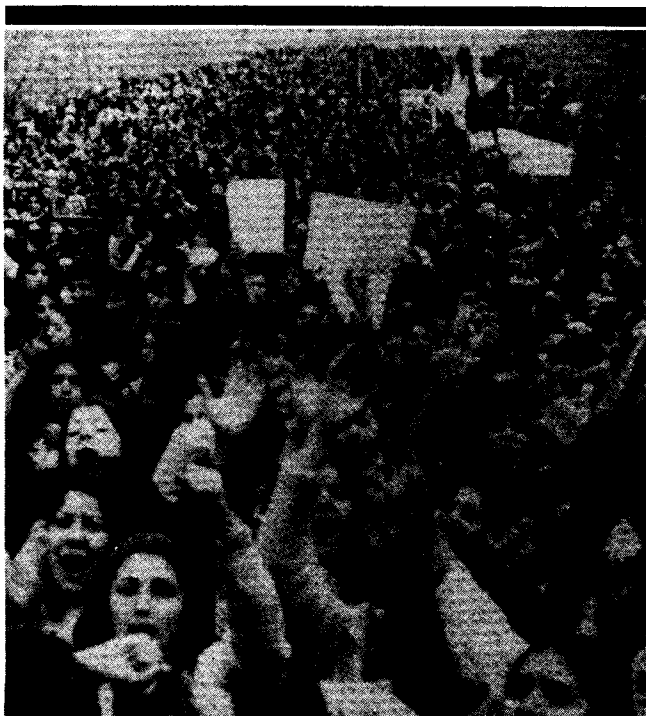
The IMG's future is miserably bleak. Any slot it would hope to fill is already taken. The British SWP has the market on shop-floor militancy cornered; the Militant and Socialist Organiser Alliance occupy the Labour 'deep entry' slot; and aping the US SWP wouldn't make much sense in a country which already has a mass social-democratic party. Moreover in the past three years membership has fallen by 30 per cent, with many longstanding cadres simply drifting out to the right or to apolitical demoralisation. A period of Cold War will take its toll of weakened elements from even a genuinely Leninist organisation, but can also force fresh elements to the communist banner. Fundamentally the IMG's crisis of perspectives is programmatic. It lacks the only programme that offers a fighting perspective against renewed anti-Soviet war drive -- the programme of Trotskyism -- and thus it is drawn ineluctably deeper into the Cold War social democracy. And for this it is hardly worth remaining in an ostensibly Leninist organisation, even one as Menshevik as the IMG. Better to be an open social democrat.

Or to be a real Leninist. There was one tendency in recent IMG history which did counterpose Trotskyism to social democracy, which did fight for defence of the Soviet Union against the imperialist Cold War drive, which did uphold the Leninist vanguard party against Pabloist liquidationism. And for these reasons it was expelled from the IMG/USec last spring. It was the Communist Tendency/Communist Faction. And it continues to fight for the same principles, as part of the only organisation on the British left which is committed to the programme of Trotsky's Fourth International -- the Spartacist League. ■

ten that 18-year-old Thomas McNulty fell victim to Loyalist vengeance hours after Bradford for the 'crime' of being found in the Catholic Short Strand district of Belfast.

In London, Prior appealed to the Loyalist community for calm -- to avoid 'playing into the hands of the IRA'. But the Orange mob which greeted him when he went to attend Bradford's funeral was anything but calm. The sectarian monster which Britain nurtured in order to help maintain its imperialist domination over Ireland will not easily crawl into its coffin simply because it no longer serves Britain's ends. The drain of maintaining 'peace' in Northern Ireland on Britain's scarce economic and military resources compels the government to search ever more desperately for a graceful exit, which in turn exacerbates fears within the Orange laager that Westminster is prepared to sell them down the river. The negotiations initiated last year between former Fianna Fail prime minister Charles Haughey and Thatcher and now continued by FitzGerald amply demonstrate the cravenly pro-imperialist character of the Republic, but they do nothing to alleviate the oppression of the long-suffering Northern Catholics nor to assuage Protestant fears of being engulfed in the clerical state to the south. So the polarisation deepens on both sides of the sectarian divide.

continued on page 6



Tehran, March 1980: Women's protest against clerical rule.

Eyewitness account: Life under the 'Iranian revolution'



April: Fedayeen rally attacked by Khomeini's thugs.

The following interview was obtained with comrade A, an Iranian woman sympathetic to the Spartacist League, who recently returned from Iran.

Spartacist Britain: How strong is the repression and harassment of the mullah regime in day-to-day life?

A: If a woman walks on the street with short sleeves or without a scarf even in the hot summer days, she risks being stabbed, stoned, spat at and so on. When I went to the passport office to obtain an exit visa I had to have a scarf on and when I had to buy stamps from the post office. Without a scarf a woman is not allowed into the parks. If a woman goes out with a man it has to be a close relative, let us say, like a husband, brother or father. If a woman is in a car with a man in the evening the chance of being stopped and asked for documents is very high. Some restaurants were forced to close since young men and women, even in a group, used to go there. A woman is not allowed to wear a swimming suit in the sea. They have to have their ordinary clothes on top of their swimming suit, although the area in which women can swim is separated from the men's area.

Mountain climbing in Iran is very popular. When I was there they were talking about passing a law saying that male and female should climb the mountain using different routes. If a woman is forty years old she can be retired if she has been working for ten years and many women were forced to do that.

National minorities are harassed, killed or massacred. Their villages are bombed although they hold big parts of two provinces in Iran. Religious minorities have no rights in the Islamic republic of Iran, especially Baha'is, who are denied jobs, businesses, owning property or travelling. Now most of the people who have Marxist literature are destroying it since they know that the penalty can be death. Somebody was arrested when they raided her house -- 300 books burned.

Spartacist Britain: Did you see much of the clerical-fascist gangs, the Hezbollahis?

A: You can see the Hezbollahis, the clerical-fascist gangs everywhere, and believe me, they are more frightening than the shah's paratroopers. I had the experience of being attacked by the latter, when I was a student in Tehran University. In the hands of the Hezbollahis, the chance of staying alive is very small. Many teachers in Iran have lost their jobs because they were sympathetic to the left or because they could not pass the religious examination which is apparently very hard to pass. So many people with PhDs in different subjects are jobless while there is a shortage of science teachers in Iran. The children are forced to report anything their teachers say in the classroom to their parents who are told to report it to the Islamic authorities. All the universities are closed now.

Spartacist Britain: The fake-left think that the working class made great 'gains' by the revolution. One of the main ones is supposed to be the shoras. Can you describe these?

A: You see, there are Islamic shoras in most of the factories. They are the eyes and the ears of the government everywhere they exist. In the start all the left joined the shoras. But since every shora has a few IRP members in it so the same shora dismisses or puts in prison workers and employees if they resist the IRP policy or if they find somebody has got leftist ideas. In brief the Islamic shoras destroy all the working class organisations in the factories.

Spartacist Britain: What has been the general reaction, not just from the left, to the various attacks on the leading government figures, like the bombing of the IRP headquarters?

A: The ordinary people don't hide their happiness at the killing of the government figures. The Mujahedeen have got a lot of support among the young people, but they don't see any other alternative, except a military coup in Iran. Bani-Sadr also has got a lot of support. These people want desperately to get rid of the mullahs. In holding the media in their hands the mullahs are using the religiousness and backwardness of the Iranian peasants in order to survive. The mullahs have closed all the universities and some of the schools. They don't need science or technology for the type of society they are trying to create.

Spartacist Britain: The Stalinist Tudeh party and the fake-Trotskyist HKE both still support the regime -- any observations about them?

A: The Tudeh party, Fedayeen and HKE all support the mullahs' government. The Tudeh party and Fedayeen majority shared a platform with the IRP on TV to discuss materialism and idealism. In June all the leftist papers which were still allowed to be published -- like *Mardom*, the paper of the Tudeh party -- were banned, but still one could buy *Kargar*, which is the paper of the HKE. In their paper, the fake Trotskyists call anybody who fights against Khomeini terrorists, claiming that these 'terrorists' are weakening the Islamic republic and therefore helping the imperialists. They are still working within the Islamic shoras. They do not denounce the executions in Iran, which are running at the rate of 50 a day, but are giving advice to the mullahs: 'Imperialism is making propaganda against the Islamic republic because of too many executions.' You know, you feel as if they are trying to say: 'Kill, but hide it; don't announce it'.

Spartacist Britain: In our article, 'Mullahs' blood frenzy' (*Spartacist Britain* no 37, November 1981), we said that the Mujahedeen are in no sense leftists. Do you have any comments?

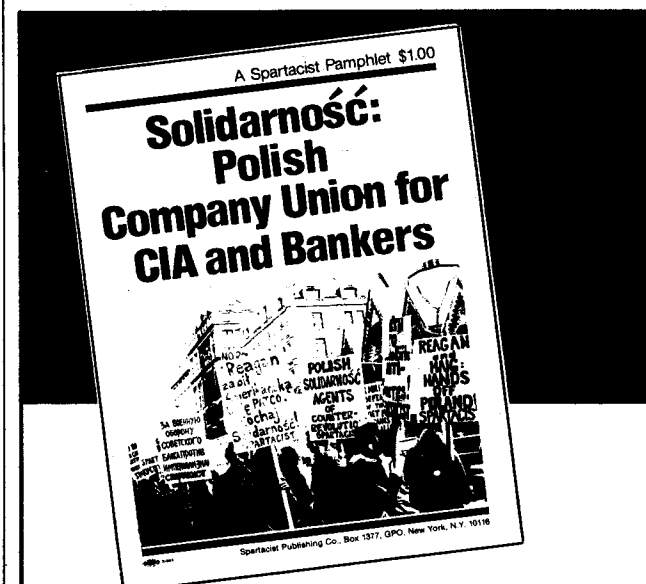
A: The Mujahedeen and Bani-Sadr have published their programme for the transitional government of the Islamic republic of Iran. They say that they are going to create a modernised, independent capitalist state which is based on true Islam, not the sort which was created by Khomeini which was not Islamic. The Mujahedeen have the support of the young officers, especially in

the air force.

Spartacist Britain: Before Khomeini came to power the Spartacist tendency put forward the slogan 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran'. Now we warn the left is making the same mistake and supporting the Mujahedeen against Khomeini as a new stage in the revolution. What do you think about the kind of strategy that is needed?

A: Perhaps I should talk a little about my own experience. I remember years ago when I was eighteen years old and a student in Tehran University and that was the time of the so-called 'white revolution'. One of the things the shah did was to give the right to women to vote and that was the time that Khomeini began to fight against the shah. I found a leaflet on our faculty window, explaining that as a result of women working outside in the offices prostitution will spread, complaining in the leaflet that giving women the right to vote or get a job is against Islam and therefore the shah is acting against Islam. I tried to tear the leaflet and I was confronted physically. My political friends took me away telling me we should support any group who is against the shah. I told them that these people are more reactionary than the shah is, how can you do that? After many years when the Islamic revolution started again I was arguing with different Iranian left groups about what is progressive about Khomeini in order to overthrow the shah and achieve their democratic rights. Then that was the time I saw the slogan, 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!' and it was raised by the Spartacists. By raising this slogan they were pointing out that Iran under Khomeini will be as repressive and as bloody as under the shah.

Democratic rights and breaking from imperialist domination can be achieved in Iran only through the proletarian revolution in which the proletariat is the leader of the oppressed masses and peasants. What is needed in Iran is a vanguard party which can mobilise the oppressed and exploited masses. As history has repeated over and over again all over the world: the popular front of the workers and the bourgeoisie ends up in the defeat and massacre of the working class. We have seen it in China 1925-27, in Indonesia and in Chile. The bourgeoisie, as soon as it's challenged by the workers, is forced to crush them. The working class should be politically independent of the bourgeoisie and the working class party should fight for the independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, to establish a workers and peasants government. ■



'Please send me one of your pamphlets "Solidarność", as you describe it: "Company union for CIA and bankers". Makes sense to me. However I have no facts to hand to prove what I am pretty sure is -- and hope to get them from your pamphlet.'

H M, Surrey

ORDER YOURS NOW!

I enclose £ _____ for _____ copy(ies) of 'Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers' at 50p each.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Make payable/post to:
Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE

Scargill puts centrists to test

Which way for the miners?

The prospect that the miners may yet go into battle over pay this winter sends a shiver down the spine of Margaret Thatcher and the entire ruling class. And well it should. The National Coal Board's latest offer of 9.1 per cent is an insulting cut in real wages; the threat of pit closures and redundancies still looms over the head of every miner; and beyond that, the Tories are long overdue for the sort of industrial body blow that sent Heath to the country in 1974. And there is no union so capable of delivering it as the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

Every pithead in Britain should have been manned by pickets on 1 November, when the miners' claim came due. A national miners strike then could have linked up with the Leyland workers. With the social weight of the miners as the motor force, with the fate of the entire Midlands engineering industry in the balance, with the direct links to car workers and engineering workers throughout the country, a joint miners/BL strike would have posed from the outset the possibility of transcending the narrow bounds of trade union economism in a classwide counteroffensive against the Tory government.

Predictably, soon-to-retire NUM president Joe Gormley was having none of that, and postponed negotiations until after Leyland had settled. But what about his various would-be replacements in the current NUM presidential election, in particular Arthur Scargill, much-vaunted leader of the NUM left wing? The *Financial Times* (20 October) told the story:

'Left wingers were curiously silent about yesterday's manoeuvre, apparently because of their preoccupation with the more important long-term issue of the presidential succession.... Indeed the only militant noises came not from Mr Arthur Scargill ... but from Mr Ray Chadburn, president of the Nottinghamshire coalfield and Mr Scargill's main challenger from the right.'

Scargill said, and did, nothing -- and BL workers went down to defeat.

What 'test', Workers Power?

Yet this is the same Arthur Scargill whose campaign is touted by the fake-revolutionary left as showing the way forward for militant miners. While organisations like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and International Marxist Group (IMG) hail Scargill with barely a word of disagreement, the small centrist Workers Power (WP) group adds some criticisms of his record and programme, only to conclude:

'Scargill's reputation and standing amongst militant miners are second to none. His "left" talking must be put to the test of action. That is why we call for a critical vote for Scargill in the coming elections.' (*Workers Power*, November 1981)

Scargill's militant reputation and standing among the miners are real. Saltley Gates is something about which every militant miner can rightly feel proud; and Scargill made his mark by leading the Yorkshire flying pickets which linked up with Birmingham engineers to shut down the Saltley Gates coke depot in the turning point of the 1972 strike. But he never transcended the bounds of reformist trade unionism -- and thus ever since, despite a lot of militant rhetoric and the occasional one-off action like appearances at Grunwicks or Hadfields, Scargill's record has been a straight downhill slide of bureaucratic treachery. Only last February he refused to call his Yorkshire area out alongside Wales and Kent in the near national strike against pit closures, despite being denounced as a 'scab' by angry striking miners. (For more on Scargill's history of betrayals, see 'What has Scargill done for the steelmen?', *Spartacist Britain* no 20, April 1980.) And his inaction and backstabbing have increased in direct proportion to his rise up the NUM and TUC hierarchy.

WP wants to put Scargill to the 'test of action'. But he has been tested many times already and found wanting. In Scargill's left reformist programme itself, there is nothing that warrants critical support against his opponents. Electioneering before a meeting of miners, Scargill typically promised:

'If you want a president who offers socialist policy and wants to see democracy in the

union, I offer you integrity, loyalty and dedication. I will never betray you, and I will never betray the membership.' (*Guardian*, 24 November)

Scargill's socialism is the fool's socialism of reactionary chauvinist import controls combined with social-democratic nationalisations of capitalist losers. His 'democracy' is the bosses' democracy of dragging the union through the capitalist courts, as he did in 1978 over a productivity plan. His 'integrity' is that of a traditional labour faker who talks about a future four-day week to fight redundancies but adamantly refuses to call strike action to stop them today. Within the bounds of trade union reformism, his loyalty must necessarily lie with a defence of the capitalist system; and in the service of a programme limited to the reform of

would have posed the possibility of critical support. In a 26 October leaflet we wrote:

'... if Scargill wants to give any militant miner a reason to vote for him, now is the time for him to put all his militant talk about industrial action against the Tories into practice by calling on the Yorkshire miners -- and every miner in the country -- to defy Gormley's backstabbing procrastination, stick to the original strike date and come out alongside BL workers on November 1 in a joint struggle against the onslaughts of the Tory government.'

That was the test of action for Scargill. Scargill's 'left' talking was put to the test, Workers Power! His decision to keep his mouth firmly shut was a pledge to the right wing and



Saltley Gates, 1972.

capitalism, he has already and will continue to betray the membership of the NUM and the working class as a whole.

The toothless 'critical vote' offered by WP (or, worse, the barely critical fawning of the SWP, IMG et al) comes down in practice to a pledge of unconditional support to left reformists against the right. Thus WP also supports the likes of AUEW 'broad left' candidate Bob Wright, whose militant rhetoric (let alone action) doesn't even approach that of Scargill. For what it's worth, the Scargills and Wrights of this world know that they can always rely on the 'critical' votes of the opportunist left -- always couched in the framework of abstract 'tests' designed to obscure concrete betrayals; always predictable, limp and meaningless.

Expose the reformists

The possibility of revolutionaries extending critical support to Scargill had to be based on an active contradiction which could be exploited. In this election such a possibility was premised on the condition precisely that he acted in accordance with his 'militant reputation' of Saltley Gates -- which appealed to widespread sentiment for class action against the Tories -- and not with his actual reformist programme of working within the framework of capitalism and reliance on the parliamentary lefts. Thus with no illusions and no advance pledge of loyalty, the Spartacist League (SL) recognised that a militant stand by Scargill against Gormley last month in the midst of the election -- despite and indeed in contradiction to his wretched programme and recent history --

the capitalists that here was a 'militant' who could be trusted when the crunch came. For Scargill, militant industrial action and the fight for the presidency were counterposed. And Scargill made his choice.

The question of leadership

In posing the 'test' the way they do, WP makes clear yet again that they offer nothing better than the most left expression of the same politics of militant trade unionism put forward by Scargill, the SWP et al. A revolutionary perspective for the British proletariat must point in the direction of a sharp, decisive class confrontation which can elevate the proletariat onto the road of a direct struggle for state power. The numerous industrial skirmishes which take place in their absence at best win temporary and easily reversible victories. And though every attack of the bosses has to be resisted, in and of themselves such disputes often dissipate the class energies of the proletariat.

The opportunist left's enthusing over such struggles reflects an acceptance of the limits of narrow, sectoral trade unionism imposed by the bureaucracy. A joint BL/miners strike last month would have at the very least raised the possibility of decisive confrontation, as would the transformation of last year's thirteen-week steel strike into a general strike, a perspective for which the SL fought with all the resources at our command. For a national miners strike! For an all-out struggle against the Tory/employer offensive! Forward to a revolutionary leadership of the trade unions! ■

In the camp of Thatcher, Reagan and the Pope SWP hails Solidarność

The leaflet reprinted below was distributed at a Socialist Workers Party (SWP) day school on Eastern Europe, held in London, 14 November. Some 40 people attentively listened as speakers from the Spartacist League (SL) challenged the SWP's 'state capitalist' rationales for lining up behind the imperialist Cold War drive against the Soviet Union and for hailing Polish Solidarność's clerical-nationalist counterrevolutionary bid for power. SWP leading cadre Chris Harman, unable to explain why Reagan, Thatcher, the IMF and CIA all back Solidarność, could only manage a feeble reply of 'guilt by association' and explained that the IMF wanted to 'get their loans back'. Indeed, the imperialists want more than their loans back, they want their markets back. Harman did score one point though -- replying to a speaker from the equally anti-Soviet Revolutionary Communist Party, an organisation which has gone eight years without deciding on the class character of the Soviet Union. Jibed Harman, 'I prefer atheists to agnostics.'

Those SWP members who were revolted by the SWP selling Solidarność badges engraved with Pilsudski's eagle must realise that this is what the 'third camp' has always meant -- the camp of anti-Soviet reaction, Thatcher's camp. A significant number of SWP members bought our press after the meeting, particularly our article on the SWP's origins, 'Korea and the Cliff group' (Spartacist Britain no 24, August-September 1980). Younger SWPers wanted to know when and why the SWP's founders first stepped into the 'third camp'. Answer: in capitulation to the anti-Soviet frenzy of the first Cold War.

Reagan cheers for it. Thatcher cheers for it. Chapple cheers for it. Benn cheers for it. And ... the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) cheers for it. Poland's Solidarność: the 'free trade union' filled with priests and private landholders that extends a special invitation to its conference for the American AFL-CIO's hard-line Cold War leader, Lane Kirkland, and to the man most identified with CIA-inspired subversion in the European workers movement, Irving Brown. Solidarność: an organisation whose leaders want the pope on the TV and his representatives in the government; who advocate a 'market economy' with the assistance of American capital and the protection of the landowning peasantry. With such politics it is no wonder (far less 'hypocrisy') that the representatives of finance-capital and their trusted servants in the labour bureaucracies, lend their enthusiastic support. But do members of the SWP find themselves at all troubled to be in the same company as Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and the pope?

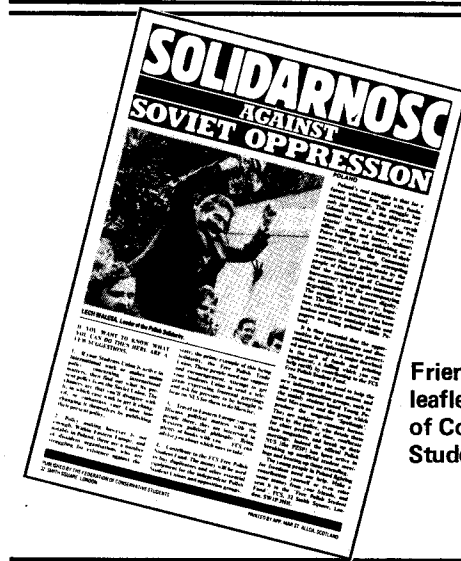
Those who do won't find the needed programmatic alternative to Cliffism in the fulsome advice the SWP has been getting from the International Marxist Group, Workers Power or the Revolutionary Communist 'Party'. Because the Cold War has sent them scurrying towards the 'third camp' as well, so they have nothing to say about the defining difference between Cliffism and Trotskyism. What centrally informs the SWP's politics is not the syndicalist rhetoric which covers its 'militant' labour reformism, but its refusal to defend the Soviet Union. (What self-respecting syndicalist would support a 'union' that quietly condoned Reagan's vicious union-busting of the air traffic controllers?) Between Trotskyism and 'third campism' is the gulf between revolution and reform; and in Poland, between revolution and counterrevolution.

Solidarność has developed in the past year from a contradictory early period in which the many obvious grievances of the Polish working class, to which it gave partial expression, were combined with a dangerous and reactionary Catholic-nationalism. But with its calls for affiliation to the IMF and a parliament on the bourgeois model, the political and economic programme adopted at the first national congress decisively confirms Solidarność's pro-capitalist orientation. The call for 'free trade unions' throughout the Soviet bloc is a slogan lifted straight from the CIA, and there are plenty of examples of what CIA-style 'free trade unions' look like in Latin America. Solidarność's reactionary character is further evidenced by its neanderthal attitude towards women -- eg not one woman on its leading body of 100 -- but this would mean nothing to Tony Cliff, for whom the question of women's oppression is ever expendable to the 'higher interests' of tailing trade

union reformism and anti-Sovietism.

Reactionaries the world over now see in Solidarność a 'heaven-sent' opportunity for capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe, under the sign of the crucifix and the crowned eagle, right on the doorstep of the Soviet Union itself. It is part and parcel of the imperialist Cold War drive to roll back the gains of the world's first and only workers revolution and the extension of those gains -- under the bureaucratic aegis of Stalinism, through the victory of the Red Army and Stalinist-led anti-fascist partisans -- throughout Eastern Europe.

It is an ABC of Marxism that the planned economy and collectivisation of the means of production is a necessary condition for the de-



Friends of Solidarność: leaflet by Federation of Conservative Students.

velopment towards socialism. The Stalinist bureaucracies must be overthrown precisely because they stand as an obstacle to that development through suppression of workers democracy and conciliation of imperialism -- just as the class-collaborationist trade union bureaucrats are an obstacle to the realisation of the potential social power of the trade unions in the struggle against capitalist exploitation. No class-conscious worker would call for joining Thatcher & Co in smashing the workers unions simply to get rid of their misleaders; but the SWP calls for smashing the workers states under the guise of getting rid of Stalinism.

Applying to Poland its syndicalist logic that 'militancy' is a substitute for programme, the SWP ends up in the camp of the most militant anti-communists. *Socialist Worker's* account of the Solidarność congress sides with the 'radicals' against the 'moderate' wing around Walesa and demands that the 'radicals' take power. That is just what they would like to do. For the

Orange reaction...

(Continued from page 3)

In the last local council elections, Paisley's DUP secured only ten seats less than the mainstream Official Unionist Party. Though the Loyalist camp is far from united, the outcome of the London/Dublin summit was greeted with bitter hostility across the board. At the last minute, Paisley's Loyalist competitors retracted their earlier opposition and backed his 'day of action' for fear of losing even more ground. And while Paisley still draws back from a complete break with Westminster, significant sections of 'Unionism' like the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association now openly talk about independence. UDA leader Andy Tyrrie declares emphatically that 'we are not imitation Englishmen but that we are original Ulster people' (*Irish Press*, 12 October). But an independent Six Counties could only mean continued subjugation and bloody oppression of the other 'original Ulster people', the Catholic minority.

Likewise in the Catholic community, the Provisional IRA emerged from the hunger strike campaign financially and numerically stronger, largely at the expense of more moderate reformist-nationalist forces like the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). Bobby Sands' electoral victory in Fermanagh, repeated by Republican Owen Carron, demolished forever Westminster's daydream that the IRA was despised and

most radical of these radicals is the wing around Jan Rulewski and the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) of Leszek Moczulski -- an openly anti-communist, openly capitalist-restorationist, openly clericalist, openly Pilsudskiite organisation which even the bourgeois press admits to be anti-semitic -- and which controlled about 100 of the 800 delegates to the recent congress (see *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 1981).

Proletarian political revolution in Poland cannot be carried through without crushing the counterrevolutionary danger posed by Solidarność. In that conflict, the class-conscious workers of Poland who have not been blinded through their hatred of Stalinism into following the banner of pro-imperialist clerical reaction, would stand with the Red Army should it intervene to suppress Solidarność. It was necessary to fight to shut down scab Sheerness in the interest of winning the steel strike -- even against the opposition of the majority of misled Sheerness workers. So today it is necessary to stop counterrevolutionary Solidarność -- even against the opposition of millions of misled Polish workers -- in the interests of the world revolution.

A victory for Solidarność today would mean a reign of anti-communist white terror to make Poland 'free' for imperialist exploitation and turn it into a dagger aimed at the homeland of Lenin's October. Cliff knows this; but his 'guiding principle' for three decades has been to oppose the Soviet Union. Since the first days of the Russian Revolution, renegades from Marxism have seized upon one or another blatantly anti-Marxist 'new class' theory -- whether 'bureaucratic collectivist' or 'state capitalist' -- as a passage for safe conduct into the world of respectable 'socialism'. Of such types, Trotsky wrote in the 'Manifesto of the Fourth International':

'The class conscious worker knows that a successful struggle for complete emancipation is unthinkable without the defence of conquests already gained, however modest these may be. All the more obligatory therefore is the defence of so colossal a conquest as planned economy against the restoration of capitalist relations. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones.'

It is no accident that the SWP last year opposed the call for turning the steel strike into a general strike, and exudes the deepest defeatism about the revolutionary prospects of the British working class.

There are only two sides in the Cold War. Cliff chose his side more than thirty years ago, when he capitulated to imperialist pressure at the time of the Korean civil war to abandon Trotskyism in favour of a reformist world outlook. Last year, the SWP's Paul Foot was 'exposing' Thatcher for not taking a tougher line to starve the Red Army soldiers out of Afghanistan, so that the 'freedom-loving' mullahs could go about their business of shooting schoolteachers and enslaving women without interference. Today in Poland the SWP cheers on 'radicals' who would feel at home in a National Front rally. That is why the Spartacist League says: The 'third camp' is Thatcher's camp. Is that the camp you want to be in? ■

isolated among the broader Catholic population. Explicitly motivated by 'our strategic political aim of pushing out the SDLP', the recent Sinn Féin conference decided not only to reverse past policy of boycotting elections for Parliament or the Dail, but even to begin sitting in local councils. At the same time it not only reaffirmed but reinforced its sectarian nationalist stance, criticising its previous federalist policy as a 'sop to Loyalism' and demanding centralised Dublin rule over the 32 counties. As one delegate put it, 'With a ballot paper in one hand and an armalite in the other we can take power in Ireland' (*New Statesman*, 6 November).

'Majority rule'?

With the sectarian polarisation threatening to spill over into full-scale armed conflict, the absurdity of the vicarious Green nationalist call of the British left for 'self-determination for the Irish people as a whole' should be obvious. 'Until there is majority rule of all Ireland there will be sectarianism, blood and death', opines the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group (IMG) in the 18 November *Socialist Challenge*. 'But', it adds a week later with characteristic sagacity, 'as recent events have shown the Loyalists are part of the problem, not the solution, to Irish unity'. Indeed. As 'recent events' and innumerable intercommunal bloodbaths around the world have shown, every people when confronted with the choice would

rather be an oppressor majority than an oppressed minority! The IMG's recent fondness for parliamentary niceties notwithstanding, it is only the armalite and not the plebiscite which could bring Green 'majority rule' to 'all Ireland'.

Green nationalism is no less bigoted and reactionary than Orange. In a minor but instructive example of what life under Dublin rule would hold out for Protestant -- and Catholic -- workers, when an 'integrated' state-run school was recently opened in Belfast for the first time, the Catholic hierarchy imposed a boycott. Several years earlier, the Catholic bishop of Belfast threatened to deny communion to any child who attended a state school! When Paisley demagogically declares, 'We prefer to die [and kill!] than give in to the bondage and tyranny of Dublin', he is appealing to an instinctive recognition among Protestant workers that what is posed in a forcible reunification is a reversal of the terms of oppression. And it is this which drives them into the arms of Orange' reaction.

The communal conflict in the North cannot be wished away; it must be addressed head-on with a revolutionary proletarian programme which breaks from the framework of competing communalisms. First and foremost this must mean no concessions to prevailing backward ideology among the Protestant working class. Against the threats of pogromist mobilisations, we recognise the right of the Catholic communities to self-defence. But with the possibility of pervasive inter-communal violence sharply posed, the Protestant communities also have their right to self-defence. While the brunt of communal terror and repression today is borne by the oppressed Catholics, Protestant workers remember atrocities like the 1978 La Mon bombing, and well know that it is not only Orange paramilitaries or UDR men who are the victims of Provisional bombs and bullets. The situation cries out for the formation of anti-sectarian workers militias prepared to combat both imperialist rampage and Orange and Green terror. Such militias would necessarily be integrated, composed in their core of the cadre of a communist vanguard and class-conscious workers who have broken from any variant of nationalist ideology and shed any illusions about British imperialism's bloody 'peacekeeping'.

Fake Marxists alibi their capitulation to Green nationalism with the flimsy theoretical rationale that Orange communalism is simply a creature of British imperialism and the entire Protestant working class a privileged aristocracy of labour. The Unionist connection has historically been powerful, but as is evident it is now badly frayed and is capable of rupture from either side. Life in the 'United Kingdom' is a dubious privilege at best these days, with the North of Ireland even more economically devastated than the Southern Republic. Mass unemployment and social decay for both communities make the Protestants' privileges marginal at best. Even the Harland and Wolff shipyard, a long-standing bastion of working-class support to Orange supremacy, now has one-fourth the work-force it had at its peak. If offered a revolutionary perspective which combatted anti-Catholic discrimination but did not entail reallocating the meagre resources in employment, housing and social services available under capitalism but transcending them under working-class rule, Protestant workers could be won to unified class struggle alongside their Catholic brothers.

The conflicting communal claims of the Protestant and Catholic communities can only be equitably resolved through the eradication of capitalist rule and the obscurantism and nationalism which accompany it. While the Northern Catholics

are part of the Irish Catholic nation, the historical fate of the Protestant community has not yet been determined. Independence and forced reunification would be symmetrically reactionary determinations. Only within the framework of the British Isles as a whole can there be a progressive outcome -- not through phoney confederal schemes between the imperialist overlords of Westminster and Dublin's Green Tories, but through proletarian upsurges which sweep both islands and erect over the grave of this decadent capitalist system workers governments as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles. That is the difficult task facing a Leninist vanguard in Ireland and Britain. But it is truly the only hope for an end to sectarianism, oppression and bloodshed. ■

Nicaragua...

(Continued from page 8)

Revolution, and losing their popular support by protecting capitalist interests against the working masses. This attempt to balance between the fundamental class forces is doomed to failure.

The danger from the US is quite real. Halcon Vista was a practice run for a blockade or invasion of Nicaragua. US colonel Samuel Dickerson told the Honduran military rulers that the joint military exercises were 'a demonstration that the US is willing to give its support to Honduras in a war with Nicaragua' (*Barricada*, 8 October). Then there are the thousands of ex-Somoza guardsmen in camps in Honduras who, no doubt financed by the CIA, stage continual murderous raids into Nicaragua. And the training camps in Florida for a Bay of Pigs-style invasion (see 'Sandinista Nicaragua Under Reagan's Guns', *Workers Vanguard* no 285, 17 July). To meet this threat the FSLN has mobilized the largest army and militia in Central America, well armed and with a fighting spirit incomparably superior to that of the drafted peasant armies of the neighboring dictatorships.

As was the case with Chile under Allende, the US is tightening the screws to 'make the economy scream'. Reagan has cut off \$81.1 million in aid to Nicaragua. As imports fall due to lack of foreign exchange, production is declining and inflation is heading toward 50 percent a year. There have also been threats to embargo Nicaraguan exports, such as Eisenhower did with Cuban sugar. But with some important US allies opposed to this policy of isolating Nicaragua, this will not necessarily work. When Reagan cut off wheat sales to the FSLN a few months ago, the Sandinistas were able to obtain 'wheat of dignity' not only from the USSR but from Canada, the Common Market and other Western countries. France, West Germany and the Socialist International are still backing the FSLN with money and propaganda in an effort to forestall another Cuba by buying them off.

But American pressure has had a profound impact on the Nicaraguan capitalists, a particularly weak branch-office bourgeoisie for whom ties with the US are all-important. This genuine 'fifth column' has the power to throw Nicaragua's economy into chaos. The private sector retains control of 60 percent of the economy, including 75 percent of the crucial agro-export businesses: coffee, cotton, ranching. What they don't have is a real voice in running the country. With no confidence in the FSLN's commitment to a capitalist economy, they have refused to invest, sent capital fleeing to Miami and have been implicated in continual counterrevolutionary plots.

As a result, in order to keep the capitalist economy running, the Sandinistas have channeled fully 80 percent of all government credit and foreign exchange to private businesses. Nevertheless, the business organ *La Prensa*, with a circulation of 80,000 (far more than the FSLN's *Barricada*), has mounted an ever-more-shrill propaganda campaign against the government, for which it has been shut down half a dozen times in recent months. The church, too, reflects this bourgeois opposition and has tried to turn religious fervor against the FSLN, despite the government's attempt to equally embrace Jesus and Sandino.

From the other side, the FSLN is under increasing pressure from the workers and peasants who rose up in Somoza's final days to put 'los muchachos' (the boys) in power. In recent months, the FSLN's own mass-based organizations (Sandinista Defense Committees, Sandinista Youth, Nicaraguan Women's Association, etc) have repeatedly mobilized to press for a crack-down ('mano dura') against 'los contras' (counterrevolutionaries), calling for shutting down *La Prensa*, banning opposition rallies and cheering suggestions of further nationalizations. In conjunction with this campaign, an 'economic and social emergency' law was declared last

summer, confiscating a few token parcels of land from absentee landlords and taking some businesses from 'decapitalizing' capitalists.

But those emergency measures were directed as much, if not more, against militant trade unionists as at the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie. The arrest of the CAUS and PCN leaders was hardly the first time that the FSLN has jailed its left-wing critics (see 'New Sandinista Jailing of Leftists', *Workers Vanguard* no 252, 21 March 1980). Yet the tepid reformists of the Communist Party with their Stalinist dogma of 'two-stage' revolution have vacillated all over the map, from calling strikes in early 1980 to joining a political front with the FSLN last spring. What worries the Sandinistas is rather that any attempt to mobilize the working masses could topple their delicate balancing job.

Referring to leading capitalist politician Alfonso Robelo, junta member Sergio Ramirez warned the bourgeoisie:

'The private sector is risking its neck. If it refuses to cooperate and things get worse, people would not turn to Robelo for a solution, but would demand something much more radical than the mixed economy now offered by the FSLN. And we would have to be at the head of it. We couldn't allow the Trotskyists to do it for us.' (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 2 August)

But what is necessary in Nicaragua is precisely what 'the Trotskyists' alone call for. And this doesn't refer to the reformist Socialist Workers Party which condemns the 'ultra-leftist' PCN/CAUS for 'appealing to the least politically conscious workers' in defending the right to strike (*Militant*, 6 November). Ramirez may not be an avid reader of *Workers Vanguard*, but he knows instinctively that Trotskyism calls for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and international socialist revolution. The international Spartacist tendency calls not for pressuring the petty-bourgeois FSLN, but for a Leninist vanguard party to mobilize the exploited masses independently of their bonapartist rulers, in establishing soviet power and a workers and peasants government. It is this program of permanent revolution, the heritage of the Russian October Revolution, which the Sandinistas (and reformists everywhere) seek to exorcise.

Even at this late date, as the bulk of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie goes over to open counterrevolutionary opposition, the Sandinistas vainly seek to maintain a 'patriotic front' of all classes. Their response to the escalating provocations emanating from the Reagan administration and its Central American puppets has been essentially military -- expand the militias and lock up some oppositionists (while letting the US-backed Robelo go) in order to intimidate the rest. It is possible that the anti-Communist Cold Warriors in Washington may force the Sandinistas to consolidate a bureaucratically deformed workers state on the Cuban model -- and the pressures are building rapidly. But this is certainly not the aim of the FSLN, which leaves a powerful weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie by maintaining and defending (anti-strike laws, etc) a capitalist 'mixed economy'.

What's needed in Nicaragua is not a Castro-style Stalinist regime based on the impossible dream of 'peaceful coexistence' with its neighboring dictatorships and US imperialism ('socialism in one banana republic'), but a revolutionary mobilization of the oppressed workers and peasants throughout Central America. The Sandinistas' refusal to arm the Salvadoran leftist guerrillas is criminal. The only real defense against counterrevolution is socialist revolution to liquidate the capitalists within Nicaragua and aid the workers and peasants of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala in overthrowing the strutting caudillos, bloody death squads, banana companies, absentee landlords and Sears & Roebuck affiliates that constitute Central American capitalism. For workers revolution throughout Central America!

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* 292, 6 November 1981

WORKERS VANGUARD

Pilsudski and Counterrevolution in Poland



Workers Vanguard no 293, 20 November 1981 (fortnightly Marxist paper of the SL/US) single issues: 20p. Make payable/write to Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE.

SUBSCRIBE NOW! SPARTACIST BRITAIN

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

Spartacist Britain: £2.00 for 10 issues

Joint subscription:
£6.00 for 24 issues WORKERS
VANGUARD (fortnightly Marxist paper
of SL/US) plus SPARTACIST BRITAIN
for duration of subscription plus
SPARTACIST (ist journal)

Make payable/write to:
Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Smash imperialist blockade threats! Reagan guns for Cuba

United States imperialism stands poised to commit a counterrevolutionary act of war in the Caribbean. The Reagan administration, attacking black people and busting unions at home, is trying to head off revolution in Central America by drowning it in a sea of blood. Their global Cold War offensive ultimately aims at overthrowing the historic achievements of the workers states, from Cuba to the Soviet Union. In the face of this war danger, socialist revolutionaries and class-struggle militants in the American labor movement must fight to defeat the predatory plans of their capitalist rulers. We demand: Down with Reagan/Haig War Threats! No Blockade! Hands Off Nicaragua! Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents in El Salvador! For Workers Revolution! As we have repeatedly insisted: DEFENSE OF CUBA, USSR BEGINS IN CENTRAL AMERICA!

The war threat was issued as a 'leak' to the *New York Times*. On November 5 a front page article by former State Department and Pentagon official Leslie Gelb quoted unnamed 'key Administration officials' to the effect that

Secretary of State General Alexander Haig had ordered his staff to quickly assemble plans for a variety of military 'options' in the Caribbean and Central America. The most frequently mentioned action is a naval blockade of Nicaragua, a maneuver the US practiced only last month in joint exercises with Honduras. As for Cuba, the plans being bandied about in Washington range from stronger economic sanctions to 'a show of airpower, large naval exercises, a quarantine on the shipment of arms to the island, a general blockade as part of an act of war, and an invasion by American and possibly Latin American forces'. And on El Salvador a 'knowledgeable source' told *Newsweek* (9 November), 'Don't rule out US Marines.'

The axis of administration policy in Central America is its Cold War drive against the Soviet bloc. As Gelb reported, the recent Haig memorandum 'concentrated on getting to "the source" of the problem in the region. The immediate "source" was described as Cuba, with the Soviet Union playing an important role in the background.' The US claims that the Pus-

sians, via Castro and the Sandinistas, are supplying arms to the Salvadoran guerrillas (unfortunately this is very much *not* the case), and as a result the war there 'has become essentially stalemated'. So in order to save El Salvador and other regional 'dominoes' from toppling out of the 'free world', the war gamesmen in Washington come up with a naval blockade. And from there they see a straight line to Bay of Pigs II, Cuban Missile Crisis II and World War III.

Socialist revolutionaries do not rely on the Stalinist bureaucracies of the deformed/degenerated workers states, which have sold out plenty of revolutions, from Spain to Chile. The only guarantee of victory for the Salvadoran masses, of social revolution in Nicaragua, of defense of workers state power in Cuba is through international proletarian revolution under a Leninist-Trotskyist leadership. Hands Off Nicaragua! Military Victory to Salvadoran Leftists! Defend Cuba and the USSR! For Workers Revolution!

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* 293, 20 November 1981

For workers revolution throughout Central America!

Nicaragua heads for showdown



FSLN banner, May Day 1981, Managua: 'Reaction will not pass.' Only expropriation of bourgeoisie can stop reactionary threat.

On October 21, Nicaragua's ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) capped a long period of deteriorating relations with the country's bourgeois opposition by arresting the leaders of the main business organization, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), on charges of violating economic emergency laws and mounting a 'counterrevolutionary offensive'. FSLN leader Daniel Ortega insisted that this step did not mean that the Sandinistas were abandoning their commitment to a 'mixed economy' and 'political pluralism' (*Barricada*, 22 October). Just to prove it, 24 leaders of the small dissident pro-Kremlin Communist Party (PCN) and its trade-union federation (CAUS) were also rounded up and charged with inciting strikes. To further drive home the point that the FSLN considers their left critics the greater danger, a Sandinista court sentenced three of the businessmen to nine months of public service work -- and handed 29-month prison terms to four leftists.

The COSEP gentlemen earned the FSLN's wrath by opposing the national mobilization carried out during the early October 'Halcon Vista' (Hawk's Eye) joint naval maneuvers by the US and Honduras. At a mass rally October 9, minister

of defense Humberto Ortega told a huge crowd that they should compile lists of 'counterrevolutionary elements' for use in case of invasion or other emergency. Right-wingers claimed that Ortega said such elements could be 'hanged along the highways' and COSEP spokesmen charged the government with preparing 'genocide' against the capitalist class. A few days later they were in jail.

In an official statement, junta member Daniel Ortega tried to justify the arrest of the leftists by saying that they 'accused the government and the Sandinista Front of surrendering the country to Latin American and Canadian investors' (*Sintesis Latinoamericana*, 26 October). Two CAUS leaders were arrested as they were leaving the Council of State, from which they had just been expelled for 'promoting division in the working class'. This bonapartist repression against leftist half-critics of the petty-bourgeois nationalist FSLN regime must be sharply denounced by revolutionary socialists everywhere! Yet the Stalinist fellow-traveling US *Guardian* and the reformist anti-Trotskyist *Militant* sup-

port and excuse the arrest of PCN/CAUS militants, a measure aimed at shoring up the crumbling 'national unity' with the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie!

Whatever the particular excuse used to jail the COSEP leaders, it has been clear for some time that a showdown between the FSLN and the bourgeois opposition is coming, and sooner rather than later. Two years ago the bulk of the Nicaraguan capitalists felt that life under the rapacious Somoza dynasty was more unbearable than the risks involved in putting the Castro-inspired radical-nationalist FSLN in power. It was a political marriage of convenience that was rocky at best. Now, with the FSLN consolidating a monopoly of power and US imperialism under Reagan applying heavy economic and military pressure on the Sandinistas, many businessmen have gone into increasingly open counterrevolutionary opposition.

The Sandinistas' 'middle course' is an attempt to steer a path between provoking US military intervention by emulating the Cuban

continued on page 7