

# SPARTACIST



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BRITAIN

## Drive out NATO/CIA lovers!

# Labour's Cold War

For the past year and a half, the Labour Party has been undergoing its most significant internal differentiation and split in half a century, catalysing a major realignment throughout British parliamentary politics. Significant elements of the right-wing leadership have decamped from the labour movement to form the bourgeois Social Democratic Party, taking with them a couple of dozen MPs and a good chunk of the party's careerist local government officials. Championed by the bourgeois media and buttressed by the adherence of middle class elements seeking a haven from the class struggle, the SDP in alliance with the Liberals threatens to unlock the Tory/Labour two-party domination of postwar parliamentary politics.

Roy Jenkins' victory in the recent Glasgow by-election underlines the threat posed by the SDP to Labour and the Tories. Jenkins' electoral win all but assures him the leadership not only of the SDP but of the Alliance as a whole forcing Shirley Williams and David Owen to back off from their previous implied threats to contest a leadership election. The squabble between Jenkins and William Rodgers on the one hand and the Williams/Owen wing on the other reflects a difference existing among the capitalist class in general over where the SDP should aim for its base of support -- anti-Thatcher Tory voters or disaffected Labour supporters, respectively.

The SDP's meteoric rise since the 'Limehouse Declaration' a year ago by the Shirley Williams/David Owen/William Rodgers/Roy Jenkins Gang of Four has led to a great deal of reassessment in bourgeois circles. Jenkins' Glasgow Hillhead by-election victory dispelled more of the initial scepticism about the party's prospects as a splinter of disgruntled right-wing Labourites, and has led to a resurgence of recrimination within the Labour Party between left and right wings. Increasing sectors of bourgeois opinion have shifted from using the SDP as a stick to beat Labour back into line to supporting the SDP as an openly anti-union 'left of centre' replacement for Labour. Faced with a deeply riven and patently unreliable Labour Party on the one hand and a broadly despised Thatcherite Tory Party on the other, layers of the bourgeoisie now see in the SDP a flicker at the end of the tunnel. The *Economist* (6 February) welcomed the SDP's decision to vote for the viciously anti-union Tebbit Bill and speculated:

'In the old two-party days the Tories could never build a broad enough coalition to take on the unions successfully. Union leaders could always call on class loyalties and fire old hatreds to thwart Tory reforms. Labour, for its part always rushes to its paymasters' defence in opposition. In government, it feels forced into some union-bashing of its own, only to find that the unions pull too

many Labour strings for it to be effective. The emergence of the Social Democrats as a third force in current British politics may now offer a way out.'

Within the Labour Party, the deep-going left/right divide manifested in the SDP split and subsequently reflected in the bitter deputy leadership contest continues to tear the party apart -- notwithstanding the much-ballyhooed union-brokered 'truce of Bishops Stortford'. Ex-left party leader Michael Foot, elevated to power at the behest of the trade union bureaucracy as a caretaker bonaparte, strives ineffectually to shore up the discredited and despised Denis Healey-led right wing against the left around Tony Benn. Behind him another round of civil war is brewing.

Indeed, Labour's disastrous showing at Hillhead, finishing in third place behind the Tories, has led to a renewal of recriminations inside the party. The right-wing cabal of Denis Healey/Roy Hattersley/Peter Shore blamed the growing influence of the pseudo-Trotskyist Militant tendency for the defeat and attacked Tony Benn for his declaration in the run-up to Hillhead that he would oppose any witch-hunt against 'the followers of Leon Trotsky in the Labour Party'. Foot pulled together a meeting of the Shadow Cabinet to 'try and cool the right wingers down, telling them not to make any more moves before the inquiry into Militant is completed. But threats of proscription and expulsion which have been flying against Militant (as well as the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Organiser Alliance and other Labour left groupings) continue to occupy centre stage. The right wing has particularly focussed on the challenge from the left in constituency reselection contests. In Liverpool alone, five of the eight prospective parliamentary candidates are Militant supporters.

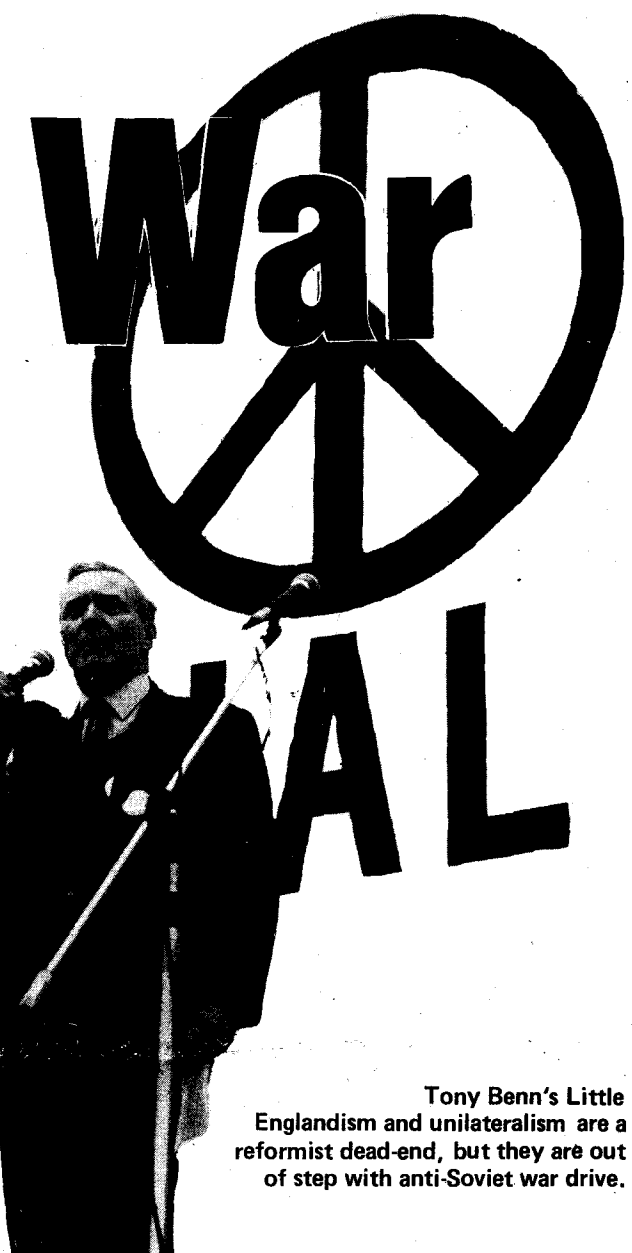
The National Executive Committee vote to deny endorsement to Militant tendency supporter Pat Wall as prospective parliamentary candidate for Bradford North is characteristic of the right's attempted witchhunting counteroffensive. While the haemorrhage to the SDP continues, those right wingers like Healey who have chosen (for now?) to stay and fight increasingly and provocatively champion an 'SDP-moderate Labour coalition'. The right wing of the TUC bureaucracy back them up, with the ISTC's Bill Sirs congratulating Shirley Williams on her by-election win at Crosby and writing:

'We cannot write off the SDP, who could well be part of a coalition with Labour if Labour fails to clinch a decisive victory.'  
(*Banner*, February 1982)

This seems designed to enrage a left which is trying to live down the despised Callaghan era with its anti-working-class Lib/Lab pact.

### Cold War cold split

The deep schism in today's Labour Party is not simply another, typical, case of the party in opposition striving to refurbish its 'socialist' credentials among working people alienated by years of betrayal from the Westminster benches. Thus it will not lightly be healed; thus the palpable sense on all sides that the Labour Party cannot go on in the same old way. There is normally a symbiotic relationship between left and right in the party. Together they make a fine team for attacking the working class: while one lulls the workers with airy talk of socialism the other does (or both do) the bosses' dirty work. This was certainly true in the last Labour government, when Benn played a major role in giving a left cover to anti-



Tony Benn's Little Englandism and unilateralism are a reformist dead-end, but they are out of step with anti-Soviet war drive.

working-class betrayal. Today, however, this symbiosis has lapsed.

A distorted and uneven class line is being cleaved in the Labour Party under the impact of renewed anti-Soviet Cold War; between Little England reformists and NATO/CIA-loving 'internationalists', lacking in sharp programmatic counterposition but necessarily reflected in and inseparable from domestic class questions. As we wrote at the time of the SDP split:

'The fragility of the capitalist economy today manifestly leaves no room for reformist manoeuvres and fooling around with social-democratic "reflation" policies;... But it is the international situation which is key to understanding the goings-on in the Labour Party. The imperialist uproar over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan signalled that the Cold War was back with a vengeance; Reagan's inauguration made it official....

'Above all the "Gang of Three" know that capitalist Britain has no hope except as a junior partner of US imperialism.'  
(*Spartacist Britain* no 30, March 1981)

Reduced in status from its hegemonic position to simply the most powerful of several imperialist powers (marked and in part exacerbated by its humiliating defeat in Vietnam), American imperialism prepared itself, with Carter's anti-Soviet 'human rights' campaign, for a course of open military confrontation with the Soviet Union -- aiming at a favourable redivision of world markets over the corpse of the Soviet workers state. The international economic crisis which fuels this anti-Soviet war drive intersects in Britain a deep, long-term structural decline. To retain their standing as any sort of imperialist power, the dominant sections of the British bourgeoisie see no course other than an emasculation of the trade unions at home coupled with slavish allegiance to the Atlantic alliance.

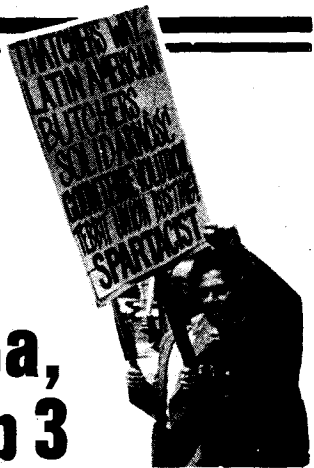
In this context the contradictions of the Labour Party as a bourgeois workers party have been brought sharply to the fore. In its role as a defender of British capitalist interests, the central core of the postwar Labour bureaucracy has been a staunch advocate of the 'American

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### El Salvador:

## Smash the junta!

## Defend Cuba, USSR! . . . p 3



## On the road back from Mandalay

# Falklands: Jingoism amok

If it had happened one day earlier, many people hearing the news would have thought that it was just an April Fools Day joke. Argentina has invaded the British colony of the Falkland Islands. And now Britain is despatching a fleet of 40 odd ships halfway round the world to salvage its tattered imperialist pride and maybe try to seize the islands back. 'It's war!' screams the banner headline in the *Sun*. Hastily scrawled blackboard messages at London tube and rail stations call on the Third Parachute Regiment -- butchers of Derry's Bloody Sunday -- to report for duty immediately. An unholy parliamentary alliance of the Labour Party and Tory backwoodsmen bays for Argentine blood. The xenophobic hysteria is real and dangerous, but ought to take the prize as an example of capitalist irrationality.

Viewed from the White House it must seem positively sacrilegious. Just when you are trying to line up all of the righteous nations of the 'free world' for a holy war against the Soviets, they all turn around and start to poke each other's eyes out. The Chinese have been sulking ever since Reagan tried to do the decent thing and ship in a few new modern arms to his old Kuomintang friends on Taiwan. Alexander Haig wants the Arabs to see that the Soviet Union is the biggest threat to peace in the Middle East, but they keep saying 'no it's not -- it's the Zionist expansionists' (as well as fighting among themselves). Now their best friend in Europe and one of their staunchest allies in Latin America are threatening to blow each other's respective navies to pieces over a collection of barely inhabited islands and rocks in the South Atlantic. Given the character of the Reagan administration, it would not surprise us to learn that these nuclear warmongers have sought quiet solace in the knowledge that the American military has contingency plans to nuke all but themselves and two or three other countries of the world.

Certainly the international proletariat may take some grim satisfaction if the Argentinians and British did succeed in destroying a good part of each other's fleets. Especially the toiling masses of Central America who will recall that Thatcher and Argentine dictator Galtieri were among the handful who backed the junta's election fraud in El Salvador by sending observers, that the British task force will include ships that have just finished taking part in naval provocations against Cuba and Nicaragua in the Caribbean and that the Argentinians have been pushing for a role in Central America, including in covert counterrevolutionary operations in Nicaragua.

But in the two weeks that it will take the British armada to reach the Falklands, a more peaceful solution may well be found. While both Margaret Thatcher and General Leopoldo Galtieri have considerable domestic prestige staked, both governments are likely to be made sharply aware, if they have forgotten it in the heat of the moment, that in this part of the world it is the US which calls the shots. The Americans will get the bases they need whichever way, and whatever murmurs of sympathy may come from the White House at Britain's discomfiture, the chance is that they will calculate that the greatest danger lies in the possible destabilisation of the Argentinian gorillas' junta if they are discredited. Margaret Thatcher may like this sort

of thing, but this is a much tougher nut than an embassy job by the SAS, even if Prince Andrew is a helicopter pilot on one of the ships (how does Duke of Falkland sound, mum?). The painful memory of the 'cousins' disapproval at the time of the Suez fiasco still haunts the Tory Party 26 years of imperial decline later. And what decline! John Nott declared for the Cabinet that the 'British armed forces do not surrender'. But even taking into account the thinness of the red line, they didn't seem to hold out very long at all.

As some Tory backbenchers are at pains to point out, Britain does not have the military capacity to defend indefinitely, or even in the present conditions in the short term, a group of islands some 8000 miles away. Hence British diplomacy has been attempting for several years to get rid of the Falkland Islands problem. For the Argentinian junta to use the military hardware so willingly provided by British and US imperialism for any other purpose than the legitimate oppression of the working class, however, just wasn't cricket. Speeding away in the dead of night from Windsor in order to avoid, as the *Guardian* put it, 'facing Her Majesty with the loss of one of her few remaining colonies over the breakfast table', Margaret Thatcher must have been piqued.

The Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas to the Argentinians) with their population of 650,000 sheep, probably the world's biggest colony of penguins and 1813 English-speaking fishermen and sheep farmers are hardly the jewel of anyone's empire. In an imperialist world it is too much to expect that they could be left alone to fish, graze sheep and entertain the occasional genuine scientific expedition. Besides reportedly rich fishing waters, there are now unconfirmed reports of vast oil resources in the area (though the technology to tap this is still not perfected). As well the islands have some strategic importance; witness the major naval engagements fought in the vicinity in both world wars. In a sense the islanders are the victims of the situation, but their problem is that they want to be part of the British Empire -- an empire that no longer exists. Were it the case that the Falklanders simply wanted the right not to be part of Argentina then there is no reason why they should be forced to be. But their belief in the virtues of British sovereignty ('more British than the British', with pictures of the Queen and Manchester United in each of the four public houses) has turned into a cruel joke at their own expense.

Nor is the Argentine attack a matter of Argentina's self-determination or of its national consolidation. Throughout the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans are hundreds of uninhabited or sparsely populated islands which were seized by the major European imperialists and later the US. These safe anchorages, coaling stations and staging posts changed hands as the respective powers' influence ebbed or grew. With the decline of the European empires, local powers developed their own ambitions. Across the world, in the Maldives for example, the native populations must be wondering whose troops might come wading ashore on their beaches.

For the Argentinian junta under General Galtieri the Falklands invasion is a vital focus of national unity in the face of developing internal unrest over the catastrophic state of the economy. Just a few days before the attack there was a 15,000-strong demonstration organised by the General Confederation of Labour in Buenos Aires with large scale arrests. Besides his efforts to get involved in El Salvador, Galtieri earned his reputation butchering left-wing guerrillas, and wants a South Atlantic treaty organisation with South Africa. Nationalist fervour in Argentina is undoubtedly being fuelled by the memory of being treated as an economic colony of Britain before World War I, but Galtieri may also soon turn his attentions to 'settling' the dispute with Chile over the Beagle channel. Those still alive among the thousands of leftists and trade unionists who have disappeared under the junta may well find that the first fruit of taking the Malvinas is the establishment of an Argentinian Robben's Island on one of the more barren out-crops. The Argentinian proletariat had best disregard the nationalist appeals and get on with the struggle to smash the bloody junta.

But if the Argentine invasion is being used for 'national unity' purposes in Buenos Aires, so too the Labour Party in Britain is milking the issue to make despicable patriotic propaganda in league with the most warmongering Tory backbenchers. Over the weekend Parliament held its first such emergency sitting since Suez. There that 'inveterate peacemonger' Michael Foot combined with the worst Tory Colonel Blimps to denounce Thatcher's 'betrayal' of the Falkland Islanders. Naturally, the revolting display of jingoism that united left and right in the Labour Party (Tony Benn was reportedly to be seen in Parliament sporting the tie of the Royal Naval Reserve) was cloaked under the call to defend the Falklanders' 'right to self-determination' against the 'tin-pot dictators' of Argentina. Ever since 'poor little Belgium' social democracy has covered its support for imperialist militarism with the same demagoguery. Already Tory backwoodsmen are shrieking that the seizure of the Falklands proves the need for increased defence expenditure and minimally no cuts in the Royal Navy, a line which will no doubt find its echo in the Labour Party, as these social chauvinists plead for nuclear disarmament on the grounds that it undermines Britain's conventional defence. We demand that Britain get out of all its colonies from the Falklands to Hong Kong. We say 'Not a penny, not a man, for the imperialist armed forces'. And we emphasise that it is the duty of the British working class to oppose lock, stock and barrel any British military adventure in the South Atlantic. ■

## Liverpool Spartacist Committee formed

The Spartacist League was pleased to welcome to our contingent on the 28 March El Salvador demonstration the members of the newly formed Liverpool Spartacist Committee. Established in February, the Committee is composed of a number of individuals of varying political backgrounds and experience. Based on agreement on central programmatic positions of the Spartacist League -- principally the Russian question, Ireland, the Labour Party, Central America and the fight against fascism -- the formation of the Committee underlines our desire to seize opportunities for expansion even when they arise in areas not previously designated as immediate priorities for expansion.

In general there can be no stable intermediary of 'sympathiser' as an organised category in a Bolshevik cadre organisation. But since a number of comrades were won to the programme of the SL in an area where, at the time, we had no organised presence it was clear that temporary and exceptional organisational measures were required to compensate for the experience normally gained working in one of our branches. Through the Committee these comrades will have the opportunity to engage in regular and disciplined political activity for our programme, hopefully as a prelude to membership of the SL.

The comrades' introduction to the politics of the SL included a series of educational classes covering the issues outlined above, as well as an SL national educational weekend school which included a history of the international Spartacist tendency and a discussion on the lessons of the Russian Revolution, in particular the Bolsheviks' struggle to retain state power following the October insurrection. In the course of the discussion, and in the light of the comrades' experience of the opportunist left organisations in Liverpool they were drawn to the SL as the authentic embodiment of the traditions of Lenin and Trotsky. Whilst carrying out work amongst the Liverpool left, the members of the Committee will be involved in systematic education to deepen their grasp of the Bolshevik programme and the tasks and opportunities facing a revolutionary propaganda group in a period of escalating anti-Soviet war drive and deepening capitalist crisis. Clearly the formation of the Committee opens a potentially fruitful area for the further growth of the SL -- so the Liverpool left can look forward to some persistent and sharp political combat! ■

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# Spartacist contingents at El Salvador demos



London: Marching for military victory to Salvadoran left.

Spartacist Britain

## Smash the junta! Defend Cuba, USSR!



Washington: Reformists back cops; Trotskyists back Salvadoran insurgents.

Workers Vanguard

London -- '1-2-3-4: take San Salvador! 5-6-7-8: nothing to negotiate!' rang the chants of the 80-strong Spartacist League contingent on 28 March when an estimated 15,000 people turned out to march against imperialist-backed junta terror in El Salvador. On a demonstration dominated by Labourite and liberal calls for negotiations to achieve a 'political solution' to imperialism's losing war, the SL contingent raised the slogan of military victory to the leftist insurgents. Emphasising that Reagan and Thatcher's support to the blood-soaked Salvadoran dictatorship and its 'democratic' election-by-death fraud was an integral part of the anti-Soviet war drive, we chanted 'Defence of Cuba/USSR begins today in El Salvador!'

The pro-capitalist popular-frontist nature of the demonstration was highlighted by the platform presence of leading Liberal Party spokesman Lord Avebury. It was notable that the only significant barracking Avebury received was when he mentioned the SDP-Liberal Alliance -- his claim that the policies of Reagan and Thatcher would 'drive them [the oppressed masses in Central America] into the arms of the Communists' went unopposed by the bulk of the rally. Labour Party leader Michael Foot, in a typically vacuous speech, could only add that it was necessary to support the masses in struggle until they achieved 'democracy'.

A lifeless contingent from the International Marxist Group was only sparked into action when the IMG leadership orchestrated an apparently premeditated provocative assault on the SL contingent. Before the demonstration moved off from Hyde Park the SL contingent formed up behind the Young Communist League (YCL). Shortly thereafter the IMG moved up alongside the SL, forming up a line of 'stewards' facing the right hand corner of our contingent. They then cynically placed a line composed only of women -- who may or may not have been aware that they were being used as cannon fodder -- in front of their stewards. As the march moved off the IMG stewards attacked our contingent over the top of the women, in an action likely to provoke police intervention and arrests. Only swift defensive action by the SL stewards, with an SL marshal shouting repeatedly to the IMG stewards 'Pack it in comrades, there's nothing in this for either side', forced the IMG to retreat and prevented the incident from getting out of hand. As it was a leading IMG'er was briefly led off by the police.

Such hysterical action by an IMG leadership in an increasingly demented anti-Spartacist frenzy has to stop, playing as it does into the hands of the enemies of both our organisations. Our desire is for *political* combat, not the physical variety seemingly preferred by the IMG leaders. This was shown later in the demonstration when we replied to the IMG's pacifist chant 'No More Vietnams' (which stands in marked contrast to the IMG's one time penchant for Che's slogan '2, 3, many Vietnams') with the chant 'Vietnam was a victory: 2, 3, many defeats for imperialism!'

The Little England chauvinism underlying the social-pacifist politics of the majority of the demonstrating organisations was graphically illustrated by the Communist Party slogan 'Keep Reagan out -- El Salvador and Britain'. So it was appropriate that amongst the numerous individual militants won to the SL's aggressively anti-imperialist contingent were a group of YCLers repulsed by the CP's social-chauvinist anti-Sovietism. And it was the SL, not the CP, who drew the links between Reagan's roll back in Central America and his support to counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc, chanting 'From Poland to El Salvador, stop NATO's drive to war!'

Washington -- Perhaps 35,000 protesters marched in Washington against Reagan's policies in El Salvador but there were two counterposed class programs raised on March 27. The popular-frontists' 'stop the war' parade looked to the Democratic Party; the Trotskyists' 'win the war' rally looked to the Salvadoran masses and the American working class.

27 March was an all-day political struggle in the streets of Washington between the 'reds' who called for leftist insurgents to win the war in El Salvador and rad-lib 'doves' who want to call the war off (particularly now that the rebels are winning). From early morning a faction centred on Sam Marcy's Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF) of the March 27 Coalition sought to provoke the cops, the armed fist of the capitalist state, to exclude the Spartacist League/US. But the superb display of police power suggests that far more powerful forces than the measly reformists had put a fix in against the revolutionaries.

Yet all the attempts to quarantine us with heavies and cops and anti-Communist slander did

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# Medvedev exposes EP Thompson's anti-Sovietism

## 'Peace loving' European imperialism?

Reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 299, 19 February 1982

During the past year hundreds of thousands of anti-war protesters have marched throughout West Europe. Among their slogans are the ironic British 'No Annihilation without Representation' and the frankly pacifistic German 'Ohne uns' (Leave us out of it). In Reagan's America the European 'peace' movement is seen as a dangerous symptom of neutralism, its leaders denounced as Commie dupes if not direct Kremlin agents. In reality we are witnessing an upsurge of European nationalism, led by the social democrats and directed at both the United States and the Soviet Union. Stripped of its utopian and hysterical elements, the Europacifist vision is of a greater European 'democratic' imperialist bloc stretching from the Thames to the Vistula.

The left-wing British historian Edward Thompson's article, 'Notes on Exterminism, the Last Stage of Civilization' (*New Left Review*, May-June 1980), is an influential statement of this new European pacifist current. From the title alone, a takeoff of Lenin's 'Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism', it is clear that Thompson's ideological fire is directed against communists, who lay the war drive at the capitalists' doorstep. Thompson insists that the USSR, no less than US imperialism, has 'its own hawkish imperatives of ideology and strategy (Czechoslovakia, 1968; Afghanistan, 1980).' In fact, he claims that 'it is the more dangerous in that it is unchallenged by democratic exposure.' Thompson concludes with a call for a Euro-popular front against the 'hawks' both East and West:

'Only an alliance which takes in churches, Eurocommunists, Labourists, East European dissidents (and not only "dissidents"), Soviet citizens unmediated by Party structures, trade unionists, ecologists -- only this can possibly muster the force and the internationalist elan to throw the cruise missiles and the SS-20s back.'

Since he wrote this Europacifist manifesto, Thompson has sought to popularize the slogan, 'A nuclear-free Europe from Portugal to Poland.' Why Poland? Because the emergence of the anti-Communist and pro-Western Solidarnosc greatly whetted the appetite of the imperialist bourgeoisies and their social-democratic henchmen to 'roll back' the post-1945 Soviet sphere. Thus left-Labourite leader Tony Benn used the large London nuclear disarmament rally last October to hail Solidarnosc for having 'the courage to stand up to the Kremlin.' And after the December 13 crackdown in Poland, Thompson participated in a right-wing pro-Solidarnosc rally. This 'peace' movement leader has no compunction about making common cause against the Soviet Union with people whose idea of a pacifist is Marshal Pilsudski.

### Medvedev dissents

Thompson would very much like to extend the movement for unilateral nuclear disarmament into the Soviet bloc, indeed into the USSR itself. One political figure in Russia to whom Thompson might look is Roy Medvedev. A man hard to classify politically, Medvedev straddles the border between liberal Stalinism and left social-democracy. Unlike pro-Western 'dissidents' of the Sakharov stripe, who are egging on Washington in its anti-Soviet war drive (demanding economic sanctions against the USSR), Medvedev advocates 'socialist democracy', sympathizes with the ideals of the Russian Revolution and champions East-West detente. Yet the November/December 1981 *New Left Review* contains a polemic against the Europacifist Thompson by Roy Medvedev and his brother Zhores (now in exile in Britain). Although the tone is mild, and they share basic political premises, their objections to Thompson's article are significant.



Thompson/CND want to ban Soviet bombs too...

The Medvedevs strongly disagree with Thompson's position that the Soviet system is driven by the logic of 'exterminism' and represents no less a threat to mankind than does American capitalist imperialism:

'Nevertheless, despite the more open character of American society, we will argue that the role of successive US administrations has been, and continues to be, more provocative and less predictable in the global interrelationship between East and West.'

Moreover, on this question the Medvedevs insist that they are expressing the deeply held beliefs of the typical Soviet citizen:

'In particular, we think that the rank and file of Soviet society, including many of those who contest bureaucratic authority within it, would be unlikely to accept Thompson's argument -- so central to his analysis of the dynamic of "exterminism" -- that responsibility for the current crisis can be divided equally between the USA and USSR.' ('The USSR and the Arms Race')

While the Medvedevs do not deal with Poland, here too the Soviet people turn a deaf ear to the siren calls of Western social democracy. Thompson's fervent support for the anti-Communist Solidarnosc would gain no more favorable

hearing in Moscow and Leningrad than his call for Soviet unilateral nuclear disarmament. Western journalists all agree that the Soviet man in the street has no sympathy at all for the Polish 'free trade union'. For example, the *New York Times* (27 December 1981) reports from Moscow:

'An opinion often heard among Russians is that the Poles are insolent freeloaders draining Soviet resources; the declaration of martial law produced less popular sympathy for the Poles than concern that Russians might be drawn in.'

The Medvedevs demonstrate absolutely convincingly that the development of Soviet nuclear weaponry has been a defensive response to the real threat of nuclear annihilation coming from the US. They remind historian Thompson which country first used nuclear weapons, and why:

'Soviet analysts -- corroborated by not a few eminent Western historians -- have generally viewed the American decision to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs in August 1945, at a moment when the surrender of Japan was already imminent, as a demonstration of force primarily designed to intimidate the USSR at this juncture.'

The Medvedevs point out that after World War II: 'Despite the absence of a single other nuclear power in the world, the United States accelerated the development of its nuclear arsenal and the fleet of special bombers which allowed it to strike anywhere in the USSR.'

Nor is the US nuclear threat to the Soviet Union a matter of ancient history. Thompson's Russian critics point out that during the past decade the Pentagon has persistently sought technological breakthroughs to give it a qualitative superiority over the USSR, from the multiple-warhead MIRVs to the new Cruise missiles. As for the Reagan administration, the Medvedevs only understate the obvious: 'It is rejection of the prospect of parity with the USSR that motivates US policy in the present period.' Reagan ran for president on a platform of nuclear 'superiority' over the Russians, ie, regaining first-strike capability, and plans to spend \$1.5 trillion to achieve this.

At one level the Medvedevs' polemic devastates Thompson's position; at the deeper level it does not. Thompson and other Europacifists could possibly concede the empirical argument, that the US has consistently taken the lead in the arms race, without this changing their basic program. They would still demand Soviet unilat-

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Helmut Schmidt (left) and Jimmy Carter

# USec loves Castro, Castro hates Solidarność -

# What is a poor opportunist to do?

Observers of the International Marxist Group (IMG) and its woefully misnamed 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' (USec) will have noticed recent strange subterranean rumblings and grumblings. What's up?

First there is the letters page of *Socialist Challenge*, which has suddenly become replete with back-and-forth polemic about the opposition of Fidel Castro and the ruling Nicaraguan Sandinistas to Polish Solidarność. Ever since editor Phil Hearse's 11 February article attacking the Cuban/FSLN line, a string of fellow IMG leaders have penned letters rallying to the defence of Fidel & Co. Not in order to endorse the latter's opposition to counterrevolutionary Solidarność and its project of Western-style 'democracy', of course; while admitting that the Cubans are 'mistaken' about Poland, Brian Lyons writes in a typical contribution:

'Rather than firing both barrels at Nicaragua and Cuba because of their line on Poland we should be devoting more space to publicise their overwhelmingly progressive policies. That too, alongside Solidarność, is the best advertisement for Socialism in over twenty years.' (4 March)

But at the same time the IMG is obviously having some trouble, if not with its pro-Solidarność line per se, then at least with trying to carry it into the real world. The problem is that while active support to Thatcher's favourite 'trade union' just isn't that popular in the broad labour movement, it is popular among anti-Communist Cold Warriors of all stripes (notably the emigre Pilsudskiite Poles who populate the Polish Solidarity Campaign [PSC]). So the leadership has been under attack from all sides: while some letters bewail *Socialist Challenge's* failure to call loudly enough for 'workers sanctions' against Polish imports, others attack the organisation for sharing political platforms with virulent anti-Communists. One (18 March) pillories the decision to march on the 20,000-strong pro-Solidarność march in London last December because it contained 'enemies of socialism and works' rights'. Who else would you expect on a demonstration in support of counterrevolution, we might ask.

## Split in the USec?

None of this is terribly unusual for the notoriously faction-ridden opportunists of the IMG -- except that the squabbles in the pages of *Socialist Challenge* reflect something even more odd going on internationally in the USec. About two months ago a new magazine, *International Viewpoint*, was launched as an English-language organ 'published under the auspices of the United Secretariat'. On the face of it *International Viewpoint* is a 'broad church' organ tailored to the USec's projects of entry into European social democracy. The initial editorial both rejected the Leninist concept of the necessity of a vanguard party to lead the proletariat in worldwide revolution and claimed that 'possibilities for international collaboration' are today greater than they were at the time of Lenin's Third International! 'Collaboration' with whom, if not the social democracy -- which USec leader Ernest Mandel lauded in a meeting in Paris in January for taking a 'class position' on Jaruzelski's counter-coup in Poland.

But there is more to it than meets the eye. When the reformist American Socialist Workers Party (USWP) and the Mandel-led majority 'dissolved' their respective factions in the USec in 1977, part of the deal was to liquidate the English-language edition of *Inprecor* into the USWP's *Intercontinental Press*. At the time, the USWP warned in no uncertain terms that if this deal were undone, it would be one of the 'three potentially explosive problems' which could lead to reconstituting factions and therefore pose the possibility of a split ('The Accomplishments of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction: A Balance Sheet' by Jack Barnes, *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* vol XIV, no 8, September 1977).

Is the publication of *International Viewpoint* paving the way for a split in the USec? Observers were urged to draw that conclusion at the recent congress of the Swedish section of the USec (which changed its name to 'Socialist Party' on the grounds that the term 'Communist' is dis-

credited! [see *International Viewpoint*, 15 March]). Appealing on behalf of the Swedish leadership, Gote Kilden urged the various tendencies in the KAF-SP to dissolve on the grounds that in any case, the USWP and the USec would not be affiliated for more than a 'few more



London, 20 December: IMG rallies to Solidarność counter-revolution.

months'! To the best of our knowledge, this assertion was not contested by the USWP observer nor by Alain Krivine, representing the USec leadership.

But what are the political issues over which the USWP and the Mandelites would split? No sooner had the first *International Viewpoint* appeared than a furious polemic broke out in the pages of *Intercontinental Press* paralleling the one in *Socialist Challenge*. First Mandel & Co attacked the USWP for 'departing from the Trotskyist tradition' because of their reluctance to praise the ruling French Socialists' pro-Solidarność demonstrations. In response, Barnes & Co are accusing the Europeans at some length of capitulating to social-democratic anti-Communism and daring to attack Fidel's revolutionary credentials over Poland. But if the USec majority is slightly embarrassed by the USWP's glorification of Castro and that industrial powerhouse of the Caribbean, Grenada, this would hardly seem to constitute the programmatic basis for a split. Moreover, the USWP's unbelievably hypocritical polemics notwithstanding, neither wing has any substantive difference over liquidation into social democracy; they both support Solidarność down the line; they both are for withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan; they have no substantive difference over the



Cuban Communist Party paper, Granma (27 December 1981).

Russian question.

The deeply reformist US SWP has been becoming increasingly bizarre since everyone older than Jack Barnes was removed from the top leadership. Thus this organisation, which calls for unilateral Soviet disarmament in the face of Reagan's Cold War and explicitly denies Soviet defencism in the bourgeois courtroom, now has the audacity to attack the Mandelites for participating in right-wing Poland demonstrations on the grounds that they 'leave out' 'opposition to our own capitalist governments, and genuine proletarian internationalism, which necessitates defense of the workers states against imperialism' (*Intercontinental Press*, 1 March)! The following week, Barnes & Co again denounced the Mandelite French LCR and two of its leading members (or is it now ex-members) Jean-Pierre Vernant and Henri Weber, for signing a reactionary call for a demonstration condemning the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (a position shared by both the LCR and US SWP!). All this combined with glowing articles with headlines worthy of 1930s style fellow travellers ('Grenada: Whole Country a School', 1 March). The latest effort is a tribute to ... North Korea. The only thing lacking from this turgid opus is a picture of Kim Il Sung to hang beside *Intercontinental Press's* many portraits of Fidel.

## A tale of two capitulations

Curiouser and curiouser, as Alice would have said. After years of attempting to dismiss the international Spartacist tendency as 'small' and 'irrelevant', the reference point in this quarrel seems to be the positions of the iSt: our insistence on the centrality of the Russian question in Cold War II, our forthright support for the Red Army in Afghanistan, and our open condemnation of Solidarność counterrevolutionary course and acceptance of responsibility for Jaruzelski's counter-coup. The first three issues of *International Viewpoint* all make significant reference to our positions.

The trial issue contained excerpts from *Workers Vanguard* with our position on Poland in 'Selections from the Left'. 'Aha', we thought, someone in USec headquarters wants to put the knife in the SWP. Then the first official issue contained a USWP polemic against the Spartacist League for 'identifying Solidarity as a right-wing movement'. The 15 March issue complains that the Italian and Spanish workers are so 'blinded' by anticlericalism that they oppose Solidarity. A central article on Poland by the LCR's Felix Lourson, after plaintively noting that the social-democratic milieu and Mitterrand's virulently anti-Soviet government are not supporting Solidarity enough, is forced to admit that the only tendency which has taken a clear position over Poland is the iSt:

'Even' the most Stalinist in the French CP talk in somewhat muted tones about Poland. This time the tough talk is being left to tiny sects whose purpose in life is posturing, such as the Spartacists.'

But resolute defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution in the context of the new Cold War (which the Mandelites still deny exists) is not 'tough talk' or 'posturing', but a cornerstone of fundamental Trotskyist politics. We are proud to be attacked for it, especially by an organisation which can only debate how best to capitulate to social democracy and other non-proletarian forces in the name of a 'revolutionary dynamic' of capitalist restorationist forces!

The so-called debate being carried out in the USec and IMG doesn't even scratch the surface of what's wrong with these deeply rotten organisations. What is one to make of an organisation which can traipse along to a Polish Solidarity Campaign conference, express surprise when a resolution opposing the imperialists' propaganda war over Solidarność and Reagan's very real war against El Salvador is overwhelmingly voted down, and then moan about 'sectarianism' when they are unceremoniously ejected for being too 'Leninist' (see *Socialist Challenge*, 1 April)? (The IMG's report on the PSC conference does strike one oddly discordant note when it denounces as anti-Communist the main resolution's call for 'independent unions every-

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# Labour's Cold War...

(Continued from page 1)

connection', while policing the unions when in office with a combination of reformist carrot and repressive stick.

The politics of the Bennite left -- primarily a repudiation of the dismal record of the last Labour government and a utopian unilateralist attempt to pull Britain out of the Cold War vortex -- are a reformist dead end from the point of view of the immediate and historic interests of the working class. But they threaten to make Labour an aberrant party in today's conditions, a party unfit, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, for 'responsible' government. Unable to control the rise of Bennism, much of the historical right wing leadership of the party is actively rethinking its need for the trade union movement as a political base of operations, and has undertaken or is considering an open break with the labour movement.

A correct understanding of and tactical stance towards the political realignments in and around the Labour Party, including a reassessment of our attitude to the Benn/Healey deputy leadership contest, is crucial for Marxists striving to break the stranglehold of Labourite reformism over the working class and forge a revolutionary vanguard to lead the proletariat to power.

## A bulwark of anti-communism

Social democracy has been a bulwark of anti-Communism ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917 and a faithful handmaiden of its 'own' bourgeoisie since the start of World War I. However the present turmoil in the Labour Party and the roots of the SDP split can only be understood by looking at the particular, unashamedly pro-imperialist role played by the Labour leadership -- especially Denis Healey and the current leaders of the SDP -- in the post-World War II period. Healey, Jenkins, Rodgers & Co are the lineal descendants of the Clement Attlee/Ernest Bevin/Hugh Gaitskell Cold War Labour bureaucracy, stamped into shape by the fight against Communism from Berlin to Rome, from Czechoslovakia to Korea. Under them, the Labour Party in the late forties was established as the bulwark of anti-Communist Cold War 'socialism' in the West European labour movement.

During World War II the Labour leaders delivered the workers to the imperialist war effort through the Coalition Government. Then came the sweeping electoral victory of 1945, and the Attlee/Bevin leadership resolved to continue the imperialist bipartisanship on foreign policy established in the war. US Secretary of State James F Byrnes commented approvingly:

'Britain's stand ... was not altered in the slightest, so far as we could discern, by the replacement of Mr Churchill and Mr Eden by Mr Attlee and Mr Bevin. This continuity of Britain's foreign policy impressed me.'  
(Speaking Frankly, 1947)

This continued with the onset of the Cold War. Foreign Secretary Bevin was one of the architects and founders of the anti-Soviet NATO alliance. The start of the Korean War in 1950 saw the virtual doubling of military expenditure by the Labour Cabinet. While the Tory Opposition bitterly fought many of the government's domestic policies (notably the nationalisation of iron and steel), when it came to international affairs Sir Anthony Eden could write:

'I was in agreement with the aims of his [Bevin's] foreign policy and with most that he did, and we met quite frequently. He would invite me to his room in the House of Commons



where we discussed events informally. In Parliament I usually followed him in debate and I would publicly have agreed with him more, if I had not been anxious to embarrass him less.' (Memoirs: Full Circle, 1960)

## 'We can rely on Mr Healey'

Outside Westminster, Denis Healey was one of the key agents of this 'CIA socialism'. An ex-Communist, Healey called at the 1945 Labour Party conference for the party 'to protect, assist, encourage and aid in every way that Socialist revolution wherever it appears' (quoted in Ralph Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism*). But he moved rapidly to the right and was soon ensconced as head of the party's International Department where, under American tutelage, he helped rebuild the Second (Socialist) International along strict Cold War lines. He played an active part in fomenting a right-wing split from the Italian Socialists in 1948 when the Nenni leadership refused to campaign against the Communists. He was a key operator working with the most right-wing, pro-imperialist Social Democrats in Czechoslovakia and other East European countries in the late 1940s, trying to shore up these oppositions and then arranging the flight of many social-democratic leaders to the West after the Communist consolidation of power.

Healey's 1947 statement, 'Cards on the Table', was an unabashed declaration of support for US foreign and military policies, and was

soon endorsed by the party's parliamentary leadership. He set up a special colonial section at Transport House in order 'to help combat the menace of Communist propaganda among African and other overseas territories'. The *New Statesman* (25 September 1981) quotes a 1948 memorandum by a Colonial Office official recording a discussion with Healey about Malaya, in which Britain was then waging a bitter and bloody colonial war. After the Colonial Office man stated his worries about opposition to the war by elements in the British labour movement:

'Mr Healey indicated that he would welcome collaboration with us to meet this kind of thing.... He said that he would be very glad if I could let him have (a) a complete list of the TU Branches, Trades Councils etc who had written to us..., (b) a list of any communist or "fellow traveller" publications

concerned with the Colonies issued in this country.... I am sure that we can rely on Mr Healey to help us in tackling any flare-up of this kind which may happen in future.'

Throughout the Labour government and the years of opposition after 1951, the Cold Warriors and witchhunters continued to 'rely on Mr Healey'. A plethora of publications and organisations -- *Socialist Commentary*, *Encounter*, the *American New Leader* (for which Healey was London correspondent), the Congress for Cultural Freedom, European Movement, Institute for Strategic Studies, Bilderberg group -- carried forward the fight for the Atlantic alliance. A great part of these were launched or sustained with covert CIA conduit funds. Besides Healey, top Labour politicians involved included Attlee's successor as party leader, Gaitskell, chief party ideologist Anthony Crossland and future SDP founders Jenkins and Rodgers. (See 'The Labour Party and the CIA', Radical Research Services pamphlet, for details).

## Bevanism, Suez, unilateralism

The flagrantly anti-working-class international policies of the party leadership did not, of course, go unopposed. Indeed the major opposition of the 1950s, led by Aneurin Bevan (with support of, among others, a young Harold Wilson and Michael Foot) was in broad political outline similar to today's Bennite movement. Against the policies of the right-wing leadership they expressed alarm at the effect of Cold War military expenditure on domestic social services, and counterposed a desire for Britain to play an 'independent' role in international affairs or, if necessary, to opt out. Bevan resigned from the Cabinet in 1951 not over international questions per se (indeed he had just finished speaking and voting for the leadership line on Korea) but against an attempt to roll back provisions of the National Health Service. But he and his 'Victory for Socialism' movement soon became identified with such causes as opposition to Britain's nuclear weaponry and to German rearmament, and in return were vilified as 'fellow travellers' and 'commie dupes'.

There was however one major difference between the Labour left of the 1950s and that of today, the reason why it did not have the deep impact of Bennism today or lead to any SDP-style split. Whereas today many of the top union bureaucrats (who have always in the final analysis called the shots in the party) have been neutralised or are in a few cases even pro-Benn, towards Bevan the TUC presented an overwhelmingly solid, hostile front. While British capitalism was already on a rapid downhill slide, there was still a little fat to pay for social welfare reforms; thus unlike Callaghan/Healey of three decades later, Attlee/Gaitskell did not emerge from the 1951 defeat thoroughly discredited and despised. So by the time Bevan capitulated and made his peace with the party leadership in 1956 (leading to his denunciation of the unilateralists a year later), the Bevanite movement had won no real victories let alone come close to taking the party leader-

## Trotskyism against Bennism

-- from 'Tasks and Perspectives', document adopted at the Spartacist League Sixth National Conference, September 1981

In order to highlight the programmatic bankruptcy of the Bennites, and of the [ostensibly revolutionary organisations] which support him, we offer a point-by-point programmatic counterposition to Benn's programme on the key questions:

A) To the sham of unilateral nuclear disarmament we counterpose the call, Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union! Cutting the arms budget means supporting an arms budget -- not a penny, not a man for the imperialist army!

B) Against Benn's historical support to the PTA, his refusal to defend the Republican victims of imperialist repression in Northern Ireland, his pro-imperialist proposal for UN troops to replace British troops, we say: No 'democratic' imperialist schemes -- Troops out of Ireland now! Free the Republican prisoners! Smash the PTA! For British trade union action against the occupation of Northern Ireland -- black all military transport to Ireland! For the formation of anti-sectarian workers militias against imperialist rampage and indiscriminate terror, Orange and Green! Unambiguous defence of the IRA and INLA against the British army but not an ounce of political support to Green nationalism! For an Irish workers republic in a Socialist Federation of the British Isles!

C) Benn supports import controls and bourgeois immigration controls -- chauvinist/racist poison which divides the workers. No to import controls -- protectionist trade war paves the way to nuclear war! Full citizenship rights for Britain's blacks and all foreign workers! Smash racial discrimination in hiring, housing and education! The only way to defeat fascism, to crush outbreaks of racist attacks, to defend against cop rampage is through the fight for union/black defence guards!

D) Benn wants the workers to wait for 1984, for a 'new' Labour government to dole out the reactionary schemes of autarkic reflation of the Alternative Economic Strategy. Now is the time to roll back the Tory attacks and the legacy of Labour with a unified classwide counteroffensive which mobilises the combined social power of the miners, the dockers, steel workers and railwaymen against the jobs slaughter and haemorrhaging social services, for worksharing with no loss of pay, for a sliding scale of wages to match inflation, for the restoration and improvement of social services. Against the endless subsidisation of failed industries with the workers' tax money, we offer a realistic programme: five-year plans on the basis of a reorganisation of the economy through the expropriation of the industrialists and the bankers, as part of an international socialist division of labour through a worldwide struggle for proletarian rule.

ship. Later that year the Suez debacle and Britain's humiliating pullout under American pressure showed all but the blind that Britain's former great power status on the world stage was definitely gone forever. It might well have been expected that these events would have produced deep divisions but there was no major upheaval.

The following years saw the rise of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), with many of Bevan's ex-followers associated. CND and the Labour left's major victory was the adoption of a unilateralist resolution at the 1960 Scarborough party conference despite the strenuous opposition of the leadership. But this was reversed a year later after a major campaign led by Rodgers along with Jenkins, Gaitskell and Crossland. The Campaign for Democratic Socialism (CDS), financed by a 'large anonymous donation', took up the twin themes of domestic and international policy, arguing that Labour should drop its formal commitment to socialism at home (Clause Four) as well as returning to pro-American bipartisanship abroad. Its major propaganda offensive in support of the NATO alliance and nuclear weapons swung the union bureaucrats back into line and returned the party securely to the Atlanticist fold a year later. While CDS failed to eliminate Clause Four from the party constitution, by the 1964 election victory Labour was clearly seen once again as a solid and reliable pro-NATO 'party of government'. And this situation more or less pertained throughout the two Wilson governments, the Heath Tory interlude and the 1974-79 Wilson/Callaghan regimes, with Labour governments consistently backing US imperialism's genocidal war in Vietnam. Henry Kissinger has written of Harold Wilson:

'He represented a curious phenomenon in British politics: his generation of Labour Party leaders was emotionally closer to the United States than were many leaders of the Conservative Party. The Tories seemed to find the loss of physical preeminence to the United States rankling, especially after what

they considered our betrayal over Suez.' (Memoirs: 1968-1973)

### Callaghan/Healey and the new Labour left

But with each successive Labour government more flauntingly hostile to the interests of its working class base than the last, the pressures kept building up. By the late 1960s, the bourgeoisie was increasingly desperate to shackle the unions. 'In Place of Strife', the Wilson government's 1969 attempt, threatened to provoke a major blowup. Wilson backed down and the Tories returned to power. Heath tried to take on the miners and lost heavily. And with the Tories' direct attack on the unions a dismal failure, Labour came back in 1974, buoyed by renewed illusions among its working class base. Throughout the subsequent years of Social Contract, strikebreaking and Lib/Lab coalitionism these eroded more and more. Finally came the trade union explosion of the 1978-79 winter of discontent, shattering the Callaghan government's credibility in office, particularly in its role of containing the unions.

Faced with a Labour government which had forfeited any meaningful control over its working class base, the bourgeoisie went back to its traditional preference for a Tory government. Thatcher offered impeccable credentials as an aggressive union-basher and Cold War crusader. And after the Tory victory the settling of accounts in the Labour Party began.

The Callaghan/Healey regime was despised not only by the base of the party, the union membership, but by the lower and even top union bureaucrats who found the unyielding, autocratic imposition of Social Contract austerity without quid pro quo was making their lives a misery. In the face of angry opposition the right pressed on regardless, increasingly giving the impression that it found the traditional ties of the Labour Party leadership, its obligations to the union bureaucracy, to be an anachronistic encumbrance. Perhaps the most remarkable expression of this stance was Callaghan's defiant election eve statement that come what may, and whether it was with or against the unions, he would continue the wage cutting and strike-breaking if reelected.

While the right-wing ex-Cabinet remained unabashed, it soon became apparent that Callaghan was more of a liability than an asset, either with the union bureaucracy and party activists or with the general working class base of support for the party. It was also obvious that Denis Healey, who had been the Cabinet's hard man Chancellor of the Exchequer, the man most directly responsible for grinding workers' faces in the dirt, was not a viable replacement.

Tony Benn, who had sat through five years of anti-union attacks and murderous bipartisanship, now moved to the back benches. There he sat for a year, maintaining a particularly noxious near-silence throughout the three long months of the steel strike, which nearly catalysed five years of frustration with Labour treachery and a year of outrage over Thatcher into an explosion that could have toppled this Tory government as well. After its sellout, Benn more and more pushed himself forward as the champion of 'democracy' and 'accountability', seeking to harness the



British troops in Suez.

resentment of the base against the party leadership.

Preferring not to get too far into the difficult field of concrete alternative policies, Benn identified the failure of the leadership to carry out conference policy as the key to the disastrous record of 1974-79. In fact at one point or another in the 1970s, most of the policies he now championed had been passed at conference, only to be ignored by the parliamentary leadership. Thus under the cloak of 'labour movement democracy' Benn was placing himself at the head of a reaction against the coalition/Social Contract. He early on touched on the 'American connection' in taking up the question of the loyalties of the government, posing it in characteristically national-reformist terms akin to his grounds for opposing the EEC. Who should the Labour Party in power be responsible to -- the international bankers and IMF a la Healey, or the British labour movement? This was a none too subtle assault on the architects of IMF policies.

What gave this left/right division an historical dimension and took the party to the point of split (and subsequent cold split) was the open resurgence of Cold War. Benn's 'democratic socialist' anti-Sovietism is clear, not least by the NEC's unanimous condemnation of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and Benn's own refusal to formally oppose NATO. At last October's CND demonstration shortly before Solidarnosc's counterrevolutionary bid for power was checked he enthused that 'The Poles have had the courage to stand up to the Kremlin.' But his fulsome support for and identification with the burgeoning unilateral disarmament movement has been the key issue over which bourgeois opposition to a Benn-ridden (let alone Benn-led) Labour Party and support for the SDP split hardened. Benn is a Little Englander who accepts that Britain no longer rules the waves and would rather see it out of the nuclear crossfire. This may be a utopia, but it is one utopia that the British ruling class is not about to fool with in its aspiring statesmen, given its dependent relation on the American 'cousins'. The *Economist* (5 December 1981) captured a sense of the bourgeoisie's attitude in its caustic remark that 'the Bennites favour precisely the foreign policy that Russia would like Britain to have'.

### The deputy leadership contest reviewed

Benn comes from the same reformist-nationalist political mould as Nye Bevan -- but the times are different. This time the union bureaucrats didn't line up solidly against him, because the alternative was equally unpalatable, and instead installed the caretaker Foot as leader, a living metaphor for the shambling state of the party and the dilemma of the union chieftains. CND Mark II was on the rise, conference came out strongly for unilateralism, and the party lurched further to the left. The decision of the special Wembley conference in January 1981 to give the unions 40% of the vote in leadership elections was an assertion of the party's organic ties to the trade union movement and a challenge to the right's appetite to shed these constraints. Unable to control the inchoate challenge to the twin pillars of coalitionism and the Cold War connection, the right decided it was time to start abandoning ship. It was too late for a rerun of CDS. David Owen flew back from a New York meeting of the Trilateral Commission, the so-called 'secret world government' founded by David Rockefeller and including such imperialist luminaries as Zbigniew Brzezinski and George Ball (not to mention Healey, Callaghan and Heath), to officially

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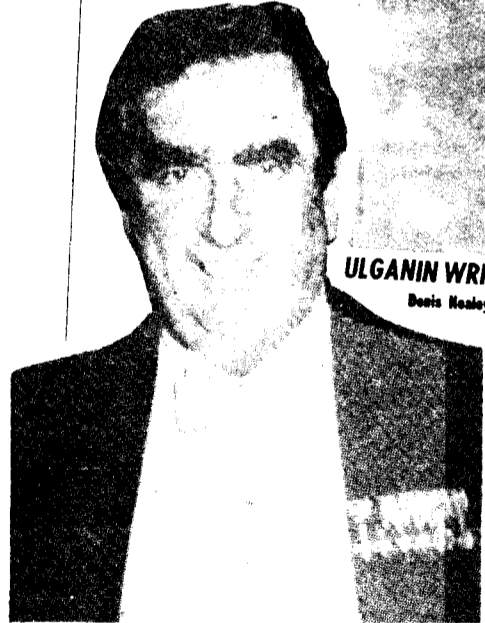
the new Leader

SPECIAL SECTION  
THE CRISIS IN  
U.S. DEFENSE  
KLAUS KNORR

FOR UN CONTROL  
OF OUTER SPACE  
Charles and Norma Herzfeld

ULGANIN WRITES AGAIN  
Denis Healey, MP

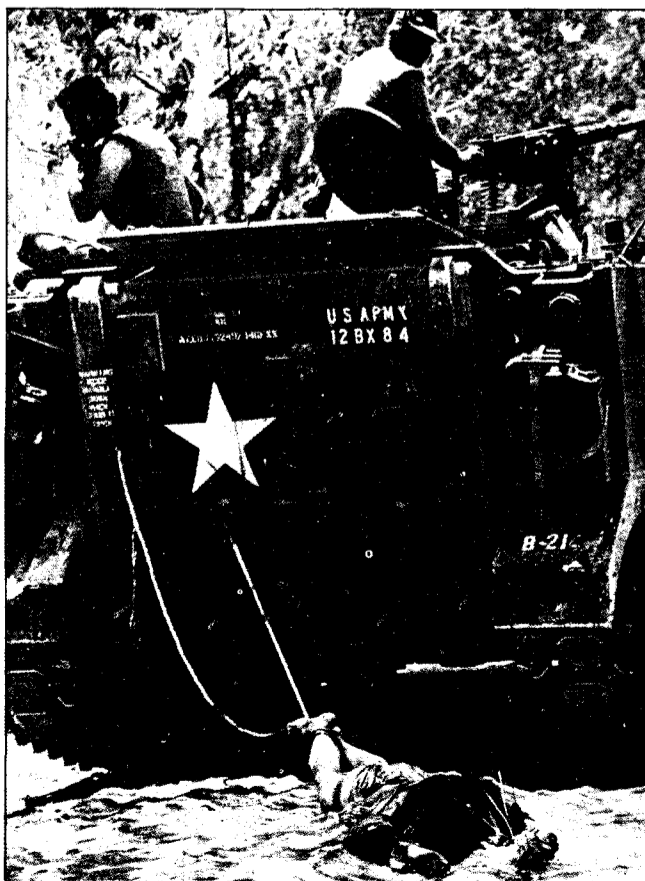
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Start of a career: Denis Healey writes for CIA-backed New Leader.



British imperialism and the American connection: British troops in Korea, US troops in Vietnam.



# Labour's Cold War...

(Continued from page 7)

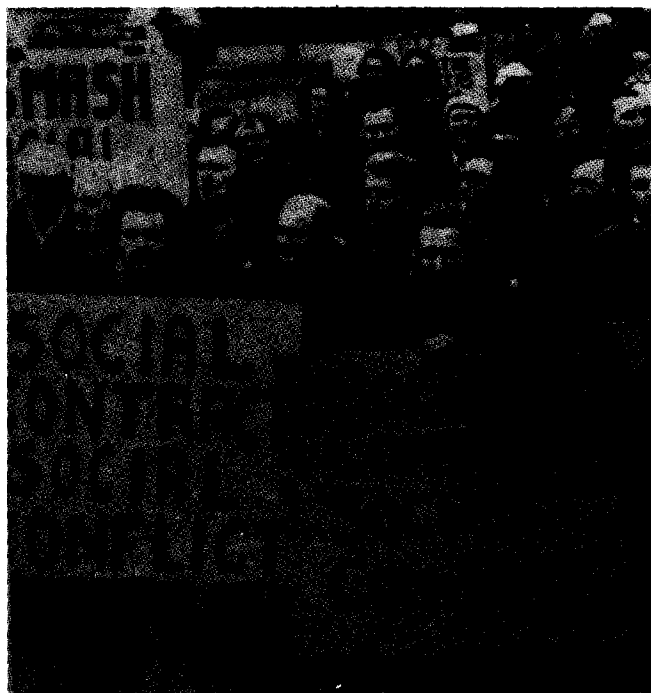
launch the Social Democrats. Trilateral Commission agents underwrote the first fund-raising advertisements, and the new party was underway. At the time we noted:

'... the current bout of shadow-boxing could prefigure a far more deep-going programmatic differentiation, as happened in the French social democracy, the SFIO, when the expulsion of the right-wing neo-socialists in 1933 precipitated in short order the formation of a centrist current in opposition to the remaining leadership.' (*Spartacist Britain* no 30, March 1981)

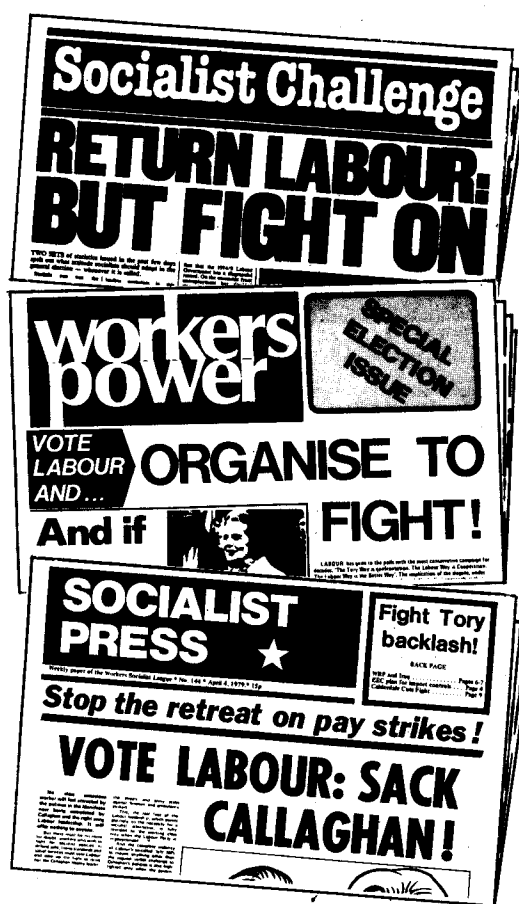
It is not likely that Benn would lead a centrist current, but the crisis within the Labour Party manifested in the SDP split was real enough. And it was in this context that the deputy leadership contest began a few months later, pitting Benn against Healey in the absence of an effective leader. The Spartacist League took a position of no support to either Benn or Healey (or to John Silkin, a 'soft left' frontrunner for the ex-Chancellor). While noting that 'the internal life of the Labour Party is far more lively and politically riven than it has been at any time since the Gaitskell/Bevan days', welcoming the discrediting of the right-wing Callaghan/Healey leadership, and denouncing the drive from our fake-Trotskyist opponents about the need to 'defend Labour unity', we wrote:

'Benn exploits the rank-and-file backlash against the architects of the Social Contract in the process, and presents a carefully tailored leftish image. But in all fundamental programmatic respects, Benn stands completely within the framework of British social democracy -- pro-NATO anti-Sovietism, social chauvinism in Ireland, autarkic reflation coupled with wage control, class collaborationist "participation", parliamentarism. He has never repudiated his career as the longest serving Labour cabinet minister. We do not give support of any kind to Benn's campaign for deputy leadership.' (*Spartacist League 'Tasks and Perspectives'*, reprinted in *Spartacist Britain* no 36, October 1981, emphasis in original)

As a broad political characterisation of Benn's Little England reformism, this was and remains correct. However we underestimated the depth of the crisis within the Labour Party and thus failed to draw the appropriate tactical conclusion given our understanding that the Cold War was central to the party's internal divide. In the context of the Cold War, the difference between what Healey stood for and what Benn stood for was one of policy and not simply posture or rhetoric. The election became a major showdown on the key issues tearing the Labour Party apart, albeit expressed negatively: for or against the CIA-loyal exponents of Cold War; for or against the architects of coalition and austerity. Who would doubt that mass defections by the right wing would have ensued had Benn won, leaving behind an unstable, left-dominated party? The situation dictated that a Trotskyist propaganda group which seeks to split Labour's working-class base from its pro-capitalist misleaders to a revolutionary programme should have extended critical support to Tony Benn -- in order to exacerbate and follow through the split begun with the formation of the SDP, drive out the blatantly pro-imperialist CIA-connected right wing and place Benn in a position where his left-reformist



British Leyland workers fight Callaghan's Social Contract.



politics could be more effectively exposed and combatted.

## Benn's best builders

This tactic is a powerful weapon in sharpening the struggle against Bennism precisely because it identifies the key programmatic questions. We counterposed a revolutionary programme to Benn's blind alley (see box). Against Benn's utopian-pacifist solutions, we emphasise the necessity of unconditional defence of the Soviet Union as a class position in the Cold War. The Bennite left now says 'No coalition' and Benn points to the Lib-Lab pact to excuse the betrayals of Labour in office though he went along with them at the time. But the Spartacist tendency uniquely opposed this coalition from the principled stand of defending proletarian class independence, noting:

'... the most class conscious Labour supporters will see this coalition with the Liberals as a formal repudiation of Labour's traditional claim to stand for the interests of working people against the capitalists.' (*Workers Vanguard* no 152, 8 April 1977)

Our opposition to extending critical support to Labour in by-elections, originally mandated by the sheer ferocity of Labour's Social Contract attacks on the working class, was hardened around this principled question of coalitionism. We said, 'Break the Lib-Lab pact!' And when Healey and Callaghan 'went to the country' in 1979 standing on their record of strikebreaking and Lib-Lab coalitionism the Spartacist League said, 'No vote to the traitors -- Remember Labour's betrayals!'

In contrast the whole gamut of fake-Trotskyist centrist groups who flocked to Benn's side last year refused to stand in principled opposition to the Lib-Lab coalition and deny the centrality of the Russian question today. Their support to Benn was not a revolutionary tactic to expose him but in fact represented a capitulation to his left-reformist programme. The cretinously Labour-loyal Socialist Organiser Alliance (SOA) labelled itself 'Bennite', while the International Marxist Group (IMG) called for support to Benn's programme 'as far as it goes' -- including a 'non-nuclear defence strategy' for British imperialism (*Socialist Challenge*, 9 April 1981). Support to CND and utopian disarmament slogans, calling for Soviet troops out of Afghanistan in unison with the NEC, PLP and NATO High Command -- this is their 'counterposition' to Bennite reformism.

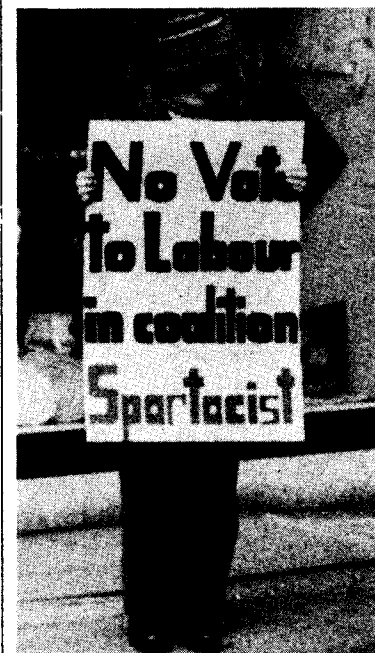
Workers Power (WP), the most 'critical' of Benn's centrist supporters, wrote:

'Benn's careful manoeuvrist strategy together with his programme, offers no way forward. Yet his limited mobilising appeal must be exploited, because through Benn the rank and file express their elemental hostility to the candidate of the IMF and Fleet Street and the CIA.' (*Workers Power*, June 1981)

If this was all there was to WP's position, we would be quite happy to say that they were right and we were wrong. In fact, however, they share the same fundamental assumptions as the IMG, SOA et al: vote Labour no matter what and always support the 'left' against the right. In 1977 WP dismissed the Lib-Lab pact as a parliamentary arrangement of little significance and then called on the workers to vote for the un-

abashed class-collaborationist, strikebreaking Callaghan/Healey Labour government no differently from the other centrists. Their vote for Benn is simply business as usual -- their own 'critical' variant of the classic British centrist capitulation to left social democracy, often summed up in the strategy of 'Make the Lefts fight'. The preconceived desire to secure unity with the left reformists against the right suggests that the lefts do fundamentally and invariably differ from the right and elevates the tactic of the united front and critical support into a strategic orientation. But WP also terms the present day left and right 'siamese twins'. If they are still 'siamese twins', then why support the left twin against the right? Similarly they consistently support the reformist left against the right in trade union elections, for example, Bob Wright's various campaigns in the AUEW.

Throughout their numerous articles on the Labour Party nowhere does WP raise the question



Trotskyism vs centrism on Lib/Lab coalition and 1979 election.

of the Cold War in the context of the crisis in the Labour Party. (Indeed on the central issue of the Cold War today, Poland, WP's position for trade union backing in defence of Solidarnosc would go down well in the CIA circles so beloved of Denis Healey and the SDP.) WP's nine-point programme for the rank and file in the Labour Party and the unions is crowned with the call 'for candidates to stand against Foot and Healey on the basis of conference control over the manifesto and NEC control of the PLP' (*Workers Power*, February 1982). They choose to fight the right from the terrain of the Bennites, never challenging the integrity of the Labour Party as the party of the British working class.

But the task precisely is to destroy the integrity of the Labour Party, splitting its working class base away to the programme of socialist revolution. And socialist revolution, not Bennite Little England reformism, is what the British working class so desperately needs to resolve the crisis of this country coming apart at the seams in a world moving towards thermonuclear war. It is this which drives large numbers of the petty bourgeoisie to the SDP, which Shirley Williams calls 'the last chance for Britain to find a democratic, moderate, but radical alternative to revolution' (*Guardian*, 29 March). In the absence of a resolute, revolutionary leadership of the labour movement which could win many of them to the side of the proletariat, they line up behind the bourgeoisie's offensive to cut the trade unions down to size. They are 'disillusioned with Thatcherism rather than with Conservatism' said the *Economist* (6 February) of a section of the SDP base. Indeed, it would not be unusual that when they become disillusioned with the 'moderate' SDP as well, and the bourgeoisie turns to stronger stuff to destroy the unions, many of them will turn to the truly 'radical' alternative of a mass fascist movement.

Today Benn tells the workers to wait until 1984 in the face of Tory attacks; tomorrow his utopian Little England panaceas can only serve to lull the workers to sleep in a period when the bosses may turn to fascist squads to solve their problems, as Trotsky put it, 'over the bones of the workers'. His 'socialist' mystique makes him all the more pernicious an obstacle to the revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat and makes the struggle against his brand of reformist betrayal all the more important a task for a revolutionary vanguard nucleus. Stop the witchhunt against the left! Never again the betrayals of Callaghan/Healey! Drive the NATO/CIA-lovers out of the Labour Party! Not Bennite Little England reformism but a revolutionary-internationalist leadership of the labour movement! Forward to a Trotskyist party and socialist revolution, the only hope for mankind! ■



# Victory for SL/US-organised mobilisation

# 2000 run Nazis out of Ann Arbor!

Ann Arbor, Michigan -- In an important victory here, a crowd of 2000 ran the Nazis out of town on 20 March. The Spartacist League/US-initiated Committee to Stop the Nazis on March 20 organised a militant mobilisation with broad support, which did exactly what its name promised and sent the 15 little Hitler-lovers with their swastikas and dreams of death camps running like rats.

The Nazis said they would come to Ann Arbor to set up their race terror operations right in the midst of the people they hate: blacks, Jews, socialists, gays and -- most important -- labour. The Committee to Stop the Nazis on March 20 said 'No', and put out an urgent call to action: 'All enemies of fascism must gather in a massive demonstration at the same time and place where the Nazis want to march.'

Perhaps the Nazis thought that only a few leftists would show up as had been the case at other times and places, but when the Nazis drove past the Ann Arbor City Hall on 20 March where they had vowed to stage their provocation, the little gang took a look at the many hundreds of militants organised by the Committee, sized up the tenor of the crowd and beat it for another area. It is instructive irony that the Nazis chose to go to the Federal Building where the mayor's 'peaceful rally for human dignity' was planned. Built as a 'community alternative to violent confrontation', the mayor's rally was intended as a *diversion* to channel the just outrage against the Nazis into an empty gesture of liberal protest. But the mayor's rally was a total flop.

The Nazis could run but they couldn't hide. When word spread through the crowd that they were at the Federal Building, first hundreds, then a thousand, then all 2000 angry demonstrators took off to give the fascists what



Crowd surrounds covering Nazis in Ann Arbor.

they deserved. The crowd kept the Hitler-lovers pinned against the Federal Building for ten minutes, where they were humiliated and pelted with ice, vegetables -- anything that could be thrown -- until in panic the Nazis tried desperately to break the door and escape the crowd's wrath. A door was shattered but a single black armed guard stood his ground and stopped the Nazis from fleeing inside. Then the police arrived, forming a protective cordon around the Nazis. The protesters continued to press against the cowed

stormtroopers until the cops loaded them into a police bus which drove off in a shower of rocks, shattering glass and shouts of 'We won! We won!'

The triumphant crowd, some waving trophies including the Nazis' splintered flagstaff, streamed back to the City Hall rally. They enthusiastically cheered the Committee's spokesman Al Nelson's statement: 'I think everybody here today feels a sense of victory.... The Nazis got their asses kicked and whoever was involved in that deserves credit for it.'

## Medvedev...

(Continued from page 4)

eral nuclear disarmament. For the decisive question is *not* which side is the aggressor in the Cold War, but which side you are on.

The conflict between the US and USSR is not a matter of national great-power rivalry, nor is it a result of American political 'immaturity', as the Medvedevs argue. It is a conflict of social systems. Ever since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, when 14 imperialist countries intervened militarily to crush the nascent Soviet power, the capitalist world has sought to exterminate the Soviet Union. And ever since 1917 social democrats, using pacifistic and democratic slogans, have supported imperialism against the USSR. As Trotskyists, we defend the bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc against imperialism. Social democrat Thompson is on the other side, while the Medvedevs try to straddle the fence.

### Europacifism and European imperialism

The Medvedevs, who themselves have a foot or two in the social-democratic camp, seek to explain Thompson's views by arguing that he identifies the West European attitude toward the USSR with the American. A central theme of their article is that the West European ruling circles

are basically pacific and accept the postwar European order, while the trigger-happy cowboys in Washington are something else again. While Roy Medvedev is hostile to the Brezhnev regime and Stalinist hardliners, ideologically he is still linked to Khrushchevite bureaucratic liberalizers. Here he reflects the growing sense of Russia's rulers that nothing can be done with the madmen now running the White House and Pentagon. The only hope is to split their European allies from the American warmongers.

According to the Medvedevs, Britain, France, Germany have always accepted Russia, whether under tsars or commissars, as a part of 'the traditional European state system.' American anti-Soviet aggressiveness is explained as a peculiarity of the US' relatively recent emergence as a world power. The Medvedevs present America as an *enfant terrible*, an infantile power on the world scene, and 'whereas West Europeans tend to accept the USSR as a legitimate state, ... Americans still often see Russia as the fount of world revolution and left-wing "subversion".' Hence, despite their differences with Thompson, the Medvedevs enthusiastically applaud the new European 'peace' movement and call on West Europe to dissociate itself from American militarism:

'If, therefore, the United States continues its drift towards the reactionary right and super-militarization, it seems probable that Western Europe will move correspondingly to the left and towards disengagement from confrontation.... The peace movements in Europe are already a powerful pressure for moderation: it is they who can halt the prospect of a new dangerous round in the arms race, threatening to all mankind.'

The Medvedevs treat West Europe as a single entity, ignoring conflicts of interests of the various national bourgeoisies. Yet even a superficial glance at West Europe's capitals exposes the Medvedevs' rosy picture of a peace-loving society. Britain's Margaret Thatcher is an anti-Soviet fanatic in the Reagan mold. Fortunately, she governs a capitalist state so decrepit it is no longer a first-rate, or even a second-rate power. As an anti-Communist Cold Warrior, French president Francois Mitterrand is a Margaret Thatcher in social-democratic dress. Moreover, France is engaged in a nuclear arms buildup proportionally comparable to Reagan's. If his *force de frappe* (strike force) is less threatening to the USSR than the Pentagon's arsenal, it is not because French imperialism is benign but because

it lacks the economic/military resources of the US.

West Germany at least superficially conforms to the Medvedevs' dichotomy between a detente-minded Europe and a militaristic America. Millions of Germans are justifiably scared to death of Reagan's anti-Soviet provocations, while the social-democratic/liberal government wants to maintain the politics of *Entspannung* (relaxation of tensions). Yet Bonn's post-1970 *Ostpolitik* represents a *long-term* strategy to penetrate and undermine East Europe economically while encouraging liberal and nationalistic trends to disintegrate the Soviet bloc. West German social democracy thus supported *Solidarnosc*' goals, in fact aided Walesa & Co financially via the DGB union federation, only Schmidt and Brandt believed the Polish hotheads pushed things too far too fast. Behind Bonn's present 'soft line' toward the Soviet bloc stands a dangerous revanchist imperialism.

The gains of the October Revolution cannot be defended, nor the imperialists' drive toward nuclear holocaust stopped, by restoring 'the traditional European state system' -- a detente version of the Congress of Vienna -- independent of the United States. Only a Socialist United States of Europe, achieved through socialist revolution in the capitalist West and proletarian political revolution in the East, can save mankind from the threatening catastrophe. ■



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# In reply to Joan Maynard- IMG admits calling cops

On 16 January leading *Socialist Challenge* supporter Davy Jones called the police against two Spartacist League (SL) supporters in order to stop them distributing our literature outside the International Marxist Group's (IMG) Other Bookshop in London. Following our circulation within the left and labour movement of copies of a letter to the IMG Political Committee (see 'IMG calls cops on SL', *Spartacist Britain* no 39, February 1982), Joan Maynard, Labour MP, wrote a letter to the IMG as well. We reprint below the exchange of correspondence between Cde Maynard and the IMG and SL.

Caught out, the IMG leadership admits to Cde Maynard that it called the cops, excusing crossing the class line with a flimsy tissue of lies. In an internal National Briefing to its membership promulgating a policy of wholesale exclusion of the SL, the IMG leadership makes no mention of its use of the bourgeois police against us and denies that the exclusion policy is on the basis of our politics. Yet bookshop worker Charlie Van Gelderen, the day before the above-mentioned incident, made it explicit that it was because of our 'counterrevolutionary' line on Poland that Spartacist literature would henceforth be banned from the Other Bookshop. The IMG leadership should get its lies straight.

## Joan Maynard to IMG

17 February 1982

Dear Comrades,

It has been reported to me that you called in the Police in order to stop other Comrades of the Spartacist League who were distributing their literature outside the Other Bookshop of the International Marxist Group in Islington, North London on January 16th. I hope that this is not the case, because whether you agree their case or not, I hope you would support their right to argue it? Further, they might have been arrested.

Sincerely,  
Joan Maynard

## IMG to Joan Maynard

25 February 1982

Dear Comrade,

Thanks for your letter of February 17th concerning the Spartacist League.

We are rather surprised that you have taken up their 'allegations'. You must surely be aware of the nature of this organisation and its systematic attempts to disrupt the efforts of left wing organisations in their political work. While socialists concentrate their attentions on organising support for different progressive causes, this particular group specialises in campaigning [sic] inside the labour movement against *other* organisations. Their latest target was Socialist Challenge, and the occasion a supposed 'outrage' at our Bookshop.

What in fact occurred is quite simple. As part of their campaign of disruption against our organisation they placed a 'picket line' across the entrance of our bookshop on 16th January. They abused and threatened the two women members of staff, and intimidated people intending to use the shop from doing so. We warned them persistently that such behaviour was completely outrageous and that we were not prepared to tolerate it. We requested repeatedly that they should cease their 'picket'. They responded by increased threats, especially from one of their number who was in fact drunk. Eventually, we were faced with three alternatives: to be forced to shut the shop, thereby preventing us from getting across our own and anyone else's ideas; to engage in physical violence against them, which is precisely the type of incident these people hope to provoke; or to call the police.

Reluctantly, we did the latter, making it very clear to the police that we wanted no arrests, and that we were not prepared to press any charges but merely wanted the Spartacists [sic] to be moved on.

This is not the first time that these people have 'picketed' our events or abused and threatened our supporters. At a trade union conference

organised by Socialist Challenge last year, they organised a 'picket' of the event to protest some supposed 'outrage' we had committed, actively trying to provoke a physical confrontation which they would then be able to launch a campaign about inside the labour movement, similar to that which they have attempted over the bookshop 'incident'. More serious -- and ironically considering their complaint about January 16th -- the Spartacists [sic] have also specialised in attempting to finger socialist militants to the management during industrial disputes: for example during the engineering dispute two years ago, they distributed a leaflet outside the Oxford Cowley plant denouncing Alan Thornett, one of the main leaders at the plant, as a scab. Similarly they used the same tactics with Pat Hickey when he was deputy convenor at the Rover-Solihull plant and already under threat from the management. The list could be extended considerably.

The Spartacist [sic] League are a very peculiar organisation. Not only do they have downright reactionary positions on almost every important political question -- support for immigration controls, supporting the crushing of Solidarnosc opposing CND, the disarmament movements and the developing revolutions in Central America -- but they are unique for also concentrating exclusively on disrupting other organisations [sic] political work and campaigns.

We think that socialists should have nothing to do with them and in particular should have nothing to do with their supposed 'defence campaigns' following their own carefully planned and executed provocations.

Comradely greetings,  
Steve Potter (National Secretary)

## Joan Maynard to SL

3 March 1982

Dear John Masters,

I enclose a copy of the reply I have received from the International Marxist Group in answer to my letter of the 17th February of which you had a copy.

Perhaps you would care to comment?

Sincerely,  
Joan Maynard

## SL to Joan Maynard

27 March 1982

Dear Comrade,

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the reply by the International Marxist Group to your letter. Given the urgent questions confronting socialists, not least the anti-Soviet war drive, it is unfortunate that time must be taken up dealing with the sort of activities justified in Cde Potter's letter. But lies and hooliganism, left to fester, can only retard the cause of socialism.

In a sense any comment on Cde Potter's letter is superfluous, since he readily admits that the IMG called the police on our comrades. Rather than take up each and every one of the lies in his letter, we take the liberty of enclosing a detailed report of the incident written for our organisation immediately afterwards by one of the comrades involved.

Cde Potter expresses 'surprise' that you have taken up our 'allegation', but since it is accurate and irrefutable he instead attempts to fabricate an elaborate smokescreen centred on a Spartacist 'campaign of disruption'. As it happens, our comrades did not set up a protest picket outside the Other Bookshop but were simply selling literature. We did set up a protest picket last year in response to a bureaucratic and discriminatory exclusion of our supporters from a publicly advertised meeting of the IMG's Revolution Youth group (the 'supposed "outrage"' Cde Potter refers to with deliberate vagueness). But is Cde Potter saying that calling the police is justified whenever there is a picket? This could come straight from the mouth of a Tory industrialist.

And what is one to make of Cde Potter's

charge that we 'finger socialist militants to the management' when we denounce them before the workers for scabbing? Since when is the exposure of scabs in the middle of a strike in the interest of management? Any self-respecting socialist militant, as did many union militants at the time, would certainly denounce Alan Thornett for leading his men back into work in the middle of the 1979 engineering strikes; or Pat Hickey for walking through a strike picket of Rover Solihull Four-by-Four workers during the April 1980 BL strike.

So much for our 'disruptive activities'. Indeed, in his portrayal of our supposedly sinister behaviour, Cde Potter neglects to address the minor matter of what brought our comrades to the Other Bookshop in the first place. It was, as we pointed out in our previous letter, because this bookshop which stocks a wide variety of literature, had placed a ban on our material on the explicit grounds that we express opposition to Polish Solidarnosc's counterrevolutionary bid for power. Indeed one *Socialist Challenge* supporter even compared it to fascist literature on this basis. Will the IMG now adopt the same attitude to such publications as the *New Worker*, *Straight Left*, or the *Yorkshire Miner*?

We doubt it. The reason the IMG singles out the Spartacist League is that we expose the fraudulence of its claim to Trotskyism, a cornerstone of which is the defence of the collectivised property forms in the Soviet bloc states against external imperialist or internal counter-revolutionary threats. Refusing to carry out this programme in capitulation to today's Cold War climate, the IMG flails out against those who do stand by Trotskyism.

And that is why Cde Potter deems it necessary to string together a series of slanderous misrepresentations of positions -- which in any case have nothing to do with this incident -- which he labels 'downright reactionary'. Cde Potter will not fool the many activists within the labour movement who are familiar with our stand that capitalist immigration controls are inherently reactionary and with our numerous initiatives against deportations of foreign-born workers and leftists both in this country and elsewhere. There is nothing 'peculiar' about our positions -- whatever disagreements Cde Potter and others may have with them, they stand in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky. Thus we oppose disarmament slogans from the standpoint that only workers revolution can disarm the capitalist militarists. Likewise we oppose a negotiated 'political solution' in El Salvador because we consider a military victory over the right-wing regime essential for all those upholding a perspective of workers revolution throughout Central America. Is this what Cde Potter means by 'opposing developing revolutions'?

Cde Potter considers our support to (in his blood-curdling terms) 'the crushing of Solidarnosc' downright reactionary. We consider the Catholic Church, the CIA and other forces which stood behind Solidarnosc downright reactionary, and find it rather peculiar that ostensibly socialist organisations like the IMG would join with SDPers and outright Tory reactionaries on the 20 December Cold War march for Polish Solidarnosc. This is a matter we are prepared to argue with the IMG politically. Cde Potter seems intent on employing the bourgeois police to adjudicate this political difference. And that is what Cde Potter's letter is all about.

Yours fraternally,

John Masters  
for the Spartacist League

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# El Salvador...

(Continued from page 3)

not win the fight for the organisers of this pro-Democratic Party march. The SL-organized Anti-Imperialist Contingent was the focus of the entire day. Most of the crowd listened to our agitational speeches broadcast into the park while we were outside the assembly site, many thousands received our leaflets and more than 1400 pieces of SL literature were sold in Washington on March 27. And despite the concentration of police power against us, when the most frenzied anti-Spartacists of the Coalition tried to cordon off the Anti-Imperialist Contingent by a chain of 'marshals' with linked arms, we quickly took down that line. You couldn't miss it: the Spartacists were the ones fighting for leftist military victory in El Salvador; the reformists were the ones who both called the cops and hid behind them.

At Lafayette Park the March 27 Coalition 'doves' had Salvadoran FDR spokesman Arnaldo Ramos (a dissident Christian Democrat) proclaiming 'We do not take pride in our military activity'; at Farragut Park the Anti-Imperialist Contingent called for the workers and peasants to 'Take San Salvador!' Since the reformists' program increasingly flies in the face of reality they can't defend it politically and resort to anti-Communist slanders and exclusion. But massive frame-up and repression only goes so far. Even without the aggressive presence of the Spartacist League, the ravenous appetites of US imperialism put them on the side of the revolutionaries and our rad-lib opponents know it.

March 27 was hardly the first time they tried to exclude our red flags and anti-imperialist banners from El Salvador marches. In view of these repeated exclusions and the pervasive rumors of heavy violence against us, the Spartacist League wrote to the March 27 Coalition proposing advance coordination in order to 'avoid unnecessary physical clashes in the face of a police presence and the possibility of extra-legal Reaganite provocation.'

The leaders of the March 27 Coalition had every opportunity to work out equitable arrangements with the Anti-Imperialist Contingent for Washington. They did not do so because their aim was to exclude the reds altogether, to keep communist politics out of the march for the Democrats. Some of the more frenzied anti-Spartacists had something else in mind though. They wanted a bloody provocation, and while doing their best to get it, failed.

On the morning of 27 March when spokesmen for the Anti-Imperialist Contingent approached the gate at 8am we were met by a police official who said we could not enter because 'the Coalition' did not want us there. The cops standing around were not ordinary police but SWAT squads. A block away they had two busloads of riot police together with vans for their arsenal. Shortly after 25 motorcycle cops with riot clubs drove up blocking us off with a line of cycles. Some time later a dozen mounted police arrived. Meanwhile the spokesmen for the Anti-Imperialist Contingent were vigorously protesting to the police that our democratic rights were being violated and we were being prevented from doing what had previously been arranged with the

authorities. We said that we were prepared to take hundreds of arrests in defense of our rights. This had an impact, so the police brought two Parks Department lawyers that could tell the official Coalition spokesmen they would have to sign a statement claiming imminent danger to safety -- ie a formal request for police intervention -- to keep the Anti-Imperialist Contingent out of the park. They did not dare to put their slanders in writing thereby making it clear that the claims for 'protection' were a smokescreen for a political exclusion. And so at 10.40 we entered the assembly site at Malcolm X Park, red flags flying and chanting 'Junta no,



Spartacists in London demonstration.

Spartacist Britain

obreros si, overthrow the bourgeoisie'.

Shortly after 1pm 400 supporters of the Anti-Imperialist Contingent proceeded to Farragut Park to hold a rally along the line of the March 27 Coalition parade. Before the march approached the cops again threw up a cordon sanitaire to cut off access to our event. Deputy Chief John Conner of the Special Operations Division, DC Metro Police, yelled at a Contingent spokesman: 'I run the streets of Washington today. I'm telling you that nobody, nobody from this march is going into your rally. No negotiations!' The whole day showed a highly orchestrated display of police power exercised so tightly and effectively as to turn both the Anti-Imperialist Contingent assembly point and our later rally into what were effectively temporary detention centres.

In El Salvador today only the victory of the leftist rebels can put an end to the hideous massacres, opening the way to a mobilisation of the toiling masses culminating in workers revolution. And in the face of Reagan's war drive the only hope for mankind is workers revolution in the imperialist heartlands. It is the bloodlust of US imperialism, rather than mainly the activity of the SL, that exposes the reformist line for the cynical fraud that it is.■

## USec...

(Continued from page 5)

where'. Can this be the same IMG which hailed the politically identical call for 'free trade unions' when this was raised as an anti-Communist rallying cry at the September 1981 Solidarnosc conference in Gdansk??)

And on Cuba, the fight is between the US SWP's uncritical championing of the Stalinist bureaucrat Castro and the hapless Hearse's explanation that while the Cuban bureaucracy has a 'revolutionary orientation' in Central America, internationally they are confused by the notion that the world is divided into 'two camps'. This 'revolutionary orientation' in Central America today consists of refusing to send arms to the Salvadoran leftists (as long ago as 1962 they gave a 'guarantee that no arms will be transported from Cuba to be used for fighting in any Latin American country'), while supporting the Mexican government's call for a negotiated 'political solution'. And to Castro's 'two camp' ideas, Hearse counterposes ... the 'third camp' of anti-Sovietism.

Two decades ago as the USec was being cobbled together, our forerunners of the Revolutionary Tendency were expelled from the US SWP for op-

posing political capitulation to Castroism. Today with the USec wildly riven with contradictory positions (all of them wrong) on the Russian question, our consistent defence of the Trotskyist programme for the deformed/degenerated workers states -- unconditional defence against imperialism and counterrevolution combined with political revolution from Havana to Warsaw, Hanoi to Moscow -- stands out sharply, to say the least.

The USec leopard has not changed its spots; it has only got older, mangier and more and more right wing. Whatever it is that is going on inside this consummately rotten political combination, neither the Mandelites nor the reformist US SWP has suddenly become committed to defending the gains of the October revolution or any of the rest of the Trotskyist programme. And given the byzantine dealings which must take place in the basements of USec headquarters, one might wonder whether the USec's favourite animal, the old mole, is not once again at work?■

## Tebbit...

(Continued from page 12)

ever achieved. They are all part of a concerted offensive against the working class internationally in an attempt to give a new burst of profitability to the capitalist class.

Cold War abroad, war on the unions at home that's the bosses' response to their economic crisis. And the more determined and desperate the capitalist class gets, the more weak-kneed and capitulatory the reformist bureaucracy becomes.

Why is such a passive, defeatist perspective also being advanced by the CP and the Liaison Committee leadership? Why did the CP oppose the fight for a general strike during the 1980 steel strike? Why did it cave in to the AUEW scab inquiry on Robinson? Those are the questions facing CP militants in particular.

The fact is that a policy of 'peaceful co-existence' with imperialism internationally means 'peaceful coexistence' with the imperialist bosses at home. Ever since the rise of Stalinism the line of the Kremlin has been to make half-hearted 'friends' for the Soviet Union instead of defending it with the Leninist Trotskyist policy of international workers revolution. The CP's project of 'left unity' does not mean unity in action around a programme of class struggle. It means unity around a reformist perspective of getting whatever crumbs the capitalists are currently offering.

This policy, graphically summed up by the *British Road to Socialism's* call for socialism through Parliament (a line originating with Stalin) is the social-chauvinist fruit of the subordination of class struggle to diplomatic manoeuvres. It means class collaboration, the line firmly pursued by the CP ever since the days of the Popular Front. In World War II it meant strikebreaking and policing the unions for the imperialist war effort. In the 1970s it meant supporting the Labour traitors come-what-may. Not surprisingly it led some CPers to even support the hated Social Contract, just as the logic of 'detente' has taken the CP majority to openly reneging on defence of the Soviet bloc states, in Afghanistan and Poland.

Defending the USSR against imperialism or defending the trade unions against Tebbit: the only way to stop capitalist attacks is through concerted class struggle aimed at the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class. A one-day general strike right now could galvanise the labour movement into action and rapidly prepare for the sort of all-out offensive which was posed by the steel strike and would have been posed by a miners strike -- an offensive against the whole array of attacks on jobs, wages, social services and union rights by this war-mongering government. Let's declare class war on the Tories. Smash the Tebbit Bill!■

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# SPARTACIST

## BRITAIN

### Bury the Tebbit bill!

# Start with a one-day general strike now!

Tory Employment Minister Norman Tebbit's anti-union legislation, due to receive its third reading in Parliament at the end of the month, is an integral part of ruling class strategy to destroy effective trade unionism. This veritable 'scabs charter' would turn black-legging into a lucrative business, forcing unions to 'compensate' those thrown out of work as a result of refusing to join to the tune of £27,000. Ballots to maintain the closed shop would be legally imposed and require an 85 per cent majority for success. Sub-contracting on a 'union only' basis would be outlawed, thus further encouraging the employment of lump-labour in the building industry, for example. Industrial actions around disputes not directly related to the employer or those deemed 'political' would be subject to fines up to £250,000, stripping the unions of immunity in civil court actions.

In the face of this undisguised attack on any form of union solidarity action, the TUC has done nothing more than talk about 'non-cooperation'. An eight-point proposal before a special conference of union executives convened by the TUC for 5 April accepts the legislation and the consequent fining of unions as a fait accompli even before it has reached the statute books. Against this criminal passivity, what is needed is an immediate classwide mobilisation to stop the bill now. A one-day general strike is the necessary start, providing a platform from which to galvanise the labour movement in united action against the Tory attacks.

That was the strategy put by the Spartacist League (SL) in a leaflet, reprinted below, distributed to the 27 March conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU). The Communist Party (CP)-dominated LCDTU billed the conference as a place to discuss 'the opposition needed to defend the Trade Unions from Tory attacks'. Such a conference was certainly needed, but the fewer than 500 delegates who turned out found a stage-managed affair lasting half an afternoon and designed only to put a stamp of approval on the left trade union bureaucracy's 'wait and see' policy. Indeed one delegate bureaucratically had his credentials refused because his trade union branch had submitted a resolution (supported by the Workers Power [WP] group) calling for indefinite strike action against the bill. The only resolution that was up for a vote at this conference was the Liaison Committee's do-nothing proposal for 'lobbies' and a token two-hour protest strike.

But WP's perpetual calls for indefinite general strike action in the absence of any mobilisation of the trade unions is meaningless, empty posturing. As for the Labour-loyal Socialist Organiser Alliance, busily organising its own conference centred around the burning questions of 'trade union democracy', its call for a one-day strike on the third reading of the bill was explicitly motivated as a 'step towards more sustained action from the day the Bill becomes law' -- accepting in advance that same perspective of 'non-cooperation' with a militant veneer. The Socialist Workers Party, whose programmatic horizons are limited to 'supporting every dispute', reflected in their interventions from the floor their obsession with the 'defeats and setbacks' of the working class. But the



Police strikebreaking at Laurence Scott's: Tebbit bill means more of the same.

answer to defeats and setbacks is not the defeatist perspective of the SWP, which pushes support for one isolated action after another in counterposition to the mobilisation of decisive sectors of the working class in unified class struggle. Had the steel strike two years ago been transformed into the general strike it had the opportunity to become -- a perspective actively opposed by the SWP and CP reformists -- all the anti-union laws so weightily deliberated in Parliament would have been reduced to scraps of paper. Laws are an expression of the relationship of class forces.

And what is needed now, in the face of an international capitalist offensive, is to turn the working class onto the offensive. That was what the delegate from the BL Rover Solihull shop stewards committee, Pat Sliney, argued for in support of the SL proposal. Sliney won the applause of many delegates when he linked Reagan and Thatcher's union-bashing attempts to the Cold War crusade for counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc. 'We all know there can be no peaceful coexistence with our enemy, the capitalist class, at home or abroad' said Sliney. 'So we should go from this conference with this proposal for a one-day general strike and fight for this in our branches and stewards committees.'

This conference faces the question of how to defeat British capitalism's latest attempt to destroy effective trade unionism. Thatcher may weep bitter tears over the suppression of pro-imperialist Solidarnosc in Poland and point in horror to the food queues there, but 3 million workers here know first-hand the horror of *dole* queues and Laurence Scott workers know first-hand what old-fashioned *capitalist* strikebreaking feels like.

Nobody here needs to be told about how dangerous the Tebbit Bill is, or how the right wing of the TUC (Duffy, Chapple, Sirs etc) is already talking about collaborating with it. But what about the lefts and the Communist Party (CP) leadership of the Liaison Committee? *Morn-*

*ing Star* talks about a repeat of Saltley Gates and a struggle of 'general strike dimensions', but it offers no independent alternative, no concrete proposals for strike action, nothing to offer a focus of mobilisation except protests and propaganda, lobbies and rallies. Instead it counsels reliance on the TUC lefts to mount a fight. It says wait -- wait for 'non-cooperation' once the bill is passed, wait for 'instructions' from the TUC, wait for the Tories to use the Act. With this stance today's conference will only be a talking shop.

There's a lot of talk about 'demoralisation', 'realism' and how 'the membership won't fight'. Well, they certainly won't fight without a strategy and perspective that offers a real possibility of defeating the bill. What is needed now is a massive, united show of strength from the trade union movement, a warning to the Thatcher government that if the bill is not shelved, this struggle will escalate until the government is shelved. This conference should decide for a *one-day general strike*, a day of mass trade union mobilisations in the streets. This is a perspective that militants here can take back and fight for in their shops and unions. The TUC is meeting on Monday, 5 April. The bureaucrats will have something real to talk about if hundreds of thousands of workers on the shop floor are talking general strike for Thursday the 8th.

In the 'Kill the Bill' campaign of 1971, it was the right wing which argued the passive line of 'non-cooperation' while the lefts like Scanlon and Jones at least *talked* about some form of industrial action. Of course none of them did anything until the rank and file moved into struggle over the Pentonville Five and the NIRC attack on the AUEW. In the last few years, we've seen the defeat of the steel strike, the successful victimisation of Derek Robinson, massive closures and redundancies, escalating cuts in social services and wages, and the anti-Soviet war drive aimed at rolling back the gains of the greatest victory the working class has

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