

## Afghanistan and the Left:

# The Russian Question Point Blank

Afghanistan is a flash of lightning which illuminates the real contours of the world political landscape. It has exploded the last illusions of détente to reveal the implacable hostility of U.S. imperialism to the Soviet degenerated workers state. It has stripped away all diplomatic cover for Washington's alliance with Maoist/Stalinist China. And it has confronted the left inescapably with "the Russian question": the nature of the state originating in the Bolshevik Revolution and its conflict with world capitalism.

*continued on page 2*

## Hail Red Army!

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<b>Counterrevolution in Afghanistan:</b>	
The Khomeini Connection .....	5
SWP/HKE: The Blood Is On Your Hands! .....	6
The Bolsheviks and the "Export of Revolution" .....	8
Open Letters to the Parity Committee .....	10
The Anti-Spartacists .....	14
Leninist Faction-SL/B Declaration of Fusion .....	18

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## Afghanistan and the Left...

(continued from page 1)

For revolutionary socialists there is nothing tricky, nothing ambiguous about the war in Afghanistan. The Soviet army and its left-nationalist allies are fighting an anti-communist, anti-democratic mélange of landlords, money lenders, tribal chiefs and mullahs committed to social illiteracy. And to say that imperialist support to this social scum is out in the open is the understatement of the year. U.S. "national security" czar Zbigniew Brzezinski actually traveled to the Khyber Pass and rifle in hand incited the insurgents: "That land over there is yours and you will go back one day because your cause is right and God is on your side." The gut-level response of every radical leftist should be fullest solidarity with the Soviet Red Army.

Yet much of the left, with the Maoists leading the pack, has joined the imperialist crusade against "Soviet expansionism." In fact, the official pro-Peking group in the U.S., the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) attacked the Carter Doctrine *from the right* as too soft on the Russians. Likewise, the "Third Camp" social-democrats, like the British Cliff group, which could maintain a certain left posture in the days of détente, stand once more revealed as State Department socialists. Those leftists, whatever they call themselves, who deny that the Soviet Union is a proletarian state power (albeit bureaucratically degenerated) find themselves, some more, some less willingly, on the same side of the barricades as U.S. imperialism.

It is not surprising that the Maoists and social democrats should rally to imperialist anti-Sovietism, although some may bridle at making common cause with the crazed anti-communist Brzezinski and his Afghan cutthroats. But for Trotskyists, support to the Soviet army in Afghanistan should be an elementary political reflex. Trotsky's last great factional struggle, against the "Third Camp" Shachtman/Burnham opposition in the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1940, was provoked by the imperialist campaign against the Soviet invasion of "little, democratic Finland." Drawing the hardest line against

social-democratic anti-communism, Trotsky declared: "The safeguarding of the socialist revolution comes before formal democratic principles."

And the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has a far more progressive content than Stalin's action in Finland in 1940, where the Kremlin simply wanted a slice of territory for defensive military purposes, moreover, in the context of an alliance with Nazi Germany. A victory for the Islamic-feudalist insurgency in Afghanistan will not only mean a hostile, imperialist-allied state on the USSR's southern border. It will mean the extermination of the Afghan left and the reimposition of feudal barbarism—the veil, the bride price. Moreover, the Soviet military occupation raises the possibility of a social revolution in this wretchedly backward country, a possibility which did *not* exist before.

Yet much of the ostensibly Trotskyist movement is also dancing to Carter's tune over Afghanistan. The most outright counterrevolutionary position is that of the unstable bloc between the Stalinophobic reformists of the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) and the followers of political adventurer Nahuel Moreno. They not only demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but actually solidarize with the reactionary Islamic insurgents! (See "Morenoites Call for Counterrevolution in USSR," *Spartacist* No. 27-28, Winter 1979-80.)

The United Secretariat (USec) has, predictably enough, split three ways over the question. A large minority, whose foremost spokesman is Tariq Ali, demands Soviet withdrawal in the name of self-determination for Afghanistan. The leadership around Ernest Mandel too condemns the Soviet intervention for violating national rights, but grudgingly admits that to now call for withdrawal would amount to support to imperialist-backed counterrevolution. The American SWP supports the Soviet action but deliberately minimizes its significance.

### SWP Skirts the Russian Question

Long seeking to become a pressure group on the liberal bourgeoisie, the SWP has presented opposition to U.S. imperialist militarism almost exclusively by reference to the democratic right of national self-determination. It was "heroic, little Cuba" and later "heroic, little Vietnam" against the American colossus. Social revolution in the colonial world was reduced to series of contests between various "Third World" Davids and the U.S. Goliath. In this way the SWP echoed and so reinforced the liberal notion of imperialism as big-power bullying of and military intervention into small countries.

But now it is Jimmy Carter who is appealing to liberal "anti-imperialism" and even Third World nationalism over the Soviet invasion of "little, independent Afghanistan." The imperialist media go on about "Russia's Vietnam," evoking sympathy for poor villagers with their primitive weapons battling the mechanized army of a "superpower."

How does the SWP justify its support to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan without confronting liberal anti-Communist prejudices? No easy task this. The SWP tries the line that Washington is mainly reacting against "the Afghan revolution" rather than the Soviet expansion. That's right. "The Afghan revolution"—this world-historic event which threatens imperialist domination in Asia!

"It was not Moscow's increased influence in Afghanistan that alarmed Washington—though there was some

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March 1980, Washington, D.C.: Spartacist contingent in anti-draft demonstration defends Soviet Union against Imperialist war-mongering.

concern over that—but the Afghan revolution itself and its repercussions throughout central Asia. The imperialists were opposed to the social gains that had been won by the Afghan workers and peasants and feared that the revolution would advance toward the overthrow of capitalist property relations.”

—“How Washington Instigated Counterrevolution in Afghanistan,” *Intercontinental Press*, 14 January 1980

So the SWP can play its old liberal refrain of “self-determination for the Afghan revolution.” The Soviet role is here reduced to merely aiding a revolution in a small country attacked by imperialism, a role comparable to that which it played in Cuba and Vietnam:

“So the issue is not Soviet intervention, but a growing U.S. intervention—aimed at taking back the gains won by the Afghan masses—that finally forced the Soviet Union to respond.”

—*Militant*, 15 February

Everyone knows that, of course, the issue is Soviet intervention or, more precisely, the incorporation of Afghanistan into the Soviet bloc through social revolution from without as in East Europe.

Although the SWP has written numerous articles on “the Afghan revolution,” one is hard put to find a *class analysis* of the revolution, the government which issued out of it or the state. Rather, in Stalinist or bourgeois-nationalist fashion, the post-April 1978 government is described as “revolutionary,” “popular,” “progressive,” “anti-imperialist,” etc.

### The April 1978 “Revolution”: What Happened?

Key to understanding what has happened in Afghanistan since April 1978 is that for decades the country has been a Soviet client state. A large fraction of the country’s thin

educated stratum was trained in the USSR, and much of the intelligentsia regarded the Soviet Union as a source of social progress. And for good reason. An Afghan schoolteacher looking across the northern border at Soviet Central Asia, two generations ago as wretchedly backward as Afghanistan, today sees a literate, relatively modern society where women are no longer degraded slaves.

The generally pro-Soviet sympathies of the Afghan intelligentsia manifested themselves organizationally with the establishment of the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in 1965. A pro-Moscow, petty-bourgeois radical party, the PDPA was composed of schoolteachers, university students, government officials and, not least important, army officers. The party had no base among the peasant masses nor among the tiny urban working class.

In 1967 the PDPA split between the *Khalq* (Masses) faction led by Noor Mohammad Taraki, one of the country’s best-known poets, and the *Parcham* (Banner) faction led by Babrak Karmal. The difference between the factions is hard to fathom, and may have been cliquish in nature. Both groups adhered to a strategy, consistent with their social composition, of capturing and radicalizing the weak governing apparatus. Officers loyal to the PDPA-*Parcham* played a major role in overthrowing the monarchy in 1973, and the party participated in the first bourgeois-nationalist Daud government.

Subsequently Daud moved right and in early 1978 decided to crush the PDPA, now shakily reunited. When police assassinated a PDPA leader and others were arrested, mass demonstrations, mainly composed of

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**Left-nationalist PDPA regime distributes land to poor peasants (right). This spurred reactionary uprising of landlords, moneylenders and mullahs.**



students and government office workers, broke out in Kabul. In the ensuing showdown the PDPA military fraction outgunned Daud's men; Daud himself was killed. Thus was born the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

The April 1978 "Revolution" was essentially a left-wing military coup with a certain popular support among the intellectuals. Unusually, the PDPA officers turned the main governmental posts over to the civilian wing of the party. But the real power remained in the military. Hafizullah Amin emerged as the strongman of the new regime because he had previously been in charge of the PDPA's work within the officer corps.

Glorifying "the Afghan revolution" so as to minimize the significance of the Soviet intervention, the SWP conjures up a non-existent mass workers' and peasants' insurrection:

"Then, in April 1978, the Afghan masses rose up and fought to change these oppressive conditions...."

"Tens of thousands of Afghan workers and peasants took to the streets, a section of the army rebelled, a new government came to power."

—*Militant*, 18 January 1980

The narrow, petty-bourgeois elite social base of the new PDPA regime is described in late 1978 by the knowledgeable radical journalist Fred Halliday. Although a supporter of "the Afghan revolution," Halliday, unlike the SWP charlatans, respects empirical truth:

"What has occurred is the seizure of power by a radical sector within the state apparatus, led by civilians (most of them teachers or other kinds of civil servant) aided by army officers...."

"The new regime's implantation outside the main urban centers is very weak, and the inevitable temptation will be to rely on the armed forces rather than the party to implement policies...."

"At the same time, the lower ranks of the State apparatus—both civilian and military—remained untouched, and in particular it was evident that the possibility of counterrevolutionary resistance from the lower ranks of the armed forces had not been eliminated merely by the removal of the top officers."

—"Revolution in Afghanistan," *New Left Review*, November-December 1978

The left-nationalist PDPA came to power in one of the

most primitive, tradition-bound countries on earth. According to the United Nations *Statistical Yearbook* for 1978, only 35,000 people were employed in manufacturing out of a population of 17 to 20 million. At the same time, there were a quarter of a million mullahs, paid by the government, an enormous parasitic caste sucking the blood from a desperately poor people.

These few statistics indicate the *limits* to social change from within Afghan society. Unlike in neighboring Iran or Pakistan, a proletarian revolution is *not* possible in Afghanistan. The country is too absolutely economically backward. On the other hand, the social base for reactionary resistance to even the most moderate bourgeois-democratic reforms is strong.

Despite this the PDPA regime launched an ambitious (for Afghanistan) series of democratic reforms—land redistribution, cancellation of peasant debts, reduction of the bride price to a nominal sum, compulsory education for both sexes, moves toward the separation of church and state. In particular it was the regime's steps toward the equality of women which most fueled the reactionary uprising. And this is recognized even by bourgeois journalists who have covered the Afghan "freedom fighters." The *New York Times* (9 February) reporter observed:

"Land reform attempts undermined their village chiefs. Portraits of Lenin threatened the religious leaders. But it was the Kabul revolutionary Government's granting of new rights to women that pushed Orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up their guns."

### The Left-Nationalist Regime Besieged

By all accounts the PDPA regime acted with a bureaucratic commandism and arbitrariness which alienated many of its potential supporters, especially among the rural poor. The example commonly given is the cancellation of peasant debts to the landlords. The landlords retaliated by withholding seed grain and, since the

*continued on page 21*

# Counterrevolution in Afghanistan: The Khomeini Connection

Much of the left, notably the Maoists, has taken a consistent counterrevolutionary line in tailing Khomeini's clericalist dictatorship in Iran and opposing the Soviet intervention against the feudalist insurgency in Afghanistan. The fake-Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), however, has chosen to support Islamic reaction in Iran while opposing it in Afghanistan. It has become common in SWP literature to couple the "Iranian and Afghan revolutions," hoping no one will notice that the Iranian "revolution" led by the mullahs is belligerently hostile to the Afghan "revolution" and the Soviet Red Army.

The SWP blithely claims that what is happening in Afghanistan "is not a war of Muslims against atheists" (Doug Jenness, *The Truth About Afghanistan*, March 1980). This unusual—one might even say unique—view is contested by an eminent authority whom the SWP deeply respects. Back in June 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini himself summoned the Soviet ambassador and declared: "Afghanistan is an Islamic country and their problems should be solved in an Islamic way (*New York Times*, 13 June 1979).

A Radio Teheran broadcast last September was explicit in anti-Soviet Islamic bellicosity:

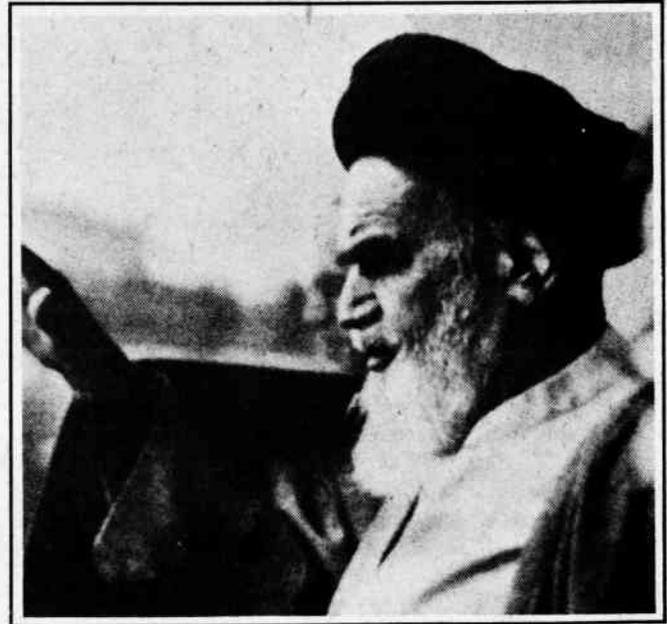
"Afghanistan will remain ablaze until right wins victory. This is the oath made in the mountains and valleys with the rising of the sun every day by thousands of Afghan fighters who are advancing toward the bastion of atheism in Kabul...."

—cited in Fred Halliday, "War and Revolution in Afghanistan," *New Left Review*, Jan.-Feb. 1980

Khomeini's regime was second only to General Zia's Pakistan in providing political and material support to the feudalist insurgency against the Soviet-backed Kabul regime.

Early this year the Soviet government assumed total control of the Afghan "revolution" through a coup. The Iranian foreign ministry promptly denounced it as a "hostile act against Iran and all Moslems of the world" (*New York Times*, 5 February). The SWP rushed to excuse the Iranian position as the nefarious work of those who did not follow the imam's line (the imam at the time suffering from a heart ailment): "Immediately after Soviet troops began moving into Afghanistan in large numbers, the Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement denouncing the move, but Khomeini himself did not speak out against it" (*Intercontinental Press*, 21 January). But when the imam got back in action, he disoblged his SWP lawyers by declaring "unconditional support" for the Afghan feudalists: "We totally support the brave and Moslem people of Afghanistan" (*New York Times*, 12 February).

On the few occasions when the SWP admits the relations between Teheran and Kabul are not exactly sisterly, it blames the conflict on the latter's "sectarianism." This is the tack taken by the Jenness pamphlet (and is in keeping with the SWP's condemnation of the Iranian Fedayeen's "sectarianism" in defending their very lives against



Time

Khomeini's criminal gangs).

Jenness goes on to commend Kabul for sending a message to Khomeini proposing fraternal relations right after the Soviet-backed coup. But the Stalinists at least took some account of reality. As part of the Kremlin's current "peace offensive," Kabul announced Soviet troops could be withdrawn from Afghanistan if the U.S., China, Pakistan and Iran ended their support to the reactionary forces (*New York Times*, 15 May). At least when their own heads are at risk, the Stalinists are less conciliatory to the reactionary theocracy in Teheran than the shameless SWP. ■

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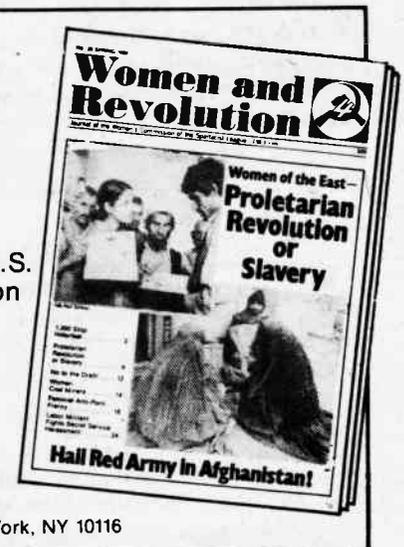
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Leftists at Teheran University aid comrade assaulted by Khomeini's thugs.

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## SWP/HKE: The Blood Is On Your Hands!

The following leaflet by the New York Spartacist League was distributed at a Socialist Workers Party (SWP) forum on Iran on May 4 just days after the most savage attack to date by Khomeini's Islamic reaction against the Iranian left. The main target of this attack was the left-populist Fedayeen, which fought back against the right-wing student and lumpen gangs. Yet the SWP and its Iranian protégés, the HKE, actually defended Khomeini's blood-purge of the left, denouncing the Fedayeen as "sectarian" for defending themselves.

We recognize that the construction of a Trotskyist party in Iran will no doubt draw many of its cadres from those who prove able to transcend the left-Stalinist limitations of the Fedayeen. The Fedayeen are fighters, against the shah and—reluctantly—against the attacks of the clerical right.

By contrast, the HKE has never fought anyone for anything. Its core cadres were trained as petty-bourgeois students in the U.S. in the "peaceful, legal" school of the reformist SWP. Only a few months before the outbreak of mass struggles against the shah, these craven opportunists

rejected the slogan, "Down with the shah!" as ultra-left. They gained further notoriety by fingering rival Iranian student radicals to the Houston cops. All this was good practice for their current role in Iran, where a decade from now the HKE will be remembered as the "leftists" who justified the murderous right-wing attacks on the Fedayeen. The most significant thing the HKE will ever do is to hideously discredit the name of Trotskyism in Iran.

The HKE learned its criminal tailism of Islamic reaction from the SWP, which more so than any other large American left group has glorified the Khomeinist movement. While the SWP did not literally term the veil "progressive," as incorrectly stated in the leaflet, it does defend this barbaric institution of women's enslavement:

"Some women who never wore the veil are now doing so as a symbol of national liberation. Some wear it in opposition to western dress styles that turn women into sex objects."

—"Revolution Opens Road to Liberation of Women," Intercontinental Press, 17 December 1979

The future cadres of a revolutionary Trotskyist party in Iran will have to absorb the lessons that Khomeini and his

*mullahs did not "betray" the revolution but intended from the beginning to build a clerical dictatorship, and that genuine national liberation from imperialism requires a struggle leading the oppressed masses to the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Crazy Carter's bungled imperialist "Mission Impossible" in Iran demonstrates he will do anything to stay in office as he drives toward World War III. The Spartacist League says, "Hands Off Iran!" But unlike the SWP and their cohorts in Iran, the HKE, we do not defend the equally crazy "Imam" Khomeini who also will do anything to consolidate his Persian chauvinist, Shi'ite Islamic theocracy. Khomeini opposes imperialism only when it stands in the way of plunging Iran back into the seventh century. He has no qualms about using American Phantom jets and helicopter gunships to massacre Kurdish rebels in Sanandaj. He offers "unconditional support" to his fellow Islamic clergymen in Afghanistan when they are tools of U.S. imperialism and the CIA. Khomeini and the Afghan mullahs and the U.S. imperialists know that their main enemy is the Soviet Union. It was the October Revolution which broke the reactionary social power of mosque and bazaar as it liberated the Moslem borderlands from imperialist subjugation. We call for unconditional military support to Iran against imperialist attack in order to open the road for the October of the Iranian working masses which will sweep away Khomeini and all the exploiters, capitalist and pre-capitalist.

During April dozens of leftist students were murdered and hundreds were injured as Khomeini sent his "Islamic Revolution" onto the campuses to "purge" them of "Marxist" influence. At Friday evening prayer services on April 18, the prayer leader at Teheran University called for ridding the campuses of pictures of Lenin and hammers and sickles. Within hours Teheran University was stormed by knife-, club- and gun-wielding Islamic thugs, the *Hezbollahi* or "people of the party of god." These are the lumpen gangs recruited and bribed by the mosque with CIA money to bring down bourgeois-nationalist prime minister Mossadegh in 1953 and restore the shah to power. The *Hezbollahi* attacks upon the left, nationalist and secular organizations last August paved the way for Khomeini to ban all political parties and papers, making the universities the last refuge of organized left-wing propaganda. Now Khomeini has determined to completely annihilate such groups as the populist Fedayeen Khalq, the radical Islamic Mujahedeen and the pro-Moscow Stalinist Tudeh. The Fedayeen who barricaded themselves in buildings at Teheran University report that twenty of their comrades were murdered. In provincial universities the Islamic goons were even more vicious. At the university in Shiraz more than 400 were injured.

The SWP/HKE have praised the veil, the symbol of the Islamic enslavement of women, as "progressive" (which is like praising the chains of a black slave as "progressive"); they have denied the right of the oppressed nationalities of Iran to self-determination; they have supported Khomeini's Persian chauvinism to the point of backing Iran in their border war with Iraq; they have hailed as "brothers" the *Pasdars*—"revolutionary guards"—the hated butchers of the workers, leftists, Kurds, Arabs and other minorities.

Now they have carried their criminal support to Khomeini's "Islamic revolution" to its logical conclusion: they hail the bloody purge of leftists on the campuses and denounce as "sectarian opposition" those who try to defend their organizations and their very lives from the Shi'ite clergy's stormtroopers.

The SWP—like Carter over his Iranian military escapades—has taken full responsibility for its Iranian cronies' defense of the massacre of leftists. In an article titled "Why Carter Fears 'Unraveling Authority' in Iran" (*Intercontinental Press*, 5 May/*Militant*, 9 May), the SWP quotes from an HKE statement published on April 21 at the height of the Islamic goon attacks upon campus leftists:

"The Tudeh Party, Mujahedeen, Fedayeen, Paykor and other so-called Marxist organizations, which always start from their own narrow, sectarian interests, have essentially opposed this brave action. These forces, under the pretext of defending the 'barricade of freedom' (these organizations think that reaction has taken over the country and that the campuses are the last bastion) have mobilized against the action of the ISOs [Islamic Student Organizations]."

The ISOs were the first to mobilize around Khomeini's demand for the "Islamification" of the universities. *Hezbollahi* merely carried out this demand in a "revolutionary" fashion. Khomeini's governing "Revolutionary Council" then adopted this slogan and closed the universities in order to complete the "Islamification."

This recent betrayal places the HKE far to the right of Tudeh which was so subservient to Khomeini that they have been derisively referred to as "assistant ayatollahs." By this act the HKE is traitor to every principle the labor and socialist movements stand for. As if to compound their crime by showing the spoils as well as the dead bodies, the *Militant* carries in the middle of its article a large photo caption showing the last of the imprisoned HKE members leaving jail and stating that "in Iran, deepening revolutionary ferment has created an atmosphere open to debate of different viewpoints." Tell that to the Fedayeen who lost 20 comrades at Teheran University. With the SWP's full approval, the HKE has offered up the lives of Iranian leftists to Islamic reaction to save their own skins. But for the East the 1965 Indonesian coup demonstrated on a massive and catastrophic scale, for those even remotely connected to the left, that opportunism saved nobody's skin including their own. ■

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Trotsky addresses Red Army during revolutionary war against Pilsudski's Poland.

## The Bolsheviks and the "Export of Revolution"

Of all the fake-left tendencies that have opposed the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, not many have tried to rationalize their objectively pro-imperialist line by referring to the policies of Lenin's Bolsheviks. One such attempt to misuse historical analogies, made by the Klonskyite Peking-loyal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) [CP-ML] in the U.S., is particularly noteworthy because it takes the form of a polemic against the Spartacist League.

In an article entitled "Trotskyites: Moscow's New Cheerleaders" the CP-ML's Carl Davidson singled out our slogan "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" as the "best example" of Trotskyist support to so-called "Soviet expansionism" (*Call*, 28 January). Most of Davidson's diatribe is devoted to trying to prettify the Afghan mullahs and tribal chiefs leading the "freedom fighters." But the article winds up by linking our Soviet defensist position to what Davidson claims is the original sin of Trotskyism:

"The problem is that they are wedded to a piece of dogma that goes all the way back to Leon Trotsky himself. Part of Trotsky's ultra-'leftism' was the argument that, since it was impossible to build socialism in one country, especially

where the majority were peasants, then the new Soviet power would have to save itself by launching its armies on the rest of Europe. This view of 'exporting revolution' was blasted by both Lenin and Stalin as ridiculously and dangerously adventurist, even at a time when the Soviet Union was revolutionary."

The assertion that we advocate "Soviet expansionism" is a patent lie, as is obvious to anyone who reads our press. But by adding this charge to Trotsky's alleged support for "exporting revolution," Davidson hopes to hoodwink those unfamiliar with the Stalinist school of falsification. For this slander isn't Davidson's brainchild. It comes straight out of the Stalinist "classics." For example, S. Rabinovich's revisionist *History of the Civil War* (1935) condemns Trotsky for allegedly wanting to "bring the revolution to Europe on the bayonets of the Red Army."

A reexamination of the question of "revolution from without" is in order in view of much of the left's support to the imperialist hue and cry over Afghanistan. For even as the Bolsheviks rejected the program of "revolution from

without," they still upheld the principle and perspective of using the Red Army to promote revolutions abroad.

### The Russo-Polish War

The issue of making "revolution from without" arose among the Bolsheviks as a result of the Russo-Polish war of 1920. Its formulation and the ensuing debate were organically linked to the course and outcome of that war.

In April 1920 Joseph Pilsudski, the bourgeois-nationalist "Liberator" of Poland, launched an unprovoked attack on the Soviet forces in the Ukraine. Backed by French imperialism, Pilsudski had ambitions to recreate "Greater Poland" by bringing the Ukraine and parts of the Baltic states back under Polish rule. The Soviet government, which had been desperately trying to negotiate a peace with Poland, was taken unprepared and was forced to abandon Kiev and much of the Ukraine. But the Red Army mustered fresh forces and in June launched a successful counterattack that sent the overextended Polish armies reeling in disorderly retreat. By the end of June the Soviet armies had advanced almost unopposed right up to the border of national Poland. The question was then posed point blank: whether to conclude peace with Pilsudski or to go over to the offensive in a revolutionary war against Poland? It was this agonizingly difficult question that the Bolshevik Politburo debated.

No Bolshevik leader considered revolutionary war against Pilsudski's Poland impermissible in principle. Rather the debate centered on two interrelated, empirical questions. One, would the Red Army's advance into Poland ignite a proletarian uprising leading to peasant aid to the Soviet forces, mutinies among Pilsudski's troops, etc.? Two, how would the Soviet peoples, devastated by six years of war and civil war, stand up to a new major war? The stronger the indigenous revolutionary forces in Poland, the less the demands on the offensive capacity of the Red Army and behind it on the Russian and Ukrainian masses.

Of the top Bolshevik leaders Trotsky alone advocated negotiation of an immediate peace with Poland. Writing later in his 1930 autobiography, Trotsky explained his position as follows:

"Even more perhaps than any one else, I did not want this war, because I realized only too clearly how difficult it would be to prosecute it after three years of continuous civil war. . . .

"A point of view that the war which began as one of defense should be turned into an offensive and revolutionary war began to grow and acquire strength. In principle, of course, I could not possibly have any objection to such a course. The question was simply one of the correlation of forces. The unknown quantity was the attitude of the Polish workers and peasants."

—*My Life*

Trotsky believed that a Russian offensive against Pilsudski could hope to succeed only if a proletarian revolution broke out early on in Poland. And he had good reason to doubt that a communist revolution in Poland was so imminent. He listened to the sober estimates of such leading Polish Communist emigrés as Julian Marchlewski and Karl Radek. Marchlewski evidently spared no effort to persuade the Russian Politburo not to undertake the invasion of Poland. But perhaps none was so opposed to a war with Poland as was Radek, who believed that Russian troops marching on Polish soil, even if they raised the

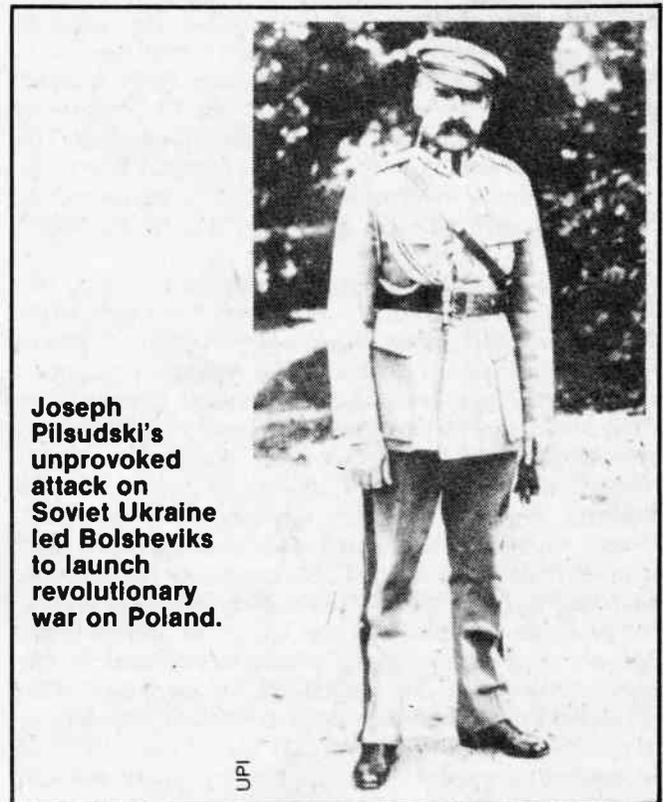
banner "For our freedom and yours!," would be regarded by the masses as conquerors and not liberators. Radek urged the Bolshevik leaders to let the Polish revolution mature on its own before sending Russian troops to its aid.

There was a definite logic to this position. If the Soviet government were to conclude a peace with Pilsudski, then both the Red Army and the Polish Communists would buy time to better gather forces for the offensive. If Pilsudski were to reject a generous Soviet peace offer, making war inevitable, then the Polish masses would be able to see clearly who was the real aggressor.

Of the other Bolshevik leaders Lenin was most resolutely in favor of going over to the offensive against Poland. No doubt Lenin was impressed by the effect on the Soviet forces of Pilsudski's attack on the Ukraine. The Red Army certainly appeared ready and willing to rout the retreating, demoralized units of the Polish army. But what seemed to have clinched the question for Lenin were the reports he received from resident Polish Communists like Felix Kon and P.L. Lapinski. Kon and Lapinski, who came from the anti-Luxemburgist wing of the old Polish socialist movement and would therefore presumably be sensitive to the national sentiments of the Polish masses, predicted imminent revolution in Warsaw.

Moreover, Lenin fixed his gaze on Berlin. Revolution indeed seemed imminent in Germany. Only a few months earlier the German proletariat had defeated the right-wing Kapp putsch with a general strike and also had prevented French munitions shipments from reaching Poland after Pilsudski's attack on the Ukraine. In a revolutionary war against Poland the stakes were enormous. A Soviet Poland would remove the last bulwark sealing off the October Revolution from Germany. If only the Soviets could deliver the *coup de grace* to Pilsudski, the entire Treaty of

*continued on page 29*



**Joseph Pilsudski's unprovoked attack on Soviet Ukraine led Bolsheviks to launch revolutionary war on Poland.**

UPI

# Open Letters to the Parity Committee

*Beset for years by endemic factionalism, Ernest Mandel's Potemkin Village "Fourth International," the United Secretariat (USec), lost perhaps a third of its membership last fall when the international followers of Latin American political adventurer Nahuel Moreno, the Bolshevik Faction (BF), split. While posturing as a left opposition within the USec, the Morenoites then turned around and made a rotten bloc with the social-democratic, virulently anti-Soviet, French-centered organization of*

*Pierre Lambert. The Moreno/Lambert lash-up, called the Parity Committee, has called for an "open conference" of "all forces claiming to be Trotskyist." Since some militants might be taken in by the Parity Committee's pretensions to "orthodox" Trotskyism, we responded to this "unity" maneuver through a series of open letters. We reprint below the letter of the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD) and lengthy excerpts from that of the Ligue Trozskyste de France (LTF).*

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## You Call for Counterrevolution in East Germany

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Frankfurt  
8 May 1980

Open Letter to the Members of the Parity Committee  
Comrades:

The Parity Committee has repeatedly issued calls for an "Open Conference" of "all forces claiming to be Trotskyist." The Parity Committee has called for national gatherings to prepare such a conference before the end of 1980 (*Tribune Ouvrière* No. 6, 29 February 1980). A direct invitation to participate was sent to the TLD via your Hamburg BF supporter M. in November of last year. The TLD, German section of the iSt [international Spartacist tendency], hereby accepts the invitation to be present as observers at such national gatherings and at the "Open Conference."

At the same time we recognize reality for what it is. The "Parity Committee" is not a "united front" but a rotten bloc between Lambert and Moreno with some formally orthodox rhetoric on Nicaragua as window-dressing to cover its real purpose: an organizational maneuver to trump Mandel by playing the card of "unity." The German components of the Parity Committee disagree on central political issues, not least of all on the question of the Trotskyist program, uniquely represented by the TLD. German BF sympathizers have in the past expressed their readiness to discuss with the TLD the political questions on which the Parity Committee is ostensibly based. In contrast Werner Uhde, a member of the CC of the International Workers Association (ISA), which is affiliated to the [Lambertist] Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, has publicly stated: "The Parity Committee has decided that the iSt stands outside the workers movement"—an offensive and utterly groundless slander, worthy of a Gerry Healy or a Stalin.

Given the political differences within the Parity Committee, its calls for the "unity" of ostensible Trotskyists make a mockery of a principled fight for programmatic clarity, for reforging the Fourth International. And on Afghanistan, the question on which the forces of the Parity Committee are in agreement, they have adopted a counterrevolutionary position. Thus the Italian section of the BF headlined its article on Afghanistan "Soviet Troops out of Afghanistan" (*Avanzata Proletaria*, 12 January) and, wholly in line with the OCI [Organisation Communiste Internationaliste]/Parity Committee position that the movements led by Khomeini and the Afghan mullahs do not have a "religious character," called for spreading the "Iranian revolution" into the Soviet Union—that is, for capitalist restoration! This is not surprising coming from the ISA, which would love to see Helmut Schmidt overthrow Honecker, in order to install an SPD regime in a reunified—capitalist—Germany. But it should destroy any illusions in the "leftism" of the Parity Committee on the part of anyone seriously considering himself a Trotskyist. And Moreno's idealization of Third World bonapartists, even in their most anti-communist form, might logically



Photoworld

1953 East Berlin workers uprising pointed toward revolutionary reunification of Germany.



"Son of Perón" Nahuel Moreno (left) meets "son of Mitterrand" Pierre Lambert (right).

lead to the formation of an "Imam Khomeini Brigade" to fight the Red Army in Afghanistan.

### Whose Side Are You On?

When Afghan reactionaries and their Maoist allies attacked comrades of the TLD with knives on account of the TLD's position of defense of the Soviet Union, seriously wounding Fred Z., the Swedish section of the Bolshevik Faction issued a principled statement, saying that they considered it "our clear duty... to solidarize with the victims of this reactionary attack and [we] defend to the extent of our power those exposed to such a deliberate attack." Individual members of the BF in Germany also supported a protest statement circulated by the TLD. The ISA, to the contrary, refused to defend the TLD, even going so far as to say (together with the Islamic fanatics and the anti-Soviet Maoists) that the attack was "fully justified" (phone conversation with leading Berlin Lambertist Ingeborg S.).

### SPD

The ISA, with its usual groveling policy toward the SPD [Social Democratic Party], calls for voting for the SPD in the coming elections. The BF, in an effort to appear to the left, opposes voting for the SPD. But this is scarcely out of principled opposition to the SPD's alliance with the FDP [bourgeois-liberal Free Democratic Party] and its anti-working-class policies. For Moreno published a paper in Argentina "under the discipline of the High Council of General Perón" and in the mid-'70s urged a vote for the popular front "Frente Amplio" in Uruguay. All this is merely a cynical effort on the part of the Morenoites to attract those forces within the GIM [Mandelite Gruppe Internationale Marxisten] who are against voting for the SPD.

What will be the Parity Committee's position on the German elections? The USec has already offered us a farce, with the same issue of *Was Tun* explaining that while the (bare) majority of the GIM opposes voting for the SPD, Ernest Mandel and the USec are in favor of it. And this is all presented as "democratic centralism"! When history occurs the first time as farce, what can the Parity Committee version of it be?

### ISA: Call for Counterrevolution in the DDR

The Morenoites made much ado about their criticisms of

the wretched USec document "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," loudly proclaiming that... the "existing proletarian dictatorships"—that is to say the deformed and degenerated workers states—were a million times [no less] superior to the bourgeois democracy existing in the imperialist countries" (*La dictature révolutionnaire du prolétariat*, pp. 249-250).

And with this position they are, of course, in the same organization with the ISA, which calls for the "unconditional reunification of Germany" through "free elections in all Germany without preconditions." That is to say, a capitalistically reunited Germany under Helmut Schmidt, who, with his Stammheim prison, would in a situation of revolutionary upsurge certainly not take a back seat to Scheidemann and Noske.

In contrast to the long-standing social-democratic Stalinophobia of the OCI/ISA (anyone who opposes the evil Stalinists must be good, including the people who go around shooting communist school teachers in Afghanistan, a country with 90 percent illiteracy), the TLD stands for unconditional defense of the social gains of the deformed and degenerated workers states, while simultaneously calling for a political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucrats and for the international extension of the proletarian revolution. The revolutionary reunification of Germany can take place only when, under the leadership of a Trotskyist party, the masses carry out the political revolution in the DDR [East Germany] and the social revolution in West Germany. While placing no trust whatsoever in the bureaucracy, we defend the right of these states to defend themselves against imperialist attack and against attempts at capitalist restoration within, even when the bureaucrats' bankrupt policies lead to "defense" by such bureaucratic methods as the Berlin Wall.

### Abandon All Hope, Ye Who Enter the Parity Committee

In West Germany the Parity Committee simply means subordination to the ISA's social-democratic Stalinophobia, to its deep entrism into the SPD, to its love for Helmut Schmidt.

However, in an effort to provide an orthodox cover for their power politics (Lambert and Moreno dividing the

*continued on next page*

world between them in their own wretched version of Potsdam), the Parity Committee raises a number of issues of genuine importance. In order to seriously debate these issues, as well as to point to the unprincipled character of the Parity Committee, we wish to be present at the "Open Conference." But in fact the Parity Committee cannot afford to permit such a debate to take place. For only the international Spartacist tendency has systematically defended Trotskyist positions on the issues raised by the Parity Committee.

We have, since the inception of our tendency in the '60s, fought for the position that the Fourth International was destroyed as the world party of socialist revolution by Pablo, Mandel & Co. in 1951-53—and therefore for the necessity of reforging the Fourth International (and not patching together some rotten bloc and calling it the "reconstructed" or "reorganized" Fourth International).

From 1960-61 the Revolutionary Tendency, predecessor of the iSt, fought against the capitulation of the SWP [American Socialist Workers Party] leadership to Castro and for the position that Cuba had become a deformed workers state: for this reason we opposed the 1963 reunification and were expelled from the SWP (although we were willing to accept the discipline of the United Secretariat had we been permitted to continue to fight for our positions nationally and internationally). While the SWP was capitulating to Castroism, while Moreno in the 1960s was fancying himself an ersatz guerrilla (before executing a sharp turn in the 1970s and referring to guerrillas in Argentina as the "mirror image" of the extreme right-wing Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance), and while the OCI for 18 years denied that any social revolution at all had taken place in Cuba, the iSt alone upheld the position that Cuba was a deformed workers state and that the task of Trotskyists was to build a party and lead a political revolution there.

Anyone interested in seriously debating these issues will have to come to grips with the program and the political practice represented today by the Spartacist tendency. The politically bankrupt Parity Committee is able only to try to seal off its members and sympathizers from this debate through the use of slanders, lies and—where the relation of forces permits, as in France—by physical violence against the iSt.

for the CC of the TLD  
Wolfgang Hohmann

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## Mullah-loving Stalinophobia

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To the Leadership Committee of the LCI [Ligue Communiste Internationaliste, French representative of the Parity Committee]:

. As political organizations go, the life of the LCI promises to be relatively brief and, by all accounts, fairly brutal.

Banners flying, you marched out of the LCR [Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, French section of the USec] congress last October, loudly proclaiming that nothing

short of a revolutionary Trotskyist party and program was needed in Nicaragua. You promised a new beginning for Trotskyism in France to a couple of hundred LCR militants who, having had it with the gross liquidationism of Mandel, Krivine & Co., and scenting a split in the air, had in a short period of time swollen the ranks of the LTT [Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency of the USec]. But where is the LCI today? It is on the side of the CIA-backed mullahs in Afghanistan, with LCI militants confined to cell meetings with no political life; there is no discussion, contrary to what might have been expected given the heterogeneous and turbulent nature of the split; they are speculating on the *date* of the fusion with the [Lambertist] OCI, not the need for it; they are campaigning for the election of Marchais and Mitterrand—again. Like in the LCR. Only the formulations on the petitions have changed.

From the beginning, you, the LCI leadership, have done everything to erect a watertight barrier between leftists in the LCI and the LTF. If there were a "Spartacist" faction in the LCI, it would be based on a Trotskyist program and counterposed both to the vile social-democratic Stalinophobia of Lambert-Nemo and the centrist tailism of the Pabloites. It is *you* who have insisted that any militant in the LCI runs the risk of being Spartacist-baited if he has any reservations about the OCI or thinks he can fight to correct its course—and of course if he asks too many questions or even wants to read for himself our assessment of his organization. You didn't like it very much when a month after the formation of the LCI we asked the awkward question: "Will Nemo put the Lambertist handcuffs on the LCI? Whither the LCI?"

That our polemics touched a nerve, we can tell from your response: physical intimidation, threats to "write us out" of the workers movement, cop-baiting and other slanders—Stalin-style intimidation tactics designed to stifle political debate in the LCI. On 13 November 1979 OCI goons attacked our salesmen in front of the Mutualité, and LCI members were forced to condone such attacks or be suspected of having sympathies for the LTF. One is reminded of an analogous tactic used, albeit on a different level, by the Greek Stalinists, who involved new members in assassinating Trotskyists in order to draw a bloodline.

The provocateur-baiting didn't work very well: the most blustering of the bullies had to back down. The cynicism behind your slanders is glaring: many of your cadre, not to mention some of your Paris and Rouen militants, worked for years with comrades who are now militants in the LTF....

While the worst insinuations have died down, at least in public, the attempts at physical intimidation continue. In addition anyone known to have ever been close to the LTF is denied entry into the LCI, forced to sign a compromising confession or, once inside, hounded and denied the right to fight for political positions not drawn entirely from [the OCI's] *Informations Ouvrières*. Truly, the LCI is rapidly becoming a Lambertist gulag. When will the show trials start? Even you, the leaders, are so fearful of being influenced by the Spartacist "virus" that you won't even handle mail from the LTF. When you returned our *Tribune Ouvrière* sub, we had a good laugh. But when you returned our press release concerning the attack against our comrade Fred Zierenberg, we characterized you for what you are: fearful little sectarian bureaucrats, mullah-loving Stalinophobes....

As we predicted, the formally leftist position expressed on Nicaragua, which the LTT and Moreno's Bolshevik Faction used as a pretext to split the USec, was soon shown to be episodic. Iran and especially Afghanistan revealed the real politics of the leaders of the "Parity Committee." As we said in a leaflet distributed to the Second Congress of the LCR:

"In a grotesque caricature of their typical enthusiasm for non-revolutionary forces, all wings of the USec (as well as the OCI) are guilty of the criminal betrayal of supporting the mullahs. They were all united in arguing that Khomeini's rise to power was a victory for the workers and they all continued to call for the defense of the Iranian 'revolution' when their own comrades were arrested and threatened with execution. And they were all united in denouncing the iSt's slogan 'Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!' as sectarian and counterrevolutionary."

And sure enough, the OC and the Morenoites joined in glorifying the spectacular diversion from the struggles of the working masses and national minorities which the seizure of the U.S. embassy by Khomeini-loyal "Islamic students" represented.

Then, when the Red Army entered Afghanistan to put down reactionary uprisings by various monarchist and religious tribal groupings who in collaboration with the CIA wanted to establish an "Islamic Republic" on the borders of the Soviet Union, modeled on that of Imam Khomeini or General Zia in Pakistan, you hurried, together with the Morenoites and the OCI, to attack... the Red Army!... The LTF's slogans, "Hail Red Army" and "Extend the Gains of the October Revolution" draw the class line in Afghanistan today. But you, who were so proud of your opposition to boycotting the Moscow Games when you were in the LCR, you jump back into line when Lambert snaps his fingers and you now refuse to defend the gains of the October Revolution at a time when imperialist threats against the Soviet Union are on the rise.

The OCI's line on Afghanistan represents the latest counterrevolutionary expression of its Stalinophobia: anyone, even the reactionary mullahs, who opposes the Stalinists must have something going for them. This is the same Stalinophobic method that the LTT and the OCI applied to Portugal in the summer of 1975, solidarizing with the SP [Socialist Party]-led, CIA-backed "mass mobilizations" which were attacking and burning Communist Party headquarters. At the time the Morenoites pretended to a left oppositional stance in the USec; now they take up the anti-Soviet cause in Afghanistan, befitting their identification with Third-Worldist nationalists even in their most reactionary forms.

Today, these Stalinophobic tinpot bureaucrats say they are setting up a conference supposedly open "to all

Trotskyist organizations." Of course we understand that the OCI and its agents in the LCI leadership reserve for themselves the right to pass judgement on who can or cannot lay claim to being Trotskyist. We challenge the Parity Committee to admit us as observers to their "open conference." Let us see who can justifiably lay claim to Leninist principles and Trotskyist clarity in the light of their political past....

### Who Are the Real Trotskyists?

Since its inception the Spartacist tendency has maintained that the Fourth International was destroyed in 1951-53 by Pabloite revisionism. The goal of the LTF and the iSt is not to throw itself into a series of unprincipled maneuvers based on the idea that there is a "family" of Trotskyism, reshuffling and patching together currently existing organizations with counterposed and incompatible political positions. All that would remain is to rebaptize this bastard product the "reconstructed" or "reorganized" Fourth International. Our fight is to reforge the democratically centralized world party of revolution. Our struggle for an authentic Trotskyist tendency united by program and governed by international democratic centralism is the complete opposite of your unprincipled "combinationism": that is why you are forced to attack us, sometimes in hilariously self-contradictory fashion. Thus in the space of a week you ludicrously tried to amalgamate us with the highly dubious Michel Varga by saying that we claimed "to be" the Fourth International (interview with Nemo, *Informations Ouvrières*, 17-24 November [1979]), then turned around and attacked us for our real position: fighting for the rebirth of the Fourth International (*Tribune Ouvrière*, 24 November [1979]). In the course of two decades of struggle to reforge the Fourth International, our tendency has grown from a nucleus in North America into an international current which must be reckoned with by all those who pay lip service to Trotskyism. We have regrouped many subjectively revolutionary militants from the United Secretariat. And we did it not by adapting our politics to form rotten blocs which are as unstable as they are unprincipled, but by remaining faithful to the Trotskyist program which is borne out every day in life, from Cuba to Afghanistan. If the Parity Committee were what it claims to be, it would have a burning interest in debating the positions of the iSt—if only to prove us wrong. We know that the OCI, the LCI and the Parity Committee will do everything in their power to make any real discussion impossible during its "open conference"—if there ever is such a conference. But just as Trotsky did not give up his struggle to win over subjectively revolutionary elements from the Stalinist parties, we will not abandon the militants of the LCI to the bureaucratic handcuffs of Nemo, Just and Lambert.

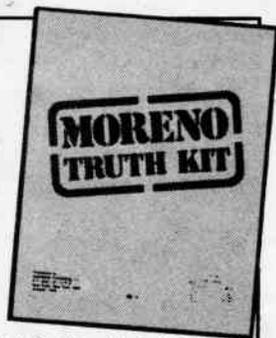
20 March 1980

for the LTF,  
 —Thimbault (LCR, 1966-76, Rouen City Executive)  
 —Lesueur (LCR, 1967-74, Central Committee)  
 —Cochise (LCR, 1968-76, Renault-Cléon, CGT)  
 —Antoine (LCR, 1968-75, Société Générale)  
 —Igor (LCR, 1971-74, Société Générale, CGT, CFDT)  
 —Daru (LCR, 1972-76, Elbeuf)  
 —Hamid (LCR, 1972-77, SNCF, Rouen)  
 —Clément (LCR, 1973-76, Elbeuf)

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## Lamentable Liaison Committee

# The Anti-Spartacists

*The following was originally published as a supplement (23 May) of Le Bolchévik, organ of the Ligue Trotskyste de France.*

Ernest Mandel's parody of Trotskyism—the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec), whose components have found themselves on opposite sides of the barricades from Portugal 1975 to Afghanistan 1980—seems to be producing rotten-bloc images of itself through cloning. First, in a spectacular split last fall over the pretext of Nicaragua, it gave birth to the "Parity Committee for the Reorganization (Reconstruction) of the Fourth International," an alliance of French crypto-social democrat Pierre Lambert and Argentine would-be caudillo Nahuel Moreno that is every bit as unprincipled as the United Secretariat. Now the Parity Committee has generated its own replica in miniature, the "Trotskyist International Liaison Committee (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International)." The three giants of this micro-USec are the Workers Socialist League (WSL) of Britain, the Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista (GBL) of Italy and the Chilean Liga Obrera Bolchevique (LOB).

For a time it looked as if Lambert/Moreno would attract the flotsam and jetsam thrown off by previous outbursts of factionalism in the USec. Their talk of an independent Trotskyist party in Nicaragua and defense of leftists from Sandinista repression gave them a militant image. But when Afghanistan tore off this cover to reveal the deep underlying Stalinophobia—calling for military support to anti-Soviet Islamic reactionary guerrillas—the wavering centrists got cold feet. Roberto Massari's Revolutionary Marxist Faction, after seeking and being refused attendance at Mandel & Co.'s "Eleventh World Congress," retaliated by publishing voluminous correspondence showing how it unsuccessfully tried to crawl back into the USec and declared itself independent. Guillermo Lora's Fourth Internationalist Tendency called down a "plague on both your houses," finding the USec split of no interest in its struggle to form an "anti-imperialist front" with the Latin American "national" bourgeoisie. And the WSL/GBL/LOB founded a home for the Orphan Annies of pseudo-Trotskyism.

Conceived in opportunism, born of a marriage of convenience, the Liaison Committee has only one reason for being: anti-Spartacism. It set as its goal "to drive out all forms of revisionism from within the Fourth International" (which one—the USec, Parity Committee, Healyites, Posadistas or Vargaites?). Thus behind its anti-Pabloist rhetoric is the bankrupt conception of a "family of Trotskyism." The first public statement of the new grouping declared, "After political agreement has been reached on strategic principles and fundamental attacks, the Liaison Committee intends to form itself into a democratic-centralist international Faction" (*Socialist Press*, 13 February 1980). Thereby the WSL/GBL/LOB admit that their bloc is based on neither democratic

centralism nor agreement on strategic principles. But if after two years of cohabitation their goal is not achieved, the high contracting parties agree in advance to separate.

In the meantime, the Liaison Committee's lack of basic programmatic agreement has not stopped it from publishing a series of leaflets on current events from Afghanistan to Peru. Its Afghanistan flyer "condemn[s] the intervention of the Soviet troops" but also warns that "a withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan... would also give a major boost to the policies of imperialism." This is about as clear as 'a barrel of tar. But as soon as the bourgeois press bemoaned the suppression of a shopkeepers' "strike" in the Kabul bazaar, the WSL solidarized with the "masses" against the Soviet army. With this position (some abstract verbiage about defense of the USSR notwithstanding), it's a toss-up whether the authors belong in the muddled USec or the anti-Soviet Parity Committee. Clearly, though, they flee from the hard Trotskyist line of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) which proclaimed "Hail Red Army!" against Afghan reaction.

The Liaison Committee wants to inhabit more or less the same niche on the USec's left flank, occupied in 1976-77 by the short-lived "Necessary International Initiative." Hoping that their lash-up can help swing a deal with the "big-time" revisionists of the Parity Committee or USec, once again the bloc partners take their sweet time in facing up to fundamental programmatic differences. This time, even more than before, it is an Anti-Spartacist League. Each of the component groups has been *centrally* defined through confrontation with the iSt. And their rejection of a consistent Trotskyist policy has been sealed with betrayals. *The Liaison Committee is the combination of an Italian group that called for votes to the "Historic Compromise" of repression, austerity and clerical domination; a Chilean group which calls for votes to the key popular front of recent times, Allende's Unidad Popular, even after its bloody demise; and an English group whose principal leader is notorious for scabbing!*

### WSL: Scabbing

Let's dissect this Anti-Spartacist League par excellence. The Liaison Committee was formed at a conference of the British Workers Socialist League in late December. But this came only after the WSL had been given the cold shoulder by both the USec and the Parity Committee, all in the space of six months. In August a draft agreement had been reached stating that despite "substantial differences," there was "the objective possibility of the WSL fusing with the USFI [USec]." This became a dead letter only when the USec backed out. Then the WSL resumed its on-again, off-again flirtation with the Morenoites and Lambertists, "welcoming" their initiative and formally applying to join the Parity Committee. However, Moreno/Lambert raised as a condition for entry that the WSL refer to them as "Trotskyists." Thereupon *Socialist Press* (19 December

1979) complained that "It begins to look as if the [Parity Committee] conference may not be as 'open' as it appeared...."

The WSL's relationship to the international Spartacist tendency is strictly involuntary: the WSL continues to produce and expel factions which solidarize with the program of the iSt. First there was the Trotskyist Faction (TF), which walked out with a fifth of the WSL's active membership, including two national committee members, three editorial board members, several regional and local organizers and two-thirds of the commission appointed to draft a reply to an iSt letter of June 1976. The fusion of the Trotskyist Faction with the London Spartacist Group gave birth to the Spartacist League/Britain in March 1978. In early 1980 this was followed by the Leninist Faction (LF), expelled with three more of the WSL's NCers, two more editorial board members, the head of the WSL youth group and the co-author of the main document against the TF. As a parting shot, the LF warned the WSL leadership to be on the lookout for a "Sverdlov Faction" and fused with the SL/B in early May.

The WSL bases its claims to Trotskyist orthodoxy on a document, "The Poisoned Well" (based on a quote by the American SWP's Jack Barnes!), which presents its analysis of the development of Pabloist revisionism after World War II. This document claims that Pabloism is simply an empirical *method* (shades of Healy), rather than a program rejecting the basic tenets of Trotskyism, and locates its origins in "middle class and intellectual forces with little experience and few links to the working class." The WSL finds evidence of this method everywhere since World War II, thus ignoring its quintessential expression: the destruction of the Fourth International in 1951-53 as a result of Pablo's liquidationism. Not once does it mention the Spartacist tendency's nearly 20-year struggle for a consistent Trotskyist program, even when discussing the Cuban deformed workers state, where the iSt's contribution is inescapable for honest Marxists. The WSL seeks not to destroy those who have betrayed the banner of Trotskyism but to pressure or "educate" the Mandels, Lamberts and Morenos.

But most of all, this workerist document tries to provide a justification for the syndicalist practice of WSL leader Alan Thornett. Originating as a right split from Healyism, the Thornett tendency has always been nationally centered with the faintest hint of internationalism. And its left-Labourite trade unionism has led it to condone and even engage in scabbing as it tails after the backstabbing union bureaucrats, first in a national engineering strike and most recently in the bitter 12-week British steel strike.

### GBL: Historic Compromise

The Italian Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista, in contrast to Thornett's WSL, has been an ardent suitor of the iSt. The GBL was thrown out of the Lambertist OCRFI in 1975 for refusing to go along with Lambert's hysterical slander campaign labeling the highly dubious Michel Varga a CIA agent. That same year the GBL authored a document, "Theses on the Crisis of the Fourth International (Draft)," stating that of the forces claiming to be Trotskyist there was "an orthodox left wing, whose main component is the iSt." It added, "The 'Statement of Principles' of the Spartacist League (1966) may be taken as the basis for the



Spartacist Britain  
**Workers Socialist League leader Alan Thornett. He scabbed on engineering and steel workers strikes.**

international regroupment of orthodox Trotskyism." More than two years of discussions ensued during which the GBL argued that despite sharp differences on two of the most controversial questions facing the left, it was principled for it to join the iSt as a faction. We replied that the goal of Trotskyists was not to build a phony "international," a mini-Usec, that would fall apart at the first real test of the class struggle.

"Notoriously," wrote the GBL, "your organization holds the strange opinion that electoral support to a workers party involved or implicated in a Popular Front, or inclined toward it, equals capitulation to the Popular Front itself" (*Il Militante*, October 1976). According to the GBL, this "strange opinion"—our proletarian opposition to class-collaborationist coalitions—indicated a "sectarian attitude toward the mass movement." So since the masses consider the popular front their own, these "Trotskyists" tail along rather than patiently explain that this bourgeois formation is a deadly enemy of the workers movement. And we are not talking about just any old popular front but Enrico Berlinguer's "Historic Compromise" with Christian Democracy—the popular front in a priest's cassock which meant anti-working-class austerity, "strong state" witch-hunting against the far left, opposition to abortion and divorce, and support to NATO against the Soviet Union! So intent was the GBL in avoiding "sectarianism" toward the "mass movement" (read, the Eurocommunist PCI) that it insisted on voting for the Communist Party *against* the far-left Democrazia Proletaria slate. (The iSt also refused to support the latter, but for opposite reasons, because the DP simply wanted to pressure the PCI into a more left-wing, Chilean-style popular front.)

On the national question the GBL accused the iSt of feeling "the pressures of the Bronx" (i.e., capitulating to pro-Zionist imperialist public opinion) for refusing to support the Arab colonels and sheiks against Zionist Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Near East wars and for refusing to

*continued on next page*



Italian Communist Party (PCI) demonstration. Italian Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista called for vote to PCI of "Historic Compromise" with papacy, austerity, repression and NATO.

take sides in the 1974-76 communal war in Lebanon. Claiming that the Muslim side was really a popular front, the GBL declared that the massacre of the Christian village of Damur (in response to a massacre of the Muslim district of Qarantina in Beirut) had "no value from the Marxist viewpoint" ("First Balance Sheet of Discussions Between the iSt and GBL"). Well, in our modest view, Marxism is opposed to genocide. In the face of the GBL's critical support to the popular front and apology for communal violence, the iSt responded in a letter of 18 April 1977:

"As we have repeatedly pointed out to you, the iSt seeks principled regroupments and a cohesive (though certainly not monolithic) international tendency based on programmatic confluence. You are already aware that your positions on voting for reformist workers parties in popular front formations and on support to petty-bourgeois nationalist movements (such as in Lebanon and Angola) are considered by us to preclude such a principled fusion at this point. Your refusal to recognize this fact appears to indicate a serious difference on the organization question as well."

### LOB: Voting for Allende

Unlike the WSL and GBL, the third group in the Liaison Committee bloc, the Chilean Liga Obrera Bolchevique, makes no pretense of internationalism. As the vehicle of a union caudillo, the LOB's only real claim to fame is to distribute in Europe a newspaper allegedly "coming from the interior" of Pinochet's bloody dictatorship. In exile its main activity is participating (along with the rest of the Chilean Trotskyoid groups) in a low-level propaganda bloc, the Committee for the Defense of Trade Union and Human Rights (CODESH), that is the likely starting point for a "far left" popular front. As for the LOB's *lider máximo*, he arrived in Europe in the fall of 1976 as the result of an international campaign waged by the Partisan Defense Committee and the iSt to rescue him from the bloody Videla junta in Argentina, where he had fled after the September 1973 Santiago coup. Unable to break from his syndicalist and viscerally anti-Leninist political origins,

he consequently parted ways with the Chilean Organización Trotskista Revolucionaria in mid-1977 as the OTR was joining the Spartacist tendency.

But the LOB has clearly stated its position on one question that was a main difference with the iSt: voting for Allende. Although terming the UP a "classical popular front," it emphatically insisted "revolutionaries could not remain aloof from the struggles waged by the proletariat to impose Allende as president." Thus, it was necessary to "convert the vote for Allende into a vote *against* the popular front" (*Alternativa Proletaria*, June 1978). That would be a neat trick indeed, seeing as the "comrade president" was the single candidate of the popular front!

The Spartacist tendency was unique in warning from the beginning that the "people's government" of the UP was a capitalist government, a roadblock that would have to be swept aside by revolutionary mobilization of the workers if a bloodbath were to be avoided. In contrast, the LOB "could not remain aloof" from the masses' illusions and, while muttering a few criticisms of the "limitations" of the UP, says it was necessary to tag along with Allende while reaction was rearming, preparing the bloody debacle. And that was in 1978, only a year after separating from the OTR. More recently the LOB signed a joint political declaration with the Izquierda Socialista (Socialist Left—ex-Dissident Faction of the MIR) which ignores the character of the UP altogether and raises "the slogan of a sovereign constituent assembly as centralizing the activities of the workers and people's movement" (*Lucha Socialista*, February 1979). So while the iSt calls for workers revolution to bring down the junta, the LOB/IS put forward a purely "democratic" program, leaving the door open for a political bloc with anti-Pinochet bourgeois forces.

### Nine Points

The "Trotskyist International Liaison Committee" is a collection of cast-offs who are defined by their abject

willingness to compromise Marxist principles out of fear of isolation from the masses and by their hatred of the Spartacist tendency. There is a clear note of desperation in the pleas by the GBL and WSL to be allowed into an international—*any* international—and program be damned, so long as they can “discuss.” (The LOB could care less.) If there is a “family” of renegades from Trotskyism, these are certainly the poor relations. And the Liaison Committee clearly is going nowhere, for with their politics there is no principled reason why the various components should not end up with the USec or Parity Committee. As a measure of the difference between this small-time Menshevism and the Bolshevism of the iSt, one need only contrast the nine-point “programmatic” document adopted at the first meeting of the Liaison Committee with a nine-point platform raised three years ago by the Spartacist tendency as a potential basis for revolutionary regroupment with dissidents breaking to the left from the reformist and centrist USec leaderships.

The only hard line drawn in the document put forward by the GBL was against the iSt (declared, in the first paragraph, “to be considered as irreparably lost for orthodox Trotskyism”). For the rest, it is a collection of homilies and generalities about destroying capitalist society, the crucial importance of democratic tasks in “oppressed countries” and the need for “an international organization” based on “the Marxism of the present epoch.” (And what is that, a reader might ask. “Bolshevism-Leninism” says the document, adding in parentheses—why not a footnote?—that this is Trotskyism.) In contrast the draft declaration by Trotskyists expelled or driven out of the USec who now adhere to the Spartacist tendency called for:

- No political or electoral support to popular fronts; for conditional opposition to workers parties in open or implicit class-collaborationist coalitions;
- Uphold the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution; for proletarian leadership of the national/social struggle;
- For military support to petty-bourgeois nationalist forces fighting imperialism, but absolutely no political support to such forces; for Trotskyist parties in every country;
- Against violence within the workers movement;
- For unconditional defense of all the deformed/degenerated workers states against imperialism; for political revolution against the bureaucracies; no



Gamma

**Even with hindsight, Chilean Liga Obrera Bolchevique would vote for Allende's Unidad Popular, which paved way for Pinochet's white terror.**

- political support to competing Stalinist cliques and factions;
- For communist fractions in the unions, based on the Transitional Program;
- For the communist tactic of the united front from above; for the tactic of regroupment to unite subjective revolutionaries in the vanguard party; for intransigent exposure of centrism;
- Rejection of the claims of ostensibly Trotskyist Internationals to speak for the Fourth International, destroyed by Pabloism in 1951-53;
- For the reforging of a democratic-centralist Fourth International which will stop at nothing short of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

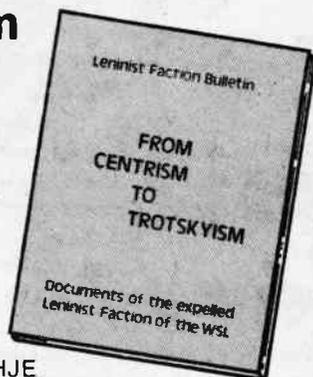
These points constitute a program which was tested in Chile and Portugal, one which uniquely armed the Spartacist tendency to confront the rise of clerical reaction in Iran, when the rest of the left was bowing to Khomeini. This program prepared the iSt to stand at its post in the onset of a new Cold War while many ostensibly Trotskyist groups were tailing Carter's anti-Soviet “Human Rights” crusade and siding with CIA-backed mullahs in Afghanistan. This is a program to lead the proletariat to power, not for making slimy deals with Mandel! Break with all the centrist and reformist attempts to tinker with the Trotskyist program! Join the iSt in the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International, to build a granite hard world communist party the way Lenin and Trotsky did! ■

## Leninist Faction Bulletin

### From Centrism to Trotskyism Documents of the Expelled Leninist Faction of the WSL

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# Leninist Faction-SL/B Declaration of Fusion

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN, MAY 1980

1. The Spartacist League (SL), British section of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), and the Leninist Faction, formerly of the Workers Socialist League (WSL), have fused on the basis of the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Comintern, the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, the Declaration of Principles of the SL/US, the nine points for international Trotskyist regroupment of the iSt, and the LF document, "The Fight for the Proletarian Programme." This fusion represents an important acquisition of cadre and strengthens the iSt's fight to forge the Leninist vanguard internationally. That LF cadres were among the most bitter opponents of the Trotskyist Faction (TF) which split from the WSL in 1979 to fuse with the London Spartacist Group and form the SL, is a powerful vindication of the Spartacist tendency's fight to polarise opponent organisations by hard programmatic combat on the key issues of the class struggle, and achieve qualitative growth through a process of splits and fusions. The ability of the SL to win these cadres must also be contrasted to the failure of our centrist opponents—such as Workers Power and the International-Communist League—to even respond seriously to the LF's approaches for discussions following its expulsion from the WSL.

2. The Left Tendency (LT)—forerunner of the LF—was formed in May 1979 in opposition to the ever more rightward drift of the WSL, on the basis that a democratic-centralist international Trotskyist tendency must be built on clear programmatic agreement. It sought a road to international regroupment quite alien to the unprincipled lash-ups seen in Mandel's United Secretariat, Lambert and Moreno's Parity Committee, and today in the WSL's efforts to form an international pressure group on the larger fake-Trotskyist blocs—and a counterweight to the iSt—through its wretched Liaison Committee. Yet the LT was a left centrist grouping because it had no consistent revolutionary programmatic alternative to the WSL leadership.

It maintained an antipathy to the Trotskyism of the iSt, both on certain key programmatic questions, and in failing to understand the need for a fighting propaganda perspective in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International through the tactic of revolutionary regroupment. LT comrades, trained in the fake "mass work" methods of the WSL, only found their way towards the iSt's programme in the course of the factional struggle itself. Particularly in fighting the WSL's lumping together of Khomeini's Islamic reaction in Iran with the anti-Somoza upsurge in Nicaragua under the rubric of the "forward movement of the working class," and in the struggle against Alan Thornett's scabbing during the national engineering strikes, the LT comrades were forced to confront and recognise the unique correctness of iSt positions as varied

as proletarian opposition to Islamic reaction, the role of petty-bourgeois guerrillaism and the creation of deformed workers states, and how the picket line is the class line and means don't cross.

3. It was after such experiences and subsequent re-examination of the iSt programme on such critical questions of proletarian class strategy as unconditional opposition to popular fronts, the application of the Leninist position on the national question to Ireland, and the revolutionary struggle against Labourism, that the LF was formed. It was a faction equipped with the basic elements of a programmatic critique of the WSL, and an understanding that the struggle to consolidate a Leninist vanguard involves centrally the fight to remove the centrist and reformist obstacles in its path by head-on programmatic combat. The transition from the LT to the LF was consequently not simply a question of reaching abstract agreement with a revolutionary programme. It was the beginning of the LF comrades' opportunity to learn concretely the meaning of *Leninist functioning*—a mode of functioning antithetical to the Menshevik and semi-Healyite methods in which they had been previously trained. The fight for the Leninist conception of the party took place not only against the WSL but within the LF itself. The fight against one LF member—who, unwilling to face a sharp political struggle against the WSL and harbouring principled disagreements with the LF beneath a guise of votes for its political positions, rapidly responded by defection—was an important step towards consolidation of the faction.

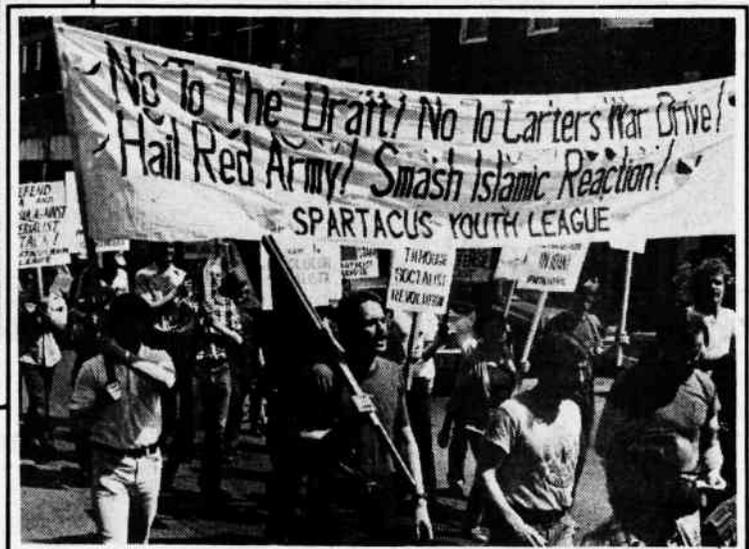
4. In the period since the LF's bureaucratic expulsion from the WSL further programmatic discussion and joint work—particularly in the steel strike and in interventions against opponents on the issue of Afghanistan and the defence of the USSR—have prepared the ground for a deep-going fusion. The attendance and participation of LF members in SL internal meetings, and vice versa, has been valuable preparation for the task of forging a collective leadership in the fused organisation—evidenced in the fact that disputed questions were not debated simply along the old organisational lines. This was the case in the discussions on the need to break with elements of libertarianism in the LF's past organisational methods, on the fight for Bolshevik membership standards (which led to the dropping of one young member), and the many discussions on the precise content of and tactics for a communist propaganda intervention into the steel strike.

The challenge now confronting the SL is to integrate these new leading cadre in the process of forging a collective leadership. The accumulation of experienced cadres from our opponents will always be central to our further development and consolidation. Our success in Britain has so far largely been in winning forces from the WSL—since its formal "orthodox Trotskyism" and "anti-Pabloism" have left little choice for active left oppositionists but to seriously consider the authentically Trotskyist struggle of the iSt against centrist and reformist liquidationism. But the SL now goes forward strengthened, confident in the knowledge that oppositions in other opponent tendencies will in the future follow the road of the LF.

**Forward to a British Trotskyist Party, Section of the Reforged Fourth International!**



# From Sydney to Berlin International Spartacist Tendency Marches on May Day



Clockwise from top left: Sydney, Berlin, Chicago, Rouen, Melbourne.

(Credits clockwise from top left: Australasian Spartacist, Spartakist, Workers Vanguard, Le Bolchévik, Australasian Spartacist.)

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## Afghanistan and the Left...

(continued from page 4)

government couldn't supply it, the peasants were economically worse off than before.

In general the regime made no effort to neutralize its numerous social enemies by moderating the pace of reforms while simultaneously broadening its own base (e.g., sending large numbers of youth to study in the USSR, rapidly expanding the urban proletariat). At the same time, murderous cliquism, especially by Amin, eliminated much of the PDPA's original following. An ever smaller group of modernizing intellectuals was tending to be pitted against the mass of the people. The Taraki/Amin regime can thus be convicted of a large dose of utopian adventurism, seeking to drag Afghanistan into the twentieth century by purely military means, moreover, a military means it did not possess.

As the insurgency grew the army was riddled with desertions and mutinies, and the PDPA regime became ever more dependent on Soviet military support. By the summer of 1979 Amin commanded some 5,000 Soviet military cadre; they manned the sophisticated weaponry, especially flying combat aircraft. Without these Soviet forces it is more than possible the Kabul radical government would have fallen before the counterrevolution.

Those self-styled "Marxists" like Tariq Ali, who now maintain that the Afghan left-nationalists and feudalist reactionaries should be allowed to fight it out free of foreign interference, should logically have demanded the withdrawal of Soviet troops well before the December coup. Here Khomeini and Brzezinski were, as usual, more consistent than their present left tailists. Last June the ayatollah read the riot act to the Soviet ambassador over his country's intervention in "Islamic" Afghanistan. A month later Carter's spiritual adviser Brzezinski denounced the Soviets for trying "to impose alien doctrines on deeply religious and nationally conscious peoples" ([London] *Guardian*, 6 August 1979).

There has been speculation in both the bourgeois and left press that the Soviets overthrew Amin because he was a "national communist," a budding Afghan Tito. Even leaving aside that he ruled through a section of the old bourgeois officer corps, this notion is utter nonsense. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan expanded precisely with the accession of Amin as premier in the spring of 1979, as he opted for a purely military solution to the rightist insurgency. Conversely, the Kremlin advocated slowing down the pace of reforms in order to minimize the need for direct Soviet military support to the petty-bourgeois radicals in Kabul. Amin evidently believed that however much trouble he got into with the counterrevolution, the Russians would be forced to bail him out.

And in a sense they did, though not exactly in the way he had expected. Here we have one of those ironies of history so appreciated by the late Isaac Deutscher. One wonders if the shade of Hafizullah Amin appreciates that in the end he won, though it cost him his own life. He provoked a situation in which the Soviets intervened with sufficient force to crush the reactionary insurgency and therefore with sufficient force to impose a social revolution on

backward, mullah-ridden Afghanistan.

### Extend the Social Gains of the October Revolution!

Khomeini and Brzezinski to the contrary, Taraki/Amin's Afghanistan was not a Soviet Communist satellite, i.e., a deformed workers state. It was an unstable petty-bourgeois nationalist regime ruling through a shaky remnant of the old army. Facing a seemingly unwinnable civil war, a section of the PDPA might have tried to extricate itself by turning sharply to the right, expelling the Russians and making a deal with the Western imperialists for their backing against the rebels. From what we know of the ruthless, power-mad Amin, he was capable of emulating Chiang Kai-shek in 1927 or Anwar Sadat in 1972.

With its massive intervention in late December, the Soviet armed forces became the dominant power in Afghanistan, whose present fate will be decided in Moscow, not Kabul. Of course, the conservative bureaucrats in the Kremlin did not send 100,000 troops into Afghanistan to effect a social revolution, but simply to make secure an unstable, strategically-placed client state. No doubt Brezhnev & Co. would prefer a friendly bourgeois state like Finland. But Afghanistan is not Finland. There is no way that country can sustain anything remotely like a stable bourgeois democracy. In any case, the rightist insurgents and their imperialist backers are intransigent against any coalition government the Russians would accept. It is possible the Kremlin could do a deal with the imperialists to withdraw, for example, in return for NATO's reversing its decision to deploy hundreds of new nuclear missiles in West Europe. That would be a real counterrevolutionary crime against the Afghan peoples.

More likely is the Soviet army's prolonged occupation of Afghanistan and with it the possibility of its transformation along the lines of Soviet Central Asia or Mongolia. Social revolutionary measures (e.g., land to the tiller) would be necessary to erode and win over the poor peasant supporters of the reactionary insurgency. Only those leftists poisoned by bourgeois-nationalist ideology could deny that such a social revolution, although imposed from without and bureaucratically deformed, would have an enormously liberating effect for the Afghan masses. Even the *New York Times* admits that Soviet Central Asians regard their country's military intervention in Afghanistan as support for the liberation of their backward, oppressed neighbors. (See "Soviet Central Asians Back Afghan Intervention," *Workers Vanguard* No. 254, 18 April.)

The difference between Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan is to be measured not in decades but in centuries. While Afghanistan is over 90 percent illiterate, neighboring Soviet Uzbekistan probably has a higher literacy rate than Jimmy Carter's Georgia. The average life expectancy in Uzbekistan is 70 compared to 40 in Afghanistan. A major reason for this is that in Uzbekistan there is one doctor for every 380 people and in Afghanistan one doctor for every 20,000! All social and economic comparisons show the same thing.

Marx and Engels, following the French utopian socialist

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Tass

**Above: Young women in Kabul liberated from the veil; right: Traditional enslavement of women.**



AP

Charles Fourier, maintained that "in any given society the degree of women's emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation." The status of women in Soviet Central Asia is not only higher than in *any* Islamic bourgeois country (let alone Afghanistan), but in some areas (e.g., representation in the government) compares favorably even with the advanced bourgeois democracies. For example, 18 percent of all judges and 45 percent of all legislative members from the village level up in Uzbekistan are women.

To be sure, the workers and peasants of Soviet Central Asia suffer the same inequalities and bureaucratic oppression as their class brothers and sisters in Great Russia. There is some pressure for Russification in Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Khirgizia, etc. and, of course, the Moscow Stalinist regime denies all nationalities the democratic right of self-determination, i.e., the right to secede and form a separate state. Should Afghanistan be transformed into a Soviet-satellite deformed workers state, it is possible a future revolutionary crisis could find the Afghan workers and peasants battling against a Soviet army under command of the Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy. And in general proletarian political revolution within the Soviet bloc will be interwoven with the struggle for the right of national self-determination and other democratic rights and freedoms. But to raise the banner of "national self-determination" for Afghanistan today is to provide a democratic cover for imperialist-backed social counterrevolution of the most brutal, barbaric kind.

### **Revolution, Counterrevolution and National Self-Determination**

"Russia has violated the national sovereignty of Afghanistan," scream the U.S. imperialists, the Peking Stalinists, the Eurocommunists. And this cry is duly echoed by the Mike Klonskys, Tony Cliffs and Tariq Alis. This charge doesn't even hold up on its own terms. Afghanistan is not a nation but a feudal-derived state

comprising a mosaic of nationalities, ethnic and tribal groupings. The Afghan monarchy was consolidated in the late nineteenth century over myriad unrelated peoples as a buffer state between tsarist Russia and British India. Much of the rural population has never lived under the effective control of any central state power, but identifies exclusively with particular ethnic, tribal or linguistic groups.

Imperialist trouble-shooters to the rightist insurgents lament that the Pashtoon, Hazara, Tadzhik, etc. guerrillas hate one another as much as they do the Soviet-backed Kabul radicals. Should the counterrevolutionary forces win, there would likely follow *another* civil war, this time fought along ethnic lines. In fact, if Soviet Central Asia is taken as a guide, the ethnic minorities of Afghanistan would enjoy more genuine national rights in a Soviet-bloc satellite than under a Pashtoon reactionary regime.

At a more fundamental political level, however, all this is beside the point. Even if Afghanistan were a homogeneous nation, revolutionary Marxists would support the Soviet Union's armed intervention. Both before and after the December coup, all talk of Afghan "national sovereignty" was but a cover for defending the class and caste privileges of the landlords, moneylenders and mullahs, privileges threatened by the Kabul petty-bourgeois radical government. For the imperialists, such slogans were mainly designed to bolster popular support for a renewed onslaught against Communist Russia. For revolutionary Marxists, the furthering of social revolution, including defense of the USSR against capitalist-imperialism, stands higher than the bourgeois-democratic right of national self-determination.

Seeking to justify their enthusiastic support to the Carter Doctrine, some Maoists, like Carl Davidson, have turned Lenin into a national-liberal, who supposedly opposed in principle military interventions to support revolutions in other countries. As against this Stalinist claptrap, even before the Bolshevik Revolution Lenin maintained that a victorious workers government was duty-bound not only

to agitate for proletarian revolution in capitalist countries, but, when necessary, to support it with force of arms:

"After expropriating the capitalists and organising their own socialist production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise *against* the rest of the world—the capitalist world—attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states." [emphasis in original]

—"On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" (1915), *Collected Works* Vol. 21 (1964)

When a civil war is raging, a liberal attitude raising national self-determination to the ultimate principle can become downright criminal. Consider Hungary in 1919. In good part due to its own errors, the Soviet regime of Bela Kun alienated probably a majority of Hungary's peasantry and national minorities. The passive opposition of the petty-bourgeois masses to the Budapest-based workers government contributed to the victory of Admiral Horthy's white army, backed by the imperialists, and with it the extermination of the revolutionary proletarian vanguard.

During the four and a half months of Soviet Hungary's existence, the Russian Bolsheviks did everything in their power to link up with it militarily. In late April Lenin personally ordered the commanders of the Ukrainian Red Army: "The advance into part of Galicia and Bukovina is essential for contact with Soviet Hungary. This task must be achieved more quickly and surely" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 44). But the military campaign did not succeed, to the great misfortune of the socialist cause. In late July, just before the end, Lenin had to inform Bela Kun:

"We are aware of Hungary's grave and dangerous situation and are doing all we can. But speedy assistance is sometimes physically impossible. Try to hold out as long as you can."

—*Ibid.*

Had the Ukrainian Red Army managed to save the Hungarian Soviet Republic, imperialist spokesmen and social-democrats throughout the world would have denounced "Soviet Russian imperialism" for trampling on the national independence of the Hungarian people. No doubt there would even have been analogies with tsarist Russia's occupation of Hungary during the revolutions of 1848.

The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was not, like the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919, a proletarian dictatorship (the Afghan proletariat being minute). Nonetheless, the civil war in Afghanistan was a social struggle which pitted a modernizing intelligentsia against feudal reaction. Here it is significant that a number of left groups (e.g., the soft Maoist *Guardian* and various Shachtmanite sectlets in the U.S.) supported the PDPA regime against the rightist rebels, but *then* condemned the Soviet intervention and demanded the Red Army withdraw. When a left-nationalist bourgeois government is fighting reaction, these self-styled "Marxists" can support it. But when there is actually a possibility that feudal-capitalist property relations will be overthrown, when the power of the mullahs can in fact be broken, when women can be liberated from the veil—*then* these petty-bourgeois radicals are against it. For these dregs of the pro-nationalist New Left and the wretched "Third Camp" social

democrats, counterrevolution from within is preferable to revolution from without!

### The Bitter Fruits of New Leftism

A decade ago it was the first principle, almost a truism, for every young radical that U.S. imperialism was the truly monstrous main enemy of the world's peoples. Yet today the remnants of the New Left "anti-imperialists" of the 1960s, now largely one or another variety of Maoist, have reunited with American imperialism against "Soviet aggression." How has this come about?

During the early/mid-'60s, when Washington was more hostile to Peking than to the Kremlin, a new generation of radicals arose critical and contemptuous of Khrushchev/Brezhnev in the name of Third World nationalism. But today over Afghanistan it is the American ruling class which invokes the rhetoric of national independence in attacking Soviet "hegemonism" and "superpowerism."

The New Left considered "the Russian question," i.e., the social character of the USSR, a scholastic topic of dispute among the irrelevant "old left." To them the Cold War was dead, Russia had become part of the rich white man's world, a co-partner with the U.S. for conservatism on a world scale. The real struggle was now between the "Third World"—China, Vietnam, Cuba—and U.S. imperialism.

This outlook was captured by the U.S.' most prominent New Left "theoretician," Carl Oglesby, in his 1967 *Containment and Change*. Here the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions are presented simply as responses to foreign domination, having little if anything to do with capitalism versus communism. The Chinese Revolution "has nothing at all to do with communism, but rather with the independent organization of China and her acquisition of modern fire." On Vietnam: "... one should be able to show somehow that the issue of the Vietnam war is not Western freedom versus Eastern slavery, but foreign versus local

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DPA

Feudalist insurgent kills radical schoolteacher near Iranian border.

control of Vietnam.”

On U.S.-Soviet relations, Oglesby opined:

“With the Soviet Union, we have gone from confrontation to detente. The relationship is no longer defined by its anger and uncertainties.... Direct military confrontation is feared and avoided equally by both sides, crises are referred to hot lines instead of war rooms, and one sometimes wonders if there is not something still springier in the air: a slow convergence of political aims. The European Cold War no longer finds Russians and Americans peering at each other through gunsights. Instead we have the experience of virtually integrated aid programs in Afghanistan [!] and India.”

This political worldview, which equated the global roles of the U.S. and USSR, contained the rudiments of the “superpower” doctrine even before much of the New Left embraced Maoism and its doctrine of “Soviet social-imperialism.”

Western Maoism arose from the grafting of New Leftism and Stalinism. A decisive shaping factor was the Vietnamese Revolution, in which a successful struggle against American imperialism was carried out under a traditional Stalinist leadership. To the impressionistic New Leftists, the “Third World” Stalinists seemed revolutionary as against the Soviets. From here it was only a short step to Mao’s doctrine of rival superpowers.

The myriad Maoist sects have tended to come to terms with the Peking-Washington alliance which has developed ever since Nixon’s trip to China in 1972, while the U.S. was raining bombs on Vietnam. In the face of such events as Chinese support to the CIA-engineered South African invasion of Angola in 1975-76, many Maoists pulled back, seeking to return to the good old days of “anti-imperialist unity.” But in Angola it was war-by-proxy between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Now it is face-to-face over Afghanistan and there is no escaping. They must choose their camps.

With the rapid heating up of the Cold War and the open declaration of a Washington/Peking axis, the Maoists have come full circle. The events in Afghanistan only underscore that those who refuse to defend the Soviet Union against U.S. imperialism will inexorably be driven into the arms of the State Department and Pentagon. While Stalin suppressed proletarian revolution for an alliance with the “progressive” bourgeoisie, for Maoists the

popular front against “Soviet social-imperialism” can only be constructed as a bloc with the most vicious, anti-Communist sections of the imperialist ruling classes.

At the core of Stalinist doctrine is the program of “building socialism in one country.” This is the ideology of a narrow, nationalist bureaucratic caste which rests on the foundations of a collectivized economy but stands opposed to the program of proletarian revolution. The attempt to counterpose China (or Albania) to Russia as the socialist fatherland has proved a dead end. The rapprochement of China with American imperialism has demonstrated that the Maos and Dengs, under the guise of building “socialism” in their country, are as willing to sell out the revolution as the Stalins and Brezhnevs. Moreover, the Peking Stalinists are today joined in a global counterrevolutionary alliance with the main imperialist power against the main anti-capitalist state power—the Soviet Union. Should U.S. imperialism overthrow the USSR (as the pro-Peking Maoists urge), this would also lead in short order to the destruction of People’s China by the same imperialist power.

### “Third Camp” Fever in the USec

The Afghanistan crisis has predictably thrown the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel into utter political disarray. At a late January USec meeting three lines were presented. The right-minority resolution advocated the pro-imperialist “Soviet troops out” line, asserting that a victory by Muslim reactionaries would be “much less harmful” than a prolonged Soviet presence. The left-minority position, ludicrously coming from the reformist American SWP, defended the Russian-backed Kabul regime while minimizing the Soviet intervention.

The Mandelite plurality tries to split the difference, playing both ends against the middle and saluting the golden mean. Its resolution (*Intercontinental Press*, 3 March) upbraids the Kremlin for not “considering any of the democratic and national sentiments of the oppressed classes and peoples” and for “introduc[ing] extreme confusion in the world proletariat”; it refuses to give the intervention “the least political support” and declares it is “opposed to the annexation of new territories by the

## Trotsky on Revolution and Self-Determination

*We do not only recognize, but we also give full support to the principle of self-determination, wherever it is directed against feudal, capitalist and imperialist states. But wherever the fiction of self-determination, in the hands of the bourgeoisie, becomes a weapon directed against the proletarian revolution, we have no occasion to treat this fiction differently from the other “principles” of democracy perverted by capitalism.*

—Social Democracy and the Wars of Intervention in Russia 1918-1921

*Against revolutionary “intervention” [the French syndicalist] Louzon quite inappropriately advances the old and uncontested principle: “The emancipation of the working class can be achieved only by the workers themselves.” On a national scale? Only within the framework of a single country? Is it permissible for workers in one country to aid the strikers of another? Can they send arms to insurgents? Can they send their army, if they have one? Can they send it either to help the uprising or in order to prepare an uprising, just as strikers send squads to pull out workers in factories that have remained behind?*

—“Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition,” Writings (1929)



Soviet Red Army runs over Afghan Islamic reactionaries.

Lochon/Gamma

Kremlin"—even if a social revolution is carried out. But well practiced in the art of obfuscation, the Mandelites do not call for withdrawal of Soviet forces; and after more than 100 paragraphs of fulminating against the intervention, they drop in, out of the blue, four sentences of the most mealy-mouthed defensism.

There is now real trouble in Mandel's main European sections. Almost half, 20 to 22 of the central committee of the USec's badly tarnished "star" French section, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), has taken an outright pro-imperialist line. Arguing that Soviet intervention "mocks the right of peoples to self-determination," they call for "actions by the anti-imperialist and workers movement to press the Soviet Union to immediately withdraw its troops from Afghanistan" (*Rouge*, 22 February). What "actions" do they have in mind? Perhaps refusal by French dockers to load grain for the USSR?

If this large LCR minority has become "Carter Doctrine socialists," the majority are hardly red revolutionaries. They too condemn the Soviet action, but reject the call for immediate withdrawal as playing into the imperialists' hands.

The factional dissension in the once-leftist British section, the International Marxist Group (IMG), is even more deep-going. The original "Soviet Troops Out" article by Tariq Ali (*Socialist Challenge*, 3 January) produced a major furor. The IMG printed a number of letters raking Ali over the coals for "joining the imperialist chorus" and "dancing to the tune of the U.S. State Department." So a couple of weeks later the IMG changed its line without openly repudiating its earlier counterrevolutionary position. It still condemned the Soviet intervention but admitted that "in the present situation a call for the immediate withdrawal of troops would be tantamount to being in favour of the victory of the rightist forces" (*Socialist Challenge*, 17 January). No kidding!

Yet even this halfhearted "defense" of the Soviet forces provoked an outpouring of criticism from the right. Letters appeared in *Socialist Challenge* baiting the majority for wanting to form "welcoming committees for the Red

Army" and urging the IMG to "junk the old Trotskyism." Amid all this, *Socialist Challenge* (6 March) introduced a new column entitled "Thinking Aloud" for Tariq Ali to ventilate his "personal" (read, factional) views. He began his first column: "I remain unrepentant on Afghanistan."

Thus just a few months after this Potemkin Village "Fourth International" lost perhaps a third of its members in the split of the Latin American-centered Bolshevik

*continued on next page*

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**Response to Afghanistan**

Tony Cliff's "Third Campist" Socialist Workers Party (left).

Tariq Ali's "Trotskyist" International Marxist Group (right).

Faction of political adventurer Nahuel Moreno, the USec is once again wracked by internal strife, this time concentrated in the Mandelite heartland. Mandel & Co. are trying to downplay the extent of the dissension over Afghanistan, but it is more potentially destructive than the Moreno split, a somewhat accidental development arising from the Argentine *caudillo's* overweening personal ambition. In the present case, it is the fruit of Mandel's own revisionism.

What we are now witnessing is the *open rebellion* by a significant section of the USec, long schooled in New Left anti-Sovietism and petty-bourgeois nationalism, against the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism. These USecers, cadres and ranks, are being drawn into the U.S.-led global counterrevolutionary alliance against the USSR through the medium of those tendencies with which they have long sought to regroup—East European "dissidents," the soft Maoists (e.g., the Euro Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs), the Eurocommunists (the circle around Jean Elleinstein) and various social-democratic groupings (the British Socialist Workers Party of Tony Cliff).

### Tariq Ali: Anti-Soviet New Leftist

There is nothing accidental or episodic in Tariq Ali's role in this factional situation. He is the representative *par excellence* of New Left movementism and Third World nationalism within the USec. A former New Left celebrity, back in 1969 he edited an anthology, *The New Revolutionaries*, featuring such notables as Fidel Castro, Régis Debray, Ernest Mandel and, perhaps prophetically, Tony Cliff. His own contribution included among the "new revolutionaries" Mao and Ho but definitely excluded the stodgy Kremlin bureaucrats: "... Asian communism was to prove itself more human, more humane and more willing to admit its mistakes than its counterpart in the Soviet Union." Ah, music to Pol Pot's ears.

Ali also echoed the Maoist line that the Soviet Union exploits backward countries in its economic relations with them:

"... The Soviet Union and East European countries, in their trade relations with the exploited world, contribute toward maintaining the unequal exchange. The Soviet Union could easily pay more without harming its own economy."

In other words, wealth should be transferred from the workers and peasants of the USSR to the bourgeoisies of the "Third World"—to the Pahlavis, Nassers and Indira Gandhis.

If Ali responds to the Afghan crisis with the outlook of 1960s New Left Maoism, he uses some arguments borrowed from the ideological arsenal of Khrushchevite "peaceful coexistence" (a *tour de force* of Stalinist ecumenism). The USec minority resolution presumably submitted by Ali and his co-thinkers actually accuses Brezhnev & Co. of something like "left adventurism" in provoking imperialist militarism. It deplors that Soviet intervention allegedly fuels:

"The imperialists' justification for their resumption of the arms race, under the pretext that the Soviet Union is demonstrating in Afghanistan that it intends to use force to impose regimes loyal to it. The Afghanistan affair has already made a shambles of the efforts of the workers movement in the imperialist countries against the step-up of the nuclear arsenal in Europe and the West."

—"Draft Resolution on the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan," *Intercontinental Press*, 3 March

This is, of course, the very rationale by which Soviet Stalinism has for decades justified *not* supporting revolutions in other countries. "Peaceful coexistence" means precisely: don't "export" revolution; don't export arms to revolutions. Do nothing to upset the imperialists and weaken the "forces of peace" in the imperialist countries.

### Mandel's Chickens Come Home to Roost

In the late 1960s the Mandelites invented the term "new mass vanguard" in order to identify themselves with the burgeoning New Left Maoist current against the pro-Moscow CPs. A 1969 USec majority resolution in praise of Maoism states:

"... the sharp campaign which Peking unleashed against the right-wing opportunist line of the CPs following Moscow's lead... has objectively contributed to deepen the world crisis of Stalinism and to facilitate the upsurge of a new youth vanguard the world over. Inside that youth vanguard the general sympathy for China and Maoist criticism of the Kremlin's revisionism remains deep...."

—"Original Draft Resolution on the 'Cultural Revolution' and Proposed Amendments—Arranged in Two Columns," [SWP] *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, June 1970

When this drivel was written, Peking's criticism of Soviet "revisionism" had become its main ideological basis for declaring the USSR was a "social-imperialist, capitalist" country. In the immortal words of the Chairman himself: "The rise to power of revisionism means the rise to power of the bourgeoisie." By 1969 the Mao regime was *already* likening the USSR to Nazi Germany, an overture for a deal with the "democratic" imperialist countries. In his memoirs Henry Kissinger indicates that Peking's denunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine as "a fascist theory" was one of the first signs which convinced him a rapprochement with Mao's China was possible.

For over a decade the European USec has chased after precisely those elements within the Stalinist milieu which have broken with Moscow in favor of competing nationalisms—for the Maoists, it was the Chinese and lately the Albanian bureaucracies; for the Eurocommunists, their own imperialist bourgeoisies. Mandel has taught his followers that among Stalinists antipathy to the Soviet leadership is the main criterion for healthy political motion. Afghanistan shows many have taken this lesson to heart.

Never given to "sectarian" narrowness, the USec generously included in the "new mass vanguard" various left social-democratic groupings, such as the French Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU), a habitat for renegades from Trotskyism like Michel Pablo and Yves Craipeau. Proposing unity to the PSU a few years ago, Mandel assured its leaders that Trotskyism and the Fourth International were mere "labels" to be negotiated away if the organizational price was right.

In Britain for years the main political bedfellow of the IMG has been the "state-cap" Socialist Workers Party of Tony Cliff, who broke from Trotskyism in 1950, refusing to

support the Soviet bloc in the Korean War. Right now when the Cliffite SWP is denouncing the Soviet action in Afghanistan as "imperialist," the IMG is holding joint meetings with these anti-Communist renegades. And at a mid-February IMG national conference, the "majority" (a bare 50 percent) voted to "launch a public campaign to unite the forces of the IMG with those of the SWP." Even the main opposition wanted to follow this liquidationist course, only desiring to hold out for better terms (see "IMG Lurches Toward Cliff," *Spartacist/Britain*, March 1980).

Pandering to the left social-democratic/Eurocommunist milieu, the USec has for years uncritically enthused over pro-Western Soviet-bloc dissidents. In light of Carter's present moves, we recall that in early 1979 the USec-sponsored *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* reprinted *without comment* a call by a group of Soviet emigrés for a total economic, technical and cultural boycott of the USSR. Circulating this reactionary, anti-Communist propaganda caused Tamara Deutscher to withdraw as sponsor of the journal (see box). So when the USec majority now claims to oppose Carter's boycott of the Moscow Olympics and "the imperialist sanctions," this declaration is less than convincing.

### Afghanistan Explodes Mandel's Détente

How does Mandel square his professed Trotskyism with a regroupment orientation toward those who refuse to defend the Soviet Union? Simply by proclaiming that defense of the USSR against imperialism is irrelevant in this happy age of détente. Mandel's conception of détente is actually a version of the old 1960s Maoist "superpower" condominium doctrine. He denies that U.S. imperialism

*continued on next page*

## Tamara Deutscher Resigns as Sponsor of USec-Backed Journal

Dear Editor,

You have published, in the *Labour Focus* of January-February 1979, a letter which contains an appeal to Western Socialists and Communists. Your introduction stresses the weight of the signatories as a 'very authoritative group of Soviet socialists and civil rights campaigners', and you obviously attach great significance to their statement which poses 'very sharply... very important questions for socialists' and 'warrants serious thought'. And yet there is in the whole issue no editorial comment in which you distance yourself from, or in any way show disagreement with, the views expressed by the signatories while your Introduction suggests that your editorial board adopts at best a neutral attitude towards the appeal.

*Labour Focus* is, as you say in the *Statement of Aims*, not a journal of 'debate' but of 'information' and, in my view, should not lend its pages to discussions, especially of a kind which start from premises removed from socialist principles. Most of the signatories of the Appeal can hardly be described as socialists; and most can find

ample space to express their views in bourgeois and right-wing papers.

The Appeal calls for nothing less than a wholesale boycott of the USSR and a complete break of all relations between West and East—in other words, for isolating the Soviet Union and putting it into quarantine. Such methods would in no way help the process of democratisation in the East. On the contrary, they would only strengthen all reactionary forces in both camps. The not so distant past has taught us that Stalinism was at its worst in the period of the Soviet Union's isolation.

I have been watching with increasing unease your treatment of some of the problems of dissent in the East. The appearance of the Letter, without any critical comment of its content, led me to the decision to withdraw my sponsorship of the paper, and it is with real regret that I feel I have to ask you to delete my name from the list of sponsors.

With all personal good wishes,  
Yours fraternally,  
Tamara Deutscher.

—*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, March-April 1979

remains fundamentally hostile to the Soviet degenerated workers state. Rather he defines the relationship as one of jointly suppressing the revolutionary forces throughout the world. Mandel claims that Brezhnev's Russia functions essentially as world capitalism's gendarme, a position in substance (if not in form) identical to that of the New Leftish Maoists and "Third Campists" like Cliff.

Mandel has derided the Spartacist tendency as fixated on Soviet defensism for our contention that Washington has abandoned its post-Vietnam policy of détente and returned to the Cold War path (ideologically expressed in Carter's "Human Rights" campaign). After the Sino-Vietnam war in February 1979, he reasserted: "... nothing has changed in the *basic* aspect of the world situation, which is the consistent pursuing of mutual peaceful coexistence and collaboration by Moscow and Washington on a world scale" ("Behind Differences on Military Conflicts in Southeast Asia," *Intercontinental Press*, 9 April 1979). Never mind that Washington rather openly colluded with the Chinese invasion of a Soviet ally. Never mind that the day that the Chinese army crossed the Vietnamese border, the State Department warned the Soviets against retaliating in kind. For Mandel, it's détente über alles.

His latest book, *Revolutionary Marxism Today*, published a few months before the Afghanistan crisis, actually prophesies:

"...I would deny that we are entering a new cold war situation in which imperialism, more or less allied to Peking, is preparing an aggressive drive against the Soviet Union. ...

"The basic trend in the current world situation, I would argue, is not toward a new, full-fledged cold war between Moscow and Washington, but a continuation of 'peaceful coexistence' that has been pursued for several decades [?!] now."

One can imagine that as the Trident missiles rise out of the North Sea headed toward their Moscow target they pass over the University of Louvain where a certain professor of Marxism is lecturing that détente is alive and well and is the main axis of world politics.

Remember how, when Michel Pablo wanted to tail after

the Kremlin in the 1950s, he invented a theory of "centuries of deformed workers states." Mandel's present equivalent—aimed at cozing up to anti-Soviet dissidents, Eurocommunists and Jimmy Carter—is "decades of peaceful coexistence."

Marx was fond of the British empiricist saying: facts are stubborn things. In Afghanistan today the defense of the USSR is posed with a directness and immediacy that not even a centrist charlatan like Mandel can dodge. Everyone knows that to call for Soviet withdrawal is to call for the establishment of a fanatically anti-Communist government on the southern border of the USSR. But for the USec to militarily support the Soviet army in Afghanistan would draw the line against almost every organization, tendency and individual it has sought to regroup with for the past five or even ten years.

After years of sweeping the Russian question under the rug, the USec is now reaping the reward in the form of a massive anti-Soviet bulge in the face of American imperialism's warmongering over Afghanistan. Whether the USec's deeply ingrained cynicism toward program can stave off sharp and even factional polarization over the central questions of revolutionary orientation in a period of heightened bourgeois anti-Sovietism remains to be seen. Is there anything left of the primitive leftist energies which once characterized the young USec cadres who built barricades in the Paris streets in May '68 and carried Vietcong flags in the radical "mobilizations" over Vietnam? Or have "the children of '68" grown up through the years of tailing popular frontism into ordinary anti-Soviet social democrats?

This much is clear: the consistent Trotskyist program of the international Spartacist tendency, centering for the backward countries on the struggle for the permanent revolution—the fight for liberation under the leadership not of the "anti-imperialist bourgeoisie" but of the revolutionary proletariat—is the only road forward.

For unconditional military defense of the deformed and degenerated workers states through socialist revolution in the capitalist countries and political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies! Extend the gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples! ■



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## “Export of Revolution”...

(continued from page 9)

Versailles would come crashing down, and the floodgates of revolution would burst open in Germany, spreading over the entire continent. The very prospect made for an almost overwhelming argument. To a certain extent Lenin and the Politburo majority were willing to subordinate the degree of indigenous support for the sovietization of Poland to the goal of securing a common border with Germany, then in the throes of a revolutionary situation. And certainly with the Red Army on Germany's border in the period 1920-23, the entire course of modern history could have been radically altered.

Lenin's most complete statement of the international significance of the Polish war was given in a speech to a congress of leather industry workers on 2 October 1920:

“The Versailles Peace has turned Poland into a buffer state which is to guard against German contact with Soviet communism and is regarded by the Entente as a weapon against the Bolsheviks....

“Had Poland turned Soviet, had the Warsaw workers received from Soviet Russia help they awaited and welcomed, the Peace of Versailles would have been smashed, and the entire international system set up as a result of the victory over Germany would have collapsed. France would then not have had a buffer protecting Germany against Soviet Russia.”

—*Collected Works*, Vol. 31 (1966)

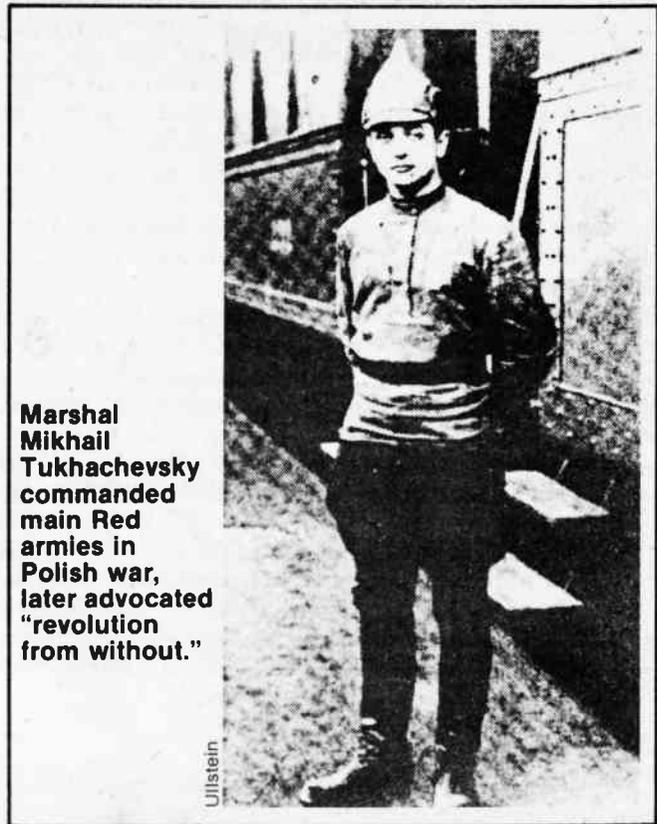
Ironically, in comparison with the differences over the Brest-Litovsk peace in 1918, Lenin and Trotsky now switched roles. At that time it was Lenin who had most adamantly pressed for concluding the “shameful peace” in order to secure a respite for the newly formed Soviet state. Trotsky, in advocating his “not war, not peace” position, banked on a more or less imminent revolution in Germany.

Whereas events proved Lenin right in 1918, the course of the Russo-Polish war did not bear out his optimistic projections. The Polish peasants, whipped up by the Catholic clergy, resented the advancing Reds as conquerors and not liberators. The memories of a century and a half of national and religious oppression were still fresh in the mind of the Polish rural majority. And the Red Army's forced grain requisitions, coupled with some incidents of vengeance against individuals by raw Russian soldiers, didn't help win the mistrustful Poles to the Communist cause.

Nor was the Soviet Russian advance welcomed in general by the urban proletariat, which in its majority was still under social-democratic leadership. The Polish Communist Party, which had been forced underground more than a year before, issued a call for a general strike, but it found no response except among the militant miners in the extreme southwestern industrial region of Dabrowa. In Warsaw some workers even volunteered to serve in Pilsudski's militias. After the Russians' defeat at the historic battle of the Vistula, Lenin admitted that the offensive provoked not class war within Poland but national unity.

### Stalin's Treachery in 1920

One of the lesser known aspects of the Russo-Polish war was the treacherous role played by Stalin. Stalin was the



**Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky commanded main Red armies in Polish war, later advocated “revolution from without.”**

senior commissar in charge of the southern armies led by A. Yegorov and S.M. Budienny. According to the plan of attack, the western armies under Mikhail Tukhachevsky would march directly on Warsaw, while the southern armies under Stalin would first take Kiev and then turn north to intersect Tukhachevsky outside Warsaw. One of the reasons that the defeat of the Soviet armies at the battle of the Vistula assumed such catastrophic proportions was Stalin's conscious insubordination in refusing to link up with Tukhachevsky in time.

When it seemed that Tukhachevsky's capture of Warsaw was only days away, Stalin decided to get his own “prize” rather than simply bring up the rear of Tukhachevsky's triumphal entry into Warsaw. When the moment came for the southern forces to turn north, Stalin instead persuaded Budienny and Yegorov to continue west and take Lvov, a Polish city of secondary importance. Thus, instead of the two armies converging, a huge gap was opened between them, leaving Tukhachevsky's flank entirely exposed.

Into this gap sprang Pilsudski. Later he described how incomprehensible the actions of Yegorov/Budienny were to him:

“Their correct line of march was the one which would have brought them nearer to the Russian main armies commanded by Tuchachevsky, and this would also have threatened the greatest danger to us. Everything seemed black and hopeless to me, the only bright spots on the horizon being the failure of Budyonny's cavalry to attack my rear and the weakness displayed by the 12th Red Army [of Yegorov].”

—quoted in Erich Wollenberg, *The Red Army* (1938)

When the danger to Tukhachevsky's flank became apparent, the Soviet Supreme Command repeatedly wired  
*continued on next page*

urgent messages backed up by threats instructing Stalin to proceed as planned. Stalin simply ignored these orders, and Budienny and Yegorov wasted precious days and men fruitlessly trying to take Lvov. Finally after more threats from Moscow, Stalin dispatched Budienny's cavalry to the north, but by then it was too late. Pilsudski launched a counteroffensive that hit at Tukhachevsky's unguarded flank and snatched Polish victory from the jaws of defeat. It should be pointed out that imperialist France provided Pilsudski with massive military support, including officers for his army.

It remains unclear whether Tukhachevsky could have taken Warsaw if Stalin had carried out his orders. In the aftermath, Tukhachevsky claimed he could have, accusing Stalin of treachery. Trotsky maintained that Stalin's insubordination was a great, but not decisive, factor in the defeat. But what is clear is that had Stalin not been insubordinate, then the magnitude of the defeat would surely have been less. The Red armies might not have been thrown back so far, and the Soviet government might have been able to conclude peace on far more favorable terms. Thus, Stalin in his own way helped strengthen those forces—the isolation of the USSR and its hostile encirclement—which were to bring about a Thermidorian reaction with him as its bonapartist head.

### “Revolution from Without”

Although Lenin recognized the necessity of concluding a peace with Pilsudski after the defeat on the Vistula, other Bolshevik leaders, notably Zinoviev, head of the Comintern, minimized the magnitude of the defeat and talked about waging a second Polish war. Not surprisingly, this mood to “continue the offensive” was expressed even more strongly in the command of the Red Army. Tukhachevsky, the brilliant general who at age 26 had led the main Soviet armies in the Polish war, vowed to hold his victory march in the streets of Wmarsaw. He argued that a Soviet victory over Pilsudski was possible *without* an indigenous proletarian revolution in Poland.

This idea had an appeal for many other Red Army commanders. In his book *From Dvina to Vistula*, E.N. Sergeyev, who commanded one of the armies in the march on Warsaw, openly stated that many Red Army commanders had never really thought the Soviet invasion would be met by a Communist-led revolution of the Polish working class:

“The occupants in the political chanceries a long way from the front were the only people who seriously believed in the possibility of a Polish Revolution. We in the army had little faith in it....”

—quoted in Erich Wollenberg, *The Red Army*

The “political chanceries” to which Sergeyev not too subtly referred were, of course, the offices of the Bolshevik Politburo and Comintern.

It was after the defeat on the Vistula that Tukhachevsky began to promote, quite unabashedly, the idea of imposing in capitalist Europe a “revolution from without.” He set forth his views in lectures given at the military academy beginning in 1921, and these were later published in abbreviated form as a book, *The Campaign Behind the Vistula*. Here Tukhachevsky was so explicit about “revolution from without” that Pilsudski himself reprinted it as an appendix to his own work, *The Year 1920*.

Where Tukhachevsky parted ways with the Bolshevik

leaders was in inverting the relationship between the indigenous revolution and foreign military aid. The Bolsheviks had always regarded the Red Army as an auxiliary of the revolutionary movements abroad. In his lectures Tukhachevsky referred to the Red Army itself as a “socialist movement.” And the key task of the Polish (or any other) revolution—the destruction of the bourgeois armed forces—was assigned to the Red Army:

“There is no doubt that the revolution of the Polish workers would have become a reality if we had succeeded in depriving the Polish bourgeoisie of its bourgeois army. The conflagration caused by such a revolution would not have stopped at the Polish frontiers; it would have spread all over Europe like the waters of a wild mountain torrent. “The Red Army will never forget this experience of ‘revolution from without.’ If Europe’s bourgeoisie challenges us to another war, the Red Army will succeed in destroying it. In such a case the Red Army will support and spread the revolution in Europe.” [our translation]

—reprinted as “The March Beyond the Vistula” in J. Pilsudski, *L'Année 1920* (1929)

Here Tukhachevsky stands closer to Napoleon than to Lenin and Trotsky. He explicitly drew an analogy with the revolutionary wars of Napoleonic France. Just give him a chance, and the Russian Red Army will carry the proletarian revolution to the West to the tune of the “Internationale,” just as Napoleon’s armies carried the bourgeois revolution eastward across Europe to the strains of the “Marseillaise.”

As head of the Red Army Trotsky in particular polemicized against Tukhachevsky’s doctrine. In this Trotsky was acting as spokesman for the Bolshevik leadership. He gave his most general reply in a December 1921 article entitled, “A Military Doctrine or Pseudo-Military Doctrinairism?”:

“Of course, not for a minute do we intend to conceal from the workers, including the Red Army, that on principle we are always for an offensive-revolutionary war in those circumstances when it could aid the liberation of workers in other countries. But to think that on the basis of this principled declaration one can create an effective ideology or ‘educate’ the Red Army is in the present circumstances to understand neither the Red Army nor the present circumstances....”

“In the monumental class struggle which is today on the rise, the role of military intervention from without must have only an attendant, assisting, auxiliary function. Military intervention can speed up the denouement and facilitate victory. But for this it is necessary that the revolution mature not only in a social sense—that already exists—but also in terms of political consciousness. Military intervention is like an obstetrician’s forceps: used opportunely, it can ease the birth pangs; set into motion prematurely, it can only produce a miscarriage.” [our translation]

—*How the Revolution Was Armed* (1923)

Trotsky further argued that, given the backwardness of Russia compared to bourgeois Europe, Tukhachevsky’s doctrine of ever “on the attack!” was a “strategy of adventurism.”

### A Revolutionary War in 1923?

Tukhachevsky returned to the subject of “revolution from without” in 1923. It was placed on the agenda when the French occupation of the Ruhr precipitated another revolutionary crisis in Germany. The question of questions among European ruling circles was whether Soviet Russia would again invade Poland, either in response to a Polish attack on revolutionary Germany or in anticipation of one.

Indeed, the Soviet government made it clear that any attack by Poland on Germany would be considered as an attack on vital Soviet interests. A lead article in the *Izvestia* of 29 September 1923 declared that "we have never renounced our idea of furthering by all means the development of the international revolution" [our emphasis] (quoted in L. Kochan, *Russia and the Weimar Republic* [1954]).

However, the main aim of Soviet policy at that time was to try to avoid war with Poland if at all possible. There were two sound reasons for doing so. First, it was doubtful that the Russian peasants, enjoying the respite of the market-oriented New Economic Policy, could be mobilized for another major war simply through political exhortation. And second, another Russo-Polish war, no matter which side initiated it, would almost certainly provoke French intervention at least, and the Bolsheviks didn't want the impending German revolution engulfed in war.

To the Red Army commanders like Tukhachevsky who had a score to settle with Pilsudski, Trotsky argued that in its present circumstances the most effective weapon Russia had was not soldiers but grain. Germany was starving for the bread Russia could supply. In turn, the Russian peasants were clamoring for manufactured goods, which a proletarian Germany could supply. In a speech to Red Army military commanders in October 1923, Trotsky stressed:

"We must ensure that the link between our fundamental interests and those of the working people of Germany becomes clear and tangible to every Red Army soldier." [our translation]

—*How the Revolution Was Armed*

If Poland permitted the Soviet government to transport grain across its territory to Germany and return with manufactured goods, the beginnings of a Russo-German economic federation would be established. Poland soon would find itself caught as if in a vise; the Polish proletariat would probably be able to come to power without foreign military assistance. And if Pilsudski refused to negotiate such a trade agreement, or terminated one as soon as its implications became apparent, the Russian peasants would then more clearly grasp the vital economic stake they had in fighting another war with Poland. These strategic

calculations, however, turned out to be moot as the German revolution was lost when the Communist Party let slip the decisive moment for action.

In summary the interaction between indigenous proletarian revolution and military intervention by a workers state is a highly complicated question, containing as it does a potential conflict between the strategic interests of the world socialist revolution and the democratic right of national self-determination. There is no simple formula which covers any and every historical situation. The Bolsheviks rejected both revolutionary military bonapartism à la Tukhachevsky and social-democratic obeisance before national sovereignty. This latter nationalist-opportunist policy was adopted by Stalin in the 1930s in the form of "peaceful coexistence" and pledges of "non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries."

Perhaps the best encapsulation of the Bolshevik position was given by Trotsky in 1921 after the Soviet conquest of Menshevik-ruled Georgia set international social democracy howling about "Red imperialism":

"A workers' state, in recognizing the right of self-determination, thereby recognizes that revolutionary coercion is not an all-powerful historical factor. Soviet Russia does not by any means intend to make its military power take the place of the revolutionary efforts of the proletariats of other countries. The conquest of proletarian power must be an outcome of proletarian political experience. This does not mean that the revolutionary efforts of the workers of Georgia or any other country, must not receive any military support from outside. It is only essential that this support should come at a moment when the need for it has been created by the political development of the workers, and recognised by the class-conscious revolutionary vanguard, who have won the sympathy of the majority of the workers. These are questions of revolutionary strategy, and not a formal democratic ritual."

—*Social Democracy and the Wars of Intervention in Russia 1918-1921*

But in distinction to every variety of pro-Russian or pro-Chinese Stalinist, we recognize that the Red Army of Lenin and Trotsky is separated from the Red Army of Brezhnev by a bureaucratic counterrevolution under Stalin. Only a proletarian political revolution in the USSR can truly restore the Red Army and the Soviet state to their internationalist and revolutionary mission. ■

## 1,200 Stop Nazis...

(continued from page 32)

need for a workers party based on the unions.

Timid reformists call on these same city rulers to ban the Klan, but the racist Hitler-lovers were stopped by tenacious struggle against the capitalist politicians. The bourgeoisie will someday resort to the armed shock troops of race terror, union-busting and anti-communism in a desperate attempt to preserve its rule over the working class—the one force with the power and unified interest to smash the capitalist onslaught of depression and war. That is why the government cannot "ban the Klan."

As Carter whips up chauvinism in his mad drive toward imperialist war, as the economy goes to hell, the ultra-right grows bolder. Even as ANCAN rallied, four black women were wounded in Chattanooga as KKKers blasted

shotguns into a group of blacks. The KKK/Nazis are the fascist fringe of the White House's perspective for a popular mobilization for thermonuclear World War III against the Soviet Union. With Carter on the warpath against Communism overseas, the KKK/Nazis feel it's open season on leftists, blacks, labor and Jews here. In working to interdict the fascists from carrying their terror into the major industrial centers, we are therefore also seeking to deprive the bourgeoisie of a rabid constituency screaming for war on the USSR.

As Spartacist League spokesman Al Nelson said at the April 19 rally:

"We need a workers party to get rid of the bosses, their courts, their cops, their armed thugs, their fascists—to get rid of them once and for all, to establish a workers society, a socialist society, a workers government."

ANCAN ran the Nazis out of San Francisco—let's keep them on the run! ■

